War, Conflict, and the City



Amsterdam Museum Journal

Issue #1 Fall 2023

AM Journal



Image on this page:
Dina Danish, *The Royal Declaration*, 140x155cm, cloth, thread, appliqué, embroidery and sewing, 2023, made by Dina Danish

Cover image:
Dina Danish, *The Forum*, 160x210cm, cloth, thread, appliqué, embroidery and sewing, 2023, made by Dina Danish

The cover image and the selected images in the introductory section of this edition are works that are on display in the Amsterdam Museum exhibition '*Refresh #2: War & Conflict*'. The exhibition runs from October 2023 until February 2024.

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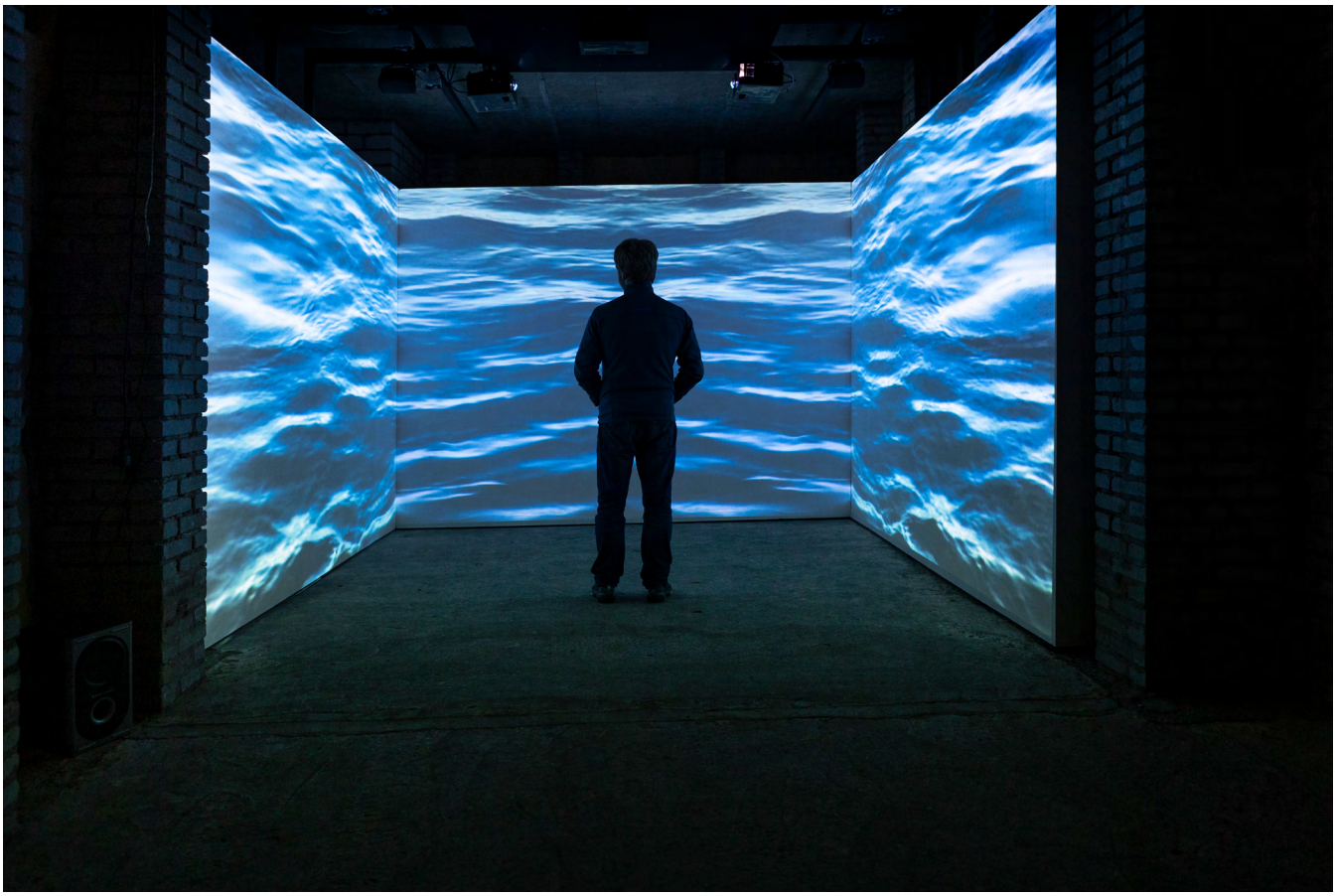
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Tina Farifteh, *The Flood*, 2021 – Continuing

About AMJournal

Amsterdam Museum Journal (AMJournal) is a (diamond) open access, peer reviewed research journal that is published twice per year on the Amsterdam Museum website.

As the city museum of the eclectic capital of the Netherlands, the art and objects we show, the stories we host, and the societal issues that occupy us are complex by nature. This complexity requires a polyphonic approach; not one field or research can, or indeed should, tell the whole story. As such, rather than disciplinary, AMJournal is thematically oriented. Each calendar year, we publish one edition that centers on social themes, such as *War, Conflict and the City* (edition 1; October 2023 – current issue) or *Deconstructing Gentrification* (edition 2; June 2024 – see the 'Call for Papers'), whilst the other edition focuses on museum practices, such as *Copies and Reproductions* (edition 3; December 2024).

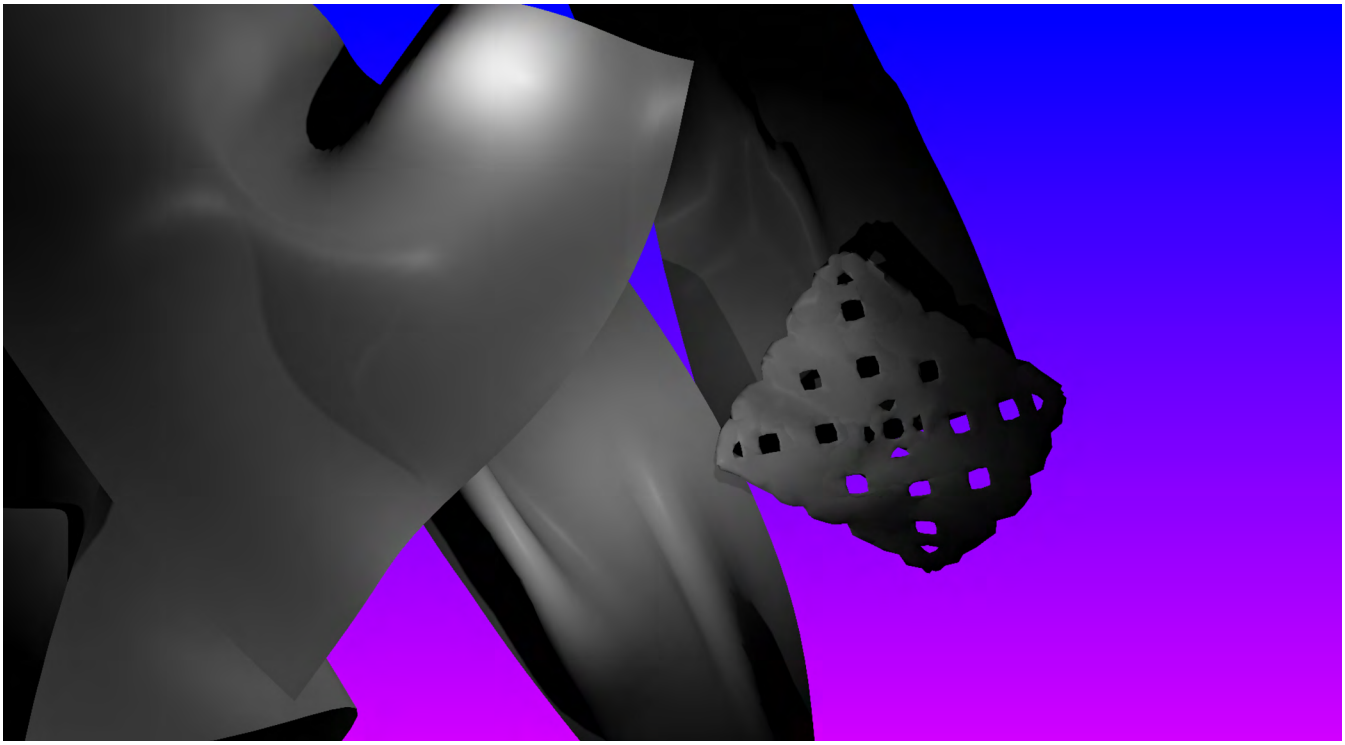
Whilst AMJournal strictly publishes contributions that meet its high standards, the aim is to make research publications accessible for both readers and authors. AMJournal therefore publishes peer reviewed contributions by scholars in *all stages* of their research careers, from outstanding master students to the most lauded full professor (and anyone in between).

In addition, we publish essays and research papers by authors from *all disciplines*, from legal scholars to sociologists and from historians to economists. By centering on a theme rather than a discipline, complex issues are approached from various angles; demonstrating that it is through a polyphony of perspectives that we advance academic discourses. In short, multidisciplinary research is not merely encouraged, it is at the core of the Amsterdam Museum Journal.

To support scientific multivocality and offer a platform for various disciplines, AMJournal publishes various types of contributions:

1. *The Short Essays*: short form texts in which authors succinctly defend topical thesis statements with proofs.
2. *The Long Essays*: long(er) texts in which authors defend topical thesis statements with proofs.
3. *The Empirical Papers*: qualitative and/or quantitative data analyses.
4. *The Polylogue*: a thematic roundtable conversation with expert voices from various fields.
5. *The Polyphonic Objects*: short complementary analyses by scholars from different disciplines of a single thematic object from the Amsterdam Museum collection.

All contributions are published in English and written according to strict author guidelines with the broader academic- and expert community in mind. Each AMJournal edition and each separate contribution is freely downloadable and shareable as a PDF-file (see our website). To further aid accessibility, for both authors and readers, AMJournal does not charge readers any subscription- or access fees, nor does it charge authors Article Processing Charges (APCs).



Senka Milutinović, *Momentary Lapse in Memory*, 2023

Editors' Note

To the reader,

Although '*War, Conflict, and the City*' may seem like a provocative theme for the inaugural edition of the *Amsterdam Museum Journal* (AMJournal), for the Amsterdam Museum it is a logical, and necessary, next step in our critical exploration of this theme.

For us, the importance of the theme is clear, as war, conflict, and cities are intertwined; cities are both prime targets for violence and platforms of resistance. Throughout the ages, people have fled war and conflict both to and from cities worldwide, making their homes anew. And even for those lucky enough to remain untouched by war and conflict, the daily news is saturated with its horrors. As the city museum of Amsterdam, and a critical knowledge institute, we recognize and acknowledge our responsibility to examine those topics, themes and issues that occupy the city's inhabitants and visitors.

The importance of the discourse on War, Conflict, and the City has previously led to our public programming series *Relevant Response: In Time of War and Conflict* (April–June 2022), featuring expert talks on positionality and responsibility in the cultural sector's responses to war and conflict, as well as the exhibition *Refresh Amsterdam #2: War and Conflict* (October 2023–February 2024; see 'What's On' in this edition). As the exhibition provides a (predominantly) visual addition to the multimodal interaction on this theme, this edition of AMJournal offers the verbal node in the critical academic discourse on war and conflict in relation to urban spaces. A verbal node that is both explicitly academic and polyphonic.



Gert Jan Kocken, *Depictions of Amsterdam*, 1940–1945, 2009–2023

By approaching the theme beyond the traditional disciplinary boundaries, AMJournal Edition #1 examines the tortuous effects of war and conflict on *people*, *places*, *products* and *processes* in urban spaces. Scholars studying *people* examine the physical and mental embodiment of trauma; how we process, change, adapt, remember, and sometimes forget. In terms of *places,* we feature in-depth studies on the destructive effects of violence on buildings, as well as the inspiration found in rebuilding. The analyses on the (implicit) *products* of war show the damage done through the (mis) reproduction of cultural heritage, whether it is in the name of safety or preservation, as well as the traces of war in our (art)histories. When it comes to the murky *processes* of war, this edition includes studies that demonstrate the difficult practice of archiving in times of war and conflict, and the recovery of knowledge after the literal and metaphorical dust has settled. In short, *Amsterdam Museum Journal, Edition #1: War, Conflict and the City* is a layered and multidisciplinary exposé.

Dr. Emma van Bijnen & Prof. dr. Margriet Schavemaker
Editors-in-Chief

The Short Essays



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Between Strange and Familiar: Urban Change in Berlin

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Discipline
Urban History

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Abstract

The post-Cold War adage, that the German capital is “poor, but sexy”, has beckoned in a new age of consumerism. In the same breath, and in light of multifarious crises across the Global South, a sizeable population of émigrés continue arriving to Berlin, the site of their ‘estrangement’. Simultaneously, and as Berlin is rapidly transforming into the ‘silicon valley of Europe’, urban change is making the city less habitable. At this crossroads, one is starkly reminded that Berlin’s urban fabric is increasingly contingent on these crises *elsewhere*. Within this context, how can we readdress urban change in the city? In this semi-personal essay, I argue that, when the city is treated as a ‘heterotopia’, there remains no monopoly on the claim to its past and future. As the city’s future is mapped out, we are able to engage with the different political meanings and experiences attached to the city.

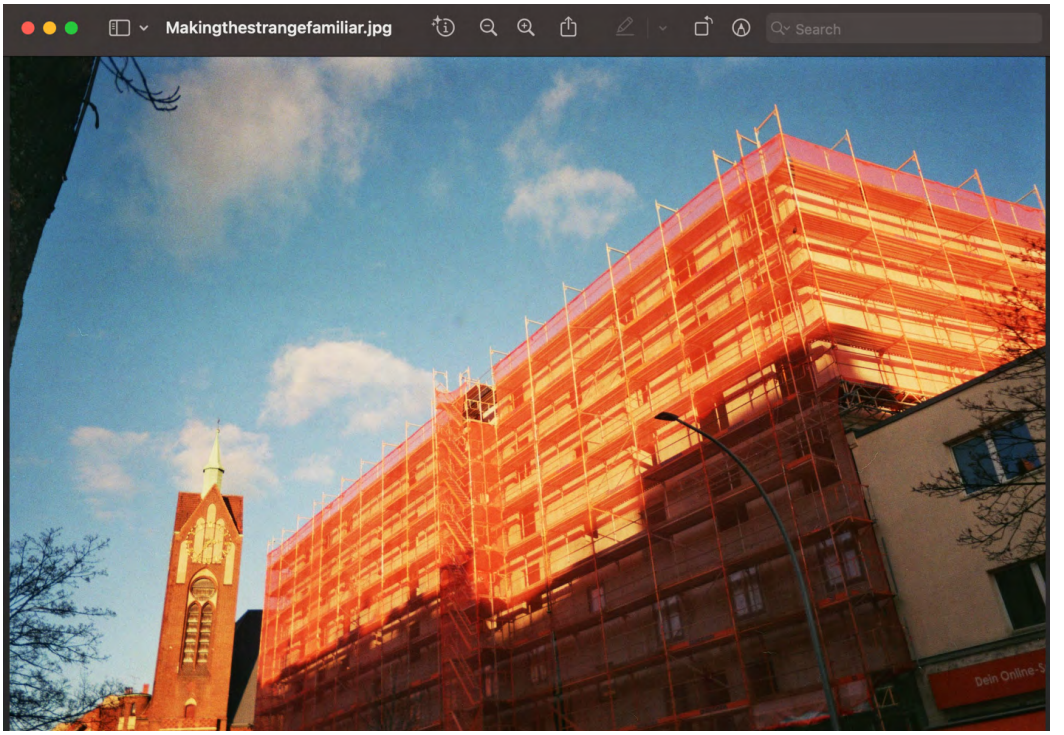


Figure 1: *Makingthestrangefamiliar.jpg, 2021, Moabit, Berlin* (photograph by the author).

Introduction

Berlin is a city of multitude. Historically, it has been refuge for Germans and foreigners alike, instilling the belief that claim to this city can be easily made. For the city's Gastarbeiter ("Guest" Workers), exiles and political émigrés, becoming a "Berliner" was conditioned by the realpolitik of the post-War era.[1] Since the end of the Cold War, the adage, that the German capital is "poor, but sexy", has beckoned in an age of state-sanctioned, neoliberal consumerism. In the same breath, and in light of multifarious urban crises across the Global South, a sizeable population of émigrés continue arriving to Berlin, fleeing political repression, urban warfare, socio-economic collapse and climate change. Throughout the past tumultuous decade, one is starkly reminded that Berlin's urban fabric is increasingly contingent on these crises *elsewhere*.

Back home in downtown Cairo, not glamorous and not shabby, there is a bar called *Lotus Bar*. On the rooftop floor of a mediocre hotel, the bar became a place of solace amidst the changing socio-political landscape of the city. After leaving Cairo, and searching for similar solace in Berlin, it became clear that this city, largely decimated during WWII, had few elevated terraces. In Kreuzberg, however, there is one cafe-bar, elevated on a thin terrace, overlooking the Kottbusser Tor metro station, called *Cafe Kotti*. This particular place, one of the only elevated spaces afforded to me here, accentuates in the most ambivalent way possible, a longing for the

“Since the end of the Cold War, the adage, that the German capital is ‘poor, but sexy’, has beckoned in an age state-sanctioned, neoliberal consumerism.”

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familiar back home, and a lack in Berlin. As I enter my fifth year here, I often wander to *Cafe Kotti*, desperate for a release from the city down below, as it shape-shifts in front of my very eyes.

For the émigrés trying to make home anew, Berlin is a space of both the strange and the familiar: a site of estrangement. Simultaneously, as Berlin is rapidly transforming into the 'silicon valley of Europe', urban change is making the city more hostile, and less habitable for its residents — Germans and émigrés alike. Within this context, how can seeing 'Berlin as a heterotopia' assist in readdressing urban change in the city? In this semi-personal essay, I argue that, when the city is treated as a "heterotopia", there remains no monopoly on the claim to a city's past and future. As the city's future is mapped out, we are able to engage with and incorporate the different political meanings and experiences attached to the city.

The City as Heterotopia

Michel Foucault's concept of the "heterotopia" is borrowed from medicine, wherein it describes tissue that appears in the body where *it should not* and adapts to the body's ecosystem as it grows. Giving the concept a spatial trait, Foucault explains that a heterotopic space, "is like a ship *par excellence";* in constant motion, elements are gained and lost, redefining the space's essence. (Foucault, 1970). Despite the ship's constant motion, traces of its contents, passengers and travel trajectory remain part and parcel of the heterotopic space. In urban terms, a city's history remains embedded in its fabric, even as the city changes.

For decades, the Berlin Wall prickled through the city's urban fabric as a vehicle of heterotopia, creating two contiguous cities. During this time, the city adapted to the presence of the concrete and barbed wire on both sides of the wall. After its fall, there was a calculated attempt to reunite the divided capital by forging a collective national identity. One scandalous manifestation of this was the destruction of the former Palace of the Republic (whose "Volkskammer" carried sentimental memories for east Berliners) and its reconstruction as the *Humboldt Forum*.[2] In what some Berliners see as a political erasure of the east, a tension appeared in the urban narrative of the newly unified capital. Despite spatial reconfiguration and urban development, the lingering past of the city contests its contemporary narrative. Although ephemeral at times, and in the absence of the Berlin Wall, the city retains this tension, rooted in its political history.

Decades after its toppling, one can still trace the Berlin Wall simply by looking at a transport map. It remains visible *physically* as "real space" dedicated to this past, and, simultaneously, present *mentally* as "ideal space"

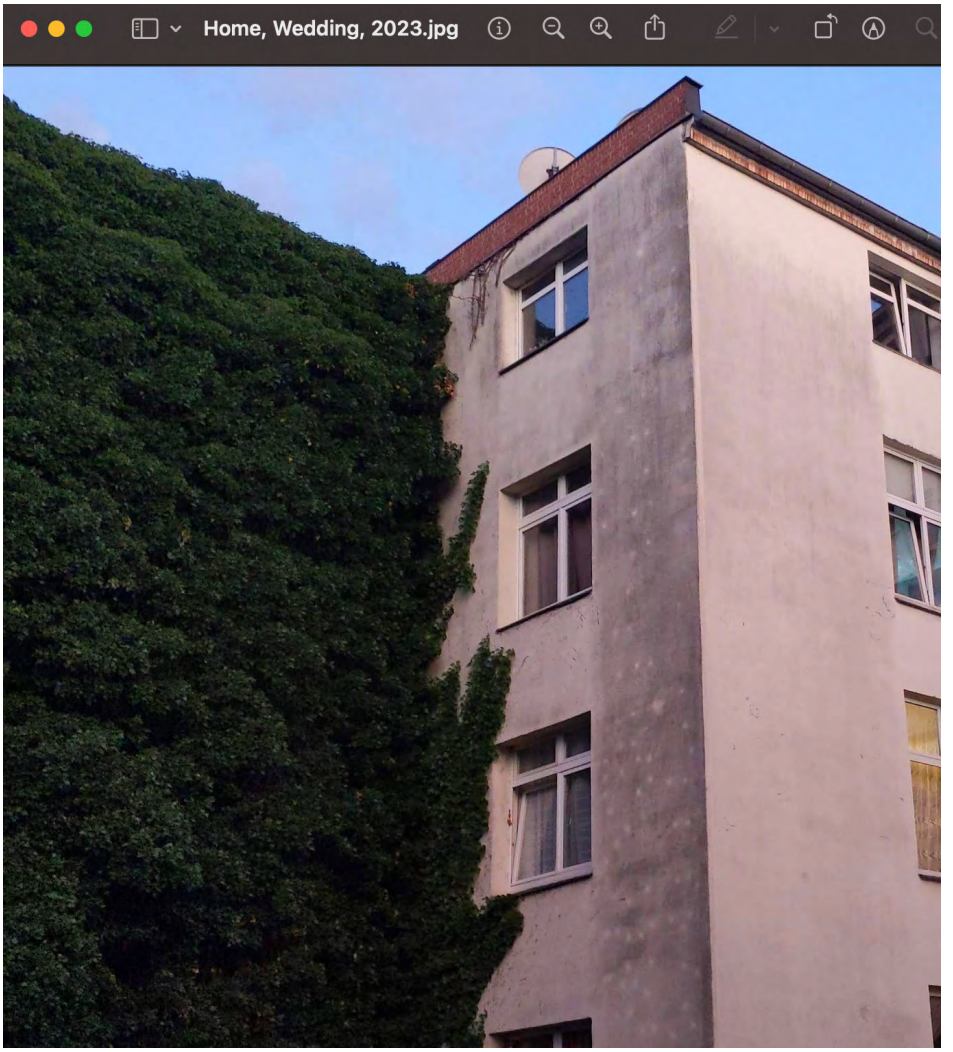


Figure 2: *Home, nirgendwo, 2023, Wedding, Berlin* (photograph by the author).

made void of the same past. (Lefebvre, 1992). This is demonstrated respectively at the former checkpoint at Bösebrücke on Bornholmer Straße, and at Mauerpark, where graffiti artists actively turn remnants of the wall, which bisected the "Wall Park", into a celebrated tourist attraction.[3] Although one can effortlessly criss-cross the former borders of the city today, Berlin remains ridden with reminders of this past. In cities that have witnessed conflict, political history has a tangible afterlife — both physically and in memory. If we establish that the past is not contained within the past itself, how does this implicate a city's relationship with urban change?

A 'Sense of Place'

Through Berlin's long winters, more often than not, I remain home, surrounded by old memories brought in checked luggage and trinkets recently accumulated. Between strangeness and familiarity, my habitual

space contains the city I left behind, and that which I currently inhabit. In an attempt to make Berlin home, I unwillingly find myself in an odd state: neither fully here, nor there any longer; neither in-transit nor arrived. Even if one can return home, it has become clear that the city I left behind exists only in memory. In this way, my relationship with Berlin becomes a constant negotiation: To be present, and leave the past to memory, or to remain in this in-between. As James Baldwin reminds us in *Giovanni's Room*, neither can one ever return home *as it once was*, nor ever recreate it elsewhere. And as Tomasz Jędrowski, in *Swimming in the Dark,* explains, that as one continues to believe their departure is temporary, the familiar becomes alien and "home ceases being home" (Jędrowski, 228). As I remain in this in-between, Berlin has come to embody my estrangement.

Arguably, a city's past and spatial dimensions give it a distinct "sense of place". As Doreen Massey explains, this 'sense' does not describe an amalgamation of urban elements, like a place's climate, geography or aesthetic, but how urban residents *feel* (my emphasis) about this amalgamation (Massey, 145). In many ways, we embody this sense of place in how we perceive, experience and inhabit a city. Massey takes this concept further in the "locality", where the sense of a place does not demarcate the city from the inside, but opens it up to geographies elsewhere, through movement and circulation. There are, therefore, endless configurations of a place's 'sense', meaning a place cannot simply be seen as "neutral" (Massey, 146).

When one witnesses turmoil in the city — a revolutionary uprising, freak-like natural disaster or socio-economic crisis — these histories are carried elsewhere as memories. Like ghosts, one becomes haunted by these memories that often guide their experience of a new "locality". Through a memory-transfusion of sorts, cities of the strange, become infused with what cannot be forgotten, from cities which were once familiar. And as pleasant memories are mixed with those that are less so, this new place becomes a landmine, a roulette of sorts, of both nostalgic and traumatic experiences. With this, demarcation becomes impossible. Berlin becomes a locality that carries a multifarious "sense[s] of place": a byproduct of an interaction, and an opening up to moments in time that are long gone, and places that are elsewhere (Massey, 148). Through these openings, I am transported to Cairo, a place that carries memories of my youth, and a time when everything was possible, while perched atop a café-bar in Berlin.

Space-Time Warp

A 'score' in musicology is a series of lines that form an orchestra. Similarly, in the city, the body also moves to a well-kept score, conducted by muscle

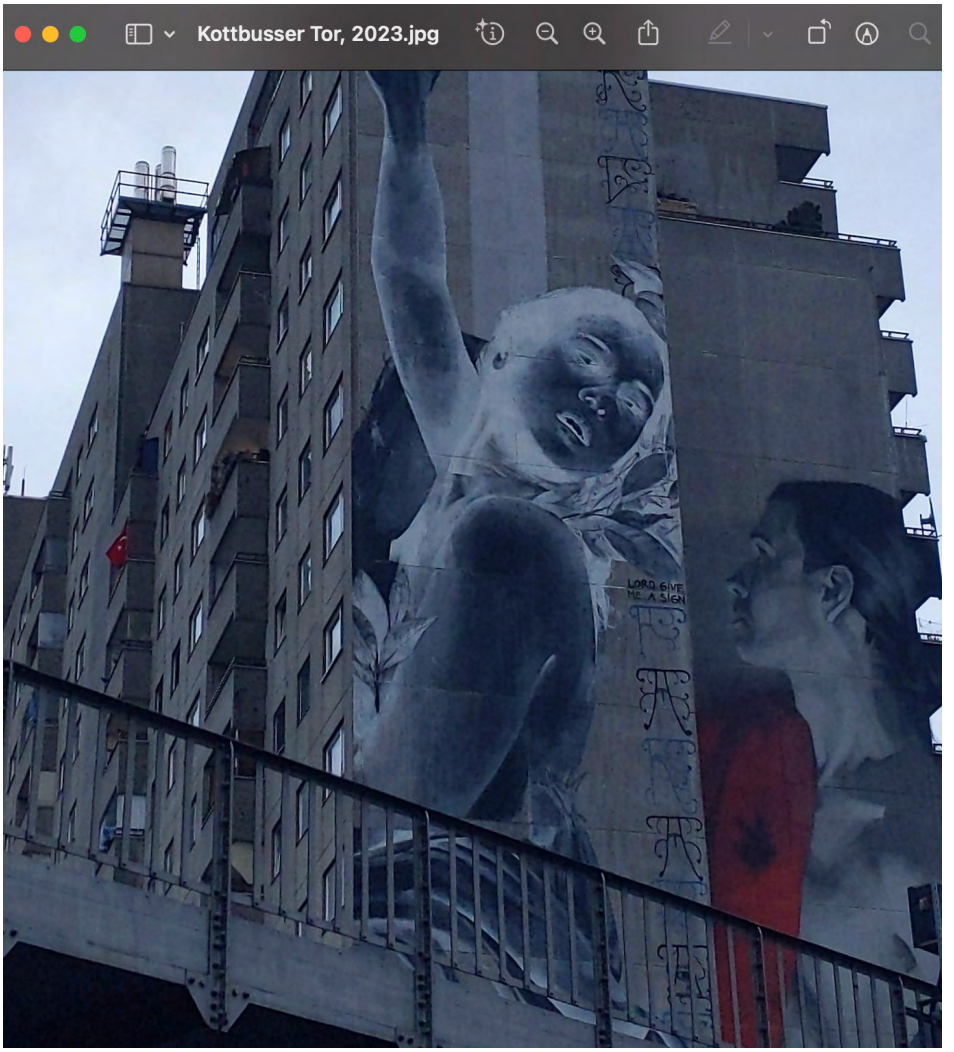


Figure 3: *Skalitzer Straße, 2023, Kreuzberg, Berlin* (photograph by the author).

memory. When I moved to Berlin, I slowly developed a new sense of direction, memorizing metro stations and learning backroads. However, this was not etched onto a *tabula rasa* of sorts; rather, intermixed with older scores. To both noticeable and minor degrees, the ways we inhabit a city are learned with the ways we once lived elsewhere. While this superimposition of old and new may seem coincidental, it is rather circumstantial, based on how the built urban environment can 'activate' the body's score. These memories are involuntary — oftentimes frightening or unwanted — reminders of a place that we no longer know, in a city we are not able to become fully acquainted with. However, as I continue to inhabit — and not *exist* — in these seemingly parallel space-times, how do I navigate change taking place in Berlin?

In her 2017 conversation with David Hornsby and Jane Clark, the late poet Etel Adnan spoke about how crisis can 'split' time. "[W]hen it comes to



Figure 4: *Lockdown, 2021, Wedding-Mitte, Berlin* (photograph by the author).

a crisis somewhere back home, or near home, then you realize that you lead a double life," she says. "You can carry on with your everyday routines, but something is hurting you that is totally without interest for other people." (Beshara Magazine, 2017). When experiencing time as 'split', there seems to be both an acceleration and deceleration of time, wherein one fails to understand 'how much time has passed' and material change that has occurred both 'here' and 'there'.

On this notion of 'split time', philosopher and Arabist Amro Ali sees Berlin as a potential "political laboratory" for its exiled population (Ali, 2019). Given Berlin's history, he believes the city can foster transnational solidarity among a cohesive 'exile body'. Notwithstanding a seeming romanticization of political reality, this is a philosophical inquiry worth questioning. While Berlin's history grants it qualities to become a 'laboratory' as he calls it, this presupposes a shared sense of place. If we all harbor different political realities, here and 'at home', a coherent exile body surely cannot

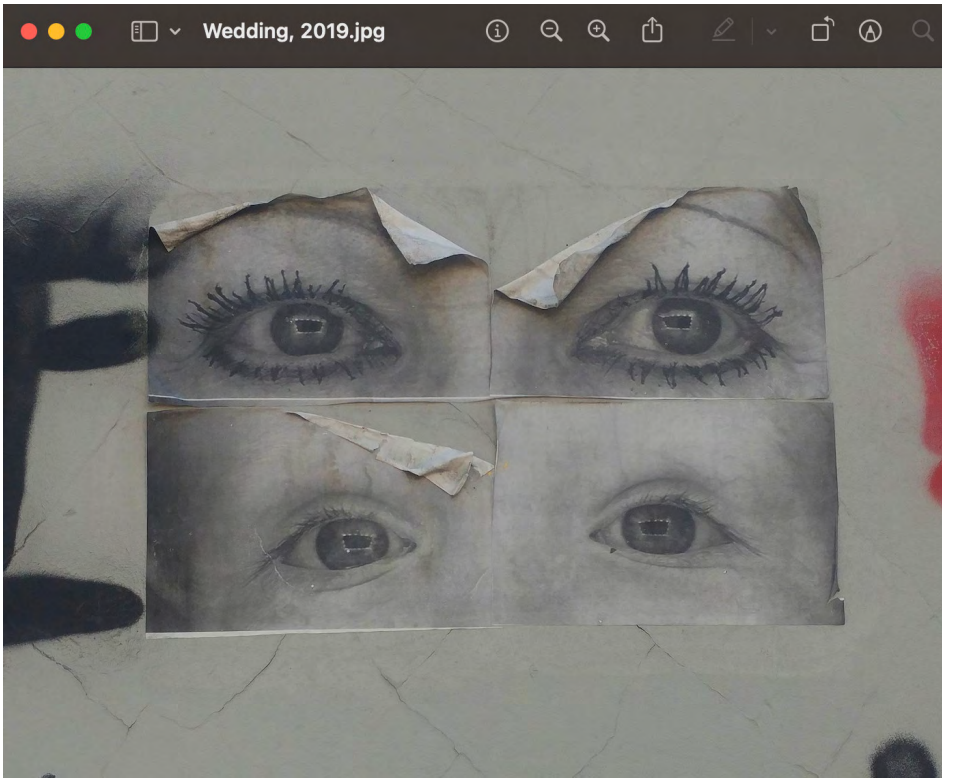


Figure 5: *Untitled, 2019, Wedding, Berlin* (photograph by the author).

experience a city as one and the same. In thinking about what political experiments can come out of Berlin, we must recognize the complexities of class, gender, race and migration that can both help and hinder how we can organize politically in the city.

In many ways, Berlin "as a political laboratory" becomes both symptom and cause of the splitting of space and time, wherein one can simultaneously think about other places while living in Berlin, rooting and uprooting oneself in the process. As Adnan explained, as time passes 'here', there is a distorted experience of time 'there', where one is not. That is to say, time is experienced from a distance. And thus, as the rate of urban change in Berlin picks up speed, this time-splitting is exacerbated, all the while accelerating the rate of evictions, gentrification and restriction of access to public space — both literally and financially.

Through challenging conditions, émigrés old-and-new have established urban economies, networks of community and emulated comfort in the urban landscape as it once was. As Berlin becomes less of a home and more of a securitized playground for consumption of so-called 'culture' and bodies, the city's urban space is becoming increasingly reclusive. While urban change is inevitable, the forms of this change — who it caters to, and excludes — is contingent and not absolute.



Figure 6: *Sweet Home Storefront, 2022, Kreuzberg, Berlin* (photograph by the author).

Conclusion

In February 2023, the Berlin police opened a highly contested station beside *Cafe Kotti*, the same cafe-bar I opened this essay with. Last summer, I attended community theatre pieces on that terrace. This spring, mostly arrestees of Color were seen walking up the steps to the terrace and led into the police station. The inauguration of this police station followed a decades-old narrative of danger rooted in Kottbusser Tor, tainted by discourses of race and class. Here, the opening of the police station is an allegory that describes a Berlin that is becoming more hostile, as the city surrenders to change from the top-down.

Viewing the city as a heterotopia gives us multitude, rather than hegemony. This reading of the city highlights the thin, but stark difference between inclusion and constituency. While the allure of Berlin presupposes the former, the latter is becoming increasingly conditional. Recent calls in Berlin have been made to allow its non-citizen residents to vote in

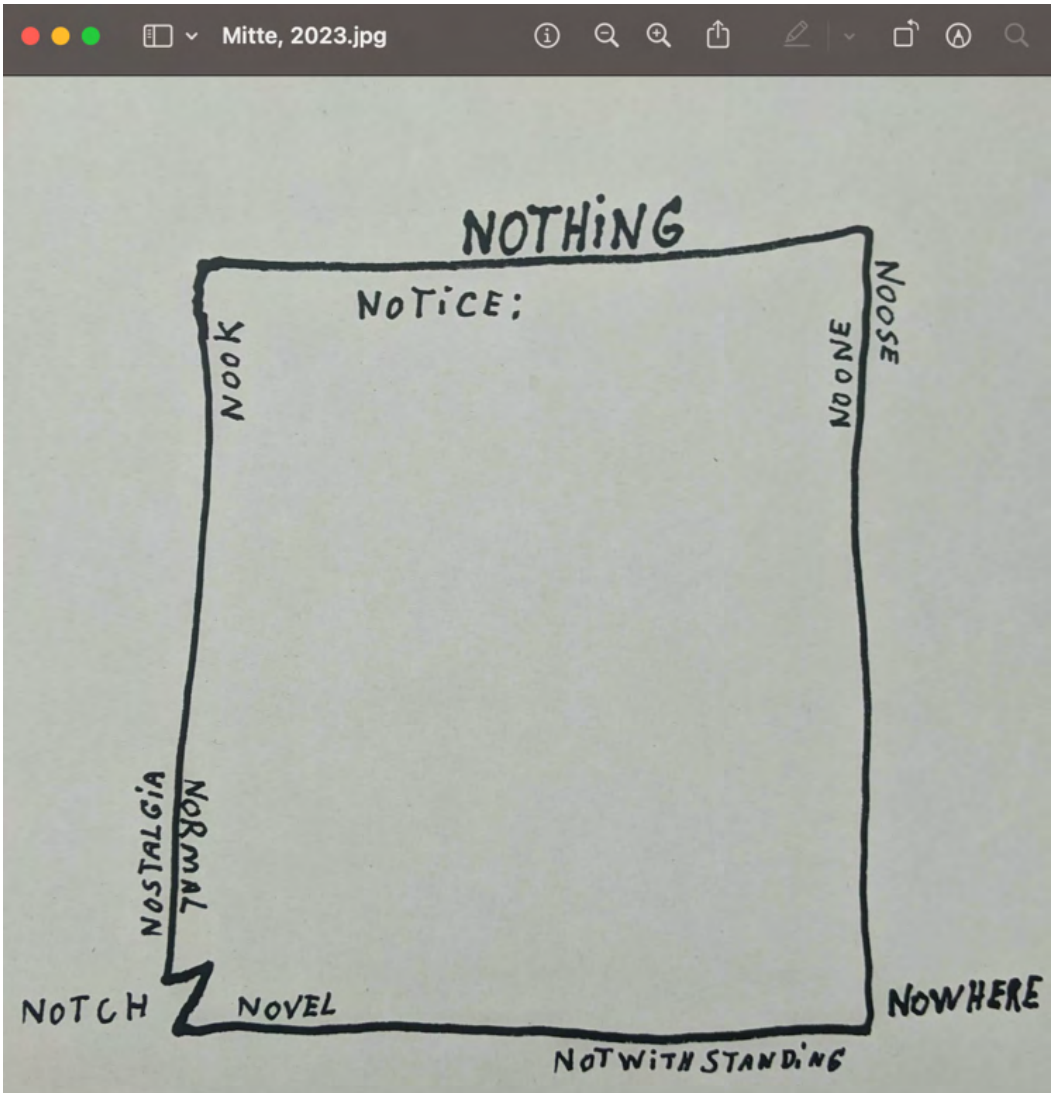


Figure 7: *Photo from Martin Wong's Exhibition "Malicious Mischief" at KW, 2023, Mitte, Berlin* (photograph by the author).

municipal elections based on residence and not citizenship. Similarly, arts and cultural funding is being funneled into projects focusing on living in "exile" in Berlin. Both instances challenge the complexity of what it means to be a 'citizen' and a 'resident' of the city. In this light, a tacit notion makes itself present: every Berliner has a *right to the city* (Lefebvre, 1992). In a Lefebvreian sense, the city is for all its residents.

Berlin is not an exceptional case in heterotopic cities; in fact, nothing makes Berlin a heterotopia *par excellence*. However, the potential afforded to Berlin by its own political history allows us to *read* the city, as a palimpsest, through which we can understand how its residents experience and associate with the built urban environment. In readdressing urban change, taking on the heterotopic lens and treating the city as a 'third space' forces a different conversation on memorialization practices, gentrification and

housing in a way that speaks to its residents, all of whom have made, or are still making, this city their home. It is, thus, rather difficult to see the police station on *Cafe Kotti*'s terrace as anything less than urban securitization, and an intentional reconfiguration of urban space, where the state is all-seeing, and we are forced to forfeit the little comfort found in the Berlin of yesterday. Indeed, the absolute truth of any city is that urban change is inevitable. But as the past lingers around us, not all from today's city must be lost to tomorrow's.

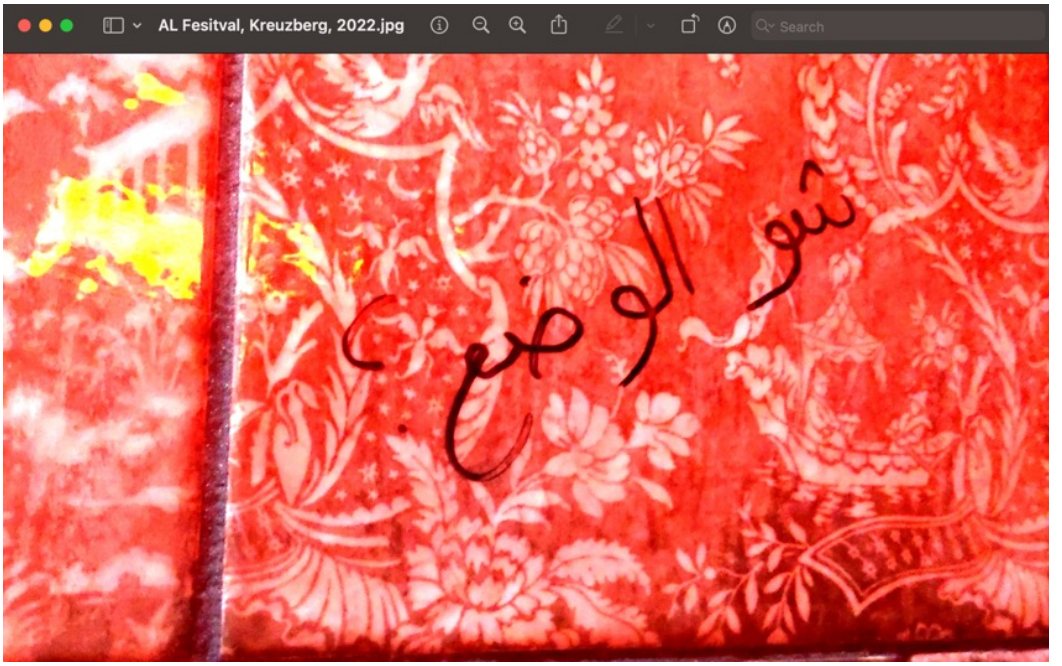


Figure 8: *How is it coming along?, 2022, Kreuzberg, Berlin* (photograph by the author).

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Endnotes

[1] The term *émigrés* is used here to refer exclusively to individuals who have left their cities in the Global South due to social, political and economic crisis. It is commonly used in works on the condition of 'exile', political connotations of which are carried over in its usage herein. In previous works, I have used "migrants" and "immigrants", which are both charged terms within a contemporary European discourse on migration. Considering the politics of movement versus migration, here, "émigrés" does not refer to so-called "expatriates", from mostly Western and European countries, who 'move' freely for personal or professional reasons: that is, as a result of the legal framework of the Schengen Zone within the European Union.

[2] The controversy surrounding the Humboldt Forum museum, which was inaugurated in July 2021, is multifaceted. Calls made to boycott the museum involve a proposal to hoist a cross above the building, reminiscent of the structure's history as the Berlin Palace, built as a palace of the Hohenzollern Family of Prussia. During the Cold War, the structure housed the German Democratic Republic's (GDR) parliament, which included the recreational centre, the "Volkskammer". After reunification, the building was written off as contaminated with asbestos and hastily demolished in 2005. Today, the museum houses the Ethnological Museum of Berlin and the Museum of Asian Art, which contain a number of objects that were looted by German colonial forces in Africa and Asia, considered the crux of the call to boycott the Humboldt Forum.

[3] The name of the bridge "Bösebrücke" is one of several former checkpoints that marked the border crossings of East- and West-Berlin. It was also the first border crossing that was 'accidentally' opened, thus marking the beginning of the end of the Cold War in 1989. Located today on Bornholmer Straße, the Bösebrücke was named after Friedrich Wilhelm Böse, a German who resisted the Nazi Regime. Interestingly, "Böse", the namesake of the anti-Nazi fighter, and the bridge's namesake, also translates to "Evil".

Dublin 1904: Conflict in ‘The Dead’

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Discipline
Comparative Literature

Keywords
Colonialism / Futurity / Joyce / Landmarks

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Abstract

In recent years, there has been growing interest in the role of futurity and hope in memory studies. This paper contributes to this conversation by examining futurity in a city marked by colonial conflict in the context of “The Dead”, the final short story from *Dubliners* by James Joyce. Drawing on discursive analysis, I argue that the postcolonial writer can rewrite the city, ripe for a new and unknown future. To support this argument, I analyze layers of the colonized urban space. Specifically, I look at the Wellington monument and the statue of Daniel O’Connell. Through this analysis, I demonstrate that futurity is an ambiguous concept capable of holding all possible iterations of the future after conflict. This paper contributes to ongoing debates about surpassing the current focus within memory studies on traumatic memories by drawing on research on hope, as it is life-affirming and inherently future-oriented, by Ann Rigney, and David P. Rando. In addition, it challenges conventional readings of conflict and trauma by extending hope to the dead. Thus, it exhibits how death helps to conceptualize an unknown future.

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in futurity and hope within memory studies. James Joyce's "The Dead", from *Dubliners*, provides a helpful context for exploring these themes as the story grapples with the complexities of memory and its role in shaping culture and society.

By situating "The Dead" within the broader contexts of hope, trauma studies, and postcolonialism, we can gain a deeper understanding of Joyce's portrayal of the relationship between the past, present, and future and how memory is depicted as both a source of pride and shame. By examining these themes in "The Dead", I aim to shed light on the nuanced ways literature remembers and copes with traumatic histories and consider the potential for hope as an open-ended future in the waning days of colonialism.

For this analysis, I start by laying out the historical and cultural context of Dublin in 1904, the year "The Dead" is set. Here I outline what I posit in my close reading, namely, that colonialism, even when not physically violent, is a form of constant conflict and psychological warfare. From there, I continue with a close reading of the Dublin of "The Dead". In particular, I will concentrate on how colonial rule looms over the city through two landmarks. I will then argue Joyce rewrites the colonial city and analyze how the form of "The Dead" works to narrativize our understanding of these themes. Finally, I will situate my argument in ongoing debates in memory studies.

By considering these themes, I want to offer insights into the insidiousness of colonial rule in the city and the ways in which postcolonial literature conceptualizes open-ended futures after colonial conflict.

Dublin, 1904

"The Dead" is set in 1904. Joyce will return to this year for *Ulysses*, in which, as Enda Duffy argues, he will saturate it with everything that leads up to it and everything that will come to pass by 1921, when he finished writing (81). It was a relatively uneventful year that fell almost in the middle of the fall of Stewart Parnell, a protestant Irish nationalist who started the last peaceful movement for independence from Britain in the 1870s until the 1890s, and the 1916 Easter Uprising led by Republicans (Duffy 82).

Although, as mentioned, 1904 was politically uneventful, I want to make clear that Dublin and all of Ireland were colonized at this time and that uneventful by no means equals peace. From the early English claims to Ireland in the Middle Ages until Ireland's independence in 1921 (Crooks 460), the colonization of Ireland was brutal and bloody (Foster 506). Of course, the years after independence were also war-torn, but for the pur-

poses of this paper, I will not currently be exploring this period. Instead, I will briefly explain how Dublin became the Dublin of "The Dead".

Much of the seventeenth century had been taken up by war and rebellion (Foster 36-166). Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, England honed the colonial model it would use in Canada, Australia, and India in Ireland. The native Irish population was seen as inferior to English protestants and treated accordingly, replete with the genocide of Gael people and their beliefs and culture (Rahman et al. 17-18). As the British Empire expanded across the globe, so did its colonial model. Urban planning became an important arm of the colonial apparatus: a way to both control the population and replace native cultures (Home and King 52). This form of remote rule was established during the Protestant Ascendancy, the period of settlement and establishing dominance of the Anglo-Irish, from the 1730s until the 1790s (Fraser 102).

Take, for example, the establishment of the four courts. The four courts were built in the late eighteenth century towards the end of the Ascendancy (Spurr 26). Before the Ascendancy, Brehon law had been used outside of the Pale, the base of British Rule in Ireland (Corráin 59). The courts came to be seen as a provocation by the protestant population during the 1798 uprising of the United Irishmen (Spurr 26). Just over a hundred years later, Joyce writes oppression onto the building: "The lamps were still burning redly in the murky air and, across the river, the palace of the Four Courts stood out menacingly against the heavy sky". (210). The scene is heavy and expresses the city's affliction in 1904: physical conflict has turned inwards and is constantly psychologically oppressive.

Joyce wrote "The Dead" in 1907, after his stay in Rome (Ellmann 243). In the years between 1904 and 1907, anti-colonial sentiment was brewing back in Ireland. Micheal Laffan points out that organizers of the Easter Uprising were doing so as far back as the turn of the century (Laffan 34). 1904 saw the release of *The Resurrection of Hungary: A Parallel for Ireland* by Arthur Griffith (Duffy 82), and with that, the establishment of Griffith as a public person and forming the basis for the foundation of Sinn Féin in 1906 (*The 'Sinn Féin' policy* 22-3). In 1906, Joyce wrote to Stanislaus about Griffith commending Griffith's work. Similarly to writing 1904 for Ulysses, he imbues "The Dead" with his knowledge of Dublin's future.

W. B. Yeats theorizes on this psychological inversion of physical conflict in the period from Parnell's fall until the Easter Uprising:

> *"The modern literature of Ireland, and indeed all that stir of thought which prepared for the Anglo-Irish war, began when Parnell fell from power in 1891. A disillusioned and embittered Ireland turned from parliamentary politics; an event was conceived; and the race began, as I think, to be troubled by that event's long gestation" (Yeats).*

This is the time in which Joyce wrote and the period that forms the backdrop to "The Dead". When this paper speaks of colonial oppression it speaks of the bloody conflicts of the past and the war that looms ahead because colonization means constant conflict.

Dublin of "The Dead"

On the 6th of January, the Feast of the Epiphany, Gabriel Conroy, the protagonist, and his wife, Gretta, go to a dinner party at his aunt's house. Gabriel will give the big speech at dinner, and by the end of the night, he will have an epiphany in which he will come to see life, death, and Ireland in a new light. The city, the country, and all their historical layers are shrouded under a thick blanket of snow. Throughout "The Dead", we see a dialectic between Irish nationalism and colonial paralysis in Dublin unfold. The story oscillates between pride and shame in the identity of a colonized space. England is represented by the East, and Ireland by the West. Until the epiphany, we are held in a liminal space, constantly going back and forth between these tensions.

As explored in the previous section, the nature of Britain's colonial power in Ireland in 1904 is equally liminal. The colonial conflict of the early twentieth century in Dublin was insidiously oppressive. Resistance is brewing, and violence looms ahead, but the conflict central to the city is psychological. Generations of Dubliners have grown up in a city designed to oppress them, an urban space marred by hundreds of years of war, rebellion, and genocide (Rahman et al. 17-18).

Joyce portrays the profound effects of oppression in the colonized urban space. All of Dublin's layers and landmarks in "The Dead" unfold with meaning when examined closely. In the following close reading, I will focus on the behaviorism between Gabriel and two statues, 'The Wellington Monument' and 'The Liberator'. Conroy is not haunted by these figures; he is possessed by them. He is a conflicted Irishman and quarrels with Molly Ivors, an Irish nationalist, over whether or not he is a West Briton, at one point blurting out that he is "sick of [his] country" (204). Yet in his speech,

he notes his pride and shame in the Irish tradition of hospitality (200). Here, he touches on the conflict of an Irish tradition: "It is a tradition that is unique as far as my experience goes [...] among the modern nations. Some would say, perhaps, that with us it is rather a failing than anything to be boasted of" (200). Here Gabriel is both proud of Ireland whilst simultaneously subjugating it to its own history.

Twice the nerves of his upcoming speech make Gabriel think of the Wellington Monument. The monument is an obelisk that represents British rule (Spurr 33). It stands in honor of Arthur Wellesley, later the Duke of Wellington, an Anglo-Irish general and politician (Haythornthwaite xi). From 1797 until 1805, Wellesley served as a commander for the empire in India (Haythornthwaite xi-ii). In India, Wellington would have enforced the same colonial model that oppressed his countrymen (Rahman et al. 17-18). The first time Gabriel thinks of the monument, he wishes he could be there: "The snow would be lying on the branches of the trees and forming a bright cap on the top of the Wellington Monument. How much more pleasant it would be there than at the supper-table" (189). Here Gabriel wishes to flee from the very Irish tradition he will soon praise in his speech. The meaning of Wellington in this moment is the paralysis, which *Dubliners* has long symbolized (Rando 53). To Gabriel, his native traditions are inferior, they have, to his mind, led to his subjugation. And thus, he wishes to escape it, which only leads him back to the source of his subjugation.

