A scholarly journal and news magazine. December 2023. Vol. XVI:4.
From the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES), Södertörn University.

Pippi Longstocking in East Germany

BALTIC WORLDS

balticworlds.com

Monuments and narration in former Yugoslavia

Cinematic renderings of monuments

Narrations of nationalism

Erasing and demolishing statues

Memory sites and mass graves

Post-communist memory culture

Monuments & memory-making

Illustration: Karin Zaric Sunvisson

Special section: Monuments, new arts, and new narratives

also in this issue

CHILDHOOD IN WAR / DESTRUCTION OF MUSEUMS / UKRAINIAN FLAG DISPLAY / TOURISM BEHIND THE CURTAIN

sh.se | SÖDERTÖRN UNIVERSITY STOCKHOLM

BALTIC WORLDS
balticworlds.com

Sponsored by the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies
ÖSTERSJÖ-STIFTELSEN
THE FOUNDATION FOR BALTIC AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES

editorial

Symbols matter

The destruction of cultural heritage and targeted harming of children are regarded as war crimes: acts that are committed by Russia in the war against Ukraine. This issue starts with a report by Anastasiia Chupis on the scale of violence and methods used by Russia against Ukrainian children, and the work in Ukraine to protect children and their entitlement to a childhood. Maria Silina's essay describes how for many years, Russia has been collecting and stealing Ukrainian artifacts to expose them, labelled as Russian, in museums in Moscow. Ukrainian museums, cultural heritage sites, and art are in this war hit by the destruction of the aggressor who is demolishing Ukrainian culture both symbolical and literary. We need to acknowledge and document this destruction to be able to hold those responsible to account.

IN JOHANNA MANNERGREN Selimovic's essay, on recognition of missing people and uncovering mass graves in Bosnia-Herzegovina, she interviews people that have long lived with trauma, grief and without reconciliation – and often in decades of silence. Her essay is part of a theme "Monuments, new arts, and new narratives". The guest editor of the theme, Cecilia Sjöholm, underlines in her essay the symbolic power of the aesthetic while analyzing the giant brutal monuments, "Spomeniks", placed in natural settings in the former Yugoslavia, on soil once red with blood. Several essays around monuments and memory sites in relation to the Balkans and war give new insights into the power of memory narratives and symbolic representations. Monuments are not merely reminders of the past but rather symbols of positions in the present. Tora Lane suggests in her essay that the notion of negative memory could be used in the post-communist sphere: "Negative memory is that which in its atrocity cannot be remembered by those who experienced it (as for instance, genocide) and yet needs to be accounted for by history".

THE HARSH REALITY of war and crimes against children that are being committed against Ukraine while we are publishing this is alarming and no coincidence – on the contrary. Children are strong symbols of innocence, hope and future. Ukrainian murals often show visual representations of Pippi Longstocking, a lone girl with stiff braids who has taken up the fight against a giant enemy. Källström has previously written about this in *Baltic Worlds*.

In this issue, Lisa Källström reflects on how Pippi Longstocking was introduced in the GDR in the 1970s, after quite some hesitation from the authorities dwelling on how to interpret the political message in the childbook and its illustrations. Källström in her essay discusses the carnivalesque role of illustrations in a totalitarian society.

We are thus, from different approaches, investigating narratives and practices of violence, contemporary and past, through the lenses of art and aesthetics and in relation to powerful symbols. ■

Ninna Mörner

in this issue

Ukrainian flag display in Estonia and Lithuania

"Flags offer a different symbol of support. They confer meaning on a space, and construct and represent community." **Page 23**

Parting the Curtain

"The contemporary press called the travelers 'tourists', but the participants were by no means looking for leisure and recreation." **Page 81**

Cities in change: Chișinău, Černivci, L'viv, and Wrocław

"The book acts as a reminder, in the light of current Russian aggression against independent democratic societies, of the pertinence of keeping the defenses of freedom and self-determination high." **Page 98**

ILLUSTRATION: KARIN ZARIC SUNVISSON

feature

4 Childhood in the conditions of war. The Ukrainian experience, *Anastasiia Chupis*

essays

13 Russian cultural expansion in Ukraine. Exploring new perspectives for international relations in the region, *Maria Silina*

23 The public pedagogy of Ukrainian flag displays: A view from Lithuania & Estonia, *Aimee Herring & Kara D. Brown*

81 Tourist with a film camera Georg Oddner in the Soviet Union, *Sune Bechmann Pedersen*

88 Upside down on horseback. The trickster Pippi Longstocking in the GDR, *Lisa Källström*

reviews

98 Four European cities in change. Chișinău, Černivci, L'viv, and Wrocław, *Thomas Borén*

101 Competitive victimhood. Ethnonational conflicts and possibilities for reconciliation, *Joakim Ekman*

theme

Monuments, new arts, and new narratives
Guest editor: Cecilia Sjöholm

31 Introduction. The politics of aesthetic historicizations and memory culture in former Yugoslavia, *Cecilia Sjöholm*

essays

34 Animating brutalism – cinematic renderings of Yugoslav monuments, *Cecilia Sjöholm*

42 The missing and the mass graves, *Johanna Mannergren Selimovic*

47 Partisan ecology in Yugoslav liberation and antifascist art, *Gal Kirn*

54 Concepts for contemporary monuments, *Rebecka Katz Thor*

59 Post-communist memory in the negative, *Tora Lane*

69 Placing a statue in its proper place, *Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen*

75 Nation and narration, *Mladen Dolar*

colophon

***Baltic Worlds* is published by the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES) at Södertörn University, Sweden.**
Editor-in-chief
Ninna Mörner
Publisher
Joakim Ekman
Scholarly advisory council
Sari Autio-Sarasmo, Aleksanteri Institute, Helsinki University; Sofie Bedford, IRES, Uppsala University; Michael Gentile, Oslo University; Markus Huss, Stockholm University; Ekaterina Kalinina (Chair), Stockholm University; Thomas Lundén, CBEES, Södertörn University; Kazimierz Musiał, University of Gdańsk; Barbara Törnquist Plewa, Lund University
Corresponding members
Aija Lulle, University of Latvia; Michael North, Greifswald University; Andrzej Nowak, Jagiellonian University, Kraków; Andrea Petö, Central European University, Vienna; Jens E. Olesen, Greifswald University; Olga Schihalejev, Tartu University
Copyediting/proofreading
Semantix, Bridget Schäfer
Layout
Sara Bergfors, Lena Fredriksson, Serpentin Media
Illustration
Karin Zaric Sunvisson
Subscription
bw.editor@sh.se
Printed by
Exakta Print AB, Malmö 2023
Printed: ISSN 2000-2955
Online: ISSN 2001-7308
Contact *Baltic Worlds*
ninna.morner@sh.se

The content expresses the views of the authors and does not necessarily reflect the views of *Baltic Worlds*.

Children are vulnerable in many aspects, one is the limited independent access to public services. PHOTO: MARIAN WEYO/SHUTTERSTOCK

Childhood in the conditions of war

The Ukrainian experience

by **Anastasiia Chupis**

Russia's war against Ukraine has been going on for nine years. During this time, a whole generation of children was born and started studying at school. After graduating from school, these children, living in two different world systems – in territories controlled by the government of Ukraine and non-controlled territories – will have a bipolar political understanding, since this consciousness is formed by educational programs, depending on whether they are approved by the Ministry of Education of Ukraine or changed under the pressure of the Russian occupiers. This war for the consciousness of Ukrainian children and against Ukrainian culture is reinforced by the systematic abduction and deportation of children from the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to the territory of Russia, which by its very nature is a war crime.

However, the informational and cultural front is only one dimension of the war against Ukrainian childhood. Children are one of the largest and most vulnerable categories of the civilian population, who are drawn into the conflict against their will and suffer war injuries of varying degrees and severity. The war unleashed by the Russian Federation not only inevitably steals the happiest time of Ukrainian youth, but also poses risks to life and health, and violates many children's rights and freedoms.

The war crimes committed by the Russian Federation against Ukrainian children include physical harm (murders, injury, mutilation, child abuse, rape), violations of the rule of law (illegal imprisonment; denial of children's rights to education, security, and access to humanitarian support; abduction; illegal transfer to custody), psychological damage, destruction of educational institutions' resources, and using children for propaganda and military purposes. All these factors create enormous challenges for children and their parents in the context of future choices to ensure better living conditions and security. These are not only the issues of individual families but also a significant challenge for the government of Ukraine, which should already form a vision for the integration and reintegration of children into the post-war peaceful Ukrainian environment, taking into account their interests in the processes of post-conflict development and reconstruction of the state.

Stolen childhood during war

The unjust war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine is stealing the childhood of Ukrainian children. And that's not just a powerful metaphor. Unfortunately, children are one of the most vulnerable categories of the population, because they are limited in their independent access to public services, such as legal services, which they can receive mostly through the mediation of parents or authorized persons. According to international law and Ukrainian legislation, a child is a person under the age of 18 (that is until he reaches the age of majority). According to Article 6 of the Family Code of Ukraine, a child is considered a minor before reaching the age of 14, and a juvenile between the ages of 14 and 18.

Since February 24, 2022, according to the annual report of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine Dmytro Lubinets, 7.9 million have received various forms of temporary protection from other states, while 4.9 million citizens of Ukraine are internally displaced persons. 35% of the total number of displaced persons are children.[1] According to Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories, Iryna Vereshchuk, as of April 2023, 4.8 million citizens in Ukraine officially have the status of internally displaced persons (IDPs), 1 million of whom are children.[2] These figures are the largest indicators of population migration within Europe since the Second World War and exceed the figures for population displacement as a result of the wars in the territory of former Yugoslavia. According to the assessment of the Council of Europe, the total number of displaced persons in former Yugoslavia was 3.8 million people, while in Ukraine this figure is about 12.7 million.[3] Such an unprecedentedly large number of refugees within the European Union causes a lot of discussions. It very often becomes a bargaining chip in the Russian Federation's PsyOps aimed at destabilizing the diplomatic unity of Ukraine's partner countries. Russia has repeatedly speculated on the issue of Ukrainian refugees in the international media field. However, attempts to destabilize the energy system of Ukraine, carried out by the Russian Federation during the autumn-winter heating season of 2023, caused a new wave of migration of women and children abroad. These actions may indicate attempts to cause systematic migration pressure on the countries receiving Ukrainian refugees and force these countries refuse to aid or reduce humanitarian and military support.

As a result of forced migration, women and children may also become victims of human trafficking, due to the vulnerability of their position.

Children at risk

Children often become victims of landmines left by the Russian military in recently de-occupied territories. In Ukraine, at the beginning of the full-scale war, the Ministry of Health created a separate registry that collects information about children's injuries and ensures that such children are provided with the necessary care and conditions for further rehabilitation. As of the beginning of 2023, according to the Head of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine (SES) Serhiy Kruk, 30 percent (174,000 km2) of the territory of Ukraine is contaminated by explosive devices of various shapes and configurations.[4]

On April 10, 2023, during a joint briefing with Acting Minister of Defense of the Kingdom of Denmark Troels Lund Poulsen, Minister of Defense of Ukraine at the time being (a new minister has been appointed since September 2023), Oleksiy Reznikov noted that demining the territory of Ukraine, taking into account foreign experience such as demining Croatia, will require at least 30 years and about five thousand specialists. According to these data, children, and young people living in the de-occupied territories for the next three decades could potentially be vulnerable to significant injuries from mines and projectile fragments, a situation that could cost hundreds, if not thousands, of lives. This factor can also affect the possibility of the civilian population returning to their homes; that is, due to the increased risk of trauma, Ukrainians will be faced with the choice of risking the health and lives of themselves and their children, or settling in another city of Ukraine, or another state in general, integrating in the future at the place where they have settled. For those who have already returned to the de-occupied territories despite the security risks, an online course on the basics of mine safety was created in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the Ministry of Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine, with the support of UNICEF, with the aim of training broad sections of the population, and especially children, in the rules for handling explosive objects. Such courses and materials should help children and teenagers to be careful with suspicious objects and

"CHILDREN OFTEN BECOME VICTIMS OF LANDMINES LEFT BY THE RUSSIAN MILITARY IN RECENTLY DE-OCCUPIED TERRITORIES."

protect them from injuries and other serious consequences from interaction with shells and mines.[5] Potentially, these courses can be either partially or completely included as educational disciplines in the list of school subjects.

It should be noted that the Russian Federation systematically violates all possible international laws and norms and has been waging the war against Ukraine with hybrid and unconventional methods. Abductions, filtering measures, murder, mutilation and torture of children and young people are among the types of war crimes against the civilian population committed by representatives of the Russian Federation's armed forces, officials of various branches and levels of government, and certainly the leadership of the aggressor state. All these actions indicate purposeful genocide of the Ukrainian nation.

The status, rights, and norms regarding the treatment of children in conditions of armed conflicts are enshrined in such international acts as the 4th Geneva Convention (1949) the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), and its optional protocols on armed conflicts and human trafficking for sexual purposes (2002), and additional protocols (1977); the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998), and the statutes and case law of other international criminal tribunals: Customary International Humanitarian Law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Civil and Political Rights (1976), and UN Security Council Resolutions on Children and Armed Conflict, including UN Security Council Resolutions 1261, 1314, 1379, 1460, 1539, 1612, and 1882.

Ukrainian Laws on Childhood Protection

In the Ukrainian legal field, the rights of the child are enshrined in the Constitution of Ukraine, the Family Code of Ukraine, the Civil Code of Ukraine, and the Laws of Ukraine "On Childhood Protection", "On Prevention of Violence in the Family", and "On Education".[6]

According to the norms of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, children have the right to personal life and protection from encroachments on it, the right to protection from all forms of physical and psychological violence, the right to rest and leisure; protection from economic exploitation and from performing any work that may pose a health hazard, be an obstacle to the child's education or harm his health, physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development; for protection from illegal abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, protection from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse; protection of the child from all forms of exploitation that harm any aspect of the child's well-being; protection from torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading forms treatment or punishment.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child and Resolution 1261 emphasizes the inadmissibility of using children as soldiers. Article 2 of Resolution 1261 strongly condemns attacks on children in situations of armed conflict, including killing and maiming, sexual violence, abduction and forced displacement, recruitment and use of children in armed conflict in violation of international law, and attacks on objects protected by international law, including places where there are usually many children, such as schools and hospitals, and calls on all parties concerned to put an end to such practices; Article 7 calls on all parties to armed conflicts to ensure that the protection, welfare, and rights of children are taken into account during peace negotiations and throughout the post-conflict peace-building process. And in Articles No. 8 and 9, parties to armed conflicts are called upon to take possible measures during armed conflicts to minimize the harm caused to children and to comply with specific obligations to ensure the protection of children in situations of armed conflicts.[7]

As of October 10, 2023, according to the state portal Children of War, since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, the Russian military and their actions have killed 506 children, and 1133 children have been injured. 1187 children are considered missing, 19 546 children have been deported, of whom 18 775 have been located, and 386 children have already been returned to Ukraine. According to the data of the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, the facts regarding the perpetration of sexual violence by the Russian military against 13 children have been established. It is impossible to establish the exact number of injured children due to active hostilities and the temporary occupation of part of the territory of Ukraine.[8]

Illegal detention of Ukrainian children

According to Iryna Vereshchuk, Russia is illegally detaining 4 396 orphans in the temporarily occupied territories and has illegally taken them to Russian territory (as of April 10). For their return to Ukraine, a Coordination Council has been formed under the patronage of the President's office, which is working on the creation of an international coalition, which should become a platform for the liberation and return of children through diplomatic channels under the protectorate of one of the international humanitarian organizations.[9]

"THE BIGGEST THREAT TO UKRAINE IS THE LACK OF ANY REGISTER OF CHILDREN STAYING ON THE TERRITORY OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION."

The biggest threat to Ukraine is the lack of any register of children staying on the territory of the Russian Federation, and the actions of Russia aimed at banning access to the children by Ukrainian human rights defenders, government officials, medical workers, and representatives of international humanitarian organizations, which makes it impossible to monitor the conditions in which children are being held and work to ensure their return to families or care institutions in the territories under the control of the Ukrainian

Vladyslav Buryak, 16 years old, was in Russian captivity for three months. He tells about grim torture.

PHOTO: CHILDREN OF WAR

government. Moreover, it is also illegal to transfer children to the care of families of Russian citizens.

In addition to the fact that Ukrainian children are being traumatized or killed as a result of the criminal actions of the Russian army, according to the deputy director of the Department for the Protection of Children's Rights and Ensuring Equality Standards of the National Social Service, Volodymyr Vovk, 6 447 children were left without parental care during the war for various reasons. For 1 233 children, this was due to the death of one or both parents.[10]

In a report recently presented by the Humanities Research Laboratory of the Yale School of Public Health, research was conducted based on open data on the activities of the Russian Systematic Program for the Re-education and Adoption of Children from Ukraine. According to the researchers' data contained in the report, as of February 2023, a network of 43 camps and other institutions was discovered in which at the time of the report, at least 6 000 children from Ukraine were being held within the occupied territories. All these institutions are located on the territory of the temporarily occupied Crimea and directly on the territory of the Russian Federation. The analysts involved in compiling the report also presented the categorization of children who are in institutions of this type. A total of 4 categories were distinguished, namely: 1) children who have parents or obvious family guardianship; 2) children who Russia considers orphans; 3) children who were under the care of state institutions of Ukraine before the invasion in February 2022 (often due to severe physical or mental disabilities); 4) children whose guardianship is unknown or uncertain due to wartime circumstances caused by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

According to the report, the primary goal of the camps is political re-education: at least 32 (78%) of the camps identified by the Humanities Research Laboratory at the Yale School of Public Health appear to be involved in systematic re-education efforts that expose Ukrainian children to scientific, cultural, patriotic and/or military education focused on Russia. Numerous camps approved by the Russian Federation are advertised as "integration programs" with the apparent aim of integrating children from Ukraine into the Russian government's vision of national culture, history, and society.[11]

In the course of investigations, Ukrainian law enforcement officers repeatedly established the fact of illegal detention of Ukrainian children in temporarily occupied places and their detention in harsh conditions with the use of physical and psychological pressure. In the interviews given by the children who were successfully returned from Russian captivity, it was noted that they were subjected to torture and witnessed war crimes regarding the military's inhumane treatment of representatives of the civilian population who were suspected of supporting the actions of the Ukrainian army or had openly patriotic pro-Ukrainian views. Thus, in an interview for the Ukrainian government project "Children of War", a 16-year-old teenager from Melitopol (Zaporizhia region), Vladyslav Buryak, who was in Russian captivity for three months, tells that he and his cellmate, a 24-year-old young man, were tortured for three days with electric current, including on the genitals, which led the young man to commit suicide in front of the child. Also, Vladyslav's captors, the military of the Russian Federation, forced him to wash the blood from his cell after torture.[12]

Is Vladyslav's case unique? Unfortunately not. Law enforcement agencies of Ukraine carefully record and study the facts

of non-conventional treatment of children, but active hostilities and the inability to collect reliable data and evidence about violations in the temporarily occupied territories make it impossible to provide timely legal, medical, and psychological assistance to the victims. That is why Ukraine needs active international institutional support in this aspect for the fastest return of all children and to ensure their basic rights and freedoms, defined by international acts and normative documents of Ukraine.

Children as tools in propaganda

In addition, Russia also uses kidnapped children to create propaganda stories. Thus, on February 22, 2023, at a rally concert in Luzhniki organized in support of the war, illegally transported children from Mariupol were brought onto the stage and everyone was forced to thank the Russian military for their "rescue". The cynical use of children is not just an immoral act, but also an important part of the propaganda mechanisms to strengthen electoral support for Putin and his United Russia party, and it is also part of the narratives for the justification of waging war against Ukraine for Russian citizens.

On March 17, the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague issued an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin. In addition, a warrant was issued against the commissioner for children's rights in Russia, Maria Lvova-Belova.[13] This means that potentially, Putin and Lvova-Belova can be arrested in 123 countries that have ratified the Rome Statute of the ICC to ensure the execution of the court decision.

On September 13, 2023, the European Parliament called on the International Criminal Court in The Hague (ICC) to issue an arrest warrant for the Belarusian illegitimate president Alexander Lukashenko. In a resolution approved by European deputies, he is named as an accomplice in the forcible removal of more than 2,150 children, including orphans, from the Russian-occupied regions of Ukraine to the so-called health camps in Belarus, where "they are subjected to Russification and ideological indoctrination." The European Parliament holds Lukashenko and his regime responsible for these war crimes in the same way as Vladimir Putin and children's ombudsman Maria Lvova-Belova.[14]

Undoubtedly, abductions, murders, and rapes causing physical and psychological injuries to children are unprecedented and the most serious crimes committed against children and youth in wartime conditions. However, another difficult aspect and at the same time a challenge for the Ukrainian government is ensuring children's right to access to education.

According to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, as of January 20, 2023, a total of 3 051 educational institutions were affected by the conflict, of which 420 were completely destroyed. Almost half of them are secondary schools. Thus, as of January 23, 2023, 1 259 secondary schools were damaged, and 223 were completely destroyed. The largest share of schools affected was in Donetsk (67%), Kharkiv (43%), and Luhansk (41%) regions. Together, the affected schools of these three regions account for half of all damaged and destroyed schools in the country. In quantitative terms, the most affected schools are in Donetsk (328) and Kharkiv regions (304), and a significant number – more than 100 institutions – were also affected in Mykolaiv, Kyiv, Luhansk, and Kherson regions, as well as in Zaporizhia regions (97 schools).[15]

As a result of Russia's full-scale military aggression against Ukraine, the number of students in educational institutions in the East, South, and North of the country has decreased. The research data of the Ministry of Education and Culture of Ukraine shows that the outflow of students occurred due to a forced move abroad and a change of place of study and relocation to another region of Ukraine. At the same time, some students are forced to study in the temporarily occupied territories. The center of Ukraine is the only region where the number of students increased. This happened at the expense of the children of internally displaced persons.

Access to education hindered

Some students, despite the fact that they continue to study in the same institutions where they received their education until February 24, 2022, have changed their place of residence. 27% of primary school students and 23% of basic and senior high school students moved from the East region to other settlements in Ukraine. 16% of elementary school students and 14% of basic and senior high school students moved from the South to other settlements of Ukraine, and 17% and 14%, respectively, moved abroad. More students from the North currently live abroad (8%) than in other regions of Ukraine (6%). In the Center and in the West, 92% and 95% of students, respectively, are in the same settlement as on February 24, 2022. During the war, the number of students receiving education via distance learning increased 43 times: from 17 669 (0.41%) to 772 909 (18.88%) students. The number of students who receive education on an individual basis has also increased. The number of those receiving homeschooling, when parents independently organize the educational process for their children, has increased 13 times (from 4 695 to 64 409 students).

> "THE GOVERNMENT OF UKRAINE APPROVED AN EMERGENCY MECHANISM FOR THE FORCED EVACUATION OF CHILDREN FROM AREAS OF ACTIVE HOSTILITIES."

The proportion of students from socially vulnerable categories who do not have access to the educational process in an educational institution is highest in the south of the country. 41% of students from low-income and socially disadvantaged families do not have opportunities for education to varying degrees, 33% of those from families with many children, 28% of students with special educational needs, and 22% of IDPs. In the center

As part of a working visit to Lviv region, the team of the Ministry of Reintegration headed by Vice Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk visited the Zhuravne neuropsychiatric nursing home, where young IDPs with special needs from dangerous regions of Ukraine have found shelter.

PHOTO: GOV.UA

and west of the country, indicators of access to the educational process among vulnerable categories of students are somewhat higher but lower than in the north and east.

According to educational institutions and surveys of students' parents, the organization of the educational process is most hindered by air alarms – 53%, lack of electricity – 41%, lack of Internet – 35%, and lack of shelter – 29%. In the east and south of the country, leaders also attributed hostilities in the territory to obstacles to the educational process – 46% and 23%, respectively.

The efforts of the occupying forces to destroy any mention of Ukraine in the newly captured territories should also be added to the problems of the education sector. Occupation representatives are destroying literature and any documentation in the Ukrainian language, which has been repeatedly reported in various regions. The so-called "Ministry of Education and Science of the LPR" (representatives of the occupation authorities in the Luhansk region) sent a document to the heads of city and district administrations, as well as to subordinate educational organizations, advising them to remove books from the school library from the list, which contained 365 items.

In September 2022, it became known that the Russian occupiers had removed all Ukrainian literature from the libraries of temporarily occupied Melitopol.[16]

They are trying to replace the seized Ukrainian literature with Russian as soon as possible. According to the Center of National Resistance, the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation allocates 200 million rubles for the purchase and distribution of Russian books in the temporarily occupied territories of the south and east of Ukraine. At the same time, about 120 million rubles will be directed to the creation of three model libraries in each temporarily occupied region, and 40 million to finance the libraries of the temporarily occupied regions of Ukraine controlled by the Russian invaders.[17]

In addition, in November, the Russian Federation opened regional branches of the Russian military-patriotic movement Yunarmiya in the occupied Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia regions.[18]

Children as "human shields"

Attempts to create paramilitary training programs are part of the systematic propaganda activities of the occupation authorities, but they may be not only cultural but also practical for the regular troops of the Russian Federation because, since the beginning of the war in 2014, researchers have repeatedly drawn attention to attempts to recruit children to collect information about the positions of the military armed forces and as combatants. An article by Ukrainian researchers Yevhen Tsokur and Iryna Chaika, published in 2019, mentions the practice of recruiting children in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to 15 such units of paramilitary groups in the quasi-republics of the LPR and DPR. Analyzing the current situation is rather difficult due to objective reasons; however, data has repeatedly appeared in the Ukrainian media about attempts to use children and the civilian population as "human shields" for reconnaissance of the positions of the regular army of Ukraine – especially at the beginning of a full-scale invasion, as reported by the Security Service of Ukraine, warning the civilian population against such actions.[19]

Military actions of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine, massive missile attacks, and their consequences also worsen the moral and psychological condition of children. Given the fact that the 2022-2023 school year was extreme for all participants in the educational process, the psycho-emotional state of students worsened. For example, according to the Ministry's report for the beginning of 2023, the number of high school students who feel safe has decreased by 20%.[20]

According to the results of a survey by the "Rating" group, based on the data of mothers' questionnaires, since the beginning of the full-scale invasion 41% of children have an increased level of irritability and apathy; indifference to education, and previous hobbies are noticed in 39% of children – these manifestations are more common in children of middle and older school age. A relatively common problem is outbursts of anger, aggression among children – 38%. There is also fear and crying for no reason in 35% of children. Such signs of anxiety states as fear of the future, sleep problems, nightmares, and problems with memory and concentration were more often recorded in older children (16-17 years old). The reflection of traumatic events in games and creativity was observed among the youngest children (3-9 years old). 60% of children witnessed or participated in various war-related events.

Most often, according to the mothers, children experienced the following traumatic events: separation from family and friends (28%), moving to another region of the country (25%), shelling and bombing (24%), prolonged stay in a cold room (17%). 11% of children moved abroad, 8% were under occupation, 6% witnessed the death of relatives or loved ones, 5% lost their homes, and another 5% experienced hunger and lack of water.

19% of the surveyed mothers currently live outside the home.

20% left, but have already returned, and 61% did not change their place of residence. 20% of respondents consider their current place of residence unsafe. Most of these people live in the de-occupied front-line regions and in Kyiv. Also, 41% of mothers noted that among their close relatives (husband, brother, sister, children, and parents) there are those who fight.[21]

The World Health Organization calls for the protection of children in armed conflicts. According to its data, ten percent of people who have experienced a traumatic event will later have symptoms of psychological trauma, and another ten percent will demonstrate behavioral changes or psychological disorders that become an obstacle to full participation in everyday life (the most common disorders are anxiety disorders, depression, and psychosomatic disorders).[22]

May 6, residents of the east can leave the shelling by the Pokrovsk-Lviv train.

PHOTO: FREERADIO.COM.UA

However, in addition to psychological problems, the threat to children's health in the temporarily occupied territories is also an artificially created humanitarian crisis. Due to the blocking of logistical routes and humanitarian aid, the chances of leaving the territory controlled by Ukraine are minimal. Attempts to create a humanitarian crisis and famine in the temporarily occupied territories and where active hostilities are ongoing do not stop.[23]

The most dangerous thing for children is to stay in the territory not under the control of Ukraine, and even more so in the immediate vicinity of the front line. Among the most significant problems faced by children and their parents who remain in such territories are: complete or partial destruction of critical infrastructure, complete absence or limited access to medicines and basic necessities, a large number of explosive devices in the environment, and the possibility of being hit during hostilities, the impossibility of obtaining medical, legal and educational services, and involvement in hostilities as combatants.

Evacuation of children

Parents who deliberately refuse to evacuate from areas as close as possible to the front line pose the greatest danger to their children. In response to such actions, on March 7, 2023, the Government of Ukraine approved an emergency mechanism for the forced evacuation of children from areas of active hostilities. Prior to the introduction of changes in the mandatory evacuation of children, parents (or those with parental responsibility) could refuse to evacuate themselves and their children by signing a refusal form. This led to the fact that children remain in the zone of active hostilities, risking death from shelling, and hiding in basements. On August 2, 2022, the Government adopted an order that provides for the mandatory evacuation of the population of Donetsk region.[24]

It is stipulated that the evacuation of the child is carried out accompanied by one of the parents, a person with parental responsibility, or another legal representative. According to the current legislation, the legal representatives of the child are the parents (adopters), guardians (custodians), adoptive parents, parent-educators, heads of educational institutions, health care institutions, and social protection institutions where the child is (if no guardianship has been established or no guardian or custodian has been appointed). At the same time, grandparents and other relatives, even if they live with minors, are not legal representatives of the child.

But in practice, if the parents refuse to evacuate, the child can be handed over to other relatives. If the child is an orphan, it is handed over to an authorized representative of the guardianship authority.[25]

According to the testimony of the Head of the Donetsk OVA, Pavlo Kyrylenko, all children were evacuated from all the most dangerous areas, such as Bakhmut, Bakhmutsky district, from the city of Chasiv Yar, where shelling often occurs", and all children were evacuated from the cities of Vugledar and Maryinka. According to his comment to Radio Svoboda on May 18, five to seven children remain in Krasnohorivka and nearby villages, whose parents have changed their location and are hiding their children from evacuation. More than 700 children live in the Toretsk community, which is relatively far from the front line. The evacuation of parents with children has already gradually begun there.[26]

There are 46 children left in the communities of the Zaporizhzhia region which are located on the front line. Yurii Malashko, the head of Zaporizhzhia OVA, spoke about this on air during the national telethon Yedini Novyni.[27]

The work of evacuating children continues constantly because the front line is no place for a child.

Conclusion

Ukraine conducts systematic work to protect and ensure the rights of children and youth on the territory of the state and tries to minimize the impact of the war on these categories of the pop-

ulation, as well as to carry out the timely and complete recording of violations of these rights. However, there are a number of challenges that are the result of systematic violations on the part of Russia, and reluctance to conduct a dialogue with Ukraine and international institutions regarding the provision of the civilian population's humanitarian rights during the war.

The war crimes committed by the Russian Federation against Ukrainian children include physical harm (murders, injury, mutilation, child abuse, rape), violations of the rule of law (illegal imprisonment, deprivation of children's right to education, security, access to humanitarian support, abduction, illegal transfer to custody), psychological damage, destruction of resources of educational institutions, and use of children for propaganda and military purposes. All these aspects listed above are a direct violation of the norms of international law and the customs of warfare and should be investigated in detail, and the guilty punished.

The children of Ukraine deserve a safe and comfortable environment for growth and development, which Ukraine should become after the end of this bloody war.

One of the priorities of the government of Ukraine in the field of child and childhood protection should be the psychological and social adaptation of various categories of children (those who were in the temporarily occupied territories, those who were illegally separated from their parents, those who remained with guardians, those who suffered injuries and mutilations, those who were forcibly resettled both within the state and abroad). All these children have different degrees and different forms of traumatization, but it is an indisputable fact that the state and specialized international organizations such as UNICEF should strengthen cooperation in implementing programs of medical, psychological, socio-economic, safety, and educational support for children. It will also be valuable to study foreign experience in this area and to develop strategic documents for the purpose of their implementation both at the regional and national levels. ✕

Anastasiia Chupis is a PhD-student at Zaporizhzhia National University and a scholarship holder at Södertörn University.

references

1 Щорічна доповідь Уповноваженого Верховної Ради України з прав людини про стан додержання та захисту прав і свобод людини і громадянина в Україні у 2022 році [Annual report of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on the state of observance and protection of human and citizen rights and freedoms in Ukraine in 2022]. Website of Ombudsman. Available at: https://ombudsman.gov.ua/report-2022/ukraintsi-za-kordonom#ref3

2 Статус переселенця мають 4,8 мільйона українців, серед них 1 мільйон дітей – Верещук [4.8 million Ukrainians have the status of immigrants, among them 1 million children – Vereshchuk] Ukrinform. Available at: https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-society/3693977-status-pereselenca-maut-48-miljona-ukrainciv-sered-nih-1-miljon-ditej-veresuk.html

3 Economic and social rights for forcibly displaced persons during the conflicts in former Yugoslavia, 27–28 June 2017, Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo Concept Note of Conference. Available at: https://rm.coe.int/coe-unhcr-conference-on-idps-in-former-yugoslavia-concept-note/1680716122

4 Це рятує життя. Що треба знати про ризики, пов›язані з мінами та вибухонебезпечними залишками війни [It saves lives. What you need to know about the risks associated with mines and explosive remnants of war]. Ukrainian Pravda. Available at: https://life.pravda.com. ua/society/2023/04/4/253638/

5 Все про мінну безпеку [All about mine safety]. Available at: https://bezpeka.info/

6 Права дітей. Що про них треба знати? [Children's rights. What should you know about them?]. Available at: https://legalaid.gov. ua/novyny/prava-ditej-shho-pro-nyh-treba-znaty/

7 UN RESOLUTION 1261 (1999). UN Documents Available at: https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N99/248/59/PDF/N9924859.pdf

8 Children of war. Available at: https://childrenofwar.gov.ua/en/

9 Формується міжнародна коаліція для повернення українських дітей-сиріт [An international coalition is being formed for the return of Ukrainian orphans]. The Ministry of Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories. Available at: https://minre.gov.ua/ 2023/04/10/formuyetsya-mizhnarodna-koaliczіya-dlya-povernennya-ukrayinskyh-ditej-syrit/

10 Майже 6,5 тисяч дітей під час війни залишилися без батьківського піклування [Almost 6.5 thousand children were left without parental care during the war]. Suspilne. Available at: https://suspilne.media/358540-majze-65-tisac-ditej-pid-cas-vijni-zalisilisa-bez-batkivskogo-pikluvanna/

11 Russian Systematic Program for the Re-education and Adoption of Children from Ukraine. Humanities Research Laboratory of the Yale School of Public Health. Available at: https://hub.conflictobservatory.org/portal/sharing/rest/content/items/97f919ccfe524d31a241b53ca44076b8/data

12 Children of war. Children's Stories. Available at: https://childrenofwar.gov.ua/en/stories-of-children/

13 Situation in Ukraine: ICC judges issue arrest warrants against Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin and Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova. The International Criminal Court (ICC). Available at: https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/situation-ukraine-icc-judges-issue-arrest-warrants-against-vladimir-vladimirovich-putin-and

14 Petras Auštrevičius, *Report on relations with Belarus*, (European Parliament, Committee on Foreign Affairs, 2023/2041(INI), July 31, 2023). Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2023-0258_EN.html#_section4

15 Війна та освіта: Як рік повномасштабного вторгнення вплинув на українські школи [War and Education: How a Year of Full-Scale Invasion Affected Ukrainian Schools]. Available at: https://saved.foundation/reports/ua/yearofwar_report_ua.pdf
16 Росіяни спалюють українські книги на тимчасово окупованих територіях [Russians burn Ukrainian books in temporarily occupied territories]. Bukvy. Available at: https://bykvu.com/ua/bukvy/rosiiany-spaliuiut-ukrainski-knyhy-na-tymchasovo-okupovanykh-terytoriiakh-tsns/
17 Росіяни продовжують вилучати українські книжки із бібліотек на тимчасово окупованих територіях [The Russians continue to remove Ukrainian books from libraries in the temporarily occupied territories]. Bukvy. Available at: https://bykvu.com/ua/bukvy/rosiiany-prodovzhuiut-vyluchaty-ukrainski-knyzhky-iz-bibliotek-na-tymchasovo-okupovanykh-terytoriiakh-tsns/
18 Моніторинги [Monitoring]. Almenda. Available at: https://almenda.org/category/pub/monitoringi/
19 Діти-комбатанти у посткофліктному періоді: проблема відповідальності і захисту прав дитини (зарубіжний досвід для України). І. Чайка, Є. Цокур [Child combatants in the post-conflict period: the problem of responsibility and protection of children's rights (foreign experience for Ukraine). I. Chaika, Ye. Tsokur]. // Політичне життя. – № 2 (2019). Available at: https://jpl.donnu.edu.ua/article/view/7304
20 Дослідження якості організації освітнього процесу в умовах війни у 2022/2023 навчальному році [Study of the quality of the organization of the educational process in the conditions of war in the 2022/2023 academic year]. Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Available at: https://sqe.gov.ua/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/yakist-osvity-v-umovah-viyny-web-3.pdf
21 Проблеми українських дітей під час війни (27 січня–1 лютого 2023) [Problems of Ukrainian children during the war (January 27–February 1, 2023)]. Sociological group «Rating». Available at: https://ratinggroup.ua/resear ch/ukraine/problems_of_ukrainian_children_in_conditions_of_war_january_27-february_1_2023.html?fbclid=IwAR1RzWGoelpkqiQCozKY5KSYluHf2_ UX9G4oQn05D1KmeFcyjNeC24GcbfA
22 Mental health consequences of war: A brief review of research findings. S. Murthy, R. Lakshminarayana // World Psychiatry: official journal of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA). – March 2006. 5(1):25–30. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/7025086_Mental_health_consequences_of_war_A_brief_review_of_research_findings
23 «Шість+» серйозних порушень проти дітей: виклики та наслідки 9 місяців російсько-української війни 2022" ["Six+" serious violations against children: challenges and consequences of 9 months of Russian-Ukrainian war 2022"]. Almenda. Available at: https://almenda.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/6-plus-seryoznykh-porushen-proty-ditey-9-misyatsiv_Almenda.pdf
24 Розпорядження Кабінету мініcрів України від 02.08.2022 № 679-р. Про проведення обов›язкової евакуації населення Донецької області [Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated August 2, 2022 No. 679. About mandatory evacuation of the population of Donetsk region]. Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. Available at: https://www.kmu.gov.ua/npas/pro-provedennia-oboviazkovoi-evaku-a679r
25 Обов'язкова евакуація дітей із зон активних бойових дій: що каже закон та диктують реалії [Mandatory evacuation of children from areas of active hostilities: what the law says and reality dictates]. Vchasno. Available at: https://vchasnoua.com/news/oboviazkova-evakuaciia-ditei-iz-zon-aktivnix-boiovix-dii-shho-kaze-zakon-ta-diktuiut-realiyi
26 Кириленко розповів, скільки дітей залишається в найбільш небезпечних місцях Донеччини [Kyrylenko told how many children remain in the most dangerous places in Donetsk region]. Radio svoboda. Available at: https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-kyrylenko-dity-evakuatsiya/32417755.html
27 В рамках всеукраїнського телемарафону говорили про події останньої доби в Запорізькій області [As part of the all-Ukrainian telethon, they talked about the events of the last day in the Zaporizhzhia region]. Telegram channel of Zaporizhzhia Regional Military Administration. Available at: https://t.me/zoda_gov_ua/18667

Frames left behind after Russian art specialists removed thousands of paintings as they pillaged the Kherson Regional Art Museum in late October and early November 2022, while Russian forces still occupied Kherson. Photo taken on November 21, 2022.
PHOTO: BELKIS WILLE/HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

by **Maria Silina**

RUSSIAN CULTURAL EXPANSION IN UKRAINE

EXPLORING NEW PERSPECTIVES FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS IN THE REGION

abstract
The paper examines Russia's cultural expansionism that extends beyond the military invasion in Ukraine since 2014. In the first part, I trace Russia's systematic efforts to seize and manipulate Ukrainian heritage, often under the guise of protection. I also touch on the role of museums in this expansion, where they are used to preserve collections through coercive acquisition and to promote a Russian-centric narrative. The second part of the article delves into the historical relationships between Russia and Ukraine, especially in the context of the Soviet era's museum infrastructure. Overall, the text calls for new concepts and international efforts to critique Russia's actions and protect Ukrainian culture.
KEYWORDS: Russian-Ukrainian war, cultural heritage, museums, international relationships, history of the Soviet Union, culture.

Russia has historically understood culture as an integral part of political, economic, and military expansion. Ukraine is known for its decade-long efforts to defend its cultural heritage from the Russian expansionism. Thus since 1917, having gained independence, Ukraine has battled for its right to return its national heritage captured and taken to Russia on different instances. These were military trophies taken to Moscow at the end of the 18th century, as well as numerous archaeological findings of the rich Northern Black Sea region, which have been dispatched to the largest museums such as the Hermitage in St. Petersburg. Most of the efforts of Ukrainian scholars, diplomats, and experts, especially active during the 1920s and 1990s, met no response. The Russian-Ukrainian War (2014–) re-actualized the realities of (post)imperial violence against Ukraine and its culture. Now, as a hundred years ago, Ukraine is fighting for recognition of its culture, for

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

The museum building in the Chersonese, in 2010. In 2013 the Tauric Chersonese National Museum Preserve was UNESCO-listed.

The ruins of the ancient city of Chersonesos-Tavriiskyi, Sevastopol, 2011. PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

returning its heritage and restoration of justice at the international level.

According to official data from Ukraine, as of January 2023, 1,271 cultural infrastructure sites were damaged[1], while 40 museums officially reported pillages by the Russian Army by October 2022.[2] More sites and collections were affected in areas of active battles, the scale of destruction in which cannot be assessed. Overall, Ukrainian heritage is exposed to a whole range of threats: from direct shelling (the Mariupol theatre in 2022)[3] to men-made environmental disasters (destruction of the Kakhovka dam in 2023).[4]

IN ADDITION TO the direct damage caused by the war, over the course of 21 months, the Russian Federation has put in place an extensive legal and institutional framework designed for the unlawful seizure of Ukrainian heritage. The appropriation doesn't work straightforwardly. To silence Ukraine, new cultural production is generated with the Russian-centric narratives: through restoration of historical monuments in temporarily occupied Ukrainian territories and the display of artworks from looted museums at exhibitions held outside of Ukraine.

To trace these tendencies, in the first part of the paper, I will provide an overview of the crimes against Ukrainian heritage and museum collections in the during the Russian-Ukrainian war (2014–). It will illustrate how Russia misuses the sphere of culture to glorify itself. This exploitation creates complex patterns of expansion in the current war: preserving heritage through destruction and forcible appropriation. It also involves artwashing the war through museum and exhibition activities, both in the Russian Federation and in the occupied territories in Ukraine. Ultimately, this expansion occurs through the augmentation of the legal framework for heritage protection.

The second part of the article will focus on the review of the historical relationships between two countries. These realities were of Russian imperialism: the establishment of museum infrastructure in the USSR, where Russia controlled the key elements of this system (types of museums and collections), as well as the routes of movement and redistribution of objects across the country. The aim of the article is to reveal the nature of the (post)imperial expansion that goes beyond the previously established scholarly frameworks of totalitarianism and purely militaristic interpretations of military invasions. In addition to the military dimension, Russia's cultural expansion in the region, both in the ongoing conflict and throughout the region's history, demands the development of new concepts to pursue justice. I will argue that one such concept is the production of knowledge on the state-controlled museum infrastructure established during the Soviet era, which facilitated the prolonged proliferation of Russian-centric narratives in exhibitions, museum politics, and the irregular alienations of cultural heritage from Ukraine.

Protection of cultural heritage through destruction and forcible appropriation

In 2014, immediately following the invasion of Crimea, Russia began to promote its efforts in heritage protection and obscured the fact that the need for rescue stemmed solely from Russia's invasion of the peninsula. February 2023, Russia created a law on inclusion of works of art and culture of Ukraine in the Russian Cultural Heritage Register and the State Catalogue, the official database of the country's museum collections.[5] However, inclusion in the heritage register is often misleading. Protected monuments can still be seized, altered, or destroyed in the pursuit of altering the narrative.

Since 2014, the Russian Federation has been conducting territorial expansion via restoration and renovation of cultural and museum reserves in the temporarily occupied Crimea. Already since the days of the Russian Empire, Russia has actively nurtured the region as a significant hub for ancient archaeological

heritage and its own national Orthodox history, thanks to established routes from Byzantium to the peninsula. Today, Russia proclaims exclusive authority in the region and is actively shaping its own cultural policies within the area. The most high-profile case is the Tauric Chersonese National Museum Preserve (since 2013 on the UNESCO list). Now Russia is building a blockbuster Orthodox center there. In addition to museums and creative workshops, it is planned to build hotels and other facilities that will cover the potential territory of archaeological excavations. Under the guise of cultural development, a valuable archaeological site is being illegally buried beneath new construction.[6]

In Crimea, Russian experts' involvement in war crimes goes even deeper than the declarative layer of renovation. Artifacts are illegally acquired through the intensified archaeological excavations conducted by the forces of the Russian Federation after 2014. According to some reports, in 2022 – early 2023, 410 permits were issued by occupation authorities and 114 illegal excavations were recorded.[7] Intriguingly, Russians themselves talk about more than 800,000 finds (160,000 of museum value) in Chersonese alone, according to data for the spring 2022.[8] No one knows how many of them were taken from the territory of Ukraine.

IN AN EFFORT TO IDENTIFY potential destinations for archaeological findings from Ukraine, the primary focus is on major hubs, such as the Hermitage. This is a museum that for centuries has been the main beneficiary of illegal excavations and artefacts moved out from Ukraine and Crimea[9]. Mikhail Piotrovsky, the head of the Hermitage, claims that all the finds remain in place, i.e. in Crimea.[10] According to Ukrainian experts, Russian museum workers actively accept new finds and catalogue them. For example, in Solkhat (the Old Crimea), Russian archaeologists discovered fragments of a medieval water pipeline: all six fragments were transported to the Hermitage.[11] It's reasonable to assume that the rotation of these items is, in part, facilitated through diplomatic initiatives, such as the joint project "Recall Where Everything Began" of the State Museum-Preserve Tauric Chersonese and the Hermitage.[12]

"USING THE MOTIF OF HERITAGE PRESERVATION, ARCHAEOLOGISTS IN RUSSIA-OCCUPIED TERRITORIES IMPLEMENT A REDUCTIONIST AND IDEOLOGICALLY BIASED EXCAVATION PROGRAM."

Using the motif of heritage preservation, archaeologists in Russia-occupied territories implement a reductionist and ideologically biased excavation program. For example, they are focused on the Christian heritage, while ignoring and destroying other, notably, the Crimean Tatars' heritage. During construction of the Tavrida highway (Kerch-Simferopol), the graves of the Muslim cemetery Kyrk-Aziz near Bakhchisarai, the Scythian ancient settlement "Kermen Burun" and others were revealed. They are buried beneath the asphalt and cannot be restored.[13]

In summary, in addition to widespread direct destruction, Russia's main strategy in the occupied territories involves establishing a perception of Russian dominance at the expense of Ukrainian and local uniqueness. This is achieved through expanding into the heritage protection industry, creating new monuments, and implementing fast-track measures, such as simplified procedures for designating heritage sites, often without the necessary expertise, to rapidly absorb a large number of such sites.

Museums as agents of cultural expansion

In the realm of museums in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, we observe a recurring pattern - the preservation of collections through coercive acquisition. As of 2016, referring specifically to temporarily occupied Crimea, data reveals that 'over 1 million exhibit items" from the Ukrainian museum fund are unaccounted for.[14]

The location of museums, which have been looted and destroyed to this day, directly coincides with the territory occupied by Russia. The Kherson Art Museum was robbed in November 2022: soldiers supervised by an unnamed Russian museum worker took out several trucks with collection items. Shortly thereafter, it was confirmed that the collection is in the Crimea.[15] In November of the same year, the Kherson Local Lore Museum was also looted.[16] In Melitopol, Ms Leila Ibragimova, the Museum Head, who refused to show the Russian occupiers a location of the Scythian gold collection, was abducted and released only a few days later.[17] Thus, rescue of objects of value by Russian Federation is a criminal offence against both heritage and people.

