

International Conference
"Postcolonial, Decolonial, Postimperial, Deimperial"
Book of Abstracts

Hosted by

University of Rijeka
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Project REVENANT—Revivals of Empire: Nostalgia, Amnesia, Tribulation
ERC Consolidator Grant #101002908

Sveučilišna avenija 4
51000 Rijeka, Croatia, EU

May 15 — May 17, 2024

Conference room F – 006
(Opening, Keynote Lectures, Closing)

Classroom F – 138 and F – 139
(Parallel Panel Sessions)

Online Event: May 21, 2024



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International Conference: "Postcolonial, Decolonial, Postimperial, Deimperial"
May 15 — May 17, 2024; Online Event: May 21, 2024

The Conference was organized and hosted by **Project REVENANT—Revivals of Empire: Nostalgia, Amnesia, Tribulation** (ERC Consolidator Grant #101002908), based at the **University of Rijeka, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences** (Sveučilišna avenija 4, 51000 Rijeka, Croatia, EU).

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POSTCOLONIAL, DECOLONIAL, POSTIMPERIAL, DEIMPERIAL International Conference Program

May 15th 2024

9:00 – 9:15 | Welcoming Remarks | Room F – 006

University of Rijeka, Vice-rector for Science and Arts, Mr. Gordan Jelenić, Full Professor, Ph.D.

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Dean, Mr. Aleksandar Mijatović, Full Professor, Ph.D.

9:15 – 10:00 | Analytical and Hermeneutic Concerns in the Postempire (with a Concluding Note on the Critique of Violence) | Room F – 006

Opening Address by Dr. Jeremy F. Walton, ERC REVENANT, Research Group Leader

10:15 – 11:45 | Decoloniality Thirty Years Later: What Was Lost, What is to be Kept, and Is There a Future? | Room F – 006

Keynote lecture (I) by Dr. Madina Tlostanova, Professor of Postcolonial Feminisms at Linköping University, Sweden

12:45 – 14:45 | **Panel 1: Powers of Imperial Nostalgia** | Room F – 138 Chair: Ivan Flis

Karolina Ćwiek-Rogalska and Karina Hoření: Industrial Specters Interwoven with a Carpet: a Story of Postimperial Nostalgia in Northern Bohemia

Nagihan Haliloğlu: Turkofuturism or Decolonizing the Future in Halide Edib's Yeni Turan

Paul Silverstein: Once Were Warriors: Colonial Mimesis, Martial Masculinity, and Imperial Nostalgia in Amazigh Morocco

Patrycja Pichnicka-Trivedi: When the Vampires of the Empire Rise: Imperial Nostalgia in the 21st Century Russian Vampire Narratives

12:45 – 14:45 | **Panel 2: Infrastructures, Legacies, Duress** | Room F – 139

Chair: Dragan Damjanović

David Leupold: The Forgotten Rival to Stalin's City: Mkrtich Armen's Yerevan (1936) as Yearning for the Precolonial Past and Anticipation of the 'New East' ('Nor Arevelk')

Jelena Seferović: The Dichotomy of Austro-Hungarian Colonialization: Exploring the Medicalization of Dying and Death in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Jovana Milovanović: Hungarian Imperial Vision and the 1896 Festival of the Crown in the Context of the Balkan Lands

Matthew Worsnick: Fleeting Empires and Persistent Infrastructures: Deimperial Reckoning with Border-Region Railroads

15:00 – 17:00 | **Panel 3: Gendered Formations of (Post)Empire** | Room F – 138

Chair: Brigita Miloš

Alla Myzelev: Jewish Masculinity in the Ukrainian Army, 2022-Present: Decolonizing Stereotypes

Almendra Espinoza: Zapatista Women: Weaving Identities and Resistance through Community Practices in Health, Education, and Care

Nóra Ugron: Writing Queer Eastern European Worlds: Queer-Feminist Literary and Activist Practices in Romania

Stevan Kordić: Muslim Woman as a Property Owner: Navigating Temettuat Surveys in the Dusk of the Ottoman Era

15:00 – 17:00 | **Panel 4: Decoloniality and Imperial Afterlives in the Eastern Adriatic** | Room F – 139

Chair: Vjerran Pavlaković

Angela Ilić: Colonizing, Civilizing, Dividing? The Imperial Legacies of Churches in Hungary in the Service of Hungarian Colonial Ambitions in Rijeka

Ivan Jeličić: "Lighthouse of the Roman Power and of the Millenary Civilization of the Lineage, Sublime Light of Sacrifices and Pure Heroisms, Ideal Flame of the Fatherland." Addressing the Postimperial Features and Heritage of a Key Symbol of Fascist Fiume Italianity

Martina Caruso: Decolonizing the Lives of Identity Photographs in the Adriatic Borderlands: From Fascism to Post-Yugoslavia

Vanni D'Alessio: The Challenges of National Integration Discourses in Late and post Habsburg Plural Istria and Rijeka

17:00 – 19:00 | **Panel 5: Islam and Postempire** | Room F – 138

Chair: Cody McClain-Brown

Brannon Ingram: On Deimperial Work: Critiquing the Category of 'Religion' in Muslim South Asia

Gulnaz Sibgatullina: Islamic Critique of The Empire: Decolonial and Anti-Liberal

Kübra Nugay: The Question "Why Are We Left Behind?" and an Answer: Salafism. A Problem of the Ottoman Empire and Its Aftermath

17:00 – 19:00 | **Panel 6: Ottoman Afterlives (I)** | Room F – 139

Chair: Gözde Arık

Eman Alasah: Longing for Ottoman Levant: The Politics of Nostalgia in Contemporary Palestinian Autobiography

Johanna Chovanec: Turkey between Postimperial and Postcolonial: Theorising the Early Republican Experience of Modernity

Sebastian Haug: Decolonial Donor? Turkish Development Cooperation Framings between Postcolonial Solidarity and Neo-Imperial Grandeur

Zeynep Kaşlı: Anxieties of Sovereignty, Unease with Im/Mobility: Traces of the Collective Memory on the Postimperial Regime of Bordering in the Thracian Borderlands

POSTCOLONIAL, DECOLONIAL, POSTIMPERIAL, DEIMPERIAL International Conference Program

May 16th 2024

9:00 – 10:30 | 'Decolonization or Extinction': Planetary Lessons from Indigenous Land Struggles | Room F – 006

Keynote lecture (II) by Dr. Priyamvada Gopal, Professor of Postcolonial Studies at the University of Cambridge

10:45 – 12:45 | Panel 7: Theorizing Decoloniality and Deimperiality (I) | Room F – 138

Chair: Sarah Czerny

Aloys Nollet: What Is To Be Done with Marx? Translations, Appropriations and Reinventions in America Latina (1871-1928)

Andrew Graan: The Colonial Project(s): On the Coloniality of the Project Form

Gruia Badescu: Emancipatory Promises: Revisiting Nationalism and Anti-Imperial Struggle in-between the East of Europe and the Global South

Niloofar Sarlati: On the Brink of (Post)Colonial Thought: Conversations from the Margins

10:45 – 12:45 | Panel 8: Decolonial and Deimperial Techniques | Room F – 139

Chair: Borut Klabjan

Anna Zadrozna: The 'Ottoman Garden': Rethinking the Imperial with Seeds and Plants

Katharina Clausius: Imperial and Imperiled Academic Labour

Galina Oustinova-Stjepanovic: How to Catch a Terror Fractal? Empire's Latent Forms and Methods of Their Detection

Olga Zaslavskaya: Decolonizing Frozen Commons: Western-Based Research in the Arctic and Indigenous Arts & Crafts

13:45 – 15:45 | Panel 9: Invited Roundtable: Thinking about De/Coloniality from (South-)East Europe | Room F – 138

Chair: Sanja Bojanić

Participants: Katarina Kušić, Ana Vilenica, Emina Bužinkić, Jelena Savić, Sanja Petrovska

13:45 – 15:45 | Panel 10: Decolonial International? On the Non-Aligned Movement and Beyond | Room F – 139

Chair: Hajrudin Hromadžić

Chiara Bonfiglioli: Women's Non-Aligned Encounters: Internationalist Dialogues during the Cold War

Joe Grim Feinberg: Anti-Colonial, Anti-Imperial, International: Unraveling Logics of Domination and Resistance in the Wide Eastern Europe

Ritty Lukose: Between Empire and Neoliberalism: 'The Woman Question' in the International System of the 1970s

Paul Stubbs: Exploring Contradictory Racializations: Socialist Yugoslavia, the Non-Aligned Movement and Decolonial Worldmaking

16:00 – 18:00 | Panel 11: Theorizing Decoloniality and Deimperiality (II) | Room F – 138

Chair: Aidan O'Malley

Katrin Kremmler: Imperial Skulls: The Vienna Museum of Natural History as a Site of Colonial-Imperial Race Making
Sanskriti Chattopadhyay: Decentralising Understanding: A Dialogue between Postcolonialism and Decoloniality
Stef Jansen: Everyday Geopolitics, Inter-Imperiality and Emancipatory Critique
Yavuz Tuyloğlu: Is Semi-Coloniality a Useful Category for Comparative Historical Inquiry?

16:00 – 18:00 | Panel 12: The Art(s) of Decolonization | Room F – 139

Chair: Claudia Clausius

Gregory Gan: Decolonial Practices and Affects amongst Transcultural Artists Living in Berlin's Plattenbauten
Tina Hofman: Can Diversity be Decolonial? The Representation of Central, Eastern and Southeastern European (CESEE) Artists in England
Vera-Simone Schulz: The Immaterial as Mode of Resistance: Bekele Mekonnen's The Smoking Table in Response to Italian Colonial Heritage
Vjera Borožan: Brothers in the Suitcase

20:30 – 22:00 | Film Screening: Brijuni – A Necromantic Theatre | by Behzad Khosravi

Noori and Magnus Bårtås Art-kino Croatia, Krešimirova 2, 51000, Rijeka

In conversation with Sanja Horvatinčić and Jeremy F. Walton

POSTCOLONIAL, DECOLONIAL, POSTIMPERIAL, DEIMPERIAL International Conference Program

May 17th 2024

9:00 – 10:30 | The Zeitgeists of Imperial, Colonial, and Their Derivatives | Room F – 006

Keynote lecture (III) by Dr. Maria Todorova, Gutgsell Professor of History Emerita,
Center for Advanced Study Professor Emerita, Department of History, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

10:45 – 12:45 | Panel 13: Postcolonial and Postimperial Geographies | Room F – 138

Chair: Maura Hametz

Goran Stanić: The Formation of Bosnian Franciscan Culture under Historical-Imperial Legacies

Kevin Kenjar: Apocalypse Now: 19th Century Proto-Zionism in the Inter-Imperial Borderlands

Malte Fuhrmann: Germany's Real and Imagined Mediterranean Colonies: A Plea for an Intertextual and Entangled Approach to Empire

Pamela Ballinger: Mussolini's Mare Nostrum as Imperial Bricolage

10:45 – 12:45 | Panel 14: Representational Politics | Room F – 139

Chair: Sanja Puljar D'Alessio

Cihat Arıncı: Post-Imperial Memory on Film: The Fall of Ottoman Palestine in Australian Historical Cinema

Irena Šentevska: Contemporary Popular Culture of the Western Balkans at the Crossroads of Postimperial and Crypto-Colonial: The Case of Serbian 'Turbo-Folk'

Paul Csillag: From Eugen to Sarajevo: De-Imperializing Austrian's Imperial History through Film

13:45 – 15:45 | Panel 15: Interimperiality, Postcolony, Postempire | Room F – 138

Chair: David Orlov

Cristian Cercel and Sacha Davis: German Settleriness in the East of Europe through the Prism of Settler Colonial Studies

Johana Wyss: Imperial Traces in Post-Socialist Spaces: A Conjunctural Exploration of Inter-Imperiality in the Silesian Borderland

Nergis Canefe and Ceren Verbowski: From Universal to the Particular and Back: Reconsidering Histories of the Middle East

Szilvia Nagy: Situating the 'Global East': Relationality in the Shadow of the Epistemic 'Grey Zone'

13:45 – 15:45 | Panel 16: Narrating Coloniality and Imperiality | Room F – 139

Chair: Natka Badurina

Andreu Gestí Franquesa: Politics, Culture, and Literature: The Figure of Caliban as a Framing for Postcolonial Studies

Anna Wiczorkiewicz: Unveiling Hidden Narratives: Colonial Fantasies and Dreams of Dominance in Travel Writing from the Polish People's Republic

Matea Magdić: The Zrinski Family Myth: How Verse Created the Nation

Stijn Vervaeke: Multilingualism as Imperial Legacy: Post-Imperial Borderlands in Andrić and Krleža

16:00 – 17:00 | Closing Remarks | Room F – 006

POSTCOLONIAL, DECOLONIAL, POSTIMPERIAL, DEIMPERIAL

International Conference Program

May 21st 2024 – Online Event

9:15 – 9:30 | Introduction

9:30 – 11:00 | Panel 17: Decolonizing and Deimperializing Eastern Europe

Hanna Perekhoda: Transcending Labels: Reassessing National and Imperial Dynamics in Revolutionary Ukraine (1917-1922)

Pietro Restaneo and Laura Gherlone: At the Periphery of the Empire: Decoloniality and the Soviet Legacy in Dialogue

Wiktoria Tabak: The Polish-Belarusian Border as a Frontier of Colonial Violence and Its Images in Performing and Theatrical Arts

11:00 – 12:30 | Panel 18: Ottoman Afterlives (II)

Kadir Can Çelik: From Unorthodox Sufism to Muslim Anarchism: Contesting Decolonial Movements in the Islamic Intellectual Field in Turkey

Miray Cakiroglu: The (Post)Empire in the Post-Disaster Turkey

Sebahattin Şen: Kurdish Cinema: From Minor Cinema to Decolonial Aesthetics

12:30 – 13:00 | Break

13:00 – 14:30 | Panel 19: Imperial Continuities, Postimperial Conjugations

Elizabeth Bishop: At Aswan, Everyone Smoked Bulgarian Tobacco

Owen Kohl: Empire-Talk

Senayon Olaoluwa: The Trauma...Transferred from One Generation to the Next: Extalgic Sensibilities and the Quest for Restorative Justice in Skulls of My People

14:30 – 16:00 | Panel 20: Theorizing Decoloniality and Deimperiality (III)

Dina Taha: The Location of Decolonial Theory, Research and Praxis in the Arab World: Reflections from the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies

Benjamin Kapron: On the Ontological, Anthropocentric Violence of Canadian Settler Colonialism

Elizabeth Shakman Hurd: Re-Colonization: The Global Politics of Settler Empire

ZOOM registration link: Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83118917916?pwd=Vk5vNms1NWE2SWw2K0psQ1hSajlzUT09>

Meeting ID: 831 1891 7916 Passcode: 292986

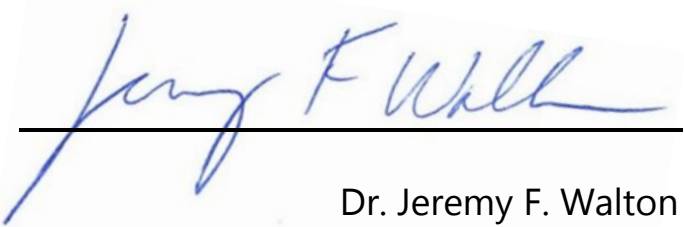
Foreword

Despite dating back at least half a century, postcolonial studies and the concept of postcolonialism evince no signs of obsolescence in middle age. The theoretical and political questions that postcolonial critique first posed, related to the racialized formations of knowledge-power that sustained colonial regimes and their ongoing effects, have only increased in urgency. Precursors such as Frantz Fanon's understanding of colonialism as a mode of psychological-subjective subjugation, signature concepts such as Edward Said's *Orientalism* and Gayatri Spivak's *subalternity*, and more recent coinages such as Achille Mbembe's *postcolony* remain both staples of syllabi and inspirations for insurgent subjects.

Several key developments have reframed and reinvigorated postcolonial studies since the turn of the millennium. First, a cadre of critics, initially based in Latin America but soon to extend throughout the Global South, has insisted on the distinctive political and theoretical valence of decolonial, as opposed to postcolonial, critique. Decoloniality, decolonization and their kin terms productively displace the temporal—some argue teleological—logic of postcoloniality. Rather than positing a gap between colonial and postcolonial times, polities, and subjects, decoloniality insists that coloniality is an ongoing formation of knowledge power, and interrogates its myriad of discontents in the present. Secondly, and in tandem with the ascendancy of decoloniality, historians and anthropologists influenced by new imperial historiography have reignited debates over empire, imperialism, and post imperialism with an eye to the ongoing effects of imperialism, its duration and “duress,” in Ann Laura Stoler’s evocative turn of phrase. Intersections and distinctions between the colonial and the imperial have animated this latter debate. Finally, in a related but distinct trajectory of theorization, latter-day Marxists such as Hardt and Negri have made a neo-Leninist argument for understanding the global political-economy of the 21st Century as a universal “empire”. In light of these ongoing, frequently tempestuous debates, our conference aspires to a comprehensive discussion of the distinctions, contradictions, syntheses and synonymities between and among our four titular key terms: postcolonial, decolonial, postimperial, and de-imperial. The final term is our coinage; we offer it as an object for (de)constructive debate at the conference itself.

The setting for our conference is by no means arbitrary. The city of Rijeka and the Kvarner Gulf of Croatia harbor many imperial legacies, especially Habsburg and Italian, while the regional identities and dilemmas of the Balkans and the Adriatic are bequests of imperial interactions. By gathering at the intersection of multiple imperial semi-

peripheries we aim to decenter and recenter questions surrounding imperialism, colonialism, and their conjunctions. Our research group, "REVENANT-Revivals of Empire: Nostalgia, Amnesia, Tribulation" (ERC #101002908), is the sponsor and organizer of the conference (<https://revenant.uniri.hr>). REVENANT's purview encompasses the collective memories and ongoing legacies of three empires, the Habsburg, the Ottoman and the Romanov; in this context, the fraught question of the coloniality of these empires—and, hence, the post- and decoloniality of their successor states and societies—is central. Accordingly, one aim of the conference is to open conceptual avenues of debate and collaboration between scholars of largely land-based empires such as those that orient REVENANT and students of overseas settler empires, with particular interest in how concepts of post-coloniality and decoloniality apply, and apply differently, to each of them. More generally, we welcome contributions from a host of disciplines, including Anthropology, Art History, Comparative Literature, Gender Studies, History, International Relations, Memory Studies, and Sociology, that interrogate inter-imperiality in Laura Doyle's capacious sense.



Dr. Jeremy F. Walton

The Principal Investigator and Research Group Leader of
REVENANT—Revivals of Empire: Nostalgia, Amnesia, Tribulation
ERC Consolidator Grant #101002908

Keynote Lecture (I)

Dr. Madina Tlostanova, Professor of Postcolonial Feminisms at Linköping University, Sweden:

Decoloniality Thirty Years Later: What Was Lost, What is to be Kept, and Is There a Future?

In the last decade decoloniality has turned into a new academic vogue and has consequently undergone considerable simplification and depoliticization. By no means should we consider it as some unchangeable and always correct meta discourse, applicable to everything everywhere. Therefore, it is useful to revisit the specific contexts and conditions of its origination and development and the gradually growing incongruence of the initial decoloniality's frameworks and the complexity of the current world (dis)order. The internal dynamic of decoloniality, the emergence of specific concepts and terms within it and erasing of others, are also worth our attention and analysis as they allow to understand the prospects of this discourse in the interpretation of the present and its potential in the political imagination of the future. Finally, it is important to consider the metamorphoses of decoloniality in the semi-peripheral no-longer-post-socialist tempolocalities, initially marked by considerable complexity and at times, inconsistency not only due to inter-imperiality but also often due to their diverse state socialist experience of coloniality. If decoloniality is destined to survive as a result of the rapid change in academic fashion for theories, then it will probably be precisely these currently still rather marginal voices and phenomena that will bring fresh blood into decolonial option.

