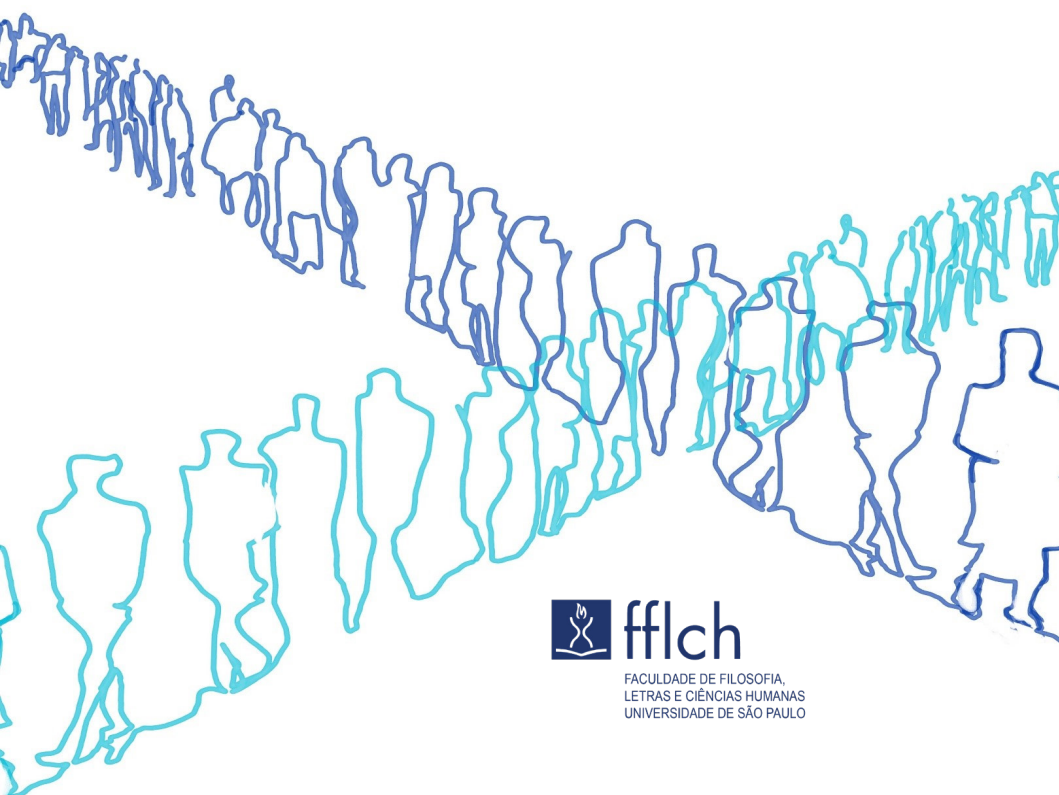# Transatlantic crises of
democracies
Cultural approaches

Editors
Laura P. Z. Izarra
Thiago M. Moyano

fflch

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LETRAS E CIÊNCIAS HUMANAS
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Introduction: Interlacing Transnational Histories

Laura P. Z. Izarra and Thiago M. Moyano

> "Memories are mobile; histories are implicated in each other. Thus, finally, understanding political conflict entails understanding the interlacing of memories in the force field of public space. The only way forward is through their entanglement." (Rothberg 2009)

The interaction between different historical memories constitutes the productive intercultural dynamic that the American Literature and Memory Studies scholar Michael Rothberg calls multidirectional memory. In bringing together Holocaust and postcolonial studies, Rothberg seeks to "uncover a countertradition in which remembrance of the Holocaust intersects with the legacies of colonialism and slavery and ongoing processes of decolonization." (p. xiii). According to him, thus, access to truths triggers individual and collective processes of meaning-making that allow a rearticulation of narratives from diverse places and times in order to go beyond comparative studies and paradigms of uniqueness.

The epigraph that opens this introduction can be found in the closing words of his book *Multidirectional Memory* (2009), which shows a new road to be taken for better grasping world political conflicts. Thinking in terms of the implications of his model of multidirectional memory and transnational entanglement, *Transatlantic Crises of Democracies: Cultural Approaches* faces the challenge of presenting histories from distant countries and different periods of time to highlight the dynamics brought about by the intersections of such distinct contexts. This approach helps to explain the spiraling interactions that characterize the politics of

memory in the last century in order to create new forms of solidarity and new visions of justice.

The first decades of the twenty first century have staged the proliferation of institutional policies questioning, or even destabilizing, the core of what had once appeared to be the solid foundations of modern democracy. Certainly a disputed term in the contemporary arena, "democracy" has been systematically threatened by the emergence of authoritarian leaderships and discourses worldwide. Intrigued by the processes that led to the current scenario, the Crises of Democracy Global Humanities Institute (GHI) funded by the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI) and the A.W. Mellon Foundation, and supported by the WB Yeats Chair at the University of São Paulo and FAPESP, sought to debate what it is in the world today that is making such approaches to government more attractive than democracy.

Through a transdisciplinary and transnational network of scholars from Brazil, Croatia, India, Hungary, Ireland, and the United States, the project included a series of lectures, conferences, and courses that promoted dialogical interactions and a fruitful exchange of ideas between different fields in the humanities. Central to the aims of this initiative, a broader dialogue was open beyond the walls of academia, reaching cultural entities, NGOs, and social movements that have all dealt with democratic crises through solidarity actions and participatory practices that lead to a conscious transformation and reconstruction.

Transatlantic Crises of Democracies: Cultural Approaches gives visibility to the importance of establishing relations between histories of extreme violence, ethnic cleansing, genocide, and memorial legacies, transcending the uniqueness of each individual history, and avoiding a hierarchization of suffering. Relating these histories to the formation of cultural traumas, Jeffrey Alexander explains that a cultural trauma occurs "when members of a collectivity feel

they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness marking their memories forever, and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways." (Alexander 2004, 1). Though Rothberg does not deny the cultural process that provokes a definite disruption in the social texture, he advocates for a theory of multidirectional memory that goes beyond national borders and challenges the nature of collective memories and its links to group identity. Cross-cultural understanding, comparisons, analogies and other multidirectional invocations are an inevitable part of the struggle for "reframing justice in a globalized world" (quot. Nancy Fraser. Rothberg 19).

The present endeavor encompasses then a collection of essays that focus on different aspects of the present discussion within a cultural realm. Not necessarily intertwined with one another, these texts open up a series of debates that stem from various fields in the humanities. The main purpose of the collected works, thus, seem to be their potential to bring about the wide reach that academics and researches deeply concerned with the outcomes of crises in democratic institutions and nation-states have.

This publication is divided into three parts to bring together a series of works that question democracy both across time and space, consolidating a transatlantic debate. In the first section "Opening Questions", specialists from different fields and universities interrogate local crises and historical and cultural traumas from diverse perspectives, from the experiences of coloniality and decolonial thoughts and praxis, in order to cross borders of ethnicity and local histories and renew debates through comparative thinking across countries, such as Hungary, Brazil, Croatia, Germany and India.

In "The 'Trianon Trauma' and the Return of the Cult of Strongmen in Hungary", Balázs Apor develops the complex relationship between historical trauma, the cult of the leader,

and the demise of democratic structures in Hungarian society. He analyses the traumatic representations of the peace treaty and how they became entangled with the growing cult around Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. The figure of this leader is also the focus of Fabio Barbosa's and Tamás Gerocs's joint essay, which compares the governments in Hungary since 2010 and the government in Brazil since 2019 within the framework of a common historical shift from liberal democracy to authoritarian neoliberalism. They based their argument upon the assumption that both countries are part of the Global Semi-periphery despite the geographical distance and their socio-historical differences. Nebojša Blanuša develops further the roles of the various "carriers of influence", usually political, military and religious leaders", who construct narratives of pain "to create new enemies for the 'pure people' of a nation". In "Populist leaders and their ideologies: symptoms or catalysts of crises of democracy?", Blanuša affirms that populism can lead to authoritarian rule with further ominous threats to democracy, such as adoption of caesaristic position of "the people's will", incarnation and messianism. Gradually, such leadership dis-empowers citizens, manipulates their participatory potentials, develops the cult of the leader and finally institutionalizes fear, by actual, as well as by threat of potential use of repressive state apparatus. Following this line of thought it is relevant to think about the relationship between different social groups' histories of victimization which reconstruct a collective memory that is sometimes competitive and does not lead to a shared understanding of historical contexts. The relationship those groups establish between their past and present circumstances and the various misappropriations of political principles and praxis, are clearly explained by Aditya Mukherjee in his essay "Jawaharlal Nehru and the Current Challenge to the Idea of India". Looking back to Nehru's idea of India, Mukherjee demonstrates how Nehru's ethical principles have been appropriated, disfigured, and contested

by the country's current administration, exercising an authoritative power over its people through fear. Another important issue is raised by Arlene Clemesha and Vitória Perpétuo Bruno who delve into the specificities of democratic crises in regards to the rights to territory. In "The Cultural and Human Impact of the Forced Displacement of the Palestinian Bedouin from the Naqab and the Jordan Valley (1948-2020)" Clemesha and Perpétuo reflect upon the policies of the Israeli Civil Administration plan for the displacement of Bedouins after having taken a field trip down the Jordan Valley in 2014. The essay shows how, in addition to looking for alternatives for physical, social, and economic survival, the conflict touches on the question of Bedouin and Palestinian identity, which is constantly questioned by the Israeli state authority.

A multidirectional memory is transversal; it cuts across genres, national contexts, times, and cultural traditions for a comprehensive understanding and agency. To close this section of interrogating democracies, Mary Cosgrove focuses on contemporary German culture and reflects upon the erosion of the memory of the Holocaust, which is based on empathy towards the Jew victims and the acknowledgement of guilt and responsibility for the crimes of National Socialism. Thus, "Cultural Responses to the Crisis of Democracy in Germany: The Center for Political Beauty and 'Sucht nach uns!' (Search for us)" explores cultural reactions to the rise of the far right in contemporary German politics using a case study of a recent multimedia political-aesthetic "action," "Sucht nach uns!" (search for us, December 2019) staged by art collective the Center for Political Beauty (das Zentrum für Politische Schönheit, ZPS). According to Rothberg, local, national, and international mediascapes play a decisive role in the construction of the memory frameworks. Thus, Esther Hamburger looks for an interpretation of images at the intersection of anthropology with film and audiovisual studies and their impact in relation to means of production and

circulation. In "Inequalities, Violence and Discrimination: Images in movement and the Brazilian Crisis of Democracy", she questions how cinema and audiovisual arts can help to disrupt class, color and gender discriminations in both local and global debates.

The section "New Voices" was designed to give early-career researchers and graduate students a platform to circulate their ongoing researches. The diversity of themes and subjects explored in these works reflect the broad spectrum of issues that crisscross the maintenance and survival of democratic institutions. Among these chapters, one can find discussions on film and media studies, literature, gender and sexuality, language education, performance, political sciences, and social anthropology stimulating an intercultural understanding. The first works in this section focused on the contemporary effects of right-wing populism globally. In dialogue with the previous section in the realm of cultural and film studies, Rebecca Carr analyzes the role of mainstream narrative movies in the current appeal of populism and authoritarianism in the United States. Her work "Keeping the Dream Alive? A Theoretical Understanding of the Role of Films in the Political Right-Wing Popularity" focuses on Clint Eastwood's *Gran Torino* (2008) and psychological factors commonly observed in the behavior of Donald Trump's supporters. In "Constructing a Non-popular Populism: Public Spheres, Private Actors, and the Role of Social Media Platforms in Democratic Discourse", Roísín Costello argues that the democratization of mass communication and media has broadened participation but narrowed discourse, resulting in increasingly polarized political narratives. In her piece, the author offers a deep analysis of the relationship between private spaces, public spheres and democratic discourse, including the establishment of new laws regulating the liability of social media actors and their speech. Moreover, in her work "Situating Populism and Nationalism in India", Feeza Vazudeva explores the concepts of nationalism and

populism in the contemporary Indian context, particularly in what has been described as "Hindu nationalistic policies" and the rising of violence associated to these policies, which implicitly dialogues with Mukherjee's previous essay from another perspective.

Other works aimed at bringing about racial politics, post-colonial and decolonial theories. Pedro Vidal Diaz uses a psychoanalytical framework to discuss the social formation of archives and appropriation of knowledge in "Decolonial Trauma in Archive Critic: Biography, Performance and Neodocumentalism".

The author believes that Lacan's approach to trauma sheds light on the development of archival devices, particularly in what has been referred to as "neodocumentalism" in the field of Information Sciences. In the chapter "Medicine of Demophobia: Race, Degeneration, and Crime in Psychiatric Thought of the First Republic", Vinko Draca presents a case study on the use of psychiatry as a form of institutional violence to suppress popular dissidents, particularly in the works published by Brazilian psychiatrists during the First Brazilian Republic (1889-1930). The author makes a compelling argument about the use of concepts such as "racial degeneracy" and "cultural backwardness" to justify the control of democratic initiatives and define certain social groups and innately criminal and dangerous.

In the field of Comparative Literature, Alan Osmo traces productive links between two distinct acts of state violence in the history of Brazil. His work "Literature Facing Massacres Perpetrated by the Brazilian State: a comparison between Euclides da Cunha and Racionais MC's" demonstrates the importance of literary contributions to the memory of crimes committed by the Brazilian State, which are still, according to the author, susceptible to being forgotten. Also in the field of Literary Studies, Leonardo Rodríguez explores the idea of ruins in the representation of space in his analysis of V.S. Naipaul's *Enigma of Arrival*. Dealing with questions

of diaspora, deterritorialization, and history, in "Dwelling On Uncertainty: After The Ruins In The *Enigma Of Arrival*", Rodríguez argues that the ruins in the narrative question the very notion of dwelling, a concept that is so constitutive of diasporic subjectivities. Also dealing with the Indo Caribbean diaspora, Thiago Marcel Moyano's work "Sexual Citizenship in Multiculturalism: a reading of 'Out on Main Street' by Shani Mootoo" turns to questions of gender and sexuality by analyzing a narrative about a lesbian couple of Indo Caribbean descent in a Canadian metropolis. His intersectional approach aims at exposing the multifaceted aspects of identity surfaced both by serial diasporic movements and expectations on racialized sexualities.

On the other hand, considering forced geographical displacements and their consequences in "new homes", the essay "You can check out anytime you like but you can never leave: immigration policy and Direct Provision in the Republic of Ireland" discusses current asylum policies in the Republic of Ireland. Serena Clark demonstrates how the Direct Provision policy established in 2000 ends up restricting social welfare for refugees for extended periods of time. The author's analysis puts the category of "Direct Provision" into historical lenses in Ireland and the European union, as well as in the United Nations policies for these vulnerable populations.

The other chapters from this section have all been based on empirical data, interlacing concepts presented previously in both sections, and discuss primarily the experience of social movements and agents in different institutional settings. In "The Impact of Democracy Crises on Language Education in a regular School in Cidade Tiradentes," Ana Paula Guimarães presents her ongoing research at a public school in the outskirts of São Paulo in an attempt to trace parallels between the challenges posed by the language literacies in these environments and the attacks that affirmative

policies have suffered in the Brazilian context over the past years. In the realm of Performance Studies, Saumya Tripathi presents an analysis of recent demonstrations organized by higher education students in India. Through a selection of initiatives by student activists and artists, "Performance, Politics and Embodiment of New Media in Contemporary Student Resistance Movement in India" argues that not only these survival strategies are triggered by a democratic crisis, but also produce new modalities for democratic participation, including the understanding of the activist body and ideas of embodiment in the political arena. In "From Silence: An Echo to Many Other Voices", Júlia Zaquia reflects on the process of Rough Stone, an 8-minute film that she directed and photographed in 2009, with Georgette Fadel in the role of a survivor who meets pianist Amela Vucina who created a musical self-reflection on her experience, traumas and pain caused by the Bosnian War (1992-1995). Thus, based on the critical concepts discussed during the CHCI seminars on Crises of Democracy, Zaquia analyses a physical trip through the ruins of Sarajevo, Mostar and the surrounding and dangerous minefields comparing the healing processes presented also in other films such as Words of Women and Calling the Ghosts. Finally, in "We learn from each other": Prisons and the activism of prisoners' family members within the COVID-19", Natália Bouças do Lago offers a timely ethnographical piece on the works done by an association of friends and family members of incarcerated people in São Paulo in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. In her work, she showcases the different challenges experienced by this group of activists, who not only must continue to struggle to make ends meet, but also keep their organization afloat in order to help and assist more families.

The final section "Participatory Practices" included contributions from cultural agents, community leaderships, and other organizations in Brazil. In "A message from the Guarani to

the world: words drawn from centuries of struggle and strength", a group of members from the Guarani nation living in a community in São Paulo, Brazil, discusses, despite the government's and the media's constant attempts to misrepresent their realities and struggles, the importance of indigenous peoples for the survival of life on the planet. Their piece appropriately demonstrates their different cosmovisions, presenting a strong critique on the predatory exploitation practices of non-indigenous peoples in the country. In a discussion of territory, sustainability and local communities, Cláudia Vukojicic presents the project "Corumbê Contemporâneo", an initiative involving a fishermen's community in Paraty, in the state of Rio de Janeiro. From another community perspective, her text "To inhabit the forest in the 21st century" briefly presents the organization's aims and current challenges as well as the actions that have taken place so far. Also in the context of Rio de Janeiro within cultural, social and educational activities offered by Redes da Maré, a favela formed by 17 communities with approximately 140.000 inhabitants, the professional modern dancer Clara Cavalcante from Lia Rodrigues Companhia de Dança presents a personal testimony on her creative work in "Dance, creative process, and life: an experience account on a dance company in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil." In her essay, Cavalcante looks at the company's piece Fúria as a performance on the power of assembly and the body's place as a living manifesto, which represents us in spite of the ongoing processes of suppression suffered by vulnerable populations and individuals. In the realm of sustainable public policies and conservation of archives in the country, the museologist from Brazil's National Museum (Rio de Janeiro), Thaís Mayumi deals with the aftermath of the fire that destroyed part of the country's largest collection of Natural History and Anthropology. According to the author, the Museum's reconstruction activities, including the recovery of collections and new researches and exhibitions, evoke a reflection on the institution's

memory of the fire. Her piece then explores the campaign "The National Museum Lives" as a form of collective mobilization that includes resistance, activism, and mourning against the erasure of cultural legacy. Finally, the director and founder of Brazil's largest International Literary Fest (FLIP), Mauro Munhoz establishes links between the present moment and the COVID-19 pandemic to the initiatives and works done by the Literary Festival in the historical city of Paraty, in Rio de Janeiro. His essay "Between During and the Post-Pandemic" offers a number of valuable insights connecting concrete projects and initiatives done in the city to broader questions on sustainability and the anthropocene.

To conclude, the interlacing of histories and praxis helps to see the world from a reverse and original perspective. In her latest work *The Force of Non-Violence. An Ethico-Political Bind* (2020), feminist philosopher Judith Butler calls for a radical shift in equality politics saying that one needs to redefine one's understanding of the body as a separate entity for a notion that comprehends that any body can only exist in its dependency to other human and non-human bodies. Therefore, her stand is that we embrace an unrealistic "egalitarian imaginary that apprehends the interdependency of lives" (139). This interdependency of life is the basis of social and political equality and an ethical vision of justice. A global commitment to uncover historical relatedness is essential to work through "the partial overlaps and conflicting claims that constitute the archives of memory and the terrain of politics". (Rothberg 29) Only then, through a multidirectional memory that intersects the remembrance of various historical contexts and aesthetic representations across differences, can other realities come to exist interdependently.

This volume is a modest contribution to bring different voices together and hopefully build networks of non-violent cooperative living for a more effective ethics of justice.

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I. Opening Questions

The "Trianon Trauma" and Return of the Cult of Strongmen in Hungary

Balázs Apor

"If Viktor Orbán had negotiated the Trianon peace treaty back in the day, half the Entente countries would have been annexed to Hungary."[1] This claim, posted by party director of Fidesz, Gábor Kubatov on Facebook in December 2020 not only demonstrates the growing cult around Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orbán, but it also highlights the role of historical trauma in the construction of mythologies supporting the ascendancy of authoritarian rule. In this case, the figure of the prime minister is linked to what is generally perceived as the most traumatic event in modern Hungarian history: the Trianon Peace Treaty that consented to the dissolution of historical Hungary, resulting in major territorial and demographic losses for the Hungarian state. Viktor Orbán is portrayed in this quote as the man of exceptional talent, an almost providential figure with the ability to correct historical wrongs and lead Hungary to a better future. Through evoking the trauma of Trianon, Kubatov's post links Orbán to the past, the present and the future and promotes the image of the leader as the guarantor of the restoration of Hungary's greatness. The aim of this essay is to explore this connection further and demonstrate the importance of cultural trauma in the construction of the Orbán-regime.

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[1] "Kubatov szerint ha Trianont Orbán tárgyalja, Magyarországhoz csatolta volna az antant országok felét," *HVG*, December 11, 2020, accessed 10 June, 2021, https://hvg.hu/itthon/20201211_kubatov_gabor_orban_viktor_trianon_brusszel_kuba_veto_jogallamisag

Trianon as trauma

An expression widely spread in present-day Hungarian society holds that "a Hungarian is one who is hurt by Trianon." There were attempts to give historical weight to the phrase and link it to prominent literary figures of the 20th century, but its origins are more recent. It seems to have been uttered first in 2000 by Miklós Patrubány, president of the World Federation of Hungarians.[2] While perceptions, opinions and interpretations of the Trianon Peace Treaty in Hungary are diverse and multifaceted, the quote highlights the sentiment that is most commonly associated with the event: pain. Indeed, 'trauma' is the most common metaphor that is used in conjunction with Trianon. The term features popular parlance, political discourse as well as academic discussions prominently, especially since 2010. Since the event took place over a hundred years ago, it is safe to argue that there are very few (if any) of those alive who have directly experienced the traumatic effects of the dissolution of historic Hungary. Moreover, due to the tabooing of the subject during the years of communist dictatorship, and the limited appeal of revisionist narratives after 1989, the probability of transgenerational transmission of traumatic memories (through family stories, for example) is also limited.[3] Therefore, traumatic images and sentiments in connection to the event are distributed primarily through cultural representations. The intensification of such narratives in mainstream political discourse in recent years, culminating in the centenary commemorations in 2020, also indicates that the "Trianon trauma" is increasingly exploited to

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2   "Mag yar az, akinek fáj Trianon – hirtelen felindulásból jött," 24.hu, June 8, 2017, accessed 10 June, 2021, https://24.hu/tudomany/2017/06/08/magyar-az-akinek-faj-trianon-hirtelen-felindulasbol-jott/

3   Éva Kovács, "Trianon, avagy „traumatikus fordulat" a magyar történetírásban," *Korall*, no. 59 (2015): 89.

serve a specific political purpose: to support Orbán's consolidation of power.

There is, of course, nothing novel in the use of historical events for political purposes. Events from the past perceived to be tragic are often politicised and they also shape political identities to various extents. In the case of Hungary, however, perceptions and interpretations of the past are directly linked to party preferences in the present, and they have contributed significantly to political polarisation since 1989.[4] This has to do with the importance of victimhood narratives and narratives of suffering in Hungarian national consciousness. As Mária Vásárhelyi has observed, the most common themes that are associated with the millennium of Hungarian history are victimhood, suffering and injustice. The idea of a small nation in the middle of Europe constantly fighting for its survival and freedom in the face of betrayal and oppression by great powers is very common and is internalised by many Hungarians, irrespective of their political views (19 and 25).

In perceptions of Hungarian history as a sequence of tragic and traumatic experiences – occupation, partition, failed revolutions, etc – the Trianon Treaty has a special place. It serves as the quintessential verification of the idea of a small nation abused by great powers, but unlike any other historical event, it is also connected to party preferences. It thus serves as a confirmation of certain tropes in popular perceptions of history while being politically divisive at the same time (Vásárhelyi 77). Despite the prominence of Trianon in popular narratives of Hungarian history, factual knowledge in society about the event seems to be limited. Vásárhelyi, in her survey in the mid-2000s showed that 42% of the respondents did not even know the actual date of the event and that

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4   Mária Vásárhelyi, *Csalóka emlékezet: A 20. század történelme a magyar közgondolkodásban* (Pozsony: Kalligram, 2007), 16-17.

there was little knowledge about the scale of territorial losses, as well (77-78). There is also an inverse correlation between knowledge about Trianon and the intensity of the circulation of narratives and myths about the event. Myths and legends about the treaty and the idea of revision are promoted most passionately by far right groups, but those supporting revision are also the ones who would be less familiar with specific details about the event (83). At the same time, there seems to be relatively broad consensus about the idea that the borders sanctioned by the treaty were unjust (55% of the respondents agreed with this claim). Moreover, the proportion of those who considered European integration and the evaporation of borders as the solution to the problem of the Hungarian minority in the neighbouring countries was also significant (40%) (82-83).

Opinion polls and sociological research support the claim that Trianon continues to be perceived as "tragic" or "traumatic" in Hungarian society even after the collapse of communism in 1989. Academic debates and discussions about the topic also tend to promote the image of Trianon as a trauma. Historians and social scientists tend to concur that the treaty caused a traumatic shock to Hungarian society and its consequences fundamentally shaped historical developments and cultural memory to a significant extent. Scholarly reflections on the "Trianon trauma" increased in number since 2010, partly as a response to the increased politicisation of the subject under Orbán, and partly as a contribution to the "trauma boom" in international scholarship in the past decade. However, as Éva Kovács has pointed out, despite the growing use of the concept of cultural trauma in the disciplines of cultural studies and sociology, there are very few in-depth reflections on the term in Hungarian historiography.[5] Indeed, theoretically inspired attempts to reflect on

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5   Kovács, "Trianon," 82-107. For engagements with the notion of trauma in the fields of cultural studies and sociology see Máté Zombory, *Traumatársadalom* (Budapest:

the meaning of Trianon tend to approach the subject from other conceptual angles, for example, collective memory or public history.[6] Gábor Gyáni, for example, in his analysis of the revival of the cult of Trianon in recent times argues that Trianon in Hungary represents "the par excellence lieu de memoire" which flourishes in the context of public history.[7] Reflecting on the resurgence of cultic practices – commemorations, monuments, publications, films, governmental policies, bottom-up initiatives supported by local institutions, etc. – Gyáni argues that the memory of Trianon represents an example of "cold memory." In memory practices related to the event history remains "frozen" and any acknowledgement of historical progress or change becomes impossible. This explains the remarkable endurance of revisionism, revanchism and images of trauma associated with the treaty. As Gyáni claims:

> The commemoration of Trianon is a trauma drama performed over and over again from the victim's point of view, telling the story of how a people – the Hungarian people – became the victims of the decisions of the great powers. The nation is presented in this story purely as a victim, which only suffered the event symbolised by Trianon, rather than contributing to it in an active way. No wonder, then, that the national commemorative community thus disposed

Kijárat kiadó, 2019); Miklós Takács, *Sebek és szavak* (Budapest: Pesti Kalligram kft, 2018); and Anna Menyhért, *Elmondani az elmondhatatlant: Trauma és irodalom* (Budapest: Anonymus – Ráció, 2008).

6   See, for example, Éva Kovács, "Trianon traumatikus emlékezetéről," *Limes*, no. 4 (2020): 7-17; Margit Feischmidt, "Memory-Politics and Neonationalism: Trianon as Mythomoteur," *Nationalities Papers* 48, No. 1 (2020): 120-143; Eszter Szőnyi, "Construction of a Traumatic National Identity: The Collective Memory of Trianon as National Trauma in the National Identity of Students in Secondary Education" (MA diss., Central European University, 2017); Róbert Balogh, "Nightmares of the Little Mermaid: Indoctrination and the Representation of the Trianon Treaty in Hungarian History Textbooks 1920-1988," in *Die Pariser Vororte – Verträge im Spiegel der Öffentlichkeit*, eds. Harald Gröller and Harald Heppner (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2013), 147-163.

7   Gábor Gyáni, "Nemzet, kollektív emlékezet és public history," *Történelmi Szemle*, no. 3 (2012): 368.

> is unwilling or even unable to acknowledge the consequences of Trianon, which are still with us today, as a (completed) fact. Unable to accept and acknowledge the history that has actually taken place, it stubbornly and unchangingly insists on the reality of the pre-Trianon era, that is, the reality of the ideal of Greater Hungary and the Hungarian identity that springs from it. This is why the practice of collective memory, dissolved in the cult of Trianon, can so easily – in accordance with the logic of cold memory – ignore the changes in time and the many important consequences of the traumatic (grievous) events of the past (372).

It is Jeffrey Alexander's concept of "trauma drama" that Éva Kovács also adopts to account for the revival and intensification of commemorative practices emphasising victimhood and suffering in connection to Trianon.[8] "Trauma drama" refers to the internalisation and reproduction of victimhood narratives by a community whose members do not necessarily have direct experience with physical suffering. The acceptance and re-enactment of narratives of trauma may increase group cohesion, but the ritualisation of such narratives may also result in the symbolic devaluation and commercialisation of practices and objects associated with the historical event (and its memory) in question. Certain trauma narratives also have the tendency to become domineering and overshadow, subsume or marginalise alternative stories of suffering or narratives of tragedy associated with different historical events. In the case of Trianon, traumatic representations of the treaty absorbed, and at the same time, overshadowed the entirety of suffering and grief associated with World War I (Kovács, "Trianon" 100). Trianon narratives emphasising victimhood also tend to be exclusivist, making it

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8   Jeffrey C. Alexander, "On the Social Construction of Moral Universals: The 'Holocaust' from War Crime to Trauma Drama," *European Journal of Social Theo*ry 5, no. 1 (2002): 5-85; Kovács, "Trianon," 94. For a shorter a version of the article in English, see Éva Kovács, "Overcoming History through Trauma: The Hungarian *Historikerstreit*," *European Review* 24, no. 4 (2016): 523-534.

difficult to reconcile such stories with other historical traumas, most importantly, the Holocaust.[9]

The emplotment of the trauma drama entails the production of myths and legends, the re-enactment of certain episodes of the story in commemorative rituals, and the creation of heroes and villains. Legends and myths of Trianon are in abundance, and they offer vivid representations of the themes of victimhood, injustice, revenge, betrayal, and so on. Some of these legends have become part of modern folklore, others remain marginal and display features of conspiracy theories. Narratives of victimhood and suffering were ritualised almost instantly and the core system of symbols and commemorative practises that endure to the present day were consolidated in the inter-war period. The legends surrounding the treaty and the cult of Trianon that emerged in the 1920s have been analysed extensively by Hungarian historians who invariably refer to the event and its consequences as "trauma," although references to the theoretical literature on cultural trauma in such works are rare.[10] "Trauma" remains the key metaphor in the literature on the recent revival of the Trianon cult, as well. Scholarly analyses of the role of Trianon in party politics, in public discourse or in the revival of the symbolism of revisionism in identity politics all use the term extensively, but without much engagement with the notion at a conceptual level.[11]

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9   Gyáni, 'Nemzet, kollektív emlékezet és public history,' 373; Kovács, "Trianon," 101.

10   For an analysis of Trianon-myths, see Balázs Ablonczy, *Trianon-legendák* (Budapest: Jaffa kiadó, 2010). For a detailed discussion of the cult of Trianon in the inter-war period, see Miklós Zeidler, *A magyar irredenta kultusz a két világháború között* (Budapest: Teleki László Alapítvány, 2002).

11   See, for example, Gergely Romsics, "Trianon a Házban. A Trianon-fogalom megjelenése és funkciói a pártok diskurzusaiban az első három parlamenti ciklus idején (1990-2002)," in *Az emlékezet konstrukciói: Példák a 19-20. századi magyar és közép-európai történelemből,* eds. Gábor Czoch and Csilla Fedinec (Budapest: Teleki László Alapítvány, 2006), 35-52; Csaba Zahorán, "A trianoni labirintus: A Trianon-jelenség és okai a mai magyar közgondolkodásban,"

The "Trianon-trauma" and the cult of Horthy in the inter-war period

The details and consequences of the Trianon Treaty are well established in Hungarian historiography, although a transnational history of its impact still needs to be written.[12] The treaty that was signed on 4 June 1920 in Versailles consented to the dissolution of historic Hungary, resulting in significant territorial and demographic losses and a crippled economy. The country (excluding the Kingdom of Croatia) lost 67% of its former territory and 58% of its population. The most problematic aspects of the treaty were the separation of approximately 3.2 million Hungarians from the "mother country," and the non-observance of ethno-linguistic boundaries in the creation of new borders. It should come as no surprise that images of pain, trauma and grief over the dissolution of old Hungary were most often evoked in narratives about the situation of Hungarian minority groups in the successor states, and it is the status of "cross-border Hungarians" that continue to shape Trianon discourses up to the present day.

Due to the severity of its sanctions, the Trianon Treaty was perceived with a shock by the majority of Hungarian society at the time, and its revision turned into the most prominent political aspiration in the inter-war period. Revisionism became the core component of the ideology of the conservative-nationalist regime led by Admiral Miklós Horthy, but it was embraced by all political – including oppositionist – parties, as well. As historian Miklós Zeidler claimed, "revisionism was the strongest legitimate national

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in *A nemzeti mítoszok szerkezete és funkciója Kelet-Európában,* ed. László Szalai (Budapest: L'Harmattan-ELTE BTK Kelet-Európa Története Tanszék, 2013), 9-53; and Feischmidt, 'Memory-Politcs.'

12 See, for example: Ignác Romsics, *A trianoni békeszerződés* (Budapest: Helikon kiadó, 2020); and Miklós Zeidler, ed., *Trianon* (Budapest: Osiris kiadó, 2008).

consensus-building factor between the two wars."[13] The hegemonic position of revisionism and irredentism manifested itself in the development and widespread diffusion of cultic practices. Although practices were diverse, the cult remained irrational and fairly rigid. It advocated, almost exclusively, the restoration of Hungary's pre-war borders, and it lacked components that articulated alternative, more progressive or pragmatic, visions (Zeidler 188).

The cult of revisionism was pervasive and manifested itself in the erection of statues, the renaming of streets, the production of objects for everyday use, celebrations and commemorations, films, radio programs and in countless articles in the press (Zeidler, *A magyar irredenta kultusz* 5). Culture, therefore, played a pre-eminent role in the diffusion of traumatic images of the Trianon Treaty. Such images were often irrational and reflected paranoia and a desire for revenge (6). There was a tendency to represent the dissolution of "Greater Hungary" in biblical terms and compare the fate of the country to the calvary of Christ. Words like "suffering," "martyrdom," "crucifixion," and 'resurrection' were routinely associated with the event. At the same time, narratives of Trianon were also infused with Hungary's freedom fighter traditions and portrayed irredentist aspirations as a struggle for justice and freedom (14-15). According to Zeidler, the third main set of symbols – next to martyrdom and freedom – was linked to the mythology of "land-conquest" (*honfoglalás*) and the protection of the homeland (*honvédelem*).

The role of heroes in stories of suffering and revival was crucial, and the emergence of the cult of revisionism also triggered the irrational veneration of political figures. The heroes of the trauma drama, among others, included the leader of the Hungarian delegation in Paris, Albert Apponyi – whose dramatic speech in

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13   Miklós Zeidler, *A revíziós gondolat* (Budapest: Osiris zsebkönyvtár, 2001), 188.

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Versailles was an oft-quoted component of Trianon narratives – and British newspaper owner, Lord Rothermere who has expressed sympathetic views with the Hungarians on a number of occasions (46-52). Similarly to its heroes, the villains of the Trianon drama were also domestic and foreign. The range of domestic enemies was diverse, but stories of betrayal were most often associated with Mihály Károlyi, leader of the liberal-democratic revolution in October 1918, whereas the image of great power arrogance was associated primarily with the French premier, Georges Clemenceau.

It was Admiral Miklós Horthy, who acted as Regent of Hungary between 1920 and 1944, who became the most emblematic figure of revisionism. His mythologised persona became the embodiment of the system of symbols and meanings associated with the trauma of Trianon. The cult of Horthy originated in radical right-wing military circles around the time of the communist Republic of Councils of 1919.[14] Horthy – a decorated admiral of Austro-Hungarian army, and leader of the National Army – was represented as a man of providence whose mission was to save and resurrect Hungary. The irrational aspects of the images associated with him were amplified by the radical upheavals Hungarian society endured during and after World War I, which included wartime suffering, the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, revolutions, communist dictatorship, foreign occupation, mass migration, paramilitary violence, and so on. In this context, the appeal of a strongman, represented as a helmsman and saviour and with the help of biblical metaphors was significant. This also explains the fundamental entanglement of representations of trauma with representations of the cultic leader at the time. Although the messianic and irrational features of Horthy's cult were toned down with the consolidation of the

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14 On the cult of Horthy, see Dávid Turbucz, *A Horthy-kultusz* (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont, 2016).

regime, his figure remained cemented to revisionism and political aspirations to restore Hungary's pre-war borders. The Vienna Awards of 1938 and 1940 provoked the revival and intensification of irrational representations that connected Horthy to Trianon. The re-annexation of Southern Slovakia and Northern Transylvania seem to have confirmed the image of Horthy as the saviour of Hungary. He was compared to historical figures (state-builder kings, freedom fighters), including the mythical leader Árpád who lead the Hungarian tribes to the Carpathian basin, to support the notion of the "second land-taking" and highlight the image of Horthy as the guarantor for the restoration of Hungary's territorial integrity (Turbucz 85). The return of former Hungarian territories were celebrated lavishly, often with Horthy himself marching into cities on the back of a white horse confirming the image of the leader as "liberator" and a "second Árpád" (Turbucz 199-214). Propagandistic representations at the time underscored the role of Horthy in overcoming the trauma of Trianon and in restoring the greatness of the Hungarian nation.

With the collapse of the Horthy-regime during World War II and the establishment of communist dictatorship in 1948-49, the cult of Trianon – along with the cult of Horthy – disappeared from public discourse and all forms of narratives and commemorative practices – revisionist or otherwise – were forced underground. Fragments of the Trianon discourse resurfaced as part of the populist-nationalist strand of intellectual dissent in the late Kádár period, and literature about Hungarian minorities and the treaty was circulated in the form of samizdat publications, but the reach and the appeal of such narratives remained very limited at the time. The issue of Hungarian minorities in the neighbouring (socialist) countries was not discussed publicly either, until the proclamation of the "village destruction" program in Nicolae Ceausescu's Romania in 1988. The program, perceived by many as an aggressive ethnic

homogenisation campaign targeting the Hungarians in Transylvania provoked a spontaneous protest in Budapest in 1988, but also critical remarks from the Hungarian communist leadership.

The "Trianon-trauma" after 1989, and the cult of Orbán

After the collapse of the communist regime in Hungary in 1989, Trianon narratives in all shapes and forms resurfaced in public discourse. In the first decade after the regime change, representations of Trianon were polyphonous with a degree of standardisation taking place in the rhetoric of individual political parties. As Gergely Romsics has shown, Trianon was discussed in the parliament often, but it did not assume the status of a domineering discourse (Romsics, "Trianon a Házban" 40). The process of EU integration had a moderating effect on most parties and the topic was evoked primarily in relation to issues affecting the Hungarian minorities in the neighbouring countries. The centrist parties – left, right, liberal – did not advocate the idea of revision and considered EU accession as the remedy to mitigate the adverse effects of the Trianon Treaty. Narratives of victimhood and grievance, with occasional references to revisionism were articulated most often by the far right party MIÉP, but also by the Smallholders (FKgP) and the Christian Democrats KDNP (45).

The position of the current governing party, FIDESZ was mostly inconsistent in the 1990s. In 1990 the party actually marched out from the (unscheduled) commemorative session in the parliament although it signed the joint declaration issued by six political parties in May 1990 (Ablonczy, *Trianon-legendák*, 33). Trianon did not feature the rhetoric of the party prominently until the formation of the first Orbán-government in 1998. The party's shift to the right in the mid-1990s manifested itself in the revival and conscious use of historical events in its communicative practices. The movement

of the Hungarian royal crown from the National Museum to the building of the parliament, the elevation of the conservative aristocrat, István Széchenyi to the top of the national pantheon, and increased participation in the "Tusványos" summer festival/political workshop in Romania's Băile Tușnad all marked the party's growing interest in certain themes from national history and the role of cross-border connections in creating political leverage. The implementation of the "status law" in 2001 to grant easier access to members of the Hungarian minorities to the Hungarian labour market is another example to illustrate this point. After losing the elections of 2002, FIDESZ continued to emphasise the importance of cross-border relations in resolving the "Trianon trauma." The referendum initiative of 2004 – initially proposed by the World Federation of Hungarians – to grant dual citizenship to Hungarians in the neighbouring countries illustrates this attempt. Although the referendum on this matter was not valid due to the insufficient number of votes, the party benefitted from the campaign in the long run and continued to promote its claim as the main political force to protect the rights of minorities abroad. Orbán was particularly active in the campaign leading up to the referendum, despite the fact that he was relatively distant from day-to-day parliamentary politics while in opposition. He was the key speaker of the main campaign event – called Day of National Unity – in the Budapest City Park in November 2004, and he was also the one to propose a spontaneous commemoration in the parliament on the first anniversary of the lost referendum.[15] Orbán's participation in the campaign helped shape his image as the protector of Hungarian minorities abroad; an image that was further intensified after his return to power in

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15 For a collection of newspaper publications about the referendum see: *A kettős állampolgárság a Political Capital elemzéseiben 2005. január 21.* (Budapest: MTA Etnikai-Nemzeti Kisebbségkutató Intézete, 2005). accessed 10 June, 2021, https://kisebbsegkutato.tk.hu/kettosallampolgarsag/sajto/kettos_allampolgarsag_PC_elemzesek_050121.pdf

2010. Nonetheless, the narrative of FIDESZ about Trianon remained essentially centrist in nature – even if the trope of victimhood was increasingly present – and it considered integration to the EU as the solution to the problem of "the divided nation" (Ablonczy 32).

Apart from the referendum of 2004, Trianon featured parliamentary debates less often than in the 1990s (32). At the same time, the first decade of the 21st century witnessed the revival of the cult of Trianon in popular culture. The cult was informed heavily by the aesthetics of irredentism of the inter-war period, and it was promoted primarily by far-right organisations (64 Counties Youth Movement) and parties (MIÉP and Jobbik). Such associations organised commemorations (sometimes in conjunction with local governments or the church) since 2001, erected Trianon monuments (and double crosses), and promoted narratives of victimhood and suffering in their newspapers and publications (Feischmidt, "Memory-politics" 138). A whole sub-culture sprang up around the theme which manifested itself in the production of irredentist souvenirs, including the (infamous) Greater Hungary car stickers[16]; the formation of "national rock bands" that have their own music festivals (Magyar Sziget – Hungarian Island) since 2001; and the publication of magazines (*Nagy Magyarország* – Greater Hungary) and journals (*Trianoni Szemle* – The Trianon Review) that echo images of trauma and victimhood.

The resurrection of the Trianon trauma drama entailed the revival of the cult of heroes and the condemnation of villains. The cult of Horthy that had been cultivated by far right organisations since the early 1990s was promoted consistently by Jobbik in the 2000s, especially after they entered the parliament in 2010.

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16 Balázs Ablonczy, "Történelmi Magyarország: az emlékezés matricája (Historical Hungary: the sticker of Memory)," *Szombat*, 7 January, 2009, accessed 10 June, 2021, https://www.szombat.org/hirek-lapszemle/878-tortenelmi-magyarorszag-az-emlekezes-matricaja

The party systematically recycled the vocabulary of inter-war revisionism and argued for the need of a "national resurrection," a "new land-taking (*honfoglalás*)," and a "new Horthy" to be able to create a "brighter future."[17] The special issue of the historical magazine *Nagy Magyarország*, presented a crystallised version of such cultic narratives about the Regent in its special issue that was published in 2010 with the title "The Last Statesman" (2, no.1). In addition, proposals to erect statues of Horthy or rename streets after him were put forward by local Jobbik sections, but the then leader of the party, Gábor Vona, also submitted a proposal to the parliament to declare 2013 the "Horthy memorial year (Turbucz, "A jelenkori jobboldali radikalizmus"). The role of villains in the re-staging of the trauma drama was equally prominent. The very first issue of the same historical magazine, which was devoted to the Trianon treaty, put imagined villains in the spotlight and re-affirmed the perception of France as Hungary's "great enemy" (*Nagy Magyarország* 1, no. 1, 2009). A year later, the magazine set out to "denounce" internal enemies, including Mihály Károlyi, in a special issue entitled "Hungary in the hands of halfwits" (*Nagy Magyarország* 2, no. 3, 2010).

The re-emergence of the Trianon cult, its diffusion through novel forms of media, and its remarkable appeal to younger generations indicates that the phenomenon is more than just the imitation of past practices, and it serves specific functions in 21st century Hungarian society and politics. There is, indeed, a strong link between the bottom-up revival of the symbolic practices of the

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17 Dávid Turbucz, "A jelenkori jobboldali radikalizmus (MIÉP, Jobbik) Horthy-, és Horthy-korszak képe," paper presented at the conference *Búvópatakok – mélyfúrások. Magyar jobboldal – 1945 után*, Budapest, Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, December 11m 2013, accessed 10 June, 2021, http://www.rev.hu/ords/f?p=600:2:::::P2_PAGE_URI:rendezvenyek/buvopatakokkonf_turbucz

cult of Trianon, socio-economic uncertainties of the present day and the resurgence of identity politics. As Margit Feischmidt claims:

> The Trianon cult in Hungary addressed a widespread need for collective self-esteem and personal pride by providing adherents the opportunity to express grievances, channelling grievance into anger against elite groups, and offering an avenue for overcoming collective trauma through the symbolic assertion of national unity and superiority ('Memory-politics' 141).

In other words, traumatic representations of Trianon in the 21st century reflect social tensions and frustrations in the present day. The re-enactment of the trauma drama about the loss of national greatness offers a symbolic remedy to certain social groups for sentiments of powerlessness and perceptions of subjugation in the present day. As Feischmidt points out, the Trianon myth functions as a "mythomoteur" or a "preexisting ethno-symbolic resource" that catalyses the revival of nationalism (130).

The potency of the "mythomoteur," and the mobilisational power of the booming Trianon cult were recognised by FIDESZ and attempts were made to hijack some of the initiatives of the far right. This also had to do with the fact that Jobbik became the second largest opposition party after the 2010 elections after having received 16.7% of the votes, and it came to represent a potential threat to the hegemonic position of FIDESZ on the political right. The growth in the circulation of Trianon narratives was connected to the 90th anniversary of the signing of the treaty in 2010 that coincided with the formation of the second Orbán government. In fact, one of the first laws passed by the new parliament in which FIDESZ had two-thirds majority was the declaration of 4 June – the date when the treaty was signed in Versailles – "the Day of National Unity." Although the text of the law makes no revisionist claims and contains some forward looking narrative components, including references to European unity – the law marks a remarkable shift

in official rhetoric towards grievance, suffering and victimhood. Trianon is consistently described as a "tragedy," and is defined as "one of the greatest historical tragedies" of the Hungarian nation, caused by "the unjust and unfair dismemberment of the Hungarian nation by foreign powers."[18] At the same time, the law represents the government's attempt to reconceptualise the nation along ethno-nationalist lines by emphasising the unity of the nation across borders (Feischmidt 133). It is indicative of the government's ethno-centric conception of the nation that it had liberalised the Hungarian citizenship law of 1993 even before the act on Trianon (which was primarily a symbolic declaration) was passed by the parliament, by enabling preferential naturalisation for Hungarians residing in the neighbouring countries,[19] and eventually granting Hungarian minorities voting rights a year later. The symbolic significance of the "Tusványos" summer camps in Transylvania, Romania also increased greatly after the electoral triumph of 2010. It is at these gatherings, attended mostly by Transylvanian Hungarians, where Orbán usually makes important announcements with regard to the political direction his regime intends to take. (For example, this is where he announced – in 2014 – his intention to build an "illiberal democracy" in Hungary.)

Due to the government's increasing support of commemorative practices in subsequent years, Trianon came to occupy a prominent place in public history initiatives after 2010. Commemorations supported by local governments were held on a regular basis on 4 June, Trianon monuments were erected, local "Trianon circles" were established, and the number of publications – books, journals,

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18 "2010. évi XLV. Törvény a Nemzeti Összetartozás melletti tanúságtételről," accessed 10 June, 2021, https://net.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1000045.tv

19 "2010. évi XLIV. Törvény a magyar állampolgárságról szóló 1993. évi LV. törvény módosításáról," accessed 10 June, 2021, https://mkogy.jogtar.hu/jogszabaly?docid=a1000044.tv

magazines, etc. – recycling irredentist and revisionist themes gradually grew in number (Gyáni 364). The Trianon Museum which was established in 2004 in the post-socialist industrial city of Várpalota received significant funding from the government and its activities and exhibitions gained wider publicity, partly due to the involvement of FIDESZ's main propagandist, Zsolt Bayer in the board of trustees (Feischmidt 136). In addition, publications formerly associated with the far right, such as the *Nagy Magyarország* magazine also received public funding in 2012 (Gyáni 363). Gábor Koltay's film, *The Bleeding Hungary*, which was released for the 90th anniversary of the treaty represented the crystallised version of the new master narrative supported by the government.

Although the booming memory industry around Trianon relied increasingly on the symbols and metaphors of the cult of irredentism in the inter-war period, there were also some (failed) attempts to transgress the traumatic framework of representations and provide a more easily digestible interpretation of June 4, one that is not necessarily anchored in notions of victimhood. One such example was the in-famous *Song of Unity*, a joyful pop-tune with rather unsophisticated lyrics (allegedly written by the wife of the then State Secretary for Culture), in which national unity is portrayed through the metaphor of people dancing together under a peach tree. The song targeted the younger generations – schoolchildren, specifically – with the State Secretary for Social Relations even circulating a letter to school principals inviting them to organise the joint singing of the song in their schools.[20] This attempt to frame national unity (and Trianon) in non-tragic terms predictably failed, due to the overwhelmingly negative reception

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20 "A barackfás Összetartozás Dalát énekeltetné az iskolásokkal a kormány", *444.hu*, May 30, 2013, accessed 10 June, 2021, https://444 hu/ 2013/05/30/a-barackfas-osszetartozas-dalat-enekeltetne -az-iskolasokkal-a-kormany

of the song. Many considered the lyrics simply too infantile, but commentators on social media platforms also perceived the song to be irreverent to the memory of Trianon, implying that the event could only represented in traumatic terms.

The resurgence of the Trianon cult was concurrent and increasingly entangled with the growing cult around the Hungarian prime minister. The revival of the leader cult in Hungarian politics was triggered by a multiplicity of factors, including the specific political and socio-economic context in Hungary, the endurance of certain historical legacies, international inspirations, as well as deliberate attempts at dismantling democratic structures in the past decade.[21] The emergence of the cult is therefore indicative of the diffusion of authoritarian practices and the gradual demise of democratic institutions and social autonomies. Narratives of trauma and victimhood have played a crucial role in the process and have been exploited systematically to construct the symbolic persona of the prime minister. The very roots of Orbán's charismatic appeal are tied to a ritual of grief: the re-burial of the martyrs of the uprising of 1956, including prime minister Imre Nagy, in 1989. The speech of Orbán at the funeral continues to be considered a decisive event in 1989 and is often portrayed in quasi-prophetic terms by his followers. The speech delivered in the specific historical context at the time (the demise of communism), connected the rising young politician to the heroes and martyrs of the past (Nagy and the tragic heroes of 1956), and managed to link the historical trauma of the past (Soviet occupation) to political ambitions in the present (the

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21 On the role of historical legacies in the rise of the cult of Orbán see Balázs Apor, "From Heroic Lion to Streetfighter: Historical Legacies and the Leader Cult in Twentieth-Century Hungary," in *Revisioning Stalin and Stalinism: Complexities, Contradictions and Controversies*, eds. James Ryan and Susan Grant (London: Bloomsbury, 2021), 93-109.

withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary) and a vision for the future (national independence).[22]

Traumatic representations of political events continued to shape the formation of Orbán's symbolic persona in subsequent years. For example, the failed referendum of 2004 to grant dual citizenship to Hungarian minorities across the border strengthened images of the Hungarian politician as a protector of minorities and as a guarantor of national unity. (His regular appearance at the "Tusványos" festival further buttressed this claim.) The referendum was often represented by right-wing politicians as a trauma and it was commonly described as a "spiritual Trianon" caused by the "betrayal" of then Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány and the left-liberal coalition.[23] The anti-government protests of 2006 serve as another reference point in FIDESZ propaganda. The leaked speech of Gyurcsány admitting lying to the electorate, was followed by spontaneous – sometimes violent – protests, as well as rallies organised by FIDESZ at which Orbán often appeared as the main speaker. The excessive use of force by the police against the protesters – one FIDESZ MP was injured, as well – was exploited to evoke the image of a victimised nation under the yoke of leftist "terror." In 2021, the government friendly Civic Coalition Forum (CÖF) even initiated the organisation of a travelling exhibition about the "Gyurcsány-terror" to mark the 15th anniversary of the 2006 protests.[24] The images of a society in crisis and a nation in peril were consistently evoked by Orbán himself, in

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22 István Povedák, "One From Us, One For Us: Viktor Orbán in Vernacular Culture," in *Heroes and Celebrities in Central and Eastern Europe*, ed. István Povedák (Szeged: Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, 2014), 156.

23 "Semjén: a kettős állampolgárság eltörli a lelki Trianon szégyenét," *Index*, August 20, 2010, accessed 10 June, 2021, https://index.hu/belfold/2010/08/20/semjen_a_kettos_allampolgarsag_eltorli_a_lelki_trianon_szegyenet/

24 "Vándorkiállításon mutatja be a CÖF a „Gyurcsány-terror" eseményeit," *Telex*, June 1, 2021, accessed June 10, 2021, https://telex.hu/belfold/2021/06/01/gyurcsany-ferenc-2006-oszodi-beszed-vandorkiallitas-cof

his speeches. According to a linguistic analysis of Orbán's vocabulary, the themes of crisis, fear and a sense of loss have played an increasing role in his rhetoric since 2014, contributing to the emergence of an increasingly militant and polarised political discourse that revolves around the trope of victimhood.[25] The refugee crisis of 2015 gave a significant boost to the circulation of such themes, and consolidated the position of narratives of suffering and victimhood in the propaganda of FIDESZ.

Despite the growth of Manichean elements in the communication of the government, the "Trianon Memorial Year" in 2020 started with relatively modest declarations. At the beginning of the year, Orbán actually asked his supporters to exercise "clever moderation" in relation to the commemorations, and he highlighted the importance of cooperation with the neighbouring countries – especially the Visegrád 4 – rather than the regurgitation of past grievances.[26] However, the Prime Minister's announcements about Trianon gradually shifted towards narratives of victimhood, resulting in a "double-speak" about the event in his rhetoric.[27] In his most publicised speech in the memorial year, marking the unveiling of the Trianon Monument in Budapest on 20 August 2020, Orbán – after declaring that the West had lost its appeal and recycling the theme of "migrant threat" – referred to the century after Trianon as "one hundred years of Hungarian solitude" and "one hundred years of imprisonment." While metaphors of suffering were in abundance

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25 Hajnalka Magyar, István Gulyás, János Kovács and Emma Világosi, 'Van egy magyar Magyarország' (16 June 2018). Available online: https://ia803100.us.archive.org/35/items/161 189wA180616_201807/161189w_a_180616.pdf (accessed 11 June 2021).

26 "Orbán a Trianon-évfordulóról: okos mértéktartást szeretnék mindenkitől kérni," *Maszol. ro*, January 9, 2020, accessed 10 June, 2021, https://www.maszol.ro/index.php/kulfold/120764-orban-a-trianon-evfordulorol-okos-mertektartast-szeretnekmindenkit-l-kerni

27 Kata Bálint, Bulcsú Hunyadi, Róbert László and Csaba Molnár, *"Minél jobbra, minél jobban:" A magyar (szélső)jobb 100 évvel Trianon után*, Budapest and Prague: Political Capital and Henrich Böll Stiftung, 2020: 42-43.

in the text, his speech also focused on the future and appealed to sentiments of national pride and unity. The past, the present and the future were brought together in his oration, through references to the survival of the Hungarian nation in the face of past traumas and through evoking the image of Hungarians standing at the gates of victory with the prospect of a better future.[28]

In a less known speech in the city of Sátoraljaújhely on 6 June 2020, Orbán's rhetoric shifted more markedly to themes of suffering, and it blatantly recycled elements of the revisionist discourse from the inter-war period.[29] Trianon was represented in biblical terms as "Hungarian Calvary," and it was portrayed as the focal point in Hungarian history: even historical time was measured in "Trianons" by the Prime Minister. The text evokes images of national greatness through emphasising the ability of the Hungarians to survive the "the hundred years of quarantine" despite all odds. Apart from evoking the theme of national martyrdom, the speech also summoned the motifs of internal betrayal and abuse by great powers that had characterised Trianon-narratives in the far right before. The problematic metaphor of a "stab in the back" was used to illustrate how Hungary "was handed over to our enemies" (the Bolsheviks), but the "betrayal" of the Western great powers was illustrated in even stronger terms. Orbán claimed that "the West raped the thousand-year-old borders and history of Central Europe," promising that "we will never forget that they did this." But despite the recycling of age-old tropes and metaphors, the speech was as much inspired by contemporary political aspirations as by the legacies of the cult of irredentism. Arguably, Orbán's anti-Westernism, manifested mostly

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28 "Orbán Viktor beszéde az Összetartozás emlékhely avatásán," August 20, 2020, accessed 10 June, 2021 https://miniszterelnok.hu/orban-viktor-beszede-az-osszetartozas-emlekhely-avatasan/

29 "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's commemoration speech," June 6, 2020, Sátoraljaújhely, accessed 10 June, 2021, https://abouthungary.hu/speeches-and-remarks/primeminister-viktor-orbans-commemoration-speech-trianon

in constant struggles with "Brussels" was equally responsible for labelling the French "arrogant" and the Americans "hypocritical". At the same time, there is a curious absence of references to Russia in connection with historical traumas, such as the failed War of Independence of 1849 or the Uprising of 1956, although the Soviet Union, as the embodiment of communism, is portrayed in a negative light. This has to do with the growing symbolic significance of the "Eastern Opening" in Hungarian foreign politics at the expense of good relations with the European Union or the Unite States. Orbán portrayed the "East" as the land of the future in rather dramatic terms, claiming that "the ground is trembling under the feet of our eastern neighbour," adding the ominous phrase "a new order is being born."

Despite Orbán's tendency to adjust his rhetoric to the expectations of the audience resulting in "double-speak", his speech in Sátoraljaújhely represents the remarkable endurance of legacies of revisionism and marks the re-emplotment of the Trianon trauma drama in the context of 21st century politics. The speech recycled the most common (and most radical) elements of inter-war irredentism, but it was also adapted to support current political agendas. The old heroes and villains of the trauma drama – domestic enemies, the "treacherous" West, and so on – were revived to support the government's struggles with imagined enemies, including "Brussels" and the opposition that is consistently personified in FIDESZ propaganda by Gyurcsány. Past confrontations were tied to conflicts in the present and the promise of a brighter future: "The return of Hungarians has begun." In this context, Orbán positioned himself at the crux of history and as representative of the nation, underlying the messianic elements in his growing cult and the image of the Prime Minister as a saviour (Povedák, "One From Us, One For Us" 159).

Conclusions

The generation that experienced the Trianon Treaty as a trauma is no longer alive, yet the event has been increasingly portrayed as a national tragedy in mainstream political discourse in recent years. The image of Trianon as a trauma is constantly re-affirmed in the context of commemorative rituals and in cultural representations, including literature, history, visual art, and so on. The ever-growing temporal distance between the event and the revival of its memory supports interpretations that define the recent revival of the cult of Trianon as a trauma drama. However, the trauma drama is not completely rigid. The plot and the metaphors might have been recycled from the past, but they serve specific political purposes in the present. The main characters of the drama may also seem familiar, but they are played by new actors. This also suggests that while the memory of Trianon remains "cold," it is not entirely frozen, and there are some limited ways to attune the master narrative without questioning the overall framing of the event as traumatic. Moreover, the resurgence of the Trianon cult and narratives of victimhood and grievance do not simply reflect the resuscitation of inter-war legacies, but the limited and not necessarily conscious interplay of different historical legacies in 20th century Hungary. Discourses of anti-Westernism, anti-intellectualism, and anti-liberalism; the promotion of a collectivist sense of identity (nationalism) at the expense of individual autonomy; and the marked return of images of the "East" as the land of the future, also echo key tropes of the communist master-narrative. From this perspective, the revival of the cult Trianon does not merely represent the return of inter-

war political language, but also the unreflected and subliminal interaction of multiple historical legacies.[30]

The re-staging of the Trianon drama has been increasingly entangled with the growing cult of the Orbán in the past decade, and the cult of Trianon and the cult of Orbán have become mutually reinforcing. The Orbán-regime keeps the (cold) memory of Trianon alive, but the re-enactment of the drama also gave a significant boost to irrational representations of the Prime Minister. The key tropes of Orbán's image – the freedom fighter, the defender of the country from domestic enemies and treacherous great powers, and the guarantor of national unity across borders – resonate with the core metaphors of Horthy's cult in the inter-war period, but they also support the political agenda of FIDESZ. In the trauma drama, Orbán represents the tragic hero who despite defeats and suffering emerges triumphant and ends up leading the nation to a glorious future. Although Orbán was not alive at the time of the treaty, his figure was integrated into the trauma drama and he is represented as the politician who could correct historical wrongs and reunite the nation across borders. It needs to be emphasised that the Orbán cult has multiple layers and is shaped by a multiplicity of factors, the return of "strongmen" in international politics, social uncertainties and anxieties in 21st century Hungary, as well as the political and economic crisis of the late 2000. However, the Trianon-trauma has emerged as an important building bloc in his ever-growing cult and has reached new heights during the memorial year of 2020.

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30 For a most recent discussion of the notion of 'historical legaces', see: Balázs Apor and John Paul Newman, "Introduction," in *Balkan Legacies: The Long Shadow if Conflict and Ideological Expriment in Southeastern Europe*, eds. Balázs Apor and John Paul Newman (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2021), 1-17.

Authoritarian Neoliberalism in a Comparative Perspective: Hungary and Brazil

Fabio Luís Barbosa and Tamás Gerocs

This article compares the Fidesz governments in Hungary under the leadership of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán since 2010, and the presidency of Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil, inaugurated in 2019, within the framework of a common historical shift from liberal democracy to authoritarian neoliberalism (Bruff 2014, Gates 2018, Kumral and Karatasli 2020). Despite their geographical distance, Hungary and Brazil share many socio-economic features; both are part of the Global Semi-periphery, hence both countries are showcases of newly rising authoritarian neoliberal regimes. On the other hand, there are noteworthy socio-historical differences. Geopolitics is one such example, Brazil having a distinctive colonial legacy with a sizeable internal market that makes historical development more inward-oriented than in the case of export-dependent Hungary, a much smaller state in the European Union. In addition, capitalist alliances articulate differently in the respective regimes, whereas Bolsonaro is backed by the political quest for privatization and militarization, in Hungary Orbán has nationalized selected sectors of the economy to help national bourgoisie realign with foreign capital. The comparison of these regimes – with their distinctive features – are aimed to contribute to the better understanding of why authoritarian neoliberalism has been on the rise in the Global Semi-periphery.

The following text has three sections. Initially, the crisis of the political and economic arrangement that followed state socialism

in Hungary (1949-1989) is discussed, to contextualize the rise of the right-wing government led by Fidesz. Next, essential traits of the political economy of this regime, which Orbán himself described as an "illiberal democracy", are highlighted. The second section follows a similar path for the Brazilian case, framing the election of Bolsonaro in the context of the demise of the New Republic, as the political period that succeeded dictatorship (1964-1989) is known. Then, key features of this government are discussed. The third section outlines a comparison between both regimes. It is suggested that Fidesz has consolidated its political hegemony in Hungary, while the rise of Bolsonaro indicates a transition to a new hegemonic pattern which is yet to be defined in Brazil. In addition to the fact that Orbán has been in power since 2010 while Bolsonaro was sworn in in 2019, this contrast is related to differences in the trajectory, the organized constituency, the class support, and the development project (or lack of it) embodied by each regime.

Hungary
Background: the path to the illiberal state

The crisis of the liberal regime, which resulted in the ongoing reconfiguration of the balance of forces under Orbán, has its roots in the economic and political contradictions in late state socialism (cf. Gerőcs and Pinkasz 2018, Gagyi and Gerőcs 2020). Hungary was one of the most indebted member states in the Comecon block, a situation that forced the country's leadership to ease on the intensive industrialization of the post-war period, initially aimed at heavy industries, and reform the economy, eventually abolishing the system of central planning in the late 1960´s. The reform period of 1968 led to the country's unique position in international trade, which

Gerőcs and Pinkasz (2018) called the "bridge-model".[1] As a result, the country developed a large exposure to foreign trade in hard currency, thus positive terms of international trade was necessary for the balance of international payment. Moreover, the country was also exposed to international financial markets, especially after the oil price shocks in the late 1970s which pushed the terms of trade into a negative territory. State socialist Hungary - with many other countries in the global semi-periphery - was compelled to join the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1981 and launch a neoliberal austerity program under the supervision of a domestic alliance of monetarist technocrats, intellectual dissidents and state socialist "reform bureaucrats" (Gagyi 2016, Fábry 2019). The diverse groups of elites at the time comprised of the agents of international lenders, such as the above mentioned western educated monetarist technocrats, as well as domestic entrepreneurs and managers with intertwining informal linkages. During the post-socialist transition, the latter group converged into a domestic capitalist class alliance[2] through various legal reforms and privatization backed by the IMF (Stark 1996; Burawoy and Lukács 1994).

The reform process that had started during state socialism culminated in a full-fledged neoliberal shock-therapy after 1990 (Gille 2010). The major pillars of the newly emerging neoliberal regime were based upon the principles of the so-called "Washington Consensus" propagated by the IMF, World Bank and the European Union. Debilitated by the shock therapy, the first conservative government during the post-socialist transition could not nurture an independent entrepreneurial class it could govern with. Following

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[1]   Hungary imported Western technology which it resold in the Comecon market in exchange for subsidized Soviet crude oil which then was re-exported to the West.

[2]   The sociological origin of many of the Hungarian national bourgeoisie went back to the 1980s, either in the informal second economy or as the managerial elite of large public enterprises (Burawoy and Lukács 1994, Stark 1996,).

the collapse of this government in 1994, the national bourgeoisie was more associated with the Hungarian Socialist Party, due to their informal networks with the old politburo prior to the 1990s.

Liberal democracy consolidated in Hungary after 1994 when shock therapy eased and the socialist and liberal parties engaged in a coalition government. The basis of the liberal party emerged from urban intellectuals who were members of a diverse group of prodemocracy social movements in the late 1980s and who were closely associated with western educated dissidents and foreign businesses. Privatization continued under liberal-socialist period, however, fractions of domestic capitalist classes enjoyed limited subsidies from the government in certain protected circuits of accumulation, e.g. housing, construction and media. During the privatization process, however, an inevitable confrontation emerged between the old managerial class which wanted to secure access to the remaining elements of state owned enterprises and international capital which gained access to untapped domestic markets, relatively well-preserved infrastructure and cheap labor force (Szelényi 2015). Since national bourgeoisie did not have sufficient financial capacity to save its position, while the indebted state was in an urgent need of hard-currency and supervised by IMF programs, therefore the shifting balance of forces made international capital benefit more from the privatization of large state assets than their domestic counterparts. Despite the overall disadvantageous experiences for domestic capitalist groups, with a few exception,[3] the majority of them remained loyal to the socialist party until as late as the early 2000s mostly due to their existing, albeit weakening informal linkages, combined with their suspicion of the only viable political

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3   A small number of well-connected individuals could profit from this period largely due to their exceptional managerial skills, accumulated experience of the spontaneous privatization in the late 1980s as well as political connections that helped them secure and rollover loans from state-owned banks .

alternative, the so called Alliance of Young Democrats (*Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége*), known as Fidesz. After the collapse of the first conservative government, that party shifted from its initial position as a junior liberal party in the early 1990s to take the leading role in the right.

The first Fidesz government led by Viktor Orbán, came into power in 1998 as a moderate conservative coalition government with the Peasants' Party. The coalition pursued a similar strategy of the first conservative government, which was aimed at the breakup of the alliance between domestic capital and the socialist party in order to realign the former with the conservative core. However, the major difference was Fidesz' ability for mass mobilization by invoking nationalist rhetoric (Gagyi 2016) in order to build a new cross-class alliance amongst very diverse groups, including domestic capital and disillusioned middle-classes. By the end of Fidesz' first term, new political tactics involved pro-government mass demonstrations and the spread of government-sponsored and affiliated proto-civilian organizations. However the first Fidesz government was unable to break the bond between domestic capital and the socialist party, and the socialist-liberal governments returned for two more consecutive terms during which period Hungary became a full member of the European Union.

Fidesz hegemony

The second phase of neoliberal governments showed signs of exhaustion as privatization, hence foreign direct investment slowed down by the mid-2000s, and the regulatory capacity of the state to subsidize domestic capital became more limited in the European Union (Böröcz 2012). The socialist-liberal governments attempted to alleviate political delegitimation through increased public spending and the encouragement of private debt in foreign

currency. Throughout the debt-led phase of development in the 2000's, dependence on European funds and IMF loans bound the governments to neoliberal policies that were met with rising social and political discontent from disillusioned middle-classes whose voice Fidesz was able to articulate with the party's nationalist agenda (cf. Melegh 2006, Gagyi 2016).

As the result of the exhaustion of the FDI-based model in combination with strict compliance with EU and IMF rules, national bourgeoisie slowly alienated from the socialist party and re-grouped around the contender Fidesz (Wilkin 2018, Fábry 2019, Scheiring 2020; Scheiring and Szombati 2020). Moreover, during the time of opposition, Fidesz could successfully reorganize its party-base and coordinate a network of local organizations, the so-called Civic Circles Movement that were connected to the party center and were easy to mobilize for local political causes. This network represented a very similar cross-class alliance of middle-class voters which Fidesz had previously used for pro-government mass mobilization and helped members of the movement to remain loyal to its agenda (Greskovits 2020). Fidesz' sweeping electoral victory in 2010 was backed by the disillusionment of the middle-classes in combination with the very harsh effects of the world-economic crisis.

Since Fidesz returned to office in 2010, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán dubbed his self-styled governance as "illiberal state" a definition that aimed to express its general ideological opposition to the concept of "liberal democracy", as he explained in 2010 at one of his annual speeches at the summer gathering of his conservative Fidesz party. At that time, Hungary's national bourgeoisie was achieving a more prominent position through the institutional centralization of political power promoted by this illiberal state. Parallel to the political centralization, a new constitution was inaugurated in 2012 and a series of proactive economic reforms were introduced in a wide array of industrial, educational and taxation policies, as well

as labor market deregulation combined with a public workfare initiative. These series of reforms targeted the major power blocks that had dominated the liberal state prior to its demise. On top of the constitutional amendments through which legislative procedures are tied to a two-third parliamentary approval, Fidesz introduced a new electoral law which helped the party to maintain its two-third majority in the parliament which has become necessary to govern due to the above mentioned institutional reforms (Wilkin 2018; Fábry 2019). Since the introduction of these reforms, successive Fidesz governments have not been seriously challenged by political contenders neither through elections nor in the parliament.

In the buildup of the Fidesz hegemony, the state used the opportunity that was opened up by the global crisis to reconfigure the post-socialist power block by renegotiating property relations with international capital on behalf of the national bourgeoisie. However, Hungary's new authoritarian neoliberal regime was not entirely hostile to international capital because of the country's persistent dependence on external financing, mostly from the European Union's Structural and Cohesion Funds as well as foreign direct investment from Germany (Gerőcs and Pinkasz 2019). In the articulation of the new power block, neoliberal policies remained intact but combined with authoritarian elements of governance. In banking for instance, the government initiated no hostile takeovers as was the case in other domestic services (particularly in utilities, energy and retail) but a carefully planned win-win situation was created between international and domestic capital by Hungary's financial bailout scheme. Banking was important for political reasons as well. The core of Fidesz electorate are middle-class families in suburban areas who were among the most dissatisfied groups with the previous liberal-socialist governments due to the fact their households were hit hard by foreign-currency mortgage loans. The Fidesz government and the central bank initiated a

currency-conversion scheme in 2015 in order to selectively bail out the most viable households. On top of the conversion-scheme, the central bank launched a new mortgage loan program in Hungarian currency that targeted new middle-classes. This new scheme helped government-associated financial institutions to overtake the private lending market.

Another example is disciplining labor. In this respect, domestic capital's interest coalesced with international capital; hence the overall dependence on German industrial capital has also intensified. German export-manufacturers helped draft the infamous Hungarian labor code in 2012. Upon their request, amendments to the labor code were added in 2018 which trade unions dubbed "Slave Law" because it severely restricted labor's negotiating power vis-á-vis companies (Gagyi and Gerőcs 2019).

Efforts to diversify away from the transatlantic lenders drove Fidesz governments towards building new regional alliances. The global hegemonic shift and the regionalization of the international system made this effort a viable strategy to include Chinese and Russian finance capital on top of the close association with German industrial interest. As a result Hungary is one of the most active partners in China's regional infrastructural investments that are part of the multilateral Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The benefit of the partnership is that it helps to set up a large investment fund independent of European financial compliance; hence it can be mobilized for government-affiliated oligarchic groups.4 With Russia, several bilateral agreements have been signed by the Hungarian government, which includes gas-transportation contracts and the extension of the country's nuclear capacity by Russia's Rosatom.

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4   One notable example is the infamous Belgrade-Budapest speed-cargo train which China started building to connect its harbor logistics to the European mainland..

In the domestic arena, using its parliamentary supermajority, Fidesz governments centralized power through institutional and budgetary reforms while also moving to an unprecedented control over the media. The first target was Hungarian municipalities, the local governments of which had been heavily indebted due to earlier governments' disinvestment policies.

Important element of the reorganization of local governments was the public workfare initiative which played a central role in the government's workfare reform, besides the Slave Law (Hann 2016). Fidesz extended the public workfare initiative in 2011 which was first introduced by the socialist-liberal government as part of their crisis-management policy-mix. In the meantime Fidesz fulfilled a popular demand of rural middle-classes to replace social cash transfers (comparable to Brazil's Bolsa Familia) that the rural poor were eligible for, with public work organized by local governments. Due to the fact that in many parts of the country mayors became the sole legal employers of the local population, the initiative has played a massive role in the tightening of patron-client relationships in areas most hit by unemployment, producing significant consequences for local political mobilization.

In the buildup of Fidesz' authoritarian neoliberal regime, the government has systematically undermined the environment for independent media through regulatory as well as market interventions. Fidesz built its own satellite of media oligarchs already during its first term in the late 1990s and after 2010, it gained control over large sways of Hungary's independent media outlets (Wilkin 2018). The majority control of public and private media helped the government to turn it into a state-propaganda machine which has been frequently activated against targeted groups around carefully selected issues. The media-control helped Fidesz to launch its infamous anti-migration campaign in 2015 during the European refugee crisis, but state propaganda often targets prominent European

politicians who criticized Orbán in public as well. A more frequent target is Hungarian-born billionaire George Soros who contributed to the consolidation of liberal democracy by his philanthropy to independent NGOs during the post-socialist transition5. The height of the anti-Soros campaigns brought about the relocation of the Central European University – originally founded by Soros – from Budapest to Vienna, Autonomous cultural institutions, art schools and universities, and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences have been similarly targeted by the state machinery.

The state propaganda plays a pivotal role in attacking the leadership of oppositional parties, the remaining elements of the social-liberals and most notably the other far-right party, Jobbik which grew to be the sole political challenger of Fidesz by its own popular movement and paramilitary organization (Scheiring and Szombati 2020). The basis of Jobbik's successful strategy was the combination of a new disillusionment on behalf of lower-middle classes whom Fidesz excluded from the redistribution of social benefits and whose loyalty the state propaganda was unable to maintain, as well as fractions of blue-collar workers typically exploited by multinational companies (Szombati 2018). As the outcome of the political rupture, Fidesz changed strategy after 2015 and it captured major topics that were raised by Jobbik, while the leaders of the party were constantly attacked by the state propaganda. As the result of Fidesz's new strategy, Jobbik moved from the far-right position closer to the political center; it has dismantled its paramilitary unit upon the order of a court ruling. While Fidesz moved from its moderate center right position closer to the far right. In the meantime, Fidesz helped the radical wing of Jobbik to separate into a new alternative far-right

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5   The so called "Stop Soros" legislation is one of the most restrictive regulations on civilian organizations in the EU as the bill has basically banned NGO's from accepting foreign donation.

party, the so-called "Our Homeland Movement" that sets the tone for symbolic identity politics which is beneficial for the operation of the state's ideological apparatus because it is compatible with the moral discourse of family deservingness, such as anti-LBGTQ and anti-gypsy discourses. Fidesz's move had repercussions not only in domestic politics, but with respect to its European allies. It has been alienated from its traditional partners in the European People's Party (EPP), the governing coalition of European conservative parties, and Orbán openly befriended himself with renowned far-right figures. Although Fidesz has been invited several times to join a newly forming Eurosceptic coalition in the European Parliament, political pragmatism has still kept the party in the EPP.

The remaining strategy of the institutional liberals and socialist parties is to invoke notions of Europeanness and values of "western civilization" which compares to a form of "regressive progressivism" that Brazil's PT performs under Bolsonaro' authoritarian neoliberal rule. In Hungary the liberal-left is losing its political relevance and as a consequence their electoral base has shrunk even behind Jobbik. Although, there have been several attempts to unite forces against Orbán in an alliance of all the oppositional parties from the liberal left to the far right but such a volatile ideological eclecticism is an easy prey for any authoritarian governments.

2. Brazil
a) Background: the demise of the New Republic

Brazilian capitalist development evolved through a contradictory dynamic, in which the tendencies to autonomize capital accumulation have been constrained by the articulation between external dependence and social asymmetry inherited from colonialism. This contradictory dynamic was aggravated by the import substitution industrialization in the interwar years, which

boosted an incipient national bourgeoisie, faced with a budding working class that was conquering rights. After the Second World War, the consolidation of a national bourgeoisie which had the internal market as its dynamic axis ("inward oriented", as voiced by the United Nations Economic Comission for Latin America) implied democratic reforms and protection of national capital, antagonizing the oligarchy of land owners and foreign interests.

These growing tensions in the context of the Cold War is the background to the military coup and the dictatorship that ensued (1964-1985), which according to Fernandes, consolidated the anti-national, anti-popular and anti-democratic orientation of the Brazilian bourgeoisie (Fernandes 1975). On the economic level, although industrialization was further pursued, the type of developmentalism put in practice anchored in the tripod of national capital, foreign capital and state intervention in a context of financialisation of the economy, added to a depleting national autonomy. In the 1980s, the convergence between the debt crisis, economic stagnation and inflation worsened the living conditions of workers, while Brazil succumbed to the dictates of the IMF.

It was in this context that the Workers' Party (PT) emerged. Labor unionism, popular movements, ecclesial communities and Brazilian progressive intellectuals mingled to contrive a mass party and not a vanguard, that intended to overcome the historical vehicles of popular politics until then. The party quickly became hegemonic in the Brazilian left, as the PT engaged in the last years of the struggle against the dictatorship and played an important role in broadening the debate around the transition, pressing for direct elections and social reforms. This role was consolidated with the protagonism, disproportionate to its representation, exercised by the party's parliamentarians in the drafting of the Constitution still in force, known as the "Citizen Constitution", approved in 1988. In that same year, the so-called Brazilian Social-Democrat Party

(PSDB) was founded, led by former President Fernando Henrique Cardoso (FHC), a party that would polarise national politics with the PT in the "New Republic" that was then inaugurated.

In the following decade, the PT accumulated local electoral successes and commanded resistance against neoliberalism, which had as its corner stone the implementation of the Real Plan in 1994, identified with FHC's presidencies (1995-2002). Despite a conservative inflection in the party's practice and rhetoric throughout the decade, Lula's electoral victory in 2002 after three consecutive defeats was interpreted as a reaction against the politics of austerity and raised hopes of change in the country and beyond. Brazilian liberal democracy was proving mature and the time for a type of welfarism to mitigate historical inequalities as foreseen by the Citizen Constitution, seemed to have come at last.

The PT's triumph occured in the context known as the South American Pink Tide, when most countries in the region elected presidentes that seemed to contest neoliberalism, such as Hugo Chávez in Venezuela (1998) and Evo Morales in Bolivia (2005). The common denominator of these governments was the attempt to mitigate social inequalities without facing their historical-structural causes embedded in colonial legacy. Benefiting from the commodities supercycle induced by China's growing demand for imported raw materials and agricultural products, the PT governments promoted cash transfers policies (notably the "Bolsa Família"6) and a discrete increase in the minimum wage, while guaranteeing conditions of extraordinary profitability for the exporting sectors, civil construction and financial capital. This was the framework of the "lulista way of regulating social conflict",

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6   Bolsa Família is a social welfare programthat provides financial aid to poor families against certain condicionalities such as ensuring that children attend school and are vaccinated.

which secured a relative pacification of the country for ten years (Braga and Santos 2019).

Retrospectively, it is plain that the pretension to manage social tensions through policies that aimed to contain the desocializing trend inherent to neoliberalism did not prevent the regression of the productive structure nor the deepening of an autophagic social dynamic. Two examples illustrate that. By increasing monetary flows in society aiming to mitigate poverty, "Bolsa Família" also spread the imperatives of money to the entire social fabric, which induces the generalization of competition as a behavioural norm and of the enterprise as a model of subjectification (Dardot: Laval: 2010). Targeted social policies in place of universal rights further commodified, and ultimately aggravated the desocializing and autophagic dynamics, which has lead to increasing violence. This explains why organized crime and mass imprisonment multiplied in the PT years, revealing that the other face of this welfarism was punitive (Arantes 2014).

The links between the warfare and welfare-oriented dimensions of the PT management of social life are highlighted in a second example. Lula sent Brazilian military personnel to lead the UN intervention in Haiti, with the idea of making Brazil a global player, which also motivated the engagement in BRICS[7]. These generals made no secret of the fact that they saw the island as an opportunity for military training and experimentation (Harig 2018). Back in Brazil, they put their know-how at the service of domestic missions, notably the "pacification" of the favelas of Rio de Janeiro in the context of the World Cup in 2014 and the Olympic Games in 2016 – another dimension of the "global player" ambition. Currently, those Haiti's veterans fill in the first ranks of the Bolsonaro government, which has more military personnel than the dictatorship ever had.

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7   Geopolitical alliance between Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

At the same time, the Bolsonaro government has increased the reach of the Bolsa Família, and in the context of the pandemic, has provisionally quadrupled the amount distributed and the number of beneficiaries.