Nobody knows how many items have been destroyed in the war. According to Ms Natalia Kapustnikova, the Head of Mariupol Museum of Local Lore, about 95% of the museum collection has been lost during the battles for the city. Before the hostilities, the museum included over 60,000 items.[18] Museums in the temporarily occupied Donetsk and Luhansk regions are particularly affected[19]. For instance, the museums and cultural institutions in Severodonetsk were devastated during the city's capture by the Russian army. Russia, however, consistently asserts that it was the Ukrainians who deliberately destroyed them. Ukrainian museums have, in addition, become ensnared in the intricate dynamics of diplomacy at war. Following the breakdown of the Grain Deal negotiations involving Russia, Ukraine, and the EU, the Russian Federation systematically targets the Odesa port situated within the UNESCO-protected historical center, which also encompasses museums.[20]

At the same time, the destruction of Ukrainian heritage is taking place through more indirect methods, such as forced assimilation and the integration of collections. Russia is actively utilizing Soviet

Art museum in Kherson in 2021: PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

The halls of the museum are empty after theft of art in November 2022. PHOTO: VGORU/WAR.UKRAINE.UA

Damaged and looted expositions of the Kherson Regional History Museum, November 2022. PHOTO: VGORU/WAR.UKRAINE.UA

heritage, both in redefining the pan-Soviet canon of art history and through the remnants of the museum management system infrastructure across the entire region. This is part of its expansion efforts, encompassing both military and cultural aspects.

FIRST AND FOREMOST, Russia is restoring Ukrainian museums, emphasizing a rhetoric of protection and care. Alongside building repairs, there is also a transformation of exhibitions to incorporate Russian content. Restoration work has been ongoing at the Museum in Sevastopol since 2018, with a particular focus on galleries of Russian and Western European art.[21] This model, featuring two main exhibition focuses – Russian and Western European art, with local, in this case Ukrainian art, taking a back seat, was originally established during the early Soviet Union. Nowadays, it is being revived under the banner of "Soviet aesthetics and canon without the communist ideology." The latter means the rejection of references to Marx and Lenin and exhibits centered around class struggle. It's crucial to highlight that these restoration efforts represent a shift in the conceptual and cultural direction of Ukrainian museums, erasing their national identity and unique institutional character.

Second, collections of the Ukrainian museums in temporarily occupied territories are entered in the register of the Russian Federation Museum Fund. Russian mass media are frank: they list treasures and their approximate price, off which the museum fund of Russian Federation will profit.[22] As early as in 2022, large museum collections of Donetsk, Lugansk, and Berdyansk were absorbed by Russia. These collections, "rescued" from Ukrainian museums, are predominantly being relocated to Crimea. Moreover, they are possibly transferred to Russian territory, including the capital cities, Moscow and St. Petersburg, often under the guise of temporary exhibition loans.

Finally, Ukrainian culture is also destroyed by means of creation of new exhibit items. These exhibits include artifacts from conflict zones, freshly crafted artworks portraying the war and the daily lives of "liberated" Ukrainians. They will serve as the foundation for new exhibitions that glorify Russia's peacekeeping mission in Ukraine. In Russia, an inter-museum group is already in operation, having collected over 10,000 objects.[23] The plan is to build complete museums around these artifacts.[24] The Russian inter-museum group includes such institutions as the State Historical Museum, the Victory Museum and the Museum of Modern History of Russia. All of them have historically been engaged in servicing the foreign policy of Russian Federation in the field of cultural exchange and the display of diplomatic gifts, as well as trophies.

Artwashing the war

I wanted also to address the practice of incorporating and displaying art from Ukrainian museums in areas that have been taken over, in the exhibitions in Russia. The geography of such exhibitions is extensive: the Rostov region bordering Ukraine, as well as St. Petersburg, Moscow, as well as Yekaterinburg at the border between Europe and Asia.

Exhibitions featuring artifacts illegally taken from Ukraine to Russian territory (without permission from the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine) occur with the active collaboration of museums in the occupied territories and Moscow. Thus, the Sevastopol Art Museum named after M.P. Kroshitsky loans artworks to the State Historical Museum, as well as with ROSIZO Center, both located in Moscow[25]. ROSIZO, the museum and exhibition center, which existed in different institutional forms from 1959 to 1994 in Soviet Russia and, later, in the Russian Federation, had its origins as a central hub for storing and exhibiting mass-produced socialist realist visual materials, a practice that was well-established during the Soviet era. In 2010, it was reinstated under the Russian Ministry of Culture and gradually assumed control over major exhibition projects and inter-museum collaborations across the country. With the outbreak of the full-scale war in Ukraine, ROSIZO has shifted its focus to showcasing propaganda art and has also been involved in transporting artworks to temporarily occupied territories.[26]

"RUSSIA IS USING THE THEMES OF PEACE AND HOME IN EXHIBITIONS TO CREATE A POSITIVE IMAGE, EVEN THOUGH THESE THEMES EMERGED ONLY BECAUSE RUSSIA INITIATED THE WAR IN UKRAINE."

METAPHORICALLY, THE EXPRESSION of aggression through art exhibitions is promoted by Russian curators with two keywords: war and peace as a dialectical pair. The topic of war is prevalent in museum cultural activities and exhibitions, represented both through contemporary propaganda and the inclusion of museums' collections, primarily dedicated to the Second World War. The metaphor of peace revolves around the motif of warmth, comfort, and home. For those Russians, who do not want to directly support the slogans of war, amicable exhibitions have been mounted such as "Build and Live!" and "Happy Childhood" by ROSIZO[27]; and "Architecture of Life" in Lugansk from collections of the Museum of Architecture (Moscow).[28] The State Russian Museum in St. Petersburg explores the theme through the "War and Peace" project, consisting of two parts, one of which is titled "Home and Family: Images of Peaceful Life."[29] Russia is using the themes of peace and home in exhibitions to create a positive image, even though these themes emerged only because Russia initiated the war in Ukraine. The exhibitions aim to generate content for media consumption, creating a narrative that is separate from the harsh realities of the war.

Lastly, one of the most powerful means of cultural expansion is through "pure art" exhibitions. These exhibitions, known for their expertise and prestige, emphasize art without delving into ideology, politics, or overt propaganda.

Let's take an example from the database of the Crimean Institute for Strategic Studies, a Ukrainian institution that monitors cultural crimes committed by Russia.[30] In August 2016, the Tretyakov Gallery (Moscow) opened an exhibition in honor of the 200th anniversary of the one of the most important academic painter Ivan Aivazovsky. He is renowned in the region for his marine paintings produced in Crimea. Ten works and 28 drawings by the artist were transported from the Aivazovsky Art Gallery in Feodosia to Moscow. While Ukraine publicly protested against the unlawful removal of these works for a temporary exhibition, Russian experts, in turn, did not view this move as illegal. In the spring and summer of 2023, the Museum of Moscow exhibited the heritage of modernist artists Kuzma Petrov-Vodkin and Maria Lomakina, including works from the collections of occupied Crimean museums, the ownership of which falls under the responsibility of the Museum Fund of Ukraine. Russia is managing these collections under the conditions of war, violating all possible conventions. The seemingly innocent reason for conducting exhibitions focused on in-depth historical research about an artist or a specific time period, along with the high level of expertise in curating these exhibitions, serves as a means for museum professionals to unwittingly or more easily become involved in the crimes of a war in the domain of culture.

Museums as agents of international politics: regional specifics

How can we address Russia's cultural expansionism?

In my opinion, a positive approach to criticizing Russia could involve a framework that encompasses international relations and the legal history of Ukraine's and Russia's interactions in the realm of heritage and museums.

Museums have consistently served as agents of international politics, with Russia and Ukraine employing their museum institutions in contrasting manners. Russia obscures misconduct and introduces ambiguities within museum practices, effectively creating gray areas. Conversely, Ukraine wants to resist these attempts to obscure historical relationships. In any case, to discuss post-war justice, it is necessary to consider the history of the region, which has the potential to provide a variety of legal and expertise-led means for analyzing and critiquing the invasion and its consequences.

IN THE CONTEXT OF RUSSIA inheriting the legacy of the USSR, the history of museums carries significant and potentially sensitive implications. Back in 1918, there was a vast nationalization effort that extended across the entire region. This effort included the seizure of architectural landmarks, collectibles, church assets, and even furniture. The act of nationalization still has far-reaching effects on international regulations and legal initiatives within the museum field. For instance, due to the contentious nature of the nationalization process that unfolded after 1918, Russia ceased to send exhibitions to the United States starting in 2011. This decision was prompted by laws that allowed for the potential reconsideration of the status of imported items, opening the door for claims from descendants of previous owners.[31]

Furthermore, after the USSR's breakup, newly independent countries sought to revisit the consequences of nationalization, which included the realm of museum and cultural heritage. These discussions were originally planned as part of the Minsk Agreements in 1993. However, Russia blocked any attempts at revision at the time. These negotiations continued, at least on a bilateral Ukrainian-Russian level, into the 2010s but didn't yield any concrete results due to Russia's consistent obstruction.[32]

Such reluctance to negotiate is understandable: the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) was the core of the Union, and it was there, in the federal and all-Soviet center, that the finest cultural treasures from the entire USSR converged. This situation became possible thanks to the established Soviet system of museum management from the 1910s to the 1950s. This system had three main pillars.

FIRSTLY, THE NATIONALIZATION of valuables created a fund sufficient to fill museums and establish new ones across the country, including in republics like Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, where memory and culture had not been institutionalized in museum forms before.

Secondly, Russian museum experts enthusiastically developed a comprehensive system of museum categories and types of objects, coordinating hierarchies of these types along two axes: Eurocentric and Russocentric. For example, all Soviet art museums (or departments) were structured based on two dominant categories: Western European art and Russian art, as the most important and scientifically significant categories, especially within the paradigm of European classical culture.

Finally, museums as institutions were gradually transformed into purely administrative units within the centralized Soviet management system. This means that even the museum's exhibition program and collection development depended largely on the interests of the region to which it was budgetarily tied, rather than solely on the goals of the museum as a cultural institution.[33]

Another layer of problematic Soviet museum history was added during the Second World War (1939–1945). Germany destroyed and looted a significant amount of cultural heritage on the territory of the USSR in the early 1940s. In response, towards the end of the war, the USSR carried out a massive plunder of German cultural heritage as compensation, unilaterally determined by the USSR. The exact number and composition of what was relocated by the USSR is undisclosed.

After the dissolution of the USSR, when the world became aware of the looted collections, there were hopes for their return or at least public disclosure as a gesture of cooperation with Europe. However, in practice, these military "trophies" were unilaterally nationalized by Russia in 1998.[34]

"VLADIMIR PUTIN PERSONALLY MADE EFFORTS TRYING TO PREVENT UKRAINE FROM RESOLVING THE ISSUES OF RESTITUTION WITH GERMANY THROUGH DIPLOMACY."

After gaining independence, Ukraine, just like Georgia, began to take steps to return the "trophy" art that ended up on their territory back to Germany and other affected countries. Russia reacts to these steps very badly and jealously. For example, Vladimir Putin personally made efforts trying to prevent Ukraine from resolving the issues of restitution with Germany through diplomacy.

The second layer of the problem with the Second World War is that a part of the art returned by Germany after the war ended up in Russia as the negotiations leading country, and not in countries from which these items were taken, primarily Ukraine and Belarus. The Russian-centricity of returns is an issue of established hierarchies within the USSR, which eventually influenced the international practices of restitutions[35].

Now it is this imperial Soviet legacy that determines in many ways not only the nature of the war and cultural expansion, but also the prospects for post-war negotiations for both sides, as well as the conceptual framework of international community.

Russia's strategy

Regarding Russia, the country recognizes that museums play an active role in deepening and complicating the already contentious history, encompassing both the nationalization of 1918 and the unilateral legalization of "trophy" art from 1945. Russia's museum policy is consistent and remains unchanged regardless

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Left: St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery in Kyiv.

The prophet Samuel. The Fresco Painting. Circa 1112 From the Mikhailovskr Monastery of Kiev, handed over from Germany to Soviet (Moscow) after WWII.

of personnel and larger political shifts. Over the years, museums have steadfastly maintained a Russo-centric focus on art history while avoiding discussions of any contentious topics related to the history and origins of collections and items. At present, this narrative is further advanced by highlighting Russia's exceptional role as the staunchest protector of global heritage.

In the realm of local propaganda, Russia actively utilizes the theme of the Nuremberg Trials as a testament to its leadership in historical heritage preservation practices. The authorities in Moscow curate exhibitions with attention-grabbing titles like "The Nuremberg Toll: Without a Statute of Limitations," which delve into the legal prosecution of the Nazis, including their roles in heritage destruction. Russian filmmakers also produce movies centered on the systematic safeguarding of heritage during the Second World War. As an example, the film "Guardians of Art" chronicles the evacuation of the Hermitage's treasures to the Urals during the war and offers viewers a platform for discussions with the creators. These events aim to underline Russia's position as a global champion in heritage protection.

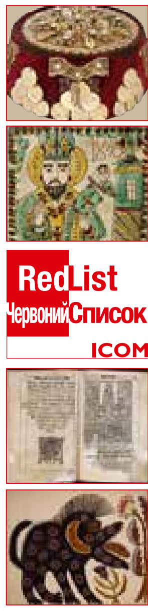
ON A LESS PUBLICLY visible but more profound legislative level, following the temporary occupation of Crimea, Russia is actively reassessing the so-called displaced (trophy) art funds. These funds consist of artworks that were stolen and illegally transported from Europe during and after the Second World War, which Russia unilaterally nationalized in 1998. To achieve this, since 2017, Russia has been conducting audits of the displaced art funds in the Southern Federal District, which, according to Russia's perspective, includes the museums of Crimea.[36] Starting in 2022, anonymous testimonies from various Russian museums suggest that inspections of trophy funds have commenced in central museums. Moreover, Federal Security Service personnel have been assigned to these museums as well.

Plans of the Russian Federation to use this heritage are double-barreled: showing it as world treasures in the role of a triumphant and legitimate winner of Nazism, and, at the same time, calculating the role of this heritage as a "petty cash" in future attempts to partially pay off crimes in Ukraine to international organizations, which include the countries that are the legal owners of the "trophies" taken out by the USSR.

Prospects: Ukraine

Ukrainian museums play a crucial role in international politics by fostering communication and integration. Ukraine actively works with international organizations for protection of heritage and in sphere of illegal trafficking of art and cultural and historical items (UNESCO, ICOM, Blue Shield), with state (Ministry of Culture of Ukraine, Art Sanct Task Force), and, most importantly, numerous public initiatives (Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, Museum Crisis Center, Museum for Change, Heritage Emergency Response Initiative), among others.

The international community's cooperation with Ukraine primarily revolves around two key aspects. Firstly, it involves emergency efforts in documenting crimes, such as the compilation of lists of missing items (like the ICOM Emergency Red List of Cultural Objects at Risk for Ukraine) and the establishment and maintenance of databases accessible to interested organizations, including border controls.[37] These lists, analytical reports, and data are part of the long-standing and traditional understanding of the threat to heritage during wartime, as outlined in the Hague Conventions.[38] There is also a second, relatively recent line of strategic decisions regarding the fate of cultural heritage in times of war. This involves the development of legislation based on the American model of countering terrorism, imposing sanctions, and legally pursuing countries whose sovereignty is in question due to systematic violence. In line with this approach, the National Agency of Ukraine on Corruption Prevention (NACP), in collaboration with the Art Sanct Task Force and the Stanford-based International Working Group on Russian Sanctions, is currently working on creating databases containing lists and origins of items held in the private collections of Russian oligarchs. These items could potentially be used as compensation for Ukraine.[39] In this paradigm, heritage and art aren't just tangible assets that can be stolen or targeted during times of con-



Experts from 11 museums across Ukraine have collaborated with ICOM's Heritage Protection Department to research and prepare this comprehensive Emergency Red List of Cultural Objects at Risk.

flict. They're now recognized as tools of influence, connected to money laundering, tax evasion, and a previously unacknowledged area where political and economic power intersects with the functioning of the military. The establishment of a potential framework for sanctions is already a significant development that formalizes the use of heritage and culture as instruments by regimes pursuing military expansion.

These various initiatives provide an opportunity to address the limitations of current approaches and underscore the need to develop more regionally appropriate concepts. As I have briefly outlined above, the way museums were managed by the state, involving the nationalization and transfer of objects based on Russian-centric hierarchies, can be a valuable basis for creating critical tools to understand the history of museums in the region. In the end, this framework could become part of the lexicon for post-war regional peacekeeping international initiatives in museum and heritage sphere, which is yet to be formulated.

"THE DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE HAS DEEP HISTORICAL ROOTS IN IMPERIAL VIOLENCE AND THE RIGID HIERARCHIES OF SOCIALIST MUSEUM MANAGEMENT IN THE USSR."

TO ILLUSTRATE THE COMPLEXITY of negotiations and the importance of a tailored approach, consider the case of St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery in Kyiv. It was constructed and adorned with mosaics and frescoes between 1108 and 1113. However, during the 1930s, it was demolished by the Bolsheviks as part of their campaign against religion. Its interiors were disassembled and moved to various museums in Kyiv, as well as to Leningrad and Moscow, all under the pretext of their national importance. Some frescoes were looted by the German Army during World War II and later returned to the Soviet Union, but not to Kyiv, Ukraine. Instead, they were sent to Russia, the federal center of the USSR. Ukraine restored the monastery in 1998 and regards it as one of its key national landmarks. The country has actively sought to reclaim displaced works of art that originally belonged to the monastery.[40]

The request for restitution of the frescoes and mosaics at St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery showcases the intricate history of a single monument. This history doesn't easily fit within the current international legal or conceptual framework. The systematic removal of these artworks was influenced by various factors. Firstly, it was tied to the repressive policies of the Bolsheviks regarding religion, which led to the destruction of the cathedral. Additionally, the hierarchies between the federal capital and republican centers established the structure for museum management within the USSR. This led to the relocation of significant artworks to major exhibitions in Moscow, where they remain to this day. Finally, the systematic looting by the Germans during the Second World War, which was thoroughly examined by international organizations in the post-war period, faced no less systematic regional obstacles. Objects were not returned to their places of origin but were sent to the central authority that retained them. This means that

the established legal and conceptual patterns for returning plunder taken during wartime encountered unfamiliar challenges evolved within the Soviet museum management system, which are barely taken into consideration even today.

We can see that a mere military or even an extended terrorist-sanction approach is not enough. The distribution system for cultural heritage has deep historical roots in imperial violence and the rigid hierarchies of socialist museum management in the USSR. These historical factors set the patterns for how items were distributed among museums in the Soviet Union. It's crucial to include these historical aspects of Soviet museum policy, like the state museum network, nationalization, and transfers of items under pressure, in discussions about compensation solutions and the broader concept of justice in post-war negotiations and reparations for Ukraine.

International cooperation focused on documenting and legally pursuing Russia's actions is likely to expand. This expansion may also involve collaborating with other regional countries, joining forces to make broader historical claims against Russian-centric museum management. These claims would be based on various criteria, such as the consequences of nationalization, the pro-Russian hierarchies that influenced museum collections and often erased the unique cultural, religious, and linguistic aspects of local regions, and the transfer of items to the RSFSR under pressure, among other factors. ■

Maria Silina is an Adjunct Professor at the Department of History of Art at UQAM, Montreal and a Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES), Södertörn University.

references

1 Ukrainian Cultural Heritage: Sectoral Analysis. Available at: https://engage.org.ua/eng/ukrainian-cultural-heritage-sectoral-analysis/; Damaged cultural sites in Ukraine verified by UNESCO. Available at: https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/damaged-cultural-sites-ukraine-verified-unesco

2 E. Campfens, A. Jakubowski, K. Hausler, and E. Selter, *Research for CULT Committee – Protecting cultural heritage from armed conflicts in Ukraine and beyond*, (European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, Brussels, 2023), 18. Available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/IPOL_STU(2023)733120

3 Robert Bevan, "Heritage destruction brings Putin one step closer to prosecution, according to landmark report", *The Art Newspaper*, September 13, 2023. Available at: https://www.theartnewspaper.com/2023/09/13/heritage-destruction-brings-putin-one-step-closer-to-prosecution-according-to-landmark-report

4 Torsten Landsberg, Ukraine: Cultural heritage sites damaged after dam burst. 14 June 2023. https://www.dw.com/en/ukraine-cultural-heritage-sites-damaged-after-dam-burst/a-65904943

5 Law № 293750-8 from March 18, 2023. Available at: https://sozd.duma.gov.ru/bill/293750-8 . At the time of writing, all Russian sources were available via vpn.

6 E. Campfens, A. Jakubowski, K. Hausler, and E. Selter, *Research for CULT* .... (2023): 20–21.

7 Ibid.

8 Svetlana Kuzina, "A multimedia museum complex will open in Crimea in 2024", *Classic Chersonesos*. March 18, 2022. Available at: https://iz.ru/1287084/svetlana-kuzina/khersones-klassicheskii-v-2024-godu-v-krymu-otkroetsia-multimediinyi-muzeinyi-kompleks

9 *Sergii Kot, Povernennia i Restitutsiia kul'turnikh Tsinnostei u politichnomu ta kul'turnomu zhitti Ukraïni (XX — poch. XXI)*, (Kyiv: Institut Histories Ukraïni NAN Ukraïni, 2020), 386, 615. For an overview of the Hermitage collection from the point of view of the redistribution of finds from the territory of Ukraine, see: https://texty.org.ua/d/2023/stolen_heritage/?fbclid=IwAR26LBs1ovhWGROAkL_GYKOaWCEuLPvLSiV7MXxopTEjr7Ria-YmKKQiqHc

10 Piotrovsky, "The Hermitage has no pretensions on the masterpieces of Crimea", March 13, 2014. Available at: https://www.interfax.ru/russia/368386

11 "Stolen heritage: Russia's archaeological crimes", April 12, 2023. Available at: https://rubryka.com/en/article/arkheolohichni-zlochyny-rosii/

12 "Remember Where It All Began" – a project for the 130th anniversary of the museum-reserve" *Chersonesus Taurica*, March 2, 2022. Available at : https://chersonesos-sev.ru/media/news/vspomni-gde-vsye-nachinalos-proekt-k-130-letiyu-muzeya-zapovednika-khersones-tavricheskiy-/

13 *Stolen heritage*.... April 12, 2023.

14 Olga Strizhova, "Due to Russia's aggression, the museum fund is missing more than a million exhibits", *Radio Svoboda*, May 18, 2016). Available at: https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/27743438..html

15 Kateryna Chornovol, "The occupants, under the guise of 'evacuation', looted the Kherson Art Museum", *Unian*, November 6, 2022. Available at: https://www.unian.ua/society/novini-hersona-rosiyski-okupanti-pograbuvali-hersonskiy-hudozhniy-muzey-12036201.html

16 *Ukraine: Russians Pillage Kherson Cultural Institutions*, (Human Rights Watch, December 20, 2022). Available at: https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/12/20/ukraine-russians-pillage-kherson-cultural-institutions

17 "They crawled around and buried Scythian gold," an interview with the director of the Melitopol Museum", *Mltpl.City*, May 6, 2022. Available at:

https://mltpl.city/articles/210810/povzli-na-kolinah-i-zakopuvali-skifske-zoloto-intervyu-z-direktorkoyu-melitopolskogo-muzeyu

18 "The residents of the Donetsk People's Republic saved the paintings of Mariupol native, artist Arkhip Kuindzhi", *Life.ru*, May 8, 2022. Available at: https://life.ru/p/1492753

19 More on Donbas museums in current war, see: Diána Vonnák, "'This Happened to Us for the Second Time': War-Preparedness, Risk, Responsibility and the Evacuation of Donbas Museums in 2022", *Museum and Society* vol. 21, no. 2 (July 24, 2023): 4–16, https://doi.org/10.29311/mas.v21i2.4305.

20 Tessa Solomon, "UNESCO Condemns in 'the Strongest Terms' Russia's Attacks on World Heritage Sites in Odesa", *Artnews*, July 27, 2023. Available at: https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/unesco-condemns-in-the-strongest-terms-russias-attacks-on-world-heritage-sites-in-odesa-1234675228/

21 "In Sevastopol, the facade of the long-suffering Kroshitsky Museum has been unveiled", *Sevaslopol.su*, October 25, 2022. Available at: https://sevastopol.su/news/v-sevastopole-otkryli-fasad-mnogostradalnogo-muzeya-kroshickogo

22 Andrey Tumanov, "Collections gathered: The museum fund of the Russian Federation will be enriched with treasures worth a billion", *Izvestiia*, October 14, 2022. Available at: https://iz.ru/1409315/andrei-tumanov/sobrali-kollektcii-muzeinyi-fond-rf-popolnitsia-tcennostiami-na-milliard

23 *Intermuseum working group has collected more than 10,000 exhibits related to recent events*, (Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, March 7, 2023). Available at: https://culture.gov.ru/press/news/mezhmuzeynaya_rabochaya_gruppa_sobrala_bolee_10_tysyach_eksponatov_svyazannykh_s_sobytiyami_noveyshe/

24 "Putin instructed the creation of museums dedicated to the war in Ukraine", *Sibir. Realii*, April 28, 2023. Available at: https://www.sibreal.org/a/putin-muzei-voynny-d-ukraine/32383126.html

25 Natalia Gopanenko, "Konstantin Bogaevsky: The Crimean Mystery and Mysterious Forgetfulness", *E Vesti*, March 23, 2022. Available at: https://e-vesti.ru/ru/konstantin-bogaevsky

26 Feminist Anti-War Resistance, "Culture as a Tool of War: Old and New Soldiers of the 'Front of Spiritual Security of the Homeland'", *Syg.ma*, May 26, 2023. Available at: https://syg.ma/@feminist-anti-war-resistance/kultura-kak-instrumient-voiny-staryie-i-novyie-boitsy-fronta-dukhovnoi-biezopasnosti-otiechiestva; Feminist Anti-War Resistance, "Culture as a Tool of War: Cultural 'Integration,' " *Syg.ma*, April 26, 2023. Available at: https://syg.ma/@feminist-anti-war-resistance/kultura-kak-instrumient-voiny-kulturnaia-intieghratsiia

27 *A State Report on the State of Culture in the Russian Federation in 2022*, (Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, 4 September, 2023). Available at: https://culture.gov.ru/documents/gosudarstvennyy-doklad-o-sostoyanii-kultury-v-2022-godu04092023/

28 Elizaveta Likhacheva, *Архитектура жизни* [Architecture of life], (Melnikov Museum, 2022). Available at: https://muar.ru/exhibitions/arkhitektura-zhizni/

29 "An exhibition about quiet happiness and family life has been introduced at the Russian Museum", *Life*, December 20, 2022. Available at: https://life.ru/p/1546979

30 The Crimean Institute of Strategic Studies, *Project: Illegal transfer of museum treasures from the Autonomous Republic of Crimea to the territory of Russia*. Available at: https://ciss.org.ua/ua/nezakonne-peremischennya-muzenih-cinnoste-z-ark-na-materikovu-rosiju.html

31 Carol Vogel, "Archive Dispute Derails Art Loans From Russia", *New York Times*, February 3, 2011. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/03/arts/design/03museum.html

32 Ksenia Bilash, Проект "Реституция» [Project "Restitution"], "Елена Живкова: "Сумасшедшее счастье – вернуть работу и повесить ее на той стене, где она когда-то висела" [Elena Zhivkova: "It's crazy happiness to return the work and hang it on the wall where it once hung], *LB.ua*, September 17, 2019. https://rus.lb.ua/culture/2019/09/17/437120_proekt_restitutsiya_elena_zhivkova.html

33 Maria Silina, "Soviet museum history from a post-war perspective: Knowledge production and international relations", *JIRD* (2024), Under review.

34 P. Grimsted, "Introduction", *International Journal of Cultural Property*, vol. 17 no. 2 (2010): 139–146. doi:10.1017/S0940739110000068

35 P. Grimsted, "Legalizing 'Compensation' and the Spoils of War: The Russian Law on Displaced Cultural Valuables and the Manipulation of Historical Memory", *International Journal of Cultural Property*, vol. 17 no. 2 (2010): 217–255. doi:10.1017/S094073911000010X

36 Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, Справка об итогах проведённой проверки* [Certificate of the results of the inspection*], (Department of the Ministry of Culture of Russia for the Southern Federal District and North Caucasian Federal District. Act No. 43 dated April 9, 2021). Available at: https://culture.gov.ru/documents/spravka-ob-itogakh-provedyennoy-proverki-upravlenie-minkultury-rossii-po-yufo-i-skfo-akt-43-ot-09-ap1204202143/

37 "ICOM launches the Emergency Red List of Cultural Objects at Risk – Ukraine", *International Council of Museums*, November 24, 2022. Available at: https://icom.museum/en/news/launch-icom-red-list-ukraine/

38 For example cited here E. Campfens, et al. (2023), see: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/IPOL_STU(2023)733120; as well as the USAID/ENGAGE Activity: Ukrainian Cultural Heritage: Sectoral Analysis (2023), see: https://engage.org.ua/eng/ukrainian-cultural-heritage-sectoral-analysis/

39 Oleksandr Novikov, "War & Art", The National Agency of Ukraine on Corruption Prevention (2022–2023). Available at: https://sanctions.nazk.gov.ua/en/art/about/

40 This is an extensively studied case, see: Sergiy Kot, *Повернення і реституція культурних цінностей у політичному та культурному житті України (XX — поч. XXI ст.)* [Return and restitution of cultural values in the political and cultural life of Ukraine (XX – almost XXI centuries)], (Kiev: Institute of History of Ukraine NAS of Ukraine, 2020) 642–653.

Photo 2. Ukrainian and Estonian flags side-by-side on Freedom Square, Tallinn.

Photo 7. General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania.

THE PUBLIC PEDAGOGY OF UKRAINIAN FLAG DISPLAYS: A view from Lithuania & Estonia

by **Aimee Herring** & **Kara D. Brown**

Postcard from Lithuania

On a bright evening in June of 2022, I exited a plane into the terminal of Vilnius airport; a large digital sign greeted me: "*Būk Drąsus, Kaip Ukraina*" ["Be Brave Like Ukraine"]. See photo 1. Vivid yellow lettering against a dark blue background made the message hard to miss. In the following days and weeks spent visiting friends and family, I was struck by this and other visual manifestations of support for Ukraine. Ukrainian flags could be found everywhere, flown not just from government buildings but also on residential buildings and balconies, hanging on the walls and in the windows of businesses. Frequently, Ukrainian flags were twinned with Lithuania's national flag. Variations on colors of the flag could be found in clothing, on ribbons, and even in street art, sometimes accompanied with the slogan, "Glory to Ukraine!"

Postcard from Estonia

Turning the corner onto Freedom Square (*Vabaduse Väljak*) on a sunny afternoon in June 2022, I was immediately taken aback. An enormous, joint Ukrainian-Estonian flag stretched over four of the six stories of the 1930s building on the corner of Harju Street, see photo 2. The sheer size and prominent location of this Ukrainian flag, as well as its "twinning" with its Estonian counterpart, made a dramatic statement of solidarity. Over my subsequent weeks in Estonia I regularly saw Estonian and Ukrainian flags hanging or standing side-by-side in university entry halls, on facades of government buildings or on town squares. Single Ukrainian flags meanwhile waved in miniature from city transportation vehicles and could be spotted in the windows of private homes.

Photo 3. Lithuanian Ministry of Defense – “WeAreNATO” (national flag of Lithuania to the left of the Ukrainian flag, not visible).

Photo 4. Office of the President of the Republic of Lithuania.

The material landscape of the Baltic states has dramatically changed with the start of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine: the Ukrainian flag, or its distinctive blue-yellow, has saturated the public space. In places once reserved only for the national flag, the Ukrainian flag flies right next to it. Building facades, windows, and walls serve as new surfaces for the display of the yellow and blue. The periodic, holiday-driven appearance of national flags has given way to the constant show of Ukrainian flags. In both these countries, the visible manifestations of support in public, private and personal spheres suggests that citizens of Lithuania and Estonia, not just the governments, align themselves with Ukraine. While the Baltic states certainly share expressions and traditions of flag solidarity, such as flying each other's flag on neighboring Independence Days, and "make space" for other flags (e.g., the European Union, NATO, those of visiting delegations, etc.), the singular, voluntary, and expansive display of another country's flag is unprecedented in both countries. The pervasiveness of the flag throughout Lithuania and Estonia prompts the question: why and for whom? In short, how do we begin to make sense of the current Ukrainian flag display in these two Baltic States?

"FLAGS CAN ALSO COME TO REFERENCE MEANINGS THAT MAY NOT BE IMMEDIATELY OBVIOUS."

IN THIS PHOTO ESSAY, we document and try to make sense of the radically changed material environments in both Lithuania and Estonia since the start of the 2022 full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. Over the course of several overlapping weeks during the summer of 2022 when both authors were in the Baltics (Aimee Herring in Lithuania and Kara Brown in Estonia), the Ukrainian flag and/or the colors of the flag seemed omnipresent to the extent we were moved to document and track displays: we texted photos of striking, more mundane, and unique locations and the ways the flag or flag colors were displayed. When we returned as visitors again in the summer of 2023, we found the patterns and presence of the Ukrainian-flag display had endured. During both summers, we became "informed passersby" documenting the flags across the two countries' capitals as well as in several additional cities and towns. We both occupy an "insider-outsider" role as individuals who have enjoyed decades-long personal and professional relationships with specific places and people in Lithuania and Estonia, so were deeply familiar with these material environments pre-February 24, 2022. To provide a snapshot of these first two summers after the start of full-scale war, along with the ways that we make sense of it, we share here a selection from our joint collection of over one hundred photos from the summers of 2022 and 2023 and elaborate on them with ideas from public-pedagogy scholarship.

Opening note about the Baltic context & flags

The robust display of Ukrainian flags has developed in a Lithuanian and Estonian context of significant foreign and domestic support for Ukraine. When NATO and the EU dithered about providing heavy arms to Ukraine in early 2022, Lithuanian and Latvian citizens raised money, and, working through the institution of their respective Defense Ministries, purchased Bayraktar drones for the Ukrainian army. Estonia provides, by the most recent estimates, the second largest (after Poland) percentage of government support by donor GDP (including refugee costs) for Ukraine.[1] Beyond this governmental and grassroots aid, both governments have also been outspoken and determined voices in the European Union and NATO advocating for more Ukrainian support and stricter regimes of restriction for Russia.

Flags offer a different type of support. As symbols, they confer meaning on a space, and construct and represent community.[2] They can be used to signal, and to initiate or direct action.[3] Flags can also come to reference meanings that may not be immediately obvious, or even originally intended, because of their indexical quality.[4] For example a Swiss flag can bring to mind the Red Cross, the field of medicine generally – and possibly pocket knives. A Canadian flag worn on a traveler's backpack can suggest "I'm not American" more than "I'm Canadian". Readers familiar with the context of the United States are likely aware of the many flags that now index white supremacy, despite their original use or origin, such as the Gadsden "Don't Tread on Me" flag from 1775.

With the sudden and dramatic ubiquity of the Ukrainian flag in the Baltic states, what sort of indexical associations has it taken on across the Baltics?

Reverence-Resistance-Regulation of flags

Flag culture and protocol in the Baltic states plays a dominant role in shaping, and appreciating, the display of Ukrainian flags in these countries since the start of the war. Orientations and responses towards national flags – particular to Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, yet also generally shared across the three states – might be best sketched as the 3R's – Reverence-Resistance-Regulation. These orientations, which we briefly highlight below in the two cases of Estonia and Lithuania, speak to, in part, the habits, dispositions, and spaces created for the Ukrainian flag.

During the waning years of the Russian Empire, a burgeoning flag culture developed as a part of nascent national identity formation in the Baltic region. By the interwar period, both Estonia and Lithuania had national flags featuring three distinct colors – the *sinimustvalge* [blue-black-white] and *trispalvė* [the three color], respectively – which were displayed proudly until Soviet occupation. In the post-1991 re-independence period, **reverence** for the national flags has taken multiple forms ranging from a room dedicated to the Estonian flag at the Estonian National Museum to an article in the Lithuanian flag code stating that all persons must show the flag respect.

For both countries, the national flag, banned during the Soviet occupation, served as a symbol of identity and **resistance** at home and among émigré communities. As Smith notes, citing George Schöpflin, the "use of flags, monuments and ceremonies is not a superfluous extravagance, but a central component of identity creation and maintenance."[5] Smidčens identifies the mass display and rallying for re-independence around the Baltic national flags during the glasnost era as the "flag revolution."[6] In the late 1980s, the Lithuanian national flag was displayed at meetings of the independence group Sajūdis, and in a notable act of defiance, which may have been instrumental in forcing the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet Council to approve the tricolor as the Lithuanian national flag, flying it upon Gediminas Tower in October 1988.[7] In Estonia, 1987 marked the first public display of the prohibited Estonian flag. Historians have labeled 1988 as the "Spring of the Flag" given the mass display of the *sinimustvalge*. In June 1988, the ESSR Supreme Soviet legalized the flag as the Estonian "national colors." By February 24th, 1989, commemorating the declaration of Estonia's independence, the national flag once again flew from Tall Herman (*Pikk Hermann*) for the first time in 45 years.

BOTH COUNTRIES have developed and adhered to strict **regulations** concerning flag display – both national and foreign – since regaining independence. Lithuania's Flag Protocol, first crafted in the early 1990s, has allowed for the ever more expansive display of flags. It initially forbade the display of the flags of foreign states outside of state institutions except for ceremonial events and official visits of foreign delegates; even private citizens were not allowed to display the flags of foreign countries, a restriction which was rescinded only with amendments to the flag protocol in 2004.[8] With growing confidence in Lithuania's international status, the critical importance of the nation's accession to the European Union and NATO, as well as acknowledgement of the importance of displaying solidarity with those seeking political freedom,[9] the flag code was amended to allow for permanent and strategic display of flags other than the tricolor. In short, the display of foreign flags has gone from being a potential threat to a display of alliance.

The Estonian Flag Act similarly sets parameters for the location and days of flying of the *sinimustvalge* and the European Union flag. The Estonian flag must be flown by state agencies, local governments, and others under public law on defined holidays and days of commemoration while the European Union flag must also be flown in front of state, county, borough, and city governments (to name a select few locations) and always on European Day and election day for European Parliament (§ 11). While beyond the scope of the Estonian Flag Act, Estonia also has policies that guide the flying of the Ukrainian flag including outside of Estonian Embassies worldwide.[10]

Flags & public pedagogy

Budrytė has recently discussed the strong emotional, vicarious identification with Ukraine and its citizens felt in Lithuania specifically, and throughout the Baltics generally, given the shared historical trauma under Soviet rule, as well as the on-going threat of Russian invasion.[11] The display of Ukrainian flags, as well as other acts of protest against the war, represent one way to signal that identification. We would like to suggest that the flags serve another purpose as well: that of public pedagogy.

Commonly understood as education that takes place outside of formal sites of learning, public pedagogy is often used to develop civic and national identity, promote cohesion, and memorialize.[12] It can play a strategic role in cultural and identity formation. Of particular significance here are the essential qualities of effective pedagogy: it is both relational and intentional, and affects change in another person.[13]

BIESTA'S TAKE ON public pedagogy, based on Arendt's conceptualization of "publicness" as a quality of human togetherness, attends to the purpose and impact of public pedagogy.[14] In Biesta's framing, there are three kinds of public pedagogy. One is a public pedagogy *for the people*: it is instruction aimed at the public, often by state entities. Public pedagogy that is *of the people* is initiated by the citizenry and emphasizes learning. Finally, public pedagogy can be conducted *in the interest of "publicness"*, as a unique, unscripted engagement between human individuals that furthers plurality, action and freedom.[15]

Biesta's conceptualization of public pedagogy, particularly that of pedagogy *for* and *of* the people, informs our understanding of the use of the Ukrainian flag in public spaces around the Baltics. Our contention is that the display and/or use of the colors of the Ukrainian flag has become a form of public pedagogy, in that the Ukrainian flag is displayed strategically, with the purpose of impact and effect, individual and collective. Repetitive use of the flag, particularly when twinned with the national flag on state institutions, creates an indexical relationship: you see the Ukrainian flag, and think of – if not necessarily see – the national flag.

"PUBLIC PEDAGOGY CAN PLAY A STRATEGIC ROLE IN CULTURAL AND IDENTITY FORMATION."

The pervasive display of the Ukrainian flag in the windows of schools, cafes, private residences, and cars; ribbons of blue and yellow affixed to backpacks, statues, and blouses – these create associations between the flag, cityscapes, and citizens, as well. Flag pedagogy educates a variety of publics, not just local citizenry, or residents, but also foreign visitors and international bodies. The ubiquity of the flag doesn't just keep awareness of the ongoing war alive; it also teaches vicarious identification with Ukraine and its citizens,[16] building community and continued momentum for national support that is not without risk or costs. Budrytė argues that the Baltics identify vicariously with Ukraine due to both their shared history of Russian occupation and Soviet terror as well as their status as younger, newer members of the Europe Union.[17]

Photo 5. University of Tartu (Estonia) lit up in Ukrainian colors.

Photo 6. Language Instruction in Lithuanian and Ukrainian: Support and Respect. The windows of Vilnius' Salomėja Nėris Secondary School.

Photo 9. Kiosk on a street in Vilnius, June 2022.

Photo 8. Ferry terminal in Tallinn.

Photo 10. Outside the Russian Embassy in Tallinn: "Ukraine is not Putin's own".

Photo 11. Glory to Ukraine! Inside a pub in Vilnius.

Photo 14. Inside a pub, Vilnius.

Photo 15. For your freedom and ours, Vilnius.

Photo 1. Sign from Vilnius airport terminal, "Be Brave, Like Ukraine".

Photo 12. “Putin, the Hague is Waiting” message and flag in Vilnius.

Photo 13. Street art in a Tartu, Estonia pedestrian underpass.

Public pedagogy: For the people & of the people

For the people. One way to understand the pervasive Ukrainian flag display is as a pedagogy aimed at the public, as a way to instruct citizens, residents, and visitors about state values, positions, and priorities. Across both Lithuania and Estonia, we observed a range of state and municipal buildings (e.g., government offices, schools, as in Photo 6, and universities, see Photo 5), city/town properties, even public transportation buses and trams flying the Ukrainian flag or displaying blue and yellow. The state or municipal government’s endorsement of the Ukrainian flag, as well as the positioning of the flag in and on governmental property, particularly given the reverence for the national flag and space usually reserved for it, signals the priority of Ukrainian support and solidarity. The state government’s social media, especially on official ministry and presidential Facebook, Instagram, and X (formerly Twitter) accounts, likewise incorporated the Ukrainian flag as a frame or icon creating a coherent virtue link between the physical and virtual spaces. When the state included messaging along with the Ukrainian flag, we found examples of national language and English use suggesting domestic and international target audiences.

An additional form in which we found “for the people” public pedagogy was in the government’s display of Ukrainian flags, or the blue and yellow, as a signal for refugees on official notices, directions, or services. It was common at transit points (e.g., ferry terminals, airports, train stations, etc.) to have signs with Ukrainian blue and yellow frames or backgrounds along with messages in multiple languages, typically a mix of Ukrainian, Russian, English (see Photo 8) and/or the national language. The use of the Ukrainian flag, or Ukrainian flag colors, in these cases served as a guidepost to instruct those needing assistance. This color-coding of services along with their position in key border crossing points speaks to a pragmatic public pedagogy of alerting newcomers to local services and assistance. Lithuania offered a distinct take on this blue-yellow signaling of pragmatic information regarding Ukrainian refugees. In Vilnius, a kiosk poster detailed, in Lithuanian only, the rights of refugees in Europe/Lithuania (see Photo 9). As such this pedagogy was explicitly aimed at educating the citizens of Lithuania.

Of the people: Protest. We found the Ukrainian flag often displayed as a form of protest and/or in conjunction with other visual displays of protest generated by actors outside of the state. Locations included spaces such as in front of Russian Consulates/Embassies (see Photo 10); on privately-owned buildings and in private establishments, at times accompanied by messaging (in English) such as, “Putin, the Hague is waiting for you” (see Photo 12) or (in Ukrainian) “Slava Ukraini!” (see photo 11). Use of the flag in this instance, particularly when combined with such slogans, is an exercise of the democratic right to protest and to free speech, as well as the demonstration of the solidarity of one citizenry with another. It is also learning methods of effective protest in real time: flags displayed by one are answered with flags displayed by others that are echoed with the hanging of flags by others still, in similar prominent displays. Singular voices join together; the call of “Slava Ukraini!” that has been spoken by the leader of independent Ukraine and Ukrainians worldwide is answered in a sort of call and response by the citizenry of another country (see Photos 11 & 13). Unique acts of protest, such as Vilnius Mayor Šimašius’ spray painting of “Putin, the Hague is waiting for you” in front of the Russian Embassy in Vilnius just a few days after Russia’s invasion are taken up by many, and also inspire acts by others who have learned have learned this as a method of attention-grabbing and effective protest. Given the messaging in English, it is clear these acts of instruction and protest aim to communicate with a public larger than that of national citizens.

Of the people: Space-Claiming. Placement of a flag within a specific location confers meaning upon that space.[18] It also creates

Photo 17. Cafe in Vilnius provides free coffee and pastries to Ukrainian mothers and their children on certain days of the week.

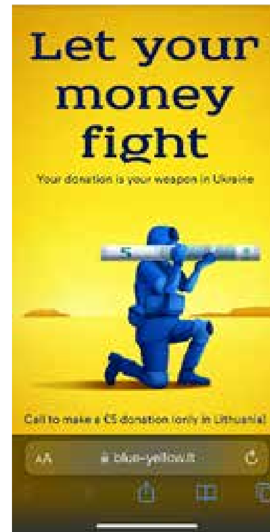


Photo 16. Ad soliciting support for NGO blue-yellow.lt, Vilnius.

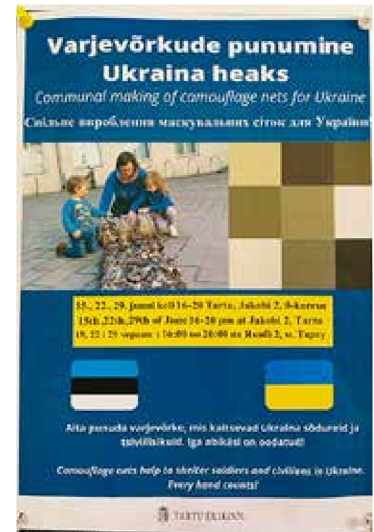


Photo 18. The NGO Aitan Kaitsa Tartu section's call for volunteers to weave camouflage cover for Ukrainian tanks.

and then represents a community.[19] The display of the Ukrainian flag in locations where people gather socially declares the support – or at least tolerance – for the meaning the flag has taken on since February 2022: support for Ukraine in its battle against an invading Russian force. It lays claim to a space in locations where people are gathered as social beings, not necessarily as "citizens". It signals a continuity of support from civic space to social space, from citizen to individual. In the case of the multistory twinned Estonian-Ukrainian flag featured earlier in the article (Photo 2), the creator of the installation, Sergei Metlev, a board member of the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory and current editor-in-chief of the Russian-language version of the Estonian daily newspaper, *Postimees*, explained the significance of this space-claiming display: "This symbol expresses the belief that democracy, freedom and human dignity will win, which Ukrainians have taken up to defend for all of us." [20]

Of the people: Assistance. Some of the most meaningful acts of public pedagogy have come in the form of private and/or pooled material assistance to the people of Ukraine, the most famous example, of course, being the opening of private homes to refugees from Ukraine.[21] Generosity as a form of solidarity can be signaled in other, discrete acts, which in turn spark further, discrete acts of generosity. Lithuanian journalist Andrius Tapinas spearheaded a crowd-sourcing campaign that raised millions from Lithuanian citizens to purchase a Bayraktar drone, which was delivered to Ukraine in July of 2022; inspired by the success, a charity in Latvia followed suit (Photo 16).[22] Smaller, but still meaningful, acts of kindness and recognition – such as offering free pastries and coffee for Ukrainian mothers and their children certain days of the week – mean something in a country where economic challenges are a given and profits are not (Photo 17). The contribution of time and energy across Estonia to weave camouflage cover for Ukrainian tanks represents a practical contribution that adults and children, visitors and residents alike can make. The language decisions, across these calls and offers of assistance, also signals various collectives – solicitations for monetary assistance typically are in the national language or English, calls for collective action (as with the tank-net camouflage, as in Photo 18) are in three languages – Estonian, Ukrainian, and English, and offers of assistance (e.g., food, discounted/free tickets, etc.) were in Ukrainian and periodically both Ukrainian and the national language.