After the party, Gabriel, Gretta, and two other party guests, Bartell D'Arcy and Miss O'Callaghan, make their way by cab back to the hotel. They cross the O'Connell Bridge (211). The bridge was named for Daniel O'Connell, also known as "The Liberator", an Irish political leader in the early nineteenth century until his death during the Great Famine (Geoghegan 104). As they cross the bridge O'Callaghan points out an old myth: "They say you never cross O'Connell Bridge without seeing a white horse" (211). The meaning of the bridge unfolds here together with the meaning of the statue. Crossing the liberator's bridge foreshadows Gabriel's epiphany, in which "The time had come for him to set out on his journey westward" (220). Here, "westward" navigates away from Britain and towards liberation.

Moreover, the implicature of a white horse conjures images of the first of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, symbolizing Death (Baynes 322). Two centuries ago, King William III and the white horse he went to war on symbolized death for many Irish Catholics (P. McDonald 72). Equally, the end of O'Connell's career and life were marred by death. The Great Famine was engineered by the British and cost over a million Irish lives (Whelan 8). By invoking O'Connell and the white horse, Joyce builds to a redemp-

tion solely for the traumatized, namely, liberation through the dead, which Gabriel will come to realize in his epiphany.

Once they arrive at the hotel, Gretta starts to cry and she tells Gabriel about a boy, Michael Fury, whom she had loved in her girlhood. And he had loved her in return, so much so that he died after waiting for her in the cold and rain (215-8). As Gretta cries herself to sleep, Gabriel contemplates the dead:

> *"The tears gathered more thickly in his eyes and in the partial darkness he imagined he saw the form of a young man standing under a dripping tree. Other forms were near. His soul had approached that region where dwell the vast hosts of the dead. He was conscious of, but could not apprehend, their wayward and flickering existence. His own identity was fading out into a grey impalpable world: the solid world itself, which these dead had one time reared and lived in, was dissolving and dwindling" (220).*

The dead are now as real to Gabriel as he is or as Gretta is. And in that, all the lives lost to war, genocide, rebellion, and uprising far outnumber those of the empire. In this liminal space between life and death, Joyce reaches forwards into the future: "Yes, the newspapers were right: snow was general all over Ireland. [...] and, farther westward, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves" (220). It is in the space of the dead that Joyce establishes a dialectic futurity. Here, the reference to the mutiny of the West foreshadows liberation on the horizon.

Rewriting the City

"The Dead" is the final story in Joyce's collection *Dubliners*. The collection starts with "The Sisters", which tells the story of a priest's death from a young boy's point of view. A cradle to coffin collection that, according to letters cited by David Rando, was to function as a mirror for Dubliners of the time, as Joyce wrote to his editor: "I seriously believe that you will retard the course of civilization in Ireland by preventing the Irish people from having one good look at themselves in my nicely polished looking-glass" (54). Even the title, 'Dubliners', opposed to preempting it with a determiner, could be read as the start of an address. What reflection will Dubliners then come to see of themselves after reading the closing lines of "The Dead"?

Joyce utilizes the space created in Conroy's epiphany by foregoing iterations of nationhood already known, such as those under colonialism or of the Gaelic revival, in favor of an open-ended future. At the time of

writing, Ireland was some twenty years removed from independence (Nolan 24), and Irish nationalism and the Gaelic revival were popular (R. McDonald 52). Considering this, allowing this dialectic process to continue is a hopeful act because it acts on possibility, as Rigney argues, because hope comes from an available prospect, a future-oriented gaze (370).

Joyce resists narrativizing this future; there is no crystallization, no flashforward. Again, the snow plays an important role in narrativizing "The Dead". By invoking the snow, Joyce leaves Dublin and all of Ireland illegible, a blank slate solely of use to its subjects. In the final passage, Gabriel is taken out of his impasse by the weather outside: "His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead" (220). In this scene Gabriel inverts his epiphany from the individual to the communal. It is not that his state of both being alive and sensing the realm of the dead has passed, more it has expanded to all of Ireland. The fact that Michael Furey is as real as he or Gretta lends all of the dead a new agency. They are as free to haunt Dublin as the living are to roam it.

Michel de Certeau considers those who roam the city. On the one hand, there are the controlling bodies. Governments, corporations, and city planners view the city as a legible entity. On the other, there are the city dwellers, who walk and subvert the map, rewriting the city (93). As David Spurr notes: "With its broad vistas, ordered arrangement, and masterful architecture, [Dublin] is the ideal site for the display and deployment of imperial authority" (23). Through the snow, Joyce can almost completely corrupt the celestial controlling eye. He rewrites it to a blank slate where even the likes of Wellington and O'Connell are capped by snow, leaving the city anew.

Memory Studies and Futurity

Within recent years there is an increasing interest in hope and futurity within memory studies and aim to extend the scope beyond the present (Rigney 371). As Rando points out: "By representing the ongoing process of hope and hunger within their historical conditions, Joyce's stories point forward to a wishful future, however undefined" (67). By foregoing the materialization of a future, Joyce returns the agency over Ireland's future back to its citizens.

Overwhelmingly *Dubliners* has been read by post-structuralists as a vignette of colonial paralysis affecting Dubliners (Rando 53). Here, "The Dead" is read as an attempt to conceive of a yet unknown future, one that rejects the backward veering stance of nationalism as much as it does colo-

nialism. As Rigney points out, memory studies are often equally enamored with the rearview (369). Rigney's assessment of the concerns facing memory studies could be used to describe the intersection between nationalism and colonialism as viewed by Joyce: "On one hand, the danger of seeing memory only as traumatic and hence the legacy of the past as only negative; on the other hand, the danger of 'falling back' into narratives of progress or into an escapist optimism or a paralyzing nostalgia" (370). This brings to mind the conflict in the city of "The Dead": the colonial city possesses its citizens through psychological oppression and shame.

This unknown and fragile future is conceived as hopeful by Rigney and neutral by Rando. Both cite Ernst Bloch on hope: "the still undischarged future of the past" (377). Additionally, Rando cites his view of hope as "open to possibilities not necessarily imaginable in advance" (53). In his epiphany Gabriel comes to see that the dead subvert and thereby envelop the empire, obscuring its rule and its long-held conflict (Bender 280). As he finds himself, at the end of the story, not yet in the realm of the dead but slowly turning to shadows, Gabriel represents a bridge between the known and the not-yet representable. As the snow falls, Gabriel expands beyond both iterations.

Conclusion

By examining the Dublin of "The Dead", this paper has aimed to provide insights into how a city is controlled by colonial rule. This paper has laid out that colonialism is a form of continual conflict. Moreover, its aim has been to broaden the understanding of types of conflict by highlighting the psychological reverberations of war, conflict, and memory in periods with little to no physical violence.

By situating the story within the broader contexts of literature studies and postcolonialism, I have argued that postcolonial literature can contain their traumatic histories and the complexities of memory. Thereby writers can rewrite the city and aid in shaping a new unknown future.

Due to the scope of this paper, I suggest the need for further research on this topic in the literature and memory studies field. For example, while this paper has focused on the concept of memory and hope as a way to navigate between nationalism and colonialism, it would be pertinent to explore other concepts that might contribute to the dialectic process of creating a new future, such as forgiveness, reconciliation, or resilience. These concepts have the potential to enrich our understanding of the process of creating such a future, particularly in societies that have experienced significant trauma and conflict.

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The Policing of Berlin as a Post-Conflict City

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Abstract

The essay explores the difficult transition from war to peace in the defeated capital of Hitler's Third Reich. Not only did Soviet forces exact terrible revenge on the civilian population, but conditions of desperation and hunger led to a spike in black-market activity and crime. The Unconditional Surrender, ratified by Potsdam, set up a significant imbalance of power between the occupiers and the occupied. Amid conditions of continued hunger, in the sheets as well as on the streets, such a blatant asymmetry encouraged exploitation and immorality. As a wounded and post-conflict city, Berlin posed special problems for the police authorities. With many policemen having tainted themselves through participation in illegitimate oppression and war crimes, policing had to be begun again from scratch. Although the Allies had lofty ideals of how to reform policing (reflecting their national traditions, but also progressive ideas about the employment of women), their lack of unity, together with the scale of the practical difficulties the city faced, meant that such reforms became watered down and ineffectual. The former capital's need to regenerate and heal was sacrificed to the needs of the cold war. Women and anti-Nazis were increasingly marginalized, while former Gestapo men found favour.

Introduction

Does policing primarily reflect the needs and interests of the public or those of the state? I would argue that the latter prevails. My *first* hypothesis then is that the situation of Berlin in 1945-1948 demonstrates a top-down model of policing.[1] In this specific time and place, the system of state rule was complicated by the exceptional conditions of defeat and four-power occupation. The three victorious allies (Britain, the USA, and the USSR) were joined by the liberated French to each occupy a sector of the defeated city. They would come together to govern Germany as a whole in the Control Council. Greater Berlin, within the boundaries of 1920, was to be governed by the Allied *Kommandatura*. Berlin was an unusual (and transformative) military occupation because the victors chose not to consume, annex or appropriate territory, but instead to subject their jointly-ruled area to radical transformation on a four-power basis (Bhuta; Cuyckens; Mann). This stretched the limits of what the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 foresaw and allowed (Kunz; Rubin; *Hague Regulations*). World opinion generally concurred that, through genocide and war crimes, Nazi Germany had forfeited and sacrificed its residual rights to customary sovereignty. As a form of foreign occupation, however, 1945 was unprecedented. In essence, it represented a co-imperium with several states jointly exercising 'jurisdiction or governmental functions and powers in territory belonging to another state' (Mann). Although the state took a new (four-power) form, it remained the defining agency and source of authority and meaning.

As a reforming power, the Allied Control Council had impressive and far-reaching ideals with which to shape reformed governance and policing in Germany. The Allies would not just demilitarize the defeated territory; they proposed to 'denazify' and even 'deprussianize' it. However, the very imbalance and asymmetry of power relations tended to negate progressive principles. Having studied multiple 'post-conflict cities', Alice Hills argues that this is common (Hills). Hills taught defence studies at the UK's Joint Services Command and Staff College, where she specialized in post-conflict operations, including counter-insurgencies. In later work, she specialized in studying policing reform and development in sub-Saharan Africa. In asking how (on earth) to 'make Mogadishu safe', she focused on security governance and police-military relations in this strategically significant, but fragile and insecure city (Hills 2018). Other post-conflict cities she examined include Basra, Baghdad, Freetown, Grozny, Juba, Kabul, Kaduna, Kigali, Kinshasa, Monrovia and Sarajevo (Hills 2009).

My *second* hypothesis is that postwar Berlin demonstrates Hills's contention about outside ideas, regarding policing, failing to take root in cities

emerging from conflict. However well meaning, the fact that outside agencies do not take account of local conditions and mentalities means that their policies bounce off, and fail to make a lasting impact on, police structures that are, by their nature, impervious (Banton; Chan; Hills (2009); Reiner).

My *third* hypothesis is that the complexity of the postwar policing situation, amid multiplex and entangled foreign governance, significantly delayed the wounded city's ability to heal. The legacy of violence, particularly that perpetrated gratuitously in the ecstasy of victory, significantly delayed the wounded city's capacity to regenerate (psychically if not physically). The cold war further complicated the situation, muddying the waters. By adding the pain of separation and division, it left Berliners as psychologically scarred as their pock-marked and gap-toothed city. The methodology combines primary-source research (using documents and memoirs) with historiography.

Mass Graveyard as Laboratory

How could order survive in the murderous death throes of the Third Reich? Having devastated most of Europe, Adolf Hitler chose complete destruction over surrender. To end his baneful rule, Berlin had to be taken street by street, house by house. With his suicide in the bunker, the war in Europe finally came to an end, but was replaced by a wave of violence (particularly sexual) that targeted female civilians (Gebhardt). To cover up their complicity in Nazi crimes, the remnants of the police hierarchy ordered the burning of records. In the last days of the war, the notorious Police Presidium building on the Alexanderplatz suffered a direct hit. Up in smoke went the precious databases of criminal records, fingerprints, tattoos, and mugshots that the Nazis had carefully sorted by racial profile. The end of a war as colossal and devastating as World War Two does not bring immediate peace. The violence it released proved difficult to put back in the bottle. Like the Māori lost in Dresden, as depicted in *Slaughterhouse Five*, large numbers of Prisoners of War (POWs) were stranded far from home (Vonnegut). Many Displaced Persons (DPs), who had hitherto been treated as slaves, wanted revenge on the Germans who had mistreated them. This helped to create a lawless scenario of incessantly breaking crime waves. With firearms lying around, attempts to contain looting often ended in shooting contests with the assorted desperadoes. On 6 September 1945, Major General John J. Maginnis recorded:

"We had another incident tonight, this time in Schöneberg. The MPs [Military Policemen] were called in by the German police on an attempted rape by two Russians, which ended in a shooting contest. [Public Safety Officer] Captain [Charles] Bond went along to see the fun and almost got himself killed. The Russians were subdued but one of the MPs was shot in the thigh". (Maginnis)

Rossellini's *Germany, Year Zero* (Italy, 1948) conjured up the oppressive atmosphere of guilt and suffering. With war wounds and mass graves still fresh, ordinary civilians simply went missing and perpetrators disappeared into the mass of hungry, dejected survivors. Psychologically, Berliners were as scarred as their devastated infrastructure. Through their misfortunes and suffering, a growing minority of Berliners managed to see themselves as the injured parties. Soviet victory brought an almost total collapse of law and order to the city. Civilians, especially women and girls, faced weeks of terror and agony as they were designated the objects of punishment and revenge (Teo; Grossmann). Celebration, especially through drunkenness, on the part of ordinary Soviet soldiers, led to mass rape. Throughout the city, Berliners remembered the terrible words '*Uri, Uri*' and '*Frau komm*' (demanding that they surrender their watches and womenfolk). Rape was, to a large extent, inescapable and endemic. The indiscriminate punishment affected the virtuous (antifascists) as much as the innocent – foreigners, hospital patients, nurses and nuns (Naimark). The rapists clearly sought to punish the German people as a whole. Even if they had tried to, there was little that German men could do to prevent the rapes. The result was an upsurge in sexually transmitted diseases as well as unwanted pregnancies ('Gewährung'). The awfulness and unavoidability of the crimes created a strong sense of collective suffering. For some, the despair was so great that they committed suicide.

"'They rape our daughters, they rape our wives', the men lament. 'Not just once, but six times, ten times and twenty times'. There is no other talk in the city. No other thought either. Suicide is in the air... 'Honor lost, all lost', a bewildered father says and hands a rope to his daughter who has been raped twelve times. Obediently she goes and hangs herself from the nearest window sash". (Andreas-Friedrich)

“With war wounds and mass graves still fresh, ordinary civilians simply went missing and perpetrators disappeared into the mass of hungry, dejected survivors. Psychologically, Berliners were as scarred as their devastated infrastructure.”

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An anonymous journalist was pragmatic: as a survival strategy, escaping the pack meant finding and latching onto a 'single wolf' (Anonymous). The vacuum of order lasted two months before the other Allies arrived. Ralf Dahrendorf went on to become a leading political scientist and director of the London School of Economics. In the Third Reich, he had been imprisoned in a concentration camp for distributing anti-Nazi leaflets. Experiencing the end of the war in Berlin, he called it a "supreme, horrible moment of utter lawlessness" (Dahrendorf).

Nazism created the wounds (psychological as well as physical) that Allied occupation was ultimately supposed to heal. The scale of crimes, committed by Germany's rulers, meant that it would not be a 'normal' occupation. Before the surrender, the eventual victors had asked how Germany should be reformed so that crimes of this nature could not be committed again. To teach the German people, as a whole, a lesson, denazification should be extensive and harsh. While the British and Americans mostly limited their punishment to alterations to the economic and political structures, ordinary Soviet soldiers meted out their anger and hate through rape. As a consequence, the 'wounded city' had an excess of evident scar tissue (Till). Truth and reconciliation, stability and order, understanding and compassion, all took a back seat to the infliction of pain (hypothesis 3). This disproportionately affected women. Those who could not (or would not) take the step of abortion were left with children conceived through violence ('Gewährung').

Continued Instability, Lawlessness and Crime

Even after the other Allies arrived, hunger gnawed away, producing distress and agony. This meant that, in practical terms, women's virtue (or rather their bodies and sexuality) had a price in cigarettes. The black market had sprung up long before the Unconditional Surrender of 7 May 1945. Nevertheless, soldiers of the four Allied victors significantly contributed to it (Roesler). Berliners' sense of grievance was nourished by the sight of the victors openly trading on and profiting from their misery. Faced with food scarcity, Germans found that they had little choice but to exchange their prized possessions (including family heirlooms) for food and cigarettes. Thus, the chaos of defeat only seemed propitious for breeding poverty, depravity and crime. The black market brought ordinary citizens into contact with criminals, often for the first time.

Starring Marlene Dietrich, former Berlin cultural officer Billy Wilder's film *A Foreign Affair* conjured up a corrupt city of sin and unchained sordid lust, entirely mired in corruption and vice. Young and inexperienced troops

were wont to taste the forbidden fruit of iniquity. Their adventurous holiday spirit contrasted sharply with the Berliners' preoccupation with bare survival. Ordinary GIs ('Government-Issued' General Infantry) assured one another that, as tainted former Nazis, the 'Krauts' deserved to have people preying on their weakness (Janis). Seeing pain as a useful lesson, the Allies were often indiscriminate in applying it. As Deputy Commandant Colonel Frank L. Howley argued, the only reason his forces brought food into Berlin was because they did not want 'the rotting corpses' of German civilians to become a source of infection (*Time*). The disparities in wealth and power between the occupiers and the occupied were immense. The formers' luxury accommodation and lifestyles just made the misery endured by ordinary Berliners more corrosive. Historians are beginning to explore the sordidness of the occupation (Carruthers; Farquarson).

Desperation encouraged both crime and disease. Everywhere there was the stench of death. With the struggle for survival relentless, Berliners died at four times the pre-war rate (Cairncross). When winter came, famine and epidemics were to be expected. With the usual norms, inhibitions and curbs eroded, young city dwellers were seen as running wild (Evans). As its modern transport system attested, Berlin was used to functioning like a well-oiled machine. Instead, in the immediate postwar period, it experienced profound dysfunction and non-governance.

The Allies had mixed aims (hypotheses 2 and 3). As occupation governments, they wanted to reform German society, notably the system of policing. Individually, however, they were inclined to continue profiting from German disarray, even if this deepened the population's distress. The continuation of the black market meant that the city did not return to 'normal'. Although suggesting novel reforms (notably widespread denazification and the employment of women), the *Kommandatura*'s Public Safety Branch made little dent on the conditions of depravity, exacerbated by asymmetrical relations of power and outright exploitation (political, economic and sexual).

Power Asymmetry

Under four-power occupation, sovereignty was absent (hypothesis 1). Ideas for how to put the defeated, devastated city back on its feet varied considerably. At the same time as fighting crime, the Allies wanted to democratize, denazify and demilitarize Germany. Having inflicted a total military defeat, the victors were determined to demonstrate to the German population that they could not shirk responsibility for what they had 'brought upon themselves' through ruthless and fanatical racial warfare. Their last-ditch,

ferocious 'Nazi resistance' had destroyed what remained of the German economy and made the resulting chaos and suffering unavoidable ('Proposal by the United States Delegation'). Unchastened, many Germans felt that it was the disorganization of the Allied occupation that had turned the city topsy turvy, upending notions of order, decency and legitimacy. The fact that the occupiers did not need to obey German laws stressed that they would remain aloof from their 'hosts'. Blatant asymmetry in power relations encouraged a potent sense of unfairness at the widespread squalor and impropriety. The feelings of distress and inequality were largely intentional. Ways occupation governments viewed the Germans influenced the way they exercised control. Seeing themselves as conquerors rather than liberators, the occupiers had opted for policies designed to punish the Germans. Some genuinely believed that the pain of defeat would provide the defeated with a salutary (moral) lesson. For German observers, this manifested a colonial mentality, in which the victors were treating them as disposable playthings (*Die Frontstadt*). In 1948, British Military Governor General Sir Brian Robertson recognized that "protracted and delayed tutelage" would not paint Britain's occupation / "colonial authority" as benevolent (Jürgensen). For his part, Winston Churchill had enjoyed a *bain de foule* in front of the wrecked Chancellery building on 16 July 1945: "When I got out of the car and walked about among them, except for one old man who shook his head disapprovingly, they all began to cheer. My hate had died with their surrender, and I was much moved by their demonstrations, and also by their haggard looks and threadbare clothes" (Churchill). Instead of vengefulness, he found compassion.

At times, the obstacles to restoring order in the shattered city seemed insurmountable. As well as fighting crime, police forces manifest order and stability, supporting the notion of security in relation to governance. Because the remnants of the Berlin police force were tainted with Nazism, at first, the police commanders were obliged to use inexperienced, untrained patrolmen. Turnover in personnel meant that there were continuous shortages of reliable patrols together with uniforms and equipment. Violence often overshadowed order, undermining the police's claim to exercise what Max Weber called *Herrschaft* (Weber). Hungry, exhausted policemen, in tattered, non-standard uniforms, were poor symbols of efficiency or hegemony. This impacted on public confidence in police authority and on notions of legitimacy. For their part, the rookies cared particularly about provision of decent footwear and wished for weapons that would act as effective deterrents. Nevertheless, despite low pay and dreadful conditions, their sacrifices and bravery allowed the gradual reimposition of order. Like

the 'rubble women', who had cleaned the streets of debris while on a hunger ration, women police exhibited courage and an undaunted spirit of survival. Their recruitment and service paid tribute to Allied optimism about the reformability of the police. But they lacked sustained support from a high command that saw them as unsuited (and intrinsically unsuitable) to the task (Nienhaus). These managers put their own preoccupations and assumed needs ahead of either the public or the state. In doing so, they created a 'brand' of rigid and aggressive policing that was to persist for decades (hypotheses 1 and 2).

Causing the splitting of the police force, the onset of the cold war further undermined the rationale for thorough-going and wide-ranging reform. What Hills saw in sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s was clear in 1948 Berlin: reforms designed to increase democratization and to pursue more equal representation took a back seat to power politics, particularly as manifested at the border (Fenemore). The new conflict on top of the old one prioritized the security of the new (divided) state structures. The population of Berlin was expected to fall into line with the commanders of the respective camps. There was no space for reconciliation and understanding, on which the sinews of a newborn (and peaceful) city could grow (hypothesis 3).

Conclusion

To the wounds of 1939-1945, not least those caused by the punishing air war, were added mass rape and widespread malnutrition in 1945. The blockade of 1948-49 was followed by insatiable cold war culminating in the brutal intervention of the Berlin Wall (on 13 August 1961). As a consequence, the body politic experienced successive new wounds on top of the old ones. In the immediate postwar period, Berliners saw their fabled order collapse into ignominy. Hunger caused a spike in black-market trading and crime. With heirlooms tradable for cigarettes, a new army of destitutes scoured the streets looking for valuable butts. What the occupiers discarded as worthless was worth more than currency to the occupied. In the new, postwar sexual economy, young women found themselves caught between the irresolvable poles of desirability and disposability. Although the occupation achieved much, it was harmed by callous 'victor-conqueror' attitudes, which seemed destined to mire it in tawdriness and depravity. "The Germans are not likely to remember with gratitude the Allied Military Governments" (*Manchester Guardian*).

The state of emergency left by defeat had lasted at least three years before being subsumed by division and the cold war. This context of up-

side-down morality and shamelessly asymmetric relations of power meant that the occupation's virtuous aims to reform policing – not least by training and employing women – became watered down and eventually abandoned (hypothesis 2). Policing expert Alice Hills argues that 'societies get the policing they deserve' (Hills 2016). Although ambitious in conception, ideas for reforming Berlin's policing proved more muted in application. Local circumstances tended to trump outside intervention and Allied disagreement helped to make the police structures more impervious to change. The police commanders who went on to serve the respective Allies diligently, as they embarked on the cold war, possessed little interest in gender equality or other progressive policing policies. As a consequence, reforms remained piecemeal, sporadic and temporary. Protecting the state appeared to demand a rigid form of policing, based on patriarchal notions of masculinity (Weinhauer). In the Western part of the city, ideas about what was outstanding in the Allied national policing traditions, together with the soothing effects of deploying patrolwomen, fell into neglect and then abandonment. Although Berlin deserved transparent, democratic and citizen-friendly policing, they instead got a structure whose manifest violence reflected unreconstructed Nazism (Fuhrer; Rigoll). In the early 1950s, policemen, who had been expelled through denazification and who were later discovered to have actively participated in the Holocaust, were allowed to return to the service (Steinborn and Krüger). The 'SS-*Führertyp*' came to predominate; they ensured that the police was led and trained like a military unit (Weinhauer; Rott). Hans-Ulrich Werner was in charge of the West Berlin police deployment on 2 June 1967. When he had joined the SS, they had rated his command of Nazi ideological principles as 'very good' (Aly; Fenemore). On that day, as the Shah of Persia enjoyed the Magic Flute inside the Opera House, Werner's men chased after student demonstrators on horseback and subjected them to brutal beatings. Chased into a carpark, from which there was no escape, 26-year-old student Benno Ohnesorg was on the ground and being subjected to blows when Karl-Heinz Kurras shot him in the back of the head.

According to Hills's viewpoint, demonstrators who went against the prevailing ideology must have deserved the blows of the policemen who waded into them with such fury (hypothesis 1 and 2). Often the violence of the protectors of law and order was so ferocious that their wooden truncheons snapped under the ferocity of the blows they were meting out. At the height of the blockade, during the railwaymen strike of May-June 1949, multiple shots were fired. The situation at that point could not have been farther from the initial Allied aims and expectations of democratization

and denazification. As positions hardened and calcified, keeping with the spirit of the nascent cold war, the minimal capacity for insight, empathy and understanding of the 'other' was lost. Exacerbated by propaganda, brinkmanship had become an all-consuming obsession that left little room for reflection or self-examination. It was not until the late 1960s that recruits who had not been socialised in the Third Reich became available. Up until the killing of Ohnesorg, political decision-makers supported the West Berlin police in taking ruthlessly harsh actions (Weinhauer).

What does it take to heal a city (hypothesis 3)? Beyond its tangible infrastructure, a city represents the combined spirits or souls of its inhabitants. Although reforms (like denazification and the employment of women) were tried, the will to pursue them evaporated with the onset of the cold war (hypothesis 2). Berlin seems to match Hills's insistence that reforms, imposed on post-conflict cities from the outside, tend not to stick. Even if they have progressive interludes, societies end up with the policing they deserve. In divided Berlin, the reversion to policing *Eigensinn* (or a stubborn and wilful pre-existing identity) was accelerated by the state-centric, top-down needs of a cold war polity (hypothesis 1). The security needs of the rulers trumped those of the ruled. Every brutal demonstration of force, in East or West, cemented the city's division and thwarted its population's pursuit of that prerequisite for mending: peace.

Like the graffiti scrawled in 1945 on the *Reichstag* building, rubble and walls are easier to erase from the cityscape than from inside people's heads. Policing in Berlin thus exhibited what Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich termed the incapacity for mourning, coupled with an absence of regret. Under ex-collaborator Maurice Papon, the police force of Paris developed similarly hostile attitudes to pro-independence Algerian immigrants, murdering hundreds after a demonstration in October 1961. Here, repression and impunity combined to create a particularly murderous form of state terror. Other police forces could demonstrate a propensity for excessive violence (not least British troops in Northern Ireland). Yet the model of heavy-handed policing associated with cold-war Berlin – and manifested most clearly during the visit of the Shah on 2 June 1967 – became emblematic as an expression of unresolved (national) trauma. The fact that Kurras was also a Stasi (East German state security) informer muddies the water somewhat. Cold warriors of the East were as damaged and dangerous as those of the West. Nevertheless, as a wounded city, Berlin remained unhealed far longer than its European counterparts, such as Amsterdam, London, Rome and Vienna.

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Endnote

[1] Research for this paper grew out of a project exploring policing in the defeated city (Bessel; Fenemore 2020 and 2023; Jones; Reinke and Fürmetz; Steege). I am particularly interested in how the conflict impacted on law and order and, with it, on the experiences of ordinary Berliners. As a city, Berlin offers multiple narratives. I seek to pay heed to them by producing a bottom-up history of the period.

The 1999–2004 Ambon Wars: Embodied Experiences, Stories and (Re)Memories

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Abstract

This essay addresses embodied experiences of the wars involving Christian and Muslim communities in Ambon that started on 19 January 1999 and lasted until 2004—wars that were made possible by the existing (religious) segregation put in place since (Dutch) colonial time, which in turn exacerbated that segregation and left marks on Ambon—both the city and its people. Starting from embodied experiences of the 1999-2004 (religious) wars in Ambon, in this essay, I argue that wars are not mere events or concepts to discuss, debate, and draw policies from. Wars are experienced in/with the bodies of those who were unlucky enough to go through them. Wars are embodied experiences of people and city(ies). The trauma and haunting (re)memories of wars and their aftereffects remain with the people and the cities visited and touched by wars. And as we walk through a particular city that has experienced wars, chances are we might bump into these (re)memories.

The 1999-2004 Ambon Wars

19 January 1999. First day of Eid. *Idul Fitri*, or *Lebaran* as we know it in Ambon. The morning Eid prayer was followed by *silaturahmi*, where people visit each other extending well wishes of Eid while enjoying refreshments prepared in the homes of those who celebrate Eid after the *Ramadhan*'s fast and served exclusively during Eid.

The spirit of festivity did not last long, though, for soon after noon tensions rose. A fight broke out in Terminal Mardika; but unlike countless similar incidents in the past, this one triggered other violent incidents that spread across the city faster than any of us could have anticipated. And so, Ambon entered a period of warfare that did not cease until 2004. In the latter half of that day, violence broke out in various parts of the city. Several houses were burned to the ground by groups of men unknown to the locals. Tensions were building, and many of us who lived in areas between Christian and Muslim-dominated territories were preparing to leave should the situation worsen.

Living in one of those border neighbourhoods, my family and I slept fitfully on the night of 19 January 1999, as we were fully prepared to flee should the violence approach our neighbourhood. There was already an emergency signal put in place: the beating of a metal rod on a metal electricity pole meant danger was approaching, and people hearing this should run for safety. Many Ambonese who survived the wars will most likely tell you, that this sound has the power to trigger panic and awaken deep-seated trauma of wars long after the violence stopped. Back to the night of 19 January 1999, we survived the night without harm. Nevertheless, not long after dawn, we heard loud voices up the hill across from our home. Peeping through our front window, I saw people running up the hill, shouting as they arrived, followed by flaming arrows aimed at houses in that area. The danger had arrived. And so, we fled. Together with our neighbours, we walked quickly to the main street, and crossed over to enter a small alley that would take us to a Christian dominated area. As we were crossing, less than 200 metres to our right we saw a group of people approaching; the blades of their *parang* reflecting the early morning sun. In silence, we hastened our pace. Within five minutes, we arrived at a Christian-dominated area where our family and friends were waiting, ready to shelter us. There, with *parang* at hand, stood a group of men ready to defend their homes should the enemy approach. My family and I found shelter in that area, less than one kilometre from our home throughout the wars. Although we occasionally managed to return between battles, almost a decade would pass before we returned to our home for good.

In 2010, I returned to Ambon for my research. More than ten years after the start of the wars and more than five years after the battles stopped, tensions were still in the air as Ambon dealt with the remnants from the wars. Relocations of those internally displaced, rebuilding of public facilities damaged or destroyed, rebuilding broken trust amidst the trauma of wars, reconnecting two communities, Muslims and Christians, almost totally segregated during the wars, so that they can learn to live together again.

Upon this return to Ambon, I found that the face of the city which had barely changed throughout my childhood had now changed so much that I sometimes felt disoriented. The big old mango tree, once a landmark of our neighbourhood was no longer there; the family who lived there had sold their plot and moved to a Christian-dominated area. On its spot was a new three-storey building. Across the street was a new iron gate decorated with a Christian cross at the mouth of the small alley that we passed to safety back in 1999. The gate was built during the wars to mark the border between Christian and Muslim territories, and help defend the area from attacks. On the wall of a tall building nearby were bullet marks from one of the many battles in Ambon between 1999-2004.

The iron gate, the bullet holes, the changing face of the city, the anxiety triggered by the sound of steel rods on steel poles, and nightmares of blades reflecting the sunlight; these are only a small portion of the remnants of wars. The marks left by five years of the bloodbath that are now embodied by the city of Ambon and its people. Not to mention the scars people bear on their bodies from wounds sustained during the wars, nor the scars deep in their hearts from the loss of loved ones to the wars. The 1999-2004 wars divide time and life in Ambon into 'before the wars' and 'after the wars'.

In this essay, using embodied experience of the 1999-2004 wars in Ambon as my starting point, I will draw attention to the fact that for those who lived through the Ambon wars, wars is not a mere concept, theory to debate and draw policies from. (The) wars are historical, embodied experiences that left long lasting impacts on the life of people touched by them. For many, (the) wars alter their-our life trajectories, their-our present and their-our future.

Writing: Resisting/Re-Existing From the Body

This essay is written as a reflection on how the 1999-2004 wars in Ambon affected the city and its people. It is an attempt to look back across the little more than two decades since the start of the wars, to put together stories and (re)memories in order to build and curate (a) decolonial archive(s) on the Ambon wars and its aftermath. In a way, as a Malukan scholar-

“The iron gate, the bullet holes, the changing face of the city, the anxiety triggered by the sound of steel rods on steel poles, and nightmares of blades reflecting the sunlight; these are only a small portion of the remnants of wars.”

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practitioner who embodied the Ambon wars through my own experience of it as well as those who are dear to me, writing this essay is my way of reaching through the interstices between theories and realities, to authenticate my voice (Alexander), to talk back (bell hooks) to those who theorise wars from the abstract position of a detached, non-embodied, non-positioned researcher. Through the stories and (re)memories (Rhee) of wars, I am writing this essay to resist [1] epistemic erasure—intended and unintended—that comes with theories of conflict and peace developed *about* (Barbosa da Costa et al.) us and imposed on us.

On Looking Back, Stories, and (Re)Memories

Sam Okoth Opondo in his afterword to the book Politics of African Anticolonial Archive (Malik and Kamola), extended an invitation to look back and to listen otherwise (Opondo), as a task of (anticolonial) archiving, which is to be understood as "archives in processes of production with no end" (Kamola and Malik 5). In their introduction to the same volume, Kamola and Malik explain, that the task of anticolonial archiving is not about looking back nostalgically or double-checking for authenticity (Kamola and Malik 5). Instead, we look back to forge relationships, that is "a relationship between a historical moment, its actors and locations, and the present historical moment" (Kamola and Malik 5).

In her work 'Dancing on Our Turtle's Back', Leanne Simpson narrates how the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg resisted colonialism, how her ancestors "resisted by holding onto their stories" (Simpson 5). Stories indeed play a very important role in indigenous ways of knowing. Through stories we learn about our land, our people, where we come from, what is our purpose, and where we will head to after serving our purpose in this life. In stories, we find knowledges about ourselves and the world around us. At the same time, in the context of colonised people, stories are at the centre of resistance.

Stories and storytelling also involve (re)memory, and (re)memory involves both remembering and forgetting (Rhee) as we also remember what we do not remember (Alexander 278). And so, in sharing our stories, sometimes we bump into memories that we thought forgotten, yet were not. Those (re)memories remain, floating around places and people, and we might bump into them from time to time (Rhee; Soukotta, *Past in Present*).

"We had to flee to a refugee camp". "I did not flee my house, did not go to the refugee camp. So, we had different experiences". "Yes. That was why back then I really hated Christians. Because of my experiences in the refugee camp. Therefore, at the beginning when they contacted me to join

[the peace initiatives], I hesitated, it was not easy for me". "Yes. Because she was in the refugee camp".[2]

These are pieces of conversations (Soukotta, *Past in Present* 118) that I had with some of the women who initiated *Gerakan Perempuan Peduli* (abbreviated GPP, or Concerned Women's Movement in English), a peace initiative started by women from both Muslim and Christian camps during the early year of the wars, and its off-shoot, Maluku Ambassadors for Peace (MAP). These conversations usually took place in between sessions of the peacebuilding workshops they organised for peace actors on the ground. Conversations like these are times where stories were shared and (re)memories were exchanged. From these exchanges, we see that different people went through different experiences of the same wars. In this case both women were Muslim, yet they went through different trajectories and embodied the wars differently.

The sharing of stories and (re)memories also helps to understand how both communities fell victim to provocations during the wars. One of the stories shared was what I will refer to here as the night terror— incidents where people were attacked in their homes.[3] These usually occurred randomly in the middle of the night when it was raining hard and there was a blackout. People in the Christian communities believed these attacks were done by the Muslims, while the Muslim communities believed that the Christians did these. Neither camp was aware that the other also experienced similar attacks. They only learned about them when stories and (re)memories of wars were shared in conversations.

Sharing stories is part of everyday life in Ambon. It is how we generate knowledges about ourselves and about the world around us (Soukotta, *Past in Present*). Our sharing of stories often involves (re)memories about people, places, events, and relations. It involves our remembering and forgetting, including our remembering what we do not remember. As we look back and (re)memory in our sharing of stories, we might realise that our recollections of things and events are different from one another. Memories are not meant to be accurate. People might have different recollections of the same event. After all, our memories of a particular event are often our record of it interwoven with our hopes, dreams and fears surrounding it. This also applies to our (re)memories of wars in Ambon. The point of looking back and (re)memory here is not about finding and double-checking facts, but rather about understanding each other's experiences of the wars and learning from them. It is about relating to each other—in María Lugones' words, travelling to each other's worlds (Lugones).

On Wars and Violent Conflicts: What Is In The Name?

The bloodbath that took place in Ambon between 1999-2004 has many different names. On the ground, the most popular name is *kerusuhan*. Riot. *Kerusuhan*, however, is not a local term. This term comes from the news of turmoil in Indonesia surrounding the fall of Suharto's new order regime in May 1998 marked by the riots (*kerusuhan*) that emerged in different parts of Indonesia, from Jakarta to Kalimantan, to Sulawesi, and of course, Maluku. The term Ambonese usually used for a situation involving unrest of unclear nature would be *baribot-baribot*, or in the case of the 1999-2004 violence, *prang*, meaning war. Through the national media repeating the government discourse labelling the violence that occurred around the fall of Suharto, the term *kerusuhan* was accepted as a name with which we refer to the violence in Ambon that started on 19 January 1999.

Another name commonly used to describe this period of time in Ambon is *prang*. War. Although commonly used on the ground to refer to the violence in Ambon between 1999 and 2004, this is not usually used among scholars writing on the Ambon wars.

Among scholars who work on conflict and peace studies, as well as those whose work focuses on Indonesia, the bloodbath that started in 1999 and lasted for the next few years is generally labelled as communal or religious conflict (Goss; Sudjatmiko; Sumanto Al Qurtuby). The term conflict, or *konflik* in the Indonesian language, is also a popular name for the Ambon wars. However, just like *kerusuhan*, the term *konflik* was also a term that entered Ambon through media discourse reflecting scholarly and policy language around the theory of liberal peace. Although not popular, a few scholars use the term war to refer to the violence in Ambon (see Hatib Abdul Kadir 187; Soukotta, *Past in Present* 24).

In this essay, I chose to use the term wars, in plural, for (1) wars, *prang*, was a term used on the ground, (2) it reflects the intensity of violence in Ambon between 1999 and 2004 that involved the use of sophisticated weaponry and mass killing, and (3) the use of plural wars reflect the many different interests involved in the wars, as well as the entanglement of actors, issues, events, and relations on the ground that go beyond religion and ethnicity debates (Soukotta, *Past in Present*).

Using the term wars instead of *kerusuhan* (riot) or *konflik* (conflict) also feels right, for riot implies uncontrolled chaos while in the case of Ambon the chaos was orchestrated and filled with interests (Soukotta, *Past in Present*). On the other hand, the term conflict does not do justice to the violence that Ambon and its people went through between the years 1999 and 2004, as it reduces five years of open wars involving sophisticated

weaponry resulting in at least 3,000-4,000 deaths within the first year only (Klinken, *Communal Contenders* 130) to a situation of incompatible goals (Soukotta, *Past in Present* 127-9).

On Embodied Experiences, Knowing and Resisting From/Through the Bodies

Taking a distance from the Cartesian view that disregards the body while privileging the mind (see Cruz; Mignolo, *Coloniality*; Soukotta, *IR from Below*), here I value bodies and everyday experiences that these bodies go through in encountering the world as a way of knowing and making sense of the world. Aligning myself with black, Chicana and decolonial feminists (e.g., Lugones; Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*; Anzaldúa & Keating; Alexander, *Pedagogies*; Icaza; bell hooks, *Remembered Rapture*; *Talking Back*; Moraga & Anzaldúa; Lorde; Wekker; Motta; Trejo Mendez) who theorise from "embodied (transgenerational, ancestral) knowledges, experiences and realities" (Soukotta, *Past in Present* 59), I understand embodied experiences as experiences that we go through with and in our bodies.

We cultivate knowledges through our bodies (Cruz)—bodies that work together (Barbosa da Costa et al.), walk together (Icaza & Aguilar), learn together (Lugones).

At the same time, it is also from, through and with our bodies that we interact with and respond to the world around us. We experience violence through our bodies, and from/with them we resist a la Fanon (see Mignolo, *Coloniality*; Soukotta, *Past in Present*).

Understanding Wars as Embodied Experience

As exemplified by the vignette at the beginning of this essay, people in Ambon experienced the 1999-2004 wars and the almost total segregation of the city into Christian and Muslim territories with and in their bodies. Bodies that left their homes behind, fled the approaching attacks, were pierced and wounded by blades, arrows, and bullets, endured the loss of loved ones, and are still reminded of the traumas of wars long after the violence stopped. These bodies experienced the wars and segregation in Ambon in their/our flesh.

Just as the wars were messy and chaotic, so were our experiences. This messiness, the different nuances on the ground experienced by the city of Ambon and its people are realities of wars that the theories written by distant, disengaged observers failed to perceive/receive.[4] And so, in academic, scholarly narratives of the Ambon wars, we often see a clear separation between Muslims and Christians as enemies (see for example

Klinken, *Bringing Society*), as well as clear linear progress between conflict and peace separated by a peace agreement signed in 2002 (Soukotta, *Past in Present*). This peace agreement, the Malino II, was initiated by the government through the hand of Jusuf Kalla. Signed by the representatives of the so-called conflicting parties invited to the peace talk in Malino, Sulawesi—hence the name of the agreement, Malino II is seen as the end of the conflict, and the period following it is considered post-conflict. Therefore, in the mainstream narrative of the Ambon wars, the conflict is generally understood as taking place between 1999-2002, despite the reality on the ground showing incidents of violence continued until 2004 (Duncan; Soukotta, *Past in Present*).

On the ground, although there were clear borders separating Christians and Muslims, there were still interstices, the spaces inbetween, where people from these two communities met each other to initiate peace. In the chaos of the battleground, wars and peace processes overlap. The same bodies that warred were also those that reached out to each other for peace. The peace process in Ambon did not start with the Malino agreement. It started long before amidst the bloodbath. GPP as a peace movement was initiated in early 2000 (Soukotta, *The Past in the Present*). These women from both Muslim and Christian backgrounds distributed green ribbons on the streets of Ambon to call for the end of violence. From there they organised workshops and training for peacebuilding, while violence was still at its peak. Similar stories of people reaching out to each other for peace are shared in the book *Carita Orang Basudara* (Manuputty et al.) published in 2014 as part of the peace initiatives of *Lembaga Antar Iman Maluku* (LAIM), Maluku Interfaith Institution.

In *Carita Orang Basudara*, Ambonese from various backgrounds who went through the wars share their stories and (re)memories of how they experienced the wars, the segregations, as well as how they transgressed borders and revived the relationality of *orang basudara*—people who come from the same source—to build peace on the ground (Soukotta, *The Past in the Present*). In this book, they take into their hands the task of resisting the mainstream narrative of the Ambon wars through stories and (re)memories of their embodied experiences.

Stories and (Re)Memories of Wars as Epistemic Resistance

In the globalised world of today where coloniality as the underlying logic of colonisation outlived the European colonial administration and remains "the most general form of domination" (Quijano 270), 'The West' still claims superiority to 'the rest' not only in political, economic and socio-cultural

aspects of life but also onto-epistemologically—in views of the world and how knowledge is produced about the world around us (Soukotta, *IR from Below*). When it comes to knowledge production, coloniality means only European culture is deemed as rational and therefore can assume the position of subjects (Quijano 174; see also Soukotta, *IR from Below*). The rest are deemed inferior, and therefore can only be assigned the position of objects (Quijano 174; see also Soukotta, *IR from Below*). In the context of (academic) production of (scientific) knowledge about Ambon wars, Ambon and its people are assigned the position of objects of study, to be spoken about, not to speak for ourselves.

The embodied knowledges generated in Ambon by people who went through the wars fall outside the category of scientific knowledge, and their-our narratives of their-our embodied experiences of the wars are reduced to mere 'stories' vis-à-vis the scientific theories of wars where the same stories and experiences are carefully collected using valid methods of data collection, sieved through a rigorous process of analysis involving sophisticated theories developed by esteemed scholars, and therefore elevated into the realm of theory. Inherent in this difference is the Cartesian dichotomy (see Cruz; Mignolo, *Coloniality*; Soukotta, *IR from Below*) that separates mind from body and theory from experience, where theory that comes from the mind is valued more as compared to the body and what it experienced.

In this context, sharing stories from the ground of the wars in Ambon, be it stories of wars as well as stories of people reaching out to each other to initiate peace amidst the wars, is a form of epistemic resistance. It is where those assigned the position of object rise up, and assume the position of subject, talk back to those who produced them as objects in the first place. The publication of *Carita Orang Basudara*, stories of peace from the battlegrounds of Ambon, is an example of this epistemic resistance. Through these stories and (re)memories, those who contributed to the book provide nuances on the ground not visible from the bird's eye view of those who wrote about the wars from a safe distance.

Rudi Fofid, a Malukan journalist and activist, places this epistemic violence—biases in information and mistakes in capturing facts burying significant truths—together with the direct physical violence—the fires that destroyed houses and villages, swords, spears and bullets that pierced through the hearts—that Ambon experienced during the wars (Fofid 37). Fofid continues, that it is important that we write our own stories, otherwise a thousand fairy tales will appear in the future telling stories of a whole generation down on their knees back in 1999 (Fofid 37).

This epistemic resistance, this undertaking to speak of our own embodied experience, is what Chicana feminist Gloria Anzaldúa refers to when she suggests that "it is *vital* that we occupy theorizing space, that we do not allow whitemen and women solely to occupy it" (Anzaldúa, *Making Face* xxv). Only by entering the "forbidden territory" (Anzaldúa, *Making Face* xxv) that is the "theorizing space" (Anzaldúa, *Making Face* xxv) bringing with us our worldviews and our ways of knowing to the space where knowledge is produced about us (Soukotta, *IR from Below*), can we "transform that theorizing space" (Anzaldúa, *Making Face* xxv).

Towards an Understanding of Wars and Violent Conflict Otherwise

New buildings stand on streets that are busier than before. New faces everywhere. Those who were children during the wars are now grown-ups. Children born after the wars might learn about the wars from stories and (re) memories of their parents and grandparents. How they see the recent wars is perhaps similar to how my generation feels about the Second World War.

After the wars, Ambon experienced development projects and economic growth, today's panacea for '(post)conflict' societies. Yet marks of the wars, scars left deep in the flesh of Ambon remain. Experiences of wars that we go through with our bodies remain. No amount of development projects and economic growth could ease the pain and the trauma the city and its people carried on/in/with their-our bodies. (Re)memories of the experiences of wars and the scars left behind float above the city and its people. And when we walk past certain places or people in Ambon, we might bump into these (re)memories of the 1999-2004 Ambon wars.

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Endnotes

1 Resisting/re-existing (Mignolo & Walsh) from the body a la Fanon (Mignolo, *Coloniality*; see also Soukotta, *Past in Present*)

2 Pieces of conversations with members of Maluku Ambassadors for Peace during a workshop in 2010 from fieldwork notes, August 2010 (Soukotta, Past in Present 118).

3 From fieldwork notes, November 2014.

4 The production of academic/scientific knowledge in general is based on an intellectual exercise that implies objective gaze of a distant observer. Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues against this idea of research as "an innocent or distant academic exercise"; instead, it is "an activity that has something at stake" (5). Along the same line, Walter Mignolo also proposes another way of generating knowledges, that is different than "the report of a detached observer" (The Darker Side 123). To be involved and engaged in research as a way to generate knowledges mean that researchers need to be aware of how we are positioned in the world, that there is no such thing as a neutral position with regards to the knowledges we generate. On this Vazquez posits, that "[p]ositionality undoes the universal validity claims of non-positioned knowledge" (xxvi). Positionality here refers to how we positioned ourselves body-geo-politically in relation to the knowledge we produce, as well as our awareness of the colonial difference between researchers, the 'subjects' located in the 'North' and the 'objects' of their research located in the 'South' (see Quijano; Trejo Mendez; Soukotta, *Past in Present*).

The Polyphonic Object



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Registration of Belgian Refugees in the Amsterdam Stock Exchange

Amsterdam Museum Journal

In ‘The Polyphonic Object’ three analyses by scholars from different perspectives and academic fields show the layers of complexity a single object can hold. Through their (art historical, historical, and sociological) reconstructions, they uncover the different stories behind the painting *Registration of Belgian Refugees in the Amsterdam Stock Exchange* by Herman Lugt (1914) (on loan, Stichting Genootschap Amsterdam Museum, 1960). Painted at the start of the First World War, it depicts Belgian refugees arriving in Amsterdam, the capital of the (neutral) Netherlands.

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Herman Lugt (1881-1950)
Registration of Belgian Refugees in the Amsterdam Stock Exchange, 1914
On loan, Stichting Genootschap Amsterdam Museum, 1960

When Germany invades Belgium in 1914, one million Belgians flee across the border to the Netherlands, which remains neutral. The Dutch government attempts to distribute the refugees evenly throughout the country, to ease the pressure on its south. Amsterdam receives 25,000 of these Belgians, who are registered in the Stock Exchange building. Most of them are housed in schools, churches, and warehouses at the port.

Judith van Gent (art historian)



People in a long line; mothers carrying small children, men packed with sacks and bundles, an old woman supported by two policemen. They look exhausted and defeated. In the centre of the painting, we see a young woman, dressed in black and holding a young boy by the hand. She seems somewhat isolated and on her own, a dramatic effect that is further enhanced by the fact that she seems to be the only person looking at the viewer. They are Belgian refugees who came from Antwerp via Roosendaal to Amsterdam after a long journey in an overcrowded train. From Central Station they then walked to the Stock Exchange on Damrak and there walked up the stairs. Painter Herman Lugt (1881-1950) captured the moment when the refugees, coming up the high staircase, are about to enter the hall of the Stock Exchange to register themselves.[1]

The painting is dated 1914, the year the First World War started. Germany had invaded Belgium in August of that year and had conquered Antwerp after a bloody battle on 10 October. From the beginning of October, one million Belgians fled across the border to the neutral Netherlands. About a quarter of them ended up in Amsterdam. Most of the refugees arrived there between 9 and 12 October. In a photograph by H.J. Witters we see them walking along the Damrak in an impressive procession.[2] Amsterdammers – as the inhabitants of Amsterdam are called – are watching. Herman Lugt must also have been there. He presum-

ably made preliminary studies for his painting in the Stock Exchange. Recent research into the painting's creator, its donor and their families provides insight into the circumstances in which it was created.