Madina Tlostanova is a feminist thinker and fiction writer, professor of postcolonial feminisms at Linköping University, Sweden. Her research interests focus on decoloniality, particularly in epistemic and aesthetic spheres, feminist social movements and theories of the Global South, the postsocialist human condition, fiction and art, critical future inquiries and critical interventions into complexity, crisis, and change. Tlostanova's numerous articles, book chapters and monographs have been translated into many languages. Her most recent books include *What Does it Mean to be Post-Soviet? Decolonial Art from the Ruins of the Soviet Empire* (Duke University Press, 2018), *A new Political Imagination, Making the Case* (co-authored with Tony Fry, Routledge, 2020), *Decoloniality of Knowledge, Being and Sensing* (Centre of Contemporary Culture Tselinny, Kazakhstan, 2020, Kazakhian translation published in 2023), the co-edited volume *Postcolonial and Postsocialist Dialogues. Intersections, Opacities, Challenges in Feminist Theorizing and Practice* (with Redi Koobak and Suruchi Thapar-Björkert, Routledge, 2021) and the most recent experimental book of essays and speculative fiction *Narratives of Unsettlement. Being Out-of-joint as a Generative Human Condition* (Routledge, 2023). Currently she is working on a book on the stateless future.

Keynote Lecture (II)

Dr. Priyamvada Gopal, Professor of Postcolonial Studies at the University of Cambridge:

'Decolonization or Extinction'¹: Planetary Lessons from Indigenous Land Struggles

In 2016, as images of protesters being chemically sprayed and bitten by dogs—were relayed across the world, #NoDAPL and Standing Rock camp in North Dakota became an internationally visible flashpoint which, beyond 'environmental justice', in fact, posited the question of decolonization in the 21st century as both continuous with and different from its precedent versions. Where the Native Americans of that region—specifically, the Lakotas—were concerned, this was only the latest iteration of a long history of resistance against land expropriation, environmental racism, and racialized injustice, and the infringement of the community's treaty-guaranteed sovereignty on their lands. Unlike many 'post-Independence' contexts, where the liberatory energies of resistance to European colonial rule have been dissipated or domesticated by the nation-states which arose after it ended, Indigenous peoples in the Americas (and elsewhere) continue to resist as they continue to experience the force of dispossession and settler-colonialism in their lives. These are contemporary anticolonial struggles in the most fundamental sense of the term because of the centrality of resistance to extractive land appropriation and racialised harm. They are also struggles with resonances for all colonized life on a planet which remains essentially colonized by racial capitalism.

Using the examples of some contemporary Native American and First Nations struggles, this paper will argue that the present-day clash between conceptions of land use which drives them is as planetary in its implications as the five hundred years of colonialism that preceded it. As early as the 1970s, Lakota intellectual, Vine Deloria Jr. presciently warned: 'Destruction of nature will result in total extinction of the human race. There is a limit beyond which man cannot go in reorganizing the land to suit his own needs.' In the decades since Deloria wrote these words, humanity and the planet have only seen an accelerated decline towards this limit turning decolonization into a matter of planetary survival. Ranging across fifty years of movement-based thinking on land justice, land use, and decolonization in North America, the paper draws out some central strands that emerge from this body of work, including manifestoes for decolonisation and liberation. Relevant texts include the 'A Basic Call to Consciousness: the Haudenosaunee Address to the Western World' (1978); the Secwepemc leader George Manuel's *The Fourth World: An Indian Reality* (1974); and the Red Nation's *The*

¹ The phrase is from The Red Nation, *The Red Deal: Indigenous Action to Save our Earth*. New York: Common Notions Press, 2021.

Red Deal: Indigenous Action to Save the Earth alongside the thinking of contemporary writers like Taiaiake Alfred (Kahnawà:ke Mohawk), Winona LaDuke (Anishinaabe) and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg). The problem of colonization, as Alfred suggests, cannot be resolved without addressing the fundamental question of Indigenous communities, lifeways, and land. That question, I argue, is not a particular one but one with planetary and paradigmatic resonances, integral to any prospect of decolonization in the present.

Priyamvada Gopal is a Professor of Postcolonial Studies at the University of Cambridge. Her published work includes *Literary Radicalism in India: Gender, Nation and the Transition to Independence* (Routledge, 2005), *After Iraq: Reframing Postcolonial Studies* (Special issue of *New Formations* co-edited with Neil Lazarus), *The Indian English Novel: Nation, History and Narration* (Oxford University Press, 2009) and, most recently, *Insurgent Empire: Anticolonial Resistance and British Dissent* (Verso, 2019) which was shortlisted for the British Academy Prize for Global Cultural Understanding and the Bread and Roses Prize. Her writing has also appeared in *The Hindu*, *Outlook India*, *India Today*, *The Independent*, *Prospect Magazine*, *The New Statesman*, *The Guardian*, *Al-Jazeera English* (AJE) and *The Nation* (USA). She has contributed occasionally to the BBC's *Start the Week* and *Newsnight* as well as programmes on NDTV-India, Al-Jazeera, National Public Radio and Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. She is currently on leave from Cambridge and on a fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey, working on a new project called *Decolonization: the Life and Times of an Idea* which examines a range of thinkers, contexts and struggles across the Global South.

Keynote Lecture (III)

Dr. Maria Todorova, Gutgsell Professor of History Emerita, Center for Advanced Study Professor Emerita, Department of History, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign:

The Zeitgeists of imperial, colonial, and their derivatives

This text tries to contextualize the different historiographies around “empire” and “colonialism.” It analyzes the uses of their derivatives, like postcolonial, postcoloniality, neocolonial, quasi-colonial, decolonization, transcoloniality, as well as imperialism, imperality, inter-imperality, etc. It pays special attention to the ubiquitousness and functions of the concept of decoloniality.

Maria Todorova is the author of *The Lost World of Socialists at Europe's Margins* (2020), *Scaling the Balkans* (2018), *Remembering Communism* (2014), *Postcommunist Nostalgia* (2010), *Bones of Contention* (2009), *Imagining the Balkans* (2009), *Balkan Family Structure and the European Pattern* (2006) and other monographs and edited volumes. She is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Panel 1: Powers of Imperial Nostalgia

Chair: Ivan Flis (University of Rijeka)

Karolina Ćwiek-Rogalska (Polish Academy of Sciences) and Karina Hoření
(Polish Academy of Sciences):

Industrial Specters Interwoven with a Carpet: a Story of Post-Imperial Nostalgia in Northern Bohemia

The Northern Czech Borderlands were the industrial center of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Today, this past is evidenced by the industrial buildings, present in the cultural landscape of the region. In 1945, following the expulsion of German-speaking communities, i.e. the actual builders of the industrial tradition, the region was resettled. It was presented as a new world with plenty of possibilities, and the German origins of the industry were meant to be forgotten. Decades later the Borderlands became a synonym of a land in decay, especially after 1989 when the industry collapsed. Old factories are now haunting the space, symbolizing this decay rather than the past glory and success.

How do people who live in the region with this particular post-imperial legacy today, perceive it? As ethnographers we work with narratives we gather during fieldwork, at the same time being focused on the stories of objects that represent various entangled pasts of post-displacement regions, treating them as ghosts in the light of hauntology theory. Hence, as the material example of the multivocal heritage of post-imperial and post-industrial legacy that is being contested, lost, and celebrated, we follow the particular object: a carpet, produced in the factory of the Ginzkey family, established in 1847, in Liberec/Reichenberg. The carpet traveled the world to show the technological superiority of the factory, but it was lost after the war, and was found and displayed only in 2022 in the library of Vratislavice district of contemporary Liberec.

We show what different nostalgias are represented by the carpet. We hypothesize that both, post-Austro-Hungarian and post-Socialist nostalgias are longing for the industrial past of the region. Simultaneously, they work in accordance with the colonial idea of participating in production as confirming one's value, overlooking the exploitative nature of the imperial industry in terms of both ecology and labor. As such, today, the carpet becomes a material example of these kinds of post-imperial and post-industrial nostalgias, oblivious to the context of its production.

Nagihan Haliloğlu (Ibn Haldun University):

Turkofuturism or Decolonizing the Future in Halide Edib's *Yeni Turan*

Writing in 1926 about her 1912 novel *Yeni Turan*, Halide Edib says ‘the book is a political and national Utopia, but not so far away from possibilities as one may suppose a Utopia to be’, complicating the genre of her narrative, placing it somewhere between speculative fiction and a political programme. The novel describes a utopia in progress, in which a Turanist government has taken power in the Ottoman Empire, and new schools and hospitals are being built in Anatolia, the part of the Empire that is argued to have been neglected while state money was showered on the Balkans. If a decolonial perspective displaces the temporal logic of postcoloniality as the call suggests, this paper investigates whether Halide Edib’s projections of a future can be seen a decolonial project where Turks are the (un)likely discontents of Empire. The new political order redressing the injustices that the ethnic Turkish nation has had to suffer is a kind of ‘decoloniality’ that signals a nativist approach, in which Anatolia is decolonized from the exploitative actions of Istanbul. Although there may not be a sci-fi element, I call Halide Edib’s narrative approach Turkofuturism, in which the ethnic Turk is centred in a formulation of de-coloniality. As a narrative of Turkofuturism, the novel is interested in the genealogies of ideas and civilization, and this interest in genealogy informs the aesthetics of the New Turan utopia, manifesting itself as a return to Seljuk heritage. Thus, Halide Edib’s narrative anticipates both Svetlana Boym’s *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001) that claims ‘the twentieth century began with a futuristic utopia and ended with nostalgia’, and also Esra Özyörek’s *Nostalgia for the Modern* (2006), where Turkish elites and the people show an attachment and nostalgia for a particular past not necessarily promoted by the *ancien regime*.

Paul Silverstein (Reed College):

Once Were Warriors: Colonial Mimesis, Martial Masculinity, and Imperial Nostalgia in Amazigh Morocco

Amazigh cultural-political activism in Morocco and beyond is premised on a rhetoric of resistance, or a fierce defense of territorial autonomy and domestic sovereignty against waves of imperial invaders from the Roman empire through the Islamic conquest and the French protectorate to the contemporary Arab nationalist regimes (*al-makhzan* or *le pouvoir*). Yet, filtering through this dominant discourse are subaltern scripts that register nostalgia for particular pasts when, even under colonial tutelage, Amazigh groups felt recognized and effectively acted as self-determining agents of their own history making. In the oases of southeastern Morocco, such memories coalesce around the twenty-five years of French protectorate rule, the traces of which are still very much present, if neglected, in the socio-material landscape. In this paper, I explore how Amazigh activists from the region narrate such a colonial past, memorialize particular figures of resistance and collaboration within it, and relate them to earlier periods of their own imperial conquest over the local oasis. These figures of nostalgia tend to be male warriors, whose martial masculinity was established through the subjugation of locally racialized castes and subsequently co-constituted in intimate

encounters – whether on the field of battle or in private exchanges of information and amity -- with colonial military officers. Nostalgic narratives of such inter-imperial intimacy display notable ambivalence, with French colonial agents alternately humanized, dehumanized, and re-humanized. The ethnographic challenge that emerges is how to sensitively account for such nostalgia in all its complexity, without simply exposing its silences, deconstructing its politics, or functionally reducing it to a critique of the present. The paper ultimately seeks to understand imperial nostalgia as a productive dimension of sociality.

Patrycja Pichnicka-Trivedi (University of Warsaw):

When the Vampires of the Empire Rise. Imperial Nostalgia in the 21st Century Russian Vampire Narratives

The fantastic narratives play the crucial role in the Russian imperial discourse, to the point that Cathy Young (2014) wrote about sci-fi writers war in Ukraine. Those narratives frequently turn to the past rather than the future, creating retrotopia's (Bauman 2017) imperial visions. The most popular topoi are the Soviet and the Romanov Empires (Dobrenko and Lipovetsky 2015). The vampire figure - the undead rising from the past - is a strikingly adequate figure for those nostalgic stories. The narratives re-enact the empire in its territorial glory (eg. Elena Tanicheva's novel *Zlavya krov'* (2011)).

This paper focuses on the comparative semiotic analysis of the 21st century Russian vampire narratives evoking the Romanov Empire. It studies them in the context of the world vampire narratives, and in the context of other Russian narratives. It particularly focuses on Sergey Ginzburg's movie *Vamps* (2017, original title *Vurdalaki*) and Danila Kozlovskiy's DK Entertainment series *Karamora* (2022). They share the tsarist empire motif, and they were produced around the time of the 100th anniversary of the October Revolution. In *Vamps*, importantly, and anachronistically (the action supposedly takes place in 18th century), Ginzburg placed the action near the Carpathian Mountains, in nowadays Ukraine, and the movie was shot in the annexed Crimea. The movie affirms the glory of the tsarist empire. *Karamora* legitimises the empire in another way: by denying any possibility of the positive change — any trial can only make things worse (Yudin and Kagarlitskiy 2022). *Karamora* shares the pessimistic vision of the October Revolution with series such as Channel One's *Trotsky* (2017), Vladimir Khotinenko's *Demon of the Revolution* (2017), NTV's *The Road to Calvary* (2017) (Litovskaya 2020). They all show the fall of the Romanov empire as yet another *smuta* (Carleton 2011).

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Panel 2: Infrastructures, Legacies, Duress

Chair: Dragan Damjanović (University of Zagreb)

David Leupold (Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient Berlin):

The Forgotten Rival to Stalin's City: Mkrtich Armen's *Yerevan* (1936) as Yearning for the Precolonial Past and Anticipation of the 'New East' (*Nor Arevelk*)

Whether Jim Torosyan's late Soviet construction of *Cascade* or the prestigious megaproject *Northern Avenue* in the post-Soviet period, to this day the spatial arrangement of the Soviet-Armenian architect Aleksandr Tamayan continues to form the most important parameter for the urban development of Yerevan. Tamayan's architectural work, which can be understood as a local variation of Stalin-era Neoclassicism (*Neo-Armenianism*), is understood by many residents of Armenia's capital not only as an unquestionable legacy, but as proof of Armenia's place in an alleged grand narrative of Western modernity.

However, this retrospective perspective of the city's Stalin-era imperial legacy obscures the view on the deep fault lines that ran between him and his opponents, revealing the urban trajectory of the nascent capital as a site of *embattled urbanity*. One of his opponents was the surrealist writer Mkrtich Armen, who advances a powerful critique of Tamayan's Western-modelled city in his novel "Yerevan" (1931). Banned upon publication by censors, the work cherishes a retrotopian vision for the future city, which embarks from the historical legacy of pre-Tsarist, Persianate-Islamic Yerevan towards the communopolitan horizon of a "New East" (*Nor Arevelk*).

In my talk, I will argue that these alternative imaginaries of the urban were informed, in an unexpected dialectical twist, both by *retrotopian yearning* for a (pre-)colonial past that was coming undone before their eyes and *anticipation for a utopian future* at a point of post-revolutionary history largely understood by its contemporaries as the dawn of socialist worldmaking. Based on this, I will conclude by discussing how Armen's forgotten vision of a post-Tsarist Armenian capital, built in unison with "architects of Georgia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan", speaks to a precarious and war-ridden present in which Armenians and Azerbaijanis are pitched against each other in a relentless struggle for mutually exclusive ethno-nationalistic futures.

Jelena Seferović (Institute for Anthropological Research, Zagreb):
The Dichotomy of Austro-Hungarian Colonialization: Exploring the Medicalization of Dying and Death in Bosnia and Herzegovina

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, divination methods like fortune-telling and rituals were deeply ingrained in cultural and religious customs related to death and dying. These practices sometimes involved dead bodies and were used to find a marriage partner, conceive a child, heal animals, or treat alcoholism. On one hand, the empire's influence improved healthcare services and the quality of care for the dying and dead. They established modern hospitals, introduced standardized medical practices, and implemented proper hygiene measures. However, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy also sought to control and influence its territories, including BiH, by imposing their own medical practices and beliefs. The authorities viewed divination as superstitious and clashed with their goal of establishing a Western-style medical system. Nevertheless, divination methods persisted alongside the emerging biomedical approach brought by the monarchy. The clash between traditional divination practices and the imposition of biomedical approaches shaped the understanding and practices surrounding death in BiH, resulting in a hybridization of beliefs and practices. It is important to note that the process of medicalization was not solely a top-down imposition. While the Austro-Hungarian authorities sought to promote their own medical practices, the influence of divination methods continued to persist. This paper is based on an analysis of literature and newspapers dating back to the late 19th and early 20th century. These materials were sourced from museums and archival institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Jovana Milovanović (Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade):
**Hungarian Imperial Vision and the 1896 Festival of the Crown in the
Context of the Balkan Lands**

In the late 19th century's dualistic era, the concept of the Hungarian Empire gained prominence, marked by its envisioned expansion toward the East. This imperial vision reached its pinnacle during the Millennium Celebrations of 1896, commemorating Hungary's thousand years since settling in the Pannonian Plain. On June 8, 1896, the Crown Festival, a grand event commemorating the coronation anniversary of Franz Joseph I, highlighted the Hungarian imperial vision. This significant occasion included a solemn historical procession featuring 1,200 horsemen, representing both houses of the Hungarian Parliament, ecclesiastical dignitaries, and officials from all Hungarian counties. The procession visually embodied Hungary's imperial aspirations, with the Holy Hungarian Crown at its center. Leading the procession behind the heralds were eleven Hungarian magnates carrying flags of countries with historical ties to the Kingdom of Hungary during the medieval period; among them, István Keglevich carried the Serbian flag, and Géza Andrásy held the Bosnian flag. This symbolic representation is central to our analysis, investigating how the revival of national history in this ephemeral spectacle projected an expected imperial future.

In addition to the historical procession, part of the Crown Festival was a ceremony held in Buda Castle. During this ceremony, members of both houses of the Hungarian

Parliament paid homage to the Holy Hungarian Crown, acknowledging the royal couple as its bearers. This scene was immortalized by Hungarian painter Gyula Benczúr in a grand historical composition titled "Homage to the Millennium". Notably, the Serbian flag prominently featured in this artwork adds another layer of complexity to the visual narrative.

Our study aims to explore how visual culture and history painting played nuanced roles in expressing Hungarian imperial aspirations within the broader context of the Balkan region. By examining the details of historical events and their artistic representations, we endeavor to uncover the complex interactions between different forms of culture, politics, and imperial visions during this crucial period.

Matthew Worsnick (Vanderbilt University):

Fleeting Empires and Persistent Infrastructures: De-imperial Reckoning with Border-Region Railroads

When an empire is gone, its material infrastructure persists. However, that infrastructure is differently powered and administered. It serves new interests and often must be integrated into different adjacent infrastructural systems. Yet, these processes are typically overseen and operated by professionals and bureaucrats who had trained and practiced in the empire and continue to propagate familiar practical and professional conventions, as well as profit from or engage with imperial professional networks. Analyzing these dual processes of imperial fracture and continuity side-by-side can provide vivid insights into the blended tensions, transitions, ruptures, continuities, and parallels between empires and their successors.

Drawing on architectural and graphic-design sources and methods, as well as anthropological and art historical theory, this paper considers two Habsburg-constructed train lines in the post-World War I Italo-Yugoslav contested territory of Istria to explore how *de-imperialism* worked on the ground. In one case, a Habsburg-built railway that transported both tourists and light-goods through both Italian and Slavic strongholds came to be in Italian-held territory after World War I. The Italian state ordered its disassembly, a choice advantageous to Fascism's racialization efforts but detrimental to local economies, and the demolition provoked the subtle but legible disapproval of participating engineers and architects. In the second case, on the opposite side of Istria, a Habsburg-era railroad network was carefully placed in the hands of Yugoslavia in 1919, only to be ceded to Italy in the 1924 Treaty of Rome. This prompted an institutional panic among Yugoslav infrastructural engineers, who immediately set to charting an alternate route, and who in the process struggled with the reciprocal processes of imagining and manufacturing a new map of the region.