"THIS SYMBOL EXPRESSES THE BELIEF THAT DEMOCRACY, FREEDOM AND HUMAN DIGNITY WILL WIN."

Discussion

Conceptualizing the display of the Ukrainian flag as public pedagogy allows us, as passersby, to attempt to make sense of its ubiquity since the summer of 2022 in Lithuania and Estonia. It provides one explanation, among many, of why and for whom the flag and/or its colors permeate public, private, and personal space, the boundaries of which – as illustrated above – overlap. Following Biesta's conceptualization of public pedagogy as being *for the public* and *of the public*, we see public officials and leaders instructing the citizenry: articulating and reminding those at home and abroad of state values (i.e., "We support Ukraine, despite the risks and costs"), aligning identities and sacrifices (i.e., "This could be us and in fact, IS us").[23] The citizenry learn and facilitate the learning of others; not just other national citizens, but citizens of other nations, and other state and political entities: "Here's what I do, and we do, and what you could do, too." Pedagogy is meant to encourage such acts of support by demonstrating their possibility and effectiveness. Our "informed passersby" approach to gathering and reflecting on the radically transformed semiotic landscapes of Lithuania and

Estonia, while not empirical, provided an opportunity to create a visual record of these places during a time of ongoing war and also to make some additional observations about socio-cultural practices common, and distinct, to both countries. In each of these Baltic States, we found a "layered" appeal to those in and beyond the country given the range of languages used, the locations chosen, and the forms of messaging. Across Lithuania and Estonia, we observed the signature Ukrainian blue and yellow in lights, officially made signs, stand-alone flags, with and without textual overlay, in art, and much more. Location matters as well as we share in this essay. Our experience over two summers in these two locations also allows us to speak to the stability of these semiotic shifts. Virtually all the Ukrainian flag displays we observed in 2022 remained in 2023.

We conclude with ideas for research that could spin off from this photo essay. One path would be to explore Biesta's "in the interest of publicness," which we didn't focus on here. Another possibility is to explore the use of a variety of national flags *in* Ukraine as symbols of support and recognition. A recent article featuring Ukrainian soldiers holding up the Lithuanian flag next to a destroyed Russian tank signals that the identification is not necessarily one-sided [Endnote Abromaitis].[24] Finally, investigating the more covert, smaller displays of the Ukrainian flag or its absences (that is, where you would expect it to be) would provide an important counterpart to our record here.

Aimee Herring ia a PhD-student in Anthropology, and Kara Brown, PhD, is an Associate Professor in the Education Foundations and Inquiry Program Department of Leadership, Learning Design and Inquiry. Both are at the University of South Carolina.

Note: All photos are taken by the authors. Aimee Herring's photos were taken summer of 2022 in Lithuania and Kara D. Brown's photos the summer of 2022 and 2023 in Estonia.

references

1 "Ukraine support tracker," IFW, accessed October 20, 2023, https://www.ifw-kiel.de/topics/war-against-ukraine/ukraine-support-tracker/

2 Steven A Knowlton, "Applying Sebeok's Typology of Signs to the Study of Flags." *Raven: A Journal of Vexillology* 19 (2012): 57–97. https://doi.org/10.5840/raven2012196; Dominic Medway, Duncan Light, Gary Warnaby, John Byrom, and Craig Young, "Flags, Society and Space: Towards a Research Agenda for Vexillgeography." Area 51, no. 4 (2018): 689–96. https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12516.

3 Medway et al., "Flags, Society and Space."

4 Knowlton, "Applying Sebeok's Typology."

5 Quote from George Schöpflin (2000), 29, in David J. Smith, "'Woe from Stones': Commemoration, Identity Politics and Estonia's 'War of Monuments.'" *Journal of Baltic Studies* 39, no. 4 (2008): 419–30. https://doi.org/10.1080/01629770802461191.

6 Guntis Šmidchens, *The Power of Song: Nonviolent National Culture in the Baltic Singing Revolution*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2014), p. 245.

7 Vilma Akmenytė-Ruzgienė, "National Flag of Lithuania - History of the National Flag of Lithuania." Symbols of the Republic of Lithuania: National Flag of Lithuania. (n.d.). Accessed October 23, 2023. https://www.lrs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=38111&p_k=2

8 Eglė Kėsylytė-Alliks, "For Friends and Citizens Only? Banal Notions of Nationhood in Official and Semi-Public Discourses on Foreign National Flags in Post-1990 Lithuania." *Journal of Baltic Studies* 54, no. 2 (2023): 154–74.

9 Kėsylytė-Alliks, "For Friends and Citizens."

10 Arp Müller, Mait Ots, and Madis Hindre, "Estonian Ambassador to China: No Removal of Ukraine Flag from Embassy." *ERR*, May 19, 2023, accessed September 15, 2023, https://news.err.ee/1608982772/estonian-ambassador-to-china-no-removal-of-ukraine-flag-from-embassy

11 Dovilė Budrytė, "'Living through the Other': Lithuania's Emotional Identification with Ukraine." *LRT.LT English*. Lithuanian Radio and Television, September 19, 2022. https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1780392/living-through-the-other-lithuania-s-emotional-identification-with-ukraine.

12 Jennifer A Sandlin, Michael P. O'Malley, and Jake Burdick, "Mapping the Complexity of Public Pedagogy Scholarship." *Review of Educational Research* 81, no. 3 (2011): 338–75. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654311413395; Jake Burdick, Michael P. O'Malley, and Jennifer A. Sandlin, "Introduction." In *Problematizing Public Pedagogy*, edited by Jake Burdick, Jennifer A. Sandlin, and Michael P. O'Malley, XV-XIX. New York, NY: Routledge, 2014.

13 Ruben A. Gaztambide-Fernandez and Alexandra Arraiz Matute, "'Pushing Against': Relationality, Intentionality and the Ethical Imperative of Pedagogy." Essay. In *Problematizing Public Pedagogy*, edited by Jake Burdick, Jennifer A. Sandlin, and Michael P. O'Malley, 52–64. New York, NY: Routledge, 2014.

14 Gert Biesta, "Becoming Public: Public Pedagogy, Citizenship and the Public Sphere." *Social & Cultural Geography* 13, no. 7 (2012): 683–97. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2012.723736; Gert Biesta, "Making Pedagogy Public: For the Public, of the Public, or in the Interest of Publicness?" Essay. In *Problematizing Public Pedagogy*, edited by Jake Burdick, Jennifer A. Sandlin, and Michael P. O'Malley, 15–25. Routledge, 2014.

15 Biesta, "Becoming Public" & Biesta, ""Making Pedagogy Public."

16 Budrytė, "'Living through the Other'."

17 Budrytė, "'Living through the Other'."

18 Medway et al., "Flags, Society and Space."

19 Knowlton, "Applying Sebeok's Typology."

20 BNS, "Vabaduse väljakul on hiigelsuur Eesti ja Ukraina lipp [A huge Estonian and Ukrainian flag on Freedom Square], "*Postimees*, March 31, 2022, accessed October 24, 2023, https://www.postimees.ee/7489950/vabaduse-valjakul-on-hiigelsuur-eesti-ja-ukraina-lipp

21 Union of Baltic Cities, "Help for Ukrainian refugees and cities," accessed October 10, 2023, https://ubc.net/help-for-ukrainian-refugees-and-cities/

22 LRT.lt, "Following Lithuania, Latvia starts raising funds to buy Bayraktar drone for Ukraine," accessed October 10, 2023, https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1760542/following-lithuania-latvia-starts-raising-funds-to-buy-bayraktar-drone-for-ukraine

23 Biesta, "Making Pedagogy Public."

24 Žygintas Abromaitis, "LRT iš Ukrainos. Iš fronto grįžęs karys: ši žiema bus kitokia nei pernai," accessed October 10, 2023, https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/pasaulyje/6/2088711/lrt-is-ukrainos-is-fronto-grizes-karys-si-ziema-bus-kitokia-nei-pernai

BALTIC WORLDS
Monuments, new arts, and new narratives

Guest editor:
Cecilia Sjöholm

special theme

Introduction.

The politics of aesthetic historicizations and memory culture in former Yugoslavia

The rise of rightwing populism, authoritarianism and even fascism is redrawing the map of relations between memorial culture and politics. The spheres of cultural representation, memory and heritage are being subjected to new forms of politicization, a development which in turn has engaged new critical perspectives in philosophy and theory, as well as contemporary art. Disputing simplified notions of nationalism and heroism, as well as the symbolisms of identification, alternate forms of memory culture are developing, beyond the state apparatus of official commemoration. Moreover, new forms of understanding are throwing light on new aspects of the status of memory culture, its form and its impact.

This special section in *Baltic Worlds* is the result of a workshop engaging with the politics of aesthetic historicizations, through the grid of the monument. Organized by the research project *Distrusting Monuments. Art and the War in Former Yugoslavia*, it has a special focus on memory culture in former Yugoslavia, but deals also with issues of the monument at large. What does it mean to remember, what does it mean to forget? What are the tools used by nationalist memory cultures? And what concepts, aesthetic expressions and forms of understanding may we use in order to counteract revisionist tendencies in rightwing populism and authoritarian ideologies?

Inside of Petrova Gora monument, Croatia.
PHOTO: CECILIA SJÖHOLM

In recent times, the conflict between the scene of contemporary art and older, nationalist memorial culture has become increasingly intense, not least in the Black Lives Matter movement. In Europe, a similar process has been ongoing, offering a critical perspective on an official history often embodied by monuments of heroism, nationalism and unity.

GIVEN THE REVISIONIST strategies of authoritarian ideologies, which entail coopting the past for political purposes, an engagement with what should be remembered and how through other and different perspectives is necessary. Memory culture is often regarded as something that produces a sense of stability in times of instability, creating permanence in times of flux, and a sense of belonging for collectives in need of healing. Such definitions, however, tend to miss out on complex questions about the many dimensions that historical sites may contain, such as the simultaneous existence of narratives and counternarratives.

In recent times, the interaction between the scene of contemporary art and memorial culture has become increasingly intense; monuments have been destroyed, or altered, and new ones have been created. Black Lives Matter has become a symbol for a global tendency in which the relation between representation, memory, and the writing of history has become an intensely debated matter of contention. In the region of former Yugoslavia, this is something that has engaged scholars, activists, and artists ever since the end of the war. During the last few years there has been an increase of debates and protests, exhibitions and art works that involve themselves in the topic. Protesting outdated models, the scene of contemporary art has pointed to the fact that the writing of history is a process in flux, and an issue that includes several components: political and ideological perspectives as well as aesthetic means. Commemorative projects and works of memorial culture should be seen as something open-ended and in need of constant reevaluation. As such, it may be showing and producing an array of productive practices and tools, not least when it comes to the way in which the reactivation of memory and the re-appropriation of an antifascist past and heritage may counter authoritarian revisionist attempts today.

Jasenovac monument by Bogdan Bogdanović. PHOTO: CECILIA SJÖHOLM

THE PROCESS of historicizing the wars in former Yugoslavia, from the First World War to the Second, and finally into the ethnic wars of the 1990s which meant the breakup of the state of Yugoslavia, is still ongoing in the region. This, in turn, a deeper look into the relation between memory, history, politics, and aesthetics. There is a direct link between the ethnic wars of the 1990s in Yugoslavia and the rise of a right-wing authoritarian or neofascist movement today. The wars in the 1990s dismantled or erased the antifascist legacy from the second world war, removed monuments, burned books, changed street names, revised histories, and ultimately denied genocides – a denial that is still ongoing.

"ACTIVISTS, ARTIST GROUPS, AND ORGANIZATIONS RETURN TO THE MEMORY AND HISTORY OF THE WAR TODAY."

At stake in the memory wars is thus the future of the region, between the ends of a heavy nationalist weight on the one hand and past transnational idea of solidarity on the other. The question of what we are to remember, and how, has come to involve a wide array of agents, materials, and forms of expressions, rather than just state funded memorials and museums. Activists, artist groups, and organizations return to the memory and history of the war today,

The visual historicizations and the alternative modes of writing history transcend the distinction between regional and transnational. Therefore, this issue of *Baltic Worlds* also moves beyond the region of former Yugoslavia. Given the ongoing dramatic shifts that surround memorials around the world, it addresses the "memorialization of culture" and calls into question received narratives of history, disputing simplified notions of nationalism and heroism, as well as symbolisms of identification and belonging. The aesthetic forms and narrative means of art allow for the production of a new kind of memory culture, as well as for a new kind of understanding of how we are to conceive of what is to count as memory culture, in order to address complex issues of their uses today.

The internationally successful Yugoslavian avant-garde, flourishing in periods during the "golden age" from the 1950s through the 80s, started a tradition of pitting critical art against state monuments. As mentioned, this theme section in *Baltic Worlds* has its origin in a research project called *Distrusting Monuments*. The title is drawn from Dušan Makavejev's famous 1958 film, *Monuments should not be trusted*. The film itself is part of the Yugoslav avant-garde which questioned "official" history writing and opened a path towards radical experimentation through conceptual art, experimental film and performances at the margins of an official cultural infrastructure. This critical tradition has been consciously incorporated into the scene of contemporary art and memory activism in Post-Yugoslavia.

THE FIRST ARTICLE in this issue, authored by Cecilia Sjöholm, "Animating brutalism: cinematic renderings of Yugoslav monuments", discusses contemporary films that are dedicated to the extraordinary so-called anti-fascist monuments left in the landscape in all of former Yugoslavia. Sjöholm analyses the way the films treat the monuments as characters of the landscape, with a history that stretches beyond the significance of the events to which they were erected. Whereas such renderings can be seen as a way of "emptying" the works of their local and regional significance, the Anthropocene aesthetic of monuments such as that at Petrova Gora (Monument to the Uprising of the People of Kordun and Banija) can also be seen to create the possibility of a new kind of understanding, where ecolog-

ical concerns merge with historical ones .

In her article "Presence of Absence. Recognizing the Missing and the Mass Graves in Bosnia-Herzegovina", Johanna Mannergren Selimovic writes about the memory work ongoing in the region as part of an elaboration of a war that, long after it has ended, is still surrounded by rumors, secrets and lies. Using the concept of "unquiet bodies", Mannergren, who argues for the importance of finding a place and space for mourning, presents case studies of the role played by the ongoing process of finding bones and body parts as traces of war crimes in the antagonistic struggles between revisionists and other political actors.

Gal Kirn, in turn, addresses the ecological dimension in partisan art as a dimension of resistance. In his "Partisan ecology in the Yugoslav liberation and antifascist art", he reads an array of artworks that juxtapose humans, animals and nature, pointing towards a new, emerging solidarity. In poems, short stories, drawings and graphic art material, the forest becomes a site of resistance, Diverse animals are not simply allegorical but rather »comrades« in the struggle, mobilizing nature in their fight against fascism, together with a practice of non-extractivist relation to nature that could be read in the more general lineage of the struggle to decolonize nature in contemporary culture.

REBECKA KATZ THOR'S "Concepts of Monumental Time" discusses the way in which monuments have changed in meaning and impact over the last few decades. Ever since James Young coined the term "counter-monument", the ways in which appearance and memory are joined have been conceptualized in new ways. Not only does a counter-monument make memory work possible: it may also defy ideologies such as fascism through its very existence. Today, monuments have been seen to develop into "post-monuments", defined in Thor´s article as monuments that are directed towards neither nation building nor defiance, but rather a structural wrongdoing in the past that society has not come to terms with.

Memory work – or, in contrast, the impossibility of memory work – can be demonstrated also to have a place in literature, the aesthetic genre that in many ways is the most appropriate one for dealing with "memory in the negative" as Tora Labe calls it. Dealing with exile as a position from which memory work becomes something quite different from a nationalist stance, she addresses a condition where "estrangement is everywhere - in the present and in the past, and in the West and in the East." What happens with memory, Lane asks in her discussion of Dubravka Ugresic, among other novelists, in a condition where countries such as Socialist Yugoslavia no longer exist? Can there even be a memory culture when the present is disinclined to see a meaning in what was honored in the past?

RETURNING TO the proper meaning of the research project inviting articles for this issue: "Distrusting Monuments", Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen returns to the same era as Yugoslav modernism but depicts the defiance of monumentality from the perspective of an art movement in Western Europe: the Situationists. To the Situationist International, monuments signified a ruling order of political and economic forms of domination in what they called the "society of the spectacle." Bringing monuments down, or distorting them, the Situationists targeted the political imaginary of images through actions that today in many ways seem prophetic with regard to how images and monuments serve, or defy, political and economic orders today.

With Mladen Dolar's article, finally, we return to the core issue that is often connected to monuments: that of nationalism. In "Nation and Narration", Dolar shows how nationalism is always a product of myth and fiction. The question is how, and whether, we can disentangle real communities from imagined ones. To Dolar, this is a task which, in the case of Slovenia, appears to have surprising results. Rather then be at one with a certain narrative of continuity, what can today be called a Slovenian national identity has been formed as a series of breaks with an idea of what has been considered "authentic"; in works of literature and theater as well as in politics. National identity is never something that can be determined by state powers or political ideologies: it is rather something that is formed by, as Dolar says, a "risky and contradictory process with uncertain outcome."

IN THIS WAY, the current theme section in *Baltic Words* throws light on the condition of memory culture in former Yugoslavia through a variety of points of view and materials: dealing with its monuments, its literature, its art and its historical legacy, as put in perspective through other geographical places and cultural positions. By no means exhaustive of possible angles, the issue gives a few suggestions of how memory work in this specific region in the world can be approached. ×

Cecilia Sjöholm is a Professor in Aesthetics at Södertörn University.

Note: The project "Distrusting Monuments" (https://blogg.sh.se/distrustingmonuments/) is funded by the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies.

special section

31 **Introduction. The politics of aesthetic historicizations and memory culture in former Yugoslavia**, *Cecilia Sjöholm*

essays

34 **Animating brutalism – cinematic renderings of Yugoslav monuments**, *Cecilia Sjöholm*

42 **The missing and the mass graves**, *Johanna Mannergren Selimovic*

47 **Partisan ecology in Yugoslav liberation and antifascist art**, *Gal Kirn*

54 **Concepts for contemporary monuments**, *Rebecka Katz Thor*

59 **Post-communist memory in the negative**, *Tora Lane*

69 **Placing a statue in its proper place**, *Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen*

75 **Nation and narration**, *Mladen Dolar*

Petrova Gora, Croatia. PHOTO: SANDOR BORDAS

From the German Netflix sci-fi series *Tribes of Europa.* ARTWORK BY LEIF HEANZO

ANIMATING BRUTALISM

– cinematic renderings of Yugoslav monuments

by **Cecilia Sjöholm**

abstract

The study of monuments tends to focus on human agency, in the form of political history, war history, antagonism, trauma and so on. Aesthetic qualities are often seen as superficial and fetishized qualities that belie the impact of the monument in a regional context. The rurally situated monuments of former Yugoslavia, however, must be seen through their extraordinary qualities as works of art, carrying an agency of their own. Rather than restricting the meaning of their impact, their aesthetic qualities and impact in the environment allow them to speak to us today from a new horizon.

KEYWORDS: monuments, Yugoslavia, Spomeniks, commemoration

In recent times, monuments have become an important object of study in the humanities as well as the social sciences; they are part of an understanding of the present that involves outstanding features of the past that have to do with political history, war history, ideological antagonism, trauma and victimhood. The study of monuments, however, tends to focus on the historicity of human agency. Although landscapes and natural sites can also host, or even be, monuments, little research is to be found at the crossroads between human and non-human memory culture.

But there are, indeed, sites that combine landscape, sculpture or architecture and historical claims, for example the rurally situated monuments of former Yugoslavia. These monuments are sites not only of war commemorations, such as concentration camps or uprisings from World War II and the 1990s war in former Yugoslavia. They are also sites of political and ideological conflicts today, vulnerable to disputes surrounding their interpretation, and disagreements about who has the rights to claim the importance and impact of their presence – or to impose their neglect. When they are forgotten, nature takes over: trees, bushes, and wildlife interfere in the forms and shapes that were supposed to symbolize human memory.

Situated as many of them are in a pastoral landscape, these monuments embody an antagonistic relation between nature

The monument Petrova Gora, from Igor Grubic's film *Monument* (2015).

National park Sutjeska in Bosnia and Herzegovina. From Jóhann Jóhannsson's film *First and Last Men* (2020).

and culture that has engaged critical and aesthetic theory since the 18th century. What is the aesthetic impact of their presence in the landscape? This is the motive of two powerful cinematic renderings: the film *Monument* by Croatian artist Igor Grubić from 2015, and a film from 2020 by the late Icelandic composer Jóhann Jóhannsson, *First and Last Men*.

In this article, I will first give an account of the hesitancy regarding "aestheticization" that is often referred to when it comes to monuments and memory culture at large. What appears to be at stake here is the antagonism between wanting to see monuments as sites of local and cultural communities and seeing them as aesthetic objects from the perspective of a transnational, aesthetically and culturally engaged audience. Can the meaning of the monuments extend beyond the local and communal towards a more indistinct significance, and speak to us today from a new horizon?

Can aesthetic qualities substantiate, or, in contrast, undo the historical narrative that a monument is supposed to tell? Does a focus on aesthetic qualities of a memorial draw attention away from political, social, and local issues, or do they serve as a key to unfold the open-endedness of monument culture at large? These are questions that are continuously discussed with regard to the modernist monuments of former Yugoslavia.

The background of the monument

The interaction between the scene of contemporary art and memorial culture has become increasingly intense in former Yugoslavia. In the region, many of the monuments that were erected during the socialist era of Tito have been destroyed, or altered, and new ones are continuously created. This is a process that to a large extent mirrors the conflicts that are still ongoing in the region, conflicts that lie at the intersection between political, ideological, and ethnic allegiances, and that are often played out against the historical background of the Second World War. There are certainly differences between the different countries, and the way in which conflicts are played out around the culture of monuments. In certain cases, they have to do with nationalism's input in politics; in others, with the anti-fascist appeal to commemorate partisan battles, murders, and/or concentration camps, battled by neo-fascists. In others yet again, monuments of reconciliation are protested against.[1]

ALL CARRY A NATIONAL, regional, and local meaning. Many of the post-Yugoslav monuments, *spomeniks*, embody a scale, magnificence, and aesthetic presence beyond the ordinary. Large-scale architectural and sculptural modernist experimentations produce a stunning visual presence. During the 2000s, these monuments have become the object of increasing interest on the international art scene, as can be seen in and through the cinematic renderings, an exhibition at MOMA and so on.[2] In popular culture too for that matter: one of the most famous monuments, at Petrova Gora, has a prominent role in the German Netflix sci-fi series *Tribes of Europa*. Knowledge of how to access these sites is being disseminated: an English database to be used as a guide for

National park Sutjeska. From Igor Grubic's film *Monument* (2015).

all international *spomenik* tourists has been set up by an America-based researcher, and guided tours are organized on site.

BUT THERE ARE ALSO discussions on the way in which these monuments should be appreciated and valued: against the backdrop of their growing popularity as aesthetic objects, researchers have spoken out against purely aesthetic veneration since it is seen to produce a kind of cultural and historical depletion. Some argue that this results in an aestheticist fetishization, through an indistinct European modernist legacy. This is contrasted to a regionally and locally motivated form of appreciation maintained by local and cultural communities. The conflict can be seen in terms of the regional against the global, as in the formulation of art historian Sanja Horvatinčić:

> **The insistence on their exquisite aesthetic features as the only or primary criterion of determining their contemporary heritage status undermines the monuments' immense cultural and political significance.**[3]

The essential feature of Horvatinčić's criticism is not that the monuments are seen as aesthetic objects. Her critique is that they can become indistinct and characterless, whilst at the same time being exoticized as Balkan "others". In this way, they are treated in the same vein as the people, histories and communities in whose names they are erected.

"DURING THE 2000S, THESE MONUMENTS HAVE BECOME THE OBJECT OF INCREASING INTEREST ON THE INTERNATIONAL ART SCENE."

Memory culture as sites of conflict

A similar resistance to the aestheticization of monuments, not with regard to post-Yugoslav monuments specifically but from a more general viewpoint of the status of memorial culture today, can be seen in the work of cultural historians Cento Bull and Hansen. With their notion of "agonistic memory", Cento Bull and Hansen argue, with reference to the work of Chantal Mouffe, for a memory culture model where a variety of actors develop interventions that are called "agonistic" in and through their reference to specific histories and cultures. As researchers in cultural memory studies focusing on historical and cultural perspectives, Cento Bull and Hansen define two basic models of how a critique of hegemonic memory regimes can be construed and conceived today.[4]

WHAT THEY WISH TO challenge through their critique is, to begin with, what they call antagonistic models. These are simple memory regimes that take certain notions of monumental culture for granted. Antagonistic models of memory culture assume that memorials and monuments should be conceived in and through distinct communities, such as nationalistic and ethnic collectivities. They are then motivated by a wish for the perpetuation of confrontation, or legacies of violence and suppression such as the colonial heritage. This is an antagonistic stance, in the sense that Chantal Mouffe has proposed. There is always a possibility that collective identities can construe a "they" which in turn can become a locus of hostility: "[...] as the case of the disintegration of Yugoslavia testifies, any form of we/ they relation, whether religious, ethnic, economic or other, becomes the locus of an antagonism"; that is, as Carl Schmitt has shown, they become integrated into friend/enemy constellation.[5] Antagonistic forms of memory culture are often evoked by extremists and belong to a fascist legacy.

Such models are, however, not dominant. What tends to be dominant is, instead, a model that is critical of this form of antagonism. In another article, Anna Cento Bull and David Clarke identify a cosmopolitan form of memory culture that holds a

more general view of what is worth commemorating, and how, often placing human rights in focus. It is often victim-focused, and speaks not to a distinct community but to a wider public. It is also a form of memory culture that is distinctly aesthetically elaborated. The model for this form is taken from James Young's classic article on what he called the counter-monument, where he refers to a series of small scale, aesthetically conscious works that were erected in commemoration of the Holocaust.[6] These works have been consciously made so as to avoid crude forms of representation. They make memory in and through dignified and artistically elaborated forms, whilst at the same time extending beyond those aesthetic forms – memory is construed, so to speak, as something that goes beyond the sheer form of its material and aesthetic appearance. The typical form of the counter-monument is, therefore, abstractly modernist, in the vein of 1960s modernism of concrete and sculpture. The archetypical example is *Monument against Fascism* by Jochen Gerz and Esther Shalev Gerz, a pillar erected in a square in Hamburg in 1986, that was allowed to disappear into the ground.

Cento Bull and Clarke refer to the aestheticization of counter monumentality today as generally problematic – it refers to an aloof, cosmopolitan, aesthetic audience through consensual ideas of human rights. In this way, it construes a new kind of hegemonic memory regime in which we all seem to agree on what is to be remembered, but the aestheticization of these memorial forms tend to erect not only a false kind of consensus on what we should remember, but also on what memory culture should be, and what it should look like.

CENTO BULL AND CLARKE SUGGEST, instead, what they call an agonistic model as their ideal, a model that challenges both antagonistic models of identification and the fleeting memory of aestheticization. To this end, Cento Bull and Clarke stress the importance of the use of public spaces and institutions, as well as artistic interventions: artists make memory more flexible. They take the example of when the Centre for Political Beauty (Zentrum für politische Schönheit [ZPS]) created a new *denkmal* – modelled after the monument to the Holocaust in Berlin which in many ways today can be said to be the most distinct, modernist counter-monument that we have – next to the garden of high-ranking AfD politician Höcke. Höcke had suggested that the Berlin *denkmal* was a memorial of shame that should be taken away and replaced by a monument in Dresden. This antisemitic and revisionist gesture was then, so to speak, punished by the art activists, who made Höcke view a small *denkmal* every day erected in the garden next to his house.[7]

There are, today, other forms of counter monumentality that are agonistic, produced for instance through the Black Lives Matter movement which challenged, altered or simply removed monuments. To Cento Bull and Hansen, as well as Cento Bull and Clarke, agonistic memory culture can be defined as multi-perspectival and open-ended, in contrast to both the antagonistic, ideological memorial and the aloof, aestheticized form of counter-memory.

In this way, Cento Bull and Hansen contrast what they perceive as forms of aestheticization with what they see as more meaningful memory practices. I believe that the wariness and suspicion of what is conceived of as aestheticization is quite typical for a progressive discourse in memory culture today, exemplified also by Horvatinčić. In this discourse, aesthetic qualities that are not very distinctly attached to histories or identities are seen as meaningless.

However, the aesthetics of the monument can, in itself, counter its own destiny. Monuments are not always subdued under a symbolic meaning. They can, like art, be multi-semiotic and multidirectional. This has to with the way in which they manage to achieve a presence in and of themselves, which may take us beyond human agency.

There is a difference between the reading of the past and the multi-perspectival dimensions that art works produce. But sometimes the works can be so strong in themselves that they produce other, new meanings. A reference to the future, perhaps, but also to the environment.

"THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE READING OF THE PAST AND THE MULTI-PERSPECTIVAL DIMENSIONS THAT ART WORKS PRODUCE."

Jóhannsson and Grubić

Both the films *Monument* by Igor Grubić and *First and Last Men* by Jóhann Jóhannsson point to this more-than-human aesthetics. Igor Grubić, the creator of *Monument*, is an internationally renowned Croatian artist. In his film, one monument stands out: Petrova Gora, a monument to the uprising of the people in Kordun and Banija. It is a monumental, futuristic building, constructed over several years during the 1970s and completed as late as 1981, in memory of the Partisan uprising against the Nazi regime in 1941, involving several architects and artists, for instance the famous Serb artist Vojin Bakic. This is a monument that stands out not only for historical reasons, involving both Serb and Croatian history, but also for aesthetic ones: Thanks to its other-worldly features it has been made the home of the heroes in the Netflix sci-fi series *Tribes of Europa*.

Visiting Petrova Gora in 2022, as I did, was not easy. The road from the Croatian side was closed, as was the *spomenik* itself. In its vicinity lies the remnants of one of the biggest Partisan hospitals in the region, now being restored for the purpose of becoming a museum. But nothing gives witness to the monument itself being restored. It is damp, pillaged, withering away unobserved. The walls are full of holes, the steel plates on the outside of the construction have been stolen. Trees, fungus and mold are growing inside the building. It is a monument of corrosion, through its steel and concrete construction. Graffiti reveals that it has been visited, but you need to force

War memorials in the former Yugoslavia. From Jóhann Jóhannsson's film *First and Last Men* (2020).

entry to get inside. Animals must live there – you can hear their sounds – or is it big drops of water?

THE CONCRETE OF the *spomenik* is brutal in the landscape, but at the same time the building itself contains organic shapes, for instance in the form of an extraordinary spiral staircase of marble, shaped like the one in the Whitney museum. When you look up, it looks like a giant ear, or a flower. The Whitney building was conceived in 1963; Petrova Gora is a collaborative effort that took place a decade later, and it is in many ways a more uncompromising piece of postmodernist architecture.

There are three eras of socialist modernism: the first from the 1950s until the early 1960s, then a more international era took over throughout the sixties, where the brutalist forms that made Yugoslav architecture famous were created. The style was explicitly made so as not to look like social realism; it was New Wave. Petrova Gora appeared towards the end of an era when the partisan monuments (or monuments to revolution as they were mostly referred to) were cutting-edge avantgarde.

In his film *Monument*, where he gives Petrova Gora a distinct place, Ivor Grubić attempts to retrieve its visibility through aesthetic rather than historical means. The film is poetic, metaphysical, contemplative. In the film, the sound predominates. It is a rhythm where the wind, the water, the animals create sounds that are amplified in the large empty rooms of the building.

In Grubić's film, the monuments at Petrova Gora, *Tjentište*, and Podgarić all have characters. They are in natural settings, alone, abandoned. At the same time they have a profile, which help create a form of narrative together with the seasons: fog, rain, snow. The film is made in a hazy grey tone which only dissipates into a solemn color for certain moments. Vjeran Salomon's soundtrack introduces an other-worldliness into the atmosphere. But what comes across most distinctly is the way in which the monuments, such as Petrova Gora, occupy a solitary location, standing in the midst of a landscape marked by growing vegetation. Grubić creates a profile, as he says, for each monument. The monuments are animated through the seasons, and the sounds of the seasons. Through nature and the atmosphere, they acquire a life that is neither human nor non-human – marked by traces of human suffering, but also acquiring an animated spirit of their own.

In real life, the monument of Petrova Gora is extraordinary in proportion, shining in the sun at the top of a mountain, overlooking the landscape for miles. In Grubić's film, however, there is nothing heroic about it. It is, he says, important to show that these monuments were built in places of real suffering. At the same time, what stands out in the film is not of the memory of what happened, but the life of the monument itself. There are almost no people in the film, and when they appear they are see-through ghosts, transparent without features.

THIS FILM IS dedicated to monuments that managed to escape the widespread destruction that went on during the 1990s war. Socialist monuments were often targeted since they symbolized the rule of Tito. But the antifascists and the socialists are not the same, Grubić points out: to him, the monuments are a part of an anti-fascist legacy which revisionist forces have tried to compromise. The monument in Petrova Gora is antifascist not despite but because of its aesthetic features, which is also part of the legacy that Grubić depicts. It is obvious in Grubić's film that it is the otherworldly aesthetics of the monuments, the shapes and rhythms of their extension, that embodies the memory of the struggle. They are not complicit with the glorification of a régime, or an ideology. Their shapes run counter to what is readily available as narration, and they are placed on their own at sites outside of the urban cityscape that is dominated by political powers.

Jóhann Jóhannsson's film, in turn, is in many ways aesthetically similar: slow moving, meditative, using sound to enhance the experience of the extraordinary features of the monuments that are depicted. His film, however, stresses the feature of eternity that is so specific for the modernist-brutalist monumental style: making the monuments into an inhuman form of creature, and making them speak with monuments from other centuries. In this way, Stonehenge communicates with Bogdan Bogdanović's extraordinary sculpture from the concentration camp of Jasenovac. The wings of Bogdanović's sculpture are well maintained, unlike the architectural monument at Petrova Gora. It offers one of the most famous silhouettes of monumental culture.

Jóhannsson's film is based on a novel that tells of a civilization that mutates, written in 1930 by author Olaf Stapledon. It is a story that stretches over several million years, from the past

into the future. The planet changes, the orbit changes. The film makes sci-fi creatures of the monuments, to the other-worldly beauty of Jóhannsson's own compositions and the voice of narrator Tilda Swinton.

One feature is shared with Grubić's film: the monuments come in somber colors, and they are at times clad in a fog that stresses their aloofness, their distantness, perhaps also the impossibility of memory. In Kenzo Ishiguro's novel *The Giant*, fog is the impossibility of memory: an element that we have to cut and conquer in order to create relations not only with our past but also with each other: not having a memory means not having a relation – neither with the past nor with the living.

In Jóhannsson's film, the difference between the past and the present is obliterated: it is not clear if we are looking into deep histories or distant times to come. The monuments appear like aliens, like posthuman creatures. What is depicted is not a foggy depletion of memory under aestheticized forms and sounds, it is rather an experimental form of commemoration, where the past is intertwined with the future.

Sunken natural beauty and aestheticization

This experimental form of commemoration that takes place in both of the cinematic renderings of these monuments is an aspect which has to do with aesthetic presence: humanoid sculptures in fog, rain, snow, blatant sun. The landscapes and the atmosphere are intertwined with the sculptures.

Bogdanović's sculpture is but a small part of the monumental installation on site. Located at what used to be a concentration camp where the Croatian fascist regime killed around 80.000 people from the resistance, and ethnic Serbs, Bogdanović also used the land around the monument to mark the placement of the buildings of the concentration camp. Shaped as mounds of earth, covered in grass, but mounds placed in holes, Bogdanović's work has the character not only of being a monument, but also a monumental piece of land art, using shapes and natural materials to create the landscape. For a visitor, it is not the sculpture that plays the main role – it is the earth. The memorial carries the signs of a distinct narrative, but it is tied to a sense of time that stretches over generations, and over the dead towards the future. Its aesthetic is tied between the distant past, of the earth, and the future, in the wings stretching towards the sky.

In his volume *Aesthetic Theory*, Theodor Adorno's classic chapter on "Natural beauty" points to the steep temporality that is tied to an aesthetics of nature:

> **The image of what is oldest in nature reverses dialectically into the cipher of the not-yet-existing, the possible.**[8]

To Adorno, the relation to nature lies at the core of what we call the aesthetic. Artworks belong to the sphere that Adorno calls a second nature: they belong not to the natural world, but to the social world, which has the ability to make things appear natural. What is beautiful in artworks is something that we conceive of as reminiscences of an age that we cannot seize in the present. Beauty cannot merely present itself to us sensuously. It has to do with ideological investments: what is conceived of as "natural" has to do with the implementation of ideals.

Art imbues the relation to nature with ideological meaning. It is not by chance that nature becomes "aestheticized." We may think of the glorification of the Alps in bright colors, works that were intertwined with German nationalist ideology in the 1930s, for instance. These are not just examples of bad taste, but more or less inevitable developments of the violation done to nature. There is no "neutral" aesthetic ground through which art can relate to nature. On the contrary, art is an agent which uses aesthetic means to determine the fate of nature.

What is violent, contradictory, and frightening about nature becomes instead familiar in art, bestowed with an acceptable face: what is called "second nature" must, so to speak, appear natural. This is why art, or rather what is called "aestheticization", is a production of ideology. What is even worse than an openly nationalist adoration of sentimentalist art, according to Adorno, is the conviction that beauty can present itself naturally, beyond the layer of social and cultural history that he calls a "second nature."

This expresses Adorno's concern with "aestheticization": Artworks are also products of human labour, and of ideas. To Adorno, it is more in line with art's own place in history to make the former demonstrative of the latter: what aestheticization does is to attempt to point beyond history. Here Adorno shares the concerns of memory culture historians such as Horvatinčić or Cento Bull and Hansen/Clarke: aestheticization is a kind of ideology that makes us forget the historical and conceptual features of the artwork and look only at sensuous dimensions that make it empty and fleeting.

The idea that the aesthetic lies above and beyond social and cultural relations is, to Adorno, worse than the ideologization of beauty and art.

IF TODAY THE AESTHETIC relation to the past is poisoned by a reactionary tendency with which this relation is in league, an ahistorical aesthetic consciousness that sweeps aside the dimension of the past as rubbish is no better. Without historical remembrance there would be no beauty.[9]

In this way, the aesthetic is contrasted to aestheticization in Adorno's opinion. Art and aesthetics have to do with our world, our history, they give us a sense of what is real and important. Nature, in turn, has a quality that lies beyond attempts to domesticate it. Nature is bestowed with what could be called a natural age, a profound history that leads us beyond modern, human interventions. In this way, nature can harbor both a sense of present history and a sense of deep time.

Beauty and memory culture

In this way, we can also approach the questions of the aesthetics of memory culture from its attachment to nature: The sense of deep time that nature can produce is not about ignoring or undoing historical reality. It is rather deepening our sense of what

Adorno calls natural history: a dimension that we tend to repress in our focus on human agency, but that is intrinsically linked to it. As Deborah Cook writes, to Adorno human history is intrinsically intertwined with natural history. They share a destiny of always being in a transitory state.[10]

We cannot stand on nature, so to speak, and create art, without incorporating at the same time a sense of time that goes beyond generations. The beauty of art cannot be conceived beyond a sense of sunken time. Art produces the wounds of history, wounds that make the sunken ideal of natural beauty appear. In this way, objects of memory that stand in a landscape carry many dimensions of time simultaneously.

This is why monuments are also wide open to artistic renderings: their aesthetics create a presence that extends beyond the historical and ideological motivations that lie behind the specific monument. But they also point to a new dimension of violence and ruination: applied to nature as such.

Shaped as otherworldly forms, as they are, in the landscape, the monuments of former Yugoslavia give witness to anti-fascist struggles through their placement, as well as through their brutalist and futurist avant-gardism. Today, their relation to the landscape has acquired a new complexity.

They are too big, brutal in shape and presence. But it is a violence that is not contrasted with the pastoral landscape. It is also echoed in it. These monuments are not only placed on a historical ground, they are also set in a used nature: Petrova Gora in a forest of plane trees, for instance, a fast growing, invasive type of tree. It is also a place of leisure, for citizens from Zagreb who come to take a walk in the forest and eat lunch at the nearby guesthouse. What used to be a place of hiding, what Andreas Malm talks about as a partisan wilderness of hiding and resistance, has now become a different kind of nature.[11]

But deep time can still be sensed in the landscape. In the films, the cinematic renderings of the monuments make up for the loss of wilderness. Through evocative fog, rain, snow, through the slow movements of its music and rhythms, the images evoke a deep time. But this is done not through nature, but through aesthetic means: Rather than obliterate the historical dimension of the monuments, aesthetics is here used as a means to give a history to the monuments when nature fails to do so.

WHAT ART CAN DO, Adorno argued, is to animate a life that is, so to speak, stolen from nature. Through their cinematography, sound and so on – set beyond time and cultural specificity – something emerges in these films that not only has to do with a general, posthuman, Anthropocene aesthetics, although that is certainly there. What emerges is that the monuments are creatures of their own history. Their shapes and materials speak to us as objects from a past that we cannot fully grasp, and a future that we do not know. And yet, at the same time, they give witness to distinct events and a particular history that cannot be belied or altered.

The writing of history is a process in flux, and when it comes to memory culture, it is also a question of politics and ideology. Setting monuments in nature, however, as objects of the landscape, they also acquire a sense of time that moves beyond simple mechanisms of ideology and aestheticization. With the more than human quality of the monuments, they make the memory of events take place between a future and a past that we cannot grasp, giving meaning to events through a sense of deep time. ■

Cecilia Sjöholm is a Professor in Aesthetics at Södertörn University.

references

1 See Uroš Cvoro, *Transitional aesthetics. Contemporary art at the edge of Europe*. London: Bloomsbury, 2018, and *Post-conflict monuments in Bosnia and Herzegovina: unfinished histories*, (New York: Routledge, 2020).

2 MOMA in 2018, "Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia 1948–1980".

3 Sanja Horvatinčić, "Between Memory Politics and New Models of Heritage Management: Rebuilding Yugoslav Memorial Sites 'from below'", *ICOMOS - Hefte des Deutschen Nationalkomitees* [Journals of the German National Committee], vol. LXXII (2020).

4 Anna Cento Bull and Hans Lauge Hansen, "Agonistic memory", *Memory Studies*, no. 4 vol. 9 (2016): 390–404.

5 Chantal Mouffe, *On the Political*, (London: Routledge, 2005) 15–16.

6 James Young, "The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 18, no. 2 (1992): 267–296. JSTOR,www.jstor.org/stable/1343784.

7 Anna Cento Bull and David Clarke, "Agonistic interventions into public commemorative art: An innovative form of counter-memorial practice?" *Constellations*, (2021): 28, 192–206. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8675.12484

8 Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (London: Continuum, 2002), 55.

9 Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, 65.

10 Debora Cook, *Adorno on Nature* (London: Routledge, 2011).

11 Andreas Malm, "In Wildness Is the Liberation of the World: On Maroon Ecology and Partisan Nature", *Historical Materialism* vol. 26 no. 3 (2018).

THE MISSING AND THE MASS GRAVES

Family members in Krajina Identification Project (Sejkovaca mortuary). PHOTO: ICMP

by **Johanna Mannergren Selimovic**

abstract

Nearly three decades after the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, thousands of people are missing and mass graves are regularly found. Relatives still search for knowledge about their loved ones in the midst of secrets, rumors and ethnonationalist denial. As the country struggles to come to terms with this dark legacy of the war, art has emerged as a space for recognition of the lingering *presence of absence* of the missing.

KEYWORDS: Bosnia and Herzegovina, missing, mass graves, ethnonationalism, presence of absence, recognition, peace.

In the 1992–1995 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) more than 100,000 people were killed.[1] About 7,500 of them are still missing. Where are they? Where are their graves? The missing people are absent, yet they are present. They are what Ed Vulliamy calls the "unquiet bodies"; through them the violent past lingers and haunts the present.[2] We mourn the missing and we yearn for them and pin hopes to their absence. The mass graves, those that have been located and those that are still waiting to be discovered, are unsettled spaces where silences and stories congregate and stick to bones and mud. Often not formally marked, they are still perceived and sensed. They are not void of meaning. They exert *presence of absence*, highly productive of post-war politics.

In this essay I reflect upon the contentious memory politics

around the *nestali*; the missing. They form a powerful trope in Bosnian political discourse that speaks to the core of the problematic peace in BiH. They are a result of the ethnonationalist logic of the war, and the searches and exhumation processes seek to address this dark legacy.

Based on fieldwork and interviews mainly carried out at different moments during 2012, 2018 and 2021, the essay discusses how the search for the missing affects the everyday lives of the relatives, as they seek to counteract the collectivizing violence of ethnic cleansing and genocide through refusing erasure. Their difficult work is foremost a struggle for knowledge in the midst of secrets, rumors and denial, and hence speaks to a key topic regarding transitions from war to peace: the importance of truth and recognition long after the end of war.

How can the lingering violence of mass atrocity be acknowledged and memorialized in a highly divisive present, where on the one hand, war crimes are actively denied in an increasingly revisionist culture, and on the other hand, the missing have become a highly politicized trope used for advancing collective victimhood by elite political actors? Can aesthetic expressions create a space for remembering that encompasses presence of absence? Towards the end of the essay, I discuss an art installation that opens up possibilities to, with Jenny Edkins' words, "encircle the trauma", and give space for mourning and restoration.[3]

"CAN AESTHETIC EXPRESSIONS CREATE A SPACE FOR REMEMBERING THAT ENCOMPASSES PRESENCE OF ABSENCE?"

Mapping the mass graves

> **"I do not like the expression the missing. They are *somewhere*".**[4]

Let's begin with some figures and logics of mass atrocity. Let's begin with some red dots on a computer screen. Each dot symbolizes a mass grave on the virtual online map created by the International Commission for Missing Persons (ICMP), containing all the information available about the mass graves and their whereabouts.[5] Some of these mass graves are huge, like the one in Tomašica in the northwest of the country in which remains of more than 400 people were found; others are smaller, containing "just" a few bodies. Many of the missing originate from the mass killing of more than 8000 Bosniak men and boys from Srebrenica by Bosnian Serb and Serb forces. It was "the largest single crime on European soil since World War II"[6] and the events were judged as genocide by the ICTY.[7] The forced disappearances were key tactics in the Bosnian war, used to create fear and chaos, and the interactive map demonstrates a topography of homogenizing, ethnonationalist violence. Navigating the map gives a startling insight into how profoundly these tactics have changed Bosnian everyday life for generations to come. In addition to the killed, 1.2 million people were forced to flee. Most of them have not returned. One reason is that the Dayton Peace Accord constructed a postwar state mainly along the divisions that the ethnic cleansing had created, and the state of BiH thus consists of two entities: the Bosnian Serb Republic (*Republika Srpska*) and the Bosniak-Croat Federation. Many people are consequently no longer living in the place where their loved ones went missing and where the mass graves might be located. This affects geopolitics in the present -- when mass graves are found, they are often in territory politically controlled by the former enemy side and there is little interest from local authorities to commemorate and mark these places.[8]

DURING THE FIRST YEARS of the war, analyses of objects such as bullets, blindfolds and ligatures were important, practices later replaced by sophisticated DNA analysis developed by the ICMP. From the beginning it was the International Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) that was in charge of exhumation and identification,[9] now it is the Special Department for War Crimes of the BiH Prosecutor's Office.[10] Other important bodies in BiH include the national Missing Persons Institute (MPI) which is mandated to investigate every "credible report" regarding mass graves. Reports are collected from witnesses or perpetrators coming forward or from information emerging from prosecutions; however as time goes by, the number of witnesses forthcoming is declining and also their accounts are not as precise. Investigators thus seek to combine witness statements with geospatial analysis as well as analysis of aerial and satellite pictures.[11]

In the face of such sophisticated technology and legal scaffolding, it may seem strange that relatives who are engaged in victims' associations have to take an active part in the search. They are often socioeconomically vulnerable and struggling in contexts where they have little support from local authorities. Nevertheless, they have developed strategies for advocacy, extracting knowledge, locating bodies, and making the MPI investigate their claims.