In short, the PT's attempt to contain a historical process of de-socialisation within the framework of the structural crisis of capitalism, implied the use of practices, devices and policies that ended up accelerating this same process, according to an "accelerationist containment" dynamic. This dynamic in turn, reinforced socioeconomic traits that refer to colonial origin, such as the export of commodities, resulting in a second paradox: a "regressive progressivism" that, however, is not to be confused with a return to the past, since integration by consumption based in the popularization of credit has engendered a modality of "inclusive neoliberalism", which corroborated and deepened the neoliberal reason upon which liberal democracy rested in Brazil. Accelerationist containment, regressive progressivism and inclusive neoliberalism suggest that, contrary to a reaction to precedent achievements, the rise of the Bolsonaro should be seen as a metastasis of the PT administrations, to the extent that corrosive forces and interests that seemed to be contained, spread uncontested throughout the national fabric (Feldmann and Santos 2020).

b) In quest of a new hegemony

These are the dynamics underpinning the shift from liberal democracy to authoritarian neoliberalism in the Brazilian case, which had political expression in a shift from the PT to Bolsonaro. The conjunction of the June Days in 2013, the largest cycle of mass mobilization in the country's history; corruption scandals involving public and private corporations nurtured under the PT, such as Brazil's largest state-owned oil company, the Petrobras;

and economic deceleration, which turned into recession from 2015 onwards, as the commodities supercycled slowed down and the U.S. reverted its quantitative easing policies; highlighted the exhaustion of the lulista way of regulating social conflict. In this context, the approach of the ruling class slipped from a dynamic of "inclusive containment" to one of "exclusionary acceleration", which is the background to Rousseff's impeachment in 2016, Lula's arrest and Bolsonaro's victory in 2018.

This circumstantial slide must be framed within a long-term inflection in which the political and social foundations of the New Republic are compromised. It is true that the so-called Citizen Constitution had already been mended frequently since its promulgation in 1988 (Bercovici and Massoneto 2006). Retrospectively, it can be seen that the envisaged social rights referred to a peripheral welfare state was arriving in Brazil at a time when the ideal of wage citizenship was receding at an accelerated pace worldwide. However, the centrality of social rights, though unrealised in practice, had until recently been preserved.

The shift was evident in the 2018 presidential election, which did not gravitate around economic issues, since no candidate questioned neoliberal orthodoxy. Beneath the rhetoric of different candidates, the core issue at stake was the political form of management of the Brazilian crisis: what will be the face of the institutional, legal and cultural arrangement that will replace the New Republic, which after the PT governments, seems definitively doomed. This trend was already noticeable in Rousseff's second term – who in practice implemented the orthodox neoliberal agenda of the candidate she defeated in 2014 – but became unmistakable under former vice-president Michel Temer (2016-18), who plotted to remove Rousseff through a fiscal impeachment parliamentary procedure, refered to by its opponents as a "parliamentary coup". A legal cap for public spending for twenty years, labor reform and pension reform (which

Temer was then unable to advance), revealed that the spirit and the letter of the Citizen Constitution had lost legitimacy amidst the ruling class. In other words, the Brazilian shift toward authoritarian neoliberalism implies overcoming the institutional framework of the New Republic.

This antipopular albeit consensual agenda among the bourgeoisie, was taken up with impetus by the Bolsonaro government, a former military officer voted for seven straight terms as a congressmen, where he caught some public attention because of his hate speech practice and the appraisal of the Cold War military dictatorship. To start with, the debate around the pension system reform was conducted in a fallacious but revealing manner. State propaganda projected calculations according to the rationale it intended to implement instead of that guaranteed by the constitution, thus forging a fictitious deficit. A similar logic runs through the administrative reform proposed in 2020 by the Bolsonario government, which calls for the untying of federal revenues that are constitutionally ensured for health, education, social security, and so on. Furthermore, the Minister of Economy intends to superimpose to the constitutional social rights, a "right to fiscal balance" which mirrors Temer's attempt to cap public spending for 20 years. In practice, social rights that compromise public accounts will no longer be guaranteed, with the argument that it is necessary to preserve the rights of future generations.

Framed against the background of the demise of the New Republic, there was a circumstantial element in the election of Bolsonaro. Since the three candidates clearly identified with the capitalist classes didn't add up to 10% of the votes[8], the bourgeoisie

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8   São Paulo state governor Geraldo Alckmin (PSDB) had 4,76% of votes; former head of the Central Bank Henrique Meirelles (PMDB), had 1,2%; and businessman João Amoedo ("New Party") had 2,5%.

ranged behind the captain. However, Bolsonaro has ideas of his own, but to give them a chance, he must build up a political basis. Because the other side of his strong presence in social networks, decisive in the election, is a fragile constituency: the president has internet followers before militants, and in 2020 he was not even affiliated to a party. In order to overcome this feeble stance, the main challenge Bolsonaro faces is to convert the virtual empathy that elected him into real mobilization, turning internet followers into militants. Hate speech and confrontational politics fuel this quest, which cannot recede but only accumulates speed and power.

Despite the colateral damage it entails, Bolsonaro´s snowball has a green light to roll because it is class oriented. In line with the illberal democratic trend embodied by Orbán, it empties the liberal aspects of bourgeois democracy, while political and economic violence are intensified. Bolsonaro offers the framework of this authoritarian neoliberalism, which in the case of Brazil involves a "police state". The content he outsources to big business, which has as guarantor the Minister of Economy Paulo Guedes, a thoroughbred Chicago boy, who studied under Milton Friedman in the 1970´s and worked in Pinochet´s Chile in the 1980´s. If Bolsonaro does not have a development project comparable to Orbán´s, those who support him have an agenda.

Sure enough, these are not parallel lines, as they converge on the horizon. Because militarization goes hand in hand with a reformatting of Brazilian society comparable to that produced in Chile under Pinochet (1973-90) – a case of authoritarian neoliberalism avant la lettre. What is envisioned is a complete reorganization of social ties that empties all possibility of collective organization and ultimately, of resistance. The desocializing effect of social commodification is the core mechanism of this onslaught, where Guedes' neoliberal fundamentalism merges with Bolsonaro's reactionary authoritarianism, coupled with evangelical values.

The absence of a national project is also perceivable in the atitude of the military. In the past, the armed forces associated their power with the industrialization of the country, which was consolidated between two dictatorships (1937-1946 and 1964-1985). In the 21st century, faced with industrial regression and social degradation of the country, the barracks gave up the state concept of a "Powerful Brazil". They assumed their role as armed managers of social life, betting on a privileged relationship with the United States.

Hatred politics faces a challenge in a country that has no external enemies and where the military only shoot their people, as nationalism cannot be mobilized in defense of a nation, which is not anymore in the picture. The country doesn´t have significant religious or ethnic divisions either, nor hostility towards immigrants like in the case of the illiberal state in Hungary. The main cleavage is the racial line, but Afro-Brazilians cannot be considered demographically a minority, although historically racialiazed politics put most of them on the social margin. Since it has no enemies and no nation, Bolsonaro mobilizes values, which he portray as being threatened in the fields of social tradition, family life and private property. It can be argued that the military even had to invent an imaginary radical left that it could constantly attack in order to be able to win the election.

It is true that Bolsonaro's politics involves permanent instability, which can be counterproductive to big business. As a counterweight, bourgeois solidarity is underpinned by the advancement of social and environmental disposession. In a top ministerial meeting that was tapped during the global pandemic, the Minister of the Environment argued that the timimg was ideal to pass any controversial legislation on the matter, because the public eyes were on the pandemic. Accordingly, deforestation of the Amazon rainforest reached unprecedent levels in 2020, while the Pantanal, the largest tropical wetland in the world, was devastated by fire. Guedes also perceived

the crisis as an opportunity, calling for facilitating foreign private investment and for privatizing the Petrobras and the Bank of Brazil among other things. His colleagues discreetly pointed out that few foreign investors were inclined to invest in this context – even less so because of Bolsonaro's unpredictable manouvers.

Guedes' unrealistic positions explain elective affinities between the neoliberalism of the Chicago Boy and the authoritarianism of the former captain. The mainstay of the military's retrograde fight is its classist content, also in its links with the rise of gender and racial struggles. Similarly to the Hungarian propaganda machine, the Brazilian president's ideology targets simbolic identity politics based on the moral discourse of family and raises hostility towards minority groups, especially indigenous peoples, the LGBTQ community, but even women in general. It is significant that the middle class that hit pots in their windows while Bolsonaro discoursed in the early days of the pandemic silenced when Afro-Brazilians took to the streets in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter demonstrations throughout the world, in the midst of a social isolation that never happened in the urban peripheries.

In short, Bolsonaro government compensates the instability through which it navigates, with a solid class foundation. However, the ground of this foundation is in itself, shaky. The former captain has emerged as a provisional response of a ruling class that reorganizes itself in an authoritarian neoliberal direction. Seen through this lens, his retrograde agenda is at most "unpleasant", as French Marine Le Pen well put it, for a ruling class in search of a bolsonarism without Bolsonaro, that is to say: whoever carries out the agenda of authoritarian neoliberalism, by other means (Santos 2020).

However, the former captain has ideas of his own, which point to a dynasty (three sons in politics), with the military as his party and the evangelicals as his political base. There are connections

between the fraying of labor relations and the spread of evangelical churches. In the era of widespread informality, labor rights are widely perceived as privileges instead of goals to be defended as in the industrial past. The resentment of subalterns against the supposedly "privileged" is extended to the institutions of organized labor, in addition to the beneficiaries of reservations, such as people of colour. Instead of unions, the affections of informal workers are welcomed by evangelical churches and instrumentalized by the right wing which, through the theology of prosperity, offers them both ideological support and labor volition (Birman 2019). After all, to face an economic environment increasingly uncertain and violent, the plebeian entrepreneurship that rules in the informal economy requires massive ideological doses of self-discipline, which popular religiosity help provide.

The decline of trade unionism finds correspondence in the discredit of the PT, whose political landscape is further oriented towards the unlikely restoration of an idealized past. By embodying the paradox of "regressive progressivism," the PT risks losing relevance. Meanwhile, disputes are taking place in society, as exemplified by the feminist struggle. Two weeks before the election in 2018, the main Brazilian cities were swarmed by women leading a massive demonstration under the slogan "Not him!". Those who witnessed this moving moment were sure that "he" would not pass. However, Bolsonaro was elected and many women voted for him. It is true that fake news machinery circulated pictures of women with breasts out or kissing, to portray the demonstration as a threat to family values, appealing to conservative catholics and evangelicals. Nevertheless, the point to emphasize is that in Brazilian society today, moral conservatism as embodied by evangelical values coexists with a deep thrust of women´s condition

Seen in this light, the vote for Bolsonaro can also be read as a violent and desperate backlash, mainly from men, but also from

women, who feel their social place threatened, even if it is a subaltern place. The electoral outcome does not diminish the women's feat. On the contrary, it reminds us that the most important dispute does not take place in Brasília, but in society: after all, authoritarianism mobilizes subjectivities, but does not produce them (Pinheiro-Machado 2019).

3) Concluding remarks

Orbán and Bolsonaro were elected when institutional arragements that followed the downfall of Cold War regimes (state socialism and dictatorship) were put in check. In Hungary, the parties that alternated or colaborated in power lost legimacy and Fidesz rise was consolidated through the enforcement of a new constitution in 2012, further signaling a change of times. In Brazil, the demise of the PT culminated the corrosion of the prestige of the parties that alternated in power across the New Republic. Since the impeachment of Rousseff in 2016, there has been an escalation of laws and policies that compromisse the Citizen Constitution installed in 1988 that is still in force.

Differences should equally been highlighted. Bolsonaro has no organic base comparable to the Fidesz Civic Circle Movement, and through 2020 was not even affiliated to a political party. As more than 3.000 military personnel filled top government posts – far more than in the days of dictatorship –, perhaps this is his real political party. Fidesz rise was gradual and they were not newcomers to power when elected in 2010, as opposed to various conjunctural factors that converged to Bolsonaro´s unexpected triumph in 2018. In that election, the ruling class staunchly opposed a PT´s comeback while none of their candidates proved viable in the ballot.

Meanwhile, in both cases we observe that the institutional left is loosing relevance while a role reversal of some sort is taking

place. In Hungary, Fidesz was challenged to the right by Jobbik, but eventually embraced some of their flags thus forcing Jobbik to move to the center. In Brazil, Bolsonaro's politics appears as subversive while the left defends the establishment embodied by the Citizen's Constitution. So far, the most serious challenges to his government have not came from the left or from bellow, but from different shades of right wing politicians that pose as a more stable and credible alternative than the captain's unpredictable manners.

It can be argued that Orban's illiberal state is based on a limited vision of developmentalism, however neoliberal policies remained intact and combined with authoritarian elements of governance. Laws that favour transnational business have been implemented, while sectors of national capital are fostered via EU funds, consolidating a solid base among capital. At the same time, dependence on European funds and his close alliance with German industry is balanced with Chinese and Russian investment. Nationalization of banks and the monopolization of sectors of the economy top this simulacrum of developmentalism, as the economy is still export oriented and counts on low corporate taxes and agressive social policies such as the "slave law", to attract foreign investment. Beneath the rhetoric of "economic patriotism", crony capitalism is to be found (Gerőcs and Szanyi 2019).

Bolsonaro in turn, hardly had a program when elected. To ensure his support among the ruling class, he trusted the steering of the economy to a staunch Chicago boy, embracing a fundamentalist brand of neoliberalism that goes against the spirit and the letter of the Citizen Constitution, thus signalling the demise of the New Republic. However, no developmental project is envisaged. As short term interests prevail, accumulation by dispossession is intensified in a commodity export oriented economy, which is further de-industrialized and de-nationalized. The economic regression corresponds to an unconditional alignement with the United States

under the fold of the Trump administration, adding to a neocolonial regression of a sort.

Underpinning these different brands of authoritarian neoliberalism, both Orbán and Bolsonaro nurture an atmosphere of permanent war. Orbán speaks to the heart of the victims of the post-socialist transition in the phase of liberal democracy, defending national sentiment against an "elite" identified with European integration and globalization. At the same time, his illiberal ideology mobilizes disillusioned middle-classes against migrants and Rome population.

Bolsonaro speaks to the heart of those betrayed by the hopes of wage citizenship, embodied by the New Republic and the PT. Instead of advocating social rights, he admits autophagy as a given reality. According to this rationale, reservations and labor rights are preceived as privileges, as everyone should struggle for survival in equally debased conditions. In the meantime, enemies are fabricated to nurture a political snowball that burns the thin layer of Brazilian civil society.

After all, perhaps this is the deepest sense of authoritarian neoliberalism as embodied by Orbán and Bolsonaro: further normalize autophagic sociability, through paths that involve the escalation of authoritarian forms of governance and increasing violence against political scape-goats. From this perspective, regardless of the political future of either leader, the trail they blaze necessarily implies violence, either to deepen or to resist authoritarian rule.

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Populist Leaders as Symptoms and Catalysts of the Global Crisis of Democracy

Nebojša Blanuša

In the social process of the construction of cultural trauma, various "carriers of influence", usually political, military and religious leaders, have the prominent role. Their main role is to represent the trauma – experienced by some directly affected group – as relevant for the identity of the whole political community. Their second role is to mediate and persuade the wider audience to accept the narrative of pain they constructed in the process of interpretational struggle. As many evidences from around the world show, the populist leaders use such process more often than others do, making it a part of their wider ideologies, which include Manichean depictions of the "pure people", whose main enemies are corrupted elites and other powerful groups, together with minorities and immigrants. In that sense, the populism can lead to authoritarian rule with further ominous threats to democracy, such as adoption of caesaristic position of 'the people's will' incarnation and messianism. Gradually, such leadership dis-empowers citizens, manipulates their participatory potentials, develops the cult of the leader and finally institutionalizes fear, by actual, as well as by threat of potential use of repressive state apparatus. Consequently, such regime demands submission and produces wide conformism. However, such leaders are not only the catalysts of the global crisis of democracy, which include widening of social and political inequalities and post-democratic tendencies at the level of crucial political institutions. Our main thesis is that such leaders emerged recently at the wave of endangerment of sovereign power by global

capital, which is articulated as cultural trauma. However, their politics do not address this wide discontent in a proper democratic way. Furthermore, populist leaders (e.g. Trump, Modi, Bolsonaro, Orban, Erdoğan, etc.) aggravate the crisis of democracy through their gouvermental power, and function as its most prominent symptoms.

Introduction: discontent of a global condition

For almost fifty years now – alongside with permanent and gradual destruction of the welfare state – we live under the faceless and ruthless goddess, named TINA, and her slogan *There Is No Alternative* to borderless global economy (Streeck 157) in achieving general well-being. Blindness of such primordialism was notoriously expressed by one of TINA-s incarnations in the statement *There is no such thing as society* (Thatcher 1987). These two statements are powerful ideological interpellations, hailing human subjects as alone and supposedly self-contained atoms, solely responsible for their happiness and quality of life in the vast world, permeated by competition, raising social inequalities and unequal opportunities. Looking back the past half century, it is clear that TINA failed "to fulfil its promise of general prosperity" and derogated "the democratic principle of equality" (Mishra 105).

Looking closely at TINA-s historical failure we can discern several long-term and non-simultaneous effects it produced. Together with the demolition of the welfare state, one of the most prominent effects were dizzying increase in inequality and erosion of solidarity (Latour 82). Another one was multisectoral privatization which usually meant nothing but commercialization. According to Rendueles (2017) "from the early 1980s, neoliberals developed aggressive strategies to manage mental suffering, the degradation of public institutions, increased social fragility, cultural deterioration

and political polarization in such a way that they feedback positively on its project" (144). For him, the "commercialization processes have always required aggressive intervention on the part of the state, in order to mitigate their systemic failures and to break people's resistance to being swept away by the economic hurricane" (145). Part of that process was a melt-down of trade unions, reducing worker's negotiating power, as well as decrease of nation-states power regarding the economic redistribution, while the ways regional crises were handled since the early 1980-ies only reinforced the neo-liberal project (145). Another effect was the cartelization of political parties, with failing membership, and declining political participation, especially among underprivileged citizens (Streeck 158) or losers of globalization. Under such conditions, the political discourse of reactionary forces became enraged, rude and focused on questions of identity and security and simplified solutions resonating superficially with problems of underprivileged. Another process was invention of post-factual politics (158) in the form of sophisticated methods to secure popular consent, especially through the expert lies and moralization of a globally expanding capitalism, creation of echo-chambers and manipulations like those exposed in Cambridge Analytica scandal. Part of this process was the uncritical use of the word "populism" to stigmatize various political movements and parties, and to promote elitist despise for all those who oppose or vote for those who oppose TINA. By such attitude, the mainstream only deepened the cleavage between global capitalism and the nation-state system and infused more oil on cultural wars and political polarization. In such framework, the social disintegration was produced first by individualization that was meant to be a part of emancipation from traditional social restrictions, but, as a result, the individual become more socially dependent than ever (Nachtwey 133). Also, with the expansion of people whose skills became obsolete in constantly changing world,

an unemployment became a personal problem, related only to the market and not any more a matter of community or intermediary representatives.

Generally speaking, the market became internalized in the form of super-ego, demanding constant sublimation and only repressive desublimation. In that sense, neoliberalism became today's form of "instrumental reason" (Nachtwey 135). Citizens, in this process, became dissocialized customers. They live in permanent uncertainty because their social rights have diminished, and precarious working conditions increased. Consequently, they increasingly lose the sense of agency. Even so-called successful people, not to mention those whose upward mobility is constrained or blocked, do not work for living but live to work. These subjects are well prepared for the new authoritarian rule.

The major outcomes of all these processes are a diffuse sense of discontent and resentment, including feelings of worthlessness, aimlessness, nihilism, withdrawal into oneself, tendency toward cynicism, envy, scapegoating, and dreaming of revenge, especially after the crisis of 2008. This is the state of mind of the growing population of globalization losers, especially in the Western world, who feel themselves as exploited social outsiders, a minority in their own country (Nachtwey 139). Their affinity to authoritarian populist leaders, parties and movements should not surprise us. Growing electoral success of populism around the world is the political symptom of a global condition produced by social-darwinist neoliberal conquest. Election of Trump and voting for Brexit were just the most obvious returns of the repressed, in the long line of authoritarian populist tendencies guided by political figures such as Bolsonaro, Modi, Erdogan, Orban, Kaczyński, Putin, Duterte, el-Sisi, etc. But these guys are not a real solution, just an obverse side of the same process, not a way out of it. Decisions to vote for such solutions are just an expression of hatred toward globalized

capitalism, together with the longing for a savior. Furthermore, the simultaneous effect of such choices is an endangerment of respective national democracies, especially because those leaders are prone to suppress human rights, and to promote nativist targeting of minorities, immigrants and refugees. Open and uncontrolled rage we saw in the last few years through the mouth of Donald Trump, together with many social media commentaries of so-called laptop warriors are a form of desublimation and, for some authors, like Oliver Nachtwey, a symptom of regressive decivilization, and part of current dialectic of neoliberalism. (Lebow 2019). Most importantly, all these authoritarian populist tendencies are direct threats to the fragile system of liberal democracy, not only to its political system (considered as the rule of majority and protection of minorities), but also to its form of society (pluralism, rights and liberties), which was historically accomplished at the national level. Furthermore, during the current pandemic we already saw what kind of obstacles to the functional state the above-mentioned populist leaders can become. Leading figure in this misconduct was Donald Trump, who was producing more than 15 false or misleading claims per day during his presidency, clearly expressing the threat to foundations of the republic (Tomasky 2020). In that sense, our next question is how does the populism function, and when it performs an anti-democratic politics?

Populist performance

First, we should keep in mind an idea often neglected in the public discourse: populism is not an enemy of democracy in itself. Populism is historically sedimented general ideological framework which can appear in various political processes and assume different forms of power. On the way of its articulation, populism can appropriate more specific ideological attitudes and

political solutions, which qualifies it as the political shape-shifter *par excellence*. Such shapeshifting or ambiguity was recognized by Margaret Canovan (1999), who considers populism as a double form: as shadow that follows democracy, as well as possibility cast by democracy itself through ambiguity and oscillation between its redemptive or enthusiastic and pragmatic or skeptical sides. She uses two phrases to explain these two sides of democracy. Pragmatic side would be best described as "a system of processing conflicts without killing one another" while redemptive side is represented by "vox populi vox dei" (9-10). However, for Benjamin Arditi (50) such conceptualization is itself ambiguous because it does not state whether if populism is external to or internal possibility of democracy. To clarify the relationship between populism and democracy, Arditi considers populism as a spectre[1] of democracy because it oscillates between being democracy's fellow traveler or its haunting apparition. By such conceptualization he tries to enable "one to accept the undecidability between the democratic aspect of the phenomenon and its possible ominous tones" (Arditi 7) and to consider it as internal periphery of democracy.

According to him, this oscillation is articulated in the three forms of populism:

1. As a mode of representation, virtually indistinguishable from contemporary, media enhanced modes of representation in current democracies. This form of populism became a part of mainstream

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[1] Arditi directly follows the philosopher Jacques Derrida who defines spectre as "a paradoxical incorporation, the becoming-body, a certain phenomenal and carnal form of the spirit. It becomes, rather, some 'thing' that remains difficult to name: neither soul nor body, and both one and the other… It is something that one does not know, precisely, and one does not know if precisely it is, if it exists, if it responds to a name and corresponds to an essence. One does not know: not out of ignorance, but because this non-object, this non-present present, this being-there of an absent or departed one no longer belongs to knowledge. At least no longer to that which one thinks one knows by the name of knowledge…[that] comes to defy semantics as much as ontology, psychoanalysis as much as philosophy" (1994/2006: 5)

democratic politics, mostly due to changes in the function of the state. To function in a more and more complex environment democratic state faces unforeseen developments and challenges requiring prerogative or discretionary power to elected politicians (Arditi 71). Such structural condition also changes balance between branches of power in favor to executive branch, blurs the boundary between making and enforcing the law and consequently, welcomes strong and decisive leaders, who are becoming more and more similar to populist leaders. Such populists do not consider representative government as either "empty formalism or a poor substitute of direct democracy" (61) and they are incorporated into liberal-democratic order, especially when the state's security is at stake. This form could be considered as "populism in power" (Panizza 190) which transforms conventional politics and appears as "a spectral companion of liberal-democratic politics" (Arditi 52).

2. As a symptom of democratic politics, or politics at the edge of democracy, expressed in radical democratic movements. It is a sort of return of the repressed of mainstream institutional politics, which "reveals the limits of the system and prevents its closure in the presumed normality of institutional procedures" (Arditi 74). It is an "internal foreign territory" of democracy and considered as improper behavior for good procedural democrats (75) and their soothing images of equilibristic functioning of the system. The symptom is conceived here in Freudian terms "as a substitutive-formation that stands in for a frustrated satisfaction or something amiss" (74) in democratic life. Such behavior masks collective traumatic experience, and its form is "a compromise between repressed representations and repressing representations" (75). Here, the populism postulates "radical alternative within the communitarian space" that grants visibility to the founding negativity of the political by summoning the disruptive 'noise' of the people (Laclau, 47). Populism is here like an awkward guest who

disrupt table manners and rules of sociability (Arditi 78). For Arditi, populism functions as a symptom of democratic politics in two senses: (1) as a promise of redemption and (2) as a reaction against politics as usual, which disrupts the gentrified democratic order and claims to expand the scope of citizen involvement in politics (80-81). It re-actualizes the concept of mass or direct democracy, and it should be differentiated from the mob rule, although it could turn itself into such non-democratic phenomenon.

3. As a possible underside or nemesis of democracy. In this form populism is "a 'misfire' that mutates too easily into authoritarianism" (Arditi 60) or even totalitarianism in its darkest form. In such situation the leader abandons the role of representative and adopts a cesaristic position of 'the people's will' incarnation and acts as messiah. The gap, usual for democratic order, between representatives and represented is dissolved in favor of the representative (83). In the situation of crisis and threatening fragmentation of society inclination for strong president among citizens could lead to this form of populism, if a leader adopts redemptive position and autocratic behavior, justifying it by the strong popular support. Gradually, such leadership disempowers citizens, manipulates their participatory potentials and ethos of citizenship, develops the cult of the leader and institutionalizes fear, by actual, as well as by threat of potential use of repressive state apparatus. Consequently, such regime demands submission and produces wide conformism. It tries to convert citizens into (un)grateful but always immature children of a strong father. We should keep in mind that such temptation is not unfamiliar for leaders in the previous forms of populism.

Although Arditi treats populism as an 'anexact' object (Deleuze and Guattari 367), outside of binary opposition between exact and inexact, his thorough discussion of its appearances and political potentials opens the space for further conceptual crystallization that I shall address later in the text. His analysis emphasizes how

populist shape-shifting potentials can upgrade, but also downgrade democratic processes. Such ambiguous potentials of populism are not only a feature of liberal democracies. Populism exists in various political regimes with the significant transformative or (de) democratizing potentials (Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser 86), as it is shown in picture 1.

PICTURE 1. IMPACT OF POPULISM ON DIFFERENT POLITICAL REGIMES
(SOURCE: MUDDE AND ROVIRA KALTWASSER 2017, 87)
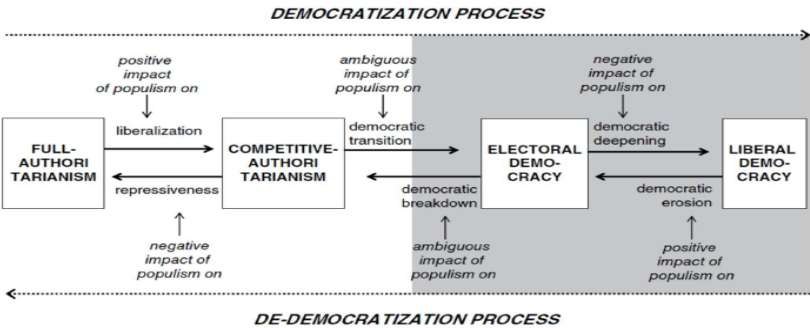
As it is suggested by Mudde and Rovira Kaltwasser (88) "populist forces can trigger changes within each of these regimes". They can play a positive role in liberalization of the full authoritarian regimes (e.g. Solidarity in communist Poland), as well as in democratic transition from competitive authoritarianism to electoral democracy (e.g. PRD in late 1980s in Mexico), although in the latter case their influence can also be negative (e.g. antibureaucratic revolution in Serbia in late 1980s). These authors consider that populism will mostly have a negative role in democratic deepening of electoral democracies and their transformation to liberal democracies (e.g. Vladimir Mečiar's illiberal politics during the accession of Slovakia to the EU) (90). However, we can theorize a positive role of populism in democratic deepening if it tries to give a voice of those who are

voiceless, criticizes illegal and unjust practices, fosters democratic values and inclusive concept of the people (e.g. Podemos in Spain). As an ambiguous political force, populism can be mobilized in opposite processes of de-democratization as well (91). According to the picture 1. it can lead to erosion of liberal democracies (e.g. Donald Trump in USA, Chavez in Venezuela, or Viktor Orban's illiberal politics in Hungary), or even to democratic breakdown (e.g. Indira Gandhi at least from 1975 to 1977, or Alberto Fujimori in 1990s in Peru), and further to repressiveness (e.g. Alexandr Lukashenko in Belarus, or Fidel Castro in Cuba).

According to the previous discussion, populism appears as a catalyst, for better or for worse, a sort of political amplifier which enables an outburst of structural cleavages into open antagonism with the demand for changing a social contract and institutional arrangements. It usually appears whenever political system performs poorly and leaves significant number of its constituents in a position they perceive as unjust and contemptuous. On the way of its articulation the major pitfall of populism is proclivity to authoritarianism, expressed in the reduction of minority rights and pluralism (Mudde and Kaltwasser 95). In such cases populism provokes and sustains constrained forms of participation and deliberation of citizens. When it comes to the power, authoritarian populism often tries to capture the state and its institutions and installs its own devoted supporters to control those institutions, who often derogate democratic principles. Through such interaction between leaders and their supporters, populism further engrave political and social crisis. Those tendencies of populism at least partially stem from its ideological structure, which manipulates the fundamental fantasies of collective identifications. How the ideological structure of populism operates I will try to explain by using Lacanian psychoanalytic framework.

Populism through the Lacanian lenses

One of the most common and minimal definition of populism describes it as "a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite,' and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people" (Mudde 23). Another similar definition says that populism is "a Manichaean discourse that identifies Good with a unified will of the people and Evil with a conspiring elite" (Hawkins 1042). These two definitions highlight the structural core of populism by emphasizing its four common elements or signifiers: 'the pure people', usually depicted as morally superior to 'the corrupt elite', whose antagonism is articulated through the 'anti--elitist conspiracy theories', and the 'general will' as the source of democratic legitimation which populist leaders often use when they speak in the name of the people. These four signifiers are the central elements of specific collective identification system that could be described in psychoanalytic terms, as well as the basis of what I would like to call a quadruple phantasmatic politics of populism.

What do these four elements stand for?

The definition of what are a proper people's attributes, proper identity, and who are the purebred members of the people describes what is called in psychoanalysis an *Ideal-Ego*. Ideal-Ego is an effect of identification with the image in which we appear likeable to ourselves, with the image representing "what we would like to be" (Žižek 1989/2008, 116), not only in individual but also in collective terms, e.g., how do we conceive the people to whom we feel to belong. Corrupt elites who allegedly conspire against the pure people represent in psychoanalytic terms the *Other*, described as powerful

and dangerous transgressors or perverters of people's moral order[2]. Populist reason deals with issues of evaluative mapping of the Other which contains moral framing (in terms of binaries between good and evil, sacred and profane, pure and polluted etc.), articulated through conspiracy theories. As such, conspiracy theories attempt to define not only elites as political enemies, but also, as their mirror image, the moral features of true members of the people, as well as how the corrupt elites endanger political community of the people.

Another instance of populist identification that should be explained is the 'general will'. This concept has its own history and multiple meanings. First, it should be differentiated from the bare majority will of the people no matter of values this will expresses. According to Rousseau, the general will is a collective decision of all the people in a state, when they try to consider only what is good for the whole society rather than what they want as individuals (Miller 446). For him, "as long as the whole body of citizens genuinely seeks the good of the whole community and enacts regulations that bind the entire community equally, the result will necessarily be equitable" (Bevir 2010, 552). In that sense, the general will is an articulation of the rule of law by political actions of united citizens and the law is nothing but the declaration of the general will. Contrary to Diderot, who claimed that general will is the foundation of morality and always right, Rousseau recognized that general will is not always enlightened. Still, Hegel subsequently criticized Rousseau's understanding of the general will as the one which inevitably leads to the Terror (Bevir 553). However, this concept was used even a century before Rousseau. Its first meaning was theological and Malebranche

2   Usual suspects for the right-wing populists as corrupt elites are liberal intelectuals, anti-people government, supranational institutions, great powers, etc., while for the left-wing populist those are the rich, financial institutions, international speculative capital, neoliberals, etc. However, the dangerous othernessness can be even extended to those groups which are generally considered by populists as those who are in collusion with the elites.

defined it as the way in which God's will operates in the world by establishing laws to regulate the Universe as a whole (Bevir 551). Exactly such authoritarian tendencies expressed in the infallibility and unified will can lead populism to act against democracy. This is especially dangerous among charismatic populist leaders who act as if they embody the will of homogeneous and sovereign people and perform their role as quasi-religious chosen ones. Such leader shows himself / herself and acts as direct translator, a mouth which articulates the popular will, interpreted as unmistakable and uncriticizable hearth of democracy. As Andy Hamilton (2017) would say: "Populists reject standards in culture and morality that are not based on popular appeal, while undermining the framework of liberty in accordance with law, in favour of populist leadership". Such tendency, as it is already described by Arditi, leads toward the nemesis of democracy, breaks down the rule of law and, finally leads to the rule of leader's will, wishes and demands. This instance of populist identification with the leader and his/her own self-identification with the general will is described in psychoanalysis as an *Ego-Ideal*. Ego-Ideal is an effect of "identification with the very place from where we are being observed, from where we look at ourselves so that we appear to ourselves likeable, worthy of love'[3] (Žižek 1989/2008, 116). This is the instance for whom, and whose gaze a group of populist leaders and their followers perform previously mentioned Ideal-Ego role? The most important question here is: 'Who is to be impressed?'. That is the identification with the gaze of the big Other›. The big Other is the Lacanian concept which describes the embodiment of socio-symbolic order, articulated as some sacred powerful instance, such as God, Reason, Nature, Law, History, State, Science, General Will, etc., or enacted by some of its authoritative representatives, ancestral heroes, saints and martyrs,

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3   It is easier to imagine this identifications since the invention of selfie stick.

describable as particular father figures. However, there is an ominous side of the Ego-Ideal, described by Lacan as the Super-Ego. Super-ego is the underside of Ego-Ideal, it works through the imperative, especially expressed in the command 'Enjoy' and imposes 'tyranny...a senseless, destructive, purely oppressive, almost always anti-legal morality' (Lacan 1988, 102). As such, it is nothing but Sade's 'Supreme Being-in-Evil' (Lacan 1966, 773), frightening figure whose enjoyment transgress civilizational restraints. Every similarity with enraged authoritarian populist leaders is non-accidental.

To explain the populism more thoroughly, now I will try to posit these identification instances in a wider Lacanian framework of fundamental orders or registers of experience. As Fredric Jameson (338) claims, social phenomenon of psychoanalytical concern is the language, "the very medium of universality and of intersubjectivity [which] constitutes that primary social instance into which the pre-verbal, pre-social facts of archaic or unconscious experience find themselves somehow inserted". With the focus on language and 'translation' of Freudian conceptions by using structural linguistics Lacan saves them from their medical and personifying content. Instead, Lacan offers theoretical "model which is not locked into the classical opposition between the individual and the collective but is rather able to think these discontinuities in a radically different way" (Jameson 349). Such is especially Lacan's theory of three fundamental orders: the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. According to this theory every human experience can be described by referring to these three registers of experience that work inseparably and are structurally coordinated. Basically, this model is based on de Saussure's conception of language as composed of signs. By that logic, the Symbolic would be "the order of the signifier" (Lacan 1993, 167), similar to Lévi-Strauss›s order of culture (Macey XXII, XXV). The Imaginary is the order of the signified. But the Real for Lacan is not what is usually called reality.

The Real is outside of language and resists absolute symbolization. We could say the Real is that barrier which language in use cannot pass to get to the core of imagined referent. It is beyond the words, and it is experienced in the most vivid way in some traumatic events which leave human subjects speechless. That is the moment of experiencing uncanniness, when something familiar turns into unfamiliar and unknown, creepy moment that strikes us, something that leaves our individually or collectively developed system of meaning inoperable, with tremendous feeling of void, something that such system cannot (yet) neither symbolically assimilate, nor imagine in other way than as horrifying thing[4]. The Imaginary is domain of images, pictures and phantasms, and for Lacan also of deception and seductive lure.

The principal illusions of the imaginary are those of wholeness, synthesis, autonomy, duality and, above all, similarity. The Imaginary is thus the order of surface appearances which are deceptive, observable phenomena which hide underlying structure; the affects are such phenomena. (Evans 82)

According to Stavrakakis (1999) Lacanian psychoanalysis is a peculiar form of social constructionism. In a nutshell, both approaches share the view that humans are trapped within the universe of discourse and that 'objective reality' is accessible through the magma of socially instituted meaning, a meaning which transforms it ontologically (Castoriadis qtd. in Stavrakakis 154). As a social constructionism, Lacanian psychoanalysis contends that social reality is not a stable entity. However, this conception also adds that reality is created by the interaction of symbolizations and imaginations in their encounters with the Real. In their mutual functioning the Symbolic and the Imaginary are always attempting

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4   Ground Zero memorial waterfalls in New York City are maybe the nearest metaphor of such feeling.

to completely assimilate the Real, to demystify it, but that is impossible task. Always something remains outside of discursive constructions, present but indescribable, felt as resistant barrier to the meaning making activities, and unbearable enigma that instigates further meaning-making activities. We could say that every discursive formation has its own Real, which is the ultimate boundary of its functioning that interrupts its consistency and idealizations, something that awaits it 'around the corner' and puts it out of the balance. In other words, the Real is a wound on the body of culture that makes it precarious (Lacan 1993, 30). So, there is something outside the discourse, but "this exteriority, however, cannot be transparent exteriority, a new essence which is objectively accessible" (Stavrakakis 66). Moreover, exactly the encounter with the Real, reveals the lack in socio-symbolic formations and stimulates further discursive activities and socially shared desire to produce them, to overcome the lack by explaining 'what is really going on'. But such 'overcoming' is only possible in the form of fiction.

In that sense, the relationship between the Symbolic and the Real is mediated by the Imaginary, which assumes a double appearance: as the support of the Symbolic order through the images that provide the illusion of functional completeness, and as psycho-social mechanism with the function to fill up the void of the traumatic encounter with the Real.

In order to further develop a conception that would be applicable to populist ideology we should situate previously described types of identifications and populist moral appeals in this framework. For that reason, I will try to visualize this psychoanalytic model in the next three pictures. The first one schematizes three orders as horizontally represented dimensions or containers of experience (Picture 2).

PICTURE 2. THREE LACANIAN ORDERS/REGISTERS OF EXPERIENCE

SYMBOLIC	
IMAGINARY	Representational / Mental
	Affectual / Experiential
REAL	

Here the Imaginary is depicted as double in its form because it has a function of mediator between the Symbolic and the Real. This is dimension of human creativity which supports the Symbolic through its idealistic images and by them gives it luring sense of consistency or illusion of functional completeness (represented as the upper part of the Imaginary). Without such support the Symbolic would be completely disarrayed and meaningless. That part of the Imaginary, which we can call representational or mental Imaginary, serves the function of temporary fixation of the social meaning and could be explained as a socio-historical and psychical creation of figures/forms/images (Castoriadis 3), or condensed images of social myths. This would be a sphere where the core of social crystallization takes the place. Another, lower part is related to the Real and it serves the function to fill up the void of the traumatic encounter with the Real. This part can be called affectual/experiential Imaginary, characterized by more elementary, but also socially constructed images, more accompanied with affects, which conjure up a pictorial and sensual landscape, not language (Morrison qtd. in Campbell 224). It is the first instance of dealing with the Real and it contains mobilizational capacity, as a social 'fight or flight' system, where the fear aroused by facing the Real could become a rage.

Each instance of previously described quadruple system of identification can be described by referring to these three orders. However, each one dominantly stems from one of them: the Ideal-

Ego is primarily the function of the Imaginary, the Ego-Ideal is of Symbolical order, while the Super-Ego belongs primarily to the order of the Real and functions as a necessary obscene and destructive side of the Law, expressed through the Ego-Ideal (Lacan, 1988). Accordingly, we present them in picture 3, together with their populist articulation on the symbolic level we already explained at the beginning of this section.

PICTURE 3. POPULIST IDENTIFICATION INSTANCES IN THE LACANIAN THEO-RETICAL FRAMEWORK ON THE LEVEL OF THE SYMBOLIC ORDER/REGISTER.

	EGO-IDEAL	IDEAL-EGO	← Antagonism →	OTHER
	General will	**The people**	**Anti-elitist conspiracy theories**	**Corrupt elite (and dangerous others)**
SYMBOLIC				
IMAGINARY				
REAL				
SUPER-EGO				
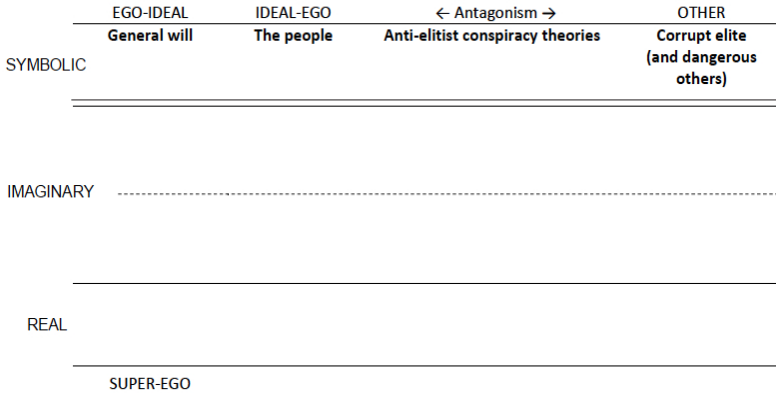
Still, we need to explain how the populism articulates its ideological features. For the purpose of this paper, I will try to explain this process on relatively abstract level with the focus on its authoritarian tendencies. For populist discourse to be articulated, the system of social meaning-making needs to be interrupted, dislocated by some real, *traumatic* event or process which produces "acute discomfort [and] …a claim to some fundamental injury" (Alexander 2004, 10-11) that will be articulated on symbolic level as some sort of personal and collective *threat*, and *deprivation*. Further, if such collective trauma lasts for longer period and leaves the

significant number of people threatened and deprived, this process could be developed as a *crisis* and a social decay (see picture 4), like, for example, the global financial crisis in 2007-2008.

PICTURE 4. DISLOCATION OF THE SOCIAL MEANING-MAKING SYSTEM AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CRISIS THROUGH THE LACANIAN LENSES.
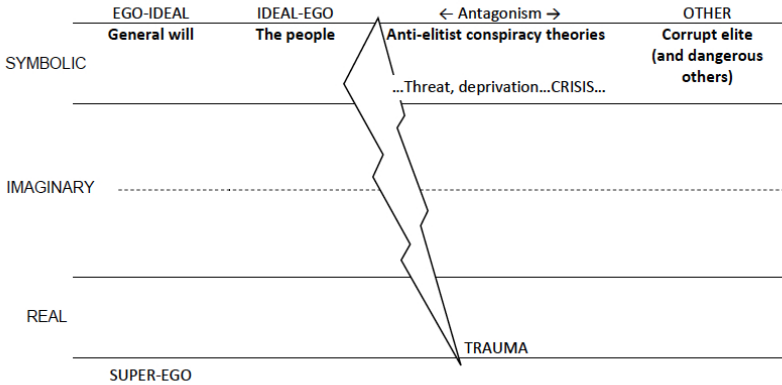
To figure out what is going on, or "what actually happened – to the particular group and to the wider collectivity of which it is a part" (Alexander 13) various carriers of influence in politics, media, religion, legal system, etc., can use different metaphors to explain, meaningfully represent the crisis, and to answer important questions, such as 'why is our country on the way of shipwreck?', and 'who is to be blamed?' for an unenviable situation or even catastrophe. These metaphors appear at the level of the Imaginary, and to answer posed questions about reasons and responsibilities for unwanted condition, (populist) carriers of influence and wider audience should assume the existence of an external agency, which can be human (e.g. dangerous groups of powerful individuals) or inhuman (e.g. a sort of natural or a broad and uncontrollable social event). If the populist carriers of influence assume that some human

agency is responsible for the threat, deprivation, and the crisis, they are facing with the horror of desire of the Real Other (Žižek 2007). The first answer to such traumatic experience appears on the level of experiential/affectual Imaginary in the form of some pure evil. This image of the enemy is the pre-ideological core of ideology containing the spectral phantasm which fills the void in the Real while functioning as defense from the unconscious question: "What does the other want from me?" and, at the same time, functions as the framework which coordinates populist desire, or "the formal matrix, on which are grafted various ideological formations" (Žižek 1995, 21)[5]. Another imaginary layer which crafts on the previous one is more defined image of the enemy, constructed through the representational process, related to previously useful stereotypical constructions produced in concrete historico-political process. Here, the ideological framework, context and political history play decisive role who will be considered responsible. In populism, that is the powerful, corrupted and dangerous establishment which lost its own authority. This representational part of the process always interacts with the previous, experiential one. It is based on culturally developed repertoires, expressed in familiar terms of available stock of lay knowledge. Thus, the image of some conspiring elite appears on the representational/mental imaginary level as a form of anchoring of responsible agents (see picture 5).

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5   We can ask ourselves whether is this a necessary reaction? If particular socio-symbolic system is dislocated then the answer is yes. Cognitivists would say this is the automatic reaction. Another question is: is it possible to change it? Answer is yes if the question is about empowering social constructions in their facing with the Real and changing its boundaries by finding new ways to 'encircle' it in symbolical and imaginary ways.

PICTURE 5. SOCIAL ANCHORING OF ELITE'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CRISIS.
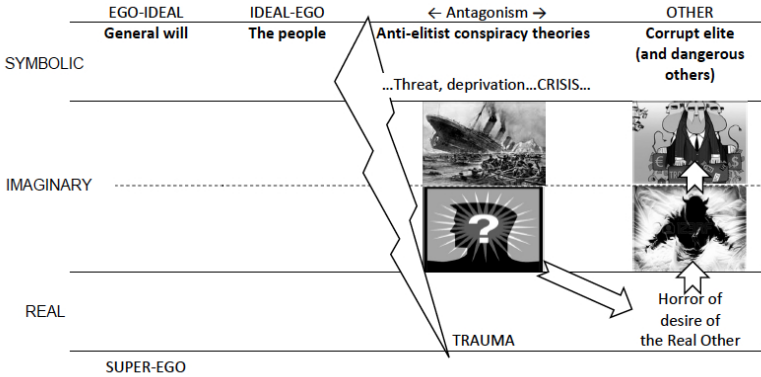
Thus, in populist ideological framework the corrupt elites are the threat for the people supposedly through their vast conspiratorial activities. What is endangered on the Symbolic level is the people, imaginarily represented as some homogeneous unity, and unified political community, rooted in mythical *heimat* or populist heartland, a sacred body politic, which is the "construction of the good life derived retrospectively from a romanticized conception of life as it has been lived" (Taggart 78). To represent the Ideal-Ego phantasm of functional completeness I use as an exemplary of such imagination the well-known picture of *Leviathan* (see picture 6). What should be also noticed regarding *Leviathan* is its double form, its structure of double phantasm (Salecl 31; Žižek 1996, 87; Stavrakakis). Underneath the organically united collective body are the land, establishments and human activities[6], a living space, sacred

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6   According to Kristiansson's and Tralau's (2014) analysis of this picture in the light of iconographic tradition, there are some not so obvious features which actually depict situation on the ground and sea as a stage of war, which is important for our analysis as *par exellence* condition for unified action of the people, which populism usually strives to provoke in the form of mass movement.

territory of the people so valuable that cannot be described by words. All these experiential elements constitute so often pronounced vague phrase of 'our way of life', which is conceived in populism as under siege.

As we deal here with Lacanian psychoanalysis, it is assumed that on the level of the Real, danger is felt as a danger for enjoyment. Through assumed conspiracies, the elites are perceived as agents who try to prevent or destroy peoples' enjoyment of being in community, of being a part of something bigger than itself, expressed in a sense of belongingness and certainty, and taken-for-grantedness that is naturalized or sacralized on symbolic and imaginary levels. In other words, that is a sense of peoples' entitlement to enjoy its community as themselves (Žižek 1993, 200-204), or to be on their own. Consequently, in the last instance, conspiring elites are accused of destroying or stealing the enjoyment of the people. In that sense, the core of populist descriptions, images and affects about corrupt elites ascribe them the role of "thieves of enjoyment" (Salecl 2002) and try to persuade and mobilize citizens as endangered, exploited people who should save a sacred body politic through the purification from the pollution, produced by greedy elites.

PICTURE 6. ENDANGERED IDEAL-EGO OF THE
PEOPLE IN POPULIST IMAGINATION.
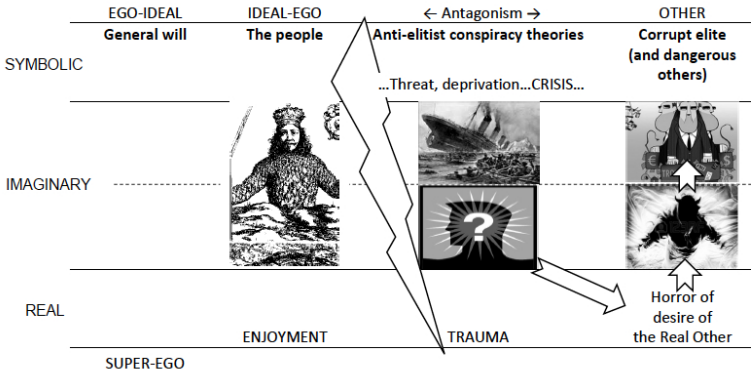
By the discussion thus far, we have covered the relationship of Ideal-Ego towards the Other. The last dimension of this problematics is of Ego-Ideal and Super-Ego, by which we attempt to further differentiate types, or better to say, dynamic positions the populism can assume. The basic question here is for what kind of gaze is populist Ideal-Ego created and performed? In other words, on behalf of what kind of Order and Law operate these populist constructions, what kind of idea of Law and Order they adopt, or which "Name of the father", as Lacan would say, different populist projects adopt?

Theoretically speaking, we are approaching here the territory of Freudian myths of two father figures, developed in his book *Totem and Taboo* (1913/1950/2001). In picture 7, this Freud's story of hypothetical historical situation should be read from the bottom to the top of the column referring to Super-Ego and Ego-Ideal. In a nutshell, according to Freud, before the dawn of civilization the basic unit of social life was a horde, ruled by the primal father, who was the tyrannical figure, expressing the pure will-to-enjoy (Lacan

1988, 102), or enjoying without restrains all women he possessed, and forbidding the same enjoyment to his sons. If they didn't obey, they were driven out from the horde or killed[7]. What did they do? At one point in pre-history, (equivalent for us to mythical time) they united...

> ...came together, killed and devoured their father and so made an end of the patriarchal horde. United, they had the courage to do and succeeded in doing what would have been impossible for them individually. (Some cultural advance, perhaps, command over some new weapon, had given them a sense of superior strength.) Cannibal savages as they were, it goes without saying that they devoured their victim as well as killing him. The violent primal father had doubtless been the feared and envied model of each one of the company of brothers: and in the act of devouring him they accomplished their identification with him, and each one of them acquired a portion of his strength. (164-165).

But they didn't only fear and hate him. As he was providing them shelter and security in their childhood, they also loved him and admired. So, they sensed guilt for the crime they did. Out of their ambivalent feelings they repressed the crime and started to worship the father as a Totem. Also, to prevent further similar situations of the fight all against all, and to secure further social organization they also renounced of the women from its tribe[8]. For the sake of future, they developed two social taboos of murderer and incest. For Freud, this would be the earliest appearance of morality, law and religion in the history of mankind, and for him "it illustrates the close connection existing from the very beginning of time between social institutions and moral obligations" (Freud 1939, 133-134). In the course of time sacred figure of (now imagined

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7   I choose to represent this mythical figure of primal father in picture 7 by Goya's painting "Cronus Devouring His Children".

8   Although they appear, women are treated here, as in the long run of the history, only as a commodity and not as political subjects.

as caring, almighty) father will assume different shapes but remain in the structure of monotheism[9].

For our analysis these two father figures as socially constructed archetypes – one tyrannical and other caring and protective paternal figure – are mythical constructions of different orders that have its expression in populist reason. But there is the third Freudian myth here – which is in fact conspiracy at the heart of civilization – the myth of social contract among equals of fraternal clan, in order to prevent killing each other and ending like the father[10]. They restrain their own desires in order to live peacefully and to avoid violent 'state of nature'. Moreover, Freud (1930/1962, 42) considered such situation of replacing the power of individual by the power of the community as the decisive step of civilization, represented in picture 7 as the image of shaking hands. This situation is also a starting point for potentially democratic development. But, as we can see through the whole history it was precarious, ambivalent and easily transformed into orders under the rule of paternal or despotic type of father figures.

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9   Such divine father figure is represented in picture 7 by Michelangelo's fragment from the Sistine chapel as image of the God creating the Adam.

10 For considering Freud's story from *Totem and Taboo* as a rhetorical strategy similar to social contract theorists see Brunner (2001: 157)

PICTURE 7. EGO-IDEAL IMAGINARY CONSTRUCTIONS OF POPULISM.
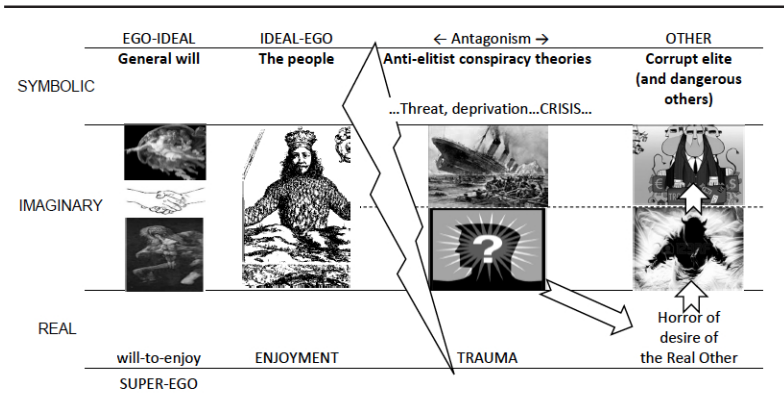
But what do these Freudian constructions have in common with our contemporary forms of populism? These mythical images can be considered as ultimate phantasms of political orders on behalf of whom particular populisms are articulated. They are imagined positions of Law and Order for which advancements populisms speak and act when they articulate their Ideal-Egos and conspiracy theories to cope with powerful inimical elites. These three positions at the level of Ego-Ideal could be easily related to the structural positions of populism as they were described by Benjamin Arditi (2007) and explained in the section on populist performance. The first one, populism in power is a part of today's democratic politics where political leaders acquire more and more discretionary power. Although democratic politics is about the people, and populism is one of its rhetorics, frames of thinking, and mobilizing devices, such use of populism could be easily abused by those leaders. Their structural position and relation to media gives them an opportunity to practice previously described politics of mood to gain the support of less and less actively involved citizens, who seem to be more and more tranquilized consumers of the spectacle and automatic

voting machines. There is no space here to discuss the issue whether we actually live in post-democracy (Crouch 2004) or simulated democracy (Lengyel and Ilonszki 2012), but those tendencies open up the space for identification of leaders, as well as their followers more with authoritarian order, especially at the Imaginary level, while they could still use language and institutions of democratic order. Only small circles of political and economic elites are really in the game and if one tries to address critically that issue, it is easy to dismiss that person as notorious conspiracy theorist. Furthermore, the elites can use conspiracy theories to point out who is the enemy of the people. We already witnessed authoritarian populist regimes through the 20th century Gasiorowski (111) [11], which can today, with advancement of information technology, spread its word much easier to gain popular support and admiration, especially if their leaders enact effective and fast solutions against powerful outer and inner enemies, whoever they are. Due to the logic that *power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely,* an increase of personalized power could even lead to establishment of totalitarian regime – the real nemesis of democracy and its underside. Total control and obedience, tyrannical rule, institutionalized fear and primacy of will of the leader are the ultimate articulation of such regime. If we conceive our picture 7 dynamically, it is possible for one populist movement to assume democratic position but with time it can transform itself on this dimension to authoritarian or even totalitarian regime, if carrier groups and significant proportion of citizens change their identification with the Ego-Ideal, especially under the condition of some collective threat. Such ominous transformation is possible in any political regime. However,

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11 Gasiorowski (2006: 111) emphasize here Juan Peron's regime in Argentina and Gamal Abdul Naser's in Egypt, although the first one is a candidate for multiple classifications. On the other hand, Stuart Hall (1983) characterized even Thatcherism as a form of authoritarian populism.

conspiracy theories of these regimes might be different. Partially, it depends to what kind of particular ideology populism is crafted on, and how dangerous are perceived the political context and global condition. Also, as we move from democracy toward totalitarianism, populist conspiracy theories will imagine political community more monolithically, be more applied openly by state institutions, more paranoid, interconnected and incorporated in policy measures as part of repressive, as well as ideological state apparatus.

Finally, populism, as it is expressed in radical democratic movements, is itself a sort of interruption and dislocating power for existing political regimes, especially when pragmatic dimension of politics fails to fulfill promises of its redemptive side or produce results which are perceived as unbearable and repressive. Such populism opens up the possibility of radical alterity to what it considers as unsustainable condition, and it demands a new social contract. Although their origins and consequences are different, and some of them have resulted in violence, civil wars and non-democratic regimes, such populisms were expressed in the last decade in uprisings of Arab Spring, Occupy Wall Street, Taksim Square protests, Hong Kong Occupy Central etc. Their common denominators were radical demands for change or complete removal of corrupted political and economic regimes. The main aim of these movements was larger involvement and participation in power of those who are effectively excluded from making important decisions which affect the whole political community. As outbursts of 'the political' they are constitutive moments of re-entrance of the people into politics with demand for agency, or for "the right to tell right from wrong in the public sphere" (Abulof 2011). Yet their consequences are ambivalent because such moments are also windows of opportunity for various carrier groups to set the stage, at least partially, for further political formations that could steal the revolution and transform spring to winter.

What is to be done to avoid populist deadlocks?

Through this paper I've tried to build a comprehensive Lacanian framework for understanding populism and its various tendencies, especially those leading to authoritarian deadlocks. I also consider this framework as an expression of conflictual functioning of contemporary society, where conspiratorial ways of thinking, imagining and feeling inscribe more human agency than it is actually present, but also produce it more than it is usual in our highly mediated societies. Is this a permanent human condition? I really don't know. I hope I showed the dynamics of populism as highly ambivalent social and political phenomenon that contributes to the image of unstable world under the neoliberal condition. However, I can think of possible way outs that will be – taken together – able to alleviate the ominous potentials of populism.

The first one would be to think differently about political antagonism, that means as a permanent state of democratic politics, without the possibility of final redemption from conflict and strife, in accordance with the conception of agonistic pluralism (Mouffe 1999; Wenman 2013). Agonistic pluralism requires the change in considering the Other not as the political enemy but respectful adversary. As the conflict is ineradicable and its certain forms can be considered as a public good (Wenman 18), e.g. those which facilitate the expression of individualism, foster recognition and independence and help to engender greater social equality (54), it should be more effectively canalized through the democratic political institutions. Those institutions should be rearranged in a way which enables more transparency and much higher participation of citizens and their involvement in the decision-making processes. In doing so, agonistic democracy should fight against "sedimented forms of violence and oppression…[and] therefore involve a struggle against normalization, excessive uniformity, imperialism, domination etc."

(54), including the sideways of paternalism and despotism. Therefore, political representation should be reinvented and supplemented by forms of more direct democracy.

The second one deals with the issue of conspiracy theories. Contrary to the mainstream approach that treats conspiracy theories as *a priori* flawed interpretations usually attributed to eccentric personalities, I consider them as cultural products related to collective deprivations and traumas, as well as differentiated from individual pathologies. Conspiracy theories are often unwarranted and simplified frames of thinking, especially those which deal with shadowy global elites. But sometimes conspiracy theories are warranted and reasonable, even unavoidable, especially when historical traces point to real conspiracies. To avoid the reductionist trap, I define conspiracy theories formally as an interpretation "that posits a conspiracy" (Pigden 222). Such theories always include powerful groups with sinister intentions against the state and society. If we accept this change in perception of conspiracy theories, then the usual stance of treating them as anti-intellectual pollution doesn't make sense. Furthermore, I think that warranted conspiracism is necessary for a proper democratic functioning, especially the one which is skeptical toward elites and orientated toward revealing corruptive activities of people in power, especially in so called post-factual age. This should not be only a matter of good investigative journalism, police and judicial system, but also the problem of each citizen. However, the question is how to make of warranted conspiracism a civic virtue, which should foster the idea that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance.

The third one is related to the issue of the quality of political leaders and the proper charisma in democracy, especially after the century of its pathology (Monod 9). In other words, today "liberal democracy is threatened by failure to recognize the importance of character in a leader" (Hamilton 2017). Such failure is especially

prominent at the left-wing political spectrum which often expresses wishful thinking of acephalic democratic order (Boucher 2008). Contrary to that, Jean-Claud Monod tries to figure out what would be the difference between todays widespread demagogic charisma (of private success and enjoyment in xenophobia) and authentic democratic charisma, or "the conditions under which a political charisma could not only be part of a democratic framework, but brings it a progressive spirit, a transformative impulse, a capacity to reintroduce justice, equality, creative imagination in politics which always risks turning to the simple management of the status quo for the benefit of the dominant interests" (Monod 13) in the world of neoliberal governmentality, privatization of the public sphere, mass migrations and increasing social inequalities. For Monod the democratic leader should fulfill a quadruple function of: expressing the democratic principles, representing a collective, assuming responsibility for a certain field of decision-making, and ability of coaching, or uniting people around the cause (179). Crystallizations of these functions he sees in four paradigmatic forms of democratic charismas: the *foundational charisma*, which "'lays down' a law or a system, the merit of which will consist precisely in being able to maintain certain social, ethical or political 'qualities' beyond the person and the existence of the founder" (179), and attributes it to Lycurgus, Solon, Washington, Bolivar, Garibaldi, Gandhi, etc.; *the charisma of resistance and liberation*, which consists in the capacity to impose a line of rupture in relation to an oppression or an occupation and to mobilize initially disparate forces against it, attributed to René Char, Lech Walesa and several below listed examples; *the charisma of justice*, expressed in the capacity to invent a form of conflict resolution which makes it possible to clean up a past of hatred without making it fall into oblivion, but by "working" on it in order to overcome, attributed to Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu an Willy Brandt; and finally, *the charisma of equality*, expressed in

the struggle against exploitation and against inequalities of groups, genders and classes, which can be attributed to many previous examples, as well as to Obama and Lula (Monod 190-198). However, we saw in the two last presidential cases how their failure to inspire and deliver substantial change in political economy can prepare the ground for alleged saviors both in the US and Brazil. But if we accept their failure as a sign of the strength of global neoliberalism able to constrain and gradually disempower any national demos and its leadership, no matter how democratic and strong it would be, and further provoke frustrations with democracy itself (Appadurai 7), then such nation-state system requires support from the creation of "a trans-nation-state legal order" (Žižek 2017, 196), no matter how imaginary or impossible should look like this idea even today. As Žižek already stated:

> …the left alternative should be a programme of new and different international agreements – agreements which would establish control of the banks, enforce ecological standards, secure workers' rights, healthcare services, the protection of sexual and ethnic minorities, etc. The big lesson of global capitalism is that nation-states acting alone cannot do the job – only a new political international can possibly bridle global capital (196).

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Jawaharlal Nehru and the Current Challenge to the Idea of India[1]

Aditya Mukherjee

The opportunity to share my views on Jawaharlal Nehru and the challenges to the idea of India comes at a very timely moment in these days of demonizing Nehru and spreading lies about him, a task which is done by the neoliberal neo-colonial right-wing, which then feeds into a much more vicious attack that is launched by the Hindu communalists. Unfortunately, even the left, too, has had its share of Nehru bashing, but fortunately that is a matter of the past. The left does not do so anymore, but there was a time when it did so in very strong language.

The communalists sometimes even try to erase the memory of Jawaharlal Nehru. In other time, when the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)[2] was in power, they actually brought up a textbook in which the whole chapter on the Indian national movement did not even have a mention of Jawaharlal Nehru. He did not exist. You are also aware that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)[3] mouthpiece in Kerala published an article by a BJP candidate for member of parliament where it was argued that Nathuram Vinayak Godse had fired the shot at the wrong person. It should have been Nehru,

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1   This essay is a slightly shortened version of the fourth lecture delivered in the series *Democracy Dialogues. New Socialist Initiative India*, on 11th November 2020. Published with permission of its author. Transcript by Thiago M. Moyano; revision and notes by Laura Izarra. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0NtztlcNQmM&feature=emb_title

2   The BJP is a right-wing party, one of two major political parties in India, along with the Indian National Congress. Its policy has historically reflected Hindu Nationalist positions. It is the current ruling political party of the Republic of India, having been so since 2014.

3   Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is an Indian right-wing, Hindu nationalist, paramilitary volunteer organisation.

who was even more dangerous than Gandhi. But despite all these efforts to erase or caricature Jawarhalal Nehru, Nehru lives on, and shall live on so long as the idea of India that he so quintessentially represented; so long as that idea lives on, there are people still there who are willing to fight for that idea. In fact, as it is now it is the opponents of the idea of India who will not let Nehru die. They are the ones who cannot forget Nehru. Just witness the central space that Nehru occupies in the vicious propaganda that the right wing has launched in recent years; they will not let his memory die.

Now, what is this idea of India? A phrase, which was coined by Rabindranath Tagore that Nehru so brilliantly represented and tried to implement in the newborn state for the initial decade and a half. The idea of India is actually the vision of, or the imagination of our entire national movement. It is the vision that was put forward by the entire spectrum, I want to underline that, of the various strains of nationalists who participated in the national movement, from the moderates to the extremists, to the Gandhians, to the socialists, to the communists, to the revolutionaries, they all shared what constituted the essential ideas of India. They had their differences, but there was a consensus on the main points. The only people who were not part of this idea of India were the loyalists, some of the princes and, of course, the communalists; they stood outside this idea of India. Now, what are the basic four elements of this idea of India?

The first and most important was Sovereignty and Anti-Imperialism. The future India will be an independent country. It will not be a junior partner to any one of the super powers, nor would it subjugate other people, other countries, which are weaker than India. And India will continue to fight for the anti-imperialist cause anywhere in the world.

Number two was equally important. It was Democracy. From its inception, the early nationalists who imagined this idea of India

were very clear that the future India would be a democratic India. As early as 1890s there was the concept that in the future constitution of India there should be adult franchise. This is decades before adult franchise has come in any part of the world. Women are still to get a vote many, many decades later. And even in countries like the United States, the civil rights movement hasn't come on until the 1960s. So it was for the national movement, a very basic original model idea.

The third idea, which emanates from the second idea, is that of Secularism. In fact, in the days of the national movement, these two words were used co-terminously: Secular Democracy. It was the phrase that was used because there is no democracy possible, unless you have secularism; you cannot have democracy only for some people, and vice versa. There is no secularism possible, unless you are truly democratic. That is, unless each citizen, irrespective of gender, caste, religion, whatever, did not have an equal citizenship right.

And the fourth element in this idea of India, which, as I said, was accepted by all, was a pro-poor oriented. Choosing my words carefully, it was not socialist, though increasingly a large number of the people in the national liberation struggle moved to the socialist idea, often because of Nehru, but yet, this was not the consensus. But there was a consensus on a pro-poor orientation from Dadabhai Naoroji onwards. His first book is *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*. From Naoroji to Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee you will see that in any of their writings poverty is in the focus of their understanding of why we need to fight Colonialism. So, from Naoroji to Gandhi, who of course does the face of Indian people towards the poor, from him to Jawaharlal Nehru, to the socialists and the communists, there was a consensus on the pro-poor orientation. All these elements are today under threat.

Before I discuss that, this imagination of the Indian nation was of unique and a very brave phenomenon. This is not what we can state in all the rest of the world. Indian imagination was in fact in sharp contrast to the European imagination in which nation States first emerged. In Europe, nation States emerged as homogenous units: Catholic France, not even Christian; Protestant England; the unification of Germany and Italy is on the basis of one language. France was a multilingual country till the French revolution flattened it out into a one-language country. In sharp contrast to this, the Indian imagination of the nation was to celebrate diversity. It was a diverse language or religion; it was going to enrich the Indian nation. It is more complementary to the idea of an Indian nation rather than contradictory.

The most famous Urdu poets, the most famous writers, the most famous Bengali or Marathi or Gujarati writers, but also the most famous nationalists: they were complimentary to each other. Secondly, the European nation States emerged out of the rise of capitalism and, in the rise of capitalism was embedded imperialism, or colonialism. Each nation state, as it emerged in Europe, also became imperialist, from Portugal to Spain, Germany, France, Italy, England, USA. They also became colonial. But Indian nationalist imagination, on the other hand, was opposite. It was a liberating phenomenon. This nationalism was liberating. It was anti-imperialist. So it was not aggrandizing. It did not have the dominating element that European nationalism had.

The European vision of nationalism, unless it was checked as it was checked by radical forces in many European countries, its logical conclusion was Hitler and Mussolini. And it is a matter of great sadness that in India, it is this vision, which ended up with Hitler and Mussolini, which is now being masqueraded as Indian nationalism.

Those who are now masquerading as shouting about "Nationalism, Nationalism" are borrowing this alien idea of Indian Nationalism. This has got nothing to do, I emphasize, with the idea of India or with Indian nationalism. It's a foreign European notion, which is being put down over our heads.

The first challenge to the idea of India came at the time of the birth of the nation itself. The spiral of communal violence beginning with the 1946 Calcutta killings followed by the killings of Noakhali Hindus, followed by the retaliatory killings, massive killings of Muslims in Bihar, and the partition riots where over five lakh[4] people were killed and some estimates are that about 60 lakh people were made homeless refugees – one of the largest migrations of people in such a short period of time in human history. Now this created a Holocaust-like situation, that its communal frenzy was at its peak.

The nationalist leaders at this time took up this challenge led by Gandhiji who stood like a rock of one man-bomb only force against communism or communal riots as he was called by Lord Mountbatten, and who would pay with his own life for this; the nationalists took up this challenge. Nehru too rose to his full stature to resist this challenge, putting his life at stake. His finest hour is this period, as a fellow historian has put it that this was Nehru's finest hour. Gandhi spent four months walking the remote villages of Noakhali, trying to face the communal situation. At the same time, the negotiations of the transfer of power are occurring, one of the most eventful events of the 20th century in which he led a major role. He was not involved in that; he was involved in the villages, walking the villages, day after day after day for continuously four months from the 6th November 1946 to the end of February 1947.

Nehru on his part, as the prime minister of the interim government, landed up in Bihar, virtually with his entire cabinet,

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4   A lakh is a unit in the Indian numbering system equal to one hundred thousand (100,000).

Sardar Patel, Kalam Azad, Rajendra Prasad, among others, and said, "We will stay till the riot stop." And they did. He said in November, 1946, in Bihar, "I will stand in the way of Muslin-Hindu riots; members of both communities will have to tread over my dead body if they try to strike at each other." What a contrast to what we have witnessed today in the district of Dadri, when a man who fought in the Indian armed forces was lynched on the mere suspicion of what meat he has in his fridge. What a contrast to the ethnic cleansing that occurs in Assam state when Muslims have yet not been able to have a political intervention.[5]

Immediately after independence, on 18th August 1947, Nehru declares: "Our state is not a communal state, but a democratic state." So this understanding that democracy and communalism are contrasts and that secular democracy come together is a critical understanding. That is, when you oppose communalism, one must learn that one is simultaneously fighting for democracy.

And in fact, I would like to add a third element, which is often forgotten that the umbilical cord connection between colonialism and communalism is also increasingly forgotten, especially as the communalists masquerade as the genuine nationalists. But Nehru says our state is not a communal state, but a democratic state in which every citizen has equal rights.

The government is determined to protect these rights, the notion of citizens having equal rights; even the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Registry of Citizens (NRC) know how important it was and how it was declared from the rooftops. From the words by Nehru, by Gandhi, we get repeatedly that this is not a communal state. This is not a Hindu state. India is a state where

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5   Bengali Muslims are at risk of disenfranchisement after being excluded from the National Registry of Citizens. In Shashi Tharoor's "Is Ethnic Cleansing Coming to India?" 10 August 2018.

every citizen has equal rights. Nehru saw Gandhi's assassination in this general atmosphere, not as an act of a mad man or a misled man, but an effort by an organization. He said that in so many words, and he names the organization, he says it is an effort by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) to change the very nature of the newly born Indian state.

This is a very important understanding. He wrote to the chief ministers on February 5, 1948, two weeks shortly after Gandhi's assassination: "a deliberate coup d'etat was planned involving killings of several persons and the promotion of gender disorder to enable the RSS to seize power." It was an attempt, in other words, to create a mirror image of Muslim Pakistan, or Hindu India in our country. It was a threat to the very idea of India as a secular democratic country and Nehru was not about to let it succeed. With the full support of Patel, he banned the RSS. Put 25,000 of their members in jail and much more important, he converted the first general election into a virtual referendum on what was the nature of the Indian state going to be: was it going to be secular democratic? Or was it going to be hindu majoritarian? He traveled something like 40,000 kilometers. And he did not have this 8,000 crore[6] worth of planes that we have just recently bought for our prime minister. He traveled 40,000 kilometers. He spoke to 35 million people, that is, one out of 10 people, basically arguing this position.

In a peaceful fair election held within two to three years of a Holocaust-like situation, the extreme arousal of communal frenzy had occurred. We have this election in which the hindu forces Hindu Mahasabha, Baratiya Jana Sangh, Akhil Nharatiya Ram Rajya Parishad, all of them put together got only 10 out of 489 seats in the election. The Indian National Congress (INC) won 364

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6   A crore denotes 10 million (10.000.000) and is equal to 100 lakh in the Indian numbering system.

seats while the other parties got only 6% of the votes. That is, the overwhelming majority of the Indian people voted for a secular India, whether they voted left, right, center does not matter. It was a stunning achievement, a tribute to the legacy of the Indian national movement, that despite this trial by fire, did succeed in creating a secular India.

The comunal threat was pushed back for decades, but unfortunately it was not extinguished. And India is paying a very heavy price today for this not being exterminated. And the last part of my lecture, I shall dwell on this question.

Very briefly, let us turn to how Nehru tackles other elements of the idea of India. First, the issue of sovereignty; Nehru correctly understood that political independence by itself is not enough unless you also had economic and intellectual independence. Otherwise you will be virtually a neo-colony. In 1950, for example, in order to generate any growth, if any investment had to be made, more than 90% of the equipment necessary for that investment had to be imported from the very countries from whom you just got political independence. This is the classic example of neocolonialism. More than 90% of not only machines, but even machine tools and pliers had to be imported.

This is what we were left with after 200 years of colonialism: a colonial economic structure. That is what Nehru inherits as the initial conditions. And he brilliantly tries to reverse it through what is now famously called the Nehru-Mahalanobis strategy. In the period 1952 to 1965, industry grew at about 7% per annum, which is a magnificent rate of growth compared to the de-industrialization of the 19th century, and a very slow growth after that, before independence. But the more important part is not only that there was industrial growth; the three fold increase in the aggregate production, the industrial production that occurred in the Nehruvian period till about 1969, 70% of this increase was explained in consumer goods; there was

an increase in intermediate goods, things like steel, chemical, heavy chemicals, cement, et cetera, which are required for investment that quadruple; and most important, capital goods production increased by 10 times in this period, there was a 10 fold increase.

This is what led to the structural transformation of the Indian economy in the very early two or three plans. To give you one statistic, the result of this Nehruvian strategy was that from nearly 100% dependence on import of machines and capital goods from advanced countries at independence, by 1960 we had to import only 43% of machinery in order to make our fixed investments. And, by 1974, we had to import only 9%. That is by the 1970s, following the Nehruvian strategy, India was able to grow on its own to the extent of more than 90%. Its former dependence on the external world, of particularly the advanced first world, had declined dramatically. This was again a stunning achievement and it was critical for India's sovereignty.

That is why I put attaining sovereignty in the first category of the idea of India. This was critical for India to have an independent foreign policy; no amount of speeches in the United Nations could have achieved that. It is the fact that we had acquired this basic economic strength, which enabled India to lead more than a hundred countries in the non-aligned movement that Nehru had initiated. A whole foreign policy initiative which is being ridiculed in these days by people who know better.

It was this unstructuring that occurred under the Nehruvian period, which in fact, enabled India in the later years, particularly after the economic reforms, to participate in the globalization process with some advantage to itself. That is, this opening up did not lead to the complete submerging of the autonomy of Indian economy. These, in other words, were not the wasted years. In the words of the neo-colonial neo-liberals, like, Lord Meghnad Desai, who was once a Marxist, but has now become a Modi admirer, he

and professor Tirthankar Roy, have actually argued that the first 40 years of India's independence were wasted years. These are not the wasted years. In fact, all post-colonial societies had required these amount of years, 30 to 40 years to unstructure their colonial structure before they could open up to the world's capitalist system. China, which also got independence only two years after India, opened up only in 1978. So, the world, the postcolonial world needed its Maos, it needed its Nehrus, it needed its Nassers, its Sukarnos. These were not wasted years. If India had opened up in 1950 the way it opened up in 1991, then we would have been a banana Republic. It is because of what Nehru did in the first decades after India's independence that we are witness in the kinds of world we are living in. So there is a complete lie that has been spread, as I said, in the right wing economic thinking.

Another lie is about Nehru's ignoring agriculture, completely ignoring the fact that the institutional reforms in Indian agriculture, which reversed virtually 200 years of the baggage of colonial agriculture, the land reforms, were brought in within a decade after independence. The backbone of that system was broken within a democratic framework. The first three plans under Nehru witnessed an agriculture growth of 3% per annum, which was eight times faster than the growth in agriculture in the previous 50 years. So to completely transform agriculture in a manner that you can grow eight times faster happens under Nehru. It is also not true to say that one had to wait for Lal Bahadur Shastri to initiate the technological reforms, which led to the green revolution. In fact, even Nehru himself in his lifetime, hadn't seen the necessity of moving from institutional to technological reforms and this intensive agriculture district program, which is the program which led to the green revolution, was started in his time. I'll just end this section by quoting one of the most famous economist who studied India at that

time, Daniel Turner. He says "it is sometimes said that the initial five-year plans neglected agriculture; this charge cannot be taken seriously. The facts are that in India's first 21 years of independence more has been done to foster change in agriculture and more change has actually taken place than in the preceding 200 years." Turner, along with Wolf Ladejinsky are considered among the most knowledgeable people who were looking at Indian agriculture and land reforms. An important thing to note is that this transformation that we see in industry and agriculture occurred with democracy.

This was an unprecedented task and Nehru as well as others were well aware of it, and they acknowledged that India was moving on a part, which I'm quoting Nehru, which was "uncharted in history". The transformation to industrialization or the agrarian revolution that occurred in the rest of the world did not occur with democracy. It occurred with slavery, with the intruder movement, with forced land tax, with forced collectivization, forced communes involving the killings of millions of people; it involved colonial surplus appropriation, it also involved general MacArthur's army in Japan to do the land reforms, among other examples. This part was not open to the Indian people. In India, the transition was not made on the backs of the working class and the peasantry and the colonial people as it had been done in the past, in the transition to modernity.

A quick reference is necessary here to also Nehru's brilliant anticipation of the knowledge of revolution. As early as the 1950s, Nehru is anticipating what is about to happen and he focuses on science and technology, an area which was left virtually barren in the colonial period very consciously. The setting up of every institution that is known of in this area – the IITs, the national physical laboratory, national chemical laboratory, the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre. All of these institutions were started from the 1950s onwards under Nehru's guidance. And the fruits of this we are witnessing today: India is in fact able to participate in the

information revolution to whatever extent that we can. The fact that the most dynamic sector in India today is the services sector, which is essentially based on information technology, is because of Nehru, because he anticipated it. It is not despite Nehru.

I also want to challenge another lie: the notion that Nehru did only higher education and ignored primary education – again, a complete lie. Nehru was one of the key architects of the 1931 Karachi resolution, which anticipates, in many ways, the Indian constitution in which basic free and compulsory education was a very key component. The destruction of the public school system, that is the government school system, and in fact, even the public health system that has occurred in recent years cannot be put on Nehru's back. All our parents and grandparents, in fact, emerged out of this school and college system that was there in Nehru's time. Rather than building on the public education and health system that emerged in Nehruvian times, what we are witnessing in the recent past, particularly since the 1980s and nineties, is a destruction of the system, a conscious destruction of this system in order to bring in the private and the foreign. This is the neoliberal model that our new education policies are trying to do, essentially, bringing the private and foreign and denying to the Indian poor, their only source of social mobility, which is education. So that education is now not accessible to the vast majority of our people; I mean, quality education.

The next element is the pro-poor aspect of the idea of India. Nehru's success in keeping India on the democratic, civil, libertarian path against considerable lords ensured that the poor were not left out entirely from the development process. Most post-colonial countries were not able to keep on that path. With 70,000 newspapers and more than 700 satellite channels, no large-scale famine could be hidden in India. Amartya Sen has been emphasizing repeatedly that democracy is the ultimate guarantor of the poor; without democracy

and civil liberties, you cannot guarantee even the life of the poor. He gives the example of China, where more than 20 to 60 million people died of famine and the world did not know because there was no free press.

While political democracy was understood by Nehru to be necessary, a necessary condition for people's empowerment, it was by no means taken to be sufficient. As he put it in 1952: "if poverty and low standards continue, then democracy for all its fine institutions and ideals ceases to be a liberating force. It must therefore aim continuously at the eradication of poverty. In other words, political democracy is not enough. It must develop into economic democracy, also". The community development program and later attempts to integrate it with the Punjabi writing institutions were efforts in empowering the poor, though as we know it took the 73rd and the 74th amendment decades after Nehru even to try and give some teeth to these ideas.

Nehru was deeply influenced by Marxism. The influence of the widely accepted socialist idea of empowering the poor among the Indian people was immense. The fact that not only the communists and socialists, but the availing majority of the nationalist opinion in India since the late 1930s accepted socialism as an objective, was to a greater extent because of Nehru.

So deeply did these ideas get rooted among the Indian people as a whole, that as late as 1980, when the decidedly right-wing Jana Sangh, which had nothing to do with socialism or the national movement, was reborn in its new Bharatiya Janata Party it goes to declare itself as a Gandhian socialist party.

Nehru was able to give the socialist idea such a wide acceptability in India partly because he made a very early break from a narrow sectarian rigid interpretation of Marxism, which India's leading historian of modern and contemporary India, Professor Bipan Chandra had called Stalin Marxism. Nehru was among the first in

the world to make this break from Stalin Marxism. Roughly at the same time as a famous Italian Marxist, Antonio Gramsci. In the late 1930s, Nehru was groping for a strategy of social transformation, along with Gramsci, in a democratic framework, which was different from the insurrectionary and violent Bolshevik model that they felt was not suitable to such democratic situations. Euro communism made this breakthrough popular as late as the 1970s, but Nehru had made this breakthrough in the 1930s.

