static

thoughts and research from global dis:connect

static

Staff

Index

gd:c global dis
:connect

issue 2 | 2022

editorial

Seasons of crisis
Christopher Balme

When we wrote and submitted the proposal for the Käte Hamburger Research Centre *global dis:connect* in January 2020, a global pandemic caused by a coronavirus existed only in the prescient minds of the Johns Hopkins Centre for Health Security. Starting in 2001, the Centre held a series of public 'pandemic exercises' to anticipate the impact of different types of pandemics. The names followed a descending arc of gloom from Dark Winter in 2001 to Atlantic Storm in 2005 to the more neutral Clade X in 2018. The format varied little. A group of experts was confronted with a scenario describing a public health crisis to which they had to respond with little preparation. Their interactions were recorded and, in the later versions, broadcast on the internet. These experts were civil servants, representatives of pharmaceutical companies and high-ranking employees of NGOs such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The most accurate forecast came from the last and most innocuous-sounding event so far, Event 201, which took place in autumn 2019 shortly before the Covid-19 outbreak and anticipated the future with frightening accuracy. The scenario postulated the outbreak of a coronavirus in China, transmitted from animals (in this case pigs) to humans and spreading rapidly. The scenario was structured around four themes or acts: global distribution of medical material; travel restrictions and economic consequences; a financial crisis; spread of misinformation via the internet. Each section was introduced by a fictional CNN-style television report. Viewers could (and still can) watch the improvised responses of the experts, who had to react to the

static
thoughts and research from global dis:connect

gd:c   # 1.2

You can also find **static** online at
www.globaldisconnect.org

rapidly evolving situations. The results were presented in the form of a 'scenario epilogue'.

The experts got it pretty much right: the exercise predicted not only a coronavirus originating in China and affecting the whole world, but also the resulting economic and health impacts, including the spread of misinformation via social media. The only prediction where they were off the mark was the slow development of vaccines.

Tabletop exercises are a hybrid genre. Because they are based on scenarios and are quite literally 'acted out', albeit by experts performing their professional roles, the whole exercise has the air of a theatrical performance: while it looks and sounds authentic, we know, as observers, it is not real. How can it be? The whole performance is based on supposition; it takes place in an imagined future.

The first issue of **static** engaged not surprisingly with the Covid crisis. This crisis had impacted the whole world and the first year of **global dis:connect**. It also mentions other crises such as climate change, breakdowns in logistics and the multifarious ways they are interconnected and correspondingly disruptive when dysfunctional. Between writing and publication, another crisis erupted, Russia's invasion of the Ukraine, which set in motion a series of further, political, economic and energy-based disruptions. Meanwhile, the Covid pandemic looks set to continue as the virus mutates and behaviours revert to pre-pandemic mode.

We are living in an age of continual, overlapping crises, as Roland Wenzlhuemer pointed out in his contribution, *Crisis and dis:connectivity*.[1] Far from being a temporary interruption, the state of emergency seems to be constant. Global crises would seem to embody by definition the key concepts of dis:connectivity, as was argued in the editorial. If the 'state of exception' is the new normal, then how can a concept such as dis:connectivity be formulated to address these overlapping crises? The answer to this question requires rethinking our notions of temporality, especially the future.

In Germany the daily 'Corona-Ticker' has been replaced or joined by the energy monitor, with daily updates information on gas storage and use – a perfect device to induce anxiety. We are continually calculating the future, by the week, month and year. How do we get through the coming winter? We wait for the next spring and summer to reduce infection rates and energy costs. In other words, our notions of the future are linked to the seasons once again. Never did Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* seem more apposite as technologically advanced societies look at the seasons with

---

1   Roland Wenzlhuemer, 'Crisis and Dis:Connectivity', static: thoughts and research from global dis:connect 1, no. 1 (2022): 9–13.

both foreboding and hopeful anticipation. The temporality of crisis is seasonal. The first tabletop exercise conducted by the Johns Hopkins Centre for Health Security was entitled Dark Winter. It posited a terrorist attack using smallpox as a weapon. As the sociologists Grégoire Mallard and Andrew Lakoff state in their analysis of the exercise: '"Nature" was now the only opponent against which the United States was playing'.[2] It would also be an apt title for the coming season.

2   Grégoire Mallard and Andrew Lakoff, 'How Claims to Know the Future Are Used to Understand the Present Techniques of Prospection in the Field of National Security', in *Social Knowledge in the Making*, ed. Charles Camic, Neil Gross, and Lamont (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 366.

Photo:
Lambert Strehlke

dis: connec- tivity in represen- tation and practice

Breaking water: the dilemmas of dis:connection in the global-South city
Sujit Sivasundaram

Arms stretching to sea

After the opening of the Suez Canal, Colombo became the second-most-used port in British Asia.[1] By 1910, it was slightly behind Hong Kong and the seventh-busiest of the world's ports by tonnage, easily ahead, for instance, of Calcutta/Kolkata or Bombay/Mumbai. At the heart of this transformation were infrastructural arms stretching out to sea, taming the winds and waves, and allowing steamer ships to dock in calm water for re-coaling. These arms were the breakwaters of Colombo. A south-west breakwater was constructed by 1885, followed by a further bout of infrastructural consolidation in the late 1890s and early 1900s and the building of a north-east and north-west breakwater.

More recently, when I returned to Colombo in 2021, after being stuck in Britain over the course of the early pandemic, it was a shock to see another new arm stretching out to sea from Galle Face Green. This is Colombo's $15-billion-dollar Port City Development Project, an attempt to make it compete with megacities such as Singapore and Hong Kong and financed by

---

1   In this essay, I investigate the work that went into the making of breakwaters in Colombo, Sri Lanka, around 1900 as a way of meditating on the relations between the environment, urban change, labour and politics in a global-South city. The essay returns to an earlier article while bringing in lots of new dimensions: Sujit Sivasundaram, 'Towards a Critical History of Connection: The Port of Colombo, the Geographical "Circuit," and the Visual Politics of New Imperialism, ca. 1880–1914', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 59, no. 2 (2017): 346–84, https://doi.org/10.1017/S001041751700007X.

China.[2] Meanwhile, Galle Face Green, on the seafront, was first formally laid out by the British as a parading and sporting ground in the mid-nineteenth century. One tradition is that the Dutch, who preceded the British, needed this level lawn to aim their cannon at the Portuguese. The new port city development project that faces this lawn has proceeded regardless of protests from environmental groups, fishing communities and from those concerned with the huge debt-burden to China that it will create. It is also at Galle Face Green that the wide-scale protests against the Sri Lankan government, in the midst of a pandemic-inflected economic crisis, arose. 'Gotagohome village', calling for President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's resignation, became a permanent site of protest on Galle Face Green in 2022.[3]

Staging connections and the reality of disconnection

The breakwaters of the past and the Chinese-financed project of the present are attempts to make Colombo a connected node of global capitalist trade and politics. If so, thinking with the underside of this infrastructure, meaning the work that goes into its making and the way it changes the environment, takes us in turn to the

---

2   For an excellent introduction to the story, see: Kanchana Ruwanpura, Benjamin Brown and Loritta Chan, '(Dis) Connecting Colombo: Situating the Megapolis in Postwar Sri Lanka', *The Professional Geographer* 72, no. 1 (2020): 165–79.

3   For some recent commentary on the protests and their causes, see for instance: J. Uyangoda, 'The #GotaGoHome Protest Movement: Significance, Potential, and Challenges', Social Scientists' Association, 2022, http://ssalanka.org/gotagohome-protest-movement-significance-potential-challenges-jayadeva-uyangoda/ and Shamara Wettimuny, 'Protests in Sri Lanka: A Historical Perspective', Medium, 10 April 2022, https://shamara-wettimuny.medium.com/protests-in-sri-lanka-a-historical-perspective-289e58908c5a.

Fig. 01
Image: Dhammika Heenpella

interrupted dynamics of projects like this. It also takes us to why the seaface of Colombo continues to be a place where politics is appropriately staged and performed even in our present. The projected connections of capitalism lead into both the realities of disconnection and the generative possibilities that follow for political movements and resistance. In arguing like this, I develop my claims in a book, *Islanded,* which came out about a decade ago, where I argued that disconnection and connection lie at the heart of the contradictory origins of the Sri Lankan state as an island set apart but linked with a mainland. I ended that book with this line:

> a connection is a disconnection when viewed from another direction.[4]

In what follows, I juxtapose a series of vignettes, firstly related to the interventionist power of the breakwaters, over nature, people and disease; secondly, I attend to resistance and consequences of various kinds, environmental and social included, which came from these infrastructural interventions. And then, at the end, I return to the contemporary moment.

---

4   Sujit Sivasundaram, *Islanded: Britain, Sri Lanka, and the Bounds of an Indian Ocean Colony* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); see also Zoltán Biedermann, '(Dis)Connected History and the Multiple Narratives of Global Early Modernity', *Modern Philology* 119, no. 1 (2021): 13–32, https://doi.org/10.1086/714972.

Fig. 02
Image: KHK global dis:connect collection

A breakwater in the sea

In the late-nineteenth century, the work of making a breakwater was hard, and it also required work beneath the sea. The nature of the work changed according to whether the monsoon was in force or not. During the monsoon, stones, blocks and quantities of sand could be washed away unexpectedly. Additionally, the nature of the waves changed dramatically. The importance of keeping an eye on the sea in making plans for breakwater-making was especially evident in how records were kept on this seafront on wave heights, wave periods and winds. It was supposed at first that nine feet was the greatest height of waves at Colombo, but subsequent measurements determined that where the breakwater was being built waves rose to 12 feet and 15 feet.

Line of control

The breakwater is a line, a line of attempted control between sea and land. But it also served this purpose for the control of disease.[5] In the 1890s a large number of vessels were put under quarantine as fears of plague spread. By 1905 disinfection was undertaken 'at the root of the breakwater' with 'an Equifex disinfector [a boiler and three disinfecting chambers]'[6] which was erected at that point alongside an immigration depot. The Bombay steamer was a particular target: all Bombay water was emptied off the ship rather carefully. Each individual on the Bombay steamer was allegedly inspected; their temperature taken, and 'the state of the glands of his (sic.) neck, groins and armpits' were examined; while '[f]emales are examined by a female examiner.'[7]

Beach reorganisation

The growing harbour of Colombo would not have expanded the way it did without the new breakwaters. For this was not a site with a significant natural harbour; the breakwaters made it possible for Colombo to become a site of trans-shipment at the centre of the Indian Ocean. Meanwhile, their construction and the resulting expansion of the city saw urban reorganisation. For instance, the harbour was emptied of 'native vessels',[8] used by fishermen and a separate fishery harbour arose to the north of the main port in 1902. But once again, like in the assault of the waves on those who were building the breakwaters, this programme of managing the sea-face did not work.

---

5   For references to the primary material in this paragraph and that following, please see: Sivasundaram, 'Towards a Critical History of Connection: The Port of Colombo, the Geographical "Circuit," and the Visual Politics of New Imperialism, ca. 1880–1914'.
6   Ibid.
7   Ibid.
8   Ibid.