Searching for bodies and recognition

One February morning I walk on foot together with F. up a woody hill situated above a small town in central BiH. The sky is blue, and the February snow is like meringue, crunching under our city shoes as we make our way through the forest. We suddenly enter an opening in the forest, and we stand still as the rustles of the pine trees fill the silence. Underneath the snow there is a sand pit, and this is the place where F. has helped find two mass graves. We stand at one of the red dots on the ICMP map.

F. has been searching for missing people since the end of the war. One of them is her brother whom she saw for the last time on July 23, 1992. He disappeared together with 46 other men when the enemy forces emptied one of their detention camps set up in the center of the town. Three years after the war, she and other relatives got hold of some information – someone said that trucks had been travelling up the hill to this place, the sand

A book of belongings showing photos of clothes and objects found near some of the bodies. PHOTO: ICRC/BENOIT SCHAEFFER

Srebrenica victims' personal items help keep memories alive.

pit. Of course, this makes sense, F. thought at the time, a well-chosen place – easy to dig, out of sight. F. and her fellow members in the association informed the council and the IMP, digging began eventually and eight bodies were recovered. But F. was certain that there were more bodies hidden there. She was right: one day in 2008 someone passing through the woods found a leg sticking up from the ground. Shifting land masses following heavy rain had unearthed yet another four victims. Ten years later, when we first met, in the small office of the victim association, F. was still searching.

She made Bosnian coffee for us on a small hotplate and showed me a wall full of photographs, yellowed, tattered, from a time long gone, happy snapshots from family albums mixed with serious faces from more formal occasions. She pointed to this one and that one, my school friend, my husband's colleague, this family was wiped out, all gone... telling stories of their lives and their disappearance and the cold miserable little room become crowded with them all.

At that meeting she was upset and I ended the interview for ethical reasons. But at this time, in the midst of the forest, she is in a relaxed mood. I on the other hand want to leave, the pine trees are so tall and stand so close, I am thinking that I never before have seen such tall, dark trees. F. wants to stay, she likes being here. Listening to her talk this time, it seems as if the site functions as a forensic testimonial that speaks clearly to the present about the traumatic event, a site where the presence of absence can be lived and acknowledged, even if it is not marked.

> **Some people say that let them be, let them stay wherever they are. But I disagree with this, I feel that if I don't have his bones and the other family members' bones, I feel as if nothing has happened. It is as if there had been no war, no torture, as if there had been nothing.**[12]

Spaces of silences and secrets

> **It all started with the man with the map. That is when we started digging.**[13]

Paradoxically, there are in fact a lot of people who know the whereabouts of the remaining missing. There are thousands of perpetrators in BiH living ordinary lives who have never been tried for their crimes as well as bystanders who for various reasons have decided not to talk. The ICMP has a function on their interactive website for people to share anonymous information about killings and mass graves and while the number of callers is going down, there is still a trickle. Many are getting old and decide to unburden themselves before they die.[14]

Yet guardians of such information are potentially powerful, and some will not speak without getting something in return. Negotiations around the protection or revelation of secrets can generate material or social capital.[15] F. and other survivors navigate an epistemic landscape where knowledge is gathered through rumors and whispers – and through transactions of truth for money. When her association discovered bodies the first time, it happened through an anonymous contact. After weeks of negotiations, they met a man in a petrol station café. He drew a map by hand and shared his secret. And now, once again, F. is involved in a painful discussion with another man who claims he has been told where her brother rests. She has met with him, he said he knows the perpetrator and told her details about life before the war that make her – maybe – trust him. She says he wants a sum of 5.000 Euros, and that he in turn will pass on some of the money to one of the killers. The sum is enormous to her. Even if she had the money – would it be morally possible for her to pay the perpetrator? She does not know.

> **The first few days after the first meeting, my feelings were first hope, hope to find my loved ones, and happiness. And then I was not able to sleep.[16]**

Not here nor there

Forensic anthropologists talk sometimes about the biography of bones, and that there is an expectation that the findings of human remains may overcome all ambiguities. The DNA process will remove doubts of identity while found objects – a blue sweater, a plastic comb, a photograph in a wallet – will humanize the bones and provide a direct link between the living and the dead. Yet even when the graves have been found, uncertainty may prevail. In the case of BiH, this is because in order to hide the crimes, the Bosnian Serb Army re-opened a number of mass graves towards the end of the war and moved the remains on trucks to more hidden locations, especially those killed in the Srebrenica genocide. These sites have come to be known as "secondary" graves. Because of the use of heavy diggers and other machinery, many bodies were torn apart and body parts ended up in several secondary graves. Some of these graves were also reopened and the human remains were moved yet again and reburied in "tertiary" graves.[17]

The practice of moving bodies to secondary or tertiary graves has ongoing repercussions for the relatives that long to find out what happened to their loved ones; it means that often the search for the missing will not result in "finding the body" but rather parts of it. Religious authorities in BiH have stated that it is enough for 40 percent of the body to be buried in order for it to be a proper burial,[18] yet it is a line that may be perceived as arbitrary. How do you decide when it is time to stop the search for yet another piece?

"BECAUSE OF THE USE OF HEAVY DIGGERS AND OTHER MACHINERY, MANY BODIES WERE TORN APART AND BODY PARTS ENDED UP IN SEVERAL SECONDARY GRAVES."

A BOSNIAN-SWEDISH young woman whose father went missing after the genocide in Srebrenica was waiting for a long time for him to be found:

> **On 20th March 20, 2007, the call came [...] They had found his head and his left arm. And they knew where the mass graves were [...] My Mum let us make all the decisions. 'You are his children, you decide, when they have found enough we can bury him'. And we felt that there was too little, there wasn't enough. So we waited and then there was one more call, and a third call, over the next two years. And then it was quiet for another couple of years. And then we sat down, me and my siblings. Because somehow we wanted more, you always want more, somewhere you can go. Simply a resting place where you can say a prayer and find some kind of peace. And in 2011 we decided we were going to bury him. We worked out that we found about 36 percent of him altogether, in eight different graves.[19]**

Rituals and (re)collectivization

It is often claimed that memorialization can contribute to the "restoration of personhood" of the missing, even in the absence of identified human remains.[20] Memorialization can consist of monuments, rituals, museums, plaques, often visible markers that express collective meanings. There are however few monuments to the missing in BiH, where focus has rather been on rituals and ceremonies that enact the restoration of personhood through burial; the transition from being missing to being found. The most notable is the yearly commemoration of the Srebrenica Genocide that comprises a number of events, including a burial ceremony of victims that continuously are identified – in 2023, 30 victims were buried. The event attracts tens of thousands of mourners who travel from near and afar to commemorate at the Potočari burial site close to Srebrenica. These events are very important as a performative moment in which collective perpetrator/victimhood identities are upheld.

In line with the understanding that the handling of dead bodies has to do with the construction of the political and moral order of communities, these events ultimately concern sovereign power and how sovereignty can be claimed.[21] Commemoration is thus a means to create and sustain a particular social order through reversing the dehumanization of the mass graves and the ethnic cleansing, recognizing the victims as individual humans again.

Yet these commemorative rituals are contested, precisely because of the tension between the individual and the collective. While many testify to the importance of the burial ceremony, some relatives and other activists express that they are uncomfortable by such politicized, collective mourning rituals.[22] They argue that the victims in fact become inscribed in collective victimhood and become representative of a specific ethno-religious positionality, which they may not have actively embraced while alive.

Aesthetic expressions of presence of absence

And so finally I turn to art as a medium for engaging with the trauma of the missing and ask if aesthetic expressions can possibly create a space for remembering that encompasses presence of absence. In various conflict-affected contexts artists seek to approach loss through marking the voids, addressing that which "fractures representation".[23] My own fascination with the concept of "presence of absence" emerged through an encounter with the powerful work of Doris Salcedo concerning the missing in Colombia. Her art, often in the form of installations, pins our attention to the political implications of when violent loss is not marked or mourned, yet ever-present. Likewise, Bosnian artists

in BiH and in the diaspora have, in numerous works, engaged with the invisible but ever-present postwar memory politics of remembering and forgetting.[24]

Possibly the artwork that speaks most powerfully to the experiences and the loss of F. and of T. and her family that I have highlighted here, is the nomadic exhibition ŠTO TE NEMA.[25] It is a travelling installation/memorial that engages with the intangible heritage of coffee rituals. The project started out in Sarajevo, where Bosnian-born American artist Aida Šehović in 2006 displayed 923 of the thimble-like Bosnian coffee cups given to her by the association Women of Srebrenica, and filled them with the frothy, thick Bosnian coffee. More or less every year since then, Šehović has organized the installation in cities all over the world, the number of cups growing each year as members of the Bosnian diaspora as well as others have added more and more. At the 25th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide in 2020, 8372 cups were laid out on the grounds of the Srebrenica Memorial Centre and laboriously filled with coffee (one for each genocide victim) and the cups will eventually be displayed in a permanent monument at the Memorial Center. In the meantime, the cups have been displayed at several museums, in Sarajevo as well as beyond BiH.

The cups are a material manifestation that reminds the onlooker of the loss of each one of those killed and missing. At the same time, the installation is a manifestation of intangible cultural heritage. It concerns the importance of the coffee ritual in BiH, as a means to engage and maintain good neighborly relations. Coffee-drinking was an intrinsic part of the upholding of the prewar multiethnic weave in communities such as Srebrenica before the war. Furthermore, the nomadic monument was created by the artist in conjunction with a large number of people getting together and making, sharing coffee, thereby weaving new connections. The cups speak directly to the people on the yellowed photos on the wall of memory, under which F. made coffee on the small hotplate. They concern all those who confront the lingering pain of presence of absence that mass atrocity generates, long after the end of war. They remind us that mass atrocity rips apart webs of relations. They speak to the loss of sociability and the loss of lifeworlds. ×

Johanna Mannergren Selimovic is Research Coordinator at CBEES, Södertörn University, and Associate Professor in Peace and Development Research.

references

1 Research and Documentation Centre, Population Losses 1992-1995, The Bosnian Book of Dead: Assessment of the Database, (2007): 58. www.idc.org.ba

2 Ed Vulliamy, "Bringing up the Bodies," *The Guardian*, December 6, 2016. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/06/bringing-up-the-bodies-bosnia

3 Jenny Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003).

4 Personal interview, May 10, 2018.

5 See https://www.icmp.int

6 Lara J. Nettelfield, *Courting Democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Hague Tribunal's Impact on a Postwar State.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 75.

7 ICTY, the judgement in Prosecutor v. Kristić, Case no . IT-98-33-A, paragraph 34 (ICTY Appeals Chamber, April 19, 2004)

8 Johanna Mannergren Selimovic, "Making peace, making memory: peacebuilding and politics of remembrance at memorials of mass atrocities," *Peacebuilding* no. 1 (2013): 334–348.

9 Admir Jugo, "Artefacts and personal effects from mass graves in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Symbols of persons, forensic evidence or public relics?" *Les Cahiers Sirice* vol. 19. no. 2 (2017): 29.

10 ICMP, *Locating and Identifying Missing Persons: A Guide for Families in Bosnia-Herzegovina*: 8–12.

11 Jeremy Sarkin J, Lara J. Nettelfield, Max Matthews, Renee Kosalka. *Bosnia and Herzegovina. Missing Persons from the Armed Conflicts of the 1990s: A Stocktaking* (Sarajevo: International Commission for Missing Persons (ICMP), October 2014): 94.

12 Personal interview, relative of missing persons, February 17, 2018.

13 Ibid.

14 Personal interview, ICMP staff, February 11, 2018.

15 Lenore Manderson, Mark Davis, Chip Colwell, and Tanja Ahlin. "On Secrecy, Disclosure, the Public, and the Private", *Anthropology, An Introduction to Supplement 12, Current Anthropology* vol. 56 no. 12 (2015): 183.

16 Personal interview, relative of missing persons, February 17, 2018.

17 Jugo, "Artefacts and Personal Effects," 25.

18 Bosnian Institute (2015)

19 Personal interview, relative of a missing person, November 10, 2018.

20 Sara Wagner, *To Know Where He Lies: DNA Technology and the Search for Srebrenica's Missing* (Oakland, University of California Press, 2008), 15.

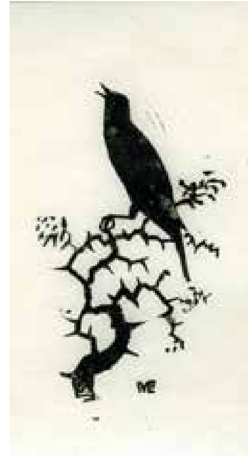
21 Finn Stepputat, ed., *Governing the Dead. Sovereignty and the politics of dead bodies.* (Manchester, New York: Manchester University Press, 2014), 5. See also Joost Fontein, Cara Kromptich, and John Harries, "*The substance of bones: the emotive materiality and affective presence of human remains,"* Journal of Material Culture 15(4) (2010): 371–384.

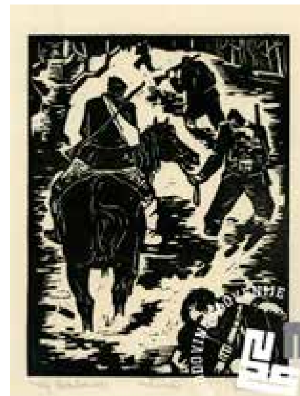
22 Personal interviews 2012, 2021. See also Laura Huttunen, "Liminality and Missing Persons. Encountering the Missing in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Conflict and Society: Advances in Research* no. 2 (2016): 201–218.

23 Judith Butler. "Afterword. After Loss. What then?" In Loss. The Politics of Mourning, eds David L. Eng and David Kazanjian (Okland, University of California Press, 2003): 467–468. See also Andreas Huyssens (2003): 49–71.

24 Johanna Mannergren Selimovic, "Articulating Presence of Absence: Everyday Memory and the Performance of Silence in Sarajevo," In *Post-Conflict Memorialization. Memory Politics and Transitional Justice, eds* Olive Otele, Luisa Gandolfo, Yoav Galai. (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).

25 www.stotenema.com





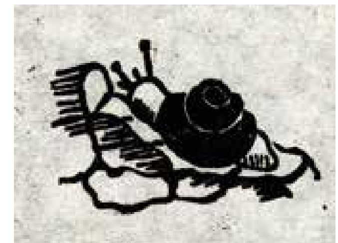


Photo reproductions of artwork from the Muzej novejše in sodobne zgodovine Slovenije. Courtesy of National Museum of Contemporary History of Slovenia.

PARTISAN ECOLOGY IN YUGOSLAV LIBERATION AND ANTIFASCIST ART

by **Gal Kirn**

abstract

Partisan and decolonial ecology is a notion addressed by Andreas Malm and Malcom Ferdinand respectively, in their texts on the Caribbean maroon partisans – the emancipated slaves – who moved to the more mountainous parts of the islands that were still covered by dense vegetation. This concept is here taken to another historical context, that of Yugoslav partisans' fight against the fascist occupation in the Second World War. I engage in reading an array of partisan artworks that point to fascist domination/war over nature juxtaposed to emerging solidarity among humans and animals/nature. From poems and short stories to drawings and graphic art material, the subject matter of forest as a site of resistance and political subjectivity emerges. Diverse animals, pack of wolves, birds that continue to sing despite the thorny branches, the figure of the snail as the affect and attitude of resilience – these become "comrades" in the struggle, mobilizing nature in their fight against fascism.

KEYWORDS: Partisan ecology, antifascism of non-human world, partisan aesthetics, becoming, "human animal", poems, graphic art, figure of resistance.

A few theoretical notes on *partisan ecology*

The figure of the partisan is often associated with (party) politics, with clearly – even blindly – taking a side. One of the major partisan statements that encompasses a wide range of fields can be found in Karl Marx's famous 11th *Thesis on Feuerbach*: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it".[1] This visionary statement, not without irony, prompted many new (philosophical) interpretations; however, its initial challenge has remained unresolved: How to change the world, and with what means? Oscillation between different standpoints and practices only pointed out that neither activity nor praxis can give the answer to these questions, and most notably cannot be isolated from one another. The eminent partisan question asks then how heterogenous practices – political, theoretical and artistic – contribute to the struggle of liberation, to changing the world.

It is precisely such a heterogeneous and transformative struggle that took place in the forests of partisan Yugoslavia, on the liberated territories that built alternative political and cultural organizations and succeeded in mobilizing masses of illiterate peasants, youth and women into the partisan struggle against the fascist occupation from 1941 to 1945.[2] Partisan activities cannot be reduced to military guerrilla tactics – even if Yugoslavian resistance was one of the few in Europe that succeeded in liberating itself on its own; there were political, and most notably cultural and artistic activities that became the most important weapons of mass creation. In four years of liberation struggle masses of anonymous poets – most of them self-educated, and many of whom had just learnt to read and write – produced 40,000 poems. In the almost impossible circumstances of scarce material and non-existent artistic infrastructure, partisan artists created thousands of drawings, novels, graphic works, sculptures, photos, even symphonies and films.[3] War, then, was not merely a dark period of horrific deeds but also a process of cultural revolution that entailed emancipation of those that had been most exploited before the war in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Thus, the negative aspect of the struggle, the fight against the fascist occupation, was connected from the very beginning to the utopian and transformative aspect: to build a new partisan Yugoslavia.

"PARTISAN ARTISTS CREATED THOUSANDS OF DRAWINGS, NOVELS, GRAPHIC WORKS, SCULPTURES, PHOTOS, EVEN SYMPHONIES AND FILMS."

FINALLY, HOW, AND WHY can Yugoslav partisan – liberation art be connected to the topic of *ecology*? While at that time concern over environment was not high on the theoretical-political agenda, today we speak of theoretical and political urgency: If one is invested in the world and changing the world, then thinking and acting in the light of climate transformation and ecological challenges would be high on a partisan agenda set against corporate greenwashing or climate denialism. Global capitalism is clearly, according to scientific research, political actions and our changing reality, hitting the limits of the environment and its delicate ecosystems. These alterations have brought dramatic changes in how we imagine the future. It is not that a large part of science fiction and fantasy has already had turned from a utopian to a dystopian future imaginary,[4] and that the demise of socialism intensified this process is old news. However, the imaginary of the apocalyptical future, of the unpredictable and uncontrollable force of nature, has been evoked in the very name of neo-partisan ecological groups: "extinction" rebellion, "last" generation, etc. Scenario building and imagination of apocalypse has then been very often presented as a restriction to thinking about a different and alternative future that would drive us beyond the religious trope of Last Judgment and sins for which humanity will finally need to pay.

IN THIS ARTICLE I would like to contribute some preliminary research on the Yugoslav *partisan ecology* that could be of help both for thinking about the artistic lineage and heritage of the oppressed of World War II, and also for giving a clear – partisan – position that is engaged in our present. I will be examine those practices of partisan ecology that were able to rupture from the ongoing state of "primitive accumulation of capital".[5] These practices imagine and already materialize a world where community-in-resistance develops a coexisting and non-extractivistic relation to nature. The term partisan, and decolonial, ecology is also influenced by the work of two authors; Andreas Malm's short text on the maroon partisans and wilderness, and Malcom Ferdinand's book on decolonial ecology that gives a fascinating reading of Caribbean modernity in the light of resistance to colonial and environmental fractures.[6] Both authors present us with a compelling emancipatory trajectory of the former slaves who built alternative communities from the 16th to the mid-20th century. Former/emancipated slaves received the name maroon[7] and escaped from plantations deep into the mountains, marshlands and forests, where living conditions were difficult. Their lives were endangered: previously as slaves, and later too their fight for freedom in the dense vegetation was continuous. Nevertheless, maroon communities expanded and constituted a different, autonomous form of living that among other things relied on a more organic relationship with nature. Maroons remained militarily vigilant guerrilla fighters who occasionally intensified raids on the plantations and freed other slaves. In this respect they kept fighting against the oppressive forms of the plantation system, and against the most violent side of the primitive accumulation of capital. For Malm, the transition to fossil capitalism is internally linked to colonialism, and is most heavily felt by the colonized peoples and on the peripheries of the world system; while for Ferdinand it is also vital to see that maroon transformative resistance offered a utopian horizon, and he takes this

as an epistemological departure point in rethinking Caribbean histories.

Neither of these two mentioned works focused on the artistic dimension of the partisan maroon struggles, but their theoretical frame informs my ongoing research. In my research I will first need to align the Yugoslav partisan case into the general transhistorical solidarity/lineage, which Walter Benjamin already called for as a recovery of the "tradition of the oppressed".[8] Having in mind a very different historical context (from the Caribbean), I analyze the resistance to the fascist occupation in Yugoslavia during World War II. There are a few immediate similarities in partisan practices and sensibility to their environments. In a similar vein to the maroons, Yugoslav partisans – in order to survive and become/remain free – were forced to take refuge in the dense forests and mountains of the Balkans. These sites of refuge turned into veritable sites of resistance and constituent power. The Communist Party, along the partisan self-organization with people, developed alternative political and cultural counter-institutions in the liberated areas. Partisan art played a vital role in creating this imaginary of a different world. What also needs to be taken into account is that their modus operandi was very mobile since liberated territories disappeared, were expanded, or partisans needed to move in entirely different regions, sometime in a matter of weeks. The whole liberation struggle can be seen as a long reterritorializing movement and guerrilla warfare. Yugoslav antifascist resistance did not merely oppose the fascist occupation but was designed as a fight against the prewar Kingdom of Yugoslavia; that is, it targeted the exploitation and domination of people, and war itself as domination over nature.

IT IS NOT SURPRISING that within the partisan struggle, the "people's liberation struggle" in Yugoslavia, nature, forest, animals, and plants played a vital part in the partisan way of life and imaginary, as is here claimed, forming a sort of partisan ecology. What is perhaps more surprising is that even in the most recent scholarship on partisan struggle and partisan art, there has been no serious study on this dimension and relation. One will find Marija Stanonik's short analyses on nature in partisan poems; Lojze Gostiša analyzed some allegorical motifs of animals in graphic art; and in an appendix to his book, Miklavž Komelj gives a short overview of "becoming animal" in some poetic-literary partisan works.[9] However, the broader analysis of partisan art and symbolic politics, the relationship of partisans to nature, and the role of nature in art, has been hitherto missing in analyses.

Partisan birch/art: between propaganda and modernism?

The material presented will not be used in order to canonize and elevate nature and landscape in partisan art. Rather, my initial hypothesis is to show how selected artworks that worked with the non-human – such as plants, forests and animals – became not only allegories of the partisan struggle, but also took sides in the struggle and were touched by liberation. I am not looking (just) for documentation of fascist terror on the animals killed and scorched earth, but on those images and poems that grasped nature dialectically, as both traces of horrific violence and promises of emancipation. In times of fascist danger there is no innocent nature, or trees, which evokes a contemporaneous trope of Walter Benjamin putting forward "politicization of aesthetics" against the fascist "aestheticization of politics" – or Brecht's poetic remark that it has become almost a crime to speak of trees in the times of fascism.[10]

IN THE YUGOSLAV and most notably in the Slovenian liberation context the controversy about what role to ascribe to partisan art was sharpened in 1944 following a public call for drawings/paintings. The controversy is known by the name "partisan birch" (in Slovenian *partizanska breza*), since the call carried the following political directive: If someone wants to paint a tree such as a birch, then it needs to be clear that "a well-drawn birch tree cannot be a work of art if there is no rifle leaning against it or if it is not pierced by a burst shot."[11] Nature would need to carry a direct representation of (military) struggle, and this is why the call was deemed propagandist, and carrying a decree/directive. The text was immediately challenged by many communists and diverse partisan artists in the public debate that articulated an autonomist position (that also prevailed). Many retroactive interpretations of this controversy – which were sustained throughout socialist times – claimed that we were dealing with a typical dichotomy between a socialist realist / propagandist side and an autonomist, modernist side that supported the autonomy of artists.

However, a close reading shows that both sides were not so far apart: the autonomist (later modernist) perspective never argued that there is such a thing as value-free, unpolitical art. Even more within the liberation struggle will any work of art become political; while also, what was deemed propagandistic neither excluded any particular art form from partisan art, nor could we claim that socialist realism was a predominant frame of liberation art. The retrospective dichotomy was overcome by the partisan art practice itself: to follow neither propaganda nor partisan modernism/avant-gardism as the guide for practice. Rather, as I tried to show in my book,[12] in the rich artistic material, from graphic or written to oral and music formats, we will find a mixture of modernist, expressionist, avant-gardist, but also propagandistic, vernacular, and folkloric tendencies and legacies. There were no pure partisan forms; what one witnessed was rather a dramatic reversal of who is a producer of art, of what is produced for whom. Those in the struggle were producing for those in the struggle, while the forms were rather a hybrid of amateurish and elitist, produced by new and some established leftist artists, who used scarce material in very inventive ways. Within graphic art we could for example find very expressionist, surrealist, but also social realist and propagandistic drawings, posters, and engravings. Elsewhere I claimed there was no singular tendency that was hegemonic, but a multiplicity of styles and forms that expressed partisan politicization of aesthetics, the drive, affect and imaginary of people's liberation.

France Mihelič, Ožgana tepka/Scorched pear tree, 1944, črna kreda/ black chalk, 38 cm x 27,5 cm, RI-11964.

Case studies: nature becomes partisan?

Departing from the controversy of partisan birch let me give one striking example of a partisan tree, a drawing that became a famous partisan graphic, called *Scorched Pear Tree* (ožgana tepka).

Scorched pear tree

This work was by France Mihelič, who was one of the more famous expressionist graphic artists and produced quite a vast graphic portfolio where (dead) nature and burned trees have an important place. I would like to suggest that the scorched pear tree does not only represent an emblem of fascist war. It is true, as Tina Fortič Jakopič argued, that the scorched tree can be seen as a victim of fascist war, but perhaps there are two further moments to stress: rather than victims, scorched trees are "material witnesses" of war. In a move that isolates and makes the tree autonomous from the landscape, – we not only embellish a trace of violence, but also underline a sign of resisting landscape. Komelj highlighted Mihelič's rather antimilitaristic stance:

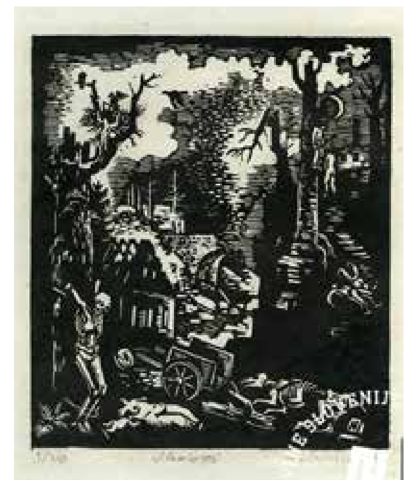
> **Mihelič maintains that trees are important precisely in their concreteness and foreignness and that the very standpoint from which we become aware of their importance is also the standpoint from which we can resist the attempt at any aestheticization of war devastation [...] antimilitarist.**[13]

Although part of the wood is dead, its horrific form persists and can be a striking exemplification of partisan resilience and resilience of the struggle: an emblem of partisan ecology.

Furthermore, if Mihelič became famous through a joint venture during the struggle – he made a fascinating graphic map, *Our Struggle*, with Nikolaj Pirnat – his most visionary and inspiring graphic work can be found in his series of drawings *Apocalypse*. He captured the dimensions of destruction of villages, people, nature; signs of violence, rape and torture form an apocalyptic landscape not easily captured by photo or film lenses. There is one striking drawing – which also later became a graphic artwork, a linoleum cut, called *Traces* (*sledovi*).

Traces (Blood's brotherhood)

Tina Fortič Jakopič argues that this particular drawing "encapsulates the stage of total ruin, while at the same time it shows the moment where everything calms down and silences ... the only surviving beings are two crows".[14] The only surviving beings: animals. This slowing down is symptomatic, since most other images and graphic art from Mihelič represent movement, of people, partisans, fascists, and other figures. In contrast to those, both *Scorched Pear Tree* and *Traces* seem to become standstills of war, where life becomes still, and can be seen as a temporary result of the movements of war.



France Mihelič, Sledovi (Krvava bratovščina) / Traces (Blood's brotherhood), linorez/linoleum cut, 1945, 17 x 14,80 cm, GR-63.

The next groups of examples deal with forest, which as mentioned was not only the primary site of refuge for partisans, but also a primary site of political organization and resistance, a laboratory of people's power. Animals, and the forest itself, became a major part of partisan and artistic sensibility. Despite Marija Stanonik's suggestion that within partisan poetry the representation of nature is not as predominant as one would expect, we still have a multiplicity of visual and written material that highlights forest as new political space. Even more, forest becomes a direct allusion to the partisan struggle itself (cf., Komelj 2008). I would like to quote one section from Zoran Hudales' Senoviški poem that holds a fascinating transition turning partisan fortresses into partisan choirs – choirs being the most popular and mass poetic form and praxis of the partisan struggle:

[…] forests, green fortresses,
murmur of struggles, heroes and victory ….
Murmur/rustle over the ground where dear ones have fallen.
Murmur proud, bud and stand!
With the wind mighty to the far distances
Sing especially a song of freedom.[15]

The transition from immobile fortress of nature to those choirs given a voice is accompanied by a small shift from murmuring and mourning of the fallen to singing songs of freedom that become extremely mobile and spread to far distances, even to the occupied cities. A similar rhythm and resilience can be traced in various inscriptions of the caged, bruised, and battered birds, and also those birds that cannot be caged, or those that get free. A partisan bird continues to sing despite the impossible circumstances, despite not being heard because of fascist bombs or restrictions to speaking in non-German languages. Despite restrictions and thorns, the partisan bird keeps singing and awakening the people (see another strong poem from Radajev, 1944, *Sing birds*). Birds thus became a strong visual trope; one of the most famous examples was a nightingale singing on a branch of thorns.

Nightingale

The image was included in some printed partisan poem collections. One could even say, emphatically, that such emblems from nature helped to substitute the typical figurative heroic representation of male or female partisans. This bird stands as the index and symbol of the partisan resistance as such.

Ive Šubic, Ilustracija za Pesmi Simona Gregorčičaß. Illustration for Poems of Simon Gregorčič, linoleum cut, 8 cm x 5 cm, inv. nr. GR-632.

Tree, forest, and a bird are perhaps too handy examples of partisan – liberation art. Let me turn now to the more horrific representation, or representation of beasts that have always served to cement the border between human/civilization, and animal, or in a more propagandistic genre, the other side: Fascists would be then expected to be seen as beasts/wolves that prey on »our« people/innocent sheep. However, in various poems, stories, and visual arts one can trace positive references to wolves, and wolf-partisans. From the first partisan reportage made by partisan poet Matej Bor, and his partisan drama from 1942 *Torn/Ragged* (*Raztrganci*), Bor used wolves in a clear connection to partisan subjectivity, to becoming partisan-wolves. Also, strikingly, the very first partisan poem printed in Delo in December 1941, *Sing after me* (*Pojte za menoj*), not signed but written by the major Slovenian poet Oton Župančič, also ended with a reference to wolves. The song calls people to arms against the fascist occupation and collaboration, and concludes:

then the wolf assembly
goes to slaughter the hunters.

The assembly of wolves, a "pack of wolves" can be found as becoming a force of fierce resistance, some of whose positive legacy comes from the broader Balkan imaginary (see also Komelj 2008). I suggest here not to take this as a mere metaphor, but rather as an imaginary that sets a political process in motion, what Deleuze and Guattari call "becoming animal".[16] The latter is defined by a movement from major/the constant to minor/the variable, where deterritorialization marks a nomadic modality of becoming: Partisan struggle, due to its intensity and specific site of struggle, overcoming the border between human and animal. Importantly, such a political reading goes against a retrospective and relativizing liberal-humanist trope that insists on holding to the distinction between humans and animals. Such a trope ascribes horrors of war to humans that became animals (circular argument: because of the war). Such argumentation exculpates humans from horrific deeds: fascist deeds, but also the antifascist struggle for revisionists; these were so inhuman because of the war ideology, because of them departing from human/civilized nature. This presupposes that war is foreign to human nature, or that human beings in times of peace and stability are somehow innocent, civilized, and do not do anything so horrific as preparing grounds for annihilation. It is only war that makes humans into beasts. The metaphor and distinction contributes to the decontextualization of war, here the struggle against fascism, while it is also not factually correct. Biologically and environmentally, the non-human world evidently has no human morality, but follows its own dynamic, laws, selections, adaptations and symbioses that balance ecosystems, while no animal species or beasts exterminate within their own or other species, or build concentration camps with the most perfect industrialist precision. The alternative partisan poetic-literary-political trajectory puts forward a new identification that partisans needed to become the beasts in order to beat the fascists, that it sometimes takes the whole existential engagement to win the struggle. The process of overcoming the binary separation between human and animal is thus highly critical towards the moralizing humanist trope and can be traced in many artworks of that time.

Yet again one of the most emblematic form of visual representation of the beast will be found in France Mihelič' s cycle *Apocalypse*. Some authors entitled the image a screaming dog, but I would like to suggest reading this image as a howling wolf (or even a partisan or a dog becoming a wolf?). Tina Fortič Jakopič analyzed this image as the depiction of a wandering dog as the last one left (besides the two crows already mentioned), who can only howl to the sky in despair. But again, adding a small dialectical twist, this howling wolf can be seen as calling for vengeance, as calling others to arms, to join the emerging assembly and pack of partisan-wolves.

France Mihelič, Tuleči pes (Cikel Apokalipsa)/Howling dog (cylce Apocalypse), tuš s čopičem / ink with brush, 1944, 21 x 17 cm, RI-15148.

Howling dog

Partisan printing contributed a range of poetry and literature for children – there were partisan hospitals in the liberated areas – and within this poetry for children I found a little cartoon that accompanied a poem called *Animals Help* (Živali pomagajo), published in 1944.

> **That night at full moon**
> **The animals of the forest gathered**
> **They came together in unison:**
> **“We will help the Partisans!”[17]**

Cartoon accompanying the poem *Animals Help*

Some animals become couriers, others patrol, again all are partaking in the partisan struggle against fascist occupation. Also importantly, many partisans took animal names when they entered detachments. One of the last key animals present in various stories, poems, graphic maps, photos, and drawings is undoubtedly a mule, or a horse. These were essentially partisans’ most vital means of transport, also a symbol of victimhood and resistance, and a strong part of the constant partisan marching columns.

Animals help / Živali pomagajo. Source: Slovenski pionir, april 1944, pp. 9–10. Comic that accompanies a poem.

Column in snow

Some of the most striking figures that represented a mule and a horse are those of Ive Šubic, who refers to the mule by name, or to a horse as a “comrade”, which points not only to overcoming the distinction between human and animal, but to the animal belonging to the political camp. This very much evokes the thought that Oxana Timofeeva – closely reading Platonov whose concern and utopia implied the whole planet – suggested: “In his writings, not only humans, but all living creatures, including plants, are overwhelmed by the *desire for communism*”.[18] In the case of Platonov, the horse’s comradely back; in the case of Šubic his comradely face and never ending support in their joint quest for liberation.

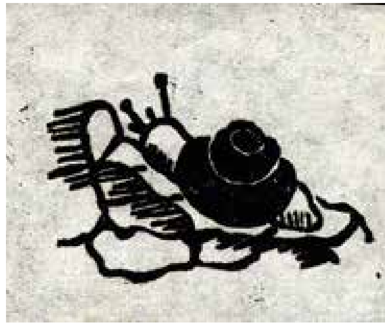
Ive Šubic, Kolona v snegu/Column in snow, linorez/linoleum cut, 1944, 18,5 x 14,3 cm, GR-66b.

Partisan mule Jaka

Finally, I would like to mention the image of an animal that might not be seen as struggling in the first lines of partisan struggle: a snail. A snail might be seen as moving too slowly compared to horses, wolves, birds, neither being fierce, nor really able to form assemblies like wolves, not really able to sing a song that would mobilize nature and masses to the joint struggle, or transport the wounded and food for the whole detachment. However, a snail represents the most central feature, attitude and affect of the partisan struggle itself. The snail embodies resilience and a painstaking, long, enduring walk of resistance and liberation of the partisans. A snail also always carries its house, portraying a certain detachment from property and state and pointing to the deterritorializing movement of partisan troops. This feature was also evoked by Che Guevara and different anticolonial struggles.

Ive Šubic, Partizanska mula “Jaka”/ Partisan mule Jaka, svinčnik/pencil 1944, 24,5 x 19,4 cm, RI-676.

Snail



Alenka Gerlovič, Polž /Snail (Ilustracije za Slovenski pionir, 1945, št. 1), linorez/linoleum cut, 1945, 5 x 6,2 cm, GR-24.

The snail is thus a fitting embodiment of deterritorializing logic that performs constant movement. The snail is a figure that can be juxtaposed to the telluric dimension of belonging eternally to one "homeland". Let us remember that precisely the attachment to soil was so important in Carl Schmitt's definition of the partisan figure. For him, partisan formation is distinguished by mobility and irregularity and overdetermined by the telluric attachment. Partisans love and fight for the soil, which we can read as an echo of fascist *Blut und Boden* ideology.[19] For the partisan snail, like the old mole that digs, over and under the soil, it is all about redefining and transforming what the land/country is. For partisan snails, land is not part of a predefined organic national substance, where blood from soil defines its past and future (of a chosen nation) but will transform the land itself and identities in the course of the struggle.[20]

TO CONCLUDE, I argued that the Yugoslav partisan struggle and their artistic activities, among other things, produced a strong ecological sensibility, a non-extractivist relationality with the non-human world. We find different depictions, caricatures, allegorical motifs, narrative and representative power invested in the forest, animals and plants. Partisan autonomy and liberated territories were enabled by the deep forests, while they turned refuge into political spaces, and mobilized the non-human world in their struggle against fascism. In the short selection and analysis of some poems, short stories, drawings, and graphic art, animals are not a simple allegory; rather the partisan struggle is marked by a process of becoming (human) animal, by overcoming of distinction between animal and human, enlisting animals as comrades in arms in the fight against fascism. Partisan ecology thus acts and imagines a world without arms or wars, but also a world that challenges and develops beyond growth and profit. ■

Gal Kirn is Assistant Professor and Research Associate at the department of sociology, Faculty of Arts (University of Ljubljana). He is also affiliated with Södertörn University (Sweden) and part of international research group Partisan Resistances (University of Grenoble).

Funding bodies: The article was written in the context of the research project "Protests, artistic practices and culture of memory in the post-Yugoslav context" supported by the Slovenian Research Agency (ARRS, J6-3144) and the research project "Distrusting Monuments. War and Art in Former Yugoslavia" supported by the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies (21-PR2-0015).

references

1 Marx, Karl and Engles, Friedrich MECW 5, 1975, 8.

2 I detailed this process in my book: Gal Kirn, *Partisan Counter-Archive* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020).

3 For the most detailed account of partisan art, focused on poetry during World War II, see Mikalvž Komelj 2008. *Kako misliti partizansko umetnost?* Ljubljana: založba cf/*.

4 Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Duke University, 1991).

5 I develop this notion from Marx and elaborate it in the context of memory politics and transition in the (post)Yugoslav context elsewhere; Gal Kirn, "'The Primitive Accumulation of Capital and Memory': Mnemonic Wars As National Reconciliation Discourse in (Post-)Yugoslavia." *Memory Studies* (2022): 1470–1483.

6 See Andreas Malm, "In Wildness Is the Liberation of the World: On Maroon Ecology and Partisan Nature", *Historical Materialism* vol. 26 no. 3 (2018):3–37; and Malcolm Ferdinand, *A Decolonial Ecology: Thinking from the Caribbean World* (Polity Press, 2019).

7 Maroon comes from French/Spanish (cimaron); maroon means feral cattle, but also already indigenous slaves, and African slaves that escaped slavery.

8 Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History" in *Illuminations,* ed. Hannah Arendt (Fontana/Collins, 1973), 255–266.

9 Marija Stanonik, *Iz kaosa v kozmos: Kontekstualnost in* žanrski *sistem slovenskega odporniškega pesništva 1941–1945* [From Chaos to Cosmos: Contextuality and Genre System of Slovenian Resistance Poetry 1941–1945] (Ljubljana: Society for the Study of History, Literature and Anthropology, 1995); Miklavž Komelj, Kako misliti; Mihelič France and Gostiša Lojze. 1994. *Franceta Miheliča Balada o Drevesu : 1941–1945*. [How to think; Mihelič France and Gostiša Lojze. 1994. France Mihelič's Ballad of a Tree: 1941–1945] (Ljubljana: Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 2008).

10 Bertolt Brecht, *An die Nachgeborenen* first published in *Svendborger Gedichte* (1939) in: *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 4 (1967): 722–25.

11 Rastko Močnik, "A Further Note on the Partisan Cultural Politics" *Yugoslav Partisan Art* eds., Jernej Habjan, and Gal Kirn, special issue of *Slavica Tergestina*, vol. 16–17 (2016): 32. For a longer discussion on political engagement and the modernist, realist and avant-gardist tendencies within left and partisan art, see also the discussion between Komelj and Močnik in the same journal.

12 Gal Kirn, *Partisan Counter-Archive.*

13 Miklavž Komelj, "The Partisan Art Revisited." *Yugoslav Partisan Art* eds., Jernej Habjan, and Gal Kirn. Special issue of *Slavica Tergestina*, vol. 16–17 (2016): 60.

14 Tina Fortič Jakopič "Apokaliptična Videnja Franceta Miheliča V Podobah Cikla Apokalipsa" [Apocalyptic Visions of France Mihelič in the Images of the Apocalypse Cycle] *Umetnostna Kronika* no. 69 (2020): 22–31.

15 Published in Paternu Boris, Marija Stanonik and Irena Novak-Popov, *Slovensko Pesništvo Upora : 1941–1945* [Slovenian Poetry of the Rebellion: 1941–1945], (Novo mesto: Novo mesto Printing House Dolenjska Založba: Scientific Institute of the Faculty of Arts, 1998).

16 Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1986).

17 Published in *Slovenski pionir*, April 1944, 9–10.

18 Oxana Timofeeva, *History of Animals* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 168.

19 For my criticism of Schmitt, again Kirn Gal, *Partisan ruptures*.

20 Snail is also one of the most important figures of Zapatista movement and their walking into alternative future.

PHOTO: © ATELIER SHALEV-GERZ_RETOUCHED

Esther Shalev-Gerz & Jochen Gerz, *Monument Against Fascism*, 1986, permanent installation Hamburg-Harburg, Germany.

Concepts for contemporary monuments

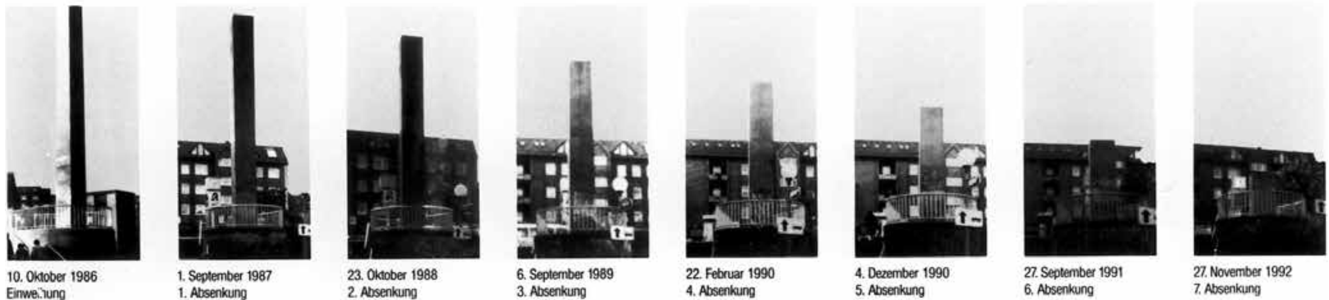
by **Rebecka Katz Thor**

abstract

What concepts can we apply to understand the current wave of new monuments? In this article I suggest labeling them post-monuments, related to the commissioning body's implied interest in what is commemorated, on the one hand, and the possibility of making amends, on the other. The concept builds on the one suggested by James Young in the early 1990's "counter-monuments" regarding the German memorial culture of the time. I address how post-monuments can be seen as a future-oriented rectification, repair, and response.
KEYWORDS: Monuments, memory, post-monuments, counter-monuments, repair.

"We invite the citizens of Harburg, and visitors to the town, to add their names here to ours. In doing so we commit ourselves to remain vigilant. As more and more names cover this 12 meter-high lead column, it will gradually be lowered into the ground. One day it will have disappeared completely and the site of the Harburg monument against fascism will be empty. In the long run, it is only we ourselves who can stand up against injustice."

Jochen Gerz & Esther Shavel Gerz



The images show how the *Monument Against Fascism* gradually was lowered into the ground. PHOTO: © ATELIER SHALEV-GERZ_RETOUCHED

In 1979 the Harburg district of Hamburg initiated a process for a monument against fascism to counter the wave of Neo-Fascism in the city. Artist duo Esther Shavel Gerz and Jochen Gerz won the commission to create *The Monument Against Fascism,* and it was realized in 1986. A 12-meter-high column clad in lead with a one-meter-square perimeter was installed in a central square. The conceptual framework included an invitation to the residents of the city to engrave their names directly onto the surface of the monument with the metal pencil provided to ratify a common statement about fascism. When one surface was covered by inscriptions, the monument was progressively lowered into the ground, making new surfaces accessible. After seven years, only the top of the monument was visible; from the side of the structure, it was still also possible to glimpse the column. The monument is contextualized with a text giving the background to the project. Their idea sprung, according to their own account, from their first discussion about the competition when Jochen Gerz approached Esther Shavel Gerz with the proposal and she responded by asking why another monument was needed at all: "We have too many already. What we need is one that disappears."[1]

"WHEN ONE SURFACE WAS COVERED BY INSCRIPTIONS, THE MONUMENT WAS PROGRESSIVELY LOWERED INTO THE GROUND, MAKING NEW SURFACES ACCESSIBLE."

In the early 1990s, James Young coined the term "counter-monuments" regarding the German memorial culture of the time, in which the monument was doubted as an incitement of public memory.[2] Young describes a new type of memorial work, counter-monuments, which are in his words "brazen, painfully self-conscious memorial spaces conceived to challenge the very promise of their being".[3] Or as he frames it in another text: "Counter-monuments would be memorial spaces conceived to challenge the very premise of the monument – to be ephemeral rather than permanent, to deconstruct rather than displace memory, to be antiredemptive."[4] The monument by the Gerzes is one of the most prominent examples of Young's view: This monument "against" something gives way for a new conceptual understanding of what the monument both is and does.[5] It is an expression of what is considered important enough not only to remember, but also to make a mark against. Hence, it addresses a wrongdoing of the past and articulates a societal refusal of such ideology in the present. The fascist past is literally buried in a sense, yet the processes were tainted by neo-Nazi slogans on the monument, which testify to the impossibility of burying the past in any sense.[6] This monument, and how it is understood by Young, has since then come to shape the debate on monuments which do not follow a conservative nation-building tradition.[7]

YOUNG'S NOTION of a vernacular memory and its expression as a negative form first appears with Maya Lin's *Vietnam memorial* in Washington in 1981. Lin, at the time a 21-year-old architecture student, was commissioned through an open competition to create the monument, which turned out to be a decisive moment in the history of monuments. The memorial's triangular shape cuts into the ground, instead of rising as most traditional monuments would. Another of Young's prominent examples at the time is the memorial to the Nazi book burning, conceived by sculptor Micha Ullman in 1995. *The Empty Library*, or *Bibliothek*, take the negative form even further as it is a subterranean room lined with empty white bookshelves, beneath a glass plate in the pavement on the square where in 1933, the Nazis burned over 20 000 books by mainly Jewish and communist authors. The equivalent number of books would fit on the shelves of the memorial. Yet another, more contemporary example, that also show how the negative form has remained and developed, is Jonas Dahlberg's unrealized monument, *Memory Wound,* intended to commemorate the victims of the far-right massacre on Utøya in Norway in 2011. Young has also written on this monument, but the affinity between Dahlberg's proposal and Lin's memorial are striking to anyone.