Nehru was fortunate in being witness to, and part of the Gandhian struggle for freedom, which was still then, and perhaps remains still today, the only actual historical example of a semi democratic or democratic type state structure being replaced or transformed of the broadly Gramscian theoretical perspective of a war of position being successfully practiced. The fact that Gramsci saw this as the only possible strategy for social transformation in the developed countries of the West underlines the huge significance on the Gandhian movement and this understanding of socialism to the world as a whole.

Learning from the practice of the Gandhian movement made it easier for Nehru to break from the standard Marxist paradigm and argue somewhat precociously that while there could be not true democracy without socialism, there could be no socialism, he said, without democracy, as the world is now realizing to be true. Nehru was among the first to say so. He insisted that civil liberty and democracy had to be a basic part of socialism, the socialist transformation required societal consensus, the consent of the overwhelming majority of the people. It could not be a minority revolution led by a handful of highly committed revolutionaries. It could not be, in other words,"a dictatorship of the proletariat". It was also not enough just to have a majority. To succeed, he said, it had to be a socialism acceptable to all sections by an overwhelming

majority. Nehru was anticipating what later events were to validate and what was to be slowly accepted globally by increasingly sections of the left, though at that time until much later in India, Nehru was ridiculed for his ideas on socialism.

Nehru was to retain, throughout his life, this nuance persuasive style of functioning while remaining resolute in his goal which brought him the support, love and admiration of millions in a manner which was surpassed only by Gandhi. As a true disciple of the master, while appealing to all sections of society, Nehru succeeded in keeping the gaze focused on the poor, the oppressed and the disadvantaged. His great achievement was that he got a very large part of Indian society, individuals and institutions, to share a socialist vision. In the Nehruvian period, from the planning commission to the public sector, bureaucracy to the media, to popular films, the socialist objective was seen as a desirable one. But it was not then of course defined in any narrow fundamentalist way, but in the way that Nehru broadly outlined it.

Socialism was not a dirty word as it is attempted to be made out today. Also the obscene inequality and total disregard and disrespect for the poor that we have witnessed today, particularly during the pandemic, when the whole world watching the wretched poor of this country walk hundreds of miles to their villages on roads with the temperatures soaring above 40 degrees, dragging their children and their old with them, many dying in the process, was unthinkable in Nehruvian times. The idea of India, of respect for the poor, of identifying the poor as the people of this country, which was the Nehru's notion of Bharat Mata, is all gone.

Lastly, before I move on to the current situation, a brief word on Nehru's critical contribution to the building and nurturing of the institutions of a functioning democracy. It's important because that is exactly what is being dismantled at the moment. The parliament, something that Nehru respected, not only by just standing in front

of it, but actually by being in parliament whenever there was a debate, particularly if there was a critique of him and his policies.

A proper cabinet system. Many of his cabinet ministers have said in their memoirs how Nehru would insist that they exercise their autonomy and did not keep coming running to him calling for guidance. A free press, critical to democracy and most importantly for Jawaharlal Nehru, a vibrant opposition. Not as it is today, an opposition party was not his goal. For him, Democracy meant of vibrant opposition, and I quote: "this is too large, a country with too many diversities to permit any so-called strong man to trample over the people and their lives." He said further, "I do not want India to be a country in which millions of people say yes to one man. I want a strong opposition" and that one man is including even himself. When he found that not enough opposition was coming to himself, he famously would write articles critiquing himself with a pseudonym. I'll quote the article he wrote in the late 1930s; he apparently did the same in the 1950s as well. In the article written in the name of Chanakya, he warns the people rather precociously (considering what is happening today), that India should not countenance any tendency towards the emergence of a dictator, or any one strong man emerging using his popularity (which is what he was), using the language and slogans of democracy and socialism (which he used a lot), and then says, "we all know how Fascism has factored in on this language." This language has been used and is being used today to bring in elements of fascism, as I will discuss in the concluding section of my talk. This brings me to the Indian situation today.

<p style="text-align:center">⋆ ⋆ ⋆</p>

What is it that has brought our country into the situation where we are faced with what has been correctly, in my opinion, described as communal fascism? Despite the heroic battle against it at the time

of independence fought by Nehru and Gandhi and his associates; despite Nehru's repeated warning that if fascism came to India, it'll take the form of majority communalism, I will list a few of what appear to me to be some of the reasons which has led to the current denouement. Where is it that we failed?

In my opinion the most important factor in the survival and reassertion of the communal forces was the fact that the secular forces failed to undertake any sustained ideological work, combating the communal ideology. Nor were they able to use state power to contain the communal forces. The hindu communalists led by the RSS, as well as the minority communalist, some among the Sikhs and the Muslims, continued their propaganda, including in the education system. After the RSS twenty-five thousand workers were released, the RSS very soon again started propaganda among the people, now through the school sector, through its primary and secondary schools, through its shakhas. Their class textbooks spread poison in the minds of young children, about the men and about our Indian revolutionary struggle. The only exception was in the 1960s, when the Indian state made an effort through the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) to bring to our children scientific, modern, secular non-communal, non colonial textbooks written by some of our most important historians, books which have all been removed under pressure from the right wing communal forces. More shocking was what happened when the communal forces, especially after 1999, actually came to power in the center, they used their state power to rapidly communalize the education system and enabled something like the Gujarat genocide to happen. When the secular forces came back to power on the slogan of detalibanizing education and fighting for secularism, they stayed in power for 10 long years, 2004 to 2014 and very little was done to combat communalism as an ideology. Many other things,

good things, bad things may have been done, but this issue did not remain the central agenda.

After the independence Nehru had repeatedly written to his chief ministers and newspapers warning them against the virulent communal propaganda that was taking place, often leading to riots. Nehru urged immediate action against such newspapers and their editors spreading communal hatred and against police officials and district magistrates for inaction during riots. He urged, I'm quoting Nehru, "proper compensation must be paid to the right victims; … it was essential that the guilty be punished and should be made to feel that it does not pay to create disturbance and to loot and to kill". Yet since the 1950s, 60s and much more today, hardly any organizer or perpetrator of communal riots or the spreader of communal poison is punished or put behind the bars. Virulent communal propaganda continues unabated till today. This is my first objection.

The second is the ruling regimes, like the Congress, which ruled for most of the post-independence period in the center, as well as the left, which ruled for long decades in many provinces, they suffered from what one would call an element of economism. That is, if only we had economic development, if the temples of modern India were to become the dance and the bridges and steel plants and industries, et cetera, then somehow this backward communal ideology would fade away. There was this assumption that economic development would do it, or economic class struggles would lead to the diminution of communal thinking. Now both of these have proved to be wrong. Communalism has spread, in fact, largely in the economically more developed areas and the working class, when it is faced with the worst of the situations, has often turned to communalism rather than to trade union movements. So, it needed something more. My first point, the ideological battle was to be launched.

Thirdly, the secular forces again, unfortunately including the left, often made some compromises. They did not play the communal game, but made compromises with communal forces in order to gain some short-term electoral gains. When a people are already communalized, appealing to their communal perceptions will get you some more votes. So rather than fighting in the long run to change their perception, it was appealing to those perceptions that was resorted to across the board. A particular weakness in this regard was softness towards the minority communalism. This was a major evil that was practiced, again, across the board, including the left. A heavy price I think was paid for ignoring the said advice given by Jawaharlal Nehru as early as the 1930s, that one cannot use one variety of communalism to win back the other. The plea that the minorities are oppressed or that they're being treated unkindly does not give you the license to practice or support minority communalism. If the minorities are oppressed, then you have to practice secular politics, not minority communal politics. As Nehru said, one communalism does not end the other. He said each feeds on the other and both fatten. Softness towards minority communalism has made the growth of majority communalism much easier today.

Fourthly the secular forces outside the Congress, including the left, in their desperation to dislodge the Congress, often came to earth and come to power, often tended to line up opportunistically with avowedly communal forces. That is, communal parties, which were untouchable immediately after independence, certainly were now seen as partners in trying to overthrow the existing Congress government. The first major instance, which I'll give you two examples, was the Janata Party (JP)[7] movement which joined

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7   The JP was a political party that was founded as an amalgam of Indian political parties opposed to the Emergency that was imposed between 1975 to 1977 by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of the Indian National Congress. In the 1977 general election, the party defeated the

hands with the RSS, in an effort to overthrow the elected Congress government of Indira Gandhi in the years before the declaration of the emergency in 1975. And when JP was questioned about the fascist nature of the RSS, JP said "the Jan Sangh and the RSS are neither reactionary nor fascists. If the Jan Sangh and RSS are fascists, then I too am a fascist." What better certificate would you give to communal forces. The result of this was when JP came to power, for the first time in India since its independence, the comunal forces came close to central power, a power that was used immediately to attack secular mentality. The first thing that the 1977 government did was to try to ban the secular textbooks that had been brought in, in the 1960s by the NCRP. The same error was again repeated, this is my second example, in 1989, when the VP Singh led Janata Dal, shockingly along with the support of the left, and made an alliance with the BJP to overthrow the Congress government of Rajiv Gandhi. The BJP thus acquired acceptability and respectability in Indian politics. They shot up from two seats in 1984 to 86 in 1989. The trajectory of the meteoric rise of the BJP since then is now history.

The fifth error which explains the current situation, is the ceding of the nationalist space by the secular forces and then, by ceding that space, enabling the communal anti-national communal forces to grab that nationalist space. The very acceptance of the self-description of the majority communalists as Hindu nationalists was a grave error. Throughout the national movement, this description was never accepted by anybody. The Hindu communalists were called communalists, not Hindu nationalists. This was made fashionable by the French political scientist Christophe Jaffrelot who continuously referred to them as Hindu nationalists and it has now

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Congress and Janata leader Morarji Desai became the first non-Congress prime minister in independent modern India's history.[1

become common parlance. Every journalist to meet is talking about Hindu nationalism. You've already allowed them to use the word nationalists by a set of people who are deeply divisive, who destroy the nation. When Jawaharlal Nehru repeatedly warns against this from very early, and not once but many times, says that majority communalism can easily masquerade as nationalism. It masquerades under a nationalist cloak: "Hindu nationalism is but another name for communalism, the betrayal of the freedom struggle, denial of every vestige of nationalism, suppressive of every manly instinct in the Hindus." This is what he says is Hindu nationalism. The current masculine aggressive, alpha male nationalism that is being paraded by secular forces were characterized by Nehru and the Indian national movement leaders as anti national and communal.

Also, the secular forces have made it easier for the communalists to occupy the nationalist space by themselves neglecting, critiquing, and even ridiculing our national liberation struggle. They condemn Gandhi, Patel, Tilak, Aurobindo, and others, as communal or semi communal, calling them bourgeois agents, and agents of the bourgeoisie, and if not of imperialism itself. There was a phase when Gandhi and Nehru were called agents of imperialism, and in recent academic writings it continues to be done till today, including among the left. All you have to do is pick up this book by Perry Anderson, editor of the New Left Review for such a long period of time, called *The Indian Ideology*, where he ridicules Nehru, Gandhi and the Indian national movement using the very digits of the colonial description of the Indian national movement. That is, this was an upper-caste Punjab party, Brahmin-Baniya combination, fighting for their little prescriptive advantages and did not represent the people. Lord Dufferin[8] said that the national movement represented the microscopic minority. This view was popularized in a large

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8   Viceroy of India (1884–1888)

spectrum of Indian academia, including among the left. The need of the hour was on the other hand quite something different. It was to own up the ancestry of the great legacy of our national movement, one of the most powerful national liberation struggles in the world, and then, standing on the shoulders of this legacy, to make further breakthroughs. What was done instead was its rejection that made it easy for the communalist to appropriate that legacy. We handed over the legacy of our national movement to the communalists, people who have no ancestry in the national liberation struggle and are now claiming them as their ancestors.

Lastly, there has been a paradigmatic change in recent years in the threat of the communal forces post to the secular democratic vision. And that paradigmatic change is the use of state power. From the fifties, sixties, seventies, you saw communal ideology being spread but they were never in state power, but this is a new phenomenon. Having seized governmental power, the BJP agenda has now become to change the character of the Indian state itself. Government power doesn't change the nature of the state. The fact that the BJP, which believes in industrial growth, has not made India into industrial yet, the nature of the state has not been converted. Their agenda is now to use state power to convert the Indian state into a Hindu state. To achieve this, it requires changing the character of all the instruments of state power – the bureaucracy, the judiciary, the police, the education system, the media, all of that has to be changed and altered. It cannot be done without repression and complete control over the media and the education system, and by punishing those who oppose these efforts. Which means, it could not be done without force. Their regime, therefore, automatically pushes towards a fascist character. And again, Nehru was one of the first to connect fascism with communalism. In the late thirties he began to describe the Muslim league as a party, which was acquiring fascist techniques and fascist methods. And by the 1940s, especially

as I referred to earlier, he was clearly seeing the RSS as representing a fascist force. In December of 1947, he says "we have a great deal of evidence to show that the RSS is as an organization, which is in the nature of a private army, and which is definitely proceeding on the strictest Nazi lines. Even following the techniques of organization of the Nazis." After damages, murder, he was even more convinced of this. Even after the ban on the RSS was lifted and I've discussed this earlier already, Nehru warns his chief ministers again, he reports that the RSS is again resuming the sum of its activities and it must always be remembered that the whole mentality of the RSS is fascist. Therefore, their activities have to be closely watched. Majority communalism, Nehru argued, could disguise itself as nationalism and the Indian version of fascism, and, therefore, deserves severest condemnation. We paid a very heavy price for ignoring this connection.

I will end by bringing to your attention some of the common features of the fascist method, which has been recently highlighted by a brilliant book, which many of you must have read by a philosopher, from Yale university, professor Jason Stanley, called *How Fascism Works*, where he looks at many countries, which have moved in the direction of fascism. He just picks up some of what he thinks are elements that show that a country is moving in that direction and I will list some of them. As you are aware of the contemporary situation in India, you will automatically see the connections. Stanley says "the fascists resort to the creation of an idyllic mythic past." We had this great past completely mythological and that in the ancient past we knew everything from plastic surgery to, as the Bengal governor said, having a nuclear power, to airplanes, everything was known to us. A great past. Number one. Number two, setting up an elaborate propaganda machinery. I don't have to talk about that. You are aware of how brilliantly it is being done in India. Number three, using the propaganda machinery to

create a sense of victimhood in the majority. That is the majority, the powerful, really need to feel like victims, that they are under attack like the Jews were seen as the danger to the German race itself. So the Muslims are now seen in India as those multiplying rapidly with the help of infiltrators, as the Home Minister calls them, like termites. Thousands of them will come and they will dominate the Hindu majority. So this fear among the Hindu majority is being created. Fourthly, fascists resort to the creation of a sense of sexual anxiety. You are aware of how in India suddenly become such an important matter, from the judiciary down to the secular worker, everybody is talking of this anxiety. Next, the equating of the majority with the nation and the minorities as the anti-nationalists. In the RSS lexicon, the Muslims and the Christians have been listed for a long time in their textbooks as people who were to be watched, that they are anti-national.

The next important element of fascism is the equating of the government with the nation. The government is equated to the nation and the corollary of that is that the Leader of this government, Leader with a capital L, is also equated to the nation. So anyone who dissents from the government or dissents with the leader or critiques the leader is declared as anti- national. And thus, his right to be a citizen is to be taken away. Now this equating of the leader and the government to the nation is straight out of Mussolini. The critics of the leader or the government are today dissenters. The educated elite is targeted, which is the next element in the fascist armory. They target the intelligentsia, the universities. The story of how Hitler attacked Frankfurt University, which was the premier university in Germany, is well-known and it has been written about by the famous management guru, Peter Drucker, who was then a student there and had to run away to the United States. The same thing is done here. The manner in which my university, Jawaharlal Nehru University has been attacked: its teachers, its students, its

independence. It is a university that has been ranked as number one for decades, now by the government itself. But it has been called a university which produces anti-nationals to such an extent that in 2016, when the campaign was built up with the help of the media auto-rickshaws and taxi drivers refuse to bring you to JNU saying that we don't take people to Pakistan. A complete vilification of education, the institutions and the intelligentsia. Examples multiply of this attack on the intelligentsia, people who can lead the thought process.

But perhaps the most important distinguishing feature of a Fascist regime from just any other authoritarian regime is the creation of a band of what Jason Stanley calls "de-humanized segments of the population", that is, the storm troopers who carry out the task of targeting, attacking, and even eliminating the so-called anti-nationals while the state machinery just benignly looks on. Do I need to give examples of this? The bands of people that roam this country today, borrowing some name or the other from the Hindu tradition and then they go about, assaulting, lynching, murdering people, sometimes with police help, sometimes without, but certainly without any action being taken against them.

The country needs to learn from the practice of fascism elsewhere and the Fascist signs that are emerging in our own country. The most important lesson that we can learn from the history of fascism is that fascism can be resisted only if all forces unite against it. It is no longer a fight between the right and the left. It is a fight between one of the greatest achievements of humans' civilization, democracy and barbarism. In this fight, everybody needs to come together. It is the absence of coming together in Germany, as you know, even the socialists and communists did not come together, which led to the rise of Hitler.

The pity, unfortunately, is that despite all the signs staring us in the face, as I've just described, this lesson has yet to be learned by the democratic forces in India. They have not yet internalized this lesson. They need to put aside all of their differences and unite at this point of time to defeat this pestilence that has hit our country. Pestilence not only in the sense of a medical illness, but a political illness that has visited our country.

The Cultural and Human Impact of the Forced Displacement of the Palestinian Bedouin from the Naqab and the Jordan Valley (1948-2020)[1]

Arlene Clemesha and Vitória Perpétuo Bruno

In December 2014, during a working visit to Palestine, the authors of this article were invited to drive out to the Jordan Valley, to meet and speak to the inhabitants of a Bedouin community, subject that year to a particularly disruptive Israeli resettlement plan. The location we drove out to was in al-Nuweima, between Jericho and al-Awja', close to a place called Dyuk. According to the *Dictionary of Palestinian Cities* (Sharab 717) in 1945 al-Nuweima had 450 inhabitants, and 116 *dunum* of banana plantation, the equivalent to 116.000 square meters. The compacted green spot where bananas were cultivated could still be seen on the horizon. We were told the children had to cross that area to reach the nearest school, subject to settler harassment on the way over. We were received by the community *mukhtar*, that is, the chosen leader, who, in spite of the language gap and the mediation of a local translator, with great hospitality, and between alternated rounds of coffee and tea, explained to us all they were going through.

In 2014, approximately 12.500 Bedouins residing in different clusters of families (*qabā'il*, in Arabic, sing. *qabīla),* dispersed in the eastern areas of Ramallah and Jerusalem up to the western foothills of the Jordan Valley, found themselves subject to an Israeli Civil Administration plan to relocate them to the lands of al-Nuweima, in an area of 1,460 *dunum,* near Jericho. The master plan was composed of four interrelated residential plans (and two transportation plans) focusing on the different communities subject to relocation and settlement in the Al Nuweima *Camp*, as it was called by the Bedouin.

The schemes suggested a planified use of the area, as residential slots, industrial zones, engineering facilities, cemeteries, open (or archaeological) areas in addition to roads and public transportation stations. They were numbered as scheme 1419, scheme 1418, scheme 2/1417, and scheme 1/1417. The total number of Bedouin communities proposed for transfer to al-Nuweima adds more than 20 *qabā'il* belonging to different tribes and clans, such as al-Ka'abneh, al-Rashaydah, and al-Jahhalin. These groups are part of the 46 Bedouin communities in the Central West Bank that have been under constant threat of forced displacement at least since 2014. (Amara *et al.* 102).

Such reality denounces not only the continuous attempts of forced settlement and the efforts to establish an Israeli geo-demographic hegemony, but also signals the continuity of the Nakba[2] and connection to the specific plans of forced sedentarization *(istitan qasri)*, which make up the policy of occupation of the territory and domination of its resources. In this context, al-Nuweima has been transformed into one of the locations for the resettlement of Bedouin communities over the last years:

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2   Al Nakba is the Arabic term used to designate the expulsion of the Palestinians from their homes and land in 1948, and thereafter. The word may be translated as "catastrophe", or preferably "tragedy" since it describes a human feeling of deep anguish. The term has been naturalized in the English language literature on the history of Palestine.

> Israel is targeting all Palestinian Bedouins within the E-1 area, particularly those in Khan Al-Ahmar, to relocate them, together with other Bedouin communities outside the E-1, to three main sites: an existing site near the Abu Dis garbage dump called Al-Jabal (known also as Jahlain-East), and a new site at Nu'eimeh, north of Jericho, which was approved by the Israeli Civil Administration in May 2013 but rejected by both the Bedouins and the Palestinian Authority. An additional less known site, Armonot Hashmonaim (known also as al-Fasayil), is also located in the Jordan Valley, north of Jericho. (Amara *et al.* 109-110)

The community we visited were members of the *al-Rashaydah* clan, part of which already inhabited al-Nuweima, and lived off these lands since their forced displacement from the Naqab[3] in 1948-51. They were Palestinian refugees, and as most Palestinian refugees of Bedouin origin, they had also chosen not to be accommodated in the refugee camps, preferring to reproduce their nomadic lifestyle, even if that meant living under very harsh conditions.

When interviewed in 2014 by Ahmad Heneiti, the community leader Abu Suleiman stated,

> Of course Bedouins are scattered in the West Bank. They refused to live in camps like the rest of the Palestine refugees because they were hoping to return quickly to their homeland [mainly in the Naqab a.n.]. Furthermore, Bedouins, in nature, reside in deserts and their economy is highly dependent on the desert along with their livestock, particularly, camels. In order to preserve their traditional way of life, they chose to avoid residence in cities, villages, and camps so as to not be confined and lose their culture and traditions. (qtd.in Heneiti 2014, 8).

It was considered more honorable, and dignifying, to live in scarcity and hardship while maintaining nomadic lifestyle and culture, than to forgo their ancestral traditions.

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3   Arabic term corresponding to the Hebrew Negev.

While some Bedouin *qabāʾil* from the Naqab had migrated to Jordan in the 1950s, most remained in the Jordan Valley region, readapting to the given social, geographic, and political realities. Like any traditional Bedouin tribe, their survival, lifestyle and culture depended on the possibility of moving from one area to another, adapting to the available grazing and whatever sparse resources the land could offer. Freedom of movement was critical for the maintenance of living conditions, even if and when income was completed with eventual part-time jobs in nearby towns. The survival of the social fabric within each clan and among both friendly and rival tribes depended on the maintenance of nomadic culture. This included the economy built over a set of agricultural activities related to mobility (roughly 90% of Bedouins are either entirely or partially dependent on livestock for income), but also very particular domestic customs and traditions that depend crucially on a given amount of family space.

At a certain point in the conversation, the *mukhtar* took out and unfolded a map, as if he were holding an entity that did not fit into the setting. He kneeled on the floor, and put the map on his chair, while trying to find the best position to address its writings and explain its meaning. The map had been handed to him by Israeli officials, with the intention of informing him of the previously and unilaterally-decided destiny of his lands. The first element to draw one's attention was clearly the name of the map, in English, and in very large font, reading "Final Alternative". Several attempts to relocate and settle the semi-nomadic peoples of the Jordan Valley had preceded the al-Nuweima Plan.

Image 3. With the help of a translator, the *mukhtar* shows us the small slot of land reserved in the Israeli planification for the Al Nuweima Camp. Photograph taken by A.Clemesha, Dec. 2014.

Al Rashaydah village in Al Nuweimah, December 1914. all rights reserved A. Clemesha.

The smaller writings on the map, in Arabic, began with the name of the project: "Region of Western Al Rasheydah" (or al-Rashaydah Western Village); the number of the project: 1417/1; the district: Ariha (that is, Jericho); the space of this project: 84 *dunum*, and the scale of the map: 1/2500. The plan, as indicated on the map and specified in the legends, was to completely transform those

approximately 84 *dunum* (84.000 square meters), from the current reality of 95,8% of "agricultural area" which the *al-Rashaydah* freely occupied according to their needs and traditions, into a village planified according to a logic of land occupation that was alien to their needs. More than 30% of the area was to be divided into fixed slots of land, with no designated agricultural area. Also in Arabic, came the information that the map was issued by the "Supreme Regulatory Council" of "The Civil Emirate of Judea and Samaria", a biblical terminology that is used exclusively by the Israeli government to designate the Occupied West Bank.

When the Olso Accords (1993-95) divided the Occupied Palestinian Territories into areas A, B, and C[4], they created a very efficient means of control over Palestinian land, according to its level of interest to the Occupying Power. Area A, comprised of the largest cities, and the largest Palestinian demographic density, fell under the – then created – Palestinian Authority administration; area B, formed by smaller villages, was less densely populated and fell under joint administration; while the majority of the area of the West Bank (approximately 70%), including most of the Jordan Valley, the Western margins of the Jordan river, vast portions of agricultural lands, and water resources, became Area C, under full Israeli military administration and control, and subject to intense settlement building. The presence of scattered Bedouin communities

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4   Specifically, as part of the Oslo Accords, the Taba Agreement of 28 September 1995, also designated as Oslo II, divided the Palestinian Territories into areas A, B, and C. Area A comprised the six main West Bank towns (Jenin, Nablus, Tulkarm, Qalqilya, Ramallah and Bethlehem) and Jerico, previously evacuated. It represented 3% of the West Bank territory, holding 20% of the population, and almost 3/4 of the Gaza Strip, with no territorial contiguity. Area B represented 27% of the West Bank and the majority of Palestinian villages, that is, approximately 450 in the West Bank. Together, Areas A and B represented 90% of the Palestinian population of the West Bank. Area C covered the remaining 70% of the territory, and only 10% of the population, including most of the Bedouin communities and clusters that survived the 1948 Nakba and resettled in this region that was placed under full Israeli military administration and control.

in Area C is possibly the largest on-the-ground obstacle to the free exercise of Israeli plans for this region, and physical impediment to full annexation as well.

The impression one had from listening to the *mukhtar's* explanation of the map, and seeing the reality of that very plain and small village of the *al-Rashaydah*, was that the future that awaited these people, or their children, once forcibly "adjusted" to the spacial configuration of the planified Camp, would be the dissolution of their tribal system, society and culture. Eventually, they would probably melt into the poorest social classes in the outskirts of big cities, surviving under the most precarious working conditions, a situation that will be worse for the female population as a result of the decrease in the private family space and mobility in settlements compared to the traditional Bedouin communities. At that moment of the visit, one could not be sure that the intention was to erase their Bedouin identity, but that was clearly how we could imagine the result of the Al Nuweima Plan. At the same time, it was quite obvious that the act of gathering together the numerous Bedouin *qabāʾil* that were spread out, along large portions of Area C in the West Bank, and transferring them into one or more large Camp (as was the case of Al Nuweima) by means of acts of demolition of existing Bedouin structures, and eviction orders from the Occupying army, would free these valuable lands for Israeli strategic control, and exploitation.

According to Ahmad Heneiti, it is worth noting that when the Israeli Civil Administration conducted the designing process of the plan, it did not consult or communicate with Bedouins in the targeted communities. Bedouins, on the other hand, believe that the plan is "inconvenient for their needs and incompatible with their lifestyle and culture which they have managed to sustain in spite of pressures attempting their eradication" (Heneiti 2014, 28). Furthermore,

the plan ignored the fact that approximately 32 families and 300 individuals belonging to the *al-Rashaydah* already occupied the land, as the plan had no mention of any pre-existing residential area when noting the current situation. Hence, it did not accurately reflect the given situation, nor the pre-existing, or current, uses of the land.

Possibly the main problem in this plan, beyond compulsory displacement itself (and demolition of the original Bedouin structures), is that it tries to present settlement and planification as progress, to a people for whom permanent and fixed settlement means alienation from their culture, identity and means of survival. Unsurprisingly, the planified Camp did not leave enough space for minimal agricultural activities, the enactment of existing social relations, and reproduction of family ties, nor did it take into consideration the space necessary for family expansion as generations go by. It necessarily implied dependency on the consumption of Israeli products and eventually some form of humanitarian aid. The sedentarization and grouping of the previously scattered Bedouin *qabāʾil* did not accompany the building of adequate urban infrastructure, in terms of schooling, health system, water and sewage, nor did it allow for the reproduction of basic and traditional Bedouin means of life.

Sedentarization as a means of control

The approximately 12500 Bedouin individuals targeted for transfer to al-Nuweima were a small portion, that is 8%, of the 150 thousand inhabiting the Jordan Valley. What the immense majority had in common however was their forced displacement in 1948-50 from the Naqab desert along with the cultural traits they had developed in their long history of migrations and semi-nomadic lifestyle.

Although the "Bedouin question" had been a challenge to the XIXth century designated modernization attempts (including policies of land control) by the governments of the Ottoman Empire and later by the British Mandate, it was with the creation of the State of Israel that urbanization and forced settlement plans emerged with greater frequency and coercion. Until the 1960s, Bedouin traditions and the tribal form of organization and economics had some autonomy under Jordanian rule (Amara *et al.* 110). It is from this decade on that the Israeli policy of "enclavization", according to Ghazi Falah (qtd. in Nasasra 2017), starts to use special control strategies such as relocation, resettlement, and restructuring, resulting in a violent, institutionalized way and without the participation of native communities in the decision-making process (Nasasra 2017, 212).

Even within the framework of the Olso accords, in 1996 the Bedouin communities continued to suffer from Israeli attacks to confiscate lands and to Judaize the Palestinian territory, as pointed out by Ahmad Amara et al: "at the outset of the "peace process" the number of settlers in the West Bank stood at 238.060, rising to 671.007 by the end of 2018, reflecting a 182% increase." (Amara *et al.* 105). Such growth denounces the contemporaneity of Israeli efforts of forced displacement of Bedouins and the fragmentation of their social-structures and traditions, indicating that the Palestinians' expulsion from their territories did not stop in 1996. Today, the West Bank Bedouin comprise up to 70% refugees, who were displaced from the Naqab Desert in 1948-1951. Those "in the north and west of the West Bank are comprised of small individual families, whereas those in the southern and central regions as well as the Jordan Valley are comprised of highly populated communities" (Heneiti 2014, 8) including the aforementioned main qabāʾil of al-Ka'abneh, al-Rashaydah, and al-Jahhalin.

Aspects and narratives of Bedouin Culture and Identity

According to Heneiti, despite Israeli efforts to disrupt traditional Palestinian cultural forms of organization, Bedouin communities were able to preserve many aspects of their semi-nomadic cultural characteristics, including oral traditions, views of the past, and stories related to themselves and their land. (Heneiti 2016, 55). Therefore, it is possible to observe the maintenance of family traditions, gender expectations and the relationship with religion, education and the land.

As exposed by Nuzha Allassad Alhuzail, the Bedouin communities are heterogeneous in lifestyle, form of settlement, status and social affiliation. (Allssad Alhuzail 1). In most qabāʾil, the families are composed of two or three generations involved in traditional logics of family honor and kinship bases, a characteristic observed in the spatial organization of the community. According to Heneiti,

The scattered tents or corrugated metal houses of Bedouin families reflect one of the main features of spatial architecture in these communities, in which distance between families is no less than fifty meters. Proximity is maintained between houses of the same family, such as a father and his married children. Bedouin culture does not allow married sons to live with their wives in the family house of their parents, as is common in Palestinian villages. (Heneiti 2016, 55)

Following gender norms and the patriarchal structure, marriages are frequently polygamous, with approximately six to ten children in each marriage, all living relatively close to each other. The family composition of Bedouin communities reinforces the traditional foundations of valuing the Duruk al-bayt (sanctity of the house, in Arabic), an area that involves all aspects of the Bedouin hamula (extended family, in Arabic), including the family houses and

facilities, stockyards and enough space reserved for women to move and conduct economic activities and chores. (Heneiti 2016, 64), and that traditionally keeps other families and dwellings at least 50 meters apart. The housing area, as a whole, would have at least 3500 sq. m. allowing for the "accommodation of housing barracks, sheep barracks, hospitality barracks, kitchens and bathrooms as well as other barracks for fodder and fowl", keeping enough room to allow for a distance between the hospitality and housing barracks.

One of the strategies to resist Israeli police action, such as forced displacement to refugee camps or cities, land confiscation, and demolitions, has been the strategic fragmentation of the family nucleus into smaller dispersed clusters (each housing unit occupying an area of the land of approximately 500 m2). While some family members take the goats and sheep to graze in greener areas for three to five months of the year, the majority of the family members remain in their location of settlement in order to avoid displacement and demolitions by Israeli forces. (Heneiti 2016, 55). With this, the group occupies both the village and farther grazing lands at the same time, resisting displacement, demolitions, and land confiscation.

In the Al Nuweima Plan, the spatial division within the plots was limited to the area of the house itself: a single housing block may include two housing units, up to two-story each, with an area of 170 square meters for each story, with the possibility of adding a basement and a storeroom with a maximum area of 25 square meters. "As for the livestock and agricultural areas, the plan does not engage any agricultural activity, whether animal or botanical, i.e. there is no space allocated for barns, livestock, grazing or planting" (Heneiti 2014, 25). Other restrictions are the impossibility for young couples to move into separate houses, according to Bedouin traditions, and the absence of sufficient space between houses. This would lead to an absolutely non-Bedouin logic of

overcrowded dwellings and family complications. In addition to the incompatibility with Bedouin traditions, unlicensed dwellings would once again be subject to demolition by the state, potentially perpetuating the cycle of unlicensed construction, demolition, forced displacement and forced resettlement.

Restrictions on the role and mobility of Bedouin women

Although the patriarchal organization of Bedouin communities ends up designating the women's space as the domestic sphere, it must be considered that the spatial arrangement of the clusters allows for a wide area of transit for these women, given that the domestic sphere is not limited to the house itself. Their social role as Bedouin women inside the traditional network involves activities such as caring for children, the house, religious activities, agriculture, and livestock. The majority of tasks that each one of them is responsible for can be carried out in environments in which those who are involved are part of the family nucleus.

For these communities, the space of public experience, in contrast to the private environment, is connected to the daily masculine world, such as economic and political activities outside the family nucleus, and community festivities, moments in which women can relate to people outside their families, according to social rules. Thus, although the female space in traditional clusters is limited to the domestic sphere, this in itself still guarantees freedom of access to different physical spaces, unlike the reality experienced by Bedouin women in planified settlements, "camps", or cities.

With the transition to sedentarization in settlements or cities there is a reduction in the domestic space and, consequently, in women's freedom. Lila Abu-Lughod argues that since it is not culturally acceptable for Bedouin women to be seen in public on account of the modesty norms that forbid women to have any

contact with men, there is a restriction on women's movement and services, left solely with the roles of wife and mother. (Abu-Lughod qtd. in Abu-Rabia-Queder 7). It can be said that the patriarchal structure is not only maintained but the space for women to circulate in the settlements is restricted. With the smaller housing area, the destitute agriculture and livestock space, and the agglomeration of new groups of Bedouin communities that are not traditionally part of the original tribal nucleus of each woman, the feminine space is restricted to the physical limitation of the houses themselves, and the entire social role and economic life of the Bedouin woman is restricted to her activities as a religious woman, mother, and wife. According to the Bedouin women interviewed by Nuzha Allassad Alhuzail, the situation only reinforces that the existence of women, the main victim of the modernization process promoted by the State of Israel, is strictly associated with their roles in the family and in the community. (Alhuzail 4)

As responsible for the control of the house and female niches, the domestic axis of existence, Bedouin women found in religion the strength to resist and maintain some of the traditions of their community after the forced settlement. (Alhuzail 5). The growth of Islamic religiosity in family environments and relationships can also be observed in the preservation of conservative values, education of children and occupation of women in the spaces of the camps, reinforcing gender expectations.

Education, orality, and resistance

The transmission of family values, privacy, and honor, are very important in Bedouin culture, especially in the process of educating their children. The education of young people in Bedouin communities, while linked to both their Islamic precepts and particular tribal values, emphasizes orality, and a strong role for

women in this process. However, unlike the Bedouin oral tradition, the Israeli educational project seeks to make the production and transmission of knowledge, based on modes of orality, invalid in the new "modern" system. (Richter-Devroe 39)

Another point of conflict between the Israeli educational institutes' perception of modernity and the Bedouin traditions is the emphasis on mixed schools, that is, the same environments for boys and girls. This model constitutes one of the factors in the school dropout of girls, who, clinging to traditional values of gender separation, chose to abandon school and devote themselves to household chores (Abu-Rabia-Queder 5).

In addition to the mixed environments, the need to walk long distances to reach the nearest available school, frequently passing next to settler outposts or Israeli settlements, is considered unsafe and viewed as another attack on parental authority, protection, and preservation of traditional values:

> Distance between their vicinities of residence and schools is perceived by parents as a decisive reason to halt their enrolment in school, as the personal security of females (which is associated with family honor) is considered more important than education or other considerations. (Heneiti 18)

The majority of Bedouin communities are marginalized in regard to the availability of nearby schools. Schools are only available in two out of approximately 41 Bedouin communities in the central area of the West Bank, which directly affects access to schooling for young people of both genders. However, as shown above, Bedouin women, in particular, are deprived from education, being the main victims of the colonial process and forced sedentarization of traditional communities:

The phenomenon of Bedouin girl dropouts exemplifies the marginalization of women as passive victims in the process of

modernizing a traditional society. The case at hand shows that, when a modern state offered Bedouins an education as part of the modernization process, it did little to consider the needs of the women or the community's traditional values. Israel's coeducation policy essentially discriminates against Bedouin women, creating obstacles to their education while Bedouin men have undeterred access to schooling. The modern concept of coeducation does not benefit a society that forbids women to appear in public. (Abu-Rabia-Queder 14)

The process of mandatory sedentarization affects women's centrality in the transmission of Bedouin values and Palestinian history for children through orality. With the shift to settlements or cities and the women's reclusion in domestic environments, family education is affected precisely by the interruption in exchange of knowledge and experiences between community members. In this regard, Bedouin women, as mothers, assume the responsibility of transmitting the Palestinian Bedouin heritage to young people, preserving aspects of orality.

> Women's songs and oral poetry contest the Israeli official discourse directly, by providing very valuable, historical counter-narratives (such as references to Palestine, to Bedouin tribal lands, to specific places, norms, events, and lived experiences and memories of their pre-urbanised and pre-1948 lives, etc.). But beyond the narrative, they also function as embodied systems of learning, teaching, storing, and, to a certain extent, of transmitting indigenous knowledge. (Richter-Devroe 52)

Countering the centrality of orality in Bedouin communities, the colonial project invested in the transition of orality to writing within schools as a counterpoint to traditional morals and principles passed on from parents to their children through generations. In most schools under Israeli command the historical narratives are those promoted by the state itself, whose overall speech is based on

the idea that the land is designated to the Jewish people. At the same time, they seek to separate the Bedouin population from the rest of the Palestinians, promoting the idea of "our Bedouin" or "good Arabs." (Nasasra 2017, p.11; 20).

Although the first association is the incompatibility of the given educational system with the Bedouin tradition, the point of contrast is in the policy of forced settlement and fragmentation of the social organization of native communities. When forced to move from their traditional physical spaces and way of life, Bedouins are constantly having to deal with efforts to uproot these communities from the modernization process – spatial and educational. In this sense, the written tradition can't be seen as the main enemy, since it is through this that many elements of culture can be preserved. Formal education, and literacy, when performed by individuals from the indigenous community, becomes an ally of the Palestinians in the resistance against Israeli domination, both in the sense of denouncing the abuses of the settlers and the state, and of preserving histories, songs, poetry, and even the Arabic vocabulary.

The maintenance of orality is one of the essential points of Palestinian resistance given its centrality in the forms of Palestinian agency. According to Mansour Nasasra, the claim for the right of return to their lands of origin and the maintenance of the Arabic vocabulary against the Hebrew are related to enabling the confrontation of the Zionist colonizing discourse:

> Bedouin adopted the return to their land (al'awda ila al'diyar) as a historical reimagining of their past. The act of remembering the past, especially historical land and names of places, played a crucial role in Bedouin survival tactics. They strengthened their land claims by using memory to tell the authorities that they would never forget their land. Stories of the past narrated by Bedouin emphasized the role of memory as a survival strategy. (Nasasra 2017, 224)

More than opposing the colonizing discourse, the maintenance of Palestinian history and vocabulary strengthens the identity issue. Therefore, while physical permanence – the Palestinian sumud (steadfastness) – has become a symbol of resistance against Israeli expansionism, orality brought identity to the field of resistance.

In this sense, the relation between a Bedouin clan and the lands they inhabit carries not only a very strong degree of identification, but also a clear delimitation between and among each group. As stated by Mansour Nasasra, "ordinary Bedouins identify themselves as natives by referring to themselves as "ahl al-ard" or "al-bilad", the owners of the land." (Nasasra 2017, 18). The opposition observed in the statement is not related only to the colonizers but also as a delimitation even with the other Palestinian communities. This self-affirmation, when appropriated by the colonizing discourse – as "good Arabs", and "Bedouin problem" – and added to the process of forced sedentarization, promote the weakening of the association between the different Palestinian peoples.

As a result of internal colonialist practices, the Bedouin lost part of their culture, were forced to live in urban villages against their will, lost almost all their land, were separated from the other Palestinian communities, and were forced to work as cheap labor (Nasasra 2017, 12)

The impacts of the al-Nuweima Plan are not different from those evidenced by Nasasra and, although in process, will therefore be felt over each and every aspect of the Bedouin living conditions, from their economy and subsistence, to family life, family expansion, freedom, and mobility of women, child education and schooling, their overall lifestyle and culture, and even the level of distinction among communities and their involvement in forms of organization of resistance.

Conclusion

Since 2014, the announcement of the al-Nuweima Plan has increased concerns and tensions for the Bedouin communities of the Jordan Valley, which have been looking for ways to resist Israeli attempts at forced displacement, demolitions, and settlement in the *camps*. Intending to appropriate native lands for the project of Judaization of the territory, several areas of traditional native life were the target of violent policies of domination, eviction, and colonization.

Among the different forms of attacks against the Bedouin organization we have mentioned the dismantling the traditional movement of the *qabāʾil*, the fragmentation of family nuclei, and forced settlement in camps or cities, all of which impose a break with the agro-pastoral economy and way of life. In terms of culture and social relations, the imposition of the modern and mixed educational system, contradicts and even opposes traditional forms of Bedouin education that preserves orality and spaces separated by gender, and leads to a direct clash between the history and the discourse of the colonized and the colonizer.

In this way, in addition to looking for alternatives for physical, social, and economic survival, the field of conflict touches on the question of Bedouin and Palestinian identity, which is constantly questioned by the Israeli state authority. The forced settlement of communities such as the *al-Rashaydah,* reveals more than the cruel reality experienced by Bedouin communities under Israeli occupation. It also demonstrates the modes of resistance of the Palestinian people and ways in which they have been struggling to maintain their land, livelihood, traditions and culture.

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Cultural Responses to the Crisis of Democracy in Germany: The Center for Political Beauty and "Sucht nach uns!" (Search for us)

Mary Cosgrove

Since 2017 the largest opposition party in the German Bundestag (parliament) has been the Alternativ für Deutschland (Alternative for German, henceforth AfD), a right-wing party with close ties to fascist and neo-Nazi groups and organizations within Germany.[1] While the political center continues to govern in a coalition of Christian Democrats and Social Democrats led by Angela Merkel, the rise of the far right on the German political spectrum demonstrates the extent to which the political middle-ground – the fundament of West German politics since the end of the Second World War and of German politics since unification in 1990 – has been losing electoral support in recent years.

Postwar German democracy is founded ethically on a commitment to honor the dignity, human rights, and personal freedoms of individuals and thereby prevent the rise of fascism; these principles have been enshrined in the German constitution (Basic Law) since its inception in May 1949.[2] The AfD threatens these principles. This is clearly expressed in the party's anti-migrant

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1   See Charles Lees, "The 'Alternative for Germany': The Rise of Right-Wing Populism at the Heart of Europe," Politics 38, no. 3 (2018): 295-310; also N. Berbuir, M. Lewandowsky and J. Siri, "The AfD and its Sympathisers: Finally a Rght-Wing Populist Movement in Germany?" German Politics 24 (2014): 154–78.

2   Articles 1 and 2 set out the inviolability of human dignity and personal freedom. See: https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_gg/englisch_gg.html#p0019 [accessed December 4, 2020].

stance, Islamophobia, and call for a move away from Germany's culture of Holocaust remembrance.[3] Germany's memory culture is based on acknowledgement of guilt and responsibility for the crimes of National Socialism; it developed gradually in the decades after 1945 and has become established, institutionalized, and normalized, particularly since unification in 1990. Central to it is empathy for the Jewish victim other, a value that is being eroded, as the recent rise in anti-Semitism in Germany demonstrates.[4]

This article examines a "backlash" cultural response to the attempted erosion of ethical values so vital to post-war German democracy by focussing on a highly controversial multimedia political-aesthetic "action": "Sucht nach uns!" (search for us) staged in December 2019 by art collective the Center for Political Beauty (das Zentrum für Politische Schönheit, henceforth ZPS).[5] The article

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3   This agenda is set out clearly in the party's campaign manifesto for the 2017 federal elections. On p. 48 the AfD takes issue with German memory culture. See: https://opus-hslb.bsz-bw.de/frontdoor/deliver/index/docId/542/file/Anlagen+01+-+20.pdf [accessed December 4, 2020].

4   The right-wing attack in October 2019 on a synagogue in Halle in the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt is a prominent example of this trend. See "Germany: mass shooting attempt that killed two was antisemitic attack, says minister," Guardian, October 9, 2019. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/oct/09/two-people-killed-in-shooting-in-german-city-of-halle; also "Suspect in Halle synagogue shooting shows no remorse on second day of trial," The Local, July 23, 2020. Available at: https://www.thelocal.de/20200723/halle-synagogue-mistake-not-a-mistake-insists-neo-nazi-at-german-trial. Rising anti-Semitism is not confined to Germany. See "Jews in Europe alarmed by rising antisemitism," Deutsche Welle, December 7, 2018, available at: https://www.dw.com/en/jews-in-europe-alarmed-by-rising-anti-semitism/a-46626142 [all accessed 4 December, 2020]. On the evolution of postwar German memory culture see Aleida Assmann, Shadows of Trauma: Memory and the Politics of Postwar Identity, trans. by Sarah Clift (New York: Fordham UP, 2015); also Stuart Taberner, Paul Cooke (eds.), German Culture, Politics and Literature into the Twenty-First Century: Beyond Normalization (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2006); Anne Fuchs, Mary Cosgrove (eds.), German Memory Contests: The Quest for Identity in Literature, Film and Discourse (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2006).

5   See: "Gedenkstätte mit 'Asche der Opfer' in Berlin errichtet," RBB 24, December 2, 2019, https://www.rbb24.de/politik/beitrag/2019/12/zentrum-fuer-politische-schoenheit-gedenkstaette-berlin.html?fbclid=IwAR0x2PD4CegU8M--1U40YORyEC_6NBuKLYN

considers the effectiveness of the "shock" aesthetics used by the ZPS – the main feature of "Sucht nach uns!" was the display of allegedly authentic bone fragments and ashes of Jewish Holocaust victims in central Berlin. Such an aesthetic choice begs the question whether in this case protest against the rise of the far right and the attack on established memory culture it represents risked undermining the ethical commitment to the memory of the Jewish victim other. In the following I will provide some background on German memory culture in recent decades and also on the AfD. Against this backdrop, I will then analyse "Sucht nach uns!".

Memory contests, normalization, and the cultural

Jeffrey Alexander's (2012) concept of cultural trauma provides a useful framework for understanding how German memory culture has developed in the decades since unification. Alexander comes from the field of cultural sociology which examines how cultural structures and meanings penetrate the social via symbols, narratives, codes, and patterns of meaning. His concept of cultural trauma thus denotes a cognitive process of construction of and identification with a trauma as mediated by a particular group or collective. Trauma, he argues, is a socially constructed and highly mediated work of imagination which is broadcast by particular historically contingent agents ("carrier groups" as he calls them) within and ideally beyond the overall traumatized collective (16). Politically the objective is to (re)gain agency by winning official recognition of and perhaps also compensation for the grave injuries

oLjBPabKhL4ADUBiRdNC44MY;, also Arno Widmann, "Asche von Nazi Opfern? Neue Aktion vom Zentrum für Politische Schönheit," Berliner Zeitung, December 2, 2019, https://www.berliner-zeitung.de/politik-gesellschaft/zentrum-fuer-politische-schoenheit-errichtet-saeule-gegen-verrat-an-der-demokratie-li.2451. The "Sucht nach uns!" project website can be viewed at: https://politicalbeauty.de/sucht-nach-uns.html [all accessed December 4, 2020].

sustained by a given group, also to assign responsibility for the trauma. Ethically the objective is to expand the circle of the "we," to create social solidarity, so that other social groups who have not experienced the trauma can nevertheless recognize it, its impact on victims, and thus empathize with the affected parties (Alexander 6).

This approach to trauma is a performance very much like a speech act, Alexander suggests; it is a claim about social reality that is communicated to different audiences, and if successful it may – depending on the robustness of institutions and the distribution of resources – result in cultural reclassification of history and group identity at various institutional levels: legal, aesthetic, governmental etc (16). Groups that may not have been recognized as traumatized on the social, cultural, and political levels can shift in status to being viewed thus officially. This development is part of the cultural trauma process. Likewise, perpetrator groups may be identified in the process and may even take responsibility for past crimes. For the victim collective, this shift in identity via an external process enters the group's self-understanding and its master narrative about itself. This meaning-making process is, if successful, ultimately a process of normalization or "routinization": as Alexander puts it, the "lessons" of trauma become objectified in monuments, museums etc., and the powerfully affective discourse of trauma gradually recedes over time (27). In sum, "cultural trauma" denotes a process whereby "new meaningful and causal relationships between previously unrelated events, structures, perceptions, and actions" are created (6).

The ways in which German memory culture developed and matured since 1990 could be described in terms of Alexander's cultural trauma process. A growing awareness of and empathy for the experience of Jewish victims had been in train in West Germany since the late 1950s; it continued through the 1960s, with events such as the Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt am Main (1963-1965)

contributing to general public knowledge about the experience of victimization. While West German law proved inadequate to deal with Nazi crimes, during the trial Jewish survivors of the concentration camp gave testimony and thus public expression to their experiences.[6] The publication and translation of victim testimonies, such as Primo Levi's *Se questo è uno uomo* (If this is a Man, 1947) and Austro-Jewish Auschwitz survivor Jean Améry's collection of essays on existence in the concentration camp, *At the Mind's Limits* (1966), also reached the German public during the 1960s.[7] In 1979 the American TV miniseries, *Holocaust*, starring Meryl Streep, was broadcast over four consecutive nights on West German television, reaching approximately half of the West German adult population.[8] Subsequently, the *Gesellschaft für deutsche Sprache* (the Society for the German Language, Germany's most important government-sponsored language society), determined "Holocaust" to be the "Word of the Year 1979."[9] The very public "Historikerstreit" (Historians' Dispute) of the 1980s is another milestone in the history of this cultural trauma process. West German conservatives and left-of-center historians and intellectuals argued about how the period

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6   For an account of the public response to the Auschwitz trial see David O. Pendas, *The Frankfurt Auschwitz Trial, 1963-1965: Genocide, History and the Limits of the Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005). The German-Jewish playwright and novelist Peter Weiss attended the trial during these years and from the notes he took he developed a landmark documentary style drama that gave the victims a central voice. See Peter Weiss, *The Investigation: Oratorio in 11 Cantos*, trans. by Alexander Gross (London: Marion Boyars, 1966).

7   Primo Levi, *Se questo è uno uomo* (Einaudi, 1958 [1947]). The English and German translations were published respectively in 1959 and 1961. Jean Améry, *At the Mind's Limits: Contemplations by a Survivor of Auschwitz and Its Realities* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1980). The German original was published in 1966.

8   See Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005), p. 811; also a *Spiegel* article from January 29, 1979, " 'Holocaust': Die Vergangenheit kommt zurück." Available at: https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-40350860.html [accessed December 4, 2020].

9   See the Society's online archive at: https://gfds.de/aktionen/wort-des-jahres/# [accessed December 4, 2020].

of National Socialism should be understood in historiography and also what this meant for German self-understanding in the present. This dispute ultimately made a significant case against right-wing revisionist tendencies and helped consolidate the self-reflexive position of guilt and responsibility that became even more influential after unification.[10]

These kinds of debates continued after 1989, but they also became more diversified, nuanced, and inclusive. Through a process that Anne Fuchs and I have called "memory contests," gradually the unified nation enshrined the memory of Jewish and other victims most prominently in the urban space of its capital and also in different locations across the nation. Thus the Monument to the Murdered Jews of Europe – the subject of memory debates throughout the 1990s that was eventually inaugurated in 2005 – is located at the heart of the city center next to the Brandenburg Gate and the Reichstag.[11] After intense campaigning, Roma and Sinti victims of Nazism also eventually won recognition, as did homosexual victims of the totalitarian regime: both groups are commemorated in separate monuments in Berlin's Tierpark (inaugurated respectively in 2012 and 2008), across from the Jewish Monument.[12] At the same time,

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10 See Rudolf Augstein et al., *Forever in the Shadow of Hitler? Original Documents of the Historikerstreit, the Controversy surrounding the Singularity of the Holocaust*, trans. by James Knowlton and Truett Cates (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1993).

11 See Fuchs, Cosgrove, "Introduction: Germany's Memory Contests and the Management of the Past," in *German Memory Contests*, ed. by Fuchs and Cosgrove, pp. 1-21. On the Holocaust Memorial and other controversies see Bill Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past: United Germany and the Legacy of the Third Reich* (London: Routledge, 2002). For an informed view of the debates surrounding the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin see James E. Young, *At Memory's Edge: After Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000). Young was part of the commission appointed to find an appropriate memorial for German commemoration of the Jewish victims of National Socialism.

12 Both groups have had to fight for recognition. On the Roma case see "Roma communities never got a break: Roma Holocaust Memorial Day 2020," Roma Education Fund, August 10, 2020. Available at: https://www.romaeducationfund.org/roma-communities-never-

German victims of the Second World War and their descendants were also voicing their memories and experiences of victimization by recalling the trauma of the expulsion of ethnic Germans from the east and the Allied area bombings that devastated German cities such as Dresden and Hamburg.[13]

German memory contests of this period evidenced the formation of a mature and democratic discursive culture that could deal robustly with revisionist challenges which threatened to dislodge the commemoration of victims' suffering and the acceptance of German guilt and responsibility from the center of the culture. The "memory district" in central Berlin with its various monuments, as well as the nearby Jewish museum designed by architect Daniel Libeskind, thus demonstrate how the lessons of the trauma caused by National Socialism have become objectified in the capital city's landscape. Overall this process is one of normalization which shows the "carrier" groups – in this instance the victims of National Socialism – gaining official recognition from the political establishment of the perpetrator nation: their trauma is mediated by a material culture that expresses how central the memory of victims and the memory of German perpetration is to the self-understanding of the Berlin Republic.

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got-a-break-roma-holocaust-memorial-day-2020/ [accessed December 4, 2020]; also Sławomir Kapralski, "The Aftermath of the Roma Genocide: From Implicit Memories to Commemoration," in *The Nazi Genocide of the Roma: Reassessment and Commemoration*, ed. by Anton Weiss-Wendt (London: Berghahn, 2013), pp. 229-51. On the Memorial to the homosexuals persecuted under National Socialism see Anika Oettler, *Das Berliner Denkmal für die im National Sozialismus verfolgten Homosexuellen: Entstehung, Verortung, Wirkung* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2017).

13 For an account of these memory debates see Bill Niven (ed.), *Germans as Victims: Remembering the Past in Contemporary Germany* (London: Palgrave, 2006), also Assmann, *Shadows of Trauma*. On Dresden see Anne Fuchs, *After the Dresden Bombing: Pathways of Memory, 1945 to the Pres*ent (London: Palgrave, 2013), and on the German expellees see Rainer Schulze, "The Politics of Memory: Flight and Expulsion of German Populations after the Second World War and German Collective Memory," *National Identities* 8 (2006): 367-82.

Alexander maintains that once the trauma process has reached this stage of official recognition and mediation, the powerful affect of trauma gradually recedes, as "the triumph of the mundane" sets in (27). However, the German example also shows that normalization is a fragile state that can be undermined. Part of this is down to a complacency borne of the relative success of normalization, as Wulf Kansteiner (2017) puts it: Germany's "robust sense of pride anchored […] in a widely shared belief in Germany's extraordinary accomplishments in the arena of memory politics" (307). Despite the complacency of normalization, Germany's memory culture has been challenged consistently over the years, and, since the rise of the AfD, with increasing ferocity.[14] This has seen a calculated strategy to subvert the trauma process on behalf of the allegedly downtrodden German nation (more on this below). In the next section, I give some background on the AfD; I then analyse the rhetoric that some of their most prominent members employ in their effort to misappropriate, for their own political ends, the victim position within the cultural trauma process.

From the 180-degree about-turn to millennium bird-droppings

The AfD began in 2013 as a Eurosceptic party with liberal-economic politics and a conservative social agenda. Initially a minor presence in the German political sphere, their great opportunity arrived in the form of the refugee crisis of 2015. They successfully

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14 On some of these challenges see, for example, Fuchs and Cosgrove (eds.), *German Memory Contests*. On the current threat to Germany's Holocaust memorials in the context of the rise of the AfD, see Derek Scally, "Holocaust Deniers Targeting German Concentration Camp Memorials," *The Irish Times*, February 4, 2020 https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/holocaust-deniers-targeting-german-concentration-camp-memorials-1.4161791 [accessed December 4, 2020].

converted this crisis into political capital by taking up a position of outrage against Angela Merkel's controversial decision to open up the country's borders to refugees. On foot of this establishment political decision, the AfD were able to whip up social divisions, resentments, and anti-migrant sentiment across Germany. Having moved significantly to the right since their inception in 2013, they entered the German Bundestag in September 2017 for the first time with a vote share of 12.6%. Heretofore such a development had been unthinkable in a country still living with the legacy of Nazism: the entry to German parliament of a far-right political party with extremists among its ranks and links to neo-Nazi and other extremist groups and networks, both national and international. The AfD is thus currently the third biggest party in the Bundestag after the CDU / CSU coalition of Merkel and the Social Democrats, and they are the biggest opposition group.[15]

Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and the coalition government's overall successful handling of the crisis, the AfD has lost some of its support; it is also riven by internal power struggles between some of the party's leaders and its extreme right members.[16] It is now seeking, with an eye on the upcoming federal elections in 2021, to exploit the backlash from some parts of the population against restriction measures imposed by the government to reduce the rate of viral infection across the country. In November 2020 AfD delegates allegedly breached security Reichstag protocols

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15 On the role of the refugee crisis in the rise of the AfD, see Robin Alexander's critical account of Merkel's decision to open the German borders in 2015: *Die Getriebenen: Merkel und die Flüchtlingspolitik – Report aus dem Innern der Macht* (Munich: Siedler, 2017). See also Lees, "The Alternative for Germany: The Rise of Right-Wing Populism at the Heart of Europe." For an interactive map of the AfD's networks see https://taz.de/Schwerpunkt-AfD/!t5495296/ [accessed December 4, 2020].

16 On the power struggles within the AfD see "Die AfD in der Krise: Das Rezept ist abgelaufen," taz, August 1, 2020. Available at: https://taz.de/Die-AfD-in-der-Krise/!5699713/ [accessed December 4, 2020].

by giving protesters and conspiracy theorists clearance to enter the building, where they heckled and filmed members of parliament and government.[17] In line with these populist tactics, since 2017 their mode of parliamentary conduct has been disruptive and strategically designed to undermine the orderly running of parliament and government. They espouse contempt for what they call the "Alt-Parteien," the "old" center-right and center-left parties of the political establishment since the founding of the West German state in 1949; against this foil they style themselves as authentic and dynamic ultra-nationalist "Patrioten" (patriots). They thus present themselves as the solution to the decline and decay of Germany at the hands of elites who over several decades have driven the country and its future into the ground by prioritizing other ethnic groups and cultures over their own people whom they have betrayed. In this vein, leading members of the party support the replacement theory whereby the white Christian West, if it continues on its current path, will be eclipsed by the Muslim other.[18]

Despite the prevalence of this type of rhetoric and (as in the case of the anti-government Covid-conspiracy protesters whom the AfD supports) also behavior, AfD Federal spokesperson and parliamentary leader Jörg Meuthen claims that the party is fundamentally a conservative bourgeois entity. And yet since early 2019 it has been under observation by the "Verfassungsschutz" (the intelligence service for the Federal Office for the Protection of the

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17 On the intimidation tactics used by conspiracy theorists who entered the Bundestag with help from the AfD, see the following recording: "Querdenker im Bundestag: "Kollegen sind physisch massiv genötigt worden," *Welt*, November 19, 2020. Available at: https://www. welt.de/politik/deutschland/video220506788/Querdenker-im-Bundestag-Kollegen-sind-physisch-massiv-genoetigt-worden.html [accessed December 4, 2020].

18 The many references to Islam in the party manifesto of 2017 make this clear. For an overview of how the AfD came to power and the challenges that face the political center in light of this shift, see Simon Garnett, "Agonies of Pluralism: Germany and the New Right," *Soundings* 69 (2018): 62-79.

Constitution) which has a department dedicated to countering right-wing terrorism.[19] It is no surprise that Meuthen's assertions about bourgeois respectability come in this rather pressured context, and also that in May 2020 the party leadership finally voted by a narrow margin to expel a prominent leader with a documented neo-Nazi background, Andreas Kalbitz. Kalbitz was moreover affiliated to an extreme far-right element within the party, "Der Flügel" (the wing) which the "Verfassungsschutz" in May 2020 officially defined as an extreme right group.[20] The party leadership subsequently dissolved "Der Flügel." Unlike Kalbitz, however, its founder, Björn Höcke, whom a German court in September 2019 determined may legally be called a fascist, was not expelled from the AfD: he and his supporters remain a strong influence within the party (indeed a third of all AfD members support those individuals who were central to "Der Flügel").[21] Despite this worrying profile, the AfD is represented in all sixteen federal states, and across those states party functionaries, members, and activists have connections to far-right organizations, from the German identitarian movement, to the anti-Islam protest movement, Pegida, and the "Burschenschaften" or right-wing student fraternities. The AfD offers such groups a public

19 See "Geheimdienst: Verfassungsschutz erklärt AfD bundesweit zum Prüffall," Spiegel-Online, January 15, 2019. Available at: https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/verfassungsschutz-erklaert-afd-bundesweit-zum-prueffall-a-1248124.html [accessed December 4, 2020].

20 Kalbitz was expelled by a narrow margin of two votes. See "AfD-Vorstand schließt Kalbitz aus Partei aus," *Spiegel*, May 15, 2020. Available at: https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/afd-vorstand-schliesst-kalbitz-aus-partei-aus-a-71850137-e360-470c-a184-12a647c23b13 [accessed December 4, 2020].

21 The "Verfassungsschutz" has no reliable proof that "Der Flügel" has in fact disbanded. See "AfD-Flügel geht offline: Verfassungsschutzchef spricht von Scheinauflösung," *Die Welt,* May 1, 2020. On Höcke's legal status as a fascist see "Björn Höcke darf als 'Faschist' bezeichnet werden," *Spiegel-Online*, September 28, 2019, https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/bjoern-hoecke-darf-als-faschist-bezeichnet-werden-gerichtsurteil-zu-eisenach-a-1289131.html [all accessed December 4, 2020].

platform of legitimacy from which to disseminate their views.[22] As above indicated, these views are anti-democratic and include attacks on government, state, and constitution, as well as Islamophobia.

Given this general profile, it is unsurprising that the AfD also takes issue with established German memory politics. The party deliberately downplays the crimes of National Socialism and the Holocaust in a bid to articulate a contemporary narrative of *German* cultural trauma which positions Germans as underrecognized victims of a self-abnegating and unpatriotic memory culture that the established political class, in an act of national self-sabotage, has inflicted on post-war society and its institutions. (A second narrative of cultural trauma they propagate preys on fears of cultural dilution and foreignization mentioned above; this article focuses on the first). As stated at the outset, a core part of German collective identity since 1945 (and again from 1990) has been predicated on a particular memory of the Holocaust which demands ongoing acknowledgement of German guilt and responsibility for Nazi crimes. Within this political and social framework of memory – to parse Maurice Halbwachs (1992) – the Germans self-identify as a perpetrator collective that vows "never again" and ritually mediates this position on the national and international levels. The ethical obligation for descendants of Nazi Germany to remember the victims of the Holocaust is inseparable from this self-understanding as a perpetrator collective that mourns the past and continually works toward a better future. In this way, empathetic attentiveness to the memory of victims mitigates aggressive nationalism in the contemporary. The narrative of cultural trauma here belongs firmly to Jewish (and other) victims of National Socialism.

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22 For an interactive map of the AfD's networks see https://taz.de/Schwerpunkt-AfD/!t5495296/ [accessed December 4, 2020].

The AfD has tried to warp this painstakingly evolved framework of national and social memory. Höcke, speaker of the AfD in Thuringia and incidentally the grandson of ethnic German expellees, is a noteworthy mouthpiece for such disruption.[23] In his notorious January 2017 Dresden speech to the youth wing of the AfD (which is also under observation by the "Verfassungsschutz") he presented Germans as the victims of a politically-correct memory culture that was jeopardizing the very survival of the nation.[24] He criticized the dead ritual of German "Vergangenheitsbewältigung" (the term that – for all its problematic discourse history – refers generally to the ongoing effort in Germany to commemorate the Holocaust and the crimes of National Socialism),[25] asserting that it produces only "Lähmung" (paralysis) and a "Schuldkult" (cult of guilt) that encourages bad feeling in younger generations and a lack of self-confidence. In this resentful, darkly impassioned speech, Höcke calls for an inner renewal of German identity. Renewal is not just part of resistance against the status quo, which he paints in incendiary terms as a civil war between true patriots and the post-war establishment; rather, it fundamentally depends on a 180-degree *volte-face* in German memory politics. For example, Höcke describes the area bombing of Dresden at the end of the Second World War as an attack on pure innocence and as a war

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23 On the significance for Höcke and his family of the experience and memory of expulsion at the end of the war see Karsten Polke-Majewski, "Björn Höcke: Mein Mitschüler, der rechte Agitator," *Zeit-Online*, February 18, 2016. Available at: https://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2016-02/bjoern-hoecke-afd-rechtspopulismus-portraet/seite-2 [accessed December 4, 2020].

24 See "Verfassungsschutz" beobachtet Junge Alternative und 'Flügel'," *Welt-Online*, January 23, 2019. Available at: https://www.welt.de/regionales/bayern/article187599012/Verfassungsschutz-beobachtet-Junge-Alternative-und-Fluegel.html [accessed December 4, 2020].

25 For a critique of the term "Vergangheitsbewältigung," see Fuchs and Cosgrove, "Introduction," in Ger*man Memory Contests*, pp. 1-21

crime; Dresden, he asserts, will be the seat of the nationalist inner renewal he calls for. This rhetoric is revisionist because it silences the memory and cultural trauma of the Holocaust and trivializes the crimes of National Socialism: the Jewish victim other is eclipsed by the post-war wounded German self.[26]

It is also a battle-cry to move away from the so-called "Schuldkult" that victimizes, inhibits, and damages Germans in their national self-feeling in the present. Höcke insists that an alternative memory culture which, on one hand, restores rightful victim status to Germans and, on the other, propagates German greatness should replace the "Schuldkult." As Alexander Gauland, co-leader of the AfD in the Bundestag, crudely put it in a speech one year after Höcke's Dresden speech: the twelve years of Hitler are but "Vogelschiss" (bird droppings) in a millennium of great German history. One wonders where the victims fit in this crass historical picture.[27] Gauland's rhetoric suggests that they are, much like the twelve years of totalitarian dictatorship during which the Nazis engineered their persecution and extermination, an abject footnote to be consigned to the scrapheap of history. Given the genocidal techniques the Nazis evolved, which included not just murder but also mass body disposal on an unprecedented scale, Gauland's wording is a repellent discursive re-victimization of the victims, and furthermore unacceptably downplays Nazi perpetration. Most of all, the collective memory of German victimization during and after the Second World War alongside the proposed new memory of

26 For a transcript of Höcke's speech (in German) see https://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/hoecke-rede-im-wortlaut-gemuetszustand-eines-total-besiegten-volkes/19273518.html [accessed December 4, 2020].

27 As in the case of Höcke's Dresden speech, Gauland's speech was aimed at the youth wing of the AfD in Thuringia. See "'Vogelschiss'-Äußerung hat keine juristischen Folgen für Gauland," *Tagesspiegel*, November 13, 2018. Available at: https://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/afd-vorsitzender-vogelschiss-aeusserung-hat-keine-juristischen-folgen-fuer-gauland/23627506.html [accessed December 4, 2020].

German greatness in the historical longue-durée aims to belittle and ultimately elide the memory of the victims.

In sum, the AfD's position on German memory culture opportunistically mobilizes post-unification and post-economic-crisis resentment. It attempts radically to change official memory culture and thereby alter the historical record as well as national self-understanding. It asserts Germany as the downtrodden victim of the forces of multiculturalism and foreignization facilitated by a weak and treacherous ruling class. Using the ZPS as a case study and focussing on its interconnected concepts of "political beauty" and "aggressive humanism," I now examine cultural responses to the AfD's attack on Germany's memory culture. I suggest that the collective's political-aesthetic "artivist" response to the re-emergence of the far right in official German politics ultimately backfired: it risked eliding the memory of victim suffering by instrumentalizing it. The ZPS took recourse to extreme aesthetics which, while different from the above-outlined extreme rhetoric employed by the AfD, ultimately had a similar effect: the precedence in cultural-political discourse of the perpetrator collective and its identity issues over the memory of the victims.

"Political beauty" and the language of "aggressive humanism"

On Monday December 2, 2019 the ZPS erected a thick steel pillar in the center of Berlin's government district. The location on Heinrich von Gagern Street was the unmarked site between the Reichstag and the Federal Chancellery where the Kroll Opera House – badly damaged during the Second World War and eventually demolished in 1951 – had once stood. Over two meters high and dark gray, the pillar's most immediately striking feature

was its centerpiece: a glass "window" enclosing a display of ashes embedded in amber-colored synthetic resin. This was "Sucht nach uns!", the ZPS's latest political-aesthetic intervention in the memory politics of the Berlin Republic.[28]

The collective claimed in a press release and on their project website that the pillar contained the ashes of Jewish Holocaust victims. Over a two-year period, ZPS activists had reportedly taken around two hundred soil samples from twenty-three sites of atrocity near concentration camps in Germany, Poland, and Ukraine. The samples had then been tested in laboratories and were found in over seventy percent of cases to contain human remains. The remains that featured in the pillar came from the area surrounding Auschwitz, where members of the collective searched rivers, dams, and fields. This area is the subject of a forensic-historical analysis of body disposal techniques at Auschwitz-Birkenau commissioned by the collective and available on the project website, *Die Wege der Asche* (The Paths of the Ashes). The title of the campaign itself, "Sucht nach uns!", expressed an imagined imperative from the Jewish victims of the Holocaust to posterity to "search for us." It was inspired by the few victim testimonies that in 1945 Soviet soldiers had discovered in Auschwitz. These testimonies bore witness to body disposal by mass incineration and feature in a further document on the project website, *An die Nachwelt* (To Posterity), a compilation of Jewish victim accounts including the Auschwitz materials and other testimonies that the collective researched and assembled over a two-year period. The pillar was thus one element in a multimedia campaign with research, performative, and participatory dimensions: in the press release, the ZPS invited civil society to join a "Zapfenstreich" (ceremonial march) the following Saturday, the

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28 See https://politicalbeauty.de/sucht-nach-uns.html [accessed December 4, 2020]. The project website includes some press and media coverage.

participants in which were to congregate at the pillar, bring flowers for the dead, and swear to resist the emergence of the new "Hitler Germany" and its enablers. A crowdfunding call was also released to finance a concrete foundation for the pillar, which was to be poured in an act of civic disobedience at the "Zapfenstreich."[29]

As this overview suggests, the ZPS conceive of public space as an agonistic arena where political and social issues such as human rights abuses, inequality, and the memory and threat of fascism can be controversially staged in a theatrical manner.[30] ZPS founder and director Philip Ruch (b. 1981) argues that the task of thinking critically about the past with a sense of responsibility for the future has fallen to younger generations, as today's technocratic political class in Germany, and in Europe, has no vision for the future. For the ZPS, politics has become hollowed out, thus art – political action art, to be precise – must step into the breach to generate, perform, and disseminate moral ideals based on an idea of shared humanity and empathy for the suffering of others. This vision of universal empathy for and solidarity with the victim other comprises the ideal of "political beauty" that motivates the collective's various actions.[31]

The ZPS value of universal empathy has a specifically German origin. They believe that Germans as descendants of National Socialism and inheritors of the legacy of perpetration have a moral duty to speak out on behalf of those whose human rights are being abused today. Ruch articulates this sense of transhistorical mission

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29 Both documents are available in full on the project website: respectively https://politicalbeauty.de/Media/hera/Die%20Wege%20der%20Asche.pdf and https://politicalbeauty.de/Media/hera/An%20die%20Nachwelt.pdf [accessed December 4, 2020].

30 See Florian Malzacher, "Aktivismus als Aufführung: Das agonistische Theater des Zentrums für Politische Schönheit," in Miriam Rummel, Raimar Stange and Florian Waldvogel (eds.), *Haltung als Handlung: Das Zentrum für Politische Schönheit* (Munich: edition metzel, 2018), pp. 344-56, here, 346.

31 For more on this see Philip Ruch, *Wenn nicht wir, wer dann? Ein politisches Manifest* (Munich: Ludwig Verlag, 2015), pp. 16-21.

when he states that all ZPS actions, irrespective of political focus, are underpinned by a fundamental commitment to the memory of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust (12-13). In this spirit, previous campaigns are national, transnational, and multidirectional in scope; they have focussed on the threat to Holocaust memory in Germany ("Holocaust-Mahnmal Bornhagen," the Holocaust Memorial in Bornhagen, 2017, which was a response to Höcke's Dresden speech of the same year), the genocide of Bosnian Muslims at Srebrenica in 1995 ("Die Säulen der Schande," The Pillars of Shame, 2010), and the plight of refugees in the early twenty-first century ("Die Toten kommen," The Dead are Coming, 2015).[32]

The collective's term for the aesthetic means that should channel the ideal of political beauty is "aggressiver Humanismus" (aggressive humanism), a language and method of performative and participatory aesthetic-political action that controversially draws attention to human rights abuses, past and present, and to failings of political leadership and institutions in Germany and the EU.[33] Reminiscent of radical predecessors such as German performance artist Christoph Schlingensief and the Vienna Actionists of the 1960s, ZPS events fuse artistic intervention and activist practice to produce contemporary visual art forms, such as temporary urban installations and "happenings" that are also mediated spectacles.[34]

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32 See Julian Jestadt, "Die Toten kommen (2015)," in *Haltung als Handlung*, pp. 126-45; Maggy Sperl, "Die Säulen der Schande (2010)," in *ibid.*, pp. 252-77; Alexander Kitterer, "Holocaust-Mahnmal Bornhagen (2017)," in *ibid.*, pp. 4-27. More details about each project can be viewed respectively at: https://politicalbeauty.de/toten.html; https://politicalbeauty.de/pillar.html; https://politicalbeauty.de/mahnmal.html [all accessed December 4, 2020].

33 *Wenn nicht wir, wer dann*, p. 27. See also "'Es braucht nicht viel Mut,'" *taz*, April 13, 2019, https://taz.de/Zentrum-fuer-politische-Schoenheit/!5585460/ [accessed December 4, 2020].

34 See Hubert Klocker (ed), *Wiener Aktionisme, Wien 1960-1971: Der zertrümmerte Spiegel* (Klagenfurt: Ritter, 1988); also Pia Jancke and Teresa Kovacs (eds), *Der Gesamtkünstler: Christoph Schlingensief* (Vienna: Praesens, 2011). For more on the ZPS in the context of German action art, see Sarah Khan, "Acting Up: Action Art in Berlin's Government District,

These place-based artist-activist forms often situate the human body at the center of the spectacle; digital platforms that outlast the in-situ performative installations supplement the aesthetic representation of materiality in urban and other spaces. Alongside the aforementioned historical research and compilation of victim testimonies, the "Sucht nach uns!" webpages feature the ZPS's mission statement about the campaign, video art, photography, and links to press coverage.

ZPS "actions" can thus be understood in Alexander's terms as part of the cultural trauma process: they are mediated spectacles that attempt to draw attention to past and present injustices and to speak out for forgotten victims by public performative means. The 2015 campaign, "The Dead Are Coming", illustrates this well. In this case, the collective exhumed the body of a Syrian refugee who had drowned in the Mediterranean and had been buried anonymously in Sicily. With the permission of her relatives, the ZPS brought her remains to Berlin for a reburial ceremony in a Muslim cemetery which was livestreamed. The target of this "action" was Europe's hostility to refugees, especially the maltreatment of migrant corpses recovered from sea, which in many cases were not identified by EU authorities or given a proper burial. "The Dead Are Coming" generated much controversy, but "Sucht nach uns!" failed: Ruch admitted as much in interview in January 2020, pledging that the collective would never again use the Holocaust in its "actions."[35] Let us examine the nature of the controversy in more detail.

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from Christoph Schlingensief to the Center for Political Beauty," *Frieze*, November 25, 2015, https://www.frieze.com/article/szenen-im-zentrum [accessed December 4, 2020].

35 See Julius Betschka, " 'Deshalb wird es keine Aktionen zum Holocaust mehr geben': Philip Ruch, Leiter des ZPS, über Aktionen zum Holocaust, Aufträge aus der Geschichte und den Schulterschluss zwischen Konservatismus und Faschismus," *Tagesspiegel*, January 9, 2020, https://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/zentrum-fuer-politische-schoenheit-deshalb-wird-es-keine-aktionen-zum-holocaust-mehr-geben/25400880.html and Annika Leister, " 'Der Holocaust ist immer unser Ankerpunkt': Philip Ruch vom Zentrum für politische Schönheit

The exhumation, transfer, and display of human remains has long been an established practice in different cultural, political, and religious contexts. However, "Sucht nach uns!" provoked immediate upset and criticism from within Jewish organizations in Germany and internationally, alongside condemnation from the German media and political establishment.[36] The outrage was driven by a number of factors, most predominantly the view that the ZPS had violated Halachic Jewish law by disturbing the resting place of the dead, removing their remains to a different location and displaying them where they should not be: "above ground."[37] A further reason

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spricht über das Scheitern der jüngsten Aktion, verletzte Gefühle und Pläne für die Zukunft," *Berliner Zeitung*, January 13, 2020, https://www.berliner-zeitung.de/kultur-vergnuegen/es-ist-unmoeglich-das-richtige-zu-tun-li.4767?fbclid=IwAR3AkDYOnmqDwjeMZ3DXeeGORcSe TYFD7CWUCYhnv2yt4eoNh3k6Pc_Tkk4 [all accessed December 4, 2020].

36 See for example Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia UP, 1999); Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1978). Prominent critics included Vice-President of the International Auschwitz Committee, Christoph Heubner; the World Holocaust Remembrance Center in Jerusalem, Yad Vashem; Poland's Chief Rabbi Michael Schudrich; President of the German-Israeli Association, Uwe Becker; President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, and also the Bundestag. See: " 'Skandalöse Störung der Totenruhe': Zentralrat der Juden und Bundesregierung kritisieren 'Kunstaktion'des Zentrums für Politische Schönheit," *Jüdische Allgemeine*, December 3, 2019, https://www.juedische-allgemeine.de/kultur/skandaloese-stoerung-der-totenruhe/; also Kirsten Grieshaber, "Outrage After Activists Place Ashes of 'Auschwitz Victims' Outside Reichstag," *The Times of Israel*, December 3, 2019, https://www.timesofisrael.com/outrage-after-activists-place-ashes-of-auschwitz-victims-outside-reichstag/ [all accessed December 4, 2020].

37 Verdery, *Political Lives of Dead Bodies*, p. 12. On the challenges posed to Jewish religious law by human remains of genocide, especially ashes, after the Second World War see David Deutsch, "Exhumations in Post-war Rabbinical Responsas," in *Human Remains in Society: Curation and Exhibition in the Aftermath of Genocide and Mass Violence*, ed. by Jean-March Dreyfus and Élisabeth Anstett (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2017), pp. 90-112. On foot of "Sucht nach uns!" former Green Party politician, Volker Beck, launched an investigation into the ZPS under paragraph 168 of the German Criminal Code, which defines and sets out punishment for the crime of disturbing the peace of the dead: " 'Ein inakzeptables Spiel mit Gefühlen von Überlebenden': Volker Beck im Gespräch mit Änne Seidel," *Deutschlandfunk*, December 4 2019, https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/aktion-des-zentrums-fuer-politische-schoenheit-ein.691.de.html?dram:article_id=464995. See paragraph 168 at: https://www.

for the upset was the interpretation of the "action" as a tasteless and insensitive *German* instrumentalization of *Jewish* victims for ends focussed on problems of German politics and culture rather than on the Holocaust victims themselves.[38] For the installation attempted to link via the display of human biomatter the memory of Jewish victims to the memory of how and where the descent into National Socialism began: namely with the vote to pass the "Ermächtigungsgesetz" (Enabling Act) of March 23, 1933 which helped transform Hitler's government into a legal dictatorship and took place in the Kroll Opera House, then the seat of the Reichstag.[39] The ZPS thus unambiguously juxtaposed "victim" and "perpetrator" categories – the pillar containing victim remains atop the toxic scene of momentous historical betrayal – as a provocative means through which to expose and address a memory deficit at the heart of the Berlin Republic: the missing commemoration of German political conservatism's betrayal of democracy in 1933. From this angle, the remains of the Jewish victims seemed to have been included in order to serve the wider objective of German memory politics.

Much of this was expressed through the strident language of aggressive humanism: for instance, the ZPS referred to the pillar as "das Denkmal gegen den Verrat an der Demokratie" (the monument against the betrayal of democracy), a title that omits explicit mention of Jewish victims. Underscoring the impression of

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gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_stgb/englisch_stgb.html#p1582 [all accessed December 4, 2020].

38 See Veronique Brüggemann, "Wieder zum Objekt gemacht," *Spiegel*, December 3, 2019, https://www.spiegel.de/kultur/gesellschaft/zentrum-fuer-politische-schoenheit-die-aktion-macht-holocaust-opfer-wieder-zum-objekt-a-1299431.html; also Christoph Twickel, "Diktatur der Anständigen: Das Zentrum für Politische Schönheit tarnt Ideologie als Humanismus," *Die Zeit*, December 17, 2017, https://www.zeit.de/2019/53/zentrum-fuer-politische-schoenheit-aktivismus-humanismus-ideologie [both accessed December 4, 2020].