Fishing communities were incensed by their relocation. In one petition of 1906 with 11 signatures, for instance, they wrote against how their boats were forbidden to fish in the harbour area where they had traditionally done so. 'True it is the Government have provided for us outside the Colombo Harbour, a place called 'Fisher's Harbour'... during the SW Monsoon the entrance of the harbour is not safe and the room for the accommodation of our fishing boats ... is quite insufficient'.[9] Various catamarans, fishing boats, that sought to continue operating in the harbour were seized by the harbour police. Meanwhile, the beach that was allocated to fishing communities was divided up so that different groups, demarcated by place of worship, had access to different stretches of the shore.

Resistance

In late 1894, when the railway line was being laid along this stretch of shore, there were 'disturbances' at St. John's Beach, and the accusation that some men had incited 'a riot' and turned on government officials.[10] This resistance was not only human; it was natural too. A fishermen's petition from 1901 – from a group who had beached their boats close to Mutwal and the mouth of the Kelani River since 'immemorial' times – complained of all the functions occurring on their beach. The result was that:

> [The] flow of water in the river is greatly obstructed by the large number of timber lying in the bed of the river and fever is spreading amongst the poor families of the fishermen who use the river for bathing purposes, the water being stagnant, the mud at the bottom has become putrid and the smell very offensive.[11]

By 1912, the problems of space had affected fishing communities to the extent that one Sinhalese group, taken to be the majority ethnic community in the island today, asked that 'Tamil' fishermen be ousted from Colombo, on the basis that Tamils 'are not residents of Ceylon' and also since these fishermen were using types of nets prohibited by the state.[12] Modes of attempted management, to allow the port to connect, allowed inter-community relations in turn to deteriorate to ethnic tussles.

9 'Petition to the Hon'ble Government Agent of the Western Province', 25 October 1906, Lot 33/3964, Sri Lanka National Archives.
10 'Documents', n.d., Lot 33/3961, Sri Lanka National Archives Colombo.
11 'Petition', 3 December 1901, Lot 33/3481, Sri Lanka National Archives.
12 'Petition to the Master Attendant from Signatories Who Sign in Sinhala', 27 March 1912, Lot 33/3976, Sri Lanka National Archives.

Fig. 03
Image: Nazly Ahmed (2022)

The stage of dis:connection

To move from the early twentieth century to the present and the sustained protests on this stretch of beach, there are various geopolitical reasons for their emergence. Grand schemes by the Chinese and Indians and others, including the Japanese, dictate the present and future of Colombo as well as the whole island. The pandemic and the loss of tourist and migrant labour incomes, for instance in the Middle East, have played a role too. In addition to this, it is also about the hold of an older generation of corrupt male politicians, who adopted supposedly populist tax cuts and new fertiliser policy for agriculture. If these reasons can be taken to indicate de-globalisation, strikingly, the protests of our moment have been led by the young and by those who did not grow up in the midst of the island's civil war, between the Sinhala majority and the Tamil minority. The protests have crossed ethnic boundaries and seen the rise of new forms of solidarity. Muslims, one of the most discriminated communities, have broken fast in the midst of the protests.

I want to end simply by stressing that these protests have also occurred on a stage facing the ocean. This is a lawn that repeated governments have struggled to keep green and struggled to convert into an iconic landscape of nationalism. It is fitting also that the protesters who stormed the president's residence were seen swimming in a pool of water. It was this recording, together

with others of the protests movement on the stretch of shoreline, that went viral when the news first broke.[13] Going into the water was a way of bringing a political movement to its sweet result.

Colombo is a specific ecology, which has faced connection and disconnection, over centuries and not only at the hands of the British, but also the Portuguese and the Dutch and now various other superpowers. It is in the gap between connection and disconnection, that Colombo has given rise to new political forms. The breakwater or indeed the lawn or harbour, have been effective places from which to rethink the political in a globalSouth city. Meanwhile the performative possibilities of sites facing water carry on apace.

Bibliography

Biedermann, Zoltán. '(Dis)Connected History and the Multiple Narratives of Global Early Modernity'. *Modern Philology* 119, no. 1 (2021): 13–32. https://doi.org/10.1086/714972.

'Documents', n.d. Lot 33/3961. Sri Lanka National Archives Colombo.

'Petition', 3 December 1901. Lot 33/3481. Sri Lanka National Archives.

'Petition to the Hon'ble Government Agent of the Western Province', 25 October 1906. Lot 33/3964. Sri Lanka National Archives.

'Petition to the Master Attendant from Signatories Who Sign in Sinhala', 27 March 1912. Lot 33/3976. Sri Lanka National Archives.

Ruwanpura, Kanchana, Benjamin Brown, and Loritta Chan. '(Dis) Connecting Colombo: Situating the Megapolis in Postwar Sri Lanka'. *The Professional Geographer* 72, no. 1 (2020): 165–79.

Sivasundaram, Sujit. *Islanded: Britain, Sri Lanka, and the Bounds of an Indian Ocean Colony*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

–––. 'Towards a Critical History of Connection: The Port of Colombo, the Geographical "Circuit," and the Visual Politics of New Imperialism, ca. 1880–1914'. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 59, no. 2 (2017): 346–84. https://doi.org/10.1017/S001041751700007X.

BBC. 'Sri Lanka Crisis: Protesters Swim in President's Pool', 9 July 2022. https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-asia-62105698.

Uyangoda, J. 'The #GotaGoHome Protest Movement: Significance, Potential, and Challenges'. Social Scientists' Association, 2022. http://ssalanka.org/gotagohome-protest-movement-significance-potential-challenges-jayadeva-uyangoda/.

Wettimuny, Shamara. 'Protests in Sri Lanka: A Historical Perspective'. Medium, 10 April 2022. https://shamara-wettimuny.medium.com/protests-in-sri-lanka-a-historical-perspective-289e58908c5a.

---

13 'Sri Lanka Crisis: Protesters Swim in President's Pool', BBC, 9 July 2022, https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-asia-62105698.

Mohamed
Portrait of a Sahrawi exile

By: Rahel Losier

This work is based on an interview with Mohamed in Barcelona in 2017. I was studying for an MA in migration studies at the time. I am currently doing an interdisciplinary Ph.D. in Canada focusing on history and sociology. When I conducted the interviews, I took portraits of each interviewee with a film camera. The roll of film was in my purse when it was stolen in Morocco leaving me to think of a different way to portray the interviews with visuals, hence the current format. I am inspired by the theoretical approach of Abdelmalek Sayad, an Algerian-French sociologist of migration. Like Sayad, I tried to approach 'the exile' as an object of knowledge, a political category, and a witness of cultural configurations in profound transformation. I am interested in such micro-historical approaches towards migration, where we can learn about someone's life framed through the historically significant contexts they live in. Learning more about the political subjectivities (the thoughts, feelings, motivations, identities, and memories about culture and politics) of overlooked individuals can sometimes lead to surprising new understandings of past and present events.

'I grew up with my parents, grandparents, cousins and aunts in the refugee camps. My family came to Spain but it is a long story in terms of how we got here.'
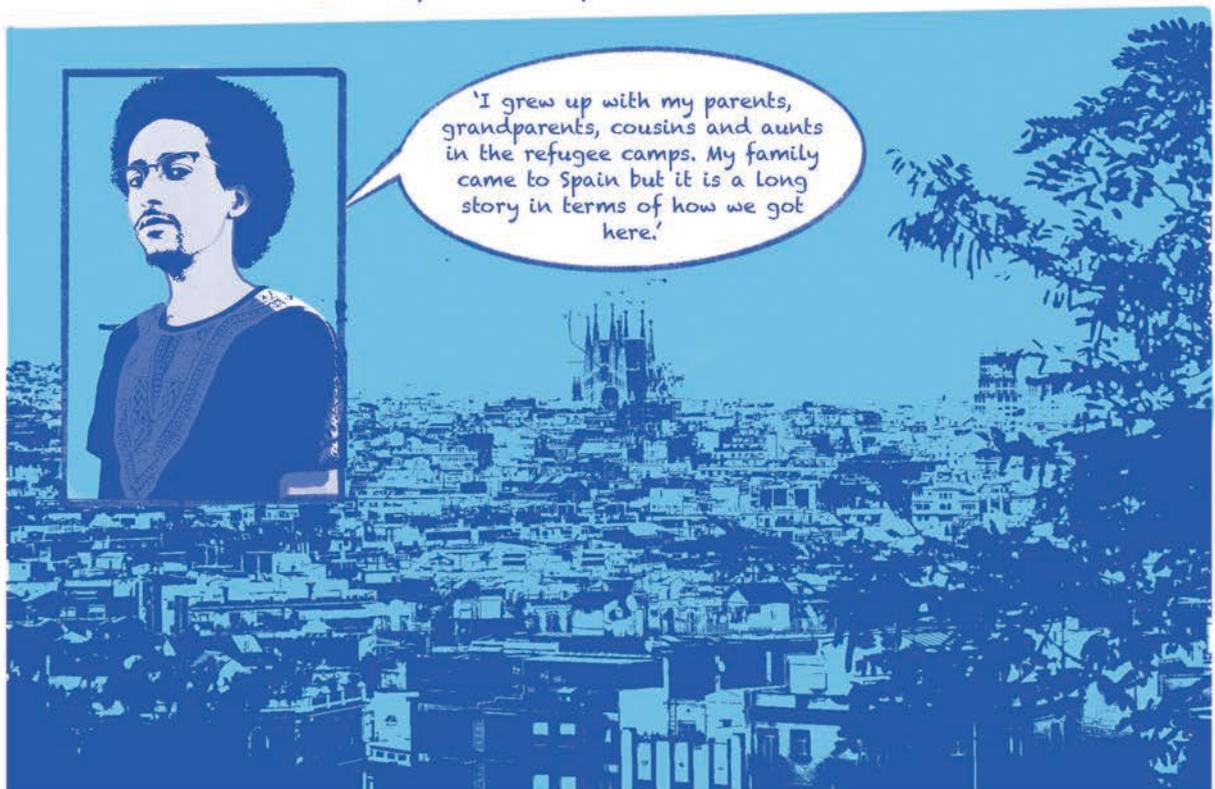
I met Mohamed for our interview at a cafe in Barcelona in the summer of 2017. I was researching the migration experiences of Sahrawi refugees for my Master's degree, which was based in Lille, France.

I asked Mohamed about his childhood and his journey to Spain.

Atlantic Ocean

Morocco

Algeria

Tindouf

He grew up in a refugee camp near Tindouf, Algeria and in the Western Saharan Liberated Territories.

'I was born in the refugee camps, that's why most of my family is there, my uncles, my grandpas, my grandmas, they are all there. Before I was born, my father went to the program, the vacation program of the youth (Vacaciones en Paz), he came as like a monitor, he went 2 or 3 years, the 3rd time, he stayed, in the Canary Islands, in Tenerife. When I was born, he made a visa for me and my mom, and we went, he started working.'