Herman Lugt

Herman Lugt was born on November 6, 1881 in Amsterdam as the third child of the insurer Johannes Hermanus Lugt (1849-1945) and Johanna van Maurik (1849-1930).[3] After high school, he studied engineering at the Polytechnic School in Delft, but his heart lay in painting and drawing.[4] From 1901 he took drawing and painting lessons from Frederik Hart Nibbrig and Jan Veth in Laren (the Netherlands). The latter sent him to the Rijksacademie van Beeldende Kunsten (National Academy for the Visual Arts in Amsterdam). Between 1906 and 1924, Lugt had studios on Hobbemakade, on Singel (in the same building as painter Coba Ritsema) and on Rembrandtplein in Amsterdam. He was a member of artists' associations Arti & Amicitiae and Sint Lucas, and exhibited there several times. He traveled extensively. He had been awarded a Royal grant for three years, which he spent on journeys to Rome and Morocco. After his return to Amsterdam, he fully participated in the artistic life in the city. For example, he was one of the artists who worked on the decorations for the artists' party in Theater Bellevue in 1915. Lizzy Ansingh painted his portrait in 1915. In the 1920s Lugt moved to Schoorl with his wife Gerda Lugt-Hoefsmit. He had problems with his eyes and became blind in one eye in the early 1930s.[6] Completely blind, Herman Lugt died on March 29, 1950 in Alkmaar.

Lugt painted landscapes, portraits, figures and still lifes. As far as we know, the painting of the Belgian refugees is the only one in which he depicted a group of people.

In 1951, a year after Lugt's death, on the initiative of his widow, ninety-two of his paintings and drawings were exhibited in a memorial exhibition at Arti & Amicitiae. A third of the works on display were contributed by his widow, the others by family and friends. The painting depicting the arrival of the Belgian refugees was also on display, as was a second painting with the same subject. According to the exhibition catalogue, both paintings belonged to a 'Mrs. H.S. de W.' from Hilversum.[7]

Johannes Hermanus Scheltema and Augusta Louisa de Wit

'Mrs. H.S. de W' was Augusta Louisa de Wit (1867-1961), widow of Johannes Hermanus Scheltema (1864-1945). In 1960 she donated the painting of the Belgian refugees to the Stichting Amsterdams Historisch Museum, the foundation that supports the Amsterdam Museum. The museum has had the painting on long-term loan ever since.

There are strong indications that, in 1914, the Scheltema-De Wits commissioned a painting with as subject Belgian refugees in Amsterdam from Herman Lugt.

The Mennonite families Lugt and Scheltema were connected through several marriages.[8] Johannes Scheltema and Herman Lugt were second cousins by marriage and will certainly have known each other personally. Apart from family ties, the families were in the same industry. The Scheltemas had been tobacco manufacturers and traders for generations. Herman Lugt's mother was the daughter of Justus van Maurik, who owned a cigar-factory in the Spuistraat and a tobacco shop near Dam Square in the center of Amsterdam.

Johannes Scheltema, born in Amsterdam, left for Antwerp in 1885 where he was further trained in the tobacco trade and where he set up the tobacco dealership Scheltema & Rebel, together with his cousin Gajus Scheltema. In 1890 he married Augusta

Louisa de Wit in her hometown Oosterbeek. Together they lived in Antwerp for five more years. They actively participated in society and were socially engaged. For example, in 1892 Scheltema was one of the founders of the Nederlandsche Vereeniging tot Hulpbetoon in Antwerp (Dutch Society for Relief in Antwerp), which devoted itself to supporting the unemployed (Scheltema 1934).

In 1895, the couple Scheltema-De Wit moved to Amsterdam and Scheltema founded Scheltema & Co's Tabakshandel on the Rokin. Between 1904 and 1921, he was a municipal councilor for the Union of Free Liberals. When the Support Committee for Amsterdam was founded in August 1914, Scheltema became its first treasurer. The committee devoted itself to the unemployed and was responsible, among other things, for distributing the funds it collected.[9]

Mrs. Scheltema-de Wit was also socially active. In 1916 she was secretary of the Urgency Council for Women's Suffrage.[10] Around that time she probably also devoted herself to the Belgian refugees in Amsterdam. Although her name does not appear in the archives of the Central Committee for Belgian Refugees to Amsterdam, a mention in her obituary of 4 September 1961 states that Augusta Louisa de Wit was 'bearer of the medal of Queen Elisabeth of Belgium'.[11] This medal was awarded to both Belgians and foreigners for exceptional services to Belgian citizens or military personnel during a period of at least one year between 1914-1919, which makes it obvious that Scheltema-de Wit devoted herself to the Belgian refugees during those years. Incidentally, the name of To Lugt-Klever, wife of art collector Frits Lugt, cousin of painter Herman Lugt, can be found in said archives. In October 1914 she headed the temporary reception of Belgian refugees at the Institute for the Blind in Amsterdam's Vossiusstraat. Her husband must have organized this; he was a member of the Central Committee's 'Housing' subcommittee.[12]

All these circumstances – their 'Belgian past', their social commitment, the medal and the family bond – make it plausible that, in 1914, Johannes and Augusta Scheltema-De Wit asked Herman Lugt to record the poignant story of the Belgian refugees in a painting. The fact that Scheltema-de Wit owned two versions of the painting in 1951 seems to confirm this assumption. Unfortunately, this second painting has not been traced to date.

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'J.H. Scheltema 70 jaar', in: *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 1 november 1934, p. 5.

Endnotes

1 *Amsterdam Museum, inv. no. SB 4522, on loan from from the Stichting Amsterdam Museum since 1960; canvas 60,5 x 73 cm. On show in Panorama Amsterdam.*

2 *Henricus Jacobus Witters (1879-?) was a shoemaker and an amateur photographer in Amsterdam. He mainly took pictures from high vantage points. Amsterdam, City Archives, inv. no. 010003047622.*

3 *Most biographical information about Herman Lugt comes from the introduction in the exhibition catalog by the painter Kasper Niehaus (Niehaus 2-4).*

4 *See, for example, his comment in a letter to Jan Veth from Paris in April 1904: 'ik weet zeker dat ik niet graag iets anders zou zijn [dan schilder]' ('I'm sure I wouldn't like to be anything else [other than a painter]'). Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv. no. RP-D-1984-40-H.LUGT-2.*

5 *On Friday, January 15, 1915, the Tweede Amsterdamsch Kunstenaarsfeest was organized by the Weekblad De Kunst in the halls of Bellevue. The decoration of the party rooms was done by various artists, including Jan Ponstijn, Leo Gestel and Jan Sluijters. The proceeds of the party were transferred to the support committees. See Amsterdam, City Archives, Archief van het Feest van Vereniging De Kunst, no. 30444, image nos. B00000029183 and B00000029184.*

6 *RKD, handwritten note by unknown. Documentation folder Herman Lugt.*

7 *Niehaus cat.nos. 20 and 21.*

8 *Lugt family: Nederland's Patriciaat 29 (1943), p. 291-318, in particular p. 311-312; Scheltema Family: Nederland's Patriciaat 27 (1941), p. 218-288, in particular p. 238-243.*

9 *Amsterdam, City Archives, Archief van het Algemeen Steuncomité Amsterdam 1914, no. 855.*

10 *'Vrouwenarbied tijdens de mobilisatie' in: De Tijd : godsdienstig-staatkundig dagblad, 19 juni 1916.*

11 *Algemeen Handelsblad, 4 september 1961, p. 6.*

12 *Amsterdam, City Archives, Archief van de Tijdelijke Afdeling en Centrale Commissie voor de Belgische Uitgewekenen, no. 470, in particular 'Naamlijst Centrale Commissie' and 'Lijst van doorgangshuizen van Belgische uitgewekenen'.*

Jan Lucassen (historian)



The Amsterdam Bourse (Amsterdam Stock Exchange), which had already been the center for the free movement of capital for three centuries, suddenly witnessed the forced movement of people in October 1914.

The Netherlands managed to stay out of what was to become the First World War, but Belgium fell victim to the German army. Marching against their archenemy, France, the Germans attacked its small neighbor on the 4th of August 1914 and the first Belgian refugees appeared at the Dutch borders soon after. They first went to Limburg, but soon to Noord-Brabant and Zeeland as well. During the first months of the war the northern provinces of the Netherlands engaged in financial assistance only, but the bombing of Antwerp on the night of 7/8 October triggered a mass exodus in the northern direction. Within weeks an estimated 1 million refugees had to be accommodated in a country with 6,2 million inhabitants, necessitating a more equal distribution across its territory.

From the 10th of October onward, free railway transportation became available. The government asked all local authorities for any possible assistance in receiving Belgian civil refugees, promising to moderately compensate for necessary living costs. An equal number reached France and England. On top of the civil refugees, the Belgian military had to be disarmed and interned, 45,000 of whom in 12 camps across the Netherlands. Amsterdam took on its fair share of refugees as well, and

on October 11th the city already hosted 14,000 of them; ten times more than its burgomaster (mayor) had offered to welcome only a few days earlier. The town declared itself full.

Registration of all these people by the police was a priority, not only for obvious bureaucratic reasons, such as the claim for financial compensation from the government in The Hague, but also to trace family members from whom they had become separated on the road. Many children had lost their parents in the chaos. Two spacious and recently built centers, within walking distance from the Central Station, had been designated for this purpose: 1. the stock exchange at the end of the Damrak and, a little further away, 2. the Diamond Bourse on the Weesperplein.

There they arrived after sitting or lying on the straw clad floor of freight wagons and animal carts for 24 hours, with all the belongings they had been able to save in a duffel bag. This scene, at the entrance of the stock exchange, has been captured by Herman Lugt (1881-1950) on his canvas *Registration of Belgian Refugees in the Amsterdam Stock Exchange, 1914* (*Registratie voor Belgische vluchtelingen in de Effectenbeurs te Amsterdam, 1914*). At the moment represented in the painting, none of them knew what the next day would bring, let alone the next days, weeks, months or years. Where could they stay, and for how long? After the fighting in Belgium had ended, the majority of the refugees returned home, but some 100,000



Henricus Jacobus Witters (1879-?), *Belgian refugees on Damrak on their way to the Stock Exchange, 1914*. Amsterdam, City Archives, inv. no. 010003047622.

civilians stayed in the Netherlands for the duration of the war.

Initially the local population and the town government were filled with sympathy and compassion. A spontaneous collection outside the stock exchange yielded no less than 250 guilders, which amounted to nearly two hundred (ordinary) daily wages. According to a newspaper report, the poor Belgians were received with extreme friendliness by the citizens of the capital, including police officers, railway workers, soldiers and members of the Salvation Army. All of them were eager to help the poor fellows.

Apart from the happy few with enough money to book a hotel, there were two options: 1. lodging offered by well-willing citizens (according to the common political denominations either Catholic, socialist or liberal) or 2. central relief, which was the available option for the 4,000 mostly poor Belgians. Moreover, the authorities tried to encourage the refugees to return to their homeland as soon as possible. One of the methods to advance this was to make the conditions of those depending on temporary central relief as austere and as unattractive as possible. The harbor sheds along the remote Handelskade and the Sumatrakade in Amsterdam, where these 4,000 unlucky ones were lodged, were extremely uncomfortable; they had no windows and light could only enter through the roof. Inside, long wooden tables with benches attached to them were the only pieces of furniture, besides the straw-mattresses on the floor at both sides of the tables. There was no privacy whatsoever; one tap per 130 persons, open air stoves, buckets on the quay for the laundry, and planks outside above the water serving as public toilets. Debates in the town council caused some small improvements, such as some privacy for families and separate taps for men and women.

It then came as no surprise that within a month many refugees had decided to leave; 2,400 people returned to Antwerp and 135 of them went to England instead. Finally, at the end of November, public indignation forced the burgomaster and aldermen to close the makeshift camp, offering those who were still there to return to Belgium or to switch to a refugee camp; for the lower social classes at Nunspeet or, for those who were slightly better off, at Ede, some 80 kilometers (about 49.71 mi) east of the capital. The majority preferred the second option.

In the years to come, the Amsterdam authorities remained reluctant to accept refugees, fearing negative sentiments among the local population (Belgian families were given nearly two times more financial assistance than local dependents of social relief), too heavy a workload for the police and a lack of means. No wonder, as they had sent all blankets and straw mattrasses to Nunspeet. Although sympathy and compassion can be captured in a painting, as Lugt clearly has tried to do, in reality, these sentiments do not tend to last very long. More is needed to face the challenge of such a magnitude. After the initial enthusiasm only 2,500 Belgian refugees were to stay in Amsterdam until the end of the war.

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Anita Böcker (sociologist)



March 2022

There is war in Europe again, resulting in large numbers of refugees. On the night of 23/24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. In the first days of the war, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians, mainly women and children, fled their country. Barely two weeks later, their number had already risen to 3 million. Poland and other neighboring countries have taken in most of them, but even in these first weeks, some had already traveled on to other countries, including the Netherlands. Some of them were picked up at the Ukrainian border by engaged Dutch people. The Russian invasion of Ukraine – just like the German invasion of Belgium at the time – has triggered a wave of solidarity. Many Dutch people, including the royal couple (King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima), spontaneously offered to host Ukrainians. The State Secretary responsible for Dutch immigration policy said he finds it "heartwarming to see how many citizens and civil society and commercial organizations want to contribute to the reception of Ukrainian refugees" (Thränhardt 2023). Meanwhile, the government is working on a regulation that will make mayors and their municipalities responsible for receiving and accommodating the war refugees.

The European Union is also proving capable of decisive and unified action in this crisis situation. On March 4, barely a week after the start of the war, the Temporary Protection Directive (TPD) was activated, for

the first time since its entry into force in 2001. This means that Ukrainians fleeing the war in their country will receive temporary protection in the EU. They are allowed to stay in the EU without having to apply for asylum. They are entitled to accommodation, social and medical assistance and access to the labour market and (their children) to education. It also means they are not subject to the so-called Dublin regime for asylum seekers and can choose for themselves in which member state they seek protection.

The TPD came about after the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s, which also resulted in large numbers of refugees. It provides for an emergency mechanism that can be activated in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons to provide collective protection and thus relieve pressure on member states' asylum systems. However, during the 2015 'refugee crisis' caused by the war in Syria, the TPD was not activated and member states could not agree on 'burden-sharing measures'. Instead, an agreement was made with Turkey to keep refugees from crossing into Greece. At that time, too, many European citizens spontaneously wanted to help, but helping refugees enter and transit through the EU was criminalised in several member states.

March 2023

A year after the start of the war, 4 million Ukrainian refugees are staying in the EU. With 100,000 refugees, the Netherlands' share is relatively modest. Most Ukrainians stay here in (group) accommodation provided by municipalities. Municipalities have managed to arrange 90,000 places with remarkably little fuss.[1] The municipality of Amsterdam has organised 2,300 reception places, but a larger number of Ukrainian refugees, about 3,500, are staying here in private accommodation, mostly with fellow Ukrainians who were already living in the city. In Germany, which is hosting about 1 million Ukrainian refugees, a much larger share are living alone or with family members in private accommodation (Brücker 2023). Other differences with Germany are that Ukrainians in the Netherlands do not receive residence permits and are excluded from language courses for third-country nationals. Compared to its neighbour, the Netherlands has implemented the TPD in a much less generous way (Franssen 2011). On the other hand, many Ukrainians have found work here, helped by the tight labour market.

Summer 2022

The application centre in the village of Ter Apel where all refugees have to report to apply for asylum in the Netherlands is overcrowded. More and more asylum seekers - 700 by the end of August – have to sleep outside. An average of 150 asylum seekers a day arrived in Ter Apel this summer. It makes one wonder how Amsterdam and other cities managed to register much larger numbers of refugees in 1914 – without a large government apparatus and ICT. Probably with a lot of improvisation, and by welcoming private initiative – similar to how the influx of Ukrainian war refugees is being dealt with. The registration process was – and is in the case of the Ukrainians – also much more straightforward, without extensive and time-consuming identity screening. However, the chaos in Ter Apel is mainly caused by another political choice: the capacity of both the government agency that processes asylum applications and the reception centers where asylum seekers are accommodated pending the decision on their application is not geared to peaks, whether or not foreseeable, in the influx of applicants. Each time a peak occurs, the agency tasked by the government with providing asylum seekers with accommodation, has to start

negotiating with municipalities about the establishment of new reception centres. Most municipalities show little willingness, often out of fear of protests from their citizens. The central government has not always been responsible for the reception of asylum seekers. Refugees could initially report and settle in a municipality of their choice. Most did so in Amsterdam and other big cities. In the mid-1980s, when several thousand Tamils from Sri Lanka – where a civil war was raging at the time – wanted to settle in Amsterdam and The Hague, these cities put pressure on the government to 'relieve' them and organise the reception of asylum seekers centrally (Puts 1995).

Epilogue

Amsterdam and other cities in the Netherlands and Western Europe have had to accommodate war refugees repeatedly over the centuries. It will be no different in the future. Much criticism can be levelled at the current difference in treatment – at local, national and European level – of Ukrainian in comparison with other (war) refugees. It is more interesting, however, to explore what we can learn from our experiences with the mass influx of Ukrainians today and the Belgian war refugees over a century ago to improve the reception of other groups of refugees now and in the future.

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The Long Essays



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A Momentary Lapse in Memory: An Inquiry into (Re)Memory and Trauma Embodiment

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Abstract

This essay investigates the impact of the archival practice on oral histories of conflict. Specifically, it asks to what capacity can the lived experience be devoured by the grinding machine of forced institutional remembrance, and how can it defy such a predicament? The inquiry to this question was studied through the oral history of the author's friends, family and neighbors concerning the 1999 NATO bombing of Yugoslavia. This military intervention was done in response to the oppressive regime of Slobodan Milošević and remains fresh in the Serbian collective memory. Utilizing qualitative generative interviews, a case study of the author's parents' approaches to archiving, and personal footage recorded by the Radio-Television of Serbia, the paper examines differences between institutional and personal archival practices. The analysis displays that institutional remembrance can claim the lived experience through collective memory, which is reinstated by commemorative practices and archiving. In contrast, oral histories of conflict result in a different type of narrative-building and remembering. They are characterized by mechanisms such as collective editing, transmission, and non-linearity, which resist standardization and instrumentalization. This paper advocates for reconsidering static preservation-oriented modes of institutional archiving, proposing instead, to embrace non-reproductible aspects or the unreliable of oral history.

On the State of Rituals

A few days after I was born, NATO started its military intervention against the country I was born in—Yugoslavia.[1] At the time, Yugoslavia had already been riddled with war for almost a decade, resulting in destruction, thousands of deaths, and displacement. The intervention began because, the then leader of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milošević was ethnically cleansing Kosovo Albanians; and although Milošević was stopped then, the issues he caused persisted much longer. Kosovo's statehood is still not recognized by Serbia at the time of writing this essay (AJLabs, 2023).

Trying to understand what happened some 24 years after the intervention, I searched through the documentation; how long did the bombing last, which buildings were hit, and which bridges were severed. But this information left gaps in understanding, ghosts of silenced media coverage, and more questions about my home and community.[2] So, I turned towards my family, friends, and neighbours to capture what is unaddressed; not through the rigid lens of a neatly kept narrative behind institutional walls, but through the lived experiences of those who remain. But to what capacity can the lived experience be devoured by the grinding machine of forced institutional remembrance, and how can it defy such a predicament?

During a talk with my mother, she told me that my baptism had been recorded by the national radio television of Serbia (RTS) during the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia. Together, we searched for the video, unsure of whether it has survived the bombing, since the building in which it was stored was hit.[3] We dug, as Balkan people do, not by sending emails to institutions, but by asking people we know—who know the right people. What would have otherwise been an intimate familial viewing of an old recording, shared with a few close people, was sitting in the archive of RTS. Once the file landed on my desktop, *I watched it with growing unease*, *scene by scene* (*Note:* Descriptions of the images are [in bracket]):

> *[Title sequence: Baptism in Rakovica Monastery, May 9th 1999].*[4]
>
> *I have been told this was the only day NATO did not bomb. In Yugoslavia it is known as the Victory Day of WWII.*[5]
>
> *[Shot of the church from outside shows the broken windows covered by tape.]*

The church closest to our house is up on the Straževica hill.
The most heavily bombed part of the municipality of Rakovica.[6]
The hill with both a military complex and the oldest holy object in Belgrade (Vasiljević).

[The camera zooms in on its current state.]
[The priest chants and pours holy water over my head.]

[I am screaming my lungs out. My father is unsuccessfully trying to console me with a pacifier. In a single frame, he looks directly into the camera, worried.]

He knows this recording will be aired on TVs across what has been left of Yugoslavia.

In dire circumstances, such as *this* war, a baptism can be performed at home. Such a ritual relies solely on the faith of the devotee for its authenticity and is called a baptism "of necessity". I can't help but ask why my baptism was not performed in such a way? Instead, there was an unconscious insistence on performing the ritual the *proper* way.

While watching, it becomes clear that through this event, not only was I merged into the institution of Orthodox Christianity, but into the institution of remembrance itself. [7] Through televising my baptism, the image of my innocence becomes conflated with what it means to be Orthodox Christian amid the active war crimes against Kosovo Albanians. What would have been an intimate familial ceremony now holds a key to the constructed social memory of a community. Paul Connerton, a social anthropologist known for his work on social and body memory, argues that "if there is such a thing as social memory, we are likely to find it in commemorative ceremonies" (70–71) which are enacted through performative ritual, habit, and bodily automatism (4–5). Connerton described the ritual, not as a "symbolic representation but a species of performance". This particular performance, like many rituals, is comprised of a coded message:

[My godfather talks about collectivity, hope, new life being brought into this world.]

The child becomes	*a part of the religion*	*a part of the collective*
	saved from damnation	*saved from immorality*
	(reunited with) Christ	*the hope (of a new future)*

“During a military intervention, the broadcast of my baptism was used to display a sense of ‘hope.’ But I believe no one involved in the recording knew what we remember through such a commemorative ceremony. We are primarily reminded of our identity, which is ‘represented by and told in [the group's] master narrative’ (Connerton, 70).”

p. 86

A ritual relies on the body as a vessel to transmit and teach, to tell the message imbedded within it.[8] Informed by Connerton's insights, Keightley investigated how rituals functioned as a "site of memory," particularly in Christian communities. The messages, "vivid memories of Jesus," "came to be embedded into the commemorative ritual of baptism and eucharist" (146).

Since Orthodox Christianity is a liturgical faith—the belief is enacted in a service of carefully prescribed rituals (Scroope). Emphasis is put on worship (through ritual) first, and doctrine second (Neapóleos, 25–30). These rituals are called "mysteria" since they are believed to be mysteries that cannot be rationalized, (Scroope), only performed.[9] Ritual surfaces above the need for doctrine and the written word.[10]

Boris Groys, whose work stretches across the fields of media theory, philosophy, art, and politics, posits that although "ritual, repetition and reproduction were hitherto matters of religions" in the modern age of digital reproduction and neoliberal capitalism they have "become the fate of the entire world." Capital, commodity, technology, and art are all prone to reproduction (Groys). Which allowed for religion to resurface and become increasingly successful. Groys argues that religious language is the language of repetition, and that this language is embedded into the ritual. In his essay, Groys stresses the difference between two kinds of repetitions in ritual, the repetition of the living spirit (the modifiable inner message of a religious ritual) and the repetition of the dead letter (the external form of a ritual). Here, in the instance of my baptism, the recording itself is the medium which speaks the language of the latter kind of repetition. It allows for the baptism to be performed the same way, each time it is re-played, regardless of whether any of the participants believe in the inner message of the ritual.

It is hard to talk about remembering without mentioning collective memory as it was pushed forward by sociologist and philosopher Maurice Halbwachs. The basic premise is that we create memories and deal with the past in relation to our social environment, not in isolation (38–40). Memory is constructed socially (as paraphrased by Uro, 164), and "the past is not preserved but reconstructed on the basis of the present" (Halbwachs, 40). This concept was echoed and expanded in many areas memory has an influence on. Ewa Górska, who specializes in sociology of law and culture, noted the inseparability and mutual dependence of identity, nation states, and memory (8): "Societies are bonded by their shared collective memories, and in most nations, there is a dominating political elite view on the past – a master collective memory (Zerubavel, 3–12). Most of the time it is simultaneously an official, state-sponsored memory, produced to 'maintain social cohesion and defend symbolic borders' (Jelin, 26–49)".

"A ritual relies on the body as a vessel to transmit and teach, to tell the message imbedded within it."

p. 85

Górska pointed out how to build these dominant narratives, state-sponsored memory excludes events that don't contribute to the state's "positive self-image" (8). This means the political elite's views of the past are favoured, while marginalized voices, who are often on the receiving end of state violence, are left out (Górska, 9).

During a military intervention, the broadcast of my baptism was used to display a sense of "hope". But I believe no one involved in the recording knew *what* we remember through such a commemorative ceremony. We are primarily reminded of our identity, which is "represented by and told in [the group's] master narrative" (Connerton, 70). Besides the people participating in commemorative practises, there are other "active agents" who decide on what gets remembered and what forgotten: archivists (Cook, 170).

Haunted Archiving

Institutional archives are an important element in how collective memory is built. As Nora said "modern memory is, above all, archival. It relies entirely on the materiality of the trace, the immediacy of the recording, the visibility of the image" (13). Early professional archiving, similar to early professional history, focused on the political character of the nation state. These traditional approaches meant that, as state employees, archivists were conditioned to privilege the official narratives of the state, rather than the documented stories of individuals and groups in society (Cook, 172). According to Cook, "archivists are active agents in constructing social and historical memory," and this act of construction, he argues – starts with appraisal – determining the value of an element that could become part of the archive (170).

When I talk about the practice of archiving here, I include a duality: *institutional archival practices* and *personal archival practices*. As Uro emphasized, to understand how societies remember, we have to understand how the human brain stores and distorts information (164). Here I would argue that along with the brain it is crucial to know how memory is stored in the body. As Bourdieu's highlighted: "Enacted belief, instilled by the

childhood learning that treats the body as a living memory pad, an automaton that 'leads the mind unconsciously along with it'" (68–69). Both him and Connerton, underlined the importance of habit and bodily automatism in the storing of information in the body.[11]

Somewhere in the early 2000s, my mother took me out for a stroll in the carriage. She ran into her late father's friends who were eager to know all the details about the newborn. When asked for my name, exhausted from sleep deprivation, my mother could not remember.

Despite this *momentary lapse in memory,* she was a hoarder of many goods. She did not use to be one, but as life got filled with more uncertainty and loss, she found a greater need to preserve. We would often go through her family's photographs and memorabilia. Communist party membership cards from her parents. Photos of familial festivities in Montenegro. Postcards from the scattered diaspora of relatives. With each viewing, the act of going through this collection remained largely the same, subject to becoming ritualistic in nature. A performance of examining all the evidence of our existence as a family.

Although personally in opposition to the government, my mother has always worked for a state institution. One that oversees creating standards, which range anywhere from the protocols of producing metal pipes to the allowed percentage of chemical compounds in food. For the creation of such a standard, a committee is formed, and it writes and agrees upon what the standard in question is. Within this institution, my mother works as an editor, a person who spends all their time carefully correcting the language of these standards, until they are representative of the institution. Afterwards, every service or process of production will conform to the standard because it embodies the status quo. She also had a habit of cautiously selecting what we do or do not say about an institution of our own: *our family*. For instance, my father's fondness for alcohol was never spoken of. There was an emphasis on portraying or performing an image of a reliable family.

There is a literal and metaphorical heaviness to holding on to data. It takes up the storage in your room and in your head: megabytes into gigabytes onto hard drives upon hard drives. One becomes a person with "baggage", a code word for many things, but trauma could be one of them.[12] Oftentimes, and in this case as well, this baggage is filled with holes, whole items sink and leave a trace behind you. By the time it is handed to the next generation, there are many questions that arise. Being raised after the onset of trauma, leaves one to fight or flee our "ancestor's war, as we carry out transgenerational errands" (Apprey 3–29, as paraphrased by Grand and Salberg, 210).

After years of my mother working for and within an institution, she has internalized and further performed its oppressive inner workings. Treating objects as testimonial evidence, editing and selecting them to build a narrative. This was of course not done with malicious intent or through simple naiveté, but because of exposure in dosage through time, which caused her to be immunized towards these mechanisms. This immunization does not mean that the ritualistic performance merely continues and is done without consideration, but that it is done with the notion of protection. Similarly to interacting with viruses, those that are immune most easily traverse to the source of the illness, while trying to protect and keep vary of those who are less shielded.

Especially those who have never been part of the institutional, like my father.

His concerned glance at the camera recording the baptism reminds me of a scene from Bugs Bunny. While being strangled by a monster, Bugs points to the camera saying "Wait, do you ever get the feeling that you're being watched?" The monster, in turn, literally breaks four walls by running away from the camera shouting "PEOPLE!" (Jones et al, 49). Where Bugs points to the onlookers as witnesses, the monster is more afraid of people as a species that captures, whether through recording or in tangible ways.

Where religious fundamentalism favors immaculate reproduction of a ritual, the video recording performs the ritual each time, without a mistake. It subjects the ritual to standardization. Here, my mother's examination of family memorabilia uses objects as mediums of a performance which happens each time in the same, or suspiciously similar, way. But my father's weariness of being captured by the recording and turned into something infinitely reproducible speaks to the opposite current. That of embodying a more elusive force: *the unreliable*.

Unlike my mother, he had no affinity for storing objects. Nonetheless, or precisely because of this, he found great satisfaction in pointing out my mother's hoarding habits, saying that her inability to let go will bury her in her own apartment. In contrast, he had no material traces of his family, only snippets of information dispersed through alcohol-induced nights and then forgotten the day after.

The Patterns of the Unreliable

It is worth noting that when internalizing or opposing an institution, there is a difference between the personal and institutional approaches to memory itself.

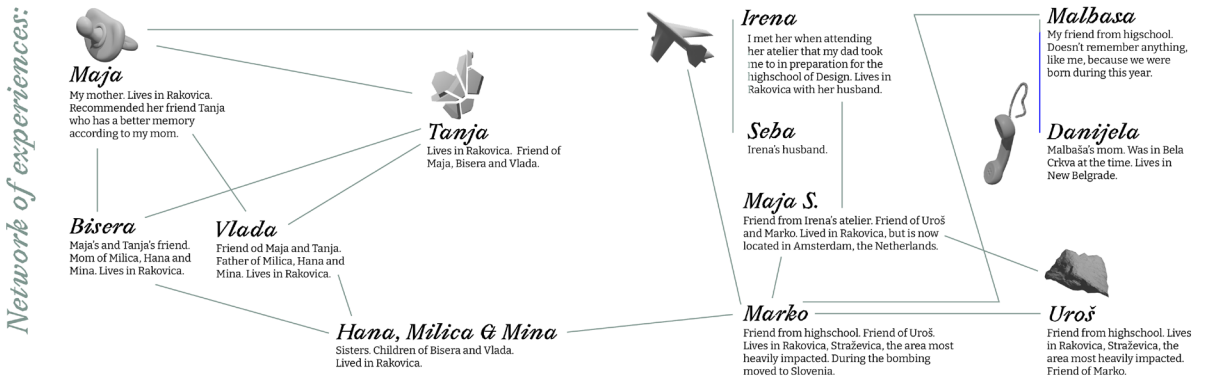


Figure 1: *Map of interviewee recommendations* (by the author, July 7 2023).

To investigate this, I have conducted generative interview sessions with people in my personal network, mainly located in the county of Rakovica. Each interviewee, after their interview, would recommend a person whose memory they trusted more than their own (see fig. 1).

These generative interview sessions were research into and through oral history. They consisted of a preliminary interview, in which I would pose open questions that were not aimed at direct inquiry.[13] Instead, I would ask about the remnants, such as the ruins still present in the city, or the sonic memories still lingering with them. Afterwards, I would create a soundscape and a digital environment based on their memories.[14] This I would offer back to the interviewees to continue the dialogue. Gradually, through their engagement and feedback, they would become co-creators of the pieces.

Oral history's position in academia "emerged as shadows from institutionally established fields" (Lucas and Strain, 259). The subjectivity, reliability, and validity of oral history, especially in comparison to written evidence (Grele, 65) have been put into question, but since most of these points have been addressed though theoretical work (Lucas and Strain, 259), oral histories are becoming a more prominent part of institutional archives.[15]

This is not to say that there are no issues in integrating oral histories into archives, which I will return to later in the text. I will first mention that, as Lucas and Strain have pointed out, "one of the most compelling issues surrounding oral interviewing is the element of memory". They elaborated on the fact that memories too, in anticipation of an interview, are prepared and performed. Yet, they emphasize that the "dialogic nature" of the oral interview aims to also prompt recall of new and deeply buried memories (269). With this essay, my wish is to bring light to mechanisms of the oral interview which the institutional archive could learn from. These mechanisms are largely constituted by being non-reproducible and part of *the unreliable*.

Conversational Narrative

Among the first aspects of these mechanisms or aspects of oral history are what Nelms indicated rhetoricians call "invention" or the collaborative discovery and creation of (historical) meaning (378). Due to the rhetorical complexities of interviews, scholars such as Grele avoid the term, and use "conversational narratives" to describe oral history interviews (Grele, 62–84). This term is supposed to encompass the activities the interviewee and interviewer do to construct knowledge together (Lucas and Strain, 275). What I have noticed in conducting group interviews, is precisely this dynamic, not just between the interviewer and interviewee, but between all the interviewees. They participate in what I would like to propose as a process of '*collective editing*'. Here I would give two examples, one a scene from Mohamed Soueid's *Nightfall*, and the other from my interview with my godparents' family.

In Nightfall, the filmmaker is meeting his former comrades, Lebanese students who joined the Palestinian resistance movement 'Fatah'. Conversations in Nightfall are mediated through drinking, which one of the people in it characterized as drinking to remember, instead of to forget.

In one of the scenes, all the participants of the conversation discuss a much larger topic through a minor detail. They are talking about the Egyptian president Abdel-Nasser, who is known for his anti-imperialist efforts and striving towards Arab unity, but they do not mention any of this. Instead, they debate his eye colour, specifically whether it was green of dark blue (Soueid). This leads to a more important resolution of how he was portrayed in print and why—with green eyes to look more European.

Similar to this scene, my godparents' family talked about one of the larger bombs that fell on Straževica. The parents recalled that the bomb itself was merely a ton or two, while their two daughters, aged ten and thirteen at the time of it happening, thought it was five and seven tons respectively. Any claim of factual knowledge would become a point of discussion and collective recollection. No story was static or set in stone. This is quite opposite to providing a fixed fact agreed on in written form.

Transmission, Value, and Agreement

This idea of collective editing is similar to the very working of memory; it is characterized by how it travels rather than how it is agreed upon. As Jussi Parikka describes: "memory works through the social and is more like transmission than storage. That's how memory is refreshed and kept alive on a social level too" (Dekker and Parikka, 68–77). It resides in the context of all the people who share it through oral means, instead of in a vacuum.

Here I would like to draw a parallel between oral history and the poor image, as described by Hito Steyerl. As the poor image travels from phone to phone, app to app, it loses quality (resolution) with each transmission. This does not make the image, the recording, and by extension the oral history, any less worthy, but the opposite. Their value lies in being spread as opposed to being preserved (in high resolution). Steyerl also points out that this transmission drafts users into production (Steyerl); they become editors, critics, translators and (co-)authors of the poor image. Analogously, oral history invites interviewees to become part of the invention of historical narrative. This process is one that archives would benefit from, since "memory is always transitory, unreliable, and haunted by forgetting, and cannot be stored for eternity no matter how hard we try to secure it with monuments and digital retrieval systems" (Huyssen, 21–38). This point alone, necessitates a turn away from pristine preservation and static storage, towards an archive in transmission.

Listening, Breath, and Editing

When talking about the integration of oral histories into archives, there is a prominent tension when moving from the oral to the printed form. From one medium to the other there is a process of translation that arises. As observed by Lucas and Strain, the edited version(s) could greatly differ from the original transcriptions, and this depends on the editing preferences of the researchers (271). In my own experience of transcribing and translating into written text, I felt discomfort with each omission of a conversation filler such as an "umm" or a "y'know." Anyone conducting oral history interviews must be attuned and dedicated to a good listening practice, and this includes noticing what is not said, what lives in the breaths, pauses and gaps between words. Anderson and Jack go as far as to say that "we need to interpret the[ir] pauses and, when it happens, the[ir] unwillingness or inability to respond" (163).

Another factor of listening is paying close attention to the repetition of details the interviewees recall, as "interviews are rarely linear and are often recursive" (Lucas and Strain, 267). Lucas and Strain emphasize that these details, inflections, and silences can tell us which questions are burdensome to answer.

Bennet acknowledges the difference of narrative and traumatic memory, in which narrative memory is one where a subject remembers the context of a feeling, without re-living the feeling. Whereas traumatic memory resists processing into a narrative, and instead re-lives the feeling as if it were situated in the present (Bennet 23–25). As such, I would argue that

traumatic memory in the context of an oral history interview calls for a different reading and a different translation. Editing out all the details, pauses, breaths, would mean to negate the nature of this kind of memory and to model it to what we understand as the norm of remembering: narrative memory.

Resurrection Interrupted - Instead of a Conclusion: Closure

One could say that my father's approach to memory, that of getting drunk, transmitting it through talking and then forgetting, is a trauma-induced approach to archiving (as is my mother's), but it is also one that is in defiance of creating purposeful narratives. When he was sober, the concern of being perceived, or rather recorded, created in my father a perpetual silence.[16] This refusal to give information out, would be disrupted while drinking, causing the information to float to the surface. Alcohol in this instance, is the medium which, unlike the video, resists perfect reproduction and in turn standardization. It encourages unpredictable remembering, things we might not want to be reminded of easily pop back into our consciousness.

Due to embodying the unreliable, it was my mother—who has microdosed the institutional way until it could do her no harm—who also had the final say on what gets told. Forced institutional remembrance can easily devour the lived experience of individuals through collective memory, which is reinstated by commemorative practices and archiving. Not only can it devour, but also claim lived experiences by creeping into personal habits of archiving and memory construction. Bearing witness to the enactments of reliable narrative memory, I can observe that it omits what doesn't align with 'the positive self-image' just the same as institutions do.

But how can personal experiences and oral history defy such a predicament? Since difficult, conflict-ridden histories might cause a shift in the type of remembering and narrative-building a person is prone to, they also ask for different institutional approaches to archiving. The difference they should look to are the mechanisms of oral history that resist standardization and instead necessitate for careful listening and reading, that might have to change each time.[17] These mechanisms could be placed in three broad categories of *collective editing*, *transmission*, and *non-linearity*. By embracing these, the archival practice would not only resist standardization, but become non-reproductible, and by extension closer to the unreliable.

“There is a literal and metaphorical heaviness to holding on to data. It takes up the storage in your room and in your head: megabytes into gigabytes onto hard drives upon hard drives. One becomes a person with ‘baggage’, a code word for many things, but trauma could be one of them. Oftentimes, and in this case as well, this baggage is filled with holes, whole items sink and leave a trace behind you. By the time it is handed to the next generation, there are many questions that arise. Being raised after the onset of trauma, leaves one to fight or flee our ‘ancestor's war, as we carry out transgenerational errands’ (Apprey 3–29, as paraphrased by Grand and Salberg, 210).”

p. 87

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Endnotes

1 On March 24th 1999.

2 For more information on Milošević's censorship and silencing of both news broadcasters and academic spacessee "Deepening authoritarianism in Serbia: The purge of the universities; Background." from the Human Rights Watch.

3 RTS, Radio-Television Serbia, was hit on 23rd April 1999. For refence see aljazeera.com/news/2023/2/17/mapping-the-countries-that-recognise-kosovo-as-a-state-2. Where the building stood was commemorated by leaving the ruins exposed. For more information on this, see "'Achieved without Ambiguity?': Memorializing Victimhood in Belgrade after the 1999 NATO Bombing" from Gruia Bădescu.

4 The stills of the baptism recording are described inside brackets instead of placed into the text as images. This has been done due to the fact that including the images would cause numerous copyright issues and infrigments.

[5] There is a difference between the celebrations of, respectively 8th and 9th of May. Non-EU Eastern Europe states celebrate the 9th of May as the Victory Day of Soviet forces over Nazi Germany in WWII. Whereas among EU members the 8th of May is celebrated as the Victory Day of WWII, while the 9th of May is called Europe day and commemorates peace and prosperity in Europe. The latter was formed on the day the Schuman declaration was made; a declaration put in place to "make war not only unthinkable but materially impossible." For more information see: european-union.europa.eu/principles-countries-history/history-eu/1945-59/schuman-declaration-may-1950_en.

[6] In the report "Downed NATO pilot rescued, U.S. officials say" of CNN, Straževica's military complex is referred to as "a military communication's site in Rakovica." For reference see: edition.cnn.com/WORLD/europe/9903/27/nato.strike.03/. Straževica has also been referred to as "the only place that was bombed each of the 78 days of the aerial bombing" by RTS Beogradska Jutarnja Hronika Program. For reference see youtube.com/watch?v=iLH6GbddVQE (in Serbian).

[7] Orthodox Christians that I know have never expressed this belief vocally, yet, in Serbia you often hear the question of "Јеси ли ти крштен?" ("Are you baptised?") when you have done something outrageous or out of the norm. The question is a test of normalcy.

[8] Connector also pointed out that there is an aspect of social memory that is neglected and overlooked: bodily social memory. He underlined that performative memory is bodily and elaborated on the kinds of bodily memory in his concept of "bodily practices".

[9] Mysteria are comprised of the Seven Holy Sacraments, including the baptism.

[10] This is without acknowledging in length that early Christian societies were not literate, and there was a need to transmit messages though a medium (public performance) other than the written word. To read about this further, see Risto Uro's "Ritual, Memory and Writing in Early Christianity".

[11] Commemorative practices and bodily memory both try to ensure that they won't be questioned by those performing them. The values they want to protect from questioning get conserved through bodily automatisms and habitual memory (Connerton, 102).

[12] There has been work written on the correlation between hoarding and the traumatic experiences an individual goes through. Higher rates of trauma exposure were associated with stronger emotional attachment to possessions (Chou et al, 85).

[13] E.g., "Where were you at the time of the event?".

[14] Both the soundscapes and digital environment were created based on the details the interviewees kept recalling or ones they would linger on. The environment was built in a 3D modelling software (Blender).

[15] In their article, Lucas and Strain give the example of the American Memory Project, which was sponsored by the U.S. Library of Congress, and gathered a wide array of life histories. This archival initiative included both online, audio and print collection of marginalized voices, such as the "Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938" or the "Tibetan Oral History Project."

[16] Instead of the flight mode the monster from Bugs Bunny went into in order to escape being seen.

[17] The method of the oral interview must be modular and dependant on the context. As oral historian Donald A. Richie emphasized “An interview must always be prepared to abandon carefully prepared questions and follow the interviewee down unexpected path” (9).

Pastiche of Threats: A Spatial Analysis of Military Urban Training Centres

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Abstract

This paper focuses on two case studies of urban military training centres, representing different combat scenarios, and generating different imaginary spatial manifestations. Using maps, drawings, photographs, and 3D models, we analyse how the architectural and urban characteristics of both cases inform the manner in which Arab built space is simultaneously conceived and perceived as what we develop in this paper as a pastiche of threats, violence, and domination. Approaching the issue from a spatial perspective, we address the materials used in each space; how spaces were planned in relation to combat legacies, and how their planners ignored non-combatant usage of public space in their creation of civilian-like military infrastructure. At the same time, we wish to address the never-ending "passion for the Real", which cannot be satisfied by any simulacra. By doing so, we map out the way abstract imaginaries are manifested and materialized spatially, attending almost literally to the "architecture of vision" involved in contemporary practices of power.

Introduction

> *"Usually we say that we should not mistake fiction for reality … The lesson … is the opposite one: We should not mistake reality for fiction … Much more difficult than to denounce/unmask (what appears as) reality as fiction is to recognize the part of fiction in 'real' reality"* (Žižek 93–94).

On 10 November 2021, soldiers and armoured personnel conducted a military training simulating counter-guerrilla combat in Umm al-Fahm, the second largest Arab city in Israel with over 56.000 citizens. Responding to a court appeal, the army defended this act by arguing that the alleyways in Umm al-Fahm "recalled southern Lebanon" (Galon; ACRI). This answer encapsulates the spatial form of the denaturalization of Arab citizens of Israel and their framing as potential enemies of the state. It is especially confounding since Israel has built, since the early 2000s, military training centres that purportedly simulate southern Lebanese urban and rural design, which should, in principle, make such infringement on the fabric of civilian daily life, unnecessary.

For our contribution to the volume *War, Conflict and the City*, we take this incident as our point of departure, and offer a spatial analysis of Military Operations Urban Training Centres (MOUTs): imaginary urban environments for military training that are created in order to prepare soldiers for wars in built contexts. As we will argue, the logic of these centres' spatial design spills over into the lived environment and grounds a fetishized reading of reality. This paper focuses on both the superimposition of (militarized) images on (civilian) urban life, and on moments of friction when such superimpositions expose themselves. It begins with exploring the phenomenon of urban combat training centres and then discusses its manifestation and relevance in Israel. Examining the case studies of *Al Furan* and *Chicago* (MOUTs), we argue that the Arab built environment is simultaneously perceived and conceived as a *pastiche of threats*, that eventually creates a new Real space.

War and the City: The Global Phenomenon of Urban Training Centres

Since the early 2000s, there has been a global surge in the construction of Military Operation Urban Training Centres (MOUTs). From Muscatatuck centre in Indiana, US, through Schnöggersburg in Saxony-Anhalt, Germany (Müller; Bunderswehr), and to Tzeelim in Israel, the financial investment in the construction of these centres is often staged around the

argument that modern combat has moved from open territory into urban environments, a change that comes with the challenge of facing civilian population next to fighters during combat (Roei, 'One Map, Multiple Legends'). This challenge, in turn, necessitates a training area that can offer soldiers "the tools they need before taking foot *in the battlefields of the 21st century*" (our emphasis) (IDF). The idea, as each site bolsters online, is to enable the practice of security routines with minimal infringement on urban and rural civilian life. For this purpose, the different training sites proclaim to stage authentic spatial experiences, offering users "globally unique, urban and rural, multi-domain operating environments", in order to "maintain … humane armies by actively avoiding unnecessary civilian casualties" and to serve "those who work to defend the homeland and win the peace" (Atterbury-Muscatatuck Training Center).

The question of 'war and the city', then, is an urgent question for military and security stakeholders, in ways that may remain invisible to the civilian eye. It seems urgent to address how some cities are now approached by governments and global powers as sites of potential combat, and more specifically, how this approach becomes naturalized and disseminated through spatial design that superimposes itself on lived space. Critical research that emerged parallel to the construction of the training centres points to the problematic ways in which they are not as harmless as they contend to be (Frohne; Brownfield-Stein; Graham, 'Cities and the "War on Terror"'; Graham, *Cities under Siege*). Stephen Graham, specifically, is explicit on the darker elements that are involved in creating a mock-Arab city that is imagined and designed through the gun's barrel. Saturated with spatial stereotypes, especially in relation to the global war on terror, these simulated urban structures complement the "widespread demonisation of entire Islamic cities as 'terrorist' or barbarian 'nests'" in ways that help to legitimise the use of massive forces by Western armies on Islamic cities:

> *"Replete with minarets, pyrotechnic systems, loop tapes with calls to prayer, donkeys, and hired 'civilians' in Islamic dress wandering through narrow streets, and olfactory machines to create the smell of rotting corpses, this shadow urban system works like some bastard child of Disney. It simulates, of course, not the complex cultural, social, or physical realities of Middle Eastern urbanism, but the imaginative geographies of the military and theme-park designers who are brought in to design and construct it" (Graham, "Cities and the 'War on Terror'" 5–6).*

“It seems urgent to address how some cities are now approached by governments and global powers as sites of potential combat, and more specifically, how this approach becomes naturalized and disseminated through spatial design that superimposes itself on lived space.”

p. 101

In what follows, we wish to complement the work done by Graham and others on the acclimating effects that training centres have on urban destruction during combat (see also Weizman, 'Walking through Walls'; Roei, 'One Map, Multiple Legends'; Weizman, *Hollow Land*) by focusing specifically on their spatial and architectural design. Furthermore, rather than following a binary logic that counters real and simulated space, a logic that can be traced in the arguments of both advocates and critics of MOUTs, we approach the mock cities of the training centres as a node on a spectrum of military-civilian spatial imaginaries (Woodward). We are especially interested in the more mundane ways in which urban fabrics of life are affected and engineered through combat scenarios. We trace a continuum of lived and imagined uses of space that make up the impossible quest for the perfect dystopian city. Employing Slavoj Žižek's reflection on "the passion of the Real", we continue to ask how "racist imaginative geographies" (Graham, 'Remember Fallujah' 5) are managed and maintained in lived urban environments outside the spectacular moment of war.

Zooming In: Israeli Militarised Civic Geographies

While military urban training centres can be found all across the Global North, the Israeli case is especially revealing for two central reasons. Firstly, in Israel, there is an unusual spatial proximity between training spaces and the cities and villages that they are supposed to simulate. The imaginary scenarios involving Gaza, south Lebanon, or Nablus, are never more than a few hundred kilometres from their spatial referent. In some cases, such as *Al Furan*, training centres are (nick)named after dwelling areas that are only a few hundred meters away.

Secondly, and more importantly perhaps, the boundary between civilian and military (uses of) space in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories has always been blurred (Tzfadia 46,62). Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories were justified as essential elements of security; while large open spaces that are reserved for military training during the week, are open to visitors for hikes and picnics during weekends and holidays. Armed soldiers in uniform make up part of daily urban scenarios and can be spotted in cafes, museums, and university classes; and the military ethos plays a major role in the recent widespread civil demonstrations against current governmental plans that threaten civil rights and freedoms. Baruch Kimmerling's insight, now three decades old, that "Israeli militarism tends to serve as one of the central organization principles of the society" did not lose its relevance (Kimmerling 199; Roei, *Civic Aesthetics*). Erez Tzfadia's geographical take on this thesis expounds on the way military-inflected

constructions of space naturalize further the military's status as a guiding principle of daily life (Tzfadia 356–57).

"A nation builds an army (that) builds a nation" is one of the main slogans of the IDF education corps (Schwake, 'An Officer and a Bourgeois'). Despite its seeming affiliation to the nation-building years of the 1950s, it is actually a new motto, coined in the early 2000s, more than 50 years after the famous recruitment posters of the 1948 War stating that "the whole country is a front, the whole nation is an army". While both phrases depict a long standing connection between the nation and its armed forces, the more recent one crystallizes more poignantly the reciprocal relationship between the Israeli civic and martial spheres and the way in which the first forms the latter, and the latter eventually forms the first (Kimmerling; Schwake, *Dwelling on the Green Line*). As a society in a constant state of perceived existential threat, the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) forms a leading political and cultural agent, playing an integral part in the nation-building process and enjoying an undisputable cultural status. As shown by Kimmerling, the militarization of Israel is not seen only in the sustained nation-army model and the active conscription duty, but also in the implementation of military concepts, perspective, and discourse in civil society (Kimmerling). To some extent, and referring to Foucault's famous rephrasing of Clausewitz, Israeli civilian everyday life is the continuation of war by other means (Foucault). Within this spatial and temporal framework, military training scenarios, and in our case, the simulations of Arab built space, re-enter the civilian mindset, contributing to their referent's perception as an environment of threat, violence, and domination.

In the occupied Palestinian territories, the infringement of military actions on civilian fabrics of life are more blatant and brutal, ranging from blocking access to privately owned agricultural lands, limiting access to public streets, and occupying private homes, to conducting night arrests, house demolitions and the banning of the right to protest (B'Tselem, 'Homepage'). Therefore, if the 1967 and 1973 Israel-Arab wars comprised a series of battles between regular armies, then the succeeding conflicts, especially with growing Palestinian militias' call for an independent armed struggle, led to battles with irregular forces and paramilitary organisations. As a result, the battlefield shifted from the open fields of Sinai and the Golan Heights to the towns and villages of southern Lebanon, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip, leading to the further militarisation of Arab built space.

Pastiche of Threats and the Pursuit of the Real:
Constructing the Idealized Dystopian City

The sites of *Al Furan* and *Chicago* are two different case studies that despite their morphological differences illustrate the common way in which the IDF perceives Arab built space. Built after the events of the Second Intifada and under the influence of the 2006 invasion of Lebanon which signified the growing significance of urban and close-quarters combat, *Al Furan* and *Chicago* pinpoint the new role that Arab built space began to play in Israeli warfare tactics.[1] Namely, they signal the turning from what James Ron defines as a *ghetto*, a segregated area excluded from mainstream society and controlled through constant policing, into a *frontier*, an area outside of the state's direct sovereignty in which it expresses its power in sporadic, but significantly fiercer forms of violence (Ron). Accordingly, if in the early 1990s Israeli soldiers roamed the streets of Gaza and other cities of the occupied Palestinian West Bank, on foot and wearing berets, ten years later this would give way to full technical gear and armoured convoys. And while close-combat and urban warfare techniques were reserved mainly for special operations, by the early 2000s this has become a central aspect in almost all combatant units; putting behind the famous tank and infantry battles in open spaces and entering an era where built space forms the main fighting scene.