39 On the Enabling Act see Richard J. Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich: A History* (New York: Penguin, 2003), pp. 349-54.

instrumentalization, they also called it "die Säule des Widerstands" (the pillar of resistance), an inflection that inaugurates vigilant memory of the betrayal of 1933 and mobilizes it for resistance against the erosion of democratic politics and society in present-day Germany. Indeed, the installation, which included an overarching banner proclaiming "Gedenken heißt kämpfen" (to commemorate is to fight), deliberately situated itself in the contemporary national context of the rise of the far right. On the project website, the ZPS specifically identified the AfD as the fascist threat. As the location of the pillar in front of the Federal Chancellery suggests, the "action" also explicitly targeted Chancellor Merkel's party, the Christian Democrats (CDU), as the potentially treacherous "enablers" of the AfD's ascent to power, implying a historical parallel between the people's party of the center right and the bourgeois parties that capitulated to the Nazis.[40]

In this context, it is hardly surprising that "Sucht nach uns!" came under fire for violating the ethical project of Holocaust memory. For the point the ZPS wished to make about the weakening of the political middle-ground in the face of the growing threat from Germany's far right seemed to eclipse the memory of Jewish victims, the cornerstone of German Holocaust memory. Worse still, the ZPS had instrumentalized victim remains in order to articulate this point. Granted, they had tried to re-inscribe the ashes in a register of subjecthood, insofar as the project imagined the victims as speaking subjects and agents of resistance ("Sucht nach uns!"; "Gedenken heißt kämpfen"). As Katherine Verdery observes in her analysis of the political lives of dead bodies in the post-socialist context, however, human remains as symbols "don't talk much on their own" (29). From this point of view, efforts to "subjectify" remains inevitably also "objectify" them to some degree. Despite

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40 See Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, pp. 352-54

their efforts to restore a sense of humanity to the ashes, then, the ZPS still stood accused of utilizing ashes and fragments of bone in a political-aesthetic, attention-grabbing stunt, and robbing Holocaust victims of their dignity once again. If we assume that promoting the ideal of political beauty as part of the cultural trauma process was the ultimate goal of this campaign – let us recall that this ideal is based on universal empathy for the victim's suffering – then the campaign was compromised from the outset. It conflated the turbulent state of present-day German politics with the memory of victims, which reinforced the impression that the ashes of the Holocaust dead were being instrumentalized to speak out against the threat of fascism in the early twenty-first century. In other words, the victim's suffering was not being commemorated on its own terms.

Worse still, the ZPS did not consult Jewish organizations and communities about the exhumation, transfer, and display of the ashes, which suggests that the collective was aware of objections on religious grounds that may well have prevented the "action" from taking place. This lack of inclusion of the descendants of Jewish Holocaust victims is a serious ethical flaw of the overall campaign, and the collective's public apology acknowledges this.[41] After all, they might have drawn on current inclusive methodologies in the field of forensic archaeology: Caroline Sturdy Colls (whose work is referenced in *Die Wege der Asche*) uses non-invasive forensic and archaeological approaches, including consultation with Jewish religious leaders, to locate new evidence and body-disposal sites in extermination camps such as Treblinka. This approach is not always free of controversy, but it has produced results that have been

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41 See https://politicalbeauty.de/Media/hera/Stellungnahme.pdf, [accessed December 4, 2020]. A hallmark of ZPS campaigns is that the collective tends to act alone. See Alice von Bieberstein and Erdem Evren, "From Aggressive Humanism to Improper Mourning: Burying the Victims of Europe's Border Regime in Berlin," *Social Research* 83.2 (2016): 453-79, here pp. 464-65.

welcomed by Jewish organizations, such as the ability to identify, mark, and honor previously unknown mass graves.[42]

Despite all of these difficulties, however, some observers viewed "Sucht nach uns!" positively as a critical commentary on normalized, even complacent German memory culture, perceived to be losing relevance for younger generations and more recently coming under attack from elements of the far right now part of the political mainstream.[43] This suggests a concern that the foundations of Holocaust memory in Germany are no longer as solid as they once may have been. From this angle, the ZPS pierced what Kansteiner describes as a Germany's pride in its accomplishments in the arena of memory politics (307). This point concerns the fragility of institutionalized Holocaust memory and is important, for the project's problematic take on material memory resonates in the context of the current historical shift to a post-witness era which necessitates "a reorientation from evidentiary logic based on eyewitness accounts to one based on forensic evidence" (Dziuban 18). The problem of instrumentalization of the victims demonstrated some of the challenges that arise with this reorientation. "Sucht nach uns!" foregrounded the story of the

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42 Caroline Sturdy Colls, " 'Earth conceal not my blood': Forensic and Archaeological Approaches to Locating the Remains of Holocaust Victims," in *Human Remains in Society*, ed. Dreyfus and Anstett, pp. 163-96. Hinnerk Höfling, *Die Wege der Asche: Eine quellenkritische Chronologie für das Interessengebiet Auschwitz*. This research was first published as part of the ZPS project. Full text available at: https://politicalbeauty.de/Media/hera/Die%20Wege%20 der%20Asche.pdf [accessed December 4, 2020].

43 See Jan Kedves, " 'Hier liegt die deutsche Diktatur im Frieden,'" *SZ*, December 2, 2019, https://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/zps-zentrum-auschwitz-mahnmal-1.4706218, also Arno Widmann, "Asche von Nazi-Opfern?" and Patrick Wildermans, "Holocaust-Asche vor dem Reichstag: Das Mahnmal des Zentrums für Politische Schönheit ist drastisch – und notwendig," *Tagesspiegel*, December 2, 2019, https://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/holocaust-asche-vor-dem-reichstag-das-mahnmal-des-zentrums-fuer-politische-schoenheit-ist-drastisch-und-notwendig/25290712.html. On AfD tactics to undermine Germany's culture of remembrance, see Scally, "Holocaust Deniers Targeting German Concentration Camp Memorials."

victims who witnessed the murder and incineration of others and faced extermination themselves – through the eyewitness accounts as well as the ashes in the installation. Despite its evident flaws, arguably it succeeded, albeit in a compromised way, in creating an alternative and contested space for the empathic re-commemoration of victims. This insight is both paradoxical and uncomfortable in that it is premised on what was so controversial about the project: the inclusion of human remains.

Conclusion: the challenge of the triumph of the mundane

At the start of this article I suggested that the ZPS's aesthetic choice to include human remains in the installation risked undermining the idea of ethical commitment on the part of Germans to the memory of Jewish victims. As outlined above, the "action" was highly controversial and offended Jewish groups as well as the German political establishment, ending in the swift removal of the pillar by the Berlin city authorities and a formal apology from the ZPS. Despite this evidence that the project was a failure, however, a limited case can be made in its defense. In using material remains, it can be argued that the collective tried to make a valid, even urgent point about the risk posed by two contemporaneous developments to Germany's culture of Holocaust remembrance: first, the inevitable shift into the post-memory and post-witness era which will intensify our reliance on material culture for the project of meaningful and engaged memory work; second, the re-emergence of the far right as a legitimate political force in Germany today. The overall project seemed to suggest that the two developments are connected. The ZPS choice of a radical aesthetic could thus be interpreted as a call to arms within a socio-political context

which has seen the routinized drift of post-memory culture into the triumph of the mundane, leaving the door open for revisionist attacks on established commemorative practices and values. From this angle, "Sucht nach uns!" protested against the triumph of the mundane in the cultural trauma process. By including the remains of victims, it arguably also flagged the indispensability of the victim to ethical and empathic memory work.

The problem, however, is that both the AfD attack on the culture of remembrance and the ZPS defense of the same were (and are) articulated through a discourse of excess: aggressive revisionist patriotism, on one hand, and aggressive humanism, on the other. Both modes of excess elide the Jewish victim – opportunistically and deliberately in the former case, and insensitively (if unintentionally) in the latter. Taken together, the memory controversies stoked by both groups, while motivated by very different agendas, point to the potential for a hollowing out of the democratic core of postwar memory discourse, as the victim other becomes displaced by febrile arguments about German identity today.

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Inequalities, Violence and Discrimination: Moving Images and the Crisis of Democracy in Brazil[1]

Esther Hamburger

> "Bolsonaro's voters who thought they were voting for Captain Nascimento may have voted for Rocha, the head of the militia"
>
> José Padilha[2]

The current debate worldwide concerns a crisis of political parties, institutional politics, the rise of populist and nationalist leaders, and increasing social inequalities in different parts of the globe, especially in places where democratic forces have suffered recent defeat. Impoverishment and growth of inequalities threat democracy even in countries that had been built upon its foundation, such as the United States or England. The panorama of conflict in chastised parts of the world, such as Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and the Balkans is presented in images of ruins. The urban reconstruction of places where contruction and real estate speculation are imposed as a way towards economic development also results in ruins that are depicted in eastern filmic productions.

Thus, how can the audiovisual arts take part in this crisis? How can they help to tackle it? What can they tell us about the Brazilian crisis? How can the debate on strategies to deal with discrimination

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1 Text translated by Thiago M. Moyano.

2 "Os eleitores de Bolsonaro que acharam que estavam votando no capitão Nascimento talvez tenham votado no Rocha, o chefe da milícia" https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ilustrada/2019/01/bolsonaristas-talvez-tenham-eleito-chefe-da-milicia-diz-diretor-jose padilha.shtml?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=twfolha (acesso 11/05/19)

while dismantling forms of oppression link Brazilian cinema to other parts of the world? Can cinema and audiovisual production become a contact zone?

These questions will be discussed within the context of Post-Structuralist thought and the intersection of Anthropology with Film studies, an intersection that has gained strength in search of ways to interpret images – according to Benjamin's technical knowledge, but also in terms of non-reproducible arts – in its aesthetic composition in relation to means of production and circulation. Here I refer to audiovisual arts as a field that encompasses cinema, television, and digital media, in their articulation with each other and other forms of art. The bibliography on the forms and denominations of a recent field of thought, which has gone through structural transformations is widespread and productive. This debate concerns the paradox which represents cinema as newly recognized valid material for the Humanities, especially as it is diversified and fragmented in numerous forms of access in screens of different sizes, mobile or not, somewhat interactive. So how does cinema feed the contemporary audiovisual production? And how can the theories on film feed the critical thinking on these contemporary forms? Despite the broad nature of this debate, I believe it serves as a framework for the present discussion. The main argument is that in the 21st century, as a result of a large democratization process initiated in the 1980s, there has been a diversification of production apparatuses and the circulation of moving images. Digital technology favors such de-centering process. Yet, in Brazil, and possibly other countries in the Global South that are marked by social disparities, the meanings of this pluralization acquire political dimensions. I seek this movement by examining a sequence of films questioning how one can film inequalities and racial, gender, and class discrimination without contributing to its reinforcement. Additionally, how can cinema contribute to the dismantling of conventional forms of

discrimination? And how can these contributions in Brazil be related to ongoing debates worldwide?

This is not a novel debate, and strictly speaking, crisscrosses the history of world and Brazilian cinema in their various aesthetic and engagement propositions. However, since the beginning of the 21st century, there has been a myriad of movies that capture and express ongoing social phenomena at once, and which unfortunately remained on the margins of institutionalized politics. Thought of as a succession of dialogues, I believe that these films allow us to follow the appropriation of moving images by emerging filmmakers from marginalized communities. The boldness of forms which emerge in this cinematic production also enables an awareness on the persistence of an unfinished kind of citizenship in territories where physical force is embodied both in discriminatory State violence and the violence stemming from parallel structures of power, such as the case of organized crime.

This sequence of films I analyze starts in 1999, with the documentary *Notícias de uma guerra particular* [News from a Personal War] by João Moreira Salles and Kátia Lund, which continues to echo in Brazil and abroad. Each new film references the other and proposes new ways of filming. Each film varies in its point of view, as well as the combination of who, how, and where it is shot and exhibited.

Twenty years after the release of this seminal documentary, empowered forms have surfaced in a cinema done in places where such productions were once impossible and unfeasible. One can say that there has been a shift in the *distributions of the sensible*, to borrow Jacques Ranciére's notion. Thus, how can the crisis be explained?

What can cinema tell us about the contemporary crisis of democracy? I position the Brazilian filmmaker Adirley Queirós in the sequence of *favela films* that marked the beginning of the 21st

century. This piece focuses on two of his films, *Branco Sai, Preto Fica* [White out, Black in] and *A Cidade é uma só?* [Is the City only one?] in order to go back to these initial questions, without fixed answers, but with hints on the potentiality of images to a possible diagnosis and in the imaginary of forms of *living together*, quoting Roland Barthes.

The Brazilian case

Brazil has experienced its most historically democratic years between 1984 and 2014, having been recently considered a case study in a world threatened by the rise of social inequality and by immigration waves of populations that were expelled from their home countries due to wars, persecutions, and economic crises. The authors who contributed to the collection *Trajetórias das Desigualdades* [Trajectories of Inequalities] (Arretche, 2015) have shown a continuum that made it possible for Brazilian social inequalities to decrease in the realm of healthcare, education, labor, and political engagement (with the inclusion of illiterate voters and those over 16 years of age) in the past 30, 40, and, in some cases, 50 years. Besides that, quality of life indicators suggest a consistent betterment in variables such as number of years in formal education, women's participation in the job market, urban infrastructure, access to healthcare, life expectancy, and child mortality. These improvements have enabled the social rise of wide population segments, favoring social, gender, and race diversity in various settings across the country.

Brazil's performance in these social areas has been particularly marked by its consistency throughout time. In some fields, such as education, the process is initiated during the military dictatorship, followed by the creation of the Brazilian Real controlling inflation in 1994, and with public policies developed in the administrations

of MDB, PSDB, and PT, with an expansion during the latter's. Comparative analyses with other countries of the BRICS point to the robustness of Brazilian improvements rooted in municipalities in a decentralized fashion. (Heller, 2015).

It is no surprise, then, that the cinema, audiovisual production, and digital media have followed this generalized movement of democratization in the era; however, with its own (belated) timeframe. There is no doubt whatsoever that there has been a diversification and de-centering of platforms producing and circulating content. Even though no major change has taken place in public television channels, it is clear that this segment has been losing strength and relevance due to the emergence of alternative, more interactive, platforms. There has also been an expansion in the access to digital technology, especially to the Internet, with a broader demographic profile for cinema agents and producers, incorporating more women and marginalized youths, who have first had access to higher education, let alone the possibility for filmic production.

The establishment of ANCINE [Brazil's National Cinema Agency], the Audiovisual Sector Fund and funding policies based on tax waivers, the 2011 legislation for cable networks, which favored a belated growth of the platform by demarcating a screen quota for national productions, as well as the *boom* of transnational streaming platforms, such as YouTube and Netflix, have resulted in an audiovisual effervescence that consolidated a *sui generis* industry in the first two decades of the 21st century.

The northeastern cinema, especially the one from the state of Pernambuco, represented in the Cannes Film Festival's main competition by Kleber Mendonça's *Bacurau,* has acquired relevance with a movement which recovers the colonial history and its contemporary presence in the region's social fabric. The filmic production is also sensitive to the ongoing urban transformations

and their links with global processes that are present in other world cinemas, such as the Chinese. The Brazilian film director from Ceará, Karin Ainouz, also selected in Cannes for the competition Un Certain Regard with *A Vida invisível de Eurídice Gusmão* [The Invisible Life of Eurídice Gusmão] is another representative of an imaginative cinema projecting gender issues poetically.

Brazil has also been in the spotlight when it comes to animations in the most important festivals. As for television series, the country continues to be an occasional exporter, but its know how has appeared in new generations capable of gaining international pioneering, for example with *3%*, created and developed by former students from the University of São Paulo's School of Communication and Arts, first series financed by Netflix in the country.[3] The international platform has also launched a show for the popular *funk* channel Kondzilla, stimulating the transition of a YouTube channel into the series format, bringing a producer from the outskirts – which has remained an outsider when it comes to state's funding – to the center of international audiovisual without having gone through cinema or national television. These are only a few examples, but the list is more and more expressive and includes thousands of qualified and engaged professionals from many different segments of an artistic activity that is intrinsically industrial.

Furthermore, Brazil is the third country worldwide, after only the United States and England, in access to Netflix and YouTube.[4] The excessive centralization of the public television system, in which a few networks concentrate the production and circulation of contents, explains the success of platforms where viewers have

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3 For a view on the international repercussion of the show, see https://www.newyorker.com/culture/cultural-comment/a-brazilian-thriller-that-exposes-the-sinister-side-of-meritocracy

4 http://www1.folha.uol.com.br/ilustrada/2017/02/1858978-brasil-e-o-sexto-mercado-de-tv-pela-internet.shtml

the option of choosing. We have been living a radical diversification of means of production and circulation due to technological shifts and the consolidation of funding and production models that are relatively new. However, there is yet a long road towards the reduction of dependency on public funding, as well as the consolidation of relevance amongst the public: the Achilles' heel of the model.

Thus, how can one explain the sudden interruption in the improvements registered in the last 50 years for social indicators, and in the last 20 in the realm of cinema and audiovisual production, and the rapid political deterioration that has been experienced? How are cinema and audiovisual production implicated in the contemporary arena?

There is something to be said about the reverberation of a strand of moving images that helps us notice territories which did not fully participate in the expansion of citizenship in the last decades. Alongside other factors, some of which external, the continuing gap between middle and upper middle class neighborhoods and the "half-citizens" of impoverished communities – who have experienced an improvement in their lives, but remained subjected to situations of a *personal war* – contributed to the strengthening of antidemocratic leaderships that were able to take office through the electoral process.

Violence and inequality in Brazil's twenty-first century cinema

In the realm of cinema and audiovisual production, the 21st century has begun with an intense debate on how to film violence which, according to Paulo Lins, author of *Cidade de Deus* (1997) [City of God], suffered qualitative changes in the 1980s due to the penetration of drug trafficking.

Relationships between violence, cinema, and politics constitute a classic theme in film studies, as well as in western thinking. The French cinephilia, which engendered new cinemas, sought the antidote against manipulative and alienating tendencies – identified with the expressionists and the German propaganda film – in formal elements proposed by the post-war neorealists. The sequence, shootings on location, contemporary dramas with the minimum, if not any artificial lighting whatsoever, amateur actors, and non-linear plots are some examples of the formal elements in an ethic cinema, as opposed to the one which would stimulate alienation by the use of indiscriminate manipulation, special effects, and other mechanisms allegedly responsible for masking and deceiving.

Paulo Lins's text offer an "inside look", written in the form of non-linear spiral fiction, in which characters facing violence come and go, being subjected to a blunt, definitive, and extreme casualty, or intricate plots, moved by relationships of cause and effect.

The book reverberated in terms of critics, sales, as well as in its adaptation to the movies. Though presented as fiction, the novel brings in an aspect of testimony based on the author's "belonging" to the universe he writers about (Kornis, 2006; 2007). The writer, as a black former resident of the area and college student, depicts with the authority of a witness who lived in the city project that entitles the novel, and who is defined by the controversial language avoided by so many of the dwellers of these and other similar "communities".

Imbued with the authority of a witness, Paulo Lins contributes to *News from a Personal War* – documentary by João Moreira Salles and Katia Lund filmed in 1997 and 1998, released in 1999 – with a scathing testimony. The penetration of the drug dealing had altered the daily life in the *favelas* from Rio de Janeiro, and such information was added to the complaint that would later resound even more bluntly in Brazilian cinema.

The violence regarding social inequalities is present in the Brazilian *Cinema Novo* films, and in Glauber Rocha's *A Estética da Fome* manifesto [The Aesthetics of Hunger]. It is an allegorical use of violence, which does not imitate the endemic situation, nor functions as a documentary. Particularly in *Deus e o Diabo na Terra do Sol* (1964) [God and the Devil in the Land of the Sun], violence works almost operationally in a film that aims to stimulate transformative ways of reading anachronistic social relations. The colonel, father, godfather, and boss who is an intermediary between his employees and the world is the perverse figure the maintains the backwardness. And so is the charismatic religious leader, who keeps an entourage of miserable followers alienated: an allegorical reference to a past that needs to be overcome.

As for the Brazilian films of the early 2000s, the debate is repositioned while portraying graphic violence in the form of documentary. This cinema made history worldwide, introducing the category "*favela films*", which was unavoidable in the festival circuits. The positive international reaction contrasted protests coming from City of God, the Brazilian academia, journalism, and critics.

In 2019, looking almost 20 years back to the succession of titles provoking a debate on how to film the barbarism that had occupied certain territories while these very same places benefited from some improvements in terms of access to water, electric power, pavement, housing and, in some cases even sewage systems, helps to assess how the situation of "exception" seen in these places insidiously poses a threat to democracy.

In *News from a Personal War* there is a brief voice over intro – reflective but not personal – locating the documentary: the amount of cocaine incinerated by Rio de Janeiro's police force, the number of seized weapons, and the number of casualties linked to the illegal drug trafficking. As for the images, we witness the incineration

work being conducted by the government's specialized unit. The documentary's focus leaves this voice behind to concentrate on the people who can be labeled in one the three categories: "police, dealers, and, at the crossfire, local inhabitants." The film's title is taken from the testimony of the young Captain Pimentel, a member of BOPE (Portuguese acronym for Special Police Operations Squad, Rio de Janeiro's elite police force), who, when asked whether he would like to serve in a war, recognized that he is already amidst one. Through this participation, Pimentel initiates a career in film that would result in the future in *Ônibus 174* [Bus 174], as well as in the co-authoring the script for *Tropa de Elite* and *Tropa de Elite 2* (The Elites Squad and The Elites Squad 2], three films directed by José Padilha, whose statement was included as an epigraph for the present chapter.

I believe *News from a Personal War* can be considered a kind of trigger for a series that I would like to call **filmic interlocutions** around who has the power to say what, where, and how about whom – a debate that takes place in various platforms. The mapping of such reverberations, taking into account stylistic elements and means of production and circulation for each film, allows us to identify an expanding public space, which incorporates a multiplicity of voices, bodies, and urban spaces commonly avoided in film, and even more so on TV. The mapping of this (still open) series of reverberations is marked by a digital transition that brought, in the field of cinema, an ongoing democratization of access to the means of production and circulation of images in other spheres of society and culture.

In this train of thought, the films *White out, Black in,* and *Is the City Only One?* by Adirley Queirós will be analyzed as interjections in a debate raised by a wide succession of films and video clips, including *They Don't Care About Us, Vida Loka* [Crazy Life], *Diários de um Detento* [Diaries of an Inmate], *Cidade de Deus* [City of God], *O Invasor* [The Invader], *Ônibus 174* [Bus 174], *Falcão* [The

Falcon], *Meninos do Tráfico* [Dealer Boys], *Antonia*, *Os Inquilinos* [The Tenants], *Tropa de Elite* [Elites Squad], *Tropa de Elite 2* [Elites Squad 2], and *Estamira*. In the public television networks, the *favela* landscape is introduced as a consequence of the aforementioned filmography, initially in series produced by Record, such as *Vidas Opostas* [Opposite Lives], and Globo, in *Duas Caras* [Double Face] and, more recently, in a number of other titles including *Babilônia* [Babylon] and *I love Paraisópolis*. Subsequently, Record and Globo soap operas also depicted favelas (where the place is invariably either totally scenographic or produced with digital technology). I would like to anticipate, however, that both performance and acting, despite the documentary tone of the first films in this debate, have acquired notable growing relevance, be it through testimonies of the directors themselves in voice over and/or in scene, or through the work of amateur actors embodying characters dealing with archival materials and personal testimonies.

The pluralization of voices and forms: Ceilândia's case

The noise from an engine right away. Interruption. Lettering situating time and space of a "satellite" town: "Old Ceilândia, Federal District". The noise resumes. It is now possible to take a glimpse at the side of a wall, an empty lot, part of a playground and a four-story building. The camera starts to move upwards as in a crane shot to reveal, from behind and over the wall, a roof and other buildings to the left: fragments of an urban and nocturnal landscape in an impoverished neighborhood. Nobody can be seen. The abrupt cut marks the transition for a long indoors sequence depicting an unusual action: a black man in a wheelchair goes down a narrow ladder using a motorized platform. The engine produces the only sound that ca be heard while the character moves towards the camera.

The setting is small and the ceiling is low. Exiting the platform, Markim moves towards a ramp that will take him one story down in the opposite direction. The camera moves slightly to the right, following the operation, from the same place, now above the character. Going down to the basement – a kind of office/studio – is faster. But the sequence is not over. In the background a LED screen can be spotted: the four divisions exhibit images from security cameras. The character moves swiftly in his wheelchair, his movement towards the depths of that space, far from the camera, reveals trinkets and other equipment.

The film constructs this secretive, tortuous, meager self-made place, which is contrasted with the monumental spaces from the pilot plan of the country's federal district. An enchanted basement, a secret *bunker*, Batman's cave, the *Matrix* brain, or the radio station that encouraged the main character from the *Easy Rider:* the feeling is that of a kind of headquarter. The rapper and DJ positions himself in front of his soundboard and starts to narrate in detail the events that took place during a party in March, 1986. Before starting, he puts on a record and his headset. The beat follows the first person narrative; the time is the present, in the old Ceilândia, about 30 years before the movie: "It is Sunday, 7pm, and I've already put on my sweet kickers." The narrative keeps on going with the rap beat following the steps of the dancer going to a ball. His friends' house, arriving at the venue, approaching girls, the seduction foreplay, brief notes sent to them. The locutor's voice is clear and expressive, aided by the moves of his upper body. We imagine the place being described by this autobiographical narrator as if we too were in the journey interrupted by a sudden explosion followed by panic.

The verisimilitude of the story is not affected by the contrast between the sound filled by the catchy narrative, in the past, and the image, which reveals the DJ's equipment – soundboard, microphone, recorders, and sound files – in the present. There is a

long sequence of the artist's profile alongside his performance. The character speaks on the microphone as if he were actually in each one of the places described without ever leaving his soundboard. The narrative describes a trajectory, his moving between places, towards the *Quarentão* ball that Sunday evening.

Pre-recorded foley effects are inserted by himself on his soundboard – his work instrument –, at that lonely basement, giving us access to the construction of the sound narrative. The force of his performance transports the viewer. We are with Markim, almost 30 years ago, at the crime scene. His vocal performance is full of rhythm. His body moves around the mic. The song "*Ih, o baile vai ser louco aqui no Quarentão. Os moleques tão de quina me esperando irmão*" [The ball is going to go down here at *Quarentão*, my fellas on the corner waiting for me, bro]… is illustrated with still shots, archival images, clothes from decades ago, children dancing break, fragments of imagery and evidence from those days.

Throughout the rap, the character talks to his friends back then. We have dived into the realm of memory, traveling in time with the protagonist who is still framed in profile in a long sequence. "I'll start a new step, like this, the head…," he conducts his partner. The visible part of his body is moving, sending a message to Paulinha, who awaits near the stairs.

But "something is going on". The sound of explosion, still shots of the crowd at the party before the attack: "it's the pigs […] pepper spray […]." The medium shot follows the gesture in charge of the soundboard. Silence. "They turned off the sound." The narrator starts to interpret lines with the asymmetrical interaction between an abusive cop and the helpless citizens:

– Come on, whores to one side, faggots to the other. Come on, Damn it! […] Are you deaf or something? I'm saying […] White out, Black in, damn it!

White Out, Black In (2014), Adirley Queirós' film, winner of Brasília's International Film Festival in 2014, was produced and takes place in Ceilândia, the satellite town whose name comes from the acronym CEI (Portuguese for Campaign to Eradicate Invasions), euphemism for the program of "urban cleansing" in the Federal District. Similar programs aimed at transferring segments of the population to far away locations without infra-structure took place in many Brazilian capital cities during the first years of the military dictatorship, including Brasília and Rio de Janeiro. Thus, one can trace comparisons between Ceilândia and City of God.

The history behind the establishment of Ceilândia (CEI), and the history of the advertisement campaign aimed at taking the families of workers who built Brazil's new federal district out of the pilot plan is the subject of a prior film by the same director, *Is the City Only One?* (2011), which covers the cleansing operation of the modernist city in the early 1970s, as well as the outcomes of this social apartheid in the present, when the 50th anniversary of the city is being celebrated. By exposing the meager landscape of Ceilândia, both films ironically underscore, then, the contrast with the monumental pilot plan.

In both cases, the films suggest the lack of full citizenship in Brasília. They somehow explore processes of expelling inhabitants and workers who had been once pioneers in the occupation and construction of the capital, but who become invaders to the city's administrative political power. In the futuristic fiction, the phenomenon is illustrated by the need of a passport to get into the city. Besides, Adirley Queirós consolidates a strong and original style that expands the limits of documentaries, using performance resources to transform his own film into a historical document that remains present in the memory of those who live in a place in need of archives. Characters who were central to the depicted events conduct the narrative in a mix of personal testimony and

performance, subverting the conventions of the documentary genre. In *White Out, Black In* and in *Once Upon a Time Brasília,* his most recent film, documentary is intertwined with sci-fi.

This place in between genres constructs an original cinema that is aligned with the international debate on film and the production of evidence to support struggles against trauma caused by various forms of State violence. *White out, Black in* tells the story of two black young men, a musician and a soccer player, who lost the movements of their legs due to police violence in a ball at the *Quarentão* Club in March, 1986. Both of their histories is investigated by a third party, a sci-fi character, an "agent" in charge of traveling to the past in order to gather evidence to be used in a lawsuit against the State, in a **reparation action**.

White Out, Black In is precarious as a sci-fi piece. A silver container that trembles like a spaceship receives messages from its headquarters in the future. The agent's research is materialized in clippings from newspapers hung on the wall of the spaceship. But the film's emphasis is on the spacial construction. The movie allows us to see contemporary Ceilândia, self-construction of the imagination, apart from Brasília's monumental pilot plan.

Is the City Only One?, the previous film by the same director, was made with funding from a public call aimed at celebrating the 50th anniversary of the federal district, a modernist city that would express Brazil's radical project as a country of the future. Filmed in 2010, this film articulates archival images with Oscar Niemeyer's voice talking about the project becoming reality, snippets from local news at the time, among others. Built around three main characters, Nancy, a girl who had been selected to participate in the official advertisement campaign to "eradicate invasions" to cleanse the pilot plan; Dildu, the candidate to city council from the fictional Party of the National Hustle, a janitor in the pilot plan, and his brother-in-law who is a realtor helping him in his electoral campaign.

Fiction and documentary are interconnected in order to produce documentation on an unknown place for those who do not live there. Given the lack of archival images, the film does not hesitate to produce them, becoming itself the archive.

Between 1969 and 1971, the children from the *favelas* in Brasília were cast to sing for a television jingle asking for the help of those who had a good place to live, "Give us a hand, help us to build our home; so we can all say together: the city is only one." Over the children's voice, images of empty streets in Ceilândia are contrasted with the pilot plan, whose entire design in the shape of a plane burns in flames in the first and last sequences of the film. After this official initiation, Nancy becomes herself a singer, working as the conductor for the children's choir produced by the film to reenact the jingle with costumes from that time in an attempt to recover the lost advertisement campaign. The low definition recording in black and white produces thus the inexistent archive. The cinematographic imagination in Adirley Queirós films works to challenge, talk about traumatic historical episodes of a community that lives in the periphery of the country's political power, on the fringes of the image, quoting Evaldo Mocarzel's documentary *On the Fringes of São Paulo* depicting homeless people in the city of São Paulo and their relationships to images.

I believe cinematographic imagination also works as a space where victims of State violence can speak up: they tell their histories, guide us through their communities, carefully framed in ways that portray broad horizons and the creative occupation of these places. The film is a document of complaint, denouncing a case of State violence, a living aberration in the community's memory, acquiring a wider collective memory. The film is both document and vengeance. A symbolic bomb. The victims take charge of the filmic space and it is from their standpoint of controlling the public images that they produce new documents and evidence as if compensating an

absence of archives. The mutilation of their bodies do not stop them from living and, even if not fully, answering their calling, and even performing their own lives on the screen. They share the trauma as a way of overcoming it: telling the story from the place of one who has conquered the ability to tell the story.

Adirley Queirós films are located in the intersection of two strands of documentary studies – archive films and testimony films – in order to produce their own niche: films which produce archives, documents, and testimonies. Archive films, according to Foucault's thought on the organization of knowledge and archives, inform us about the organization of power on what is being documented, acquiring their own strength. Archives of images and images of archives are manipulated in a way that suggests new possible interpretations of what archives aim to document. Such documentary films can also record relationships between subjects and archival materials, generating additional grounds on the conditions in which certain materials have been produced and transformed in the present. At times, these subjects witness the history that the archives themselves can no longer tell. The filmmaker can be personally implicated, in the first person, in the situations that are only partially represented. Thus, while problematizing the archive, films have shifted beyond the representations that certain systems of classification and organization of knowledge produce. *White Out, Black In* and *Is the City Only One?* deal exactly with such absence. In other words, they go beyond the denouncement in order to fill in what was missing, constituting archives of aberrant events disseminated in a fragmented fashion throughout history.

Ceilândia is common ground for both films, a space that allows for the articulation between people's memories of the traumatic situation and new forms of State discrimination through testimonies, but not just any testimony. The performance strategy potentializes the testimonials. In both films, Markim speaks as a DJ,

musician, writer of jingles, driver of his own car, master of his own studio. His character inspires autonomy, overcoming, and strength towards the local memory and its contemporary transformations. Thus, Adirley Queirós' films, and before them the series of works experimenting different approaches on how to film the daily violence in impoverished communities can be placed in a long-lasting discussion in cinema's history and theory.

In 2011, right after president Dilma Rousseff's election, *Is the City Only One?* pointed towards the maintenance of political inequality inscribed in the contrast between the urban landscapes of Ceilândia and Brasília's pilot plan. The final sequence, in which Dildu, the candidate from the fictional "Party of the National Hustle", sees his independent grassroots campaign being superseded by the official candidate's motorcade, can be considered portentous of Brazil's current moment. The professional politics mega structure invades the fictional character's arena, as if highlighting the wide disconnection between Brazil's Workers' Party (PT) and its popular base.

In 2014, while the Truth Committee [*Comissão da Verdade*] investigates the basements of the military dictatorship, *White out, Black in* suggests a more attentive consideration of more symptomatically obscure archives: those reporting State violence in the New Republic. Police violence has kept on going throughout the entire process of re-democratization and the administrations run by MDB, PT, and PSDB, almost without any consequences. A history that continues to be unfolded in the daily present, in *personal wars* that haunt the inhabitants of city projects and *favelas*, but that has never been fully included in the nation's political agenda, at least not until the electoral campaign of 2018, according to the words of the polemic José Padilha opening this text. By not recognizing parallel powers as a problem in the outskirts, these governments have opened up a space for a war-like discourse.

Adirley Queirós' first feature film dives deep into an effervescence that has taken place for at least 20 years in Brazilian outskirts and *favelas*. By getting access to the means of production, collectives and directors are now building their own narratives, offering new points of view, and changing the relationships of alterity inscribed in the Brazilian audiovisual production.

But this is also a war of images. The production agency *Filmes de Plástico* from Contagem, Minas Gerais, is another example of an organization that has gained national and international relevance. In São Paulo, Cristiano Burlam, from Capão Redondo, seeks to elaborate his own survival history, of a family that has lost a brother, father and mother and which has other two of its members in prison. Indigenous filmic production has also been on the spotlight, with more and more representation and space in the public sphere. As for black women, K-bela de Yasmin Tayná adds up to the scene through her strong poetic essay on overcoming the traumas related to her hair.

Therefore, by introducing landscapes such as Ceilândia's in the audiovisual repertoire, Adirley Queirós contributes to the pluralization of our access to places and people who are not commonly depicted on the screens of movie theaters and television. In the majority of times, whenever they do appear, these places are reduced to mere concentrations of poverty. Queirós's work faces the challenge of showing a human geography beyond the imagination. Like himself, other emerging filmmakers such as André Novais and Affonso Uchoa are engaging in a film production that can be linked to Eduardo Coutinho's works as opposed to other cinematographies. Neighborhoods under construction, packed with self-made houses; the enormous bus station; computers, recorders, radios, DJ, music, soccer; a place inhabited by people who sing, compose, play, work hard, and dream of becoming politicians. Sequences focusing on open spaces, streets, houses, alleys bathed by the sun light, marked

by the presence of a railroad. I believe such chosen settings and the way they were filmed value relatively open horizons in an attempt to deal with traumatic events without reinforcing stigmas.

The examination of documentary elements with performance expands the universe of the documentary genre, allowing remembrances to let loose from the private lives of autobiographical characters towards a collective, public, and historic dimension. Dildu, the janitor who wished to become a councilman, fictional character inserted in *Is the City Only One?*, exposes the political isolation of the Worker's Party (PT), in its peak then, by the end of Lula's administration.

In *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler proposes the notion of *performativity* to discuss gender. The contemporary philosopher looks back at the reenactment that involves recognizing the expressive dimension of bodies interacting with each other to defy binary paradigms, based on essentialist notions of alleged identities. The performance of gender might follow pre-established codes or propose new ones. The notion of performance is subjected to the unforeseen and relational interactions. Performances take place in situations that can be circumscribed and that are directly tied to certain interlocutions. I believe this notion of performance can be fruitful to understand the relationships between the subjectivities portrayed in the analyzed films, the subjectivities filming them, as well as the viewers. In the first two decades of the 21st century, there has been a process of appropriating the means of production in film, including, at least at first, the appropriation of black bodies, their oral traditions, rhythms and territories, and the parallel structures of power in their communities. By reaching the means of production, such appropriation becomes even more resounding and reverses the sense of performance in a way that escapes the Aristotelian mimesis towards new displacements.

Science fiction appeals to a sense of futurity, in which the atrocities of the recent past and present can be reinterpreted in terms of reparations, just as much as the slavery's past demands a constant battle against discrimination in the present. Science fiction justifies the production of testimonies and the imagination of a symbolic vengeance. These testimonies are not constrained in front of a threatening camera, looking to depict tears and scars. The DJ's performance in his enchanted bunker, his rhythm resisting his own paralysis, speaks louder, beyond the documentary, favoring the documental.

Going back to the early 2000s films in order to look at this debate helps us to notice how cinema had been, at least for 10 years, warning the inconclusive citizenship that haunts the outskirts of large cities in Brazil, where the State cannot guarantee peace, and practices violence mainly against young black men. There is a backlash worldwide, threatening the welfare and humanitarian social advances of the post-war world. A humanitarian comospolitanism, diversified, open to cultural, religious, and ethnic differences, with which both cinema and audiovisual production are identified clashed with various forms of fundamentalism across the globe. In many cases, cinema and television are among the main targets of these totalitarian movements. In others, cinema, television, and digital media are responsible for the setbacks. Between these two extremes, both affirmations presuppose the recognition that moving images are part of the problem, which does not mean the examination of how images are implicated in contemporary life.

There are economic, political, social, and even cultural data on the crises of democracy. But even though social media can be placed at the center of the most recent electoral victories by leaderships who seek to dismantle democratic institutions and the national states responsible for the maintenance of income distribution initiatives and social welfare, a solid study on these platforms is still

needed. Especially in terms of the relationship between social media and the diverse and fragmented field of sound and images. In the realm of Cinema and Audiovisual Studies, one can find a reflection on images and their relationship to politics and contemporary life. These studies have the potential to gain more relevance if linked to the questions posed by other consolidated fields of knowledge.

In a world of overwhelming images, the negativity of thinking about the image can be overcome by an effort, at least for critics and producers, to look at forms and platforms which, against sensationalism, alienation and fundamentalism, can imagine a future with more social justice. The question is one of aesthetics and politics at the same time, and, remains at the core of the knowledge on the production and circulation of images since the Second World War, and in each and every conflict throughout the 20th century.

The challenge now is to connect the Brazilian filmography to the contemporary international debate on the power of images to fill in the blanks, reaffirm memory, and overcome trauma. Eduardo Coutinho, Harun Farocki, Rithy Pahn, and Trim-min-ha, as well as the critical work on their films, help us to establish links, updating questions for the contemporary world posed by the films and theories that continue to reflect upon the paradoxes of the image.

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II. New Voices

Keeping the Dream Alive? A Theoretical Understanding of the Role of Films in the Political Right Wing Popularity

Rebecca Carr

Introduction

This article is an initial foray into theoretically understanding the often-overlooked role of mainstream narrative films in the current appeal of populism and authoritarianism in the United States. Movies should be considered more seriously when examining voter tendencies. Doing so contributes to and encourages the study of film in the context of political science to fill a knowledge gap highlighted by Laurent Godmer (2010) and others. Taking Clint Eastwood's successful film *Gran Torino* (2008) as a case study, I apply Nidesh Lawtoo's interpretation of mimetic theory (2017) and Alison Landsberg's "prosthetic memory" (2004) together as an entry point for audience reception. Annemone Ligensa's survey of Eastwood's "core audience" and other data regarding his popularity reveal an overlap in demographics and attitudes with Donald Trump, the right-wing American president from 2016-2020. *Gran Torino* (2008) will be briefly analyzed according to five social psychological factors of Trump supporters identified by Thomas F. Pettigrew (2017). Further research calls for deepening the evaluation of *Gran Torino* and increasing the sample pool to test more recent productions according to the above methodology to determine their ideological function. Additionally, more research should explore correlations between popular movies that model and reinforce authoritarian

and populist sentiments and voters. A larger goal is for viewers to appreciate the ideological functions of the films they consume and how they impact political beliefs and behaviour.

Context

The paradigmatic shift in American society towards a more inclusive chorus of narratives has brought intentional and unintentional, welcome and unwelcome challenges to collective identities. When such a move poses a perceived risk to the ipseity of the group, it can trigger the revisionist reaction of declaring that there is a war on the community's traditional values and those who abide by them. This motif has found expression in the recent films directed by and starring Clint Eastwood.

Previously, many of Eastwood's films featured "extraordinary (anti-)heroes" whose occupations such as police officer (*The Rookie*, 1990), preacher (*Pale Rider*, 1985), or even astronaut (*Space Cowboys*, 2000), situated them at the frontier of society. The films Eastwood directed from 2008 to 2018 actively reject the move towards inclusion in the United States. He returns from the periphery to depict "ordinary heroes" under attack at work (*The Mule*, 2018) and on the front lawn (*Gran Torino*, 2008). Films from this later period portray an American white man's uncontested right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" being curtailed by women, people of colour and immigrants. Eastwood's fictional characters' real-life counterparts historically wielded power but are now losing ground to previously marginalized groups and decry the transformation culture is undergoing.

In 2016, a political outsider and a purported underdog who promised to "Make American Great Again" was elected president of the United States by voters who were predominantly low to middle-class white males (Pew Research), such as those depicted

in recent Eastwood films. A well-known sentiment in that political camp, recognized for its fascist, authoritarian and populist stances, is the sense of dispossession and resentment. To answer the question, "What is it in the world today that is making populist and authoritarian approaches to government so attractive?" this article proposes that perhaps the best place to start looking for answers is at the movies.

First, I will summarise the value of discussing films in a political context to convey the urgency of considering the role of films in political trends in light of recent socio-political trends. Second, I will outline Lawtoo's conceptualization of myth and mimetic function and apply it to film. How this impacts the audience will be explained by using Landsberg's theory of "prosthetic memory." Third, an overview will be provided of Thomas F. Pettigrew's "Social Psychological Perspectives on Trump Supporters" (2017) which structures the brief analysis of *Gran Torino* to determine its ideological function. The conclusion suggests avenues to research further the significance of film studies for political science and expand awareness of the relationship between mainstream cinema and viewers who vote.

Call for the political analysis of films

Pettigrew (2017) states that the reasons for voting for a particular party or candidate are multivariate. Godmer argues that films should be considered more seriously as one of those reasons. He acknowledges it is difficult to quantify the influence a film has on balloter but suggests it is possible, though not with a precision enjoyed in other cause-and-effect relationships, for the reason mentioned above by Pettigrew. Undeterred, Godmer cites the cinematic trends of "blaxploitation" (1969-1975) and "new black film" (1986-2000) as decisive forces in broadening the ethnic inclusivity of American

politicians. Diversity was made possible "by making emancipation a reality on film, particularly through rebellion… heroicization, and trivialization when socio-political and artistic constructions could interweave, influence each other, and hybridize" (Godmer 18). To appreciate how the mechanism-medium could make the political body more reflective of the constituency, we must not lose sight of its functions.

The ubiquity and transportability of film and its frequent focus on individuals' daily lives make it accessible to the broader public. Despite this approachability, Godmer calls upon Kracauer and Deleuze to remind us that the art of cinematography is to escort us towards a perspective. "Film renders visible what we did not, or perhaps could not, see before it was created. It effectively assists us in discovering the material world with its psychophysical relationships" (Kracauer qtd in Godmer 20). Through camera work, or what Benjamin likened to surgery (Benjamin 13), angles and lingering shots usher viewers toward a "point of view" (Deleuze qtd in Godmer 20). Our attention is directed to aspects and interactions within a film we may have overlooked in our own lives. Audiences observe how an individual navigates socio-politically constructed situations, which may impact a viewer as a person and a voter once the film concludes, as proposed above by Godmer and further below with Landsberg. She explains how people may internalize films through prosthetic memory leading to empathy. To grasp the motivations and priorities of voters, we can observe them on screen. Before speaking at the psychological level, let us first consider the dynamics of film at the social level.

Myth and mimesis

Lawtoo develops the theory of Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy regarding how fascism operationalizes myth to attract followers. Blending the French philosophers and Nietzsche, Lawtoo examines the role of mimesis, explored here in the context of film, in catalyzing a "contagious *pathos*" in audience members (75).

Lawtoo concludes his article "The Power of Myth (Reloaded): From Nazism to New Fascism" with words from Phillipe Lacoue-Labarthe. The French philosopher cautions that we should be "… considering fascism a 'pathological' phenomenon… and recognize in it not only (at least) one of the age's possible political forms… but the political form that is perhaps best able to cast light on the essence of modern politics" (Lacoue-Labarthe qtd in Lawtoo 80). Given the durability and renewed popularity of fascism, it behooves us to appreciate what contributes to its ubiquity and the figures who represent it.

Eastwood's film models and reinforces right-wing behavior by taking the stance that films function as an example of the Platonic "protean concept." Lawtoo asserts, "to this day, continues to give power to myth: namely *mimesis*, understood *both* as an aesthetic representation of reality *and* as an effective formation of subjects" (65). Eastwood portrays a growing, concerning version of reality, namely that which Pettigrew terms "relative deprivation" caused by the shifting landscape of American national identity. As the adage goes, "When you are accustomed to privilege, equality feels like oppression."

Lawtoo builds on Nietzche's argument in *Birth of Tragedy* to highlight the interaction between Apollonian *logos* and Dionysian *pathos* in which logos feeds pathos, and pathos feeds logos, offering the example of the dynamic at a Trump rally between attendees and

the then-president of the United States. Here, the director and the actor – who in this situation are the same – present and represent a particular message (logos) to an audience who has an emotional response to what they observe (pathos).

The sentiment of relative deprivation is shared by a large contingent of Trump voters (Pettigrew). Ruth Ben-Ghiat points out that to cultivate a following, Trump and other leaders such as Vladimir Putin and Silvio Berlusconi prey upon the insecurities surrounding unwarranted hardship and use the actions and words of an "authoritarian demagogue" (Ben-Ghiat 2001).

Lawtoo proposes,

> … mythic figures or types generate what Plato calls in Republic a phantom of reality… without ontological value… and these figures bring into being what Nietzsche calls 'phantom of the ego,' a copy of simulacrum of men without psychic substance, the real-life consequences of which can reach massive proportions in modern life (66).

When he asks, "What… is the affective and formal mechanism that is currently reloading the power of myth?" (66), we should turn our attention to the recent Eastwood films. When Eastwood is the director and the star, he exerts control over the message (logos) and how it is enacted (mimed) before audiences, who are likely to have an emotional response to his mediated representation of a particular type of American. This article proposes that Eastwood's latest films are one source that is reloading the power of neo-authoritarian myth.

Eastwood is a living legend, having acted in 72 films, directing 44 others in a career spanning seven decades. One may describe him as monumental. Writing on the topic of collective identity prior to the ubiquity of cinema, Landsberg offers that monuments acted and continue to act as

> …guarantors of national memory; they both created an
> illusion of a stable, recognizable past and promised to serve as
> a bulwark against further social upheaval. These monuments
> were overwhelming and led people to recognize the power
> and "always ready" quality of the nation-state. (Landsberg 6)

In Ligensa's comprehensive survey of audience reception of
Eastwood, she writes, "To many Americans, Eastwood is more than
a film star: in a Roper poll in 1985, he was the person most often
named by 18- to 24- year olds as their hero (McBee)" (234). She
offers evidence that Eastwood's appeal extends beyond the screen.
"… due to his short stint as mayor of his home town Carmel, polls
revealed that many could imagine him as a presidential candidate
(Anon 1995b)" (234).

In *Gran Torino,* Eastwood is the embodiment of fighting – and
losing – against the social upheaval to which Landsberg refers. Or, to
use Plato's words via Lawtoo, Eastwood is generating a phantom of
reality that becomes a "phantom of the ego." Eastwood's characters
within each movie and over time mythologized him, making his
name shorthand for the independent, raw, masculine type who is
achieving the American dream. This figure models behavior, or
better yet, a moment in the hazy halcyon days when individuality
was not contradictory to authority. If men did not dominate socially,
they were inferior. The era of the "American Man" demanded, "a
car, a job, and a girl", as the *Gran Torino* protagonist Walt Kowalski
encourages his young Hmong neighbor to acquire to achieve
the "American Dream" is familiar to many. This period is often
compressed into a narrative that suggests a strong national identity.

Of course, cultural artefacts and literature from that period
overwhelmingly prove that the seemingly uncomplicated age that
formed the values of Eastwood's two protagonists considered
here was anything but simple. Furthermore, Ligensa reports that
Eastwood's character was treated as "something of an anachronism"

as early as *Coogan's Bluff* (1968), which is to say that "old-fashioned" values he continuously practices were treated as antiquated half a century ago (Ligensa 242). What *did* often go unchallenged was prejudice and the expectation that one would not be deprived so long as one had a job. These two points and others will be revisited below when Pettigrew's social psychological perspectives are explored.

Returning to the trope Eastwood animates, he continues to project an unwavering connection to, for some, an idyllic myth or fantasy. In this article, I examine this fantasy in which right-wing voters and audiences revel. Eastwood and Trump are most popular with men than women and the demographic that did not complete high school (Ligensa; Pew Research). Ligensa proposes, "The kind of masculinity Eastwood personifies (dominant, violent and emotionless, except for anger as a driving force) can then be understood as a more or less generalizable metaphor for an extreme desire for independence and personal empowerment" (241). While many lucrative vocations require an apprenticeship rather than a high school diploma, social and economic stigmas surrounding non-completion of second-level education remain.

It is conceivable that the impact of the lack of academic achievement can create a sense of *dis*empowerment, leading to a search for means of personal empowerment or the illusion of it. As an illustration, *Gran Torino* Walt is empowered by serving as the authority on American success and reclaiming the neighborhood from immigrant and minority gangbangers. Ligensa argues that Eastwood's films are comparable to the fantasy propagated in comics, but acknowledging that the real nature of mainstream films make the performance more potent, "but also makes it appear more "political" than it was probably ever intended" (Ligensa 241). Intentionality is hard to ascribe or assess and beyond the scope of this endeavor.

Additionally, whether the politics are intentional or not, in the two films analyzed herein, Eastwood, as the director, constructs a message and, as the protagonist, mimes a particular ideology. This collection of attitudes is consonant with the demographics of his core audience, thereby reflecting their concerns through Eastwood, the icon. Nonetheless, the focus remains on the hypothesis that belief in the myth Eastwood portrays and the faith in politics that support it and its circulation are factors that contribute to the rise of populism and authoritarianism in the United States in plain sight. But how do the myths on-screen get transported to the public arena and, of particular interest here, the voting booths?

Making (prosthetic) memories

Landsberg (2004) attributes the change in an individual's beliefs and even voting practices after watching a film to the creation of "prosthetic memory". She proposes that the experience of watching a historical film "takes on a more personal, deeply felt memory of a past event through which he or she did not live. The resulting prosthetic memory has the ability to shape that person's subjectivities and politics" (2). This process is made possible by the commodification and dissemination of the narrative beyond its original audience (i.e. the community a film depicts) to viewers who otherwise may have heretofore little contact with the original group. The exposure to another group through film lays inroads for the secondary audience's development of empathy towards those who belong to the collective depicted or impacted. What permits this is the representation of the diegesis. Landsberg writes, "Because they feel real, they help condition how a person thinks about the world and might be instrumental in articulating an ethical relation to the other" (21). Though she writes theoretically, Landsberg readily asserts that no two viewers will construct the same prosthetic

memory despite watching the same movie. Landsberg attributes this to the perceptions and experiences that shape the individual.

The individual's awareness of oneself in the present permits prosthetic memories to be formed when watching historical films reasons Landsberg. Her hypothesis is based on bearing witness to a mediated representation of previous eras through films about the Holocaust, American slavery, and of particular interest here, immigration to the United States at the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Regarding that era of immigration, Landsberg points out that many films produced in response to that event were part of an effort to assimilate the recently arrived.

> Nineteenth-century moments produced memories that unified people across differences of class, ethnicity, gender, and region. But they did so by constructing a common national identity that was supposed to supersede these differences. (9)

This attitude is palpable throughout *Gran Torino,* as the analysis below will show.

Expanding on the aspect of identity and belonging in prosthetic memory, Landsberg celebrates the non-proprietary nature of cinematic encounters. She argues that "Mass-mediated memories are not premised on any claim of authenticity or 'natural' ownership", which means that any viewers can "incorporate them into their own archive of experience" (9). The lack of proprietorship is indicative of Landsberg's stance that prosthetic memory has the potential to facilitate compassion. She proposes that when a member of one group witnesses the cinematic memory of another group, the outgroup member may retain the experience of developing empathy for the other without the expectation of new group members, and they maintain ties to their original community. Indeed, films are a viable means of promoting inter-group contact, and this is consistent with

the process of identification with characters. In a literature review of Eastwood's audiences from 1964-2009, Ligensa finds that he is the most "popular white star among African Americans" and the favorite star among disabled respondents" (234). However, it would be neglectful to avoid discussing how films, especially starring icons, can catalyze antipathy as well as empathy.

Permission to act?

Eastwood reclaims power via unsanctioned means from those who challenge his sovereignty. Žižek defends Plato's call to banish the poets from the city on the grounds that it was the poets who provided Milosević with the material he needed to manipulate the nationalist passions of Serbs resulting in ethnic cleansing during the 1990s (504). Elsewhere, Ron Eyerman counts poets among the messengers delivering accounts of grievances to the public arena to gain wide recognition to declare cultural trauma (Eyerman). By both Žižek and Eyerman's theories point to poets disseminating information about the populace, or at least a subgroup, to the public. In the context of this theoretical exploration, Eastwood is, indeed, a poet depicting responses to not-so-fictional and politically-charged situations, despite Ligensa's opinion that Eastwood's film politics are unintentional. She cites a study on Hollywood films in which Ryan and Kellner (1988) investigated audience beliefs and entertainment with Harry Callahan's illegitimate antics in *Dirty Harry* (1971). The investigators found that most of the sample group (77%) disagreed with Callahan's approach and watched the film while maintaining their political stances. "It suggests that the popularity of right-wing films is not necessarily a testament to the prevalence of right-wing opinions in the films' audiences" (Ligensa 238). However, Ryan and Kellner entertain the possibility that "it points to the possibility of false consciousness and of unconscious influences" (Ryan and

Kellner qtd in Ligensa 238). Yet, at neither point when *Dirty Harry* premiered nor when Ryan and Kellner conducted their study was there a flowing tide of populism like the present.

Characteristics of a Trump supporter in Gran Torino

Eastwood is perceived to be a uniquely American icon if nothing else than through box office success enjoyed predominantly domestically rather than internationally (Ligensa 2012). Remarkably, the traits he portrays in *Gran Torino* are consistent with far-right characteristics observed internationally. In his 2017 commentary on Trump supporters, Pettigrew opens by acknowledging that "all social phenomena are multivariate" and that "no claim is made that these social psychological factors provide in themselves and explanation" (107). Despite that, the five social psychological perspectives on the voters he identifies share "close parallels between these American results and those of research on far-right European supporters", suggesting that there are commonalities at least in the West, if not universally. These traits are "*authoritarianism*, *social dominance orientation*, *prejudice*, *relative deprivation*, and *intergroup contact*" (italics added for emphasis) (Ligensa 107) Uncoincidentally, in Ruth Ben-Ghiat's analysis on right-wing leaders, she finds a high incidence rate of propaganda, virility, violence and misogyny qua patriarchy. She surveys rulers around the world from Idi Amin (Uganda) to Vladimir Putin (Russia) and Silvio Berlusconi (Italy) to Donald Trump (USA) and categorizes them as so-called "Strong Men" (Ben-Ghiat). Her research indicates that certain far-right tendencies are not restricted to the occidental world.

Pettigrew finds that in the US and Europe, the primary catalyzers of far-right political groups to be "male nativists and populists who were less educated than the general population" (Pettigrew 108).

A graph from March 2020 shows that high school graduates from 1960 to 2019 increased from 42.5% to 90.5% of women and 39.5% to 89.6% of men (Duffin 2020). The rise suggests that male high school dropouts are a shrinking minority. The statistics reflect a passing of a way of life when the odds were men were less than likely to complete secondary education, despite the cost of third-level education being more affordable in the past than now. Though beyond this article's scope, research into the attitudes of high school dropouts regarding their increasingly uncommon educational status may offer insight into the appeal of Trump and Eastwood. Pettigrew's research shows that, in a progressively diverse world, the low education status is not the only characteristic that is increasingly rare in wider society, namely "prejudice" and limited "intergroup contact" (108). Below, Pettigrew's five characteristics will be defined and illustrated with examples from *Gran Torino* to demonstrate how both films function ideologically to model and reinforce the right-wing political stance.

Authoritarianism

Several symptoms typify authoritarianism, a syndrome that Pettigrew concedes is globally uniform. He says that it is exemplified by "deference to authority, aggression toward outgroups, a rigidly hierarchical view of the world, and resistance to new experience… and typically triggered by threat and fear" (Pettigrew 108). It may be connected to belonging to the above-mentioned shrinking minority of high school dropouts. In previous texts, Pettigrew explores whether authoritarianism is "a political ideology in itself" or, more psychologically, a personality construct" (108). Regardless, ultimately the adherents tend to possess a right-wing perspective.

Part of *Gran Torino*'s perceived charm is the evolution of Walt Kowalski, retired Detroit auto-worker, from a cantankerous Korean war veteran to the martyred protector of his Hmong neighbours.

The film opens at Walt's wife's funeral. One of Walt's sons says to the other, "Dad's still living in the '50s." Indeed, Walt's attitude towards the Asian outgroup was shaped by serving in the US military during the Korean War (1950-1953), a period of continuous threat. For example, he says, "Jesus Christ, how many swamp rats can they cram into a living room?" when there is a celebration next door. When he does attend gathering (a glimpse of progress) and makes a faux pas, drawing the dismay of the other party guests, his reaction is, once again, to dehumanize them: "What the hell are all you fish heads looking at?!?" Sue (Ahney Her) explains that his actions violate Hmong customs; he considers her advice not out of love for the foreign culture but an appreciation of a "rigidly hierarchical view". The affinity he develops for the family next door (rather than toward his own family, whom he sees as ungrateful and soft) is that of a benevolent colonizer, owing to their strong sense of identity and willingness to practice what he considers American values. The film script reads:

> Walt sees a young man give up his seat to an Elder. Walt sees a young woman go to each of the older folks and offer tea and cookies from a tray. Walt sees a child help an old man out of the bathroom. Walt coughs hard. He wipes blood from his lips. Sue comes in and looks at Walt.
>
> SUE:
> Are you okay?
> Walt brushes past her and goes into the bathroom. Walt washes his face in the sink and dries his hands. He's still pale. He looks long and hard in the mirror. Walt is stunned, it all adds up. Walt hasn't really lived in 50 years, he hasn't relaxed or exhaled or let his guard down since he got back from Korea in 1953. (Schenk 2008)

This mentality is reminiscent of Landsberg's discussion films at the beginning of the twentieth century that fostered immigrant assimilation at the expense of their culture of origin. Walt can make believe that America is great again through good, old-fashioned

values of the family next door and his role as the undisputed "man of the house".

Social Dominance Orientation (SDO)

Those who gravitate toward socially dominant rather than socially dominated groups view resources as zero-sum and are driven by self-preservation. Behaviors manifested by those who are social dominance-orientated include but are not limited to being "dominant, driven, tough-minded, disagreeable, and relatively uncaring seekers of power" (ibid.). At this juncture, readers are reminded that Eastwood's perpetual scowl helped launch his career (Ligensa 240). Pettigrew offers phrases from Trump's speeches such as "losers and bad hombres" to propagate the narrative of undesirable groups, including Latinx, as examples of "classic social dominance" (Pettigrew 108). He also reports that those interviewed who intended to cast a ballot for Trump supporters possessed a high score of authoritarianism and SDO. The high score for authoritarianism and SDO was not prevalent among supporters of other candidates in the Republican presidential primary elections. However, Pettigrew reports that voter populations with significant scores for authoritarianism and SDO accurately forecasted far-right success at the polls throughout Europe. This result demonstrates that the findings in the US were not culture-specific but rather more universal indicators of right-wing political popularity.

In the diegetic world of *Gran Torino*, Walt's family are repelled by his constant barbs and expressions of disappointment in their conduct. He sees his son's decision to drive a Japanese brand car or birthday presents highlighting his weakening body (e.g. a phone with enlarged number buttons, a cane, and a grabber) as disrespectful to his status as the head of the family. There is no appreciation of their efforts or judgment calls, suggesting there is an acceptable way other

than Walt's. Conversely, missing from the Hmong family next door is a strong male lead. Coincidentally, it is a well-tread trope to depict non-white characters as women or children who need to be rescued. Nonetheless, getting to brandish his shotgun to ward off trespassers and avenging Sue's honour as she is under his protection plays to his strengths as he is socially dominant. He comfortably steps into the role of the patriarch with Sue's brother Tao (Bee Vang) following his benevolent colonizer advice unquestioningly to pursues "a job, a car, and a girl".

Prejudice

In Europe, much of the prejudiced rhetoric targets the immigrant population. In Belgium, DeWitte's 2008 findings that the primary indicator that an individual would vote for the Vlaams Blok Party was prejudice against immigrants (DeWitte qtd in Pettigrew 2017, 110). The prejudice associated with Trump supporters and right-wing presidents is not confined to immigrants but to all so-called "outgroups", particularly Black Americans. Pettigrew points to racist remarks made Republican party members about Barack Obama, who served as the first Black president of the US from 2008 to 2016, preceding Trump. After Trump entered office, Pettigrew, citing Reilly, states that "Racist graffiti, threats, and hate crimes all rose sharply (Reilly qtd in Pettigrew 2017, 110).

In *Gran Torino*, initially, the Hmong neighbors draw most of Walt's ire, but the sole interaction with Black people demonstrates his prejudice is not restricted to immigrants. In the scene where Sue and her male friend walk down the street, they get bothered by three Black teenagers. Walt sees them from across the street and intervenes:

> You... and your buddies. What's the matter with you? Don't any of you work? I see you lazy showoffs in the middle of the day,

> slowly walking across the street or harassing women. Nobody owes
> you bastards anything so go out and get a job instead of pushing
> little girls around, for Christ's sake.

Sue and her companion do not deserve to be harassed. Still, the absence of any other white-Black intergroup contact (i.e. the three youths do not appear otherwise) conveys that Walt's words are not specific to Sue's immediate situation. Rather, what Walt says to them is how he feels about Black people in general.

Intergroup Contact

Though imposing intergroup contact has been found to increase prejudice by perpetuating perceptions regarding historic injuries (David) other research conducted by Pettigrew indicates that "optimal intergroup contact" is a significant way of diminishing negative bias. He uses Gordon Allport's optimal intergroup contact conditions: "equal group status within the situation, common goals, intergroup cooperation and authority support" (Pettigrew 1998, 65). A benefit of intergroup contact is the decrease of fear towards the other group. The lack of intergroup contact and geographic isolation were strong predictors of support for Trump and other right-wing groups (Pettigrew 2017, 110).

As seen above in *Gran Torino*, aside from the immigrant neighbors, there is minimal intergroup contact. Within Walt's own group, he maintains an "us-*vs*-them" stance through slurs that he treats as banter. He brings Tao (whom he initially refers to as Toad because he cannot be troubled to pronounce his name) to his friend, Martin the Barber (John Carroll Lynch).

> BARBER: There, you look like a human being again. You
> shouldn't wait so long between haircuts, you cheap bastard.
> WALT: I'm just amazed that you're still alive. I keep hoping
> you'll die and they'll get someone good in here, but you

> just hang in there, you dumb, Italian-Wop-Dago, you.
> BARBER: That'll be ten dollars, Walt.
> WALT: Ten dollars? Jesus Christ,

Martin, you keep raising the price. You sure you're not part Jew?

Walt insults almost everyone he encounters as a means of undermining the shift toward political correctness and all the changes it signifies. His use of slurs is a hangover from when immigrants were actively encouraged to assimilate or face discrimination. Furthermore, his "harmless" use of stereotypes connote that anyone who says otherwise is being oversensitive. Indeed, Eastwood harbors the same sentiments offscreen. In a 2016 *Esquire* magazine interview before the presidential election, Eastwood was asked about Trump's racist comments. He replied, "Just fucking get over it!" and proceeded to claim that the issue lies not with the Republican candidate but with the country. "We're really in a pussy generation. Everybody's walking on eggshells. We see people accusing people of being racist and all kinds of stuff. When I grew up, those things weren't called racist" (Hainey 2016). Eastwood's defense deflects accountability for maintaining verbal barriers between groups, reinforcing isolation and protecting the status quo, which continues to be biased against outgroups (Massie).

Relative Deprivation

The final point in Pettigrew's description of Trump supporters looms the largest in Eastwood's films which promote this particular type of mythology. Contrary to popular belief, Pettigrew's research shows that people who backed Trump were "less likely than others to be looking for work, unemployed, or part-time employed" working in sectors that did not necessarily benefit from Trump's foreign trade policies (Pettigrew 2017, 111). They are earning an income, and the promise of lower taxes to increase discretionary funds is appealing in

a largely consumerist culture such as the US. The trope of assembly line worker who lost his job to China does not accurately reflect the majority of the demographic, despite being touted as the reason behind Trump's accession. Instead, said unemployed assembly line worker and union members were more likely to vote Democrat. In contrast to "absolute deprivation" where there is an *actual* dearth of resources, relative deprivation describes the *sense* that people "feel deprived relative to what they expected to possess at this point in their lives and relative to what they erroneously perceive other 'less deserving' groups have acquired" (111).

Walt is depicted as an independent, hard worker who looks after his property and prized possession, a souvenir from his auto factory career. While he feels content with his possessions rather than relatively deprived, he views those around him as "relatively unworthy" of being his material equal. Walt does not consider the Hmong worthy of living next door to him. He mutters to his dog, "Damn chinks let their yards go to hell. Polarski would turn over in his grave if he could see what they did to his lawn" (without acknowledging that names like "Polarski" or his own "Kowalski" indicate that his predecessors were once the unwanted immigrants in their neighborhood) (Schenk 2008). Similarly, he considers his granddaughter undeserving because she prioritizes crop-tops and cell phone reception (calling Walt's neighborhood a dead zone ghetto) over modesty and family. In his will, Walt leaves the car to the heir of his "American Dream" values, Tao.

Conclusion

There is much more to explore regarding the relationship between film and politics. Still, this article is a starting point in recognizing the role films play in the recent return of authoritarian populism. Lawtoo's interpretation of mimetic theory is a promising

means of understanding the phantasm of the ego and overlap in data and demographics of Trump supporters and Eastwood fans, as demonstrated by Ligensa and Pettigrew. Landsberg offers an optimistic take on empathy generated from prosthetic memories created from historical films, but identification is an action that we do not necessarily control. The next steps will be to continue evaluating *Gran Torino* and expanding the sample pool of films. Following that, big data analysis of both amateur and critic reviews should shed light on the process of political film reception. To be clear, The author does not advocate for the cancellation of Eastwood films. There should be more awareness of how films function ideologically function, and they inform us about voters and how best to meet their needs in the hope that this will diminish authoritarian tendencies.

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Constructing a Non-popular Populism: Public Spheres, Private Actors & the Role of Social Media Platforms in Democratic Discourse

Róisín Áine Costello

Introduction

At the emergence of the internet as a broadly available communications medium much was made of the medium's potential to democratise communication in a manner which would allow society to come closer to the Habermasian ideal of an inclusive public sphere.[1] The general tenor of such argument was that the internet would enable popular participation in democratic discourse on an unprecedented scale, and thus facilitated a breadth of democratic engagement not previously permitted by traditional communications or media. Foremost among the proponents of this view was Benkler (2006) who identified the benefits of the 'networked economy' as radically lowering the costs of sharing information and enabling a greater diversity of content to be shared at a global scale.

In this view, the internet was transformative of the public sphere, and democratic participation within it, because of its potential to enable global participation in the public sphere and because this online change had begun to generate offline impacts. The influence of the internet on "real world" democratic processes

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1   See for example, Jonathan Zittrain, 'The Generative Internet' (2006) 119 Harvard Law Reivew 1974; Clay Shirky, 'The Poltiical Power of Social Media: Technology, the Public Sphere and Political Change' (2011) 90 Foreign Affairs 28; Dawn R Norris and Jonathan R Flinchum Lisa M Kruse, 'Social media as a Public Sphere' (2018) 59 The Sociological Quarterly 62.

is now so apparent that Tufecki (2018) refers to the modern public sphere as more accurately being a "digitally networked public sphere" which encompasses the interaction of complex, intertwined online and offline communities and groups. Increasingly, however, it is not the internet – but rather social media platforms that control participation in and the impacts of this digital public sphere.

The consecutive political movements collectively referred to as the "Arab Spring," and the rise of extremist behaviour which characterised both the 2016 and 2020 US elections are perhaps the most notable examples of this pattern, but it is one which is equally observable in more quotidian political and democratic processes.

This article examines this role of social media platforms as private actors who control access to and participation in the spaces in which democratic discourse is increasingly situated and shaped. In particular, I argue that the potential of the internet to act as a great equaliser in facilitating participation in the public sphere has been distorted by social media platforms that have moved democratic discourse from the public "town square" to privately controlled digital spaces or "walled gardens."

The result has been that while participation in the public sphere may indeed be broader on a per capita basis and thus more "democratic" (in the thin sense of that word which looks to the number of citizens engaged rather than the consistency or longevity of that engagement) the discourses which take place within its spaces has narrowed. This has been facilitated by the regulatory standards imposed by social media platforms which amplify dominant populist voices while subjecting popular speakers to strict policing without the protection offered by free speech rights in parallel, offline environments. This simultaneous amplification of already dominant populist voices alongside the restriction of popular speech of non-high profile speakers generates a pattern of "non-popular populism" which in turn fosters a fragmented model of democratic discourse

which favours the emergence of increasingly polarised and non-representative political narratives.

1. From the public to the digital sphere

While international and national law imposes responsibility for the protection and vindication of human rights (in the context of this article – the rights to freedom of expression) on state actors, the diverse ecosystem of private actors that populate the digital space are subject to no comparable constraints.[2] Rather, such actors have generally been subject to a range of self-regulatory, 'soft law' instruments and minimal legal obligations in respect to fundamental rights.[3] This is despite the capacity of such actors – and particularly social media platforms – to influence how rights are expressed and the extent to which they can be enjoyed in digital spaces.[4]

The most notable extensions of fundamental rights standards to private actors and to social media platforms, in the twenty-first century has been the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)[5] which imposes significant requirements on a range of public and private actors in respect of data protection and privacy rights. The extension of other rights – including rights of free expression – to private actors has been far less comprehensive. In recognising that

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2   Though there are notable exceptions to this pattern see, Dawn Oliver and Jorge Fedtke (ed), *Human Rights and the Private Sphere: A Comparative Study* (Routledge 2007).

3   In a European context see the Framework Decision on Combatting Racism and Xenophobia (2008) and the EU Code of Conduct on Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online (2016).

4   See, in the context of privacy rights Róisín Á Costello, 'The Impacts of AdTech on Privacy Rights and the Rule of Law' (2020) 11 TechReg 11.

5   Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation).

social media platforms possess the power to impact fundamental rights in general, and freedom of expression in particular, the next step is to examine the impact of such power on our institutions and rights.[6] In particular how social media platforms control access to and participation in the spaces constitutive of the modern public sphere in which citizens (as users of the platforms) can engage in democratic discourse.

1.1 Defining the Public Sphere

In Habermas' seminal articulation, the public sphere is a space in which private individuals come together to engage in the deliberation and the formation of political will which "is channelled through the filter of discursive opinion formation" constitutive of modern democratic citizenship.[7] The importance of the public sphere as articulated by Habermas (1992) thus lies in its potential as a mode of societal integration which promotes and facilitates democratic participation and the maintenance of a vibrant democratic state.

In his analysis, Habermas identifies three "institutional criteria" which are necessary for the emergence of the public sphere namely: a disregard of status, a domain of common concern and inclusivity, and the situation of the group engaged in discussion within a broader public of private individuals.(1992,36). In Habermas' account a key feature of the public sphere which these factors generate is its

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6 Generally see, Rikke Frank Jorgensen, 'When private actors govern human rights' in Matthias C Kettemann and Kilian Veith Ben Wagner (ed), *Research Handbook on Human Rights and Digital Technology: Global Politics, Law and International Relations* (Edward Elgar 2019).

7 Jürgen Habermas, 'Political Communication in Media Society: Does Democracy still have an Epistemic Dimension? The Impact of Normative Theory on Empirical Research' in Jürgen Habermas (ed), *Europe: The Faltering Project* (Polity Press 2009) what Habermas calls 'epistemic proceduralism'; Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation Of The Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into A Category Of Bourgeois Society* (Polity 1992), 57 *et seq.*

separation from institutional powers (commonly of church and state) (1992, 30-32, 57 *et seq).* This separation results partly due to its location within areas traditionally viewed as constitutionally protected from State intervention, and within which citizens can thus engage in debates over the functions and powers of the State without fear of reprisal (27).

In this respect it is notable that Habermas points both to "public-private" discursive arenas (such as Britain's coffee houses) as well as "private-private" areas (such as France's salons) as spaces crucial to the emergence of a public sphere. (27). Dean (2003), drawing on the original account offered by Habermas, has offered perhaps the most influential, modern conceptualisation of the public sphere in a digital context as "the site and subject of liberal democratic practice" within which individuals consider and debate matters of common concern in order to reach more cohesive group views (95). Specifically, Dean notes that the emergence of the digital landscape in the 1990s generated a "town hall for millions" (95) a position echoed to varying degrees by Papacharissi (2002), Grossman (1995), Jones (1997) and Arterton (1987).

Yet Dean questions whether the internet can in fact be considered to have generated a public sphere noting both the historical and arguably continued dominance of the internet by young, white, North-American men and its origins as a private, military funded research project (95). Indeed, this question has been considered in two cases from Europe[8] and the United States[9] which asked whether public actors operating on social media platforms should be held to the standards applicable in an 'analog' public sphere.

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8   Information Commissioner Case No. 180285, *Ms X and the Charities Regulatory Authority* (Freedom of Information Act 2014) 2018.

9   *Knight First Amendment Institute v Donald J Trump*, S d NY 17 Civ 5205 (2018).

In *Knight First Amendment Institute v Donald J Trump,* the Southern District of New York found that the "interactive space" which Twitter provided could be used to interact with the then President through his tweets. As such the Court found that Twitter should be accurately considered a "public forum" such that the defendant's "blocking" of the plaintiffs from interacting with his statement's effectively restricted their capacity to engage in democratic debate (2).

Similar conceptions of the interaction between public and private spaces is implicitly endorsed in the decision of the Irish Information Commissioner in the decision of *Ms X and the Charities Regulatory Authority.* In a case, again involving Twitter, the Commissioner was asked whether it was permissible for the Charities Regulatory Authority (CRA) to block a member of the public from interacting with their statements without giving reasons as required in an analog context where such action was taken. The Commissioner found that the use of a social media platform did not remove the obligation imposed upon a public body to provide a reason for its actions. In addition, the Commissioner found that "blocking" on Twitter constituted a "material act" of the public body and the exercise of a power or function which may result in the conferring or withholding of a benefit.'

Both of these decisions acknowledge the functional status of social media platforms, notwithstanding Dean's criticisms, as integral aspects of the modern, digital public sphere and the venue for interaction and debate with and about the state. This militates against the idea that the private character of social media platforms excludes them from the public sphere and they are instead what Papacharissi has described as the "private sphere."

Papacharissi's argument was that social media platforms occupied a liminal space where individuals were afforded the opportunity to engage in "privately public" conversations which

took place neither entirely behind closed doors nor in full view of the public.[10] While this conceptualisation is correct in a traditional analysis, the decisions of both *Knight First Amendment Institute v Donald J Trump* and *X and the Charities Regulatory Authority* indicates the adoption of a broader, modern view of what we can understand as a public space in modern discourse online.

These decisions reassert the fundamental contribution of these spaces provided by social media platforms to the public sphere as articulated by Habermas (1992). These decisions understand the public sphere as including private spaces in which individuals come together for public debate. As a result, the digital fora provided by social media platforms, like the coffee houses or salons of Habermas' theory, continue to function as part of the public sphere for the purposes of modern public discourse.

Yet when we seek to understand social media platforms as furthering the public sphere in a digital environment there is an important challenge to Habermas' theory which we must address. Though a private space (the coffee house in Habermas' account), might refuse entry to an individual, and might profit from his presence, they did not, and arguably could not, impose upon those individuals engaging in discussions on their premises, private rules about the types or content of conversations which could be held in their confines.

Moreover, if one coffee house did so, it would be unlikely that all others would impose almost identical controls, such that no

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alternative venue for discussion on broader terms was available. Yet these are the conditions imposed on discourse in the modern, digital sphere. This is not to say that a public sphere is absent in the digital environment which social media platforms provide. Rather, it highlights that the public sphere as it subsists in the digital space is subject to a degree of regulatory intervention in both its policing of participants and content which is not present in the model envisioned by Habermas.

1.2 The Faltering Public Sphere

The public sphere imagined by Habermas (1992,159-175) was, in his own account, progressively eroded by the forces which had created it. In the resulting structural transformation of the public sphere, rational-critical debate gave way to a consumption culture as part of which the media (and commercial media in particular) failed to further the goals of the public sphere due, in part, to limitations placed on participation as well as economic pressures and political preferences that generated selective and partial coverage.

In assessing the particular causes generated by this transformation, the modern focus has been on epistemic failures in public spheres (Faris and Benkler 2018). The concern of these accounts is the extent to which citizens are misled and, as Benkler articulates it, the increasing vulnerability of individuals to false beliefs. This focus on epistemic failures is related to long-standing concerns about the prevalence of fragmentation, incoherence, and disorder in public spheres (Bimber and Zúñiga 700). What has been left unexamined in these accounts is how platforms generate a context ripe for polarised narratives by policing the limits and content of the discourse online. Contemporaneously, as social media platforms have assumed the mantle as the *de facto* venue for

critical discourse concerning the State and public institutions there has been a renewed focus on epistemic failures.

In particular, the broad reach of social media platforms which makes them efficient for the dissemination of political messaging and thus for engagement with citizens also means they are a site of particular concern in assessing the terms of participation in the public sphere. Indeed, the decentralisation of information occasioned by social media (Habermas 2009, 146) results, as Habermas himself notes, in the progressively greater entanglement of mass communication and politics (153). [11]

This entanglement has resulted, according some accounts, in a fracturing of the public sphere. Sunstein (2009) argues, for example, that a weakened press and the omnipresence of information in the digital sphere have combined to undermine the common base for political discourse. A consequential pattern has emerged of small groups exchanging shared views as part of a system of "echoing" or "bubbles"[12] which increase polarisation and reduce substantive

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[11] Elmer et al. thus focus in their work on how the Internet and social media platforms have redefined the relationship between politics and communication, Ganaele Langlois and Fenwick McKelvey Greg Elmer, *The Permanent Campaign: New Media, New Politics* (Peter Lang 2012), 5. Elsewhere see Dahlgren and Webster on the 'political public sphere' Peter Dahlgreen, *Media and Political Engagement: Citizens, Communication, and Democracy* (Cambridge University Press 2009); Frank Webster, 'What's the Use of the Public Sphere in the Age of the Internet' in Louis Leung Francis LF Lee, Jack Linchuan Qiu, and Donna SC Chu (ed), *Frontiers in New Media Research* (Routedlge 2013), 19–38.

[12] See, Cass R Sunstein, *#Republic: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media* (Princeton University Press 2018); Markus Prior, 'Media and Political Polarisation' (2013) *Annual Review in Political Science* 101; Maren Beaufort, 'Digital Media, Political Polarisation and Challenges to Democracy' in Maren Beaufort (ed), *Digital Media, Political Polarisation and Challenges to Democracy* (Routledge 2019); Alex Bruns, 'Filter Bubble' (2019) 8 internetinternet Policy Review ; Philip Seargeant and Caroline Tagg, 'Social media and the future of open debate: A user-oriented approach to Facebook's filter bubble conundrum' (2018) 27 Discourse, Context & Media 41; James R McMurray Hywel TP Williams, Tim Kruz and F Hugo Lambert, 'Netork analysis reveals open forums and echo chambers in social media discussions of climate chance' (2015) 32 Global Environmental Change 126; Philipp Lorenz-Spreen Fabian Baumann, Igor M. Sokolov, and Michele Starnini, 'Modeling Echo Chambers and Polarization Dynamics

democratic discourse is discussed by both Gitlin (1998), termed "sphericules,"[13] and Schmidt referred to as "personal public" spheres (Schmidt 3).

This splintering of discourse into "sphericules" challenges the idea of a unified public sphere with Webster (2013), for example, arguing that it may thus be necessary to consider abandoning the concept of the public sphere (25). Yet if the rise of the mass media in the twentieth century saw a structural transformation towards a scaled public sphere (Hartley and Joshua 341) then it is more accurate that the present challenges can be similarly represented as merely a further evolution, albeit not necessarily one which can continue without remediation (341).

Habermas acknowledges this in an update to his framework, noting that "the public sphere is rooted in networks for the wild flows of messages – news, reports, commentaries, talks, scenes and images" (Habermas 2009, 415). If we incorporate this clarification, then the public sphere, rather than being constituted as a unified, mass-mediated space through which democratic debate is conducted, is revealed as a complex combination of multiple interlocking elements (Dahlgreen 74). As such, that social media platforms continue, in practice, to function as significant in the modern public sphere is largely accepted regardless of the failures or flaws which subsist within such a public sphere. Moreover, extant accounts of the flaws of the platform dominated public sphere largely

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in Social Networks' (2020) 124 Physical Review Letters 20; Gianmarco De Francisci Morales Kiran Garimella, Aristides Gionis and Michael Mathioudakis, 'Political Discourse on Social Media: Echo Chambers, Gatekeepers, and the Price of Bipartisanship' (2018) Proceedings of the 2018 World Wide Web Conference 913.

13   On similar arguments see, Stuart Cunningham and John Sinclair, 'Popular Media as Public 'Sphericules' for Diasporic Communities' (2001) 4 International Journal of Cultural Studies 131, 135; Alex Burns, 'Oblique Strategies for Ambient Journalism' (2010) 13 M/C Journal 1.

fail to afford sufficient focus to the deeply regulated nature of these private spaces that contribute to this fragmentation into spherules.

While these platforms portray themselves and their values[14] as egalitarian and democratic they are, in fact, highly regulated spaces that actively police the types and content of speech which they host. It may, in fact, be more accurate to describe the present situation, as one in which the role of social media platforms in policing not only discourse but also the spaces in which that discourse occurs as generating a "mediated public sphere." Social media platforms are both private, commercial and shared spaces – "walled gardens" rather than "town squares." Yet, crucially, so were those spaces that Habermas emphasised as the venues for the public sphere in his account. The change is the highly regulated nature of these modern equivalents – the rules which permit the actors who control such platforms to "mediate" both access to and participation in the spheres which they constitute. In the proceeding section, I move to consider how this mediation is accomplished and the impact on democratic discourse.