Sahrawi youth grow up in a nation-in-exile housed in Algeria, and many spend decades in Spain and Cuba to escape the harsh desert conditions of the refugee camps. Considering that they are twice removed from their territorial homeland, I was curious to learn about Mohamed's cultural identity.

'The reason I have a strong internal conflict, I feel that I'm Sahrawi, it is because of the conflict, because of the situation that they let my people in, no? The reason is because we all humans need to choose, right?'

'At around 5 years old, like 1999, they decided for me to go back there and stay with my grandma's, because I lost, not even I lost, I didn't even learn about it, the language like, they want me to feel like where I come from so I stayed there like two or three years with my grandma's. We were in between Mauritania, we went to the Liberated Territories and the refugee camps, we moved on like every 6 months.'

Since 1975 when Morocco invaded the Western Sahara, there has been no agreement on how to define Sahrawi people in terms of citizenship. The Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) is a partially recognized nation that claims sovereignty over the entire Western Sahara. As a government-in-exile, the SADR provides birth certificates, national identity cards, and passports. The Algerian government also issues travel documents for countries where the SADR remains unrecognized. The majority of Sahrawi people remain stateless.

'Around 2003, my documents expired, so I came with the youth vacation, a Spanish solidarity program, to Tarragona. I stayed with a Spanish family for two months. When I was going to go back in the airport, my parents took me, because they moved from Canarias to here. I stayed here and I go most of the summers back to the camps. That's the geographical movement, there's a lot of different stories in there though.'
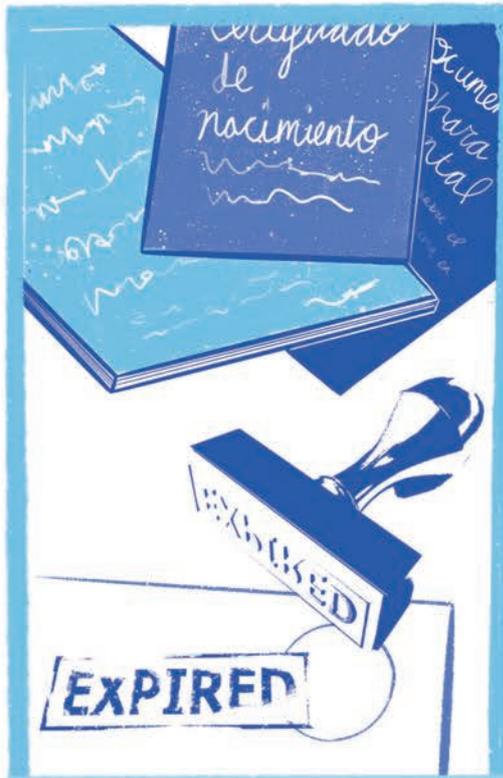
The Sahrawi passport is valid for travel to countries that recognize the SADR. There have been biometric passports since 2012. Sahrawi people who were residents of Spanish Sahara before 1975 can, in certain cases, apply for Spanish citizenship.

Memories of the camps

'There are a lot of memories there and here. Sahrawi are a big family. They all know each other even in Spain. I can get to know all the Sahrawis in Barcelona. We are so much familiar with each other.'

'Although, the last summer that I went to the camps, like 3 years ago, one time I was on the streets going shopping with my uncles in shorts, I was whiter than I am now. People 15 meters away asked, is that a 'nasrani'? It's a term Arabs use to describe Westerners, it has an origin, 'nasareni', nazareth, it comes that way, and I was like, what? Why are you speaking about this? It doesn't even matter?'

'That was the first week, so the rest of the time I stayed there, I felt it. I was eleven so when I came back I got to listen to these kinds of comments here too, of not belonging. But, the problem is, I feel part of this, they don't feel like I'm part of this over there, not even there, same way here, it's not the problem that I don't identify as a Spanish, it's the fact that, I don't want to say they don't accept me, but...it's a difference, I can smell it. So, when I get to meet people that have traveled a lot, these kinds of people most of the time, they feel like internationalists, so I feel better with these kinds of people than with the other ones. Here they are too much Spanish for me, and there they are too much Sahrawi for me...
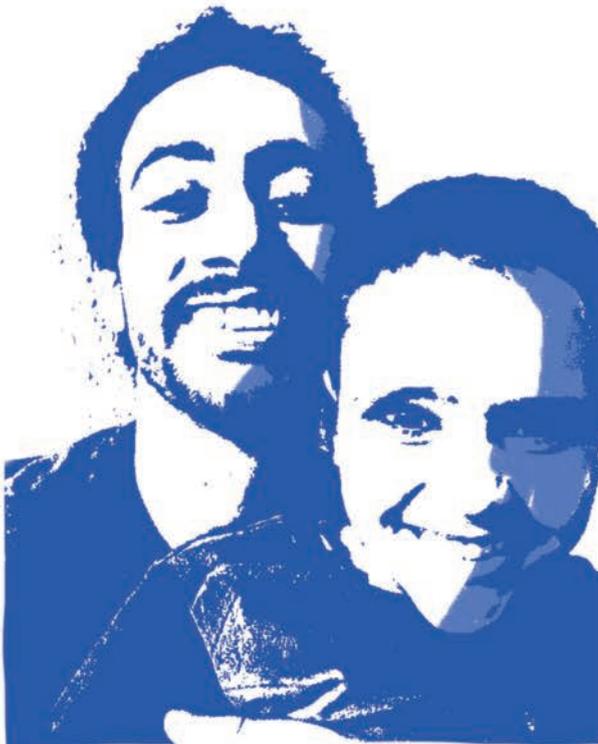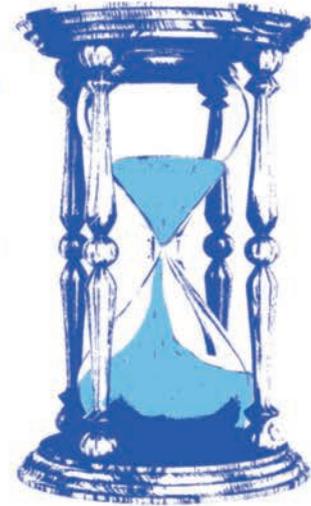
I attended three Sahrawi protests in Barcelona in the summer of 2017. People were raising awareness about the historic responsibility of Spain. They demanded that the Spanish government, the colonizing country which led to the Moroccan occupation of the Western Sahara, help enact justice. It was a great place to meet Sahrawi youth and understand their points of view. Mohamed's cousin gave me his contact, she said he didn't believe in traditional activism, so I asked him why.

'Activism is not working anymore. You can take this world in so many different ways, like demonstrations, you can make noise in two ways, war and lobby versus economic control. The war is not a solution. The Sahrawi, we have to reach this point to get to this economic power and give it time, whatever it takes. I'm just the first generation, my brother now is 2 years old, he's not even the second generation. He's not even reached to the second generation, we still need to wait, it's all about time.'

I asked Mohamed what he thought about the growing frustration in the camps and the younger generation talking about war again more. Since the older generation lived through the armed struggle, many are against it. Previous interviewees told me they didn't support war although they wouldn't try to stop it since they had found opportunities in Europe. For those stuck in the camps, the feeling was much more desperate. Mohamed said something similar. Since our interview in 2017, an armed conflict did resume in 2020 which ended the 1991 peace agreement.

'I respect them, because I can say what I'm saying in my point of view, in my lifetime, in the experiences that I have, but they see their life going off. They are staying in the camps, economically because they cannot get out, you can't get a job to feed your family, and that's the most reachable, they couldn't reach, so I respect, if they say they want war it's because they see no other solution, in their mind they only can fight, what can they do from there on the point that I was saying? Lobby? They can't do nothing so if they can't do nothing on this I would say no, I must choose a way that they can help and this is the way they can, I really respect that everything they do, I think like if they decide to do that I'm not the one that's going to be saying no, when you suffered a lot more than me. I can choose to not even think about the conflict anymore and I would be good, they can't, I can't too but because of my, not moral, but because of my personality. But I can't get to say no.'

From 1975-1991, the Sahrawi POLISARIO front waged a guerrilla war against Morocco after Morocco organized the Green March where 350,000 civilians and 20,000 Moroccan troops entered the Western Sahara to occupy it after the nearly 100 years of Spanish colonization.

'It's not easy to take up arms, the only thing that I'm sure is that they have lost a lot, not only my family members, they have lost too much wealth. Nomads only have camels and sheep, everyone has lost all this because of the war. They started to live from humanitarian help, because of the war directly.'

'Before the war, it could have been a UNESCO patrimonial heritage. We lost a lot of fauna and plants that you can't see, gazelles even lions, there was a lot of fauna, I think if it wasn't for the war it would be a cultural heritage, there is a lot of pre-historical, pre-historical bones, artifacts, no there were like graveyards pre-historical graveyards, cave paintings, there are a lot of stories there. "Because of the war, we lost a lot of, thinking about another world. War is a suicide, in all countries, whoevers to go to war is a suicide. We all know that, Morocco has a lot of military, we would last like 4 minutes. I think it's not even our decision, if we start a war it's not even because of POLISARIO decision, I think it's because Algeria let it because it's the first supporter and Algerian military gave us a lot. They defend us a lot, even on oil and gas, we depend so so much. So, it's not only my decision or those youth decision or the POLISARIO decision alone...'

Mohamed spoke about a Cuban program that his father participated in. To date, some 7,000 Sahrawi youth have gone to study in Cuba for middle/high school and university. After Cuba's long process of decolonization from Spain and rejection of neocolonialism from the USA, they sought to help other peoples achieve what they did and to foster camaraderie and alliances with fellow disenfranchised people. The educational migration program began on the Island of Youth in Cuba as a way to cultivate human resources for decolonial liberation movements, mainly in Africa and Latin America. The students would study regular school subjects and also were accompanied by adults from their cultures who taught the languages, traditions, and histories of where they grew up, whether it be Ghana, Nicaragua, Palestine, Western Sahara, etc.