Dahlberg's proposal caused strong reactions, and the project was eventually cancelled. The point of departure for an intense debate on the means of commemoration, and, above all, who needs to be confronted with this memory, was triggered by the design itself–a wound in the island. Dahlberg's proposal involved physically taking a slice out of a peninsula facing the island, thus creating a gap separating two land masses from each

PHOTO: © ATELIER SHALEV-GERZ_RETOUCHED

Esther Shalev-Gerz & Jochen Gerz, *Monument Against Fascism*, 1986, permanent installation Hamburg-Harburg, Germany.

other. A material and metaphorical wound that would convey a symbolic violence in that it could never heal. Therein, perhaps, lies one reason for the immense opposition to the work among those who live in the area, but also its artistic strength.

IN LIGHT OF THE IDEA of counter-monuments, and the concept of post-monuments that I propose for a certain kind of contemporary monuments, I briefly want to return to the Latin origin of the word monument, *monumentum*. It literally translates as "something that reminds" and is one of the ways in which monuments have been used historically: as reminders or celebrations of a nation´s or a person's deeds or glory. However, there are also other aspects at play in terms of figuration, symbolism, and space. Monuments are not to be equated to public sculpture, and one of the things that differentiate them is that the monument has a mission foreign to the essential openness of artworks. As I have discussed elsewhere, a monument performs something specific, while works of art can do infinitely many things.[8] On the one hand, the question of expectations regards both the monument's function from the point of view of the one commissioning it, and how it comes to be interpreted in the public space. On the other hand, there is an underlying constant negotiation of what a monument is expected to do and what it does. The commission of a monument is often slightly different than that of a permanent public artwork in terms of a designated memorializing theme, which should also be reflected in the artistic expression.

"[...] A MONUMENT PERFORMS SOMETHING SPECIFIC, WHILE WORKS OF ART CAN DO INFINITELY MANY THINGS."

In German there is a seemingly helpful distinction between *Denkmal* and *Manhmal*, where the former tends to refer to deeds and moments of glory, and the latter commemorates and memorializes victims of war and suffering. Yet in practice there is no such clear division. The monument for the Jewish victims in the Holocaust, for example, is called *Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas*, but also there are colloquial terms such as the *Holocaust-Mahnmal*. Such a conceptual division does not exist in Swedish or English, even if several concepts are in flux, i.e. the English terms "monuments", "memorials", and "memory art". The German *Gedenkstätte* or *Manhmal* implies a call to action, to remember rather than memorialize, and to mourn rather than to honor as the *Ehrenmal*. In Swedish there are concepts that translate as "memorial site"(minnesplats), "memorial mark" (minnesmärke), or "memory care" (minnesvård) with a similar implication of mourning, whereas "monument" remains an overarching category, spanning from statues of kings, commemorations of victims of natural disasters, to contemporary performative interventions labeled by artists or commissioners as "monuments". To call a work of art a monument inscribes it in a certain (art)history and implies a claim of a mission and motif of memorializing.

The purpose of the concept I suggest is to understand the processes around contemporary monuments dedicated to what are often labelled as "difficult pasts" such as a fascist legacy or as present expressions of authoritarianism or racism. The post-monument concept aims to capture what is at stake in the commemorative processes and what differentiates these processes from other monuments. It is related to the commissioning body's implied interest in what is commemorated, on the one hand, and the possibility of making amends on the other. This term is a tool or framework to analyze the monuments at hand and to capture similarities in their missions. Yet neither the concept nor the application does justice to the specific histories these monuments seek to commemorate. I reflect on how such monuments encompass a temporal continuation in the form of reparative work and might enhance a rupture, an end, and a new beginning all at once.

As I argue in an article focusing on post-monuments, they are defined by a conflict of continuity and rupture, where they both entail historical violence of oppression and racism, and simultaneously a wish from the commissioner to recover and offer repair, even though that which it seeks to commemorate is also a present issue.[9] Hence, the specificity of such monuments resides in a structural condition of conflict between what they commemorate and who commissions them. That is, in the flows and power relations present between what is commemorated, who is doing the commemorating, and by which means and expressions, and the temporal status of both the memorialized and the monument. They differ from a general notion of monuments in what they commemorate and by their processes, since they commemorate violence and oppression that is associated with shame rather than a collective grief or pride. What is crucial in this discussion is that these monuments are defined by their processes as much as their motifs (the aim to memorialize).

Rendering for the LBTQI+monumentet *Gläntan* (*The Glade*) at Esperantoplatsen, Gothenburg, Sweden, 2022.

IMAGE: NEW ORDER ARKITEKTUR AND CONNY KARLSSON LUNDGREN

A PRELIMINARY DEFINITION of post-monuments could include three main factors:

1. They commemorate a difficult heritage, a structural wrongdoing in the past that society has not yet come to terms with.
2. They are commissioned, funded, initiated, or built by the same governing body that was structurally, legally, or symbolically responsible for the oppression or wrongdoing that it wishes to commemorate.
3. They are conceptualized in a framework of vulnerability and repair.

THE COMMISSIONING of post-monuments facilitates structures for commemoration of difficult heritages, violent pasts, or oppression. As such, they are processes ruled by what they seek to transmit (the subject matter that the monument should commemorate), the effect of the commission to that transmission (for example, when a city frames a form of oppression as something of the past rather than the present) and the transmissive shape or form (the possible success or failure of the aesthetic expression).

The core of "post" is a question of temporality, which in the context of monuments and commemorations is complex. Firstly, all monuments are ruled by a temporal structure that is at least three-sided: the time that they commemorate, the time that they are built, and the temporal instances when they are encountered and interpreted by a viewer. This is evident in relation to the demands to remove statues, for example. Secondly, monuments tend to be perceived as a form of closure, hence a rupture between a before and an after, an ethical and temporal coming to terms with and moving beyond. Thirdly, monuments "fix" an historical event in time, they monumentalize what they seek to commemorate and imply a non-forgetting, which is also both ethical and temporal.

THE NOTION OF "post" stems from Marianne Hirsch's work on post-memory. Her term relates to how memory is intergenerational and proposed in an era of many "posts", as she herself recognizes, which we are no longer in. She first formulated the concept of post-memory in the early 1990s, and has developed it since. However, one can argue that "post" belong in the past context of "post-colony", "post-secular", "post-human" etc.,[10] whereas today it is more relevant to understand our era in terms of "de-" or "un-", of "decoloniality", and of "unlearning", for example. Yet Hirsch insists that post-memory both shares features with other "posts" such as:

> **their belatedness, aligning itself with the practice of citation and mediation that characterize them, marking a particular end-of-century/turn-of-century moment of looking backward rather than ahead and of defining the present in relation to a troubled past rather than initiating new paradigms and that it is not a mere method or idea but a "structure" of inter- and trans-generational transmission of traumatic knowledge and experience.**[11]

If monuments in a general sense are understood as simultaneously aimed toward both past and future, these monuments have a more complex temporal structure. Post-monuments might be understood as durational and/or open-ended. Further, as discussed above, the "post" does not demark a move from one thing to another but a relation between pasts and presents, which is negotiated in terms of continuity and ruptures. These monuments are also "post" in relation to the commissioning body, since many of these the initiatives do not come from "above" as in conventional processes of public monuments, but are formed by activists or civil society. The "post" should not be understood as designating a specific time (like post-Soviet, postwar, postmodern etc.) but as a state of contingency, of being defined by a past that one also wishes to take a stand against and be responsible for.

They are embedded in a framework of vulnerability and repair as an attempt of societies to respond to a violent past. This

framework is temporally based and holds unstable positions and acts. To take the notion of vulnerability seriously, a temporal negotiation and reevaluation must remain central. It is a situated knowledge, and the threshold allows for new or other situations. This ties into what contemporary monuments are expected to do, and to label them as post-monuments is an attempt to expose this *doing*. Hence, labeling a sort of contemporary monuments as "post" does not indicate primarily that they temporally succeed some other type of monument, but that they imply in their conceptual formulation that a particular episode of oppression or a violent past is now part of a history that calls for a response.

The concept above all addresses the history of monuments, their subject matter, and forms of aesthetic expression. Hence, not as after monuments, but monuments that are "post" in the sense discussed above. I suggest a "post" rather than "counter" or "para" against the backdrop of Young's term countermonuments and the recent suggestion by Nora Sternfeld as she proposed another concept, the "para-monument". She describes how her and Young's concepts differ, since the para-monument does not address the idea of a monument negatively but appropriates the form and discourse of the powerful monuments in order to turn these properties against them – hence it is neither "against" the monument nor defined by it.[12] For her, a para-monument is dominated by the quality of being near, next to, and going along with, both spatially and temporally speaking. Thus, her concept is in stark contrast to Young's memorial spaces which have a self-refuting quality embedded in them, both conceptually and aesthetically. The notion of post-monuments draws on and departs from these two notions in the sense that it is nor counter and nor going along with. However, all three concepts share a sort of foundational reflexivity.

I CAME TO THIS concept as a response to the wave of new monuments that can currently be observed in Sweden; both in what is being monumentalized, and in how it is being done. These monuments can be read against a backdrop of the past decade's international debate on monuments, from the 2015 *Rhodes Must Fall* movement in South Africa, demanding the removal of statues of Apartheid leaders, to the toppling of statues in connection to *Black Lives Matter* in 2020. Although in Sweden similar demands never reached beyond the culture section of the daily press, these current monuments can be seen as directly linked to these movements; not only in what they memorialize, but also in terms of how the processes are considered and conceived. That is, how and by whom the monuments are initiated, commissioned, and potentially realized. The current manifold commissions of monuments in Sweden can thus be seen as a reaction upon the topics and demands raised and as a proactive act towards possible demands in the future. Among the monuments that are discussed, produced or recently inaugurated in Sweden are a monument over Swedish Colonialism (process between 2019–2021, discontinued), a LGBTQI+ monument in Gothenburg (inaugurated November 2023), an antiracist monument in Malmö (will be inaugurated 2025), a Seyfo memorial to the Assyrian genocide of 1915 (process between 2019–2022, discontinued), several monuments to war veterans (from 2019-present), a handful of monuments honoring the Roma population (the most ambitious one inaugurated in Gothenburg 2020) and one celebrating 100 years of Swedish democracy (inaugurated June 2022).

ALTHOUGH THE EXAMPLES range from traditional monuments to experimental modes of remembrance in terms of theme, form, and conceptualization, they share a feature of shedding light on events and histories previously not present in public spaces. The oppressions and discriminations as thematized in these monuments should be considered on a structural level. The question of what it means to create such monuments must be reiterated. At the time of writing, it is one month before the dedication of the LGBTQI+ monument, *The Glade,* by Conny Karlsson Lundgren. It might pass mainly unnoticed and become part of the invisibility of an everyday public landscape or it might cause an intense debate, the two contrary poles ruling the discourse and faith of public art. But will it do something more? Will it offer some kind of apology for those who suffered under Swedish discriminatory laws or mark for contemporary citizens that such oppression is a matter of the past? Will it become a stage and a site to hang out as the design suggests? Hence, what I have aimed to show is that post-monuments like this should evoke a future-oriented rectification, repair, response or even a societal change. ■

Rebecka Katz Thor is a Researcher at the Department for Aesthetics Culture and Education, Södertörn University.

references

1 James E. Young, *Esther Shalev-Gerz [between telling and listening = entre l'écoute et la parole], ed.* Nicole Schweizer (Zurich: JRP 2012), 93.

2 James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1993), 30.

3 Young, *The Texture of Memory,* 27.

4 Noam Lupu, "Memory Vanished, Absent, and Confined: The Countermemorial Project in 1980s and 1990s Germany", in_*History & Memory* 15:2 (2003): 130–164.

5 Lupu, Memory Vanished 30, 34, 37

6 Thomas Stubblefield, "Do Disappearing Monuments Simply Disappear? The Counter-Monument in Revision", in *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism*, 8:2 (2011), 4.

7 Thomas Stubblefield, "Do Disappearing Monuments Simply Disappear?, 1.

8 Rebecka Katz Thor, "Monumental Tiredness – The Time and Function of Monuments", in *Public Memory, Public Art – Reflections On Monuments And Memorial Art Today*, ed. A. Enqvist, K. Modig, R. Katz Thor, J. Zawieja (Stockholm: Art & Theory Publishing 2022), 20.

9 The discussion on Post-monuments was first published in: Rebecka, Katz Thor, "Post-monuments? A Discontinued Project, A Current and A Prospective Monument In Sweden, *Politeja* 84 (2023).

10 Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press 2012), 5.

11 Marianne Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory", *Poetics Today* 29:1 (2008). 106

12 Nora Sternfeld, Counter-monument and Para-monument: Politics and Re-membrance in Public Space, in *Ort der Unruhe/Place of Unrest*, ed. E, Logar (Klagenfurt/Celovec: Drava 2019), 52–61.

POST-COMMUNIST MEMORY IN THE NEGATIVE

by **Tora Lane**

abstract

This essay takes the novel *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* by Dubravka Ugrešić as a starting point for a discussion of why the notion of a post-Yugoslav or post-communist cultural memory seems to be a contradiction in terms. The manifest impossibility of forming a collective post-Yugoslav memory provokes a reflection on how cultural and collective memory has been used in post-communist Eastern Europe to historify the communist past, which further has served the revival of a nationalist agenda. Ugrešić offers a counter memory, if we understand the term from Foucault as something that escapes the forming of identities. Finally, I suggest the notion of negative memory, as introduced by Reinhardt Koselleck, as a more apposite term for approaching memory in the post-communist sphere and in the unfolding catastrophes of the modern world.

KEYWORDS: Dubravka Ugrešić, Memory novel, memory politics, counter memory, negative memory.

In *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender* (1997), which belongs to the genre of the memory novel, Dubravka Ugrešić reflects on "the condition called exile", as the Russian poet Joseph Brodsky termed it, through different auto-fictional stories from her personal experience of the fall of communism and its aftermath in the 1990s. Yet the exilic pathos that we found amongst writers in exile from the communist regime such as Brodsky or Milosz is downplayed, if not to say inverted in the novel. Ugrešić did not escape from communism, but from the ethno-nationalism of post-communist Croatia. And there is no sense of retrieval of a lost home through memory, no nostalgia, because estrangement is everywhere – in the present and in the past, in the West and in the East. If there ever was a homeland for the writer and main character, it was Socialist Yugoslavia, but how to relate to that historically existing political construction and its loss remains unclear. In this ambivalence, the novel opens the question of what sense of meaning there is to be held from the past and the present in the context of the fall of communism. And with Ugrešić we can ask the question whether there actually can be a cultural memory of the communist states, not only because there is no communist state any longer, and because the memory of this recent past is being silenced, but also because the very idea of an enduring cultural or collective memory is contrary to a notion of universalist communality that lives on in the post-communist legacy.

Dubravka Ugrešić.

Framing the lack of a memory

The title, *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender*, refers in direct terms to a museum dedicated to the surrender of Nazi Germany in 1945, but as the novel proceeds we begin to suspect that it indirectly bespeaks what we can understand as the unconditional surrender of communism in Eastern Europe. Through memory fragments, photographs, and narratives of the lives of people that the post-Yugoslav writer has met, she gropes for what they seem to be saying to her about the experience of the communist past, the transition to the liberal capitalist West and the rebirth of the Balkan nation states. In its rather inconspicuous attempt to understand, the novel constitutes a patchwork of fragmented memories evoked in the form of diary entries, ruminations on photographs, or simply reflections on different themes and shorter stories, and it never becomes clear what all these stories really can say to us, together or apart. The different pieces are to be read, as the author writes, like the belly of the sea elephant at Berlin Zoo that had swallowed different pieces of junk, with a narrative woven by chance

DUBRAVKA UGREŠIĆ

MAURICE HALBWACHS

JAN & ALEIDA ASSMANN

HANNAH ARENDT

ASTRID ERLL

REINHARDT KOSELLECK

SUSAN SONTAG

MICHEL FOUCAULT

OSIP MANDELSTAM

and not by any particular "meaningful coordinates of historical reconstruction".[1] And as a comment on the form of this memory work, aligning her memory work with the avantgarde, Ugrešić quotes Shklovsky who wrote: "I do not want to be inventive. I do not want to construct a plot. I will write about things and thoughts. Like in a collection of quotations."[2] The novel collects moments, past and present, but there is no collectivity around which these dispersed notes can be centered. In fact, it is as much the urge to collect these snapshots as their dispersion that gives the novel its tone. And while dispersion means broken and refracted light, it is a word which has the same roots as diaspora. Just as this dispersion has no original light to trace back from the scattering, it has neither an "original" people to be retrieved in exile, nor a past as a place of meaning. In the novel, we are always and everywhere already clouded in the disastrous smog of modernity, and what remains is to look into this dispersion for what it tells us of the past and the present.

IN FACT, THE LACK OF a collectivity and a center around which to gather the memories, impressions and expressions characterizes this novel in the vision of the historical moment that it conveys. Through the dispersed prism of a timid everydayness the writer looks with a Janus face at the crossroads of the historical line or turning point of 1989/1991 both into the *before* of communism, and into the *after* of a whirlwind of liberal democracy and national re-awakening. Ugrešić is reluctant to adhere to political narratives telling of the unambiguous greatness of this moment of freedom and democracy in the unconditional surrender of communism, making the new nation states in the new Europe the only way to a bright future. In the essay "Ostalgia" in *Nobody's Home*, a collection of essays from 2005/2007, she writes:

> **The business of remembering sometimes resembles a resistance movement, and those who do the remembering become like guerrilla warriors. There is an official version of history, espoused by the official institutions, and the professional watch guards of history who attend it. There is a personal version, one that we see to ourselves. We catalogue our lives in family albums. But there is also a third history, an alternative one, the intimate history of the everyday life we have lived. This one receives the least attention. The archeology of everyday life is the sort of thing that only oddballs care about. Yet it is the history of the commonplace which is the custodian of our most intimate recollection, more precise than any official version, and more exact and warmer than the one bound up in those family albums. For the secret of remembering is not conserved in a regional museum or a photo album, but in that little cookie, the *madeleine*, that Proust, the master writer, knew so well of.**[3]

She therefore goes to listen to how it is mirrored in the dissonating private intimate experiences of people unable to find a home or meaning for themselves in this world of the after. It is also in this panoply of lives and memories that she comes across a question of the relation between the collection of memories and collectivity in the post-communist world, which we can read in the following conversation taking place amongst former citizens of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia at an exhibition at the Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin:

> **'We'll never have a museum like this', says Zoran.**
> **'How could we when the country has disappeared', says Mira.**
> **'That's why we're all walking museum pieces ...', says Zoran.**
> **'But if the country has disappeared, then so has collective memory. If the objects that surrounded us have disappeared, then so has memory of the everyday life that we lived. And besides, memory of the former country is tacitly forbidden. And when the ban is one day lifted, everyone will forget ... There'll be nothing left to remember', I say.**
> **'Then everyone will remember something that never existed ...', says Mira.**[4]

It is typical of this novel and of Ugrešić's way of writing that this casual private conversation taking place amongst migrants contains a key to understanding the relation between history, memory, and politics in post-communist times as well as to the novel and the writer's manifest unwillingness to organize the memories collected in the book into "historical coordinates". The people speaking are migrants from the Balkans, that is, former citizens of Yugoslavia. When they say that they can have no national historical museum like the *Deutsches Museum*, in which objects from everyday life are displayed, they deplore the lack of a museum for the former Yugoslavia which is the gathering point of their history and their memories. The country is no more, that is, there is no longer any socialist Yugoslavia, and the world and the objects that constituted it disappear. The conversation mentions the effective silencing of the memory of socialist Yugoslavia in several Balkan states, or what in official circles today in Croatia is still often referred to as "the former state". And it can be added that the almost revisionist relation to the communist past in the newborn nation states was one of the reasons why Ugrešić, who called herself post-national, left Croatia in 1993.[5] But more so, there are people of a past collectivity who remember this world, but while there is no place and no collective in the present for whom the memories of the former Balkan communist state are being preserved, there is also no enduring collective memory. The collective popular memory of Yugoslavia, the excerpt seems to tell us, perishes with the state that historically sustained its existence. And in turn, the Yugoslav collective exists only as a memory of a people that is no longer.

UGREŠIĆ IS ARDENT in her reluctance to carve out a space, an identity, or a narrative for the dispersed articulations of the experience of the recent past. And for the writer Ugrešić, the question forms itself as the question how it is possible in writing to *collect* a story out of memory fragments, when the collective this

relates to is deemed to be in the past as a failed experiment under a regime of pitiful lies. And while doing so, she distinguishes herself from the general scheme of post-communist memory writing, in which a sense of a truer other reality can be opposed to the lies of the political regime through the memory work performed in exilic writing. Ugrešić's loss of a past and present collective leads her to thematize the relation between the present and the past, in the sense that we can see how the making presence of this past in the present shapes the understanding of the past, and also in turn, how the understanding of the past shapes its making of the present.

Thus the question of exile and exile writing also comes into play, since exile also seems to presume a place of meaning that you can return to in reminiscence. Since the country where Ugrešić lived and grew up, Yugoslavia, not only does not exist anymore, but even its existence is denied as a historical parenthesis, often treated as nothing but a political, ideological construct in the face of what is often portrayed as a restored (national and nationalist) history, her exile is an exile from nowhere, with no country or collective to go back to, and with no collective subject to harbor these memories. And while there can be no Yugoslav collective memory, her memories are as dispersed as the country from which she is not in exile, which is no longer, and for which the memories can have no meaning. Just as her exilic relation to her country stretches into the present (she is in exile not from a lost Russia or Poland, as a Nabokov, a Milosz, or even as in could be imagined in the poems of Brodsky, but from the Yugoslavia that exists no longer and from actually existing Croatia – and here there is no nostalgia), there is also no clear demarcation between the past and the present in the novel. Ugrešić invites us to understand memory through her dispersed prism where there is no relation between the past and the future, just as there is no real difference between anywhere and anytime. She shows that while the past does *not* form itself into a locus of a particular historical memory, the present never acquires any coordinates or contours.

Cultural memory and national reawakening

The moment in the museum is not only crucial for the novel and for what it says about the memory of former Yugoslavia, but it also has wide-ranging implications for a possible critique of the concepts of collective or cultural memory. It indicates that there indeed is a memory of Yugoslavia that is collective or cultural in the sense that it refers to a collective or cultural experience and meaning-making of the past, although it cannot adhere to the concept of collective memory. In other words, there is something in the notion of collective in collective memory, or, for that matter, in the notion of culture in cultural memory, which excludes not only the memory of former Yugoslavia, but also, by extension, certain post-communist memories of the communist era. And it seems that we can see *via negativa* that what prevents us from speaking of a Yugoslav collective memory is the notion of an enduring collective. The Yugoslav collective implies reference to the collective experience of a political construct, an expression of Yugo-nostalgia. A cultural memory of Yugoslavia would be a memory that is connected not only with a no longer existing state but also with the notion of collectivity in communism, which was not founded on national or ethnic identity, but on an idea of the universal communality of the working people. Because in turn, like Ugrešić with her critique of the cultural memory politics of the newborn nation states, would not the collective memory of these nation states also imply a political construct? Can there be a Croatian cultural memory as long as there is a Croatian state? And what enduring collective or culture can there be if it is not sustained by an equally enduring political idea of the collective or the culture? Because what the conversation tells us in the end is precisely this – a collective memory can only live on as long as the idea of this collective does too. In the countries of the former Yugoslavia, there is no Yugoslav collective any longer, but amongst people on the Balkans there are memories of collective and collectivity, that in a certain sense lives on through them, but as an idea appears irretrievably lost to history. And this ambiguity of the collective memory not only concerns Croatia and other countries of the former Yugoslavia, but with some modifications, much of the post-communist world.

WITHIN THE DISCIPLINE of memory, the notion of collective memory as introduced by Maurice Halbwachs has been effectively criticized precisely for implying an essentializing notion of collective. Cultural memory was introduced by Jan and Aleida Assmann as a further development of the term, since it arguably does not link shared forms and places of memory to an existing collective, but can instead open to negotiating the articulations of memory of different local, regional, national or transnational groups within the wider sphere of culture. In the introduction to the handbook *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* (2008), Astrid Erll proposes to consider cultural memory as an umbrella term denoting: "the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts".[6] The definition is very broad and runs the risk of watering down the term, blurring it in several cases with that of history. Jan Assman, however, is more specific in his contribution to the handbook, and he gives the following definition of "Communicative and Cultural Memory": "Memory is the faculty that enables us to form an awareness of selfhood (identity), both on the personal and on the collective level."[7] This definition adheres broadly to Halbwachs' thesis and indeed preserves the central idea of the collective. Thus, one may ask, as the passage from Ugrešić's *Museum of unconditional surrender* suggests, whether this definition does not exclude forms of memory that work counter to the formation of an awareness of identity, especially when there are conflicts between the personal and the collective, the past and the present. In particular, it seems crucial not to exclude the memory of a culture, a collective, an identity or a selfhood, which for different reasons seems to make no sense in the present. In other words, like collective memory, cultural memory presupposes a group or groups that is/ are acknowledged as such and separately or jointly can formulate and advocate a historical experience. This also concerns the interplay between past and present. In another contribution

to the theory of memory, Assman asserts that cultural memory is the "contemporized past",[8] but this also presupposes that there is someone for whom and by whom the past is being contemporized. As collective memory presumes a *collective* that endures over time, it also makes *memory* into a relation between the past and the present, where the past can be given a sensical form, a storage of established facts about the past, or meaningful artefacts that constitute a sanctuary for the survival of (a) culture, that in turn can give a manipulable meaning to our today. Personal, social and cultural memory are not circles with natural transitions and interrelations, but rather conflictual spheres. In social, collective and cultural memory, we must still always face the edifice of something that was, and this can in several respects be contrasted to the private memory that we meet in Proust or Nabokov, when something is brought into the present in the act of remembering (what in German is thought of as *Erinnerung* – a reawakening of what was within the person who remembers).[9]

One can paraphrase Hannah Arendt's sentence about the paradox of human rights to say that cultural memory is accorded only to those who already have a cultural identity. It was in the 1949 article "The Rights of Man: What are They?", later included in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, that Arendt argued that the declaration of human rights requires states to protect inalienable human rights, although these rights are enjoyed only by the citizens of national states.[10] And by analogy, memory is understood as a human capacity, and cultural memory belongs to everyone and can be shared by everyone, whereas it needs a subject with a cultural identity to negotiate an understanding of history. And, in other words, one may further argue that the notion of collective or cultural memory sustains the idea of the collective or cultural subject, just as in turn, the collective sustains the idea of memory. But can we then not also take this further and ask if there is not a historico-conceptual linkage between the memory turn and the return of nationalism and fascism today?[11] As collective or cultural memory relates to, restitutes or preserves an essentializing idea of a culture or of a collective, it also derives a sense of meaning from the past of a culture or collective over against the dispersal of peoples and groups or even over against the destitution of meaning, history, collective and culture in our today. In his thesis on collective memory, Maurice Halbwachs argued that collectivity is needed for private or personal memories to become intelligible, to acquire meaning or make sense. The primary scene of memory is a young homeless girl without a family and of distant origins, who, dissociated from her past, has difficulties in making sense of her own recollections. Memory, Halbwachs infers, is dependent upon a *milieu* in which the personal recollections are communicated, materialized, and sustained by others.[12] If we extend this notion to culture, is it not so that cultural memory also is understood as the locus where historical experience can acquire meaning and make sense? Moreover, is it not so that therefore, in turn, the notion of collective memory works to preserve an idea of a collective or culture over time as a collective or culture that is given in history? Can we then not say that collective memory contributes to a conserving and perhaps even essentializing perception of the collective and of culture that would redeem this collective against the dispersed and dissipating workings of history, against modernity and nihilism? And would this not be true as much for the sense of a Croatian, a Swedish or a European cultural memory?

SUSAN SONTAG STATED in *Regarding the Pain of Others* that there is no collective memory, there is only collective instruction.[13] The Bulgarian writer Georgi Gospodinov, who won the Booker prize for his novel *Time Shelter*, commented that the novel is about the "militarization of memory" in today's Eastern Europe. As he states, previously the Communist Party explored ideas of the future; now the populists are using bright visions of the past. This tendency to form a political utopia out of the past can also be related to the memory discourse today, understood with Jan Assman as the way in which identity is established out of the relation to the past. And, needless to say, a vision of the future derived from a bright national past is an inherent feature of nationalist or fascist discourses. And yet, the whole (political) re-nationalized identity of post-war Europe is built on a condemnation of its past, a condemnation, which for several reasons was extended in a problematic way to the communist past of Eastern Europe. And what appears particularly problematic with regards to memory discourse is how the communist past in several countries was erased from popular memory, and how the no longer and no more communist was formed into a positive identity.

"PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL MEMORY ARE NOT CIRCLES WITH NATURAL TRANSITIONS AND INTERRELATIONS, BUT RATHER CONFLICTUAL SPHERES."

Indeed, there seems to be a politics to cultural memory, which concerns not only the use of memory for political purposes, but the very concept of cultural memory itself. Cultural memory means the formulation of, or the historical experience of, a group or a people that endures over time because of the relation between the history and the identity of this group and therefore can "contemporize the past". This becomes particularly apparent in the case of Eastern Europe, and it is the reason why memory politics has been effectively used by a national agenda for decades in Croatia and in other former communist states. In the CBEES State of the Region Report 2019, *Constructions and Instrumentalizations of the Past*, Barbara Törnquist-Plewa showed how the boom of cultural memory in Eastern Europe in the early 2000s became intimately linked to the ideology of the reborn nation states from under the yoke of communism.[14] It is therefore no wonder that memory today goes hand in hand with nationalism. Nationalism in Eastern Europe feeds on anti-communism, and memories of communist repres-

sion, and the notion of collective memory feeds the return of the idea of a national collective that had been suppressed but endured over time.

Counter-memory and the political historification of the present

But what other memory can there be? One could perhaps argue that Ugrešić writes a counter-memory, but then we must not understand this concept as it is often used today to denote a memory activism that counters falsified or otherwise distorted official historical memory narratives.[15] Ugrešić is not attempting to compose a different history of Yugoslavia, the fall of communism and the transition with the war out of the articulation of a different collective experience. The experience she seeks to articulate is that of a people that once belonged to Yugoslavia, and that now stands without their former country, unable to articulate their experience through memory. In other words, the movement of her writing does not go back to history, but seems rather to open up a different perspective on recent events and their relation to the present. This past is not treated as the store house of collective facts and artefacts that can be brought into meaning for the present; instead, she shows how the relation between the past and present are confused – from the perspective of the present. And yet there is a sense in which Ugrešić's memory can be understood as counter-memory, if we go back to Foucault's original definition in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice* as a memory that would "inhibit the formation of any form of identity".[16] Foucault's notion of counter-memory establishes a method of retrieval of an understanding of the very historicity of knowledge,[17] through recalling and remembering also how detours and derailings, or, as Foucault writes, dispersion and dissipation, have formed a history that we want to understand as the linear progression of the same, measured by the criteria of truth. Foucault's counter-memory cannot serve to "contemporize the past" and establish cultural identities over time. It must have no final aim, serve no purpose, and establish no truths. Its purpose is instead to unravel the mechanisms behind the establishment of truth through historical knowledge. But what is collective or cultural memory if not the establishment of a collective or cultural identity out of a shared experience of significant past events, since it concerns articulations of the significance of historical events for a certain group?

"SHE SHOWS HOW THE RELATION BETWEEN THE PAST AND PRESENT ARE CONFUSED — FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE PRESENT."

NOW, UGREŠIĆ DOES NOT have a genealogical approach in the Foucauldian sense of a methodology for a critique of metaphysics derived from historical knowledge. Yet with Foucault we can speak about a counter-memory that does not serve to alter the understanding of the 'facts' or 'truths' about history, but instead about a memory, which in its multiplicity and "dissipation"[18] is advocated by no one, serves no purpose, but instead invites us to critically approach the historical background to concepts of continuity and linearity. And Ugrešić takes us to the memory of a critical point in recent history, not to point at a different history, but at how the memory discourse is at work in the very formation of the memory of former Yugoslavia and how it reinforces the sense of dispersion and dissipation. For the people that she meets and for herself, the experience of the fall of communism seems to lie as much or even less in the imperative to deal with the past and to uncover the lies of the communist regime, than in the consequent dispersion of a people that in the economic hardships of the transition, the wars, and in a second rate European migrant status, were left with only the history of a temporary and flawed political identity to fall back upon, and the identities, continuities and linearities construed in post-communism as memory from a political relation to the history preceding communism.

What is more, the counter-memory at stake in the novels of Ugrešić and in general in the experience of the fall of communism is not that of a distant past that can offer us a genealogical perspective of the historicity of certain metaphysical concepts, but instead a near past, of immediate relevance for the understanding of our today, especially from a political viewpoint. And what is interesting in the politics of the memory of communism, which should include the politics of the memory of its fall and its aftermath, is how it mobilizes memory for political purposes. Just as the memory of a more distant past is used as a resource for the encouragement of nationalist sentiments, so is the memory of the near past under communism made into a negative other. And yet the communist past is not only a political system that history judged to be flawed, but also an integrated part of modern history, with respect to institutions as well as to the experience of the people and to the lessons that we can draw from it. And the question that Ugrešić poses is, at heart, how, in the midst of a time that through a discourse on cultural memory is forming an identity from its relation to the past, we can grasp a memory of that which belongs to the negative in history writing. And by analogy, we may also ask what happens to individual memory when it enters into a relation with historical political judgements, since in the case of Yugoslavia, the historical judgement about communism (=the judgement about the history of communism) is at the same time in question and not in question in this memory. And furthermore, can we retain an idea of counter-memory in the sense that Foucault intended when speaking of the experience of communist Eastern Europe beyond the way that the establishment of political truths about history, and/ or historical truths about politics, has come to serve the formation of current national and ethnic identities in the region?

THE HISTORICAL JUDGEMENT of communism is directly related to that of Nazism. According to the *European Parliament Resolution of 2019 on the importance of European remembrance for the future*

COUNTER MEMORY

COLLECTIVE MEMORY

NEGATIVE MEMORY

POST-MEMORY

MEMORY NOVEL

CULTURAL MEMORY

HISTORICAL MEMORY

MEMORY WORK

of Europe, the totalitarian regimes termed as "communist, Nazi and other dictatorships"[19] are placed on an equal footing in relation to crimes in history. Remembrance here plays the role of the arbiter of history with direct political consequences: "whereas after the defeat of the Nazi regime and the end of the Second World War, some European countries were able to rebuild and embark on a process of reconciliation, while other European countries remained under dictatorships – some under direct Soviet occupation or influence – for half a century and continued to be deprived of freedom, sovereignty, dignity, human rights and socio-economic development".[20] The statement on memory is not entirely neutral. Although it is indisputable that in several respects the communist system was thoroughly insufficient and lagged behind that of the liberal capitalist West, stating that the countries of Eastern Europe were *deprived* of socio-economic development can be contested. In other words, a "European" statement about recent "European" history in terms of "European" remembrance is made into a political statement about the fundamental rights of European member states and their citizens in the present that also means the establishment of a "European" identity derived from its history, formulated by the European Union.

Moreover, the statement implies not only a "contemporization of the past", but also a historification of the present. After the fall of communism, the judgement of a recent and still ongoing past is being rationalized and turned into the past, according to the process described by Reinhardt Koselleck in *Sediments of Time*:

> **[...] every history that we analyze as something completed in the past is a *logificatio post festum* [rationalization after the fact]. This necessarily presupposes, however, that every history is *in actu* without meaning [*sinnlos*]. The irony or paradox of this idea is thus that actual history first reveals its truth when it is over. In other words, the truth of a history is always a truth *ex post*. It first presents itself when it no longer exists. The past must become past for us before it can reveal its historical truth.**[21]

The present has been turned into history to serve as a political principle for the EU in its formation of a European (political) identity. The fall of communism was followed by a rapid and politically sanctioned transition to democracy and free market economies, administered by the reborn Eastern European national states. It is questionable whether the past in all its respects had really become a past in the sense that it could reveal its historical truth, if indeed such a truth can be revealed. Instead, I would argue that the recent past was made into distant past by means of a historical truth that was motivated by the need to condemn totalitarianism. The communist past was extracted from the general path of European modernity as erroneous, although in several countries, its institutions or the legacy of them were still important. Moreover, the reaction of peoples of Eastern Europe to the transition was also politically monitored through the memory discourse. However, if we consider the problems of communism and totalitarianism in relation to the nature of modernization and modern politics, as indeed Hannah Arendt invites us to do, we ought instead to ask the question what the history of modern communism tells us about the present rather than condemn it to the past.

Negative memory

The purpose of this article is not at all to restitute and redeem the memory of communism, but to find concepts to approach and understand the historical and political circumstances surrounding memory and remembering in the post-communist sphere. And instead of turning the condemnation of the past into a positive identity through the discourse of culture memory, Koselleck's term "negative memory" in *Sediments of Time* may offer a perspective on modern history that is more apposite to the experience of having lived under communism. Koselleck was highly critical of the concept of collective or cultural memory, while sensitive to the difference between the lived experience of an event and the meaning attached to that event in hindsight as the historical memory of it, and historical memory here understood in German not as *Erinnerung* but *Gedächtnis*. Memory (*Erinnerung*) cannot, he argues in *Sediments of Time*, establish a meaning in hindsight, while remaining faithful to how something was lived and would be remembered in a personal manner. It is when memory becomes *Gedächtnis* that it forms a part of history writing – as a way of according a certain meaning to a historical event, and as a part of history, memory becomes a crucial tool for historical manipulations. And *Gedächtnis* stands in a problematic relation to *Erinnering*, not only today, but especially in times of totalitarianism, mass war and mass destruction. With the example of Stalingrad, Koselleck argues that on the German as well as on the Russian side, a rationale has been accorded to its memorialization, but perhaps, he suggests, there is a profound absurdity or meaninglessness to what took place, a meaninglessness that also needs to be accorded for in memorialization. The rationale ascribed to the battle of Stalingrad as the turning point of the war may, he argues, be contested by saying that the war was already lost from the start,[22] but what does that argument do to the meaning of the experience of each of the millions of soldiers who suffered and died?

THE QUESTION ABOUT the historical meaning of Stalingrad opens up the more fundamental issue for Koselleck's discussion of negative memory, namely, the Nazi crimes and the Holocaust. Negative memory is that which in its atrocity cannot be remembered by those who experienced it (as for instance, genocide) and yet needs to be accounted for by history.[23] This also poses a problem of meaning, since remembering (memory, personal or collective) is the meaning making of an experience of the past. The extermination of the Jewish people can never be given any meaning; it is instead an immense meaninglessness that stares at us from out of the camps. Therefore, he concludes, there is a negative memory vis-à-vis history that places us in front of an aporia, because, as Koselleck writes about the Nazi crimes: "Moral judgement is necessary but it does not alter the past".[24] Thus, we

can understand the negativity of this memory as the impossibility of remembering, not only in the sense of not having the experience that is being remembered, but also as the impossibility of bringing this past into a meaningful relation to the present and presence, although we live with the imperative not to forget this historical event that goes beyond the moral ability to remember. The past speaks only for itself, answers only to itself, while we are only left staring at its terrifying consequences. No monument can redeem this. There is no representation and no moral distinction that can help us, but we must rather stay with or by the aporia. He writes: "We can thus recognize that aesthetic solutions are possible if they thematize unanswerability itself..." or further, "This means an aporia, namely the impossibility of generating meaning through memorialization, itself becomes an aesthetic theme." (p. 248) In other words, the negativity of the memory can only be brought into meaning in the present if we somehow recognize ourselves in the inability to form a memory or "contemporize the past" in the sense that we cannot abstract any meaning from the Nazi crimes. Reinhardt Koselleck insisted that as memory remembers the horrors of the 20th century and further, it must bring to our contemporary world a question of the meaning of events that threaten us with an immense and ultimate meaninglessness. The notion of a collective remembering seems to redeem us from a sense of meaninglessness, irrationality or even from the terrifying consequences of the present, and yet, it seems to keep us caught in the objectification of the present into the past.

There is a negative memory of communism just as there is a negative memory of Nazism in the sense that there is an immense number of people who cannot speak about the crimes committed to them. Moreover, the sheer immensity of this number points to a meaninglessness that no memory can account for. But the notion of negative memory can also open up a way of dealing with the memory of people who lived and experienced communism, such as Ugrešić and the people she met. If Koselleck's approach mainly deals with the aesthetic expression of the impossibility of making sense of the past because of its utter meaninglessness, or its utter atrocity, Ugrešić's novel brings the recent past into the question of the relation, and how meaning making of the historified recent past in our today meets present experiences of the present. But also in relation to Ugrešić, the notion of negative memory could open a space for an articulation of an experience that cannot be formulated or advocated through any collective.

One could therefore hope that it would open the articulations of this past beyond its historification to really form a countermemory to the establishment of historical truths about the present. Because what communism really says about modern history may perhaps still appear for us. Again, modern history, in its drive towards the future, appears to be obsessed with leaving things behind through a process of historification. This is also a process that memory making today needs to reckon with.

Conclusive reflections

I would like to conclude with reference to the Russian poet, Osip Mandelstam, who made the question of history and time into a central theme of his poetry. With the experience of the Russian revolution, he again and again addresses the impossibility of remembering oneself as the inability to be in and with one's time, to be contemporaneous in a world that repeatedly establishes historical truths and narratives of collective or cultural meaning. In a poem titled with a date, *1 January 1924*, that is, titled with time, Mandelstam writes in pain and despair:

> **It's such a pain to look for a lost word,**
> **To raise sickly eyelids, and when**
> **One's blood is thickened with quicklime,**
> **To gather night herbs for a foreign tribe.**
>
> **The age. The layer of lime thickens in sick son's blood.**
> **Moscow sleeps like a wooden chest.**
> **There is nowhere to turn from a tyrannous age...**
> **Like in old days, the snow smells of apples.**[25]

Here past and present are intertwined in a gordian knot of meanings impossible to generate and yet present, memories established and yet impossible to be remembered. The time is a master-age, from which you cannot run nor hide, which means that you can also neither remember, nor forget. Thus, time shows itself as a dictator to a world that appears as a valley of death, because all meanings are corrupted, and, as if polluted, smogged, and only the snow smells of old apples. To reduce the time that Mandelstam steps down into as to Hades or Petropolis as that of post-revolutionary communist Russia is, I believe, yet another fetishization of the past in the name of collective memory. I would say that it is the contemporary world where meaninglessness haunts us and meaning seduces us at every step. Mandelstam speaks to us about the age through the age as an Orphic singer who attempts to remember how to speak of this time, while painfully aware that the words for it may be lost. ☒

Tora Lane holds a PhD in Russian Literature, and is a project researcher at Södertörn University and Senior Lecture at the Department for Slavic Studies at Stockholm University.

references

1 Dubravka Ugrešić, *The Museum of Unconditional Surrender,* transl. by Cecilia Hawkesworth, (London: Phoenix House, 1998), 1.

2 Ibid.

3 Dubravka Ugrešić, "Ostalgia" in *Nobody's home. Essays,* transl. Ellen Elias Bursac, (London: Telegram, 2007), 27.

4 Ugrešić, *Museum of Unconditional Surrender*, 243f.

5 For a comprehensive account and an in-depth reading of the theme of exile and memory in the ruins of East Europe, see David Williams, "The Citizen of a Ruin" in *Writing Postcommunism. Towards a Literature of the East European Ruins*. 33–69.

6 Astrid Erll, "Cultural Memory Studies: An Introduction" in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies,* eds., Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning and Sara B. Young, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 2.

7 Jan Assman, "Communicative and Cultural Memory" in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies,* eds., Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning and Sara B. Young, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 109.

8 Jan Assman, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity", *New German Critique*, Spring - Summer, no. 65 (1995):129.

9 In *Speak, Memory*, Nabokov emphasized the poetics of the art of memory as *Erinnerung*, but his memory is exilic in the sense that it refers to a lost country that is also his country of origin. Meaning vibrates in every scene, every scent, light, touch and sound of his childhood in its sharp contrast to the darkness of post-revolutionary Russia. And we find this poetic cult of a minute memory, reviving the dead in an existence that like Eurydice is faintly sensed, over against a dull and trivial reality in several stories by Nabokov.

10 Hannah Arendt,"The Rights of Man: What are They?" *The Modern Review*, no. 3 (1949): 24–37.

11 I am deeply indebted for this thought to Marcia Schuback Sá Cavalcante and Johan Hegardt, who developed a critique of the concept of Cultural Heritage derived from its assumed relation between heritage and identity. See Marcia Schuback Sá Cavalcante and Johan Hegardt, *Kulturarv: En begreppspolitik* (Huddinge: Södertörn Philosophical Series, 2022).

12 See Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory,* transl. by Lewis A. Coser, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

13 Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (London- NY: Penguin Books, 2019 (2003)), 74.

14 Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, " Eastern and Central Europe as a Region of Memory. Some Common Traits" in *CBEES 2020 State of the Region Report. Constructions and Instrumentalization of the Past. A Comparative Study on Memory Management in the Region,* eds., David Gaunt, Tora Lane and Ninna Mörner (2020): 15–21.

15 In her article "Decommisioning Monuments, Mobilizing Materialities", Ann Rigney "calls for reflection, not just on strategies for giving voice to hitherto occluded actors, but also on best practices for undermining hegemonic narratives and decommissioning their normative power." See the article in *The Routledge Handbook of Memory Activism,* eds., by Yifat Gurman and Jenny Wüstenberg, (London: Routledge, 2023).

16 Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice. Selected Essays and Interviews,* transl. by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), 162.

17 Foucault writes: "Genealogy does not pretend to go back in time to restore an unbroken continuity that operates beyond the dispersion of forgotten things; its duty is not to demonstrate that the past actively exists in the present, that it continues secretly to animate the present, having imposed a predetermined form to all its vicissitudes. Genealogy does not resemble the evolution of a species and does not map the destiny of a people. On the contrary, to follow the complex course of descent is to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations – or conversely, the complete reversals – the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being do not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents." Ibid, 146.

18 Ibid, 162.

19 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2019-0021_EN.html

20 https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2019-0021_EN.html

21 Reinhardt Koselleck, *Sediments of Time. On Possible Histories*, transl. by Sean Frenzel and Stefan Ludwig Hoffmann, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press), 186.

22 He writes further: "Indeed, viewed over the long term, we can locate the turning point prior to the outbreak of war in 1939, for in light of the global political constellation, the beginning already contained the seeds of the downfall. From this perspective, the entire war would not just be meaningless in itself, but would from the start also be absurd [*unsinnig*] vis-à-vis the rational calculations and embellishments. Stalingrad would then become a symptom of a war of aggression motivated by utopian visions, a war that eventually became World War II, and that was instigated for ideological reasons without any kind of political or military rationale. The criteria for meaninglessness would then lie in the ideology critique of Hitler's racist and expansionistic plans that *Mein Kampf* had already openly stated." Ibid, 179

23 "To speak of the negative in memory is ambiguous, because either the negative in memory implies that the content stored by memory is off-putting, unwelcome, despicable and worthy of scorn, or it means that memory (das Gedächtnis) closes itself off to recollection (Erinnering), refuses to become cognizant of the negative: that memory thus represses the negative and thus makes the past responsible for it and relegates it to oblivion." Ibid, 238.