2. Broadened participation but narrowed discourse – constructing a non-popular populism

The democratisation which the internet, and later social media, purported to offer has not been fully actualised, in as much as the constitution of, and participation in, the digital public sphere is neither as stable, nor as broad as anticipated by early idealistic accounts. Rather, the movement of democratic discourse from the public "town square" to privately controlled "walled gardens"

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14   See, for example, Facebook's 'Five Core Values' and 'Terms of Service' available at (<https://www.facebook.com/terms.php>) or Twitter's, 'Rules and Policies' available at (<https://help.twitter.com/en/rules-and-policies#twitter-rules>) accessed 10 November 2020.

has broadened participation but narrowed discourse. As part of this pattern, while social media platforms present themselves as providing a space in which everyone can speak and participate in debate, they simultaneously operate complex private regulatory infrastructures that police participation in the spaces they govern.

This regulation is accomplished largely through the moderation policies and terms of use employed by social media platforms which strictly control participatory architectures and dictate how users engage with information and content posted by other users and what they can and cannot post themselves. Twitter, for example provides extensive policies on impersonation, parodies, commentary and fan accounts, non-consensual nudity, content deemed "sensitive," "hateful conduct" as well as policies about content that may infringe intellectual property, or may be construed as threatening, abusive or glorifying violence – all in addition to content declared illegal under national law.[15] In addition to these explicit rules and policies, platforms also control user behaviour in indirect ways by sharing of data and metadata of users with third parties – data which can be used to influence individual attention and preferences through targeted advertising and personalisation of the content displayed to users.

These private policies determine the language users can employ, what images can be shared as well as what types of content are considered offensive or impermissible. Platforms also impose procedures for reporting and removing content which users consider, and the platforms determine to be, objectionable. More recently, platforms have also imposed measures to advise caution in respect of, or censor, material determined to be factually inaccurate

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15 See, Twitter 'Rules and Policies' available at (<https://help.twitter.com/en/rules-and-policies#twitter-rules>) accessed 10 November 2020.

– notably in the context of the 2020 United States presidential election.[16]

Jack Balkin has argued that as a result of these moderation patterns, the power and pressures exerted by the privately-owned undertakings (including social media platforms) have rendered them effective governors of the digital public sphere (Balkin 118). This is not a unique or newly arrived insight. Lessig's theory of the internet as regulated by layered systems (Lessig 1999), for example, postulated that private actors acted as regulators in digital spaces, creating private codes which, like law, shaped the permitted behaviour of individuals online (McKinnon *et al.* 2014). McKinnon made similar arguments which have been echoed by Gillespie[17] and the recent account given by Klonick (2018) in which the latter author viewed social media platforms as "New Governors" of the digital environment (1598). In particular, Klonick argues that the digital infrastructure of such platforms gives them a significant regulatory role, (1635–48 and 1181-2).[18]

There is thus broad consensus that social media platforms actively police the spaces in which public discourse is situated through their terms of use and moderation policies. In particular while participation in these venues is broad, as any individual can open an account for a platform, the manner in which the policies and

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16 See, Hannah Murphy, 'Twitter to block 'misleading' retweets from US candidates' *Financial Times* (<https://www.ft.com/content/feda2f38-4777-4400-8602-f2bc0a60de42> accessed 10 November 2020. On the unpredictability of the application of such bans and the ambiguity about the basis on which they are instituted see, Mike Isaac and Kate Conger, 'Twitter Changes Course After Republicans Claim 'Election Interference" *The New York Times* (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/15/technology/facebook-twitter-republicans-backlash.html> accessed 11 November 2020.

17 Tarleton Gillespie, *Custodians of the internetinternet: Platforms, content moderation and the hidden decisions that shape social media* (Yale University Press 2018), 9 and 206-7; Tarleton Gillespie, "Platforms Intervene". *Social Media and Society* 1, 2015, p. 1.

18 See also, Balkin, "Free Speech is a Triangle"

rules governing participation have operated has narrowed discourse by strictly delineating what content, material and expression is permissible. Such narrowing is evident in the restrictions provided by the rules and policies themselves and by the opaque systems that enforce those rules and standards, often in ways that appear to favour already dominant populist voices.[19] As Gillespie argues, the way in which rules and standards are applied to remove content are often unclear, and sometimes contradictory or blatantly incorrect.[20]

The result has been to create what I refer to here as a "non-popular populism," in which popular voices are subject to strict policing without the protection offered by free speech rights in public, offline environments while dominant populist voices are amplified. In an apparent acknowledgement of the systemic issues facing social media platforms who have inserted themselves as de facto adjudicators of the terms of participation in the digital public sphere, Facebook has introduced what it has referred to as a "Supreme Court" for speech issues. The Facebook Oversight Board (FOB) represents a pivotal moment in the future of online discourse and an apparent (though not unproblematic) understanding that the process of private actors setting the rules for participation in the public sphere raises an inherent spectre of its anti-democratic potential.

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19 Paolo Gerbaudo, 'Social media and populism: an elective affinity?' (2018) 40 Media, Culture and Society 745; Nicole Ernst Sven Engesser, Frank Esser and Florin Büchel, 'Populism and social media: how politicians spread a fragmented ideology' (2017) 20 Information, Communication & Society 1109; Jacob Groshek and Karolina Koc-Michalska, 'Helping populism win? Social media use, filter bubbles, and support for populist presidential candidates in the 2016 US election campaign' (2017) 20 Information, Communication & Society 1389.

20 Gillespie, *Custodians of the internetinternet: Platforms, content moderation and the hidden decisions that shape social media*, 1-10; Gillespie, "Platforms Intervene" Tarleton Gillespie, "The politics of 'platforms'". *New Media and Society,* 12, 2010, p. 347.

This threat subsists not least because it is now well-documented that private standards, and the systems which impose them in the digital environment, are designed predominantly by affluent, male, Western (and largely North American) actors whose preferences and biases, whether conscious are not, influence the standards which they subsequently develop.[21] The threat is also generated by the reality that those involved in the formulation of the technical standards which implement the principles and rules that regulate speech are at best unaware of, or apathetic to the normative, legal implications of the systems they design (American Society of Mechanical Engineers).

The expressed purpose of the FOB is to protect freedom of expression by making principled, independent decisions about "important" pieces of content by issuing policy advisory opinions on Facebook's content policies.[22] Initially cases will be referred to the Board only on individual pieces of content which have been taken down, and will be referred to the Board either by users who disagree with the outcome of Facebook's decision regarding content

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21 American Society of Mechanical Engineers, 'Understanding Bias in Algorithmic Design' *Medium* (<https://medium.com/impact-engineered/understanding-bias-in-algorithmic-design-db9847103b6e> accessed 27 November 2019; Jeff Larson Julia Angwin, Surya Mattu and Lauren Kirchner, 'Machine Bias' *ProPublica* (<https://www.propublica.org/article/machine-bias-risk-assessments-in-criminal-sentencing> accessed 27 November 2019; Batya Friedman and Helen Nissenbaum, 'Bias in Computer Systems' (1996) 14 ACM Transactions on Information Systems 330; Paul Resnik and Genie Barton Nicol Turner Lee, *Algorithmic bias detection and mitigation*, 2019); Vauhini Vara, *Pandora and the White Male* (2014); Blanca Myers, 'Women and minorities in tech, by the numbers' *WIRED* (<https://www.wired.com/story/computer-science-graduates-diversity/> accessed 27 November 2019; Engin Bozdag, 'Bias in algorithmic filtering and personalisation' (2013) 15 Ethics and Information Technology 209; Caroline Criado Perez, *Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men* (Penguin Random House 2019). More fundamentally, the development of a parallel, private articulation of publicly agreed normative standards itself dilutes the power of those standards in the public setting.

22 See, "Oversight Board" available at (<https://www.oversightboard.com/appeals-process/>) accessed 10 November 2020.

("Oversight Board") or by Facebook itself where it has identified significant and difficult cases that it deems to require consideration.

As such, the Board will hear only "hard cases" and cannot offer a substantive response to criticisms of the broader issues of whether private actors should be permitted such regulatory reach in policing the modern public sphere – and if not what interventions are necessary and appropriate to reassert a more balanced, or perhaps unified, model of democratic discourse in the space provided by social media platforms.

The Habermasian conception of the public sphere provides that the maintenance of a robust democracy requires the existence of spaces in which citizens can and should be asked to confront the political and policy problems which affect them (Ingram and Schneider 2012) so that they can, in turn, locate the democratically preferable design of the solutions to those problems.[23] Meiklejohn (1960), has similarly argued that the primary purpose of rights to freedom of expression is to ensure the endurance of spaces in which citizens can engage with and thus understand political issues and participate effectively in the working of democracy (24 et seq.).

In this understanding, democratic decisions are not fair unless all citizens have had an opportunity to express and exchange attitudes and opinions not only in the hope of influencing others but also to confirm his or her standing as a responsible agent in, rather than a passive victim of, democratic discourses and the resulting action (Hare and Weinstein vii). However, the non-popular populism which the mediated public sphere has constructed has arguably undermined this, restricting what can be spoken about through the

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23 Eugene Bardach, "Problems of Policy Definition in Policy Analysis" in JP Crecine (ed), *Research in Public Policy Analysis and Management*, vol 1 (JAI Press 1981), 162. See generally, David A Rochefort and Roger W Cobb, *The Politics of Problem Definition: Shaping the Policy Agenda* (University of Kansaas Press 1994); Frank R Baumgartner and Bryan D Jones, *Agendas and Instability in American Politics* (University of Chicago Press 1993).

impositions of standards that cannot be mapped onto public law protections of freedom of expression, that are applied inconsistently and in a manner that has generated spaces which amplify populist and diminish popular narratives.

The basis on which the standards that construct the resulting non-popular populism are formed is also opaque. It is not clear, for example, on what basis certain narratives or discourses are deemed to be permissible and are thus amplified while others are censored or removed. Indeed, with notable exceptions during the 2020 US Presidential election, the true differentiating factor between permissible and impermissible content appears to be retrospectively constructed. Speech from populist speakers is often treated as presumptively permissible, and is removed only following numerous and highly public complaints while the speech of popular speakers remains highly policed and subject to a much lower threshold of presumptive permissibility. The result is a model of democratic discourse in which the already fractured public sphere already subdivided among various public sphericules which produce internally defined and self-referential narratives, is further fragmented.

A consequence may well be an increasing reluctance, both conscious and unconscious, to exit such sphericules. This is particularly the case where opaque enforcement standards are used, and the results of platforms' policies can appear unpredictable, and overly hostile to certain types of speech – or to certain groups. A member of a protected class who finds themselves subjected to abusive or threatening speech that is not removed by a platform may retreat into a sphericule rather than engage in public debate. Equally, a holder of particular political views, which are in a minority or are adverse to other political groups but which are otherwise unobjectionable, may react in an increasingly hostile

manner. Individuals may thus end up cocooning in increasingly insular sphericules of similarly minded individuals receptive to their speech.

The resulting atmosphere is one in which groups may become increasingly introspective, with democratic discourse fragmenting into individually defined spaces whose membership is mutually exclusive. In such contexts, the spaces in which discourse can develop are reduced and the capacity of the public to engage in meaningful debate is limited to large scale political events with corresponding physical manifestations. Polarised perceptions of identity and persecution at this point may be such that these events act not as rare opportunities to ameliorate some of the impacts of sphericulisation but instead as flashpoints in permanently polarised discourses. This has been evidenced, most recently, during the US Presidential elections in 2016 and 2020 during which Republican supporters threatened media representatives at rallies, and stormed the US Capitol in an attempt to impose the narrative of Republican persecution of democratic threat which their particular sphericules had adopted.

There are now growing calls for social media platforms to face greater consequences for their failures to police speech more effectively – in particular where they fail to remove content whose character discourages some users from entering, communicating through and interacting with others on platforms. Proponents argue that laws which restrict the liability of social media platforms for content posted or shared through their sites – most notably s.230 of the Communications Decency Act in the United States but also Articles 12 to 15 of the e-Commerce Directive[24] in the European Union – permit polarising content and hostile atmospheres to

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24 Directive 2000/31/EC on certain legal aspects of information society services, in particular electronic commerce, in the Internal Market.

proliferate online and argue that imposing liability on platforms would lead to a more inclusive and less polarised digital sphere.[25]

Such arguments, however, fail to appreciate that the imposition of liability will only further reinforce the trend of non-popular populism identified here, by incentivising more aggressive content removal as platforms seek to protect themselves from liability. The natural result of such a shift would be a more sanitised social media landscape but also one in which legitimately held minority and unpopular opinions (that do not otherwise satisfy the thresholds for impermissible speech) would be vulnerable to removal on a cautionary basis. The result for democratic discourse would thus be a deterioration rather than an amelioration.

Conclusion

How to resolve the issue identified here remains contested. Ultimately, it is unclear whether additional internal mechanisms (such as FOB) or limits on intermediary liability can be effective. By some measures the solutions proffered to date prompt more questions than they resolve. The Oversight Board cannot oversee all enforcement decisions in relation to speech on the platform, and in focusing on "hard" cases is unlikely to generate a body of decisions which has the broad applicability necessary to inject greater stability and clarity into the decision-making process of moderators removing speech.

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25 See, The White House, President's 'Executive Order on Preventing Online Censorship' 28 May 2020, available at (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-preventing-online-censorship/>) accessed 11 November 2020. More generally see, Zoe Bedell and John Major, 'What's Next for Section 230? A Roundup of Proposals' Lawfare 29 July 2020, available at (<https://www.lawfareblog.com/whats-next-section-230-roundup-proposals>) accessed 11 November 2020. In a European context see Tambiama Madiega, *Reform of the EU Liability Regime for Online Intermediaries: Background on the forthcoming digital services act* (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2020).

Equally, the proposal to limit or remove intermediary liability does not resolve the fundamental concern over how and why particular standards are applied by social media platforms, but rather imposes liability in a manner more likely to generate an increasingly turn toward sphericulisation, rather than the unified space necessary for substantive and sustainable democratic debate. Ultimately, the question which underlies many of the trends in this area, and which remains unanswered, is whether the mediated public sphere provided by social media platforms can offer the open, and a-institutional spaces described by Habermasian ideas of the public sphere absent State lead regulatory intervention.

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Situating Populism and Nationalism in India[1]

Feeza Vasudeva

Introduction

Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister of India in 2014, and the scale of his win was stupendous. Based on his popularity, he was able to sideline his right-wing political party *Bhartiya Janata Party* (BJP), to directly appeal to the masses and create a cult around his personality. Sophisticated use of technology, a powerful rhetoric and strong populist appeals centered around the theme of development allowed him to get a majority win. However, despite failing to keep many of his promises on development and growth, Modi was able to stay in power and get re-elected. Were Modi's populist appeals strong enough to create and sustain the category of "the people" or was it his parallel hegemonic tactic of the cultural transformation of "the people" based on Hindu identity that made him successful? Based on this question's answers, many saw Modi as a populist leader par excellence, and others viewed him as a Hindu nationalist. However, I will argue that looking at Modi's success through a one-dimensional framework won't be conducive. Rather, we need to look at how discourses of populism and nationalism converge within Modi's policies to construct a different kind of "the people" who view themselves not only as victims and underdogs, but who also define themselves as against the enemy who has been designated as the outsider.

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1   An earlier version of the article was published under the aegis of "Conflict, Justice, and Decolonization: Critical Studies of Inter-Asian Society" (CJD) project.

To do so, the first half of the section begins by laying down the theoretical framework for both populism and nationalism. The former draws upon the works of Ernesto Laclau whose contribution to the populist debates have been immense, followed by the theoretical background laid down by Rogers Brubaker who talks about the points of convergence of two concepts. Following this framework, I will discuss in brief the discourses of nationalism and populism in India, followed by an analysis of how Modi was able to build up a chain of equivalence and re-define 'the people' on both up/down axis (of populism) and in/out axis (of nationalism).

Defining populism and nationalism

Populism is the concept *du jour,* particularly in light of its spread across various countries of the world. It is an important concept as it is characterized by its ability to construct 'the people', its power to create an antagonistic frontier and mobilize emotions, and in specific situations, its ability to create a strongman leader. Nevertheless, what is populism? Populism as a political logic has no specific contents or modes of governance attached to it, making it a contested terrain that comprises of a wide gamut of movements, actors and behaviors. Many a time, it has even been equated with nationalism, thereby dissolving the distinction between the two concepts (Ruiz Casado 2019). In order to not get caught up in the definitional trap, I will undertake a discursive route and chooses to articulate populism as curated by Ernesto Laclau.

Laclau's analytical framework is particularly useful because it interprets populism not as a distortion or a pathology but something that is based on idiosyncrasies of political reason. A crucial argument is that populism is a political logic instead of an ideology or a social movement with a pre-established social base. Instead, it depends on the "particular *mode of articulation* of

whatever social, political or ideological context", making populism an "ontological and not an ontic category" (Laclau, "Populism" 34). Populism then becomes a bid to establish identities on a terrain that is fundamentally contested and fluid, i.e., the terrain of politics itself. Laclau structures his theory of populism in the following way – when a series of heterogenous social demands that share a negative dimension remain unsatisfied, they tend to reaggregate themselves into solidarity or a *chain of equivalence.* This means each demand is split into a particularized self and in totality with other demands. The unsatisfied demands can then be potentially united around common, albeit powerful symbols or ideals, which Laclau calls as "empty signifiers" or strictly speaking, "a signifier without a signified" (Laclau, "*Emancipation(s)*" 36). The empty signifier can become the hegemonic representation of collective unsatisfied demands, creating a totality in which one signifier comes to represent the rest. The unmet demands and, therefore, the empty signifier can be capitulated by leaders or political parties or movements who can interpellate the symbols and the masses, leading to a process of popular identification.

Putting it simply, for Laclau, unfulfilled or unmet demands are the embryo of populism as they lead to the constitution of 'the people' that aim to confront the status quo (Laclau, "Populism" 127). 'The People' as a political subject is thus instituted. Populist politics form an internal frontier because of equivalent logic through various modes of representation, including visual, rhetorical or performative. This internal frontier becomes characterized by oppressors (the enemy or the powerful elite) and the oppressed (the people or the under-dog) where the former denies the people from those who stop them from achieving these demands. However, these demands can change over time, making the category of 'the people' also a floating signifier at times, meaning the heterogeneous

elements have to come together in a chain of equivalence that can be changed over time.

Similar to populism, nationalism is also a discursive formation, in this case, positioned around the signifier of the nation and construed as a limited and incomplete sovereign community which exists through time (De Cleen and Stavrakakis 2017). The nation is tied with specific spatiality and is constructed through an in/out axis, thereby establishing a boundary between the nation's members, i.e. the insiders and the outsiders. The nation is viewed as sovereign i.e., with the power to makes its own decisions. Understood thus, the nation and not the nation-state becomes the nodal point of nationalism. For instance, many demands for the independent state has been in the name of the nation (for instance, the case of the Catalan independence movement in Spain) or the demand has been for the state to be shaped in the image of the shape, as we will see in case of India.

Both populism and nationalism share discursive traits as both leads to the construction of subjectivity, often defined as "the people". The importance of the idea of "the people" is evident when Ernesto Lalcau argues that 'the political operation par excellence is always going to be the construction of a 'people'" (Laclau, "Populist Reason" 153). However, since both nationalism and populism lead to the construction of 'the people', the theoretical scholarship of Benjamin De Cleen and Yannis Stavrakakis have tried to argue against the conflation and reified association of both the concepts. For them, the construction of populism is along the vertical up/down axis or between the elite and the people-as-underdog. The former is represented as the illegitimate ruling elite and the latter as the pure or authentic people. Contrarily, nationalism is characterized by constructing "the people" on horizontal axis of in/out or people-as-nation and outsiders. Keeping the conceptual distinction between the two concepts allow De Cleen and Stavrakakis to keep the impurities

and ambiguities in empirical articulations evaporating from sight ("how should we analyze"). The conceptual difference further allows them to assert that what we see in many parts of Europe, such as Greece, is predominantly nationalism and not populism.

However, it is not always possible to chastely split "the people" on different axes for the sake of conceptual purity, because as Rogers Brubaker (2020) shows us, "the people" can also be understood 1) as plebs (demanding recognition and equitable distribution of resources 2) as demos (sovereign people who want their power restored) and 3) as a nation (distinct moral, cultural or political community). The different understandings of "the people" allow us to see the partial overlap between nationalist and populist discourses, an overlap also understood in terms of the semantics of inequity (in populism) and semantics of differences (in nationalism). Thus, an understanding of the intersection of populism and nationalism is essential in order not to reduce the concept in terms of double relations of up/down or in/out. The following diagram by Brubaker helps us understand this relationship better.

Within the polity	
Insiders	Outsiders
Leaders	The elite
People as Plebs, demos and bounded community l	Those at margins. Can be defined by culture, sexuality etc.
	Those represented differently in terms of ethnoracially, culturally or morally) .

This relationship helps us understand that populism itself doesn't occupy a single-dimensional space that delineates the elite and the people-as-underdog but many a times a potentially two-dimensional space that includes in/out as well as up/down relations. For example, the elite might be signified both as both on top as well as outside of the nation, construing them as anti-national or non-national as well see happening in India. Thus, the intersectionality of concepts of populism and nationalism can help us better understand the recent their articulations in India.

Hindu nationalism and its peculiar populism

This section focuses on the different articulations of 'the people' in India. Articulation, a term made popular by Laclau, means linkages of disparate elements within an indeterminate political situation. One of the most recent and violent articulations of "the people" has been in form of what Partha Chatterjee (2020) following Gramsci calls as people-nation, specifically Hindu people-nation. Thus, I would like to start briefly with the history of what has been termed as Hindu nationalism[2] which has its roots in an anti-colonial movement, a rising national consciousness and the construction of "the Indian people".

The construction of Indian people was tied with the political processes through which "the people" were mobilized as political subjects against the British empire. This particular construction of people was an essential task for the Indian nationalists because Indian masses while being the subject of their own histories was never understood as "the people" or the "the Indian people" to be more precise, and hardly as enumerated communities with strict

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2   For a deeper analysis of Hindu nationalism, see Thomas Hansen Blom (1999), Christope Jafferelot (2009), Amrita Basu (2001), amongst many others.

identities and boundaries. It was through the nationalist struggle combined with the populist power of strong leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, that the idea of 'the people' of Indian nation-state came into existence. And yet, the construction of "the people" was a result of competing nationalisms.

One strand of nationalism was in tandem with the nation-state's discourse and saw the integrity of "the people" in the national community sharing common interests. The other saw the national community as having an idiosyncratic religious identity, predominantly a Hindu identity that is rooted in the existence of Hindu people-nation since time immemorial. However, in epistemological terms, the idea of modern Hinduism and a Hindu nation were born as an empty signifier, i.e. "as a signifier of the true and full "culture" that made India truly Indian, thus stabilizing otherwise diverse and alternating ritual and social hierarchies around an "ideal" core. Yet it was a signifier that no actual group could claim to control fully" (Hansen 67). Partly, this was because there existed no unified and homogenized Hindu nation as historians like Romila Thapar (2010) have shown us but a society that was highly stratified and divided on religious as well cultural lines. It was only through long process of encompassments that an idea of "syndicated Hinduism" and a synthetic Hindu identity was produced. The idea of this fictional Hindu nation was carried forward and became rooted in the psyche of post-colonial India.

The idea of the Hindu nation has further taken roots in the ideology of Hindutva or the primacy of Hindus, whose propagators were inspired by Nazi Germany and its accentuation on birth and race to argue for the essence of people (Jaffrelot 1999). Hindutva can be classified as "a hyper-practice of Hindu cultural dominance" which uses the biopolitical ethos of the Hindu society to hierarchize and differentiate while at the same time invoking diversity and multiplicity in the name of its dominating quest (A. Chatterjee

323). The idea of Hindutva has been carried forward and primarily manifests itself in the Hindu nationalism of post-colonial India. Its vision held by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)[3] and BJP, brings together the idea of cultural nationalism and political stratagems aimed at unashamed dominance of upper castes, rapid development, cultural traditionalism as well control on instruments of state. Following the ideology of Hindutva, Hindu nationalism rhetorically envisages a "Hindu-nation" for a majority Hindu country. Thus, following Eric Hobsbawm (1992) and Ernest Gellner's (1983) famous analysis, Hindu nationalism represents a case wherein "nationalism comes first before nations" and real 'nation' can only be recognized posteriori.

As there has been no historic Hindu people-nation with a coherent and seamless unity, it has not been easy to construct a 'we'. As Laclau and Mouffe (2001) have argued, construction of any kind of we require the presence of an antagonistic enemy. It is then not surprising that the Hindu nationalist movement has construed the enemy in the figure of Muslim. This is partly because Muslims in colonial India represented sovereignty, which was later translated to a question of difference. Within this translation, Muslims were constructed as empty signifiers imbibed with values such as pre-modernity, orthodoxy, hyper-virility, contamination etc. The function of Muslims as an empty signifier forms the ideological substratum for the Hindu nationalist movement that allowed it some success in the last few decades. However, that in itself has not been enough to create a stable people-nation or "us" that can mirror the state-nation.

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3   RSS is the premier Hindu-nationalist, right-wing paramilitary organization which inspires to create a unified Hindu Rashtra or Hindu State.

Populism in India

Populism is not an anathema to Indian politics but rather has been one of the defining elements in the creations of "the people". As Christophe Jaffrelot and Louise Tillon asserts, most political parties in India allege to be "from the people, for the people and by the people", apparent in the fact that their name has some variation of the word "the people" including *Janata, Jan* or *Lok (*Jaffrelot and Tillon 2017). Furthermore, the settings for populist politics is different at both central and state level. The difference stems from the equation's alteration, *identity = nation = state*, at the two levels (Chatterjee 2020). The discourse at the center level is based on the history of India's nation-state, whereas at the state level, the discourse is based on caste, linguistic, regional, religious identities etc. Thus, the political project of instituting "the people" has seen variation in different parts of the country. For example, the southern state of Tamil Nadu has been dominated by Dravidian populist politics since the last forty years based on Dravidian history, anti-brahmin mobilization, and antagonism to Hindi-speaking people Northern elites as well as supremacy of Tamilian language, depending on the context. Different variants of populism have also characterized other parts of India.

At the central level, Indira Gandhi's populist stance in the late 60's and 70s proved to be vastly successful. Bypassing the old congress leaders, she directly reached out to people for support. Her form of populism produced a highly centralized power structure established around a single leader and politicization of bureaucracy. It was also effective in projecting the leader's personality vis-à-vis the state as a benign guardian of the poor and the disadvantaged. However, her brand of populism could never create a stable national people because of her inability to establish a chain of equivalence that could bring people together. This is because of her inability to

create a stable enemy and antagonistic identities vital to populist politics. As Partha Chatterjee highlights, barring the Bangladesh liberation war of 1971 where Pakistan proved to be a powerful enemy, the populist government of Gandhi could only create enemies that were her enemies. These were the conservative congress party bosses against the progressive policies, followed by Gandhian socialists and then the right-wing Bhartiya Jana Sangh. Thus, the enemy could only remain a floating signifier with its definition and elements changing with the time and not changing into an empty signifier with an identification.

Redefining "the people"

The earlier sections briefly highlighted the ideology behind the Hindutva, whose project is a hegemonic struggle to blend the nation-state's idea with that of people-nation that is unitary, homogeneous and converges around the normative Hindu identity. For decades, this project has been unfulfilled with some success markers (like Babari Masjid demolition)[4]. However, BJP under Narendra Modi, initially as Chief Minister of the western state of Gujarat and then finally as the Prime Minister, has managed to assert strategic populist sphere, becoming a populist leader par excellence. In Gujarat, Modi was given the appellation (symbolic more than literal) of "Hindu hriday ka samrat" (monarch of the Hindu heart), after the Godhra train massacre of 2002 and the subsequent communal violence that resulted in death of several thousand Muslims[5]. In addition, he has

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4   Babri Masjid was a mosque in Ayodhya, a site which many Hindus believe was a birthplace of Lord Ram. The mosque has a site of contention between two coomunities for centures and it demolished in 1992 by Hindu nationalists. This led to wide spread communal violence across the nation.

5   Refer to https://www.huffingtonpost.in/2017/10/22/why-modi-and-bjp-are-desperate-to-revive-the-hindu-hriday-samrat-strategy-for-gujarat-polls_a_23251394/

cultivated his image as that of a *Vikas Purush* or development man who could get things done (Jaffrelot, "Narendra Modi"). From his ministerial stage, his centralized and personal administration style that was able to circumvent intermediaries was consistent with his populist electoral strategies even in his endeavor for Prime Minister's post in 2014.

Modi's image and his satirical style replicated the socio-cultural component of populist appeals. He exhibited himself in traditional Hindu costumes that were tailored according to the region he was rallying in. He wore golden turbans, head clothes, carried swords, touched the feet of elderly, petted the young, got pictured in pilgrimage temples, greeted the people in their regional languages etc. He coined popular acronyms and slogans. His spectacular pomp was filled with grandiose imagery while he claimed to be one of the masses – a man of humble origins, a *chaiwala* (tea seller) and a *chaukidar* (guardian) of the people. This image was heavily projected onto public sphere as his distinct election campaign made extensive use of technological platforms to reach a broader audience. As Shakuntala Banaji (2018) writes,

> By 2014, the imagery of the early BJP and RSS videos had metamorphosed into online communications, comic book versions of Modi's life, Facebook posts about his exploits, Twitter fandoms, You Tube videos and visual holograms of the quasi-sacred hero-leader Modi transmitted to an adoring – or even a worshipful – audience (339-340).

Thus, Modi presented a new narrative of development-oriented leadership around the personality of a leader who could bring wealth, recognition, and pride to India. His leadership was showcased as that of a tough man who could make difficult discussions, superseding even his party networks, and as someone who could fight the corrupt regime and decaying elitist institutions. Consequently, Modi's strongman figure has been enormously successful in capitulating

various symbols in the polity and constructing a larger-than-life figure of himself.

Despite his various electoral success, what has truly set apart his style of populist politics is how it has construed 'the people'. One of populist politics's main features is how it creates an 'internal antagonistic frontier' that demarcates the true or authentic people from power (Laclau, "Populism"). The true or authentic people are then seen as the under-dogs and their oppressors are considered as the elites. Within this schema, the dynasty of Congress that had electoral upper-hand and has governed India for decades comes across as the elite enemy. Gandhi family has been incessantly targeted as *Naamdhari (*working only by name)*,* while Modi presented himself as *Kaamdhari (working by ethic).* Modi has led an intensive public re-imagination of Congress as corrupt with their scion Rahul Gandhi a *Shehzada* or a princeling while presenting himself as a man. [6] This strategy also included the slow dismantling of Indian history wherein nationalist leaders, many of whom were in Congress, and other freedom fighters who represented the anti-colonial struggle were maligned, with the agenda of de-legitimizing their legacies. Modi is particular is particularly disdainful of India's first Prime Minster, Jawaharlal Nehru, whom he has charged with creation of a weak and divided nation[7]. Moreover, decertifying Nehru becomes a medium of decertifying Congress and its leadership. Thus, Congress has been made an emblem of elitism, entitlement, and pro-establishment, while Modi presents himself as an emblem of a new kind of anti-establishment and anti-elitist vision while being one of "the people". The Congress government

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6   Refer to https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Will-continue-calling-Rahul-shehzada-Narendra-Modi-says/articleshow/24787052.cms

7   Refer to https://www.dailyo.in/politics/jawaharlal-nehru-sangh-parivar-congress-rss-hindurashtra-secularism-foreign-policy-secularism/story/1/10870.html

which was already facing a crisis of credibility because of allegations of very public charges of corruption and even nepotism in their second term of UPA, proved unable to counter the Modi wave in 2014 and again, in 2019.

Up

Elites
Congress, Left-liberals,
Intellectual, Activists etc.

'The people' as underdogs.

Down
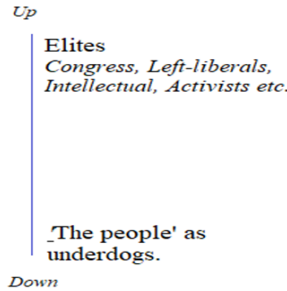
Modi regime further signals out the elites via symbolic/cultural ways – the supposedly English speaking urban middle class, left-liberals who are part of high learning institutions such as Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), the academicians and the intellectuals, the activities, and even the NGOs who spoke against the Modi regime were construed as elites. Correspondingly, these values have been projected to Congress and the system of values and politics it stood for. Following Brubaker (2020), we can create the following vertical diagrammatic schema where elites are pitched against the people as plebs, i.e., people who are represented as underdogs and those who want recognition as well as equitable distribution of resources. "The people" here are then constructed as those who have disadvantaged from the neo-liberal turn of economy and the failure of the welfare system and the gradual dismantling of traditional caste structures of Indian society. The demands for recognition and resources then come from the poorest section and the middle class and urban

voters (who are Modi's biggest supporters)[8] and the poor and marginalized from the dominant castes. Explaining the latter, Ajay Gudavarthy writes, "There is a massive insecurity among these castes comparable to that of Dalits and Muslims today. These castes suffer from an insecurity of losing the hold on political and bureaucratic power, and as a result, a sense of suffocation of their social power that they wielded so long" (50). Modi, then through his populist policies, promises of development, strongmen behavior, the cult of personality, and remarkable propaganda machinery has brought forth multiplicity of demands together in a chain of equivalence, creating a frontier between elites and the underdogs.

However, populism as a strategy cannot alone unite and stabilize the domain of 'the people'. The populism of the pasts has shown us that it is impossible to fulfill the demands of all sections of the populations while adjusting costs and benefits, which can eventually lead to a break-up in targeted populations. Thus, the promises of poverty reduction or development or even agrarian population have not been entirely successful before. This is because a political field that is more divided and disputed will be more open to more of "metonymic sliding" of discursive elements (Hansen 1999). This is especially true for Indian society which is divided by a caste-like ladder structure as well as a horizontal structure of social divisions. Thus, the signifier of the nation becomes an important stabilizer in the construction of "the people" (Kinnvall 2019).

The importance of the signifier of the nation is evident in the politics of Modi regime. When Modi came to power in 2014, he focused intensively on development and creating a frontier between the elitist and 'the people' as the underdog. However, this went hand-

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8   Refer to https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story who-are-the-people-attracted-to-narendra-modi-and-his-style-his-followers-show-a/306179

in-hand with Hindutva's ideological agenda of coming to fruition of people-nation of Hindus.

People -Nation ———————————————— Outsiders
     In   *Out*

This meant integrating different conflictual plans by differential inclusion, which has allowed the regime to create a "us" vs. "them" polarization in a society divided deeply along vertical and horizontal planes. The inclusion has been done through fragmentation and mobilization of smaller castes and then stitching them to a unified Hindu identity while still retaining their differential identity. It has also been done via large-scale celebration of Hindu symbols, which have saturated the public sphere while a similar saturation has occurred to further build up the idea of the Muslims as the enemy of the nation. This is essential for as Laclau and Mouffe have stressed that all the difference does not collapse into one identity within the relationship of equivalence. If that was so, then there would be no equivalence but a simple identity. This is why Ajay Gudavarthy (2019) has asserted that fragmentation and fraternity go hand in hand in Hindutva politics[9]. Chantel Moufee further writes, "this is precisely why the creation of a collective will through a chain of equivalence demands the designation of an adversary. Such a move is necessary to draw the political frontier separating the "we" from the "they", which is decisive in the construction of a "the people" (63). Within the Indian context, "the people" are also constructed

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9   Talking in respect to castes on lower rung of ladder including Dalits and Other Backward classes (OBC's), Ajay Gudavarthy has argued that fragmentation provides these castes with representation (through reservations) and fraternity provides them social recognition. So, one can be a Dalit gain representation and a Hindu to gain recognition.

on a horizontal axis as a moral, bounded community of insiders (Hindus) who have been victimized by the outsiders (Muslims).

However, because the construction of 'the people' is on both vertical and horizontal registers, there has been an overlapping and the intersection of these discourses leading to a tightly interwoven and mutually constitute discourse. As a result, outsiders are not just posited on in/out axis but also top-down axis. Thus, Muslims are not only outside the people-nation, but they have also been *constructed* as elites while in actuality, they have become one of the most ghettoized minorities in India. This reversal has been made possible by creating a feeling of hurt-pride of Hindus and being victimized by senseless pandering of pseudo-secular state who is said to have only prioritized the Muslim religion, while imposing regulations on Hindus. Thus, it has posited Muslims on the top axis (because of alleged favoritism by the Congress) and the out axis. The Hindus have construed on in and down axis where "the people" are both insiders and yet, underdogs. Similarly, the other elements on the top axis are also on the out axis. This is evident by the constant invocation of the Gandhi family as foreigners[10] while intellectuals, activists or anyone who dares to criticize Modi has been termed as anti-national[11] or a member of *tukde tukde gang* (loosely translated as break-up gang)[12], and therefore, outside of the nation. The following diagrammatic schemata explain it further:

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10 Refer to-https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/if-i-am-an-outsider-who-is-sonia-gandhi-asks-pm-modi-in-bihar-rally/articleshow/49595808.cms

11 Refer to-https://www.nationalheraldindia.com/india/anyone-who-does-not-worship-narendra-modi-is-an-anti-national

12 Tukde tukde gang is term that used BJP and its supporters to refer to people who allegedly want to divide the nation. Refer to https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/who-are-members-of-tukde-tukde-gang-rti/articleshow/73263876.cms

Insiders	Outsiders
Modi as the leader who is anti-establishment and belongs to people and therefore, speaks for the people.	Congress as the elite.
'The people' understood both as plebs (want recognition and resources) and as people-nation or Hindu-nation.	Muslims, Congress especially Gandhi family who are foreigners.

The intersection and mutually constitutive discourse of populism (up/down) and nationalism (in/out) allows us to view populism as a two-dimensional space that is "at once a space of *inequality* (economic, political and cultural) and a space of *difference* (of culture, values and ways of life)" (Brubaker 55-56). It also allows us to see that "the people" are not constituted in confinement of one-dimensional space. Relatively more stable construction can be found with both axes' intersection, at least within Indian context. Modi wave was able to capture the power in 2014 in a majority win and then keep it in 2019 because of the possibility of the construction of "the people" on a populist frontier by creating a divide between the elitist and the underdog, while at the same time dividing them on the lines of the nation – people-nation to be precise. This resulted in a far more stable field, at least in comparison to what could have been possible if the divide was only on a single axis. This can be hypothesized by the fact that prior populist governments, at least on central level, could not hold on to their power once the populist promises were exhausted or were left unfulfilled. Or, that the Hindu nationalist BJP could not accrue a majority win before 2014 and it was not able to stay in for power for as long. Thus, understanding these two discourses and their operationalization on the polity level can be a constructive ground in understanding how political identities are construed and relatively fermented while delineating

lines of antagonism and conflicts. Moreover, understanding two-dimensional expressive space allows to see "what makes 'people talk' rhetorically powerful and pragmatically effective" (Brubaker 58).

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the conceptual formation of "the people" within the Indian context through the prism of populism and nationalism. While populism focuses on the construction of "the people" or the pure people contra the elite on the up/down axis, nationalism construe "the people" as a nation who are different from foreigners or the outsiders. Instead of sharply delineating the two concepts, the focus was on their intersectionality and understanding what kind of schema this convergence generates. Understanding the tightly woven discourse allows us to see how Narendra Modi could powerfully capture the discourse on "the people" by bringing together the discourses on populism and nationalism. "The people" were pitched against the elite such as Congress and against the outsiders who were primarily Muslims. Similarly, elites were constructed on the up axis and on the horizontal axis, thereby being situated as not only elites but also the outsiders. "The people," then were the pure people who were part of a nation but also the underdog who have been victims of both the elite and the outsiders.

The tow-fold invocation of "the people" also resulted in a comparatively stabilizing field of "the people", which might not have been possible if the Modi regime had only worked within the ambit of populist or nationalist appeals. Therefore, it can help us understand why despite many failures to achieve his populist promises of *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas* or inclusive development for all, he could still retain his popular appeal with the masses, a fact attested by his re-election and majority win in 2019. It can also explain why his populist appeals have not waned, even while evoking illiberal and

authoritarian themes including curbing freedom of dissent and speech, excessive state violence, encouragement to Hindu vigilante outfits etc, Furthermore, an understanding of this convergence is important because no future counter-hegemonic strategy to BJP and Modi's construction of "the people" will be possible, without the realizing the importance of building a counter-narrative that can re-define the signification of "the people" in India.

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Decolonial Trauma in Archive Critic: Biography, Performance and Neodocumentalism

Pedro V. Diaz

Introduction

> An archive may be largely about 'the past' but it is always 're-read' in the light of the present and the future: and in that reprise, as Walter Benjamin reminds us, it always flashes up before us as a moment of danger (HALL 92).

The decolonial critique have develop the postcolonial debate focus on knowledge archives and social memory since it proposed itself to go further than the epistemological rationality based on colonial heritage, evidencing the still condition of coloniality and modernity on contemporary globalization. The documents legitimated and administrated by colonial institutions and officialized by offices and then, to History researchers now encounters trough decolonial critics the claim for forgotten and silenced reports, fragmented stories, personal archives, etc. What is the future of colonial archives in postcolonial nations and how should we rethink these archives in relation to decolonial futures?

The archive emerged as a focus of interest in a range of (inter) disciplinary contexts. This "archival turn" is partly indebted to a Foucauldian contribution to the political analysis of archive, as an artefact and as diapositives, for knowledge production. This double injunction produces both the interface that are inscribed the knowledge references as well invest itself as an area of symbolic narrative construction for social production. This epistemic shift signaled a complexity change in academic research of the archives, its systems and cultural reflexes.

The archive, we might say, affords access to the past in the present and in so doing shapes futures. The contribution of archives in the "development of society" has been recognized and is foregrounded by international agencies such as UNESCO. We note, for example, the definition of archival value articulated in the universal declaration on archives adopted by the International Council on Archives and endorsed by UNESCO in 2011:

> Archives record decisions, actions and memories. Archives are a unique and irreplaceable heritage passed from one generation to another. Archives are managed from creation to preserve their value and meaning. They are authoritative sources of information underpinning accountable and transparent administrative actions. They play an essential role in the development of societies by safeguarding and contributing to individual and community memory. Open access to archives enriches our knowledge of human society, promotes democracy, protects citizens' rights and enhances the quality of life. (International Council on Archives)

Decolonial authors see archives as "interruptions" or "interventions", privileging not so much the legislative aspect of such institutions, but their transformative capacities. Indeed, the concept of the decolonial archive must privilege "epistemic disobedience" in order to generate decolonial freedom (Mignolo 2011). Stuart Hall's (2001) observations on the archive also do not emphasis its classificatory, taxonomic logic, but instead celebrate it as a "living" institution that is by definition incomplete, and open to the future. Derrida's analyses of the duality of the archive entangle this complex and intrinsic structure showing both the death drive as well the living drive that constitute its systems and necessity of remembering and preserving.

This essay introduces repertoires of Freud and Lacanian psychoanalyses from Derrida in the discussion of archives and how colonial archives are being reconfigured to imagine democratic or totalitarian futures. Decolonial authors have situated the discussion

of the opening of archives in public spheres for a democratic and transparent approach for civic institutional development. The micropolitics of creating and expressing archives is both contingencies for macropolitics of dominance and its administrative classification as well as immanent expressions and performative affirmations of critical narratives and different ways of living. In this article we look at the "neodocumentalism" turn as critique of social appropriation of records, archives, documents and social memory in post colonial trauma and its decolonial propositions.

1. Colonial Archives and their critique

Since the colonial government, reluctant to open its archives to the colonized, the archive's democratic potential remained limited. As a domain for matters of public interest, the public space produced by the colonial archive was as both constituent on utopia and trauma. First as a major affirmation of imperial powers, the collections looted from subjugated areas like Egypt or India, were showed as tamed achievements of state influence and race relativism.

The science of imperial expansion of techniques for social comprehension and management were object of much entailed research in the metropolis development. Always falling short of its promises founded in Enlightenment and Positivism principles, the archive and its libraries or museums, are also utopian institutions (Richards 2). Although the utopia was never realized in the colony, even so in the metropolis, subjects still pursue utopian projects through producing, living and incorporating archival references and systems that also depart from those associated with imperial rule.

While a Foucauldian analysis of the archive privileges its capacity to exert epistemic violence, Appadurai (2003) tries to affirm that "perhaps Foucault had too dark a vision of the panoptical

functions of the archive" (16). Rather than react to the approach that the archive is as an instrument of surveillance, we focus at the appropriations of the archive as a cultural dispositive open for multiple uses. In the articles presented, the mutability of the colonial archive is acknowledged and explored through its multiple questioning and critic of unanticipated affordances in the present.

The relationship between anthropology and the archive has already been explored in the context of imperialism. In the gathering of knowledge in 18th- and 19th-century India, natives could only be informants or interpreters, but not scholars, and the production of colonial knowledge preceded – and informed – formats of ethnological and anthropometric data collected by anthropology and military intelligence.

As colonial archives erase the voice of the "natives", to what extent the history of the subalterns could yet be written given their silencing. The author Spivak (1988) considers their voices absence in the archives asking: "Can the subaltern speak?". In this systematic inventory of the production of 'silences', archives appear as the decisive moment of fact assembly that determine what kind of stories can be told.

Ann Laura Stoler (2009), in her article "Along the archival grain: Epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense", focuses the debate on the danger of common ground that modern epistemologies of science in its evidence and factual constructivism for social universalism. The author asks if the modern social construct erases ethnic systems of thinking, producing, visualizing its identities to open way for power relations of colonial systems to explore and train labor for the metropolis way of production.

Stoler has identified this shift as a move from "archive-as-source" to "archive-as-subject". A shift occurred from a focus on the final artwork towards an exploration of how and why art was produced, from product to process and the archive became the

means of demonstrating the "becoming" of art and the artist, as it could provide a multitude of perspectives and contexts.

As Derrida (1996) has argued, "There is no political power without control of the archive", and nowhere was this more evident than in the context of the colonial archive, in which the colonial state held a monopoly over the production of knowledge, and where one finds the most explicit demonstration of archival power representing a "breach of democracy" (11). As Hall (2001) also argues, the archive is always "'re-read" in the light of the present and the future' for such re-readings constitute an archival "reprise": moments of danger that may subvert archival intent even while invoking the archive's own authority (92). Latent within the archive, it might be said, is the archive's own dissolution – but also its rebirth.

The neo-documentary approach given by Suzanne Briet (1951) to archive production, in its conceptual radicality, states that everything could be archived or archivable. Not only what is taken as a taxonomic form and reference already legitimated, as in the example of an antelope, but also its varied and clipped expressions can also function as political contexts where archives are produced in a dynamic and constructive symbolic complex character of multi-languages. The author Bernd Frohmann (2009) takes up the concept of neodocumentalism to instigate this philosophical and sensitive approach of language between document and information, proposing to highlight the "contextual and political agreements, of the systems that form documents, archives and classifications. The neo-documentalism approach encounters the frontier of decolonial politics as it criticizes the archive and its production, fighting to reveal the ideology, the occult or even the unheard expressions of archive.

2. Trauma and decolonial violence
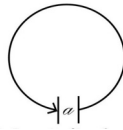
The ethical practice of producing oneself constitutes a critical and intrinsic element to human production in dynamic social formations, mainly of identity, social acceptance, etc. The symbolic interaction in producing, archiving, creating or remembering parts, facts or moments constitutes elementary experimentation to develop and express knowledge. The use of the file is always in an abstract instant, between the need to remember and the updating of the memory through the referring object.

In the psychoanalytic aspect, Lacan (1978) develops the concept of the *Real* as something that always returns to the same place for the subject - the return or the insistence of the signs -, but that the subject may not always find or be able to process it. Trauma is thus, linked to a lost *Real* whose encounter becomes problematic due to the lack or inability of symbolic translation. Trauma is inferred as something difficult to apprehend as a named, classified, predicted event, but which returns in eventual social and real incompatibilities.

Lacan translates the Aristotelian *Tiqué* by meeting the *contingent real*, which is beyond the insistence of ordered signs (that is, it is beyond the called *automaton*). The *automaton* translates as a network of signifiers, through which something is repeated, insofar as it is submitted to the enjoyment principle. In other words, the automaton corresponds to the automatic unfolding in the significant chain. In the colonial system, such symbolic operations were operated and systematized more intensively in models of nomination and exclusion in the various aspects of colonial life as in early biopolitical laboratory experiment. The metropolis controls and produces the automaton as a symbolic code of languages and

customs, inducing and producing a normality more adherent to the conditions of colonial reality, referring to capitalist, slave-owning and eurocentric production of racism and modernity.

Violence could then be suppressed through the institutional and legal union of several individuals, but this new form of power is still violence. Ready to turn against any individual who opposes it, it works by the same methods and pursues the same objectives as the violence instigated by the force of a individual. The evidence of constituent violence and oppression is the focus of decolonial praxis and the lack of perception to the inherent violence structure is cause of social trauma.

In "Archive Fever", Derrida (1996) is concerned not just with the mnemonic unreliability of the concept of the archive, he is concerned with the repressions and suppressions of the archive, the *superrepressions* that seek to exclude the traumatic phantoms that threaten to return from the archive (91). As Freud showed, for repression to be possible, there must be a first nucleus of repression, which, although it does not seem to exist, remains somewhere and calls for all subsequent repression. In Lacan's interpretation, the original repression is exactly the moment when the symbolic is established, leaving out much, including a more immediate relationship with the body – a intrinsic performative and biography endeavor.

In Lacan, trauma is understood as the subject's entry into the symbolic world; it is not an accident in the speaker's life, but constitutive of subjectivity. Thus, in this part of the work, the contribution that Lacan establishes between the notions of trauma and the significant is examined, as well as by the idea of trauma as an uncertain encounter with the Real. According to Lacan's reading, it is in the approximation of traumatic elements, founded on a disintegrated image over which the subject has no control, that lapses are produced in the synthesis of the speaker's history.

Outbreaks of unconscious symptoms produces discontinuities in psychic life, attributable to the return of the repressed. They correspond to what Freud called discontinuities in the subject's conscious motivational chain. This gap between the desire of a named object to the return process in which it realizes itself is where trauma can develop. In this incompleteness of the enjoyment of the desired process to fit and return the premises named by the object-desire is where the *archive fever*, as well the crises of representation also derives.

The tradition notion of psychoanalysis is that because of some inner obstacles that you internalized (like excessively identified with paternal or other social prohibitions), you cannot set yourself free to enjoy. Pleasure and enjoyment are accessible to you only by pathological forms of felling guilty, romantic desire, social status and so on. The psychoanalysis approach allows you to perceive this internalize prohibition so that enables you to enjoy more spontaneously without strong reified external influences. The problem today is that the commandment of the ruling (colonial and capitalist) ideologies produces and administrate ways of enjoinment very complex ways: it can be sexual enjoyment, consumption commodity enjoyment up to spiritual enjoyment like to "fulfill yourself". The problem is not how to get rid of your inhibitions and to be able to spontaneously enjoy, but how to get rid of these injunctions to enjoy, amplified by social imperatives and constrains.

The enjoyment usually is experienced as "transgression", but in its innermost status is something imposed, ordered, always following a certain injunction. In psychoanalyses, this injunction is called *superego*. Civilization needs discontent to establish itself as normal so enjoyment can work in this surplus, constituent of excess. If we subtract the surplus we lose enjoyment itself just as capitalism which survives only by incessantly revolutionizing its own (im) material conditions of production. This then is the homology

between surplus value, the cause which sets in motion the capitalist process of production, and surplus-enjoyment, the object-cause of desire. The Lacanian's concepts of, *phantasy*, *object petit a* and *excess enjoyment*, corroborate with Marx's *commodity fetish* theory as well helps to understand new forms of racism, xenophobia, social trauma, colonial exploration and phycological violence.

Archives functions as testimony of social evidence and also as a trace of social production of injunctions. It works in both education and censorship. The semiotic capitalist fetish of merchandise overflows the references and illusions of reality, accelerating the info-sphere, saturating it with more signs, more simulations in a process of signifying the world – more information less meaning. This movement are fueled by commodification reterritoriality. The recombine time of global network runs through production and work dynamics, subjectively deterritorializing social and reality references. This inflexion on information and its contingencies of reality produces it the pathologization of the psych-sphere into psychological injunctions of desire.

Therefore, to produce archives is to produce themselves in their fragments, deciphering and developing symbolic valuations that express it desires and potencies. The erased and violated production of the narratives of populations subjugated by colonial systems still faces identity challenges and subalternity in geopolitical economy producing new emergencies of trauma.

The decolonial politics inferred by neo-documentalism, with its biographical and performative scope of reenactment, seeks to introduce criticisms evidenced by the *Tiqueé* in the encounter with the real contingent. The systems of signifiers normalized and automated by the social constituent powers, the automaton, is then put it in check by its critique. The contingent *Real*, evidenced by Lacan, constitutes itself as a field of action where history can be rewritten or even unfolded in its complex ramifications, points

of view and paradoxical truths, revealing constituent powers, intentions and violence. Psychoanalysis's proposals for thinking about the subject can shift and redirect ordinary ways of conceiving the political subject and analyze lines of tension that cross social space and help to shape it.

3. Biography and Performance
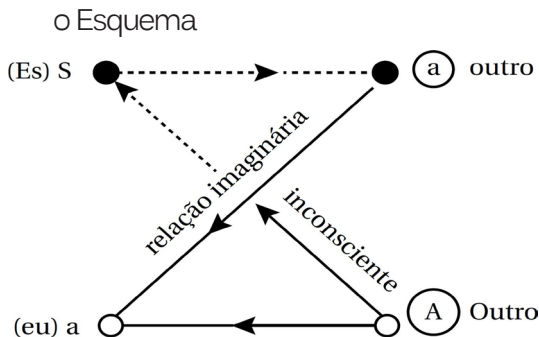
Fig. I. Esquema L. (Lacan 142).

Archiving the suppressed, the unheard, forgotten or violent erasure legacies imposes a difficult endeavor and challenge for those who struggle for making a stand in its identity defense, history and ways of living. The social struggle of popular rights it's a political matter than can be performed as a cultural scene to affect others and recollect, introduce and maybe intervene in collective memory and history.

The archive conjugate remainings long to be rescued from disappearance and/or erasement. This recollection is a performed remembrance that can causes memories and affections of what is, can be or it was. It can present trough a cut, a montage that produce differences and openings for virtual possibilities of knowledge. To perform a memory is to reenact an event as in its phenomenological

and psychological opening for others possibilities of connection and alterity. Remember and input the present body as a dispositive of memory can be an archiving technology as its relation to art and social contingency history. The biographic body can tell histories and be proven of knowledge production as well witness of becoming itself subject and agent.

The positivism approach of representation signs the future as representation of the past. The decolonial approach affirms the present performing the past-future, marking a methodology turn. The instability of archive production dynamizes its languages and myths of the sensible world defining a frontier between the fleeting and ephemeral of performance versus the stability and permanence that classical archive and knowledge production affirms it.

These notions of archive expand the idea of physical storage space that preserves objects and documents to traditional data collection archives accessed through computer screens and digital processing. Collective memory engaged in the reinterpretation of history, or the political dimensions of archives have to be invested with discussions of accessibility issues and concentration of power and totalitarian surveillance. New ways of understanding archives, history and memory emerges and forward theories of enactment and intervention, while performance concepts proliferate and allows a critical focus and activation of the archival residue.

Performance archives refer to processes in which human beings create and handle archives, but they also refer to how archives are formative in modulating history and therefore perform human beings, structure and shapes contradictions. Such approach allows a critical investigation of some key issues on how to engage interdisciplinary research in their mechanics and performance powers of documentation and archives.

An interregnum approach constitutes a brief moment of instability between two conditional arrangements. Proposed in an activated space of classified and indexed "between states" reports, releases its narratives and hidden or unclear secrets or potentials through archival storage dynamics. A perspective is concerned with how the image and visual culture mobilizes the idea of identities and belonging, emphasizing the role of vision and visuality as an inherently interdisciplinary phenomenon. The gap between performance and its recordings can allow the representation problem to set in, or it can function as a detachment gap, that can be used to re-signified complexities.

The ontology of moving images, performing and becoming other, others, choreograph archives and its knowledge organization and representation. This activation of multi-representation is the main affirmation for decolonial concept and praxis. The happening of an event provokes the experience of a temporal memory rather than just the classification of an event in facts sequences. The discovery of the subaltern as well the colonial being infers the danger paradox of alterity. The discovery of "others" is already a genocide. Art proposes to think this "other" body outside of this identity regimes build by dualism, colonialism, orientalism, racism, etc, creating sensible contexts. Peggy Phelan (1993) reflects on the ontological nature of performance:

> Performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the calculation of representations of representations: once it does, it becomes something other than performance. To the degree that performance attempts to enter the economy of reproduction, it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology. Performance's being… becomes itself through disappearance. Remaining traceless within the ideologies of capital (146)

From the Greek root of *Archon*, it inferred to the house of the Head of State, which leads to the notion of archive as a Western phallocentric cultural reference of documents and objects that are visible and "housable" organization display. Performance is this antithetical to document because of its disappearance nature resisting the "ocular hegemony" of the visible and surveilled remains of this archive. Both, archive and performance, materializes itself through disappearance as the archive itself becomes a social performance of retro-action. The dispute of the notion of ephemerality in performance are a conflict discussion since the archive can only be fixed if by a social performance of value, memory, heritage, patrimony, etc. Diana Taylor (2003) asks herself: "Whose memories, traditions and claims to history disappear if performance practices lack the staying power to transmit vital knowledge?" (21)

Another dimension of the language that performance faces, when writing epistemologies, is the mark in which the methodological notions embedded in culture such as documents, recordings, maps, texts and other materials appear and are used in history. The conflict is not just the written language versus the spoken language, but the static file versus the repertoires of incorporated and distributed knowledge practices. It is not binary or sequential, but interact with intrinsic patterns of exchange and expansion, contingencies in the activation of social and non-organic networks.

An *anarchiviolithic drive* refers to the necessity of remembering by the process of destruction intrinsic to archives. The inheritance it leaves only its erotic simulacrum, its mask of seduction, memories of death, self-obliteration, seductive finery, mourning, calling for a "theatricalisation of the archive", a self-conscious archive, a staged archive, or a contra-archive. Already in social history and its conflicts it becomes a political practice to impose itself by intervening poetically and dramatically in expressions of ways of life and its challenges of becoming present, a being not forgotten.

The political archive is conflicting paradoxical in its very nature: it supports the symbolic and/or reveals its hidden aspects. Such ontological discussions through concepts such as "liveness", "performance remains" and "repertoire" are just a few to deconstruct the dichotomy between performance versus archive. Mediatized recordings of liveness reflect the legacy of aspects of time, object and affect that characterize archival practices.

Considerations
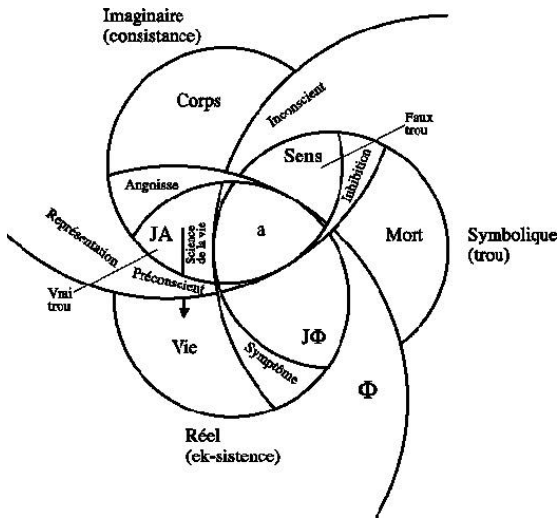
Fig.2 Lacan's detail diagram. Font: Google images

This reinterpretation of the archive is exciting and challenging, but we also champion the value and importance of the traditional role of the archivist in preserving the legacy of artists for future generations. The archive is as a technology of surveillance aspires to generate a complete set of documents on a particular subject. The archive system is a utopian institution of knowledge as well as a *panopticon* system of control – the archive as a Utopia. But if we acknowledge that this utopian character of the archive pertains to

an archival logic that is not always shared by all people, we must also reconsider the notion of a epistemological utopia. The archives "are sites of hope and aspiration". But beyond this, the archives are also sites of political struggle.

Activists became historians of the counterinsurgency and the archives shapes their sense of self and transformed their subjectivities. Discerning different "archival logics" open to its activation of living testimonies, biographies and performed histories can put the knowledge classification utopia into knowledge practices turn to social lives and its expressions and struggles of memory and identity.

The panoptic function of the colonial archive is now being appropriated by communities around the world who were formerly subjected to it. Objects of evidence have turned themselves into subjects that produce, and judge, evidence. The appropriation and production of archives serves local agendas for the production of "situated knowledges". Such a production goes "against the grain" of Western epistemologies, sometimes conforming to it, entangling or conflicting. As our descriptions demonstrate, the appropriation of archives benefits alternative forms of knowledge and thereby supports the decolonization of epistemologies imposed by hierarchical centers as well psychoanalyses forms of dealing with subjective social trauma.

A "Decolonial Archive" refers to those innumerable and intertwined material and immaterial traces left by anticolonial figures, ruins and remains, and active decolonial movements in the globalized contemporaneity. Archival imagination is a call to pay attention to the movements of the present to find situated answers. For this we call to activate both the historical imagination, which can create practices of different time perceptions to summon its disruptive social power over the present and encourage its dimension of the future.

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Medicine of Demophobia: Race, Degeneration and Crime in Psychiatric Thought of "The First Republic"

Vinko Draca

Introduction: Da Cunha's invocation of biopolitics

Brazilian journalist and sociologist Euclides da Cunha (2016) ended his famous work on the War of Canudos, *Os Sertões* (translated in English as *Rebellion in the Backlands)* with the following, often discussed sentence: " The trouble is that we do not have today a Maudsley for acts of madness and crimes on the part of nations..." (476). This sentence was left painfully unfinished: the title of the paragraph is "Two lines" while da Cunha offers only a single line which ends in elipsis. The omission alludes to the lack of adequate emotional closure, felt on part of da Cunha after the bloodshed he had witnessed. The trouble da Cunha refers to is inability of rational mind to process the senseless violence in which Canudos campaign had culminated and which was undertaken by the Brazilian authorities, side in the conflict that presented itself as devoted to progress and civilization. In this traumatic moment, the speech is broken and interrupted, author failing to provide the answer reader seeks from him and the final, second line that was foreshadowed in the title of the paragraph is left unsaid, probably to be spoken by some "Maudsley" of the future who will understand the nature of political, collective, madness that happened.

Henry Maudsley (1870), the man who da Cunha is invoking was probably one of the first psychiatrists whose ideas became known outside of medical profession. Starting his stellar career in the middle of the 19th century as editor of British *Journal for Medical Science,* Maudsley was usually credited with wrenching the psychiatry away from the margins of medicine and giving mental illness clear biological and physiological etiology, rooted in theory of evolution and supposed hierarchy of mental, intellectual and emotional characteristics. For Maudsley, there was a clear line of evolutionary progress not only of organisms but also of mental functions "through sensation, passion, emotion, reason, to the highest place of mental force, a well fashioned will (312). In the context of new evolutionary theories, madness is not just mental illness, but also an atavism, sign of regression to the lowest levels of intellectual development. What is also important for Maudsley (1874) is the evident nature of madness: it is not a sudden occurrence, but outbreak of hereditary burden, phenomenon that can be predicted by the trained professional, even in people who are apparently sane and healthy. As Maudsley points out in his book *Responsibility in Mental Disease*: "…it would scarcely be an exaggeration to say that few persons go mad, save from palpable physical causes, who do not show more or less plainly by their gait, manners, gestures, habit of thought, feeling and action that they have a sort of predestination of madness." (276). In his earlier work *Body and Mind* Maudsley is even more specific when identifying the signs that reveal predisposition for mental illness listing series of bodily defects that are invoking all too familiar notions of mid 19th century scientific racism: asymmetry of the head, lack of harmony on the features, malformations of the ears and eyes, etc. (34).

By rooting mental illness in the body and identifying physical and behavioral stygmata of propensity to madness, Maudsley created a new category of individuals, people with hereditary

propensity for madness who hadn't yet manifested its symptoms, group of people who are "in the borderlands" between reason and unreason. Da Cunha was well aware of this Maudsley's contribution to the psychiatric thought: he himself said of Antonio Conselheiro, the leader of ill-fated Canudos rebellion that he is a man "whose sickly consciousness oscillated about that ideal middle line which Maudsley regrets that he is unable to trace between good sense and insanity" (120). By the end of Da Cunha's work, a very Foucaldian twist happens; the body of the self-proclaimed sovereign of Canudos rebellion is paralleled with the body of the nation. Both of them are obviously abnormal and their abnormality is hard to pin down and identify and it seems that according to Da Cunha, the bodies of nations need to be checked for madness and controlled. So if Da Cunha is, in anti-conclusion of his work, desiring for Maudsley capable of recognizing and curing madness and crimes of the nation, could it be that he is invoking someone who could clearly identify signs of mental illness and degeneration in society at large, to be more specific in Brazilian society of the turn of the century? More so, is Da Cunha implying that nations can also be in the "borderlands" between madness and reason, between criminality and civilization, between anarchy and backwardness and "ordem e progresso"? I think that Da Cunha's invocation of biopolitical alienist betrays Da Cunha's anxiety on the perceived inability of Brazil to rise above the savagery attributed to it by European intellectuals. Intellectual and urban elites of the Brazilian First Republic considered themselves on a quest of transforming Brazil into a modern nation state that would be on par with European superpowers of the time. One of the necessary vehicles of that transformations were broad measures undertaken in the field of public health: from obligatory vaccination (that even sparked a city-wide rebellion in Rio de Janeiro in 1904), sanitation measures and suppression of tropical diseases. Brazilian psychiatrists also took part in these reforms that, despite their sound

reasoning, often took form of brutal social control that benefited the elites more than it benefited population and large.

This work deals with notions of European psychiatry that were adopted by Brazilian mental health professionals in the time of First Brazilian Republic – time period spanning from the abolition of the monarchy to the Revolution of 1930. Using psychiatric journals of the time such as *Archivos Brasileiros de Psychiatria, Neurologia e Sciencias Affins*[1] and *Archivos Brasileiros de Hygiene Mental*, and other writings of Brazilian psychiatric professionals, I will try to track the way in which notions of European psychiatry of the time, focused on scientific racism, theory of degeneration and organicist determinism, leading to eugenics, were applied to the complex social, cultural and political landscape of Brazilian society. In first part of the work I will outline the intellectual and institutional history of modern psychiatry in Brazil in the period of the First Republic and tract the transatlantic intellectual connections of some of the leading Brazilian psychiatrists of the time. In the second part, I will show the way in which those theories were applied to population at large, using models of biopolitics described by French philosopher Michel Foucault. I will try to prove that anxieties of the elites, related to disenfranchised and oppressed population of the First Republic, found the way into psychiatric texts that identified biological and mental characteristics of that same population as obstacle to nations path to modernity. It will be important to keep in mind that those explanatory models and mechanisms devised as response to them have complex intellectual history that reveal one of the main contradictions present in the history of psychiatry as medical discipline: the polarity between psychiatry as therapeutic discipline led by humanitarian ethical standards of medicine and psychiatry as

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1   Later renamed to *Archivos Brasileiros de Psychiatria, Neurologia e Medicina Legal* (since 1907) and, finally to *Arquivos Brasileiros de Neuriatria e Psiquiatria* (since 1919)

one of the instruments of social control of "maladjusted" individuals and in some cases, "maladjusted" and troublesome social groups.

Between therapeutic pessimism and mental hygiene: Psychiatry of the First Republic in the global context

Most common symbolic depictions of the birth of modern medical psychiatry shows French physician and superintendent of the Parisian mental asylum Salpetriere Phillipe Pinel striking down the chains and manacles from the wrists of mentally ill woman. As Elaine Showalter (2001) had pointed out, the image that truly captures the way men of Enlightenment have perceived themselves: heroes of scholarship who ended the brutality of previous era and defeated the forces of cruelty and superstition armed solely with reason and science, emphasizing in turn gendered division between feminine madness and male rationality (2). Although it would be oversimplifying to trace the beginning of modern psychiatry solely to Pinel, his authority as a reformer and liberator of those oppressed by mental illness and tortured by pre-medical cruelty of layman asylum attendants was used as argument for the introduction of new therapeutic approach to the management of mentally ill called "moral treatment". Moral treatment as a therapeutic method spread throughout the Western World (and through the colonies of leading European imperial powers) supplanting the various previous methods of treating the people that were dubbed insane by their surrounding, methods that ranged from mystical (exorcisms, prayer) and disciplinary (prison-like confinement, whipping) to proto-surgical and proto proto-pharmaceutical (purging, abrasive therapy, hot baths, therapeutical bleeding, kinetic therapy). We can say that there are four main characteristics of moral treatment, as practiced in the insane asylums of the late 18th and 19th century:

1. Abandonment of previous crude physiological therapies like purges and bloodletting.
2. Basing the etiology of mental illness on psychological and moral causes.
3. Mental illness can be only treated in the specifically built asylums administered by trained physicians.
4. Physical restrains like ropes and chains are, in theory, abandoned as means of discipline and replaced with more humane kind of restrains: straitjackets, isolation rooms and bed-restraints. Declared notion behind their implementation is prevention of unintentional harm to patients and not limiting of their freedom.

As third characteristic implies, moral treatment and 19th century psychiatry are necessarily tied to the mental asylum. The role of the mental asylum in the treatment of mental illness is threefold. First it serves as therapeutic institution; it was believed that seclusion, disciplined regiment and even the very architecture of asylum is beneficial to the patient. Asylum's role as therapeutic institution is inseparable from its disciplinary role: asylums serve as places of what Michael Foucault had called disciplinary power that achieves its role through constant supervision and discipline of inmates. The psychiatric power of asylum is centered in the figure of asylum superintendent, who, according to Pinel (1806), has to be able to establish full control on therapeutic regime within the asylum (59-60). And finally, the asylum is a place of observation and recognition of mental illness: it is the place where vast varieties of symptoms and behaviors and ways of thinking that were deemed abnormal were submitted to medical gaze and transformed into clear and discernible categories – mental illnesses. As Foucault wrote clinical gaze of the medically trained asylum superintendent, strips the patients body of his or hers individuality and it turns them into the object of medical observation. So in every way,

establishment of asylums that are to be run by physicians trained in the new medical branch of psychiatry was the priority of every 19th century psychiatric movement. Building of new asylums was almost exclusively presented as part of the modernizing efforts by political elites and 19th century Brazil was no exception to that. During the Empire, works of Pinel and his disciple Esquirol on the treatment of the mentally ill, had reached the shores of the newly independent land and were quickly disseminated among emergent and largely francophone intellectual elite. First thesis written in Brazil on the subject of mental illness, written in 1837 by Antônio L. da Silva Peixoto, is mostly comprised from the direct translation of two medical dictionary articles on mental illness by Esquirol and Achille-Louis Foville (Oda 635).The asylum movement emerged in the cities of Atlantic coast and became most powerful in Salvador in the state of Bahia and in Rio de Janeiro, the capital of the newly independent Empire of Brazil. In Rio de Janeiro medical elite, who wanted to establish the health and sanitation services of chaotic, cosmopolitan and multiracial capital in the image of European cities, had to contend with layman Catholic charity Santa Casa de Misericórdia that had been taking care of the ill people since colonial times, as well as with many African-born curandeiros (healers) and feiticeiros (sorcerers) who managed to gain significant respect in both enslaved and free urban communities (Meyer 28). The first asylum, Hospício de Pedro II[2] built in Praia Vermelha of Rio de Janeiro, on the land today occupied by Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, opened its door on December 5th 1852. Its building plan and neoclassical aesthetics drew heavily on French asylums and it was immediately celebrated by academic medical community as "monument of compassion of the monarch Pedro II, asylum for most

2   Renamed Hospício Nacional de Alienados in 1890 and Hospital Nacional de Alienados in 1911.

unfortunate of men in whom the light of reason was extinguished" (Candido 96). The great pomp that surrounded the opening of the asylum and celebratory words spoken by Francisco de Paula Candido, president of Imperial Academy of Medicine, witness the pride felt in establishment of such a modern institution and the faith the medical community put in the new field of psychiatry.

This early optimism, characteristic of the era soon gave way to therapeutic pessimism of the *fin de siecle* as number of asylum inmates grew and therapeutic methods of asylum psychiatry showed little in way of results. The theories and methods of moral treatment slowly gave way to the notion of degeneracy, the idea first expounded by Belgian-French doctor Benedict Morel and later expanded by German psychiatrists of the turn of the century. According to Morel, degeneration was

> process of pathological deviation from the ideal type of human being created by God, the process that started with Adam and Eve. While one part of the mankind was healthy and adaptable, another part was incompetent for social action and transferred those negative characteristic to its offspring (Morel 1860, II).

Degeneration manifested itself as mental illness and presence of somatic "stygmata" that pointed towards the inferior heredity, signs like "irregular shape of skull and deformities of the body. The idea of degeneration fused the traditional biblical notion of original sin with biological theories of heredity and Darwinian and Lamarckian theories of evolution that were prevalent at the time. This gradually drew psychiatry away from its original goal of curing individuals confined in asylums towards the eugenic ideas of culling the insanity out of the population. Measures of medicinal discipline gave way to what Foucault had dubbed biopolitics: body of the individual maladjusted patient god substituted to the perceived body of the nation. Biopower, as crucial element of Foucauldian

biopolitics is manifested in an attempt to control the population of certain state in a way hospitals and prisons are controlled: through classification, segmentation and statistical description of every member of all of the bodies within given population (Foucault 240-241). In Europe, Italian psychiatrist Cesare Lombroso, using Morel's notion of degeneracy described "born criminal" atavistic type of man with assymetric skull, lack of tactile sensitivity and physical features described as "atavistic" (Lombo 250-251). In 1901. Hungarian neuro-psychiatrist, Max Nordau had written his treatsie "On Degeneration" dedicated to Lombroso. Nordau had tied the notion of degeneration with challenges of modernity and anxieties of conservative elites regarding it. In Brazil, a rapidly modernizing young nation, sanitation and public health policies played important role in transformation of the country into the image of modernity. Those constant push for sanitation and expansion of medical services made some of the biopolitical notions quite explicit, as shown by often quoted statement made by São Paulo physician Miguel Pereira that equated Brazil with an "immense hospital".[3] If Brazil was considered an immense hospital in terms of physical and infective diseases Pereira was referring to, it was a matter of time before psychiatrist started considering Brazil an immense asylum. If response to infections was mass sanitation policies and vaccination programs, Brazilian psychiatrists started thinking in similar terms. Degeneration, as cause of mental illness had to be fought outside the asylum through programs of eugenics and mental hygiene. But first, problem of degeneration and its causes needed to be diagnosed. Notions of degeneration, adopted through Transatlantic marketplace of ideas, needed to be adapted to the population of Brazil. This intellectual process of "figuring out the degeneration" was greatly complicated by the fact that degeneration in European

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3   See *Jornal do Commercio,* October 11th 1916.

sciences went hand in hand with ideological notions of scientific racism. During the First Republic, race as field of oppression started to be discussed in terms of hereditary medicine and psychiatric power.

Collective madness and paranoia: two visions of "epidemic" madness in turn of the century Brazil

One of the fields that was in great degree influenced by theories of degeneration is the field of criminology. In the late 19th century Cesare Lombroso was considered a father of "criminal anthropology" the theory that had done away with previous notions that put to the forefront the free will and motivations of the criminal, arguing instead that there is a kind of "born criminal", a man or woman that is inclined to criminal behavior through because of their heritage. For adherents of Lombrosian criminal anthropology, born criminals have little agency: their criminal acts aren't the product of social circumstances or their decisions but a symptom of certain form of hidden epilepsy that isn't manifested in epileptic seizures but in pervasive personality disorder that makes them indifferent to moral norms, violent and unpredictable. Lilia Moritz Schwarcz (1993/2005) had already described that there was a huge interest in Lombroso's ideas in intellectual community of the First Republic, taking up a high percentage of articles in the legal journal and being described as "modern ideas in combat against crime" (176). Epistemological connection between crime and heredity put psychiatric theories of degeneration at the forefront of late 19th century war of crime, movement that often had elements of true "civilizing effort" which elites undertook to pacify unruly lower strata of society. If sanitary medicine, personified in the chivalrous figure of Oswaldo Cruz, "knight of the lancet" fought the blights of infectious disease through vaccination and sanitation projects, psychiatry was expected to

explain, diagnose and eradicate crime and social deviance. This was reflected in the very first article of the Decree 1132 of 22nd of December 1903 that stipulates: "The individual who due to mental illness, congenital or acquired, compromises public order or people's safety has to be put away in the establishment for alienated" (Câmera dos Deputados). Therefore, the implied primary purpose of the new system of insane asylums is to help in maintaining the public order. Recognizing those sort of mentally ill who jeopardize order and security became one of the most publicly discussed tasks of the physicians. In those discussions, moral and medical were often intertwined in a way that moralistic notions of the conservative elites were shrouded in the air of medical discourse that gave it sense of legitimacy. Shrouding moral infractions into medical language signified a new approach in the treatment of deviance. For instance, in discussion about prostitution published in "O Brasil-Médico" in 1890 both moral aspect and sanitary aspect of prostitution were mentioned. The participant in discussion, dr. Erico Coelho, says that medicine should not deal with moral aspects of prostitution, but sanitary ones. By sanitary aspects, Coelho is not only worried that prostitution is a canal for spreading and perpetuating syphilis, but also by the alleged propensity of prostitutes to spread the hereditary taint of anti-social degeneration through society. Also, while moral harm of prostitution is immediately visible, there is a hidden danger to the practice: According to Coelho, most worrying trait of prostitution is not its public offensiveness but

> idleness and venality that reveal great degradation and that show in their kinship as grand neuroses. This proves prostitution is an evil, as a cause of degeneration, hereditary in certain families, prostitute is harmful from all viewpoints, she is antisocial, doesn't produce, perpetuates syphilis and should always be policed... (*O Brazil-Médico*, 1890, p. 63).

Reception of Lombrosian ideas in Brazilian psychiatry can be divided in two schools. First, having as foremost proponent Raimundo Nina Rodrigues (2006), embraced theories of Lombroso and notions of racial science and somatic origins of crime more or less wholeheartedly, while second whose foremost proponent was Rio de Janeiro based psychiatrist Juliano Moreira (1905) gradually developed more complex perception of degeneracy and turned away from the idea of "born criminal". In the context of the First Republics, Lombrosian notions of inborn criminals and hereditary degeneracy became politicized and used as a way to explain a plethora of political upheavals of the time. Since notions of degeneracy was closely tied to scientific racism, perception of Brazilian racially mixed population started to reveal a hidden anxiety of intellectual elites. Miscegenation was, according to dominant views on race at the time, seen as source of degeneration. Thus, the mixing of races that had happened in Brazil since colonial times became sort of the "original sin" of the nation and excuse for its perceived backwardness in comparison to European nations.

Political strife that had happened at the turn of the century also started to be explained by degeneracy and backwardness. Raimundo Nina Rodrigues perceived upheavals like War of Canudos (1895-1898) and attempted assassination of President Prudente de Morais and assassination of Minister of War Carlos Machado de Bittencourt by young soldier Marcelino Bispo de Melo as acts of degenerate and socially inferior social groups and individuals. In his medical analysis of War on Canudos, Nina Rodrigues dubs it a form of collective insanity. Concept of collective insanity is a construction Nina Rodrigues uses to describe many singular events from history of Brazil. In order to conceptualize it, Nina Rodrigues uses well known diagnosis of *folie a deux* taken from French psychiatry. Certain form of folie a deux involves delusional, mentally ill individual who imposes his delusion on suggestible partner. Nina

Rodrigues expands upon that, notion, postulating a number of cases in which delirious and cunning man, influences a group of people who have predisposition towards madness (74-75). Analyzing numerous epidemics of insanity in Brazil Nina Rodrigues comes back to miscegenation as a factor for population's predisposition towards behavior he deems abnormal, ranging from mystical cults to armed rebellions and assassinations. In case of Canudos, scientific racism is used to explain both the rebellion and the advantage of apparently inferior jagunços of sertão over Brazilian army who waged bloody and protracted campaign against the rebels for three long years. Jagunços, described as racially mixed are according to Nina Rodrigues vastly different from the mestiços of the coast, described as "weakened and bastardized by aguardente, environment of the cities, daily struggle for life that is more intellectual than physical and civilization superior to the demands of its physical and mental organization"(49). Jagunço was inferior as well, but in another way, unlike passive mestiço of the cities in his physiognomy and character: "the indomitable character of the Indian savage reveals itself, a taste for wandering and nomadic life, resistance to physical suffering, to hunger, to thirst, to bad weather, eager to lean on the adventures of war" (49-50). More relevant for the cause of the conflict, described by Nina Rodrigues as "epidemic madness" is the apparent inability of the jagunço to understand modern democratic forms of government:

> The population of sertão is and will be a monarchist for a long time, because in the lower stage of social evolution in which it finds itself, it lacks the needed mental capacity to understand and accept the replacement of concrete representative of power for the one embodied in the abstraction of the law. (51).

In the world of Lombrosian legal medicine even normalcy was deceptive: just like prostitutes were spreading hidden contagion of

degeneracy, so did Nina Rodrigues found "normal" skull proportions of leader of Canudos rebellion Antonio Conselheiro deceptive. Nina Rodrigues still regarded him as "suspected degenerate because of his mestiço qualities" and diagnosed him with "systemic chronic delirium" (90) Apparent normalcy became almost a metaphor for the fragility of new social order. Just as its apparent equality and modernity hid oppression that could erupt at any moment, so apparent normalcy of population, concealed seeds of degeneracy which could erupt in a delirium and spread in epidemics of madness.

Another famous Brazilian scientist of the time, previously a student of Nina Rodrigues, Juliano Moreira (1905), being himself of Afro-Brazilian heritage, regarded notions of hereditary degeneration with more skepticism than his contemporaries. In his seminal work on history of the care for mentally ill in Brazil, published in 1905, he painted what at first seems a pessimistic perception of Brazilian population saying that first a great successions of prisoners from Europe arrived, among them many epileptics, hysterics and other degenerates, followed by great number of brutalized Africans, often pacified by alcohol and malnourished (52-53). Finally, indigenous population of Brazil "received little in way of instructions, except in bearing firearms and operating most rudimentary tools."(53). However, Moreira is reluctant to draw conclusions about racial inferiority or ill effects of miscegenation, he even underlines that in the case of people of African heritage alcohol is guilty of "many defects attributed to the race and miscegenation by all those who cannot be bothered to deepen their understanding of the facts"(53). Instead of "inferior racial constitution", Moreira will find sources of degeneracy in lack of education and bad customs. Moreira further explained his attitudes toward degeneration the description of paranoia, written with another famous Brazilian psychiatrist and author Afrânio Peixoto. Moreira and Peixoto (1905) start their discussion on etiology of paranoia by going against the grain of

most contemporary psychiatrist and declaring degeneration a "diagnostic stereotype and accusing Italian authors of abusing the word "atavism" in their theory of psychopathology (7-8). Moving away from degeneration and somatic hereditary atavisms Moreira and Peixoto look for causes of paranoia elsewhere: in the faulty education. Authors postulate that paranoids suffer from a form of egophilia. According to Moreira and Peixoto, ego of a child is always hypertrophied making a child similar to madman or criminal (8). Altruism is learned through good education and social interaction, but in some cases, bad and spoiled upbringing can enforce the autophilia of the child and make natural equilibrium between individual and his surrounding unstable (8-9). Authors named this primary stage of paranoia a prodromal stage, characterized by "primitive autophilia", inability of normal interactions between the individual and their social environment, resulting in perceived hostility on behalf of the individual and reaction of individual against the environment (12).