'My pop studied in Cuba. He went there when he was younger. The program Cuba has is a program with liberation movements, they can help their youth to study there for free, they are like from all countries, Asians, Palestinians, Africans, all over the world, Syrians, even my cousin, both of her brothers have studied there, one is finishing school there and one is on vacation. I never went to Cuba. I would like to, only to see. When I finished secondary school, my father asked me if I wanted to go there and study in the same program as he did. I didn't do it but want to visit.'

personal

Wall of Fire

Liberated Territory
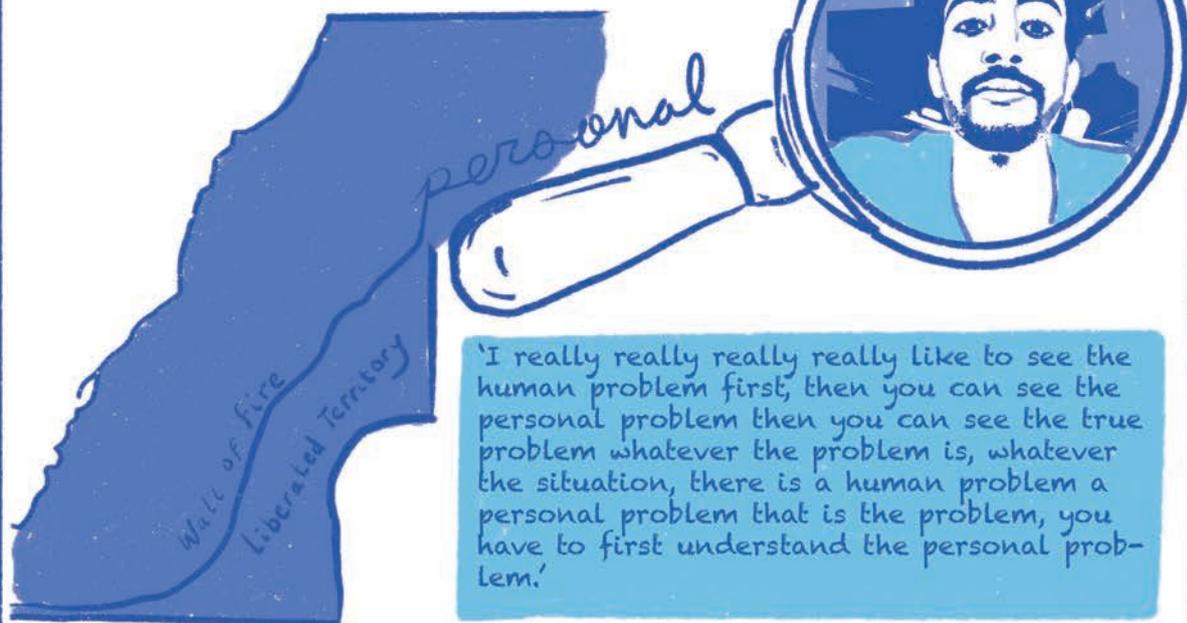
'I really really really really like to see the human problem first, then you can see the personal problem then you can see the true problem whatever the problem is, whatever the situation, there is a human problem a personal problem that is the problem, you have to first understand the personal problem.'

Mohamed discusses being on the Geneva convention which defined the status of refugees in 1951. Many have argued that the 21st century requires new treaties that reflect changes unpredicted in the 1950s.

'I think you have to accept that you are born in this country, you are born in this conflict. I didn't choose when I was born to get on Geneva. Even if it's at the war situation even if it's the best situation you always will have some good things, some bad things, I think because of the conflict, you appreciate life more than being here more than raising here. Here your life is your work, sure you get something, you get house, you get family, you happy, you work like eleven months and you get like a month of vacation, you kicking it. There it's like living, we never been alone in the community, you would never be alone there, you are always with someone. We consider the family a lot more than here, like I can tell you the name of my eleventh grandfather, we consider the family a lot more than here.'

'We are nomadic, if the camels, goats and sheep survive, people will survive. First you take care of all them, then take care of yourself, it's always been like that. Today, they make us feel like there is no movement all around the world. But, there's always been moving, 20 years or 2000 years ago. We have to accept that there is always going to be geographical changes, it could be happening like in Catalonia. Now this movement and flexibility is becoming more inevitable because of global warming, but many political systems still seem too rigid. For example, it rains less now than twenty years ago, which affects the lifestyle, like some of my family. Things will keep changing, nomadism always exists.'

Mohamed spoke a lot about larger issues that frame his life and the occupation of the Western Sahara. He felt like Western organizations like the UN, IMF, World Bank, or CIA operate from a self-interested position, not for the freedom of other countries.

'The Western organizations, the big ones like that run the countries they have committed a big problem, it's thinking that they, their point of view, their way of seeing freedom is the same as Arabs, same as Asians, same as Africans. It is not that way, you gotta accept that. The Western organizations and the Western countries have wronged about it, and I know they don't do it because of the freedom of those countries, they do it for their own interests.'

RIGHT TO PROPERTY

freedom
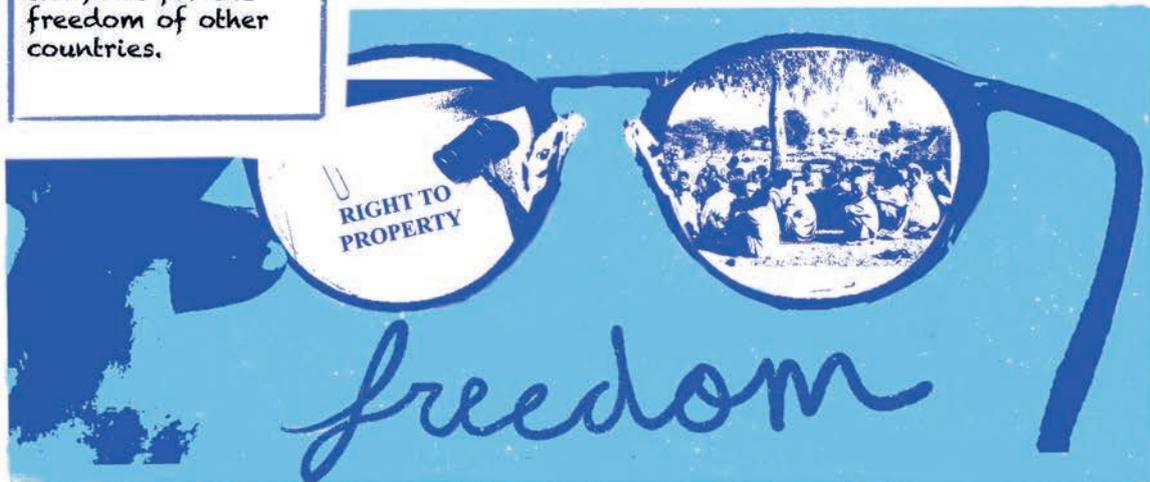
'I don't think it's Arabs' time. We had our time and I don't know where we would have our time of, not shining, but, at least being normal. The last 22 years have been really stigmatizing, they have changed a lot of the perception of people on Arabs.'

Discrimination

Hatred

War on terror

Racism

Labels

Stereotypes
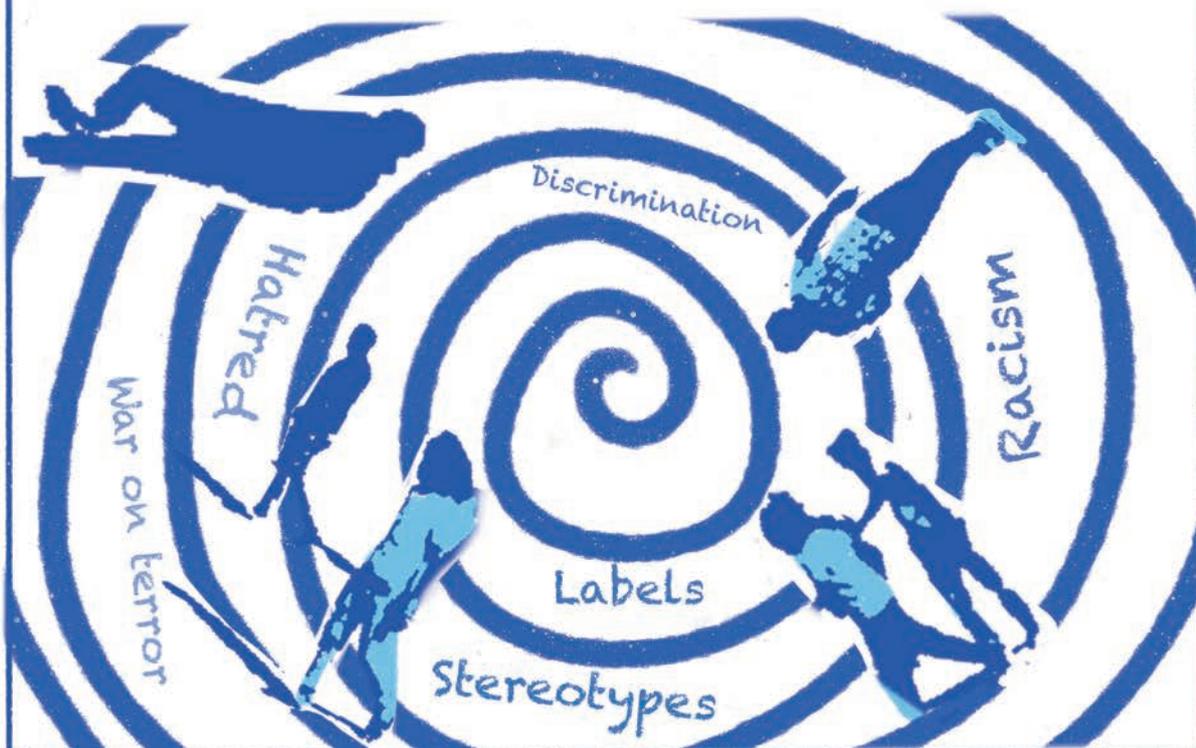
'There is a huge problem we having in Africa, we need another decolonisation, an economic one, most of the companies, wow, a lot of companies that work on Africa most of them are Europeans and most of them have like 80 percent or, most of them, not only Africa, also Asia, South America it happens, I saw it that the company that was on Bolivia working on the oil was getting the 85% and the country was getting 15% - 20% do you think that is rational? That seems normal?'
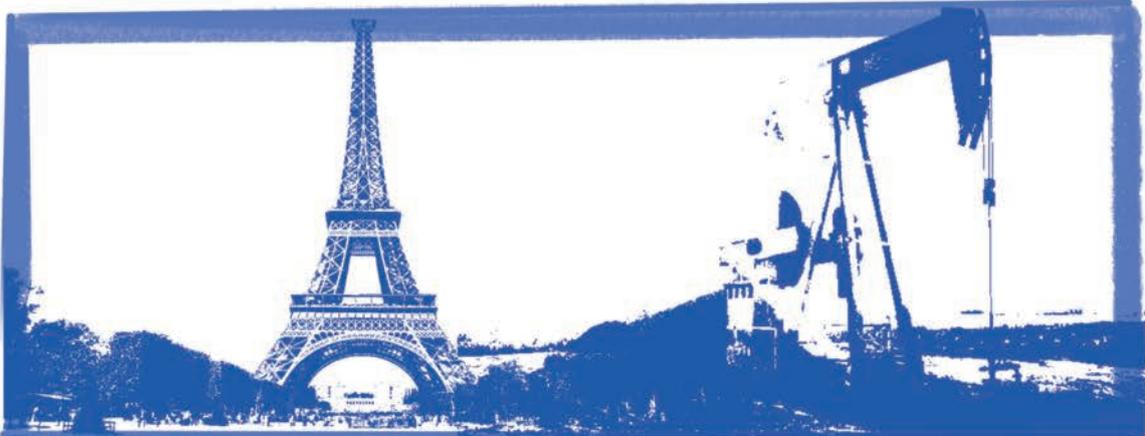
'Europe still exists because of these types of situations. Many African countries were ruled by the French. I think I read somewhere that 15-20% of French people's GDP is because of the companies that are exploiting Africa. I don't mean the profit they get, no, the over-profit. How can we help on this? It's a corporate thing, it's not easy, not a person, not only a group of people can do it, only another corporate system can do it, and it has to be built in Africa. We have the resources and yet we're the poorest at the same time, that's not rational. It is economic, it's always been that. If we were only desert, nobody would go, it's always an economic thing. It's kind of a pity to always be on that, the economical thing, but it's our world now, and we need to move on because of something, a really really big problem. The day that our world stops growing, the day we will realize that it's taking us nowhere, you know?'