24 Ibid. 217.

25 Osip Mandelstam, "January 1, 1924" in *Centuries Encircle me with Fire. Selected Poems of Osip Mandelstam,* transl. by Ian Probstein, (Boston MA: Academic Studies Press, 2022).

PHOTO: INTERNATIONALE SITUATIONNISTE, NO.12 (SEPTEMBER, 1969)

A photo of the Situationist International placing a copy of a statue of Charles Fourier at Place Clichy, Paris, 1969.

Placing a statue in its proper place

by **Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen**

abstract

In 1969 the Situationist group re-installed a copy of a statue of Charles Fourier on an empty plinth at Place Clichy in Paris as a gesture of commemoration of the events in May-June 1968 in Paris. The article will discuss the event and use it in an analysis of the ongoing monument wars that took off in the summer of 2020.

KEYWORDS: Situationist International, Charles Fourier.

On March 10, 1969, members of the Situationist International lifted a 100-kilo bronze-finished plaster copy of a statue of the French utopian socialist Charles Fourier onto a 2.5-metre empty plinth in Place Clichy in Paris.[1] The Situationist International generally had little use for monuments. Especially not monuments immortalizing kings or other political or religious authorities. In line with the group's revolutionary critique of the capitalist commodity economy and the pictorial forms of domination that constituted the fragile simulacrum of a society they called "the society of the spectacle", there was nothing else to do but destroy the ruling order and its monuments.[2] Not only did monuments glorify an oppressive history, their presence was itself a blockage to another way of using the space of the city. Monuments were materialized ideology. Therefore they had to go. The case of the Fourier statue, however, was different: it had to go back to its place in the center of the city in order to make possible a different use of the city.

I RETURN TO THIS heavy-handed practical joke from 1969 on the back of the huge increase in the number of protests against statues and monuments. I do so, claiming that the Situationists' small action in 1969 is instructive for those who want to reflect a little on the relationship between public monuments, art, violence and history. The toppling of statues culminated in 2020 where the protests against racist and colonial statues almost seemed to take on the character of a new iconoclastic international dedicated to a reinterpretation of history from a consistently anti-racist perspective. As Jacqueline Lalouette writes in *Les statues de la discorde*, between May 30 and October 23, 2020, more than 100 statues commemorating slave owners, settlers or fascists were toppled by protesters or removed by local authorities in the US, Great Britain, Belgium, Italy, Denmark, and other countries.[3] The global spread of statue topplings was triggered by the murder of George Floyd, a 46-year-old African American who was strangled by a white policeman on May 25 in Minneapolis. Floyd was choked while repeatedly uttering "I can't breathe". The phrase immediately became an anti-racist slogan not only in the widespread demonstrations and riots that took place in the following days in the United States, but in the many demonstrations that took place around the world in the follow-

ing weeks and months, where protesters rejected racism and police brutality and demanded the decolonization of public spaces. The toppling of statues is nothing new, but the summer of 2020 marked a high point; the scale exceeded earlier iconoclastic moments in recent history, and one toppling seemed to inspire the next in a global flow of urban interventions.

Against monuments

The Situationist International was against monuments. They saw themselves as part of a marginalized and almost completely destroyed revolutionary movement that tried to criticize existing capitalist society as a global social totality. It is difficult to articulate the kind of historical self-consciousness the Situationists had: the avant-garde is not what it once was, but the Situationists' analysis of the function of monuments in the city can perhaps help us in the discussion of the ongoing statue struggles.

The Situationists were a collective of anti-capitalist practitioners active from the late 1950s to the early 1970s, who sought to develop a practical critique of the alienated nature of late capitalist society and its revolutionary overcoming. The group was initially composed of artists and cultural producers but after a few years of existence most practicing artists were expelled as the group deemed the production of art works to be too compromised an activity. It was no longer possible to create individual art works and art had to become an activity outside the institution of art.

In his 1959 film, *Sur le passage de quelques personnes à travers une assez courte unité de temps*, Guy Debord went to great lengths to avoid filming monuments. As he explained in the "Technical Notes" he prepared for the film, the camera had to avoid showing monuments at all times.[4] In a film about the lives of young Lettrists in Paris in the early 1950s, this was difficult – but necessary. It was important not to show monuments so as not to naturalize them.

The statue of Charles Fourier erected at Place de Clichy in Paris in June 1899. PHOTO: ALAMY

The Situationists saw the many monuments and statues in Paris as elements in a battle for the control of the city in which the ruling class, the bourgeoisie, went to great lengths to preserve historical monuments of French kings and emperors as part of its transformation of the city into an urban theatre.

MONUMENTS WERE PART of a struggle for urban space. As the Situationists put it in a 1962 text, no monuments were innocent.[5] On the contrary, monuments and statues functioned as political statements in the class struggle. The ruling order filled the city with statues and monuments or emptied it to make room for cars. The built environment was a testimony to domination. Not only did the ruling class, the bourgeoisie, display their own grandeur in this way, but they also prevented the possibility of any other use of the city. It became filled with objects and artefacts. Statues, cars and advertisements were all part of the materialized ideology of the spectacle. They were anything but innocent; they were testimonies to a history of oppression and exploitation, of how the proletariat was robbed of control over their own lives through images of a commoditized existence. The past led naturally to the present, and the future was a variant of the present. There was nothing else. The spectacle was everywhere.

"Modern capitalism dissuades people from making any criticism of architecture with the simple argument that they need a roof over their heads, just as television is accepted on the grounds that they need information and entertainment. They are made to overlook the obvious fact that this information, this entertainment and this kind of dwelling place are not made for them, but without them and against them."[6]

The Situationists sought to challenge this situation by intervening in the culture of the ruling class. The Situationists fought in the world of the bourgeoisie, in the city, but against it: the city understood as a whole civilization, capitalism as a way of life that had hastily been built after the destruction of the World War. The small Situationist group fought with and against the images and representations, including statues, that the bourgeoisie had spread everywhere. It was an ideological war they were engaged in, and they understood the action in Place Clichy as a battle in this war. As a kind of guerrilla action on enemy territory.

Authorities in stone

As Henri Lefebvre, friend of the Situationist group, wrote in *La production de l'espace*, monuments are a way of stopping history. They produce or occupy a space and postpone the future by preserving the past or the present. Monuments are almost always traces of violence and death, but they are characterized by "a generally accepted Power".[7] Once erected, they produce "a consensus [...] in the strongest sense of the term", writes Lefebvre.[8] Now they are there. This is the way the world is organized, they seem to say. "Small wonder that from time immemorial conquerors and revolutionaries eager to destroy a society should so often have sought to do so by burning or razing that society's monuments."[9] Monuments transform a brutal reality into "a materially realized appearance".[10]

PERHAPS THE MOST RADICAL critique of monuments was formulated by Georges Bataille in the late 1920s and early 1930s, when he wrote a series of short texts on the counter-revolutionary function of architecture. "Thus great monuments rise up like dams, opposing a logic of majesty and authority to all unquiet elements. [...] Indeed, monuments obviously inspire good social behavior and often even genuine fear. The fall of the Bastille is symbolic of this state of things. This mass movement is difficult to explain otherwise than by popular hostility towards monuments which are their veritable masters."[11] Bataille understood monuments as authorities in stone, imposing admiration and astonishment on the masses. The monument is an attempt to stabilize and dominate space. They issue "authoritative commands and prohibitions", wrote Bataille.[12] The storming of the Bastille in Paris during the French Revolution was a natural reaction to this submission, a rejection of society's authorized superego. It was telling that the masses not only stormed the prison, but quickly tore down the whole building.

"THE MONUMENT IS AN ATTEMPT TO STABILIZE AND DOMINATE SPACE."

The fight over the statues in the city is always part of a larger struggle. Bataille, Lefebvre and the Situationists make us aware of this. Statues are large, three-dimensional incarnations of power, placed on high pedestals and made of durable materials such as stone, marble or bronze. They are substitutes for the people they represent.

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Certain founding members of the Situationist International in 1957. From left to right: Guiseppe Pinot-Gallizio, Piero Simondo, Elena Verrone, Michele Bernstein, Guy Debord, Asger Jorn, and Walter Olmo.

When activists in Martinique in 1991 cut off the head of a statue of Joséphine de Beauharnais and painted her neck red, it was, of course, an attack on the continuing (post)colonial oppression on the island.[13] Like Guadeloupe, Martinique remains part of France and has the status of a 'French overseas department'. In the 1660s, the local population was massacred by French colonizers and plantations with enslaved Africans were established on the island. Inspired by the Haitian slave revolt led by Toussaint L'Ouverture, slavery was then abolished in Martinique in 1794. However, it was reintroduced in 1802 by Napoleon, advised by his then wife, Josephine de Beauharnais, who grew up as the daughter of a French plantation owner on the island who owned 300 slaves. In 1856, a statue of Josephine de Beauharnais was erected in Fort-de-France, the capital of the island. It was this statue that activists beheaded in 1991. The Empress lost her head. The activists did what should have happened during the French Revolution, when de Beauharnais had been arrested with her first husband, Alexandre de Beauharnais, and narrowly escaped the guillotine.

THE 1991 ACTION in Martinique is part of a history that includes not only the 2020 statue topplings, but also the storming of the Bastille in 1789 and the toppling of the Vendôme Column in 1871. These are iconoclastic attacks on an oppressive racial-colonial order that consistently divides the dangerous classes in order to ensure the accumulation of capital.

“Monumentalization of violence”

The toppling of the statue of Napoleon in Place Vendôme stands as a high point in the history of the anti-colonial reconquest of the city by the lower classes. The iconoclasm of the communards was part of a large-scale attempt to create the conditions for a communist life where everyone could express themselves beyond established hierarchies, political, religious and artistic, where everyone was (virtually) creative beyond class and racialization.[14] The statue of Napoleon was toppled in a carefully orchestrated political event organized by Gustave Courbet. It was not just a sudden outburst of popular discontent against the emperor, but part of a visual campaign to destroy the symbols of the old imperial order so that a new life in Paris could be possible. As photographs of the event show, a huge crowd gathered in the square, which had been renamed Place Internationale, and three orchestras played in turn before the statue of the emperor was finally toppled. It had been sawed off at the bottom, so it toppled like a giant tree as one of the orchestras played the Marseillaise. The crowd cheered ecstatically as the 40-metre-long column, consisting of melted-down cannons from the Battle of Austerlitz with the statue of Napoleon at the top, dressed as a Roman Caesar, toppled over. Maxime Vuillaume described the toppling as a decisive event: “Suddenly, there it is, like the flapping of the wings of a gigantic bird, a huge zigzag through the air. Oh, I will never forget the colossal shadow falling past my eyes! A cloud of smoke. All is over. The column lies on the ground, cracked, its stone viscera exposed to the wind. Caesar lies humiliated and headless.”[15] The emperor, enthroned in the centre of the square, was gone. No one would look up to him anymore.

Communards and Gustave Courbet pose with the statue of Napoléon I from the toppled Vendôme column, Paris 1871. PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

DURING THE OCCUPATION of the Academy of Fine Arts in Paris in May-June 1968, members of the Situationist group had found the mold for the statue of Fourier that had stood in Place Clichy until December 1941, and Pierre Lepetit had made a copy of the statue.[16] The bronze statue of Fourier had originally been removed by the Vichy government and sent to Germany where, along with a number of other statues, it was molded into ammunition for Hitler’s army on the Eastern Front. From October 1941 to August 1944, according to historian Kirrily Freeman, the Vichy government collected at least 1,500 statues in France that were sent to Germany.[17] Considering how many statues and monuments either consist of melted down cannons or depict weapons and war equipment, it is not as strange as it may sound that the French collaborationist government, on its own initiative, collected the many sculptures and sent them to Nazi Germany in support of the Nazi war machine. As W.J.T. Mitchell, among others, has described, monuments are historically inextricably linked to war and violence. “From Ozymandias to Caesar to Napoleon to Hitler, public art has served as a kind of monumentalization of violence.”[18]

Fourier

This was not the case with the Fourier statue. It had been erected as a tribute to the utopian socialist who has inspired generations of revolutionaries – from Marx to Benjamin, Marcuse and Norman O. Brown – with his ideas of free sex and a radical rethinking of work through play. We can hardly get further away from emperors and kings than Fourier.

The statue of Fourier itself had been erected in 1899 with funds raised by a small group of enthusiastic Fourierists in Paris. The statue showed an elderly, seated Fourier wearing a long coat with a cane resting on one arm, looking thoughtful. It was the work of the anarchist sculptor Émile Derré, who had modeled the statue on a painting of Fourier by Jean Gigoux from 1835, a few years before Fourier’s death in 1837. The location of the statue in Place Clichy was quite fitting; Montmartre was at the time a working-class neighborhood where many artists hung out, and Fourier was buried in the Montmartre cemetery just around the corner.

The Situationists loved Fourier. He was at the centre of the anti-Stalinist revolutionary tradition in which they saw themselves. Fourier was an early critic of industrial capitalism and its forms of wage labor, which, he argued, destroyed people as well as nature.[19] Capitalist organized wage labor was nothing less than contrary to the order of the universe, according to Fourier, whose critique of early industrialization had a distinct metaphysical dimension. It was morally necessary to reject wage labor, according to Fourier. Man was a creative and collective being who had to express himself in community with others and seek to satisfy his needs. If the worker did not want to go to work, it was work

that was the problem, not the worker. This was an important critique of wage labor, according to the Situationists, who fought fiercely against the sacralization of work that had occurred during the 20th century, when European social democrats and Leninists alike glorified wage labor and made it a cornerstone of their political projects. For the traditional labor movement, it was about producing a new world in which workers took control of the productive apparatus. Such a project, however, had nothing to do with communism, the Situationists argued, citing both Fourier and Marx: communism was the abolition of both wage labor and the nation state. It was not the workers taking control of capitalist production.

FOURIER'S CRITIQUE of wage labor and his ideas about the creative qualities of man made him an ally in the Situationists' struggle against the falsification of communism. Along with Marx, Bakunin, Luxemburg and German-Dutch council communism, Fourier was part of a repressed wild socialism that the Situationists orientated themselves towards and tried to practice at a time in the 1960s when a booming economy allowed capital to strike a deal with local working-class representatives in the West, offering workers access to culture, education and consumption. The Situationists famously saw this development as a "colonization of everyday life", where colonial plunder and factory exploitation were complemented by the alienation of workers in their free time. More and more aspects of human life were commodified and took the form of commodity images. It was therefore necessary to intervene into and try to scramble the new world of images, to show that the new abundance, all the new commodities, washing machines, cars and cigarettes, were in fact weapons in an image-political struggle for the consciousness of the proletariat. All the many images made up a new world that threatened to erase any alternative and sever the link to previously unrealized historical potentials, such as Fourier's utopian socialism.

Symbolic reproduction

The spectacle or the spectacular was a description of the shift in which images became the material that politics necessarily was made of. Political events have always had a visual dimension, of course, but during the 20th century this dimension was greatly accentuated and tended to transform politics altogether. This is what the Situationists tried to describe with terms such as spectacle and the spectacular. It was not least thanks to new technologies of reproduction such as radio, film and television that this metamorphosis took place. But it cannot be reduced to the emergence of new media; what matters is how society creates images of itself through concepts, notions and all the many media at its disposal – from statues to television and the internet.

For the Situationists, the new, of course, was the medium of television. They saw de Gaulle addressing the nation and the individual Frenchman through television. He appeared on the screen and spoke directly to the citizens. But they also saw how the new consumer goods, from Coca Cola to washing machines, record players and cars, created a new mesmerizing world of objects and goods that promised happiness, comfort or excitement. All you had to do was choose. The many commodities all promised a new life, or at least a moment of pleasure or distraction. Instant satisfaction. The spectacle was a new phase in the terrible subsumption of life in the service of capital, where the boundary between "reality" and "the spectacular" was dissolved. Culture merged with capital and citizens were integrated from above. The individualism of mass culture was a pseudo-individualism, the result of the fusion of artistic techniques and advertising.

The Situationists' analysis of the coming into being of new forces and means of symbolic reproduction was to a large extent the inspiration for Jean Baudrillard's notion of simulacrum and Fredric Jameson's use of the notion of postmodernism. The dramatic changes to the conditions of the production of the image transformed politics.

"CULTURE MERGED WITH CAPITAL AND CITIZENS WERE INTEGRATED FROM ABOVE."

The storming of Congress on January 6, 2021, was in many ways the paradoxical culmination of this process, with fascists and conspiracy theorists entering Congress and disrupting Senate approval of Biden's electoral victory. Trump's motley storm troopers, dressed in Braveheart costumes and camouflage, entered the capital and stormed the "Winter Palace". And took selfies while they did it. Not only did we all see it, they saw themselves doing it. And the event will probably act as a mobilizing factor for the late fascist movement in the US. It was probably less the end of the Trump presidency than the beginning of a new phase of colonial-racist violence. Late fascism is by no means defeated, and the storm was a charivari, a noisy example of what it is capable of and how it has already spread its tentacles far into, for example, the police, who did very little to stop the attack. Events like the attack on Congress help make previously unthinkable acts possible and introduce ultra-nationalist and racist ideas into a mainstream culture already characterized by an almost narcotic addiction to images of violence (against women and non-whites).[20]

IT WAS THE EARLY phase of this expansive visual culture that the Situationists were trying to catch up with. What happens when political events take place as image events, when the political is not just mediated by images, but is images? And how do you fight this dominance of images? The Situationists understood it, as I said, as a colonization in which the commodity subordinated more and more parts of human life, including art: Spheres and practices which, for various reasons, previous modes of production had not subsumed, but which now, in this phase of capitalism, were beginning to enter into the reproduction of capitalist society. The grandiose and desperate tone that pervaded the texts of the Situationists has to do with this process, which the Situationists perceived as a closure. History is quickly being

emptied of content and becomes a dead postcard time.

But the Situationists sought to activate history against the spectacular, "fanning the spark of hope in the past", as Walter Benjamin puts it.[21] They sought to intervene in the spectacle against the spectacle. To create confusion among all the many images and false promises. The spectacle was everywhere, it was a global totality, there was nothing outside. Even the media of art such as painting or happening were passive spectacular relations, therefore the role of art as a transgressive act was now to dominate these media as means of propaganda. Art had become an art of war, where those who were formerly called artists used all available means, including what was left of art, to propagandistically create unrest and fight the spectacle.

THE COPY OF THE STATUE of Fourier was an intervention in the spectacle. And the authorities were not slow to react. As the Situationists wrote in their journal, a policeman was immediately placed in front of the statue until it was removed two days later. The Situationist command had put the statue in place in fifteen minutes using wooden beams. The authorities, on the other hand, used a crane and 30 police officers to remove it again, the Situationists noted with great satisfaction in their account in their journal.[22] The action was considered a success by the Situationists. It was an example of a heavy-handed détournement, where the iconoclasm of the state was momentarily challenged by an iconoclasm from below. And the attempt to quickly remove the traces of the replica of the statue of Fourier and its reactivation of the events of the previous year confirmed the Situationists' analysis of the French state as a new form of colonization. De Gaulle was Pétain, and there was no essential difference between Vichy and the V. Republic.

For the hundreds of people who saw the Situationists lift the statue back into place, the city was suddenly different. And passers-by could laugh at the policeman in front of Fourier in the days that followed. Not that the Situationists imagined that the action would bring about any major changes, of course they didn't. The action was a revolutionary practical joke, and they were fully aware of the need to carry out a much more comprehensive attack on the spectacular commodity economy beyond any reference to notions of aesthetic qualities. It was important which statues stood in the city squares, but the project was not to put up any other statues, the project was to change the city. ×

Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen is Professor of Political Aesthetics at the University of Copenhagen

references

1 Guy Debord describes the action in a letter to the Italian section of the Situationist group, dated March 12, 1969. Guy Debord, *Correspondance. Volume 4, 1969–1972* (Paris: Fayard, 2005), 42. The twelfth and last issue of the Situationist journal briefly presents the action at Place Clichy. *Internationale situationniste*, no. 12, 1969, 97–98. François de Beaulieu, who participated in the action, talks about the action in an interview with Christophe Bourseiller, "L'homme est un homme pour l'homme", in *Archives & Documents situationnistes*, no. 3, 2003, 17–25.

2 Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* [*La Sociètè du Spectacle*, 1967], translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1995).

3 Cf. Jacqueline Lalouette, *Les statues de la discorde* (Paris: Passés Composés, 2021), 22.

4 Guy Debord, "Fiche technique" [1964], in idem: *Œuvres* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006), 486.

5 Guy Debord, Attila Kotányi and Raoul Vaneigem, "Theses on the Paris Commune" ["Sur la commune", 1962], translated by Ken Knabb, *Situationist International Online*, https://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/commune.html

6 Attila Kotányi and Raoul Vaneigem, "Basic Program for the Bureau of Unitary Urbanism", 1961, translated by Ken Knabb, *Situationist International Online*, https://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/bureau.html

7 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* [*La production de l'espace*, 1974], translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Blackwell, 1991), 220.

8 Ibid., 220.

9 Ibid., 221.

10 Ibid., 221.

11 Georges Bataille, "Architecture" ["Architecture", 1929], translated by Iain White, in Robert Lebel and Isabelle Waldberg (eds.), *Encyclopædia Acephalica* (London: Atlas Press, 1995), 35.

12 Ibid., 35.

13 For an analysis of the beheading of the statue of Joséphine de Beauharnais, see Kylie Sago, "Beyond the Headless Empress: Gabriel Vital Dubray's Statues of Josephine, Eduard Glissant's *Tout-monde*, and Contested Monuments of French Empire", in *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, vol. 41, no. 5, 2019, 501–519.

14 Cf. Kristin Ross, *Communal Luxury: The Political Imaginary of the Paris Commune* (London & New York: Verso, 2015).

15 Maxime Vuillaume, *Mes cahiers rouges au temps de la Commune* [1909] (Paris: Albin Michel, 1971), 247.

16 Cf. "Pierre Lepetit: 1935–1989", in *Encyclopédie des nuisances*, nr. 14, 1989, XII.

17 Kirrily Freeman, *Bronze to Bullets: Vichy and the Destruction of French Public Statuary*, 1941–1944 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

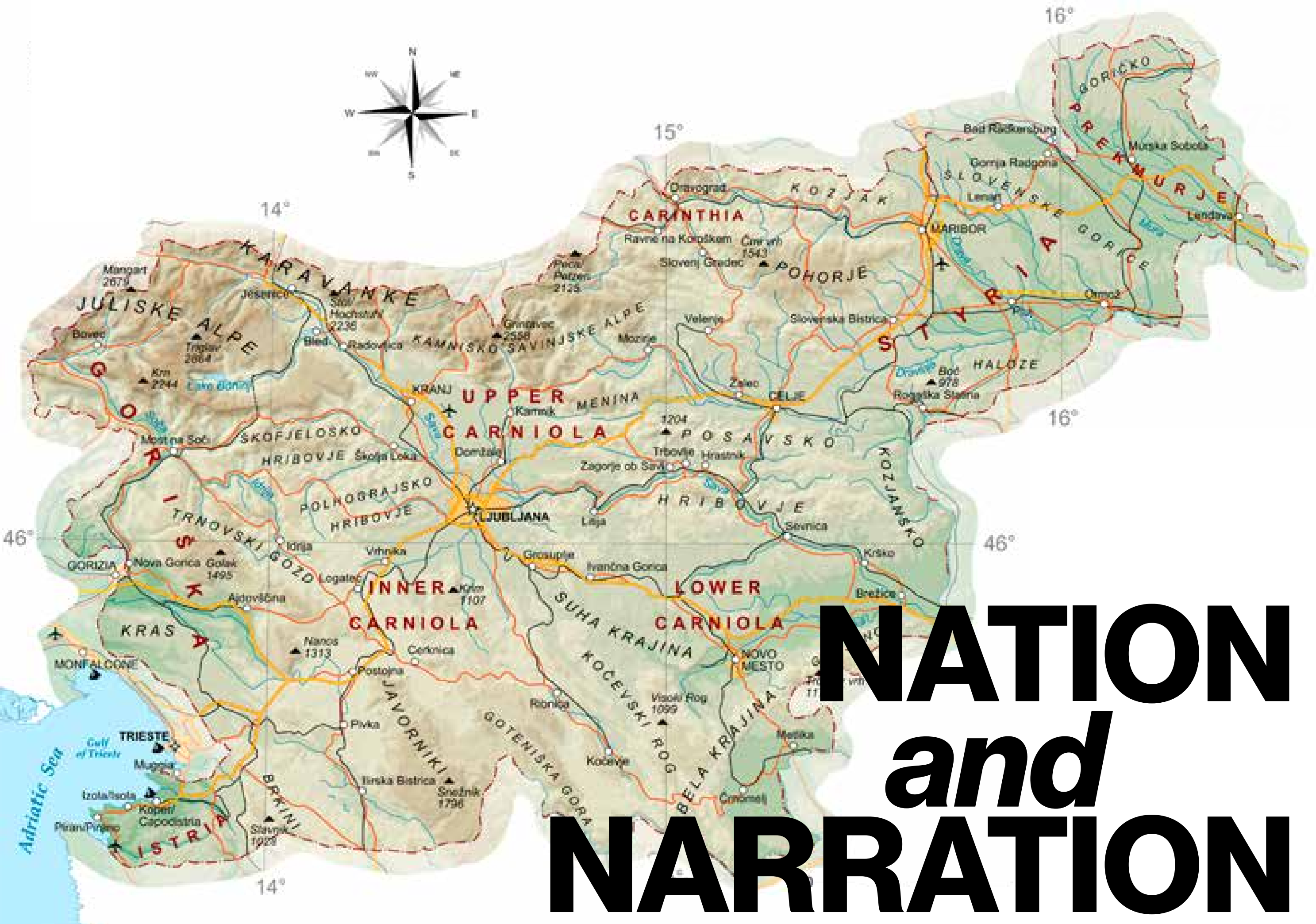
18 W.J.T. Mitchell, "The Violence of Public Art: Do the Right Thing", in idem (ed.), *Art and the Public Sphere* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 35.

19 For a good introduction to Fourier, see René Schérer, *Charles Fourier ou la contestation globale* (Paris: Seghers, 1970).

20 Cf. Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen, *Late Capitalist Fascism* (Cambridge: Polity, 2022).

21 Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History" ["Über den Begriff der Geschichte", 1940], translated by Harry Zohn, in idem, *Selected Writings: Volume 4*, 1938–1940 (Harvard University Press, 2006), 391.

22 "The Return of Charles Fourier" ["Le retour de Charles Fourier", 1969], translated by Reuben Keehan, *Situationist International Online*, https://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/fourier.html



MAP: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

NATION *and* NARRATION

by **Mladen Dolar**

abstract

Nationalism always relies on certain ways of historical narration. The history of a nation is made in narration, and narratives retroactively create a homogeneous mythical history that is used for the present political purposes. The article considers the emergence of nationalisms during the period of the downfall of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe and concentrates on the formation of Slovene nationalism through the spyglass of historic narration. The Slovene case may provide some general lessons as to how, in national narrations, history is retroactively homogenized: all significant landmarks of Slovene history that now form the core of the narrative presented at the time the major breaks with the then standards of Slovene national identity. Everything that is now considered the epitome of "Sloveneness" was at the time seen as an import of a foreign intrusion, changing the very standards by which "Sloveneness" was to be assessed. Thus the fidelity to the Slovene national identity can only be achieved by the courage of putting it into question. The last part of the article addresses the larger question of how the nationalisms of that period have in the course of the last decades evolved into the new populisms which no longer try to present a coherent narrative but functions rather as the managements of rage, based on the fantasy of the theft of enjoyment.

KEYWORDS: Historical narration, nationalism, Slovenia

Nation and narration make a good rhyme, and a semantic connection is at hand. One can easily see that there is no nation without narration, and that narratives, stretching back to some mythical origins and never quite free of the mythical background, form the very substance of nationhood. Imagined communities tend to have far more traction than the supposedly real, historical, empirical ones – provided that one can ever fall back on the real historical empirical objective account that would dissipate the appeal of narrations, fantasies and myths and debunk them as myths. But can one ever disentangle the real communities from the imagined ones? The latter actually enabled the formation of the former, by providing them precisely with a narration: "illusions" have material consequences. I guess that this was the weak point of the sociological-scientific approach to the question of national narrations, namely the illusory idea that illusions are mere illusions, and that they can be dissipated by the insight into true facts, by confronting the narratives of mythical fabulation with historic reality. Why do narratives and fictions tend to win in such a contest? Why does one tend to underestimate and dismiss the sheer force of narration and the enjoyment it can conjure? How is it that the question of the nation can never be reduced to the ascertainable objective parameters of common territory, geography, common language, common history and tradition, common economic interests? This alleged factual background

tends to be superseded by narration, which selectively includes or excludes “facts” and embroiders upon them, gentrifies them, in order to create a totalizing narrative, with all its retroactive fabrication and omissions. No national identity without this narrative surplus, without this gesture of totalization/exclusion, and without the surplus of passion that fuels, and is fueled by, narration. The surplus of narration over a “factual historic account” corresponds to the surplus enjoyment, a “politics of enjoyment”, as it were, that is at the core of all nationalism. If one considers the drastic falling apart of some socialist countries on the basis of ideologies driven by nationalisms and their capacity of narration, one can see that the national question was the blind spot of socialist political thought all along (something that Slavoj Žižek called “enjoyment as a political factor”, in the subtitle of his book *For they don’t know what they do*).[1]

I THOUGHT I HAD invented a felicitous wording, a well-sounding phrase, with my proposal of nation and narration, but one always disappointingly finds out that there is nothing new under the sun; the phrase has been used before (I guess perhaps quite a few may have had this idea), most notably as the title of a collected volume, *Nation and Narration*, ed. by Homi Bhabha.[2] This is an illuminating collection, with a number of different perspectives on this very tricky topic. As felicitous expressions go, Homi Bhabha proposed another one, “nation and dissemination” (or more briefly, *DissemiNation*),[3] to counteract the implicit script implied by “nation and narration” (I guess this is not surprising given Bhabha’s Derridean affiliations, and his well-known general line on hybridization). The volume takes as its point of departure the ambivalence of this syndrome “nation-narration”. Benedict Anderson, the great classic on the question of nation formation and the origins of nationalism, put the paradox this way:

> **The century of the Enlightenment, of rationalist secularism, brought with it its own modern darkness. [...] Few things are suited to this end better than the idea of nation. If nation states are widely considered to be ‘new’ and ‘historical’, the nation states to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past and glide into a limitless future.**[4]

Nation would thus be a double creature of enlightened rationalism and its dark flipside, where the dark flipside is born out of the spirit of the Enlightenment. Or as Tom Nairn put it: nation is “the modern Janus” (the Roman double-faced deity), and “the ‘uneven development’ of capitalism inscribes both progression and regression, political rationality and irrationality in the very genetic code of the nation.”[5] There is an ambivalence, the Janus-character, that one must keep in mind and pursue, for nation, with its narration, is not simply “bad” and to be condemned and dismissed; it actually points to a real that enlightened rationalism both produced and was not capable of addressing and dealing with.[6] One cannot simply say: “Let’s keep the good side and be rid of the bad flipside”; they have the nasty tendency to stick together, and one should rather take narration not simply as a confabulation, but as a terrain where the ideological battles have to be fought. – But this is not the place to expound on the general theory of nation and nationalism.

Homi Bhabha’s volume appeared at a particularly significant historic moment, in 1990, and it deals with many aspects of nation-formation and its concomitant narrations in England, France, Latin and northern America, Australia, with the colonial legacy, India, Africa – but there is a part that is conspicuously missing, namely the emergence of nationalisms at the point of the collapse of socialist regimes, the falling apart of the Soviet “empire” and the looming falling apart of Yugoslavia. This was in 1990, exactly at the moment when this process was dramatically taking place, but out of the field of vision of this largely post-colonial take on the question of the nation. Another volume would be needed to deal with this new installment of the ‘Enlightenment and its flipside’ story, now under the guise of “socialism and its flipside” – and socialism was conceived as the continuation of the Enlightenment project, however badly it turned out.

“NATION WOULD THUS BE A DOUBLE CREATURE OF ENLIGHTENED RATIONALISM AND ITS DARK FLIPSIDE, WHERE THE DARK FLIPSIDE IS BORN OUT OF THE SPIRIT OF THE ENLIGHTENMENT.”

But I don’t want to address these larger perspectives which would demand a lot of additional reflection. I would like to concentrate on the case of my own nation, Slovenia, and its homegrown nationalism which largely accompanied the whole process of Slovene independence in 1991, the establishment of this new rather tiny nation state, the independence hailed and celebrated as a great heroic historic achievement. It was part of the larger process of nationalisms getting the upper hand at the point of the collapse of socialist regimes, all of them proposing narrations, a great part being invented and concocted in this new situation while claiming to have been there since time immemorial. New power structures were significantly based on retroactive histories – but the appeal of their narrations was very hard to undo.

“Balkans” as the Other

The first thing to be considered, but this is more of an aside, is the function of the signifier “Balkans”, with all the imaginary ramifications of this disorderly tribal cut-throat fantasy land, supposedly still stuck in a Hobbesian pre-civilized state. “Balkans” is the Other of “our” national community; it starts on the other side of the border. As the joke goes; on the Austrian side of the border with Slovenia, they will tell you that the Balkans begins over there; on the Slovene-Croatian border the Slovenes

Roman empire 264 BC. MAP: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Map of the former Yugoslavia, showing national borders as they existed before Serbia and Montenegro separated MAP: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

will tell you that the Balkans begins on the other side; on the Croatian-Serbian border they will tell you that the Balkans begins on the other side; on the Serbian border with Kosovo they will tell you that the Balkans begins on the other side ... But if we thus progress eastward we finally get to Greece, the extremity of the Balkans, which happens to be the cradle of "our" European civilization. The joke has its moment of truth: It demonstrates, by somewhat crude means, the mechanism of the expulsion of the Other, its dislocation and relocation, but also keeps the Other as something we badly need in order to be ourselves. This presents a bit of a caricature at the core of Slovene identity: we are not the Balkans, we belong to central Europe, we are the last bastion of European values against the East, epitomized by the Balkans (the proverbial Balkan tribes). Ironically, the geographical dividing line, the somewhat arbitrarily convened border of the geographical Balkans, is the Ljubljanica River which runs through the middle of Ljubljana, so Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, appears as the split city sitting on the borderline, a city separated from itself, just as Ljubljanica runs roughly through the middle of Slovenia (prolonged by the Sava River) and splits the whole country into two. It's an identity which dwells on both banks of the river, however much one tries to expel the Other.[7]

Historically, Slovene national identity relied largely on culture, Slovenia having never possessed serious economic, military, and independent political power. It was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, always governed by foreign rulers. It was the culture that kept the Slovene language and tradition alive, so culture is at the core of a narration based on the formidable achievements of Slovene cultural figures and movements. This is a retroactive narration construed as a continuous narrative of the development and defense of Slovene national identity, the rampart of Slovene national substance – and curiously the term "national substance" emerged at the time (of independence) and played a major role. The question was how to protect the substance from accidents, to use the Aristotelian parlance.

Slovene history: Course and ruptures

How to counteract this narrative, this retroactive continuity serving to build up the national substance? This is where the Slovene history provides some resources which I hope are not just a Slovene specificity but can perhaps serve as a wider model, a paradigm of an argument that one can propose in many similar cases. As opposed to this narration, my thesis is very simple: *all essential points that form the core of Slovene national identity have been precisely the breaks with what at the time was seen to constitute our "authentic" national identity*. What is retroactively considered as continuity is actually a series of breaks with continuity. – In order to elucidate this a bit, I must give a very short and cursory rerun of Slovene history, a crash course.[8]

TAKE CHRISTIANITY to start with. Christianization of this part of the world brought about the violent annihilation of the pagan tribal unions with their many gods and homegrown Slav myths. It was a bloody affair, an alien external force supported by superior foreign military powers, suppressing the relative freedom of the then Slovene community, and subordinating it to foreign rule. This was a drastic end to the first forms of Slovene communal organization, which is now retrospectively much celebrated by the dubious myth of its incipient democracy, the short-lived country Carantania (precursor of Carinthia). But Christianity at the same time also produced the first written document of Slovene language, the so called *Freising Manuscripts*, dating to approx. 1000 CE, which are actually the oldest preserved Latin-script text in any Slavic language. Christianity presented a violent break with our previous identity and introduced a new kind of social bond. There is already a paradox – are we originary pagans or are we Christians at our core, the latter having eradicated the former? So how can we be both? – Take Protestantism five hundred years later. It brought about a break with the community of medieval Christianity, established over centuries

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Anton Tomaž Linhart as depicted on a portrait from the collection of "Image archive of the Austrian National Library" in Vienna.

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

VESELI DAN

ali

Maticek se ženi.

Komédia v 5 délih.

The first Slovene theatre piece was Linhart's adaptation of Beaumarchais's *The Marriage of Figaro*, [Matiček se ženi], 1789.

PHOTO: NATIONAL AND UNIVERSITY LIBERAL OF SLOVENIA

Manuscript of the Opera *Črne maske* [Black masks] from 1928 by Marig Kogoj.

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Image of the Slovenian composer Marij Kogoj (1892–1956) taken in the 1920s.

– once again as a foreign ideology imported from the outside, armed this time not with weapons, but with the new resources of the printed word (instead of sword). Inspired by the idea that the holy scriptures should be translated and made available in national languages, the Protestants produced the first Slovene printed books (in 1550, with *Catechism* and *Abecedarium* by Primož Trubar, inaugurating literacy), the Slovene translation of the entire Bible and the first Slovene grammar (in 1584). The Protestant period was short-lived, but in the half century of their consorted and dedicated efforts they flooded the country with a whole library of Slovene books. The Slovene printed word was proving to be fatal for the previous Slovene authenticity, but then the Counter-Reform endeavored very hard – in a further radical cut – to erase all Protestant traces. It amply ensured that all Protestant books were burnt (except for the Bible; only a few specimens survived) and as a consequence almost no Slovene book was published for more than a century and a half (1600-1750, with very few exceptions). This is when and how the country turned adamantly Catholic, which is henceforward supposed to define our national identity. – To pursue the paradox: are we Protestants (epitomized by the establishment of Slovene language, the book culture) or are we Catholic (doing everything to eradicate this)? How can we be both?

"SLOVENE CULTURE, SUPPOSED TO BE THE BASTION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY, WAS ACTUALLY ITS HARSHEST CRITIC."

TAKE ANTON TOMAŽ LINHART, the first Slovene playwright and the beginning of Slovene theatre,[9] the key representative of the Slovene Enlightenment at the end of the eighteenth century. The first Slovene theatre piece was, unbelievably, Linhart's free adaptation of Beaumarchais's *The Marriage of Figaro,* [*Matiček se ženi*], set in the Slovene countryside, written in 1789, the year of the revolution. It's still a cause for celebration whenever it is produced in Slovenia, and it is produced often. But what was Linhart if not an "epigone" that followed – with great courage and against all odds – a foreign model, the hottest European play of the time? All this presented a radical break with all previous Slovene identity. Linhart was an importer of foreign ideas and ideals, not a guardian of Slovene substance; he was reputed to be an atheist and a freemason, he was denied a Christian funeral, and was treated as an outcast. – Take France Prešeren, the Slovene national Romantic poet, and his brave rebellious attitude against the conservative nature of the then Slovene identity, the liberty with which he reached for foreign expressive forms and made them his own, enormously widening the limits of the previously possible. He too was treated as a dangerous crank. – Take the Slovene Modernists, especially Ivan Cankar, the most important Slovene writer, but who was accused of following decadent foreign ideas at the turn of the century, so foreign to the Slovene national substance that he had to be met with fire (in 1899, the Catholic church dignitaries bought the entire print-run of his book of poems *Erotika* and had it burnt). To make things worse, he was the first promoter of socialist ideas. – Take all innovative art movements in the twentieth century: scandals that accompanied the first exhibitions of Slovene Impressionists, or the utmost liberty of Srečko Kosovel's constructivist poetry collection *Integrali* (*Integrals*, which was relegated to a drawer and published only forty years after his death), or Marij Kogoj's opera *Črne Maske* (*Black Masks*, 1929, Kogoj was Schoenberg's pupil), or Anton Podbevšek and Avgust Černigoj in the 1920s – examples are numerous, and always the same story: the intrusion of the foreign, a break with the current standards of Slovene identity. This continued also at the time of socialism, when the avantgarde movements of the sixties (the poet Tomaž Šalamun, the artist group OHO, the journal *Perspektive*, the theatre group *Pupilija Ferkeverk*, later the group NSK-*Neue Slowenische Kunst*) were all met with the same hostility, chastised as the alien bodies disturbing what was now seen as the socialist identity and its

values – very different from the Catholic ones, but the same logic applied.

If a gallery of great Slovenes is now formed in retrospect, the parade of the brave fighters for the Slovene identity, the icons forming the core of our national substance (Trubar – Linhart – Prešeren – Cankar – Kosovel and so on), then the counter argument is very simple: what they all have in common is only the fact that each of them at his own time presented a radical break with what was considered to be the Slovene identity of the time. The ideological operation is obvious: the retrospective constitution of the Slovene national identity/substance consists almost exclusively of cases that prove the opposite, namely that one can only attain important landmarks of national identity by calling into question the very standards of national identity prevalent at the time. Everything that is now considered truly Slovene was at the time seen as an import of a foreign intrusion, changing the very standards by which "Sloveneness" is to be assessed. Slovene culture, supposed to be the bastion of national identity, was actually its harshest critic. Or to put it more pointedly: one can only be true to the national identity by having the courage to call it into question.

PHOTO: STADTARCHIV MEMMINGEN

Primož Trubar (or Primus Truber, 1508–1586) was the founder of the Slovenian literary language, a Protestant priest and a leader of the Protestant Reformation in the Slovenian lands. Trubar was the author of the first printed book in the Slovenian language, a Catechism and Primer (Tübingen, 1550) intended for the education of all Slovenians

Socialism, the massive break

Take, finally, socialism, the massive break, a cut into the national substance on the political, cultural and economic levels, a radical undoing of all previous substantial ties. In the post-independence national narration this period is heavily vilified and demonized. Of course its legacy is highly mixed, with on the one hand, its universalist ideas of social justice and a community not based on national identities (but this came back with a vengeance in the bloody falling apart of Yugoslavia), and on the other hand, its actual form which fell far short of democracy and human rights. But whatever one may think about its course and results, its cut is irreversible; there is no return to some mythical pre-socialist community that the nationalist stance dreams about. This cut has become a part of the Slovene national identity, one more in the line of cuts and breaks that constitute it. This is where the narration has a big problem: no amount of vilification can obfuscate the fact that the socialist time has utterly transformed the country and established new standards of measurement.

To resume this quick and cursory panorama of Sloveneness in a few simple points, one could say the following: one shouldn't simply dismiss the idea of national identity and its narration, but rather show that its narration is contradictory at the very core. It will never do for national identity to take support in tradition, to celebrate its landmarks, to defend the domestic against the alien. Every identity worthy of its name requires an act – both at the individual and the collective levels – that demands the departure from the hitherto known and accepted, the estrangement of the domestic. In psychoanalytic terms, every identity is identification, that is, a risky and contradictory process with uncertain outcome, and not a state or a possession. The safe shelter of homeliness and tradition is the certain way to betray national identity; it can be kept alive only by the courage to 'betray' it. Those who do not want to accept this, and point the finger at the presumed traitors, are certain to fail it.

It follows that the talk of national identity should abandon the discourse of a measure for delimiting the domestic and the threatening Other. It can make sense only through acts that subvert the very measure. Nothing threatens the national identity more than talk about the threats to national identity. Rather than abandoning narration, one should rather try to bring it to the point where it starts functioning as its own dissemination (to use Homi Bhabha's parlance). One should work with its contradictions and ambiguities, build on discontinuities, try to provide an alternative narrative, push identity to the point of it undermining itself. This leads to the "million dollar" question: how to provide a counter-narration of emancipation that would be capable of engaging passion and tackling enjoyment? Why is it that nationalist narrations tend to be more successful?

The nationalist moment comes to an end

This narration of Slovene national identity was a hot topic at the time when the downfall of socialism coincided with the surge of nationalisms. It seemed that the universalist idea promoted by socialism had no chance against nationalist agendas – and Yugoslavia was precisely conceived as a nation state beyond nationalities, encompassing different nationalities with radically different traditions, histories, religions, and social structures; it was supposed to be the showcase of transcending nationalisms. Then the nationalisms based on newly construed narrations, retroactively establishing concocted national traditions, eventually got the upper hand, emerging as if from nowhere, and managed to present universalist narratives as a pipedream. – But this historic nationalist moment is over, it pertained to the

post-socialist "transition". It was bad enough, but it seems that it has now given place to something worse, namely the surge of new populisms, whose trademarks are obscenity and cynicism. One can even in retrospect see in the nationalist moment a degree of pride and devotion, however misguided, but now this rather turned into the question of the management of rage. One can briefly say that depression and rage are the two opposite affects produced by the decades of neoliberalism, two sides of the same coin, where depression functions as rage stuck in the throat. Both are not merely widespread feelings, but necessary structural effects of the last decades, now turning into the major driving force of new populisms which are able to provide an outlet. National narration has become secondary, it has been relegated to a sideshow, yet one can detect a continuity concerning the core element: the persistent core is perhaps most easily designated as the fantasy of *the theft of enjoyment*. The others enjoy at our expense, they prevent us from being ourselves or what we should properly be. At the time of the heyday of the nationalisms of the nineties the privileged others were the neighboring nations (hence the bloody wars). Now the others have become expandable and expanding – most obviously and conspicuously migrants, then cultural Marxism, Islam, LGBTIQ+, climate movements, the deep state, China ... The targets are movable, narration has no need for consistency, while the rage is growing. One can feel – almost – nostalgic for the times when one could argue about the inner contradictions of the nationalist narrative; now contradictions are freely exhibited and enhance the economy of enjoyment and its theft which easily translates into new forms of racism and segregation.

Predictions of the future

Let me finish with Lacan, and with a very general point. Lacan practically never undertook the risky business of predicting the future, except, perhaps astonishingly, with his predictions of the rise of new racisms and the increase in segregation. As early as 1967: "Our future of common markets will be counterbalanced by the increasingly crude expansion of the processes of segregation." He related this to "the consequences of the way that science rearranges social groupings, and in particular the universalization it introduces."[10] He would return to this in the famous television interview in 1973[11] and several other times. There is the implementation of science, of universalization and at the same time, concomitantly, of common markets and globalization, but the more these processes progress, the more the tension will intensify, the more the problem of surplus enjoyment will increase, the bigger the danger of segregation. The more the problem of the theft of enjoyment and of those others who enjoy at our expense spreads, the more globalization will erect new walls against the segregated. Lacan's predictions are, of course, very general, but we can see that they have unfortunately come true. How can psychoanalysis still serve as a critical tool to counteract this prospect?

Mladen Dolar is Professor and Senior Research Fellow at the Department of Philosophy, University of Ljubljana.

references

1 Slavoj Žižek, *For They Don't Know What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (London: Verso, 1994).

2 Homi Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990).

3 I guess puns easily proliferate once one starts on that slope: contami-nation, alie-nation, combi-nation, determi-nation, discrimi-nation, elimi-nation, imagi-nation, imperso-nation, resig-nation, subordi-nation ... So many threads that can illuminate nation formation and the vicissitudes of its narration. One shouldn't dismiss puns too easily, they can serve as a weapon of dispersal of unitary meaning, given that the defense of unitary meaning is one of the core concerns of all nationalisms.

4 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983), 19.

5 Tom Nairn, *The Break-up of Britain* (London: Verso 1983), quoted in Homi Bhabha, "Introduction" in *Nation and Narration*, 2.

6 It's illuminating to use the Freudian conceptual pair *heimlich/unheimlich*: "The *heimlich* pleasures of the hearth, the *unheimlich* terror of the space or race of the Other" (Bhabha, "Introduction", 2), a good way of formulating the paradox of the nation. With nation, the uncanny structurally appears at the core of the 'homely' – maybe all nationalisms can be conceived as ways to tackle this extimate kernel.