Shifting the guilt from biological to cultural certainly represented great discontinuity in Brazilian and global psychiatry and by making this step, Moreira was way ahead of many European scientists. But this inference does not make his notion less politicized. After all, Moreira still maintains the continuity with notions of "hidden insanity" by saying that there are different gradients of paranoid characters within the population: socially maladjusted "autophiliacs" who can develop mental illness under certain circumstances. They are carriers of true degeneracy, "fertile ground for all kinds of abnormalities" (12). Thus, every man who shows inability to adapt in his social environment is potential pathologically paranoid person. Case studies of paranoid people presented in journal articles of Brazilian doctors show great number of political and religious delusions among paranoid people, putting political concerns in the center of discussions of paranoia, although they never get explicated. In his 1907 paper Renato

Pacheco describes cases of patients with paranoia and progressive systemic psychosis whose symptoms include being "influenced by electric transmissions by people of high standing in Brazilian government" (59), "weird religious beliefs"(70), one of them a protestant of African heritage, who held himself important to many people despite his race (74) and another believed in palm reading and fortune telling. In the era when most psychiatrists tended to disregard voice of the mentally ill as insignificant babbling, many doctors show particular interest in political and religious delusions of inmates diagnosed with paranoia. The idea of paranoia hiding behind the veil of normalcy and apparent social maladjustment was taken a step further in 1922, when Henrique Roxo (1922), Brazilian foremost expert in the field of legal psychiatry described "periodic delirium of degenerates", differentiating it from Moreira's definition of paranoia by its acute onset and bases in hallucination, listing a number of cases of mentally ill people who acted in a disruptive way (212). Many of them held spiritist beliefs: another sign that certain forms of religious nonconformity were regarded as markers of degeneration. Acute delirium is inherently transitory and every person with "psychopatic constitution" can be grasped by it suddenly. Thus the concept of "degenerates" as seemingly normal individuals that can be overtaken by sudden and violent mental illness at any time, survived as a notion of psychiatric diagnostic.

After World War I, adoption of eugenic ideas in Brazil reflected the different perception of the origin of degenerates. While some physicians like Renato Kehl were still informed by ideas of scientific racism that gained grounds in Germany and United States, Juliano Moreira remained one of the more influential progressive voices. Despite holding on to some of the concepts that we would now consider dated, Moreira (1925) spoke against discrimination of immigrants on basis of race and nation (114). Despite Moreira's engagement in eugenic circles there is little of racial or negative

eugenics in Moreira's thought. At the time when forced sterilization and dangers of mixed-race marriages preoccupied legislators in many European countries and United States, Moreira (1925) outlined main methods of fight against nerve and mental degeneracy as: campaign against infections, infestations and intoxications, elimination of sexually transmitted diseases and alcoholism, avoidance of procreation of mentally ill, fight against hookworm and broad educational campaign (226). However, racist and moralistic perceptions of degeneracy were still at large: Ignacio da Cunha Lopes Filho, physician in Botafogo sanatorium in Rio de Janeiro, in his paper about addicts published in 1925, still drew parallels between "toxicomany" homosexuality and prostitution(125), differed between occasional and "constitutional" toxicomaniacs and attacked Rio carnival as a place where addiction is spread through use of inhalants (119).

Conclusion

Psychiatry of the second half of the long 19th century found refuge in racist theories in part to find reasons for the failure of its declared mission: to cure mental illness. If certain people carried the hereditary germ of insanity in their bodies, ability to heal them came second to prophylaxis. Saving the individual patient was no longer its primary goal: its errand was saving the nation from the deviants that threatened it. Project of modernity meant unified, controlled and predictable society: any kind of social deviance, upheaval and unpredictability had to be explained and psychiatry offered ready explanations for them through notions of degeneration, hereditary atavism and "born criminals". Those notions were never proven, but they were articulated in scientific discourse of the time and easily communicated to the educated elites who saw themselves as harbingers of reason and progress. Brazilian psychiatrists, eager

to present themselves as modern and up to date with ideas of the age, at first embraced scientific racism of European psychiatrists which offered an explanatory frame in which social disorder of the young state could be discussed. Degeneracy also served as an apt metaphor for anxiety of social elites, in time when widespread racial and class oppression created a wide mistrust of people in government and when simmering anger of the population bubbled over in many revolts and rebellions. It served as a forum where practices and beliefs considered culturally alien to the image of modern nation, like spiritism, could be denounced as pathological atavisms. In this transatlantic transfer of ideas, between Brazil and Europe two ideologically informed images started to crop up in Brazilian psychiatry. First was *mestiço*, a racist caricature brought into the psychiatry, definition of Maudsley's man who stands in the borderlands between sanity and insanity. Belief in inferiority of "racial type" that inherited traits of miscegenation, connected with obsession of Brazilian physicians with epidemics and sanitation and gave birth to the idea of revolts as epidemics of madness. Abandonment of racial theories brought forth a second type – paranoid character, different kind of degenerate, created not through racial mixing but through immoral upbringing, person who was constantly in conflict with society. Both those persons existed hidden behind the curtain of normalcy, capable of creating trouble for society if conflict with social environment brought their madness to the surface. Response to those social threats identified within the psychiatry came through comprehensive measures of mental hygiene that articulated social ills in terms borrowed from infectology: epidemics, sanitation, hygiene and prophilaxis.

Medicalization of maladjustment was a global process that went hand in hand with modernization driven by social elites. While social drive of psychiatry had many positive aspects, like fight for eradication of alcoholism and syphilis, two of the ravages that were

maybe the most responsible for overpopulation of asylums around the world, its insidious effect was creation of discursive relationship between dissent and non-comformity and mental illness. This relationship had opened the door to many abuses of psychiatry that were discovered and documented too late- sterilization of "psychopaths" in the United States, grand scale medical murder of Nazi Germany, psychiatric jailing of dissidents in Soviet Union and murder by neglect of thousands of "morally questionable" people in Hospital Colony of Barbacena in Brazil during the years of military dictatorship.

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Literature facing massacres perpetrated by the Brazilian State: a comparison between Euclides da Cunha and Racionais MC's

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Introduction

This article derives from a question that was brought about as a sort of challenge. That is, would it be possible to compare and create links between historical events that are so apart in time such as the War of Canudos (1896-1897),[1] and the Massacre of Carandiru (1992),[2] works of art which are esthetically different such as the book *Backlands: the Canudos Campaign*, by Euclides da Cunha

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1   The War of Canudos (1896-1897) was a brutal repression by the army against a community in the backlands of Bahia, a Brazilian State. The community that settled at the bank of the Vaza Barris River and was named Belo Monte in 1893 gathered around the religious leader Antonio Conselheiro. His fame spread through the northeastern backlands, calling the attention of a great amount of people. It was alleged that such community was made up by monarchists who threatened the new born republic. The community resisted to three military campaigns and for almost a whole year, being dizimated in the fourth campaign. The exact number of deaths is still uncertain, but one can estimate more than twenty thousand. Nowadays there is a vast literature about Canudos and its leader Antonio Conselheiro, but I would like to highlight the books by José Calasans (1950, 1997), the book *Sentencing Canudos* (Johnson, 2010) and the documentary film *Paixão e Guerra no sertão de Canudos*, directed by Antonio Olavo (1993).

2   The Carandiru Massacre (1992) was a slaughter perpetrated by the military police of São Paulo inside the largest prison in Brazil at the time. The military attack allegedly would stop a rebellion of inmates. It resulted in the assassination of at least 111 people (there are still controversies about the total amount of deaths). For further information about the slaughter, I recommend the book *Carandiru não é coisa do passado* [Carandiru is not past] (Machado and Machado, 2015) and the book chapter *The Carandiru Massacre: Across the Mediatic Spectrum* (Stam, 2013).

(2010)[3], and the rap *Diário de um Detento* [Convict's Diary], by Racionais MC's (1997)[4]?

In a paper where two epigraphs are put side by side, one from Euclides da Cunha and another from Racionais MC's, Hardman (1998) states that it is still important to talk about Canudos a hundred years later, because doing so allow us to see continuities in the history of Brazil. That is, for the sake of creating a Brazilian cultural unity, there was an attempt to erase the traces of the committed violence. To this extent, the metamorphosis that the War of Canudos underwent in the Brazilian Literature Canon, through the book by Euclides da Cunha, was crucial to constitute the very memory of this event, given that other events with similar devastation did not have a similar repercussion.

There are almost a hundred years between the Massacres of Canudos[5] and Carandiru. However, it is possible to link those events. Both were crimes committed by the Brazilian State, originated by

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3   Euclides da Cunha (1866-1909) was a member of the armed forces, an engineer, a journalist and a writer who was sent by the paper *O Estado de São Paulo* to cover the War of Canudos. He wrote the book *Backlands: the Canudos campaign* about this episode, first printed in 1902. His work is studied in several fields of knowledge and is considered a milestone of the Brazilian social thought.

4   The Racionais MC's rap group, still working as a music group, began in 1988. It is made up by Mano Brown, Ice Blue, KL Jay and Edi Rock, who were in 1988 not older than 20 and lived in the slums of the North and South Zones in the city of São Paulo. The group became nationwide famous when they recorded the album *Sobrevivendo no inferno* [Surviving through hell] in 1997. More than a million copies of the CD were sold. The song *Diário de um detento* [Convict's diary] that is part of the album won two MTV awards in the Video Music Brasil 1998. Its videoclip is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_CZunqkl_r4>. In 2018, *Sobrevivendo no inferno* [Surviving through hell] became part of the literature list of the exam to be admitted at the University of Campinas, one of the most renowned universities in the country. Also in 2018 a book version of the album was printed by Companhia das Letras (Racionais MC's, 2018).

5   Despite the fact that the event is usually known as the War of Canudos, hereon I will use the words Canudos Massacre, because the word 'massacre' sounds more appropriate to describe what happened there.

orders of rulers, and they involved a huge repressive apparatus. It is also meaningful that in both cases the State attempted to erase officially the memory of the harm done, by destroying the places that were stage for the massacres. Canudos was flooded to create the Cocorobó Dam in 1969 and the Carandiru Prison was imploded to give place to the Parque da Juventude [Youth Park] in 2002. This paper will discuss how important were literary works to engender the memory of said crimes. *Backlands: the Canudos Campaign*, by Euclides da Cunha, did it for the Massacre of Canudos and *Diário de um Detento* [Convict's Diary], by Racionais MC's, did it for the Carandiru Massacre. It is meaningful that the Canudos Massacre happened a few years after the proclamation of the republic, in 1889. It was even justified as a campaign in the name of the recently born republic. The Carandiru Massacre took place in the redemocratization period, shortly after the 21 years of the civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985), therefore becoming a milestone of the crimes perpetrated by repressive forces of the State under democracy.

Two books inspired the methodology of this paper. The first was *grandesertão.br*, by Willi Bolle (2004), which proposes a comparison between two literary works: *Backlands: the Canudos campaign*, by Euclides da Cunha, and *The devil to pay in the backlands*, by Guimarães Rosa. According to the author, both are portraits of a Brazil ruled by violence. The key to the comparison is that both are "speeches from narrators who are witnesses and defendants before a court which rules over decisive moments of the Brazilian history" (8).[6] The rap *Convict's Diary* may also be seen as one such interpretations of Brazil, since, as stated by Garcia (2004), the violence that structures the Brazilian Society is the core theme

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6   All quotes from excerpts originally in Portuguese and with no translation into English were freely translated here.

of the work by the rap group Racionais MC's. Thus, the works *Backlands: the Canudos Campaign* and *Convict's Diary* may also be compared.

The other book was *The Juridical Unconscious*, by Shoshana Felman (2002/2014), which discusses the role literature has to play when facing situations in which the rule of law fails to promote justice. Felman (2014, 28) asks the question: "[h]ow does literature do justice to the trauma in a way the law does not, or cannot"? It is important to stress that both in the Carandiru Massacre and in the Canudos Massacre the juridical sphere was unable to judge a crime perpetrated by the State.

Eyewitness testimony

The first thing to highlight about the book *Backlands: the Canudos campaign* is that Euclides da Cunha, at first, was in favor of the military campaign against the uprising people from Canudos. It was only after he was there and saw the massacre with his own eyes, that he changed his mind and started to call the government to account for the crime that took place there. That is why Bolle (2004) sees Euclides da Cunha as an author divided and torn apart for having to denounce a war he himself had contributed to legitimate by writing to the press. If before writing *Backlands...* Euclides was "one of the Brazilian intellectuals who stood for the military intervention in Canudos" (36), the book itself will express the twist his opinion went through, thus becoming, according to Walnice Galvão (33), "the greatest *mea culpa* in the Brazilian literature". Such change also reflects in the style used to write *Backlands...*, in which Euclides uses the rhetoric of a person who is in court accusing a defendant. One can see that in the "Preliminary Note", where the author states that the Canudos campaign: "in the

most basic meaning of the word, it was a crime. Let us therefore call it to account (Cunha 2010, 52).[7]

According to Hardman (2009) the challenge before Euclides da Cunha is: "how to write this history, how to write down the catastrophe without erasing it?"(137).

I believe that in the core of what Euclides da Cunha intended when writing *Backlands…* is the massacre of the population who lived in Canudos. The main reason for him to write "was to preserve the memory of the dead" (Bolle 222). This culminated in the chapter entitled "Eyewitness testimony", in which the author talks about the atrocities committed by the soldiers.

In this chapter, Euclides da Cunha states that perpetrators of the massacre were sure they would not be punished, which was strengthened by the anonymity of the guilt and by the complicity of the rulers who ordered the campaign. According to *Backlands…*, Canudos was "a parenthesis, a vacuum. It did not exist. After scaling that mountain chain, no man could sin any longer"[8] (Cunha 2010, 615) By using the word "parenthesis", Euclides da Cunha makes believe that such massacre would not be entered in the books of history, and therefore there was a need for someone to play the role of a historiographer. That is why in the section "Man" of *Backlands…*, Euclides states that "no one documented their history" (Cunha 2010, 158). And, when referring to the war and the "impious acts of cruelty" that characterized it, he says: "They did not have to fear the weighty judgment of posterity, for history would not venture to this place"[9] (Cunha 2010, 615). The soldiers could trust they would not be punished for history would not come that far. Euclides writes his

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7   "foi, na significação integral da palavra, um crime. Denunciemo-lo" (Cunha, 2016, p. 11).

8   "um parêntese; era um hiato; era um vácuo. Não existia. Transposto aquele cordão de serras, ninguém mais pecava" (Cunha, 2016, p. 512).

9   "um parêntese; era um hiato; era um vácuo. Não existia. Transposto aquele cordão de serras, ninguém mais pecava" (Cunha, 2016, p. 512).

book to be opposed to that. A book that is a scream of revolt in view of the risk of silence that came upon that dark event.

Adriana Johnson (2010) has a critic view of his project to write the history of the backlanders. She points out that he plays the role of a mediator as a member of the intellectual elite who is trying to give voice to subordinate groups. This is particularly important in view of the importance that the idea of "people" had in the new-born republic. The intellectual elite that was close to the republic realized they did not know the very people from Brazil, so that Euclides da Cunha is one of the first intellectuals who explicitly takes over the task to portrait and give voice to this people, which involved telling their story.

At that time, the Republic was immerged in domestic conflicts between two factions that were seizing government control and in revolts throughout the country, which threatened national unity. Therefore, the Canudos campaign became excessively important to reassert the power of the ruling group and to create an image of a strong Republic. Ventura (1990, 134) points out how the conflict was manipulated within those disputes, and the ruling group started to paint Canudos as a conspiracy to restore the Monarchy, which turned the military campaign into a "revolutionary 'crusade' to strengthen the regime".

Euclides da Cunha was fervently in favor of the Republic. Even if in *Backlands...* he started to call to account the crimes perpetrated by the military campaign, he still believed that the backlanders in Canudos represented a setback and therefore needed to be incorporated by the modern nation-state project. According to Johnson, Euclides da Cunha sees the Republic not as one of the many possible political projects at dispute, but as an inevitable and necessary future. However, despite the fact that the Republic had been proclaimed a few years earlier, it existed solely as an idea, and Canudos represented the past that prevented from making

this republican project a reality. Canudos was something that they needed to eliminate on behalf of the modernization of the Brazilian State that the Republic would put into motion.

Another important aspect of the historical context of the Canudos campaign and of the denounce made by Euclides da Cunha is the Golden Law, from 1888, which officially put an end to slavery in Brazil. This topic is not mentioned in *Backlands…*, and there are almost no comments on the presence of formerly enslaved people in Canudos. Historians, on the other hand, have been highlighting a substantial presence of black people in the community. José Calasans (1997) talks about "former slaves, unable to adapt to their new lives which set their freedom but did not free the land" (46), who joined the leader Antonio Conselheiro in Canudos. This situation annoyed the landowners from the region, who suddenly could not have enough manpower in their farms.

The Law of the Beast

A first link between Canudos and the reality depicted by the Racionais MC's' rap is the interesting metamorphosis that the word "favela" underwent. Favela originally was the name of a very common plant that was widespread throughout the Canudos region. It is a bush with thorns, that irritates the skin when touched. This plant is the origin of the name of the Favela Hill, an important stage of the battles in the Canudos Campaign, particularly during the last expedition, when the troops remained sieged atop this hill for months. After the war, when the soldiers came back, the word also came with them and started being used to designate the improvised and precarious housing that the poor population (including low rank soldiers that had took part in the Canudos Campaign) built in the hills of Rio de Janeiro.

I would like, however, to emphasize the connection between the Massacres of Canudos and Carandiru, and between the works by Euclides da Cunha and Racionais MC's, as related to what will be called "the law of the beast".[10]

Euclides da Cunha in the aforementioned chapter "Eyewitness Testimony", states that:

> whoever travels [through the backlands] on these trails and sees a cross by the side of the road does not stop to investigate the crime but tips his hat and moves on. There would be no investigation of public authorities. In this case the crime was perpetrated by the government.[11] (Cunha 2010, 615)

To understand properly this moment when the law is suspended, it is necessary to think about the expression "the law of the beast" which was how the followers of Antonio Conselheiro referred to the government soldiers and to the republic. Instead of the common sense of the word "crime" as an offense against the law, what is at stake is an inversion, according to which the very law of the Brazilian State is seen as the crime. In Canudos the law of the beast was represented by the Republic. While Antônio Conselheiro, the leader of the community, incarnated a divine mission and was, therefore, by the side of the justice of God, the government's soldiers represented the Beast, being associated with crime and sin. It is possible to see how this was present in popular poems made by the followers of Antonio Conselheiro, quoted by Euclides da Cunha:

O Anti-Cristo nasceu
Para o Brazil governar
Mas ahi está o Conselheiro
Para delles nos livrar!
(Cunha 2016, 194)

The Antichrist was born
So he might govern Brazil.
But the Counselor is here
To save us from this ill.
(Cunha 2010, 268).

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10 In Portuguese: "lei do cão".

11 "O sertão é homemizio. Quem lhe rompe as trilhas, ao divisar à beira da estrada a cruz sobre a cova do assassinato, não indaga do crime. Tira o chapéu, e passa. E lá não chegaria, certo, a correção dos poderes constituídos. O atentado era público". (Cunha 2016,p.512)

According to the poem, the proclamation of the Republic was an Antichrist deed. Macedo and Maestri (1997) state that to Antônio Conselheiro the creation of the Republic meant desecration of the world, which was related to features like: a laic regime, acknowledgment of the civil marriage, the separation of church and State and the acknowledgment of other religions. Whereas the Monarchy represented the ruling of God on Earth, the Republic "related to 'the law of the Beast' incarnated evil and was seen as a creation of Satan himself" (83).

The expression "the law of the Beast" is also present in this other poem quoted by Euclides da Cunha:

Garantidos pela lei	Protected by the law
Aqueles malvados estão	Are those we know are evil.
Nós temos a lei de Deus	We have the law of God
Eles tem a lei do cão!	They have the law of the devil [the
(Cunha 2016, 193)	law of the Beast].
	(Cunha 2010, 266)

To Bolle (191), what the rebels in Canudos designated as "the law of the Beast" was the very law that founded the Brazilian Republic.

Curiously some raps in the last decades also describe the slums or even the Carandiru prison as the law of the Beast. As early as 1988, the rap by Thaíde and DJ Hum called "Homens da lei" [Man of the law] says: "Policial é marginal e essa a lei do cão/A polícia mata o povo e não vai para prisão". ["Police officers are scoundrels and this is the law of the Beast/The police kill the people and don't go to prison"] (Thaíde and DJ Hum 1988).

One can think that in Carandiru or in Canudos the Beast is the Devil. But the word used in Portuguese "cão" can also be used to refer to dogs, specifically. And it is important to recall that dogs were used in the police action that culminated in the Carandiru Massacre. In a way, the dogs were representing the State, the police. That is, at least at a first glance, they represented the law. Dogs are

mentioned in the song by Racionais MC's (1997) *Convict's diary* as "cachorros assassinos" [killer dogs] which spread HIV via their mouths.

Dogs are also the main characters in a horrifying scene described by André du Rap (2002), who survived the Carandiru Massacre, and had his testimony about the event transcribed in the book *Sobrevivente André du Rap* [André du Rap a survivor] (2002). André du Rap says:

> I saw dudes being mutilated by dogs in front of me […]. They [the police] yelled:
> – Com'on thief! Fifteen come here! *Y'all gonna see what the Beast [cão] is.*
> They locked the door and let the dogs attack the inmates. Horrifying. Can you picture the dogs in that situation, blood all over the place, noise of shots, yelling, sticks hitting the bars? They got mad. […] The inmates were trying to break the door and the police officers were shooting them. A dog bit the testicles of a fellow and ripped them apart. A horrifying scene. Truly horrifying. A police officer came in and executed him. (24-25, my emphasis)

When discussing this scene, Zeni (2002) highlights that the Beast in the police officer's sentence "Y'all gonna see what the Beast is" is the Devil but is also the dog.

> The police officer's sentence makes the metaphor null and void: 'the Beast is not the Devil, as you might think', he seems to be saying. The Beast is nothing more than a dog, drooling blood, thirsty for more blood, that will bite and rip apart your genitals" (208).

To his words I would like to add that in the aforementioned scene the Beast is the Devil, the dog, but also the law of the Beast.

The expression law of the beast seems to point out that the exact laws that protect part of society (elites and those who have power), can be used to repress, marginalize, incarcerate and even kill other

parts of society. So that the law of the beast is a sort of law for the absence of law, it is the law that can make the rule of law null and void and get much closer to the idea of crime.

But who is gonna believe in my testimony?

I believe that one of the most relevant issues about the memory of the Carandiru Massacre is that it was one of the first major crimes perpetrated by the State after democracy was stablished in Brazil. It was also one of the first tests to see how justice during democracy would deal with crimes committed by the State. The book *Carandiru não é coisa do passado* [Carandiru is not a thing of the past] (Machado and Machado 2015) discusses the judicial processes concerning the Carandiru Massacre. However, it revealed that the criminal prosecutions regarding the episode were too slow and that no instance was able to effectively answer it. It is important to note that in Brazil two vital issues that led to the massacre have only worsened from 1992 to our days: police violence and the increasing mass incarceration.

The rap group Racionais MC's put the memory of the Carandiru Massacre in the center of the debate with their song *Convict's diary*. It was one of the first works of art, not only in the field of music, but also in the more broaden fields of literature and art in general, that approached the Carandiru Massacre[12]. The song was written by Mano Brown and Jocenir[13] and is part of the album *Sobrevivendo no*

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[12] The Carandiru Massacre was portrayed in other works of art, from which I would like to mention the best-seller book *Estação Carandiru*, by Drauzio Varella, printed in 1999 (there is a version in English called *Lockdown: Inside Brazil's Most Dangerous* Prison, printed in 2012). There is a film called *Carandiru*, 2003, directed by Héctor Babenco based on the book by Drauzio Varella.

[13] Jocenir was arrested in 1994 and in 1997 was an inmate at the Carandiru Prison. He wrote about his experience in the prison in the book *Diário de um detento: o livro* [Convict's diary: the book] (Jocenir 2001).

inferno [Surviving through hell] (1997). Right in the beginning of *Convict's diary* we hear the following verses:

Aqui estou mais um dia Sob o olhar sanguinário do vigia Você não sabe como é caminhar Com a cabeça na mira de uma HK Metralhadora alemã ou de Israel Estraçalha ladrão que nem papel (Racionais MC's 1997).	Here I am another day. Under the killer eyes of the watcher Ya got no clue what's like to walk With a machine gun pointed to ya head A gun that comes from Germany or Israel Tears apart a thief just like paper. (Racionais MC's 1997).

The song is written as a diary of a person who survived the Carandiru Massacre. One of the first things that comes to mind when hearing this part of the song is that the inmate walks with a machine gun that "tears apart a thief just like paper" pointed to his head. The massacre theme is already there to be seen from the beginning, for the inmate is someone who can be brutally shot. However, it is worth pointing out that there is an addressee, which we can perceive in the word "Ya". When the rappers assume the role of an inmate, they put themselves side by side with the other inmates, creating a link between them. On the other hand, as Garcia (2007, 191) highlights, the song is addressed, from the beginning, at someone who is "put outside of the stage of the narrative".

Further on, the convict-narrator says:

> Ratatatá, mais um metrô vai passar
> Com gente de bem, apressada, católica
> Lendo jornal, satisfeita, hipócrita
> Com raiva por dentro, a caminho do centro
> Olhando pra cá, curiosos, é lógico
> Não, não é, não, não é o zoológico
> Minha vida não tem tanto valor
> Quanto seu celular, seu computador
> (Racionais MC's 1997).

> Ratatata another train gone by
> filled with decent people, in a hurry, catholic

> Reading the paper, satisfied, hypocrites
> Anger inside them on their way downtown
> looking at us, obviously curious
> No, no, it's not, it's not the zoo
> My life is not as worth
> As your cellphone, your PC
> (Racionais MC's 1997).

The Carandiru prison was really close to the Carandiru Subway Station and could be seen from the train windows by people passing by. "Ratatata", onomatopoeia that calls forth the sound of the machine guns from the end of the song, is also the noise the inmates would hear when subway trains passed by. The point of view of the inmate that sees the train passing by changes to that of the "decent people" in the subway, who look at the prison as if it were the zoo. Once again, there is an opposition between "my life", which is related to the place of the convict, and "your life", which seems to be connected to an addressee who has a cellphone and a PC. According to Garcia (2007), "the pronoun ya refers to 'decent people […] anger inside them', who the convict supposes are in the subway train, as well as the owners of cell phones and PCs who listen to the rapper" (202).

An important feature of the work by Racionais MC's is that, on one hand, it addresses their fellowmen and, on the other hand, they are aware that their song goes "beyond the bridges". It addresses their fellowmen, dwellers of the slums that exist in the periphery of São Paulo or any large city in Brazil, via language and themes. At the same time, a white middle class that lives in a completely different reality hears them. The verse "the world is different at our side of the bridge" ["O mundo é diferente da ponte pra cá"], part of the song "Da ponte pra cá" [Our side of the bridge] by Racionais MC's (2002), is an allusion to the geography of the city of São Paulo, where the rivers Pinheiros and Tietê divide a rich central region and the poor periphery. If there is a physical division in the rivers

that separate these worlds, a much greater barrier makes white downtown dwellers ignore what happens beyond the bridges. There are two actual worlds: in one side of the bridge the homicide is shocking and in the other it is not. In one side violence is allowed and in the other it is not.

In *Convict's diary*, the following verses make it explicit that there are groups of people who may be killed in the country:

O ser humano é descartável no Brasil
Como modess usado ou bombril.
(Racionais MC's 1997).

Human beings are disposable in Brazil
like used tampon or steel wool.
(Racionais MC's 1997).

As Garcia (2007) points out the human being is levelled with used tampon or steel wool, "cheap hygiene products, consumed by every class with some purchase power" (216), which are disposed after being used. Used tampons are thrown away soaked in blood, which brings forth the image of the Massacre. Steel wool is associated in Brazil to the prejudice against black hairs (racist people in Brazil call them "bombril", a wool steel brand). It is important to stress this side of the discrimination, because even though the verses refer to human beings in general, the work of Racionais MC's constantly reminds us that in Brazil mainly black young males are actually disposable.

I believe that the denounce the rap is making reaches its apex by the end of the song, when they make the question: "But who is gonna believe in my testimony?" ["Mas quem vai acreditar no meu depoimento?"] (Racionais MC's 1997). According to Zeni (2004), this question expresses the doubt about whether they will be able to make people hear them, about the credibility of their own voice, "about the ability to make believe that there actually happened a slaughter" (234). The rap is thus questioning the silence that has been historically inflicted upon convicts, black and poor dwellers of the slums. It is also demanding those who hear it to take

a stand. Taking into account that the witnessing of the survivors may be silenced and put into discredit, those who hear the song are the ones that can break the barrier of indifference that surrounds those allegedly disposable human beings.

The testimonies of Euclides da Cunha and Racionais MC's against the Brazilian State

The Carandiru Prison, a hundred years after Canudos, was also a "parenthesis" (using Euclides' words) since, according to Racionais MC's (1997) it kept "what the system disposed of" ["o que o Sistema não quis"] and hid "what the soap opera doesn't tell" ["o que a novela não diz"]. Therefore, a loophole in the system would suffice to make someone order the slaughter of the convicts.

Both Euclides da Cunha and the rap group Racionais MC's use the word 'testimony' in vital parts of their accusations, in the chapter "Eyewitness testimony" from *Backlands…* and in the final question from *Convict's Diary*: "But who is gonna believe in my testimony?". By using a word that refers to a juridical context, both works of art put themselves before a jury to denounce a crime. The fact that the juridical sphere has failed (until today) to judge both crimes and that State officers were involved in those crimes makes their questioning even more meaningful. Because it is up to the State to judge the crimes committed by its own officers, the threat of denial and erasure of such crimes is constantly nearby. Which only makes their testimonies even more relevant. According to Felman (2014) "writers often feel compelled to testify through literary or artistic channels when they know, or feel intuitively, that in the court of history (and, I will add, in a court of law) *evidence will fail or will fall short*" (96). To Felman (1992) testifying is more than telling the story beyond a fact or event, more than telling what one has gone through or remembers, testifying is taking responsibility over the

truth to address the other, making the hearer and the community reverberate something that goes beyond the personal sphere, and that has consequences for the entire society.

One must highlight, however, that, even though Euclides da Cunha and Racionais MC's testify State crimes, they do it in a different fashion. According to Seligman-Silva (2003a), there are two different Latin words for testimony: *testis* and *superstes*. On one hand, *testis* is used to determine a third part testimony in a process. On the other hand, *superstes* refers to a person "who has undergone some hardship, the *survivor*" (374). Despite the author's emphasis that there is no strict cleavage between *testis* and *superstes*, I believe that this distinction might help think about the differences in the testimonies from Euclides da Cunha and Racionais MC's.

In *Backlands…*, the narrator puts himself in the place of a third part who is denouncing a crime. Euclides da Cunha engenders a "sincere narrator", who is trying to describe the events the way he saw them. According to Seligmann-Silva (2005), the "model of the *testis* testimony is visual and equals to the model of the *positivist* representational knowledge, with an instrumental conception of language" (81). Euclides da Cunha's premise is that he is able to offer a neutral and objective report. Imbued by positivism, he does not ask questions about the very place from where he tells the story, as if he could be a transparent lens that would only broadcast what happened. Johnson (2010) stresses that the importance of the sight to the relationship that was established between Euclides da Cunha and the backlanders is that it is through it that he is able to report the truth from Canudos.

Bolle (2004) criticizes the alleged sincerity from Euclides da Cunha, especially because he did not see any problems in the place he had occupied as an intellectual who had been in favor of the war: "what kind of sincerity is one that denounces soldiers who rip off heads but does not investigate the intellectual who told them to go

to war?" (38). Euclides da Cunha, throughout his book, does not free himself from the ways of the traditional historiography, because he does not make clear at which side he is regarding the conflicts and political interests at stake.

Although one can see throughout the book this project of testimony in the form of *testis*, I believe that the strength of his denounce resides where this fails. In his narrative, Euclides da Cunha is constantly trying to make himself invisible, not mentioning the "I" who is talking about the events. However, the narrator goes through some changes while he is trying to tell the story. Moved by the destiny of the victims, the narrator puts himself in the mission of denouncing such crime, because he cannot be neutral before the massacre. Euclides da Cunha was moved by the event, and he is not unharmed after living it. What he saw and lived through will keep coming back to haunt him, at least until he is able to shape his experience via his work *Backland*.

Mano Brown and Jocenir have a completely different approach in *Convict's diary*. In the song, the massacre is narrated from the point of view of a survivor. However, neither Mano Brown nor any other group member of Racionais MC's were at any time inmates at the Carandiru prison. Jocenir (who wrote the song, but is not part of the group) was a convict inside the Carandiru Prison while writing the song, but did not live the massacre. Mano Brown had a day-by-day contact with other inmates from Carandiru, via mail or visits. Jocenir did not live the massacre, but used to be intimate with survivors and had even shared a cell with one of them. Therefore, they both *heard* testimonies from survivors. According to Seligmann-Silva (2005), the "testimony model of the *superstes* has hearing and not sight in its center" (81).

Mano Brown and Jocenir create a testimony of the Carandiru Massacre from the point of view of a fictional narrator, who was made up out of several survivors' points of view. When they take

over the point of view of a survivor, it is impossible to be neutral, because it is the victim of the violence who screams and tries to make a stand, before the brutality of the threats of denial and silence. Besides, Racionais MC's' denounce differs from Euclides' because they make it from the place of those who have been historically silenced and victimized, poor black dwellers of the slums in the periphery of any large city in Brazil.

Seligmann-Silva (2005) points out that a remarkable feature of the testimony as *superstes* is fragmentation, which reflects in the "inability to incorporate the 'live' and 'exact' images in a continuous chain" (87). I believe that this is to be seen in the song in the speed and in the way that images are overlaid and concatenated, without any mediation. Jocenir and Mano Brown take these fragments of reality, which were originated in their own experiences or in the experiences of intimate people, and make a patchwork like song. The extremely condensed form and the rhythm of the rap intensify the feeling of violence that we experience when we hear it.

Backlands... and *Convict's Diary* are important because they write down the memory of massacres perpetrated by the Brazilian State, which is often trying to silence and deny them. Even though different, they both denounce, playing the role of testimonies that call the very Brazilian history to account before a jury. This becomes even more relevant in view of the fact that Brazil has systematically failed to judge crimes committed by the State. Because in these massacres many victims were killed without a name or a face, literature sees itself before the task of seeking "an ethos of the representation of the past that brings forth our debt with it and the dead" (Seligmann-Silva 2003b, 64).

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Dwelling On Uncertainty: After The Ruins In V.S. Naipaul's *The Enigma Of Arrival*

Leonardo Rodríguez Hernández

What is the meaning of ruins in the representation of dwelling in V.S. Naipaul's *The Enigma of Arrival*? What constitutes the relationship between dwelling, writing and history? Walter Benjamin saw ruins as an allegorical figure of historical fragmentation or destruction, a critical testimony of its hybris. María Zambrano also thought about ruins as belonging to a figurative part of speech. Ruins were for her a metonymy of history, a mark of the human building, the signal of a tragedy without author. In Naipaul's (1932-2018) *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987) ruins appear as fragmented remains of other times and cultures, as in neighboring Stonehenge; they also show specific, if deteriorated, ways of dwelling, as in the surrounding area of the recently rented house of the narrator; they finally metaphorize writing itself. History, dwelling, writing: the figure of ruins belongs both to the semantic fields of uncertainty and agency. This configuration of ruins in the novel relies on a spatiality with a strong connection to the *topos* of the *loecus amoenus*. *The Enigma of Arrival* proposes indeed a form of extraterritorial Arcady, a myth of hospitality. The image of the alien but sheltering rural environment offers also room for the enigmatic figures of the ruins. The eye of the narrator – a foreigner, out for good of his native Caribbean island, out of any fixed community whatsoever- is restlessly in search of them. The ruins punctuate the wandering of the narration as much as the no less intriguing pastoral signs, which seem to appear as their symbolical counterpart. Naipaul's ruins configure therefore an

allegory of human ventures; also, paradoxically, work as catalyst of subjective reckoning. Ruins propose an image of a place impregnated by time and narration. They open the question of dwelling itself. *The Enigma of Arrival* implies thus the enigma – understood as a figure that dramatically defies interpretation, as a tragic problem or a puzzling obstacle (Colli 78) – of dwelling.

To tell his attempts at dwelling in this rural passage implies for the narrator of *The Enigma of Arrival* a sense of lack of orientation, perplexity and lingering. That ambiguity is present in the etymology of the lexeme *dwelling*, that goes from the Old English *dwellan* 'to lead into error, deceive, mislead' to the Middle Dutch *dwellen* 'to stun, perplex' and the Old High German *twellen* 'to hinder, delay', and it suggests a historical transit related to the of the equivocal disposition of the agent-dweller. There is indeed an intimate drama of equivocity in The *Enigma of Arrival*. The narrator arrives as a stranger and that very feeling of strangeness works through the novel as an intimate, if intersubjective, foundation of remaining in the place. Dwelling and transit are not antinomies for the narrator. To dwell is a form of transit and vice versa. Ruins operate as reminders of transition. It is as if at the beginning there were the ruins. They could appear as bewildering flat shallow boxes somewhere in the unfenced field, which the narrator acknowledges as "relics of other efforts or lives" (Naipaul 16), implying they are a metaphorical replacement for them, although those *others* remain hardly conjectural and spectral. The past wasted, the frailty of human ventures, the conjectural workers or entrepreneurs survive emblematically in those relics. So that is a first, direct meaning of ruins: they are an emblem of life gone. Life dwells in them as specters, as specters appear as figures of mourning. The narrator, as he himself says about Jack, comes to live among ruins (Naipaul 19). Not only the antique ones. He sees "Ruined walls, roofless, around bare earth" (Naipaul 17); obsolete, useless, absurd machines in the manor house; he also feels attached

to himself "the idea of ruin and dereliction, of out-of-placeness" (Naipaul 19) and it is certainly present in the Giorgio de Chirico's painting that gives name to the novel. Ruins disrupt a given order of history, everyday life, art and subjectivity. This disruption is at the core of Naipaul's book.

Ruins are emblems of the uncanny, emblems of things mysteriously falling apart. They express and constitute, to follow Benjamin's (185) notion of emblems, the very concept of uncanniness and disintegration. Ruins even contribute to the image of the place and offer therefore unexpected ways of dwelling. The landscape of Wiltshire, inhabited by a few workers and a hidden property owner; there are some neighbors; and a cottage. It is a rural side of England, not far from Salisbury and Stonehenge, *circa* the 1970s. Here the middle-aged, foreign narrator has come to mourn; mourning has come with him. Ruins are also marks of mourning. They relate to an initial melancholic mood of the narrator. Death is everywhere and the narrator is an open-eyed, even anxious witness. But it is the faculty of wonder -as if desire were an aspect of mourning- what he first discovers in the landscape. This faculty was somehow emptied just when he first arrived in London: "I lost a faculty that had been part of me and precious to me for years. I lost the gift of fantasy, the dream of the future, the far-off place where I was going" (Naipaul 124). The missing is recreated: the Wiltshire's manor becomes a writer's Arcady, a place of the imagination, a landscape of wonder and discovery and play, "a toy settlement" (Naipaul 177). The narrative assumes the modality of a pastoral. The aspect was ironized by Derek Walcott (1998) as a clear, for him predictable sign of trying to fit into the English pastoral canon, whereas Salman Rushdie (1987) saw it as an uncommon place of choice within the community of immigrant writers, if narrowly emblematic of post-imperial England, and by Fatwa Mustafa (1995) as a writer's path to a certain right of abode. However, these critics did not seem to

notice the permanent presence of Trinidad as a subjective specter that accompanies the narrator. Naipaul's very English pastoral hides a lacerated, ghostly Caribbean confession. The representative anecdote is the initiation of the narrator to dwelling in a landscape of ruins and delight.

The lives told in Naipaul's novel are intimately related to the represented landscape, indeed to the very possibility of representing a landscape. There is some kind of disruption too in the puzzled attention the narrator pays to the landscape, to the life of the people who inhabit it and to the intimate transformation he experiences in there. That wonder appears as a mark of strangeness as well. He expresses that "the sense of space was overwhelming" (Naipaul 15); that the "setting felt ancient; the impression was of space, unoccupied land, the beginning of things" (15); "The inexplicable little pond, the abruptness and height of the slope, the scattered trees – the land here had a feeling of oddity, ancientness, even sanctity" (169). The witness of ruins is also a geographer in wonder: "I felt delight at the setting, the naturalness, the rightness. And surprise that this was where I lived." (176). What contemplation and discovery share in this novel is the action of deciphering what is given. The narrator does not create a world; he acknowledges it, rather deciphering it as a sort of enigmatic presence. That deciphering present in writing is indeed a form of dwelling; it opens new ways of looking at the world, new ways to explore it, new gifts: "They (the larks) were another lucky find of my solitude, another unexpected gift" (24). Nature –and the narrator several times writes it in capital letters- appears to him as a riddle; the dreamlike and antique landscape belongs to a vaster allegory. The very elements of the landscape (the plants, the animals, the houses) seem emblematic to him.

> Unbriddled, broad-backed, with muzzles perhaps a little too sloping, they looked heavy, primitive animals, and as emblematic as everything else in that setting: the pond, the paddock, the elm stumps, the steep green slope with the scattered trees, each tree casting a perfect shadow (Naipaul 169).

Similes between nature and history abound. Time past and time present seem to fuse. The water meadows beyond the weir of the river "were like the water meadows Constable had painted one hundred and fifty years before" (170). Even at its most simple, "there was a kind of mystery" (169) in the place. That countryside idyll, rich in discovery and analogies, contrast with the confessed poverty of images of the landscape of Trinidad, "off the northern coast of Venezuela" (169), as he likes to remember with encyclopedic precision. He was not acquainted with that landscape; he did not discover it. When he first left the island, already in the plane that took him to London via New York, he realizes that "the landscape of my childhood was like something which I had missed, something I had never seen" (98). The narrator oscillates between two different kinds of strangeness to the place: the strangeness of loss and the strangeness of wonder. Now he yields (his verb) in an explorer-like discovery of an unknown landscape. Life in the manor house bestows a second childhood, as if at "the beginning of things" (15).

In a metaphorical way, writing is for him a task of discovery. Seeing is the key verb. It is not something he does not want to give for granted. Seeing is a way of understanding, the main and most problematic action: "it took me time to understand what I was seeing" (175). Writing –and *The Enigma of Arrival*, as Dooley (2003) pointed out, is in a great measure a novel on the process of writing- for him is to create a way of seeing. Learning to recognize what he sees, learning to recognize himself in what he sees, is for

him the writer's task[1]. He accuses himself of being insincere, prone to deception, imprisoned in his "monkish, medieval" education, "learning quite separate from everyday things" (Naipaul, 108). Insincerity and abstraction prevented him from writing anything truthful about his first trip abroad (he wrote a story called "Gala Night") and his post-war time in the Earl Court's boarding house. Truthfulness for the narrator relates to experience, its point of depart being a critical awareness of it. The writer experienced humiliations and disturbances; he saw the London social changes and even some architectural ruins; but he did not transfer them to the page; they were an unworthy matter for the young, pretending metropolitan writer. His admired models were Ackerley, Somerset Maugham, Huxley, Waugh, an admiration that averts him to "see material in the campers in the big Earl's Court house" (Naipaul 125). Writing and the experienced world were treated as separated instances. Unacknowledged, experience-effacing mimicry is –here and in several other Naipaul's works- the key issue.

Now in the Wiltshire manor, years after Naipaul could talk about his *material*, he both fancies and sees, often in the same movement, as an enchanted or Wordsworthian naturalist, keen to a sort of earthly intimacy: "And yet I liked to look; I noticed everything, and could be moved by beauty of trees and flowers and early sunny mornings and late light evenings" (11). Myth, history and expression appear no more as antinomies. Yet the narrator could not help seeing, as Guercino's *Et in Arcadia ego* translated by Panofsky (310), that even in his Arcady death also dwells. Not just the ruins around: the antique ones of Stonehenge and Medieval buildings,

1   "But for Naipaul knowing is a process worked for and arrived at through other representations, it is a slow process of learning to distinguish seasons, of taking "people" in along with the land" (Jasbir 122).

the everyday ruins of the manor; there are also emblems of death in nature, as when he finds in his walking path the skeleton of a hare:

> Dead and soon useless, soon less than carrion, it had perhaps been turned over inquisitively by a farm worker or a walker, kicked or pushed along a deep rut and left finally to dry and moulder away (Naipaul 169).

Here again the narrator relates what he sees in the Wiltshire manor house with a memory from the Caribbean place, between Trinidad and Venezuela, only a memory that occurred ten years later. He refers to a certain Soldier's Rock, an "islet of pelicans and frigate birds, but pelicans above all. Here pelicans lived and also died", "knowing themselves to be in their sanctuary" (169). Death gives to these places – the Wiltshire manor, Soldier's Rock- some sort of sacredness, another kind of strangeness. The narrator's Arcady (or toy settlement) is also an open-air, unacknowledged sanctuary: temple and tomb. Animal corpses –and for Benjamin (217) only the corpse establishes the allegorizing of the *physis*- are a natural equivalent to the ruins.

According to Paul Ricoeur (9), everything in the novel of initiation seems to turn on the self-awakening of the central character. This is the case in *The Enigma of Arrival*. The narrator's reckonings, observations and spatial movements are the substance of which the plot is made; the plot, in the Aristotelian sense, is no other than the mimesis of those actions (Ricoeur 10). It tells a story of a writer in mourning and wonder in deep territorial and psychic strangeness and even metaphysical distress. He tells the story of his initiation into a place, indeed an ellipse on dwelling. The enigma referred in the title is not only the enigma of arrival but also the enigma of dwelling. Arrival and dwelling are indeed different names for the same initiation.

However, the novel of initiation is also a novel of relations. Already the first lines indicate the narrator's relation to the place:

> For the first four days it rained. I could hardly see where I was. Then it stopped raining and beyond the lawn and outbuildings in front of my cottage I saw fields with stripped trees on the boundaries of each field; and, far away, depending on the light, glints of a little river, glints which sometimes appeared, oddly, to be above the level of the land (Naipaul 11).

The main subjective action in that initial account is the act of seeing: the narrator sees the place, which appears to the reader through his telling. There is, nonetheless, the neutral verb for the rain, which corresponds to a certain confusion for the narrator in relation to that very place. The initiation to the place is both of unsettled sense of space ("I could hardly see where I was") and of a natural, although metonymical phenomenon for some sort of puzzled inwardness. After the stopping of the rain the narrator sees the first elements, mostly natural as well, in front of his house. The little river marks a limit, a fluid limit therefore, which entices an intrigued view (the little river "sometimes appeared, oddly, to be above the level of the land"). Strangeness and acknowledgement mark the first encounter with the land (soon a landscape, a human intervened space). They set the terms of that relation throughout the whole book.

The land as a metaphor of the absorption of life and meaning will appear shortly after: "Later – when the land had more meaning, when it had absorbed more of my life than the tropical street where I had grown up" (11). The comparison in favor of the last place is another relation in the narrator's account. Trinidad haunts him, and there is much room in his account for his troubled memories of life in that Caribbean island, a British colony until 1962. To Trinidad he will not return for good, and yet he is often *returning* in those memories (at the end of the novel he does return for the funeral of his sister Sati). The fertile Arcady of Wiltshire relates intimately to the sterile life of Trinidad, "where nothing had savour, and even the light had a life-killing quality" (98). The ghost of colonial Trinidad

is nonetheless present in his narration, and sometimes he seems to notice hints of that Trinidadian life in his new landscape. Trinidad account both as a specific experience for him and as a metaphor of sterility itself. Still, the Indian-looking, Caribbean self-exile writer brings those tropical specters – that phantasmatic circumstance of Imperial rule – with him. They also dwell metaphorically in the Wiltshire manor. Absences are embodied. Waste does even have a place: the refuge, as in the idiomatic way of Pitton, is a refuse, a waste-room (182).

Through the ontological ambiguities of the narrator, *The Enigma of Arrival* suggests a two-stage dwelling. The mixture of factual reconstruction, invention and spectrality implies a sense of being in a place based both on the contingent and the imaginary. What distinguishes one from another is mainly the temporality within which they operate: the contingent is historical, even chronological; the imaginary constitutes an expanded in-between line. What the narrator implies is a sort of historical metaphor of dwelling on uncertainty, a historical metaphor which applies firstly to him, an out-of-place presence among the ruins of the British Empire (the very institution of the manor being a relic of it). The pastoral wonderland of the Caribbean emigrant comes not as a replacement but a possibility of the ontological absence of land. Therefore, he creates his own dwelling in Wiltshire, and in *The Enigma of Arrival* wandering is a verbal metaphor of the discovering eye, a physical relation with the land and an opening of ways. The sense of wonder is metonymically present in the action of walking. *The Enigma of Arrival's* narrator actions supposed a passionate, grateful acknowledgement of the world; a world here marked by the movement of the eye and memory of the narrator, and by the relations he made out of his discoveries. Walking is here an agency of understanding and openness: "The solitude of the walk, the emptiness of that stretch of the downs, enabled me to surrender to my way of looking" (Naipaul

23). Walking, looking: he learns new words for new things, words and things in movement, conscious of the limitations of his visions (Hayward 59). The learning of a new language, indeed "his delights in words" (Dooley 157), means a new way of understanding, an essay on the attempts of narrating the experience. The fascination with language coexists with the disenchantment of the world. It could be said that that writing absorbs both fascination and disenchantment. The narrator's inquiry focuses on the way he and the people he meets in Wiltshire see themselves and the world. As in an inversion of the first Spanish conquistadors in the Americas, the colonial, out-of-place, melancholic writer is also a discoverer of the land and its people. Contrary to what he thinks of them, he does not want to give the singularity for granted. Walking accounts as a metonymy for opening narrative ways to intellectual discovery[2].

What he realises while getting to know empathetically the inhabitants of the manor – Pitt the gardener, Alan the writer, the Philipses, the hidden landlord- is that instability and inadequacy are not unique to him. Pitt, who the narrator sees for a long time as an embodiment of his idea of the manor, lives in a very poor house, actually lost when the gardener is dismissed from the job; the friendly, suburban Phillipses count on nothing else but their random work to survive; Alan, who tells the narrator of his writing in process and boasts of his friendship to the rich landlord, commits suicide without leaving any visible oeuvre, not managing to touch his experience; the landlord withers away in seclusion. Instability, failure and death appear as the corrosive counterpart of their belonging to the place, at first seen as of one piece by the narrator.

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2 "Walking provides a way of understanding sites in flux in a manner that questions the logic of measuring, surveying and drawing a location from a series of fixed and static viewpoints. When we walk we encounter sites in motion and in relationship to one another, suggesting that things seem different depending on whether we are 'coming to' or 'going from.'" (Rendell 188).

Except the landlord, a relic himself, nobody exactly belongs to the manor. Even about the landlord the narrator wonders if he could see the neglected place –the ruins of his Arcady- at all.

> Did he in fact see decay? Or did he –since vegetable growth never stopped- simply see lushness? Or did he cherish the decay, seeing in it a comforting reflection of his own accidia (Naipaul 195).

The manor means different things to every one of them. Mourning and wonder mark the narrator's approach to the place. Both the ruins and the garden serve as emblems of mortality (or disappearance) and beauty (or appearance). The unexpected fates of the people bring an element of disruption to this representation of the landscape. That element is of course human chance. But this chance operates on the very subject of the narration. Such is the work's sense of the provisionality of all conclusions, says Susan Hayward (67), that by the end it is not the provisionality of others, but of Naipaul's himself, which remains an enigma.

The ruins, the landscape and people's lives bring to question the meaning of dwelling. However, meaning is always enigmatic for Naipaul's narrator, a perplexed and inquisitive decipherer of human traces. The novel itself metaphorizes that perplexed and inquisitive deciphering (seeing and walking the alternative verbs of it). The meaning – the enigma – of dwelling implies an analogy between writing and the sense of place. Dwelling for Naipaul's narrator means the creation of intimacy with a land, as writing means creating intimacy within language. But place and language are related. The cottage is rented, the grand manor house is crumbling, people leave, come or die; yet it is through them – unstable as he knows his own circumstance to be – that he establishes that relation with the place. His initiation consists on this: the place is not something given, it is never whole; "we remade the world for ourselves; every generation does that" (Naipaul 318). Wiltshire is a place of choice, and choice,

not just chance, is at the core of the novel. The mourning and the wonder – and there is no way to separate one from another-are part of this acknowledgement. Writing – his form of dwelling-makes it enigmatically clear.

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Sexual Citizenships in the Indo-Caribbean Diaspora: bodily textures in "Out on Main Street" (1993) by Shani Mootoo[1]

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In the World through which I travel, I
am endlessly creating myself.
– Frantz Fanon

Introduction

In his work *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Frantz Fanon, in an exercise that is both theoretical and autobiographical, opens up the way for a new understanding around the complex web of racial and social relations in which subjects of African origin find themselves in the world. This reflection by the author takes us, then, to two aspects that are relevant to current literary debates. Firstly, by mixing his readings, especially on philosophy and psychoanalysis, with reports from his personal experience (a black man, born in the Caribbean, educated in France), Fanon adds an inventive aspect to the constitution of subjectivities, these deeply marked by countless displacements, as it can be seen in the aforementioned epigraph that opens the pages of this work. Secondly, in addition to his racial identity in the world, Fanon also brings about the implications

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of race upon his body, which allows us to extend the scope of his thoughts to another category of analysis: gender. One can highlight, for example, his final prayer: "O my body, always make me a man who questions!" (Fanon 353)

In this way, Fanon's work, considered one of the precursors of what would unfold in Post and Decolonial thoughts from the mid-20th century to the present, is relevant to a more contemporary approach, in which gender, race, and class are projected concurrently: the notion of intersectionality. In the scope of legal studies, it was the American scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw who drew our attention to the fact that, in addition to the inequalities marked by the racial component within the North American judicial system, gender policies would further disadvantage African-American women. To illustrate this panorama, Crenshaw (2002) comments on US government advertisements about social security, alerting us to how these images would reproduce a discourse based on common sense. We read:

> Whenever there is a media story about social security in the United States, African American women are cited and shown in images, although they do not represent the majority of women who depend on the social security system. In addition to that, statistically, African American women have no more children than white women. But the illustrations always focus on African American women. There are a series of ideas and images that promote some public policies that end up reflecting the intersection between conceptions of race and gender. (Crenshaw 13, my own translation)

Gender studies and post-colonial theory have established new paradigms for the investigation of subjectivities in the contemporary world. Strongly influenced by social and political movements that were consolidated throughout the 20th century – namely feminism and civil rights organizations – such theoretical frameworks articulated a reversal in the hierarchies of totalizing

discourses. What such criticisms have promoted, therefore, is to deconstruct processes that perpetuate knowledge through a vertical movement that naturalizes the Global North (Europe, USA), as well as the white man (European, North American), as the desired point of departure (and arrival) for any and all other racial, sexual and gender identities.

At the turn of the 21st century, this scenario has been largely intensified by transnational dynamics that, by altering the circulation and control of the means of production, also cause the global mobility of subjects and discourses to proliferate. In the field of literary studies, one can see, for example, the growing number of works that either revisit the Western canon, or question its status from these new perspectives, thus reworking what is at stake in the very definition of "Literature", both in terms of traditionally legitimated voices, as well as the themes and forms that have been privileged throughout history. In this process of deconstructing epistemic "truths", I believe one should underscore, in an intersectional perspective, a discussion on the role of the body in the constitution of subjectivities. This work aims to analyze the short story "Out on Main Street" by the Indo-Caribbean writer and visual artist Shani Mootoo. In the following pages, I argue that the author brings to light a critique of the colonialities of power and gender and their multiple intersections in the social fabric by textually projecting the body in the character-narrator's impressions regarding her surroundings.

In the short story, which also entitles Mootoo's literary debut – the collection *Out On Main Street and Other Stories* (1993) – one is presented with a daily scene experienced by a lesbian couple of Indo-Caribbean origin in a Canadian urban context. The narrating voice of the story – whose actual name is never disclosed, except for the affectionate nickname "Pudding" given by her partner – reports a visit to an Indian pastry shop on the city's "main street". However,

throughout this afternoon in the public sphere, both women are confronted with a series of characters from different ethnicities, sexual and gender identities, which exposing a variety of tensions experienced by subjectivities that are constituted by different social markers of difference. From the differences between both lesbian characters to their interaction with their surroundings, there is a constant play of allegiances and oppositions in which the narrator seems to highlight the role of the body as the main vector.

Mootoo's own biography is particularly interesting to our reading of her work, since the author finds herself as a citizen of transnational spaces. Born in Ireland, the daughter of Trinidadian parents of Indian Hindu origin, the writer who spent her formative years in Trinidad and currently lives in the island of Prince Edward County, Canada, seems to resist the idea of a fixed national identity. In her essay "Dual Citinzenship, Elsewhereness, and the sources of Creativity" (2001), she briefly discusses the difficulties in categorizing her work geographically:

> Sometimes I ask myself if I am a Trinidadian writer or a Canadian writer. My subject matter is decidedly influenced by what I know of Trinidad, and that is a Trinidad, a particular one at that, that is long gone. The act of making the work, the possibility of its existence is Canadian; it is certainly facilitated by living and working in that country. Perhaps, one might even say that the condition of longing for "back home", of creating an imaginary literary space of places left behind, frozen in time and in memory, is Canadian. Is this also Indian? It might well be, actually. (Mootoo 2001, 25)

Alongside these issues of national identity, her sexuality also has a poignant influence on most of her works. In many of her novels, for instance, characters from the LGBTQIA+ community of Caribbean origin find themselves rooted in Canada, aiming not only for better job opportunities, but mainly for a space they believe to be better equipped to receive them. When talking about the

importance of the visibility that her work has provided her, Mootoo denounces the need to "have the room to be heard when I talk about the things the touch me at my core: my garden, my dogs, my loves, subjects that seem for people like myself to be a privilege to utter." (Mootoo 2001, 24)

In order to further explore my analysis, however, some theoretical considerations will be necessary, both in Queer and Gender Studies, as well as in decolonial thought, especially through the works of Aníbal Quijano, Fernanda Belizário, Judith Butler, among others.

Expanding the territory, the post-colonial queer.

> ...all along the original was derived.
> – Judith Butler
> The "corporeality" is the decisive level of power relations.
> – Aníbal Quijano

Developed from a feminist framework, gender studies have constantly reworked questions on subjectivity since the later decades of the 20th century. Based on the reflections of scholars such as Teresa de Lauretis, Monique Wittig, and Judith Butler, this theoretical approach established new possibilities for our understanding, differentiation and challenging of categories such as sex, gender, and sexuality, both incorporating and deconstructing a Western tradition of thought.

The very notion of tradition, as Butler suggests, would be implicated not in a starting point in which origin and originality would constitute a fixed 'body' of works, but in the incessant act of repetition throughout history that would consolidate models to be followed. In her readings of Foucault and Wittig, the philosopher thus develops her definition of

gender, denouncing its performative character, as well as the use of the category for regulatory purposes. For her,

> Discrete genders are part of what "humanizes" individuals within contemporary culture; indeed, we regularly punish those who fail to do their gender right. Because there is neither an "essence" that gender expresses or externalizes nor an objective ideal to which gender aspires, and because gender is not a fact, the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all. Gender is, thus, a construction that regularly conceals its genesis; the tacit collective agreement to perform, produce, and sustain discrete and polar genders as cultural fictions is obscured by the credibility of those productions–and the punishments that attend not agreeing to believe in them; the construction "compels" our belief in its necessity and naturalness. (Butler 449-450)

This understanding of gender as a "fabrication" that is detached from an essence has guided innumerable readings in the most varied academic forums, and seems to have unfolded in the development of gender studies that would seek to implode any and all forms of essentialism. Dealing more directly with aspects that intersect gender and sexuality, Queer theory emerges in a movement that reverses the logic of discursive hierarchies, exposing language as a site of struggles. The term queer, which would refer to the oppressor's way of giving the oppressed a place in the world, then comes to be used by this groups as a slippery signifier, which would precisely escape any need to demarcate rigid boundaries for the subject.

This critical aspect, however, did not fail to present limits in terms of representativeness. While being formulated mostly by the Global North in a Eurocentric academic context, such studies have been challenged by many post-colonial scholars, who question the agency and autonomy necessary so that gender could be subverted from its fluid character. Thus, such transgressions, or 'parodic' possibilities that Butler would have identified in borderline subjects and in drag queen performances would have very different concrete

implications from, for example, the racial identity and economic class of those involved. It is important to highlight that Butler herself has engaged in transnational networks of feminist and queer thought since the first publication of *Gender Trouble* in 1990 (Butler et al, 2016).

Therefore, in order to better understand the constitution of subjectivities in the midst of so many overlapping categories, a more careful consideration on the intrinsic relationship between the colonial project and the idea of modernity on which queer studies were first formulated is made necessary. In the wake of this project, the notion of "coloniality of power", developed by Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano is relevant to us. In "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism and Latin America" (2000), Quijano assumes that, although related to Colonialism, Coloniality concerns another mechanism, which would transcend the territorial domination of (Latin) America and Africa, that naturalized and uprooted a correlation between different ethnic and racial categories and the unequal distribution of power on a global scale. To this end, he denounces how the very construction of knowledge in the Western world, from a so-called rationality was configured as the only way out, not just among the colonizers, but also among those who would have been subjugated to their power.

The crisis of this understanding of the world, according to Quijano, comes from the recognition that, in the Western philosophical tradition, especially in the development of Marxist thought, the focus on the categories of "class" and "work" ended up implying that any and all other intersubjective components would be deemed as a natural fact. Thus, in parallel fashion to what feminist thought had done with the categories "sex" and "gender", Quijano proposes that:

> As time went by, the colonizers codified the phenotypic trait of the colonized as color, and they assumed it as the emblematic characteristic of racial category. That category was probably initially established in the area of Anglo-America. There so-called blacks were not only the most important exploited group, since the principal part of the economy rested on their labor; they were, above all, the most important colonized race, since Indians were not part of that colonial society. Why the dominant group calls itself "white" is a story related to racial classification. (Quijano 2000, 534).

Despite his recognition of gender as a naturalized marker, intentionally confused with sex, Quijano is opposed to the linear comparison between gender and race, as, for him, there would indeed be differences (of biological attributes and mechanisms) determined by sex, whereas phenotypic characteristics would be merely differentiational. However, although he maintained "sex" as an unquestionable biological datum, it is pertinent for our reading that he highlighted the role of "corporeality" (the body in its materiality) in power relations. In his words,

> In exploitation, it is the 'body' that is used and consumed at work and, in most parts of the world, in poverty, hunger, malnutrition, and disease. It is the 'body' that is implicated in punishment, repression, torture, and massacres during struggles against exploiters. [...] In gender relations, it is the 'body'. In 'race', the reference is the body, 'color' presupposes a 'body'[2]. (Quijano 2009, 113. My own translation)

In this train of thought, gender theorists have appropriated the concept of "coloniality of power" in order to discuss what feminist philosopher Maria Lugones calls "the coloniality of gender". In other words, an attempt is made to understand a process, similar to

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2   Na exploração, é o 'corpo' que é usado e consumido no trabalho e, na maior parte do mundo, na pobreza, na fome, na má nutrição, na doença. É o 'corpo' o implicado no castigo, na repressão, nas torturas e nos massacres durante as lutas contra os exploradores.[...] Nas relações de gênero, trata-se do 'corpo'. Na 'raça', a referência é o corpo, a 'cor' presume o 'corpo'. (Quijano 2009, p. 113)

that identified by Quijano, of the crystallization of power relations geopolitically distributed based on gender, projecting, in line with Butler, the heterosexual matrix not just as a sexual identity, but a "political regime" that regulates subjects. According to Fernanda Belizário, "sexual dimorphism is an organizing axis of the gender system *in the colonial perspective*."[3] (Belizário 386. My own translation. Emphasis added). Thus, the system of domination in which women are subjugated by men would also work as an operator for the colonial project, which would manifest itself, for example, in the process of subjection of black and Latin women, both cis and transgender[4].

In her work "Por uma teoria Queer Pós-Colonial: colonialidade de gênero e heteronormatividade ocupando as fronteiras e espaços de tradução", Fernanda Belizário (2016) discusses how a series of feminist and post-colonial studies have been dedicated to the understanding of subjectivities that subvert any form of identity fixity – from the Borderland/La Frontera writings of Gloria Anzaldúa to the in-between spaces of Homi Bhabha's self – have contributed to the debate in the field of gender studies. Under the premise that Queer Theory is based on the "mistrust of the identity stability of subjects and their sexualized bodies"[5] (Belizário 387. My own translation), her work underscores the importance of developing, alongside gender, an interpretative model that is sensitive to the implications of the colonial project in the constitution of the self.

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3   "dimorfismo sexual é um eixo organizador do sistema de gênero na *perspectiva colonial.*" (BELIZÁRIO, 2016, p. 386. Grifo meu)

4   Anne McClintock offers and insightful critique of the formulation of the modern notions of race, gender and sexuality in *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest.* Routledge, 1995.

5   "desconfiança da estabilidade identitária dos sujeitos e seus corpos sexuados" (Belizário, 2016, p. 387)

If Queer Theory is to be seen as a critique of colonialism and globalization, as such intersectional approach has proposed, the organization of the world must be taken in its complex web of relations of race, gender, and sexuality within a capitalist system with a very specific agenda. Thus, binary oppositions that have historically hierarchized the subjects based on these categories. It is precisely in this overlap that Belizário's work resonates Quijano's. In line with the Peruvian author, she also sees in the body – especially in the "post-colonial body" and in the "queer body" – a decisive role in this project. We read:

> The post-colonial body is a central element of analysis, insofar as it is metonymy and expression of the social inscription of difference, a starting point for questioning the Eurocentric and Logocentric condition and its processes of invisibility and subordination of other bodies, others world grammars. At the same time, the queer body is the condition for the production of meaning. As a limit, it is the body that is racialized, that is man or woman or none of them, it is the body that has sex, that loves and negotiates its physical limits with the boundaries of its identity. The body as a place of identity, oppression and resistance.[6] (Belizário 391. My own translation)

This intertwining of race and gender in the humanities is already a central aspect of black and feminist movements across the globe. As an illustration, Ina Kerner (2012) shows us how, even linguistically, the very term "sexism" would come to exist in analogy to the term 'racism', at the time already well sedimented. For her, however, one cannot make a simplistic approach to understanding both gender

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6   O corpo pós-colonial é um elemento central de análise, na medida em que é metonímia e expressão da inscrição social da diferença, um ponto de partida para o questionamento da condição eurocêntrica e logocêntrica e seus processos de invisibilização e subalternização de outros corpos, outras gramáticas de mundo. Ao mesmo tempo, o corpo *queer* é a condição de produção de sentido. Como limite, é o corpo que é racializado, que é homem ou mulher ou nenhum deles, é o corpo que faz sexo, que ama e negocia seus limites físicos com as fronteiras de sua identidade. O corpo como lugar de identidade, da opressão e da resistência. (Belizário 391).

and racial markers. There are, therefore, specific demands for each of these categories, which would explain their focus on different structuring components of oppression – for example, in the case of feminists, in the "public" x "private" division of labor, and, for the black movement, in the othering processes of the racialization.

To illustrate such differences, Kerner (2012) presents, within the European context, how the State and its institutions deal with reproducibility. If, on the one hand, for feminism it is necessary to deconstruct the idea of the naturalization of sex and compulsory heterosexuality, on the racial side of the argument, the hegemony of power would be mostly concerned with preventing hybridity, thus ensuring segregation between the different groups that today make up the continent's demographics. When dealing with intersectionality, therefore, one must take into consideration

> all possible forms of combinations and entanglements of different forms of power expressed by categories of difference and diversity, especially those of "race", ethnicity, gender, sexuality, social class, as well as, eventually, those of religion, age and disabilities.[7] (Kerner 55. My own translation).

Thus, having made these considerations, I believe that Shani Mootoo's work might open up a discussion around these varied "combinations" and "entanglements" of power. In the next section of this chapter, a further exploration based on language and the literary text aims at revealing such dynamics, in particular the sensitive relationship between discipline and subversion, in which the queer, post-colonial, Caribbean bodies find themselves in transnational spaces on the frontlines of these struggles.

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7   todas as formas *possíveis* de combinações e de entrelaçamentos de diversas formas de poder expressas por categorias de diferença e de diversidade, sobretudo as de "raça", etnia, gênero, sexualidade, classe/camada social, bem como, eventualmente, as de religião, idade e deficiências. (Kerner 55)

Across Borders, the text.

one can go and even if the train moves on,
one doesn't move away from oneself
– Hilda Hilst[8]

The discussion on what characterizes a Caribbean identity proves to be a focal point in the production of many critics from the archipelago. Given the specificities of the colonial project, the future emancipation of the islands in independent states, or the maintenance of power from European states, it is noted that these islands constitute an amalgamation of ethnicities in which the very notion of "home" develops itself as a slippery signifier, carrying within itself the seeds of its own deconstruction. In the scope of literary production, the work of writers of global reach, such as Aimé Césaire, Édouard Glissant, V. S. Naipaul, and Derek Walcott, is already revealing of this phenomenon, representing subjects in constant search or denial of their own origins and roots. Since the last decades of the twentieth century, however, there has been an increase in the number of works that encompasses "Caribbean literature" as the production by authors who are already displaced from the islands, which showcases the transcultural aspect of these texts.

In this context, metropolitan centers in the Global North, such as New York, London, and Toronto become the stage for a proliferation of works that seem to further complicate what has been consolidated as "English Literature". Thus, while looking at the works of Jamaica Kincaid, Caryl Phillips, Marlene NourbeSe Philip and Shani Mootoo, to which canon should one refer? Unlike

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8   Brazilian Modernist poet (1930-2004). My own translation from the anthology *Tu Não te Moves de Ti*, Biblioteca Azul, 2012.

other territories colonized by the British Empire, such as India, Australia, and South Africa, Rosamond King (2014) warns us of the importance of keeping in mind that, "as it exists now, the Caribbean region is itself a product of both globalization and transnationalism and that the majority of its residents can be defined as part of other diasporas" (King 4).

"Out on Main Street" (1993), my object of analysis here, narrates the tensions suffered by two lesbian characters of Indo-Caribbean descent while going to an Indian pastry shop in Canada, the country where they both now live. In spatial terms, it could be said that the plot is developed in a microuniverse that seems to work as a metonym for these characters's geopolitical position. The setting is a place of specific ethnic origin (Indian), located in a metropolitan center (Canadian), where white Canadians, Indian, Indo-Caribbean imigrants and others pass by, face each other, and attempt to live together, though not always necessarily in harmony.

Regarding Shani Mootoo's work, Sandra Goulart Almeida (2011), in Brazil, and Tina O'Toole (2001), in Ireland, both make use of Sneja Gunew's notion of "serial diaspora" to understand the complex web of relationships in which the characters find themselves in. According to Almeida, these would be constituted, therefore, through a "process of sequential accommodations across geopolitical boundaries and limits, which sometimes characterizes the experiences of diasporic subjects, generating new and often conflicting affective economies."[9] (Almeida 116. My own translation). Several times removed from a "point of departure", the protagonists of Mootoo's narrative will need to negotiate and, to a certain extent, abdicate to some aspect of what would once have constituted

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9   "processo de acomodações sequenciais através de fronteiras e limites geopolíticos, que por vezes caracteriza as experiências dos sujeitos diaspóricos, gerando novas e frequentemente conflituosas economias afetivas." (Almeida 2011, p. 116)

their own subjectivity. In "Out on Main Street", for example, the protagonist tells us:

> I used to think I was a Hindu par excellence until I come up here and see real flesh and blood Indian from India. Up here, I learning 'bout all kind a custom and food and music and clothes dat we never see or hear 'bout in good ole Trinidad. (Mootoo 1993, 208)

In her reading of Mootoo's work, Almeida (2011) also calls attention to another interface that permeates the literary text, in which this lack of a fixed ethnic or racial background is intertwined with gender and sexuality. For her, "the performance act characteristic of Mootoo's works reveals the intricate network of connections established between contemporary cultural movements and the interface of gender, sexuality and ethnicity".[10] (Almeida 2011, 116). My own translation). From the very first pages of the text, one finds the character-narrator, almost in a confessional tone, listing different reasons for her apprehension of going out in public with her partner.

At first, the narrator tries to justify her desire not to go more frequently to that particular place by using her body, and a concern with physical appearance, as an argument. Referring to phenotypic characteristics that are often associated with the bodies of women of color, she complains about the fact that "is dem sweets self what does give people like we a presupposition for untameable hip and thigh." (Mootoo 1993, 205). Subsequently, she expresses a resentment for not feeling welcomed in that place, both for not mastering the linguistic codes of that community, and for being representative of a third community that had redefined such "Indian" habits and

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10 "o ato performático característico das obras de Mootoo desvela a intricada rede de conexões estabelecida entre os deslocamentos culturais contemporâneos e a interface das questões de gênero, sexualidade e etnicidade". (Almeida 2011, 116)

customs. Finally, she tells us of her own insecurities due to her body's non-conformity with any pre-established social norms (Caribbean, Indian, Canadian) expected from women. As for this last aspect, it is worth highlighting how the narrator sees herself in relation to her partner, a difference that unfolds in tensions linked both to her gender identity and to her posture in relation to the colonizer's culture.

Thus, the reader is introduced to the main interlocutor of the story's narrative voice, Janet, whose name would have been a tribute to missionaries in the Caribbean whose purpose was to convert the local populations into Christianity. One reads: "In de ole days when Canadian missionaries land in Trinidad dey used to make a bee-line straight for Indians from down South. And Janet great grandparents is one a de first South families dat exchange over from Indian to Presbyterian." (Mootoo 1993, 206). The westernization that marked Janet's identity, already made evident in her name, also seems to be reflected in a greater degree of adaptability in relation to ethnic and gender codes, bringing to the surface, once again, the materiality of the body to frontline of the debate. The phenomenon could be analyzed in the light of Quijano's (2000) thought when he identifies the body as the site to start questioning the structures of the coloniality of power. While describing her partner's physical traits, as well as expressing her dissatisfaction with the constant sexual harassment that she would witness, the narrator stresses aspects associated with feminine stereotypes, such as the use of makeup, high heels and her dark, long and silky hair. She says:

> Janet pretty fuh so! And I doh like de way men does look at she, as if because she wearing jeans and T-shirt and high-heel shoe and makeup and have long hair loose and flying about like she is a walking-talking shampoo ad, dat she easy. (Mootoo 1993, 208)

Janet's heterosexual passability would somehow underscore the subversion that her partner's "body" would represent in that space. In line with this dynamic, the narrator states that "And den is a whole other story when dey see me with mih crew cut and mih blue jeans tuck inside mih jim-boots. Walking next to Janet, who so femme dat she redundant, tend to make me look like a gender dey forget to classify." (Mootoo 1993, 209). For the character, however, the problem could easily have been solved if her partner did not stress a supposed "femininity".

Furthermore, it is necessary to emphasize also the different forms with which Mootoo deals with the English language. While Janet always seems to use standard English, the voice of the character-narrator is presented in a Caribbean patois, constantly subverting the hegemonic expression of language. Her specific way of using language, therefore, will be strongly influenced by marks of oral speech, (re)affirming, through countless morphosyntactic alterations, this subjectivity that is *queer* in the broad sense of the term: that yearns to escape the norm.

These binary oppositions, which reappear throughout the text as a constant source of friction between the characters, project, at the individual level, the complex process of liberation for the post-colonial queer body. On the one hand, Janet tends to play down what her partner identifies as systematic oppression, ignoring, perhaps, how transgressive it would be, for that society, to accept the performative act of her body, whose gender does not seem to have been "classified" and whose ethnic origin is always under suspicion. On the other hand, the character-narrator's attitude of trying to control her partner's behavior seems to resort to a conventional structure of the heterosexual matrix, in which one part of the couple exercises a presupposed right to subjugate the other, reinforcing, in some way, the punitive and regulatory character of gender. This clash of relationships imbricated in the coloniality of

power and gender is in line with what Letícia Sabsay identifies in her work, *The Political Imaginary of Sexual Freedom*: *subjectivity and power in the new social democratic turn* (2016). When discussing the relationship between neoliberalism and sexual subjects that have been conquering, especially in the Global North, more and more rights guaranteed by the State, she reminds us that,

> […] the heteronormative ordering of desire and identification implies losses and negotiations that form a substantial part of the constitution of the subject, and yet the forms that desire and identification assume systematically fail with regard to those heteronormative ideals. When this failure implies a disruption of those norms, this *does not mean* that the subject formation that veers off from these norms constitutes itself without any reference to them. (Sabsay 57. Emphasis added).

The recurring overlapping in the dynamics of power, however, is not limited to an analysis of the couple's interaction. Upon arriving at the pastry shop, both characters seem to be, to a certain extent, placed into the same category when they both need to use English to place their orders. The establishment, described as a family business, has six waiters, all men, and its clientele, in the eyes of the narrator, consists exclusively of Indian women. With regard to this apparently underprivileged panorama, the character complains that "Yuh ask dem a question in English and dey insist on giving de answer in Hindi or Punjabi or Urdu or Gujarati. […] And den dey look at yuh disdainful disdainful – like yuh disloyal, like yuh is a traitor" (Mootoo 1993, 208).

Throughout the interaction between them and the Indian waiter (who the reader later finds out to be from Fiji), this segregation linked to the characters's Indo-Caribbean identity is confirmed when the narrator, in an effort to fit into what she believes as the ideal of a woman and an Indian, uses the wrong word for "sweets". The word *meethai*, used by her to designate a specific dessert, comes from, as the waiter makes a point of explaining in a patronizing tone, the

generic hindi word "*mithai*" used to talk about any "sweets". In an dialogue with Janet, the scene makes her reach the conclusion: "all a we in Trinidad is cultural bastards, Janet, [...] I looking forward to de day I find out dat place inside me where I am nothing else but Trinidadian, whatever day could turn out to be." (Mootoo 1993, 213). In his essay "Caribbean Identity and Belonging", Richard Allsop (2001) claims that "Caribbean identity is instantly defined when one is *not* in the Caribbean." (Allsop 35). Although the Caribbean identity is made clear in the dialogue, especially due to the character's use of language, the narrator is constantly faced with what she qualifies as a lack of legitimacy implicit in the hybridization that is constitutive of her place of origin. When talking about intersectionality, Ina Kerner (2012) states that this notion

> points to, among others things, processes of subjectification or formation of identities with different points of reference. [...] The question of whether individuals realize their own ethnicity or not continues to depend on their social position: in all cases, members of ethnic minorities were perceived as having stronger ethnic identifications than members of majority ethnic groups.[11] (Kerner 58. My own translation)

The protagonists, however, witness a reversal in the dynamics of power when, subsequently, two white men, probably Canadian, enter the shop, parodying what they believe to be Indian expressions in a scene that, according to the narrator herself, is at the same time violent and a caricature, as we can see in the text:

> Suddenly de door a de restaurant spring open wide with a strong force and two big burly fellas stumble in, almost rolling over on

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11 aponta, entre outros, a processos de subjetivação ou de formação de identidades com diferentes pontos de referência. [...] A questão de se os indivíduos se dão conta de sua própria etnização ou não continua a depender de sua posição social: em todos os casos, integrantes de minorias étnicas foram percebidos como portadores de registros étnicos marcados mais fortemente do que integrantes de grupos étnicos majoritários. (Kerner, 2012 58)

> to de ground. Dey get up, eyes red and slow and dey skin burning
> pink with booze. […] Out loud he greet everybody with "Alarm
> o salay koom". A part a me wanted to bust out laughing. Another
> part make mih jaw drop open in disbelief. (Mootoo 1993, 213).

The incident goes on in a series of unsuccessful attempts by those men, probably tourists, to communicate with the waiters. However, unlike the patronizing way they had treated the protagonists, these Fijian men find themselves vulnerable and powerless in the face of that white presence. The pastry shop, now in complete silence, only one of the customers is heard whispering to a friend: I can't stand to see our men humiliated by them, right in front of us. […] And de friend whisper back, "If he throws them out all of us will suffer in the long run (Mootoo 1993, 214). After realizing they are not welcome, these customers decide to exit the place, leaving behind a general feeling of consternation and empathy that dominates the entire clientele. One of the customers, described by the narrator by her long giraffe-like neck, states in solidarity: "Brother, we mustn't accept how these people think they can treat us. You men really put up with too many insults and abuse over here." (Mootoo 1993, 215). At this time, therefore, racial and gender differences seem to be suspended in the name of what all those immigrants recognize as a form of shared oppression, suffered by everyone daily in the Global North.

However, Mootoo's text directs the reader to yet another twist in the game of colonialities. Shortly after that event, the narrator witnesses that same customer being sexually harassed by the waiter. By calling her dear and touching her back inappropriately, we witnessed the creation of yet another bond of solidarity, now between this (heterosexual Indian) woman and the protagonists. In a feeling of indignation, she then says:

> Whoever does he think he is! Calling me dear and touching me like that! Why do these men always think that they have permission to touch whatever and wherever they want! And you can't make a fuss about it in public, because it is exactly what those people out there want to hear about so that they can say how sexist and uncivilized our culture is" (Mootoo 1993, 216).

As it can be seen, this passage, revealing both the character's irony and self-awareness, evokes the vulnerability of the body – this time specifically that of the Indian woman. However, the interaction exposes not only the patriarchal structure that colonizes these women, but also, and in particular, their underprivileged intersectional position, from which public rebukes on the behavior of those men would imply a confirmation of stereotypes. In denouncing the harassment, the woman knows that she would be contributing to the narrative the West perpetuates about the atavistic nature of people of color, ultimately resulting in consequences for all the members of that community.

Finally, the friendly relationship between the characters falls apart, along with any attempt by the character not to draw attention to herself, when two of their lesbian friends walk into the shop. The narrator, ironically recognizing that, as suggested by the title of the story, she was "outed" says: "instead a any recognition of our buddiness against de fresh brothers, I get a face dat look like it was in de presence of a very foul smell." (Mootoo 1993, 218).

The unfolding of events, which shift positions of power at all times between those characters, ends up finally dissolving the tension between the protagonists, a fact that gives the narrator an ultimate sense of relief. Although their bodies are always in a more vulnerable position within those dynamics – whether because they are Caribbean, women, or lesbians – the character ends her story in an optimistic and humorous tone:

De good thing, doh, is dat Janet had become so incensed 'bout how we get scorned, dat she forgot I tell she to cut she hair and to ease up on de makeup, and so I get save from hearing she would prefer if I would grow my hair and wear lipstick and put on a dress sometimes. (Mootoo 1993, 219)

As if ending a cycle, therefore, the character goes back to the recurrent discussion with her partner, in a movement that escapes, then, the victimization process, or negative key in which such subjectivities could be represented in a certain horizon of expectations.