The location and administering groups in charge of each of the sites are supposed to involve distinct future battlefields, consisting of dissimilar enemies, threats, and warfare, as well as natural and built environments. *Chicago* is located in the IDF Ground Forces' main training area, adjacent to Kibbutz Ze'elim in the southern Negev. As such, it is to be used by all units belonging to ground forces and address the different combat scenarios these units might face. Correspondingly, it is an abstract Arab space: it could be Nablus, Gaza, Bint Jbeil in Lebanon, and even Baghdad, when considering US involvement in the site's construction (see also Bishop). *Al Furan* on the other hand is more case specific and thus smaller in terms of scale. It is located in the occupied Golan Heights, subject to the control of IDF Northern Command, and named after a mispronunciation of the nearby remains of the depopulated Syrian village of Al Furn. With its affiliation to the Northern Command, the facility is supposed to mimic a typical village in southern Lebanon and includes a series of underground tunnels as used by the Shia militia of Hezbollah.[2]

A superficial gaze of both case studies (see figures 1 and 2) suggests that they simulate an apparently representative Arab, Palestinian or

Lebanese, city or village. Bringing Kevin Lynch's famous concept of the "image" of a city, represented through paths (the routes people take), districts (distinct neighbourhoods or areas), edges (the boundaries between different areas), nodes (important junctions or gathering places), and landmarks (prominent physical features) (Lynch), one can clearly identify these elements in both *Chicago* and *Al Furan*. Accordingly, both sites consist of a main landmark and node in their centre in the form of a mosque and a public square, a system of paths comprising main access roads and alleys, and distinct districts that are demarcated by clear edges. To this extent, one might get the impression that these are actually replicas of existing localities.



Figure 1: *Chicago training area, outside of Kibbutz Ze'elim, 2022* (govmap).



Figure 2: *Al Furan training area, marked in red, and the ruins of Al Furn village in dashed red line* (govmap, edited by the authors).

However, a closer look reveals that both sites are actually what Frederic Jameson defines as a pastiche, a design that borrows and combines different architectural styles and elements from a variety of historical periods, which he claims to be a characteristic phenomenon of postmodernism (Jameson 111–25). Building on Jameson, *Al Furan* and *Chicago* can be understood as spatial pastiches: outcomes of checklists that include so-called typical Arab elements, which create the eventual representative image of a typical Arab space, yet lack its inherent hierarchy, development logic, and authenticity. Nevertheless, if in Jameson's understanding pastiche is a way to commodify cultural forms by turning them into consumer products, endlessly recombined and remixed, when it comes to our case studies, pastiche forms a way to flatten and objectify perceived Arab space, enabling its recurrent appropriation and occupation. If the pastiche Jameson envisioned has the potential to eventually challenge traditional notions of authenticity, the spatial pastiche of *Al Furan* and *Chicago* creates a new reality that challenges the 'realness' of the actual spaces it mimics (see figure 3).

Crucially, the pastiche that defines both case studies, is not simply related to typical Arab spatial elements, but rather and more specifically to *threats* soldiers might encounter in Arab built space. The difference is not merely semantic: it informs the rationale behind the planning of both sites, as well as the spatial logic they rely on. Accordingly, the spatial designs of



Figure 3: *Police training exercise simulating violent civil unrest, held at the Ze'elim army base in the Negev, Moshe Milner, 2008* (GPO, Israel).[1]



Figure 4: *One of the 'smaller' compounds in Al Furan Training Centre, 2019* (IDF).

the small-scale and fragmented areas in *Chicago* do not represent common Arab Qasbas,[4] or Palestinian refugee camps, but rather the typical threats an Israeli combating unit might encounter when entering such areas. With this mindset, the image of the traditional villages or historic centres for example, which are outcomes of complex networks and customs, gives way to the need to create the different martial scenes that deployed units need to practice and be prepared for, whether in manoeuvring in open areas while being controlled by surrounding buildings, entering and taking control of buildings, or being threatened from the surrounding environment while occupying a building. The same logic is applied in the areas of larger scale buildings, and the alleged 'city centres', adjacent to the 'main mosques', making this 'city' into an amusement park of battle scenes, already on the level of urban design, before any additional performative elements enter it (see Graham). *Al Furan*, due to its simpler structure, illustrates this even more clearly. It comprises four main areas, that initially might look similar as they include buildings of the same scale, yet their placement implies the different abovementioned battle scenarios they are supposed to represent (see figure 4).

This *pastiche of threats* does not remain on the level of overall urban design as it continues to also dictate the architectural design of the different individual buildings, in both case studies. From the outside, the openings, orientation, height, and volume, are designed to create a variety of threats to the forces manoeuvring throughout the facility. Windows, balconies, and roofs in different heights are not intended to mimic an ideal picturesque

scenery of an Arab lived space but to illustrate the different spots one needs to cover. Accordingly, the basic unit in *Al Furan*, is reproduced to create an inventory of threats, enhancing the different fighting scenes that need to be practised (see figure 5). Similar, yet more complex, *Chicago* consists of several basic living units, generating a larger inventory of threats and accompanying combatant scenarios (see figure 6). The same logic is applied to the internal divisions that characterise these buildings, which hardly resemble actual housing units as they include only the elements that are relevant to simulating the dangers a force entering a house should watch out from, such as stairs and upper storage areas. In a way, it is in the transformation of the interior of an Arab house into a simple list of targets, vulnerabilities, and potential hazards, that the logic of a pastiche of threats presents itself most clearly. What was applied on the level of the single building, repeats itself on the level of the district, and the entire facility.

As a theme parks of urban threats, *Chicago* and *Al Furan* form an idealized dystopian imagined space, in which the pursuit of the Real could constantly take place. Not surprisingly, *Chicago* was used as the set for the third season of the popular Netflix series *Fauda* (War Cities), which follows an elite Israeli undercover unit's operation in the Occupied Territories. The

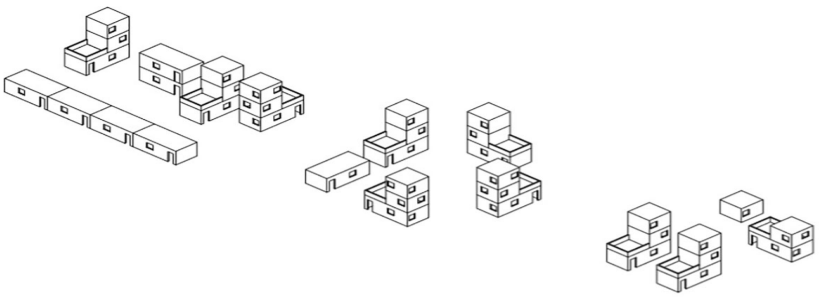


Figure 5: *Basic unit and different settings in Al Furan* (illustrated by the authors).

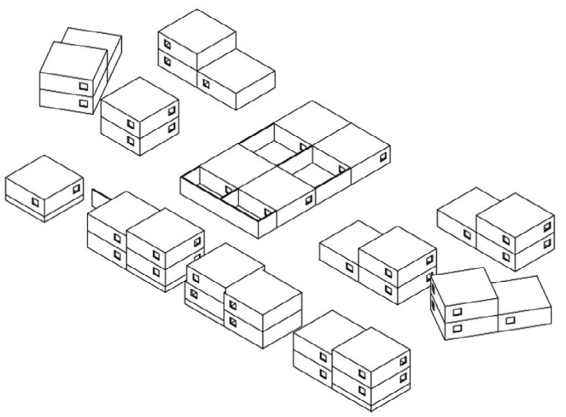


Figure 6: *Basic unit and different settings in Chicago* (Illustrated by the authors).

first two seasons focused on the West Bank and were filmed in Palestinian localities within Israeli borders; the third focused on Gaza, a place outside of the common Israeli cognitive map, and a more 'foreign' set needed to be found, causing the production to choose this site of *Chicago* as a replica of Gaza. In that sense, *Chicago* became 'more real than the real', demonstrating how the theme park of urban combat eventually turned from a simulation into a simulacra, a fabricated reality that sooner or later replaces its referent (Baudrillard; Frohne).

On Authenticity, Or, Why Shadow Cities are not Enough

The *Chicago* training centre is bolstered in the media as helping soldiers to "actively [avoid] unnecessary civilian casualties" by distinguishing terrorists from city residents. Yet, we argue, in their design of Arab urban dwellings – from the single unit to the broader distribution of space – as spaces of threat, *Chicago* and *Al Furan* work, in practice, to undermine the distinction between the enemy combatant and city dweller. Rather than replicating lived space, the centres modulate village- and city- designs according to a biased militaristic perspective that re-construct lived space first and foremost as a potential combat zone. Contrary to their promise, then, the only authenticity offered by the MOUTs has to do with their reliable display of militaristic dystopian spatial perspectives.

An acknowledgement of the military's own realization of the incompleteness of MOUT imaginaries, regardless of how much effort has been put into creating the ultimate authentic experience, is to be found in its continuous training outside of the centres. The case of Umm al-Fahm, with which we opened this paper, is only one amongst numerous recent military exercises and events reported to take place within Palestinian and settler lived spaces (Breiner and Shezaf; Levy and Levac; Gili). Seeing as such exercises clearly infringe on the daily life of inhabitants, and have long-lasting effects, one must ask, what is it that remained missing from the military spatial experience, in city models that were constructed to answer to its every need?[5]

A preliminary answer to this conundrum can be found in Slavoj Žižek's conceptualization of the "Passion of the Real". Addressing the 9/11 attacks on the twin towers in New York and their aftermath, Žižek expounds on the impossible quest to capture raw experience in images or language. Any such quest for raw experience, emanates from a suspicion of representation's ability to capture reality, but ends up being a passion for semblance, a quest for the perfect image:

> *"On today's market, we find a whole series of products deprived of their malignant properties: coffee without caffeine, cream without fat, beer without alcohol... And the list goes on: what about virtual sex as sex without sex, the Colin Powell doctrine of warfare with no casualties (on our side, of course) as warfare without warfare, the contemporary definition of politics as the art of expert administration, that is, as politics without politics ... reality itself deprived of its substance, of the hard resistant kernel of the Real ... What happens at the end of this process of virtualization, however, is that we begin to experience 'real reality' itself as a virtual entity" (Žižek 90).* [6]

From Žižek's perspective, the urban training centres are another version of contemporary postmodern products: coffee without caffeine, empty Arab 'enemy' cities without inhabitant killjoys or spatial designs that would destabilize the connotation of the surrounding as combat space. Furthermore, and more importantly, translating Žižek's conceptualization to our case, it is easier to see how the training centres' virtual semblance of lived space fuels the continuous need to experience 'real reality' (in our case, lived urban and rural Arab spaces) in light of its virtual image. To paraphrase Žižek, in contrast to the Barthesian reality effect, where details in the urban training centres make us accept their fictional scenarios as real, here, lived experience itself, that is, urban fabrics of Arab cities and villages under occupation regime, in order to be sustained, has to be perceived within the imaginary prism of the architecture of threat (Žižek 93).

The persistent military exercise in lived spaces, which should be deemed unnecessary after the construction of the training centres, now makes sense. As a node in the process of "the passion for semblance" and its continuous search for the perfect image, lived cities are addressed as versions of training centres, and not the other way around.

Conclusion

In May 2022, half a year after the military training at Umm al-Fahm with which we opened this paper, another military exercise was set to take place in the city, as part of a larger drill named "Chariots of Fire," that was spread across different locations in Israel and the Occupied Territories, simulating a multi-front war (Jerusalem Post). However, this time, the drill in Umm al-Fahm was cancelled at the request of the city mayor Samir Sobhi Mahamed. In his letter, Mahamed wrote,

> *"I, the city council, and the residents of Umm el-Fahm are strongly opposed to conducting the military drill inside the city, and we have made our position known to the relevant military officials … Needless to say, moving armored personnel carriers inside the city that simulates a battle against Hezbollah has a dramatic effect on the feelings of the residents" (Ahronheim, 18 May 2022).*

Crucially, Mahamed points out in his letter that the problem lies not (only) in the clash between soldiers and civilians *during* the simulation, but in the effects that the simulation may carry *after* the drill is over and done with. He writes,

> *"As mayor of the city, I do everything within my power to promote co-existence and improve the image of the city as well as the quality of life within it. And I am afraid these kinds of military exercises are harmful to those goals … There is a good chance that an 18-year-old soldier or a hi-tech entrepreneur who takes part in the exercise to 'conquer the enemy' will have difficulty changing his view that Umm el-Fahm is the enemy even after the drill, and all our efforts to bring about … economic growth and an improvement of Umm el-Fahm's image will go by the wayside"* (Ahronheim, 18 May 2022).

To our mind, Mahamed's letter encapsulates the issue at stake most clearly, and points to the ways in which military training centres cast their shadow over Arab lived space in Israel, not to mention the Occupied Territories and actual urban combat.[7] While in May 2022, the military drill moved away from Umm al-Fahm, it did take place in and near other Arab villages in Lower Galilee and the Wadi Ara region. The structural approach to Arab lived environment as spaces of threat, prevailed.

The simulation of war in the city is, then, located on a continuum that superimposes the simulated military pastiche of threat scenarios – and the racist imaginative geographies they carry – over into lived urban space. The effects of such superimposition remain in place long after the training is concluded whether in the form of a popular TV series, or in the form of a fading respect for urban spaces and the fabric of daily life they contain.

“Saturated with spatial stereotypes, especially in relation to the global war on terror, these simulated urban structures complement the “widespread demonisation of entire Islamic cities as ‘terrorist’ or barbarian ‘nests’” in ways that help to legitimise the use of massive forces by Western armies on Islamic cities (Graham).”

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Endnotes

1 The Second Intifada (In Arabic the Aqsa Intifada or Intifada al Aqsa) is a term used to refer to the violent clashes between Israel and the different Palestinian organisations (including the Palestinian Authority) during 2000-2005. It began as a civil uprising, but evolved into armed clashes, shootings, bombings, and suicide attacks from the Palestinian side and sieges, arrests, and airstrikes from the Israeli side, and led eventually to the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza strip and the construction of the West Bank barrier. The 2006 Israeli invasion of Lebanon (referred to by Israel as the Second Lebanon War and in Lebanon as the 34-Day War or the July War) is a series of skirmishes, battles, and clashes between Israel and the Hezbollah Militia during the summer of 2006, in Lebanon and northern Israel.

2 A Lebanese Shia militia and political party (literally meaning the Party of God), established in 1982 following Israel's invasion of Lebanon. It formed one of the main resisting forces to Israeli presence in Lebanon, and since the 1980s it has turned into one of the country's most influential political organizations.

3 The 'explosions' in the walls, embedding the fighting tactic of passing through the walls into the architecture of the building and highlighting the perception of the 'Arab' house as an object of conflict designed through the perspective of warfare.

4 Historical city centers or villages, characterized by traditional architecture, which includes narrow streets and closely clustered buildings.

5 One answer to this question, that will not be pursued further in this contribution, is the employment of military training as part of a practice of land confiscation. Our focus here remains on the ways in which urban spaces are re-configured according to military imaginaries. For more on military training area in relation to land confiscation in the past and in the present see for example Tzfadia; Hass.

6 For Žižek, 9/11's traumatic affect is created in part in relation to its constant a-priory imaginings in visual culture: "For the great majority of the public, the World Trade Center explosions were events on the TV screen, and when we watched the oft-repeated shot of frightened people running towards the camera ahead of the giant cloud of dust from the collapsing tower, was not the framing of the shot itself reminiscent of spectacular shots in catastrophic movies, a special effect which outdid all others, since – as Jeremy Bentham knew – reality is the best appearance of itself?" (Žižek 90).

7 On this note see for example (B'Tselem, 'Jenin Refugee Camp Is Not a Battlefield - It Is the Home of Thousands of People').

Migrant Mental Healthcare, Conflict, and Embodied Experiences

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Abstract

This provocation draws on my experience as an ethnographic researcher conducting interviews structured by emotion and embodiment with a diverse group of migrants about the barriers they face accessing mental healthcare (Ayata et al.). In conversation with these diversely embodied migrants, their capacity to affect and be affected by power imbalances comes to the fore (Blackman). I reflect on these experiences and explore the nuances of what it means to have (partially) escaped conflict to pursue a future only to be confronted with the ever-present traces of colonial history in a world-city like Amsterdam (Quijano). The conversations gifted to me through these interviews form a backdrop for the complexities of meaning-making that sanctions the presence of newcomers. This essay illuminates the extent to which the thriving cultural sector of Amsterdam obscenely includes sojourners in often conflicting discourses around society, livelihood, and cultural production (De Genova).

Introduction

Positionality, particularly as a researcher at a prestigious university, is paramount. I find myself writing this essay interwoven within the temporal and socio-cultural fabric that envelopes and defines my experiences. I am currently a postdoctoral researcher and lecturer at the University of Amsterdam in the Communication Science Department. I was hired to work as a project manager and researcher in the *Mental Health 4 All project*, an EU-Commission-funded initiative that seeks to understand and mitigate barriers migrants and refugees face when seeking access to mental healthcare. Throughout this text I will refer to these people as 'migrants,' with the understanding that this broader category includes and centers refugees and those fleeing violence and conflict. I am currently responsible for contributing to individual papers that rely on interviews with migrants who have sought mental healthcare. It is one of my responsibilities to do this work and these people justice.

The Mental Health 4 All project, structurally housed within the European Union and supported through European funding, occupies a remarkable position in the current geopolitical landscape. As I write this essay, Russia's aggression towards Ukraine and the rest of the world stands to create more migrants to Europe than we have seen in recent years. Additionally, ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and Africa continue to create the kinds of conditions most would flee. This migration "crisis" forms the backdrop that facilitated my employment at the university and allowed me to migrate to the Netherlands. As such, war, conflict, and the city are conceptual and material drivers for this essay.

As a migrant myself, I am struck by the dynamics of power/lessness in our narratives. This dichotomy between a sense of agency and being seen as "less than" characterizes how we move through the world. As migrants, we are faced with conflicts at differing scales: some of us are fleeing inhospitable socio-political climates, some of us experience the conflict of existing between "two worlds," but none of us can ignore the effect conflict has on the mundane trappings of everyday life in the city. The current edition presents an opportunity to shed light on the complexities of these stories; the conflicts we experience are embedded in us, just as we are embedded in the city of Amsterdam.

In my work regarding mental health in Amsterdam and the Netherlands, more broadly, the interplay between racial, ethnic, and national diversity and neurodiversity leads me to conduct my research from a decolonial perspective. This perspective aims for "a critical delinking that offers pluriversal alternatives to modern coloniality" (Enck-Wanzer 17). This "delink-

ing" does the work of exploring how modernity and colonialism (i.e. the constructs that situate coloniality) facilitate the current power imbalances found in many, if not all, systems, including the mental healthcare system. My research participants' voices delink, for example, notions of care and the state, by decrying the barriers they have faced when seeking state-funded care. In other words, the work I do presents our alternatives to this power structure: the modern colonality referenced throughout this essay.

As a member of multiple global diasporas, a migrant, a flaneur, a sojourner, whichever label applies in whichever context, it is of utmost importance to consider my global position when moving through the world. Conducting research is a prime responsibility as it allows me to use my capabilities to affect change on a small scale and perhaps, as Frantz Fanon suggested, "change the order of the world" (Fanon 2). In this process, I take to heart the notion that "decolonization is not a metaphor" (Tuck and Yang 61). I am constantly thinking about ways to disrupt the violences perpetuated by hegemonic powers, often in the form of nation-states.

Throughout my research, as well as in my lived experience, I have been confronted by the arbitrary violence of national borders. As a passport holder of a country in the so-called Global North, I am nevertheless reminded of the immense amount of privilege I have in being able to traverse these borders with relative ease; my siblings of the global majority must often plan and spend carefully to embark on the same kinds of journeys that I can undertake without much of a second thought. That being said, I do face the consistent (micro)aggressions that anyone darker than beige must face when being "randomly" controlled at border controls. As countless anecdotal accounts show, these checks are not a coincidence (Kamaloni 99). The suggestion that your presence is worth scrutiny amounts to the kinds of symbolic violence that can lead to the erasure of that presence; violences ranging from second glances to passive-aggressive remarks to explicit racism and xenophobia all form part of the violence that is constituted by and reconstitutes nation-state borders.

How this relates to my research is manifold. First, as a person occupying multiple identities at once, I exist at the junctures of advantage and disadvantage that characterize so many of the migration flows to the Netherlands. As a highly-educated, cisgender, non-disabled man, my privileges have afforded me certain opportunities to which the participants in my research do not have access. By the same token, as a Queer person of color from a low-income background, the disadvantages I have faced allow me to relate to a certain extent to the barriers and challenges faced by those experiencing a new environment.

“As migrants, we are faced with conflicts at differing scales: some of us are fleeing inhospitable socio-political climates, some of us experience the conflict of existing between “two worlds”, but none of us can ignore the effect conflict has on the mundane trappings of everyday life in the city.”

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Relying on autoethnographic insights from my experience as a researcher, this essay argues for a sensitive engagement with the city with the diverse individuals that make up its populace. Autoethnography, defined differently in different fields, can be understood as "research, writing and method that connect the autobiographical and personal to the cultural and social" (Ellis xix). Through the practice of describing my own research and migration narrative, I present the city, my research participants, and institutions I have encountered along the way with the reflexive intent of illuminating broader social phenomena (Anderson). This essay further reflects on the role of materiality and discourse in how migrants navigate complexities in cosmopolitan settings. Ultimately, I contend that migrants form an integral part of the cultural landscape of a city. This essay exemplifies newcomers' intellectual, embodied, and affective contributions across various interlocking spheres throughout the city.

Post Up

In the current era of "posts" (post-truth, post-structural, post-colonial), we also find ourselves in a posthumanist wave. This movement of scholarly thought encompasses a broad tradition of scholars exploring the boundaries between the human and the non-human from the perspective of cultural studies, feminist studies, and animal rights studies, to name just a few. Rosi Braidotti, a prominent scholar who has helped to shape posthumanist thought, has argued for an expansion of consideration of who counts as human (Braidotti). The dichotomy between humans and non-humans often subliminally characterizes debates around migration. For example, through what colleagues and I have identified as a qualified form of humanitarianism elsewhere (Hernandez et al. 12), migration discourses in Europe often construct the migrant as human only to a certain extent. The qualified nature of humanitarianism has been discussed at length (Pallister-Wilkins 32-35). Still, for this essay, this concept of humanitarianism suffices to highlight how various categories of migrants are positioned in hierarchies, with those who are most 'like us' at the top and deserving of our respect, concern, and care. Particularly for those migrants who flee war (and other threats to their living bodies), humanitarianism proves to be anything but humane. The qualified concern for the often-represented "floods" of humanity (Pruitt 383) positions social and political actors in ways that reaffirm the hierarchies of those who deserve and those who do not.

My research adopts a critical poststructuralist perspective. By critical, I reference Horkheimer here, who conceptualized critical research as intended "to create a world which satisfies the needs and powers of" human

beings (Horkheimer 246). As a researcher aligned with the critical school of thought, I am interested in how contested meanings become preferred by society and, importantly, seek to challenge those meanings with my research. The thrust of a critical stance is not only to describe oppressive dynamics but also to undo them to the best of our ability. This approach means avoiding taking 'common-sense' understandings at face value and approaching underlying meaning with an intent to perceive how these understandings influence our lived reality.

The Role of Culture

Part of my praxis as a researcher means implementing a 'culture-centered approach' (Dutta 4). This approach calls "for the cultivation of a form of humility that begins by noting the ways in which community voices are often erased through the very processes of knowledge production" (Dutta 255). A culture-centered approach further entails understanding culture not as a static element of a given country, region, or city but as an evolving, contested site of diverging discursive meanings (Hall 13). My research as a communication scholar has shown how specific cultural discourses can be accepted, rejected, or negotiated. For example, in my work on racial, ethnic, and national diversity, I have argued that race, rather than being merely 'taboo' becomes rendered discursively and materially unspeakable through dominant discourses common throughout Western Europe (Hernandez). The political and cultural unspeakability of race are present in my ongoing in migrant mental healthcare, though I do notice a shift in contemporary discourse. In this vein, I am often confronted with conflicted meanings of complex concepts like change, conflict, and politics.

The tensions between and amongst discourses and the material realities they represent must be navigated carefully. Discourse can be understood as "a structure in which meaning is constantly negotiated and constructed" (Laclau 254). Simply put, everything written, said, or otherwise expressed constitutes discourse. Conversely, material can be thought of as the "stuff that things are made of" (Ingold 1). Importantly, these two concepts are intertwined, as one cannot be understood without the other (Carpentier 13). Understanding that things only have meaning when they are discursively impactful in some way is key here. This conceptualization is not to negate material realities but to understand that how humans make sense of the world is only with and through discourse. It is here that the notion of conflict moves from the discursive (i.e. conflicted meanings) to the material (i.e. the impacts of those meanings on migrants).

"The suggestion that your presence is worth scrutiny amounts to the kinds of symbolic violence that can lead to the erasure of that presence; violences ranging from second glances to passive-aggressive remarks to explicit racism and xenophobia all form part of the violence that is constituted by and reconstitutes nation-state borders."

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It is my responsibility to illuminate these discursive and material issues marginalized communities face and seek ways to alleviate barriers. For example, in the research for the Mental Health 4 All project, and the other projects I have worked on, part of my work means centering the voices of our research participants, acknowledging their complexity and humanity, and encouraging positive change in systems that disenfranchise.

Identifying culture as constantly evolving also opens the possibility for the culture of the city as a growing force with the power to heal. As a relatively new migrant to the city, Amsterdam has also been a place of revitalization and growth for me. I see the culture of this place in the institution I work for and the social settings I attempt to frequent. While culture exists as a site of struggle (Martin et al. 5), we can also hold space for the restorative implications of culture as a constant means of reinvention.

In resonance with the theme of this special issue, I would also like to expand on the concept of 'conflict'. Conflict is, of course, not limited to national boundaries. Throughout my research, I am reminded of the embodied and often epigenetic traumas carried in the bodies of those who leave their home contexts. By epigenetic trauma, I mean the cultural trauma leveraged at a specific group that can be inherited by future generations of that group (Lehrner and Yehuda). Far from a cultural metaphor, this biological affliction manifests in the expression or suppression of specific genes, impacting physical embodiment (McEwen). For example, descendants of the enslaved peoples in the United States and descendants of those affected

by World War 2 and the Holocaust demonstrate the effects of this cultural trauma at the genetic level (Kellermann; Jackson et al.). This intergenerational impact of war and conflict can also be seen in today's survivors of conflict in the occupied land of Palestine (Atallah). Thus, conflict and war on a national scale find their way into the breathing and flowing crevices of the bodies of people we interact with daily.

Conflict does, however, have the capacity to influence change. Without conflict, humans do not grow. I do not mean to romanticize the notion of conflict; it can have long-lasting psychological, emotional, and material consequences. Rather, I want to offer an alternative way of thinking about conflict that may help contextualize the realities of discord that characterize urban life in the context of global migration. The tensions caused by the presence of newcomers can act as a mirror to the dominant society. In this sense, I propose welcoming the energetic flow that migration can represent. New eyes, new faces, and new perspectives can and do have a rejuvenating effect on cities.

Diversity and Intersectionality

Diversity in the city represents opportunities and challenges. With this essay, I want to center the super-diverse identities of various migrants that come to Amsterdam. In a period of heightened migration, discussing 'just'" diversity as an aspect of cosmopolitanism is no longer analytically sufficient. Contemporary migration has necessitated the concept of "super-diversity" or a modern condition detailing "a dynamic interplay of variables among an increased number of new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants" (Vertovec 1024). This move to super-diversity allows us to acknowledge differently positioned newcomers in myriad ways and move past bounded notions of migrants as occupying one category (i.e., nationality, gender, race, ethnicity) at a time.

In my experience as a researcher, the concept of super-diversity is in a constant state of emergence. My research participants are differently positioned regarding legal status; some as refugees, some as undocumented, and some as knowledge workers. I encountered those of lower socio-economic status, folks of different genders and ability statuses, and those whose transnational connections position them to understand the city from incredibly unique vantage points. The lens of diversity magnifies the need for everyone, including those of the native-Dutch 'majority', to become accustomed to adapting their worldview to a new and evolving city (Crul and Lelie 187).

These culturally-inflected vantage points are deeply entwined with notions of identity and how migrants interact with the world. Each time I have scheduled a research interview with a new study participant, I carefully consider what aspects of their identity and personality they will bring to our interaction. Especially regarding mental health, witnessing the full humanity of the person in front of you in all of their complexities is of utmost importance.

One tool that has helped researchers and practitioners think of individual and structural complexities in the past is the now ubiquitous term 'intersectionality'. Originally coined in the legal context of the United States by Kimberlé Crenshaw, the term has been adapted (for better or worse) to fit many social realities (Crenshaw 140). The work of intersectionality has also extended into "resisting racialized, heteropatriarchal oppressions of global capitalism and colonialism" (Roshanravan 42). However, at its core, intersectionality is a Black Feminist understanding of how oppressions intersect.

Often, one sees in the social sciences a rather superficial engagement with intersectionality. Diversity in Europe is often seen solely through an "either/or" lens that dichotomizes gender and migration status (Hernandez 121). This dichotomy has several implications; diversity work is seen as predominantly or solely addressing the problems of gender inequality, as though those of various genders cannot also have other intersectional aspects of their identity. This reductive view can manifest as, for example, administrators in various municipal institutions perpetuating racist/xenophobic microaggressions towards women of color, lack of affordances for disabled women in public spaces, or a lack of acknowledgment of ignorance of the way non-Christian religious holidays are adapted for various LGBT communities, to name but a few examples.

The city does, however, offer intersectional solutions to the problems facing diverse communities. As a researcher and educator, it is my responsibility to seek out and magnify these solutions with whatever recognition my voice can bring.

Concrete Examples: the City in Movement

In a recent volume published by Pakhuis de Zwijger, the *Designing Cities for All* (DCFA) collective organized written contributions from the perspectives of eighteen diversely positioned designers, artists, academics, and activists. The volume identified "Cities of Belonging," "Everything is Design," and "Making it Work." as relevant themes for the diversity of topics of the various essays by the contributors (Ader et al. 10).

The essays that make up the other two sections are impactful and challenging in their own right. However, for this essay, I would like to turn to the concept of "Cities of Belonging". To open this section, cultural anthropologist Aminata Cairo raises the question, "What is a city for?". She adroitly points out that systems of inequality are perpetuated through the material construction of cities, often excluding certain members of the populace (Cairo 15). This point moves further in not only the material construction of the city but the discursive representation of "all" in questions of who is included/excluded. Nishant Shah, Professor of Global Media at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, emphasizes the interplay of sameness and difference in considering who counts as being seen as worthy. As Shah says, we are more likely to include those who look, think, and act like us (Shah 25).

My intent in highlighting the conceptualizations of these thinkers is to draw attention to the linkages between the discursive and material constraints that define existence within cities like Amsterdam. The interplay of materiality and discursivity here has practical implications for those living or trying to live in the city: issues like gentrification, inequality, and inaccessibility are consistent problems when trying to imagine a fairer place to live for everyone. The work by the DCFA reminds us to consistently turn a critical eye towards the city and consider for whom and what a city exists. Further, this work reminds us of the importance of considering how each of us is responsible for contributing to an inclusive city.

In/Excluded Migrants

Examples of migrant presences in the city abound. However, migrants to a new urban context are often "obscenely included" to fulfill certain societal positions but disallowed from participation in society at all levels (De Genova 1181). This obscene inclusion takes place in a context where migrants represent a form of necessary labor, not only in a manual sense (i.e., agriculture, service jobs, etc.) but also in terms of cultural production. The desire for migrant cultural work is evidenced by the consumption of art, music, dance, and other forms of cultural production from elsewhere that nevertheless does not guarantee the producers of these forms anything other than a precarious and contingent place within the cultural landscape (Drzewiecka et al. 462). One powerful trend I have noticed is that cultural producers (i.e. both artists and institutions) will use art to speak back to the oppressive forces of the nation-state while thematizing their precarity. For example, artists I have met during my time in the Netherlands while conducting this research rely on their experiences to inspire their

"Geography that connects certain people of certain phenotypes through the process of racialization is the result of centuries of meaning-making processes that have constructed global hierarchies."

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performances, drawing attention to the myriad ways they have navigated conflict, both here and elsewhere. This phenomenon means that for cities like Amsterdam, San Francisco, Berlin, and New Delhi (all of which I have called home at some point), migrants make up a large part of the cultural scene. In Amsterdam, a global hub of creativity, the impact of migrants on the cultural sphere is undeniable.

Additionally, my experience in identifying new cultural venues and opportunities has led me into contact with exemplary individuals and organizations that work towards improving the cultural and academic landscape of the city. For example, the *Salwa Foundation*, a collective of migrant artists based in Amsterdam, and lecturers and researchers at the *Royal Tropical Institute* (KIT) have allowed me to witness them doing this work. Their endeavors have shown me specific exemplars of the myriad ways migrants contribute to the diversification and enrichment of the city of Amsterdam.

The Salwa Foundation does ground-breaking work creating community and providing access to the Dutch cultural landscape for artists with a migrant background. While this can look like funding, mentorship, and other forms of infrastructural support, as I attended some of their gatherings, I also see the disruptive power of groups coming together for the sake of simply existing in community. Often, as subjects of late capitalism, we are told to produce, produce, produce without any regard for our own well-being. This self-destructive tendency is particularly true for migrants and newcomers to a country who have to prove they are "worthy" of being allowed residence. The Salwa Foundation seeks to disrupt capitalist notions

of production by providing the space for artists and activists to exist in community.

Another example of work that seeks to disrupt globalized capitalism is a course I assisted in creating at the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) in Amsterdam. The course entitled 'Strengthening Disrupted Health Systems' featured an e-learning session on Mental Health for 'Refugees and Vulnerable people'. The course took place within the *Masters of Health Policy* at the KIT and is geared towards professionals from the so-called Global South. The course aimed to provide these professionals with practical insights into understanding and improving access to mental healthcare resources in contexts disrupted by conflict.

Finally, I would be remiss not to mention the Netherlands' role in global (de)colonization. The Netherlands' historical role in colonizing many countries in the Global South has resulted in continuous, ongoing hierarchical relations with large portions of the Global South. Another institution that does excellent work in this regard, the *Black Archives*, highlights the colonial relationships that the Netherlands has with its former formal colonies, particularly (but not only) Surinam. Their work has implications for local, regional, and national power relations. For example, local school classes attended their recent exhibition, "Facing Blackness," which thematized issues of representation of Black bodies, particularly Zwarte Piet (*Black Pete*), in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement. This exhibition did a phenomenal job of linking the local Dutch context with the global uprisings, illuminating how the conceptualization of the colonized impacts how we think of marginalized people today.

The Black Archives, through outreach and activism work, speaks truth to power. What we can gain from this perspective are potential ways of thinking through the meanings of war, conflict, and the city. The Black Archives and the other examples I have offered here are only a few among multitudes of contributors to the brilliant cultural sphere of the city. In highlighting their efforts, this essay represents a singular perspective, but one that can hopefully spur thoughts and conversations that will further inform and challenge the reader.

Where Shall We Go From Here?

In conclusion, I ask the reader to consider the confines placed upon us by the modern colonial system. More specifically, I must ask, in the Black Feminist tradition, how to render the political personal and think of how the ways we exist in the city can continue to perpetuate and also undo the conflicts I have described throughout this essay. The tensions between

so-called majorities and minorities can serve as productive points to enter the discussion.

In her seminal essay '*Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe*', Hortense Spillers notes, "We are also reminded that 'geography' is not a divine gift." (Spillers 70). While her commentary was originally intended as a materialist understanding of gendered and racialized politics in the United States, I want to highlight the applicability of this insight to a global context. Geographic contexts and origins, while certainly aleatory, are highly contested literal and metaphorical sites of struggle. Geography that connects certain people of certain phenotypes through the process of racialization is the result of centuries of meaning-making processes that have constructed global hierarchies. In this sense, our geography is far from providence bestowed upon us, but rather a discursive and material conflicting force that imprints upon human bodies.

The material presence of diverse bodies can only be understood through discourse. By emphasizing this entwinement, I have provided the basis for an argument that suggests a sensitive and sensitized engagement with our fellow city dwellers. Understanding the material needs of those fleeing war and conflict is but a first step in advocating for their rights. Furthermore, understanding our material and discursive position is another crucial step in adopting a culture-centered approach.

In this essay, I have argued that a rich understanding of migrants is necessary to advocate for their presence in urban social landscapes. As a closing provocation, I would like to take this a step further and assert that migrants' contributions to a local context are, in fact, irrelevant to whether or not they should be allowed to live there. One should not have to have escaped war to lead a happy, self-actualized life. The argument that purports migrants should first contribute to a context before being conditionally accepted is rooted in an inherent supremacist mindset that ignores the humanity of specific kinds of people. The same humanity that affords a Dutch person to live in the Netherlands without being questioned should be afforded to all, regardless of national origin. This should be the case the world over.

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Everything but Restraint: Aldo van Eyck and Constant Nieuwenhuys' Visions of Post-war Society in Light of Their Lived Experience.

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Abstract

This essay investigates how Aldo van Eyck and Constant Nieuwenhuys' respective visions of post-war society were influenced by their lived experiences. Rejecting the functionalism prevalent in society, both found a guiding principle for their post-war visions in the relation-based thinking found in Johan Huizinga's 1938 book Homo Ludens. Seeking to reintroduce play into daily life to counter the societal rigidity prevalent prior to the Second World War, they developed visions of societal structures that facilitated and reflected new societal relations. Their respective wartime experiences influenced these visions. Van Eyck, who spent the war years in neutral Switzerland, developed a humane structuralist architecture while Constant, who lived under German occupation in Amsterdam, zeroed in on an all-encompassing utopian vision which surpassed Van Eyck's in everything but restraint. Through a comparative analysis, this essay will illustrate how Constant's more extreme experiences pushed him to take a more radical stance than his spared counterpart.

Introduction

In his 1938 book *Homo Ludens* (Man the Player), cultural historian Johan Huizinga (1872-1954) investigates the necessity and primacy of play in the generation of culture and society. Claiming that as animals played before humans, play existed before western civilization. Although "civilization is, in its earliest phases, played", in our search for progress, we began seeing civilization as coming *from* play instead of arising *in* and *as* play, thereby demoting play to a leisurely activity rather than a fundamental aspect of human culture, one which helped shape our language, institutions, and social norms (Huizinga 173). Alarmed by the rise of National Socialism, Huizinga contrasted the playful *homo ludens*, 'man the player', with the intellect-based *homo faber,* 'man the maker', whose progress-focused rigidity represented the societal coolness that is at the base of 20th-century Fascism.

After the destruction of the Second World War, many sought to restructure society, of which several developed guiding principles that bordered on Huizinga's thinking. Two of these thinkers were Aldo van Eyck (1918-1999) and Constant Nieuwenhuys (1920-2005). Architect and artist respectively, both rejected the then-prevalent functionalism which, in its search for societal advancement, prescribed certain ways of living without space for personal freedom. From their readings of respectively Martin Buber and Karl Marx, Van Eyck and Constant developed akin understandings of the importance of physical infrastructure to human relations, similar to Huizinga's thesis in *Homo Ludens*. Although only Constant cites Huizinga directly, the vocabulary used to articulate their respective visions clearly indicates his influence in Van Eyck as well. Both Van Eyck and Constant make use of the term *homo ludens* – Constant even uses the term to name the inhabitants of his envisioned utopia– and Huizinga's play-based terminology, which he uses to describe society, is present in their texts as well (Nieuwenhuys, "Lecture at the ICA" 198-200; Van Eyck, qtd. in Strauven 287, 300).

Recognizing the precedency of play and the modernist negligence to its significance, both sought to reintroduce it into their visions of post-war society (Romagnoli 127). Although they kept in close contact over the years and exchanged many sources (Van der Horst, "Biography" 290), their individual visions developed differently with Van Eyck developing a structuralist vision of architecture and Constant an all-encompassing utopian vision that surpassed Van Eyck's in everything but restraint.

Investigating each of their visions, the question remains why they differ so greatly in radicality, while their thinking is informed by overlapping sources and has developed in continuous dialogue. What, if any, might the leading decisive factor be? Given that their biggest incentive to

investigate new ways of structuring society was their experience of a society ravaged by war, the explanation of their differing levels of intensity is most likely to be found in their lived wartime experiences. Through a concise comparative analysis, this essay will examine how their individual experiences influenced their respective visions of the post-war world.

Aldo van Eyck's Distant Perception

Aldo Ernest van Eyck was born in the Netherlands and grew up in the United Kingdom where his father, poet and reporter Pieter Nicolaas van Eyck (1887-1954), worked. At 20, he moved to Zurich where he enrolled at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, or 'ETH'), known for its societally engaged progressive architecture department. By the time of his 1942 graduation, the occupation of the Netherlands forced him to stay in Switzerland.

In Switzerland, Van Eyck was not exposed to the Second World War in the same intensity as he would have in the Netherlands or the UK.[1] He was, however, confronted with fascist ideology by his first teacher at the ETH, Professor Friedrich Heß (1887-1962). Heß imposed in his classroom a Swiss *Heimatstil* idiom which opposed industrialization and urbanization and instead favoured architectural structures and ornamental styles traditionally present in the Swiss townscapes. An avid supporter of the *Blut and Boden* (blood and soil) architecture which attempted to unite racially defined peoples with specific settlement areas through a nationalist design vernacular, Heß exposed his students to National Socialist rhetoric emphasising the need for a preservation of both the Swiss national identity and its kinship with their German neighbours (Strauven 63).

Put off by Heß' rigid teachings, Van Eyck turned to other, more inspiring lecturers such as Linus Birchler and Alphonse Laverrière, who each represented a more pluriform approach to architecture that denied the nationalist vision held by Heß its importance (Strauven 64-5).The biggest influence on Van Eyck's thinking, however, turned out to be an art historian whom he met outside of the ETH: Carola Giedion-Welcker (1893-1979). C.W., as she liked to be called, believed the art (and by extension architecture) of the time was merely an empty façade without any connection to nature of society (Strauven 78). Arguing for the destruction of the pedestal that has elevated the subject since the renaissance, C.W. wanted to bring object and subject on equal footing so both would be defined by the relations between them, rather than the regard we hold them in (Strauven 79). In this thinking, she was significantly inspired by Martin Buber's 1923 book *Ich und Du* (I and Thou), which Van Eyck would extensively study upon

“Given that their biggest incentive to investigate new ways of structuring society was their experience of a society ravaged by war, the explanation of their differing levels of intensity is most likely to be found in their lived wartime experiences.”

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her recommendation. In the book, Buber defines dialogue as a separate, foundational entity called 'the real third'. This real third, as described by Van Eyck, is "not something that happens to one person or another person separately … but something that happens in a dimension only accessible to both. The in-between acquiring form" (Van Eyck, "*Writings*" 55). The thought of doing away with existing hierarchies in favour of relations and constellations resonated with Van Eyck, who believed modernist architecture lacked this in-between.

Van Eyck's scepticism of this architecture was mainly aimed at the program of CIAM, the Congrès Internationaux d'Architecture Moderne (International Congress of Modern Architecture) which from 1933 onwards mainly interested itself in an urban planning informed by functionalism, an architectural principle where the unornamental form of the structure follows its function (Withagen and Caljouw 2). Although initially enthusiastic – Van Eyck took part in several CIAM meetings – he started to heavily criticize the call, led by the congress' unofficial leader Le Corbusier, for a massive rebuilding of cities into spaces characterized by a segregation of labour, living, and leisure (Withagen and Caljouw 2). As functionalism started to transform into a practice where the form of the structure, determined by the architect based on their understanding of modern life, started dictating its use, Van Eyck began to see it as pseudo-scientific (Strauven 66). The self-referential simulacrum of the functionalist built form was dismissed by him as "miles upon miles of organized nowhere" (Van Eyck, "Writings" 66). Rather, he wanted to see an architecture that reflected the new social structures fitting for the 20th century, free from the expanded rule of the architect.

The first opportunity to work towards such an architecture came when Van Eyck was asked by Cornelis van Eesteren (1897-1988), the then-head of the department of urban development at the municipality of Amsterdam, to work on a series of playgrounds. Unbound by the efforts of post-war reconstruction, children were able to traverse the cityscape as they pleased. Navigating the corridors recently opened-up by wartime violence, the desired paths left by the children were a direct physical result of their social structures. Through their disorderly movements, these children were reintroducing play into the existing fabric of the city. Play, as Van Eyck realized, was the only way in which the established boundaries of the city could be overcome (Van Eyck, "Writings" 25). Faced with the task of now formalizing this play, Van Eyck opted to follow the children's desired lines and create a network of playgrounds that followed the routes set out. For the playground equipment, he opted to develop his own line of designs



Figure 1: *Children playing in the Molenwijk playground designed by Aldo van Eyck.* (Photography by Fotopersbureau Holland Flavia Foto Pers Collectie, Stadsarchief Amsterdam).

based on basic geometric shapes that do not suggest any specific type of use (see figure 1). In line with Huizinga's ideas on play and relation-based significance, the meaning of the equipment is only determined by children's interaction with them. Between 1947 and 1978, approximately 700 playgrounds were built on unused and overlooked plots throughout Amsterdam which, together, created a network of free movement and play, covering the city from one end to the other (see figure 2) (Álvarez Santana 31). Like the unprescriptive equipment, the network of playgrounds allows the children to move on their own accord; their play is the only determining factor for the informal infrastructure facilitated by Van Eyck.

Following his playgrounds, Van Eyck developed an open, human-scaled architecture fostering a freedom of creativity and play for its inhabitants. Coined structuralism, this architectural concept allowed a similar establishment of freer relations between the occupants. In his best-known work, the 1960 Amsterdam Burgerweeshuis (Municipal Orphanage) (see figure 3), this concept is translated in a building consisting of hundreds of units, nonhierarchically connected through a range of transitional spaces, reflecting Buber's in-between realm. Echoing his mantra that "a house must be like a small city if it's to be a real house, a city like a large house if it's to be a real city" (Van Eyck, qtd. in Strauven 300), the building reflects his sys-



Figure 2: *Map of Amsterdam marked to indicate the playgrounds designed by Aldo van Eyck as per 1961* (graphic made by the author).

tem of playgrounds in how children were encouraged to move through the building and interact without prescription. But whereas the playgrounds followed the structures naturally set out by the children's social dynamics, the orphanage essentially inverses this, dictating relations through its physical structure. By taking into account both the individual and the collective, and by balancing the private and shared spaces, Van Eyck attempted to avoid the hierarchy inherent to institutions such as orphanages (Van Eyck, "Writings" 220).

Constant Nieuwenhuys' Lived Experience

Born Constant Anton Nieuwenhuys, Constant (as he would sign most of his work) grew up in Amsterdam where he enrolled in art school. A year after the occupation of the Netherlands by German forces, Constant, upon his graduation, moved to the Dutch town of Bergen until its evacuation by the occupying forces two years later. He moved back to Amsterdam where, to avoid the *Arbeitseinsatz* (compulsory work service), he refused to register

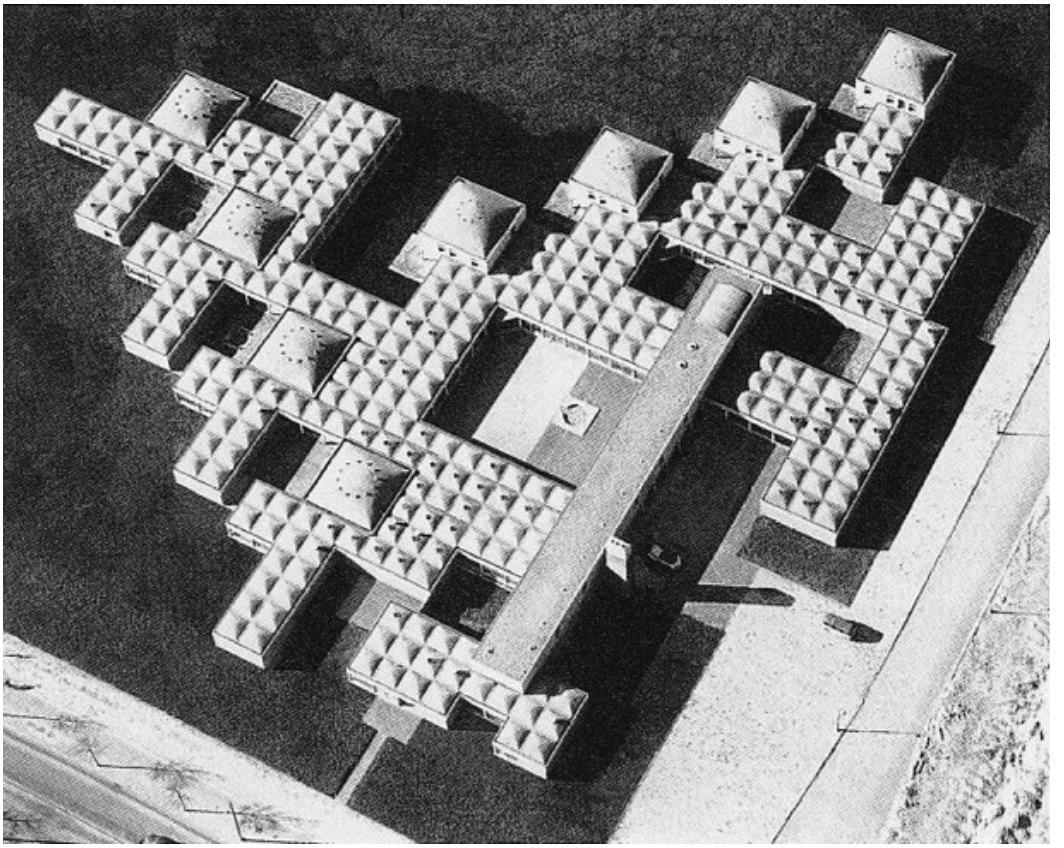


Figure 3*: Aldo van Eyck's Burgerweeshuis seen from the North.* Aerial photo by KLM Aerocarto Schiphol-Oost, 24 February 1960 (Aviodrome Lelystad, photograph by Luchtfoto Archief).

at the *Kultuurkamer* (Chamber of Culture) and went into hiding.[2] Shortly after, Constant was joined in hiding by his brother-in-law who introduced him to western philosophy and several of its key figures such as Descartes, Spinoza, and Marx.

After the liberation of the Netherlands, Constant moved away from the classical motives and ventured into a more experimental style of painting. In 1948, he co-founded the artist group *Experimentele Groep in Holland* (Experimental Group in Holland), which united painters, sculptors, and poets such as Karel Appel (1921-2006), Corneille (1922-2010), and Lucebert (1924-1994) in the quest to break with old conventions, explore new forms of artistic expression, and connect with likeminded artists abroad. Shortly, the Dutch group fused with the Belgian artists of *La Surréalisme Revolutionnaire* (The Revolutionary Surrealism), initiated by Christian Dotremont (1922-1979), and the Danish Høst (Harvest), headed by Asger Jorn (1914-1973), into the transnational artist group Cobra (stylized CoBrA and named after the home cities of its founders; Copenhagen, Brussels, and Amsterdam). Cobra aimed to develop a manner of spontaneous artistic expression, free from the restrains of academic art and societal expecta-

tions. Finding inspiration in places they considered close to the source of creativity and unspoiled by western civilization, such as children's drawings, the Cobra artists developed a recognizable, colourful visual language that danced between abstraction and figuration, and exudes a clear sense of spontaneity. After Cobra disbanded in 1951, most of the artists stuck to the visual idioms they had developed as part of the group. Constant, who had already limited his contribution to Cobra's final exhibition to paintings that just concerned the destruction of war, was, however, already heading in a different direction (Van Halem 9).

Constant's move to Paris in 1950 exposed him to the emaciation of post-liberation Paris and expanded his interest in a culture untainted by rational modernism from the arts to society. This development was accelerated after his move to Frankfurt in 1951. There, Constant's daily journey to his son's school took them through "large heaps of rubble, with here and there some places that had been flattened so you could walk over them like paths" (Constant, qtd. in Wark 135). On the experience he remarked that "[if] you walk through a town that lies in ruins, the first thing you naturally think of is building. And then, as you rebuild such a town, you wonder whether life there will be just the same, or what will be different" (Constant, qtd. in Wark 135).