7 As a denizen of Ljubljana, I now live on the European side, but I grew up on the Balkan side, where my parents lived. My Croatian mother was from the Balkans, but my father stemmed from a place very close to the Austrian border, a vintage central European. I am literally a Lacanian split subject.

8 Of course there are innumerable sources for the very brief, selective and simplified account that follows. Perhaps the most comprehensive survey of Slovene history available in English is Peter Štih, Vasko Simoniti & Peter Vodopivec, *A Slovene History. Society – Politics – Culture* (Ljubljana: Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino – Sistory, 2008).

9 Technically preceded by the *Škofja Loka Passion Play*, a penitential Passion procession in Slovene first performed in 1721, featuring the world's oldest preserved director's book for the performance.

10 Jacques Lacan, *Autres écrits* (Paris: Seuil, 2001), 257.

11 Lacan, *Autres écrits*, 534.

BALTIC WORLDS
balticworlds.com

Tourist with a film camera
Georg Oddner in the Soviet Union

by **Sune Bechmann Pedersen**

The first western tourists in Moscow after the Second World War. The man carries a Sohlman Conversation Guide phrasebook. PHOTO: GEORG ODDNER

A Swedish tourist lends his camera to a local in Stalingrad. PHOTO: GEORG ODDNER

abstract

This essay presents the little-known story of the first western package tour to the postwar Soviet Union along with never-before-seen photographs from the journey. It also introduces the digitized Oddner archive, which contains an abundance of visual sources on the Soviet Union of 1955.

KEYWORDS: Tourism, photography, cold war, Russia, Ukraine.

On June 5, 1955, the Swedish daily *Aftonbladet* ran a sensational headline story: The Soviet Union would open for package tours! After years of isolation, Khrushchev allowed leisure travelers to come and experience the world's largest country. The Soviet Union had not allowed regular tourist visits since 1939, but now ordinary Swedes could obtain a ticket. The Swedish travel company Reso was among the first western travel agencies to land a deal with Intourist, obtaining permission to send a hundred tourists on package tours that same summer. The weekly magazine *Vecko-Journalen* spotted the opportunity to produce a unique travel reportage and dispatched their star reporter Marianne Höök, accompanied by the young photographer Georg Oddner (1923–2007). This assignment ensured the Swedish photographer of Russian descent lasting fame. Two of Oddner's best-known works, *Den dansande matrosen* [The dancing sailor] and *Mannen med boken* [The man with the book] stem from this trip. *Den dansande matrosen* first featured in *Vecko-Journalen*, whose extensive presentation of Höök's reportage and Oddner's photography spanned no less than six consecutive issues in August and September 1955. Photos from the trip have since been printed and exhibited numerous times in Sweden and abroad. The exhibited works, however, only make for a small fraction of the thousands of photographs Oddner took during the trip.

Parting the Curtain

When looking back from our media saturated world, it is hard to comprehend the information vacuum in the West surrounding the Soviet Union in the early 1950s. Churchill's musings on Russia as "a riddle wrapped in mystery inside an enigma" still resonated fifteen years on. The memoirs of Lennart Petri, Sweden's deputy chief of mission in Moscow from 1955 to 1958, recount how he would report about the most trivial observations. "Any information fit to increase the knowledge about the Soviet system and its population's support was of significance to the part of the world that did not share the Soviet values."[1] Contemporary western newspapers lamented the country's inaccessibility and any indication that a change was underway immediately became headline news in the early Cold War.[2]

To be sure, the Soviet Union was never entirely shut off to the Western world. Delegations of politicians, businessmen, and fellow travelers shuttled back and forth with increased intensity in the early 1950s. Artists, experts, and athletes from the West were also received in ever greater numbers following Stalin's death in March 1953. Still, the opening of the country to everyone who could afford the hefty travel expenses in the early summer of 1955 marked a symbolic step towards improved East–West relations and foreshadowed the optimistic "spirit of Geneva" apparent after the "Big Four" summit of July that year.[3]

THE HONOR OF PUSHING open the Soviet border for western tourists is sometimes ascribed to Gabriel Reiner, owner of the New York-based travel bureau Cosmos Travel. During a chance encounter with the Soviet leadership at the US embassy in Moscow on July 4, 1955, the Russian-speaking Reiner explained how the unfavorable currency exchange rate and the lengthy visa application procedure kept US tourists at bay. According to Reiner, Nikita Khrushchev proclaimed, "tourism is a wonderful thing" and a meeting with Intourist was immediately set up the next morning. Reiner thus secured an agreement, which rendered a

Swedish tourists at the Neva River opposite Leningrad's Peter and Paul Fortress. PHOTO: GEORG ODDNER

trip affordable for others than the select few by reducing the sky-high cost of room and board by a third.[4] While this anecdote may well be true, it downplays the fact that western travel agents had already courted Intourist for a while. Lennart Petri mentions the arrival in Moscow of travel agents from Stockholm, Oslo, and Copenhagen on May 12, 1955, and Ivan Ohlson, Reso's CEO, reported on the successful results of "months-long negotiations" with Intourist at a meeting on June 7, 1955, two days after Reso had broken the news about a breakthrough to the Swedish press.[5] Curiously, Ohlson returned to the Soviet capital to conclude Reso's agreement with Intourist on the very same evening that Reiner attended the US Fourth of July reception.[6] In other words, Cosmos Travel appears to have merely gate crashed the final stage of the negotiations between Intourist and other western agencies, although the backing Reiner secured from the Soviet leadership may have accelerated the process and generally improved the terms for the western agencies.

Travel-writing tourists

Reso's first tour was organized in such a haste that there was barely any time to advertise it. Already on August 1, just weeks after the deal with Intourist had been finalized, a pioneering contingent of ten Swedes departed for a 17-day journey around the enormous country. The contemporary press called the travelers "tourists", but the participants were by no means looking for leisure and recreation. Aside from compulsory stops at the Kremlin and the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad, the program contained visits to Moscow's agricultural exhibition, a collective farm, a hospital, and the miserable everyday life among the ruins of Stalingrad. In fact, half of the travelers were critical journalists seeking unique first-hand experiences of the contemporary Soviet Union. Aside from Höök and Oddner, they were Henning "Heng" Österberg of the daily *Stockholmstidningen*, Gits Olsson of the photo magazine *Se*, and Åke Appelgren, who wrote for Reso's magazine *Fritiden* and also served as the group's Swedish guide. The participation of well-known reporters boosted the media interest in the journey. Colleagues from the press interviewed and photographed the party at Stockholm's airport before departure and returned again to gather the travelers' first impressions upon their arrival.[7] In the meantime, *Stockholmstidningen* had published ten dispatches by Österberg during the trip, all of which became front page news.

"THE CONTEMPORARY PRESS CALLED THE TRAVELERS 'TOURISTS', BUT THE PARTICIPANTS WERE BY NO MEANS LOOKING FOR LEISURE AND RECREATION."

The interviews and the travel accounts provide glimpses of the brief moment in the Cold War—between the Geneva summit and the Warsaw Pact's crushing of the Hungarian revolution the following year—when the Soviet Union appeared astonishingly amicable and welcoming. The Swedes were aware of the infamous Soviet "hospitality techniques" traditionally deployed to present the country in the best light to foreign visitors and they were on the lookout for any signs of Potemkin villages.[8] At the end of the day, however, the tourists found that their hosts did little to mask the state of affairs. The journalists reported how, to their surprise, the hosts allowed them to walk about freely, photograph virtually everywhere, and talk to everybody they met. As Olsson wrote in the first of his seven reportages

> **We saw factories, kolkhozes, flats, hospitals, theatres, cinemas [...] we met peasants, factory workers, students, waiters, drivers, doctors, engineers. Everybody dared to speak with foreigners. We met some colorful types.[9]**

Tourists overlook Kyiv in the background, while Oddner foregrounds scrap ignored by the tourist gaze. PHOTO: GEORG ODDNER

This photo was intended to be used in SAS advertisemen: the viewer becomes as a camera-carrying tourist in Moscow. PHOTO: GEORG ODDNER

The travel accounts all describe with a measure of disbelief how the Soviet hosts allowed the journalists to search out poor neighborhoods, photograph abject living conditions, and interview people dreaming of leaving the Soviet Union. One of the tourists worked as a doctor in Stockholm and politely requested to visit a Moscow hospital. To the group's amazement, a visit to a mediocre Moscow hospital – not an elite facility–was quickly improvised. While the Swedish-speaking Intourist guide stayed impeccably on message despite frequent attempts by the visitors to tease out an honest opinion, some of her compatriots gladly expressed their critical views of communist society. All things considered, the Swedes were impressed by the liberty the Soviet hosts granted them in their attempts to make sense of the large country.

"[...] THE SWEDISH-BORN ODDNER LATER REMINISCED HOW AS A CHILD HE EXPRESSLY DISLIKED EVERYTHING RUSSIAN."

THE SWEDISH REPORTERS saw enough to draw their own sober conclusions about life in the Soviet Union. The collective farm – an award-winning model collective often shown to foreigners – proved almost inaccessible due to the sorry state of its dirt road after a heavy rainfall. Measured by Swedish standards, Olsson found the collective "dirty, primitive and backward" with the peasants dressed like it was 1917 and a recently built home looking like a relic from the seventeenth century.[10] Österberg agreed, finding that its workers appear "poor and grey and burdened by work and look like our nineteenth-century farmworkers".[11] Höök compared the statistics provided by the farm's leader with data on the Swedish agricultural sector and concluded that a comparable Swedish farm would support twice the number of cattle, produce 40 per cent more milk per cow, and only require a tenth of the Soviet collective's work force.[12] The journalist was equally critical of the proclaimed Soviet gender equality. As she noted about a group of women construction workers, "the female equality is an equality in terms of heavy physical work".[13]

One of the Swedes was a self-declared communist, and the journalists paid close attention to his opinions of the host country. To their satisfaction, he was a far cry from the gullible party member susceptible to Soviet hospitality techniques. On the contrary, he was furious at the poor housing conditions. Summing up the group's impression, Olsson concluded that "it is the Kremlin and the Red Square that makes Moscow, the rest of the city is slum dressed up as a Potemkin village".[14] Though the journalists easily saw through any Soviet attempts to shape their opinions they remained conscious of the complexity of Soviet society. When asked upon his return if the people lived in poverty, Olsson replied "it seemed as if the Russians live a great deal better than the Americans claim and a great deal worse than they claim themselves."[15] And as Österberg, noted, "the happiness coefficient is relative". Even in the backward rural community life was "as summer-bright, work-driven and inscrutable as anywhere else in the world, where people try to shape their destiny as tolerably as possible within the given framework".[16] Amidst

A Swedish tourist photographs Soviet visitors of the agricultural exhibition in Moscow. PHOTO: GEORG ODDNER

Central Asian tourists pose at the statue in Moscow of Yuri Dolgoruky, the city's mythical founder. The monument was completed in 1954. PHOTO: GEORG ODDNER

intense superpower rivalry and rampant stereotypes fueled by widespread ignorance, the Swedish journalists sought to present a balanced view of the "other side".

Soviet street photography and the Oddner archive

While the Swedish journalists made their observations, talked to locals, and discussed with the Intourist guide, Georg Oddner often remained to one side, eavesdropping on the conversations while documenting every step with his camera. The result of his efforts is preserved in the Georg Oddner archive held by Malmö Museum. The photo collection contains 670,000 negatives, 2000 of which stem from the visit to the Soviet Union in 1955. The online archive provides access to these photographs as digitized contact prints (i.e., positive prints in the same size as the original negative) that Oddner used to review and identify photographs for further processing. On top of the 2,000 unique contact prints, the archive contains another 700 contact prints consisting of variously developed versions of the same negatives used for finding the ideal light and framing. Many are cropped with a marker and some are singled out for sale or subsequent exhibitions.[17] A ledger provides additional technical data and lists later use in publications and exhibitions. The collection is evidence of Oddner's outstanding talents. The lens and formats used by Oddner (60x60 and 24x36) produced medium range shots that captured sudden impressions of public life in the Soviet Union. Although most shots contain people caught unaware, often on the move, only a tiny fraction of the images are blurred, unbalanced, or poorly framed. The contact prints have been preserved in chronological order and thus document the extensive trip from the arrival in Moscow to the departure from Leningrad airport.

ODDNER'S WORK IS profoundly inspired by his hero at the time, the French photographer and pioneer of street photography, Henri Cartier-Bresson. Although Oddner earned a living as a fashion photographer at the time of the journey, his main interest was "actual, living life, real life".[18] In the Soviet Union he dressed anonymously and sought to become one with the scenery, while the other Swedish tourists clearly stood out and attracted attention. Oddner's photographs from the Soviet tour thus belong to the tradition of the Magnum founders Robert Capa and Cartier-Bresson, both of whom had actually visited the Soviet Union after the Second World War. Capa famously journeyed the Soviet Union with John Steinbeck in the autumn of 1947, seeking to document the "private life of the Russian people" while avoiding "politics and the larger issues";[19] Cartier-Bresson had visited the Soviet Union for ten weeks in 1954 aiming to "get a direct image of the people going about their daily life" and to show "human beings in the streets, in the shops, at work and at play, anywhere I could approach them without disturbing reality".[20] Capa's photojournalism accompanied Steinbeck's travel writing for the *Herald Tribune* and was soon published in the hotly debated *A Russian Journal* (1948). Cartier-Bresson's photos featured in *Life* in January 1955 and also attracted great interest. Thus even if Oddner's company was officially the first postwar contingent of western tourists in the Soviet Union, he was by no means the first postwar western photographer to traverse the country. However, unlike Capa, whom the Soviet authorities considered "friendly disposed", Oddner harbored little

A Central Asian visitor to Moscow's Tretyakov gallery looks curiously at the camera of a Swedish tourist.

PHOTO: GEORG ODDNER

The depiction of tourists posing for the camera has a long history. "The Season at Niagara Falls," *Harper's Weekly* (August 18, 1877).

Georg Oddner in his studio.

PHOTO: ÅKE HEDSTRÖM/MALMÖ MUSEUM

sympathy for the host country.[21] His Russian mother had fled from the revolution and the Swedish-born Oddner later reminisced how as a child he expressly disliked everything Russian.[22] As a sign of the change from 1947 to 1955, Capa was nevertheless monitored closely and had photos confiscated before he left the country while Oddner encountered few restrictions and was permitted to leave with his work uncensored.[23]

Oddner's previously published photographs from the Soviet tour share a familiarity with those of Capa and Cartier-Bresson.[24] The street life documented by the three photographers is dominated by women due to the country's immense loss of men during the Second World War. Women mend the roads, reap the wheat, chat on street corners, and populate a shopping arcade. Capa and Cartier-Bresson both shot women dancing with other women. Traces of war are most present in the works of Oddner and Capa. The former captured a one-legged amputee while the latter filmed the wretched living conditions among the ruins of Stalingrad. Cartier-Bresson's pictures in *Life*, meanwhile, largely avoided imagery that could displease the Soviets.

AMONG ODDNER'S previously unpublished works, however, are a number of tableaus unlike anything Capa and Cartier-Bresson came across. Because Oddner traveled in a group he had the opportunity to document the encounters between the tourists, the Soviet authorities, and the locals at a time when westerners were a rare sight. The Oddner archive thus contains scores of scenes where guides point and explain, the tourists gaze, listen, and take their own photographs, and baffled locals gaze at the foreigners as they stand out with their western clothes and camera equipment. There is a long tradition of depicting tourists as vulgar pleasure seekers and mindless herds consuming "sights" designated as such by a commercial tourist industry. This strand of thinking about tourists has also been expressed visually dating back to 19th century paintings and satirical cartoons and continued in recent times in the photography of Martin Parr.[25] Oddner's depiction of the tourists, however, contains no such satirizing. Instead, he captures the concentration of the phrasebook-carrying Swedes as they listen respectfully to their guide and the contacts established across linguistic gulfs when locals get to try the tourists' cameras. Oddner also has a keen eye for the agency of the tourists at work in search for the perfect views. These photographs, some of which accompany this essay, may not represent Oddner at his artistic best in terms of framing, composition, motif, and sharpness. However, they show an easily forgotten side of the Soviet Union of 1955: a country that was opening up and making itself available for modern tourist practices such as the mass production of images by tourists with cameras. They thus represent a kind of source that tourism historians often struggle to locate. While there is an abundance of written sources detailing how and why to travel, it is much harder to find visual evidence of actual tourist practices in the past. Hence the Oddner archive is not only of relevance to historians interested in the Soviet Union of the 1950s; it should also appeal to scholars focusing on the visual history of tourism.

In the autumn of 1955, the Swedish Foreign Ministry enquired

Reso about its experiences sending the first tourists to the Soviet Union. Reso reported that they were satisfied. According to the memo forwarded to Petri at the Moscow embassy, "the participants had seemed happy and the collaboration between Reso and Intourist had been frictionless."[26] How the Soviets evaluated the tour and the subsequent press coverage we do not know, but Reso and many other western travel agencies increased their number of tours to the Soviet Union over the following years.[27] For the 32-year-old Oddner, the Soviet journey provided a career-defining boost. In November 1955 Cartier-Bresson published a book with photos from his 1954 visit. A Swedish reviewer measured the work against Capa's and Oddner's photos from the Soviet Union and found Oddner's the most interesting. "Which publisher will take care of Oddner?" he asked.[28] A volume dedicated solely to the 1955 trip never appeared; with the open online archive, however, now everybody has an opportunity to delve into his oeuvre. ■

Sune Bechmann Pedersen is Associate Professor of History at Stockholm University

Note: All photos by Georg Oddner are published with the courtsey of Malmö Museum.

Acknowledgement: This research was supported by Gyllenstiernska Krapperupstiftelsen (grant no. 2020-0065).

references

1 Lennart Petri, *Sverige i stora världen: Minnen och reflexioner från 40 års diplomattjänst* [Sweden in the big world: Memories and reflections from 40 years of diplomatic service] (Stockholm: Atlantis, 1996), 352.

2 Sune Bechmann Pedersen, "A Paradise behind the Curtain: Selling Eastern Escapes to Scandinavians," in *Eden für Jeden? Touristische Sehnsuchtsorte in Mittel-und Osteuropa von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart* [Eden for everyone? Touristic places of longing in Central and Eastern Europe from 1945 to the present], ed. Bianca Hoenig and Hannah Wadle (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2019), 233–236.

3 Anne Gorsuch, *All This Is Your World: Soviet Tourism at Home and Abroad after Stalin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 10–15.

4 The anecdote was first published in *The New Yorker*, November 19, 1955. Frederick Charles Barghoorn recounted it in his influential *The Soviet Cultural Offensive: The Role of Cultural Diplomacy in Soviet Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), 72.

5 Lennart Petri's unpublished diary 1955–1956, 148, Lennart Petris arkiv, Lund University Library. Minutes of Reso's working committee, June 7, 1955, 1221/A/1/7, Swedish Labour Movement's Archive and Library.

6 Telegram from the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Stockholm, to the Swedish embassy in Moscow, July 2, 1955, I7.Er, Swedish National Archives.

7 *Expressen* was present at the departure. *Svenska Dagbladet* covered the arrival.

8 On Soviet hospitality techniques, see Paul Hollander, *Political Pilgrims: Travels of Western Intellectuals to the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba, 1928–1978* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).

9 Gits Olson, "Landet annorlunda" [A different country], *Se*, August 26, 1955, 8.

10 Olson, "De frivilligt livegna" [The voluntary serfs], *Se*, September 9, 1955, 20.

11 Henning Österberg, "ST-man i rysk kolchos: Potatis och bröd dagslön" [ST-man in Russian kolkhoz: Potatoes and bread daily wage], August 13, 1955, 3.

12 Marianne Höök, "Kolchos på lerfötter" [Kolkhoz on clay feet], *Vecko-Journalen*, September 17, 1955, 46.

13 Höök, "Första turist i Sovjet"[The first tourist in the Soviet Union], *Vecko-Journalen*, August 27, 1955, 18.

14 Olsson, "Kamrat Karlsson åker till Sovjet" [Comrade Karlsson goes to the Soviet Union], *Se*, September 2, 1955, 30.

15 Olson,"Landet annorlunda," 8.

16 Österberg, "ST-man i rysk kolchos," 3.

17 Georg Oddners samling, Malmö museum, http://carlotta.malmo.se/carlotta-mmus/web/object/652048. Additional photographs from the trip, including some of the most famous works, remain with the Oddner family.

18 Georg Oddner, *Genomresa* [Transit] (Malmö: Malmö Museer, 2003), 27.

19 John Steinbeck with Robert Capa, *A Russian Journal* (New York: Viking Press, 1948), 4.

20 Henri Cartier-Bresson quoted in "The People of Russia," *Life*, January 17, 1955, 16–17.

21 On the Soviet assessment of Steinbeck's and Capa's political sympathies, see Rósa Magnúsdóttir, *Enemy Number One: The United States of America in Soviet Ideology and Propaganda, 1945–1959* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 72.

22 Oddner, *Genomresa*, 19.

23 Steinbeck with Capa, *A Russian Journal*, 220. Höök, "Första turist i Sovjet," 11.

24 Photos from the 1955 tour are included in the Oddner retrospectives *Genomresa*, 122–157, and in Georg Oddner, *Närvarande* [Present] (Stockholm: Arbman, 1984), 12–41.

25 Sune Bechmann Pedersen, "Turism: Nöje, pilgrimsfärd, bildningsresa och diplomati" [Tourism: Pleasure, pilgrimage, educational travel and diplomacy], in *Natur & Kulturs globalhistoria 1*, ed. Klas-Göran Karlsson (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 2022), 483–484.

26 Letter by Richard Hichens-Bergström, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to Petri, September 19, 1955, I7.Er. Swedish National Archives.

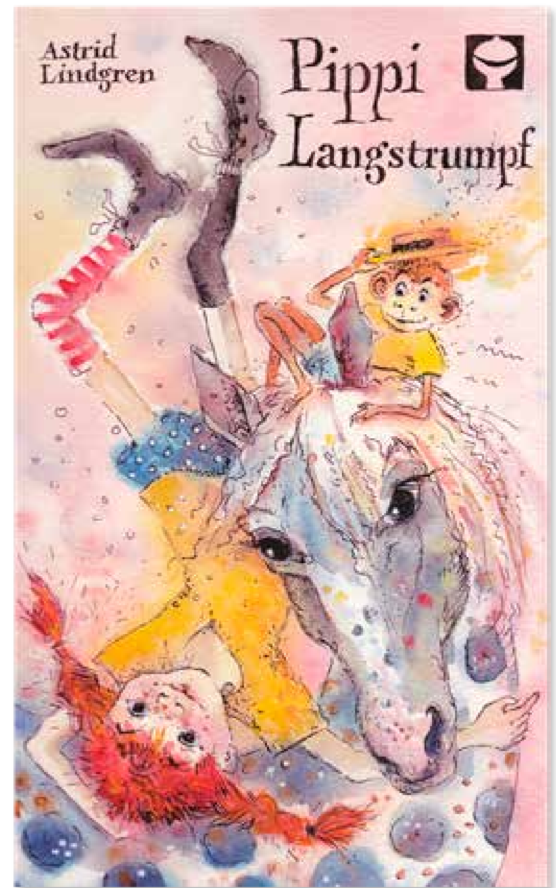
27 The books by Gorsuch and Magnúsdóttir on Soviet tourism and cultural relations at this time do not mention any sources related to the opening to western tourists.

28 Carl-Adam Nycop, "Har ni tröttnat på konstfotograferna? Se då på Cartier-Bresson" [Are you tired of the art photographers? Then look at Cartier-Bresson], *Expressen*, November 8, 1955, 4.

UPSIDE DOWN ON HORSEBACK

The trickster Pippi Longstocking in the GDR

by **Lisa Källström**



COPYRIGHT: CORNELIA ELLINGER, SKETCH

abstract

A sketch for the cover of the second East German edition to *Pippi Langstrumpf* (1988) showing a girl standing on her head on horseback is the starting point for this article. It was drawn by Cornelia Ellinger, only one year before the fall of the Berlin wall. The sketch becomes a starting point for a discussion of humor and materiality in the reception of Pippi in the GDR. Just as the cover frames and delimits the text, our preconceptions frame our gaze and affect what we can see. However, this act is not just something that is imposed on us but an invitation to act ourselves, which makes issues of illustration, color choice and book format particularly important in a monolithic society, in an attempt to steer the reader's attention in a desired direction. The discussed sketch was never printed. Instead, the publisher chose a more blatantly humorous image.

KEYWORDS: Pippi Longstocking, GDR, print authorization procedure, cover images.

A sketch for the cover to the second GDR edition of the *Pippi Longstocking* (1988) shows a girl standing on her head on horseback. She casually rests her head on one arm while the other arm reaches round the horse's neck. Seemingly unconcerned, she performs this audacious acrobatic exercise without holding on to the horse. With a happy and calm expression on her face, she stretches her long, slender legs straight up in the air. Both her stockings reach above the knees, one is striped white and pink, the other is black. On her feet she has two obviously oversized yet at the same time elegant ankle boots. The title of the proposed publication is written with black slightly squiggly letters: "Pippi" and with smaller letters "Langstrumpf" on the right edge. The playful form of the letters in the title reflects the anatomy and movement of the girl's body.

While Brigitte Schleusing, a much more established artist, had been commissioned to draw Pippi for the first GDR edition in 1975, it was now up to Ellinger to depict her as part of her

internship at the publishing house Kinderbuchverlag Berlin. Giving the commission to a graphic designer who had not yet completed her training was unusual, as she could not be expected to know what was considered politically desirable. Normally, the choice of illustrator was considered important, but here the assignment went to a young art student. Perhaps the decision could be justified by a lack of time. It might even be a sign that the book was not considered particularly important in the yearly publication list. Initially Schleusing (the GDR's first Pippi illustrator) was asked if she could draw some new illustrations for the new edition, but she declined. Ellinger was not even paid for her work, even though she was expected to design two full-page posters and eight black and white illustrations.

THE AIM OF THIS article is to shed light on the cultural adaptation and implementation of the pictorial motif Pippi based on the sketch and the published cover image, with particular emphasis on the playfulness and humor of the character. When a motif is re-expressed, a process which Henry Jenkins calls "convergence culture" emerges, i.e. a power struggle over the distribution and control of content between various intersections of media, industries and audiences.[1] Because of the global nature of such an exchange, the interpicturality processes are also necessarily cross-cultural.[2] Regarding the visualization of an already well-known theme, illustrations, like art in more general terms, are dependent on the interpretation that comes before the individual expression, but the work done by later images obliterates the latter and creates new versions of them through the viewer's interpretation.[3] This indicates that our interpretation, as well as any humorous intentions, depends on the context. The question of how humor is expressed through an image is particularly interesting in relation to the trickster Pippi, as the international launch of the character can be seen as an attempt to tame her.

The article consists of six parts, first discussing research on Pippi as a trickster and then discussing this rhetorical figure in more general terms within the framework of children's literature. Then I discuss Pippi's role as a trickster in East German children's literature, the role that contemporaries attributed to her, and the illustrations that aim to capture her essence. Material aspects are important in terms of how humor appears, as humor is about the discrepancy between the framed expectations of the viewer and the perceived reality. Finally, I compare the sketch described above with the printed cover image, examining how they emphasize Pippi's clownesque nature. In this context, humor should be understood as a pragmatic category that depends on the contextual condition.[4] The theory of incongruity assumes that we have certain expectations when we read a text or see an image. If these expectations are not met, we may find the situation comical.

"THE QUESTION OF HOW HUMOR IS EXPRESSED THROUGH AN IMAGE IS PARTICULARLY INTERESTING IN RELATION TO THE TRICKSTER PIPPI."

Pippi as a trickster

Literary scholars have pointed to the humorous qualities of the Pippi character.[5] Her humor stems from her quirky and unconventional personality.[6] She is a playful and unpredictable character, often making fun of social norms and expectations. Pippi's superhuman strength and unusual pets, a monkey and a horse, add to her eccentricity. Her unconventional nature and disregard for societal conventions provide ample comedic material throughout the book. Pippi has even been called a trickster, a carrier of a counterweight to the ideologically desired ideal.[7] The trickster has been described as a liminal actor, as someone who appears in unstable situations and has the potential to influence these situations. Paradoxically, the trickster is a liminal entity, one who is conservative as well as radical, or able to destroy as well as create. The trickster is thus a mediator of anti-structure. In this way, the trickster is a boundary crosser. By offering solutions to problems or explanations and critiques of the world as it is, the trickster can appear as an outsider, or as one who speaks to the center from the periphery. Importantly in relation to Pippi in the GDR, she is an individualist read against a closed society where the collective is of great importance.

THE RECEPTION OF Pippi in the GDR has been discussed. Caroline Roder has returned to Astrid Lindgren in several publications.[8] Astrid Surmatz also discusses the reception in East Germany in her extensive thesis on Pippi in the German language.[9] Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer mentions the published cover picture by Ellinger but is not very impressed by the young artist's work, which she finds lacks some independence in relation to the Swedish illustrator's depiction of the character.[10] Ines Soldwisch discusses the reception of Pippi from the perspective of a historian in "Pippi als 'Kontra zu einer bürgerlichen Welt'" [Pippi as 'counterpoint to a bourgeois world'] in a contribution to Clio-online. In a chapter in *Mera Astrid Lindgren! Författaren, förläggaren och filmskaparen* [More Astrid Lindgren! The author, publisher and film-maker], a not-yet-published Astrid Lindgren anthology, I consider why it took so long for Pippi to reach the GDR, taking as my starting point the correspondence between the author and her FRG publisher.[11] I also discuss the changes made to the text and ask where to draw the line between a more faithful interpretation and a freer reworking, if not outright adaptation, as the story in the GDR version was reduced by approximately half.

Then I move on to the depiction of tricksters such as Pippi Longstocking. The materiality of the book is an important and often overlooked dimension. This statement is also true regarding the reception of Pippi Longstocking in the GDR. Astrid Surmatz and Caroline Roeder have thoroughly analyzed how Pippi was received in the GDR, but without discussing in detail the significance of the book's format, paper quality, typeface, and typography for how Pippi was interpreted and received by her contemporaries.[12]

But books are also concrete, materially designed objects in this world and as such they in turn enter into the fictional world of literature itself. For this reason, an examination of the materiality of the medium itself and the significance of the book and of reading is necessary. The material properties are crucial to the reading experience, to setting the limits of the narrative imagination.[13] It is particularly important when it comes to a pragmatic understanding of humor, concerned with how our interpretive processes are shaped in relation to our own "contextual frameworks". Bakhtin defines carnival as materialistic. In his reflections on the trickster, he aims to achieve a positive revaluation of the material and the corporeal.[14] He opposes the emphasis on the purely spiritual, and takes a firm stand on the insurmountable contradiction between "hyle" (matter) and "pneuma" (spirit) that has characterized Western philosophy and religion.[15]

THE HUMOR REGARDING how Pippi has been depicted has also been discussed. Agnes-Margrethe Bjorvand reflects on how text and image interact to emphasis the dynamics of Pippi. She draws on Gunther Kress' and Carey Jewitt's concepts of modal affordance and functional load (how different media create meaning together and the possibilities and limitations that characterize each medium).[16] While Astrid Lindgren describes how Pippi "runs", "skips", "jumps", "climbs", "steps" and "balances", the Swedish Pippi illustrator Ingrid Vang Nyman depicts this movement through visual blurs, motion lines or action lines.[17] Bjorvand's reflections concerns the strategic choices of the illustrator and the author. With a focus on the viewer, it would instead be possible to reflect on how meaning-making processes require the picture book reader's ability to remember, associate, combine and connect. This latter kind of reflection brings together ethical and aesthetic considerations.[18] In another context, I have discussed Ingrid Vang Nyman's work in relation to humor. Using rhetorical concepts, I explain how Vang Nyman's clear lines, with their clear delineation of solid surfaces, can still convey a strong impression of movement and comedy. In doing so, I use what Sofi Qvarnström calls "the emotional function of the aesthetic artefact", i.e. the affective appeal of images.[19]

The trickster in children's literature

A trickster such as Pippi Longstocking is often regarded as a manifestation of the child's desire for individuality and self-expression, free from adult control, in children's literature.[20] Considering the function of the trickster in children's literature, this rhetorical figure can provide the child reader with "valuable psychological relief from the pressures and confines of adult authority".[21] If one assumes that the unexpected, that which does not quite fit in, can attract laughter, then perhaps it is the actions of the trickster, breaking rules, resisting authority, which manifest itself as humor. Humor has often been accused of encouraging stereotypes and confirming the beliefs of mainstream audiences. Researchers have shown that in a closed society like the GDR, humor can open up a heightened social and political awareness and thus resonate with the public at large, or with parts of the public.

A monolithic society may be more open to jokes due to a clearer picture of the opponent. But in order to work within the framework of the concept of the GDR, a trickster would have to develop into a positive socialist hero who manifests the collectivist ideal but also simultaneously represents its individualistic ("bourgeois") counterpart. The trickster is the remnant of a collective stooge, a summary of all the deficient character qualities of individuals which, little by little, have become intolerable.[22] In contrast to the savior type, the trickster would not really try to bridge the contradiction, but only "surreptitiously" jump back and forth between the two polarities, i.e. ultimately engage in a "deceptive" pseudo-mediation. Clearly, such a hero would have been problematic within the framework of socialist realism.[23]

"PIPPI'S TRICKSTER CHARACTERISTICS WERE, IT IS CLAIMED, RESPONSIBLE FOR HER LATE ARRIVAL IN THE GDR."

In further studies I would like to look at the trickster in DDR literature, with particular emphasis on the expected role of the child and the child reader. Such research would be motivated by a strengthened interest in the rhetorical figure and humor in research. This research could be inspired by rhetorical research where the trickster has been discussed. More recently, scholars have discussed the motivational aspects of humor with its possible applications in the classroom. Such research is inspired by Julie Cross' work *Humor in Contemporary Junior Literature* (2010), examining the intricate textual humor in contemporary young adult literature using literary criticism and humor theory.[24] Cross problematizes the dichotomy between high and low humor and thus an oversimplified view of children's development and how they will learn to appreciate humor. These previous studies often focus on the text or the interaction between image and text, while here I approach a sketch of a book cover and its materiality.

Pippi in the GDR

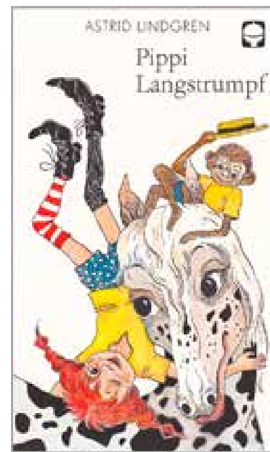
Pippi's trickster characteristics were, it is claimed, responsible for her late arrival in the GDR.[25] The first Swedish Pippi book was published in 1945 and was quickly followed by two more. But the books about her were only published in the GDR in 1975 in a collected edition. It was quite late compared to other countries in the Eastern Bloc. Pippi was introduced to Russian children with illustrations by Irina L. Tokmakova as Peppi Dlinnyj Čulok (*Пиппи Длинный Чулок*, 1968). Pippi also appeared in Poland and the former Czechoslovakia in 1968 with illustrations by Zbigniew Piotrowski and Karel Teissig, respectively. The publishing house Verlag Mladé letá published a translation into Slovak: *Pipi Dlhá pančucha* (in Czech the title would have been *Pipi Dlouhá punčocha*).[26] The stories about Pippi were also published as a serial in the early 1970s in the children's magazine *Mateřídouška*, and later in several editions, illustrated by the popular illustrator Adolf Born. In Russia, Pippi was never as popular as *Karlsson*

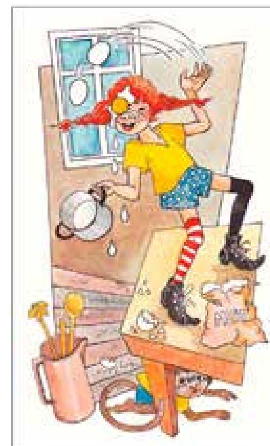
on the Roof. One reason for this was the cartoon film by Boris Stepantsev. The film portrayed the wicked Karlsson as a cute and funny trickster saving his friend from the overbearing Miss Bock who punished the boy for interrupting her coffee break with cinnamon buns by locking him into his room.

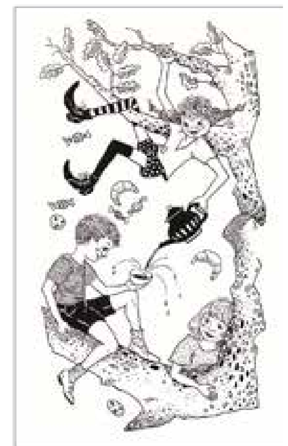
The GDR regime's authoritarian and highly didactic approach, combined with the already immanently pedagogical nature of children's books, meant that careful considerations were made not only about which books to publish, but also about their design. Books were taken into the service of the agenda. Coupled with a uniform, ideologically convergent, and state-controlled education system, books were reshaped into tools for the all-round formation of a new kind of socialist human being.[27] Publishing was a political, ideological, and bureaucratic issue. GDR leaders spoke of need for "planning" cultural processes and "protecting" socialist art, constantly reminded artists of their "responsibility" not to damage the state or its reputation. This review process did not apply solely to the text itself but also to the appearance of the book, the type of illustrations it should have and the number of copies to be printed. Of course, these regulations also had an impact on the books published, the layout of the book with pictures, the design of the cover and much more.

The review process outlined above might be one explanation why it took so long for a publisher to pick up the books about Pippi in the GDR. If in the FRG it was the publisher Friedrich Oetinger himself who decided to publish the Pippi books, in the East it was a state matter. This resulted in fundamental differences in the publishers' considerations. Before an international book could be published in the GDR, it had to be approved by a commission consisting of a GDR official, a GDR educator and a GDR author. While Pippi arrived in the FRG in 1949 at the Oetinger Verlag, it took until 1975 for her books to be published in the GDR. This delay can partly be explained by the fact that the attitude towards fantastic literature differed in the two countries. In the FRG, the post-war book market was quickly filled with translations of Nordic and English literature. Fantasy and nonsense became dominant genres. Domestic authors such as Ottfried Preußler and Michael Ende soon joined Astrid Lindgren, whose books quickly gained a prominent position in the publishing house.[28] After a brief phase of mainly problem-oriented literature in the 1970s, a new wave of fantastic literature emerged in the 1980s.[29]

In the GDR, however, the situation was different. Here, fantastic literature played a more subordinate role.[30] In a state where the aim was to educate the socialist citizen, other literature was considered more important. This fact applied not only to what was written for adults but also for children. In the mid-1970s fantastic literature did receive a certain boost, but the genre was still not very important. For example, only 100 titles of such children's literature were published in the entire period 1949–1989.[31] The aim was to strengthen domestic book production in an attempt to assert its uniqueness. Moreover, Russian classics were translated more often than children's books from the West. Finally, though, in 1975, it was Pippi's turn. This was probably also





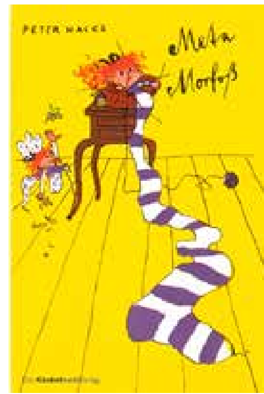


Cover and illustration, Cornelia Ellinger, *Pippi Langstrumpf*, 1988.

linked to the fact that Pippi Longstocking films were released in the FRG, which could also be watched in the GDR by those who received West German television.[32] However, from the 1970s onwards, the state leadership was also liberal due to its belief in its own consolidated socialist world. Erich Honecker stated on 17 December 1971 at the 4th Congress of the SED Central Committee: "Based on the firm position of socialism, I believe that there can be no taboos in the field of art and literature."[33]

Pippi and other GDR-tricksters

In this article I discuss a sketch that was never printed as a book cover for children. Material concerns may seem all the more important as Kinderbuchverlag Berlin attached great importance to the appearance of their books and their illustrations, within the constraints of the paper shortage. Founded in 1949, it was the country's largest publisher of children's literature. The books, illustrated by established artists such as Werner Klemke and Hannelore Teutsch, were characterized by clear lines, bright colors and quirky characters. One example is Peter Hack's *Meta Morfoss* with illustrations by Heinz Edelmann (1975). Meta Morfoss has a special gift. She can transform herself: into an angel,



Cover, Heinz Edelmann, *Meta Morfoß*, (Kinderbuchverlag: Berlin, 1975).
Cover, Manfred Bofinger, *Alfons Zitterbacke*, (Kinderbuchverlag: Berlin, 1976).

an animal, or whatever she wants. This skill often leads to unexpected situations. Another example is Gerhard Holtz Baumert's *Alfons Zitterbacke* (1958) with illustrations by Manfred Bofinger. Unlike other children's book heroes of his time, Alfon is not an ever-ready pioneer but an anti-hero who never succeeds and whose every good intention is misinterpreted. Also, Meta Morfoss and Alfons, like Pippi, are tricksters. But while Pippi gives the impression of being quite happy with herself, Alfons tries to fit in and fails.

When discussing Pippi as a trickster, it is important to remember that the GDR Pippi is not nearly as unrestrainedly wild as the Swedish version and even slightly milder than the FRG rendition. The collection of books about Pippi came to the GDR as a license purchase from the FRG in a translation by Cäcile Heinig. As for the text, the GDR version was a bit more formal than that of the FRG. The main difference, however, was that the entire third book and parts of the second book were deleted with the consequence that in the GDR edition, Pippi never leaves the small town in which she lives. This makes Pippi less controversial because, as a white girl, she never visits a South Sea island. At the same time, she conforms to an ideal in which the book's characters, having been out of the loop early on, adapt to the group and realize the undeniable benefits of the collective.

"[…]THE GDR PIPPI IS NOT NEARLY AS UNRESTRAINEDLY WILD AS THE SWEDISH VERSION AND EVEN SLIGHTLY MILDER THAN THE FRG RENDITION."

THE FACT THAT the GDR version was purchased from the FRG is evident in the colors of Pippi's clothes. At the same time, the publisher Kinderbuchverlag Berlin wished to personalize the story with new illustrations. While the Swedish Pippi has a blue dress with blue patches, the first FRG-Pippi has yellow top and blue trousers with white dots. In this sense, Ellinger's Pippi repeats a color pattern from the FRG-Pippi when she draws Pippi in a yellow sweater and blue shorts with white dots, but one stocking is clownish, red-and-white striped instead of yellow-black. Regarding Pippi's top, the German text translated into English states: "It was a beautiful yellow, but because there wasn't enough fabric, it was too short, so a pair of blue trousers with white dots peeked out from underneath. On her long thin legs she had a pair of long stockings, one striped and one black."[34] In Ellinger's interpretation, however, the yellow dress has become a yellow short-sleeved shirt, possibly a sports shirt in line with the country's sporting ideals.[35]

In terms of book format and paper choice, however, the difference between the two East German editions and the West German license book is striking. If the FRG edition was printed in the "Hausbach" format (17 x 40 centimeters), which usually is reserved for classic fairy tales, the DDR edition is simpler. It was published in an already existing book series. Weighing 850 grams and spread over 351 pages, the FRG edition belonged more on the coffee table in the parlor than in the nursery. Not only the price of the book (19.80 DM compared to 70 Pfennig for a comic book), but also the quality of the paper and the linen cover with its protective colorful paper dust jacket, show that the FRG publisher Oetinger was targeting a conservative clientele.[36]

The Kinderbuchverlag had 25 series of books recognizable by their uniform layout. The first Pippi Longstocking was printed in the series *Paperbacks for Young Readers* with illustrations by Brigitte Schleusing. The book included about 180 pages for 2.40 Marks. Like the rest of the Paperbacks for Young Readers series, the 1975 Pippi book has a glossy cover, a cardboard cover with foil, with a colored illustration, but otherwise the inside was rough unbleached paper with black lettering. The second edition of the stories of Pippi Longstocking (which Schleusing would illustrate) was published in 1988 in the *Alex Taschenbücher*-series at a price of 2.80 Marks and a print run of 40 000 copies.[37]

IN THE CASE of the 1988 second edition the publisher Kinderbuchverlag Berlin also decided to provide the new edition with inside illustrations which also justified a new front-page design. The first edition had only one cover picture and no other illustration. While the FRG edition had a lavish mustard yellow linen cover with a blue dust jacket, both GDR editions looked more like any other book in the same series, apart from Pippi's yellow dress and blue shorts (an outfit reminiscent of the BRD version). While the FRG edition is richly illustrated with drawings by Rolf Rettich, the GDR edition has only one illustration, on the front cover, and it looks like all the other books in the GDR series. After this review of the material aspects of the book, it is now time to take a closer look at what Gerhard Holtz-Baumert, who wrote the external review in connection with the publication of the Pippi stories, thought

about her more generally, and about future illustrations of this trickster more specifically.

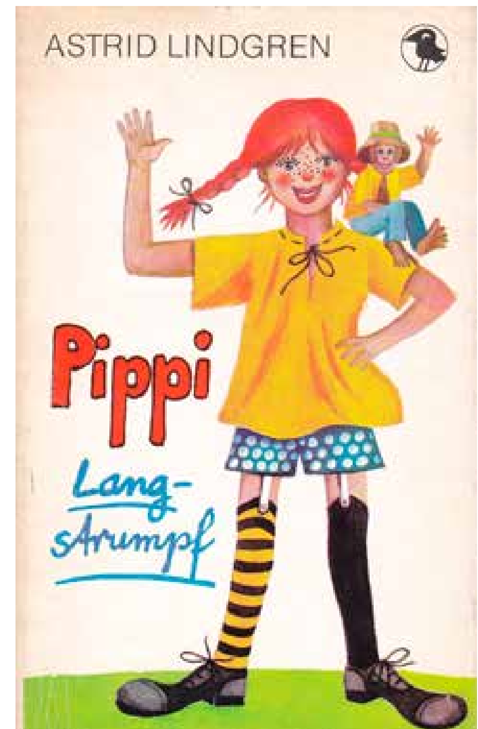
The importance of illustrations

Authors and cultural officials of the time also emphasized the value of proper illustrations for children's books. Gerhard Holtz-Baumert, for example, emphasizes the particular importance of the illustrations for the Pippi books in a statement to the Ministry of Culture on the question of whether it was worth publishing Pippi. He notes: "The artist who takes on the task of drawing Pippi must make an effort to reinforce the subtle, the Utopian, the humanitarian of Pippi in order to help the book to become what it really is – a fairy tale".[38] This quote is interesting for two reasons: firstly, because it says something about how Pippi was interpreted at the time and secondly, because it shows the recognized importance of illustrations for the reader's experience of a literary character.[39] There was never any question of taking over the FRG illustrations as the publisher preferred domestic illustrations. Moreover, Rolf Rettich, who had drawn Pippi for the German publisher Oetinger in 1967, had absconded from the GDR.

Brigitte Schlusing, who was first commissioned to draw Pippi in the GDR, had established herself in the field of fairy tales. Ellinger, in turn, was an art student and therefore still relatively new to the scene. The fact that the assignment went to her may indicate a certain urgency to publish the book, but also that the book was not considered particularly important in comparison with other works that were to be printed at the same time. As I discussed above, Kinderbuchverlag Berlin regarded illustrations as important. The illustration techniques and styles used in GDR children's books were diverse. Many books contained realistic depictions of everyday life, while others contained abstract or surreal elements. Illustrators often used bright colors and bold lines to create visually striking images. The publishing house awarded several prizes, including the Hans Baltzer Prize, in order to recognize outstanding illustrators. Emphasizing high-quality illustrations helped to establish the GDR as a leader in the field of children's book publishing.[40] Due to the illustrations' proximity to the text, they were supposed to highlight desirable features and thereby steer the readers' interpretation in the right direction.