Final Remarks: to the identity, which body?

> I know though, that presented with home, even with a home that is the acceptance I long for, I will bolt. But allow me to yearn for it, and getting it, to reject it.
>
> – Shani Mootoo

Understanding oneself as belonging to a group – be it ethnic, racial or national –, or finally settling down in a home, is not always an easy task. For diasporic subjects, as the Post and De-colonial theories have long been denouncing, this search goes far beyond the constitution of identities. When dealing with Caribbean space, as it was discussed here, this endeavor proves to be even more complex, since "home" as some stable, geographically fixed location becomes increasingly untenable." (Griffith 2001, 11)

Amidst these transnational dynamics and migratory movements towards the Global North, what can be said, then, of those whose identity, in addition to being slippery in geopolitical terms, prove to be equally subversive with regard to the pre-determined codes for gender and sexuality? If, for a long time, racial issues focused on the "man of color" while gender studies universalized the white woman,

Shani Mootoo's narrative reveals much more complex phenomena that overlap various facets of subjectivity and citizenship today.

Moving beyond the separation between the structures of power that verticalize behaviors and determine extent to which rights are attributed to minorities, "Out on Main Street" (1993) denounces, from an everyday scenario, the numerous tensions that affect queer post-colonial subjects on a daily basis. In the constant struggle between race, class, gender and sexuality, this work underscores the importance of the body and the projection of a corporeal awareness for such citizens of the globe. As Belizário (2016) warns us, "Perhaps the ultimate radicality of the queer and postcolonial encounter is the body. The body as a limit, the body that causes affection and is affected by identity, by subjects, by oppression, by differences, by borders "[12]. (Belizário 391. My own translation).

Thus, this body that, at first demarcates differences and exposes vulnerabilities is also a battlefield. Its materiality (color, shape, appearance, performance) always projects it on the front line of any and all clashes, opening pathways, often strategically, for allegiances, empathy, and solidarity. In the short story, the body always appears as a foundation in the understanding that the narrator makes of her own surroundings. Based on the most diverse social markers of difference present in her body and of those around her, she – a subject to whom a new identity "home" is being assigned at all times – will know what challenges to face. Throughout this process, the body is therefore a vital locus. It is home: first instance on which subjectivities are constituted, starting point for resistance.

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12 "talvez a radicalidade última do encontro do queer com o póscolonial seja o corpo. O corpo como limite, o corpo que provoca afetos e é afetado pela identidade, pelos sujeitos, pelas opressões, pelas diferenças, pelas fronteiras". (Belizário 391).

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You can check out anytime you like but you can never leave: Immigration Policy and Direct Provision in the Republic of Ireland.

Serena Clark

Introduction

The international crisis of forced displacement poses a serious challenge to democratic governance. The more than 28.7 million refugees and asylum seekers reported by the United Nations in 2019 (United Nations), often come from geographical regions where the infrastructures of stable democracy are either absent or have collapsed. Meanwhile, recipient countries must domestically manage the influx of migrants whose presence often causes a cultural backlash and exclusionary attitudes arising from anti-immigration and nationalist or populist movements. The issue of immigration is also increasingly politicized, renewing or enforcing established national divisions. In 2015, Europe alone received 1.32 million asylum applications (Arnold, Ryan and Quinn) which tested the European Union's (EU) ability to manage such an influx of irregular arrivals and placed pressure on its asylum mechanisms. Though the inflow of migrants has decreased, the 'migration crisis' significantly altered the public debate and political landscape in Europe. Efforts to reform the European asylum system have often ended in deadlock, resulting in policies focusing on national interests rather than a single European approach. The absence of European unity in response to asylum is complicated by limitations and failures of border control policies and border-sharing schemes (Greenhill 2016). In Hungary, for example, immigration policies

have led to the use of physical protection on its border with its non-Schengen neighbors (Greenhill 318). Challenges also arise from the European Commission's (EC) commitment to replace the Dublin Regulation with a European migration governance system. In Italy, the government is reversing policies to restrict access to asylum, increase immigration detention and reduce the care asylum seekers receive (Sunderland 2018, 2020). Similarly, Ireland is reconsidering its immigration policies for international protection applicants. The Irish government pledges to end Direct Provision, the keystone strategy in managing the reception of asylum seekers. Direct Provision is controversial, and many national and international entities criticize the approach. This article critically explores the Direct Provision system, Ireland's obligations under international and EU law, and the government's objective to create and implement a new immigration approach.

Obligations of Ireland under International and EU law

Though EU member states have the sovereign right to determine the admission or expulsion of non-nationals in their country, they are responsible for doing so in a manner that upholds the rights of individuals under international and EU law. Many migrants have no other option but to leave their home country, fleeing from war, famine, persecution, economic depression, or natural disasters. Those with limited choice are often ready to sacrifice some rights for the possibility to regain them later. Those who become migrants are likely to encounter a world that is unfamiliar and more insecure. The legal status of a person entering a territory does not protect against the diminishment of their rights compared to citizens. If migrants are undocumented, they often will accept denials of rights and hardship not to be sent back to their country of origin. The degree to which these phenomena occur and the exclusion from

legal protections or redress depends on the destination country. These are the conditions that migration policies and laws engage with, regulate and, at times, exploit (International Commission of Jurist).

Like other European countries, Ireland is a party to many international conventions and EU laws, which inform its immigration approach. The principal international legal mechanism is the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The Convention establishes that refugees have specific fundamental rights; the most significant is the right to non-refoulement. This Provision prevents the return of people seeking protection to a country where their life or freedom is threatened based on race, religion, nationality, social group, or political opinion. Other rights include housing, education, and employment. Ireland has committed itself to the 1951 Convention, and the Refugee Act (1996) puts specific provisions into domestic law (McMahon 2015). It is also a member of many human right mechanisms that prohibit refoulement, such as the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), enacted in Irish law by the European Convention on Human Rights Act (2003) (McMahon). Five parts of the ECHR are most relevant, Articles 3, 8, 13, 14 and Protocol 12 to the Convention (Gupta 2020). Article 3 bans the use of torture and inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment'. Article 8 safeguards the right to privacy and family life, Article 13 the right to an effective remedy and Article 14 and Protocol 12 to the Convention prohibit discrimination and promote equality (Gupta). Only the rights in Article 3 are absolute, and States maintain a margin of appreciation in the interpretation of rights under Articles 8, 13, 14 and Protocol 12 concerning their domestic situation (Gupta).

All EU Member States are signatories of the 1951 Convention and the human rights mechanisms mentioned above. However, historically, each has implemented a different system for interpreting

the Convention and determining if someone is a refugee. These collective actions led to "asylum shopping," a practice where asylum seekers place applications in the several Member States (McMahon) and "orbiting" where asylum seekers move throughout Europe with no territory taking responsibility for their cases (Brekke and Brochmann). To address the issues of asylum shopping and orbiting, Europe set to establish common regional asylum legislation. The process of aligning asylum policies among the Member States and later the European Economic Area (EEA) began in the 1990s with establishing the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). CEAS has four parts: the Dublin Regulation (determines the Member State responsible for asylum applications), Qualification Directive (international protection), Asylum Procedures Directive (equitably processing asylum cases) and Reception Directive (reception conditions and fundamental rights of asylum seekers), all of which have undergone revision since their implementation (Brekke and Brochmann) (European Commission *Common European Asylum System*) (European Commission *Country responsible for asylum application*).

The Dublin Regulation is critical in this effort and places the responsibility of processing asylum applications onto a single country. This legislation is meant to regulate the transfer of asylum seekers and prevent asylum shopping and orbiting. Under this policy, migrants must apply for asylum in the country of entry point. People choosing to move to the other Member States will be transferred back to the territory responsible for their application (Brekke and Brochmann). The Dublin Regulation also establishes an EU asylum fingerprint database (EURODAC) where all asylum seekers entering the EU or the Schengen area must have their fingerprints taken as part of the registration process (Nedelcu and Soysüren). EURODAC enables fingerprint comparison to help determine the responsible Member State for cases. Its primary

purpose is to assist the implementation of the Dublin Regulation, and together these two mechanisms are often referred to as the "Dublin system" (European Commission *Identification of applicants (EURODAC)*).

The Dublin Regulation was first introduced in 1997 and reformed in 2003 (Dublin II) and 2013 (Dublin III). The legislation is problematic for two reasons. There is a disproportional burden among the Member States, with countries on Europe's southern border receiving higher levels of arrivals. Meanwhile, the different reception conditions and access to social rights like living standards, labour-market, and government supports may encourage people to move on from the country of their asylum application. In recent years, the Dublin Regulation has become increasingly controversial, and the EC is planning to replace the system.

Direct Provision into policy

As a member of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the Irish government introduced the main principles of the Convention into domestic law through the Refugee Act (1996). These provisions make Ireland responsible for processing applications of those entering the State and seeking international protection. Those applying for protection in this manner may choose to enter the State's Direct Provision system or cater for themselves while their application is processed. The Department of Justice and Equality is responsible for the asylum process in Ireland and established the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) in 2001, an internal agency overseeing the Direct Provision system. Ireland also accepts those seeking protection under the EU Relocation and Resettlement Programmes. Persons admitted in this way are entitled to permanent settlement in Ireland, and while their applications are being processed are accommodated in Emergency Reception

and Orientation Centres (EROCs). The Irish Refugee Protection Programme (IRPP), a sub-agency in the Department of Justice and Equality, manages these Programmes (Tyndall 2018).

In Direct Provision, asylum seekers are placed in one of 47 centres. There are a further 33 emergency accommodation locations in private accommodations like hotels, guesthouses (Oireachtas Joint and Select Committees 2020), convents, mobile homes and chalets (Gupta). The locations of these centres are in both rural and urban setting across Ireland, and the State pays for the cost of full board, meals, heat, electricity, television, laundry and household maintenance (Department of Justice and Equality). Residents have free movement in Ireland but must inform their centre of any overnight absences. Though there is no obligation to use Direct Provision services, only those who avail of them can claim the associated monetary allowance. If a protection applicant enters Direct Provision, they can leave at any time. Applicants who decide not to enter Direct Provision but later decide they would like to avail of the system can do so. However, applicants cannot choose accommodation location; the Department of Justice and Equality determine accommodation placements (Gupta).

Until the Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional in 2017, there was a blanket prohibition on the right to work (Tyndall), and asylum seekers lived on a weekly allowance of €38.80 per adult and €29.80 per child (Gupta). The Irish Constitution recognizes certain fundamental rights without distinction. The Court ruled that Article 40.3 of the Constitution, which guarantees personal rights, including access to the labour market, should be extended to noncitizens residing in the State (Gupta). International protection applicants can apply for the right to work from the Minister of Justice and Equality after eight months of lodging their application if they have not received a first instance decision by the International Protection Office (IPO). While asylum seekers can work, practical issues may

prevent access to the labour market, including difficulties opening a bank account or applying for a driver's license. Those living in rural areas are more likely to be affected. Since introducing the legislation on access to the labour market in June 2018, 4,200 labour market access permissions have been granted (Irish Legal News). However, a person working and living in Direct Provision must contribute to the costs of Direct Provision services and may no longer be eligible for Daily Expenses Allowance or Exceptional Needs Payments (Gupta).

The introduction of Direct Provision in 2000 was to help the Irish immigration system. There was an expectation that application processing time would occur within a few months and Direct Provision centres a short-term solution. However, from 2014 to 2018, 60 per cent of residents spent between 18 and 45 months in Direct Provision (Irish Government and Economic & Evaluation Service). Families are housed together, and single people share rooms with others of the same gender but often with people they do not know (Tyndall). Most units have bedrooms, no private living space, and a mixture of private and communal bathrooms. Many units lack cooking facilities, and those that do have these facilities are often prioritized for families. Others must rely on the food provided by the centre and are not allowed to store food in their rooms (Gupta). The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) expressed concern over the substantial capacity issues in these centres, which the housing crisis in Ireland exacerbates. At the same time, at times, residents granted refugee status are unable to move out of State accommodation because of these issues (Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission). Though there is continual criticism for the living conditions and services applicants receive in Direct Provision, "pull factors" concern some policymakers in considering more humane treatment. A statement by the Principal Officer of the RIA

in 2009 highlights the inadequacies of Direct Provision alongside concerns of "pull factors" (Chiosáin):

> (a Direct Provision centre) provides basic shelter and board but does not represent suitable long-term accommodation for the families who live there, (this) is an arguable point. […] Direct Provision […] was the only system that could have fulfilled Ireland's humanitarian and international obligations and, at the same time, not have created an economic pull factor for economic migrants using the asylum system to enter the State' (Response to draft Strategy Statement for an Integrated Strategy for the Co-ordination of services to Immigrant Communities in County Clare; Chiosáin).

Several key reports further demonstrate the challenges of the Direct Provision policy. In December 2019, the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice and Equality published a *Report on Direct Provision and the International Protection Application Process.* The report raises many issues including, "accommodation that is not fit for purpose; inadequate supports and services that do not cater to the needs of vulnerable individuals arriving in Ireland; long delays in the single application process; issues with accessing the labour market; and issues relating to children in the Direct Provision system" (Gupta). The Committee stated that the "Direct Provision system currently in operation here is flawed in several respects and needs root and branch reform, preferably replacement" (Gupta; Joint Committee on Justice and Equality). This recommendation supports the conclusions of the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Public Service Oversight and Petitions (2015) and McMahon Report (2015) (McMahon; Gupta).

Other challenges arise from limited government engagement with communities over the location of prospective Direct Provision centres. The legal rights of local communities to contest the location of Direct Provision accommodation are limited even in cases where the centre risks placing a disproportionate burden on local services

or the local economy by undermining local tourism. Properties changing from an accommodation provider to one of Direct Provision makes it an exempted development. Consequently, it is not possible to use the current planning law to dispute the change. However, potential objectors can raise a challenge if there is a legal question over which category the property provider is designated. The government has made efforts to consult with local communities; however, there is no legal obligation for this, and communities do not have legal rights to ensure this occurs (Gupta).

Using private providers to establish Direct Provision centres is also problematic. The Department of Justice and Equality has amended procurement for these centres to align with European procurement standards. However, the government has not stopped the procurement process by expression-of-interest, whereby the government requests entities to express an interest in providing goods and services. The expression-of-interest process was used to procure all emergency accommodation in the State. This type of procurement raises concerns around the sustainability of Direct Provision accommodation, the best value for money, private entities cashing in on the current system, and private providers' ability to adequately meet residents' social and care needs (Gupta). The controversial accommodation in Caherciveen, Co. Kerry demonstrates this point. The IHREC has expressed concern over the use of this type of lodging for many reasons, including inadequate living conditions, weekend relocation to increase profits, failure to inform residents of entitlements, failures to place children in school and preschool, bed-sharing with strangers, unsuitable food for cultural and religious beliefs, and delays in accessing legal aid and medical cards. Problems also arise from the privatization of the Direct Provision system. There are legal mechanisms to hold public actors accountable, including judicial review, judicial procedure acts, and instruments for the non-adherence of rights guaranteed under

the ECHR. However, private actors are not necessarily accountable to these same processes (Gupta).

The public health crisis arising from Covid-19 further emphasizes these problems. These settings are especially at risk during the pandemic because of overcrowded, communal living, as the outbreaks in centres in County Kildare show. Unlike the general public, where social distancing is encouraged, sharing intimate space is unavoidable and self-isolation difficult. This problem is complicated when residents work in healthcare or other front-line work, increasing the risk of exposure to Covid-19 (Irish Refugee Council). The lack of space to social-distance and self-isolate led to many protection applicants contracting Covid-19. The Irish Refugee Council found that 50 per cent of those in these centres reported an inability to social-distance, and 55 per cent felt unsafe during the pandemic (Irish Refugee Council). Pre-pandemic policies considered these institutional housing settings acceptable; however, Covid-19 has highlighted the consequences of congregated living and the need to end Direct Provision.

Policy changes to Direct Provision

Since the McMahon Report (2015), the Direct Provision system has undergone some changes from both a legislative and policy point of view. In 2017, the Irish Government enacted the International Protection Act 2015 (the "2015 Act"). This piece of legislation created a single protection application process. Though this did not directly impact the Direct Provision system, it did introduce a single right of appeal to the International Protection Appeals Tribunal. The 2015 Act has been attributed to reducing the time applicants spend in Direct Provision accommodation (Gupta). A critical moment in Direct Provision came in 2018 when the European Communities (Reception Conditions) Regulation came into effect, placing

reception conditions on a statutory footing for the first time since its inception. This legislation puts asylum seekers' rights into national law, aligning the policies with European standards (Joint Committee on Justice and Equality).

In 2019, the Department of Justice and Inequality published the *National Standards for accommodation offered to people in the protection process* ("National Standards"). This legislation provides a structure for the continual development of person-centred, high-standard, and effective services and supports for protection applicants in accommodation centres. The goal of the National Standards is to enhance the quality of care and ensure uniformity across accommodation centres. The National Standards ensure residents receive information on what they should expect while in accommodation and future assessments, including inspections by independent bodies. These inspections evaluate the level of standards and support that service providers offer residents. There is a requirement to maintain high standards and effectual services and supports for residents by all service providers contracted by the RIA (Department of Equality and Justice). The National Standards became legally binding from 1 January 2021. This legislation is generally well-received; however, there are recommendations for creating independent oversight to monitor the implementation of the National Standards. The sustained use of emergency accommodation puts into question the ability of the Department to effectively implement the National Standards because the Department cannot impose these requirements on hotels and guesthouses, and it is unclear what supports those residents will be provided with (Gupta).

Though policy changes have led to specific improvements to the system, residing in these centres can impact family life and cause adverse mental health outcomes. In January 2020, the IHREC found, "Inappropriate living conditions, isolation, and a lack of activities,

among other issues, adversely affect the physical and mental health of persons living in Direct Provision centres" (Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission; Gupta). In 2017, the Council of Europe (CoE) emphasized the detrimental impact on children's wellbeing and development. Women are another vulnerable group, and there are documented cases of violence and sexual harassment at centres, some complaints coming from women who previously suffered sexual violence and trafficking. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) expressed similar concerns and recommended the State develop an alternative model and, in the short term, improve living conditions. The Committee also recommended that the State develop definite standards of reception conditions, create monarchisms to inspect centres and hold those responsible accountable for any violations (Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission).

International and national human rights groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), asylum seekers and several Oireachtas Committee and independent reports have continually criticized the Direct Provision system. Improvements to the present system are often fragmentary and do not address fundamental problems or produce long-term solutions. The State needs to establish a sustainable and alternative system. In December 2019, the Government established the Expert Advisory Group on Direct Provision to develop new approaches to meet the long-term needs of asylum seekers. In September 2020, the Expert Advisory Group published the *Report of the Advisory Group on the Provision of Support including Accommodation to Persons in the International Protection Process (Asylum seekers)*. Based on the recommendations made by the Expert Advisory Group, the Irish government published *A White Paper to End Direct Provision and to Establish a New International Protection Support Service* (2021). The White

Paper outlines their plans to end Direct Provision and replace it with a new International Protection accommodation policy.

The beginning of the end: a commitment to replace Direct Provision

Following the formation of the new government in June 2020, the *Programme for Government: Our Shared Future* was announced. This document summarizes the government's position on many key issues, including Direct Provision. There is a re-emphasis on the commitment to providing international protection to those seeking refuge, as obligated under EU and International law. Protection applicants awaiting a first instance decision by the IPO will be given accommodation that is centred on the protection and promotion of human rights. The report acknowledges the failures in Direct Provision and pledges reform. The outgoing government appointed an Expert Group on the *Provision of Support including Accommodation, to Persons in the International Protection Process (Asylum Seekers)* to consider this matter. The government committed itself to replace the Direct Provision system with one based on a not-for-profit approach.

The Programme for Government considers vulnerability assessments, access to the labour market, ability to apply for driver licences and bank accounts, independent inspection processes, application processing time, mental health services, and training for managers of Direct Provision centres. Other issues addressed include ensuring timely processing of international protection applications, fair procedure and an approach founded on human rights. In this document, the government stated it would develop new inclusive models of community engagement when establishing accommodations centres. To finance these measures, the government committed to an annualized capital and current investment

programme (Government of Ireland). The changes necessary to end Direct Provision was informed by the recommendations of the Expert Advisory Group, which also looked at immigration policies in the other EU Member States.

European Union member states: "best practices" in reception system models

Reception system models differ substantially throughout Europe, and there is no consensus on the most effective model. (Joint Committee on Justice and Equality). The EU Member States have developed different strategies to accommodate international protection applicants. Some consolidate financial and executive obligation in State agencies, while in other cases, these responsibilities are shared between the State and local authorities. Often third parties are contracted to manage reception facilities such as NGOs and private companies. In France, Austria, Estonia, and Luxembourg, a combination of NGOs and private companies are responsible for reception facilities' day-to-day operations. In Belgium and Portugal, these responsibilities are solely managed by NGOs. Ireland is in a minority of Member States that excludes local authorities from managing reception facilities. There is also variation in the Provision of food and financial allowances. Ireland, Hungary, Latvia, Portugal, Slovenia, and Slovakia provide 'food in-kind.' Others use financial allowances to cover subsistence costs, and France and Luxembourg use prepaid cards for asylum seeker allowances (Expert Advisory Group).

The issue of capacity also varies among the EU Member States, and in 2019, nine countries showed signs of capacity problems. Between 2012 and 2018, France has had insufficient accommodation facilities even though reception infrastructure was significantly expanded. Presently France is increasing capacity and

creating legislation to distribute protection applicants throughout the country. Some states such as Germany, Greece and Spain use emergency accommodation which regularly ends in longer durations of stay than planned. Hotels are used in Spain for housing in the first stage of reception, and in Italy, emergency reception centres have become the primary type of accommodation. Since the irregular influx of arrivals in recent years, some Member States have increased capacity. In contrast, others, such as Belgium and the Netherlands, have decreased it, placing stress on their systems (Expert Advisory Group).

In this framework, it is difficult to point to one or more cases as "best practice" to inform the Irish approach. In considering the future policies in Ireland, the Advisory Group examined alternative models and data provided by the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) and the Asylum Information Database (AIDA). EASO advises the EU Member States on reception supports and standards for protection applicants while their cases are processed. For instance, EASO recommends that accommodation is near relevant services such as health care, schools, shops, leisure activities and social and legal assistance. EASO also advises the Member States on developing contingency plans in the likelihood of an increased surge of irregular migrants, focusing on planning responses in advance rather than reacting when the high influx happens. The Advisory Group finds it might be more useful to look to agencies like the EASO and AIDA when composing the new Irish approach to asylum seekers than to examine individual instances appropriate to national and local conditions (Expert Advisory Group). Though this is the conclusion of the Expert Advisory Group, regarding best practices, in the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Justice and Equality's *Report on Direct Provision and the International Protection Application Process* (2019) recommends using a comparable European model,

pointing to countries like Portugal, Scotland, Sweden and the Netherlands (Joint Committee on Justice and Equality).

Expert Advisory Group: key recommendations

The Expert Advisory Group was set up to evaluate the current Direct Provision system in Ireland and make recommendations to the government. In October 2020, they published the *Report of the Advisory Group on the Provision of Support including Accommodation to Persons in the International Protection Process*. The principal objectives of this publication were to analyze the length of time people spend in Direct Provision and the type of accommodation and services the system provides while their application is pending. The report accounts for the guiding principles of EU and international obligations by the State. When preparing it, two critical events happened: Covid-19 arrived in Ireland, highlighting the unsustainability of Direct Provision. The government announced its plan to end Direct Provision and produce a White Paper by the end of 2020. The Expert Advisory Group proposes a new system with specific time limits for processing applications, abolishing the current accommodation approach, and helping applicants transition to own-door accommodation in local communities. They recommend an efficient and orderly transition to a more humane service that should occur in full by 2023 (Expert Advisory Group).

There are many critical recommendations made in the report, and the Expert Advisory Group stresses the need for a strong political commitment to implement and follow up on the recommendations. Previous failures to see through on recommendations should not be repeated. The *Programme for Government* (2020) establishes a commitment to end Direct Provision; however, replacing it will need ongoing political and system-wide efforts and adequate financial and staff resources. The Advisory Group recommends a

holistic approach to managing international protection applications and creating a permanent system that accepts that Ireland will need to process 3,500 applications per year. To do this, the State needs to increase its direct responsibility for ensuring humane reception conditions, especially in housing. The present system contracts out part of this responsibility to private companies and citizens as well as NGOs.

The government must establish mandatory deadlines for different phases in the process, with almost all cases concluding in 12 months. The timelines outlined in the report advises that applications be processed within six months and another six months for the appeals stage. The judicial review phase should be left for the courts to decide because they are constitutionally independent. Moreover, it is imperative to end the congregated and segregated accommodation used to house international protection applicants. Local authorities should source own-door accommodation within three months of application submission (Expert Advisory Group).

The new system should be ready to roll out from mid-2023 to provide time to process the current caseload to avoid passing on any legacy backlog, an issue that occurred when the 2015 Act came into effect. Additionally, this time will allow for the recruitment of staff, introduction of new technology (IT) procedures and the development of an accommodation model that can satisfy the proposed 3-month limit on placements in reception centres. Additionally, the transition to the new permanent system should begin immediately and be phased in up to mid-2023. The government should initiate change to legislation where required across all relevant Departments and have it in place by the end of 2021. Recruitment and training of necessary additional staff in the International Protection Office (IPO), International Protection Appeals Tribunal (IPAT) and the Legal Aid Board (LAB) should reach advised levels by mid-2022 (Expert Advisory Group).

Regarding the new IT system, work and funding should be continual from early 2021. Likewise, the government should identify and make available resources needed by local authorities during 2021. The Expert Advisory Group argues that it is possible to begin implementing many of the recommendations in the report immediately, and doing so would indicate a commitment by the government and a policy shift as the new permanent system is being finalized (Expert Advisory Group).

Ending Direct Provision: The White Paper

Following on from the Programme for Government and Expert Advisory Groups' recommendations, the White Paper outlines the Government's strategy to fulfil its commitment to end Direct Provision. The Government plans to replace the current system with International Protection accommodation policies centred on a human rights approach and not-for-profit model – ensuring "integration with independence." The strategy focuses on several key areas, including child welfare and protection, healthcare, women's health, vulnerability, domestic, sexual, gender-based violence, victims of trafficking, and education, diversity, integration and monitoring wellbeing (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth 2021). Full implementation of the new system is scheduled for December 2024.

The new system will accommodate international protection applicants in six regional Reception and Integration Centres for an initial four months, helping people integrate and prepare for life in Ireland. Moving away from privatized accommodation, these reception centres will be State-owned, operated by not-for-profit organizations, own-door for families, own-room for single people and tailored for people with specific vulnerabilities. After four months, people whose applications are still pending will be moved

to own door/own room accommodation in local communities across Ireland – in any county. These proposed centres are set to be in urban areas with access to services. This relocation is meant to promote early integration into Irish society instead of spending sometimes years in Direct Provision (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth 2021).

Asylum seekers and their families are to be provided with comprehensive information about the International Protection process that will be available in multiple languages. They will continue to have the right to access some mainstream services, such as primary and secondary education, and a new healthcare model will be introduced. Applicants can access the labour market if a first instance decision is not reached within six months of their application and will be able to open bank accounts and apply for an Irish driver's license.

Though there are noticeable improvements in the system that will replace Direct Provision, the White Paper lacks detail to support specific aspects of the new model or prepare for uncertainties, such as an influx in irregular migrants or another backlog of applications. The most significant issue lies with capacity issues. The new plan is based on the assumptions that there will be 3,500 International Protection applicants per year and that most of these applicants will receive a first instance decision within six months. The new accommodation centres will accommodate up to 2,000 asylum seekers at any given time (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth 2021). However, the demand for people seeking asylum is unpredictable. Between January 2017 and the end of June 2019, the RIA reported an increase of 59 per cent in the total number of people requiring accommodation. This increased from 4,425 persons in January 2017 to 7,016 persons on 30 June 2019 (IGEES Unit 2019). If the accommodation ceiling is exceeded, this brings up questions around if this will lead to a return

of poorer conditions for asylum seekers, privatization of the system and an inability to monitor accommodation services and conditions – the same problems as Direct Provision.

Additionally, some of the plan will be based on existing systems and policies that guide Direct Provision. Community engagement and coordination at a local level will be based on existing structures, primarily the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) and the Children and Young People's Services Committees (CYPSC) (Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth 2021) with the SICAP only running until the end of 2022 (Department of Rural and Community Development 2020), two years before full implementation of the new model. Other issues arise in allowances for those living in accommodation and access to bank accounts and driver's licenses. There are no clear steps laid out as to how asylum seekers will have better access to these services in the new system, and the allowance will stay similar to the small amount afforded in Direct Provision. While the messaging of the White Paper offers hopeful change, the Government should provide more detail on how these processes will be improved for International Protection applicants and the communities in which they will integrate.

Conclusion

Global trends in forced displacement pose a significant challenge to democratic governance for the countries refugees and asylum seekers are fleeing and recipient countries. Refugees and asylum seekers often come from regions where structures of stable democracy do not exist or have collapsed. Recipient countries must domestically manage the inflow of the new arrivals, whose presence often triggers cultural backlashes and exclusionary attitudes, especially by anti-immigration and populist movements. Some EU

Member States have recently begun revaluating refugee and asylum policies, one of which is Ireland. The primary system in Ireland, Direct Provision, is highly criticized. Though there have been attempts to improve the international protection reception process, these policy modifications are often fragmented and respond to internal or independent reports identifying specific problems. The solutions are temporary, short-term and fail to address the underlying issues arising from this immigration approach. Advocacy groups highlighted the shortcomings of Direct Provision, and there was increased public pressure. Responding to this, the Irish Government committed to replacing Direct Provision with a new model centred on a human rights approach. The new system proposed in the White Paper (2021) tries to restructure the asylum system holistically, and it is seen by many as a positive step in implementing change. At the same time, the new model is based on existing structures, and with accommodation at the centre, it raises questions about if this new system will be a temporary fix.

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The Impact of Democracy Crises on Language Education in a Regular School in Cidade Tiradentes: A Brazilian Case Study

Ana Paula Guimarães

Introduction

This paper is an effort to show some points of relevance between my research whose provisional title is *The challenge of Teaching English in a Public School in Public School in Cidade Tiradentes: Multiliteracies/ New literacies and Ubiquity.* The intention underlying it is also to bestow resistance to the disastrous effects of the current global democracy crises we have been witnessed for the past decade. For being a black teacher working in Cidade Tiradentes, my defiant attitude becomes even more imperative, inasmuch as Cidade Tiradentes is a district located in the outskirts of São Paulo, where the majority of the residents are Afro-descendants.

In Brazil, since the slavery period, black people, solely for the color of our skins, are discredited, discriminated and persecuted by the police under the endorsement of governmental authorities. The students attending my classes, Cidade Tiradentes inhabitants, struggle to endure this pressure daily basis. Most of them can barely pursue higher education, because they have to start their professional activities earlier in order to help their parents, usually, single mothers make the ends meet. Those single mothers are usually former adolescents that had to quit their studies to raise their babies and, therefore, generally disregard schooling and do not consider themselves or their children capable of engaging formal education. Some of these mothers delegate the school and its staff the duty of care takers or a safe place to leave their kids so that they go to work

or even rest from the heavy demands of parenting. I believe that this situation is not accidental, but a project designed by the Brazilian political elite who intends to weaken scientific reasoning in order to maintain the *status quo*. Relegating education is a facilitator to the ascension of political parties whose policies jeopardize democracy and the most vulnerable subjects in this process are destitute communities like Cidade Tiradentes.

Cidade Tiradentes in perspective

For some time now, especially since the 1990s, much has been discussed about teacher authority and its status as the "source of knowledge" as well as the role of the school in shaping people. The issue of teaching authority is even more complicated when this educator teaches English language classes in the public regular school in Cidade Tiradentes, seen by most of the paulistanoes as one of the most dangerous areas in the city of São Paulo.

If it is up to the regular school to teach English, why is it that the students do not believe they can learn the language throughout twelve years? Why do they, instead, disregard the classes, affirming that they will only learn if they join a specialized language institute? Among other reasons for this problem, several scholars, such as psychopedagogue Nadia Bossa, Professor Bertha do Valle and Helena Freitas, president of the National Association for the Training of Education Professionals (Anfope), have found that poor teaching training and lack of infrastructure in the educational system have been the problem not only in English teaching but also in all other subjects. In addition to the aforementioned specialists, the works of Uechi (2006); de Motta (2008); de Alves (2010) and de Sousa (2011) confirm that language education is a major challenge for both faculty and students.

Despite the difficulties pointed out in the above postulates, which immediate alternatives could help change this situation? Could theoretical frameworks based on critical literacies contribute to a concept of an "emergency pedagogy" in order to reduce the vicissitudes faced by teachers and students in English classes in a public regular school? By mentioning an emergency pedagogy, I refer to what could be done in the classroom right now while struggling for a vigorous and consistent educational system that will ensure good teaching training, infrastructure and programs. The attempt to answer this question is the purpose of this work, bringing the theme of Ubiquity[1] and Multiliteracy[2] in foreign language acquisition.

This research is taking place at the EMEF P.C.B. public school, located in Cidade Tiradentes neighborhood, east side of São Paulo. Cidade Tiradentes District is home to the largest housing complex in Latin America, with about 40,000 units, most of them built in the 1980s by the São Paulo Metropolitan Housing Company (COHAB), the Housing and Urban Development Company (CDHU) and large construction firms, who even took advantage of the last major financing from the National Housing Bank (BNH), before its closing. The neighborhood was designed as a large peripheral "dormitory neighborhood" designed for displacement of populations affected by public construction works, just as happened with Cidade de Deus, in Rio de Janeiro.

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1   Originally, ubiquity means being present at the same time everywhere. It is the property or state of what is ubiquitous, which is the ability to be at the same time in different places. According to Cope and Kalantzis (2009), ubiquitous learning is a new educational paradigm made possible by digital media.

2   When thinking about Multiliteracy, we take into account the increasing multiplicity and integration of significant ways of meaning construction made possible by the digital age, when the textual is related to the visual, audio, spatial, behavioral and so on, which guarantees a multimodal understanding of the senses. Thus, it is believed that school procedures cannot be excluded from this process, since students, born in the digital age, even if they do not have full access to all these machineries, they no longer respond to the same stimuli, they did 20 or 30 years ago.

Cidade Tiradentes has a population of 211,501 (2010 census) in a single district. The high population concentration – 14,100 inhab./Km2 – is compounded by one of the city's highest growth rates and serious social problems. This population counts a total of 52,875 families residing in the territory covered by the local Regional City Hall. Of this total, 8,064 families are in a situation of high or very high vulnerability. The areas occupied by the population of the "Informal City" are gaps left in the construction of the COHAB buildings, occupations on the edges of the ensembles, and also of urban sprawl expansion. The identity of the residents of Cidade Tiradentes is directly linked to the process of constitution of that neighborhood, made without pre-established planning that took into account the basic needs of the population.

The above brief description shows that my context of work has been neglected by Governments for a long time, and the democratic crises we've been facing in Brazil has put us through a great setback in terms of local assertive social policies that were implemented during the "Lula-Dilma Era" and have unfortunately been dismantled in the past 5 years. By "Lula-Dilma Era", I am referring to the period in which PT, the most important Brazilian left wing party, was in charge of the Brazilian Federation. It was a time when the Brazilian population experienced a rich phase of assertive policies, such as social inclusion and strengthening of collectives and organizations linked to human rights causes. PT's mandate dated from 2003, with the election of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to 2016, when President Dilma Roussef was impeached. During the eight years Lula, from the PT, was at the head of the country (2003-2010), 11 programs divided into areas such as housing, education, food and health were largely implemented. After Lula, the second main responsible for implementing social projects was the government of Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016), also from the PT, with eight new programs.

The Programs created and maintained during the "Lula- Dilma Era" were:

Bolsa atleta – a program that issued financial incentive to athletes;

Água para todos – a program that consisted of providing access to potable water to the population;

Bolsa Família – a program of direct income transfer, aimed at families in situations of poverty and extreme poverty throughout the country, so that they are able to overcome the situation of vulnerability and poverty. The program sought to guarantee these families the right to food and access to education and health;

Programa Nacional de Acesso à Alimentação – a program linked to actions aimed at combating hunger and promoting food and nutritional security, which do not not exclude the possibility of the benefited families receiving other benefits from government income transfer programs;

Bolsa Estiagem – officially called *Auxílio Emergencial Financeiro*, a financial benefit to help farmers whose plantations are affected by drought;

Programa Brasil Alfabetizado – a program which provides technical and financial support to promote the overcoming of illiteracy among young people aged 15 and over, adults and the elderly and contribute to the universalization of basic education in Brazil;

Minha casa minha vida – was a federal housing program in Brazil that subsidized the acquisition of a house or apartment for families with an income of up to 1.8 thousand reais (Brazilian currency) and facilitates the conditions of access to the property for families with an income of up to nine thousand reais;

Prouni – a program whose objective was granting full and partial scholarships in undergraduate and sequential courses of specific training, in private institutions of higher education;

Projovem – an educational program for young people aged 18 to 29 living in urban areas who, for any reason, have been excluded from

schooling, with the aim of reintegrating them into the educational process, raising their schooling and promoting their citizenship and professional qualification, through an eighteen-month course;

Tarifa Social de Energia Elétrica – a program that introduced innovations for the classification of consumers that were considered beneficiaries of a discount on the electric bill. For the portion of electricity consumption less than or equal to 30 kWh / month, the discount was 65%;

Brasil Sorridente – a program whose main objective was the reorganization of the practice and the qualification of the actions and services offered, bringing together a series of actions in oral health, with expansion of access to free dental treatment to Brazilians through the Sistema Único de Saúde (SUS), the Brazilian Health System;

Bolsa Verde – launched as part of the *Brasil sem Miséria* program, and its main objective is to promote the social inclusion of populations in situations of extreme poverty, combining income transfer with environmental conservation activities;

Brasil Carinhoso – a project focused on early childhood, also part of the *Brasil Sem Miséria* Plan and was composed of actions aimed at supporting families benefiting from the Bolsa Família program with children up to six years of age by improving education, health and income. Among its strands was the quest to expand the access of the low-income population to public or affiliated daycare centers by expanding the number of enrollments for children aged 0 to 48 months;

Luz para Todos – a set of public measures in Brazil, which aimed to bring electricity to residences in remote areas and with tariffs subsidized by the Federal Government, state governments and distributors;

Mais Médicos – a program whose objective was to lessen the shortage of doctors in the municipalities of the interior and on the outskirts

of large cities in Brazil. The program took 15,000 foreign doctors to the areas where there was a shortage of professionals;

Pronatec – a program created with the objective of granting full and/or partial scholarships in technical degree courses and initial and continuing education, in private and public institutions of technical education;

Sisu – a digital platform on the air since January 2010, developed so that students who took the Brazilian national entrance examination *(ENEM)* can register and use their scores as a form of admission to enroll in higher education institutions that have offered certain percentage of their vacancies to those students;

Programa de Fomento às *Atividades Produtivas Rurais* – a federal government cash transfer program, aiming the stimulation of the dynamism of rural territories, through orientation to families living in that area; *Programa Cisternas* – a program related to the program Água *para todos* which passes on direct income for the construction of cisterns to provide food security for the Northeastern semi-arid region.

Regrettably, most of those policies have been eventually discontinued since President Dilma Roussef was impeached, about 5 years ago. The few ones that were kept by the current Government were reformulated in a way that less and lesser people have the chance to benefit from them.

During the event *Transatlantic Crises of Democracies: Cultural Approaches,* it became clear that the Far Right Movement is not an isolated event happening solely in Brazil, but in many different countries in the world. I had the opportunity to listen to scholars from different countries, describing their local governments and their dynamics of spreading political terror, denying memory, overthrowing democratically elected governments and disseminating neo-fascist ideas. All this barbarism is largely endorsed by the representative potential of the digital era and its

traps in its most obscure realms. Besides this barbarism, what those nations and my own share is the suffering of the poorest, who not only have been massively put in a situation of extreme hardship, but also had their rights and strategies of resistance suppressed little by little. This destitution of rights, even the right to fight politically, is happening through unconstitutional acts on the part of the current authorities, who were supposed to be there working to maintain national security and assertive policies in order to guarantee the common welfare and good educational and health infrastructure.

In Brazil, the far-right took power in 2019. The precursors that led to this point, regarded as acts of political terror, were perceptible from 2013 on, for example, the dissemination of fake news about left leaderships and minority collectives and organizations. It is a well-established fact that exploited and deprived communities who fight for common welfare and a more just society are vulnerable to violence and murder, not only politically, but also physically. However, nowadays, these acts of physically, morally and politically murdering someone have been intensified as the responsible for those crimes no longer feel the need to hide themselves, for they have the three democratic powers: Executive, Legislative, and Judiciary ready to support them whenever they need. They do not even feel ashamed of practicing and enticing these atrocities. Shockingly, although those three powers were supposed to be independent and politically cohesive in a democratic nation, what we see is a whole system designed to protect the interest of a very small elite to the detriment of the vast majority of the Brazilians. In order to maintain this system, afro-Brazilians have been unfairly imprisoned, exterminated in every way a life can be jeopardized. Education has been systematically denied, and without it the chances to find a good job is undermined. Violence flares up, fear takes control and an unprepared police force is deployed to fire to kill.

What has been reported above is the background of most of the people who live in Cidade Tiradentes. As aforementioned, I work as a teacher in this community, at EMEF P.C.B., and the majority of my students are afro-descendents, have at least three siblings and very young sub literate single mothers, once their fathers have abandoned the family, are imprisoned or even deceased. They lack from hygiene conditions and sanitation to food. Most of them have the daily meals at school and face hunger during the weekends and the 4 to 6-week vacation periods when the school is closed.

Although I still do not have the answer to the questions posed above, since my research is ongoing, some sad conclusions are already verified, that is to say that the context of the subjects of this research, in which, very early in life, have to worry about whether they will eat today is not favorable to learn the basic abc and 123, let alone, a foreign language. According to those kids and their adult relatives, joining higher education is something regarded for very few people, especially when they listen on TV, from the Minister of Education that "higher education is not for all, only for a small selected elite":

In an interview with a newspaper affiliated with Globo, Valor Econômico, at the end of January of 2019, the then Minister of Education of Brazil said: "the idea of a university for all does not exist". The minister also added: "universities must be reserved for an intellectual elite, which is not the same economic elite".[3]

Given this point of view, coming from a person who supposedly would be occupying the Ministry of Education to ensure policies

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3   The Minister's original saying: "A ideia de uma universidade para todos não existe" [...] As universidades devem ser reservadas a uma pequena elite intelectual que não é a mesma elite econômica." Available in https://www.valor.com.br/brasil/6088217/ideia-de-universidade-para-todos-nao-existe-diz-ministro-da- educacaohttps://www.valor.com.br/brasil/6088217/ideia-de-universidade-para-todos-nao-existe-diz-ministro-da- educacao Access in May 2021.

that defend the right to education for the population as a whole and not just for an elite, it is possible to understand the resentment of these students and their parents against the University of São Paulo (USP), whose reputation has a strong impact, as I noticed. The speech of students, parents and some teachers of this school community reveals that these people believe that USP is inaccessible. I have often heard from members of this community that "USP is not for everyone." One teacher said on one occasion: "Only those who studied there is able to take a Master's degree there (at the University of São Paulo)! I hate that over there! It's a bunch of junkies. You are an exception. Everyone who studies there thinks they are better than the others." When asked to high school students, if they would take the FUVEST[4] entrance exam, the few who know what FUVEST has to do with the University of São Paulo, say: "I won't even try, teacher. USP is not for me." The aforementioned Minister had already been replaced, but his speech has already caused damage, since it corroborated and reinforced in a more open and clear way the mentality that had been disseminated and internalized among the less favored communities in this country for years.

At the same time that the public school is often seen as the only alternative of offering a foreign language to its students, the language education provided by it is devalued, as society believes that English classes, in this space, are inefficient. This discourse is understandable when we realize the fact that few foreign language teachers working in public schools have a reasonable training in the language they teach. English classes are often assigned to Arts or ~~Portuguese~~ teachers who have never been trained in English. The truth is this is not always the case, since there are many teachers with

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4   The University Foundation for entrance examination (FUVEST) is an autonomous institution responsible for conducting entrance exams at one of the main universities in the state of São Paulo. Founded in 1976, FUVEST selects students for the University of São Paulo.

good academic and linguistic training working in the public sphere. Due to fallacious discourses spread mostly from authorities, public services have become synonymous with work that is substandard and not fit for purpose. This statement is not only applicable to Sao Paulo, but also in cities in the United States of America, as claimed by Apple (2005) "anyone who works in public institutions is seen as inefficient" (11). I, myself have verified it in an informal conversation with a group of students, in which I heard that they believe that it is only possible to "learn English in the language school, where the teachers really studied English".

It is overtly known that there is insufficient support for language learning in Basic Education on the part of the government, which is reflected in the school community that perceives little support for this field. On the other hand, English learning, as it is divulged, feeds the neoliberal discourse that this language is an 'important tool' for the future of these students, considering its potential to expand professional horizons for young people. However, it is worth mentioning that language education can collaborate, especially so that these children can learn to look at the other, recognize them as different and thus recognize themselves as citizens by law. Language education can be a way for these students to understand issues deeper than the code, but linked to their own notion of culture and identity.

Learning the verb "to be" through loose and meaningless phrases, such as, "The book is on the table" can be useful to learn the language as a system, as a code; however, public school students often criticize learning based on this model. Many of those students say they hate the verb to be. On the other hand, when they learn that same verb to talk about themselves, their characteristics, exchange information, comparing themselves to their colleagues or even to talk about their international idols, they come in contact with constructions of meaning that transcend the notion of code

and go to the cultural and identity scopes. One of my students, one day commented that she did not know that she could learn to communicate so much of her life with the "horrible verb to be".

That kind of mindset in which quality education is for few people – the white wealthier groups – is pervasive, given the Brazilian History. In this country, since the colonization, there has been violence against non-Europeans, namely the native indigenous people, the Africans brought as slaves and consequently, the Afro-Brazilians, who were enslaved for over 300 hundred. My ancestors were brought here, enslaved and when the authorities perceived the nation was becoming too black, they decided to invest in eugenics. They ended the slavery system, imported white Europeans for work in exchange of salaries and left the black people to die marginalized, without a home, without a job or perspectives. In fact we found ways to resist and eventually survived, but the stigma remains strong, the descendants of those Europeans are the same ones that today hate us, consider us subhuman and nowadays, more than ever, feel free and legitimated to bestow their hatred against us. Now and then, regimes change and whenever there is a government that allows assertive politics to be implemented, as an attempt to diminish the abysm between the elite and the marginal, an inversion of discourses take place, leaderships are overthrown and, many times, assassinated, rights are neglected, a new history is written and the memory is brazenly jeopardized.

As a Brazilian black educator living and working in the outskirts of São Paulo, as well as a citizen fighting for keeping our rights for a better educational system, I have been making a tremendous effort to prepare my students to be able to understand the situation and not to perish trapped in the illusionary discourse created by the ones who explore them. Simultaneously, attempting to make these kids and teenagers believe that this kind of awareness is the

right thing or the only alternative for them to dignifiedly survive. At the end of a term; if I can convince at least one of my students that poverty is not their fault, that their situation is not natural, but constructed as a project to maintain a few people wealthier and that they can learn whatever they want; I will consider my effort valid and gain strength to carry on, for I deeply believe the cause of critical education. This will also help me keep on attempting for children to learn to identify discourses that are inserted in their daily lives as a way of conforming them to a role that reduces them to mere spectators of life, instead of investing them with agency[5] to become protagonists of their own stories, considering their community and benefiting from the technological advances of the current times.

The outskirts' education reality vs. Covid-19 pandemic

It has never been more imperative to ensure democratic access of those benefits, especially because since last year – 2020 – due to the actions taken to minimize the impacts of the pandemic, such as the suspension of face-to-face classes, I had the opportunity to testify how much this community is at disadvantage with regard to the access of digital technology. In 2020, the Municipal Secretary of Education (SME), in partnership with Microsoft, and Google made the teachers' institutional emails official, together with the Microsoft 365 and Google accounts and their tools to help teachers develop their work according to this online reality. After access problems and lack of skills with digital technology, we have adapted to participate in virtual meetings, without any type of preparation, training or help, except our own curiosity in watching YouTube tutorials – about the various tools and modalities for the preparation of video lessons and remote teaching. Another key element for us to continue to develop our work has been our own desire to learn to

deal with this new reality and go through this phase without major losses to our students.

Despite knowing the lack of infrastructure and the inefficiency of teacher training, one can never assume how unprepared most teachers are in relation to the use of the internet. Preparing a class to be taught online has been a painful challenge for most colleagues, who in despair, ask for help, at any time of the day and even at night, in order to fulfill their obligation to offer their class to students. If the teachers themselves have experienced access problems, lack of material conditions to have a better equipped computer or cell phone, it is difficult to find out what is reserved for students, who in some cases, do not even have a regular address.

After six months of operation on that platform, we did not reach even 10% of accesses on the part of the students, but in the initial weeks this number was even less expressive, as children, adolescents had great difficulties in making the first access and their parents worried about whether they would be able to feed their children, they were anxious to get the R $ 55.00 per month that they are entitled to for the food that their children were not having at school during lunch time. According to the school director and assistants, most of the parents who made contact with the school, in this initial period, were irritated when asked about access to the platform, because all they wanted to know was how to be able to receive the referred financial benefit.

Only when they were able to resolve themselves in relation to these receipts did they start helping their children to make the first access to the platform. Of the almost 10% who made this first access, there is still the selection of school subjects, since there are students doing lessons from some, but not other school subjects. In my English classes virtual rooms, about 3% of those who accessed the platform are regular – those students do all the activities as they

are posted, some do them randomly and others, did one or two activities and never accessed it again.

I realized that the reason for the low adherence to the platform is not due exclusively to the lack of access or the students' choice to do or not the activities of one discipline or another, but also to the fact that, many families have only the cell phone of the mother with poor internet access and at least three school children and each child with 10 different subjects – Google Classrooms – to access during the week. Often, the mother works and takes her device with her. There are some students who access the platform at night or at dawn, when they can count on a "quieter environment to study", according to one of my students. Understanding these issues, we agreed not to assign a date for the delivery of activities on the platform, even though each teacher posts their components once a week.

In 2021, however, some changes occurred: the mayor of São Paulo, Bruno Covas and the SME, following the governor of the state of São Paulo's resolution, decided that the children must attend school in person, observing a set of unattainable health protocol. Being put under pressure by private school leaderships, João Dória, the aforementioned governor, determined that we must return to the classes in person, organizing the attendance in groups of students that did not exceed 35% of the regular audience. Nevertheless, most of the elementary school attendance in Brazil is provided by public school. If we consider that the public schools in this country lack the basic infrastructure, it is easy to come at the conclusion that it wouldn't work and, alas, the vast majority of those schools is not equipped with the necessary apparatus for receiving those kids in person, they have been doing it, though.

The situation got even worse because our federal authorities did not have a national vaccination plan until February, 2021 – when the school year starts in Brazil – and consequently, we witnessed the aggravation of the pandemic. As a result of the disastrous

decision, innumerous of my fellow coworkers and children's family members caught Covid 19 and, unfortunately, many of them lost their lives. I used to have a student who had to move to another state to live with an aunt because everybody else living in his house died of the disease: he lost his grandfather, grandmother and mother, respectively, within a month.

Following the new arrangement, the students are now supposed to receive hybrid schooling, being at school in turns, in which each group has classes in person for a week. The plan is, about to be mentioned, group 1 is at school in week 1, the next week, group 2 and so on. At, EMEf P.C.B, we have 5 groupings, so, each of them has classes bodily about once a month and during the period they are not at school, they have to either attend online classes via Google Meets and Google Classroom platform or collect print activities at school do at home, in case of not having internet access. Because of this, we, teachers, have to prepare four kinds of classes, being one to teach in person, one to teach online, one to post in the platform and one print version that synthesizes the other three. We even have to adapt the print version to fit in fewer pages possible for the school does not count on a significant supply of paper and ink to make those activities available to all the students that need them. Most of us, as usual, have provided some of those copies on our own expenses.

The resistance must go on

As we can see, on the one the reality is that many of the families living in Cidade Tiradentes do not have regular access to the internet, on the other hand, the school does not receive enough governmental funds to maintain its basic needs, let alone, the necessary protocols that will assure safety to its community. Parents cannot afford regular internet ingress, and thus, worried about their

kids' education, take the risk and send them to school. The ones who do not want to dare and do not have the proper online access try to make their children keep up with the print activities and randomly access the platform. According to one of my student, she can only access it when her neighbor leaves her internet on. She uses her neighbor's internet through a Smartphone application that detects and accesses the accounts available around her.

Evidently, in Brazil, especially in Cidade Tiradentes neighborhood, the pandemic has not only proved the chaotic situation peripheral districts live in but also intensified the necessity to pursue a pedagogy that enhances students' awareness that they are not predestined to a life of hardship, but to fight for more democratic living conditions. Such pedagogy is, therefore, supposed to help these students resort to their agency in order to build a better future for themselves and their community. An important part of this attempt pedagogy is to aid students as well as their family in the understanding that they need to charge form the authorities the infrastructure the tax they pay is supposed to earn to them. The problem in Brazil is that we have now a government and elite who plainly declare that public service is bankrupting the country and the worst part of it is that they are convincing those families that it is their own fault they are deprived. Subsequently, the government, supported by the elite, legitimate the unconstitutional acts they have being promoting: facilitating the enrichment of big companies, worsening work conditions, rapidly reducing or simply cutting basic social policies they must provide the population with, and above all, increasing the taxation on essential items such as food, medicine, electricity, natural cooking gas, water, sanitation and even books. Hence, raising those families' awareness of this vicious cycle was never so peremptory.

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Performance, Politics, and Embodiment of New Media in Contemporary Student Resistance Movement in India

Saumya Mani Tripathi

Introduction

The current Indian State has been facing a "crisis of authority as a growing middle class with access to decentralized technologies, shaped through a global flow of ideology and capital, questions the sovereignty of the territorial state and looks at new forms of governance and organization" (Shah 2013). From increasing alarm around student protests in response to the attack on universities to the dissidence of marginalized bodies that cannot actualize their citizenship rights, we are looking at a radical rethinking of the relationship between the State's modes of struggle and the Protestors. It erupted to exist for many reasons ranging from the Privatization of Education to restructuring education to propagate particular political ideologies and to restrict others to the rupture of the idea of equality and justice by the manifestation of Caste biases inherent in the Indian State to targeting dissenting voices from across the country. The recent student movements of FTII, Occupy UGC, HCU, and JNU have led to a new way of thinking about politics and performance and new sites of their synthesis. Here, student politics is articulated in ways that use both avant-garde and "traditional" means of protesting. Here, performance is a means to intensify these protests as the protest itself emerges as a new performative.

Culture of student resistance movements: an overview of case studies

The three case studies for this paper are Student Resistance Movements of FTII, HCU, Occupy UGC, and JNU which took place between 2015 and continued till around 2018 in its latent affective forms. Here is a brief introduction to each of these protest movements.

In 2015, FTII (Film and Television Institute of India, Pune), students saw an indefinite protest of 139 days against the appointment of Gajendra Chauhan as the Chairman of the institute. Students, activists, performers, filmmakers, civil society groups all forged solidarities in support of the student movements. Apart from popular agitprop performances like street theatre, sloganeering, singing revolutionary songs, graffiti design, and rallies, FTII adopted new and innovative modes of conducting alternative classes under the wisdom tree, conducting seminars on Performance Art, Origami Workshops as Protest, face painting workshops, Collective Drama and Poetry reading as Protest. They even contributed their bit to the Azaadi slogans with new iterations of "*Camera Mange Azaadi, lights mange Azaadi*" and infusing classic slogans with new content like "Ray*, Ghatak, Tarkovsky, we shall fight, and we shall win.*" FTII adopted a monochromatic theme and popularised it as #nocolor. All their digital content was shot in monochrome as a cinematic gesture of protest.

In 2016, HCU (Hyderabad Central University, Hyderabad), the suicide of Ph.D. scholar Rohith Vemula and subsequent crackdown on students became an event of massive uproar on the question of caste and institutional structures and individuals through which it was facilitated. He left behind an extraordinary jolting suicide note, which has become a foundational dramatic text for many performances. His death invited very intense and quick responses

from across the students of the country. Velivada(Dalit Ghetto), a site on campus, became the ground of mass gathering for political action. Performance and creative expressions of protest emphasized more and more the thematic of caste, apart from the traditional visual design of a protest that includes flags, pamphlets, placards, ribbons, Slogans, marches, plays like *Eklavya*, solidarity songs by *Gaddar* and other prominent artists were performed. The sculpture of Rohith Vemula installed in HCU became an act of iconoclasm, reclaiming visibility in public space and exposing historical caste injustices by placing it in the place where his 'institutional murder' was committed. The Greek-style bust sculpture of Rohith, placed high on a pedestal, was designed to inspire a heroic image of him, establishing him as the next Dalit icon. It is also challenging the idea of untouchability by mandating the visibility of this dalit hero and to make the world see the future from his vantage point. The suicide letter of Rohith Vemula itself became a text for the foundation of imagining new politics, new art, and new thought. In another such gesture of protest, The students of Fine Arts Department of HCU covered the paintings of the Gallery with a cloth and lay down on the floor covering their head inside a bag, pressing their ears with hands and closing their eyes at the arrival of Appa Rao, the VC of the university, whom they accuse of being the culprit behind Rohith's Death.

In JNU(Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi), the arrest of JNUSU President Kanhaiya Kumar on charges of sedition and subsequently two other students after the controversial event of 9th February saw massive protests from February 2016 onwards. Students assembled at Admin Block, later re-christened as Freedom Square, to assert a sense of community, overcome the fear, and reaffirm the ideological battles and cultures of resistance that have been the legacy of JNU. Songs and slogans continued all the while as a tool for healing, but they also specifically broke out the moment

there was a threat of clash or physical confrontation with right-wing student groups. For the first few days, the Azaadi slogans were shushed as it automatically meant the reference to Kashmir. Later on, when the video of Kanhaiya's 10th Feb speech came out, which also became raw material for Rap songs on AZAADI and other creative artworks, the Azaadi slogan was reclaimed and popularised, almost became an Anthem of the Movement. The JNU way of Protesting was thought through, and Teachers initiated the daily Nationalism and Azadi lecture series, while all kinds of solidarities poured in from across the globe. Freedom Square was occupied with daily series of art installations, songs, contemporary and classical dance, street plays, Interactive Performances, Stand-up comedy, Film Screenings, Flower Protests, Activist theatre performances like Maya Rao's Walk.

Performing protest: mediating the physical and digital landscapes

In every resistance movement, culture becomes an important tool and manifestation of carrying out the politics of protest. It is a unifying factor for sustenance and continuity of the protest as well as a common ground for community formation and belonging. Performance facilitates in the expression of varied discourses of protest on stage and generates an affective presence/impact among the participant. The performances that are traditionally not used as part of an agitprop method of performances but are "traditional" performance whose genealogy and origins lay outside of the site of the protest when performed in a site of protest, brings onto itself interruptions, breaks and appropriation of meaning encoded in the impact of the Real Event. In doing so, these performances become a tool for something very essential in constituting a polity as a group of speaking bodies gathered in a central public place.

This polity/assembly was constituted in majorly two ways:

1) Theatre and performance as a site of constituting an assembly of people and student politics as a mode of people coming together in a physical assembly.

2) Media and digital space where people came together in the mode of virtual communication.

As a human microphone, chanting in unison created a common sense of purpose, established relationships among neighbors, and intensified awareness of surrounding bodies. At the same time, Social media engaged many thousands of people who had no pre-existing connection to social change organizations and activist networks. These virtual spaces, even more than Freedom Square, became points of encounter where previously unrelated individuals aggregated to form popular assemblies. In addition to people forwarding information and "liking" the YouTube videos of these demonstrations posted on Face book, these student protests, for example, were replicated online. Sympathizers found each other on Social Media via the # sign and clicking on tags in other social media. This was the digital iteration of what the sound of these movements accomplishes in street protests. These digital means made the protest noticeable and traceable, just like the cacophonic sounds that emerge in public space. Contemporary demonstrators find ways of connecting the live and the distributed, the in situ and the mediated by streaming events in real-time, sharing documentation of past rallies, or (while in physical protests) carrying with them signs advertising social media sites where supporters may continue networking after the event is over. Social media even transcends the link of physical visibility as a show of strength by introducing means online petition and signature campaigns etc. The physical and the digital are intertwined and feed on each other. The work of activists and artists analyzed here sets a rich ground for socio-political experimentation based on the construction of social

networks and face-to-face interactions. These actions, carried out by activists and artists, represent not only survival strategies triggered by the crisis, but they also put forth new modalities of labor and production and of democratic participation. The creation of networks and embodied practices are approached here as the main tactic. Although these embodied practices represent a notion of the political that is radically grounded on the body, these practices are better understood in relation to Digital capital. The fact that these practices are positioned here as radical offline manifestations of embodied gestures in response to disembodied virtual capital does not mean that they are dissociated from the online world. In contemporary power formations, the online/offline refers to a dialectical Relationship, not to mutually exclusive ontologies.

Culture and embodiment of protest

Culture produces meaning through the reflection of public shared symbols and collective representation. On the other hand, it also changes individual values and beliefs. Cultural performance produces alternative views of identity, meaning, and values and transmits it through embodied bodies in a public space. They also bridge the dichotomy between mind and body, intellect and emotion, political and performative. These are transferred through live interacting embodied bodies, which claim the agency of the body as a lived subject and assert the identity of the bodies. However, it is necessary to highlight the dangers of over-extending the notions of performance. Since everything and anything seems to be brought under the definition of performance, it becomes crucial to understand that though culture is performative, anything that generates new meanings and creates new perceptions necessarily not be deemed as performances. Things like petition writing, organising events, recruiting students for organisations and joint

action committees, phone calls, attending a meeting, lobbying, maintaining a book store or counter, announcements are crucial part of social movements and do have a performative dimension to them but certainly do not have the same structure, impact, affect and interaction with the public and space like a street play, protest song or a flash mob performance. Likewise, culture is also not limited to social and political movements. Political activists make use of cultural and performative tools to create oppositional discourses and counter ideas as an important political strategy. Looking at culture as text limits our understanding of its cultural production and provides a homogenous static view of its historical context. We need to look at the material process of its creation and explore the dynamics of its power.

Cultural performances in social and political movements generate collective emotional impact, make claims of contestation of power and are self-transformative in nature. Here the performer assumes responsibility towards the audience and is composed of elements like ritualized acts, emphasizing the current political crisis, the reiteration of symbols and meanings shared collectively as a basic ideological agreement. The previously shared and agreed ideas enhance the experience of the performances, heighten its emotional impact, and make it a powerful communicative tool for social change efforts. Moving beyond mere discourse, performances generate agency, activate emotions, and bring alive presence and corporeality of witnessing bodies. Protest performances often employ tools and content that communicated dissent and move beyond the immediacy of the movement itself. The form and choice of performances are chosen as part of a political tactic to generate a desirable effect. The choice of these embodied actions is based on simulation, practicality, gesture, and affect. E.g., *Gherao* (blockade) is used as an effective tool when the protestors seek to disrupt the immediate effect of a policy or a decision. Whereas the formation

of Human Chain is chosen to showcase the strength and solidarity of a collective opposition by the exhibition of physical numbers of bodies present.

Jeffery S Juris, in her article "Embodying Protest: Culture and Performance within Social Movements" divides these performative protest into four categories, which I am borrowing to illustrate my argument.

Macro-level protest events

These are the largest scale protest performances organized by activists to engage and assert their ideas to the masses. They have an element of strong emotional and affective impact and identities. They are newsworthy events often bordering towards the creation of spectacle. These protest repertoires are Marches, rallies, confrontational riots, militant protest, public meetings, solidarity protests, and sit-ins, etc. These are massive protest repertoires that forge solidarity nationally and globally, mediated through online interventions and adapting itself to differences of time-space and cultures.

They use common identifiers and hashtags while adapting to the regional at the same time. The #noclor #JusticeforRohithVemula #Notinmyname #StandwithJNU and #OccupyUGC are some of these examples of these macro-level protest events. Not only does it involve the physical intervention of live bodies confronting authorities and creating alternate practices and modes of protest, but it also involves power dynamics that shift through solidarity protest beyond the physical site and mediated representation it through various mediatic technology. They create multiple 'theatrical events, 'which are multi-sited and simultaneous at the same time, creating the domino effect of resistance and formation of a global community. This happens through generating affective

solidarity where strong images and emotions are conveyed through intensified embodied action, which arouses heightened emotions of rage and anger, mobilizing a collective body of protestors for action.

While the physical bodies are relied upon to counter the immediate political and violent threat, the other, however, creates and propagates an alternative set of discourses and practices in nonviolent form. These are more spontaneous and potent mass actions as they are free-flowing and not limited to institutionalized spaces and thus do not have an immediate risk or threat of attack. Ritualized activities and performative actions thus become crucial elements of these protests as they limit the potential of confrontation, precarity, and uncertainty of counter-violence and engage emotions in a liminal state where alternative worlds can be imagined, and political utopias are fulfilled through lived experience. The difference between these scripted rehearsed protests and spontaneous live protests is elucidated by Don Handelman's distinction between events that "present the lived-in worlds" and events that "represent the lived-in world."

By staging spectacular performative events, activists make visible unequal relations of power and challenge hegemonic and oppressive symbolic codes and meanings. Thus, Macro-level protest events produce affective solidarity amongst a larger population by embodied actions to turn them into a collective actor.

Micro-level embodied performance

Micro-Level embodied performances are subunits of the large-scale macro-level protests. These large-scale events encompass diverse micro-level embodied performances. These myriad micro-level performances constitute a macro level repertoires of dissent. The difference is of analytic abstraction. At the macro level, I was concerned with universal logic and mechanisms, whereas here, I am

concerned about the specific embodied performances and dynamics of particular spatial tactics.

In 2014, with the formation of a new right-wing government in India, the general public and specifically universities, academic institutions, and artists faced backlash for the opposition of attempts to saffronisation by oppressive government policies and the rise of Hindutva terror. The micro-level resistance started with incidents like banning the Ambedkar-Periyar study circle in IIT madras and soon enough gained momentum to the whole university, turning to rebellion with Hokkolorob and FTII strike. With the FTII strike, the protest transcended to other spaces and cities adopting new repertoires of resistance. It saw physical and well as online solidarity protests, marches, talks, film screenings, rallies, and theatre performances that were multi-sited. While the FTII strike was still on, Occupy UGC happened. It borrowed from the previously forged solidarities and methods of creative resistance that the FTII strike had created. Occupy UGC then became a macro level large-scale protest which brought in, for the first time, the identity of a student as a collective group. Resisting the Sale of Education as a commodity and questioning neo-liberal policies' economic policies in education made it a site of global solidarity where students fighting for the right to education poured in their solidarity from across the globe. Students from across the country gathered at the UGC building as well continued protesting in their specific universities.

The students of HCU even started a similar occupation on their campus and merged it with the question of caste and identity-based discrimination in University spaces. This was when Rohith Vemula and his friends were expelled from the university and were called anti-national for defending the right to self-determination of oppressed nationalities. On the very day that the Occupation of UGC ended, Rohith Vemula committed suicide leaving behind the most jolting suicide note that raised the level of solidarity to the

question of the dignity of human life. This led to the mass movement of the rise of consciousness of caste oppression and attacked the very core of the saffron brand of hegemonic Brahmanical ideology. This chronology of events and resistances are not mere accidental occurrences. It is an embodied expansion of affect that multiplied the specific local acts of resistance into a mass movement of a large scale. Political agency and the rise of freedom of speech expressed as embodied emotions such as anger was transmitted to convert passive bodies into active political agents. Each event had archival traces of previous ones, and with the creation of each new event, new methods of protest and expression of dissent were born. The similarity of patterns is apparent from the similar performative simulation, gesture, and affect that they generated. A collective reiteration of resistance to oppressive government ideologies and the anger towards curbing spaces of dissent was visible.

Though these micro-level events are units of an umbrella macro movement, they still carry within themselves diverse micro-political discourses. Many conflicting micro-level battles are waged over the distribution of the body in space and control and production of physical territory. Thus micro-level protest performances bring the alternating and conflicting creation of identities, symbols, and meaning. They might have different nuances than the master narrative of macro-level protest. While the Macro level protest event creates a space for collective representation, affect, and identity, micro-level embodied performances create diverse particular embodied meaning, affect and emotions and help to differentiate between the range of diversity of protestors.

Protest theatre

The embodied performances we have looked at so far have performative dimensions to them but are not the same as an independent art form that has a formal structure and apparatus to it. Their validity exists only within the spaces of macro and micro-level protest spaces and does not have an independent journey as an art practice. Protest theatre encompasses a diverse range of formalized art practices that form part of a performative political intervention. It can range from puppet theatre to agitprop art forms like street theatre, open-air stage events to elaborate media stunts, to cultural jamming. Such mass-mediated performances use design, properties, symbols, assembled, and adorned bodies to convey particular cultural meaning and identities. Such performances are very vital to raise the level of awareness and consciousness of a collective body of protestors. They also include art education as every new performance of this kind brings about new thinking of perception and meaning of art. Comedy and satire form a key component of protest theatre as humor is seen as an effective weapon to fight fascism and other hegemonic forces.

Gaddar, a guerrilla theatre group from Telangana, staged the musical performance at HCU. A street play called *Eklavya* was performed by Progressive Theatre Group. Another stage Theatre called *The Last Letter* was performed by the students of HCU. The performance was organized at Velivada, the site where Rohith Vemula and his friends slept after being expelled from the hostel. It later became the center of protests against caste atrocities and the epicenter of the movement for Justice for Rohith Vemula. In the middle of this compound, a bust of Rohith Vemula was also raised on a pedestal. The very location of the space and the presence of witnessing bodies evoked the memory of Rohith Vemula every

time Eklavya was addressed in the performance. Eklavya became a metaphor for Rohith Vemula. The performance staged singing songs in an open-air space where the characters step forward and enact embodied gestures to illustrate the story. The songs are colloquial and are loaded with folkloric melodies and content. The form and content of this Protest Theatre not only created an oppositional force and a political articulation of dissent but also made visible the history and trauma written on the bodies of Dalit lives throughout centuries. It not only staged symbolic rejection of the State's Brahmanical monopoly but also affirmed the right to dignity of human life in the face of violent acts of hate crimes in the name of identity. These performances also take individuals on a diverse journey of memories triggered by gesture, emotion, and affect. Thus Protest Theatre has a more direct engagement with the audience using structures and content that move beyond the movement and bring into fore the diverse everyday settings of struggles.

Musical performances

Music has been one of the most key components of resistant movements in contemporary times. Whether it is the consumption of music as playback to a performance, musical concert, or protest songs sung in protests and rallies, music has a visceral effect on the bodies of the protestors. It helps in transcendence, retrospection, the evocation of memory and senses, and helps achieve catharsis in moments of crisis. Moreover, the powerful condensing effect of music makes it an ideal tool to evoke strong emotions and bring people together in affective solidarity. From the folk music of IPTA to reggae compositions of contemporary, musical genres of all forms are utilized for diverse spaces of protest. Musical performances help disseminate ideological praxis of movements in a way that is non-confrontational and cognitive. Music works as a perfect archive of

past traditions that can be used to evoke sedimented memories. Music thus becomes a river of embodied ideas and images between the generations of activists.

It can also be a perfect tool for satire where popular images and icons can be used in a melody to convey alternating ideas, images, and identities. Music is a medium that helps builds solidarity across identities, nationalities, and breaks the barrier of language and region. It does the double job of challenging oppression and building strong solidarity within the movement. It has been one of the most powerful embodies tools of resistance from the African Apartheid movement to the Women's suffragette movement to freedom struggles of colonized nations. The evocation of the song at any specific location brings in the archive of its global solidarity and makes the bodies present a single global entity united against oppression sung in the song as "The international ideal Unites the human race." The Fluid content of the song makes it readily available for diverse translations and rendition. It became a musical repertoire for the globe and became an international anthem for left-leaning movements and parties. It became a ritualized musical performance, which is not just sung at movements but also as national anthems and party and public events. It prepares the embodied bodies of activists for further action and is generative of affective solidarity. Thus musical performance, like guerrilla theatre, is an important tactical political intervention. It helps build an organized, nonviolent, renewable image of resistance.

During the immediate possibility of a threat, songs become an effective tool to recuperate and heal a community from collapsing into fear. In all of the student movements, we see a ritualized emphasis on protest songs as a tool to forge solidarity and heal the bodies for further fights. A group of students in JNU composed a choir called "We are JNU." This helped strengthen the crisis of identity that JNU students were facing. During Hunger Strikes,

Reggae concerts and Nirgun Sufi songs were sung to uplift the spirit of the striking students. They felt sublime and acknowledged a renewed will to fight by soothing harmonic songs that calmed their senses and gave the energy to carry on the resistance through their bodies. FTII invited Shambhaji Bhagat, Kabir Kala Manch , Piyush Mishra, and many other renowned singers to celebrate the culture of dissent and freedom. Their idea of resistance involved the evolution of self as a response to the democratic dictatorship that limits the self into a censored body. The musical drumming of bands and cultural groups at HCU similarly incited passion and excitement similar to the war music that evokes heightened affect of resistance and rage in the face of a violent, cruel enemy.

Thus Musical performances bring in emotional, cognitive, ideological, and physical dimensions of protests and produce heightened emotions and inspire action and affective solidarity. Its unique sensory and the corporeal effect is regenerative and evokes diverse memories of the past. It is the unifying performance to build solidarities across time, space, and cultural diversities.

Performative utterance and the rise of slogans

J.L Austin, in his seminal book *How to do things with Words,* theorizes what he terms as 'performative utterance.' In the philosophy of language and speech acts theory, performative utterances are sentences that are not only describing a given reality but also changing the social reality they are describing. These performative utterances are illocutionary acts that depend upon their efficacy to be ascribed as true or false. The efficacy of these speech acts thus depends upon their performative efficacy, which is determined by the receiving side. This theory opened up the question of linguistic components that constitute our world. Followed by Austin's work, many scholars worked on the efficacy of language. Judith Butler

in her recent book *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative,* asks a pertinent question: When we claim to have been wounded by language, what exactly do we mean? According to Butler:

> We ascribe an agency to language, the power to injure and position ourselves as the objects of its injurious trajectory. We claim that language acts and acts against us, and the claim we make a further instance of language, one which seeks to arrest the force of the prior instance. Thus, we exercise the force of language even as we seek to counter its force, caught up in a bind that no act of censorship can undo. Could language injure us if we were not, in some sense, linguistic beings, beings that require language to be? Is our vulnerability to language a consequence of our being constituted within its terms? (Butler 1997)

Thus language claims an agency over us as linguistic beings. But it is not the words alone that generate that effect on us; it is the mode of addressing, conditions of these utterances, pronunciation and tonal quality, gestural movement accompanying it as well the variables that constitute the subjectivity of the addressee. The term verbal assault and that words wound effectively mean that they cause symptoms of physical injury and pain. It is felt viscerally, bodily, and mentally and, in response, can lead to physical attacks, verbal abuse, death threats, hate speech, and other forms of physical and verbal violence. A mixture of all these responses was received and felt by the JNU community over the "alleged" slogans that wounded the "patriotic spirit of the nation."

On 9th February 2015, a group of students from a student organization in JNU organized an event titled "The Country without a Post Office: Against the Brahminical Collective Conscience, Against the Judicial killing of Afzal Guru and Maqbool Bhatt." It was supposed to be a cultural evening of protest with poetry, art, singing, etc which later turned into a clash between two opposing political organizations and individuals and became a Roshomon

like situation which was mediatized, doctored and became the controversial event that led to an entire global resistance movement

The aesthetic choice for the expression of politics is of critical importance here. Poetry and singing as a form of protest aesthetics mobilize bodies and sensations in the world of "rasa," or generation of emotion or aesthetic sentiments. They fuel imagination, invoke myriad human emotions; generate ecstasy and sublime effect on the bodies of the spectators. Even if one disagrees with the lyrics and content of these performances, by the very nature of its other aesthetic affects like tone, rhythm, melody, etc., the spectators nevertheless feel attracted and bonded to it in a passive cogent way. These choices have the potential to transform the spectators into a collective and transform their experiences in a unifying way. It is a constructive and self-healing method of appointing words in an aesthetic medium.

Poster of the controversial 9th February Event in JNU, New Delhi

However, it could not have hidden the political motif behind these aesthetics, and thus the permission for the event was canceled at the last minute. In response to this, as is an older tradition of dissent in JNU, a march was taken out. This march propelled the passive bodies of spectators into active political subjects. In its essence, sloganeering is a call; it demands that the call to be answered by the bodies present there. It is the formation of a collective political unity on the basis of ideological agreement. Slogan thus, unlike songs and poetry, polarises people into for and against parties. This speech act aims to mock, wound, assert political claims. The students marched from Sabarmati to Ganga Dhaba, had a verbal and physical clash with the opposite nationalist group of students, sloganeering began from both sides as a mode of a verbal clash. Later on, media and police got involved, and the rest is history. Until this point, the identity of a student was of little significance, and their ideological viewpoint was highlighted. After the "alleged" words of the slogans were out in the world, which included key words like "*Kashmir*," "*Azaadi*," "*Afzal Guru*'", "*freedom*," "*India/Bharat*," *Pakistan, Zindabad, Murdabad.* None of these words were new to the political repertoire of sloganeering in JNU. What was new, however, the absurd, the surreal, that was never painted on the oral landscape of JNU were slogans like "*Bharat tere Tukde honge, Inshallah*", "*Bharat ki barbadi tak jung rahegi*". These were the utterances that wounded the national sentiment, which provoked acts of hatred and violence against JNU community. This was the new, the event that ruptured the historical continuity of articulation of politics, the routine political repertoire of JNU students. The arrest of JNUSU president two days after it is the result of the efficacy of this injurious speech act.Language is the terrain on which the imagination of nation takes place. The other must be invoked to wound the self. Hence the fiction of Pakistan, the evocation of the other, is to hurt the sentiments of self, the Indian State. It is to deepen the insult that the linguistic injury of

praising Pakistan is added. The blow of these slogans was felt to such levels that even law was borderline to law being threatened and the constitution being suspended. Not adhering to principles of natural justice, the arrested student Kanhaiya Kumar was attacked by lawyers in court, all in response to the blows incarcerated by these slogans on the body of Mother India (see Appendix 1, table 3.6). The rational interpretations of these slogans, however, adhere to questioning the power of a system and using language to create and claim alternate imagination.

The slogans here became an embodied practice that blurs the line between life and art, performance, and the event of the Real. They are a liminal form of language and performance, neither completely representational nor dramatic nor completely rhetorical. The Azadi slogans became an umbrella which acquired new rhythms and new form wherever it traveled and almost explicitly became a call for dissent, for freedom from all oppressive structures. It resonated equally in the gender justice movement, in social movements, and in the student movement, but just like the "auratic" work of art, the origin is always quoted in the aura of the replica- the Kashmir and right to self-determination resounded with each call of freedom. The name-calling was accepted as a badge of honor and became a revolutionary idea of dissent.

Today when the truth is turned into literal images, and any evidence-based rational investigation of truth has taken a back seat, the modes of resistance, linguistic, and otherwise by students, artists, activists, and rationalists have brought in a new and emancipatory way of generating insult. At times when discourses are emotive responses more than rational logic, this is a visionary counter-revolutionary force. No doubt, it was the writers of this country who were the first to protest against the growing culture of intolerance and hate-mongering.[10] They understood when the growing atmosphere

of hate and violence was still at the level of language and rhetoric. The growing atmosphere of censorship enriched our sense of humor and creativity and made us look for interventions that lead us towards the goals of humanity.

It is almost encapsulated in the slogan used quite often in the student protest movement: " We fight, not only against your tyranny but for the beauty of our Dreams."

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From Silence: An Echo to Many Other Voices

Julia Zakia

Bosnia and Herzegovina was the most multicultural of the republics that formed Yugoslavia. Composed of three main ethnic groups, well spread throughout the territory, they had been living in peace for less than half a century, during the period of unification of Marshal Tito. A short period, historically, since in the Balkans there have not been fifty consecutive years of peace since the fire wars, passing through 500 years of Ottoman Turkish rule, reaching the first and second world wars, in an accelerated and violent plot.

At the edges and borders, already in the early 80's, barbed wires and canines on display. In the 90s, folds from hell: the worst of man and his gestures of horror. At that time there were more than four years of armed attack on Bosnia, as a mean and late echo of what had already been the successive wars of independence of the Yugoslav republics. The architecture of violence in the hands of self-militarized men, driven by imbalance and kerosene. Full of hatred and blind to the humanity on fire.

In what already announced the power of construction of false and fluctuating "historical truths" as in the current Fake News, Susan Sontag (2003) exemplifies and analyzes the dual use of photographs for counter-propaganda for the dissemination of violence, based on images of the Bosnian war. On her *Regarding the Pain of Others* she wrote "During the struggle between Serbs and Croats at the beginning of the recent wars in the Balkans, the same pictures of children killed in the bombing of a village were distributed by the propaganda services of the Serbs and also of the

Croats. It was enough to change the subtitles to be able to use and reuse the children's deaths." Mutual accusations of human rights violations while both violated those rights.

Between 2004 and 2008, I lived and studied in Belgrade and Sarajevo, having lived with Serbs and Bosnians, alternately. I was trying to understand how the common Serbian people, those many militant friends of a possible peace; how could those Serbs fail to stop Milosevic and his war machine before so many deaths and irreparable catastrophes? And like the surviving Bosnians, people with swollen eyes from so much crying, so much loss; how did they build a new geopolitics of affections with their neighbors and often relatives, across the border?

I had these doubts from history classes and from the few books and films about the region and the famous conflict. Up close, my detached judgments obviously soon fell to the ground, in a dry and bloody land. At each meeting and interview, open listening to the elaborations of the traumas experienced by the survivors, the attention to the uniqueness of each testimony and its semantic labyrinth.

In terms of the images, as the ruins began to appear in the landscape of Sarajevo and Mostar, any sign of theoretical and symbolic arrogance became rarefied. The repeated phrase sprayed on the walls in a nutshell carried the only latent thought among the tombstones replicated by public squares and gardens, in NATO's official language: "Fuck the War". Fuck the War so as not to silence the rebellious gesture of the spray-armed survivor. One red color spray against fifty cannons and a hundred artillery foci.

More than ten years after the end of the conflicts and the ruins were there, expanding the temporal and war dimension of the conflicts. Countless holes in walls and gates, in everything that is solid the hollow mark of firearms, in everything that is not solid signs of early and painful death.

An important part of my research is based on an interview I will make with Amela Vucina, a Bosnian pianist who is a survivor of Bosnian War (1992-1995) and an artist who I met and filmed in 2008 for the short experimental film *Rough Stone*. We've worked together in 2 films, we have spent much time together doing our art, materializing feelings and thoughts into music and cinema but we never really talked about what she lived in Mostar between 1992 and 1995.

How did she survive? How many people she lost? What were her feelings during those 4 long years? I just know that she never stopped playing her piano and even during the bombings she used to play with more intensity not to hear how close were the bombs, where were the horror soundings coming from. But now for deepening the research it's going to be the first time I am interviewing her, without camera, with wide open attention.