These thoughts which may have attested to a first link between societal and physical structures in Constant's thinking, advanced after the artist was asked by Van Eyck to assist in organising the 1952 exhibition *Mens en Huis* (Human and House) (Van Halem 12). Constant and Van Eyck previously befriended each other during the preparations for the first Cobra show at the Amsterdam Stedelijk Museum in 1949. The close collaboration between Van Eyck, who had been asked to design the exhibition, and Constant, who created new works to fit the architect's displays, led to a long-lasting correspondence on architecture and art (Van der Horst, "Constant" 136). For *Mens en Huis*, the two repeated this process with Constant creating a mural to accompany Van Eyck's designs. The preparations for this new exhibition fortified Constant's interest in architecture, leading him to study Van Eyck's extensive architectural library and incorporate an increasing number of architectural elements in his oeuvre (Streuven 205-6; van der Horst, "Constant" 138).

After a series of interdisciplinary projects, including an interior-design project with architect Gerrit Rietveld (1888-1964), and a series of spatial experiments with former-Cobra-contemporary, the painter Stephen Gilbert (1910-2007), Constant was invited to a residency in Alba where he interacted with writer and activist Guy Debord (1931-1994) (Van der

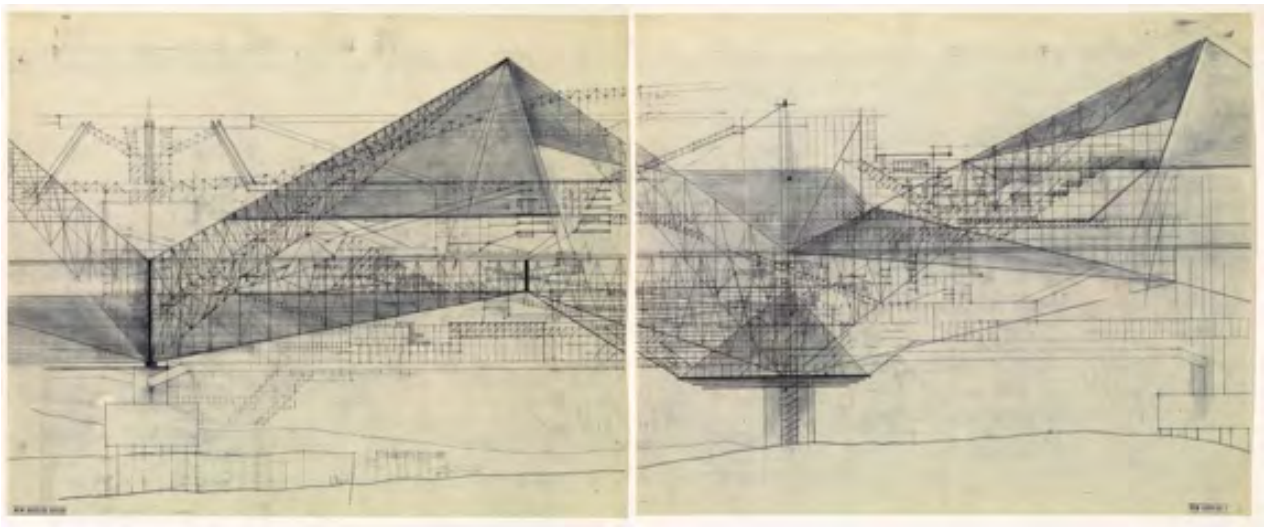


Figure 4: Constant Nieuwenhuys, *Cross Section of Big Yellow Sector, 1967*. Ink and pencil on paper (Kunstmuseum Den Haag, photograph by Tom Haartsen).[4]

Horst, "Constant" 139-142). Together with Jorn, they found the Situationist International (SI), an avant-garde movement of artists, theorists, and intellectuals, united by the aim of synthesising its members' disciplines into a cohesive critique of mid-20th century capitalist society.[3] By 1957, at the time of his encounter with Debord, Constant was working on the design for a camping ground for Piedmontese Sinti. The malleable camping ground was the first of Constant's urban designs which would adapt according to the use of its inhabitants and is referenced as the starting point of New Babylon, his all-encompassing utopian vision of a restructured world. Fuelled by the undertakings of the SI, Constant's interest in restructuring society overtook an increasingly large portion of his practice until he devoted himself completely to New Babylon the following year.

The New Babylon project encapsulated drawings, paintings, models, and maps in which Constant envisioned a society organized around play and creativity. Harking back to his wartime-readings of Marx, especially his writings on the automation of industry, Constant envisioned a society where labour is eliminated from daily life. The New Babylonians, as Constant referred to the inhabitants of his envisioned playground of participation, would use the time freed by the removal of labour for unprecedented creativity and collaboration. Almost giving literal shape to Marx' base and superstructure (Wark 138), New Babylon would be developed as a worldwide structure, elevated above an automated industrial base layer on the surface of the earth (see figure 4). The suspended structure would consist of several dynamic layers that would evolve with daily life, taking the physical form of the liberated societal relations facilitated by this new



Figure 5: Constant Nieuwenhuys, *Mobile Ladder Labyrinth,1967.* Brass, ink on plexiglass, and oil on wood (Kunstmusem Den Haag, photography by Tom Haartsen).[5]

infrastructure (see figure 5). Divided into sectors about the size of a small city, these constructions would be linked across the globe (Wark 140) (see figure 6). Although Constant had already determined how the sectors could be implemented, he also acknowledged the impossibility of designing for the future (Nieuwenhuys, "Ten Years On" 281).

For Constant, the New Babylonians would be the archetype of a new kind of human: the homo ludens. Following Johan Huizinga's description, homo ludens would be able to lead a life of creativity, rather than exist as a mere instrument of production. Through play, they would be able to escape the unsatisfying reality by entering an alternative dreamed 'reality'. Constant's homo ludens, however would be an ordinary individual (Nieuwenhuys, "Lecture at the ICA" 197*).* Rather than have homo ludens create an imagined personal reality which allows them the creativity, Constant proposes that reality itself will change, allowing every person to transform into homo ludens. Combining Huizinga's reinsertion of play with Marx' automation, the imagined becomes real. With labour no longer taking up precious productivity, homo ludens is now at liberty to use its productivity for the construction of this ideal reality.

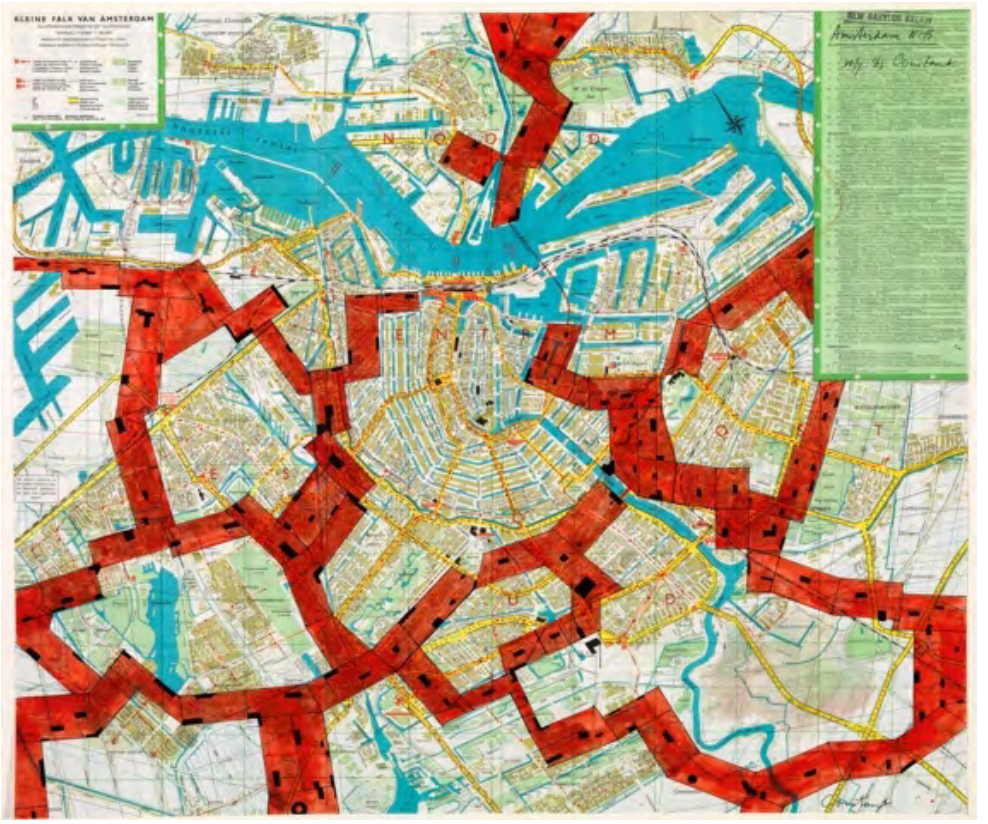


Figure 6: Constant Nieuwenhuys, *New Babylon – Amsterdam,* 1963. Ink on city map. (Kuntmuseum Den Haag, photograph by Tom Haartsen). [6]

Different Visions

Having lived under the false authority of the occupying German forces, Constant developed a Marxist understanding of power dynamics through the readings introduced to him. When his continuous search for an environment fitting for his ideas led him to the SI, his ideas started to become both more radical and more articulate. New Babylon started to be defined through what it would *not* be; lacking borders, states, property, law, policing, and corporations, all that remains in his vision are the structures facilitating play and unrestricted relations (Wigley 122; Nieuwenhuys, "Ten Years On" 277-279).

Similarly, Van Eyck's concept of non-hierarchical structuralist architecture can be traced back to a similar experience of power relations, albeit a less intense one. Exposed to hierarchical and affinity-based nationalist thinking through reactionaries such as Professor Heß, Van Eyck developed a distaste for functionalism and its imposing nature. Van Eyck believed that the architect should be the "ally of every man or no man" (Van Eyck, qtd. in Strauven 150), and the elevated position of the architect made the discipline lean towards the latter. Instead of the prescriptive authority held by the architect, new architecture would be ruled by what he believed would

sustain 20th century culture: relativity (Álvarez Santana, 25). Opting for a humane scale in his new world-building, Van Eyck allowed the inhabitants of his structures to take ownership of the space and thus their relations. "The right size will blossom as soon as the gentle wheels of reciprocity start turning" (Van Eyck, qtd. in Strauven 458).

This humane scale, however, was not at all present in Constant's New Babylon. Although he believed that the structures of his utopian city should facilitate human relations, the inhabitants themselves do not need to be related to them in scale. Instead, modern homo ludens connects to these structures through their construction; "it's always been clear that New Babylon was to be made by the New Babylonians themselves" (Nieuwenhuys, "Ten years on" 281). The time for this construction is facilitated by the automatization of industry and subsequent removal of labour from daily life.

In essence, the biggest difference between the two visions is radicality. Both sought to replace the vertical power structures of the world with unfettered relations, both saw the importance of physical configurations, and both hoped to form these after societal relations instead of the other way around. But where Van Eyck seemed to look for a manner in which to insert these changes into the existing world, Constant sought to change the system wholly.

Although one might attribute the discrepancy between Van Eyck's pragmatism and Constant's extremism to their different professions – after all, his position as an architect did not allow Van Eyck to take the same liberties as Constant who, as an artist, was not constrained by reality per se – this was not necessarily the case. In fact, Van Eyck clearly empathized with Constant's abstract envisioning of a society beyond the boundaries of modernity and would even go to similar lengths in his own work.[7] As an architect, however, he still believed that it was his task to deal with form consciousness in the world "for the sake of humanity and the reality of life" (Van Eyck, qtd in Strauven 150), and the only way to take on this task is through the systems in place.[8]

Similarly, Constant's ambitions had, since the foundation of the Situationist International, transcended that of the artist. Rather than representing the image of the world, he now realised it is more important to change the world itself and make it more liveable (Nieuwenhuys, "Lecture at the ICA" 197). In this pursuit, he also recognised that there were indeed real-world factors he had to consider. His proposal for the Alba Sinti camp, for example, was never realized due to a lack of funding from local government (Van der Horst, "Biography" 292), and even within the ranks of the by no

means moderate SI, he had to compromise on some of his more radical ideas (Wark 116-120). Constant, however, was not interested in compromises.

His experiences of occupation, ruin, and emaciation had forced him to realise what the extremities of the system could lead to, leaving him unable to imagine a future that still incorporates it. The utopian thinking that he developed as a response was after that only fuelled by the Marxist-informed situationist circles he found himself in. Van Eyck, on the other hand, had evaded occupation and only spent the post-war years in the Netherlands, developing a much more pragmatic outlook on the reconstruction of society. Hence, where Constant was willing to create a fertile breeding ground for homo ludens by completely overhauling society and implementing his relation-based society, Van Eyck was hesitant to accept these projections of a future without a past, and instead settled for a reimplementation of play on a smaller scale.

Even though their visions differed in radicality, Constant and Van Eyck shared key similarities in their thinking about a restructured society. Both held onto a clear rejection of the hierarchies and societal coldness that dominated the first half of the twentieth century, and both developed a similar understanding of the importance of social- and physical structures. It is not difficult to see the resemblance between the in-between spaces of Van Eyck's *Burgerweeshuis* and the dynamic levels of the sectors of New Babylon.

The clearest difference between the two comes to light, however, when the elaborations of Constant's vision start to reveal a menacing quality. Whereas New Babylon had, until then, been characterized by the bright characteristics that also typified Van Eyck's structuralism, from the early seventies on, signs of death and destruction enter its utopian edifices (Wigley 128). With the illusion of bodies in the background and bloodstains on its hitherto polished planes, New Babylon's structures appear to lean more towards ruin than construction (see figure 7).

Launched against violence in the wake of violence, the implication of a certain inevitability of barbarism in the project's return to brutality may seem quite sudden. On closer inspection, however, this suggestion has always been there, and not just in the calculated destruction of the dynamic structures to make room for newly established relations and their accompanying edifices. Constant, who witnessed what people were capable of during the occupation of the Netherlands and his later sojourns abroad, was very aware of humanity's violent nature. Constantly in flux, New Babylon had always been poised somewhere between construction and ruin (Wigley 127). With the scale now tipping over to the latter, Constant's stance reveals itself; the possibility of the ruin is always present in the new ¾ the new will



Figure 7: Constant Nieuwenhuys, *Entrée du Labyrinthe (Entrance of the Labyrinth)*, 1972. Oil on canvas (Kunstmuseum Den Haag, photograph by Tom Haartsen). [9]

always be at the source of the ruin. As Van Eyck remarked: New Babylon was "not retrospective, [but] prophetic" (Van Eyck, qtd, in Strauven 140).

Conclusion

Departing from a similar frustration with society's treatment of daily life, both Aldo van Eyck and Constant Nieuwenhuys rejected the functionalism prevalent in twentieth-century society. Faced with the destruction of the Second World War, they concluded that a societal overhaul was needed to prevent a repetition. In their respective readings of Martin Buber, Karl Marx, and Johan Huizinga, they found guiding principles to steer away from the hierarchical, progress-focused rigidity of modernity which had led to an all-destroying Fascism. They believed that true value laid in the space created by interactions between separate entities, whose significance was not intrinsic, but determined by their relations; relations that only reached their full potential when free from restraints. To liberate these relations, a reintroduction of play was necessary, akin to Johan Huizinga's thesis in *Homo Ludens.*

In the manifestations of their concepts for a post-war world, both Constant and Van Eyck recognized the importance of physical structures

to the formation and arrangement of these new relations and included an underlying dynamism to facilitate this interplay. The extent to which they maintained a balance between this newfound flexibility and the existing societal structures, however, differed greatly. Where van Eyck's time in Zurich allowed him to keep a pragmatic outlook on existing societal infrastructures, permitting him to focus on reconstruction and the implementation of play into modern life, Constant's exposure to humanity's capabilities, on the other hand, instilled in him a determination to restructure modern life and replace it with play entirely.

Not only did their visions differ in their envisioned end results, the process of executing these visions also clashed. Where van Eyck believed that the architect was tasked to examine a form consciousness in society to propel it forward, Constant's grand utopian vision transferred this role upon the people, now unrestricted by labour.

Shaped by their different wartime experiences, Constant and van Eyck developed alternative visions for the post-war world. Whereas van Eyck's distant observation of devastation led him to develop a free, human-scaled architecture that facilitates the establishment of new social relations, Constant's experience of living under occupation and with its consequences pushed him towards a more radical stance, taken only by those not just confronted with the ruin, but who existed within the process of destruction.

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Endnotes

[1] He kept in touch with his native country through some correspondence with his parents and friends, who managed to convey the oppressive atmosphere of the occupied Netherlands but did not inform him too much of the ruin of daily life (Strauven 73).

[2] The *Nederlandsche Kulturkammer,* or Dutch Chamber of Culture, was a Nazification institute introduced by the occupying German forces where all artists, architects, journalists, and writers had to register to be allowed to work. Those registered were eligible for *Arbeitseinsatz,* a forced labour deployment which filled the vacancies left behind by those called up for military service.

[3] Although the SI officially dissolved in 1972, Constant already left in 1960 after a disagreement with its central figure Guy Debord (1931-1994). For a full overview of the Situationist movement, see: Wark.

[4] Cross sections of New Babylon clearly show how the sector's suspended layers are separated according to their functions.

[5] Several models of New Babylon contain movable elements to demonstrate the dynamic nature of its structures.

[6] Following the decentralized nature of New Babylon, Constant designed the first sector-proposals around the locations he was familiar with such as the inner city of his hometown Amsterdam.

[7] This is evident in the writings and speeches by van Eyck on the work of Constant, several of which can be found reproduced in Strauven.

[8] Full quote: "what has been discovered in the world of form consciousness [...] was carried over from the realm of painting to that of architecture. So the painter is relieved of the one-sided duty to forgo his desire for direct expression in favour of pure formal experiment. This duty will continue to apply to the architect for a long time yet: for the sake of humanity and the reality of life he will have to continue his laborious struggle with form. That is his nature and his task" (Van Eyck, qtd in Strauven 150).

[9] Towards the end of the project, signs of death and destruction such as blood splatters and ruins seem to enter New Babylon.

‘The Wise Let the Sword Rest, but not Rust’: Celebrating an Armed Peace on a Civic Guard Portrait

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Discipline
Art History

Keywords
War / Peace / Order / Prosperity / Painting

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Abstract

Amsterdam civic guards are posing as armed keepers of peace and order on Govert Flinck's *Company of Captain Joan Huydecoper and Lieutenant Frans Oetgens van Waveren* from 1648-50. That peace and order was deeply rooted in self-interest and conceived by them as a prerequisite for the arts. This deliberate portrayal of the men as peacekeepers actively silences the fact that they also participated in trade wars and colonial activities and/or profited of them, either directly or indirectly. In depicting these men in this way Flinck addressed to their needs as well as his own. The painting proved a very important step in the course of his successful career. Flinck – and other artists from the 17th century – played their part in immortalizing the 17th century in Amsterdam as a peaceful and prosperous 'golden age'. The stories of war and conflict meanwhile were at the same time effectively silenced by the same people that profited of them.



Figure 1: Govert Flinck (1615-1660), *Company of Captain Joan Huydecoper and Lieutenant Frans Oetgens van Waveren*, 1648-50 (Amsterdam Museum, inv. no. SA 7318).

Introduction

The Amsterdam seventeenth-century painter Govert Flinck (1615-1660) painted an appealing and convincing scene in his large group portrait (265 x 513 cm) painted between 1648 and 1650. Two groups of armed men, some of them partially dressed in armor, meet each other in a cityscape (see figure 1). Shots are fired, in the background an open fire is raging. Through all the fire, arms and armor it might not immediately be apparent to modern eyes that these men are actually celebrating peace: the signing of the treaty of Münster in 1648 that ended the eighty-years war between the Dutch Republic and Spain. The fire in the top right corner is celebratory, as are the gun shots. In the bottom center of the painting, on a painted sheet of paper, a poem by Jan Vos (1610-1667) used to be visible (it has now become largely illegible), that evokes a similar tension between war and peace:

"Here goes Van Maarsseveen, heading eternal peace,
As his father once headed first in the State's war,
Spirit and courage, the power of free cities,
Cast off old grievances, but not the armor,
Thus one guards at the IJ after murder and destruction,
The wise let their sword rest, but not rust". [1]

The painting is one of many civic guard group portraits (see paragraph two for a discussion who the civic guards were and why they were depicted in group portraits) that were painted in Amsterdam between the early sixteenth century and ca. 1650. When he painted this work, Flinck had already established himself as one of the leading portraitists in Amsterdam. He had even painted civic guard paintings before, in 1642 and in 1645.[2] This civic guard painting, however, reflects more clearly on themes of war and peace than any other civic guard painting. War and peace within the city, but ultimately also far beyond.

The men portrayed – and above all the captain of this company of civic guards, Joan Huydecoper (1599-1661, the man in black in front of the left group of civic guards, holding the commanders' baton, see figure 6, no. 1) - were thus immortalized by Flinck and Vos as vigilant peacekeepers, their arms and bravery guaranteed a peaceful city. But the tensions between war and peace in this painting run deeper than just external appearances. The men that desired to be remembered as keepers of the peace had lives that were more complex than - and sometimes plainly contradicted – the images of themselves that were evoked in the group portrait by Govert Flinck. This essay will explore the tensions between image and reality, between war and peace and between propaganda and truth that a closer look at this painting can offer. Flinck has conceived an image of these men that is selective and at times sharply conflicts with their actual biographies. He is offering an ideal, disguised as a realistic portrait, that conforms to contemporary ideas of the relationships between the ruling class, peace and art. The inclusion of his own likeness within the group portrait (right behind the captain, see figure 6) seems to acknowledge those ideas. What were those ideas around peace, war and art, how are they displayed and how do they relate to the realities of what these men actually did in their lifetimes? By analyzing who these civic guards were and why they had their portraits painted, we will get more insights into what ideas were prevalent about the relationship between war, peace, order, prosperity, and art and how they related to reality. Finally, I will also reflect on the role of the artist. This leads to a deeper understanding of the painting discussed, but also of ideas around war and conflict in seventeenth century Amsterdam.

Civic Guards: Their Role in Society and Their Group Portraits

In early modern Amsterdam, citizens formed cooperative paramilitary units called the civic guards. From 1578 onwards, service in a civic guard company was obligatory for men between the ages of eighteen and sixty. There were notable exceptions, Jews were not admitted at all and anabaptists

“This civic guard painting, however, reflects more clearly on themes of war and peace than any other civic guard painting. War and peace within the city, but ultimately also far beyond.”

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were exempt, because their religion forbade them to bear arms. The largest group not represented in the civic guard though – besides women - were those not wealthy enough to pay for their own equipment, a prerequisite for joining the civic guards (Prak 169-170). The working classes were thus effectively excluded as well. Civic guard companies were organized by city district. Between 1620 and 1650 there were twenty such districts. The civic guards in Flinck's painting are representatives of city district 1, located between the Singel and the southern city wall.[3] The civic guards kept the order in their own district and, in principle, could be employed for the city's defense. In principle, because this never actually happened in Amsterdam.

The companies had an important social function for the coherence of the upper layers of a certain city district, but the most important goal for the civic guard companies was keeping order. Order implies hierarchy, so it should not come as a surprise that the order seventeenth century civic guards kept also served their self-interest. Order was a prerequisite for the trade that formed the basis for their riches and protected their accumulated wealth and power. This becomes abundantly clear in the role of the civic guards in quelling revolts in the city such as the revolt in 1696, called the 'aansprekersoproer' (Prak 167-168). A new burial tax caused widespread rioting in the city. The houses of burgomasters and other city officials were plundered. The civic guard was called upon to restore order. They did so, with considerable violence. Many rioters were killed and two of them were hanged from a window of the weighing house on Dam square as a deterrent for other would-be rioters.



Figure 2: Reynier Arondeaux, *Medal remembering the quelling of the 'aansprekersoproer' revolt in 1696*, 1696 (Amsterdam Museum, inv. no. PA 438).

The civic guards were rewarded for restoring order with a medal (see figure 2). One of the Latin inscriptions on the medal translates to: *For restoring the peace the council of Amsterdam grants her citizens, on account of ancient bravery and trusted fidelity, this memorial medal.* The civic guards in this and other cases effectively formed armed protection of the self-interest of the upper and middle classes of Amsterdam.

In 1696 the habit of commissioning group portraits of civic guards had already ceased to exist. In fact, the painting by Flinck is one of the last of such commissions.[4] From the early sixteenth century onwards, an impressive number of civic guard portraits had been made, of which Rembrandt's *Night Watch* of 1642 is the most famous. The paintings functioned as decoration of the 'Doelens', the buildings where the civic guards convened to practice and to celebrate together. There they served a dual function, first as a remembrance of who served as a civic guard (and implicitly also who was entitled to a place in the city magistrature), secondly, to give the present civic guards the sense of continued tradition of 'ancient bravery and trusted fidelity', to again quote the inscription on the medal above.[5] Not every civic guardsman was depicted on the walls of the civic guard buildings. Only a small minority of officers and other civic guards who could afford to have their likeness immortalized have been portrayed. These men are therefore part of the more privileged layers of society, but are surprisingly diverse nonetheless, as we will see below.

The Civic Guards Portrayed by Govert Flinck

We know the names of almost all of the men depicted in the civic guard portrait discussed here, thanks to a framed wooden nameplate intended to be displayed below the frame of the painting itself (see figure 3). The numbered list of names corresponds to small numbers painted on the portrait itself (Middelkoop 1: 817-18). It opens up the opportunity to analyze who the portrayed men were and what their respective roles in society were. This is important, because it allows us to assess their actual roles in war, conflict and peace within and outside the city, beyond their proposed self-image in the painting.



Figure 3: Unknown maker, *Nameplate for Govert Flincks's company of Joan Huydecoper*, ca. 1650 (Amsterdam Museum, inv. no. KA 28881).

Joan Huydecoper is clearly the main character of this painting (see figure 6 for his position on the painting and that of others mentioned in this essay). As the company's captain, he is the highest-ranking officer in the painting and the poem by Vos is dedicated specifically to him. In the middle background he even had his own house depicted.[6] It is therefore safe to say that the initiative of commissioning the painting came from him. Huydecoper was a member of the absolute elite of Amsterdam's society. Shortly after this painting was finished, he would become one of the four burgomasters of Amsterdam (then a yearly rotating position) for the first of six times (Elias 1:384-385; Kooijmans 113-116). Others depicted, such as the brothers Frans (1619-1659) and Nicolaes (1622-1684) Oetgens van Waveren came from similar high circles. They are depicted here as the lieutenant and ensign of the company and were sons of Anhony Oetgens van Waveren, who served as a burgomaster multiple time as well (Elias 1:331-332). They were all members of a select segment of families within the city that combined wealth with political power. For them, the civic guards simultaneously functioned as a steppingstone towards public office and as direct control of the monopoly on violence.

But not all of the civic guards belonged to that absolute top layer of Amsterdam society. Pieter Meffert for example, the man adjusting his stockings on the small staircase in the center of the painting, was a producer of playing cards, which would perhaps suggest him to be of modest means to modern ears, but he was affluent enough to buy a house on the Reguliersbreestraat in 1630 and a piece of land to build a manor near Ouderkerk aan de Amstel in 1649.[7] That certainly did not mean he was on the same level of wealth as Huydecoper or the Oetgens van Waveren brothers, let alone their level of political influence. In the top row, between Joan Huydecoper and Nicolaes Oetgens van Waveren, Aart Jansz Verlaen (unknown-1678) is depicted.[8] He was a cabinet maker, which again suggests a modest background, but,like Pieter Meffert, he must at least have been well-to-do enough to be able to afford to pay for his likeness in Flinck's painting. This is confirmed by the tax register of 1674, where he pays seventy guilders in taxes, which indicates that his assets at the time were worth 14,000 guilders (Kohier van de 200ste penning 276v). This is nowhere near the capital others accumulated, such as Nicolaas Oetgens van Waveren who was worth 170,000 guilders according to the same tax register (Kohier van de 200ste penning 279v). It can therefore be concluded that the men in the painting belong to different social and economic classes, from the affluent middle class upwards.

Apart from class distinctions, it is striking that among the civic guards depicted are at least two catholic merchants: Jacob Cornelisz van Campen (1598-1668) and Rogier Ramsden (circa 1610/11-circa 1665). In 1648 they were not allowed to publicly practice their faith and were barred from holding any public office. These limitations of their freedom, rights and privileges apparently did not stop them from proudly posing as members of the civic guard company. The order and peace the civic guards kept might have been contrary to their religious practices, but it did offer them access to a network of neighbors (who could also be customers or business partners). Perhaps even more important, they too were proud participants in the city's commercial success and therefore the law and order that the civic guards aimed to guarantee was in their interest as affluent merchants as well. Again, a safe and peaceful city was good for trade. This was, in fact, the core message of art and literature in Amsterdam around 1650, as will be shown below.

Peace, Prosperity, and Art in Amsterdam in the 17th Century

On 20 October 1653, a group of painters, poets and 'lovers of those arts' convened in the very room where Flinck's civic guard portrait then hung, in the large hall of the *Voetboogdoelen*, one of the three civic guard buildings in Amsterdam.[9] Among the other paintings in that room was Bartholomeus van der Helst's *Company of Captain Cornelis Witsen and Lieutenant Johan Oetgens van Waveren Celebrating the Treaty of Münster*, also made in 1648-50 (see figure 4), which,like Flinck's group portrait, has a poem by Jan Vos painted on it, addressing the theme of peace:

> *"Bellona loathes blood, and Mars damns the thundering*
> *Of the pregnant metal; the sword caresses the sheath:*
> *Thus offers brave Witsen to noble Van Waveren*
> *on the eternal treaty the horn of Peace".* [10]

Poetry also played an important role during the meeting in 1653. In the course of the event poems were recited, most of them were written by Thomas Asselijn (1620-1701).[11] A year later they were published under the heading *Op de vereenigingh van Apelles en Apollo* (On the union of Apelles and Apollo) (Asselijn 25-30).[12] The book with poems of the two meetings in 1653 and 1654 are exceptional sources, because they shed an interesting light on the ideas that were prevalent in these circles in Amsterdam at the height of its economic and cultural power. As the title of the collection of poems suggests, the main theme was the relationship between the visual arts and poetry, but – more interesting for the theme of this essay - peace



Figure 4: Bartholomeus van der Helst, *Company of Captain Cornelis Witsen and Lieutenant Johan Oetgens van Waveren Celebrating the Treaty of Münster*, ca. 1648-50 (Rijksmuseum, on loan).

was explicitly formulated as a prerequisite for the functioning of both forms of art. Of four allegorical festoons displayed during the festivities one was dedicated to peace. Its epigram articulated the first step of the idea that peace was needed for the arts to flourish, namely that peace leads to prosperity. The design drawing of that festoon by painter Cornelis Brisé (1622-1670) is dominated by cornucopias, symbols of prosperity (see figure 5). Below the drawing an inscription affirms that idea: 'The festoon of peace, depicting prosperity' ('t feston van vreede; uijt beeldende den oovervloet). The poem by Asselijn, written on the drawing but also published in the volume of texts a year later, also stresses the importance of peace for prosperity. Later in the program of the meeting, Asselijn elaborated on this in his poem *Merkurius, uyt last der Goden, beveelt Mars en Hercules de kunst met den staat te beschermen* (Mercury, in name of the Gods, orders Mars and Hercules to protect the arts and the state). In this allegorical poem Mercury tells Mars and Hercules that Jupiter orders them (as protectors of the state) to protect the art lovers in Amsterdam from the violence of war. The final sentence of this poem finally connects peace, trade, prosperity and art: "Here (in Amsterdam) is the stock exchange, and the money, and the love of the arts".[13] While making these connections Asselijn introduces the allegorical weaponized protectors of the peace in the guise of Mars and Hercules. It would be reasonable to assume that those present (and in fact Asselijn himself) associated these classical protectors with the civic guards in the group portraits that hung around them, while these words were recited, especially since two of those paintings, as we have seen above, had poems painted on them with a similar message of armed peace.

It is also interesting to point out that Asselijn lets Mercury ask to specifically protect the 'minnaars' (lovers (of art)), because it is they who can use their prosperity (that had earlier been posited because of peace) to commission poetry and art.

Returning to Flinck's civic guard portrait, the roles of armed peace-keeper and art lover merge in the person of captain Joan Huydecoper. He let himself be portrayed as the equivalent of Asselijn's Mars or Hercules, while at the same time clearly demonstrating his role as a Maecenas of the arts. Not only did he allow Flinck to paint a self-portrait directly behind his own likeness, immediately next to Flinck the notary and playwright Joris de Wijse has been portrayed. The inclusion of Huydecoper's mansion on the painting might also be read as alluding to him as an employer of the architect, Philips Vingboons (ca. 1607/08-1678). The same can be said about the poem by Jan Vos. The connections between bringing peace and protecting the arts that Asselijn put into words a few years later are therefore already very present in the painting. When in 1654 a second gathering took place in the same great hall under the title *Broederschap der Schilderkunst (Fraternity of the Art of Painting)* Huydecoper was the guest of honor. In the long poem by Asselijn recited in that year, Mercury, Apollo and Pallas Athena have a long conversation on the rightful place of the art of painting in Amsterdam. Peace, prosperity and the arts are again considered as dependent on each other, but now with the addition that peace and prosperity were also dependent on good governance (Asselijn 7-24). Huydecoper was one of the four burgomasters that year.



Figure 5: Cornelis Brisé, *Festoon of Peace*, 1653 (Amsterdam, City Archives, inv. no. 010097001195).

The texts of the gatherings in 1653 and 1654 provide an interesting view on the ideas that were formulated around peace, prosperity and the arts. To the artists and art loving merchants that were part of the gatherings (Flinck included), it was clear that art could only flourish thanks to the affluent and powerful elite of the city and that art therefore also was in service of those rulers and their ideas. The civic guard painting therefore clearly reflects Huydecoper's ideas around war and peace, his own role in it and of that of his peers. Those ideas were rooted in reality (Huydecoper indeed was a captain of the civic guards, a burgomaster and he commissioned art, for example), but the more general ideas of himself as a bringer of wise governance and peace are at least debatable. Moreover, the order the civic guards brought to the city was, as already discussed above, an order that protected their own positions of power and wealth. But even more contrasting is the proclaimed ideal of peace and prosperity with the wars waged, territories occupied, and people oppressed and enslaved at the same time.

Between Peaceful Traders and Rapacious Colonists

Peace at home was indeed a prerequisite for prosperity, the claim that Asselijn makes in his poems of 1653 and 1654 sounds more than logical. In the poems, he alludes to the first Anglo-Dutch War (1652-1654) twice.[14] In 1653 the English succeeded in blocking Dutch harbors for a couple of months. According to a calculation by the burgomasters (mayors) of Amsterdam, 1200 merchant- and fishing ships were lost: a huge blow to Dutch trade (Israel 788-789). The suggestion that peace brings prosperity (or that war prevents prosperity) thus comes from a lived experience. This, however, ignores the fact that prosperity was often captured by means of war as well. The very peace that Huydecoper and his fellow civic guards are celebrating on the painting in 1648 ended a decades-long war with Spain. The war had many negative consequences, but it had also provided the Dutch Republic (and many Amsterdam merchants) with the opportunity of conquering a colonial trade empire on that same Spanish and the Portuguese (who were under Spanish rule until 1640). War in this case had eventually also provided prosperity.

Joan Huydecoper had been a director of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) from 1634 and served as counsel at the Amsterdam admiralty from 1653. His father had been one of the first shareholders of the company, while also being one of the first traders on South America (Van Dillen 81, 92, 133). Huydecoper might therefore have been an advocate for order and peace as a civic guard at home, but he was part of and profited from the systems that waged colonial wars to gain monopolies of goods, and profit



Figure 6: Detail of Govert Flinck, *Company of Captain Joan Huydecoper and Lieutenant Frans Oetgens van Waveren*, ca. 1648-50 (Amsterdam Museum, inv. nr SA 7318). *Note:* 1. Joan Huydecoper, captain; 2. Joris de Wijse, 3. Govert Flinck, painter; 4. Aart Jansz Verlaen; 5. Nicolaaes Oetgens van Waveren, ensign; 6. Pieter Meffert; 7. Frans Oetgens van Waveren, Lieutenant

at the expense of others. The involvement with colonial trade would last for generations within the Huydecoper family.[15]

The fact that Huydecoper was profiting from and participating in these violent systems of trade makes his posing as a peacekeeper feel like a hollow gesture from today's point of view. And the same is true of others on the painting, in various ways. The grandfather of the brothers Oetgens van Waveren, Frans Hendricksz Oetgens van Waveren, was one of the first major shareholders of the VOC, like Huydecoper's father (Van Dillen 191). Both their father and Frans Oetgens van Waveren himself were councilor to the admiralty, the navy of the republic that was crucial in conquering trade ports. The father of the sergeant Jacob van Campen, too, was involved in colonial trade. They owed their position of power and wealth at least in part to aggressive colonial trade. That same position offered them the privilege of immortalizing themselves as bringers of peace.

The Position of the Artist

For Govert Flinck, the *Company of Joan Huydecoper* was his third and final civic guard portrait.[16] These commissions were considered honorable and were very profitable as well. It also offered the painter to come into contact with powerful and affluent men. For Flinck these connections seem to have played a role in the most prestigious commissions he received in his career, for decorations of the new Town Hall on Dam square.[17] Joan Huydecoper was one of the key overseers of the building process. He might well have secured these jobs for Flinck, effectively living up to his pose of Maecenas on the civic guard portrait a couple of years earlier.

Flinck delivered an appealing and convincing group portrait, it is one of the highlights of the whole production of the Amsterdam civic guard portraits, together with,for example,the above-mentioned *Company of Captain Cornelis Witsen and Lieutenant Johan Oetgens van Waveren Celebrating the Treaty of Münster* by Van der Helst and of course Rembrandt's *Night Watch*. But it would be shortsighted to only consider the painting from an aesthetic perspective. As demonstrated above, the painting also served a clear, propagandic message about the men depicted. Flinck played a role in this as well, as the inventor of the desired image, but also in posing deliberately behind the main character, giving Huydecoper credibility as a Maecenas (see figure 6).

"That their spectacular legacy of cultural heritage has predominantly stressed their ideals has, in part, made a later nationalistic idealization of their times as a peaceful and prosperous 'golden age' possible. The stories of war and conflict meanwhile were silenced by the same people that profited from them."

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A seventeenth century painter like Flinck was somewhere between being a pure craftsman, an artisan of luxury goods and an autonomous artist in a more modern sense of artistry. As for the civic guard portrait, we can assume that, more than anything else, he was an executor of Huydecoper's ideas. He was, however, part of the systems described above: he profited from the peace and prosperity that his benefactors enjoyed and he was present at the festive meetings where ideas about its beneficiary effects on the arts were shared. And chances are high that he agreed. Flinck was not just a neutral image maker who made esthetically pleasant paintings, he was deeply rooted in the ideas of his own times and immortalized them, together with the faces of the civic guards he portrayed.

Conclusion

The painting *Company of Captain Joan Huydecoper and Lieutenant Frans Oetgens van Waveren* by Govert Flinck offers a convincingly painted, appealing group portrait of a group of civic guards in 1648. But it also conveys the message of how wealthy and powerful men in Amsterdam thought of war, peace, order, prosperity, and art. Their own role is presented as keepers of peace and order and as lovers of art. In doing so, they omitted parts of their own identity and actions that put those claims in perspective, or even contradicts them. Flinck's talent as a painter made for an attractive painting, but also a convincing depiction of the ideological message.

It is noteworthy that the ideal among the elites of Amsterdam around 1650 was peace and order, while at the same time they were responsible for war, conflict and suffering elsewhere. That their spectacular legacy of cultural heritage has predominantly stressed their ideals has, in part, made a later nationalistic idealization of their times as a peaceful and prosperous 'golden age' possible. The stories of war and conflict meanwhile were silenced by the same people that profited from them.

“But the tensions between war and peace in this painting run deeper than just external appearances. The men that desired to be remembered as keepers of the peace had lives that were more complex than - and sometimes plainly contradicted – the images of themselves that were evoked in the group portrait by Govert Flinck.”

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Endnotes

1 "Hier trekt van Maarseveen de eerst' in d'eeuwge vreede. // Zoo trok zijn vaader d'eerst' in 't oorlog voor de Staat. // Vernuft en Dapperheidt, de kracht der vrye steede', // Verwerpen d'oude wrok, in plaats van 't krijgsgewaadt. // Zoo waakt men aan het Y na moorden en verwoesten. // De wijzen laaten 't zwaardt wel rusten, maar niet roesten". (Vos 1:540-541). Translation by the author.

2 The two paintings are *Governors of the Arquebusier Civic* Guards, 1642. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, on loan from the city of Amsterdam, inv. no. SK-C-370 and *Company of captain Albert Dircksz Bas and Lieutenant Lucas Pietersz Conijn*, 1645. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, on loan from the city of Amsterdam, inv. no. SK-C-371

3 Middelkoop published maps of the division of city districtsin his book on Amsterdam group portraits (Middelkoop 2:474-477).

4 Middelkoop cites the peace of Münster, lack of wall space and the increase of the number of companies from 20 to 54 as possible reasons the tradition was discontinued (Middelkoop 195-197).

5 For more reflection on contemporary perspectives on these civic guard portraits see Van der Molen 192-216, in particular 196 and 208 on the staged continuing tradition of the Huydecoper family in particular.

6 Although occasionally recognizable architecture was included in the background of civic guard paintings, Huydeoper was unique in showing his own home in the painting.

7 He bought the house called *De Zevenster* in 1630. (Kwijtscheldingen 1630). He bought an adjacent plot and houses in 1639, which makes clear that his house on the Breestraat was near the (now disappeared Pietersteeg), probably hnear where currrently Regulierbreestraat no. 18 is located (Kwijtscheldingen 1639). When he was buried in 1662, the house had been rebaptized "De gekroonde kaert" (Begraafregisters 1662).

8 The name plate reads Van Lier as the last name. However, on a note in the family archive of the Ortt family, alternatives to some of the names on the plate are mentioned. Among them is Aart Jansz Verlaen.

In the book on Govert Flinck that I will publish in 2023, a more elaborate discussion of the men on the painting and the new insights the note offers will appear (Correspondentie familie Ortt 1800-1966).

9 'Schilders, poëten en liefhebbers der zelver Konsten' (Asselijn 25)

10 Belloone walgt van Bloedt en Mars vervloeckt het daavren// Van't zwangere metaal; het zwaardt bemint de scheê:// Dies biedt de dappre Wits aan d'eedele van Waavren,// Op 't eeuwige verbondt, de hooren van de Vree. (Vos 1:543). Translation by the author. In the book (but not on the painting) Vos added two lines: 'Zoo vlecht de strijdtbre Leeuw zijn lauwren met olyven. Wie dat de vreê bevecht begeert ook vry te blyven' (Thus de vigilant Lion interweaves his laurels with olives. Who fights for peace, also desires to remain free). Here the theme of weaponized peace that was the main subject in the poem on Flinck's painting is repeated. For this painting also see Van Gent 198-202

11 He was the brother of painter Jan Asselijn (ca. 1610-1652)

12 See for a further discussion of this meeting and the one a year later at the same location Van der Molen 2013

13 Merkurius, uyt last der Goden, beveelt Mars en Hercules de Kunst met den Staat te beschermen.// De groote Jupiter, op zynen Troon gezeten// Laat door myn heyl'ge mondt, dit groot Orakel weten;// Dat nu de Wapen=Godt, en Alkumenaas Zoon// (Handt-haavers van den Staat, gezeten voor den Troon// Der eedle Kunst-goddin,) haar Minnaars zal bewaaren ,// Voor 't gruwelyk geweldtr der Zee-geweldenaren.// Op dat haar godtheydt hier in rust en vryheydt zy,// En bloeyt gelyck de Stadt aan dit gezegende Y;// Laat *Romen* dan op Kunst en haer Aeloudtheydt brallen,// En Tivoli op al zyn groote Waatervallen,// En Naples op het Graf van Maaroo, en haar gunst,// Hier is de beurs, en 't geld, en liefde voor kunst (Asselijn 29)

14 'Maar als zy 't hoorde laatst zo donderen in zee' (When she recently heard it thunder that much at sea) in the *Festoon of Peace*. Asselijn 1654, p. 26 and '(…) 't gruwelijk geweldt der Zee-geweldenaren' (the afwul violence of the Sea-tyrants), in *Merkurius, uyt last (…)* (Asselijn 29).

15 His son was a director of the VOC and councilor to the admiralty as well. A later descendant, Jan Pieter Theodoor Huydceoper was a director for the West-India Company in Elmina, the notorious castle in present-day Ghana from where enslaved Africans were transported to the Americas. (Elias 1:518-519)

16 For the other two, see note 2.

17 *Manius Curius Dentatus refuses the presents of the Samnites*, 1656 and *Solomo prays for wisdom*, 1658 are still in situ in the now Royal Palace. In 1659 Flinck received the commission to paint twelve paintings for the galleries in the Town Hall. Flinck's death in February 1660 prevented him from starting that commission. (Scheltema 2:76).

Rebuilding Cities in a Digital age: The Destruction and Reconstruction of Heritage in Palmyra, Warsaw, and Amsterdam

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Abstract

This paper investigates recent digital reconstruction efforts of Syrian heritage sites. These projects illustrate a Western saviorism emblematic of the colonial roots of archaeology and heritage practices. Rather than offering a solution, digital innovation further exacerbates the unequal distribution of knowledge and power. In order to de-naturalize narratives of technological progress, this paper compares the digitally produced replica of Palmyra's Arch of Triumph, first presented in London in 2016, to the postwar reconstructions of Warsaw and the Hollandsche Schouwburg, a Holocaust site in Amsterdam. By comparing digital and nondigital memory technologies, we can examine how Western conceptions of heritage are entangled with the very possibilities of destruction and reconstruction.

Introduction

On 19 April 2016, London's Mayor Boris Johnson revealed a scale replica at Trafalgar Square of Palmyra's Arch of Triumph. The Arch had been destroyed by ISIS less than a year before and was reconstructed using a computer model and robotic sculpting techniques by the UK-based Institute for Digital Archaeology (IDA). Johnson underlined the importance of this project by stating that "Syria's future depends on the conservation and protection of Syria's past" (qtd. in Shea). Later that same year, the Parisian exhibition *Eternal Sites: From Bamiyan to Palmyra* showed displays of Palmyra that were created as part of a larger digital preservation project. Drones took over 40,000 images of several sites throughout war-stricken Syria to create detailed computer models for future restoration and reconstruction. François Hollande, President of France, called the exhibition "an act of resistance" against terror and "the best answer to the Islamist propaganda of hate, destruction and death" (qtd. in Simons).[1]

Both projects use digital technologies during the ongoing war in Syria to 'save' global heritage under threat of war and damage. In this essay I argue that such efforts can replicate the colonial structures that have long been part of archaeology and heritage practices (De Cesari; Meskell; Munawar, *Cultural Heritage in Conflict*). Digital innovations are often hailed as solutions but only strengthen the unequal distribution of technological infrastructures, knowledge and power (Rico, "Technologies and Alternative Heritage Values"; Stobiecka; Keightley). To de-naturalize narratives of technological progress I approach digital technologies as dependent on and entangled with non-digital techniques. I do so by comparing the replica of *Palmyra's Arch of Triumph* with two older cases of postwar reconstruction: *Warsaw's city center* and *the Hollandsche Schouwburg*, a Holocaust heritage site in Amsterdam.

First, I discuss the colonial roots of 'world heritage' that enables the saviorism underlying the digital replica of the arch. The appropriation of the Arch of Triumph as a global site in need of international protection sidelines local stakeholders and their perspectives on heritage. I then proceed to argue that the possibilities of destruction and reconstruction that fuel Western saviorism are not external to, but essentially part of Western understandings of heritage. Seeing heritage as a continuous process of destruction and reconstruction allows us to move beyond saviorism's unequal distribution of power. In the final sections I examine the cases of Warsaw and Amsterdam to consider how human-induced destruction and natural decay cannot be categorically separated and are deployed to both erase and articulate marginalized memories.

World Heritage as Appropriative Practice

The value attributed to heritage is not inherent to material objects, but rather the outcome of competing political, economic, societal and cultural stakes (Graham et al. 32). The question is therefore not why certain sites are valuable, but rather why they are considered to be valuable. The very possibility of loss is fundamental to Western understandings of heritage and can be traced back to the romantic roots of heritage preservation as a response to the Industrial Revolution in the United Kingdom (Lowenthal, chap.3). The idea of heritage under threat leads to a logic of protective measures that rely on technological interventions to preserve and restore objects and buildings. Heritage scholar Laurajane Smith argues that what she calls the "authorized heritage discourse" privileges material artefacts, technology and expert knowledge over local stakeholders and an active public that uses heritage to "understand and engage with the present" (Smith 44).

Expert knowledge and technological innovations go hand in hand and their unequal distribution leads to a barrier between those in charge of heritage protection and the people who live with that heritage. This raises questions of ownership, appropriation, and the political uses of heritage. In the three cases central to this essay, the attribution of value is tied up with different and overlapping understandings of heritage and memory: that of world heritage in the case of Palmyra, national redemption in the case of Warsaw, and the early formation of Holocaust memory in the case of Amsterdam. Destruction figures in different ways: the Arch of Triumph and the city of Warsaw were both destroyed as part of an armed conflict in an effort to eradicate and replace a culture; the Hollandsche Schouwburg, a theater used for the registration and deportation of at least 46,000 Jews and currently a Holocaust memorial museum, was not significantly damaged until after World War II as there was no consensus how to deal with this painful heritage.

The Arch of Roman emperor Septimius Severus in Palmyra was built in the 3rd century A.D. as "an imperial marker of Roman domination" and can be read as a "sign of colonial dominance and imperial power that resonated throughout the history of architecture" (Stobiecka 115). Since 1980 the site of Palmyra, which encompasses much more than only this arch, is recognized as world heritage by UNESCO with the following description: "the art and architecture of Palmyra, standing at the crossroads of several civilizations, married Graeco-Roman techniques with local traditions and Persian influences" (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Site of Palmyra"). The site was considered to be at grave risk since the outbreak of the war in Syria in 2011. In 2015, ISIS occupied Palmyra and destroyed pre-monotheistic buildings such as the Temple of Baalshamin and the Arch of Triumph.

“By reducing Palmyra to a crossroad of humanity and highlighting a Roman site while ignoring other, non-Western, heritages, the layered history of this city is denied and framed solely in Western terms.”

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Soon, calls were made in Western media to start the reconstruction of 'our' heritage and archaeologists and other experts from France, Russia, Poland, Switzerland and other countries rushed to set up initiatives (Elcheikh 118). The Institute for Digital Archaeology (IDA), a collaboration between British universities and Dubai's Museum of the Future, was the first to present a replica at two-thirds scale within a year's time. The IDA used dozens of photographs to compile a 3-D computer model. Robots in Italy used this model to carve out the replica using Egyptian marble. After its unveiling, the replica traveled to other cities such as New York, Washington, Dubai, and Geneva.

The swift response by Western experts for immediate action fits the politics that underlies UNESCO's world heritage: protecting sites that are valuable to humanity in a universal, but ultimately Eurocentric, discourse of one-worldism, as archeologist Lynn Meskell phrases it (Meskell, chap.1). She demonstrates how within UNESCO, archaeology, traditionally a discipline of digging and providing context, was replaced almost entirely after the 1960s and turned into "the handmaiden of heritage" with a focus on monumentality, preservation and recovery, prioritizing technical assistance over field research (Meskell 4). The targeted destruction of the arch was already prefigured in its inscription on the list of world heritage, and so was the idea of its reconstruction.

The arch is considered global heritage because of the colonial conception of Palmyra as a crossroad between West and East (Elcheikh). IDA director Roger Michel compares Palmyra to London, the metropole he describes as "the crossroad of humanity, and that was what Palmyra was" (qtd. in Murphy). This explains his choice for Trafalgar Square for the public unveiling of the replica. By reducing Palmyra to a crossroad of humanity and highlighting a Roman site while ignoring other, non-Western, heritages, the layered history of this city is denied and framed solely in Western terms (Kalaycioglu). Anthropologist Chiara de Cesari demonstrates how the notion of the Middle East as the cradle of civilization is a legacy of European archeologists such as the British Gertrude Bell. She not only excavated sites but was heavily involved in drawing the borders of what later came to be the nation-state of Iraq. "In the colonial period, archaeologists and Orientalist scholars were hard to distinguish from the military and colonial administration" (De Cesari 25). Boris Johnson's statements about the future of Syria based on a replica of a Roman Arch while standing at Trafalgar Square are illustrative of the underlying colonial mindset. He frames the act of 'saving' heritage from the barbaric destruction by ISIS as an act of solidarity with the Syrian people while the arch is appropriated and relocated to what once was the center of the British empire (see figure 1).