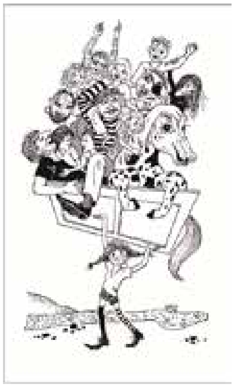
GERHARD HOLTZ-BAUMERT, who acted as an independent reviewer of the stories about Pippi, was a major cultural figure as head of the Authors' Association for Children's Literature and editor-in-chief of the only journal for children's literature, *Beiträge zur Kinder- und Jugendliteratur*. He argues in favor of the work's potential literary qualities. All publications in GDR were subject to authorization. This procedure, known as the print authorization procedure, covered not only domestic literature but also licensed literature. At least two opinions were sent to the Ministry of Culture together with the manuscript: one prepared by the editor and one external expert opinion. Both assessed the literary quality of the manuscript as well as its political message.

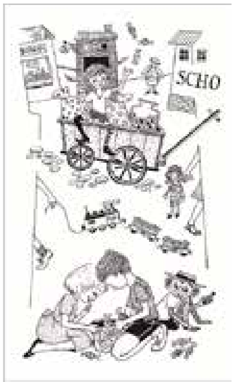
The careful scrutiny of Pippi is in itself perhaps not particularly remarkable; even today, publications are the subject of strategic considerations in publishing houses around the world.



Cover, Brigitte Schleusing, *Pippi Langstrumpf*, (Kinderbuchverlag: Berlin, 1975).

Cover, Walter Scharnweber, *Pippi Langstrumpf*, Oetinger, Remake of original cover from 1949 to new context.





Illustrations, Cornelia Ellinger, *Pippi Langstrumpf*, 1988.

Moreover, debates about Pippi still flare up at regular intervals (even in Sweden).[41] But here the review was state-regulated and part of a censorship system. The purpose of the examination was to determine the position of the character in relation to the system. In light of this requirement, illustrations also become important, as they have an impact on the reader's interpretation of the book. The choice of artist is particularly important because the story does not represent a "socialist position", according to Holtz-Baumert.[42]

Holtz-Baumert describes Pippi's world as a Utopia, a children's counter-world construct and in dialectical opposition to the world of adults.[43] Emphasizing that Pippi's world is not only a parallel world, but also a counterpoint to the adult bourgeois world, a world where children's rights are taken seriously, he also suggests that the GDR has come closer to this dream than the West. He claims:

"Let's look at Pippi this way: as an attempt to protect children from a stupid, pedagogic, helplessly evil world [...], from incomprehension and lack of love – as a plea for children [...]. Of course, this is not a socialist position – but it is a humanist one that should absolutely be honored."

In his interpretation, Holtz-Baumert thus confirms the socialist position, although he gives a cautious hint that Lindgren herself may not be aware of the true potential of her story. Whatever the case may be, he claims, the story "embodies Lindgren's notions of a better future" of a socialistic counter-world to the west.[44] He claims that "The socialist literature embraces everything that is valuable, defends it – sometimes even against itself – and upholds it. Pippi Longstocking can be printed here in this light, absolutely not uncritically. A defence against itself' is also necessary in this respect."[45]

AFTER THIS REVIEW of Pippi's publishing history and consideration of the character as a trickster, and humor in more general terms, it is now time to return to the sketch described above. What first comes to mind is perhaps the position on horseback in which Ellinger has placed Pippi. She cannot really ride in that extravagant position; the character's position on horseback has a purely performative purpose. Her gestures and the composition of the sketch draw the viewer's attention to the character's trickster quality. This is a far-fetched exaggeration (hyperbole) as she does not make the slightest indication of having to hold on. Even in the executed cover image she occupies a similar position, but now she appears to be clinging to the horse.

Like the sketch, the printed image also draws attention to the head of a horse that dominates the image with its patterned coat. In the rhetoric of the visual composition, Pippi herself becomes a mere secondary character. She is still standing on her head on a horse's back, but the dreamy quality has been retouched. Instead of being drawn in soft watercolor, Pippi and her companions stand out sharply against the background. Clear lines separate Pippi's body from her companion's and from the unbleached background. The harsher impression of the cover image is reinforced by the fact that the background is no longer pink but gray-white.

On the printed cover Pippi no longer leans back calmly with her head resting on her arm; instead, she seems to hold on to the horse. She flashes one eye mischievously towards the viewer with an open smile. The horse's spots have turned black instead of gray-blue and Pippi's pink-striped stocking has turned clownish red. In a letter to me, Ellinger explains that she was not particularly fond of this later version. She writes: "All in all, the illustrations were a bit cramped, so I preferred to let it disappear completely in the drawer and never used it for my portfolio afterwards".[46] However, Katrin Pieper, editor of the publisher Kinderbuchverlag Berlin, had explained that the soft watercolors were not suitable for the coarse paper of the cover. This may not necessarily have been the reason, nor that the style did not fit with the others in the book series, even if it had stood out with its soft brush strokes and liquid colors.[47]

"HOLTZ-BAUMERT DESCRIBES PIPPI'S WORLD AS A UTOPIA, A CHILDREN'S COUNTER-WORLD CONSTRUCT AND IN DIALECTICAL OPPOSITION TO THE WORLD OF ADULTS."

BACK TO THE SKETCH; here Pippi's body is portrayed as incomplete, merging with the horse and the monkey as a mixed human-animal. Comfortably reclining behind the horse's pointed ears sits a monkey. Like the horse, he also looks at the girl. The monkey's shirt is just as yellow, and the short blue pants have the same white dots as hers. The two form a colorful unit. The dots are repeated in the horse's spotted pattern, but now some gray has mixed into the blue color. Pippi and the two animals seem caught in a balancing act together as if they were one. The red color of Pippi's very long stockings blends with the blue color of the horse spots to mingle with the pink background color. The colors flow into each other, indicating a dreamlike state of mind – an open body. These soft movements of the various colors intertwine with Pippi's body, not bound by any limits.

Ellinger tells me she was particularly pleased with how Pippi looks like she is prepared to kick off the letters making up the title, thereby freeing herself from the restrictions of the book cover and the world of fiction. This detail has been removed on the printed cover: as if the words "wanted to push down Pippi's legs again, which were stretched up in the air", Ellinger writes.[48] Instead, the changes from sketch to finished cover image can be explained by a strengthening of the character's uniqueness, with a kind of superfluous ambiguity. The dreaminess of the illustration is gone, replaced by the clear lines and strong colors that were so typical of the publisher. Pippi gains a clown-striped sock. She also winks mischievously with one eye as if to emphasize to the reader that this fairy tale is not real. With its clear contours, the illustration does not invite the viewer to linger, but to quickly turn the page to get to know this funny girl.

Conclusion

In this article, I have compared a sketch for the second edition of the GDR book *Pippi Langstrumpf* drawn by Cornelia Ellinger with the printed cover image, drawing on the humor that a trickster character can engender. As a trickster, Pippi stands out in the small town where she lives. In her individualistic behavior, she becomes a peripheral character, marginalized by the majority culture while moving within it. Carnival, according to Bakhtin, offers a form of symbolic protest and criticism of existing ideologies and socio-political systems. From the vantage point of "normalcy", carnivalesque behavior appears eccentric and inappropriate.[49] If we apply this argumentation to Ellinger's sketch, we could argue that this interpretation emphasizes Pippi's carnivalesque characteristics (although these may be much milder than in Cervantes stories about Gargantua which Bakhtin discusses in *Rabelais and his World*).[50]

The literary scholar Maria Nikolajeva notes that the discussion about the carnivalesque features of Pippi Longstocking has often stopped at the grotesque, the upside-down qualities, the scatological humor, and histrionics.[51] She reminds us that the deeper meaning of carnival goes beyond these superficial details. It is also about the rebellion of the individual against the demands of society. Claiming the intensity of the aesthetic experience, "the emotional function of the aesthetic artefact", we can, with Bakhtin, talk about how the trickster frees us from the weight of the realization of the lack of overarching meaning in life. The rhetorical power of Ellinger's depiction of Pippi is not only due to the assumptions about girlhood that come across, but also its potential to create its own movements and temporalities. Pippi's trickster-ness does not only have to do with such aspects as braids and shoes that are too big but arises above all in the interplay between what we see and what we perceive as possible. In this sense the trickster invites us to change perspective, and in this way this rhetorical figure can also encourage resistance – this too is a rhetorical device. ✕

Lisa Källström PhD is a researcher in the field of visual rhetoric at the Department of Culture and Education at Södertörn University. Currently working on the project "Pippi Beyond the Border"(funded by the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies). Her research concerns the ethical implications of aesthetics.

Acknowledgement: Cornelia Ellinger sent me a reproduction of the sketch in autumn 2014. The sketch had by then been tucked away in a drawer since 1988. I would like to thank her for this confidence and the exchange of ideas we had back then. This article gave me the opportunity to return to the sketch for the Pippi Langstrumpf collection (1988). I would also like to thank Professor Jörg Meibauer, Johannes-Gutenberg-University Mainz, for reading earlier versions of the article and adding his insights and suggestions about humor.

references

1 In the essay "Street Art Against War with Stencil Marks and Paint Cans in Ukraine" *Baltic Worlds*, (2023), I show how the motif of the strong, independent girl has been reused in murals in opposition to the war in Ukraine. Here I return to this theme, but now focusing on Pippi as a trickster in the GDR. If Jenkins' concept of civic imagination was then central, the discussion now concerns how a motif is perceived and visualized. Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture. Where Old and New Media Collide*, NYA Press (2006).

2 Regarding the international depiction of Pippi, see Lisa Källström, *Pippi mellan världar. En bildretorisk studie* [Pippi between worlds. A pictorial study] (Media-Tryck, 2020).

3 In *Quoting Caravaggio*, Mieke Bal uses the notion of entanglement in order to explore its implications for both contemporary and historical art, as well as for current conceptions of history, herby stressing the importance of memory. Mieke Bal, *Quoting Caravaggio*, (The University of Chicago Press, 1999). Elsewhere I have discussed the interplay between memory and gaze, see for example Lisa Källström, "Lyssna, hör du dem kvittra och ryta. Bilderboken som fabelövning," in *Är man två har man alltid en publik. Festskrift till Lennart Hellspong*, [Listen, and you will hear them chirping and roaring. The picture book as fable exercise., in If there are two of you, you always have an audience. Celebration volume to Lennart Hellspong] (Mediatryck, 2022), 233–248.

4 Jörg Meibauer, "Sprache im Bilderbuch," in eds., Ben Dammers, Anne Kreichel, Michael Staiger. *Das Bilderbuch. Theoretischen Grundlagen und analytische Zugänge, Lehrbuch* ["Language in the picture book," in eds., Ben Dammers, Anne Kreichel, Michael Staiger. *The picture book. Theoretical principles and analytical approaches, textbook*], J. B. Metzler (2023): 113–118; Salvatore Attardo "Humor and Pragmatics," in ed., Salvatore Attardo, *Handbook of Language and Humor*, (Routledge, 2017), 174–188; Kristin Börjesson & Jörg Meibauer, eds., *Pragmatikerwerb und Kinderliteratur* [Pragmatic acquisition and children's literature], (Narr Francke Attempto, 2021).

5 Elina Druker, *Modernismens bilder. Den moderna bilderboken i Norden* [Images of modernism. The modern picture book in the Nordics] (Makadam förlag, 2008). Hans-Heino Ewers, "Pippi Langstrumpf als komische figur. Anmerkungen zu einem Kinderbuchklassiker," [Pippi Longstocking as a funny character. Notes on a children's book classic], ed., Hans-Heino Ewers, *Komik im Kinderbuch: Erscheinungsformen des Komischen in der Kinder- und Jugendliteratur* [Comic in children's books: Manifestations of humor in literaturen for children and adolcense], (Juventa Verlag, 1992), 127–134; Laura Hoffeld, "Pippi Longstocking. The Comedy of the Natural Girl," *The Lion and The Unicorn*, vol. 1, no 1 (1977): 47–53; Lisa Källström, "Den klara linjens komik," in ed. Tommy Bruhn, *Berättelser, retorik och medier. Texter till Sofi Qvarnström* ["The comic of the clear line," in ed. Tommy Bruhn, Stories, rhetoric and media. Texts to Sofi Qvarnström], (Media-Tryck, 2020); Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer, "Astrid Lindgrens Bilderwelt. Pippi Langstrumpf-Illustrationen in Schweden und Deutschland" [Astrid Lindgren's world of images. Pippi Longstocking illustrations in Sweden and Germany *Kinder und Jugend Literatur* [Children's and young adult literature] (2007):19–27, Astrid Surmatz, *Pippi Långstrump als Paradigma: Die deutsche Rezeption Astrid Lindgrens und ihr internationaler Kontext* [Pippi Långstrump as a Paradigm. The German Reception of Astrid Lindgren's Works and their International Context] (Francke, 2005).

6 Lauren Hurrel, "Pippi Longstocking.: Hero, Feminist, Queer Icon". Accessed November 16, 2023, readthemuse.wordpress.com/2019/01/23/940/. Tiina Meri, "Pippi Longstocking – Rebel Role Model" (2016), <https://sweden.se/culture-traditions/pippi-longstocking-rebel-role-model/> [accessed November 16, 2023].

7 For an outline of the notion of trickster see Michael P. Carroll, "The Trickster as Selfish-Buffon and Culture Hero," *Ethos* (1984): 105–131.

8 Caroline Roeder, "Archivalisches zur Astrid Lindgren. Rezeption in der DDR," [Archival material on Astrid Lindgren. Reception in the GDR] in eds., Sonja Blume, Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer & Angelika Nix, *Astrid Lindgren – Werk und Wirkung. Internationale und interkulturelle Aspekte*, [Astrid Lindgren – work and impact. International and intercultural aspects] (Peter Lang, 2009), 105–122; Caroline Roeder, "Die Lindgrenschen Tücken und Attacken abzuchecken", *Pippi Langstrumpf. Heldin, Ikone, Freundin* [Checking out Lindgren's pitfalls and attacks," Pippi Longstocking: Heroine, icon, friend], (Oetinger, 2020).

9 Surmatz, *Pippi Långstrump als Paradigma*.

10 Kümmerling-Meibauer, "Astrid Lindgrens Bilderwelt" [Astrid Lindgren's world of images].

11 Lisa Källström, "En dosis Pippi till östtyska barn" [A dose of Pippi for East German children], in eds., Helene Ehriander & Eva Söderberg, *Mera Astrid Lindgren! Författaren, förläggaren och filmskaparen* [More Astrid Lindgren! The author, publisher and filmmaker] (Makadam, 2024).

12 Surmatz, *Pippi Långstrump als Paradigma*, 131f, Roeder, "Archivalisches zur Astrid Lindgren",

13 The material aspects of the reading experience are important if we want to understand what happens then we read, cf Lisa Källström, *Pippi mellan världar*.

14 Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, (Indiana University Press, 1984.

15 See, for example, the same figure of thought in Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*. For more on Nietzsche's importance for Bakhtin's thought, see Rainer Grübel, "Vorwort," [Foreword]in ed., Rainer Grübel, *Ästhetik des Wortes* [Aesthetics of the word], (Suhrkamp Verlag, 1979).

16 Agnes-Margrethe Bjorvand, "Kropp i bevegelse i bildeboka *Känner du Pippi Långstrump*?" [Body in motion in the picture book Do you know Pippi Longstocking?], *Barnboken*, (2011): 204–218; Carey Jewitt & Gunther Kress. *Multimodal literacy*, Peter Lang (2003).

17 Bjorvand, "Kropp i bevegelse i bildeboka *Känner du Pippi Långstrump?*", 205f; Druker, *Modernismens bilder*, 32f.

18 cf. Lisa Källström, "Den klara linjens komik".

19 Sofi Qvarnström, "Fiktion som retorik," [Rhetoric on fiction] in eds., Otto Fischer, Patrick Mehrens & Jon Viklund, *Retorisk kritik. Teori och metod i retorisk analys* [Rhetorical criticism. Theory and method in rhetorical analysis], (Retorikförlaget, 2014): 147–176, (147).

20 For an overview of research on humor in children's literature cf Diane Muel Bermejo, "Humor in Children's and Young Adult Literature. The Work of Gilles Bachelet," *Children's Literature in Education* (2023): 73–96.

21 Julie Cross, *Humor in Contemporary Junior Literature* (Taylor & Francis Group, 2010); Maria Nikolajeva discusses how power is expressed through humor in children's literature in *Power, Voice, and Subjectivity in Literature for Young Readers*, (Routledge, 2010). See also Bettina Kummerling-Meibauer's discussion on how children develop a sense of humor through what they read in "Metalinguistic Awareness and the Child's Developing Concept of Irony. The Relationship Between Pictures and Text in Ironic Picturebooks," *The Lion and the Unicorn*, no. 23 (1999): 157–183.

22 Janet Afaray & Kamran Afaray, "The Rhetoric and Performance of the Trickster Nasreddin," *Iran Namag*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2017): II-XXVIII.

23 Steffen Richter: "Deutsche Schelme. Fritz Rudolf Fries & Dr. Alexander Retard lesen Balthasar Gracián," [German pranksters. Fritz Rudolf Fries & Dr Alexander Retard read Balthasar Gracián] in ed., Heinz Ludwig Arnold, *DDR-Literatur der neunziger Jahre, Text + Kritik 2000* [GDR Literature of the Nineties, Text + Kritik 2000] (Sonderband, vol. 9, 2000), 62.

24 Muel Bermejo, "Humor in Children's and Young Adult Literature"; Marianne Røskeland, "Humor and Engagement in Children's Environmental Literature. En himmel full av skyer", *Barnelitterært forskningstidsskrift* (2021): 1–10.

25 Kümmerling-Meibauer, “Astrid Lindgrens Bilderwelt”. We need though to take such a statement with a pinch of salt. Publications with trickster characters, both domestic and in translation were published in the GDR as Alice in Wonderland (1967, publisher Kinderbuchverlag Berlin), cf. Rüdiger Steinlein, Heidi Strobel & Thomas Kramer, *Handbuch zur Kinder- und Jugendliteratur: SBZ/DDR von 1945 bis 1990*, [Handbook on children’s and youth literature: SBZ/DDR from 1945 to 1990], (Springer Nature, 2006), 691.

26 “Astrid Lindgren in original and translation > 1994” (transcript 12.12.94), in: Stiftung Weitendorf Archiv Hamburg, o.Bl.

27 Manfred Altner, *Das proletarische Kinderbuch: Dokumente zur Geschichte der sozialistischen deutschen Kinder- und Jugendliteratur*, [The proletarian children’s book. Documents on the history of socialist German children‘s and youth literature], (VEB Verlag der Kunst, 1988), 38f.

28 Surmatz, *Pippi Långstrump als Paradigma*, 131.

29 Steinlein et al, *Handbuch zur Kinder- und Jugendliteratur,* 688.

30 Cf. Roeder “Archivalisches zur Astrid Lindgren: Rezeption in der DDR”, 91, Steinlein et al, *Handbuch zur Kinder- und Jugendliteratur*, 555.

31 Steinlein et al, *Handbuch zur Kinder- und Jugendliteratur*, 691.

32 Ellinger states that: “When Pippi Longstocking appeared on German television in the early 70s, we were able to watch ARD at home – in black and white. I was the same age as Pippi at the time and loved the series right from the start. No episode was to be missed. Once there were almost tears because we had to go to a family party” [“Als Pippi Langstrumpf Anfang der 70er Jahre im deutschen Fernsehen auftauchte, konnten wir zu Hause ARD schauen – in schwarz-weiß. Ich war damals im gleichen Alter wie Pippi und habe die Serie von Anfang an geliebt. Keine Folge durfte verpasst werden. Einmal gab es fast Tränen, weil wir zu einer Familienfeier gehen mussten”], Ellinger e-mail 2014-11-18. See also Ulrike Gahnz, “Edition schwedischer Literatur in der DDR”, (Leipziger Jahrbuch zur Buchgeschichte 9, [“Edition of Swedish Literature in the GDR”, (Leipzig Yearbook on Book History 9)], (1999), 333–375, (364).

33 Honecker claims: “Wenn man von der festen Position des Sozialismus ausgeht, kann es meines Erachtens auf dem Gebiet von Kunst und Literatur keine Tabus geben.” Cited in Manfred Jäger, *Kultur und Politik in der DDR, 1945–1990*, [Culture and politics in the GDR, 1945-1990],(Wissenschaft und Politik, 1995), 140.

34 “Es war wunderschön gelb; aber weil der Stoff nicht gereicht hatte, war es zu kurz, und so guckte eine blaue Hose mit weißen Punkten darunter hervor. An ihren langen dünnen Beinen hatte sie ein Paar lange Strümpfe, einen geringelten und einen schwarzen” cited in *Pippi Langstrumpf*, (Kinderbuchverlag, 1988). Silke Weitendorf at the former FRG-publishing house Oetinger told me that the first German illustrator, Walter Scharnweber, had a “whim” about how Pippi should be drawn before he had read the story and that the author agreed to change the text. Interview with Silke Weitendorf December 8, 2022, cf, Email Gerlinde Mühle, (Oetinger Verlag, October 3, 2018).

35 Physicality is often expressed in GDR children’s books through the focus on sports promotion, which also goes hand in hand with a certain ideal of beauty, conveyed in Ellinger’s work as a very slim female body, see the conference paper Corina Löwe & Lisa Källström, “Mädchenrollen in der DDR am Beispiel von Karl Neumanns ‘Ulrike’ (1974)”, Konferenz: Kinder- und Jugendliteratur in der DDR – Die 1970er Jahre [“The Role of the Girl in the GDR on the Example of Karl Neumann’s ‘Ulrike’ (1974)”, Conference: Children’s and Youth Literature in the GDR in the 1970s],in Potsdam, September 7–9, 2023.

36 Lisa Källström, “Pippi och utopin. En omslagsbild i den västtyska studentrevoltens kölvatten” [Pippi and Utopia. A cover-image in the wake of the West German studentrevolt], *Barnboken*, vol. 41 (2018). https://doi.org/10.14811/clr.v41i0.361

37 For a more detailed description of the individual titles in the “Alex Taschenbücher” series see: http://www.ddr-hoerspiele.de/ATB/ATB-index.html.

38 Gerhard Holtz-Baumert, Gutachten (Expertise), dated March 3, 1973, in: SAPMO Bundesarchiv, DR 1 (Ministerium für Kultur) 2275a, Bl. 269.

39 Holtz-Baumert, Gutachten, SAPMO Bundesarchiv, DR 1 (Ministerium für Kultur) 2275a, Bl. 269.

40 Doreen Zippel, ed., *Erzähl mir vom kleinen Angsthasen. Die schönsten Kindergeschichten der DDR*, [Tell me about the little scaredy-cat. The most beautiful children’s stories of the GDR], (Kinderbuchverlag, 2009); Katrin Pieper: “Die besten Helden. Literatur für Kinder und Jugendliche in der DDR nach sowjetischen Vorbildern”, in eds., Karl Eimermacher & Astrid Volpert, *Tauwetter, Eiszeit und gelenkte Dialoge. Russen und Deutsche nach 1945* (= *West-östliche Spiegelungen.* Neue Folge, 3) [“The greatest heroes. Literature for Children and Young People in the GDR based on Soviet Models”, in eds, Karl Eimermacher & Astrid Volpert, The Thaw, the Ice Age and Guided Dialogues. Russians and Germans after 1945 (= West-East Reflections. New Series, 3)], (Fink, 2006), 1033–1056.

41 Helene Ehriander, “Klassiker och bearbetningar i Astrid Lindgrens författarskap” [Classics and adaptations of Astrid Lindgren's oeuvre], in eds., Helene Ehriander & Martin Hellström, *Nya läsningar av Astrid Lindgrens författarskap* [New readings of Astrid Lindgren’s writing], (Liber förlag, 2015), 24–45.

42 Holtz-Baumert claims, “Betrachten wir Pippi so: als Versuch, Kinder vor dummer, pädagogisierender, hilflos-böser Welt [...], vor Unverständnis und Lieblosigkeit zu bewahren – als Plädoyer für die Kinder [...]. Sozialistische Position ist das natürlich nicht – aber eine durchaus zu würdigende humanistische” [Considering Pippi as an attempt to protect children from a stupid, pedagogical, helplessly evil world [...], from incomprehension and lack of love – as a plea for children [...]. Of course, this is not a socialist position – but it is a humanist one that should certainly be recognised], my translation. Holtz-Baumert, Gutachten, SAPMO Bundesarchiv, DR 1 (Ministerium für Kultur) 2275a, Bl. 269.

43 Holtz-Baumert, Gutachten, SAPMO Bundesarchiv, DR 1 (Ministerium für Kultur) 2275a, Bl. 269.

44 Holtz-Baumert, Gutachten, SAPMO Bundesarchiv, DR 1 (Ministerium für Kultur) 2275a, Bl. 269.

45 Holtz-Baumert claims: “Die sozialistische Literatur nimmt sich alles Wertvollen an, verteidigt es – manchmal auch gegen sich selbst – und hebt es auf. In solchem Sinne, absolut nicht unkritisch, kann man Pippi Langstrumpf hier drucken. Dazu ist auch di ‘Verteidigung gegen sich selbst’ notwendig” Holtz-Baumert, Gutachten, SAPMO Bundesarchiv, DR 1 (Ministerium für Kultur) 2275a, Bl. 269.

46 Ellinger tells me that she was not very happy about it. She writes: “Die insgesamt etwas verkrampft geratenen Illustrationen habe ich deshalb lieber komplett in der Schublade verschwinden lassen und auch anschließende nie für meine Portfolio genutzt”. Ellinger November 18, 2014.

47 The fact that not all book covers at Kinderbuchverlag Berlin were drawn in the same way, with clearly marked outlines and bright colors, is shown by the series “Ein Tag im Leben” ... which consisted of a total of 29 books (published between 1975 and 1992). In contrast to the Pippi books, these books were printed in high gloss in the size of 22.0x24.5cm.

48 Ellinger writes: “als ob sie die in die Luft gestreckten Beine von Pippi wieder nach unten drücken wollte...”. Ellinger November 18, 2014.

49 Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*.

50 Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*.

51 Maria Nikolajeva, “Visualizing People: Multimodal Character Construction in Astrid Lindgren’s Works”, in eds., Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer & Astrid Surmatz, *Beyond Pippi Longstocking: Intermedial and International Approaches to Astrid Lindgren’s work*, (Routledge, 2011), 125–137.

Four European cities in change.
Chișinău, Černivci, L'viv, and Wrocław

At home or abroad? Chișinău, Černivci, L'viv and Wrocław: Living with historical changes to borders and national identities.

Bo Larsson, (ed.) (Lund: Universus Academic Press, 2020), 560 pages.

This impressive work reports on a large research project on four European cities – Chișinău (Moldova), Černivci (Ukraine), L'viv (Ukraine) and Wrocław (Poland) – whose population was more or less totally altered in connection to WWII, which raises interesting questions about memory and urban heritage in these cities. The four cities have in common that the inhabitants were largely replaced as the pre-war inhabitants were either killed or forced out when Europe was burning, somewhat similar to what we see repeated today in Russia's aggression and unlawful war since 2014 on Ukraine. In addition to its other purposes, the book hereby also becomes a reminder of how fragile urban life could be and a prompt to never relax the defenses of democratic societies to imperialistic attacks. The project was carried out in the years 2011 to 2018 and involved an international and multi-disciplinary team of researchers from Sweden, Germany, Moldova, Ukraine, and Poland.

THE BOOK, WHICH is one of the project's outputs, is 560 pages long and consist of several parts, all of which are well illustrated by a large number of photos, maps and graphs. The many color photos and maps make the book very pleasant to open, glance through and look at almost any page. The text, in turn, is filled throughout with very detailed accounts about city life and the cities themselves which in total provides the reader with in-depth information from a region not very well known to urbanists in other parts, or at least in the Anglophone part, of the world, which also gives an obvious additional value to the work.

The book is organized in seven main parts. The first is an introduction, giving the aim and research questions and a general overview of the material and literature that the book is based upon. The work is not driven by any particular theoretical agenda; rather, the overall purpose is to empirically analyze and describe, firstly, how the cities looked and how they functioned before and up to WWII, with comparisons to the present day, and secondly, to investigate the relations of post-war urban planning and conservation policy with "those older buildings and urban environments that are representative of the vanished population groups". The latter aim is not least supported by the interviews with old persons from the cities, now mostly living elsewhere in the world, which provide additional detail to the work which is otherwise primarily based on plans, photographs, and archive research as well as surveys and interviews with the current population. This first part, and the next two, are written by architect and researcher Bo Larsson, who initiated the project and led it from Lund University's Centre of European Studies. Bo Larsson is also the editor of the book.

The second part provides an approximately 50-page historical background to the region and the four cities, offering both an overall context of the population and how the cities have been subject to the shifting political geography of Europe and various types of (often) authoritarian takeovers, as well as providing detail on persons, buildings and events. Important here, and to a great extent throughout the book, is the Jewish population. In three of the four cities, Jews made up a very large part of the population before the war, whereas after the Holocaust the Jewish populations were almost totally gone. In all cities there were also large population changes concerning other nationalities when the cities came under new regimes as wars were settled and borders changed.

The third part follows up the historical background with a substantial chapter per city on "everyday urban environments" in the interwar period. The focus here is on very detailed descriptions of each city with information, for example, on who lived where (i.e. the exact address of named persons often including mention of their ethnicity), property owners, individual buildings or streets, markets, shops, churches, synagogues and other landmarks, some of which are gone, whereas some still stand and others still have become a protected heritage. The information is very dense, detailed, and very well illustrated which in total gives this part value as a reference book regarding the urban environments it covers.

The fourth part consist of three chapters written by authors from the region discussing and describing urban history and architecture in Černivci with a focus on the period before WWII. The first two chapters, by Julia Lienemeyer and Svitlana Bilenkova respectively, have a clear urban history perspective much in line with the preceding parts and covering mainly the interwar period, whereas the third by Ihor Piddubnyi has a focus on the everyday social and economic conditions in the city during the same period.

IN THE FIFTH PART the perspective shifts towards urban planning and development in the postwar period and is covered by two chapters per city by various authors. Anatolie Gordeev's chapter is concerned with an oversight of Chișinău's urban plans up to the present. The next chapter, by Tamara Nesterov and Andrei Vatamaniuc, compares Chișinău's urban structure plans in the (Romanian) interwar and (Soviet) post-war periods. In the following chapter, by Vasyl' Kholodnyts'kyi, the theme of Sovietiza-

Armenian Černivci. PHOTO: СЕРГІЙ ВЕНЦЕСЛАВСЬКИЙ,WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

tion is continued regarding Černivci with a focus not so much on urban plans but on the change in politics in a number of policy fields relevant to the city's inhabitants and everyday life. The independent Ukrainian period is also covered. In the second chapter on Černivci, urban planning and preservation is described by Iryna Korotun with the emphasis on policies after the war. In the two following chapters L'viv is at the center of attention. In both Vitaliy Shulyar's and Bo Larsson's respective chapters on L'viv the focus is on urban plans from the 1940s and onwards, of which the former emphasizes development projects and the latter discusses non-realized plans, urban memory and heritage. The last two chapters in this part are concerned with Wrocław. In the first, Elzbieta Przesmycka provides a broad urban and social history of the city from the war onwards, and in the second Bo Larsson describe urban plans and (changes in) preservation and cultural heritage from the war till the present day.

The sixth part of the book is called "Selected results of surveys and interviews" and is made up of four chapters. The first by Bo Larsson reports about interviews with 40 intellectuals held in Chișinău on the city's multi-ethnic heritage. The second, by Tamara Marusyk and Svitlana Herehova, gives an account with several tables and diagrams of a survey with 200 university students about their knowledge and attitudes to Černivci's cultural heritage. In the third chapter, Barbara Pabjan analyzes the results of two large interview studies in Wrocław with the population and the 'elite' respectively and argues, among other things, that remembrance attitudes differ depending on if a local or national perspective is used for understanding the cultural heritage of the city. In the fourth chapter Paweł Czajkowski discusses symbols, myths and monuments in Wrocław and their significance today.

The seventh and last part of the book is written by Bo Larsson. This is a 10-pager summary and conclusion for the whole book with discussion and comparison of differences and similarities of the four cities.

TO SUM UP, this work is a feast of empirically detailed and well-illustrated descriptions for those interested in urban history, urban plans and urban physical environments and thus covers well the first of the book's purposes. The social transformations in these urban environments are also covered and it is clear to the

Continued.

Four European cities in change

Former synagogue and Jewish school in Chișinău. PHOTO: NIKLAS BERNSAND

reader that various nationalities have had various influences at different times. The role of the war, Soviet influence and later independence destined radical changes not only to politics, urban planning or preservation but also for how the respective heritage of the cities could - and during Soviet times, should - be understood. The second purpose is thus also covered, primarily empirically and with somewhat less detail compared to the how the urban environments are described. Much of the work comprises empirically driven descriptions and these have great value, not least as documentation and reference. However, the results in relation to especially the second purpose would have benefitted from an overall and more conceptually driven argumentation. As shown by Barbara Pabjan in her chapter on Wrocław, the rich material produced in the project could be taken beyond description to thought-provoking analyses with the potential to open up new discussions and debates. When results are treated this way, they become a starting point of something new. This critique aside, the book as a whole is a rich source for anyone interested in urban development in the region and discusses interesting questions regarding how different nationalities treat each other's cultural and architectural heritage when borders change and people are replaced. In the case of Ukrainian cities today these are not only of historical interest but burning issues once again.

Finally, to an extent the book also settles with the Soviet and Russian influence in the region with regard to how people, places and the urban environment were treated up till the years around 1990 when the Soviet Union collapsed and the iron curtain was lifted. Again, the book acts as a reminder, in the light of current Russian aggressions against independent democratic societies, of the pertinence of keeping the defenses of freedom and self-determination high, including among those defenses an honorable and worthy treatment, preservation and understanding of our urban environments and the people creating and living in them, now and in the past.

Thomas Borén

Professor at the Department of Human Geography, Stockholm University

Note: The book reviewed here is also published, with the same inlay, in 2023 by DOM Publishers, Berlin under the title *The city as a political pawn: Urban Identities in Chişinău, Černivci, Lviv and Wrocław.*

Competitive victimhood.

Ethnonational conflicts and possibilities for reconciliation

Analyzing Competitive Victimhood: Narratives of Recognition and Non-recognition in the Pursuit of Reconciliation

Çağla Demirel, (Doctoral dissertation: Södertörn University, School of Social Sciences, 2023). 187 pages.

In her doctoral thesis *Analyzing Competitive Victimhood* political scientist Çağla Demirel has investigated ethnonational conflicts and possibilities for reconciliation, looking specifically at narratives of conflicts where both sides want to establish that "we" have suffered more than "them". This phenomenon is not uncommon, and conventionally referred to as competitive victimhood (CV).

Competitive victimhood is thus, simply put, the tendency to consider one's own group as having suffered comparatively more (during a past violent conflict) relative to an outgroup. In the literature, the CV concept is defined in a number of different ways, but it is typically linked to important aspects of intergroup relations (for example, resistance towards resolving the conflict) or intrapersonal processes (for example, biased memory or self-perceptions). Such narratives of historical suffering may also be used for rationalizing various transgressions in the present. The data analyzed in the PhD thesis include interviews, public opinion polls, political party manifestos, political statements, NGO reports, newspapers, documents, and memory sites.

DEMIREL'S PHD THESIS is based on four papers, dealing with different empirical cases and different aspects of competitive victimhood. Also, the cases are selected to include post-conflict societies after different levels of violence. Paper I is "Competitive Victimhood and Reconciliation: The Case of Turkish-Armenian Relations" (published in *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*). It deals with especially difficult conflicts, where competitive victimhood has become a component of the very identities of the conflicting parties. Using both public opinion polls and interviews, the author compares Turkish and Armenian victimhood narratives (relating to the Armenian genocide). The article suggests that chances for reconciliation in this case are very low, but not entirely non-existent.

Paper II is published in *Peacebuilding* and is called "Re-conceptualising Competitive Victimhood in Reconciliation Processes: The Case of Northern Ireland". In the literature, CV tends to follow a crude binary distinction between the existence of competitive victimhood (which

Sarajevo (from the cover of the dissertation).
PHOTO: ÇAĞLA DEMIREL

means unresolved conflict) and "common" or "inclusive" victimhood (which could mean reconciliation). In order to come up with a more sophisticated analytical distinction, Demirel suggests a five-fold typology, drawing on the Northern Irish case (Catholic Republicans versus Protestant Unionists). The five categories indicate varying levels of competitiveness: revengeful victimhood, strong-CV, mid-CV, weak-CV, and inclusive victimhood. In paper II, interviews are complemented with analyses of party manifestos.

PAPER III, published in *Third World Quarterly*, is "Exploring Inclusive Victimhood Narratives: The Case of Bosnia-Hercegovina". In this paper, Demirel draws attention to the importance of narratives of inclusive victimhood for successful reconciliation processes ("we all suffered together") – and ultimately, as a way of overcoming competitive victimhood. Using her own typology (above), the article focuses on different victimhood identities and different narratives in Bosnia and Hercegovina that recognize outgroup victimhood and acknowledge ingroup responsibility for doing harm (Bosniak-Bosnian Serbs relations). The Bosnian case suggests that such narratives, of shared suffering, can be instrumental to peaceful coexistence. However, in situations where the use of violence has been highly asymmetrical (in this case, including the Srebrenica genocide) shared responsibility for atrocities is not very likely.

Paper IV was unpublished at the time of the public defence (but submitted to *East European Politics*), and is at least thematically an extension of paper III: "Does Power-Sharing Facilitate

Continued. Competitive victimhood

Memory-Sharing? Bosnian Croat Narratives in Post-War Bosnia-Herzegovina". Although power-sharing and memory-sharing are different things, it is not unlikely that constructing a power parity between former adversaries could enable reconciliation and, in the long run, the creation of shared narratives. Or, maybe this would only be naïve, wishful thinking? Examining Bosniak and Bosnian Croat relations, who because of the Dayton Peace Agreement have experienced power-sharing, Demirel finds only little evidence of shared memories. Admittedly, Bosniak war stories and Bosnian Croat war stories overlap in the sense that Serbian aggression in Bosnia and Hercegovina is acknowledged by both parts; and the same goes for recognizing Bosniak victimhood, in particular. However, when it comes to the conflict between Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats, memory remains divided.

FOR SEVERAL REASONS, it is an impressive work. Drawing on political science, peace and conflict studies and memory studies, Demirel develops a novel framework for studies on competitive victimhood (see especially paper II). It is a nuanced discussion that treats the notion of victimhood from a relational perspective (by considering the question of reciprocity); the author examines variations in victimhood narratives in a way that does not exclude the recognition of outgroup suffering nor avoid the question of ingroup responsibility for doing harm (see especially paper III). It is a well-written, relevant, and timely contribution to existing research on the prospects for reconciliation in post-conflict societies. ✕

Joakim Ekman
Full Professor in Political Science
at Södertörn University

Reviews online

Defended Doctoral theses

Gefjon Off, *Contested Feminism: Backlash and the Radical Right* (Department of Political Science, University of Gothenburg, September 15, 2023), Public defense of doctoral dissertation.

Roman Privalov, *After Space Utopia: Post-Soviet Russia and Futures in Space* (Södertörn University, School of Social Sciences, May 12, 2023), Public defense of doctoral dissertation.

Call for papers

Sounds in times of war. **Popular music, (contentious) politics and social change**

Popular music has time and again played a supporting role in (post-) Soviet popular movements. Exploring the period before the full-scale invasion, following the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea, until today and the full-scale invasion, this issue seeks to examine music's multifaceted roles in reflecting, shaping, and responding to the political landscape, propaganda, and societal sentiments during times of war.
Guest editors: Anna Schwenck (Siegen University), Aleksej Tikhonov (UZH Zurich), David-Emil Wickström (Popakademie Baden-Württemberg): music_conflict_balticworlds@d-ew.info
Deadline Abstracts: January 31, 2024
Full Cfp at: https://balticworlds.com/cfp-music-and-war/

Now in Scopus

Baltic Worlds' statement of purpose

BALTIC WORLDS is a scholarly journal published by the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies at Södertörn University, since 2008. It publishes articles in social sciences and humanities as well as environmental studies, practicing a double-blind peer-review process, by at least two independent specialists. *Baltic Worlds* is listed in Scopus, and in the Norwegian bibliometric register (DHB), included in EBSCO databases, DOAJ, and Sherpa/RoMEO.

Baltic Worlds is distributed to readers in 60 countries, and reaches readers from various disciplines, as well as outside academia. In order to present multi- and interdisciplinary ongoing research to a wider audience, *Baltic Worlds* also publishes essays, commentaries, interviews, features and conference reports. All content relates to the Baltic Sea Region and the wider Central and Eastern European area, including the Caucasus and the Balkans.

Baltic Worlds regularly publishes thematic sections with guest editors, enabling deeper explorations into specific fields and research questions. International scholarly collaborations are encouraged. *Baltic Worlds* wishes to advance critical engagement in area studies and to apply novel theoretical and methodological approaches to this multifaceted field.

The journal's Scholarly Advisory Council consists of international scholars, representing different disciplines and with specific knowledge on the area.

The Scholarly Advisory Council

contributors

Sune Bechmann Pedersen

Docent (Reader) in History and Senior Lecturer in Digital History at the Department of History, Stockholm University. He specialises in 20th century European history: the transnational history of media, memory, tourism, European integration, and the Cold War.

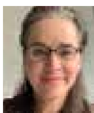
Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen

Professor in Political Aesthetics at the University of Copenhagen. Research focus on the politics and history of the avant-garde, the politics of contemporary art and the revolutionary tradition.

Thomas Borén

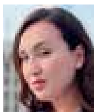
Professor of Geography Stockholm University. Chair of the Steering Committee of the Urban and Regional Planning Programme, Stockholm University. Founding Director of Stockholm University Higher Seminar in Urban and Regional Planning (SUHSIS).

Kara D. Brown



PhD, is an Associate Professor in the Education Foundations and Inquiry Program Department of Leadership, Learning Design and Inquiry at the University of South Carolina.. Her research focuses on language policy, minority schooling and teacher migration and she has conducted studies in Estonia.

Anastasiia Chupis

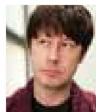


A PhD-student at Zaporizhzhia National University and a scholarship holder at Sördertörn University. Research focus: war and peace studies, peacebuilding, reconciliation, and the involvement of vulnerable categories in this process. She has management experience from international technical assistance programs and NGO-projects in Ukraine.

Mladen Dolar

Professor and Senior Research Fellow at the Department of Philosophy, University of Ljubljana. His principal areas of research are psychoanalysis, modern French philosophy, German idealism and art theory. He has lectured extensively in US and across Europe, and published widely in scholarly journals, collected volumes and books.

Joakim Ekman

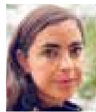


Full Professor in Political Science and a Project Researcher at CBEES, Södertörn University.

Aimee Herring

PhD-student in Anthropology and Presidential Fellow at the University of South Carolina. Research focus on migration, language and belonging, and with a particular interest in Baltic Studies.

Rebecka Katz Thor



A writer and senior lecturer at REMESO Linköping University and in Aesthetics at Södertörn University. She is co-chair of Memory Studies Association Nordic and participating researcher in the project Distrusting Monuments – Art and the War in Former Yugoslavia. Her research focus is on cultural memory studies, contemporary art, monuments and museums in relation to difficult pasts.

Gal Kirn

Assistant Professor and Research Associate at the department of sociology, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, and affiliated with Södertörn University, and part of the international research group Partisan Resistances, University of Grenoble. Research focuses: art, politics and memory in the period of the national liberation struggle and socialist Yugoslavia.

Lisa Källström

Holds a PhD and is a researcher in the field of visual rhetoric at the Department of Culture and Education at Södertörn University. Currently working on the project Pippi Beyond the Border (funded by the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies). Her research concerns the ethical implications of aesthetics.

Tora Lane

PhD in Russian Literature, Associate Professor and a Senior Lecture at the Department for Slavic Studies at Stockholm University, and a project leader of Writing and Thinking at the Margins at CBEES, Södertörn University (funded by the Baltic and East European Studies Foundation).

Johanna Mannergren Selimovic

Associate Professor in Peace and Development Research, a Senior Lecturer and currently a Research Coordinator at the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies, CBEES, at Södertörn University. Her research concerns peace processes with a focus on the politics of memory, transitional justice, gender, and everyday peace.

Maria Silina

PhD, is an Adjunct Professor in the Department of History of Art at UQAM, Montreal and a Visiting Fellow at CBEES, Södertörn University, Stockholm (2023). They participate in several research projects that address Communist culture and media, museum studies, and contemporary art activism.

Cecilia Sjöholm

Professor of Aesthetics at Södertörn University and project leader of the research project Distrusting Monuments. Art and the war in Former Yugoslavia (funded by the Baltic and East European Studies Foundation). She studies the relation between art and politics in contemporary culture. She has published extensively on art, psychoanalysis and critical theory.

BALTIC WORLDS

coming publications

CBEES' regional report series

The CBEES State of the Region Report (funded by Östersjöstiftelsen) is a series reporting and reflecting on the social and political developments in the Baltic Sea Region and Central and Eastern Europe, including the post-Soviet countries and Balkan, each year from a new and topical perspective.

The up-coming report 2024 *A World Order in Transformation? A Comparative Study of Consequences of the War and Reactions to these Changes* intends to make a contemporary overview of the diversity of challenges the region and the countries are facing, and to present a preliminary analysis of the implications for the region.

The latest report released 2023 *Ecological Concerns in Transition: A Comparative Study on Responses to Waste and Environmental Destruction* also addresses the current war in the report from Ukraine, how it adds another dimension to ecological concerns and bring new levels of destruction to the region. ■

All reports are available OA.
Visit: https://www.sh.se/stateoftheregion

UNE'S BOOK SERIES *NEW EUROPES*

The book series *New Europes* aims to provide a new understanding of Europe's past and present in the face of current crises such as Russia's war against Ukraine, climate change, the post-pandemic recovery, and the rise of new forms of authoritarianism. The editors encourage authors to revisit established narratives of European, national and subnational histories, to correct the neglect of geographical areas such as Eastern Europe in general studies of Europe, and to seek out new methodologies for interpreting documentary evidence.

The series is edited by a group of scholars from History, Political Science, Gender Studies, and Literary Studies at the University of New Europe. The series aims to serve three sets of readers: the general public interested in contextualising present conflicts; readers seeking to deepen their expertise of modern European society in global contexts; and those involved in education at the level of schools as well as higher education, looking for inspirations and approaches in research and teaching of European history.

Recent publication: Olena Palko and Manuel Férez Gil (eds.) Ukraine's Many Faces Land, People, and Culture Revisited (2023).

For more information visit: https://neweurope.university

Available research funding 2024

Apply for research funding on the Baltic Sea Region and Eastern Europe

- Research projects
- Postdoctoral projects
- Networks and conferences

Funding can be applied for individually or in groups.
Last application date for research projects is January 31, 2024.
For more information visit: www.ostersjostiftelsen.se/en

CEU's series on memory studies

Central European University Press is announcing a new series: *Memory, Heritage and Public History in Central and Eastern Europe*. The series is edited by; Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, Lund University, Sweden, Violeta Davoliūtė, Vilnius University, Lithuania and Lavinia Stan, St. Francis Xavier University, Canada.

During the last two decades with the rapidly expanding multi- and interdisciplinary field of memory studies it became clear that both heritage and history may be seen as specific forms of cultural memory or agents of memory structuring. While struggling with their difficult heritage, traumatic and conflicting memories, and explosive politics of memory, Central and Eastern Europeans become increasingly entangled in the global processes and the ensuing political, socio-economic, cultural, and civilizational challenges.

The starting point for the scholarly reflection in the series will be the societies of Central and Eastern Europe, but the scope of the series will reach beyond these regions.

This new series furthers the cooperation between scholars working within these fields and is allowing qualitative publication of the recent scholarship. The editors welcome both senior an early career researchers to submit their book proposals for monographs or thematically focused anthologies. ■

Jen McCall, Acquisitions Editor
McCallJ@press.ceu.edu
ceupress.com