In analyzing the infrastructural and political choices surrounding these two train lines, this paper illuminates the multiple, overlapping, and conflicted interests of engineers

(as professionals, as nationals, as locals, as ideologues, etc.), primarily as evinced in their professional production and debates over the future of the region's infrastructure. As each side of the border wrestled with the relationship of infrastructure, nation-building, and institutional legacies, individual actors had to reimagine the built environment and its role in the borderland. At work was not so much the legacy of the Habsburg Empire, with regions and infrastructure cleanly cleaved away and left to either continue and reformulate imperial structures. Rather, we find a reckoning, a messy, self-conflicted negotiation among past, present, and future; among old institutions newly positioned; among interests long-established and those tentatively emerging.

Panel 3: Gendered Formations of (Post)Empire

Chair: Brigita Miloš (University of Rijeka)

Alla Myzelev (State University of New York, Geneseo):

Jewish masculinity in the Ukrainian Army 2022-present: Decolonizing Stereotypes

This proposed paper investigates the representation and roles of Jewish men in the Ukrainian military following Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. Russia justified the invasion with the contentious claim of needing to "de-nazify" Ukraine, a premise questioned widely given Ukraine's current president's openly Jewish heritage. This Russian narrative attempts to revitalize Soviet-era stereotypes that cast Ukrainians as Nazi collaborators, especially in the context of the Holocaust. Employing a masculinity studies framework, the paper leverages existing but limited sociological research on military service and masculinity within a Jewish Eastern European context, notably studies by Edna Lomsky-Feder and Tamar Rapoport on the Israeli armed forces. I argue that Jewish involvement in Ukraine's military—encompassing both native Ukrainians and volunteers from Israel and elsewhere—has gained increased visibility as a rebuttal to Russia's allegations. This amplified visibility accomplishes two key objectives. First, it counteracts Russian stereotypes by spotlighting Jews, and by extension, other national minorities, as active participants in Ukraine's defence. Second, it aligns Ukraine's military masculinity narrative more closely with Israel's, serving as an implicit counter-narrative to Russian claims. Additionally, this enhanced visibility signifies a realignment of alliances. Although not officially backed by the State of Israel, considerable support for Ukraine from global Jewish communities not only echoes current geopolitical realities but also revisits historical grievances stemming from World War II. It also challenges entrenched stereotypes depicting Jews in Soviet and post-Soviet regions as militarily disengaged. Importantly, this research enriches our understanding of how ethnic and religious minorities are integrated into Ukraine's war narrative. It also complexifies the traditional narrative of hegemonic masculinity, showing it as not merely reflecting mainstream ideals. In summary, the paper offers a nuanced exploration of the diverse dynamics characterizing Ukraine's military response to Russia's invasion, with particular emphasis on the evolving roles and representations of Jewish men in the military.

Almendra Espinoza (University of Barcelona):

Zapatista women. Weaving identities and resistance through community practices in health, education, and care

The aim of my work focuses on the analysis of the identities and resistances that Zapatista women have been thinking and weaving since the emergence of the EZLN in 1994 until the present. In the framework of what they call the 'internal revolution', this seeks to put an end to the 'bad customs' (*malas costumbres*) that exist within their communities, particularly those practices of macho oppression exercised by their male comrades, and which are generally based on gender roles. To understand this process, on the one hand, I analyze and reflect on the existing proximities and distances between the political proposal of Zapatista women, the approaches of decolonial feminism, and indigenous feminisms. On the other hand, I analyze the following community practices that these indigenous women have been developing within the Zapatista project: promoters of reproductive and sexual health, and promoters of education. Furthermore, based on what happens in those spaces, I interpret how care practices are being rethought and reconfigured. Finally, as research sources I use previous research done in and on Zapatista communities; and my own experience in working with the Zapatistas on their 'Zapatista Tour' (Gira Zapatista) in Europe between September and November 2021, in the cities of Frankfurt and Freiburg.

Nóra Ugron (University of Turku):

Writing queer Eastern European worlds: Queer-feminist literary and activist practices in Romania

Eastern Europe, colonially constructed as a semi-periphery, has been caught between seemingly antithetic imperatives of becoming, between Westernisation and nationalisms (Popovici 2022). Thus, on one hand, queer-feminist initiatives are often deemed as Western influence by conservative discourses. On the other hand, liberal feminist and LGBT-activism indeed operate with the rhetoric of 'catching up to the West'. What are the possibilities to build queer-feminist practices in Eastern Europe that are critical towards the colonial idea of Western superiority and that are also able to challenge nationalist discourses? This paper looks at the case study of the queer-feminist literary circle called Cenuclul X [Cenacle X] from Romania founded during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2021. The paper argues that queer Eastern European worlds are emerging from Cenuclul X's practices and writings. In order to analyze these, I briefly look at how the idea of Eastern Europe was constructed by West(ern Europe) and trace possible directions to unsettle these hegemonic and colonial imaginaries in literary-activist practice. I also contextualize the emergence of Cenuclul X by looking at other local grassroots queer-feminist initiatives that are connected to the group either directly in the present or genealogically by creating space for queer Eastern European worlds in the recent past. Finally, this paper applies close reading to several excerpts from Cenuclul X's anthologies, focusing on how the modern-colonial grasp of Time can be unsettled, as well as on possible literary materializations of queerness in Eastern Europe.

Stevan Kordić (Istanbul University):

Muslim Woman as a Property Owner: *Navigating Temettuat Surveys in the Dusk of the Ottoman Era*

This study examines property ownership among Muslim women in the Balkans during the turbulent times of diminishing Ottoman power, specifically by delving into the obscure and sometimes contradicting landscape of Temettuat surveys. It aims to provide new insights into property ownership in light of the previously unused archival sources by focusing on instances in registers for the cities of Vidin and Niš.

Ottoman surveys typically recorded just heads of households while omitting other household members. That resulted in decreased visibility of women, children, or detailed accounts of family structures that historians struggle to overcome. However, the 1844 Temettuat registers contain some references to the female population, such as widowed householders, or women as property owners.

On the surface, the Temettuat surveys contain merely quantitative data. However, this article argues that their subtext is more complex and could reveal not only the means for obtaining property and the types of property obtained but also some more subtle implications to the status of these women in their local social environment.

This paper aims to shed some light on the social and economic position of Muslim women in the Balkan periphery less than 50 years before the Ottoman Empire lost these lands to newly created nation-states. Ultimately, this paper emphasizes the importance of re-evaluating the intersection of gender and property, challenges our post-Ottoman preconceptions, and invites us to search for the hidden agency of Muslim women at the twilight of the Ottoman era.

Panel 4: Decoloniality and Imperial Afterlives in the Eastern Adriatic

Chair: Vjeran Pavlaković (University of Rijeka)

Angela Ilić (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München):

Colonizing, Civilizing, Dividing? The Imperial Legacies of Churches in Hungary in the Service of Hungarian Colonial Ambitions in Rijeka

The proposed paper applies the terms offered by the conference organizers to one specific aspect of Hungary's colonial ambitions in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in its only sea harbor, Rijeka/Fiume. It presents the microhistory of the involvement of Catholic and Protestant church hierarchies in the religious life and its organization in the city.

What colonial/imperial ambitions did these church bodies harbor and how did they wish to achieve their goals? In general, relatively little has been written on Hungary's colonial aspirations, and even less on its religious dimensions. Exceptions are Makkai (1995) and Poznan (2017), have examined the originally secret government initiatives Actio Slavonica and Actio Americana, respectively, in the first decade of the 20th century.

Such interference in religious life has been largely overlooked in the case of Rijeka until now. The proposed paper aims to therefore present an overview of the strategies, discourses and actions employed by the Roman Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed churches and the relationship of these to the official and unofficial goals of the Hungarian government in the time period between 1868 and 1918.

It is the author's hypothesis that the largest Hungarian churches, although mostly acting independently, nonetheless exhibited colonial ambitions themselves with Orientalist overtones (echoing Said) and served the colonialist ambitions of successive Hungarian governments in varying ways: through dividing, setting out on a civilizing mission and through initiating administrative-structural changes.

Archival materials in various languages will be examined through critical discourse analysis.

Current and widely observable practices of imperial nostalgia in Hungary make the proposed topic relevant, especially in light of recent claims of Hungary being a bastion of Christianity and defender of persecuted Christians worldwide.

Ivan Jeličić (University of Rijeka):

Lighthouse of the Roman power and of the millenary civilization of the

lineage, sublime light of sacrifices and pure heroisms, ideal flame of the Fatherland", addressing the postimperial features and heritage of a key symbol of fascist Fiume Italianity

In 1930, on the 6th anniversary of the annexation of the city of Fiume to the Kingdom of Italy, the votive crypt for the fallen Italian soldiers in World War One and the deceased for the "cause of Fiume" was inaugurated. The crypt, soon surmounted by a Votive Temple, became a distinctive visual element of the newly built and building uncontested Italian national and fascist character of the city. And its role was not only visual, the area around the crypt also became a site for recurring celebrations and rituals of fascist Italy at the local level. Beneath this fascist and national narrative, the people buried, removed, or excluded from the crypt, as well as the engineer who planned the Temple, enable to trace a covered up postimperial (hi)story. Devoting particular attention to the crypt, the intend of this paper is to shed light on features and heritage of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the postwar Fiume. Analyzing biographies of the buried and memory politics, the research displays how the city postwar period was characterized by (post)imperial circumstances and environment. The monument for Fiume "italianissima", the most Italian city, enables thus an alternative reading of the aftermaths and the memory of Empire, emphasizing after 1918 continuities rather than a mere radical rupture.

**Martina Caruso (University of Nova Gorica):
Decolonising the Lives of Identity Photographs in the Adriatic
Borderlands: from Fascism to post-Yugoslavia**

For this presentation, I will firstly examine the forensic systems set up under fascism, with a focus on the use of identity photographs in the context of the Adriatic Borderlands. Secondly, I will examine the repurposing of these identity photographs and police files in (post-)Yugoslavian historiography.

The fascist bureaucratic system, which had been perfected from the early twentieth century onwards under Salvatore Ottolenghi, a disciple of the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso, pathologized and criminalized both biological and ideological identity. By focusing my case-study on the Adriatic Borderlands, I examine the way in which (ex-)Yugoslavian historians (e.g. Dedijer 1941; Drndić 1981; Pelikan 2002) would subsequently, in an arguably decolonial gesture, appropriate these images to represent national freedom fighters who fell in the Second World War. Once indicative of an anti-communist and anti-Slavic narrative, such repurposed police files help problematize the way the state was part of a process of 'othering' citizens through identity photography (Sekula 1986; Cole 2001; Helfand 2019).

As historical and postcolonial studies have shown, in the Adriatic provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and under the Fascist and Nazi regimes, anti-Slavic

racism has formed a consistent theme in public discourse and culture (Collotti 1999; Wingfield 2003; Verginella 2011; Catalan 2015). These have tended to focus on legal and linguistic racism and forms of ethnic cleansing, such as the Fascist law obligating Slavs (primarily Slovenes and Croats) to Italianise themselves by changing their names, the names of places and their education system (Hametz 2004). By selecting specific case-studies of 'Slavo-Communist' dissidents whose photographic identities re-appear up to eighty years later in (ex-)Yugoslavian history books and journals I aim to decode a photographic culture of faces in relation to empire, nationalism and racism. This analysis would help deconstruct a decolonial appropriation of human faces in recent Slovenian and Croatian historiography from an, as yet, overlooked visual perspective.

Vanni D'Alessio (University of Naples):
**The Challenges of National Integration Discourses in Late and post
Habsburg Plural Istria and Rijeka**

Towards the end of the 19th century the press in Istria and in Rijeka fostered the images of these territories as inhabited by people coherently attached to specific national identities. In identifying the local territories and population with a specific nation, they minimized the presence of alternative and competing forms of national integrations and belongings. After the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, and the two 20th century World Wars, the North-Adriatic area was divided by the states of Italy and Yugoslavia, with a significative territorial shift after the Second World War. In the post war years, while recognizing the presence of local minorities, local press and intellectuals and scholars such as geographers, historians and other human and social scientists, carried on and developed the pre-World War One discourses of mono-national interpretations and depictions of land and people. Treatment of national minorities was very different in the two post wars, but arguments for the rightful national integration process were specular, as were the understandings of exclusive forms of cultural identifications. As in the pre-World War One fashion, these concepts of national integration were based on ethnically exclusive understanding of cultural belongings. This paper will discuss some of the 20th century concepts related to regional and local territorial and cultural identification labels, such as *istrijanità*, *istrijanstvo*, *fiumanità*, *riječanstvo* or *primorstvo*, to name a few, and will examine how they have been used in *ethnicized* terms, positively or negatively. Instead of denoting a culturally diverse attachment to a territory, these labels have entered the political debates and the later historiographic readings of the past, and will be analyzed with other terms, which were used in the wider Adriatic area to refer, and often to demote, the *other*, such as *talijanaši*, *regnicoli*, *s'ciavi cragnolini*, and others.

Panel 5: Islam and Postempire

Chair: Cody McClain-Brown (University of Zagreb)

Brannon Ingram (Northwestern University):

On De-imperial Work: Critiquing the Category of 'Religion' in Muslim South Asia

My second book project, which I aim to finish in 2024, examines the way in which Muslims in late colonial and postcolonial South Asia debated, conceptualized, and contested the category of 'religion'. In the book, I argue that the emergence of Muslim anticolonial thought led Muslims to interrogate what 'religion' meant and the ways in which Islam related to it, compelling some to reject the notion that Islam is a 'religion' altogether. Islam, they concluded, was everything 'religion' was not: avowedly public and political. My book traces the myriad routes by which this particular caricature of Protestant religiosity (apolitical, private, and interior) became the normative understanding of 'religion' in South Asia from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. For the REVENANT conference, I hope to focus on one particular theoretical argument I am making – namely, that Muslims in South Asia sought to decolonize 'religion' itself. In my conference paper, I will focus on critiques of the category of religion from a number of late-colonial South Asian authors, some of whom are well known (e.g. Abu'l A'la Mawdudi) and some of whom are less well known (e.g. Sadruddin Islahi, Ghulam Ahmad Parvez, and Mazheruddin Siddiqui). These authors explicitly conceptualized 'religion' as a tool of imperialism, but had divergent views of whether, or how, 'religion' could be redeemed. I do so in conversation with contemporary theorists of decoloniality, such as Anibal Quijano, Murad Idris, and Salman Sayyid. To be specific, I want to pose the following questions: What are the ways that 'religion' acts as an imperial category in South Asia? Does inter-imperiality give us a means of accounting for the disciplinary work of 'religion' beyond specific colonial contexts, e.g. within the British empire as a whole? How can we parse the differences between de-colonial and de-imperial work? Finally, what are the implications of this work for the study of Islam and the study of religion, more broadly, today?

Gulnaz Sibgatullina (University of Amsterdam):

Islamic Critique of The Empire: Decolonial and Anti-Liberal

This paper seeks to contribute to the conference discussion—on disentangling the relationship between postcolonial, decolonial, postimperial, and de-imperial ideologies—by suggesting rethinking our theoretical approaches to the Islamic critique of colonialism. I use historical and contemporary developments within Russia's Muslim communities as my case study. The focus spans examples of Islamic

scholarship from the latter half of the 19th century onward, with necessary corrections to conditions created by Soviet and post-Soviet transitions; special attention will be given to decolonial projects initiated after the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia. I regard these examples as a form of not only anti-imperialist but also decolonial discourse.

By highlighting the decolonial aspect, this paper underscores the underacknowledged nature of Islam-inspired critique of colonialism within academic and public discourse compared to Muslims' critiques of imperial domination or decolonial activism of non-Muslim groups. One significant reason for this neglect lies in the inherent anti-liberal nature of Muslims' proposed solutions to coloniality. The core of Islamic critique challenges the European style of modernity, contesting liberal conceptions of individualism, community, religion, and state that have shaped both Western and Russian (neo-)colonial domination. Therefore, while Euro-centric decolonisation processes—centred around notions of nationalism and liberal democracy—are encouraged, those that challenge the hegemonic understanding of progress tend to be neglected or opposed.

These observations aim to invite attention to the critique of colonialism by Muslim communities that, unlike those in North Africa, Indonesia or India, have been part of the continental empires, such as the Habsburg Empire, Russia and the US. The proximity of the colonised to the colonisers has created different kinds of interactions and, hence, reactions to the colonial situation. Moreover, the paper seeks to challenge the emancipatory promise of decolonialism, especially in the present-day context, where only liberal forms tend to receive recognition from the international political and intellectual community.

Kübra Nugay (University of Bergen):

The Question "Why Are We Left Behind?" and an Answer: Salafism. A Problem of the Ottoman Empire and Its Aftermath

The question "Why did we fall behind", has been on the agenda in the Ottoman Empire since the 18th century, and the answers sought for it continued until the early 20th century. During this process, this 'question' was discussed in the distant and Muslim peripheries such as Egypt and Hijaz, and solutions were tried to be found. Breaking away from the Ottoman Empire did not mean breaking away from this problem, and in fact, it may be claimed that falling apart from the center in the answer found accelerated the break even more. In this study, the question "Why did we fall behind" remains at the center, and it will shed light on how *the salafi movement*, which was seen as a remedy in the geography of Hijaz and Egypt, shaped the newly established administration after it officially broke away from the Ottoman center. While doing this, newspaper articles of the period, archive documents, and the opinions of the scholars of the period will be drawn on. Moreover, while the discussions and correspondence

about the salafi movement in the Ottoman center at that time would shed light on the issue from one side; what is written and said on the Egypt and Hijaz front will shed light from the other side. Thus, it will seek to formulate the equation of the configuration, like religion, modernization, new movements, separation from the empire, and effects of the Ottoman Empire.

Panel 6: Ottoman Afterlives (I)

Chair: Gözde Arık (Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey)

Eman Alasah (Northumbria University):

Longing for Ottoman Levant: The Politics of Nostalgia in Contemporary Palestinian Autobiography

This paper examines the unequivocal sentiment of nostalgia in the ever-growing genre of Palestinian autobiography. Against the backdrop of present political instability, nativist currents, and national borders in Palestine and the broader Levant region, a mounting nuance of melancholic, nostalgic sentimentality arises to evoke a superior past. Through the textual and contextual analysis of the autobiographies of Suad Amiry, Raja Shehadeh, and Ghada Karmi, the paper explores the intricacies of nostalgia for the Ottoman times. While nostalgia can arguably be an ambiguous, undirected phenomenon, the autobiographical accounts examined primarily articulate an unmistakable longing for geopolitical borderlessness and ethno-cultural pluralism; a model that historically characterized the Mediterranean Levant region under the Ottoman Empire. Nostalgia is translated into a socio-political aspiration for a dynamic and cosmopolitan Levant, akin to the belle époque of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This nostalgia, however, is reflective and not restorative, to use the terminology of Svetlana Boym. The imperial Ottoman past is romantically contemplated and reimagined as a source of inspiration in opposition to a disenchanting present and is not depicted as an ideal paradigm to restore. The multiethnic state paradigm and the vast borderless territory are nostalgically recalled highlighting the repercussions of another imperialist intervention, which is that of the French and the British, and the later nativist and national currents in the region. The paper delves into contemporary discourses on identity, borders, and empire by critically scrutinising nostalgic sentiments in the life narratives selected.