'The last time I was there, the liberated territories in the Sahara in the desert, I didn't even have a watch. I didn't even ask the time the 10 days I spent. The most simple technology that is around the world. Instead, you feel the day, you wake up early because it's hot by 11-12 am, you care the animals or whatever you're doing, then you have time for yourself. There is a Tuareg quote: "You may have the watches, but we have the time". I think even they're not having all these things, it is worth living there than here. Your life is worth there because you are around your family.'

'Here is more about what you do, what you study, who you are. You can't even speak if you don't study, that's another problem that we have, and I really really hate that part, we consider a person as what she does, not because the fact that they are a person and she has a point of view and have a lifetime experience. It's like if you don't even study, don't talk to me. It is true, they taught us this way but it's not, I don't think it's the good way. I know people that can work in the most degrading jobs for forty hours per week and they can be the most beautiful people you can ever meet.'

The UN Settlement plan which Morocco and the POLISARIO accepted in 1991 has failed. The agreements were slowly dismembered and ultimately failed due to disagreement over who was entitled to vote for Sahrawi self-determination. The situation has been unresolved for 47 years. I asked Mohamed how he felt about the future of the struggle. He said, "I only have hope."

'I mean the activism doesn't attract me, not even the traditional political world attracts me. But, I love politics. I think we all do politics, even me with friends, me with strangers, me with my family, we all do politics, it's not just voting. I mean my behavior would be my politics, my behavior with others it is a kind of politics, people say like, nah, no I hate politics, and I say, your life is politic, your way of thinking is, everything is politics, you can acknowledge.'
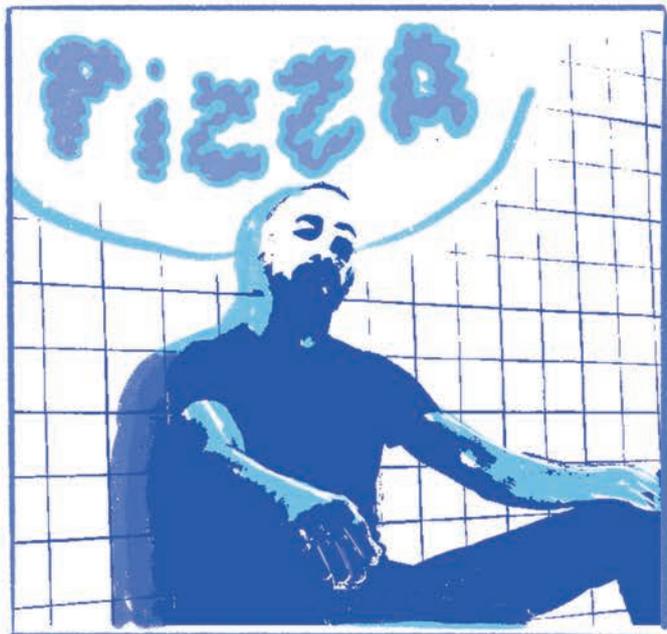
Mohamed now owns a Pizzeria in Barcelona that he opened with the help of his friends and family. He has worked really hard on it, and it bears his family name. He contributes to the liberation of his people in the ways he knows, and our interview was a testament to his desire to raise awareness about the struggle.

'Without You': 'German coffee' and the politics of dis:connection
Christina Brauner
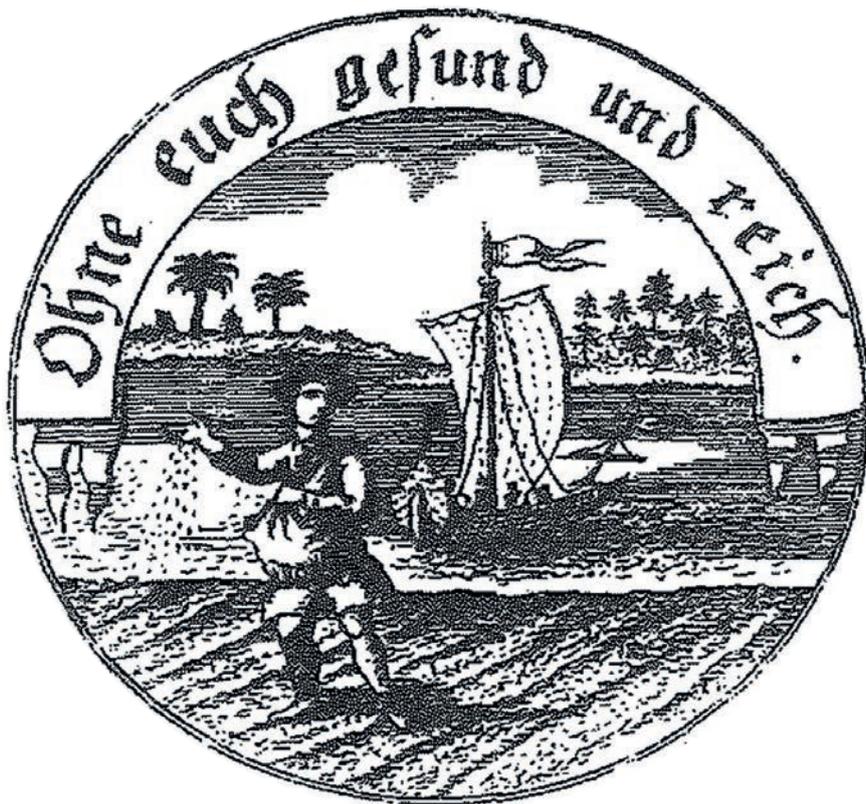
The lure of paradise, the hint of distant yet accessible fortunes, the promise of exotic luxuries available right here and now – these are commonplaces in the long history of commodity advertising.[1] Yet, there is also a long history of rejecting them in favour of promoting

---

1   Cf., e.g., Paul Freedman, 'Spices and Late-Medieval European Ideas of Scarcity and Value', *Speculum* 80, no. 4 (2005): 1209–27; Catherine Molineux, 'Pleasures of the Smoke: "Black Virginians" in Georgian London's Tobacco Shops', *William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (2007): 327–76.

Fig. 01
Image Coffee trademark from the 1770s: 'Healthy and wealthy without you'

local goods. Take the trademark depicted above from the 1770s: through an expressive gesture, the peasant, busy sowing his field, turns away the ship arriving from an exotic shore. The inscription acerbates the gesture, which reads: 'Healthy and wealthy without you'. This implies the rejection of colonies and colonial goods in general – coffee in particular – in favour of what is called 'German coffee', a drink made from chicory roots instead of coffee beans.[2]
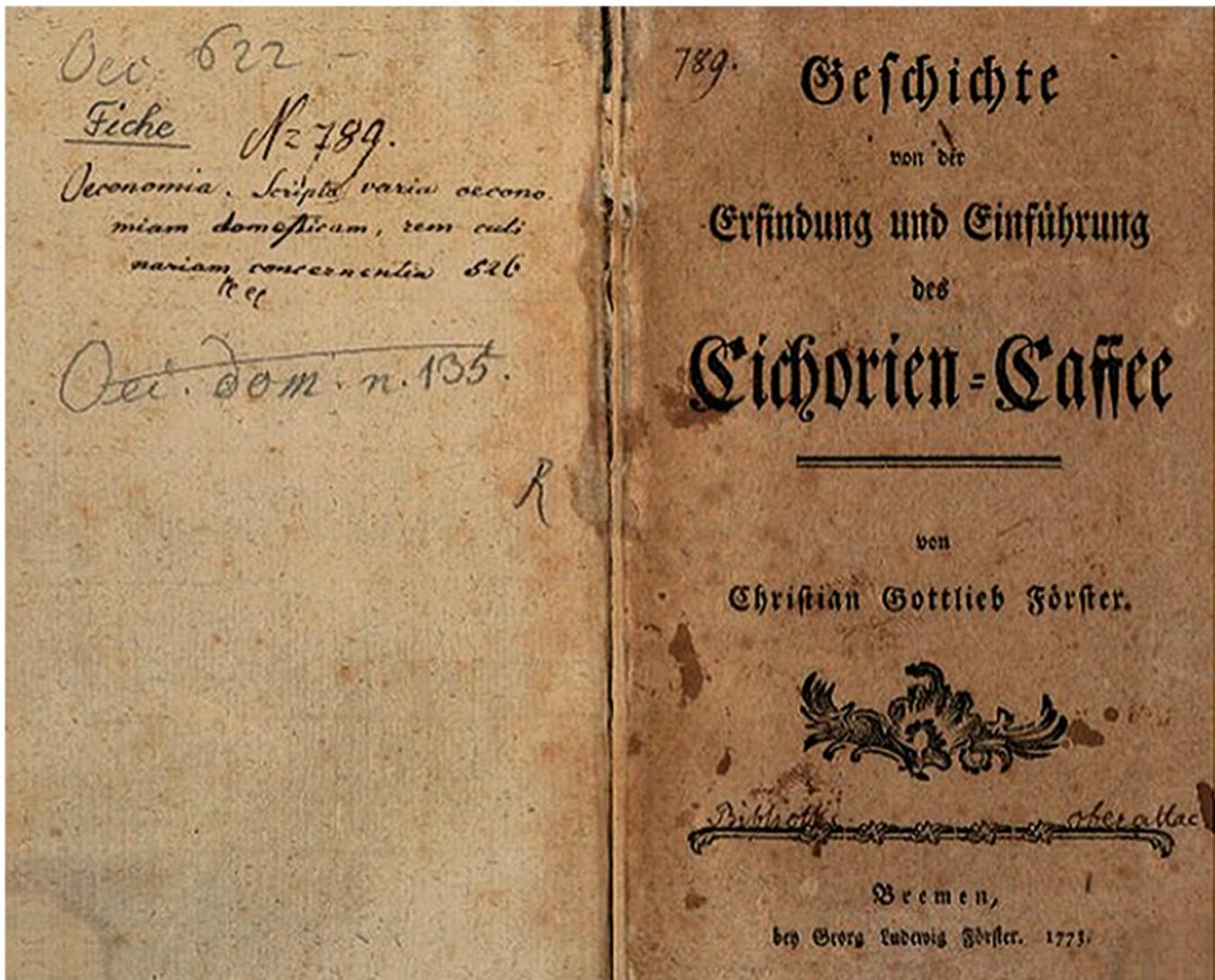
As a substitute for 'real' or 'foreign' coffee, 'German coffee' comes with connective and disconnective features simultaneously. It was part of what some contemporaries had already identified as 'diet revolutions' – the sometimes slow, sometimes quite quick establishment of 'new' foods and consumables such as tea, coffee, chocolate, and – with a somewhat longer history –

2　For an explanation of the trademark, see Christian G. Förster, *Geschichte von der Erfindung und Einführung des Cichorien-Caffee* (Bremen, 1773), 51; the 1864 edition of Grimm's dictionary mentions 'German coffee' as a synonym for 'chicory coffee': 'cichorienkaffee ein surrogat (auch deutscher kaffee genannt)', see Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch. Fünfter Band. K* (Leipzig, 1873), 21f.