Figure 1: *Boris Johnson unveils replica of Palmyra's Arch of Triumph at Trafalgar Square*. London, UK, 19 April 2016 (photograph by Rachel Megawhat).

The Entanglement of Heritage, Destruction, and Reconstruction

Geographer Elly Harrowell argues in her discussion of the arch's replica that "[r]econstruction naturally follows on the heels of destruction – in many respects they are two sides of the same coin – and it seems unthinkable that a site as valuable as Palmyra (both in terms of heritage and potential future tourist revenue) will not be rehabilitated in some way once the fighting finally ends" (Harrowell 82). Her metaphors conjure up two different models to think about reconstruction: the first is one of an unexamined causality, where reconstruction naturally *follows* destruction simply because there are economic, and perhaps political, stakes involved. The second model, that of two sides of the same coin, argues that destruction and reconstruction exist simultaneously. This implies that the very possibility of reconstruction might invite destruction. Archaeologist Bill Finlayson critiques IDA's replica for this very reason: "[t]he dangerous precedent suggests that if you destroy something, you can rebuild it and it has the same authenticity as the original" (qtd. in Hopkins).

I challenge a rigidly schematic and teleologically structured causality of first construction, second destruction, and third reconstruction. This step-by-step formula makes it hard to see how these three steps are interconnected. Instead, the very possibility of destruction *and* reconstruction are always already part of the conception of heritage. Destruction and reconstruction are not external threats to supposedly stable heritage sites, but instead enable their very being. This explains the value attributed to an inauthentic replica despite the importance of authenticity in Western conceptions of heritage.

Like heritage, dominant understandings of memory are embedded in discourses of loss and subsequent retrieval. Memory scholar Ann Rigney critiques this model of "memory as something that is fully formed in the past (it was once "all there" in the plenitude of experience, as it were) and as something that is subsequently a matter of preserving and keeping alive" (Rigney 12). Such a model invites a saviorism in the form of unearthing and appropriating marginalized memories on behalf of others, while at the same time longing for a past that is forever lost, which defines those others as fundamentally different. Her alternative implies a perspectival shift towards a "social-constructivist model that takes as its starting point the idea that memories of a shared past are collectively constructed and reconstructed in the present rather than resurrected from the past" (Rigney 14). Using this model, we can likewise understand heritage as a continuous process of destruction and reconstruction.

When we return to the Arch of Triumph, it is telling how blind we are to the destruction of the 'original' building from the 3rd century A.D.. As any ruin, the arch as we know it is only a fragment of what it once was. It is therefore tempting to separate human-induced and willful destruction from natural, material decay. Geographer Caitlin DeSilvey takes up a materialist approach and argues to see decay "not (only) as erasure but as a process that can be generative of a different kind of knowledge" (DeSilvey 28). She claims that objects "generate meaning not just in their preservation and persistence but also in their destruction and disposal" and argues that the things we consider heritage have social, biological and chemical lives as well (DeSilvey 29–30). Though it is essential to take the material vulnerability of heritage seriously, I fear that a strict separation of manufactured destruction and natural decay is unproductive. Do not all forms of preservation act against natural decay? And can we really consider the material decay of a site that is not 'properly' taken care of, for instance because of an ongoing war, as purely natural? Moreover, this might lead to a romanticized understanding of decay as a natural process that we should embrace, juxtaposing it to its 'unnatural' counterpart of human-induced destruction that can forgotten. Such an erasure leads to a sanitized reconstruction of the past.

In the next sections I examine the cases of the city center of Warsaw and the Hollandsche Schouwburg in Amsterdam. We will see how the categories of natural decay and human-induced destruction are mixed up and ultimately indistinguishable. In the former, a preconceived 18th century Warsaw was reconstructed, erasing both the Nazi destruction and the Jewish presence in the city. In the latter, the postwar 'natural decay' of the old theater was made to stand in for the Nazi persecution of the Jews.

Redemption and Erasure: Rebuilding a City Without Jews

Warsaw was the most damaged European city after World War II. The Nazis had a plan to destroy the city and rebuilt it as a provincial town inhabited by ethnic Germans and enslaved Poles. They first targeted Jewish properties as part of the Nazi genocide of the Jews. Before the war, about 370,000 Jews lived in Warsaw, many of them in the city district Muranów. In 1943, the Nazis torched this district street by street in response to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. A year later, in 1944, the Polish resistance attempted to liberate the city awaiting the arrival of the Soviet army. After this failed attempt, the Nazis tasked special forces to systematically burn down the city. Most of the historic old town was destroyed with an emphasis on cultural heritage such as libraries and historical landmarks. In the whole of Poland, the Nazis

killed between five and six million Poles, about three million of them Jews. After the war, the reconstruction of Warsaw's old town continued until the 1960s using archival documents and paintings to recreate the city's late 18th-century appearance, excluding the Jewish district Muranów (Meng). It was a prestige project that the postwar communist government took as an opportunity to rebuild the nation in line with their understanding of the history of Poland and was the first reconstructed city inscribed as world heritage in 1980 (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Historic Centre of Warsaw").

Soon after the war, Poland's provisional communist government used the narrative of Warsaw as a martyr city whose reconstruction would function as a symbol against the Nazi destruction. The agency that oversaw this reconstruction began with organizing an exhibition called *Warsaw Accuses* that included photographs of the destruction and first reconstruction efforts. Soon after its opening in Poland it traveled to the United States, comparable to the arch's replica tour through Western countries. Historian Michael Meng demonstrates how the reconstruction of Warsaw was a struggle between urban modernism and historic reconstruction. The Polish authorities rebuilt hundreds of buildings based on photographs and drawings that the resistance movement had already started collecting during the Warsaw Uprising. The resulting reconstructed old town was

> *"[a] space of spectacle and consumption, a space to experience, photograph, and witness national renewal. The restorative nostalgia denied the irreversibility of time by claiming that Warsaw's past had never been lost. … Warsaw's sacred ruins had to be restored because no less than Poland's survival appeared at stake. Warsaw suffered a violent, unnatural catastrophe. The ravages of time did not slowly decay its old town, but rather human violence did. This untimely death seemed … full of redemptive promise: the city's precious ruins could be brought back to life and with them the Polish nation" (Meng 74).*

Meng's vocabulary resonates with the arch replica and separates natural decay from unnatural human destruction: where 'natural' decay can remain visible, Nazi destruction should be erased to fight the Nazi genocidal agenda.

The reconstruction of the old town takes the late 18th century as its reference point, with 1830 as a breaking point, erasing other historical periods. When I visited the city in 2017, I stood in front of one of the



Figure 2: *The Church of the Holy Cross*. Warsaw, Poland, 19 May 2017 (photograph by the author).

reconstructed churches and saw a display holding a copy of a painting by Bernardo Bellotto (see figure 2). The display held little information other than the painter's name, date of birth and death, and presumably the painting's title in Polish and English: 'The Church of the Holy Cross, 1778'. That title refers both to the painting and the church and merges the two. The year of the painting, 1778, is a convenient way to reduce and erase part of the complex building history that includes several demolished chapels and churches from the 15th and 16th century that stood at this ground, the main building from the late 17th century with additions from the 18th century, and its destruction in World War II. The display's location in front of the church suggests that the authorities used the painting for the reconstruction of the church. I was looking at a copy of the painting that served as an original source for reconstruction. This reversal of copy and original reflects the entanglement of destruction and reconstruction in heritage sites. The painting enabled reconstruction and by displaying this in front of this church is made to function as a promise into the future in defiance of any possible destruction. The redemptive promise that was part of the reconstruction effort as described by Meng is essential to its status as reconstructed heritage that embodies both real (past) and possible (future) destruction and reconstruction.

The most painful erasure in the reconstruction of Warsaw can be found in the Jewish district Muranów. City planners did not consider this quarter to be of historic significance and took its destruction as an opportunity to get rid of poor housing conditions. In the late 1940s, the architect Bohdan Lachert proposed to build new housing blocks with façades using red bricks from the debris to reference the destruction of Warsaw's Jews. This would have placed the memory of Jewish suffering alongside Warsaw's martyrdom. The plan was soon abandoned for a more cheerful design and "a colorful place for the working class" (Meng 81). The former Jewish district came to symbolize the communist rebirth adjacent to the old town's sanitized reconstruction of Polish identity. Builders used the debris of the ghetto for the reconstruction of the city and any trace of Jewish heritage was lost in the process.

The replica of the Arch of Triumph was also a political act to counter the destruction of ISIS and erases several important elements in its process. The IDA selected only one single architectural motif out of a large ensemble and changed their plan several times, including the materials used and the scale of the replica. Comparing the replica to photographs of the original demonstrates the removal of many decorative details and two arches directly attached to it (Burch 67). Furthermore, the project did not involve local stakeholders but instead relied on photographs and was carried out from a distance. Heritage scholar Nour Munawar argues that the replica removes all traces of the current war and that a reconstruction that does not include the lifecycle of heritage can lead to political amnesia, which "has the potential to prolong conflict on a social level, as the reconstruction can be as destructive as the destruction itself" (Munawar, "Competing Heritage" 153). Furthermore, the enormous amount of attention for this replica in the name of saving world heritage denies the importance of other sites and erasing them from view. "Western cultural elites have spent more time lamenting damage to a single site, the Classical ruins of Palmyra, than the destruction inflicted on hundreds of Islamic mosques and shrines across Iraq and Syria combined" (Meskell 183). Though different from Warsaw, both cases render marginalized heritages invisible in relation to dominant political narratives. In the case of Warsaw, the Jewish community was murdered by the Nazis and their heritage was not inscribed into the reconstruction of this capital. In the case of the replica of the Arch, notions of 'humanity' and 'civilization' exclude non-Western heritage. What once was an immobile site was now transformed into an mobile replica, presented in London which is a "key conduit for looted artefact" (Burch 71). The ensuing 'grand tour' of the replica in mostly Western cities was not a demonstration of solidarity with

the Syrian people: "Created and owned by Western agendas, it recalls the long-standing Western ambitions of possessing heritage" (Stobiecka 120).

Postwar Decay as Wartime Destruction:
The Hollandsche Schouwburg as Painful Heritage

The destruction of the Hollandsche Schouwburg is different from the other cases as it was not a direct effect of World War II but resulted from the inability of the postwar community in the Netherlands to deal with painful heritage. Built in 1892, the Hollandsche Schouwburg ('Dutch Theater') stood in a district known for its theaters and mixed population of Jews and non-Jews. During the Nazi occupation, Jews were forced out of orchestras and theater groups as part of anti-Jewish measure and the theater became the Joodsche Schouwburg ('Jewish Theater'), a cultural center for performing and visual arts for Jews, in the spring of 1941. Following this period, the Nazis used the building from 1942 to 1943 for the registration and deportation of nearly 50,000 Jews on their way to extermination camps (Vree et al., chaps. 3 and 4). The building was sold in 1944 by a company that forcibly liquidated Jewish businesses, and the new owners wanted to resume its operations after the liberation.

Amsterdam was not as damaged as Warsaw; the Nazis saw the Dutch as a German race that had to be incorporated rather than destroyed. Most urban destruction was due to early fights, allied bombing, and the looting of houses of Jews who were deported or in hiding. In this postwar period of national reconstruction, there was little attention for and acknowledgment of painful heritage, just as there was no attention for the suffering of the Jews. The Nazi occupying forces, with the help of thousands of collaborators and Dutch agencies gradually isolated and deported Dutch Jews, leading to the killing of more than 100,000 Jews in the Nazi extermination camps. Less than a quarter of all Dutch Jews survived the war, which was considerably lower than in any other Western European country (Griffioen and Zeller). Despite this, the persecution of the Jews was initially incorporated in a national frame: the Dutch had suffered as one people and the national government did not want to commemorate Jewish suffering separately. It is remarkable that in this period, a group of concerned citizens protested the opening of the Hollandsche Schouwburg under the new name Piccadilly, a reference to the entertainment district in London. An action committee, consisting of Jewish, Catholic and Protestant members, argued that the reopening was shameful and successfully collected money for this national debt of honor. It acquired the theater and, after a long legal battle, donated it to the city of Amsterdam in 1950. The city council

was unable to find a broad consensus about what to do with the building, which was unsurprising given the memory culture of the 1950s that made the articulation of Jewish suffering subordinate to the national narrative of collective suffering, and a heritage discourse that did not attribute any value to painful World War II heritage.[2] As a result, the building stood empty and dilapidated.

In 1962, the Hollandsche Schouwburg was finally opened as one of Europe's first Holocaust memorials with a national significance. Architect Jan Leupen made use of the bad state of the building and used its demolition to stand in for the destruction of the Jews (see figure 3). The red brick walls of the former stage evoke the image of ruin and loss. The (unplanned) erosion of the top of these walls, including the plants that have grown in its cracks, only reinforces this sentiment (see figure 4). When I did research on this site in the early 2010s for my dissertation project, nearly all visitors I talked to were sure that this theater had been destroyed during the war. The postwar decay of the theater was thus not erased by a historical reconstruction but instead used to stand in for the destruction of Dutch Jewry (Duindam, chap.4). This is not an incorrect interpretation that confuses postwar decay with wartime destruction. This case demonstrates that the separation between human destruction and natural decay does not hold up: the postwar decay of the building was the indirect effect of the Nazi destruction. The fact that the theater was not properly maintained by the city of Amsterdam was a sign of a nationwide inability to cope with the memory of the destruction of Dutch Jewry, which the historian Isaac Lipschits has called the "kleine sjoa" (the small Shoah) after World War II (Lipschits). Highlighting the continuation of destruction in other forms, rather than deferring this destruction entirely to the past, complicates common understandings of trauma as event-based and belonging to the past and sensitizes us to the fact that in many cases, historical trauma and suffering continues into the present (Craps, chap.2; Saloul).

Conclusion

In this essay I compared the reconstruction of the Arch of Triumph without highlighting the digital nature of its production. As argued by most scholars who published about this case, IDA's project is deeply engrained in Western heritage practices and agendas and has little to do with the heritage or interests of Syrian people, which resonates with the colonial structures that underlie the very notion of world heritage. UNESCO aims to protect endangered sites that are valuable for humanity as a whole and prioritizes technocratic solutions. The resulting use of new technologies is



Figure 3: *Courtyard of the Hollandsche Schouwburg.* Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 11 September 2012 (photograph by the author).

an extension of that very same imperial move that appropriates heritage sites through Western technologies for Western consumers.

The exhibition in Paris, under UNESCO's patronage, suggested that the data gathered could be used for future rebuilding. The IDA replica worked under the same techno-optimism which was shared by Western media that did not fully apprehend the technology, but hailed it nevertheless (Stobiecka 116). Technological advancements in the fields of archaeology and heritage management have in general been welcomed by policy makers and academics alike and have not been met with enough critical reflection (Rico "Technologies and Alternative Heritage Values" 218; Stobiecka 114). In the case of the replica, archaeologist Trinidad Rico argues that the replica is about "technological fetishism" and leads to a "cultural imperialism" that figured Western companies as "fighting back" ISIS (Rico, "The Second Coming of Palmyra" 120–21). Framing the replica as a technological wonder that stands for the future of heritage reconstruction erases its non-digital nature.

As archaeologist Monika Stobiecka points out, "the effect of that intense digital work is material – a tangible, touchable, solid, 11-ton weighted copy of an arch" (Stobiecka 117). This resonates with the call by media scholar Emily Keightley that media memory studies are too invested in Eurocentric narratives and understandings of technology. This has "centralized the



Figure 4: *Detail of courtyard of the Hollandsche Schouwburg*. Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 11 September 2012 (photograph by the author).

role of media technologies, and digital communication in particular, as a key, of not the key, structuring feature in contemporary experiences and practices of remembering" (Keightley 2). According to Keightley, we need to refrain from universal claims about media ecologies and acknowledge the unequal distribution and usage of new technologies. One effect of this focus on new technology is that the digital is made invisible as an ecosystem that simply works in the background, and the non-digital is seen as content that needs to be translated to the digital realm. This very aptly describes both the exhibition and replica projects. One solution Keightley suggests is to understand nondigital media as memory technologies in their own right. This is precisely what we have seen in the cases of Warsaw and Amsterdam: the painting by Bellotto and the courtyard of the Hollandsche Schouwburg are memory technologies that do not stand at the beginning or the end of a potential digitalization process, but instead act as both copy and original, enabling not a traveling from nondigital to digital, but a continuous and co-creative process that encapsulated the redemptive power of reconstruction in the former, and the continuation of trauma in the latter. If we look again at the replica of the arch, we do not see radical innovation, but rather a conservative gesture that should not stand model for the future of heritage preservation and memory production.

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Endnotes

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2 When the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Luns was asked to intervene in the planned destruction of the Anne Frank House in 1954, he answered the building was of no historic or artistic relevance (Lans and Vuijsje 66). In the years before the Covid-19 pandemic the Anne Frank House had more than one million annual visitors.

‘When the House is on Fire’. Cardinal Mercati, Paul Kehr, the *Pius-Stiftung* and the Case of Madam Ludwig

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Abstract

This research-based essay discusses interwoven cases connected to wartime destruction and disarray in relation to cultural heritage – libraries, manuscripts and research collections. It is based mainly on archival material in collections in the Vatican City, mostly sections of the correspondence of Cardinal Librarian Giovanni Mercati that are as yet uncatalogued and have hitherto not been available for research. The essay focuses on lost research material in the chaos and turmoil of war, such as the scholar Paul Kehr's manuscript and library collections, as well as the so-called *Pius-Stiftung*: research funds provided by the Holy See.

Note

The author is aware of current controversies concerning Pope Pius XII. Although Pius XII is referred to in the text, he is not the focus of this essay on wartime heritage protection.

Introduction: A Papal Pointer

The quote in the title is from an analogy by Pope Pius XII on recovery after the Second World War, directed to the Roman nobility in an address in January 1944, during the German wartime occupation of Rome: "When the house is on fire, a first concern is to call for help to extinguish the flames, but after the destruction it is fitting to repair the damage and to reconstruct the building".[1] The 'house' that Pope Pius referred to was metaphorical; he accentuated the need to look ahead and focus on its post-war reconstruction. Yet actual flames were to consume the locations where some library and manuscript collections under scrutiny here had been placed for safekeeping during the Second World War, such as *Schloss Wässerndorf* in Bavaria, to which we shall return.

This research-based essay discusses interwoven cases connected to wartime destruction and disarray in relation to cultural heritage – in this case libraries, manuscripts and research collections. Rather than focusing on one specific case study or question, a canvas is presented with interrelated circumstances based on archival findings in the Vatican apostolic archive and apostolic library. The essay concentrates on the apostolic library and on Cardinal Librarian Giovanni Mercati (Vian 2000a; Vian 2000b), a centrally placed key figure in scholarly networks before, during and after the war. Mercati was appointed cardinal in 1936, and librarian and archivist of the Holy Roman Church a few days later. His brother, Angelo (Vian 2015), was prefect of the Vatican archive in the same period; they would both merit more international and interdisciplinary attention.

During a scholarship period in Rome in 2020–2021, I worked on significant sections of Giovanni Mercati's correspondence in the Vatican library, the "Carteggi Mercati" (Mercati correspondence; Pasini and Rodella 2019), much of which has not yet been catalogued and has consequently not previously been available for research. In other words, this is the first time this archival material sees the light of day.

The Vatican City State offered a neutral haven during the Second World War and the German occupation of Rome. The papal system of museums and libraries was employed to safeguard art and library collections – indeed an extensive topic, outside the scope of this essay. What is covered here, however, is arguably important and can provide useful pieces for future puzzles in various fields, e.g., history, art history, library studies and the history of scholarship. The contexts and details provided are new in the sense that the material on which they are based has not been made use of before.

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Giovanni Mercati was one of the well-placed individuals to which the surrounding world of scholarship would turn. The overall object here is to shed light on instances of individual influence in relation to institutional structures. The essay zooms in on lost research material, casualties in the chaos and turmoil of war – the scholar Paul Kehr's missing manuscript and library collections – as well as missing research funds: the so-called *Pius-Stiftung* (see below). By illustrating Mercati's influence and "academic diplomacy", as well as the protection of the neutral Vatican library as instrumental to safeguarding enduring research undertakings and institutional continuity, the essay emphasizes networks and personal contacts in scholarship, its organization and its funding.

Paul Kehr

The historian and archivist Paul Fridolin Kehr is a key figure in this story. He was appointed professor of history at the universities of Marburg and Göttingen in the 1890s. In 1903, Kehr was named the director of the Prussian Historical Institute, the present German Historical Institute in Rome (Esch 1997; Grafinger 2004; Matheus 2007; Matheus 2009). In 1915, he took on the directorship of the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (MGH), a monumental series of published primary sources on Northwestern and Central Europe, founded as a text publication society (in 1819). The MGH was taken over by the state during the Nazi regime as the *Reichsinstitut für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* (National Institute for Older German History), but was revived with its original name after the Second World War. It has been based in Munich since 1949, its work continues to this day, and its publications are available online.[2]

Paul Kehr was a significant scholar in the Roman research community with far-reaching connections to the Vatican and its archival holdings (Esch 1992; Esch 2000; Matheus 2009). Cardinal Librarian Giovanni Mercati was a focal point of that community. He had known Kehr and corresponded with him regarding his scholarly work for almost half a century,

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with early correspondence between the two scholars dating to 1897.[3] When Kehr was about to retire from the German Historical Institute and from the MGH in 1935, he referred to Mercati as "one of the first [of his] old friends". [4]

The above-mentioned Schloss Wässerndorf was one of the homes of the von Pölnitz family (another was *Schloss Hundshaupten*, north of Nuremberg), and accommodated collections that were destroyed in April 1945 (more on this below). Baroness Gudila von Pölnitz was Kehr's daughter, and he stayed with the family towards the end of the war. Kehr passed away at Wässerndorf in November 1944. The news of his death was conveyed to Giovanni Mercati in Rome by Giovanni Battista Montini, later Pope Paul VI (Vian 1999) in the secretariat of state of the Holy See.[5]

The Pius-Stiftung

Paul Kehr's work became connected with the so-called *Pius-Stiftung*, the Pius-Foundation, set up in 1931 by Pope Pius XI, who had himself formerly been prefect of the Vatican library. As pope, he had entrusted Kehr with a sum for continued work on a large-scale research project, the *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum*, which resulted in large-scale and ambitious publication series. Two of these were the *Italia Pontifica* and *Germania Pontifica* undertakings. The *Italia Pontificia* scheme was presented by Paul Kehr in 1896: all papal documents until Pope Innocent III (1198) were to be published in a series of volumes on different regions in Italy. The *Germania Pontificia* series was to achieve the same result for Germany, broadly defined.[6]

During the war, the existence of the *Pius-Stiftung* was, according to Mercati, known by "at least four people" (not including himself) who may or may not have survived the conflict. One person who appears to have been informed was Bartolomeo Nogara, director general of the papal museums and art galleries (from 1920), and a key figure in the safeguarding of cultural heritage with the Vatican during the Second World War (Various authors 1945; Vian 2008; Serlupi Crescenzi and Calvano 2012; Whitling 2019). The fund, Pius XI's aforementioned donation, was known as the Pius-Stiftung (*Pius-Stiftung für Papsturkunden und für mittelalterliche Geschichtsforschung*, or the Pius-Foundation for Papal Documents and for Mediaeval Historical Research). It was to have been transferred to a Swiss bank but had since gone missing. Investigations were made by the *nuncio* (papal ambassador) to Switzerland, Filippo Bernardini, but to no initial avail.[7]

According to Mercati, the historian Friedrich Bock, a convinced national socialist, and an erstwhile colleague of Paul Kehr's at the German Historical Institute in Rome, had been charged by Kehr to withdraw some of the money in 1942 (or earlier), and Mercati speculated that the funds

might be found with Friedrich Bock, who had persuaded Kehr that he would finish the research and the publication series. Mercati also thought it likely that Bock had been sought out by the Allies or the Russians. He stressed the "general scientific interest of the continuation of the two works/publications" and that the fund was not to be considered German public or private property; it did not belong to Bock, Kehr, von Pölnitz or anyone else for that matter. On the contrary, there was the possibility that the fund be restituted to the Vatican, should there be a legal way to do so. Mercati ensured that this would have been "the sentiment [...] of Kehr and of all honest people". [8]

War, Conflict, and the Cities

Several places are involved here in relation to the theme of this issue: the Vatican City, Rome, Berlin, Munich and Eichstätt, along with other locations in Bavaria. The essay format admittedly does not allow for excessive detail – it scratches several surfaces – but within its scope I address the roles and influences of individuals, on institutional, local, national and international levels. I have elsewhere employed the concept of 'academic diplomacy', a potentially useful conceptualization of the grey zone between official diplomatic representation and networks in scholarship. This may be helpful in grasping also, for example, Giovanni Mercati's well-connected position and well-positioned connections.

Not long after the liberation of Rome from German occupation in the summer of 1944, the neutral Vatican and Cardinal Mercati were contacted by members of the Allied so-called 'subcommission' (the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives program).[9] He was a most valuable contact. Another well-placed person was the apostolic nuncio (ambassador) to Germany, Cesare Orsenigo. He had been nuncio the Netherlands and to Hungary in the 1920s and had replaced Eugenio Pacelli – the future Pope Pius XII (Stehlin 1984; Stehlin 2009) – as nuncio to Germany in 1930. He remained in this position until 1945, when the nunciature in Berlin was bombed (in February), and Orsenigo moved it to Eichstätt, northwest of Ingolstadt in Bavaria.[10]

Several months before he left Berlin, Cesare Orsenigo communicated with Giovanni Mercati about Eichstätt and a list of belongings of Paul Kehr's colleague, the priest and historian Paul Maria Baumgarten.[11] As an example of German-Vatican research relations, Cesare Orsenigo sent two boxes with documents from Baumgarten's research on church and institutional (for example Jesuit) history with a lorry "from Germany to the Vatican City" at the end of June 1945, or in other words, after the German capitulation. The material arrived safely and was taken to the Vatican library; it ended up in the Vatican archives after a decision by the pope.[12]



Figure 1: *Pope Pius XI watches over researchers in the Vatican Apostolic Library manuscripts reading room* (photograph by Frederick Whitling, 2021).

The Kehr Affair

During the temporary move of the papal nunciature in Germany to Eichstätt in the spring of 1945, the nuncio Cesare Orsenigo occupied himself with the 'Kehr affair', as the fate of Paul Kehr's research records – manuscripts, notes, documents, books – were in the disarray of the end of the war. Giovanni Mercati was kept in the loop by Giovanni Battista Montini.[13] Orsenigo communicated with the professor-priest Martin Grabmann, a historian of Medieval philosophy who had studied in Rome and has been referred to as the "greatest Catholic scholar of his time" (Rosemann 2000, 55). Grabmann functioned as a go-between with Kehr's relatives. He pointed out that the calamities of war meant that finding people's whereabouts was becoming increasingly cumbersome, and that it was possible that much was indeed "lost in the flames that recently have devastated Berlin". [14]

Paul Kehr appears to have brought all or most of his research material to Bavaria for safekeeping together with a deposit by the MGH "in a castle near Bamberg, [later] in the American occupation zone". The castle in question was the von Pölnitz family's Schloss Wässerndorf, the place of Kehr's passing in 1944.[15] The castle had been occupied by the family since 1910, despite having been expropriated by the Nazis in 1936. As mentioned above, it was destroyed – burned – in April 1945, together with thousands

of boxes of archival material and art objects in storage there, seemingly including much of Kehr's material, along with "a part of the archive of the University of Munich".[16] Giovanni Mercati was worried that the staff of the MGH might want to claim Kehr's material, if it indeed had survived the flames, together with a deposit there of MGH material. The outcome of the affair, Mercati believed, "depended to a large extent on the comprehension and good will of the Anglo-American allies". [17]

In mid-August 1945, the nuncio Cesare Orsenigo still had no definite answer regarding whether Kehr's research material had survived the war. He had managed to confirm that Kehr for some time had resided with his son-in-law, Görtz *Freiherr* (Baron) von Pölnitz, in the family residence at Wässerndorf. Book collections from Munich had been placed in the castle for safekeeping, including possibly Kehr's notes: "The castle has however been burned to the ground" (in April 1945).[18] In September, Orsenigo informed Mercati that Martin Grabmann intended to seek out Paul Kehr's "possible surviving relatives".[19]

Cesare Orsenigo passed away at Eichstätt on 1 April 1946. After the defeat of Nazi Germany, the nunciature lost its official status; no new nuncio was in fact appointed until 1951. Carlo Colli, Orsenigo's aide and papal *chargé d'affaires* (chief of mission) at Eichstätt, was kept abreast of the Kehr affair and attempts at locating the Pius-Stiftung. The secretariat of state (Giovanni Battista Montini) clarified that the fund had indeed been "earmarked" by Pius XI, and that the Holy See intended to claim it to avoid it being used for purposes other than publication or considered a private German asset by the Allies.[20] In September 1945, Montini had conveyed this to the nuncio Filippo Bernardini in Bern, and presumably to Orsenigo in Eichstätt.[21] The Pius-Stiftung fund needed a new home, and it was feared that the money might vanish were it regarded a German asset (private or public) as part of the post-war Allied liquidation of German assets as war reparations.

The Case of Madam Ludwig

Meanwhile, a Margarete Ludwig – of Vienna, dates unknown – conveyed to Giovanni Mercati that the British Military Government had made her aware in May 1945 of the existence of an account in the national bank in Zürich in the name of Paul Kehr for *Italia Pontificia*, containing the tidy sum of at least 250 000 Swiss Francs. According to Ludwig, the money ought to return to the Vatican after Kehr's death; she sought out general Mark W. Clark and Pope Pius XII in this connection.[22] Margarete Ludwig appears to have been one of the few sources for the existence of this bank

account. The Apostolic archive holds a document outlining the issue by her (in French, from July 1945). According to this, Friedrich Bock had been authorized to dispose the fund together with Paul Kehr "until 1942".[23] Margarete Ludwig had seemingly met with Kehr in 1938, and had also met with the aforementioned Friedrich Bock in Berlin during the war. In a separate document, she emphasized that "there was a great possibility that some authority would appropriate the money via the German embassy in Switzerland (or similar)".[24]

Giovanni Mercati alerted the nuncios in Switzerland and Germany, Filippo Bernardini and Cesare Orsenigo, as well as the "English and American authorities" and the direction of the Swiss National Bank.[25] Bernardini in turn contacted Paul Rossy, vice president of the *Banque nationale suisse*, about what he referred to as "the case of Madam Ludwig", although the information provided had not been sufficient for the bank to locate what he referred to as Kehr's deposit.[26] Margarete Ludwig, however, felt "alienated and offended" for not being rewarded for providing information on the alleged existence of the assets.[27] Mercati replied to her (in German) about a possible confirmation and recognition of the right of the Holy See to obtain these funds that the Allies "had failed to obtain".[28] Ludwig again affirmed that the money belonged to the Vatican and that she had done her duty by reporting it.[29] Mercati informed Giovanni Battista Montini, who in turn notified the pope.

At about the same time, Martin Grabmann passed on the information that Baron Görtz von Pölnitz, Paul Kehr's son-in-law, had placed material relating to Kehr's papal research "in a room in the Prussian Academy of Sciences", today the Berlin State Library.[30] Mercati also communicated with Montini about attempting to recover Kehr's research material. This involved informing the art historian Charles Rufus Morey – acting director of the American Academy in Rome (1945–1947) and cultural attaché at the American embassy (Kent 1964; Bottum and Dalin 2004; Chadwick 1977; Sjöqvist 1996 [1956]) – and giving him and others a copy of a wartime letter from Pope Pius XII "in favour of Jewish and other scholars forced to emigrate by the Nazis and Fascists", "if there are any copies of it".[31] In one of his many audiences with the pope, Mercati may well have discussed Kehr's material and the missing funds with Pope Pius.[32] Mercati's access to the top of the papal pyramid of power in combination with his scholarly repute and standing in the Vatican system gave him perhaps more influence than has often been acknowledged, and provided him with a certain leeway for implementing his own 'academic diplomacy'. His pen, in this sense, was mighty. His voice was reckoned with.

Bavarian Castles, German Libraries

The American art historian and cultural attaché Charles Rufus Morey was the first president of the so-called "Unione" of institutes in Rome, founded in early February 1946, a few months after the establishment of Unesco. The new Unione was charged with the major issue of the libraries and future fate of the main German scholarly institutions in Italy in the world of archaeology and art: the archaeological and historical institutes in Rome, the *Bibliotheca Hertziana* (for art history) in the same city, and the *Kunsthistorisches Institut* in Florence (Whitling 2019, 167–172).[33] The archivist Giulio Battelli had worked on safeguarding archives and library collections during the Second World War, and provided a report on the status of the three above-mentioned German libraries in Rome, and interventions by the secretary-general of the Unione (and the president of AIAC), Erik Sjöqvist, director of the Swedish Institute in Rome (Billig, Billig and Whitling 2015; Whitling 2023a).[34]

Charles Rufus Morey had asked Federico Pfister (Rosetti 2010), Secretary-General of AIAC, another new international organization in Rome, for classical archaeology, and a Swiss citizen, to make enquiries about the Kehr affair in Switzerland. Morey provided Giovanni Mercati with Pfister's contact details.[35] A month later, Mercati was able to report to him that the library of the MGH was situated in the eighteenth-century *Schloss Pommersfelden* (also called *Schloss Weissenstein*, near Bamberg), and was to be transported to Munich, where its work would be resumed by the Bavarian Academy of Sciences.[36]

In May 1946, more light was shed on the Kehr affair in a letter to the church historian Hubert Jedin from an unknown source with a previous connection to the German Historical Institute in Rome (possibly Friedrich Bock). In a letter that reached Mercati, Hubert Jedin was informed that the segment of Kehr's material that had been deposited at Schloss Pommersfelden had been saved from destruction and had been sent to von Pölnitz at Schloss Hundshaupten. Von Pölnitz' other castle at Wässerndorf had suffered the fate of some of Kehr's material: "a victim of the flames".[37]

Solid and reliable information was, as we have seen, hard to come by. Another report indicated that Kehr's library had indeed succumbed to the flames at Schloss Wässerndorf in April 1945, but that the material for the last volume of the *Italia Pontificia* had been saved. Material pertaining to the German Historical Institute in Rome had been "fetched by the Military government" from Schloss Pommersfelden and had been deposited at Schloss Hundshaupten. The report exultantly announced that "it is currently located there!".[38]

The search for the missing money continued. The-Pius-Stiftung had been deposited in Zürich by the historian, archivist and politician Hans Nabholz. Attempts to access the fund had allegedly been made by the academies in Göttingen in Berlin as well as by the MGH "during national socialism", and the foundation's original statutes had been destroyed in the castle fire. The report stated that the amount of money deposited in Switzerland was "substantial" (*erheblich*), without specifying the sum.[39] It stressed the need for meetings with Mercati in Rome and with Hans Nabholz in Zürich, and ended with the suggestion that Baron Görtz von Pölnitz and Friedrich Bock might carry out the necessary further research in order to complete the publications in libraries in Rome and southern Italy, particularly in Sicily. Kehr had brought the work to near completion before the war: "the largest part by far of the very difficult material has already been collected at Hundshaupten".[40]

In January 1947, Cardinal Michael von Faulhaber, archbishop of Munich, asked Giovanni Mercati for the "legal authority to convey unnamed important letters to Baroness [Gudila] von Pölnitz", Kehr's daughter.[41] In March, Giovanni Battista Montini passed on a note from nuncio Filippo Bernardini in Bern about the continued search for "the fund given by the Holy See to Prof. Kehr".[42] The search produced some results; a copy of the statutes of the Pius-Stiftung appeared to have been located by Peter Vieli, director general of the *Credit Suisse* bank.[43] At this time, Mercati informed Friedrich Bock about a report that was anticipated from Gudila von Pölnitz about Kehr's last will and plans to publish "the end of Italia Pontificia".[44] In February 1948, Görtz von Pölnitz wrote to Mercati apropos his personal involvement in the scientific board of the Pius-Stiftung, and in continued work on the Italia Pontificia.[45] We leave them there as we zoom out again.

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Conclusion

Since the opening of the Vatican archives for research in the late nineteenth century (1881), museums, libraries and archives have been the beating heart of the Vatican, also in times of conflict, such as the one discussed here. The Kehr affair remained inconclusive after the war based on the archival evidence dealt with here. Fragments and hearsay, scraps of evidence pieced together; a common situation with preserved source material. This essay has aimed to illustrate examples of the disarray at the end of the Second World War and the immediate post-war period.

Recalling the earlier papal wartime quote about measures for the metaphorical 'house being on fire', the figurative flames were eventually extinguished here. The damage was repaired, the building was reconstructed, research was resumed. The Pius-Stiftung still exists, based in Zürich (Hiestand 2003). Since 1948, the foundation has been supervised by a commission with one representative each from the Vatican archive, the Vatican library, the MGH, the Institute for Austrian Historical Research and the Swiss Society for History, under the direction of the chairman of the philological-historical class of the Academy of Sciences in Göttingen.

The theme here has been heritage protection under wartime pressure – with the fate of manuscripts, research material and library collections during and after the Second World War; in this case private or semi-private collections enabled by funding from the Vatican. The conclusions are fragmentary, as are the available sources. This reflects the quality of archival material as pieces of a puzzle. Museums, libraries and archives all have the dual function as research institutions and repositories.

The general answer to the question raised in the introduction here – of what roles, agency and representations individuals might simultaneously embody – is, perhaps unsurprisingly, that they can express and encapsulate multiple levels of representation and several interests at the same time. Individuals can, thereby, simultaneously speak for themselves and others, as well as institutions, organizations, states and nations, in this instance including the Vatican City State. Yet the essay also shows that self-interest vis-à-vis the common good is perhaps seldom exposed more clearly than when significant amounts of money are at stake.

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Endnotes

1 Pius XII, "Patriziato e nobiltà romana", 19 January 1944: "Quando la casa è in fiamme, una prima sollecitudine fa certamente chiamare al soccorso per spegnere il fuoco; ma dopo la rovina conviene riparare i danni e rialzare l'edificio". Archivio Apostolico Vaticano (AAV), Carte Pio XII, Discorsi, box 7, file 1.

2 Cf. *Regesta Pontificum Romanorum Online* (papsturkunden.de, accessed 1 June 2023).

3 Correspondence from Paul Kehr to Giovanni Mercati between 1897 and 1936 (the last year in the inventory) can be found in Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (henceforth BAV), Carteggi Mercati (CM), boxes 4–53 (various references). Mercati ostensibly discussed Kehr's work with Pius XI on several occasions, cf. audience, 18 April 1929. BAV, CM, box 42.

4 Paul Kehr to Giovanni Mercati, 30 December 1934 ("i vecchi amici, fra i quali Ella ha uno dei primi posti"). BAV, CM, box 48. Cf. Doris Kehr to Cesare Orsenigo (?), 14 November 1944 (from Schloss Wässerndorf, Würzburg); Orsenigo to Doris Kehr, 16 November 1944 (condolences); and Orsenigo to Giovanni Battista Montini, 24 November 1944 (telegram, notification for Mercati on Kehr's death). AAV, Arch. Nunz. Berlino, box 126 ("Archiv S. E. Orsenigo"), file 100.

5 Giovanni Battista Montini to Giovanni Mercati, 30 December 1944. BAV, CM, box 61, file 4. Cf. obituary, Kehr (by "Frau Doris Kehr, geb. vom Baur, Gudila Freifrau v. Pölnitz, geb. Kehr, Götz Freiherr v. Pölnitz, Gisela Freiin v. Pölnitz"). AAV, Arch. Nunz. Berlino, box 126, file 100.

6 Giovanni Battista Montini to Giovanni Mercati, 15 December 1945. BAV, CM, box 62, file 6. Cf. Mercati to Charles Rufus Morey, 20 April 1946. BAV, CM, box 63, file 2. The first volume in the *Italia Pontificia* series (Kehr et al. 1906[–1975]) was published in 1906; the first volume in the *Germania Pontificia* series (Kehr et al. 1911–]) appeared five years later.

7 Giovanni Battista Montini to Giovanni Mercati, 15 December 1945. Cf. handwritten notes by Mercati on "la morte del […] P. Fr. Kehr" and the "memoria" of Margarete Ludwig, Vienna. BAV, CM, box 62, file 6.

[8] Handwritten notes by Giovanni Mercati: "la morte del [...] P. Fr. Kehr": "levarne denari"; "l'interesse generale della scienza per la continuazione e il compimento delle due opere"; "il sentimento [...] del Kehr e di ogni altro onesto". BAV, CM, box 62, file 6. Cf. Giovanni Battista Montini to Mercati, 3 January 1946. BAV, CM, box 63, file 1. For Friedrich Bock, see for example Klinkhammer 1992 and the *Nachlaß Friedrich Boc*k, MGH-Archiv NLB 1-197. Cf. also MGH-Archiv B 584. For funding and the Vatican more generally, see Pollard 2005.

[9] Cf. Bernard M. Peebles (sergeant) to Giovanni Mercati, 31 August 1944. BAV, CM, box 61, file 3. See for example Rémond 1987.

[10] Cf. Giovanni Battista Montini to Giovanni Mercati, 15 January 1945, on a telegram from Orsenigo, Berlin; telegram, Orsenigo, Berlin, 20 February 1945. BAV, CM, box 62, file 1.

[11] Cesare Orsenigo, Nunzio, Berlin ("Nunziatura Apostolica Germania"), to Giovanni Mercati, 5 September 1944. Cf. Montini to Mercati, 10 September 1944, quoted telegram from the nunzio in Berlin: "Cassa [...] fu trasferiti presso Vescovo di Eichstatt". Added (Mercati?): "Deve essere cassa scheda dell R. O. P. Baumgarten". Cf. also typewritten "Elenco dei documenti di proprietà del Prof. Baumgarten". BAV, CM, box 61, file 3; and Montini to Mercati, 24 February 1945 (Baumgarten – another 4 000 "marchi per la Consegna di nuovi documenti"). BAV, CM, box 62, file 1. For Baumgarten, cf. AAV, Arch. Nunz. Berlino, box 116.

[12] Cesare Orsenigo had made inquiries regarding Paul Baumgarten's parents which were thus far without result, partly as they could not yet "extend to the Berlin zone of Russian occupation". Orsenigo to Giovanni Mercati, 21 June 1945: "non possono finora estendersi alla zona berlinese di occupazione russa". Cf. Mercati, description of the content of the two boxes of Baumgarten's material. BAV, CM, box 62, file 2. Cf. also Orsenigo to Mercati, 13 August 1945. BAV, CM, box 62, file 4. A third box of documents relating to Paul Maria Baumgarten's research sent by Orsenigo had reached the Vatican by the end of the year. Cesare Orsenigo to Giovanni Mercati, 22 November 1945. BAV, CM, box 62, file 6.

[13] Giovanni Battista Montini to Giovanni Mercati, 6 April 1945, message from Cesare Orsenigo (Berlin, 24 March): "si è occupato dell'affare Kehr". BAV, CM, box 62, file 2.

[14] Cesare Orsenigo to Giovanni Mercati, 25 May 1945: "perito nelle fiamme, che devastarono tanto recentemente Berlino". BAV, CM, box 62, file 2.

[15] Giovanni Mercati to Charles Rufus Morey, 20 April 1946. BAV, CM, box 63, file 2.

[16] Giovanni Mercati to Charles Rufus Morey, 20 April 1946. BAV, CM, box 63, file 2.

[17] Giovanni Mercati to Charles Rufus Morey, 20 April 1946: "per una gran parte dipenderà dalla comprensione e buona volontà degli Alleati Anglo-Americani". Cf. Giovanni Battista Montini to Mercati, 16 April 1946, regarding a "Nota Verbale della Legazione di Gran Bretagna presso la Santa Sede relativa alla somma affidata da Pio XI di s.m. al compianto Prof. Kehr per due lavori scientifici". BAV, CM, box 63, file 2.

[18] Cesare Orsenigo to Giovanni Mercati, 13 August 1945: "Invece il castello è totalmente bruciato". BAV, CM, box 62, file 4.

[19] Cesare Orsenigo to Giovanni Mercati, 27 September 1945: "gli eventuali parenti superstiti"; Mercati was at the same time informed that the Bavarian state library was in ruins. Martin Grabmann (?) to Mercati, 30 September 1945: "ein Trümmenhause". BAV, CM, box 62, file 5.

[20] Giovanni Battista Montini to Carlo Colli ("Incaricato d'Affari della S. Sede Eichstaett"), 11 July 1946. AAV, Arch. Nunz. Berlino, box 126, file 99. Cf. Helbach 2002; Alsheimer 2003.

[21] Giovanni Battista Montini to Filippo Bernardini, 27 September 1945. Cf. "Promemoria", 19 January 1945 (on Kehr, for Bernardini?); memorandum (Bernardini), 27 February 1946; Giovanni Mercati to Bernardini (?, undated). AAV, Arch. Nunz. Svizzera, box 102.

[22] Margarete Ludwig to Giovanni Mercati, 15 January 1946. Cf. Mercati, note, 4 January 1946. BAV, CM, box 63, file 1.

[23] Margarete Ludwig, 8 July 1945 (handwritten memorandum, translation?) and original (in German): "Denkschrift der Frau Margarete Ludwig", 8 July 1945. Cf. Giovanni Battista Montini to Filippo Bernardini, 27 September 1945; Giovanni Mercati to Bernardini? (undated); Bernardini (?) to Montini,

3 December 1945; Montini to Bernardini, 18 January 1946; Montini to Bernardini, 1 February 1947 (quoting a letter from Friedrich Bock to Mercati). AAV, Arch. Nunz. Svizzera, box 102.

[24] "Denkschrift der Frau Margarete Ludwig", 8 July 1945: "Es bestand in grosse Ausmasse die Möglichkeit, dass irgendwelche nationalsozalistische Behorde uber die Deutsche Botschaft in der Schweiz (oder ahnlich) sich das Geld aneignen wurde". AAV, Arch. Nunz. Svizzera, box 102.

[25] Giovanni Mercati, note, 4 January 1946 (reference also to a possible second letter from Margarete Ludwig in May 1945; as well as a letter from Mercati to Montini, 23 June 1945). BAV, CM, box 63, file 1.

[26] Filippo Bernardini (?) to Paul Rossy, 5 December 1945: "le cas de Madame […] Ludwig". AAV, Arch. Nunz. Svizzera, box 102; Giovanni Battista Montini to Giovanni Mercati, 8 March 1946. BAV, CM box 63, file 2.

[27] Margarete Ludwig to Giovanni Mercati, 15 March 1946: "Dass Sie mir eine Belohnung nicht zuerkennen wollen, befremdet und kränkt mich". BAV, CM, box 63, file 2.

[28] Giovanni Mercati to Margarete Ludwig, n.d.: "seitens der Allierten zu erlangen fehlgeschlagen ist". BAV, CM, box 63, file 2. Cf. Ludwig to Mercati, 27 May 1946. BAV, CM, box 63, file 3.

[29] Margarete Ludwig to Giovanni Mercati, 27 May 1946. BAV, CM, box 63, file 3.

[30] Martin Grabmann to Giovanni Mercati, 24 January 1946. BAV, CM, box 63, file 1. Grabmann was in continued contact with Mercati until his death in January 1949. Cf. Martin Grabmann to Giovanni Mercati, 15 November 1946; Grabmann to Mercati, 17 November 1946. BAV, CM, box 63, file 6; Grabmann to Mercati, 6 March 1947. BAV, CM, box 64, file 2; Grabmann to Mercati, 23 November 1947. BAV, CM, box 64, file 5; Grabmann to Mercati, 22 December 1947. BAV, CM, box 64, file 6; Grabmann to Mercati, 22 July 1948. BAV, CM, box 65, file 4; and Grabmann to Mercati, 10 September 1948. BAV, CM, box 65, file 5.

[31] Note, Giovanni Mercati ("con S. E. Montini 20 II 1946"): "la lettera di Pio XII in favore degli Ebrei ed altri dotti costretti dai Naz. e dai Fasc. ad emigrare […] se ci sono copie". BAV, CM, box 63, file 1.

[32] Audience with Pius XII, 16 March 1946, envelope with notes, 14 March 1946, Giovanni Mercati. BAV, CM, box 63, file 2. The nuncio Cesare Orsenigo passed away at Eichstätt two weeks later, although the nunciature continued to correspond with Gudila von Pölnitz about the Kehr material. Carlo Colli (?) to Gudila von Pölnitz-Kehr, 26 October 1946. Cf. unidentified sender to Colli/the nunciature, 30 November 1946. AAV, Arch. Nunz. Berlino, box 126, file 99.

[33] Cf. Leo Bruhns, "Memoriale", 9 June 1946, on the transport of the Bibliotheca Hertziana. BAV, CM, box 63, file 3; as well as Giovanni Mercati to Morey, 16 March 1947; and Mercati to Friedrich Bock, 24 July 1947, on the deposit of the library of the Deutsches Historisches Institut in the Vatican. BAV, CM, box 64, file 2.

[34] Giulio Battelli, memorandum (?), 29 April 1946. Cf. Battelli, memorandum (separate document), 29 April 1946. BAV, CM, box 63, file 2. Cf. various authors 1945; Ward-Perkins 1977; Billig; Klinkhammer 1992; Battelli 1996; Billig, Nylander and Vian 1996; Nylander and Vian 1996; Vian 1996; Battelli 2000; Esch 2007; Petrucciani 2007; Vian 2008; Whitling 2008; Whitling 2011; Serlupi Crescenzi and Calvano 2012; Matheus 2013; Matheus 2015a; Matheus 2015b; Whitling 2016; Whitling 2019; Whitling 2023b.

[35] Charles Rufus Morey to Giovanni Mercati, 27 March 1946. Cf. Mercati to Morey, 20 April 1946. BAV, CM, box 63, file 2; and Morey to Mercati, 28 May 1946. BAV, CM, box 63, file 3.

[36] Giovanni Mercati to Charles Rufus Morey 26 April 1946. BAV, CM, box 63, file 2.

[37] Report, German Historical Institute, Rome (Friedrich Bock?) to Hubert Jedin, 30 May 1946 (Pommersfelden): "ein Raub der Flammen". BAV, CM, box 63, file 3. Cf. Giovanni Mercati to Bock, 24 July 1947. BAV, CM, box 64, file 2. Jedin had worked in the Vatican for many years. During the German occupation of Rome 1943–1944, he was unable to leave the Vatican due to his mother's Jewish descent, which had forced him to leave Germany. He lived under papal protection at the German catholic cemetery in the Vatican City, the *Campo Santo Teutonico* (Matheus 2015b).

[38] "Bericht der Nachforschungen über die 'Piusstiftung'", n.d. (1946?): "von dort das Material des Röm.Instituts durch die Militärregierung abgeholt wurde"; "Dort liegt es derzeit!" AAV, Arch. Nunz. Berlino, box 126, file 99.

[39] "Bericht der Nachforschungen über die 'Piusstiftung'", n.d. (1946?): "noch in nationalsozialisticher Zeit"; "Die in der Schweiz erhaltenen Mittel sind erheblich!" AAV, Arch. Nunz. Berlino, box 126, file 99. Cf. Hans Nabholz, 22 February 1947, memorandum (?), on the Piusstiftung; and Giovanni Battista Montini to Peter Vieli (*Credit Suisse)*, 24 July 1947. AAV, Arch. Nunz. Svizzera, box 102 ("Somme d'argent remise par S.S. PIE XI au prof. KEHR Pro-memoria du Card. Mercati et de Mme Marguerite Ludwig" (1942–1943)").

[40] "Bericht der Nachforschungen über die 'Piusstiftung'", n.d. (1946?): "Der weitaus grösste Teil des sehr schwierigen Materials ist allerdings bereits in Hundshaupten gesammelt". AAV, Arch. Nunz. Berlino, box 126, file 99. Cf. Margarete Ludwig, 8 July 1945 (handwritten memorandum, translation?). AAV, Arch. Nunz. Svizzera, box 102.

[41] Michael von Faulhaber to Giovanni Mercati, 2 January 1947: "Vollmacht […] wichtige Briefe an Baronesse Gudila von Pöllnitz und Kehr zu übermitteln". BAV, CM, box 64, file 1. Cf. for example (?) Bertolini ("La Sapienza", Rome) to Mercati, 16 April 1947, regarding a letter from the ancient historian Gaetano De Sanctis "per la [Baronessa] Pöllnitz-Kehr". BAV, CM, box 64, file 2. Cf. also Gudila von Pölnitz to Carlo Colli (?), 6 September 1946. AAV, Arch. Nunz. Berlino, box 126, file 99.