Johanna Chovanec (University of Vienna):

Turkey between post-imperial and post-colonial: Theorising the early republican experience of modernity

As a successor state of the Ottoman Empire, the Republic of Turkey inherited a complex set of positionalities. Extant literature describes the Ottoman Empire as a dominant and colonizing force that, however, was also increasingly affected by the expansionary logic of European imperialism. Following the First World War and the demise of the Empire, the newly founded Republic of Turkey sought to politically emancipate from the 'weak' Ottomans in order to be perceived as a nation state on

equal footing with the West. Public debates in the 1930s emphasized Turkey's need to catch up with the West and the 'time lag' between Turkey and 'more developed' European countries. This paper suggests theorizing early republican Turkey through an intertwined post-imperial and post-colonial lens, highlighting how both Empire (as the dreaded past) and Europe (as the ideal yet unreachable future) become major reference points in the early republican imaginary of belonging. Drawing on Occidentalism (Couze Venn) as a post-colonial theory, I approach Turkey as both affected by imperial collapse and Western-dominated modernity. With reference to the work of Peyami Safa and Halide Edib Adivar, I show how major intellectuals in early republican Turkey mobilized different combinations of post-imperial and post-colonial narratives to make sense of Turkey's place in the world.

Sebastian Haug (German Institute of Development and Sustainability):
**Decolonial donor? Turkish development cooperation framings between
postcolonial solidarity and neo-imperial grandeur**

Turkey occupies a complex position when it comes to questions of coloniality and imperialism. As a successor state of the Ottoman Empire, it builds on historical experiences on both sides of the dominance/subjugation divide. This paper focuses on Turkey's international development cooperation to unpack how and to what extent official framing practices rely on notions resonating with (post/de)coloniality and/or (post/de)imperiality. On the one hand, Turkey presents itself as a *decolonial* force that contributes to upending century-long Western dominance over the assumptions, terminologies and practices of international development cooperation. In line with Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's mantra "dünya beşten büyüktür" ("the world is bigger than five", i.e. the five permanent members of the UN Security Council), this revisionist outlook underlines Turkey's solidarity with all postcolonial people. On the other hand, the Turkish government emulates notions of *donorship* long propagated by Western states and embraces the Western concept of Official Development Assistance as the gold standard for its cooperation processes. As an important twist, however, Turkish donorship is intertwined with references to Turkey's imperial past and the paternalistic support the Ottoman Empire provided to peoples across the region. While some highlight the inherent ambivalences of this approach, different parts of Turkish framing practices seem to address different audiences. For the Development Assistance Committee at the OECD, Turkey's embrace of established notions of donorship means that Turkey belongs to the Western camp. Partners in large parts of Africa and Asia, in turn, seem to resonate more with Turkey's rhetorical challenge of the Western-led status quo and Turkish promises of generous and altruistic support. Overall, the notion of *decolonial donor* captures the Turkish government's attempt to combine two – for many irreconcilable – sides of its identify framings in development cooperation: the revisionism of the (post)colonized and the dominance of the (neo)imperial.

Zeynep Kaşlı (Erasmus University Rotterdam):

Anxieties of sovereignty, Unease with im/mobility: Traces of the collective memory on the post-imperial regime of bordering in the Thracian borderlands

Modern Greece and Turkey share a long history of imperial and post-imperial conflicts. Both countries defined each other as a threat and built their national identities antagonistically and through a persistent politics of emotions. In the early 2000s, Greek-Turkish relations have taken a somewhat friendlier direction. The old hostile us-them distinctions and the rights of ethnic minorities in each other's lands have ostensibly been revisited under the EU framework. This is also the period when the 'transit' migration through the Greek-Turkish border in Thrace and in the Aegean has gradually been met with stricter EU-led measures and bilateral cooperation on border control. My research investigates the changing meanings of this national border over the course of a century through the politics of mobility and fixity of people (population) over space (territory). I examine bordering processes and practices from the perspective of those involved in *all* sorts of cross-border mobilities, be they authorized or unauthorized mobilities. This research reveals how both the Byzantine and Ottoman pasts, their rise and demise, looms large in everyday encounters between local state actors, borderlanders and people on the move and manifest themselves in various ways; from resistances, frictions to cooperations, compliances and new forms of privileges and distinctions, therefore make up, what I call, the regime of bordering.

Currently I work on a book manuscript that is based on my historically informed ethnographic research (my PhD fieldwork) in the Greek and Turkish borderland (2013-2015) and follow up visit to Edirne on the Turkish side (October 2021). In my conceptualization of the affects of the long *durée* on today's regime of bordering, I specifically draw on Stoler's (2016) stress on the degrees of imperial sovereignty, Bhabha's formulation of connected sociologies, and Müller's (2020) contributions to these debates from the Global East. In a nutshell, my manuscript demonstrates that the recent politics of im/mobility operates at two intersecting lines of distinction. While the first, and rather obvious, one is the line of il/legality which seemingly separates unauthorized from authorized border-crossers, the ethno-religious (and increasingly racialized) line of distinction render *some* border crossers more deserving than others regardless of the legality of their crossing. At the intersection of these two lines lies the collective (and contested) memory shaped through anxieties of (loss of) "national" sovereignty. Local accounts show that the collective memory and traumas continue to shape the dynamic and ever-changing regime of bordering while some new possibilities or small ruptures in socio-historical patterns are also observed which one may even call, following Isin and Nielsen's (2008) conceptualization of acts of citizenship, as de-imperial acts of citizenship.

Panel 7: Theorizing Decoloniality and Deimperiality (I)

Chair: Sarah Czerny (University of Rijeka)

Aloys Nollet:

What is to be done with Marx? Translations, appropriations and reinventions in America latina (1871-1928)

La ironía muestra que, si el universo es una escritura, cada traducción de esa escritura es distinta, y que el concierto de las correspondencias es un galimatías babélico.²

Octavio Paz

How universal is Marx? This question has been given fresh currency since the emergence of postcolonial studies in the 1980s. Their aim is to make the colonial and post-colonial fact intelligible, while at the same time questioning the very categories in which this problematic is analyzed. As the West, through colonization, is said to have largely structured the theoretical resources of its own critique, there is an ambiguity of conceptual space: European knowledge is said to form both the knot of domination and one of the means of severing it (Brisson, 2018). At the heart of this paradox stands Marxism, a critical theory of domination that structured some of the nationalisms that drove the decolonization movements of the twentieth century. Yet, Marx has found himself at the center of criticism in postcolonial studies: judged in particular to be evolutionist and complacent with colonialism, Marxian criticism of political economy has found itself filed away in the Eurocentric inventory unfit to grasp social relations in the Southern countries (Lindner, 2012).

In Latin America, this issue seems particularly burning. Since the mid-1990s, researchers have been reflecting on the colonial fact and the power relations. Grouped together under the heading of "decolonial studies", and in addition to seeking to complement the obvious lack of attention paid to Latin America by their Anglo-Saxon peers, they also stands out for its inclusion in another intellectual genealogy: the group is in fact heir to works begun in the 1960s, in particular with liberation philosophy and dependency theories, the two sharing "elective affinities" with Marxism (Lowy, 2007). However, Yet, this relationship may appear far more critical to others: some decolonialists thus assert that "Marx participated in epistemic racism" (Castro-Gomez and Grosfoguel, 2007, pp.69-70), and emphasize the inoperative nature of Marxism for

² «The irony reveals that, if the universe is a writing, each translation of this writing is different, and that the concert of correspondences is a babelike galimatias.». Octavio Paz, *Los hijos del limo*, Barcelona, Seix Barral, 1993, p. 111.

"thinking about exteriority" and the overcoming of colonial modernity, as it "is a European invention" (Mignolo, 2013, pp.147). As a result, they call for a clean slate and get rid of a tradition that is far too rooted in modernity (Mignolo, 2012). We are once again faced with a tension that through the entire history of Latin American political thought, and reactivated by the decolonials : what should we do with Western paradigms? A clean slate? Hybridisation? "Copy or imitation"?

To grasp these ambivalences and different horizons of expectation (Jauss 1990) in decolonial readings of Marx, and thus apprehend these misunderstandings (Bourdieu 2000), Aloys Noll Postcolonial, Decolonial, Post-imperial, De-imperial and other uses and misuses (without any moral judgment) in the circulations and appropriations of the Marxian work, we first need to historicize its diffusions and appropriations in Latin America.

Let's take another look at the contribution that the historian of ideas could make to dialogues with contemporary critical thought, in our case with decolonial studies: the task is not to correct a programmatic statement, but rather to consolidate its historical foundations; by focusing on detailing the genesis of the original textual and ideational productions, the historian proposes to contemporary artisans a return to the sources, to become more aware of the distance from the contexts of production and reception, in order to ultimately inform the process of interpretation, in the hope of providing a richer appropriation. The passage through deconstruction is, therefore, necessary to ensure the (re)construction of an academic field that is aware of and reconciled with its limits.

In short, it's a matter of putting these traditions back into their specific context, in order to set the basis for a critical dialogue with decolonials. In dialogue with socio-political conjunctures, I seek to study these tensions through the study of intellectuals, activists and journals, as well as projects for the translation of Marxian works. Bearing in mind that translation and interpretation are not reproductive processes, but productive ones. Translation is not just the work of the linguist or interpreter, but also the political translation of a paradigm that seeks to adapt to the specificities of a particular space. In short, we can say that translating Marx is already reinventing him (Ortega, 2018).

Andrew Graan (Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies):
The Colonial Project(s): On the Coloniality of the Project Form

The decolonial turn provokes scholars to reckon with the coloniality of power in the worlds in which we live and study. This paper takes up this challenge through a history of the present. Today's world is a world saturated by projects: development projects, research projects, conservation projects, reform projects, projects of scientific discovery, projects of technological innovation, construction projects, projects of artistic creation, and so on. So ubiquitous are projects that the project form—that

recognizable genre of purposive, managed action—often appears as a natural and universal mode of acting in the world.

This paper, however, traces a critical genealogy of the project form and interrogates its entanglements with colonial and imperial power. Empirically, the focus is on 17th century England, a time and place that Daniel Defoe characterized as a “Projecting Age.” In this milieu, “projects” described as a specific category of action, one premised on transformation, novelty, and “improvement,” and they were articulated through emergent document genres such as proposals and pamphlets. Yet, this milieu also witnessed England’s conquest of Ireland, the acceleration of English colonization in the Americas, and the expansion of English commercial colonialism in India. This paper traces the centrality of projects to European colonial and imperial formations, and it argues that colonial practice and the colonial imagination was integral to the formulation of “the project” as a category. Ultimately, the paper asks: in order to de-colonize and de-imperialize must we also de-projectify?

Gruia Badescu (University of Konstanz):

Emancipatory promises: Revisiting nationalism and anti-imperial struggle in-between the East of Europe and the Global South

In much of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), as well as across the Global South (GS), national historiographic regimes have framed liberation from various empires as an emancipatory process. In CEE, nation-building narratives of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries celebrated the end of the Ottomans, Habsburgs, and the Tsarist empire. Nevertheless, imperial nostalgia, particularly about the Habsburg empire, has reemerged in the last decades. Moreover, a reevaluation of the violence, expulsions, and destruction of the built heritage of empire in the successor states has marked recent historiography. Yet a new turn towards examining imperial duress in these states created the foundation for a deeper engagement with other frameworks shaped in relationship with the Global South, including postcolonialism, decoloniality as a continuous critique of structures of power and knowledge installed by colonialism, and inter-imperiality. This contribution argues that a mutual regard on nationalism and post-imperial violence between CEE and GS is beneficial for scholars of both regions. It puts forward three pillars for a research agenda to foster a deeper engagement between the regions and examine nationalism, empire and emancipation. First, it highlights how a further engagement with imperial duress and critical approaches coming from the Global South can counterbalance the recent redemptory historiography of empire. It revisits the frame of imperial break-up as an emancipatory act by delving into the post-colonial and decolonial approaches. Second, it interrogates the potential of engaging with the research perspectives stemming from CEE in discussing violence and nation-building in postcolonial contexts. It discusses the critique of nationalism beyond emancipation as a project of violent modernization and erasure. Moreover, it examines to what extent the work on Southeastern Europe

on violence connected with perceptions of historical victimhood complicates the narratives of emancipatory violence. Third, the contribution examines how the frames of indigeneity, mixture (*mestisaje*), and, more recently, settler colonialism have been used in both similar and contrasting ways in nationalist and antiimperial projects in Central and Eastern Europe and the Global South and what are the perspectives for an *histoire croisée* of the concepts. All in all, the paper interrogates whether we can still differentiate between an emancipatory, resistant nationalism, characteristic of the nineteenth-century imperial spaces in Latin America and CEE and twentieth century decolonization elsewhere, and the hegemonic nationalism of post-imperial nation-states, with its direct and indirect forms of violence.

Niloofer Sarlati (University of Michigan):

On the Brink of (Post)colonial Thought: Conversations from the Margins

"An Iranian once asks an Indian, 'How did foreigners conquer India?' The Indian responded: 'The same way they have conquered Iran.' The Iranian protested, 'No one has conquered Iran; we are an independent state.' The Indian said, 'that is what we thought as well until we realized we have become enslaved to the foreigners'." In this imaginary conversation from a mid-nineteenth-century economic pamphlet from Iran, an Indian—a representative of a colonized country—thus warns his Iranian companion—a representative of a semi-colonized country—of the threat of the belated recognition of colonialism. The Iranian, who starts off the conversation with a sense of pride, suddenly finds himself on the cusp of being colonized. Perhaps, he begins the conversation because he has already sensed that colonial brink. By the end of the conversation, the Iranian comes to an uneasy realization: colonialism has either not reached Iran *yet*, or it has not yet been recognized there. In addition to the confusing temporality of colonialism, the colonizer's identity is ambiguous in this semicolonial context.

Drawing on this imaginary conversation from a minor mid-nineteenth-century text, my paper proposes a more inclusive frame for studies of colonial and postcolonial thought. Bordering British India—the supposed paradigmatic colonial case—the Iranian character in this text sees his own country as, instead, paradigmatic of independence, even if he constantly senses the colonial brink. Attending to the "margins"—often categorized as the "buffer zone"—of what has been considered as colonial sights and eavesdropping on south-south conversations—even if imaginary ones—vis-à-vis colonialism will open a space for rethinking postcolonial thought by pushing the colonial powers to the margins and bringing the traditional "margins" to the center.

Panel 8: Decolonial and Deimperial Techniques

Chair: Borut Klabjan (University of Ljubljana)

Anna Zadrozna (University of Gdańsk):

The "Ottoman Garden": Rethinking the Imperial with Seeds and Plants

The "Ottoman Garden" (Osmanlı Bahçesi) is a prominent brand of vegetable and herb seeds and an initiative that popularizes organic gardening and rural development projects in Turkey. Sold in the biggest chain supermarkets and municipal garden stores, the brand offers the possibility of (re)planting (both symbolic and material) the "Ottoman" in the soil of the Turkish Republic and promises sustainable futures of organic agriculture and authentic flavors.

My paper takes the "Ottoman Garden" as a point of departure for historically and ethnographically grounded reflection on the relationships between humans, non-humans, and nature and their contribution to our understanding of "(post)Ottoman" and de-imperial as affective, temporal, and material. If de-imperial is about undoing and post-imperial is about continuation/transformation, what practices, affects, imaginations, and human-nonhuman relations do they involve? My paper looks at materialities as polytemporal: seeds, soil, and plants become carriers of different (imaginings of) futures and pasts. The "Ottoman Garden" seeds re-invent the "Ottoman" in terms of purity of genes, authenticity of flavor, and positive impact on more-than-human health. Regarded as local, in the very primordial sense, they stand in striking opposition to imported cultured plants who "colonize" the landscape. The undoing and re-inventing apply not only to the imperial but also to the republican and the national with their claims for modernity, progress, and control over nature. In this process of un-doing the (post)imperial with non-humans and plants, narratives of (de)contamination and purity take on new meanings and shed new light on the transformations of the last few decades.

Katharina Clausius (Université de Montréal):

Imperial and Imperiled Academic Labour

My paper challenges two assumptions underlying discourses around the decolonization and deimperialization of higher education and academic research, namely that the academy has only begun to wrestle with its colonial and imperial heritage in recent decades, and that the history of academic labour prior to new historicism was immutably rooted in hegemonic narratives. On the contrary, I show that the history of scholarship offers concrete evidence that academic labour has repeatedly responded energetically to radical de-imperial movements, and moreover that the strategies deployed by previous generations of scholars have laid the foundation for postmodern

deconstructionist methods in constructive and dangerous ways. By way of example, I document the case of German-speaking historians who, in the wake of the collapse of the Habsburg Empire and its cultural-political stability, found themselves mediating between post-imperial and de-imperial factions. Through primary source analysis, I retrace the careers of a group of interwar cultural historians who cultivated a brand of scholarship rooted in the politics of aesthetics. Some scholars like Roland Tenschert and Ernst Decsey spearheaded a revisionist movement interested in recalibrating Habsburg cultural exceptionalism as a type of pan-European liberalism. More radically, David Bach and Paul Pisk aggressively pursued public activism as a way to erase the expert-amateur-outsider divide and personified the academic "labourer" as a fully-fledged member of the proletariat. Others, including the renowned musicologist Otto Deutsch, tried to project a professional objectivity in their scholarship by maintaining a socio-political aloofness in their publications. Through a comparative analysis of the careers of these early researchers, I argue that the modern academy reproduces many of their de-colonial and de-imperial strategies, notably an emphasis on public outreach, a research model prioritizing political activism, and an explicitly socialist notion of academic labour. The failure of these strategies in the face of fascism, I conclude, unsettles our current confidence in decolonial and de-imperial theory.

Galina Oustinova-Stjepanovic (University of Glasgow):
**How to catch a Terror Fractal? Empire's latent forms and methods of
their detection**

This is an experimental paper in unbridled ethnographic imagination that considers whether there is anything to juxtapose with the Empire's thinginess. The mattering of the Empire, used for a moment as a singularity, is associated with ruins and toxic remainders, with categories of being and memories of political violence. The Empire is also a world of fragments, carbon imprints, and phantasmic history. The Empire is a pestilence; its corpses pictured, sculpted, and buried in unmarked graves. In other words, the empire has a visible, manifest surface, and a hidden form that can be a silenced past or a potential future. If an ethnographer could spot a movement that precipitates the transformation of the persistent past into a prefigured future, they would catch a terror-fractal.

A Terror Fractal appears in the radical thought of Reza Negarestani, a philosopher and storyteller, who substitutes the political with the poly-tical, a polyp that connotes the abominations of Persian sorcery (Negarestani 2008: 31). A Terror Fractal is a diagram of secret violence, its "crypto-structure" (ibid.) It is a political gesture that encrypts and encodes relations between the unborn, the living, and the dead in urban imagery, dream sequences, speculative philosophy, and the 'insensible' archive (Feldman 2015).

To write about terror fractals is exhilarating. But, can we have a working method that could dislodge an evidentiary epistemology that social anthropology relies on to study

political formations, such as the Empire and its lingering yet intractable effects? Navaro's negative methodologies (2020), Hartman's critical fabulation (2008), Walter Benjamin's thought-figures (2009), Gell's art theory (1998), Wagner's holograms and obviations (2001) have not been widely adopted despite a shared anthropological conviction that evocation and allegories rather than explanation are better suited for ethnographic sensibilities. Perhaps, an imperial terror-fractal lives on a different plane of immanence? By looking at architectural paperwork of monuments that will never be built in a city of Novi Sad (Vojvodina), I would like to invent an excessive methodology of latent forms in a place of knotted imperial temporalities.

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Olga Zaslavskaya (International Alternative Culture Center, Hungary): De-colonizing Frozen Commons: Western-based Research in the Arctic and Indigenous Arts & Crafts

The paper presents a work-in-progress that focuses on the research and practical implementation of the ArtSLInK (Arts, Science, Local, and Indigenous Knowledge) methodological approach. Its aim is to foster collaboration among different knowledge systems and bridge the gap between Western-based research and Indigenous knowledge.