Fig. 02
Image courtesy of the Bavarian State Library digital collection

sugar and spices in European kitchens and on European tables.[3] Alongside other substitutes, such as herbal tea (in place of imported Asian tea), 'German coffee' signals both the growing popularity of 'global goods' and the attempt to domesticise them and limit the impact of world trade on the domestic economy. While others merely deplored the demise of good olde German beer and published verbose condemnations of the new luxuries, Christian Gottlieb Förster and fellow champions of the chicory coffee business actively responded to the new consumables, sometimes by even promoting a new product to replace them.[4]

Drinking chicory coffee in place of imported coffee, the trademark suggests, protects both health and wealth. The act of consumption apparently connects the physical body to the body politick, the wellbeing of the individual to that of the political economy at large. In Förster's 1773 treatise about the history of chicory coffee, clearly written with an intention to advertise, this connection is established through metaphors, relying on images of circulation and sickness, as well as through statistics. In line with the contemporary fashion of assessing the world through numbers, the treatise features a considerable amount of data on coffee imports and prices. They call upon the individual consumer to relate their own foodways to the economy at large and think about their personal share in the harmful currency drain.[5] Aligning imports and incorporation, Förster ties together health and wealth, the individual and the collective.

3   Johann G. Leidenfrost, 'Revolutionen in der Diät von Europa seit 300 Jaren', in *August Ludwig Schlözer's Briefwechsel, meist historischen und politischen Inhalts*, vol. 8, iss. 44 (Göttingen, 1781), 93–120; for an overview, see Anne E. C. McCants, 'Global History and the History of Consumption: Congruence and Divergence', in *Global History and New Polycentric Approaches. Europe, Asia and the Americas in a World Network System*, ed. Lucio de Sousa and Manuel P. Garcia (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 241–53; and the respective contributions in Frank Trentmann, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); while this debate long focused on Western Europe and its colonial empires, Central European entanglements with global trade and consumption have only recently become the subject of extensive systematic study, cf., e.g., Jutta Wimmler and Klaus Weber, eds., *Globalized Peripheries. Central Europe and the Atlantic World, 1680-1860* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2020).

4   See Förster, *Geschichte von der Erfindung und Einführung des Cichorien-Caffee*; for the trademark and the respective enterprise, see Peter Albrecht, 'Die Erschließung neuer Absatzwege durch Braunschweiger Firmen in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts', in *Innovationsgeschichte. Erträge der 21. Arbeitstagung der Gesellschaft für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 30. März bis 2. April 2005 in Regensburg, ed. Rolf Walter (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007), ill. 181; despite Förster's claims to the contrary, there were earlier propagators of chicory coffee, see Christian Hochmuth, *Globale Güter - lokale Aneignung. Kaffee, Tee, Schokolade und Tabak im frühneuzeitlichen Dresden* (Konstanz: UVK Verlag, 2008), 71f.; on substitutes and 'domestication', see Julia A. Schmidt-Funke, '"Eigene fremde Dinge". Surrogate und Imitate im langen 18. Jahrhundert', in *Präsenz und Evidenz fremder Dinge im Europa des 18. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Birgit Neumann (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2018), 529–49; and Anne Gerritsen, 'Domesticating Goods from Overseas: Global Material Culture in the Early Modern Netherlands', *Journal of Design History* 29, no. 3 (2016): 228–44.

5   For an insightful take on the emotional and moralising usages of statistics, see David Kuchenbuch, '"Fernmoral". Zur Genealogie des glokalen Wissens', *Merkur* 70, no. 807 (2016): 40–51.

Consequently, numbers come with emotions and a call for action. Förster describes his personal reaction to the results from his accounting work in very corporeal terms: '...I felt queasy. I turned to bloodletting, drank a lot of water, took a lemon laying before me, yet, as it was foreign, threw it away again with some force, shattering my punch bowl'.[6] Yet, he continues, 'the Fatherland and our body (sic!) still are strong enough to recover; but it is time, high time'.[7] Förster directs this urgent appeal, above all, to German women as caretakers of house, home and husbands. While blaming Germany's exposure to outlandish influences mainly on men and male weaknesses, he calls upon female wisdom and virtues to replace foreign fashion and food with authentic and healthy German goods – even by means of withholding their kisses.[8]

There was a very physical element involved in relating individual consumption to the 'Fatherland' and its political economy – namely, the specific nature of German bodies. Such a notion was by no means an eighteenth-century invention; rather, it emerges from a centuries-long tradition of thinking about bodies through their interaction with the environment and climate, with ways of life and, not least, with foodways. This tradition, known as humoral pathology, was rooted in difference, in different *complexiones* that were shaped by and at the same time required different ways and conditions of living. Bodies were different, but they were also malleable, and this was what made food both so powerful and so dangerous.[9]

What Talal Asad and others have suggested regarding 'Europe' as a whole also holds true for 'Germanness' in particular: these concepts were shaped through expansion and entanglements.[10] Studying practices of natural history in early modern German lands, for instance, Alix Cooper has shown how notions of the 'domestic' emerged through the encounter with the world at

---

6   Förster, *Geschichte von der Erfindung und Einführung des Cichorien-Caffee*, 12: '...mir ward schlimm. Ich ließ mir die Ader öfnen, trank viel Wasser, ergrif eine vor mir liegende Citrone, doch, da sie ausländisch war, warf ich sie mit Ungestüm weg, und zerschmettere damit meine Punsch-Schale.'

7   Ibid. 14: '...das Vaterland und unser Körper haben noch Kräfte, um sich erholen zu können; es ist aber Zeit, und zwar die höchste.'

8   Ibid. 15: '...geben sie ihm keinen Kuß, wenn er ihnen nicht monathlich einen Entwurf, oder auch nur einen gesunden Gedanken zur Verbesserung des Vaterlandes opfert'. The history of eighteenth-century consumer boycotts has recently drawn some attention but mainly in the context of the abolitionist movement. The case of Förster's chicory coffee demonstrates, once more, the different political usages such early practices of 'global responsibilisation' could be put to.

9   For an introduction, see Steven Shapin, '"You Are What You Eat": Historical Changes in Ideas about Food and Identity', *Historical Research* 87, no. 237 (2014): 377–92; and David Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe. Diet, Medicine and Society, 1450-1800* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016).

10   Talal Asad, 'Muslims and European Identity: Can Europe Represent Islam?', in *The Idea of Europe. From Antiquity to the European Union*, ed. Anthony Pagden (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 220.

large.[11] This goes back to the dawn of the so-called 'European expansion'. Indeed, while humoral pathology was rooted in ancient medical discourse, by the late Middle Ages, it had changed. Complexio had always been an individual issue, yet, increasingly, a tendency towards collectivisation of complexiones and essentialisation of skin colour emerged – a development inextricably tied to colonial expansion and slave trade.[12] Protecting 'German bodies' from foreign influence, thus, was linked to the racialisation of bodies elsewhere. Moreover, through the nexus of the German body, both individual and politick, Förster also envisages Germany as an entity of political economy at a time where no such thing existed, at least in terms of political institutions. To put it bluntly: Germany was threatened by global connections prenatally. At the same time, the market was the place where the 'Fatherland' could be rescued, through patriotic acts of purchase and consumption. Whether chicory coffee indeed helped to decrease the consumption of 'real' coffee is still open to debate. Some scholars have even suggested that the cheaper substitute inadvertently prepared the ground for the latter establishment of 'real' coffee throughout German society, as it allowed non-elite consumers to acquire respective drinking practices.[13]

Throughout the world of the twenty-first century, the trope of protecting the nation, its borders and its economy has come back with a vengeance – if indeed it ever left. Studying the global history of nationalism, thus, seems to be a timely endeavour for historians interested in dis:connectivity. Doing so means exploring dis:connections in terms of dialectics rather than dichotomies, studying the interplay of connections and disconnections both in terms of unintended effects and deliberate politics.[14]

---

11   Alix Cooper, *Inventing the Indigenous. Local Knowledge and Natural History in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); see also Peter Hess, 'Protest from the Margins: Emerging Global Networks in the Early Sixteenth Century and Their German Detractors', in *Other Globes. Past and Peripheral Imaginations of Globalization*, ed. Simon Ferdinand, Irene Villaescusa-Illán, and Esther Peeren (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 41–62; and Bethany Wiggin, 'Globalization and the Work of Fashion in Early Modern German Letters', *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 11, no. 2 (2011): 35–60.

12   See Gentilcore, *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe. Diet, Medicine and Society, 1450-1800*, chapter 4; Rebecca Earle, *The Body of the Conquistador. Food, Race and the Colonial Experience in Spanish America, 1492–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), esp. chapter 2; Valentin Groebner, 'Haben Hautfarben eine Geschichte? Personenbeschreibungen und ihre Kategorien zwischen dem 13. und 16. Jahrhundert', *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 30, no. 1 (2003): 1–17, esp. 12-17; for the ongoing debate on racism in the Middle Ages, see Vanita Seth, 'The Origins of Racism: A Critique of the History of Ideas', *History and Theory* 59, no. 3 (2020): 343–68.

13   See Hans J. Teuteberg, 'Kaffeetrinken sozialgeschichtlich betrachtet', *Scripta Mercaturae* 14, no. 1 (1980): 41f.; Hochmuth, *Globale Güter - lokale Aneignung. Kaffee, Tee, Schokolade und Tabak im frühneuzeitlichen Dresden*, 71f. Hochmuth links the decreasing volume of coffee imports in Dresden after the 1760s to the rising consumption of coffee substitutes (88f.).

14   Cf. Cemil Aydin et al., 'Rethinking Nationalism', *American Historical Review* 127, no. 1 (2022): 311–71; Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction. An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

Bibliography

Albrecht, Peter. 'Die Erschließung neuer Absatzwege durch Braunschweiger Firmen in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts'. In *Innovationsgeschichte. Erträge der 21. Arbeitstagung der Gesellschaft für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 30. März bis 2. April 2005 in Regensburg, edited by Rolf Walter, 175–89. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007.