On the workshop "Self Care and ethical practice for Trauma-Facing researchers", Professor Bruce Shapiro makes an important and attentive panel about the challenges to the trauma-facing researchers, ethically and emotionally, giving us practical ways to incorporate as much ethical practice and self-care for trauma-facing situations. Professor Shapiro establishes practical strategies for helping the understanding of how trauma exposure affects both the subjects and the researchers.

Amela was a witness of the horrors of that war and built a musical self-reflection on her experience, her traumas and her pain. She prefers to sit and play the piano.

Amela plays the piano in the white, overexposed hall of a neighborhood school, it is getting dark and the screams and humming begin to compete with her melody. She plays louder and louder until she hears neither the shrapnel nor her own music.

In the last paragraph of "Personal Memory, Collective Tragedy" Ilana Feldman (2017) helps us to reflect on the power of poetry

"in the face of traumatic experience", writing that "perhaps only a poetic game with facts and fragments, as an inventory of losses and disappearances, is capable of supporting the shattering of the experience."

This thought resonates in the waves of Amela Vucina's music. It emerges from the ruins of the war and gives life to dramatic songs, which flow like a long and unique anti-bellicose opera. In her encounter with the piano keys that turn into sounds, she is the updating of suffering and the discharge of possible energies transmuted into music. All of Amela's songs seem to be the same song, with variations resulting from the encounters that the artist has or had, according to the waves of her firm and persistent hands.

Some of these songs compose the sound design of the short film *Rough Stone*, an 8-minute film that I directed and photographed in 2009, with Georgette Fadel in the role of a gypsy woman, a survivor – time wanderer – who meets pianist Amela and embarks on a physical trip in super-8 millimeters through the ruins of the city and the surrounding and dangerous minefields.

We did not film the instant of the violation, nor were we present at the fall of bombing afternoons, but the ruined landscape and the artists' performance present the overwhelming disproportion of the war. An entire army is built in the sound field, engaging in combat against a single female body dressed in rags, in the visual field. "The landscape of a city is not made of meat," as Susan Sontag wrote, "but broken buildings are almost as eloquent as bodies on the street. (Kabul, Sarajevo, eastern Mostar, Grosni, 6.5 hectares of lower Manhattan after September 11, 2001, the refugee camp in Jenin ...). Look, say the photos, this is it. This is what war does. And more, war also does that. War tears apart, it breaks. The war ravages. The war quarters. The war is devastating."

War destroys and leaves deep marks. In *Rough Stone* we try to denounce the facts with poetry, in a short audiovisual version that

does not have the reach of the mainstream media (which covered this war in a sensationalist way), but that reverberates an encounter between artists in the post-war period and the subjective effects of the moment of crisis.

Serious signs of crisis emerge from everywhere in the democracies themselves, as if determined and brutish power orders could no longer endure the slightest and most subtle signs of delicacy, other than those placed in a media-marketing circulation. False signs that lead to succumbing to failed gestures. A new type of alienation has been eroding what is vital in the individual.

In the case of the film *Rough Stone*, combative sensibilities are in a scenario of horrors and destruction, denouncing the war, casting itself as a body between stones and sounds. A camera, a body, a piano: dancing about demolitions. The research problem is linked to an incentive for further investigation of themes dear to the film: a poetic nature, although small, marginal and inconclusive.

Kaia, the wanderer of our film is the silent version of Sedina, Jasmina and Senada, the three women who donate their voices and healing processes to the documentary *Words of Women* by French director Laurent Bécue-Renard. How much pain does the dimension of trauma generate? There does not seem to be a possible calculation for this unfortunate equation, but this film is approaching the limit.

Sedina, Jasmina and Senada are three women who, for a year, participated in a work by the German NGO Vive Zene, which offered them therapy sessions as a means of resuming life. Structured according to the seasons, the documentary uses the nuances of nature to try to define the feelings of the protagonists. At first, women find it difficult to touch a wound that is still open, but slowly they begin to tell their trauma and as painful as it may be, it seems that the war needs to be left behind, somehow.

The therapist asks, "Sedina, how many of your close relatives died or disappeared in the war?" Sedina replies: "Who knows? I loved

them all. Brothers, brothers-in-law, uncles, cousins, 3 brothers, 2 brothers-in-law, plus 2 other brothers-in-law, 3 uncles, 4 cousins. In my husband's village there were more than 20." They wait in silence while both do the math: more than 34 dead relatives."

There is a scene that has marked me since the first time I saw the film. Women in therapy do massage once a week. They are reluctant. For many, the last time they were touched (in addition to their children) was their dead husbands or a rapist. Cameras are not allowed inside that room, so we see only one woman entering the room and then leaving. The difference is so dramatic. When she enters, her face is closed, seriously, as always. When she leaves, her face is open, her voice is soft, and she really smiles. It is as if a small miracle has happened for a few minutes. Simple gestures can be pain-transmuting agents. It is visible.

In the final sequence, the team returns to the villages they had to leave. For the first time after the traumatic departure, Sedina, Jasmina and Senada find the remains of their houses looted and destroyed by militiamen or neighbors from other ethnic origins. Most had never worked outside the home and therefore were unable to support themselves and the remaining children. Some had children as a result of rape during the war.

For them, in this film, it seems to be productive to speak and work on the traumatic experience through guided therapy. Jeanne Marie Gagnebin (2009) points out that "it belongs to everyone who has undergone a similar transformation process, but who has not been able or unable to tell it. The self tells his life so as not to let the story of others fall into oblivion, in particular of others who have no possibility of speech or who have already been speechless. Writing your life story can then mean, and perhaps in the first place, remember the death of others."

And that is exactly what the Bosnian women portrayed in the film do all the time, remembering the deaths of others. The film,

Calling the Ghosts, a story about rape, war and women, explains yet another possibility of making cinematography. The scope on the legal and institutional universe of corporate organization. This film goes beyond the numerical truth that it also carries: "more than two thousand women of Muslim and Croat ethnicity were raped by Serbian nationalists between 1991 and 1993."

I say further, because some of these women tell their stories in the film, triggering legal processes and some historical achievements. Through testimonies marked by abrupt cuts, interviews and photographs, the documentary recomposes the passage of Jadranka Cigelj and Nusreta Sivac through the concentration camp of Omarska, in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Childhood friends, ethnic Muslims and both legal professionals, Jadranka and Nusreta together experienced the horror of the "ethnic cleansing" process imposed by the Serbs. They were the first women to agree to speak to Mandy Jacobson and Karmen Jelincic, creators of the film and debuting directors.

For them, "speaking was a way to start channeling into work what used to be pain, hatred and a desire for revenge, turning everything into a deeper issue of justice," says Mandy Jacobson. Part of the documentary's objective, which was to include rape in the war crimes category, has been achieved, with the seal of the UN International War Crimes Tribunal. The second objective, which is to identify rapists, report them and bring them to trial in international courts, only in part, historical worms, many have been identified and accused of crimes against humanity, but many of them live in freedom, protected by the Republic of Serbia, pain and impunity as by-products of a historic catastrophe.

In the introduction to "Narrating the Trauma - The question of testimonies of historical catastrophes", Márcio Seligmann Silva (2008) emphasizes the historical catastrophes: "In these situations, as in the genocides or in the mass violent persecutions of certain

sections of the population, the memory of the trauma it is always a search for compromise between individual memory work and another one built by society. Here the already complex task of narrating the trauma itself acquires yet another set of determinants that cannot be ignored even when we are primarily interested in individual victims."

There are many voices that whisper or shout their traumas, in this historic catastrophe that was the Bosnian war. The voices of Amela, Sedina, Jasmina, Senada, Jadranka and Nusreta resonate and echo to many other multiple voices.

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Filmography

Chamando os Fantasmas, uma história sobre estupro, guerra e mulheres, Mandy Jacobson e Karmen Jelincic (Croácia, 1996)

Pedra Bruta, Julia Zakia (Brasil/Bósnia, 2009)

Que vivam as mulheres, Laurent Bécue-Renard (França/Bósnia, 2001)

Other Resources:

Trauma-informed Victim Interviewing: https://www.ovcttac.gov/ taskforceguide/eguide/5-building-strong-cases/53-victim-interview preparation/trauma-informed-victim-interviewing/

On the "frontline": Political Action and Solidarity Among Prisoners' Relatives Amid Covid-19

Natália Bouças do Lago

A number of contributions have been exploring, in the field of Social Sciences, the complexities that emerge with the worldwide advancement of coronavirus. Such contributions have investigated the challenges imposed by the need for social distancing between people, the quarantine periods, the increasing deaths or the effects of the pandemic on public policies and in the relations of people with state apparatus. It is a global challenge that has very particular local developments. In other words: the pandemic is a challenge on a global scale, but not a universal phenomenon. It has very different effects depending on the context and responses to the virus (Tsing, 2005; Segata, 2020).

My standpoint is Brazil, one of the epicenters of the pandemic. In the midst of the government's death policies under Jair Bolsonaro's administration and his denial in relation to Covid-19, one of the questions to be raised concerns the situation of the prisons – the challenges and violations that occur in this context. We have one of the largest prison populations in the world, comprising almost 800,000 people[1]. About a third of the prison population is on pre-trial detention, that is, they are imprisoned before a last resort conviction. Our prisons are overcrowded with young, poor, and

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[1] Data provided by the National Penitentiary Department (DEPEN). Available at: https://www.gov.br/pt-br/noticias/justica-e-seguranca/2020/02/dados-sobre-populacao-carceraria-do-brasil-sao-atualizados. Accessed on 11/30/2020.

black people from the outskirts of large cities[2]. The health conditions of prisoners are already worrying even if we disregard Covid-19, since they live in an environment with a widespread of skin diseases, such as scabies, and respiratory diseases, such as tuberculosis.

In times of "normality", the situation of prisons in Brazil and their countless human rights violations are generally perceived and reported through inspection visits carried out, for example, by public defenders or by people within state mechanisms fighting torture. These reports also occur through the *relatives of prisoners*[3], who regularly cross prison borders and take part in the process of releasing documents, attending public hearings, and organizing strategies for denouncing the current situations in prisons. The Covid-19 pandemic has interrupted such information flows and has caused, in the context of prisons, a kind of data "blackout".

In this article, I present an approach on prison contexts in times of pandemic. I write from my proximity with *prisoners' relatives*, especially *mothers* and *prisoners' wives* gathered through Amparar – The Association of Prisoners' Family Members and Friends. Therefore, I write about prisons from the context of São Paulo, and my close links to the social movements of *prisoners' relatives*. Amparar's headquarters are located on the east side of São Paulo, in a neighborhood made up of housing projects[4]. It is a territory marked

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2   Such a hasty profile of the prison population aims to demonstrate to the reader that the prisons reflect the countless racial and class inequalities that mark Brazilian society. Data on who is imprisoned in the country reveal that poor people, black people, and people living in the peripheral neighborhoods are the most targeted by police and justice apparatus. Obviously, such criminal selectivity is not exclusive to Brazil. Michelle Alexander (2011), on American prison policy, and Didier Fassin (2017), on prisons in the French context, indicate that the social and racial selectivity of the justice system is constitutive of prisons in different national contexts.

3   The words, expressions, and phrases in italics are original terms voiced by the people I have spoken to in field research.

4   I write about the Association in detail in my PhD dissertation (LAGO, 2019a). I followed the narratives of Railda Alves, one of the founders and coordinators of Amparar's activities,

as peripheral, which, from the dynamics of São Paulo's metropolitan life, means that it is in a neighborhood marked by poverty and the prison as a social experience directly linked to a certain social class and race. Within this scenario, Amparar, especially from the actions of Railda Alves and Miriam Duarte, has not stopped its activities at any time during 2020[5]. On the contrary, the questions brought to the association have multiplied and become even more complex.

Both Miriam and Railda are somehow in the "frontline" of the pandemic. They get involved in demands and actions that mix new and old dilemmas of those who deal with prisons and their violations. More than that: Amparar's *mothers* face old issues that, in turn, deepen with the pandemic, with physical distancing and with the indeterminacy that seems a permanent imprint in dealing with the institution of prison. By following their actions, which I have done remotely throughout 2020, I unveil some of the issues faced by *family members* of people arrested during the pandemic and the possible answers to these demands by Amparar, specially by Miriam and Railda, who work directly and daily with *relatives*.

My work as a researcher, in addition to supporting the actions, has been to systematize, document, and archive the demands that arrive and the consequent movements of Amparar. I use this information to fly over what has been undertaken within the scope of the association. My attempt is to outline a bit of the lively and frantic dimension of events, at the same time that I suggest continuities, that is, processes that are repeated in dealing with and

and sought the perspectives of *relatives of prisoners*, especially *mothers*, in Human Rights activism and in the struggle for the rights of prisoners.

5   Railda and Miriam founded Amparar in 2006, but they were involved in the struggle before that, already in the late 1990s, when their children were imprisoned and sent to Febem, an institution then responsible for the application of socio-educational measures of deprivation of liberty in the São Paulo state in São Paulo, today Fundação CASA. I use their real names with their consent. Their trajectories are public and well known and changing their names would seem like erasing the impact they seek to build.

fighting against prisons. They are new and old dilemmas that mark the movement of *prisoners' relatives* in the middle of Covid-19.

Times of (more) uncertainties: the absence of information and the suspension of visits

In June 2020, a man died in one of the penitentiaries of *fundão* [a Portuguese term designating the deep bottom, or a very distant place]. The name has been given by relatives of prisoners to the region in the state of São Paulo that concentrates a high number of prisons, indicating the long distances between the capital and the towns that host these penitentiaries. The news of the man's death was preceded by miscommunications between the prisoner's family and the prison unit's social service. It suddenly reached his relatives. The wife had not received any accurate information about her husband's health and the seriousness of his condition appears to have escalated rapidly. The prisoner was alive, and suddenly he was gone.

Upon reporting the casualty, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the institution's social worker stated that the burial would take place in the town where the prison is located. The distance from the capital and the coronavirus did not require any further explanations regarding the prison unit's refusal to be accountable for transporting the body. In light of the situation, Amparar mobilized a "task force" so that the corpse could be transported and buried in São Paulo, close to his family. At the end of a pilgrimage at different parliamentary cabinets who showed solidarity and contributed financially to the cost of transporting the body, the family finally managed to bury the man in São Paulo.

Difficulty in accessing information about prisoners is not a novelty that started to affect *relatives of prisoners* only during the pandemic. The sudden death of the man whose body was almost buried in the prison's town, and not in the deceased's

hometown would not have been unusual at other times. The lack of communication with family members and the indeterminacy about the procedures are not exclusive effects of the Covid-19, nor can the pandemic be held accountable.

In fact, this issue has been addressed within Amparar for a very long time and it is the first aspect that I believe needs to be highlighted. There have been many people, women for the most part, who arrive at the headquarters of the Association seeking help to walk through the myriad of knowledge, protocols, and procedures that encompass the prison of a family member. Finding lawyers and/ or public defenders; organizing documents and registering with the Penitentiary Administration Secretariat (SAP), which issues a mandatory registration card to carry out a visit; understanding the ever changing rules of the penitentiary units that govern visiting days and objects allowed in the *jumbo*, the provision bags that prisoners are allowed to receive from their relatives; monitoring the progress of legal processes in criminal courts and hearings.

Veena Das (2004) frames the State as "(...) neither a purely rational-bureaucratic organization nor simply a fetish, but as a form of regulation that oscillates between a rational mode and a magical mode of being" (225). As far as the State combines both rational and magical, the author argues that revealing this double aspect requires understanding how state authority presents itself in everyday life. My description of the procedures for conducting the visits, albeit quickly, seeks to demonstrate the "signature of the state" in a given set of daily rules and bureaucratic paths that end up turning into ordinary torture in the day-to-day life of prison visits. Such violences infiltrate the experiences of *relatives of prisoners* and shape their relations with prisoners, with justice, and with the prison institution.

The usual difficulties faced by *relatives* in dealing with prisons were intensified due to the Covid-19, particularly as a

result of the suspension of visits to São Paulo penitentiary units, a decision that was active between March and November 2020. The suspension of visits generated a set of immediate difficulties for relatives and prisoners, as well as efforts by relatives to work around the restriction. One of the immediate effects of this measure was that with the suspension of visits, *jumbos* were also restricted. Supplying the prison and people arrested during the pandemic period is only possible by sending food, cleaning, and hygiene products by mail. This measure has an important impact, given the centrality of the groceries sent by relatives to stock the prisons with the most basic items – without which life inside the prisons becomes even more impracticable (Godoi, 2017; De Paula e Silva 2019; Lago 2019a, 2019b).

The rules for sending and receiving groceries by mail simply make this modality more expensive than the regular *jumbo*, which relies on the labor of *mothers* and *prisoners' wives* to buy the items themselves, pack them according to rules of each penitentiary unit, and carry them through the prison borders so that they can be searched and accepted inside the prison during visiting days. These women's efforts to ensure that their imprisoned relatives have food inside the prisons are, in the context of the pandemic, amplified.

The lack of information regarding prisoners alongside the greater difficulty in supplying the prison with *jumbos* were two of the most mentioned issues by women who have reached out Amparar's headquarters since the suspension of prison visits in March. One of these women reported to Railda and me that a strategy to get news about her husband in prison was to get together with other women and pool their money for the payment of a private lawyer who could, by videoconference, *request* the prisoners, that is, talk to them and then find out about their conditions. One of the immediate effects of pandemic management in prisons, therefore, was the impact on

the already reduced budgets of families with people in the prison system and on prisoners' access to basic life supplies.

Another effect of the suspension of prison visits was the suffering caused by the difficulties to go along with their relatives in prison, expressed in a survey conducted by the Getúlio Vargas Foundation in a partnership with the Amparar Association[6]. Among the 1283 answered questionnaires, 69.6% of the respondents had been out of touch with their imprisoned relatives. The research was published in early July. At the end of the same month, São Paulo's state governor, João Dória, announced that relatives could carry out "virtual visits": conversations of up to five minutes with the person arrested, once a month. The duration and frequency of virtual visits already demonstrated that it would not be an adequate solution to guarantee the rights to coexistence between prisoners and their families. Added to this is the fact that not all families are able to register and meet their prisoners within the five minutes offered by the state.

The ordinary tortures, expressed in the long-lasting processes of institutional rules and procedures, have largely intensified. During this period, the lack of information about inmates deepened and the rules for being able to make a visit were transformed, that is, being able to meet (in person or remotely) with one's family member deprived of liberty. The difficulties of communication through the walls between prisoners and relatives are still on, especially if we consider that Brazilian prisons do not have public telephones available to the incarcerated population. The return of face-to-face visits in November has not translated into a return to the possibilities of communication between prisoners and family

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6   The research was carried out by the Bureaucracy Studies Center (NEB) of the Getúlio Vargas Foundation and was supported by Amparar. The data are in the report available at: https://neburocracia.files.wordpress.com/2020/07/rel04-familiares-presos-covid-19-depoimentos-v3.pdf. Accessed on 09/03/2020.

members, especially as a result of the numerous restrictions imposed on visits to prisons[7].

The agility in suspending visits and treating this suspension as the only appropriate measure to interrupt the progress of coronavirus in penitentiary units has produced yet another layer of criminalization on *relatives*. While prisons are closed to the inflows and outflows of women who visit their children and husbands, they maintain other flows: the transit of officials through prison walls and inmates, transferred from one place to another in the state, continued to take place throughout the pandemic period.

In addition, the suspension of visits and the delay in finding an alternative solution continue to reveal that there is still the ongoing belief that prisoners and their families are not entitled to their relationships. The indeterminacy regarding health and infections by Covid-19 in prisons has the effect of situations like the one presented at the beginning of the text: a family unfolding itself in arrangements and requests for help to transport a body that was only indicated as ill by the prison unit when he was actually dead.

Of complaints and decisions: house arrest and violations

If I need to remember anything, I'll call you, because I know you keep it. That was how Railda started one of our conversations in late June 2020. She had just returned home and wanted help with saving some information. Railda had been dealing for days with the case of a woman in prison who had received the right to house arrest. She

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7   The return to visits established a rotation between family members in order to reduce the flow of people through prison units. Visits that previously could have been weekly occur in this way every 15 days. There is a need to fulfill a physical distance between prisoners and visitors during the length of the face-to-face visit, which was also reduced due to the coronavirus. Finally, the São Paulo government banned children, adolescents and people over 60 years old from visiting.

was one of the few people released due to a series of *habeas corpus* filed in recent months by the São Paulo Public Defender's Office.

The decision defining the length of her sentence under house arrest came out on a Monday. Railda and the woman's family waited for the release permit on Tuesday, then Wednesday. The document was not issued until Thursday, but after 4 pm – too late for the woman to return home the same day. She was then released on Friday morning, when she met Railda, Miriam, and their relatives at the prison gate.

Her release and homecoming were documented by a journalist in the context of a report on the low number of imprisoned people who obtained house arrest during the pandemic, in spite of requests for release from lawyers and public defenders. According to the report, which used data from the state of São Paulo's Public Defender's Office, only 7% of the release requests were granted in the context of Covid-19[8].

The aforementioned case exposes novelties and continuities in relation to the arrests in the year of 2020: the novelty is the pandemic itself and the mobilization of Covid-19 in attempts to obtain the right to serve a sentence at home. The continuities are revealed in the slowness of complying with the decision and in its exceptional character, since the release was one of the few obtained among countless other attempts. The justice system does not follow its own rules, that is, it does not release prisoners who, due to the pandemic, would be able to serve time from their homes: those considered "at risk" due to their age or previous health conditions;

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8   There were 277 release orders out of 3,868 orders. The report indicates that the figures were obtained considering the requests made by the Public Defenders Office to the São Paulo Court of Justice between March 18 and July 14, 2020, a period that already includes the coronavirus pandemic situation. The report is available at the link: https://globoplay.globo.com/v/8753280/. Accessed on 09/03/2020.

pregnant women, nursing mothers, or those who have toddlers or small children.

The case as a whole still reveals one of the dimensions of the "fronline" occupied by Railda and Miriam during the pandemic. They went to the prison gate to monitor the woman's release. The release itself was the result of pilgrimages that were once exclusively physical and that have now also become virtual. Achieving someone's freedom from prison requires walking paths between prisons and prison administration staff, rooms, and professionals in the justice system, dialogues with the prisoner's relatives, waiting and insisting on the door of the prison unit, which takes time to release the person despite the release permit. These pilgrimages have been part of Railda and Miriam's routine since before the foundation of Amparar. They are now divided between phone calls, video appearances via apps, and physical presence protected by a face mask.

Video calls and app-mediated conversations are now more prevalent in the political activism of *relatives*. Over the past few months, Amparar participated in two moments of discussion, organized with the support of a state congresswoman, aiming at reporting violations of prisoners' rights[9]. The first hearing was closed: the parliamentary advisory board was careful to share the meeting link between people appointed by Amparar and the other groups that helped to build the online meeting[10]. The purpose of the first conversation was to collect information for a *complaint*, which was filed by the congresswoman's cabinet at the Secretariat of

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9   This is Érica Malunguinho, whose mandate opened space to discuss the effects of the pandemic in prisons, especially based on information shared by relatives of prisoners. Malunguinho is the first black trans woman to be elected for a term in the Legislative Assembly of São Paulo.

10   In addition to Amparar, the *Network for Protection and Resistance to the Genocide* and *Afape* (Association of Family and Friends of Prisoners and Ex-Prisoners) mobilized participants to the audience.

Penitentiary Administration (SAP), at the Court of Justice, and at the São Paulo Public Ministry.

The second hearing, which took place on the day the *complaint* document was filed by the congresswoman, was an "open" event, that is, it was broadcast as a live-streaming forum with representatives from the congressman's staff, associations of relatives of prisoners (Amparar among them), representatives from the *Pastoral Carcerária,*[11] and the Public Defenders Office – partners of the *relatives* in the systematization of complaints filed in the Executive and Judiciary Powers. At the *open hearing*, the congresswoman Érica Malunguinho opened the proceedings by mentioning *the breaking of civilizing pacts and Human Rights principles* by prisons in the country. She also highlighted the disagreement between the practices of São Paulo penitentiaries and the national legislation. While the speeches were taking place, *relatives* reported situations in the Youtube comments section that explained – or better, exemplified – the dimensions of Human Rights violation presented by the congresswoman's speech.

In addition to talking about the institutional paths taken by the complaints, the congresswoman also said that the same material had been delivered to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR)[12]. In this sense, there is an attempt to produce

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11 The Pastoral Carcerária (Prison Pastoral) is linked to the Catholic Church and acts in the prison sphere offering religious assistance to prisoners and intervening in the defense of prisoners' rights. More information can be found in research that had some level of connection with the actions of Pastoral (GODOI, 2017; PADOVANI, 2018) or on the organization's own website: http://carceraria.org.br/. (Accessed 02/22/2019).

12 The IACHR is a commission of the Organization of American States (OAS) based in Washington D.C. (United States) that is charged with "protecting human rights on the American continent". The cases analyzed by the Commission result in the production of reports and recommendations to the States. With these documents, members of the IACHR can suggest legislative changes within the framework of the denounced states or compensation for violations of the rights of victims recognized in the cases. More information about the IACHR can be found at: http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/. Accessed on 11/30/2020.

intelligible "cases" in the form of complaints (Lacerda 2012; Azevedo 2016) which could be used in different institutional instances such as the Secretariat of Penitentiary Administration (SAP) and in international human rights bodies such as the IACHR. This is an effort to systematize reports of violations faced by *relatives* and their prisoners, and translate them into a "language of rights" (Vianna 2013) and institutional documents.

Of food and live-streaming: distribution of provision baskets and political organization

The work of Amparar was not transformed by the pandemic just by the proliferation of virtual channels for conversation, connections, and the production of complaints. A series of appeals exploded with the beginning of the quarantine: requests for help from *relatives* and *survivors of the system*[13] to avoid house eviction, to pay rent and utilities, to get food, among other issues. The pandemic had the first effect of increasing the financial difficulties of the women who had previously depended on their precarious and intermittent jobs to make ends meet and to provide for their imprisoned kin. A *survivor* was fired once the boss learned that she was an *ex-convict*. Relatives who worked as informal cleaners lost their daily wages and, consequently, their earnings.

The aid requests that grew rapidly during the pandemic were as basic as they were urgent. At Amparar's headquarters, the requests arrived by people who were *relatives of prisoners* and also by neighbors of the association who noticed the movements and arrived themselves with their urgencies. Over the past few months, then, there has been an effort to make it possible to support those who arrive by asking for help. Amparar worked with other organizations

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13   *Survivors* are people who have already been arrested. There is a political intention in replacing the term *egress*, which is the word used by the state to identify who has been to prison. The word *survivor* marks the person's resistance to the horror of prison.

to obtain and distribute basic food baskets around its headquarters. Railda and Miriam began to mediate the processes of receiving and distributing donations, a movement that has spread to other neighborhoods and territories on the outskirts of large cities and which has been increasingly supported by women, *survivors of the system*, who help to distribute the obtained donations. Therefore, the past few months have required an arrangement between demands for prisons, information on lawsuits, and donations of food and money – the latter being driven mostly by the pandemic.

Amparar also mobilized a fundraising campaign to help fund more basic provision baskets and pay rent and bills. The campaign itself was organized with the efforts of a network of supporters of the association. Within their connections, they asked for donations and organized a series of live-streaming events as part of the campaign. The live streaming counted on conversations that had the participation of researchers, activists, and people who work in the prison field in a perspective towards *penal abolitionism*, defending the end of prisons altogether[14].

Two of these live streaming moments took advantage of the fundraising campaign to talk to *relatives* and *survivors* from different countries in a comparative perspective on the effects of Covid-19 in prisons. One of them had the presence and participation of two family members from Argentina and Mexico, who shared some of their situations and the challenges related to the pandemic. Both the Mexican and Argentinian participants were appalled by the fact that Brazilian prisoners did not have access to a public telephone in the prisons. Despite this shocking surprise, issues related to uncertainties and lack of information from *relatives* with the

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14 Two conversations are available on Amparar's Instagram profile (@ amparar.assoc). Another three conversations are available on Amparar's youtube page: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDlSRETpYP4RMps8WjJRZBg. Accessed on 09/03/2020.

suspension of visits were also indicated by Argentine and Mexican activists as something in common in the three contexts.

Another live streaming forum was attended by an American prison *survivor* who is now dedicated to fighting for the end of prisons. In the conversation, the activist spoke about the issues raised by the pandemic and that crosses prisons, while commenting on the protests and mobilizations in her country, especially the ones related to the deaths of black people due to police brutality. The exchange of information and strategies of struggle was guided by a perspective that *we learn a lot from each other* and that it is necessary to understand the struggle for the end of prisons as a *global issue*. During the live streaming events and their dissemination, the solidarity campaign for fundraising was widespread at the same time as the association's political work was carried out.

Thus, the demands from the last few months at Amparar mobilized the need to produce a flow of money for financial and food aid that was only possible through the support that occurred in different ways: the association's fundraising campaigns, the articulation with other organizations, the collection of food donations to be redistributed according to the demands and needs reaching Railda's and Miriam's cellphones. The urgencies and the need to respond quickly to them added yet another layer of work to their routines.

In addition to forwarding violations that took place in prisons, and articulating with other organizations in order to produce cases and file complaints, part of Amparar's efforts started to revolve around basic provision baskets and their distribution. Despite working with prisons, an issue that arises as *a global issue*, demands are also local and urgent.

Final considerations

In this article, Amparar's work functioned as a pivot that allows us to follow and understand some of the difficulties faced by *relatives* of imprisoned people amid the Covid-19 pandemic and the responses that the organized family members articulate in the face of this situation. Throughout the text, I highlight some points that mark the current state of affairs: i) the absence of information and visits, which are central to the dynamics of the relationship between relatives and prisoners; ii) the reporting work carried out by Amparar and their efforts to enforce house arrest sentences as a way of protecting people from exposure to the coronavirus; and iii) the *welcoming* of *relatives* through the distribution of provision baskets linked to a solidarity campaign that is also a political articulation in itself, since the live streaming event has strengthen a broader network of *relatives of prisoners*.

The somewhat panoramic treatment of the issues that arrived at Amparar and the possible actions in the context of the pandemic seek to outline one major point: the perspective that *relatives of prisoners* move in the midst of difficulties of the most diverse orders. It is not just a matter of dealing with the prison institution and the uncertainties that go through information (or its lack thereof), the supply of prisons and the coexistence, even if remotely, with the person who has been deprived from their liberty. Issues related to prisons and the impossibility of visiting prisoners add up to the basic and urgent needs of *relatives*, *survivors of the system,* and neighbors of the association, who also demand help.

The movements of *relatives* crisscross these different fronts, in which they struggle to thrive in any possible ways, seeking dialogue and denunciation within institutions identified as the State. Amparar continues to deal with the multiple layers of challenges and

violations that are imposed in regards to the prison and deepened with the Covid-19 pandemic. The narratives of *relatives*, who follow the situation of what happens in prisons from the outside, with little or no information, form a unique perspective on how Covid-19 affects prisoners and their relationships. Amidst the diverse bundles of activities and the production of complaints about prisons, there is an effort by activist organizations to document and keep information about what comes to the association and what is done regarding the pandemic urgencies. The *relatives,* while surviving, also document on their own ways the effects of the pandemic and the escape routes they manage to find. This article is, in a way, a contribution towards that effort.

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III. Social Movements
and Cultural Agents

A message from the Guarani to the world: words drawn from centuries of struggle and strength[1]

David Karai Popygua, Verá Mirim
Márcio Mendonça Boggarim and Valdemir Karai Poty

Indigenous Peoples and the Guarani: presenting who we are and where we live

In Brazil, there are currently 305 different indigenous peoples, who speak 274 native languages. We are part of the Guarani people, an indigenous group that inhabits a vast territory that stretches across the Bolivian Andes, Northern Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Brazil. So, the Guarani are present in an extensive portion of South America. However, we Guarani do not consider this part of the planet, this continent, as America. We see it as *yvy rupa*[2].

The Guarani population in Brazil is around 84 thousand people, in Bolivia there are approximately 82 thousand, in Paraguay we are nearly 65 thousand and, in Argentina, the estimates are of 42 thousand Guarani. In Uruguay only a few Guarani families survived the history of massacres and genocide that were perpetrated against our people, so there are very few Guarani currently living in Uruguay.

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1 Transcription, notes and translation by Fabio Nogueira da Silva and Adriana Queiroz Testa.

2 *Yvy rupa* (yvy = land + rupa = bed/platform). According to the Guarani, *Yvy rupa* is the terrestrial platform that supports the world. It is often translated as "the entire land" or "one continuous body of land".

This land is **yvy rupa**, and we were already here

Our people had to learn to live among the Spanish and Portuguese since 1492, when the Spanish invasion began. Despite this, we Guarani have been able to preserve our awareness and regard for what it means to live on this land. We call this *teko porã* – "the good/beautiful way of living", and we strive to continue living this way.

When we refer to *yvy rupa*, we are saying that this land is whole and integrated, that the boundaries of countries and nations are artificial limits imposed by people, but, beyond the human beings and their divisions, we recognize that the land itself is a live organism that sustains the lives of animals, plants and humans.

We want to share this knowledge of our history with you and convey this understanding of the land, which is a very strong characteristic of the Guarani people: the land does not belong to us, it is not a thing that can be owned. Therefore, we would never say that this land is ours.

Every culture and people across the world, within their knowledge, philosophy and way of thinking, have a sense of well-being and of developing a good way of living. However, if this well-being exists, we must also acknowledge that its opposite also exists; that there is a lot of ill-being in the world. This is precisely why we Guarani have been struggling to survive, because hardship and ill-being followed the European settlers when they came to this territory that we call *yvy rupa* in 1500.

A sustainable life for the survival of the land and all living beings: against predatory development and accumulation of material wealth

It is vital that all peoples around the world resist this contemporary notion of progress and development – this belief that a country can only exist if it has a thriving economy, if it is financially wealthy and produces material wealth. We Guarani do not think in this manner. We seek to live life with what is necessary to fulfill our basic needs, because if we take more from the land than is required for our sustenance, we will certainly destroy this planet's capacity to provide life and we will also be destroying the survival of our future generations.

We are sending this message to you, speaking from within a house that we call *opy*, this is the house where we gather to pray. The Guarani people come together to pray every day. Where there is a Guarani community, there are always daily prayer rituals. We do not pray seeking prosperity and wealth for ourselves. Instead, we pray for the rain to continue existing, for the cold and heat to continue in balance, for our children not to become ill, for our elders to remain among us, so they can continue to give us guidance and knowledge. We pray for the survival of our people. And, our prayers for the land to continue giving us life are not only for us Guarani, but include all human beings and other creatures.

What does it mean to be indigenous?

Five percent of the world population is made up of indigenous people. This accounts for approximately 350 million people. But what does it mean to be indigenous? The word indigenous refers to native peoples, those who inhabited a place prior to the colonization processes that spread across the globe.

We indigenous peoples are peoples that have resisted the processes of colonization and have been able to hold on to and develop our own languages, beliefs and art forms. We do not accept, in any way, shape or form, a model of colonization that seeks to impose upon us a way of thinking, a religion, a faith and a way of living on this land.

If you are among those who do not accept a model of globalization in which a few large economies manipulate and control all natural resources and human lives, in addition to exploiting people through labor, if you object to this and envisage another possibility for human existence that respects nature, then you can also be considered indigenous.

Why indigenous populations are vital to the world

A very important and urgent question to reflect upon is: what is the importance of indigenous peoples for humanity and life on the planet?

Without a doubt, if indigenous peoples did not exist, humanity would have to invent indigenous peoples. Why? Because currently the indigenous – 5% of the world's population – protect 82% of the planet's biodiversity.

In Brazil, the indigenous lands account for 13% of the territory. However, the indigenous make up only 1% of the Brazilian population. That means that, out of a total population of roughly 200 million, there are fewer than 1 million indigenous people in Brazil. So, when Brazilian president, Jair Bolsonaro, says: "*You, indigenous, have too much land*", we are compelled to ask if, in fact, there is too much land for such a small indigenous population.

It is true that there are some large indigenous lands in Brazil, such as the Kayapó land that is the size of Portugal and the Yanomami land that is comparable to other European nations. It

would seem that these are very large indeed. And, in that sense, a journalist once asked the great and wise Kayapó leader, Roani: "Raoni, don't you think the Kayapó land is too big for a group of only 9 thousand people? The Brazilian population could take this land, use it to promote agrarian reform and distribute it among the Brazilian population".

How did Raoni respond to this? He stated the following: "Indeed, the Kayapó land is very large. It is a very large land being protected by few people so that the entire world can survive". This is an example of indigenous wisdom and it is this wisdom that makes us indigenous.

We indigenous peoples do not measure the value of the land according to the price of a square meter or hectare. In the city of São Paulo, the price of a square meter varies between R$5 thousand and R$10 thousand[3]. The Guarani land we inhabit has an area of 532 hectares, but we refuse to measure its worth according to the price attributed per meter or hectare, even if it is located in São Paulo, the largest metropolis in South America. How, then, does an indigenous people, the Guarani people, measure the value of the land? We value the amount of life that exists on this land. The more life that can exist on a piece of land, the more sacred it is and, therefore, more important for us to protect.

The jurua (non-indigenous people) constantly change, for lack of knowledge on how to live well on this land

We, Guarani, have not changed our vision. Even after 519 years of violent massacre against our people, we have not abandoned our way of thinking. But, it just so happens that the non-indigenous

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3   These values in Brazilian currency amount to approximately US$ 877.20 and US$ 1,754.40, respectively.

population, the *jurua*, can never make up their minds. In Brazil, they started off with a Colony, enslaved other people and exploited the natural resources. After that, they had an Empire and instated an Emperor, who was followed by another Emperor. Later, they formed a Republic, which was interrupted by a long period of Military Dictatorship. When that regime ended, they created a new Constitution, which has been called a "Citizen Constitution". However, in 2019, an extreme-right, fascist and genocidal government came into power.

All of this leads us to question: is it true that indigenous peoples do not know what they want, as many falsely accuse, or would it be more accurate to acknowledge that the non-indigenous do not know how to live on this land?

We indigenous peoples are not frightened by a totalitarian government such as President Bolsonaro's. We have never truly had our rights respected and guaranteed. We have been able to resist oppressive governments, again and again. We have resisted against all forms of oppression that have been imposed upon us since 1500 to this day. If we are still alive, it is because we know how to survive.

We are living on the planet's smallest Indigenous Land. The Jaraguá Indigenous Land is the smallest territory in the world to be officially recognized and reserved for a native population[4]. The territory where we live is currently surrounded by three major transportation routes: the Rodovia dos Bandeirantes, Rodovia

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4   The Jaraguá Indigenous Land, inhabited by a population of approximately 600, was officially demarcated by the government in 1987, with an area of only 1,7 hectares. A new process of demarcation of this land, that proposes an area of 586 hectares, has been in course since the beginning of 2000. However, this process has been paralyzed due to (1) the refusal of the federal government to implement the measures required by law and take action in guaranteeing and protecting indigenous rights established in the Constitution; (2) A lawsuit filed by the Government of State of São Paulo against the demarcation, claiming that part of the Indigenous Land overlaps the limits of Jaraguá State Park.

Anhanguera[5] and Rodovia Mario Covas. These highways surround and confine our territory, but they cannot confine our spirit. Our spirit is free to wander through our country and planet.

When the Portuguese came to this territory where Brazil is located, they initially began to exploit a tree called pau-brasil. This is a tree native to the Atlantic Forest, where the Guarani people live. They exploited this tree to near extinction. People in Brazil are called "Brasileiros" (Brazilians), a name used to refer to people who exploit the tree pau-brasil. Are we Guarani going to be "Brasileiros", in that sense? Never. And you should know that the patches of forest that still remain here will only disappear if they are able to kill all of us. As long as there is one Guarani alive, we will continue protecting life on this planet.

Some of the struggles we currently face

The number of indigenous students in Higher Education is proportionately low, but growing in Brazil. Being an indigenous person in a university is one of our biggest challenges, because we suffer a great deal of prejudice and discrimination of all sorts. Nonetheless, we persevere. Many indigenous students have to leave their villages for years in order to attend university. They become very isolated and lonely because, in addition to having to live in cities that are distant from their villages and families, the reality and

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5   The Rodovia Anhanguera and Rodovia Bandeirantes, that border the Jaraguá Indigenous Land on the West and East, respectively, carry in their names references that evoke the history of Brazil's violent and racist colonial past. The Bandeirantes were groups that charged from São Paulo to other parts of the territory in search of gold and precious stones, but mainly chased fugitive slaves and went after indigenous populations that were captured and sold off as slaves. Anhanguera was the epithet given to a famous leader of these expeditions, whose violence granted him a name that in the Guarani language means "old devil" or "evil spirit". The fact that these major transit routes were named after such figures, demonstrates that they continue to be celebrated as heroes and founding fathers.

conditions they endure in these cities are totally different from their lives in the indigenous villages.

Along with the current struggle to guarantee our access to education, from Elementary to Higher Education, we must acknowledge that indigenous peoples have been suffering in many other aspects, since the invasion and colonization of our territory. We have had to deal with organizations that were created with the sole purpose of hunting down and controlling the indigenous. This is not a thing of the past. In fact, Brazil's President recently defined the indigenous as indigent, saying that we don't produce anything and we don't pay taxes.

We frequently discuss political issues in our villages and evaluate the government's actions, but the fact is that no government that has come into power has ever been good for the indigenous peoples in Brazil. In the past, many politicians would lie and try to hide their contempt for the native populations. However, today we have a President that doesn't conceal this and speaks openly about his disdain for us.

In the past, during the Dictatorship, there were indigenous persons that were taken from their communities and trained by the military to impose martial conduct and repression in their villages. Today, we see this happening again.

Within the government institutions, there are indigenous persons that joined the armed forces and were trained by the military to speak and act against their own people. This has been very prejudicial to our cause, because when an indigenous person associated with the armed forces is appointed to work in a public institution, the federal government feels unhindered in making claims, such as: "We have put an indigenous person in charge of the

indigenous health service[6]. She certainly understands a great deal concerning indigenous health issues, because she is indigenous and lives in a village." But none of that is true, because these are actually members of the armed forces that may identify as indigenous, but they don't live in villages and many of them never have.

This happened during the Dictatorship and, now, we see history repeating itself. Since the beginning of the current government, many indigenous persons have been killed in their villages and territories, for the mere fact that they are indigenous and have a different life style.

This is very serious and sad, but this kind of information does not reach people. It is not published in newspapers and mainstream media outlets, because we are invisible to the large media groups. This is why we are working to expose what is really happening to us in this country. The situation of indigenous peoples in Brazil is extremely difficult.

Closing words

We want to stress that our people, the Guarani, is being forgotten and ignored by the media and, therefore, we are invisible to the world. Many countries are unaware of all the violence and retrogression that assails us. But, here, we have an opportunity to speak to people who come from around the world and expose our reality, in the hope that this will be shown to societies in every

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6 There are several cases in which the current government has placed members of the armed forces who identify as indigenous in public institutions that deal with indigenous affairs. It should be noted that their identity as members of indigenous groups has often been objected by these very groups. The case mentioned here refers to Sílvia Nobre Wajãpi, who was appointed by President Bolsonaro as head of the Secretary of Indigenous Health. She is a member of the Brazilian army and claims to be part of the Wajãpi indigenous people, despite objections made by leaders and organizations of this indigenous group.

nation. We treasure this opportunity to share our thoughts with people who have been illuminated by our Great Father. Those of you who have come all this way to our village or are reading this from have been illuminated and sent by Him to hear our voices and learn about our situation.

That is why we Guarani from the Jaraguá Indigenous Land are grateful for the opportunity to share our words with illuminated people who will be able to carry our voices further on, so that more people can become aware of our reality. We hope to spread this information, so that more people can join us to overcome the violence and retrogression that we are facing and help us in any way possible to find peace. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

You will always be welcome in our village, not only this village, but the other Guarani villages that you may someday come to visit. Our villages will always welcome illuminated and responsible people who come to join and aid our cause. *Ha'evete*! Thank you!

Inhabiting the Forest in the Twenty-First Century

Claudia Vukojicic

In the last few months, life at Corumbê has gone through some evident transformations. Besides the covid-19 pandemic that shut down all businesses for approximately four months, two public wharfs were installed in the region, reactivating the traditional connection between the coastal communities via the sea. There was also a fire in June 2020, which burned down part of the local church – *Nossa Senhora dos Remédios do Corumbê* [Corumbê's Our Lady of Remedies] –, symbol of the fishermen's traditional community. The incident brought about particularities on the place's history alongside the communities wishes for the future of the church's surroundings.

The territory is in constant transformation.

Reading and dialogues are at the core of *Contemporary Corumbê*, seeking the territory's potential and development through an informal exchange.

The greatest question is how not to collectively repeat a model of unsustainable disorganized occupation and growth, which is not aspired by anyone at the individual level, but which is the most recurrent one in similar communities across the country, resulting in numerous problems such as violence and environmental degradation.

The *Contemporary Corumbê* is an initiative to help to establish ideal conditions for the best future outcome at Corumbê, Paraty's fishermen community, looking for alternatives to the exploratory and predatory tourism industry.

We promote meetings and debates that support the local population to reflect upon the potentials of the territory. We seek to favor the necessary communication for the creation of new practices, more connected to sources of creativity and awareness.

We are currently living a transition from the previous rural nature of the region to the consolidation of its urbanization, which has taken place through the information occupation of the coastal lands and the construction of summer homes.

By looking for a sustainable development model, aligned with the territory's specificities, we have decided to conduct an intervention between the preserved forest and the land that is now open for occupation.

The forest is the focus of the project, once we are in the middle of the Atlantic forest, one of the richest biomes on Earth, with its infinite possibilities. We have mapped a series of potential scenarios through the study of the various aspects of the region: economic, environmental, social, cultural, historical, and legal.

From these studies, some potential scenarios can and should be combined with each other in order to create a project to integrate various issues with a holistic approach in an harmonic relationship between tradition and innovation:

The production of an agroforestry system, strengthening an activity that has been emerging spontaneously, still in an embryonic level though: the growth of foods in connection to the forest, as well as the collection of seeds and seedlings for environmental restoration and compensation, sustainable agroforestry practices, and growth of ornamental species;

Implantation of raw material processing infrastructure, extracted sustainably from the forest, as, for instance, to produce flour and biodegradable disposable places from 100% natural materials;

High research on genetic resources: stimulating research on the existing biodiversity, mainly of native forest fragments; collection, research, storage, and production of seeds for commercial trade;

Experimenting low impact technologies: laboratory to construct and produce solutions on low environmental impact architecture for smaller towns and low income populations;

Sustainable tourism: experimenting tourism strategies with formation, specialization, and empowerment of the local population.

How can such a complex project be initiated?

In order to make it viable and actively involving the local population from the beginning, we have decided to start by making an intervention between the preserved areas and the lands that are currently going through urbanization, consolidating a nucleus of homes with sustainable architecture, accessible to a low income public and designed for the people who will live and work directly with the forest, strengthening their affective connections with the territory, which also favors its preservation.

With the first phase of the project's implementation, and aware of the fact that the organism manifests its singularity throughout its expansion and development, we anticipate a gradual evolution of the other phases through the occupation and integration with other areas, closer to the BR 101 highway all the way to the coast – an area that continues to grow in terms of the urban fabric.

Among the various challenges we will face, one is to find the sustainable balance, being flexible and fluid, within our values and principles, and promoting the exchange between the different communities and a broader integration with the social fabric, overcoming the spatial segregation between the towns.

The *Contemporary Corumbê* is inspired by the notion of an open city, where the study of the territory is fundamental to favor the equilibrium between its organisms.

We are in a long-lasting cycle, aware that each new development solution brings in a new challenge.

Dance, Creativity, and Life: An Experience Report Working for a Contemporary Dance Company in Rio de Janeiro.

Clara Amorim Cavalcante[1]

Dancing beyond the scene

Lia Rodrigues Dance Company is a Brazilian contemporary dance company, located in Rio de Janeiro, founded and directed by Lia Rodrigues, which celebrated its 30 years in 2020. Given that Brazil has gone through an ongoing process of losses in the field of arts and culture, Rodrigues's artistic work has gained its own relevance and singular meanings.

Throughout the years, the Company has used many different spaces in the city in order to perform. At first it was located in Rio's south side, a predominantly bourgeois region of the city, with an elitist – both socially and economically – community. Since 2003, invited by the company's playwright, Silvia Soter, Lia Rodrigues has been collaborating with the institution *Redes da Maré*.

The company's activities were then relocated to the Maré complex, the largest group of *favelas* in Rio de Janeiro. There are over 137 thousand inhabitants occupying the area, living a completely different lifestyle in comparison to the city's south side, marked primarily by a state of social vulnerability and lack of effective public policies guaranteeing the basic rights of a democratic society to its population.

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1   Text translated by Thiago Marcel Moyano.

As stated by Lília Schwarcz (2020), Brazil's democracy is somewhat a misunderstanding, in the sense that it has not been applied to all of its citizens, and its basic principles of equality and freedom are usually not followed. In a democracy, citizenship must include a large number of people, taking into account their singularities and differences. In a male-oriented, racist country with such alarming social disparities, there can be no full democracy. When all plural voices can be heard, when historical differences can be passed on, and when racism and other forms of social discrimination are overcome, only then could we experience a democratic state.

It is within this context that the partnership between the company and *Redes da Maré* is established. Struggling for a more egalitarian society, the *Centro de Artes da Maré* [Maré's Art Center] was created – space that hosts the company, where many of its creations come to life – as well as *Escola Livre de Dança da Maré* [Maré's Free School of Dance], which are structured under two main axes. On the one hand, there is the Nucleus 1, open to all of those who wish to take art classes, and Nucleus 2, which from time to time selects 25 young people (between the ages of 14 and 23] through an audition so that they can further pursue their dance education.

Throughout the Company's years of activities at the Maré *favela*, workshops and open courses with guest teachers and artists have been offered, alongside artistic residencies and performances that started to attract a more diversified public. As free of charge initiatives, they help to democratize the access to the arts and culture, fighting for a more integrated society and city.

> As Marx and Engels long ago observed, art is a form of social consciousness–a special form of social consciousness that can potentially awaken an urge in those affected by it to creatively transform their oppressive environments. Art can function as a sensitizer and a catalyst, propelling people toward involvement

> in organized movements seeking to effect radical social change. Art is special because of its ability to influence feelings as well as knowledge. (Davis 283)

The company's work has been recognized for its sensibility and socio-political engagement in a way that dialogues with global events, calling our attention to issues that have been systematically made invisible. Existing throughout the years, especially with such characteristic, has only been possible with hard work, drive, persistence, resilience, and investment by the direction, as well as those who continue to contribute to write the company's history.

I started my own personal journey with the company in 2013, almost eight years ago, and since the very beginning, after writing my presentation letter and auditioning, I have been invited to look "beyond the scene", talking about, for instance, what I believed to be the dance scenario in the country.

Ever since, I have danced numerous pieces with the Company and actively participated in the writing process of three creations. The most recent one premiered in 2018, and it is through the process of bringing this show to life that I intend to trace the steps of this journey. *Fury* "came on with full force," its intensity invited us to look around in order to collectively create a space of freedom, sharing, and imagination. The following text illustrates our major questions:

> How can one glimpse at the time in a world dominated by infinite contrasting images – scary and beautiful, somber and bright – marked by an infinity of unanswered questions and crossed by so many contradictions and paradoxes? How can one peer at the time in a world in fury? How can one give visibility and voice to what has been made silent and invisible? [2]

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2   Excerpt taken from *Fury*'s program for the 2019 season at Sesc Consolação, São Paulo, Brazil. My own translation.

It took seven months for the piece to come to life. At the time, the company was starring a brand new formation: four students from Nucleus 2, three senior artists, and two new dancers. We were, therefore, nine people getting to know each other and starting a new creation process. For the first time in the company's history, most performers came from Maré, and black representation was no longer an exception in a professional group that had been formed primarily by white Brazilians.

Lia, the company's choreographer, started off by sharing a little bit from her personal readings. Over all, literature has always been an important part of her creations and, in this case particularly, authors such as Ana Maria Gonçalves, Mário de Andrade, Conceição Evaristo, Aimé Cesaire, Clarice Lispector, Harriet Ann Jacobs, Achille Mbembe, Futhi Ntshinglia, Carolina Maria de Jesus, and Djamila Ribeiro nurtured our conversations and creative process.

Situations from our daily lives as well as world events were brought to light, questioning, among other things, how come we were all capable of living amidst the chaos and carrying on, even when life and art do not seem to make sense, recognizing, thus, different realities and standpoints.

A selection of photographs was one of the tools we used. We chose many images and categorized them under thematic groups, such as "love", "joy", "war", "women", "childhood", "demonstrations", "police", "slavery", "family", "parties", "fashion", "dance", "education", "nature", "violence," and "peace". They were all placed on a large mural so that we could constantly see them all, look back at specific ones whenever needed in our bodily experimentations.

We reproduced, then, forms and situations, accessed emotions and created – both individually and collectively – universes and new meanings.

> Nonstop imagery (television, streaming video, movies) is our surround, but when it comes to remembering, the photograph has the deeper bite. Memory freeze-frames; its basic unit is the single image. In an era of information overload, the photograph provides a quick way of apprehending something and a compact form for memorizing it. The photograph is like a quotation, or a maxim or proverb. Each of us mentally stocks hundreds of photographs, subject to instant recall. (Sontag 38).

The aforementioned proposition could be confirmed throughout our daily practice. We came up with creative apparatuses through images, readings, videos, dances, sounds of nature, words, songs, rituals, random objects, old costumes from our own archives, and whatever else was available around us, even something as simple as a tree branch. The possibilities were infinite and it was our job to recognize and experiment them.

Thus, various issues were brought about. How can anything be done alone? How can we create in smaller groups? How can we overlap images and situations in space? How can one reproduce what had been created by others? How can one transform the other's creation? How can one create with a set of my others? How can re-signification take place? How can one make poetry? How can one embody the unnamable? How do words, images, and sounds become the body?

The company's creative processes are all collaborative. At all times we are invited to contribute, and the final piece stems from this ongoing exchange. There is no fixed methodology for the creation itself. Lia Rodrigues presents us, at different moments, either blurred or more defined designs for what she envisions to be the final outcome. We worked 7 hours a day to create, re-create, transform, destroy, and build new pathways, always together. Nothing comes ready made to be executed, once everything goes through practice, the body, experience, questions, and the discovery of senses. We are always open to new ideas, practicing what it is to

listen to the other, respect, deal with personal anguish, crises, and deserts that accompany the process that is always permeated by all kinds of affection. In this way:

> In times of blurring the essential, of fabricated realities and multiples crises (…) we are seduced by diversity, constructive confrontation, horizontal and responsible relationships stimulating the human evolution and the democracy that is so fragile these days. (Cruz qtd. in Guzzo, Federici and Liberman 114)

Considering the fact that:

> Artistic creation does not have the commitment to promote social and political change. But, by giving visibility to crises, it explicits issues not always visible in our daily lives. Thus, links are establish, with the potential to destabilize habits and beliefs and point toward possibilities. (Greiner 11).

Thus, as a performer, I am particularly drawn by the way the creation is woven. We could count on a generous director and choreographer who is truly interested in the singularities of each dancer, not giving up until each and every one of us can express our best artistically. By opening space for individualities, we also have the chance to dive into the unknown and, collectively, build something greater. It is through the exchange that we create pathways and offer resources so that through the body's movement life can also be moved.

In *Fury*, we come up with new beings, live the images, create solos, reproduce daily actions in group (fights, mass robberies, attacks, etc.), dance according to Josephine Baker, Childish Gambino, and the children from everywhere – free, joyful, and inspiring –, which we access through videos available online. Together we create worlds and Lia kindly offered us a way, designing the contours of the show, as it happens in all of her works.

It was amidst this process that the show was born and flew across the ocean to premiere in Paris, at the *Chaillot* National Theater, in November 2018. Since we did not have any financial support from Brazil, the Company has survived thanks to our international reach and production, with European financial aid, reason why we premiere most of our works there.

What can be seen in *Fury* is our voice, our very existence, that which silences us, which moves us, and makes us stronger. Therefore, I see *Fury* as an engine for life, for transformation, and for denouncement. In times that demand answers to obligations and automatisms, to get to know and work with the body is a revolutionary act: by opening spaces and bringing autonomy, it is a way of confronting a system that is constantly inciting disconnection and alienation from the self.

Fury has been performed in over twenty three cities in seven countries with different impact and reactions from the audience. The socioeconomic contexts directly interfere with how spectators perceive the piece. A white European audience, used to a welfare structure which does not require them to worry about the minimum basis for existence, is foreign to the Brazilian context in its complexities, it does not know, among other things, the need and urgency of being creative in order to survive.

Christine Greiner (2019) released a meaningful statement that better translates how such discrete contexts result in different perceptions:

> I had the opportunity to see the show twice in Paris, in very different venues – Chaillot's National Theater and the 104. Chaillot's audience is sophisticated, wealthy and predominantly white. The questions after the show surrounded certain details of the piece: the soundtrack (which disturbed many of them), the choreographic concept, the dancers's nudity (which also disturbed the audience) and so on and so forth. At 104, the space is quite different. Located at the 19*e arrondissement* this cultural center is defined by its director,

> José-Manuel Gonçalves, as a collaborative artistic platform that is open to diversity, aiming at creating a space for experimentation. The public was completely distinct, more popular in the best sense of the term, and, this time, what destabilized the audience was not the soundtrack, or the dancers's nudity, but what the show opens wide, reaching the end of the piece with posters asking who had killed Marielle Franco. A lot of people were moved and I could barely speak, feeling butterflies in my stomach[3].

The "wealthy, sophisticated, and white" audience was provoked especially by the technical and structural aspects of the piece, without necessarily recognizing themselves in what they saw.

> Bourgeois aesthetics has always sought to situate art in a transcendent realm, beyond ideology, beyond socioeconomic realities, and certainly beyond the class struggle. In an infinite variety of ways, art has been represented as the pure subjective product of individual creativity. (Davis 292-293)

On the other hand, the more "popular" European audience, like the Brazilian public, was moved mainly by the infinitude of symbols and images the piece might suggest. Many people underscored the power relations brought about each time a body is dragged across the floor, each time a man confronts a woman, each time a woman carries a man, or even, when a white man is supported and elevated by all of the other dancers. In Brazil, the identification is even more direct and immediate. At different times, black men and women from the *favelas* recognize themselves in the diversity of bodies, in the contours and drawings they form on stage.

I have recently had the chance of seeing the piece from another angle. Due to an injury, I spent the rest of the season watching what I had only danced and lived from within. There is something surreal, dreamlike, and at the same time, realistic in *Fury*. The images

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3 Statement published at *Fury's* program for the 2019 season at SESC Consolação, São Paulo. My own translation.

are dismantled and reconstituted all the time. I saw myself in an endless journey, with undefined pathways, precious in its capacity to transform and reveal different narratives.

From this side, I no longer recognize my colleagues as individuals, they do not have a name, I feel as if they are all working towards a greater idea, whose potency relies on its plurality. Even when they are doing solos, their surroundings strengthens them, it is the drawing on stage, the atmosphere created by the group, the landscape that piles up fabrics, objects, textures, bodies and organisms designed in site. Besides, it is incredible to notice how it is possible to be one and many at the same time. Though I do not see individuals, I can still recognize their differences coexisting in harmony.

The arts and culture are fundamental in our society, they constitute gaps in which we can become stronger, more oxygenated, find similarities, communicate and create life possibilities, promoting change and resistance to what is given. In this context, the lack of public support to the cultural sector becomes even more evident and self-explanatory, once, for an authoritarian and arbitrary government, these spaces also represent a threat.

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Brazil's National Museum Fire: Disaster, Reconstruction and Resilience

Thaís Mayumi Pinheiro

Fire

In Brazil, we usually call Rio de Janeiro's carnival "The greatest show on earth". The holiday, the parties in the streets, the joy that spreads through the city finds its highlight in the Parade of Samba Schools. The different communities, which work all year long in the preparation for the carnival, perform for the party and a competition at the venue *Sambódromo* for four nights. On the last day of carnival, one school is declared the winner.

In February 2018, one of the most traditional schools, *Imperatriz Leopoldinense* took to the *Sambódromo* a parade that celebrated the 200th anniversary of the oldest museum in Brazil: the National Museum/UFRJ.

Not by chance, the school is named in honor of Empress Leopoldina, wife of D. Pedro I, first emperor of the monarchic period in Brazil and son of D. João VI, the king who created the National Museum in 1818, when Brazil was still part of the Portuguese Empire.

With the plot "A Royal Night at the National Museum", the samba school promoted the meeting of the popular culture of carnival with the heritage, science and education that marked the Museum throughout its history. Fantasy and allegories represented icon pieces, and the Museum's own employees and researchers participated in the parade, wearing costumes representing corals, Greco-Roman vases or African drums.

The institution was experiencing a moment of great optimism, with the perspective of several renovation projects, security and

exhibitions, the beginning of a new management and many new employees. The joy of that carnival night was the coronation of the 200th anniversary of the National Museum, celebrated on June 6.

What nobody could imagine is what would happen a few months later, on September 2, 2018.

Brazil and the world together watched on live TV and internet the headquarters of the Museum, the Palace of *São Cristóvão* went up in flames. After a electrical failure (as reported months later by the police[1]), the fire spread rapidly through the building that held the largest collection of Natural History and Anthropology in the country, with tens of millions of pieces of the collection.

In the days that followed we began to count the losses, to see the rooms, the twisted iron structures looking like rubber and we realized the extent of the tragedy. There was the loss of unique collections, which were part of the history of science in Brazil, the result of the dedication of countless researchers, technicians and scientists. Fossils of many extinct animals and plants were hit, the largest collection of Egyptian artifacts in Latin America, specimens of the zoological and botanical diversity of the continent, the library of Social Anthropology, the linguistic records of indigenous peoples that no longer exist, among many other valuable items for Culture, Memory and Science. The loss is immeasurable not only because of the items that were recognized as being of great importance, but also because of the potential for scientific discoveries in millions of items that possibly did not have time to be researched.

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1   Jornal G1: https://g1.globo.com/rj/rio-de-janeiro/noticia/2020/07/06/pf-conclui-investigacao-sobre-o-incendio-que-destruiu-o-museu-nacional.ghtml

Fire as disaster

We characterize fire as a disaster: not an accident, but a critical moment in a series of historical events. We start here from the definition proposed by Revet (2007), of disaster as an event that causes damage, an interruption of the functioning of a society, that causes human and material damages.

Although not like other disasters, which involved a great loss of human life, the fire and destruction of the museum's heritage affected all aspects of the institution's existence and its community, with the disorganization of material and symbolic networks.

Thus, we characterize the museum fire as a great moment of destruction and destabilization of a museum institution, a disaster that, with due proportion, can be understood from the comparison between other cases in different contexts.

Far from being isolated, the case of the Museum is part of a historical process of lack of financial support to cultural institutions. In other words, to understand what leads to the destruction of the National Museum we need to think about this event as a process: not only in the history of lack of investment in the National Museum itself, which since the 19th century has not received what would be necessary to maintain its activities and its collection, but is thinking about the historical series of fires of cultural institutions in Brazil.

The fire at the National Museum is the most devastating case of a series of occurrences in the history of museums. Only in the last decade, we had in Brazil the fires at the Portuguese Language Museum, in São Paulo (2015), at the Arts and Crafts Lyceum, in São Paulo (2014), at the Museum of Natural Sciences of the PUC university of Minas Gerais (2013), at the Butantan's institute collection, in São Paulo (2010), among others less serious.

It is important to point out, however, that major disasters also occurred in other countries. We can recently cite the destruction by

fire at the Museum of Natural History in New Delhi, India (2016), at the Museum of Civilization in Quebec, Canada (2014), at the City of Sciences Museum in Naples, Italy (2013).

In addition, we have records of several other cases throughout the history of the museums. We highlight as an example, only the year 1978, for its devastating cases. At the beginning of that year, the Aerospace Museum in San Diego, USA (February 1978) was destroyed in a criminal fire. In July, almost the entire collection of art works of the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro was lost. A month earlier, the National Museum of Natural History of Portugal was destroyed in Lisbon.

We observe that the carelessness with the preservation of the heritage of culture and science is latent all over the world. History is permeated by processes of destruction of collections, whether by negligence, lack of investment, natural disasters or conflicts and wars. And the historical sequence could foresee that the case of the National Museum/UFRJ would not be the last. Unfortunately, less than two years later, in 2020, we saw a fire hit a building of the UFMG Museum of Natural History in the city of Belo Horizonte, destroying part of its scientific collections.

It is therefore essential to consider the disaster from the standpoint of risk and vulnerability. Beck points out that it is not the failure that produces the catastrophe, but the systems that transform humanity error into inconceivable destructive forces. He points out that one cannot lose sight of the political potential of the disasters, because, for the author, Modernity is marked by the relationship between the social production of wealth, systematically accompanied by the social production of risks (Beck 23).

More than thinking about production, Beck emphasizes the unequal distribution of risks in society, which leads to the unequal distribution of vulnerability.

We then understand that in the event of a disaster, the agent of destruction is the metonymy of the entire process of conditions that produced vulnerability.

In the area of human and social sciences, disasters have been the object of more recent research, according to Oliver-Smith:

> [...] disaster studies emerged from research on the strategic bombing of populations in World War II. There was almost nothing, apart from some anthropological articles on typhoons and a volcanic eruption on the Pacific islands, in the non-industrialized world and virtually nothing on political economy, that I understand to be the study of the interaction of economic wealth and social and political power in the production and distribution of resources, whether in disaster or reconstruction (the latter, on which the field was totally silent) (Oliver-Smith 11).

We observe how the author considers the need for a multiplicity of interpretations on disasters, to think not only of a characterization of the cases, but to consider the contexts that lead to the event and that make possible (or not) the process of reconstruction.

In the case of the Museum, it is essential to consider the permanent lack of investment and attention from public agents throughout its more than 200-year history. Since its foundation, it is recurrent to find manifestations of its leaders about the financial difficulties in its management. In 1874, Ladislau Netto, then director of the Museum, wrote in his Annual Report:

> Lamenting in a way the hindrance that is for prosperity, if not for the simplest and most common service of the Museum, its money so limited and in disagreement with all that more of today I will repeat what I wrote somewhere, particularly about the pettiness of the wages of our employees: A salary worthy of its attributions, the social demands imposed on it, the considerations that a first-rate scientific corporation should deserve from the country, and a field of broad horizons will expand before the steps of the National Museum, inexhaustible and fruitful fields where flowers and fruits will sprout

lush and endlessly: those to be garnished in the years to come, each one of the pages of Brazilian Science [....] (National Museum 1874, 3).

Netto in a text addressed to the Minister of Agriculture, Commerce and Public Works (Ministry to which the Museum was submitted), explains that the budget of the institution did not account for the most ordinary activities of its routine. He points out that the lack of investments could be an impediment to the development of an institution of great importance to national science.

Despite the lack of resources, the Museum grew over the 20th century and confirmed itself as one of the most important scientific centers in the country. Great scientific expeditions, the development of areas such as anthropology, archaeology, botany and paleontology, the formation of large collections, public exhibitions and educational activities raised the Museum to the position of the largest museum in the country.

At the same time, the prestige and relevance before federal governments seem to have diminished over the years. Throughout its history, the Museum has been linked to seven federal government ministries, and since 1946 it has been part of the UFRJ – Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (at the time, University of Brazil), submitted to the Ministry of Education (Carvalho 634).

The last president of Brazil to visit the institution was Juscelino Kubitschek in 1958, on the occasion of the institution's 140th anniversary. Sixty years later, on his 200th birthday, the highest authority present was the president of the Brazilian Institute of Museums (Baumann 9).

Financial difficulties have never ceased to be a challenge for the institution. In the 2018 Institutional Report, the annual budget reported was R$ 57,418,202.49, including personnel expenses and external investments made after the fire. The report itself makes a comparison with national natural history museums in other

countries: the American Museum of Natural History (USA) with a budget of R$ 892,298,127.00; the *Muséum National D'Histoire Naturelle* (France) R$ 630,324,840.00; and the Natural History Museum (UK) R$ 674,290,068.00 (converted at the end of 2018). It can be observed that the investment in the National Museum of Brazil is more than 10 times smaller than that of other similar institutions around the world. (Museu Nacional 2019, 152-153)

To understand what leads to a museum fire is essential to question the access to public and private financing in the area of culture. The same condition that leads to its destruction may be same reason that makes it impossible to be reconstructed, or if so, can make it return to the original downturn short time after.

Reconstruction and resilience

Another essential characteristic to understand a disaster is the need for help: the National Museum cannot recover on its own. It depends on other state agents, institutional partners, and mobilization of society for its reconstruction.

On this horizon it is necessary to point out the vulnerability that this institution has to face in its moment of reconstruction. In several cases of disaster, the action of external agents proposes changes that disrupt the previous reality and further destabilize a fragile reality.

In the case of the National Museum, the federal government's proposal to extinguish the Brazilian Institute of Museums (IBRAM) and create the Brazilian Agency of Museums (ABRAM) was quite emblematic. It is important to situate the political and social context in which the fire occurred. There was little more than a month before the disputed elections for President, Governors and legislative positions; the electoral race was in full swing and political issues were in great focus, mainly because of the high polarization

of discourses propagated in the 2018 elections, with emphasis on the mobilization of the far-right, which culminated in the election of Jair Bolsonaro in October.

In September, then-President Michel Temer, at the end of his term (taken over after Dilma Rousseff's impeachment in 2016), signed a Provisional Measure that creates an agency "to discuss the recovery of the National Museum and the situation of other museums in the country".

The day after the fire, the president had stated that "yesterday's tragedy will turn into something that will not only be destined to the recovery of the museum, but the preservation of all the historical, scientific and natural heritage of the country"[2].

The disrupting action for the museums sector would have take away the autonomy of the National Museum itself and would withdraw the State responsibility on its management. The proposal made without any public discussion, indicates that there was already the intention of creating the Agency. Due to the diverse protests of the cultural and museum community of the country, the proposal was left aside, but we figured out that the horizon of disaster is also one of political and economic opportunities.

Faced with instability and questions about the reconstruction of the Museum, the campaign "Museu Nacional Vive" (National Museum lives) was born, which can be read as a catharsis of the idea of resistance and continuity. After a few days of the event, it began the campaign to support the institution with the slogan "#MuseuNacionalVive". The concept of the campaign was idealized by the journalist Fernanda Guedes, head of the Communication and Events Center at MN/UFRJ. Initially used as a communication strategy, with emphasis on actions in social networks, the slogan

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2   https://g1.globo.com/politica/noticia/2018/09/10/temer-assina-mp-e-cria-agencia-responsavel-pela-reconstrucao-do-museu-nacional.ghtml

was soon adopted by the institution as the motto for its entire reconstruction project, as Baumann points out:

> The campaign "O Museu Nacional Vive" presupposes a strategy of actions: the search for resources from the State and society to raise means for the projects and the execution of the restoration of the building; the recovery of the internal areas and the future implementation of the new exhibitions; and the maintenance and dissemination of its research, teaching and exhibition activities of its collection. (Baumann 9. My translation)

Among the actions that took place, we can highlight the event "Festival Museu Nacional Vive" held in September 2018, August, October and December 2019; the collective financing campaign "Museu Nacional Vive nas Escolas" launched in October 2018 to support the educational activities of the Museum; the university extension project "Museu Nacional Vive" under the responsibility of the extension coordinator Valéria Pereira; the exhibition "Arqueologia do Resgate – Museu Nacional Vive" held at the Cultural Center of Banco do Brasil (CCBB/RJ) in February 2019; the exhibition "O Museu Nacional Vive! Memories and Perspectives" exhibition, held in September and October 2019 at the National Congress in the capital Brasília.

The Museum's continuity speech also starts from the statement that the museum was more than its headquarters. An annex building with collections and laboratories (part of the entomological and invertebrate animal collection) were not affected by the fire. The spaces of the *Horto* garden are also preserved, an area inside *Quinta da Boa Vista*, the park where the Museum is located, which includes the Central Library, the vertebrate animal collections, botany and an archaeological collection. (Baumann 10)

The campaign brings together the resumption of activities as a symbol of resistance, of affirmation of the "living" institution, based mainly on people's actions and the mobilization of society.

We observe an appreciation of the idea that the importance of patrimonies are not in themselves, but in the social relations that are created from them.

At the same time, the importance of the collections has not been lost sight of: one of the most important has been the direct action at the Museum's Palace. The Emergency Stage involved the stabilization of the building and the Rescue of Collections. This detailed archaeological technical work involving dozens of museum staff and students excavated about 2,000 square meters. The Museum had 36 collections and about 80% were physically affected or lost. About 5,000 sets and/or pieces were removed and cataloged from the rubble of the Palace. The collections of geology, paleontology, archaeology and shells from molluscs were the most resistant to fire (Museu Nacional 2020, 9).

The work of Rescue of the collections, as well as many others, was interrupted by the Pandemic of COVID-19, in 2020. The Museum community, which was already facing the difficult process of reconstruction, once again has to adapt to a new reality.

If the great difficulty of developing the projects and obtaining the investments for the reconstruction was already in sight, this challenge was intensified by the Pandemic. Nevertheless the reality of the Museum after the fire may have trained its employees to resilience and adaptation. Despite the great social impact of coronavirus in Brazil, we observed the continuity of several projects in progress at the Museum, such as the restoration of the collections and the Palace and the construction of the research labs, offices, libraries in a new property next to the *Quinta da Boa Vista* park.

It is worth highlighting the project of new exhibitions under development. At this moment when the differences and social problems in the country became so latent, the Museum's researchers propose to discuss a representation of Brazil through diversity, dialogue, decoloniality and the defense of biodiversity and science.

We hope that the reconstruction of the exhibitions and collections will mark a new moment in the scientific and museum making all over the country and the world. The fire is an institutional turning point, and one of the ways to deal with the memory of this process is configuring new institutional narratives. And certainly, these stories will be shaped by the catastrophic scenario and also by the Museum's struggle for survival and reconstruction. We must believe that these stories about the loss of the National Museum will teach something to the cultural, scientific and political area of Brazil.

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Between During and Post-pandemic

Mauro Munhoz[1]

1.

The chronicler Antonio Prata has recently posted a meme on his Instagram account, representing something both ferocious and funny regarding the present moment: "Scientists announce the end of the **Anthropocene** and the new geological era is the **Whatgoingonscene**"[2] Characteristic of our times, memes (in their contemporary digital version) say almost everything without saying anything, minimal expression of an idea that is widespread autonomously; not coincidentally language as a virus.

The focus of the meme is what interests us presently – the dissolution of the world as we have known it, *Homo sapiens*'s backyards, master of an era (*cene*) dominated by the human (*anthropo*, Greek as the suffix). Dissolution and not destruction because the ongoing disruption – *Whatsgoingonscene* – affects primarily the symbolic realm. We are not insensitive to the most tragic dimension of the coronavirus pandemic, the drama of thousands of lost lives and entire families dragged to a devastating economic scenario, deprived from work and a source of income. Yet, even the most concrete and absolute aspects of this unprecedented crisis have been severely affected by the symbolic dissolution, catalyzed in the drastic measures to combat the spread of the disease – what can one say of the grief regarding the loss of those who are not entitled to a

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1   Text translated by Thiago Moyano.

2   The Portuguese original has a pun between the sounds of the expressions in bold: "Cientistas anunciam o fim do Antropoceno e a nova era geológica é o **Oqtaconteceno**"

proper farewell, or those whose work conditions put themselves and their loved ones constantly at risk?

What is going on?

2.

The Covid-19 pandemic has imposed a vast emptiness to the world, which is most visible in social distancing. A quarantined society emptied city streets, draining the very meaning of the public sphere. The transformation is evident in large metropoles, no longer characterized by large crowds, reduced to the volume of high rises, contrast between the full and the empty in the urban design.

With the forced absence of the human dimension, the evident response to the meme's question would be "the world has stopped". The state of things dismantling civilization's daily life across the globe must also be understood as an absence of movement and purpose. And the corollary that presents itself as opportunity (or necessity) acquires the shape of another question – what can be done for the world to restart in a way that allows us to re-evaluate the very processes that led us to this crisis, and to elaborate strategies to re-occupy the public sphere in new ways?

As both a technique and art form of organizing space and creating environments to host human activity and mediate its relationship to the land, architecture has been both part of the problem and the solution. As a language, it manifests in a plastic fashion the vices and virtues of how we dwell in the world and it helps us to come up with new form of occupying space.

3.

The socioenvironmental indigenous activist Ailton Krenak has been one of the strongest voices to criticize the way we currently

live. According to him, the endemic state of chaos in which we find ourselves is the symptom of how alienated humankind has become in relation to the Earth. Born in the Rio Doce valley region, devastated in 2015 by the mining tailings dam rupture in Mariana, Minas Gerais, Krenak has analyzed the coronavirus pandemic in the context of natural resources depletion and processes of eliminating diversity – not just biodiversity, but the diversity of cultures and subjectivities as well. For him, we have been walking towards the precipice of self-destruction. "We have to leave the anthropocentrism behind; there is much life beyond us, we will not be missed in biodiversity", he writes in his book *O Amanhã Não Está à Venda* (Companhia das Letras publishing house) [Tomorrow is not for Sale]. "This package called humanity has been entirely detached from the Earth, living an abstract civilization that suppresses diversity, denies the plurality of forms of life, existence, and habits."

Through his people's tradition, Krenak – *kren,* head; *nak*, earth – warns us on the root of the problem by bringing about the urgency to reconnect with nature and the land in a way that restores the essential idea of inhabiting, echoing German philosopher Martin Heidegger's thoughts (1889-1976) – "In the sense of inhabiting, thus, in the sense of being on earth, building permanence for man's daily experience, that which has always been, as stated so beautifully by language itself, 'habitual'. This sheds light on why there is constructing behind multiple forms of inhabiting, behind making and farming activities." Misplaced in the process, *building* becomes a deforming element of "being on earth", of the "habitual", by inducing a certain occupation by a pre-conceived and undifferentiated intention, erasing any and every form of *inhabiting* – "the alienation from the planet" that Krenak talks about.

Here is where both the activist's and German philosopher's ideas meet in the elaboration of a strategy to slow down the world by restarting it, in the moment between and post-pandemic –

establishing oneself in a space that has been emptied of meaning through the diversity of forms of living and existing. If nobody believed that the material and symbolic means of production which reigns today could have been stopped, and yet they were, why not believe that the land can be reclaimed according to another reasoning, favoring what distinguishes ourselves from one another, reinforcing the collective instead of what makes as equal in a bubble of undifferetiation?

There is a real chance here.

4.

The moment being faced is the paroxysm of a crisis that has taken place for a long time now, under a myriad of lenses. They all imply a certain lowering of language in the establishment of its own dynamics – the alienating means of hiper-production that have emerged since the Industrial Revolution, based on the Malthusian fear that there would not be a way for the food production in arithmetic scale to supply a growing population in geometric series. Though this assumption that haunted the turn of the 18th to the 19th has been overcome, we have kept on going towards the irreversible process of shifting reality that led us here, as if the planet were inexhaustible and we still lived the need of a furious production that would free us from hunger and extinction.

Even if there are not grounds for a direct correlation of cause and effect between the crisis of hiper-production and the coronavirus pandemic, one cannot ignore the hypothesis that perhaps sustainable solutions will not be possible without restoring some of the previous links to the Malthusian paradigm.

5.

Paraty's Literary Festival (Flip) has mirrored the reflection with its relationship to the historic city on Rio de Janeiro's coastal shore for more than 30 years. Its creation in 2003 resulted from a territorial reading that was initiated in the 1990s, in which nothing was built before the establishment of inhabiting.

FLIP stems directly from this process of "being on Earth", of opening up to the history that Paraty has to tell. Founded in the 17th century between the cities of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, progress would necessarily go through its hectic port amidst the Coffee cycle in the 1800s, leaving it virtually isolated by land during more than one hundred years, favoring the preservation of its cultural roots, always nourished by its relationship to the sea.

Informed by such inhabiting, building FLIP would be constituted by a set of intermediated temporalities' apparatuses, inserted in the public space in a constant dialogue with the elements posed by the town's history and landscape – the city constructions, the social organization of its community, the local arts and trades, the forest, the rivers, and the sea. In this process, the literary festival would emerge naturally as a way to structure a new narrative, integrating multiple languages involved in the process of valuing the place's history.

Under the light of its historic center's solid grounds, preserved throughout 300 years, FLIP's architecture was thought of in temporary structures, projected to host the program, but also to mediate the relationship of the public with the city and the living forces of the land.

Without ever getting into the conflicts that characterize the contemporary ways of urban renovation, which ignores the value of the past, FLIP's efforts for inhabitants and visitors to occupy Paraty in a certain way every year strengthens the public space with the

incorporation of its new uses during the festival's five days. As a result, the impact of its temporary apparatuses throughout time ends up determining a more permanent transformation of the city by establishing a collective memory for a place where everyone wishes to go back to.

6.

The Main Square's requalification project resulted from this singular process of inhabiting the land and rethinking urbanism.

Initiated in 2011, regarding the relationships between the festival and the city, the objective was to restore the original design of the 1910 square, which had been covered by waterfall stones, imitating the historic city's pavement. When this 1980s imposture started to be removed according to IPHAN's protocols – the institute of heritage protection –, the local population started a civil suit to paralyze the work. By assembling the inhabitants to discuss the idea of bringing back its original clay center, all of them realized how much more the project was aligned with the way they used the square in the present in relation to what they thought of the square in the past.

Aside from removing the stones that covered the clay, the action dismantled the 14 inch fences segregating the flowerbeds in a 10 foot wide pathway, expanding it to 20 feet of concrete, the original material that had been certified in 1974. The gardens and landscape design were recovered. As a result, the square acquired more open areas with the integration of the grounds to the same level, more permeable to draining and the social dynamics that characterize the public space.

The crowning of this process to let the square breathe, mediated by Flip and inhabitants of Paraty, would be made visible with *Samba da Benção*, a group that gathered the youth and seniors to dance on Mondays, as well as the hosting of kids from the outskirts, who now have a central place to be in the city.

One could argue whether the same people had not been experiencing the Main Square before. Yes, they had. Or whether the requalification project somehow violated the protocols of historical and cultural heritage protection. On the contrary, its identity was restored. So, what changed in fact?

More than qualifying the square's physical structure, the project oxygenated its symbolic nature. The same ramps and steps that inspire the youngsters' skateboard maneuvers, guarantee accessibility to the older ones, bringing about the virtues of public spaces as a place for mediating conflicts and exchanges between generations.

7.

Going back to the meme-question that has led us here, there are many possible answers to help us understand what is going on right now. The more they represent renouncing that which justifies what has been done until now – in the name of a model that we no longer recognize –, the richer they are.

Everything we do not know points towards one only certainty – we need to change our relationship to the world, one that has been emptied of meaning. We know what to do, but we need to do it differently, in a way that values the accumulated experiences, not as something that will make us unmovable, but as the flame to enlighten new ways to rethink the contemporary chaos in new terms. "Let us hope we will not go back to normal", going back to Krenak in his book *O Amanhã Não Está à Venda* [Tomorrow is not for Sale], "because if we do, then the deaths of thousands of people across the globe will have meant nothing. It would be as if we converted to denialism, if we accepted the Earth is flat, and that we must keep on devouring each other. Then, we will have truly proven that the humankind is a lie."

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