The Arctic and sub-Arctic regions are home to Indigenous communities with centuries of experience living in a sensitive environment dominated by cold and frozen matter, such as snow, ice, and permafrost. They hold and pass down traditional knowledge, embodying stories, practices, and ecological awareness. Indigenous arts and crafts serve as a medium through which the environmental, cultural, and social aspects of Arctic communities are expressed.

In the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions, a growing number of studies are embracing decolonial, collaborative, and co-creative approaches and methods. Arctic Indigenous communities possess in-depth knowledge of environmental dynamics based on their long-standing connection to the land. As we address environmental changes in this region, it is imperative that we adopt a decolonial mindset that incorporates Indigenous arts and crafts, advocating for a deeper connection between traditional and scientific knowledge.

The paper will present the *Arctic StoryWorlds* program, a collaborative initiative involving representatives from Arctic Indigenous communities, the Arctic Indigenous Virtual Arts Network (AIVAN), and scientific projects, including the "Frozen Commons: Change, Resilience, and Sustainability in the Arctic " (2021-2026). This program exemplifies the integration of Indigenous arts and crafts in research, analysis, and decolonization discussions regarding the relationships with frozen commons. As a living narrative unfolding over several years, each year the program explores a different facet of Arctic life and knowledge.

Acknowledgment: I would like to express my gratitude to the Indigenous communities, scholars, and artists who have generously shared their knowledge and culture with us. This work would not be possible without their invaluable contributions.

Panel 9: Invited Roundtable: Thinking about De/Coloniality from (South-) East Europe

Chair: Sanja Bojanić (University of Rijeka)

Participants:

Katarina Kušić (University of Vienna)

**Emina Bužinkić (Institute for Development and International Relations,
Zagreb)**

**Sanja Petkovska (Institute of Criminological and Sociological Research,
Belgrade)**

Jelena Savić (Uppsala University, Sweden)

Ana Vilenica (Polytechnic of Turin, Italy)

Almost 30 years ago, Todorova's *Imagining the Balkans* launched what can be described as a broad research agenda of 'critical studies of Balkanism.' Today, there exists a formidable field of postcolonial and decolonial study of the region that goes well beyond what was conceived in Todorova's engagement with Said. This field does not interrogate only knowledge production, but studies the materiality of global coloniality, hegemony, and race in South East Europe broadly understood, and charts possible decolonial futures.

In this roundtable, we reflect on the last five years of scholarship, publications, and activism in the field of post-colonial and decolonial East, Central, and South East Europe. We do so by bringing together authors who have engaged in research, publication, and activism in different formats on the topics of de/coloniality in South East Europe.

Katarina Kušić is a Marie-Skłodowska Curie Actions Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Vienna. Her research interests include land politics, statebuilding and peacebuilding interventions, interpretive and fieldwork-based methods, and post-colonial and decolonial thought. Her current work explores international political ecologies of land and human-nature relations more broadly. Her PhD and the forthcoming monograph focused on post-war reconstruction efforts in Serbia.

Emina Bužinkić engages in research, writing, education, public agitation, and resistance activism in the fields of migration and border regimes, militarization, xenoracism, ethno-nationalism, civil society, peace and anti-war movements, and the neoliberalization of public goods. She continuously explores the possibilities of migration justice through the actions of social movements and people's tribunals,

advocates for socially responsible academia, and is writing a book titled *Storying Social Distancing: Race, Border and Refugee*. She earned her doctorate in critical educational, cultural, feminist, and human rights studies from the University of Minnesota in the USA. She is a member of the editorial collective for the journal [AGITATE! – Unsettling knowledges](#). She is employed as a postdoctoral researcher with the project [ENDURE – Inequalities, Community Resilience and New Governance Modalities in a Post-pandemic World](#), which is financially supported by the Croatian Science Foundation.

Sanja Petkovska obtained a PhD degree in Cultural Studies from the Faculty of Political Sciences at the University of Belgrade and previous academic degrees in Sociology and Adult Education from the Faculty of Philosophy at the same university. She works at the Institute of Criminological and Sociological Research in Belgrade, Serbia as a Research Fellow and her research revolves around critical theory, knowledge production, cultural studies, violence/conflicts, and public policy. She is the editor of *Decolonial Politics in European Peripheries: Redefining Progressiveness, Coloniality and Transition Efforts* (Routledge 2023).

Jelena Savic is a Ph.D. candidate at Uppsala University, Centre for Gender Research, specializing in the intersection of Critical Digital Humanities and Critical Romany Studies. Her research draws from theories of whiteness, decolonialism, and critical race theory. With an MA in Philosophy from Central European University in Budapest, Hungary, she has a background in dehumanization studies and her theses addresses the issue of scientific racism, sexism, and speciesism. Jelena also graduated from the Department of Andragogy at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, Serbia. Being of Serbian Roma origin, Jelena has been engaged in the Roma and feminist movements for two decades, and in 2019 she contributed a chapter to the Routledge publication *The Romani Women's Movement: Struggles and Debates in Central and Eastern Europe*.

Ana Vilenica is a Post-Doctoral Research Fellow with the ERC project "Inhabiting Radical Housing" at the Polytechnic of Turin's Inter-university Department of Regional & Urban Studies and Planning (DIST) and co-investigator at the research project "Sustaining Civil Society in the Context of Multiple Crises" (SustainAction). She is a member of the Radical Housing Journal Editorial collective and the Feminist Autonomous Center for Research (FAC research) Athens and Palermo. She has edited five books, most recently *Decoloniality in Eastern Europe: A Lexicon of Reorientation* ([kuda.org](#) 2023), *Radical Housing: Art, Struggle, Care* (Institute of Network Cultures 2021) and *Urban Marginality, Racialisation, Interdependence: Lessons from Eastern Europe* (Routledge forthcoming). Vilenica's work on housing, feminist, and no-borders activism and organizing has taken place in Serbia, the UK, and across unequal Europe. Her current research focuses on translocal, transnational and transcontinental organizing in and beyond radical housing struggles in so-called Americas.

Panel 10: Decolonial International? On the Non-Aligned Movement and Beyond

Chair: Hajrudin Hromadžić (University of Rijeka)

Chiara Bonfiglioli (University of Venice):

Women's Non-Aligned encounters: internationalist dialogues during the Cold War

Based on different case studies of encounters and exchanges between activist leaders in socialist Yugoslavia and the Global South held within the framework of the Non-Aligned Movement, I will discuss how internationalist dialogues were established as a way to strengthen ideals of sovereignty, self-determination and anti-imperialism. These ideals spoke to Yugoslav women who had fought against Fascist and Nazi occupation and were part of state sponsored women's organizations as well as to women who had been (or still were) part of anti-colonial movements and were engaged in post-independence governments in the Global South. Such historical case studies provide an important counterpoint to ongoing transnational feminist debates on the (dis)connections between post-colonialism and post-socialism. Their legacy allows us to foster a more inclusive canon of transnational feminist history, one that includes communist and socialist female activists that contributed to state building and that saw women's emancipation, class emancipation and alternative geopolitical relations as interdependent, on the basis of their experiences of imperialism in the Balkans and in the Global South.

Joe Grim Feinberg:

Anti-colonial, Anti-imperial, International: Unraveling Logics of Domination and Resistance in the Wide Eastern Europe

In contemporary political discourse, the notions of "colonial" and "imperial" have been losing semantic specificity as they gain rhetorical currency. Russia's "colonialist" practices are invoked as reasons for fighting Russian "imperialism," while Western "imperialism" is invoked as a reason for "decolonizing" Eastern Europe. In this paper, I attempt to analytically distinguish the logics of imperialism and coloniality, and to reflect theoretically on the differing forms of resistance that these two logics of domination tend to provoke. I am particularly concerned with how differing notions of national and internationalist liberation emerged from struggles against differently conceptualized adversaries, colonial and imperial. In the course of this analysis, I'd like to explore a few cases where these two logics of domination and resistance converged in the history of what I call the "Wide Eastern Europe" (that is, just as "the long 19th century" identifies a socially determined unit of time, I am interested in the loosely

defined area where the Habsburg, Ottoman, and Romanov empires and their successors have historically struggled for influence). How, for example, did the Polish Socialist Party's understanding of imperialism affect its approach to Polish liberation differently from, for example, the Bund's understanding, and its approach to non-territorial autonomy?

Ritty Lukose (Gallatin School, New York University):
Between Empire and Neoliberalism: 'The Woman Question' in the International System of the 1970s

Gender equality is now a widely if unevenly and contested global norm, in popular culture, media, civil society, social movements, nation-states and the international system. This has generated within feminism a vexed debate about gender mainstreaming and co-optation by capitalist and imperial geopolitical forces. This project contends we must grapple with the crucial decade of the 1970s and after in order to better apprehend how and why gender equality has become a global norm. This decade saw the emergence of a revitalized and contested international women's movement, across First/Second/Third Worlds, which is rightly understood to have put 'the woman question' on the agenda internationally. However, the 1970s also saw the emergence of neoliberal restructuring and the articulation and defeat of Third World assertion and Non-Alignment by the end of the decade. What is the relationship between the struggles of feminist activist-scholars from the North *and* South to make the international system focus on 'women' and later 'gender' and how "the woman question" became productive for this international system during this decade and after? In other words, what is the relationship between the rise of the 'woman question', neoliberalism and the defeat of decolonizing visions of the international system in the 1970s? Focusing on the writings of Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), a research network of scholar activists from across what is now called the Global South that emerged in the 1980s, this presentation seeks to recover a Southern feminist critique of neoliberalism as it was emerging, one that conjoined a critical apprehension not only of neoliberalism but also its imperial stakes in the undoing of Third World sovereignty. How can attention to this critical project illuminate our understandings of postcolonial, decolonial and perhaps post-imperial feminisms today?

Paul Stubbs (The Institute of Economics, Zagreb, Croatia):
Exploring Contradictory Racializations: Socialist Yugoslavia, the Non-Aligned Movement and Decolonial Worldmaking

The Non-Aligned Movement was an important part of decolonial worldmaking, in which socialist Yugoslavia played an important role. Socialist Yugoslavia's enrolment

into global raciality through its engagement in the Movement was complex and contradictory, however. Real, and tangible, support from the Yugoslav side for decolonial liberation movements often adhered to a racialized understanding of political struggle. At the same time, strong condemnation of apartheid in South Africa and (what was then) Rhodesia in every NAM event tended to frame such extreme racialized hierarchies and exclusions as exceptional rather than as general. One can certainly find examples of a "race-blind" or "non-racial" stance but, also, examples of precisely the opposite. The study of racialisation also needs explore the salience of legacies from before the socialist period, as well as internal oppressions within socialist Yugoslavia itself. It is, also, important to move beyond a sole focus on diplomatic history to address questions of the circulation of knowledge, student exchange, the role of Yugoslav companies in the Non-Aligned world, and artistic and cultural circulation, appropriation and bricolage. The extent to which circuits of decolonial solidarity included an understanding of racialised formations in global order remains an open question. Understanding socialist Yugoslavia and NAM in terms of racialization deepens the study of NAM, and decolonial worldmaking more generally, as a multi-nodal architecture of complexity and generates an important set of questions for further research.

Panel 11: Theorizing Decoloniality and Deimperiality (II)

Chair: Aidan O'Malley (University of Rijeka)

Katrin Kremmler (Humboldt University Berlin):

Imperial Skulls: The Vienna Museum of Natural History as a Site of Colonial-Imperial Race Making

Visitors to the Vienna Natural History Museum (NHMW) who book a rooftop tour to enjoy the spectacular view pass through off-limits areas. Turning a corner, they will come across the 'Skull Corridor', which houses the oldest section of the osteology collection at the Department of Anthropology, a display case containing more than 8,000 human skulls.

This paper posits that the vitrine offers unexpected insights regarding historical practices of racial categorization, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of 19th century scientific racism in the Habsburg context. As I will demonstrate, the skulls of the so-called Habsburg nationalities (individuals classified as German, Czech, Slovak, Polish, Ruthenian, South Slav, Hungarian, Romanian, Italian, Romani, and Jewish) obtained in 1877, and skulls of colonial provenance gathered during the Novara Expedition, the first circumnavigation of the world undertaken by the Imperial Austro-Hungarian Navy in search for future colonies (1857-1859), were arranged together according to a global taxonomic system of racial evolution.

This makes the NHMW osteology collection a highly relevant resource not only for Habsburg historians of science, social, medical, and military history but also for historians of race in post-imperial Eastern Central/South Eastern European contexts. It is particularly intriguing for current theoretical perspectives on colonial-imperial legacies of race and (off-)whiteness in Eastern Central/Southeastern Europe.

Sanskriti Chattopadhyay (University of Gothenburg):

Decentralising *Understanding*: A Dialogue between Postcolonialism and Decoloniality

Postcolonialism and decoloniality have often been put in a linear historicity, one succeeding the other, purportedly *solving* the issues of the former. They are both often understood in a binary against the colonial/ imperial thought. This thought process based on various layers of dichotomies may carry a colonial imprint within itself. Not only in its binary thinking replicating the age-old us and them narrative, but also in positing against coloniality, the centrality of colonial thought only becomes underlined. In this proposed presentation, I attempt a dialogue between the discourse and discord of the postcolonial and the decolonial critiques. This is not a performance

of opposition to the colonial/ imperial violence, rather as a recuperative gesture to decentralise the colonial/imperial worldview from its dominant, standard mainframe and establish it in relationality to various other worldviews and perspectives that exist as parallel to the colonial/ imperial one. Within this decentralising process, there is a fragile balance between accepting and acknowledging our position within the large colonial machinery while attempting a challenge to it by reinvigorating the multitude of worldviews it sought to suppress. Taking eminent Bengali literary artist Kamalkumar Majumdar's novel *Antarjali Jatra* as a case study here, I read a decolonial agency against the colonial/modern regime of *understanding* in an attempt to dismantle the causal logical centrality, trickling down from the early coloniality 400 years back. This destabilisation may arise or be created through the postcolonial method of underlining the inherent instability of all that is known as *stable truths*. With deep-reading of selective sections from the case study, I explore how the syntax, semantics, and temporal construction of a literary image can categorically aim towards a total cognitive shift and act as a decentralising tool. These readings will be contextualised within the Umbrella of Decolonial thinkers like Ánibal Quijano, Catherine Walsh, and Rolando Vázquez while drawing from postcolonial tools of hybridity and deconstruction, especially inspired by Homi K. Bhabha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.

Stef Jansen (University of Sarajevo):

Everyday geopolitics, inter-imperiality and emancipatory critique

The Balkans are one of those regions where geopolitical dynamics and concerns are particularly intensely present in everyday lives. Instances of what I call 'everyday geopolitics' are manifest in people's reasonings, but also as a pervasive form of affect and as an infrastructure for the unfolding of many practices. Unsurprisingly, questions of empire are integral to such everyday geopolitics. In this light I will reflect on the analytical potential of the 'decolonial' prism for our understanding of Southeast Europe and, particularly, on its promise of emancipatory critique. I argue that straightforward 'applications' of this paradigm run into trouble due to the uneasy relation between, on the one hand, its analytical emphases and sensibilities and, on the other hand, the specific location, or positionality, of the Balkans in global history. Namely, the highly relevant questions that the 'decolonial option' raises about the epistemic violence of modernity tend to feed into a focus on identitarian injuries that relies on an (often unspoken) politics of authenticity. Can something so central to the legitimisation of current domination in Southeast Europe be emancipatory? And what about other imperial forms of domination and inequality, drawing on sources other than Eurocentric 'coloniality'? Taking seriously long-term 'inter-imperial' dynamics in the Balkans means acknowledging that *all* empires count and I propose that our understanding would gain from going beyond the decolonial focus on epistemology, placing a much stronger emphasis on material interests and inequality in global-historical processes. Of particular interest for critique, I suggest, are articulations of

imperial domination with domestic hierarchies. Denunciations of Eurocentrism and of modernity's flattering self-presentations remain important. But if we aim for emancipatory critique, I suggest, we need to disturb the comfort that the decolonial option has come to provide by raising more prickly questions about the Balkans.

Yavuz Tuyloğlu (University of Groningen):

Is Semi-Coloniality a Useful Category for Comparative Historical Inquiry?

This paper follows through on a point raised by Middle East specialists. They argued that due to their incorporation into the modern European imperial system during the nineteenth century as semi-colonial entities, Qajar Iran and the Ottoman Empire exhibited qualities that postcolonial theory cannot fully capture. Postcolonial theory's central preoccupation with the colonizer and the colonized dichotomy is too neat a distinction to account for the specificities of the semi-colonial polities of the Middle East.³ For all their suggestiveness, however, such arguments remain essentially negative, "neither here nor there" conjectures. They are not systematic constructions answering the call raised by Jürgen Osterhammel more than forty years ago for a comparative analysis of semi-colonialism.⁴

In responding to Osterhammel's call, this paper first builds a comparative working definition of semi-coloniality that brings together their marked characteristics, such as subjection to unequal treaties and relinquishing of their certain sovereign prerogatives. In the following, and to avoid detention in this necessary yet static moment of comparative conceptualization, the paper turns to Ann Stoler's notion of "politics of comparison"⁵ to develop its distinctive historiographical contribution. Comparison, I argue, serves historical analysis better when it is seen as political practice (and not only as an external analytic) through which the condition of semi-coloniality was imposed and resisted.

Historically, two main axes of comparison interactively made the condition of semi-coloniality. In the first, Western European powers drew upon the earliest semi-colonial

³ Fatma Müge Göçek, "Parameters of a Postcolonial Sociology of the Ottoman Empire," in *Decentering Social Theory*, ed. Julian Go, vol. 25, Political Power and Social Theory (Bingley, UK: Emerald, 2013), 73–104; Shiva Balaghi, "Nationalism and Cultural Production in Iran, 1848–1906" (PhD Thesis, Ann Arbor, MI, University of Michigan, 2008); Afshin Marashi, "Paradigms of Iranian Nationalism: History, Theory, and Historiography," in *Rethinking Iranian Nationalism and Modernity*, ed. Kamran Scot Aghaie and Afshin Marashi (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2014), 3–24; Farzin Vejdani, *Making History in Iran: Education, Nationalism, and Print Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015); Mehrzad Boroujerdi, *Iranian Intellectuals and the West: The Tormented Triumph of Nativism* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 24; Clemens Hoffmann, "Anti-Colonial Empires: Creation of Afro-Asian Spaces of Resistance," in *Asia in International Relations: Unlearning Imperial Power Relations*, ed. Pinar Bilgin and L. H. M. Ling (London: Routledge, 2017), 137–48.

⁴ Jürgen Osterhammel, "Semi-Colonialism and Informal Empire in Twentieth-Century China: Towards a Framework of Analysis," in *Imperialism and After: Continuities and Discontinuities*, ed. Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986), 296.

⁵ Ann Laura Stoler, "Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies," *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 3 (2001): 829–65, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2700385>.

polity, the Ottoman Empire, as an example for later imperial engagements and impositions across Eurasia. The second axis is that of state-led resistance and “catch-up” strategies. In their response to the geopolitical pressures from the advanced Western European powers, the elites of semi-colonial entities drew on the examples of other “late modernizing” states (e.g., Meiji Japan), which experienced similar pressures and pursued modernization with similar goals.