Asad, Talal. 'Muslims and European Identity: Can Europe Represent Islam?' In *The Idea of Europe. From Antiquity to the European Union*, edited by Anthony Pagden, 209–27. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Aydin, Cemil, Grace Ballor, Sebastian Conrad, Frederick Copper, Nicole CuUnjieng Aboitiz, Richard Drayton, Michael Goebel, et al. 'Rethinking Nationalism'. *American Historical Review* 127, no. 1 (2022): 311–71.

Cooper, Alix. *Inventing the Indigenous. Local Knowledge and Natural History in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Earle, Rebecca. *The Body of the Conquistador. Food, Race and the Colonial Experience in Spanish America, 1492–1700*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Förster, Christian G. *Geschichte von der Erfindung und Einführung des Cichorien-Caffee*. Bremen, 1773.

Freedman, Paul. 'Spices and Late-Medieval European Ideas of Scarcity and Value'. *Speculum* 80, no. 4 (2005): 1209–27.

Gentilcore, David. *Food and Health in Early Modern Europe. Diet, Medicine and Society, 1450-1800*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016.

Gerritsen, Anne. 'Domesticating Goods from Overseas: Global Material Culture in the Early Modern Netherlands'. *Journal of Design History* 29, no. 3 (2016): 228–44.

Grimm, Jacob, and Wilhelm Grimm. *Deutsches Wörterbuch. Fünfter Band. K.* Leipzig, 1873.

Groebner, Valentin. 'Haben Hautfarben eine Geschichte? Personenbeschreibungen und ihre Kategorien zwischen dem 13. und 16. Jahrhundert'. *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 30, no. 1 (2003): 1–17.

Hess, Peter. 'Protest from the Margins: Emerging Global Networks in the Early Sixteenth Century and Their German Detractors'. In *Other Globes. Past and Peripheral Imaginations of Globalization*, edited by Simon Ferdinand, Irene Villaescusa-Illán, and Esther Peeren, 41–62. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.

Hochmuth, Christian. *Globale Güter - lokale Aneignung. Kaffee, Tee, Schokolade und Tabak im frühneuzeitlichen Dresden*. Konstanz: UVK Verlag, 2008.

Kuchenbuch, David. '"Fernmoral". Zur Genealogie des glokalen Wissens'. *Merkur* 70, no. 807 (2016): 40–51.

Leidenfrost, Johann G. 'Revolutionen in der Diät von Europa seit 300 Jaren'. In *August Ludwig Schlözer's Briefwechsel, meist historischen und politischen Inhalts*, 8, iss. 44:93–120. Göttingen, 1781.

McCants, Anne E. C. 'Global History and the History of Consumption: Congruence and Divergence'. In *Global History and New Polycentric Approaches. Europe, Asia and the Americas in a World Network System*, edited by Lucio de Sousa and Manuel P. Garcia, 241–53. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

Molineux, Catherine. 'Pleasures of the Smoke: "Black Virginians" in Georgian London's Tobacco Shops'. *William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (2007): 327–76.

Schmidt-Funke, Julia A. '"Eigene fremde Dinge". Surrogate und Imitate im langen 18. Jahrhundert'. In *Präsenz und Evidenz fremder Dinge im Europa des 18. Jahrhunderts*, edited by Birgit Neumann, 529–49. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2018.

Seth, Vanita. 'The Origins of Racism: A Critique of the History of Ideas'. *History and Theory* 59, no. 3 (2020): 343–68.

Shapin, Steven. '"You Are What You Eat": Historical Changes in Ideas about Food and Identity'. *Historical Research* 87, no. 237 (2014): 377–92.

Teuteberg, Hans J. 'Kaffeetrinken sozialgeschichtlich betrachtet'. *Scripta Mercaturae* 14, no. 1 (1980): 27–54.

Trentmann, Frank, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. *Friction. An Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Wiggin, Bethany. 'Globalization and the Work of Fashion in Early Modern German Letters'. *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 11, no. 2 (2011): 35–60.

Wimmler, Jutta, and Klaus Weber, eds. *Globalized Peripheries. Central Europe and the Atlantic World*, 1680-1860. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2020.

Mapping the wounds of the world: dis:connectivities of global representation at the 12th Berlin Biennale

Ayşe Güngör

The title of this year's Berlin Biennale, *Still Present!*, reflected its objective to examine the consequences of the collective trauma caused by colonialism, structural violence and, more generally, the crimes of modern capitalism through a current perspective. Kader Attia, curator of the Biennale, and the curatorial team[1] expand on their approach, namely, to make the crimes of colonialism apparent through the agency of art. Repairing this trauma and the 'wounds accumulated throughout the history of Western modernity'[2] – as Attia refers to it – the reparation process appears as both a question and a tool throughout the works presented in the Biennale.

In this context, the Biennale's global artistic scope will be my focus, which connects as well as disconnects through a range of artistic approaches in its curatorial agenda. Throughout the course of the Biennale, the artistic and curatorial decisions were broadened with numerous decolonial perspectives from various regions, pluralising the global representation. Parallel to the ideas of Bilbao, 'most discourses and narratives that account for the Biennale's globality rely almost entirely on visibility',[3] which is reflected in the curatorial agenda of the recent Berlin Biennale in

1   Kader Attia, curator of the 2022 Berlin Biennale, has assembled a five-member team to assist him, including Ana Teixeira Pinto, Đỗ Tường Linh, Marie Helene Pereira, Noam Segal and Rasha Salti.
2   Kader Attia, 'Introduction', in *12th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art* (11.6. -18.9.2022), *Catalogue* (Germany, n.d.), 22.
3   Ana Bilbao, 'From the Global to the Local (and Back)', *Third Text* 33, no. 2 (4 March 2019): 179–94.

terms of an approach to globalisation that accentuates unseen local issues in various regions. The issue at hand, as Ndikung points out, is:

> Where is the local, especially in this postcolonial era and context, in the crafting of the concept of global museum? And this local cannot be simplified but analyzed in its complexity that goes beyond national or racial categories and that takes into consideration historical and geographical entanglements as much as geopolitical and social intricacies.[4]

Entanglements are occasionally emphasised in the framework of the Biennale, which emphasises broadening the perspectives it represents. This framework, which seeks to account for the 'global' by combining cases from diverse peripheries, also risks reducing a multifaceted globality to the dichotomies of 'the West and the rest' or 'colonisers vs. colonised'. Recalling the part that situatedness plays in the logic of liberal capitalism, the general intention of global art discourse is to dissolve these dichotomies. As Jacob Birken addresses, the discourse 'might not solve anything – just make [these dichotomies] easier to swallow'.[5]

When examining the Biennale as a larger phenomenon, a pluralising strategy emerges as the prevailing tool to maintain its position in the global art world. Therefore, the Biennale is often taken as a microcosm of the globalisation of the arts. The curatorial approach of the recent Biennale reflects the general tendency to portray the globe, with its objective of interconnecting the stories of many cultural spheres. In this regard, the 2022 Berlin Biennale fits the general narrative of Biennale-making in a transcultural context, since it seeks to present a comprehensive picture of the globe by focusing on the shared meanings of those affected by oppression and violence.

The globally interconnected histories reflected in the artworks navigate distinctive modalities of artistic production. Specifically, archival practices and the 'field of emotions' that Attia illustrates are a frequent tool artists implement to confront the legacies of colonial racism. Here, a 'field of emotions' helps to reclaim our present, which no longer belongs to us since it has been 'colonized 24/7 by computational governance and capitalism'.[6] Attia proposes that the agency of art provides us with the freedom to be in the present. In a similar vein, the framing of art in this context evokes an artistic manifesto.

4   Soh Bejeng Ndikung Bonaventure, *In a While Or Two We Will Find the Tone: Essays and Proposals, Curatorial Concepts, and Critiques* (Berlin: Archive Books, 2020), 186.

5   Jakob Birken, 'Spectres of 1989: On Some Misconceptions of the "Globality" in and of Contemporary Art', in *Situating Global Art*, ed. Sara Dornhof et al. (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2018), 49.

6   Attia, 'Introduction', 34.

When it comes to seeing the globe through a range of artistic practices, thinking broadly about these methodologies raises the question of what connects us and disconnects us. To this end, I would like to gain a clearer sense of what Attia means when he refers to 'the field of emotions'. One could refer to Dewey's concept of 'aesthetic emotion' through the agency of art experience. This principle describes how, as the artist works with their raw materials, they transform the raw feelings into artistic emotions. Based on the premise that there is no fundamental difference between everyday life and art, but simply a difference in the degree of differentiation and integration, aesthetic emotion is therefore well structured.[7] Since aesthetic experience is made possible by reshaping materials on purpose until a sensitivity to the characteristics of objects can be realised, this process makes it an aesthetic experience rather than simply an experience. Aesthetic experience gives us a chance to engage with our emotions in this artistic playground. These works not only generate a field of emotions, but also produce for the audience a space in which they are able to pause, think and reflect. This space provides the means to identify with the subject at hand and, as a result, engage with it as it's being recognised.

For instance, Thuy-Han Nguyen-Chi's work incorporates elements such as a bluescreen, a hospital bed, a boat, an oxygen mask, a portrait and a fire-resistant plant into an installation that tells multi-layered stories independent of a specific time or place. Using a blend of real and fictitious elements, the film follows a woman as she travels from Vietnam to Thailand and then to Germany in the aftermath of the American war in Vietnam. The elements of the installation metaphorically set the ground for an imaginary journey and enables the audience to identify with the subject and the story in a womb-like setting, symbolised here by the boat and the operating table.

Similarly, using natural and synthetic materials like metal, sugar, charcoal and latex, Christine Safatly's paintings and sculptures depart from the artist's personal history and local setting to probe social constructions of gender and other forms of alienation. Using allegorical narration and juxtaposition, her works encourage the viewer to relate to subjects of physiological suffering and everyday experiences with authoritarian regimes in Lebanon and beyond. This allegorical storytelling is not limited to this, in many cases, the emotional field presented invites viewers to think and reflect.

---

7   H. Hohr, 'Aesthetic Emotion: An Ambiguous Concept in John Dewey's Aesthetics', *Ethics and Education* 5, no. 3 (1 November 2010): 247–61.

Archival research and documentary modes of representation
also recur throughout the Biennale. Most of archival art's
potential is due to its frequent reproductions of alternative
historical perspectives, primarily depicting the unrepresented
in official histories to challenge power relations and authority.
However, archival practices have also attracted criticism for their
representation politics and institutional critique. For instance, Hal
Foster criticised the lack of critical engagement, 'representational
wholeness,' and 'institutional integrity' in archival art. In his article
Archival Impulse, he adds:

> *The work in question is archival since it not only draws
> on informal archives but produces them as well and
> does so in a way that underscores the nature of all
> archival materials as found yet constructed, factual
> yet fictive, public yet private. Further, it often arranges
> these materials according to a quasi-archival logic, a
> matrix of citation and juxtaposition, and presents them
> in a quasi-archival architecture, a complex of texts
> and objects.*[8]

8   Hal Foster, 'An Archival Impulse', *October* 110 (2004): 3–22.

Artistic approaches to archives cannot be limited to these critical approaches since they also enable alternative forms of representation by challenging the normative historical narratives or reinterpreting them. Archival artistic practices reflect unstructured information that is neither inherently linear nor connected, and they admit a wide variety of formats.