[42] Giovanni Battista Montini to Giovanni Mercati, 13 March 1947: "il fondo dato dalla Santa Sede al Prof. Kehr". BAV, CM, box 64, file 2.

[43] Peter Vieli to Filippo Bernardini, 29 May 1947; Vieli to Bernardini, 17 June 1947 and Giovanni Battista Montini to Filippo Bernardini, 14 July 1947. Cf. Vieli's business card; Montini (?) to Pierre Vieli, 24 July 1947; and Vieli (unidentified sender) to Montini, 21 August 1947. AAV, Arch. Nunz. Svizzera, box 102. Vieli had been Swiss minister in Rome during the war, 1942–1943 (he was previously first secretary at the Swiss legation from 1924 until 1931).

[44] Giovanni Mercati to Friedrich Bock, 24 July 1947. Cf. Wolfgang Hagemann to?, 25 July 1947. BAV, CM, box 64, file 2.

[45] Görtz Freiherr von Pölnitz to Giovanni Mercati, 5 February 1948, on the "Pius-Stiftung". BAV, CM, box 65, file 1.

The Willet-Holthuysen House as a Site of Resistance

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Abstract

This paper examines the Willet-Holthuysen House, a canal house museum in Amsterdam, in the context of World War II. Originally bequeathed to Amsterdam by its last owner, Louisa Willet-Holthuysen, in 1895, the house has a rich history of being home to various families and institutions. While some connections between the house and World War II have been previously established through oral sources, this essay introduces additional source material to shed further light on the house as a place of resistance. The research uncovers that the Willet-Holthuysen House served not only as a location within the Council of Resistance's network but also provided shelter for a person in hiding and accommodated a family actively involved in the resistance. This reveals that the house was more than just a place for art collection and opulence; it operated as a vital node in the resistance network, offering a hiding place and serving as a meeting spot for illegal resistance activities.



Figure 1: *The Willet-Holthuysen House in May 1943* (Amsterdam City Archive, photographer unknown).

Introduction

In Amsterdam, the history of the Second World War is omnipresent. When walking in the city, one might pass streets named after resistance fighters, monuments and *stolpersteine* dedicated to victims, and plaquettes indicating historical sites. But besides these visible traces, there are many stories still left untold. In this paper, one such case will be explored: that of The Willet-Holthuysen House, a museum located on Herengracht 605. The last owners of the building, Louisa and Abraham Willet-Holthuysen, lived there in the 19th century. Both were from wealthy families, and they spent their lives collecting art and curating the house to their liking, decorating it in

a neo-Louis XVI fashion that was popular at the time. Before her death in 1895, Louisa decided to bequeath her house and its collection to the city of Amsterdam. The municipality, unsure of what to do with the large building and its peculiar contents, accepted only because they recognized the exceptional value of the couple's book collection.

A curator, Frans Coenen, was installed and led the small museum until he retired in 1932. After that, the museum came under the aegis of the Stedelijk Museum, and in 1962, it was moved under the wing of the Amsterdam Museum, of which it is currently still part (Vreeken 316-318). The museum today is mostly focused on the lives of Louisa and Abraham. Its period rooms, most of which are reconstructions, aim to transport visitors back to the 19th century. However, the building also has an interesting war history, that until now has been significantly less investigated.

While working as a junior curator at the Amsterdam Museum, the war history of the building fascinated me. Over the centuries, the museum has been a home for people of diverse walks of life – from the 18th-century Burgomaster whose colonial investments were responsible for the immense amount of marble in the hallways, to the immigrant women who worked as household staff and slept on the kitchen floor.[1] Previous research has pointed out that there were indications that Willet-Holthuysen may have been a site of resistance, but these leads often led to dead ends, and stunted the knowledge of what actually happened in the museum between 1940 and 1945. This research traces back from what we know, and presents new source material that consolidates our previous assumptions: that the Willet-Holthuysen House during the second world war was a node in a resistance network, and an example of a building that is deeply connected to Amsterdam's war history, even if these traces today are not directly visible.

War Years in the Willet-Holthuysen House

On May 15, 1940, German forces marched over the Berlagebrug into Amsterdam, firmly establishing the city's occupation. Tensions soon were rising in Amsterdam: Jewish people were forced to register themselves, and their liberties are slowly taken away. Incidents between the city's Jewish population, members of the NSB, and the police were becoming more frequent, leading to the February Strike in Amsterdam in 1941.[2] From 3 May 1942 onwards, Jewish people were forced to wear yellow stars on their clothes, razzia's in which large groups of Jewish citizens are deported to concentration camps are happening more and more often.

In Amsterdam, it led to the formation of resistance movements, which were trying to help victims of the new regime by aiding them with fake pass-

“The smoking and drinking surely form a stark contrast with the meticulous conservation policies that are upheld in the same rooms today. But taking into account the collective hardships endured by these individuals, coupled with the significant loss of numerous of their friends and relatives, witnessing their embrace of the freedom for which they fought so intensely can fill one with a sense of joy.”

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ports, food stamps and places where they could hide. The war threat also had an influence on the city's sites of heritage: in 1939, the municipality started the construction of a bomb-free shelter in the dunes of Castricum, to protect art from possible looting or bombings. Over the war years, many institutions including the Willet-Holthuysen House placed part of their collections here, and closed their doors to the public (Vreeken 235).[3] While the museum was closed, the building was not entirely empty: at the time, it was also used by the University of Amsterdam, who rented some rooms on the second floor to house their art history department.



Figure 2: *The Willet-Holthuysen house as seen from the garden, May 1943. The lowest row of windows belong to the souterrain* (Amsterdam City Archive, photographer unknown).

The students were able to access the building until 1943, when the ongoing war and gas shortages finally forced the university to close.[4] The souterrain was also occupied, as this was the living space of the Boer family. Dirk Arie Boer (1895 – 1976) was the concierge of Herengracht 605 and lived with his wife Helena Sophia Hendrika Boer-Cornet (1905 – 1998) and their daughters Ewalda (Wally) (1928 – 2006) and Carla (1930 – 1996) in the dark and humid basement. [5] Since the museum rooms were no longer used to welcome visitors, a sociographic institute under the name of ISONEVO rented the rooms on the bel-etage. For 100 guilders a month, they were free to use the opulent salons as their offices.[6]

This is where the current knowledge of the war history of the building starts. Hubert Vreeken, who was a curator of the museum between 1992 and 2014 published his extensive PhD Thesis *'Bij wijze van museum: oorsprong, geschiedenis en toekomst van Museum Willet-Holthuysen 1865 – 2010'* in 2010. While his thesis primarily focused on the lives of the building's last inhabitants, he covered part of the war history as well. Vreeken managed to track down two oral sources who told him more about the war history: Henk Heeren, a former employee of ISONEVO, and Hannie Tuinstra, a childhood friend of Wally Boer. Both were able to give an idea of the war efforts that may have happened there. Building upon this research, and using new digitized sources, I will explore in the following sections how both the Boer family and ISONEVO were related to the war efforts.



Figure 3: *The kitchen of the Willet-Holthuysen House* (photograph by Monique Vermeulen).

Resistance from the basement:
the Boer family and Jozef Salomon van der Hal

Today, the kitchen in the souterrain of the Willet-Holthuysen House has been furnished with a reconstruction of an 18th-century kitchen, almost seeming as if time has stood still (figure 1). In reality, from 1939 to 1950, these were the living quarters of the Boer family.[7] Up to now, not much was known about them – despite the multiple newspaper advertisements the museum put out, no relatives of the family were found. What was known was that Arie, besides being a concierge, was also a photographer – the museum even paid for his camera, so he could 'take pictures of paintings and objects'.[8] There were indications that the Boer family may have been involved in resistance activities – Vreeken for instance notes in his research how 'the concierge helped people find refuge' and also mentions that the curators knew the name of one man who was in hiding in the Willet-Holthuysen House: Jozef Salomon van der Hal (235). Contemporary insights now allow us to piece together some of the gaps in information regarding these resistance activities. An interview with Van der Hal from the 1990s has emerged, shedding light on his concealed experiences. Interestingly, this account, omitted in previous studies, accentuates the substantial support provided by the Boer family throughout his clandestine stay.

In the 1990's, there was increasing attention for the stories of holocaust survivors, as the people who lived through the war became older. One of the projects initiated at the time was Steven Spielberg's interview project, which he did together with the USC Shoah Foundation Institute. By using the royalties from his film Schindler's List, the project conducted interviews with survivors from 1995 to 1998 in 34 different countries, leading to an archive of almost 52.000 testimonies. The Jewish Cultural Quarter in Amsterdam selected 2000 interviews of this project that held a relationship with The Netherlands, which can today be viewed in the Jewish Cultural Quarter's library. Van der Hal happened to be one of the people interviewed, which is how his story can be recounted today.[9]

Jozef (Jo) Salomon van der Hal was born on November 3, 1911 in Cuijk. He grew up in a Jewish middle-class family. When the children were in their late teens, the family decided to move to Weesp to be closer to the University of Amsterdam, where Van der Hal wanted to study medicine. He took the train daily with other students from his village, and once, they jumped off the train for fun, hoping to skip the walk to the station this way. The train warden scolded them for it, but as Van der Hal says, anyone feels invincible at that age, and they did not think about the risks.

Van der Hal went on to become a general practitioner in Amsterdam. When because of Nazi laws, non-Jewish people were no longer allowed to visit Jewish doctors, Van der Hal came to be without patients and made an impactful decision: via one of his patients, he got a job at the Hollandsche Schouwburg, the Amsterdam theater where Jewish people were gathered as they awaited their deportation.[10] By working in the theater as a doctor, Van der Hal was promised a durable 'sperre' – an exception document that would prevail him from being deported (De Jong 1044). Van der Hal worked alongside two other doctors, and was supposed to provide basic care to the imprisoned people. At that moment, there was also a resistance movement active in the Schouwburg. Resistance workers combined their efforts to save hundreds of children from deportation by smuggling them out to the daycare across the street in bags or under clothing, after which they would be placed in foster families.[11] Van der Hal himself was part of the resistance movement too – at times, he and his fellow medical practitioners would get the German guards drunk, so they could liberate prisoners through the infirmary. It was a risky endeavor, given that they were under strict control of supervisors and any visibility of their actions could get them arrested. Regrettably, the people Van der Hal freed often reappeared within the Schouwburg in mere days: in many cases, they lost their houses and their friends had dropped them, and they had nowhere to go. Van der Hal recalls this as being very frustrating.

Van der Hal worked at the Hollandsche Schouwburg for approximately 1,5-2 years before he eventually got arrested and ended up in the same theater to await his deportation.[12] As he knew the building well, he managed to access a tiny window in a secluded room. He jumped four meters down to the courtyard, snuck underneath the windows there, and made it over the walls of the property. "I'm not necessarily a very athletic person", Van der Hall states in his interview, "But deadly terror makes your body able to do things it normally couldn't".

From the Hollandsche Schouwburg, Jozef flees to the Willet-Holthuysen House. He describes this as follows:

"That was at Keizersgracht 605, which was the Willet-Holthuysen Museum, and the porter of the Willet-Holthuysen Museum was a patient of mine, the whole family was. They offered me that I could come to them for help in case of emergency. That was the Boer family. They lived downstairs in the basement. The house was an immense building, with a magnificent library, there was an institute for social sciences, and upstairs there was an art academy from a professor, and lots of things happened there, I could go unnoticed. The institute, the Willet-Holthuysen Museum, was located at the Keizersgracht 605 and next to the building there was the Italian Consulate, and that man kind of befriended the Boer family, their kids played together. The kids told the boy from the Italians that they had someone in hiding at home, and so, I was betrayed. A raid came, but it was an immense building, I could easily hide. I saw these guys, the Grüne Polizei were storming in the building, and I was all the way up in the highest attic of the building, so I could easily disappear there. After this I could not stay any longer, so I searched with all my might for a new place to hide, but nobody wanted to take me in" (van der Hal).[13]

Van der Hal continues his story by explaining how Mr. Boer helped him find a new place. Months before, Van der Hal had sent other Jewish people looking for a hiding spot to a family in The Hague, and Mr. Boer went to see if he too could move there. This was possible, and thus Van der Hal made the move, but he was ill at ease as the host family already had several other people in hiding. Unlike cases such as Anne Frank's, in the places where Van der Hal stayed the people in hiding did not remain inside, but roamed the neighborhood. He felt they would attract too much attention having that many new people walking around, and turned out to be right: the house was raided. Van der Hal, who did not look stereotypically Jewish, carried a fake ID under the name Jan de Wit, but the policemen knew this ID was registered as stolen. He was taken to a cell in the local police station, where he miraculously managed to escape during the moment the guards were switching shifts, but as soon as he was outside, he was immediately captured again by a group of marching NSB men. They put him back in his cell, but Van der Hal was not tortured – he was so hysterically mad that the NSB men seemed afraid of him. Van der Hal stated that this all happened on the day 'Mussolini capitulated', likely referring 25 July 1943 (De Jong 308).



Figure 4: *The highest attic of the Willet-Holthuysen House, where Jozef hid during the raid* (photograph by the author).

After the incident, Van der Hal was once again transferred to the Hollandsche Schouwburg. Out of pure chance, his parents were also at the Schouwburg this time, and they were placed on the same transport to Westerbork the next day.[14] When they were boarding the train, Van der Hal stayed behind on the platform as long as he could. His dad urged him to come inside, something Van der Hal scoffs about looking back – as if the train wasn't bringing them straight to their deaths anyway. The guards forced him into the train at the last minute, and in the confusion, the doors were not properly sealed as they were with the other wagons. Between Amersfoort and Zwolle, Van der Hal once again takes a big risk by jumping

off the train, just as he once did in his teenage rascal years. He survived, and immediately started running. To his surprise, the train is stopped, and he is being chased. He ran up to a farm, asking for a bike. The farmer told him he could not give it right there, it would be too risky, but he could cycle to the next bit of forest where he could give the bike in the coverage of the trees. The farmer hopped on the cycle, Van der Hal ran after him, and the farmer kept his word: Van der Hal escaped on the bike. He rode the bike to Nunspeet, where he boarded a train to Amsterdam. He managed to make it to a hiding address in the Queilijnstraat, where he would stay with a communist family until the end of the war. He survived, unlike his fiancé and his entire family.

A Lasting Friendship

Besides Van der Hal's testimony, up to now there has been one other source who confirmed the indications that the Boer family may have been involved in the resistance: Hannie Winterwerp-Tuinstra, a childhood friend of Wally Boer who often visited the family in the stately house. Bert Vreeken interviewed her for his thesis in 2009, where she was able to recall how she and the Boer daughters played Ping-Pong in the marble hallways. The daughters at the time were sleeping on fold-out beds in the adjacent room to the kitchen. About the war years, she recalls how one time, she borrowed a book from the family, but when she opened it at home, she was shocked to find a falsified passport within – she returned the book hastily, never telling anyone what she had found (Vreeken 239). On multiple occasions, Vreeken has tried to find relatives of the Boer family that may have been alive.[15] Bert Vreeken passed away suddenly in 2015, and his extensive research archive is now located within the Amsterdam Museum. His notes show that in 2014, he tried yet again to locate relatives of the Boer family – this time he placed an ad in a Dutch newspaper. A relative of Helena Sophia Hendrika reached out, informing Vreeken that Carla had had two children: Hendrik and Annemarie. The letter he sent them is still present in his archive.[16] For this research, a last attempt to find the children was made, and it succeeded with the help of Facebook: Annemarie, Dirk Arie's granddaughter, had a profile on the site.

Serendipitously, Annemarie had been reconnecting to her family history too at the time we came into contact. She had just visited her grandfather's place of birth and was delighted to hear her family had come up in the research. She noted:

> *"In my family, the time in the museum was often a topic of conversation. My grandfather and grandmother were true resistance fighters indeed, and even my mother Carla contributed, by distributing illegal newspapers on her bike with wooden wheels".*[17]

The Boer family remained in contact with Jo van der Hal throughout their lives. As Annemarie states:

> *"I've talked to him on multiple occasions, and one time he stayed over at my house, to attend my grandmother's 80th birthday party. He has always continued to show gratitude towards them".*[18]

Dirk Arie Boer, notes Annemarie, was arrested once during the war years, because a radio was found during a raid of the building. Fortunately, his resistance activities were not found out, he was freed shortly after. As it turns out, Annemarie had never received the letter Bert Vreeken had sent her, as she said she surely would have replied. Her statement that her mother was involved in the resistance activities juxtaposes with the statement Van der Hal made in his interview, as he assumed the children of the Boer family may have been the reason the house was raided. Both, however, could exist simultaneously: at the start of the war, Ewalda and Carla were just twelve and ten years old – in these five years it's highly likely they matured fast, and may have helped the efforts especially in the last years of the war.[19]

ISONEVO and the Council of Resistance

As previously stated, there was another connection to the house and resistance movements, through ISONEVO, the sociographic institute that moved into the building in 1943. The name was an abbreviation for 'the Institute for Research into the Dutch Population', and officially, the organization was supposedly active with the 'collation of rural monographs'. In reality, it was a cover for resistance activities hosted by the Council of Resistance, as Henk Heeren, former employee of ISONEVO recalled in 2010 (Vreeken 238). The Council of Resistance, or 'Raad van Verzet' in Dutch, was established in 1943 by Jan Thijssen (1908 – 1945), head of the Radio service of the 'Ordedienst' (another important illegal anti-German organization) and six other members of the resistance (De Jong 832). At the time, many different resistance organizations had been formed, and the

"He jumped four meters down to the courtyard, snuck underneath the windows there, and made it over the walls of the property. 'I'm not necessarily a very athletic person', Van der Hall states in his interview, 'But deadly terror makes your body able to do things it normally couldn't'."

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Council was aimed at coordinating all these efforts on a national scale. The management of the council was in the hands of prominent members of the resistance, such as Gerrit van der Veen (1902 – 1944), and the council had access to a private radio server.[20] According to Heeren, while ISONEVO rented the rooms on the bel-etage, these were from time to time used for illegal resistance meetings of the council. Heeren also noted that some of the resistance activities were 'double clandestine', meaning that the workers of ISONEVO did not always inform their superiors of the resistance activities that were going on (Vreeken 238). While Heeren's testimony has been one of the most important sources connecting the Willet-Holthuysen House to the resistance movement up to now, it's also vital to acknowledge that Heeren started working in the building in 1947, thus it would be interesting to see if there were further indications for the Council's presence within their Archive.

The minutes of the Council of Resistance's meetings are understandably cryptic – resistance workers wrote down as little information as possible, referring to locations with house numbers, and to people with fake names or abbreviations. The minutes of the meetings between March and April 1945 were especially interesting. This was the time when the western part of the Netherlands was still struggling with intense food shortages after the so-called 'Hunger Winter', a period during which 22.000 people died because of starvation.[21] Supplying people in hiding with enough food became a critical task of the resistance, which was why the Council of Resistance appointed a 'voedselcommissaris', or food manager, who oversaw

hiding and distributing food in the network. On 20 March, the notes state the following:

> *"Report of the Food Manager. M. gives overview of the events that led to the storage of supplies. In the previous meeting it had been decided to transfer these stocks from 605 to 422 (...) the distribution has, however, been delayed by some misunderstandings, as well as by a lack of bags".*[22]

The minutes further explain the dire situation, noting that 'everywhere around us, cases of hunger are reported, which should be aided individually' and 'to illustrate the situation: in the Hague alone 274 starvation deaths were reported in the last week'. That week, '500 pounds of oats' had arrived, along with '100 kilograms carbid'. It continues on:

> *"Since there is a very high level of traffic in 605, it must be considered desirable to make a certain spread in stocks".*[23]

In these notes, for the first time the street number 605 comes up, which might be related to the Willet-Holthuysen House. Though the document does not name Herengracht as a street name, the mentioning of both the name 'Boer' in one of the later meetings and the right address number does make it likely that it is the Willet-Holthuysen House that the council is referring to. The notes explain how the supplies stocked in '605' should be spread to other addresses because there was too much traffic going on. The Willet-Holthuysen House, at that time no longer open as a museum or university but still the residence of the Boer family and the office location of ISON-EVO, must have had people walking in and out frequently. In a meeting a few days later, the notes continue:

> *"The food supplies are now weighed thanks to the cooperation of 605. Distribution can also now be arranged with the help of 605. However, M. must first have the lists in hand. It appears that the supplies are not enough for 14 days of distribution (...). M. would like to have a special courier at his disposal. However, this one may not know all addresses (...) 605 must have a bicycle at its disposal, for which, however, a tire must be purchased. Permission is given for this".*[24]

If we assume the notes are indeed talking about the Willet-Holthuysen House, this means that at the end of March, the house was used for supplies with the intention of spreading these over multiple locations. It also states that the house was in need of a courier – would it be possible that the Boer daughters may have been involved at this point, and the bike that needed tires was the wooden-wheeled one Annemarie recalled in her mother's stories?

A few weeks later, on 24 April 1945, '605' comes up in the meetings again. This time, the notes seem to indicate a quarrel over supplies:

> *"The chairman returns to the Peters case. He is convinced that we are being deceived by Boer and perhaps also by Heerland. B. reports that he has spoken to Hld. and that the latter has told him, that the Army conducted a search at 605, during which a box of cigarettes belonging to F., was taken. Furthermore, a small quantity of bread, about 10 pieces, was said to have been brought, 6 of which were taken by Nel van Luyn. Initially it was feared that the rest of the bread had disappeared (...) However, last Sunday it turned out that part of the bread had been delivered to 64 (...). However, there was not enough. It made an unpleasant impression on the council that Hld. did not warn P's wife, and likewise that Br. refused to admit anyone in at 605".*[25]

The notes, as cryptic as they are, state that Council feels deceived by Boer and a certain Heerland. Perhaps they doubted whether it was really the army who took the cigarettes, or that Heerland was involved with it himself. The council also was afraid that loaves of bread had disappeared – some of them were delivered at '64', but there was still not enough. It is also interesting that it is noted that 'Br'. refused people entry – as concierge and porter of the house, he would have been able to deny people access, though why this would give the council an 'unpleasant impression' was unknown. Boer's vigilance would be perfectly understandable, given the illegal resistance activities going on in his place of residence. The quarrel leads to another movement of supplies, as the notes continue with 'Mrs. Van der Heyden has alerted Mr. Hendriks. The latter will have the supplies removed by municipal car. 473 is designated as the new storage place'.[26]

As stated earlier, the notes by the Council are intentionally vague, and it is hard to determine what actually happened in the situations described above. If the Boer in the document was the same Boer that lived in Herengracht 605, did he deserve the distrust of the Council in April

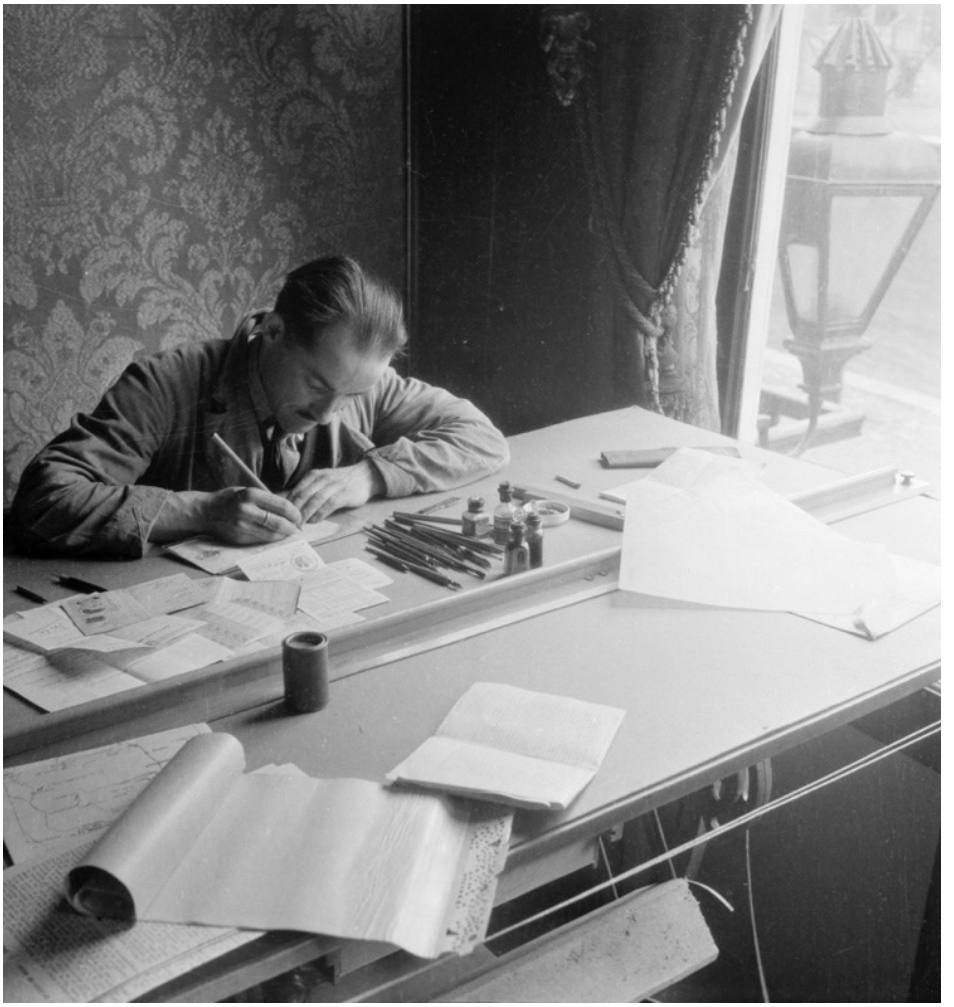


Figure 5*: Forging of passports* (photograph by Cas Oorthuys).

1945? Could the extreme hunger have left him to meddle with supplies out of desperation, or did the ongoing war efforts lead to misplaced paranoia?

Until this point, the discussion has primarily focused on oral and archival sources, yet there also exists compelling visual material pertaining to Willet-Holthuysen's wartime history. This imagery encompasses the activities of the Council of Resistance, captured in a series of photographs by Cas Oorthuys (1908 – 1975), a Dutch photographer who, along with a courageous cohort, risked his life to document the harrowing circumstances in the Netherlands during the waning years of the war. Until November 1944, photography within the Netherlands remained officially permissible, but subsequently, it became strictly prohibited. At this juncture, Cas Oorthuys aligned himself with the clandestine resistance group known as 'The Hidden Camera,' and through his lens, he offers us valuable insights into the bleak realities endured during the hunger winter.[27] As Hekking and Bool state in their publication on the group, 'De illegale camera 1940-1945', using photos



Figure 6: *Printing of Illegal Newspapers* (photograph by Cas Oorthuys).

as historic sources is not without difficulties: a single picture taken out of its context usually does not give a lot of information (20). Luckily, in the case of Oorthuys, there is a bit more information at hand.

In Willet-Holthuysen, Cas Oorthuys shot a series of 20 photographs, that showcase the resistance activities that were happening in the building. One series shows a man sitting at a desk in front of a window on the Herengracht side of the Willet-Holthuysen House (figure 5). The view on the lamppost outside verifies the location. He is surrounded by papers, pens, ink and glue, and working on the falsification of passports, confirming what Heeren stated about ISONEVO's clandestine activities. Upon initial observation, it might seem strange for someone to perform such illegal work in plain view of a window, however, it's crucial to consider that the bel-etage, positioned one floor above street level, makes it challenging for outsiders to peer inside from the street. While the man working on the passports is likely posing, and not caught in the act, there's a good chance this may have been his regular workstation. As Hekking and Bool found in their research,



Figure 7: *A courier picks up illegal newspapers to spread around the city* (photograph by Cas Oorthuys).

almost all close-up images of illegal or high-risk activities are authentic: these were usually taken inside, where people tended to feel relatively safe (25). The other series shows the printing of illegal newspapers in the right front room, where the interior can be recognized when compared to photos of the room in the archive of the Amsterdam Museum. The photos show the printing of the illegal newspaper 'De Koerier', with the date of printing visible in a closeup: April 3, 1945. Especially when looking at the young courier in figures 6 and 7, the story of Carla Boer feels close: like many other young women, she risked her life to spread vital information around, and that at such a young age.

Until now, whether the pictures were taken before Amsterdam's liberation or staged afterwards was unknown – it was however certain that Oorthuys was active in De Ondergedoken Camera since 1944, when he started documenting the horrors of the war. In 1970, he published a selection of his work in the publication 'Het laatste jaar: 1944-1945', in which two photos made in Willet-Holthuysen are published as well (33, 35). A possible



Figure 8: *Sheet from the Contact Album, with both the photo's made in the Willet-Holthuysen House as the ones made in Oorthuys' own house* (by Cas Oorthuys).

source for dating them comes from Oorthuys' own archive. During his career, he and his wife Lydia kept his photos documented in 'Contact Albums' – photobooks in which small square prints of Oorthuys' pictures were collected, so they could easily find the negatives in case they wanted a larger print of the photo. The series made in the Willet-Holthuysen house is archived on the same page as images Cas Oorthuys took of his Jewish friend Nathan Notowicz (figure 8), who was in hiding in his own house from 1944 until the end of the war (Bool and Hekking 26). The Nationaal Fotomuseum, where Oorthuys' archive is kept, therefore assumes the



Figure 9: *Council of Resistance having dinner in Willet-Holthuysen after the war* (photograph by Wim Loopuit).

pictures are taken in the same period, and dates them between 1 December 1944 and 4 May 1945, indicating that they think the photos are authentic images made before Amsterdam's liberation.

A final interesting source is a series of photos that once again connect the Willet-Holthuysen House to the Council of Resistance. These images were unknown up to this research: in the NIOD Archive, their location was documented as 'Ede', a small town in the East of the Netherlands, which may be why they have escaped previous studies. However, at first glance, it is clear that we are looking at the salon of the Willet-Holthuysen house - Louisa and Abraham's uncanny wall furnishings and art objects leave no question there. According to the NIOD, the pictures were part of a series made on the day Prince Bernhard came to visit the Council of Resistance to show his respects, by photographer Wim Loopuit (1900 – 1991). Loopuit at the time had just joined Particam, an abbreviation for 'Partizanen Camera', a photo collective that aimed to document the country post-war. The exact date of the pictures is unknown but seeing as Prince Bernhard did most of his celebratory visits in the summer after the war, it is likely anywhere between May and September 1945.

In the pictures, we see members of the Council of Resistance having drinks and dinner. The tables are full of flowers and bottles of gin, and in

“This research … presents new source material that consolidates our previous assumptions: that the Willet-Holthuysen House during the Second World War was a node in a resistance network, and an example of a building that is deeply connected to Amsterdam’s war history, even if these traces today are not directly visible.”

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Figure 10: *Members of the Council of Resistance in the Hallway* (photograph by Wim Loopuit).



Figure 11: Members of the Council of Resistance opening a bottle (photograph by Wim Loopuit).



Figure 12: *The clock of Louisa and Abraham Willet-Holthuysen clearly stands out on the mantle (*photograph by Wim Loopuit).

figure 9, the man on the left has a cigarette casually tucked behind his ear. The smoking and drinking surely form a stark contrast with the meticulous conservation policies that are upheld in the same rooms today. But taking into account the collective hardships endured by these individuals, coupled with the significant loss of numerous of their friends and relatives, witnessing their embrace of the freedom for which they fought so intensely can fill one with a sense of joy. The photos, though indicating yet another link to between Willet-Holthuysen and the Council of Resistance, do remain somewhat mysterious – it is not unthinkable that the rooms were solely rented for the event, and further research should be conducted here to find out more.

Conclusion

This research set out to dive deeper into the war history of the Willet-Holthuysen house, and specifically to explore whether the house could be seen as a site of resistance. To answer this question, firstly the Boer family history was explored. While it was already expected by Vreeken that Dirk Arie Boer may have helped people to go into hiding in the building, the interview with Jozef Salomon van der Hal now confirms this. Together with the additions made by Dirk Arie's granddaughter Annemarie, it can be concluded that the Boer family indeed spent the war years reaching out

to people to help them, risking their own lives in the process. Next to that, the research also set out to find out more about the connection between ISONEVO and the Council of Resistance. The archives, though intentionally vague, do seem to mention Herengracht 605 as a site of their activities, and also connect the Council to Mr. Boer. Although Boer is mentioned in the context of a supply quarrel too, the notes also indicate that the situation in Amsterdam was extremely dire, and that the food supply chain was chaotic at times– whether Boer may have touched supplies remains unknown, but it is certain that the family kept in lifelong contact with the people they helped. Finally, two series of photos strengthen the connections between the Willet-Holthuysen House and the resistance movement: those by Cas Oorthuys, showing resistance activities, and those by Wim Loopuit, showing the Council of Resistance celebrating the end of the war within Willet-Holthuysen's ballrooms. To conclude, the research thus has shown that Willet-Holthuysen certainly was a place where people risked their lives to care for others.

Naturally, the scope of this study leaves room for further research. For instance: what was the role of Willem Sandberg, curator of the Stedelijk Museum, the then care-taker of the Willet-Holthuysen House? His role in the early construction of the art shelter in the dunes near Castricum and his later involvement in the resistance might be an interesting connection to explore. Moreover, one would like to know more about the photographs of the Council of Resistance: much information remains unknown on when exactly the photographs were taken, and can we see them as further proof of the fact that the Council used Willet-Holthuysen as a hub, or did they only rent the location out for the occasion of the event? The archive of the NIOD too could be further investigated, to see if any other sources relating the Council of Resistance to the Willet-Holthuysen House could come up. If anything, this paper has shown that even topics that may have been deeply studied in the past are worth revisiting. Especially in this day and age, where tracing both information and people can in some cases be easier than it ever was before, paths that led to dead ends in the past may bring surprising new insights, and histories that were long hidden may be brought back to the surface.

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Endnotes

1 Currently, interesting history into the buildings inhabitants over the centuries is done by Thijs Boers, who is curator at the Amsterdam Museum. The house has been a home for multiple Burgomaster families, amongst who Willem Deutz, see Vreeken 263.

2 For more information on the February Strikes, see: Beliën et al. 1995.

3 For more information on the Castricum Bunker, see Schavemaker et al. 2015.

4 The art historical institute, as the department was called, took residence in the building in 1929. See: Vreeken, 207.

5 Whilst the basement is noted as the primary residence of the Boer family, Vreeken states that in 1944 the family moves into some of the rooms on the first floor, as the Art Historical Institute is no longer open. Professor Van Regteren Altena, head of the Art Historical Institute, reclaims the rooms after the war, which led to a discussion with the Boer family (Vreeken 239).

6 Amsterdam Museum Archive, Facturen.

7 Dirk Arie's pension registration can still be found in the city archive in Amsterdam, indicating he started working in Willet-Holthuysen in 1929. Amsterdam City Archive, 5175 Archief van het Gemeentelijk Pensioenbureau, 1962 Bloc-Bogt, 526. archief.amsterdam/inventarissen/scans/5175/1.2.5.1.6/start/520/limit/10/highlight/6

8 Amsterdam Museum Archive, Facturen.

9 The interview with Jozef Salomon van der Hal can be viewed in the Information Centre in the Jewish Cultural Quarter. See for more information: jck.nl/nl/longread/tweeduizend-getuigen-vertellen

10 For more information on the Hollandsche Schouwburg: see Van Vree et al. 2018.

11 The saving of the children was a collaborative effort. One of the main figures in the operation was Walter Süskind, see Roegholt 1990.

12 Unfortunately, Van der Hal does not mention exact dates of when he was imprisoned.

13 Original quote: 'Dat was op Keizersgracht 605, dat was het Willet-Holthuysen Museum, en de portier van het Willet-Holthuysen Museum was een patiënt van mij, die hele familie. En die hadden mij aangeboden dat als de nood aan de man kwam, dat ik daar terecht kon. Dat was de familie Boer, en die woonden beneden in het soutterain. En dat huis, dat was een immens gebouw, met een schitterende bibliotheek, er was een instituut voor sociale wetenschappen, en boven was er een kunstacademie van een professor, er was heel wat te doen, en dat liep niet in de gaten dat ik daar zo langs liep. Het instituut, het Willet-Holthuysen Museum, was op

de Keizersgracht 605 en naast het gebouw was het consulaat van de Italianen, en die man raakte een soort van bevriend met mijn onderduikadres, en die kinderen speelden met elkaar. De kinderen hebben tegen het jongetje van de Italianen gezegd dat ze een onderduiker hadden, nou, toen was ik dus verraden. Toen werd er een inval gedaan. Maar het was een immens gebouw, ik kon me makkelijk verstoppen. Ik zag die kerels van de Grüne Polizei naar binnen stormen, en ik zat helemaal boven in de nok van het gebouw, dus daar kon ik makkelijk verdwijnen. Nou, toen kon ik daar niet blijven, dus ik zocht door weer en wind om een onderduikadres te krijgen, maar niemand wou me nemen'. Jozef Salomon Van der Hal, Visual History Archive, USC SHoash Foundtion Institute, 1995. Seen in Joods Cultureel Kwartier, August 2023.

14 Lists with the names of the people transported to Westerbork are available in the Dutch National Archives, but classified until 2046 due to privacy laws in the Netherlands. The exact date that Jozef Salomon van der Hal and his father Samuel van der Hal (1881 – 1943) and mother Rieka van der Hal-Denneboom (1872 – 1943) were transported to Westerbork therefore remains unknown. Rieka and Samuel died on 3 september 1943 in Auschwitz, see for more information: joodsmonument.nl/nl/page/120607/rieka-van-der-hal-denneboom and joodsmonument.nl/nl/page/120608/samuel-van-der-hal

15 As Vreeken states in his notes: "The daughters are named Carla and Wally Boer. Attempts to find the now elderly women, or any of their relatives, through the city archive or messages on the museum website up to now have remained without results" (239).

16 Amsterdam Museum Archive, Archive of Bert Vreeken, map: 'Correspondentie'.

17 Email conversation with Annemarie, last name known by the author, on 26-07-2023.

18 Ibidem.

19 There are certainly other cases known of teenagers working in the resistance. Such as the ones of Freddie Oversteegen, who joined the resistance at only 14 years old, and her sister Truus Oversteegen, who joined at 16. Truus published a memoir after the war on her experiences: Menger-Oversteegen, 1982.

20 NIOD, 185, 1. Raad van Verzet, 'Doelstellingen en Verklaring van den Raad van Verzet'.

21 Dr. L. de Jong estimated the amount of people that died of the hunger winter at 22.000 (L. De Jong. *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog Dl. 10b* (The Hague 1981). pp 219). This number is confirmed by recent research by Ingrid de Zwarte (De Zwarte, Ingrid. *De Hongerwinter*. Prometheus, 2019, pp. 75) See for more information: 'Slachtoffers Hongerwinter (Cijfers)' *NIOD*, via: niod.nl/nl/veelgestelde-vragen/slachtoffers-hongerwinter-cijfers

22 Original quote: '*Verslag van den Voedselcommissaris. M. geeft overzicht van de gebeurtenissen die, geleid hebben tot het opbergen van de voorraden. In de vorige vergadering was besloten deze voorraden van 605 over te brengen naar 422 (…) de distributie is echter vertraagd door eenige misverstanden, alsmede door een gebrek aan zakken*'. Niod, 185, 1. Raad van Verzet, 2: Map bevattende verslagen van vergaderingen, 20 maart 1945.

23 Original quote: '*Daar er in 605 zeer veel aanloop is, moet het wenschelijk geacht worden een zekere spreading in de voorraden aan te brengen* '. Niod, 185, 1. Raad van Verzet, 2: Map bevattende verslagen van vergaderingen, 20 maart 1945.

24 Original quote: '*De levensmiddelen zijn nu afgewogen dank zij de medewerking van 605. Ook de distributie kan nu geregeld worden met de hulp van 605. M. moet echter eerst de lijsten in handen hebben. De voorraden blijken niet genoeg voor 14 dagen distributie (…). M. zou graag een speciale koerierster ter beschikking hebben. Deze mag echter niet alle adressen weten (…) 605 moet een fiets ter beschikking hebben, waarvoor echter een band moet worden gekocht. Hiervoor wordt toestemming gegeven*'. Niod, 185, 1. Raad van Verzet, 2: Map bevattende verslagen van vergaderingen, 27 maart 1945

25 Original quote: '*De voorzitter komt terug op het geval Peters. Hij is ervan overtuigd, dat wij door Boer en wellicht ook door Heerland bedrogen worden. B. deelt mede dat hij Hld. gesproken heeft en dat deze hem heeft verteld, dat de Landwacht op 605 een huiszoeking heeft gedaan, waarbij een aan F. toebehorende doos cigaretten, werd meegenomen. Verder zou er een kleine hoeveelheid brood, ca. 10 stuks, zijn gebracht, waarvan er 6 zijn meegenomen door Nel van Luyn. Aanvankelijk werd gevreesd dat de rest van het brood verdwenen was (…) Zondag j.l. bleek echter dat een deel van het brood bezorgd was op 64 (…). Er was evenwel niet voldoende. Het heeft op den raad een*

onaangenamen indruk gemaakt dat Hld. De vrouw van P. niet gewaarschuwd heeft, en eveneens dat Br. weigert om iemand op 605 toe te laten'. Niod, 185, 1. Raad van Verzet, 2: Map bevattende verslagen van vergaderingen, 24 april 1945.

[26] Original quote: *Mevr. Van der Heyden heeft hr. Hendriks gewaarschuwd. Deze zal met de gemeente-auto de boel laten weghalen. Tot nieuwe opslagplaats wordt 473 bestemd'*. Ibidem.

[27] See Oorthuys, *Het Laatste Jaar* 2009.

[28] Nederlands fotomuseum CAS-5840: 1 - 8, CAS-5838 1 - 12, see: collectie.nederlandsfotomuseum.nl/collectie/detail/966d71b5-3f4c-3168-6d8d-aa1f96022c0b/media/a84798a0-0010-d06a-6ac5-5de89e7d1c31 and collectie.nederlandsfotomuseum.nl/collectie/detail/59aecf82-b0fd-241f-5a40-d5f9b3a08f7c/media/3c85ef89-c3ce-6340-21c8-be3d3b684ad5

[29] Couriers were often young women – as stated by Wichert ten Have in the introduction of Oorthuys *Het Laatste Jaar*, this was both because there were thought to be capable of diverting the occupier's attention, and because it played into traditional gender roles (10).

[30] Information supplied by Harco Gijsbers, researcher at NIOD, in an email conversation with the author on 24 April 2023. Unfortunately, NIOD does not have further information on the images – a Delpher search did also not yield any results. Further research could focus on the Archive of Prince Bergnhard in the Royal Archives in The Hague - perhaps itineraries of his visits are logged here.

Architecture of Destruction and Healing

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Abstract

On November 29, 2017 Slobodan Praljak, the architect of the destruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990s, had committed suicide. Libraries, bridges, museums, universities, mosques and squares were purposefully destroyed by him. For these crimes – against buildings, public spaces and landscapes – he was not tried. In one of Praljak's 'main acts', he ordered the destruction of the Old Bridge in Mostar. The story of the Old Bridge is that of Mostar's multi-ethnicity. Many books, plays and films have been devoted to it. It was that very story that had to be destroyed. And that was precisely Praljak's expertise. Before becoming a general, Praljak was a creator and manager in the cultural field, like many of his fellow criminals. Slobodan Praljak's actions show us that architecture can be used consciously and unconsciously to dislocate and destroy human relationships and the environment. I call this architectural disaster. Rebuilding is impossible if the disaster is reduced to an individual problem or responsibility, no lessons are learned from it, and the history of violence, exclusion and segregation keeps repeating itself. What are ways to reconnect and build these relationships? How can we work on recovery, so that victims get a perspective for the future?

The Perpetrator

On November 29, 2017 I was in Rotterdam, having a meeting in a café, when I received a text message. I had been nervous all day because I knew the court would be announcing its ruling. Would he get a life sentence, or one of those senseless punishments that war criminals often receive and which leave the surviving victims utterly disillusioned? The text message said: "he has poisoned himself." Nothing more, nothing less. I had seen him years before, after he had just turned himself in to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague. I attended one of the hearings where he was on trial with his fellow war criminals (Mačkić, 29 November 2017). I sat in the public gallery, and to my horror, I was not surrounded by other victims, but by the perpetrators' relatives. I got disappointed when I saw the lawyers and judges staging a legal performance. At no point did the proceedings focus on the future of the affected communities. In fact, the violence continued. Research showed that the criminals at the tribunal were hugely productive while in prison, writing dozens of books disseminating their inhuman nationalist ideologies. So, the punishment achieved little (Horsthuis, 4 juni 2021).

The text message startled me. During the meeting, I kept checking news sites on my phone to see what had happened. Slobodan Praljak was sentenced to twenty years for crimes against humanity, violations of the laws or customs of war, and grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions, specifically murder, willful killing, persecutions on political, racial and religious grounds, deportation, unlawful transfer of civilians, imprisonment, unlawful confinement of civilians, unlawful labor, inhumane acts, inhuman treatment, extensive destruction of property not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly, destruction or willful damage done to institutions dedicated to religion or education, unlawful attack on civilians, unlawful infliction of terror on civilians, extensive appropriation of property not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly, and plunder of public or private property through the third category of joint criminal enterprise liability (The Hague Tribunal, 29 November 2017). Praljak also ordered the destruction of Stari Most (*Old Bridge*) in Mostar, footage of which was televised on news channels around the world. After the sentencing, Praljak stood and said: "Judges, Slobodan Praljak is not a war criminal. With disdain, I reject your verdict," and then drank a bottle of poison. Shortly after, he lost consciousness, and the curtain in front of the public gallery was hurriedly drawn. It felt like a play, a Greek tragedy. The architect of the destruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990s had committed suicide.



Figure 1: *Slobodan Praljak drinks a bottle of poison in the courtroom in The Hague, November 29, 2017* (photograph by International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia).

Destroyed cities have been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. I have memories of air-raid alarms, hiding in the basement, TV pictures of the Old Bridge in Mostar being destroyed, family visits to cities whose apartment blocks are pocked with bullet holes, houses with their roofs blown off, and potholes in the road from artillery shell fragments. This experience showed me that architecture can be used consciously and unconsciously to dislocate and destroy human relationships and the environment. I call this architectural disaster. Landscapes, cities and communities can be destroyed in a fraction of a second; rebuilding and making a new start is the difficult part. It is impossible if the disaster is reduced to an individual problem or responsibility, no lessons are learned from it, and the history of violence, exclusion and segregation keeps repeating itself. What are ways to reconnect and build these relationships? How can we work on recovery, so that victims get a perspective for the future? These questions are what drove me to become an architect and answering them is the core of my architectural practice. How can an architect help to connect and rebuild human and spatial relationships?

The Victim

On November 9, 1993, the Stari Most—Mostar's oldest inhabitant—was destroyed. The bridge and the city were always one. Mostar is named after

“With the bridge gone, Mostar would cease to exist, and along with it the city’s soul. And that is exactly what happened. When Praljak ordered the bridge’s destruction, Mostar seemed to take its last breath of air. The city was a mere mortal; Mostar was dead.”

p. 239



Figure 2: *The destruction of the Old Bridge in Mostar on November 9, 1993* (photograph by Evan Genest, *Two Dishes But To One Table*, 2006).

the bridge keepers, *mostari*, who kept guard from their fortified towers, checking those crossing the Stari Most over the Neretva river. In addition to symbolizing the city and joining its two parts, the bridge also represented tolerance and unity. The city was the bridge, and the bridge was the city. It was a meeting place. For generations, it was the place young couples would meet on their first date, and was where Mostar held its famous annual diving competition. The attack on the bridge was an attack on the concept of multi-ethnicity. With the bridge gone, Mostar would cease to exist, and along with it the city's soul. And that is exactly what happened. When Praljak ordered the bridge's destruction, Mostar seemed to take its last breath of air. The city was a mere mortal; Mostar was dead.

Before it collapsed, the bridge was hit by sixty shells in twenty-four hours. Besides the bridge, other structures that furnished public life were also destroyed: libraries, museums, universities, mosques, squares. The destruction of these places was part of a broader war strategy in which Praljak used the demolition of public and cultural buildings as a means to erase a specific culture and identity. Milan Kundera's description of geno-

cidal strategies in *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (p. 159) are directly applicable to those Praljak and his fellow war criminals employed:

> *"The first step in liquidating a people is to erase its memory. Destroy its books, its culture, its history. Then you have somebody write new books, manufacture a new culture, invent a new history. Before long, the nation will begin to forget what it is and what it was." (Kundera 159).*

The Motive

I have often wondered what kind of person Slobodan Praljak, this architect of destruction, was. Did he have a military past? Did he spend his entire life in a bubble of nationalism and hatred? Did he act out of ignorance, or even stupidity? The opposite turns out to be the case. Before graduating from the film and television academy, Praljak had obtained three university degrees in electrical engineering, philosophy, and sociology. In the 1970s and 1980s, he was director of several theatres, including in Mostar. In her article "The Cultured Destroyers of Culture," Gordana Knezević describes how "the man of culture became a general":

> *"Some of the most notorious acts of destruction of cultural heritage—aimed at removing all traces of the Muslim population from areas of Bosnia that the Croats considered to be "theirs"—were masterminded or carried out by men who before the war had built a reputation as "promoters of culture." (Knezević, 29 November 2017).*

Praljak, it seems, was acutely aware of the consequences of destroying cultural heritage and public architecture. He knew very well that architecture could become part of his war strategy precisely because he had gained so much knowledge and experience in the Croatian and Bosnian cultural milieu. His experiences taught him its symbolic value and significance. By obliterating important public places that made the city vibrant and tolerant, spaces where it didn't matter what your religion or ethnicity was—because one was always a *Mostarac* or a *Mostarka*—Praljak knew that he would also erase Mostar's identity. Praljak knew Mostar well and fully understood that the Old Bridge and its significance were integral to the identity of the city's inhabitants. The bridge was always there, not only as a structure in the city, but also as a cherished icon depicted in the many tattoos, paintings, sculptures, embroideries and key rings of *Mostarce*

and *Mostarke.* And among the residents, whether Bosniak or Croatian, the bridge's significance transcended religion. The book *Mostar '92 Urbicid* cites Džemal Čelić's explanation for the destruction of Mostar's bridges:

> *"Studying the old bridges, we shall experience and understand the whole history of our country where bridges appear as road signs of positive movements of culture and civilization in any span of the times passed. Therefore we cannot accept their destruction in the latest war as a result of strategic necessity, but as a violence against the identity of our peoples." (Čelić in Šego et al. 27).*

The Target

Because the Old Bridge was built during Ottoman rule (and was therefore Turkish/Islamic), Praljak associated it with those people who had an Islamic background, as if the bridge belonged to them. However, it belonged just as much those of Croatian descent. The destruction of the Old Bridge and the killing and purging of Muslims destroyed any possible kinship between the Croats and Bosnians. The two religious groups were physically separated from one another and any breath of connection, multiculturalism, and tolerance eradicated.

After the war, Mostar was further segregated, and architecture and public areas were used to appropriate space in the city for singular ethnic identities. In her dissertation architectural historian Emily Gunzburger Makaš writes about post-war identity politics in Mostar: "Within the city, on the other hand, the Islamic Community and especially the Catholic Church and clearly Croat institutions, have used architecture to reinforce distinct identities and manipulated it to accentuate national differences and clearly mark national territory" (Makaš 337). Many religious symbols and monuments, especially on the Croatian western side of the town, were added to public space; streets were renamed often with nationalistic significance; and ethnically and politically-colored institutions were given prominent places in the city. The two groups now live separately, each with their own schools, history books, hospitals, postal services, football clubs, and so on.

Stari Most was rebuilt in 2004. It looks the same as before the destruction, only a little cleaner and paler. The Old Bridge was rebuilt in the way monuments used to be built. But to build it this way only reinforces Praljak's and his fellow war criminals' aims. After all, they destroyed not only the site but also the residents' experience of the bridge. The Old Bridge

was a place from where you could look past differences and where common experiences could be shared. Praljak destroyed this place, just as all the city's places have been destroyed. Mostar will never be the same again. The bridge now symbolizes the separation of the two parts of the city and contains an abundance of fragmented, imaginary, self-proclaimed, and self-imposed memories. The goal seems to have been achieved.