Panel 12: The Art(s) of Decolonization

Chair: Claudia Clausius

Gregory Gan (Freie Universität Berlin):

Decolonial practices and affects amongst transcultural artists living in Berlin's *Plattenbauten*

This research examines artistic practices and transcultural emotional repertoires amongst artists from post-Soviet states residing in Berlin's GDR-era residential panel-block mass housing. The Soviet Union, widely understood as a colonial power, extracted resources and labour from ethnically-diverse regions assimilated as Republics under the ideological banner "Friendship of the peoples," but it also exerted economic and political influence in SED-controlled East Berlin and East Germany. Participants of this anthropological study would have found themselves in a migration trajectory at a time when newly-formed independent states had formally broken with the centrally-controlled Soviet government, and when Germany became reunified as a nation-state. They would have thus encountered double stigmatization; as former subjects of a Soviet colonial regime, and again, as foreigners from the "East," meeting restrictive migration laws in a newly-reunified Germany. They were also likely to settle in a familiar setting of industrially-built, East German high-rises—known as *Plattenbauten*—not unlike the Soviet panel-block mass-housing from which they came. My previous research examined this type of housing as highly affective, beckoning research participants to reflect on the meaning of home in a transnational context. My current approach expands on this work by drawing on decolonial theory (Mignolo and Walsh 2018), which recognizes how postcolonial political regimes are shaped by colonial epistemic practices that may be at once resisted, and internalized. This is especially pertinent in view of Russia's escalation of war in Ukraine, which raised awareness of the threat of state violence beyond Russia's borders, and which catalyzed a conversation regarding the legacy of socialist architecture in Berlin. Using affect and emotions as methodological tools for artistic research, I examine participants' emotional repertoires with the aim of developing collaborative decolonial artistic practices, disseminated through a series of artistic interventions, collective workshops, and public exhibitions.

Tina Hofman (University of Birmingham)

Can Diversity be Decolonial?: The Representation of Central, Eastern and Southeastern European (CESEE) artists in England

In this paper I will explore relationship between diversity and decoloniality in relation to arts industries through asking the question: Can diversity be decolonial? My point

of departure is the fact that working with diversity scales and frameworks is nowadays unavoidable for arts organisations, creative producers and presenters or even artists themselves working in publicly funded arts in England. Within the paper I seek to tackle the above question by relating to the position of Central, Eastern and Southeastern European (CESEE) arts and artists in English arts spaces. I will outline the evidence of racialisation and marginalisation of CESEE people, and the available evidence of their underrepresentation within the arts in England. The underrepresentation stems from their position of falling between the gaps of diversity frameworks as suggested by the *In-Between Spaces* report (Jones, Ceglarz, Centrala, 2021). I will explore their position within the paper in more detail. Following this I will offer critical view of diversity work, centring Sara Ahmed's (2012) critique, which suggests tokenism through the so-called "Benetton Model" and the action of "doing diversity". Whilst Ahmed specifically critiqued institutionalised diversity work in higher education, I am working to apply this critique to institutionalised diversity work within publicly funded arts organisations in England. In addition, I review the problematic of the "White Other" category on diversity monitoring forms in England's arts spaces.

The above questions are a part of my PhD research project within which I am examining the implications of diversity measuring and monitoring in the England's arts industry and beyond, as well as how the consideration of diversity and decoloniality might influence the development of contemporary artistic programming and commissioning. I will interrogate this through qualitative methodologies based on the interviews and case studies of CESEE artists in England, and reflections on their work, representation and diversity. Finally, I look to offer recommendations for re-thinking diversity practices within the arts.

Vera-Simone Schulz (Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz):

The Immaterial as Mode of Resistance: Bekele Mekonnen's *The Smoking Table* in Response to Italian Colonial Heritage

During the past years, it has become common practice in European museums to invite contemporary artists from Africa and other parts of the globe to provide a critical approach to museum objects and to the toxic legacy of colonial collections. This paper will investigate one such artistic response, Bekele Mekonnen's art installation *The Smoking Table*, which was created in interaction with the museum holdings from Africa in Turin, Italy. The paper will analyze Mekonnen's work as an artistic response to the Berlin Africa Conference in 1884-1885 and to the history of European colonialism on the African continent more generally. At the same time, it will discuss the multi-layered ways in which *The Smoking Table* is related to the particular case of the history of Italian colonial endeavors and military occupations in the Horn of Africa. The paper will show how Mekonnen's use of the immaterial in his art installation functions as a reaction to the material heritage of Italian colonial history. It will sound out notions of invisibility that become strikingly visible in his work just as the intricate interplay

between presence and absence. Finally, the paper will contextualize Mekonnen's art installation in the wider horizon of material remains of Italian colonial heritage both in Italy and in the Horn of Africa. It will shed new light on it comparing it to other contemporary art interventions with regard to the legacy of Italian colonialism. And it will show how, in the work of Bekele Mekonnen, the notion of the immaterial provides specific means with regard to artistic practices of resistance.

Vjera Borožan (The Academy of Fine Arts in Prague): **Brothers in the Suitcase**

The paper will be based on the findings of a research project initiated about a year ago at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague. Its main purpose will be to grasp and situate in a broader context, the issue of "*Czech kuferaši*" on the examples of selected artists and scientists, variously involved in the Austro-Hungarian „*civilizing mission*" in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

To this end, the paintings of *Jaroslav Čermák*- Czech artist living in Paris, will first serve as an introduction and at the same time as apt examples of the phenomenon of *ambivalent reading* of the artworks; Perceived in the West (the French Salons) primarily as an *Orientalist genre*, while allowed the local Czech audience to evoke ideas of *Slavic reciprocity* or to work with mechanisms of *co-victimization* in response to perceived cultural oppression. From salons and art exhibitions, we get to the representation of Bosnia and Herzegovina at world exhibitions. The temporal and contextual shift of the whole discourse will be captured by selected examples of works by *Alfons Mucha*, one of the key actors of the Austro-Hungarian "*exhibitionary complex*".

In the second part of the paper, I will shift our attention from world exhibitions to the museum institutions and from artists to selected scientists; to some archaeologists, geologists, mineralogists... (*Karel Patsch, František Fiala, Bedřich Katzer...*), who were involved in the founding of the collections of *Zemaljski Muzej/Landesmuseum* in Sarajevo; to those who at the same time led the first excavations of many archaeological sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina, or collected and described the local flora and fauna, or classified minerals (or participated in their extraction), and at the same time all published their studies in the museum magazine *Glasnik*.

I will then connect all the actors mentioned and their work in the field of culture /knowledge production and place them in the network of geopolitical and economic relations gravitating in the space between *inter-imperiality* and *the colonial matrix*. Finally, I will address methodological issues and try to find answers to the question why we learn more about this topic from Austrian or Bosnian colleagues, while in the Czech Republic it is characteristically given minimal attention...

Film screening: *Brijuni – A Necromantic Theatre*

by Behzad Khosravi Noori (Habib University, Karachi) and
Magnus Bårtås (Konstfack University of Art, Design and Craft in Stockholm)

In conversation with Sanja Horvatinčić and Jeremy F. Walton

Art-kino Croatia, Krešimirova 2, Rijeka

Brijuni-A Necromantic Theatre is an ambitious endeavour to establish a connection with the deceased and gain insights into their narratives and experiences. The inspiration behind this venture originates from an intriguing incident involving Koki, the talking cockatoo, who would call out for Tito from its cage on Brioni Island. This uncanny encounter with Koki's seemingly articulate utterances motivated us to embrace the necromantic concept of engaging with historical material and allowing the past to reveal itself in the present. Employing a fictional, pseudo-psychoanalytical approach, we delve into the submerged undercurrents of the biographies of our two central figures, resulting in the creation of the film manuscript. Both protagonists, Paul Kupelwieser and Josip Broz Tito, have distinctively invested their lives in Brioni, albeit in different ways. The establishment of a zoo, symbolising an envisioned empire, bears colonial undertones. The concept of fashioning an exotic "colony" within Europe to construct a lavish global hub unites them in their aspirations.

Dr Behzad Khosravi Noori is an artist, writer, educator, playground maker, and necromancer. He is a professor in Practice at Habib University in Karachi and a postdoc fellow at Goldsmith university department of fine art.

His practice-based research includes films, installations, and archival studies. His works investigate histories from The Global South, labour and the means of production, and histories of political relationships that have existed as a counter narration to the east-west dichotomy during the Cold War and beyond. By bringing multiple subjects into his study, Behzad explores possible correspondences seen through the lenses of contemporary art practice, proletarianism, subalternity, and the technology of image production. He analyses recent history to revisit memories beyond borders, exploring the entanglements and non/aligned memories.

Khosravi Noori's works have been shown at Kalmar Museum, Malmö Art Museum, Venice Biennale, Timișoara Biennale, Ural Industrial Biennale, 12.0 Contemporary Islamabad, Tensta Konsthall, Sakakini Art Institution Ramallah Palestine, HDLU Zagreb, WHW Zagreb, Botkyrka Konsthall, CFF (Centre of Photography, Stockholm), Marabouparken, Stockholm, Centre of Contemporary art, Riga, Arran Gallery Tehran, among other venues. He is a member of the editorial board of VIS – Nordic Journal for Artistic Research and teaches fine art and postcolonial theory at Habib University in

Karachi, Pakistan. Behzad Khosravi Noori divides his time between Sweden and Pakistan.

Dr Magnus Bærtås is an artist and author. His installations and video essays are often investigated in the fields of marginal architecture, biography and storytelling. He is a head of research and deputy vice-chancellor at the Konstfack University of Art, Design and Craft in Stockholm. His PhD in practice-based research was presented in 2010 (You Told Me – work stories and video essays). His video essay Madame & Little Boy won the grand prize at the Oberhausen International Film Festival. He has published three books of essays together with Fredrik Ekman. Their latest book (Alla Monster måste dö) was nominated for the Swedish National Book Prize (Augustpriset). He participated in 'Reshapes', the IASPIS contribution to The Venice Biennale in 2003, "Modernautställningen" at Moderna Museet, Stockholm 2006 and 2010 and the 9:th Gwangju Biennale 2012 among other exhibitions.

Panel 13: Postcolonial and Postimperial Geographies

Chair: Maura Hametz (James Madison University)

Goran Stanić (KU Leuven, University of Rijeka):

The Formation of Bosnian Franciscan Culture under Historical-Imperial Legacies

After the Ottoman occupation of the Medieval Kingdom of Bosnia in 1463, Franciscan missionaries remained the only Catholic priests present on the territory of Bosnian *sanjak*. This marked the shift of the Franciscan pastoral mission towards political representation of Catholics, culminating in *longue durée* perspective with their significant participation in the modernist culture and revolutionary movements of the 19th century. Yet, in 1881, Franciscan clerical monopoly in Bosnia was abruptly suppressed by the re-installed diocesan Catholic clergy only three years after the Austro-Hungarian 'civilizing mission' had overtaken Bosnia at the Congress of Berlin. Top-down diocesan implementation of anti-modernist theological paradigms together with nationalist ideology of *Catholic Croatianism* appeared dissonant with the Franciscan self-ascribed historical rights and their heterogeneous appropriation of national emancipatory movements. This caused the conflict in Bosnian Catholic community that has survived in manifold ways until today, vividly manifested in the ambiguous political and cultural position of Croats as one of the three constitutive peoples in contemporary Bosnia & Herzegovina (B&H). In this talk, I draw on Maria Todorova's notion of 'historical legacy' in order to make parallels between the cultural profile of Bosnian Catholic tradition and Christian Orthodox churches in the Ottoman Empire, which Todorova in *Imagining the Balkans* (1997) attributes as "quintessentially Ottoman", which functioned as "preserver of religion, language, and local traditions" and even "benefited from the imperial dimensions of the state". I extend those arguments also in the case of Franciscan tradition in B&H by describing its peripheral cultural, religious and theological positionality as direct consequence of changing imperial constellations. Navigating this presentation with theoretical considerations that describe Bosnian Franciscan culture as the embodiment of an ambiguous 'European-Oriental micro-culture' that is largely determined by 'post-imperial legacies', I also clarify the role of Catholic clergy in providing formative institutional network and ideological motives for the development of 'grounded nationalism', understood here as part of the wider 'global history' movements. In conclusion, I discuss how example of Bosnian imperial past provokes to distinguish the Balkans as a site of post-imperial legacies from the context of settler colonialism that gave rise to postcolonial and decolonial theories.

Kevin Kenjar (University of Rijeka):
**Apocalypse Now: 19th Century Proto-Zionism in the Inter-Imperial
Borderlands**

This paper follows the development of various early 19th-century Messianic movements within the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions which all came to believe that the "end times" were to begin within a few years of 1840 CE, and how these movements all came to intersect in 19th-century Ottoman Palestine. A particular focus here is on the emerging suburbs in the northeastern outskirts of the port city of Jaffa. It was here that Sarajevo-born Rabbi Yehuda Margoza first planted a garden and citrus grove to feed the growing number of Jewish migrants from North Africa, and this garden and the surrounding land would soon host various waves of zealous Protestant Christian colonists from both the US and Germany who settled in the Holy Land, driven by the own chiliastic predictions of redemption.

Malte Fuhrmann (New Europe College, Bucharest):
**Germany's Real and Imagined Mediterranean Colonies: A Plea for an
Intertextual and Entangled Approach to Empire**

History of imperialism as it was practiced in the 1970s and 1980s, with its staunch reliance on the materialist driving force behind social processes, strictly differentiated analytically between colonialism as a modern-day landgrab and imperialism as more general means of pursuing international domination. By focusing on the particularity of the colonial condition, both postcolonial and decolonial approaches in part miss out on the fact that the colonialist/ imperialist mentality thrives within an intertextual framework that constantly refers to different bygone empires. Turkey legitimizing one of its first interventions into the Syrian War with the preservation of an Ottoman sultan's tomb, the role of pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian self-styled Cossack militias in the ongoing war, as well as Chinese evocations of past glories as part of the Belt and Road Initiative are but some examples that both peaceful initiatives and acts of aggression are justified and interpreted by their apologists with constant reference to previous empires (or rather glossed images thereof).

I therefore propose to loosen the analytical differentiation between colonialism and imperialism as well as different ages of empire in order to grasp more comprehensively the historicizing mentality that accompanies intended empire building. In my paper, I will take the example of Germany's ambitions of building an empire in the Mediterranean region between roughly 1830 and 1918. It will demonstrate how this attempt was inspired by three different narratives. In the first, Germany was cast as a new Rome, but unlike France or Italy, this always remained the weakest image in making Germany's Mediterranean empire. The second-strongest trend was to cast the Kaiserreich as a Crusader state in the footsteps of Emperor Friedrich I (Barbarossa,

ruled 1152/1155–1190). The most influential was however also the most historically remote one: It cast the German dynasty as a modern-day incarnation of the Attalids (282–129 BC). The paper will show how these motifs acted as incentive, legitimation, and in the absence of actual conquests as imagined empire for nineteenth century Germans. It will also demonstrate how these images influenced Germany's actual conquest of Mediterranean lands during fascism.

Pamela Ballinger (University of Michigan):
Mussolini's Mare Nostrum as Imperial Bricolage

The Italian fascist expansionist project of "Mare Nostrum" is often understood in reductive terms, as the Duce's (delusional) projection of a revived Roman Empire with an "Italian" Mediterranean at its center. A more careful reading, however, reveals Mare Nostrum as an imperial bricolage, invoking empires from ancient Rome to la Serenissima but also Austria-Hungary and the Ottomans. While the fascist empire operated within and across the space of what Borutta and Gekas (2012) have deemed a "colonial sea," this paper instead explores the fascist empire as interimperial in a *temporal* sense along the lines of what Geroulanos, Edelstein, and Wheatley (2020) have deemed *chronocenosis*. This concept captures not just "the multiplicity but also the conflict of temporal regimes operating in any given moment ... [the] interface amid intensely competitive temporal formations, and not simply parallel or layered ones."

This paper analyzes two aspects of this interface of historical (formally superseded) empires within the domain of the fascist empire. First, the paper explores how the Adriatic served as both a model and springboard for fascist imperialism. This manifested itself in initiatives such as the Istituto di Studi Adriatici, a prominent expression of Volpe di Misurata's political project of a "grande Venezia" aimed at vindicating the loss of la Serenissima's Adriatic territories, first to the Habsburgs and then to new states like Albania and Yugoslavia. Secondly, the paper inquires into the spatial and expressly infrastructural manifestations of competing imperial temporal formations in the Isole Italiane d'Egeo (the Italian Dodecanese).

Viewing Mare Nostrum through the lens of chronocenosis goes beyond dismissive accounts of this imperial project as ideologically impoverished. At the same time, it may offer new ways to frame decoloniality. While highlighting the persistence of colonial structures, decoloniality is typically applied to a singular imperial formation rather than to the complex overlaps and entanglements of multiple empires across time.

Panel 14: Representational Politics

Chair: Sanja Puljar D'Alessio (University of Rijeka)

Cihat Arınç (Boğaziçi University, Istanbul):

Post-imperial Memory on Film: The Fall of Ottoman Palestine in Australian Historical Cinema

Historical cinema plays a significant and complex role in expressing, shaping, and contesting the collective memories of post-imperial nations. A meticulous exploration of historical films across distinct political eras illuminates the dynamic and adaptable nature of post-imperial memory, highlighting its nuanced evolution in relation to the changing meanings of the imperial past for the national present and its continuous reshaping to align with contemporary political agendas. This paper delves into the cinematic representations of the British Empire's campaign in the Ottoman province of Palestine during World War I, employing a comparative analysis of two Australian historical war films, Charles Chauvel's *Forty Thousand Horsemen* (1940) and Simon Wincer's *The Lighthorsemen* (1987), produced nearly fifty years apart. The paper examines the narrative, visual, aural, and generic elements of these films, with a particular focus on their mnemonic functions, drawing attention to both consistencies and divergences. Special emphasis is placed on the portrayal of enemies, encompassing the Ottoman Turks and Germans, alongside a thorough scrutiny of British, Anzac, and Arab/Bedouin characters. The paper argues that analysing how historical narratives are represented, distorted, or silenced in films provides a crucial framework for understanding the intricate interplay between cinematic imagination, master narratives of imperialism and nationalism, and the regimes of remembering and forgetting in post-imperial contexts. Through the dissection of shifting national self-images, perceptions of enemies, and deliberate filmmaker choices, the paper unravels the power dynamics inherent in shaping Australian post-imperial memory through film.

Irena Šentevska (Independent Researcher):

Contemporary popular culture of the Western Balkans at the crossroads of post-imperial and crypto-colonial: The case of Serbian 'turbo-folk'

This paper attempts to situate the ongoing discussions revolving around the concepts of 'colonialism', 'orientalism', 'subalternity', 'postcolony', 'decolonial' and 'post-imperial' in the field of contemporary media and popular culture of the Balkans. In my opinion, contemporary mass culture is often unjustifiably excluded from academic considerations in spite of its impact on the contemporary societies. The media phenomenon familiar throughout the Balkans and termed in Serbia as 'turbo-folk',

seems like a perfect case to demonstrate the dynamics of the post-imperial cultural legacies at work in the Western Balkans (especially in the context of dissolution of former Yugoslavia). They strongly shape the countries of the region culturally, politically and even economically. Drawing from different academic disciplines (anthropology, sociology, musicology, media studies), I observe 'turbo-folk' as a mirror of the neocolonial processes of 'thirdworldization' of small cultures which share a marginal position in the globalized world order. I also look at the association of turbo-folk with the concepts of crypto-colonialism and self-colonization.

This once despised and now hugely influential form of popular entertainment has been acknowledged as a cultural phenomenon deeply connected with questions of cultural and political legitimacy, largely based on the shifting attitudes towards Serbia's own post-Ottoman heritage. The historic roots of 'turbo-folk' lie in socialist Yugoslavia's processes of modernization and post-World War II social transformations. 'Turbo-folk' has generated more controversy between the former Yugoslav republics than any other aspect of contemporary mass culture. Here, orientalist assumptions on core cultural differences based on differing post-imperial legacies in their contemporary guise could be best observed at play. This makes 'turbo-folk' a valuable object of study when discussing the intersections between Postcolonial, Decolonial, Post-imperial, and De-imperial in the context of the contemporary Western Balkans.

Paul Csillag (European University Institute, Florence):
**From Eugen to Sarajevo: De-imperializing Austrian's imperial history
through film**

In my presentation, I will show how recent Austrian filmmakers tried to de-imperialize Habsburg history in the eastern Mediterranean. Period pieces and cinema in general play an important role in determining how society perceives its imperial present and past. Art can uphold imperial worldviews or deconstruct and de-imperialize them. Recently, Austrian directors started to question imperial narratives that persist in schoolbooks, historiographical writings, and popular history. They endeavored to present a new interpretation of the empire's actions in southeast Europe and the Mediterranean by breaking with traditional narratives. I will analyze two examples of Austrian cinematic de-imperialization to illustrate the versatility of its methodology. First, an evaluation of Andreas Prohaska's *Sarajevo* (2014) will demonstrate how alternative historical models can question traditional interpretations of mythical, historical, and imperial events. In the film, an Austrian detective unveils a secret plot to kill the heir to the Habsburg throne, Franz Ferdinand, generating an understanding of the (in)famous murder that diverges from official versions. Second, Wolfgang Murnberger criticized Austrian imperial nostalgia with his film *Kebab mit Alles* (2011). Instead of availing himself of the period-piece genre, Murnberger showed how fictionalized citizens of twenty-first-century Vienna mobilized imperial symbols, such as the legendary general Prinz Eugen, to support xenophobic narratives. Ingeniously,

he depicted how these narratives served to maintain an imperial self-understanding and a hereto-linked economically advantageous position. Although both films have, at first impression, nothing in common, they pursue similar objectives. While Prohaska tries to de-imperialize Austrian popular history by providing an alternative reading of the past, Murnberger ridicules imperial nostalgia in the present. To understand recent de-imperialization outside of academic circles, the analysis of cinema is indispensable.

Panel 15: Interimperiality, Postcolony, Postempire

Chair: David Orlov (Nazarbayev University)

Cristian Cercel (Institute for Danube Swabian History and Regional Studies, Tübingen) and Sacha Davis (University of Newcastle, Australia):
German Settleriness in the East of Europe through the Prism of Settler Colonial Studies

This paper makes the case for placing the east of Europe on the global map of settler colonial studies by addressing the apparent parallels between German settlers in the east of Europe and settlers in transatlantic societies.

Scholarship as well as more popular discourses routinely refer to the historical German presence in the east of Europe as a presence of “settlers” or “colonists”, a result of processes of “colonization” (Wolff 2002; Sébaux 2015; Sallanz 2020; Seewann and Portmann 2020; Schmidt 2021). Nonetheless, this has generally not led to a critical discussion of German settleriness in the east of Europe within the framing of settler colonial studies. Exceptions are few, and they mainly regard the place of the so-called *Volksdeutsche* within Nazi plans for German imperial expansion (Bergen 1994; Harvey 2005; Fiebrandt 2014; Siemens 2017; Siemens & Wolf 2017; Goossen 2017; O’Sullivan 2020). Still, the parallels between the flight and expulsion of Germans from the east of Europe and the decolonial forced ‘return’ of the *pièdes-noirs* from the north of Africa have been noticed (Borutta & Jansen 2016).

Against this background, our paper expands the remit of the engagement with Germans in the east of Europe through the prism of settler colonial studies by critically engaging with the histories of migration and settlement, and the identification discourses, of Transylvanian Saxons and Danube Swabians. In both cases, parallels to transatlantic settler colonial situations elsewhere are striking: settler privileges and ideas of in-group equality and sovereignty building on such privileges, the land-centeredness of the settlement processes, which were also meant to contribute to the securitization of (imperial) frontiers, representations of the lands that were settled as ‘empty’ or as inhabited by backward ‘natives’ etc. Moreover, the postwar dispossession and/or expulsion of Saxons and Swabians parallels acts of decolonization and of unsettling the settlers, confirming the validity of the aforementioned comparison with the *pièdes-noirs*. Related to this, in Ceaușescu’s Romania nationalist narratives emphasized the indigeneity/nativity (‘autochthony’) of the Romanians in Transylvania and Banat, counterposing it to German (but also Hungarian) settleriness.

Our paper dissects these and other parallels and entanglements between German settleriness in the east of Europe and settler colonial situations elsewhere, discussing both whether and how can settler colonial studies help us fruitfully engage with them

as well as what are their implications for settler colonial studies. It asks not only what can settler colonial studies do for the study of German settlers in the east of Europe, but also what can the study of German settlers in the east of Europe do for settler colonial studies. In doing this, the paper also emphasizes that there have been other cases of groups in the east of Europe articulating their identity around ideas of settlerness – both ‘German’ and non-German – such as Russian Germans, Bessarabian Germans, Dobruja Germans, Gottscheer, but also Szeklers. Second, drawing on the work of scholars such as Patrick Wolfe and Lorenzo Veracini and emphasizing the specificities of the *settler* colonial as opposed to the colonial situation, the paper asks what does it mean to think of post- and decolonization and post- and de-imperialism in the east of Europe if we recognize it as a space that has seen various forms of settler colonialism.

Johana Wyss (Institute of Ethnology, Czech Academy of Sciences):
**Imperial Traces in Post-Socialist Spaces: A conjunctural Exploration of
Inter-imperiality in the Silesian Borderland**

This paper delves into the complexities and intricate dynamics of imperial legacies in post-socialist Eastern Europe. Grounded in Laura Doyle’s concept of inter-imperiality, this exploration focuses on everyday life in multi-imperial semi-peripheries, particularly within Silesian transnational European borderlands. It sheds light on the daily practices, narratives, and subjectivities of contemporary inhabitants of this region. Applying conjunctural theorising and conjunctural geographies of other borderland regions, such as Istria, Galicia, or Burgenland, this research seeks to understand the interconnectedness of historical and contemporary factors that shape the European borderland landscape, emphasising the entanglements of imperial and socialist influences on local borderland communities in the present. This approach considers how communities navigate the complexities of moving beyond these dual historical structures, offering insights into the challenges and opportunities presented by such movement. In doing so, the intertwining of imperial and socialist traces becomes a focal point, illustrating the layered nature of the sociocultural landscape of post-imperial borderlands in post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe.

The study’s theoretical grounding incorporates an exploration of the concept of “de-socialist” to further elucidate the transitional processes within the region. In examining the kin relationship between the concept of “de-colonial”, “de-imperial”, and “de-socialist”, this research seeks to uncover shared threads of dismantling oppressive structures. By exploring the intersectionality of these concepts, the study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of historical and ongoing power dynamics in post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe.

Nergis Canefe (York University) and Ceren Verbowski (York University):
**From Universal to the Particular and Back: Reconsidering Histories of the
Middle East**

This paper explores the geopolitics of knowledge embedded in the production and evaluation of Middle Eastern Studies “area studies” as an academic field with an orientalist legacy to grapple with its barring from ‘universal history’ or in general ‘world history’. While Middle Eastern history remains largely confined within the domain of area studies, critical scholars are acutely aware of the need to re-think the parameters of analysis from a universal perspective. Meanwhile, some explicitly seek to remove the object of critique from the confines of a particularism that renders histories from the Global South esoteric, and thereby irrelevant to universal history or any social and political conception of the global. As they address with universal categories developed in other fields, however, these scholars often encounter a two-sided resistance. At home, such projects come up against an exceptionalism that unwittingly reduces its subject to a particular. Outside, they are sometimes challenged by the producers of the adopted categories, who find the contexts too dissimilar and the inapplicability of conceptual tools across contexts, thereby, inappropriate. Here, the problem is multifaceted. In the latter case, the refusal to “lend” conceptual categories not only brings their universality into question but also reveals the essentialism underlying area studies, which conceptualizes the “Orient” as fundamentally different from the West. Meanwhile, the rejection of scholars of the Middle East must be considered alongside the power relations that gave rise to their confinement within area studies in the first place. In this paper, we grapple with these questions through the concept of colonialism and re-think its applications and absences in Ottoman and Turkish studies, with special emphasis on the work of Charles Issawi, Albert Hourani, Suraya Faroghi, Cemal Kafadar, and Nikki Keddie. Here, we consider the use of concepts such as race, “borrowed colonialism,” “internalized orientalism,” and “internal colonialism” considering the decolonial rendition of coloniality and seek a theoretical framework that does not reduce the academic pursuit of universality to a matter of lending and borrowing. We highlight the ways in which key scholars of the Middle Eastern history have been barred from producing a universal critique from within and are limited to adapting or adopting from the West instead. We thereby identify the need for a conceptualization that grounds the universal in the particular and pays attention to concepts emerging from multiple networks as opposed to a single one with an exclusive claim to universality.

Szilvia Nagy (Central European University):
**Situating the 'global easts': Relationality in the Shadow of the Epistemic
'Grey Zone'**

How can we comprehend and make sense of the epistemic space and 'grey zone' between the traditional understandings of the 'Global North' and 'Global South' through relational approaches? Various concepts have emerged in the last years to frame post-soviet lived experiences – Eurasia, Global East, Central- and Eastern Europe, Transperipheral – but so far none of them seem to be widely accepted. Why is it so particularly difficult/challenging to address this epistemic 'grey space'? How can we explore and understand the spaces opened by the sudden rupture caused by the fall of the Soviet world? This paper will address these questions in two steps. On the one hand, it explores how relational approaches can contribute to the post-imperial understanding of the former "Second World" prompted by questions about the possible links between the (post)socialist, (post)communist and the (post)colonial. On the other hand, through relational approaches, it aims to address how the liminalities and dualities encompassed by the concept of the Global East contribute to and deepen decolonial (or deimperial) thought and praxis.

Panel 16: Narrating Coloniality and Imperiality

Chair: Natka Badurina (University of Udine)

Andreu Gestí Franquesa (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris):

Politics, culture, and literature. The figure of Caliban as a framing for postcolonial studies

Caliban, the monstrous slave in one of Shakespeare's last plays *The Tempest*, has been interpreted in many different ways through the globe, depending on each sociopolitical and historical context. In the last half century, the character has been conceived as a symbol of resistance against colonial domination, and more recently as a multi-layered figure for exploring simultaneously different oppressions. Common point to all these multiple approaches is that Caliban represents moral and socio-cultural difference, crystallizing the idea of marginalization and discrimination. Indeed, the presence of Caliban in the plot has been the beginning point to discussions and critics about *The Tempest* being Shakespeare's work that best explores issues of colonial oppression. The play may or not be 'about' the historical and political project as we today understand as colonialism, but it does engage with attitudes to otherness, cultural and racial difference that formed the ideological basis of the colonial enterprise. Most importantly, during the seventies several Caribbean authors have forged a version of Caliban that became a strong symbol of Latin-American anti-colonialist thought. In that sense, important critics and thinkers as the Martiniquais Aimé Césaire, Cuban Fernández Retamar, or Barbadian George Lamming have simultaneously engaged political and cultural debates about postcolonialism and decolonialism in their own intellectual traditions and cultural areas. For this comparative literature analysis, I will begin by exposing the essential points that reshaped Caliban as a metaphor for the colonized in the Caribbean. Then, I will be reflecting on the character, and Shakespeare's play more generally, as a helpful tool allowing to understand and articulate notions such as "postcolonial" or "decolonial" among different intellectual heritages, languages and cultures. Finally, I will open the discussion by integrating the other key notions such as post-imperial and de-imperial, in an attempt to actualize a corpus which *a priori* only articulates the two first notions.

Anna Wieczorkiewicz (University of Warsaw):
**Unveiling Hidden Narratives: Colonial Fantasies and Dreams of
Dominance in Travel Writing from the Polish People's Republic**

This paper delves into the complex mechanisms behind the cultivation of colonial narratives within the context of official colonialism critique. It does so through the lens of travel writing during the era of the Polish People's Republic, a period when colonialism and imperialism were officially condemned.

The prevailing narrative in Poland, both in the collective imagination and school education, presented and still presents the country as a historical victim of oppression, emphasizing its subjugated status. However, beneath the surface of these legitimate narratives, there may be concealed fantasies of role reversal.

The paper highlights two examples – one from the 1950s and another from the 1980s; both concern journeys to India, a recurrent theme in Western literature. By drawing upon Marie Louise Pratt's concept of "Imperial Eyes," the paper explores how axiological patterns are perpetuated, assigning specific roles to cultural subjects within the hierarchy of civilization.

The analysis reveals that Polish travel literature under socialism employs traditional strategies of travel writing to normalize structural inequalities between cultures, allegedly in the service of promoting the socialist development ideology. Paradoxically, the allure of these journeys does not stem from their promotion of socialist ideals, but rather from the fascination with the lifestyles of European colonizers, known through literature and movies. Colonial heritage, typically overtly criticized in official discourse, is subtly cherished in the intricate descriptions of colonial life that Polish travelers sought to emulate. These narratives demonstrate the manipulation of semi-peripheral identity and contribute to a broader system of ideas regarding the positioning of residents from countries within the People's Democracies in a global context.

Matea Magdić (University of Rijeka, University of Zagreb):
The Zrinski Family Myth: How Verse Created the Nation

The Habsburg Monarchy was once known as the "dungeon of the people," a pejorative term, despite its motto of "Einheit in der Vielheit" (unity in multitude). In the 19th century, the challenge of merging diverse cultural identities into one entity led to the emergence of ethnically homogenous nation-states, making the "dungeon of the people" metaphor relevant.

In the 19th century, Croatia was a region of various imperial and cultural powers. The south, comprising Split and Dubrovnik, boasted a thousand-year-old tradition of urban elites. The north, on the other hand, was home to noble culture, oral literature, and folklore (cf. Rapacka 1998). Both areas were influenced by wars against the Ottomans

and tensions with the Republic of Venice, and characterized by an ambivalent attitude towards the Habsburgs.

The Croatian national revival aimed to homogenize culturally dissonant areas. In the process, the revivalists chose between various types of folk and literary culture, replacing some cultural myths with new ones that later became national myths and are still relevant. The change of paradigms and the replacement of one myth with another can be observed in the example of the noble family Zrinski.

The Zrinski family, from the north of Croatia, became part of the Croatian cultural pantheon through the memory of the Battle of Siget (1556). The battle produced one of the most celebrated military leaders in Croatian literature, Nikola Šubić Zrinski, who was remembered as part of the *topos ante murale christianitatis* but also of a broader narrative pattern which is known in Western literature as the fight between David and Goliath.

A turning point in the interpretation and memory of this cultural myth occurred in the Croatian National Revival when Nikola Šubić Zrinski became part of the counterculture, that is, part of the wider pretensions to resist the "external" ruler and to seek secession from other countries within the framework of the newly established national unity. This paper will examine the shift in the interpretation of the Battle of Siget, as well as the replacement of the established "Siget myth" with a new myth in which Fran Krsto Frankopan and Petar Zrinski are the main figures. This new myth came to life in the verse genres of the revival period.

Stijn Vervaet (University of Oslo):

Multilingualism as Imperial Legacy: Post-Imperial Borderlands in Andrić and Krleža

Not without reason, current scholarship tends to focus on migration as the main generator of literary multilingualism, celebrating the postcolonial, postmodern western city as the case par excellence to study multilingual writing. But literary multilingualism has a long tradition reaching well beyond the current moment. An interesting case in point is the literature from the multiethnic regions in East-Central Europe, which were often subjected to and wedged between different empires and their conflicting interests.

In this paper, I will explore the afterlife of imperial language(s) and language policies – understood with Mary Louise Pratt (2015) as the translanguistic needs of the imperial administration and of the production of imperial subjects through language – as imagined in post-imperial Yugoslav fiction. I argue, first, that the creation of linguistic diversity, and, by extension, the thinking in "monolingualism" and "multilingualism" in 19th c. Central Europe and the Balkans can be best understood as a (by)product of imperial governance and an effect of inter-imperality. Secondly, I hope to demonstrate

that studying the politics and aesthetics of multilingual writing in works by Yugoslav post-imperial writers can shed light on the afterlife of the overlapping legacies of empire in the region.

I will illustrate my claims by looking into the fictional representations of Habsburg borderlands in Miroslav Krleža's theater play and prose fiction *The Glemboys* and of Ottoman borderlands in Ivo Andrić's posthumously published novel *Omer Paša Latas*. Both works deploy a wide range of multilingual writing strategies such as codeswitching, language mixing and translation, but not just for the sake of realism or linguistic play. Foregrounding the historically contingent forms and meanings of multilingualism and its entanglement with imperial power asymmetries, Andrić and Krleža in different ways evoke and reflect upon the politics of language under empire, both as historical given and as afterlife.

Panel 17 (online): Decolonizing and Deimperializing Eastern Europe

Hanna Perekhoda (University of Lausanne):

Transcending Labels: Reassessing National and Imperial Dynamics in Revolutionary Ukraine (1917-1922)

Amid the tumultuous period of imperial fragmentation in 1917, the political forces competing for power on the territory of present-day Ukraine endeavored, each in their unique manner, to disentangle the intricate web of social tensions that had arisen due to the incoherent and conflicting process of nationalization and modernization of the Tsarist empire. Our focus lies in examining the resultant political configurations through the lenses of *empire* and *nation*, understanding these concepts as ideal types for integrationist polities, one of which strives for homogenization, while the other attempts to manage diversity⁶. Our goal is to dissect prevailing historical narratives centered solely on nationhood, prevalent in both Ukrainian and Russian contemporary historiography, which paint the events of 1917 as a clash between Ukrainian "nationalists" and Russian "empire-saviors".

Prior to the winter of 1918, Ukrainian Central Rada aimed to accommodate the diversity by transforming the Russian Empire into an inclusive federation structured around ethnoterritorial principles. In contrast, the majority of the Bolsheviks in Ukraine did not plan to accommodate the diversity, but to break it through the knee, applying a universal onedimensional taxonomy of a *class-based nation*. The formation of the USSR as an "empire of nations" or an "affirmative action empire" based on ethno-territorial principles wasn't an initial plan but a product of intricate negotiations and adaptations commencing already in 1917. Crucially, the pursuit of a class-based supraethnic nation persisted within the USSR. The state vacillated between imperial and national strategies, without one of them ever completely giving way to the other.

Understanding the motives driving the Russian invasion of Ukraine—dubbed a "colonial" or "imperial" war by some and "nationalist" by others—urgently necessitates a comprehensive reevaluation and nuanced discussion of the interplay between national and imperial dynamics in Russian history.

⁶ Burbank, Jane, and Frederick Cooper. *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011.

Pietro Restaneo (Institute for the European Intellectual Lexicon and the History of Ideas of the Italian National Research Council) and Laura Gherlone (National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET) of Argentina):

At the periphery of the Empire: decoloniality and the Soviet legacy in dialogue

In the present paper, we wish to offer an overview of our research enterprise, focused on exploring potentials for cross-fertilisation between decolonial thinkers and what we call the "Soviet semiosphere". The research started with the comparative analysis of two authors that, albeit with very different perspectives and intent, shared a common 'semiotic' view of the world: decolonial thinker Walter D. Mignolo and Soviet semiotician Jurij Lotman. Through a comparative analysis, we explored the important differences and the astonishing points of convergences between such spatially and culturally distant authors, that we mostly attributed to a similar condition: being situated at the 'periphery' of the (colonial or Soviet) Empire. This condition, while stimulating these authors to pay attention to the border zones of meaning-making, has encouraged them to think about chronological time in a complex way, emphasizing the cultural role of the untold stories, the marginalized events and the invisible figures of history – or, in the words of Mignolo, the "energies, knowledges and beliefs and praxis of living that were never destroyed".

Expanding our research to other decolonial and Soviet authors, we started mapping the various encounters and 'points of convergence' that could form the basis for dialogue and cross-fertilisation between the two (colonial and Soviet) worlds. Finally, we explored how their legacies interact nowadays, following the recent contribution of decolonial ideas to the reflection on the 'post-Soviet' condition. An initial exploration suggests that the decolonial framework could help to clarify the political, social, and cultural history and dynamics of the post-Soviet space. Such an encounter could also contribute to retrospectively interpreting the intellectual tradition of the Soviet Union and its tensions between imperialist policies and discourses of freedom and equality.