Counter-Attack

I was born in Čapljina, just like Slobodan Praljak, on the Bosnian-Croat border. During the war, Praljak and his fellow war criminals also took over this city, expelling the non-Croatian population and setting up concentration camps for the Bosnians. Praljak was in charge of Camp Dretelj, where my father was imprisoned. When I was in Čapljina last year, I saw graffiti on an apartment building near my old house that portrayed Praljak's face, along with his last words before drinking poison. Many in Čapljina still consider him a hero. I feel increasingly uncomfortable in Čapljina's public spaces. After the war, I spent a lot of time there because Bosnian Croats still occupied our house in Čapljina. In the summers we spent in Mostar, I got to know the city better, and the fierce divisions in the city became apparent. I learned that



Figure 3: *Graffiti drawing of Praljak in Čapljina, Bosnia and Herzegovina.* Text reads: "Slobodan Praljak is not a war criminal. With disdain, I reject your verdict." (photograh by Arna Mačkić).

some parts of the city were out of bounds since my surname would reveal my Islamic background. But as I got older, I began exploring both parts of the city because I refused to participate in the politics of division.

Architects and architecture critics are eager to discuss, criticize, celebrate, or loathe new buildings. Yet when buildings, monuments or even entire neighborhoods and cities suffer deliberate destruction, they are less vocal. Indeed, the architect's responsibilities should also include understanding why and how destruction takes place and the possible responses. How can an architect help to connect and rebuild human and spatial relationships in a city like Mostar, where many monuments, cultural buildings and institutions, and public meeting places have been destroyed, and where new monuments and buildings are ethnically divided?

Looking Pain in the Eye

One way to connect and build is to look the painful past in the eye and to look for new ways of living together with affected communities. For doing this I sought inspiration from Stari Most, which is both the pain and the pride of the city. One of Mostar's most important historical traditions is diving from the Old Bridge, which first took place in 1567. It used to be a ritual in which young men would dive from the bridge to prove their masculinity and impress young women, but later became a tradition that was carried over from one generation of Mostar men to the next regardless of religious belief. The diving competition still takes place annually, with renowned high divers (both men and women and from different religious backgrounds) coming from around the world to take the plunge. For Mostar, it is a tradition that stems from the city's origin and being. Even after the war, with the Old Bridge gone and before a temporary cable bridge appeared, a platform was created from which people could dive.

Since the Old Bridge is now part of Mostar's eastern half, which is mostly home to Bosnians, Croatians from the city's western side hardly visit the bridge. Although the Old Bridge's unifying significance has ceased, its age-old diving tradition could play a role in restoring the unity between different religious groups. To investigate this, I designed a speculative diving school on the border of the western and eastern part of the city where residents can learn to plunge into the water from a great height. It is an urban activity for all residents of the city, regardless of nationality, religion, gender or age.

The diving school would be situated opposite a high school where students with a Croatian, Islamic, and international background study (although classes are still segregated). It is freely accessible and has no win-

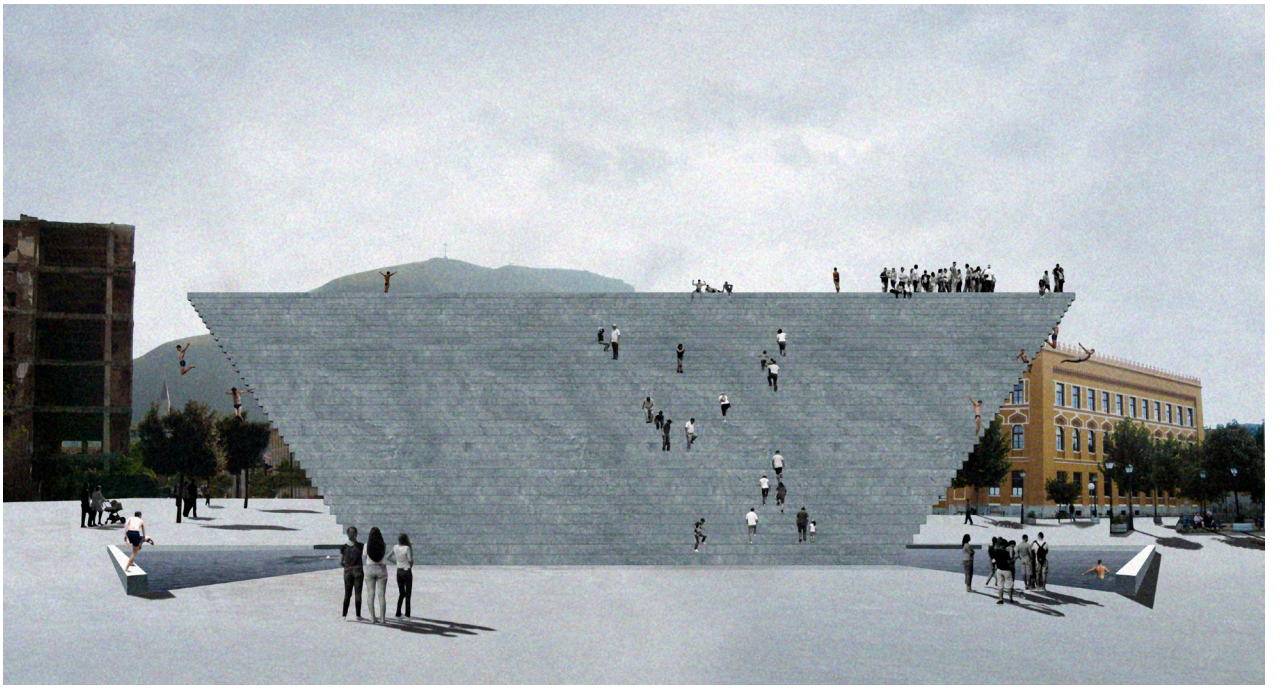


Figure 4: Arna Mačkić, *Design of a speculative diving school* in Mostar (back), 2019 (by the author).

dows, doors, or roof. Its access is a vast inverted trapezoidal staircase that ascends to create two protruding points on either side. The fifty-centimeter steps encourage learning higher diving in half-meter increments. The steps also function as a tribune where people can sit and gather. Swimming and diving teach Mostar's inhabitants to keep their heads above water, literally and figuratively. The three-second plunge into the water gives a feeling of weightlessness and freedom, disconnecting you from everything around, including Mostar's fraught public space.

In Practice

I never intended to realize my design of the diving school. Rather, the idea was to propose new, collective public space that would encourage discussion among Mostar's residents and authorities. What kind of public space is desirable? Do we want a public space that connects different—now estranged—groups? Are we able to meet the other through shared experiences? Is my proposal a good example of this?

My book *Mortal Cities & Forgotten Monuments* was translated into Bosnian the week after Praljak drank poison to kill himself. Mostar was tense. Praljak's supporters were honoring him with candles and flowers and shouting nationalist slogans in the square in front of the cultural center where the book launch would take place. The situation was uncomfortable. Not only because of my family's suffering through Praljak's crimes,

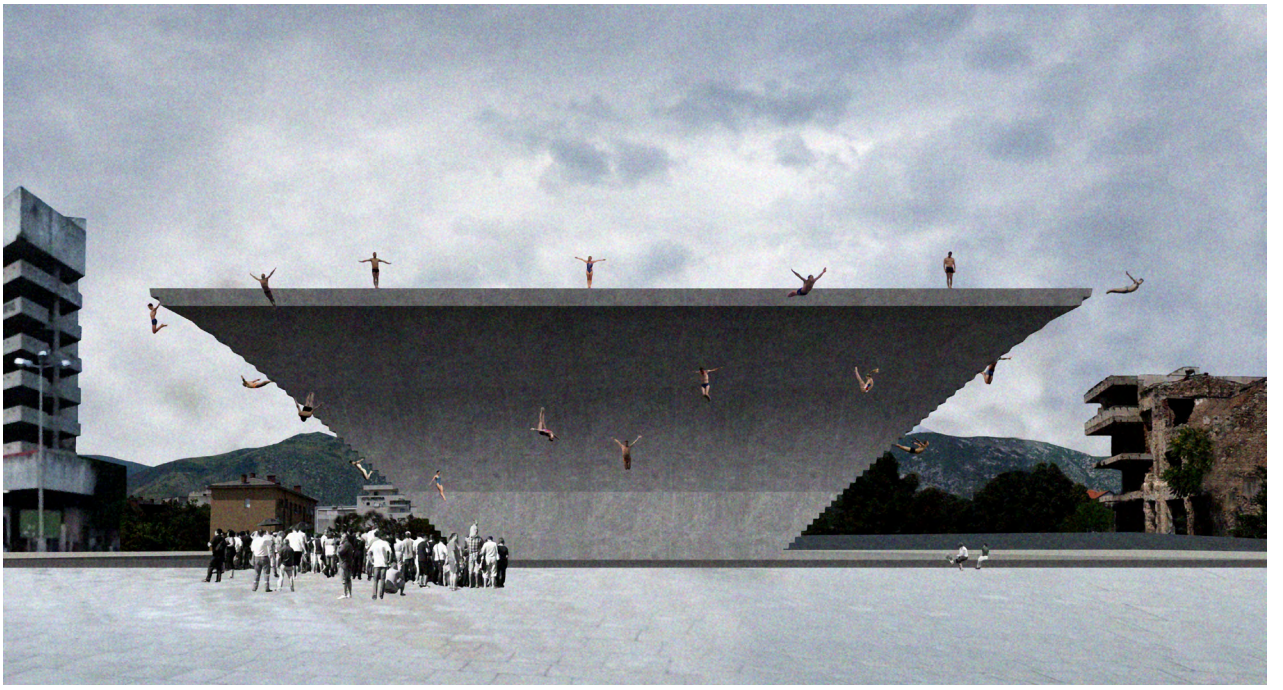


Figure 5: Arna Mačkić, *Design of a speculative diving school in Mostar (back),* 2019 (by the author).

but also because I was promoting a book about connecting architecture and humanity in a context where unity was hard to find. The event had a somber atmosphere, with just a handful of people in the audience, most of whom were family members. Those gathered asked hardly any questions, and there were no comments about my proposal. Anxious and despondent about what was going on outside, everyone seemed numb and afraid to talk about connecting to others through public space.

However, my impressions changed the following day. Aida Kalendar, director of the NGO Akcija Sarajevo, organized a diving workshop for children at a nearby bathhouse. Local hero Lorens Listo, multiple winner of Mostar's annual diving competition, gave lessons to a group of children from both sides of the city. Naturally, the children were thrilled. Listo taught them diving techniques and also about the tradition's significance for the city. Despite their different perspectives and backgrounds, the shared, playful experience of learning to dive and discussing history inspired togetherness. A few years later Listo started his own diving school in which he teaches diving to teenagers from Mostar as well as from the Bosnian diaspora. And last year, a training platform for diving was built next to Stari Most on the initiative of Listo.

My design did not lead to its physical realization, but to a process in which people from the local community, such as Lorens Listo, started to implement the design in their own way. In this implementation, a new



Figure 6: *Diving workshop in Mostar, led by Lorens Listo* (photograph by Jan Konings, 2015).



Figure 7: *Diving workshop in Mostar, led by Lorens Listo* (photograph by Jan Konings, 2015).

generation has committed itself to the city and thus acquired a face, a generation that playfully learns to look beyond differences and that develops both physically and mentally.

Public Center for Architectural Disaster and Collective Healing

The example of the designed diving school has given young people a perspective for the future and has reconnected them with each other. The design thus contributes to the recovery of the architectural disaster. But it is an exceptional example, because recovery for affected communities hardly occurs after architectural disasters. Look at the damage caused by earthquakes as a result of gas extraction in Groningen. The gas is no longer extracted, and there are options for compensation and the construction of a new earthquake-resistant house. But the risk of earthquakes is still present and the social structures in the villages are not taken into account in the rehabilitation of houses and villages. How can villages be rebuilt without losing the soul of the villages? How can residents in the area continue to live without the constant fear of tremors and damage to their homes? It is precisely this future perspective that residents should be offered, but this is not what politicians are focusing on. Who can victims turn to for recovery and future perspectives?

The conventional legal system always operates on the basis of a perpetrator and a victim. As much evidence as possible is produced to prove the innocence or guilt of the suspect. Even if a sentence is imposed, the system is not aimed at repairing the damage suffered by the victim and developing a future perspective for them. This traditional legal system is not suitable for healing architectural disaster – the destruction of human and ecological relationships. That is why I advocate the creation of a new institute: *Public Center for Architectural Disaster and Collective Healing*.

The Public Centre for Architectural Disaster and Collective Healing uses the building that housed the International criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia from 2009 to 2017. This is located in the international zone of The Hague, near the Peace Palace and other buildings that deal with European and international justice and security. It was designed for an insurance company by Ad van der Steur in 1953. The classical stone building, with its columns, ornaments and bronze statues, has not been publicly accessible over the past decades. What happened inside happened behind closed doors, and the building's architecture was an expression of monumentality, power, security, inscrutability, and legal tradition. It will literally make space for its new function.



Figure 8: Arna Mačkić, *design of Public Center for Architectural Disaster and Collective Healing* (photograph by Aad Hoogendoorn, 2022).

The strategy for the existing building will be both a break with the past and a reconciliation. To make the Public Centre for Architectural Disaster and Collective Healing publicly accessible, the existing building will be cut down to a large sloping plaza. A new floor will be poured using concrete containing crushed fragments from the demolished building, between and on top of the remaining walls. The floor will be polished, leaving traces of the cut-down walls and built-in furniture visible on the new plaza,

as a reminder of the building's former function. This drawing of memories will give the plaza a human dimension, so that visitors, the public, and other interested parties can walk around between the old building and the new centre.

The centre will enable people affected by architectural disasters (victims, those responsible, and communities) to undergo a healing process with the support of a team of researchers and mediators. These will be specialists from different areas such as architects, lawyers, economists, psychologists, educationalists, heritage specialists, and mediators. The story and perspectives of those affected will play an important role in working towards recovery and positive systemic change in society. There will be five 'Voice Pavilions' where people can share their stories, either individually or in the presence of other affected people and researchers. These will be recorded and documented, and used there as research material. In the 'Space for Collective Healing' work will be carried out with all stakeholders using contextual mediation to develop architectural solutions, possible action to remedy the disaster, and new design methods to prevent similar events from recurring. This form of mediation provides a perspective of the future and of positive change for everyone involved. It creates a dynamic between those responsible, victims, and the communities of which they are part, in which they can discuss the damage in a social, political, economic and historical context.



Figure 9: Arna Mačkić, *design of Public Center for Architectural Disaster and Collective Healing* (by the author).



Figure 10: Arna Mačkić, *design of one of the Voice pavilions* (photograph by Aad Hoogendoorn, 2022).

The *Space for Collective Healing* is definitely not a safe space, but one in which people with differing needs and experiences are brought together and given support in sharing what has happened, listening to one another, and moving towards change together. It is a circular space with a big circular table. Stakeholders are surrounded by a podium with architectural tests on it: full-scale mock-ups, models, materials, produced by the researchers in the 'House of Knowledge Production'. The architectural tests are used to guide the discussion on planning solutions and new design methods.

The *House of Knowledge Production* is one of the biggest additions to the centre. It consists of long raised wooden shelves running alongside the plaza. Here the emotional is transcended and voices, dialogues, and memories are used to store, produce and share knowledge. The material stored on the shelves consists of the shared stories of people affected by architectural disasters recorded in the Voice Pavilions, and stored here in the form of sound recordings, and fragments of objects such as a piece of stone from a destroyed bridge, fragments of wood from broken trees, a beloved kitchen tile from demolished social housing, studies of architectural tests (lifesize mockups, models, materials), and completed studies by the researchers.



Figure 11: Arna Mačkić, *design of the Space for Collective Healing* (photograph by Aad Hoogendoorn, 2022).

Victims of architectural disasters from all over the world can contact the mediation centre. If it turns out that there is enough information to start a mediation procedure, an investigation will be conducted to find out which parties are involved. These could be e.g., companies, architects, governments, developers, investors or communities. The victims are invited to follow the healing process. The gained knowledge and design proposals will be shared with the public, educational institutions and policy makers. This process will not only lead to recovery, but also to a new architectural movement, new fields of expertise and changes in government policies.

The centre is dedicated to the damage caused by *architectural disaster* and promotes positive systemic change in society and in architectural practice. This strategy of intervening in a sensitive location requires an architectural language which doesn't ignore or deny the past, but rather responds to it without judging or imposing truths. A language that looks to the future while simultaneously making use of old location-specific traditions. Clear, elementary and radical, the design creates freedom for the user to relate to it in various ways. I believe this is a prerequisite to facilitate healing and to facilitate a new beginning.



Figure 12: Arna Mačkić, *design of the House of Knowledge Production* (photograph by Aad Hoogendoorn, 2022).

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The Polylogue



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Jolle Demmers

Full Professor in 'Conflict Studies' at Utrecht University. She teaches and writes on theories of violent conflict, boundaries and violence, and technology and war.

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Experienced programmer, writer, public speaker, moderator, and award winning activist with an international law degree, specializing in human rights and failing refugee policies.

Fatima Warsame

Documentary maker, columnist, journalist, and freelance Editor of the Interior at RTL News. She focuses on promoting social awareness and change.

Chris Keulemans

Journalist, writer, moderator, educator and curator, specialized in the impact of war on societies and individuals. He has co-founded Press Now (Free Press Unlimited) and is board member of ASKV (refugee support).

Imara Limon (moderator)

Curator at the Amsterdam Museum, who is responsible for the exhibition 'Refresh Amsterdam #2: War and Conflict'. She specializes in socially engaged artistic practices.

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A Polylogue on War, Conflict, and the City

In this *roundtable*, speakers from various disciplines and perspectives talk about war, conflict and their effects on cities such as Amsterdam. The expert participants examine how the current war in Ukraine has awoken the public's consciousness of war, as well as highlighted various biases. Together they reflect on the positionality and responsibility of institutions when it comes to crises, the dangerous reproduction of tropes, as well as self-reflection as a slow process of change.

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Consciousness of War

IL: I would like to start with the general discourse on war and conflict in Amsterdam. At the beginning of 2022, we were confronted with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Suddenly, everyone was talking about war and conflict. Have you noticed any shifts in the discourse on war and conflict since that moment?

CK: It looks like the war in Ukraine, for right or wrong reasons, revitalized the consciousness of war in cities like Amsterdam. People started talking about the war in ways they have not in years. Just before the Russian invasion of February 2022, people here were putting so much energy into getting life back to normal after COVID. Everyone was so eager to have a good time and get together and enjoy the sun. Yet to me, it almost felt like an act of desperation, deriving from the knowledge that sooner or later, the polycrisis will find us here as well. This war, wars elsewhere, the climate crisis, the inequality crisis. People feel insecure because they know how precarious life can be, especially those who come from, or have roots in, crisis zones; those who have been aware of this for a long time. In general, I think you can draw a metaphorical line between the people in Amsterdam; a distinction between those who do not want to hear any bad news anymore, whether it is about Ukraine, about Sudan, about Ethiopia, about Afghanistan, and those who cannot stop thinking and talking about it. That is very interesting to me. The consciousness of war means that you will either deny it by living and enjoying life to the fullest, or you will have your life imprinted by it 24 hours a day.

SS: Can you maybe clarify what you mean by the overcompensation after COVID of wanting to live life to the fullest, versus the consciousness of what is happening in war-torn areas. I am missing the connection between those two.

CK: I think basically everybody in the city is conscious of the fact that there are wars and crises going on in the world. Of course, many people in the city are not directly affected by them, but everyone, even those who do not want to see any more bad news, is aware that they exists. This feeling of crisis, this feeling of news getting worse by the day. People have different ways of dealing with that. This comes on top of the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. To many people, that period meant: isolation, loneliness, financial insecurity, anger at restrictions, the feeling of going under. Post-COVID, everybody desperately wanted life to get back to normal. Other crises were not welcome. Denial of catastrophes happening elsewhere in the world was a natural instinct for many, an emotional defense mechanism. And yet, we must acknowledge that life will never return to what it once was.

JD: I think it was only one month after the restrictions were lifted that the war in Ukraine hit us, right? There was hardly any break between the relief of thinking we were finally emerging from the pandemic and the total shock of the Russian invasion. For many, it was very depressing to step into a new crisis straight away.

"Everyone was so eager to have a good time and get together and enjoy the sun. Yet to me, it almost felt like an act of desperation, deriving from the knowledge that sooner or later the polycrisis will find us here as well."

Chris Keulemans

Biases of War

SS: I understand the fatigue people felt, even empathy fatigue for Afghanistan, because how long have we been receiving bad news from the region. This can lead to a sense of desensitization with a certain area. Then, six months later, the Ukraine crisis occurred, and the reaction it received was different. I do not know if you can apply the same theory of people being tired of the COVID crisis to their reaction when Afghanistan was happening. Would we say that was also the case then? Personally, I think not. I think it really has to do with this notion of proximity, although it should not matter. The idea in the Ukraine debate was that they resemble us, unlike in the other crisis. But "love thy neighbor" should apply to all human beings; a neighbor being anyone, regardless of whether they live nearby.

When discussing conflict areas and people's reactions to war and conflict, it is more appropriate to examine these practices side by side rather than comparing them to COVID. I am affected by news of war every single day, and some of my family members in Afghanistan have also suffered from it over the past two years. It is grief labor that I have to carry every day. However, I am also that woman that is outside enjoying the sun. Because I have experienced multiple crises, including COVID. I embody the intersection of these experiences, and I do not think they exclude each other. I also do not think that it is always necessary to have first-hand experience or be directly affected by war and conflict to be aware and empathetic. I know many people who are not from Afghanistan but who deal with grief labor the same way. People are very biased in what they consider war. Period. That's it.

JD: I think you are spot on. What counts as war, what is recognized as war, is indeed a significant question. I think there has been quite a difference compared to how this city reacted to previous wars. What struck me was the claiming of space through 'flagging' that demonstrated support for Ukraine everywhere. That is a repertoire of contention that works through an engagement with space. In general, people stick to rather scripted forms of protest events if they want to express their discontent: demonstrations, strikes, blockades, sit-ins. Recently, I have noticed that 'the flag' has been added to this repertoire. The tradition of 'flagging' had already been established through the use of the LGBTQIA+ rainbow flags, for example. However, we now also see it in the Farmers Defence Force community flag, which is the Dutch flag upside down. So, we see this new script emerge where you can apparently express your position on issues by placing a flag outside your window, which I find very interesting.

“People are very biased in what they consider war. Period. That’s it.”

Sahar Shirzad

Suddenly, the colors of the city changed to yellow and blue. That struck me. What does it mean? What am I looking at? What is this signaling? It is not a conversation. It is a form of signaling that is done through the act of flagging. But I do not know exactly what it means. Is it solidarity? What I missed was the dialogue, the narrative, the exchange of ideas.

FW: As you mention flagging, what struck me were the train stations that changed. At Amsterdam Central Station there were prominent signs directing people from Ukraine to go to specific locations or call specific numbers for help. There were people standing there every day for weeks on end, with jackets on, with the Ukraine flag. Their message was: "Do you need help? Come to me". Combined with the flagging, it was not only through our phones that we were confronted with the war; it was also present in our physical surroundings. Society responded very quickly and very warmly to the Ukrainians.

SS: It was the best training for former refugees and people with a migrant background to not feel envy. To embrace pride in these moments and avoid becoming overly upset. To not fall into 'whataboutism'. That is how I felt.

FW: Also, when it comes to the dialogue about war, what I noticed, both personally and as a journalist, is the way that the Ukraine war has been discussed and treated in the media. The urgency that has been given to the war, the way that we have been constantly reflecting on the war, the way that we have been giving voices to different people who had different parts in the war. I do think it is important to note the distinction between this war and others, such as the Palestine/Israel, or Syria and Iraq conflicts. In journalism, it felt like there was a continuous focus on the Ukraine war from February to October 2022, with each news cycle featuring updates and analyses. I notice this war is getting more attention than other people who are being displaced, or other people who are being confronted with the same types of pain and discomfort. As a journalist, you receive pushback, to say the least, when you reflect on this. This resistance, both within journalistic circles and in wider discussions, is the biggest thing that comes to mind in terms of changes since last year.

IL: How would you define pushback?

FW: People say that you cannot compare situations, you cannot compare wars. I have personally noticed a particular way of talking within news organizations when discussing individuals seeking asylum in the Netherlands who are from Ukraine compared to those from various other parts of the world. There has been a notable difference in how topics such as housing arrangements have been addressed for these different groups. It is remarkable to see how people from Ukraine are embraced and welcomed with open arms, which is, of course, very warming. It is not meant to be a competition. It is just that there is a really big difference. The way one of the biggest newspapers in the Netherlands has been writing about housing for Ukrainians in comparison to housing for people who are not from there, is an important example. This is hard to talk about with colleagues, because as I mentioned, they will often say that it is not the issue at hand right now, that we need to focus one issue at a time.

Positions of Institutions

JD: How institutions respond is essential. It is important to note the different asylum regime that is applied to those who come from Ukraine. Soon after the war started, the EU Council implemented a specific Protection Directive, offering expedited stay, residence and work status for Ukrainian citizens. This meant that everyone coming from Ukraine could start working and earning a living within the first year, which is a huge difference with the standard treatment of refugees. It really helped Ukrainians to integrate straight into the Dutch labour market, giving them such a different starting point. EU-Advisor Lodewijk Asscher recently wrote a report in which he pleads to extend this special arrangement for 10 years. It turns out that Ukrainians largely do well in the EU as a result of the rights granted to them under this Directive. This actually shows the impact that different types of institutional arrangements can have on the lives of refugees, on their dignity, and sense of agency. Refugees do much better if they can just start working from day one. So apart from many other reasons, this also helps to explain the different position and reception of Ukrainians in Dutch society.

SS: On top of that, in 2015 there was, what we called, a 'refugee crisis', although there were actually fewer refugees compared to the number of Ukrainian refugees we see now. So how come we all of a sudden have this capacity to absorb such numbers of migrants? It is essential to remember that in 2015, we also witnessed a great display of solidarity for Syrians and Afghans. Amsterdam has always had this character; it is just amplified even more with Ukraine. But even before that, Amsterdam was one of the first cities, where its mayor said: "we will make space for evacuated Afghans". I would say that I was already proud of Amsterdam before these events occurred. As an Afghan, it was heartening to see how my people were received here, especially in comparison to incidents in places like Enschede, where they faced Nazi signs and fireworks. I went to the radio station there and spoke about the difference in reaction towards Afghans and Ukrainians. And there is a word for it, right? It is *racism*. Let's not beat around the bush.

Institutions should address these issues, instead of making it a philosophical or sociological question. I refuse to answer that question, as it tries to theorize inhuman treatment based on appearance. Institutionally, we are excluding people and it affects lives and saves lives and ends lives at this point. Amsterdam is home to undocumented residents, with some living here for over 10, 20, or 30 years. Imagine how they feel seeing the disparities. It is interesting to look at how we can change lives and save lives and

foster broader solidarity without committing discrimination and racism towards those affected by war in our city. These people are already your neighbors; They are already here, and their numbers are significant.

CK: I agree. Over the years, working with ASKV, which is a support centre for undocumented migrants, I have always been curious to see how they map Amsterdam. Needless to say, their city map looks radically different from mine. Anything that costs money is out of bounds, including, for example, Amsterdam Central Station, where the rate for public toilets has been raised to 70 cents. The only public institution that they appreciate and cherish are the public libraries (OBA), where they are free to enter and read, go online, hang out. Why would the libraries be the only institutions that show hospitality to all, regardless of residence permits? Why are they the only institutions where knowledge, beauty, time and space are free to be shared by anyone who happens to be in Amsterdam? Undocumented people have a deep understanding of the city. Any public institution here remains incomplete without including that knowledge.

FW: When we look at the demographic of the city, we find that many have a migrant background. Places such as 'Javastraat' in Amsterdam East are very mixed, culturally speaking, and they are often mentioned as the best parts of the city; people are really proud of these neighborhoods as part of Amsterdam's identity. Yet, it appears to be a case of "accepting the benefits diversity but not the burdens of being inclusive".

SS: Cultural institutions, like those in Amsterdam, can play a pivotal role in educating people on Amsterdam's history as a migrant city. I was in New York City recently, which calls itself a migrant city. Yet, when you look at the history of Amsterdam, it is actually even more of a migrant city than New York City is. Some cities are very proud of the identity where "no one is from there, yet everyone is from there". Museums could really embrace this narrative and educate people. I mean, your ancestors went through the same thing as your Syrian neighbors did.

FW: During the beginning stages of the war in Ukraine, I noticed that the sense of solidarity was mainly superficial. The flags, the Instagram posts — there was little to no risk involved because everyone was doing it. They might as well just participate because they were not losing anything. I feel institutions should take a different approach — one that involves stepping out of their comfort zones and challenging the status quo. They could organize exhibitions on Afghanistan, Somalia, or Palestine, spark conversations beyond the confines of their walls and engage with the city. Or they could issue bold statements or grant artists a carte blanche to do whatever they want to on a certain subject. I feel like taking that risk, going and daring, is one of the things that institutions could be doing differently.

“I feel like taking that risk, going and daring, is one of the things that institutions could be doing differently.”

Fatima Warsame

Regimes of Truth

JD: Although there is a lot of 'easy solidarity', in terms of risks, there is quite a difference in the position of the Dutch government in the war in Ukraine compared to earlier wars. This time, there is a strong sense of close collaboration. We almost portray ourselves as if we are fighting this war. As if we too, are victims. With statements like "they are fighting for our values". This close emotional connection and identification with the challenges that Ukrainians are faced with is full of popular culture tropes. It is almost like a Marvel movie; the portrayal is extremely simplistic, and black and white. I find that very problematic. I would rather see a European Union that aims to use its diplomatic and strategic assets to negotiate a way out of this war.

IL: Can you elaborate on the visibility of the Dutch support for Ukraine?

JD: Well, there are remarkable performances of solidarity from European and American state affiliates, who want to pose with Zelensky, and show that they are 'on the right side of history'. In addition, there is a huge transfer of knowledge, skills and weaponry to Ukraine. Institutionally, the reaction to this war is radically different from other wars we have been involved in. Over the past decades, Western advanced militaries have been actively engaged in wars and violent actions in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, but also in Libya, Somalia, Yemen, Mali, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Georgia, Kenya, and the Philippines. Mostly, these wars were fought 'remotely', from a distance, through the use of air-strikes and drone strikes. But also through 'partnerships' with militias on the ground, who would do most of the killing and dying. The Dutch and the Americans in their military coalitions have been rather secretive about the wars they have been fighting over the past decades. Particularly when it comes to the civilian casualties that result from this violence. A recent report by the 'Cost of War Project' from Brown University estimated that 4.5 million civilians have died as a result of 'the global war on terror' over the past decades, spanning countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Sudan, and Somalia. These figures are rarely mentioned.

As citizens, we are almost never informed about these wars that are being fought 'in our name', but from a distance. Partly, this is possible because there are hardly any casualties 'on our side': no body bags are coming back home. With the war in Ukraine, we are again sort of remotely involved, through the massive supply of arms, but also intelligence, and real-time targeting support. But now the state is extremely public about it. And performs a strong sense of solidarity. Public debate is dictated by

oversimplified Cold War tropes of good versus bad and Russia as the ultimate enemy, and with no room for a more (self)critical analysis of how and why this war broke out, and, most importantly, how it can be ended. I see a powerful narrative that is difficult to critique or challenge. This strong 'regime of truth' cannot be broken. You cannot break the story.

FW: I think the sentiment that I feel is that it really revolves around nationalism. It comes down to the question: "Are you with us or against us?". Even in my work as a journalist, where my sole job is to critique the status quo, to question why we do things the way we do, I see this at play. It is about defining who "us" is, and often I feel excluded from that definition. So, who gets to make these rules?

JD: I have never experienced that so strongly in my life, this sense of what you can say and what you cannot say. When discussing the war's beginning, you have to start with February 24 of 2022; that is when the misery started. If you say, "Maybe we can zoom out a bit and see that it is not just about Ukraine-Russia, but that this is also about NATO extensions, and Russia as the one who lost the Cold War…". This is just not accepted. It is interesting to see who decides on who can speak and who cannot. Who has the authority to say something and who has to shut up.

CK: In wartime, societies tend to solidify. The national narrative becomes all-important. Defense requires unity: dissenting voices will be seen as a sign of weakness, ambivalence, interior disagreement, even treason. But the people of Amsterdam today, regardless of national policy, are not at war. It would be ludicrous for us to entrench ourselves in nationalism and war tropes right now. On the contrary. Taking a warlike stance right now would just invite aggression. Try standing in the street with your fists clenched and shouting abuse – you will attract a fight immediately. People like us, working in the public sphere, should do the opposite. Ask questions, dissent, open up alternative narratives, invite other perspectives. This to me seems to be the only valid option to defend our public space right now.

“This close emotional connection and identification with the challenges that Ukrainians are faced with is full of popular culture tropes. It is almost like a Marvel movie; the portrayal is extremely simplistic, and black and white.”

Jolle Demmers

Slow Processes of Change

SS: Perhaps we should ask the public the inconvenient questions; ask them to reflect on themselves and what their role is in this regime of truth. To see how qualitative their solidarity actually is instead of it being performative. Now, it is a picture, it is a post. Jolle and Fatima, you were speaking on the fact that there is inequality when it comes to the right to labor and inequality between refugees who are and those who are not from Ukraine. We were told that we cannot change things because we do not have the capacity as the Netherlands to let anybody just walk in here and work or study. And then magically, those in power conveniently claim they had the ability to change all along when it comes to Ukrainians. Which is great to me as a legal professional; now we have legal precedents. Legally and institutionally, in the end, it comes down to taking ownership and responsibility in what our role as a city or as a country is within these conflicts.

CK: I do not know if cities or countries have a conscience, but this difference in how we welcome people from Ukraine or Afghanistan, for instance, might have something to do with bad conscience too. Because in Afghanistan, the Netherlands very visibly failed. In the case of Ukraine, on the surface at least, the Netherlands was innocent of the Russian invasion. So, comparatively speaking, it was easier in terms of conscience, right? That, on top of the obvious racism, might explain why the society here and the measures taken by our government aligned to welcoming one people and turning away from the other.

Racism is present and totally explicit. This racism runs very deep, permeating both the institutional and the personal on all levels. As institutions, there are two things you can do to take responsibility when conflict arises. First of all, show more hospitality than ever, including to people that you might not have

welcomed before. Secondly, take a firm stand against racism. I have always believed that cultural institutions should take explicit stands, also outside of their cultural domain, on political and social issues, leveraging the liberty they possess. Standing up against racism is more than sending positive messages of inclusivity; it is about speeding up the frustratingly slow process of transforming your organization, your program and your audience. This is what frustrates me so much about the cultural life in Amsterdam – it is so slow and so much window dressing.

SS: I do think that self-reflection is a slow process. I think we can talk for years about that; what a flag means to us, what solidarity means to us. I think in some cases it is also nice that those processes of self-reflection are slow. There is a difference between the fast and slow pace of what you can do as an institution. As quickly as you can display a flag of Ukraine, which is window dressing, you can tell the whole story about what constitutes as war and who do we include in this story to make it more inclusive. However, I do believe the process of self-reflection, how we can change our attitude towards war, is a slower process. Comprehending what war is, what war is not, and in what wars we should take ownership of, is pretty complex. We have become completely desensitized to the high numbers of casualties and refugees, and I think that it will be a slow process for people to fathom that the character of war has changed if you compare it to a Second World War or a Cold War. Ukraine made it possible for people to self-reflect and think: “What does war actually mean to me?”.



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About the Contributors



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Anita Böcker is associate professor of Sociology of Law and affiliated to the Centre for Migration Law at Radboud University Nijmegen. She has published widely on the social and legal status of labour migrants, the regulation of migration and immigrant integration, and the social working of anti-discrimination law. Her current research interests include retirement migration and transnational ageing, as well as the international recruitment and migration of health workers. Together with colleagues, she authored several publications on the reception of different groups of European war refugees in the Netherlands.



Arna Mačkić
Arna Mačkić is part of Studio L A, which she founded together with Lorien Beijaert. The studio focuses mainly on the design of public space. For L A, the practice of architecture is a device through which to investigate societal issues. Mačkić is the author of the book Mortal Cities & Forgotten Monuments, which has been named as one of the best architecture books of 2016 by the Guardian. Studio L A has won several awards, including the Dutch Design Award 2014, Best Dutch Book Design 2014, the Maaskant Prize for young Architects 2017 and the Groninger Architectuurprijs 2021. In 2022 Mačkić was nominated for the Prix de Rome Architecture with her design for the Public Center for Architectural Disaster and Collective Healing.



Bram Groenteman
Bram Groenteman is a curator and writer. Currently undertaking a dual Master's in Curating Art and Cultures at the University of Amsterdam, his interests lie with national identity and trauma in post-war European art, with a special focus on Germany. His publications include "Selection and Concealment: Gerhard Richter, Wolf Vostell, and the Role of Print Media Imagery in West German Identity Construction", "Black Crows, Not Roses: The Life and Work of Boris Lurie", and "Images of the Shoah in light of the mass media of the German 'Wirtschaftswunder'". He splits his time between Amsterdam, where he grew up, and Berlin.



Chris Keulemans
Chris Keulemans is a journalist, writer, moderator, and educator, based in Amsterdam. He has extensively researched and written about the impact of war on societies and individuals, including the role of the arts. Among other things, he helped found Press Now (now called Free Press Unlimited) to support independent media in the Balkans and beyond. As a journalist he has visited many (post) conflict cities, such as Sarajevo, Qamishlo, Beirut, Prishtina, Algiers and Ramallah. He has been a board member of ASKV, the support center for undocumented migrants in Amsterdam, for many years. In addition, he has held various curatorial and directorial positions within the cultural sector.



David Duindam
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Imogen Mills completed her bachelor's degree in journalism at Goldsmiths College, University of London, in 2018 with a second-class honors degree in the upper division. In 2022 she started her master's degree in Comparative Literature at the University of Amsterdam. She specializes in postcolonial literature and cultural objects. She is currently researching how English and Dutch cultural production deal with their colonial history while also trying to configure a new future for her master's thesis. Alongside her studies, she works as a student cultural programmer at the creative space for the Humanities at the University of Amsterdam, and an intern in the department of Research and Publications at Amsterdam Museum.



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Jolle Demmers
Jolle Demmers is Full Professor in Conflict Studies at Utrecht University. She teaches and writes on theories of violent conflict, boundaries and violence, and technology and war. Under the heading of 'The Intimacies of Remote Warfare' she is currently engaged in research projects on the spatial and temporal reconfiguration of warfare and its blowback effects.



Mark Fenemore
Mark Fenemore has a PhD in German Studies from the University College London. Mark Fenemore has published three books: Sex, Thugs and Rock 'n' Roll, exploring youth subcultures in East Germany, Fighting the Cold War in Post-Blockade, Pre-Wall Berlin and Dismembered Policing of Postwar Berlin. Other projects explore education, media, espionage and psychological warfare together with ethnic transvestism (or cultural appropriation), catfishing and serial killing. Keen to explore power structures from below as well as from above, he has developed his own mode of urban history as an expression of the history of mentalities. He is particularly interested in how the pressures and pains of defeat and occupation shifted into the new and challenging cold war, with its liminal and destabilising (still) open border in the divided and wounded city.



Noa Roei
Noa Roei is Assistant Professor at the Department of Literary and Cultural Analysis, University of Amsterdam. Her research focuses on the politics of aesthetics in relation to images of conflict and war. Her book, Civic Aesthetics: Militarism, Israeli Art, and Visual Culture (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017) presents the multifaceted representations of militarism in contemporary Israeli art.



Sahar Shirzad
Sahar Shirzad is an experienced programmer, writer, public speaker, moderator, activist, and lawyer with an international law degree, specializing in human rights. She focuses her expertise and skill on various facets of failing refugee policies. She has worked with numerous cultural institutes and non-profit organizations to achieve great (social) impact. Amongst other things, she is founder of 'Refugee Millennials', a platform for former refugees who have been living in the Netherlands for over twenty years.



Senka Milutinović
Senka Milutinović was born in 1999 in Belgrade, Serbia. They are a researcher, a writer, a tutor at the Research Station of Willem de Kooning Academy (WdKA), and a multimedia designer currently based in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. They graduated with a BA in Graphic Design with an Honors degree from the WdKA in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Their work has been shown all over the world, from Taipei to Belgrade. In addition, they have held workshops focused on writing and image-making at Worm Rotterdam, WdKA and KCB (Belgrade). For their work they have received multiple awards, both for individual and collective projects.

Tamara Soukotta
Tamara Soukotta completed her PhD at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam (2023). Her dissertation, titled "The Past in the Present: Segregation and relational peacebuilding in Ambon" is a decolonial investigation on (religious) segregation and peacebuilding processes in Ambon in relation to the 1999-2004 wars.



Tom van der Molen
Tom van der Molen studied art history at the University of Amsterdam and works as a curator at the Amsterdam Museum. He specializes in 17th-century Amsterdam painting and is interested in how history is written and what role art plays in the perception of history. He is also a PhD student with Prof. Dr. Volker Manuth at Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, working on a dissertation on Govert Flinck that is projected to appear in 2023.

Editorial Board



Emma van Bijnen
Emma van Bijnen is a lecturer at the University of Amsterdam, as well as an independent researcher and writer with a doctorate in discourse and argumentation. She specialises in multidisciplinary with a focus on common ground and communication in conflict (resolution), as well as in/exclusion and multimodality in persuasive communication. In addition, she is the Research and Publications Officer at Amsterdam Museum, and the Editor-in-Chief of Amsterdam Museum Journal.



Margriet Schavemaker
Margriet Schavemaker is professor of Media and Art in Museum Practice by special appointment at the University of Amsterdam. She is an art historian and philosopher, who specializes in modern and contemporary culture and museums, with a special focus on counterculture, feminism, diversity and inclusion. In addition, she has been the artistic director of the Amsterdam Museum since 2019.



Vanessa Vroon-Najem
Vanessa Vroon-Najem is a researcher, curator, writer, lecturer, and moderator. She obtained a Ph.D in Anthropology at the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research, and is currently a member of the Academic Staff, Educator Co-Creation, as well as Post-Doc Researcher at the University of Amsterdam. In addition, she is Director of Diversity and Inclusion at the Amsterdam Museum.



Judith van Gent
Judith van Gent is an experienced Dutch art historian, curator and author. On top of her broad knowledge of art history, she specializes in the Dutch painter Bartholomeus van der Helst. In addition, she is the head of Collections and Research at Amsterdam Museum.

Special Thanks

Rowan Stol
Who played an important part in the conceptualization of the Amsterdam Museum Journal.

Elin Immerzeel
Who provided procedural support and lent her linguistical support as copy editor.

Julia Bakker
Who provided procedural support, including her great organizational skills.

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Who provided some much-needed procedural support in the final stages of this issue (and contributed to the journal herself).

Katharina Klockau
Who managed our budget and proved herself to be a gifted trouble shooter.

Isabelle Vaverka
Who, as the designer of the editorial formula of the Amsterdam Museum Journal, is responsible for the innovative visual layer of this edition.

Patrick de Bruin
Who, through his hard work, keen eye and visual knowledge, was able to marry all the academic content with the journal's design.

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What's On

Refresh #2: War and Conflict

At Amsterdam Museum
Opens on October 7th, 2023

Refresh Amsterdam is a biannual art manifestation initiated by the Amsterdam Museum. Together with leading art- and cultural institutions in the city, the exhibition highlights works from contemporary artists specially made after an open call on a certain theme regarding city culture. This year, the theme is War & Conflict. This edition exhibits work from twenty artists from different disciplines, selected through an open call. Through their work these artists portray how war and conflict throughout time and across the globe influence Amsterdam

City at War: Antwerp, 1940–1945

At MAS (Museum aan de Stroom)
Opens on September 8th, 2023

This exhibition at the MAS, Antwerp, focuses on the city during the Second World War. Antwerp was particularly hard hit by the war. Nazi terror, persecution of Jews and military violence killed 25 000 people. The exhibition brings to life the society of the time with symbolic places and personal stories and objects of Antwerp citizens. Stories of discord, powerlessness, betrayal, violence, but also of courage, resistance and help. Stories which are never to be forgotten.

Ukraine: The Road to Freedom

At Kamp Vught
Open until January 7th, 2024

In the photo exhibition 'Ukraine: the Road to Freedom' the fight against Russian dominance is portrayed through eleven Ukrainian photographers and one videographer. A fight that did not just start during the Russian invasion in 2022 but has actually continued on for decades.

The Future of the Dutch Colonial Past

Published December 2023 by Amsterdam University Press

Edited by Margiet Schavemaker, Pepijn Brandon, Karwan Fatah-Black, Wayne Modest, Imara Limon, Emma van Bijnen.

In the past few years some significant developments have taken place in the social, cultural, and political landscape of the Netherlands regarding its dealings with the Dutch colonial past. This book is born out of a shared need to (self-)critically reflect on the ways in which Dutch museums, archives, and universities have been engaging with the Dutch colonial past. The aim is to initiate and add to discourse, share ideas, and discuss the challenges and lessons we have learned. On top of the critical essays, short provocations, interviews and round table, artist and designer Raul Balai provided the content with a graphical layer in which one of the most basic rules of Western bookmaking is being inverted.

The Temporary Protection Directive. Central Themes, Problem Issues and Implementation in Selected Member States

Published September 2023 by Ipskamp Printing

Edited by Sandra Mantu, Karin Zwaan and Tineke Strik

Directive 2001/55/EC on temporary protection was adopted on 20 July 2001 as the first instrument of the Common European Asylum System. The directive was activated for the first time on 4 March 2022 by a unanimous decision of the European Council after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The book examines how selected EU states apply the provisions of the directive, what problem issues are relevant in practice and how protection needs are met in EU states.

Nonhuman Witnessing: War, Data, and Ecology after the End of the World

Published February 2024

Written by Michael Richardson

In Nonhuman Witnessing Michael Richardson argues that a radical rethinking of what counts as witnessing is central to building frameworks for justice in an era of endless war, ecological catastrophe, and technological capture. Dismantling the primacy and notion of traditional human-based forms of witnessing, Richardson shows how ecological, machinic, and algorithmic forms of witnessing can help us better understand contemporary crises.

Taboo in Cultural Heritage: Reverberations of colonialism and national socialism

Organized by the Amsterdam School for Heritage, Memory and Material Culture, Open University and the Reinwardt Academie, University of the Arts.

February 1–2, 2024.

The Open University's international conference aims to reflect on the concept of taboos in relation to cultural heritage in the context of colonialism and national socialism and their reverberations in society. What can the dynamics of taboo convey about today's globalizing world? How have taboos shaped (and continue to shape) and impacted the process of cultural heritage making? How do taboos generate heritage dissonance (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996)? How does the concept apply to 'difficult heritage' (Macdonald, 2009)? How do/could/should cultural heritage professionals deal with questioning the display, adjustment or removal of such 'burdened heritage', and is every heritage professional and scholar 'allowed' to address every topic?

Closing Symposium of Decolonial Dialogues @ Humanities

Organized by Decolonial Dialogues@Humanities, at University of Amsterdam (auditorium)

January 24th 2024

With this symposium, the University of Amsterdam (Faculty of Humanities) will formally close the project 'Decolonial Dialogues@ Humanities'. During the symposium, the results of the yearlong programming in the 'VOC-zaal' in the Bushuis (former headquarters of the Dutch East India Company) are presented. Together with faculty, students and participants, we will reflect on the project's central themes of decolonization and in/ exclusion within the academic context. The program will consist of talks and performances, as well as the presentation of the project rapport, which includes the possible scenarios for the future of the room itself.

Living with War

Organized by ICMEMO International Museum Amsterdam

November 1-5 2023

The conference focuses on the long-lasting (psychosocial) impact of both historical as well as current events. It adopts an interdisciplinary approach with ample room for challenging insights, stimulating visions, discussion and interaction. By offering varied experiences for education, changing perspectives, reflection and knowledge sharing, museums can improve their role as learning spaces.

Call for Papers Issue #2: Deconstructing Gentrification

The second issue of the online, peer reviewed Amsterdam Museum Journal (AMJournal) is devoted to the impact of gentrification in urban spaces (published open access in 2024). As the city museum of Amsterdam, how gentrification shapes cities and their inhabitants, greatly matters to us. In fact, we consider it our responsibility to explore and reflect the replacements and displacements in the city we present and represent, as we have previously done through co-creation and exhibitions (Welcome to the Northside).

Neither gentrification, nor the study thereof, is new; its manifold processes and products have affected the ways people live, interact, build, and collaborate throughout our shared histories. This edition aims to present a fresh, intricate, and multi-layered exploration of this pertinent subject matter, by which we can elevate the academic discourse to new heights. By embracing and incorporating this inclusive approach, this edition of the AMJournal ensures a more comprehensive examination of the gentrification of cities.

To achieve this goal, AMJournal invites qualitative and quantitative researchers from all disciplines to contribute. From art scholars, who can shed light on artistic activism, design and the aestheticization of gentrified urban spaces, to political scientists, who may delve into the policymaking and neoliberal urbanism. Research on historic preservation may uncover the impacts of gentrification on the tangible and intangible (cultural) heritage of cities, while insights from finance and economics can illuminate the interplay between capital, culture, and the sharing economy. This variety of voices and research perspectives helps us fulfill our mission of fostering multivocality and multidisciplinarity, by which we enrich our understanding of this multilayered subject matter.

AMJournal, highly values author accessibility. As such, AMJournal welcomes contributions from authors representing all academic disciplines and at different stages of their careers, including junior researchers and freelance scholars.

Deadline:
1st of November 2023,
23:59 PM CET

Suggested research topics include:
Gentrification and...

1. Artistic activism
2. Urbanism
3. Collective memory
4. Design
5. Co-creation
6. Cultural heritage
7. In/exclusion and belonging
8. Power asymmetries
9. Public discourse and narratives
10. Performance/performativity
11. “Gentry” in specific urban areas
12. Displacement and replacement
13. Financial (in)equity
14. Urban renaissance and recessions
15. Rural-urban migration
16. The role of cultural institutions
17. Linguistic diversity
18. The aestheticization of spaces
19. Ethics
20. Counterculture

(Note. This list is not exhaustive)

Call for Papers Issue #2: Deconstructing Gentrification

Types of contributions

For edition #2 **"Deconstructing Gentrification"**, AMJournal calls on authors from all disciplines to submit abstracts for the following contributions (deadline 1st of November 2023).

The Short Essays
2000 – 4000 words excl. abstract, key words, reference list, and endnotes
The essay is relevant to the current edition. Specifically, the essay provides a valuable contribution to the literature and polyphony that surrounds the theme. Authors should be explicit as to their own positionality, as well as the positionality
of their contributions in the broader academic space and public discourse. As such, authors present a clear thesis statement in the text for which they offer sufficient reasoning. The argumentation in support of the thesis statement is embedded in existing academic literature. As such, essays should be well referenced and include a clear theoretical framework.

The Long Essays
4000 – 6000 words excl. abstract, key words, reference list, and endnotes
The essay is relevant to the current edition. Specifically, the essay provides a valuable contribution to the literature and polyphony that surrounds the theme. Authors should be explicit as to their own positionality, as well as the positionality
of their contributions in the broader academic space and public discourse. As such, authors present a clear thesis statement in the text for which they offer sufficient reasoning. The argumentation in support of the thesis statement is embedded in existing academic literature. As such, essays should be well referenced and include a clear theoretical framework.

The Empirical Papers
2000 – 6000 words excl. abstract, key words, reference list, tables, figures, and endnotes
The empirical papers present studies that are based on empirical analyses (e.g., data driven research, case studies, experiments). Authors present a defined research questions or hypothesis that is relevant to the current journal edition, which they explore by means of analysis. The qualitative or quantitative research results are presented and discussed with demonstrative or illustrative examples selected from the data/corpus/cases studied. The article provides a clear theoretical framework and methodology for research and follow the standardized structure for research articles (introduction, theory, methodology, results/analysis, discussion, conclusion).

Abstract Submissions

Submit an abstract of your contribution (max. 400 words excluding references and end notes) plus four key words. Submit the title page and the abstract as two separate documents. On the title page, makes sure you mention 1. your full name(s) and contact information, 2. the discipline(s) in which you (and your co-authors) operate, 3. the text's full (working) title and a running title (five words max.), 4. the type of contribution, and 5. if you qualify for the Best Paper Prize. Note, all abstracts undergo double-blind peer reviewing. As such, all abstracts should be anonymized/ pseudonymized.

The Best Paper Prize
To encourage contributions by junior[1] and freelance scholars, a Best Paper Prize is awarded each edition. The contributor of the winning contribution will be awarded
a certificate and 350 euros.

Abstract Deadline
Submit your abstracts before November 1st, 2023, 23:59 PM CET to journal@amsterdammuseum.nl.

[1] PhD, MA, MSc, and rMA students

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