Wiktorja Tabak (Jagiellonian University):

The Polish-Belarusian border as a frontier of colonial violence and its images in performing and theatrical arts

In 1985, at an international scientific conference in Bellagio on "The Roots of Eastern Europe's Underdevelopment," Robert Brenner argued that the region's lack of development is an essential rule inherent in its history, rather than an exception or accident, so researchers should be more interested in the spectacular (cultural, economic) development of the West, rather than the failures and weaknesses of the

East (Chirot, 1991; Wolff, 2021). "The 'inferiority' of Eastern Europe, however, was not first established then, nor was it established during Winston Churchill's famous speech at Fulton in 1946, but, as Larry Wolff argues, already in the Enlightenment. Indeed, defining Western Europe required establishing and defining Eastern Europe on a negative basis through such conceptual dichotomies as development-backwardness or civilization-barbarism. Poland, whose border with Belarus I would like to devote my speech to, if only from its geopolitical (so to speak, between East and West, torn between the identity of "victim" of violence and "perpetrator") location is interesting for considering inter-imperiality and decoloniality. However, there is still too little space in the scholarly discourse devoted to these perspectives in relation to individual Eastern European countries.

The starting point for my talk is the situation on the Polish-Belarusian border since 2021 and its representations both in the Polish public sphere (especially those reproduced by right-wing politicians, co-responsible for the constitution of a racist border and, as it were, responsible for the deaths of refugees), and in visual and theatrical projects ("Green Border" by Agnieszka Holland; "Responsibility" by Michał Zadara; public television concerts "in defense of Polish borders and Polish uniform").

Apparently observed since 2015, the conservative-nationalist turn in the Polish public sphere founded largely on an anti-refugee discourse (which at the same time emphasizes the civilizational superiority of the Polish nation vis-à-vis "culturally different" non-European others, as well as the necessity of defending the borders against "a wave of disease-spreading invaders"(Kaczynski, 2015)) seems to be a good starting point on the basis of which one can observe the impact of a mixture of colonial and post-colonial forces resulting from the hybrid identity of Poland torn between victim and perpetrator or between striving for independence from the West (and at the same time making attempts to "catch up" with it) and Russia and imposing its hegemony on others.

Panel 18 (online): Ottoman Afterlives (II)

Kadir Can Çelik (Bilkent University):

From Unorthodox Sufism to Muslim Anarchism: Contesting Decolonial Movements in the Islamic Intellectual Field in Turkey

Looking at the Islamic Intellectual Field (IIF) in Turkey, it is possible to see how different groups conceptualize Islamic decoloniality, which refers to the Islam-based political and intellectual movements promising to break the hegemony of West-centric knowledge production that silence, exclude, and denigrate non-Western, Islamic knowledge production. Although such decolonial movements have been introduced with the promise of emancipation from the epistemic colonialism of the West in Turkey, the ruling AKP government has been practicing it to establish and impose its truth regime over Islamic and non-Islamic movements. The AKP government claims itself as the only agent of Islam to end the hegemony of Western thought and Turkey's secular founding ideology, Kemalism, which has been seen as a form of "internal colonialism" relying on top-down imposition of the Western mode of modernity, suppressing Islam-based knowledge production. Besides, while Muslim anarchists

oppose the AKP's hegemonic application of decolonial thought to silence, marginalize, or ignore other Islamic and non-Islamic movements, they also problematize the West-centric epistemological hegemony on the anarchist thought silencing the religious anarchists in Turkey. Muslim anarchists' primary stance consists of a critical engagement of enlightenment-based, anti-theist, modern anarchism that denies the spiritual and religious elements of anarchism, they are also opposed to the hegemonic-decolonial thought of the current AKP government for a complete autonomous emancipation of knowledge production in Turkey. This paper examines contemporary Muslim anarchists who base their ideology on the Qur'an and oppose private property, the state, capitalism, authority in all its forms, institutions and religious orders. Through an analysis of their online periodical "itaatsiz" (disobedient), published since 2013, along with the interviews, the study sheds lights on how they establish a counterhegemonic movement in modern Turkey, providing insights into the performance of Islam-based decolonial thought and its relationship with politics within a counter-hegemonic context.

Miray Cakiroglu (Stanford University):

The (Post)Empire in the Post-Disaster Turkey

Colonial imperialism is a historically specific category. Still, scholars in Ottoman studies have also considered the place of the Ottoman Empire among other imperialisms

(Deringil 2003; Makdisi 2002). However, the debate on colonialism in Ottoman studies and discussions in Turkish studies regarding (post)coloniality belong to different trajectories as one does not follow from the other. The last decade has seen increasing attention to "dispossession" in Turkish studies that might bridge these two. In the context of the "Gezi uprising," some scholars objected to discussing the dispossession of urban commons solely in the neoliberal milieu (Özgül and Parla 2016). They aimed to steer the discussion away from its immediate context to histories of dispossession. Those who deem it necessary to discuss dispossession in a longer historical context than neoliberal property relations have also found the perspective of "imperial ruination" (Stoler 2013) productive. These studies on post-conflict temporality in post-Ottoman geographies pointed to traces of empire, making unlikely references in post-Ottoman landscapes (Navaro-Yashin 2012; Biner 2020). While these studies have critically engaged with ongoing imperial formations that outlive the formal end of imperial rules, they do not address the question of empire and imperialism per se in the context of the aftermath of the Ottoman Empire. In my paper, I would like to discuss the anthropological approaches to "empire" and the affordances, limits, and methodological questions that the concept of "post-empire" raises for ethnographic work in contemporary Turkey. In doing this, I will draw from my ongoing ethnographic fieldwork focusing on the more-than-legal scene of non-Muslim property in Turkey. My work focuses specifically on property and ownership as well as how these might be rearticulated following the disastrous 2023 earthquakes in the relationship of the Arabic-speaking Christian Orthodox community in the Antakya region to foundation properties.

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Sebahattin Şen:
Kurdish Cinema: From Minor Cinema to Decolonial Aesthetics

Although the history of Kurds' encounter with the camera goes back nearly a century, this encounter occurs not by taking the camera into their own hands, but by being recorded on it. Because they lack the power required to represent and the tools it creates, Kurds and the places they live in have been represented through the eyes of others, by non-Kurds, for many years. The Kurds taking up the camera, making films, and the Kurdish language beginning to be heard on the cinema screen happened late, approximately a hundred years after the invention of cinema. This "delay" is undoubtedly linked to the colonization of Kurds and Kurdistan by different nation states. Since the 1990s, with the transformation of the colonization processes and political, social and geopolitical changes, young people from all four parts of Kurdistan and the diaspora began to make films. Today, a cinematic field has emerged that can be described as Kurdish cinema or Kurdish films.

It can be said that the Kurds have experienced colonial existence under the sovereignty of different nation states and in different forms, and that the so-called Kurdish problem is essentially is a colonial problem. In other words, the Kurdish issue, which is a multi-layered issue that structures the political, social, cultural, spatial, institutional, psychic and aesthetic within relations of power, violence and domination, and creates multi-dimensional and complex effects in different places, times and bodies, has been a colonial problem for more than a century, indicates the existence of a problem. Kurdish cinema was born as a part of this colonial problem and was surrounded by it. In this respect, Kurdish cinema creates a unique cinematic field, unlike other national cinemas. In this paper, I will argue that this unique cinematic space, which has already reached a certain quantity and quality, has turned into a part of an anticolonial struggle. In other words, I will discuss how Kurdish films have turned into a part of a decolonial aesthetic in connection with the exceptional lives lived by Kurds and the colonial character of the Kurdish problem.

Panel 19 (online): Imperial Continuities, Postimperial Conjugations

Elizabeth Bishop (Texas State University): **At Aswan, Everyone Smoked Bulgarian Tobacco**

I drill down on Bulgarian tobacco's significance for Egyptians in Aswan by reworking a chapter for a monograph *Spaces of the High Dam* (under contract with the American University in Cairo Press). Bulgarian tobacco played a role in Egyptian men's lives during socialism, contributing indirectly to a new interdisciplinary research project at University College London which articulates "Socialist Anthropocene" as a new field of study (Fowkes & Fowkes, 2022; Holm & Taffel, 2016). The Chamber of Egyptian Tobacco held an international exhibition on the Cairo exhibition fairgrounds (1960-1961); exhibitors offered cigarettes and cigars to visiting dignitaries including President Gamal Nasser. The President, a chain smoker, declined and apologized, claiming that he was accustomed to a pack of smuggled Kent cigarettes; evidently uncomfortable with the situation, he chuckled: "*Shoufo kidda ya geda'an* (look here, you wise guys), if you make me a cigarette similar to the Kent, I'll be your best client." Since cigarette companies routinely analyze their competitors' wares (Velicer, 2015), Joseph Matossian ordered a similar blend and box—white with gold inlay—with "Cleopatra" as this new cigarette's name. Wrapping four cartons in celebratory gold paper with silver ribbons, Matossian wrote a letter introducing the new cigarette to the President (Bell and Zada 2008). In prison two years later, Egyptian novelist Sonallah Ibrahim transferred literary notes to rolling papers. Smuggled, these notes were published as a novel *Tilka al-Riha* (*The Smell of It*), condemning Nasser's military administration (Abul-Magd, 2017). Cigarettes and the smell of cigarettes permeate this writer's work, as the novelist uses practices associated with consuming tobacco to indicate the "deep structure" of his narrator's subjectivity. In *The Smell of It*, the narrator's ability to light a cigarette marked a policeman's power external limits (Ibrahim, 1966, p. 20), and the length of time a cigarette burns allowed the narrator to read an ex-lover's letter slowly, then read it again (p. 28).

Owen Kohl (Grinnell College and the University of Chicago): **Empire-Talk**

Since the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, there has been no abatement in an ongoing resurgence of the term "empire" to describe contemporary capitalist-expansionist polities. Political orientations of numerous stripes have found the idiom useful, and this paper will analyze related forms of "empire-talk" as a subgenre of broader contemporary talk about crisis (see Muir 2021, Masco 2022). A paradoxical yet dominant post-WWII Washington Consensus sees empires as antiquated and

anachronistic despite increasing rightwing and neoliberal nostalgia that view preferred imperialist behaviors as blueprints for the future. In longform video documentaries, online news shows, and Op-Eds, how and why has “empire” continuously reemerged as a useful political-scientific critical analytic? In the US, newsmakers, politicians, and other commentators associated with various ideological predispositions all regularly deploy “empire” and “imperialism” to derisively describe targets of their geopolitical critique, be it contemporary Russia, China, or hyper-militarized American society itself. What do these terms reveal, and what are their limits in describing configurations of contemporary power? Ever since news first emerged as a genre of information sharing, its layout, articles, and narratives have always had an indexical dimension (e.g., Habermas 1989). Like their other contemporaries, newsmakers on the US American Left, who will be the focus of this article, often assume stances in their empire-talk that point to political positions of both kindred and antagonistic consumers. Grappling with both imperial and industrial planetary fallout will require renewed attention to how media genres often thwart defining “security” and earthly belonging in more inclusive, far less militaristic ways (Haraway 2016; Jašarević 2015; Masco 2021). Emic “empire-talk” among leftist newsmakers is often implicitly if not explicitly geared toward imagining anti-imperial forms of mediated solidarity.

Senayon Olaoluwa (University of Ibadan, Nigeria):

The Trauma...Transferred from One Generation to the Next: *Extalgic* Sensibilities and the Quest for Restorative Justice in *Skulls of My People*

In this paper, I extend my formulation on *extalgia* as the strains of homeland trauma and transcendence predicated on the dispersion of loved ones into other lands (Olaoluwa 2023)⁷. I argue that *extalgia* offers compelling parallels to nostalgia by the very sense in which it facilitates new ways of rendering the trauma of the left behind as necessarily constitutive of the larger migration discourse. Here, I pay attention to the possibility of extending the pains of being left behind to the investigation of the persistence of agitation for the return of the looted Herero and Nama skulls from Germany, using the documentary *Skulls of My People* (2016) by Vincent Moloi. I additionally extend the discourse of what I have elsewhere termed “trauma in situ” as a complex and concentrated grief of the left behind that—at saturated point—provokes a contradictory response of another vicious circle of dispersals into diaspora in search of the displaced loved ones and objects. I argue that the Namibian history of the early 20th century genocide resulting from the colonial execution of the German Extermination Order has produced a complex of traumas. Such is foregrounded in the entanglement of the agitation for the return of the looted skulls originally taken to

⁷ Senayon Olaoluwa, “*Extalgia*: Transcending the Legible Frames of Diaspora”. *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 23:1: 1-14 (2023) : DOI: 10.3138/diaspora.23.1.2023.03.27

Germany for racist research to prove the sub-humanity of the colonized and decimated Herero and Nama people during the war and the grief over the loss of land by the natives. By tracking a trajectory of the interface of these complex sensibilities, the paper argues that the agitations dramatize the enduring trauma of Namibian people as an intergenerational discourse despite political and temporal evolutions. The dispersions that the sensibilities provoke parallel those of nostalgia in ways that underscore the imperative of restorative justice. The paper concludes that by transcending our mobility bias, there is a strong sense in which extalgia offers new lenses of apprehending the enormity of the trauma of the left behind as predicated on the dispersal of their loved ones and other objects to which they bear witness.

Panel 20 (online): Theorizing Decoloniality and Deimperiality (III)

Dina Taha (York University):

The location of decolonial theory, research and praxis in the Arab world: reflections from the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies

The Arab world is a region that was troubled by imperialism and colonialism through multiple waves (e.g., the Ottoman Empire, and European colonialism). Yet, with very

few and recent exceptions⁸, debates surrounding post-colonialism, anti-colonialism, and decoloniality in this part of the world are limited, sidelined, or conflate decoloniality with anti-westernization, debates about tradition and modernity or oversimplified to denote the post-colonial independence movements emerging in the mid-twentieth century (El Kurd, 2023).⁹

This presentation will reflect on some of the major themes, debates and early learnings that emerged from the 2023/2024 Sociology and Anthropology annual seminar series¹⁰ entitled: "The Location of Decolonial Theory, research and Praxis in the Arab World" at the Doha Institute for Graduate studies (DI).¹¹ Guest speakers from the DI, the Arab world, and the Arab Diaspora reflect on a wide range of topics from semiotics and challenging binaries and orientalist perceptions about the region all the way to amplifying transnational solidarity movements for decolonization. Stemming from the premise that decoloniality originated in Latin America as a response to Eurocentric and hegemonic knowledge production,¹² the seminars and discussions sought to address questions such as:

- How are decolonial approaches understood in the Arab world?
- In what ways could academic decolonial frameworks be different in the Arab region?
- What role does language play? And what is the difference between decolonizing in Arabic and decolonizing in other languages?
- What are the unique challenges to decolonizing the academic institution compared to other parts of the world (e.g., Turtle Island)?

The series is meant to start and sustain a conversation about the location of decoloniality in the Arab world and explore possible collaborations and initiatives (e.g. research clusters or working groups) necessary to form a decolonial project in, by, and for the Arab world. We will use the presentation as an opportunity for self-reflection and co-production with the audience which includes academics, researchers and students to move such a project forward.

⁸ Mostly limited to conferences and symposiums. See for instance, [the Arab Council for the Social Sciences 6th conference](#) or this [Call for Papers: "The Arab-majority and Muslim-majority Worlds in/and Contemporary Decolonisation Debates" | IASH \(ed.ac.uk\)](#).

⁹ El Kurd, D. (2023). [Elusive decolonisation of IR in the Arab world](#). *Review of International Studies*, 49(3), 379-389.

¹⁰ Special thanks to Lara Sheehi (Doha Institute), Stephen Sheehi (The College of William and Mary), Rana Sukarieh (American University in Beirut), and other seminar guest speakers who agreed and supported sharing some of the learnings and discussion points in this planned presentation.

¹¹ The Doha Institute for Graduate Studies is an independent academic institution located in Doha, Qatar with a mission to contribute to the social, cultural, and intellectual development of the Arab region through producing localized knowledge.

¹² See, for instance, Quijano, A. (2000). Coloniality of power and Eurocentrism in Latin America. *International Sociology*, 15(2), 215-232 and Mignolo, W. D. (2012). *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking*. Princeton University Press.

Benjamin Kapron (York University, Tkaronto/Toronto, Canada)
**On the Ontological, Anthropocentric Violence of Canadian Settler
Colonialism**

Tuck and Yang assert that in settler colonial societies, such as Canada, “decolonization is not a metaphor” (3); “decolonization specifically requires the repatriation of Indigenous land and life” (21). Simultaneously, Mills outlines how Canadian settler colonialism enacts violence against Indigenous individuals, Indigenous communities, *and* Indigenous “ontological, epistemological, and cosmological system[s]” (136). For many of the Indigenous Nations facing ongoing Canadian settler colonialism, their ontologies hold that plants, animals, waters, rocks, and other nonhuman beings can be persons, kin, and nations possessing their own agency.

Within these contexts, the author of this paper—a settler Canadian—contends that if settlers are to support Indigenous Peoples in dismantling settler colonialism, then their decolonial praxis ought to attend to the anthropocentrism of dominant settler ontologies. By failing to consider the significant relationships, including kin relationships, that Indigenous Peoples might have with nonhuman beings, settlers fail to address significant aspects of Indigenous ontologies, and social and legal orders, meaning that their attempts at challenging settler colonialism may be ineffective—diverting from Indigenous efforts to dismantle settler colonialism—and may even contribute to attacks on Indigenous ways of being, reifying settler colonialism.

The author develops a case study regarding the importance of attending to the nonhuman relations of Indigenous Nations, and to the anthropocentrism of dominant settler thought worlds, by contrasting dominant settler Canadian narratives of the Trent-Severn Waterway (TSW) with Indigenous Anishinaabe understandings of the other-than-human persons that the waterway was built onto and into. The TSW is a 386-kilometer-long system of locks, dams, and canals built onto waterbodies throughout what is now considered central Ontario, Canada, to facilitate colonial settlement, resource extraction, and transportation. As it expanded access to central Ontario for settler Canadians, the TSW had devastating impacts on the Anishinaabe Nations whose territory it cut through *and* on their other-than-human relations, demonstrating the ongoing ontological, anthropocentric violence of Canadian settler colonialism.

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Elizabeth Shakman Hurd (Northwestern University):
Re-colonization: the global politics of settler empire

In contrast to *post*-coloniality, *de*-coloniality insists on the fact that coloniality is an ongoing formation that perdures in the present. Yet conversations about decolonialization and decoloniality still often appear to take for granted that which is or has been 'colonized' (i.e., mainly, though certainly not exclusively, non-European states and peoples in the past), and, concomitantly, who or what needs to be *de*-colonized.

This paper pauses in this space to interrogate this assumption. I refract the formidable conceptual apparatus of *de*/coloniality and *de*/imperiality through a different prism: that of *re*-colonization or, in the terms of the REVENANT project, *re*-imperializing. I use these terms to refer to the myriad processes through which categories of practice often perceived to be 'neutral,' 'universal,' and/or beneficent carry within them imperial impulses. Such impulses are presumed by their advocates to have been cast aside long ago and replaced by progressive and egalitarian ideals, often associated with global modernity. Examples include foreign aid, conservation, development, and the promotion of liberal democracy and religious freedom, all undertaken by settler empires such as the United States and mimicked and riffed on, and also refused, by various other aspirants to global power and hegemony.

Expanding on my work on the politics of advocacy for international religious freedom, this paper proposes to explore the potential of the concept of 're-colonization' (or 're-colonizing') as a useful heuristic for grasping current or emergent forms of hierarchical ordering in global imperial politics. These forms travel not only under the heading of support for 'religious freedom,' 'democratization,' 'development,' but also, at times, inhabit and energize more benign (and often less overtly political) constructs such as 'environmentalism' 'conservationism,' 'historical preservation,' and 'religious pluralism.'



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