Many instances of archival art appear in the Biennale, including the work of Azoulay, who assembled texts and images shot in Berlin right after World War II with some quotations of women who lived in Berlin in 1945. By interspersing these historical documents with her comments, modifications and substitutions, so she uncovers the existence of these women who were excluded from official historical archives.

Similarly, research agency Forensic Architecture's Cloud Studies (2022) investigates how the air we breathe can be weaponised through herbicidal warfare, tear gas, forest fires, oil and gas pollution and bomb attacks from Palestine to Beirut, London to Indonesia and around the United States–Mexico border.

Fig. 02
Christine Safatly, PIECE 1, 2019, from the series THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN KETCHUP AND RIPE TOMATOES, 2019-20, fabric pierced with nails and pins, Photo by the author

Fig. 03
Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, THE NATURAL HISTORY OF RAPE (detail), 2017/2022, vintage photographs, prints, untaken b/w photographs, books, essay, magazines, drawings, dimensions variable, Photo by the author

While these documentary and investigative practices intertwine in many instances, mergers of art and documentation sometimes collapse the separation between the emotional field and documentary practices. Such works often combine political and poetic voices, such as in *Exile Is a Hard Job* (1983/2022)
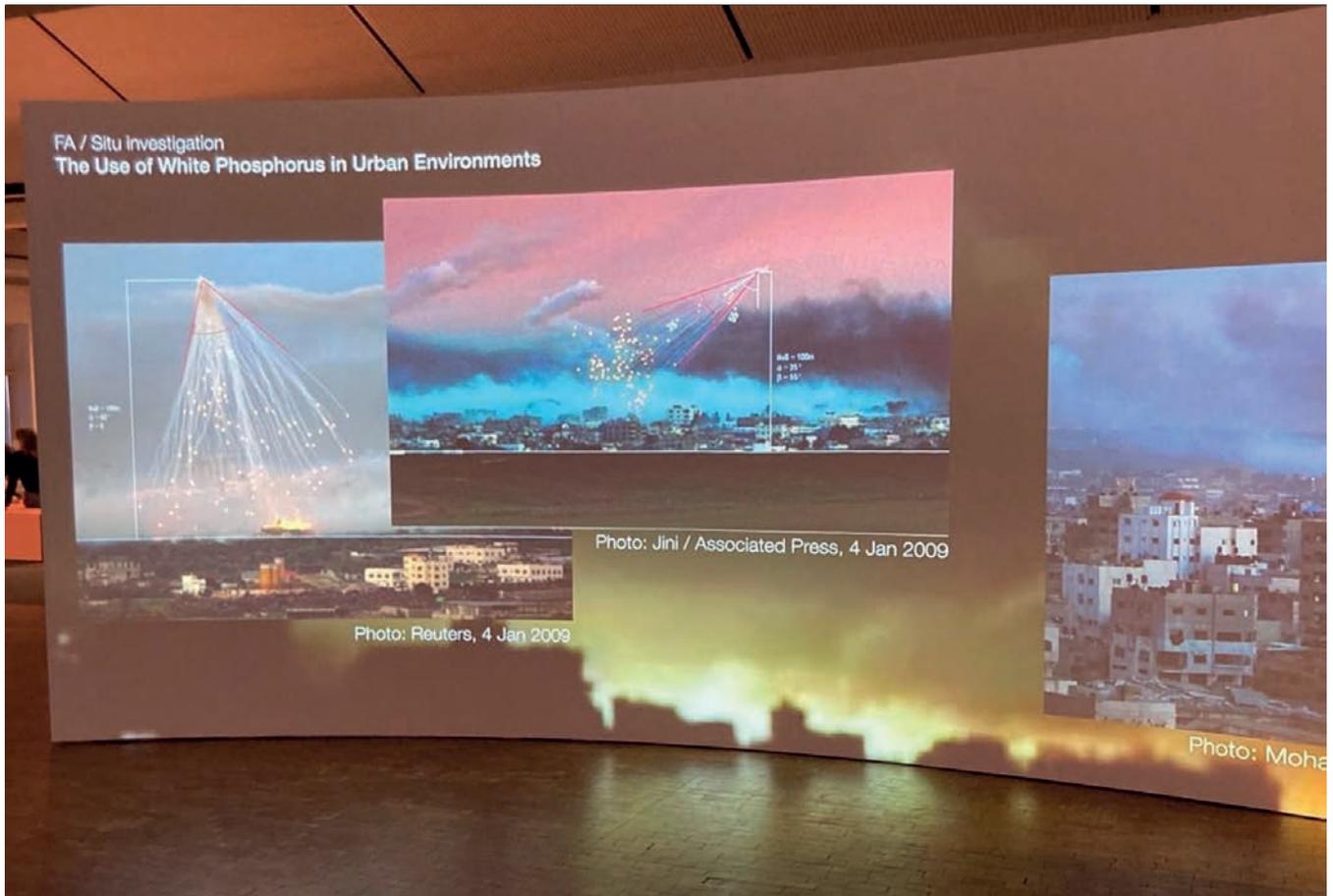
by Nil Yalter, which involves experimenting with photographs, transcriptions, quotes and videos to explore lives of immigrant women and families from Portugal and Turkey. These practices of documenting, drawing, and collecting involve an open-ended process of tracing and moving with the experience itself, implicating several challenging modalities of artistic production that exist between art and anthropology.

Archival modes of representation employ particular narratives to reflect upon historical realities. They, on the other hand, do not leave enough room for interpretation or engagement with the subject and instead present the audience with the narratives that have already been transcribed. After getting involved in a great deal of documentation procedures throughout the Biennale, one may, in the end, realise that they are drowning in an excessive amount of information that might be hard to engage. I believe that the more room they give for the audience to interpret the subject, the more possibilities for connection they generate. This most likely corresponds to the 'emotional field' that the curatorial team intended to yield with this selection of works in this context.

What can the Biennale accomplish with these practices? What connects and disconnects us globally and interpersonally is rooted in the space provided for viewers to think rather than inundating them with information. Since any dichotomous division does not represent the complexity of the world, such

Fig. 04
Forensic Architecture, CLOUD STUDIES, 2022, 2-channel video installation, colour, sound, 26′08″, Photo by the author

global representation fails to question the narratives that have shaped the world. Given the diversity of the art world, it is difficult to identify a single world centre or global narrative that might include all the forms of transformation.[9] To achieve a decolonised representation of art, one must refrain from making geographical generalisations when selecting which parts of history are – or are not – included in narratives. Instead of constraining viewers to a certain time and location or overloading them with information while engaging in documentary practices, the space opened by the poetic core of the aesthetic experience transcends both. That space enables the viewer to connect with their thoughts and feelings while experiencing this artistic playground. Mapping colonial wounds would not be reduced to geography but may be opened to the exchanges, circulations, entanglements, conflicts, and disconnections of the global context.

Bibliography

Attia, Kader. 'Introduction'. In *12th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art* (11.6. -18.9.2022), *Catalogue*. Germany, n.d.

Bilbao, Ana. 'From the Global to the Local (and Back)'. *Third Text* 33, no. 2 (4 March 2019): 179–94.

Birken, Jakob. 'Spectres of 1989: On Some Misconceptions of the "Globality" in and of Contemporary Art'. In *Situating Global Art*, edited by Sara Dornhof, Nanne Buurman, Birgit Hopfener, and Barbara Lutz, 35–52. Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2018.

Bonaventure, Soh Bejeng Ndikung. *In a While Or Two We Will Find the Tone: Essays and Proposals, Curatorial Concepts, and Critiques*. Berlin: Archive Books, 2020.

Foster, Hal. 'An Archival Impulse'. *October* 110 (2004): 3–22.

Hohr, H. 'Aesthetic Emotion: An Ambiguous Concept in John Dewey's Aesthetics'. *Ethics and Education* 5, no. 3 (1 November 2010): 247–61.

Morgner, Christian. 'Diversity and (In)Equality in the Global Art World: Global Development and Structure of Field-Configuring Events'. *New Global Studies* 11, no. 3 (2017): 165–96.

---

9   Christian Morgner, 'Diversity and (In)Equality in the Global Art World: Global Development and Structure of Field-Configuring Events', *New Global Studies* 11, no. 3 (2017): 165–96.

The wreck of the *Highland Fling:* tragedy and ballast at sea
Paul Blickle

The ship in question is the British steamer *Highland Fling* and the picture was taken at the Falmouth drydocks early in 1907.[1]

1   Gibson & Sons of Scilly, *A View of the Stern Section at the Break in the Hull, of the Cargo Steamer Highland Fling* (1890) in Drydock at Falmouth, c. 1907, Photograph, G14156, National Maritime Museum Greenwich, London, Gibson's of Scilly Shipwreck Collection, https://www.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/rmgc-object-1113561.

Fig. 01
This photograph of a shattered hull hides a rare sight. It is not the shipwreck.

A terrible disaster has sundered the ship in half, and all that remains is an almost anatomical cross-section of the ship. Labourers are interrupting their work to pose for the photographer. They are in the process of clearing ballast from the ship's hold before its engines and parts can be salvaged and the rest of the *Highland Fling* scrapped.

The *Highland Fling* had been a mighty ship, almost a hundred metres long, first launched 17 years previously from a Newcastle shipyard. The ship boasted a modern steel hull and was fitted with electric lights as well as refrigeration machinery (the purpose of which remains obscure). Originally named the *Duke of Portland* and later the *Morayshire*, the steamer became the *Highland Fling* around 1905, when it joined the fleet of the Nelson Line of Liverpool (which christened all their ships with names beginning in 'Highland'). The new owners employed the *Highland Fling* for trade with South America.[2] It was on one such voyage that disaster struck.

According to the London Times, the steamer ran aground near the Cornish coast in thick fog on the night of 7 January 1907. It had left London only days before carrying several thousand barrels of cement to Buenos Aires. An inquest by the Liverpool Board of Trade later ruled that the ship had exceeded safe speed too near the coast. The ship's master, a Captain Purvis, was held responsible for this navigational error and his captain's licence was suspended for a year. This was a light punishment, given that the newspapers valued the *Highland Fling* at £25,000 (nearly £3.2 million today), excluding the value of its cargo. At least, no loss of life was reported, and the vessel was sufficiently insured.

On 10 January, the Times reported a first, unsuccessful attempt to tow the steamer from the rocks after several hundred tons of cargo had been jettisoned. A second attempt, undertaken two days later, also failed and left the bow section of the vessel badly damaged. After repeated attempts to free the *Highland Fling* had proved futile, the London Salvage Association tried to retrieve at least part of the cargo and the ship's most valuable parts (its engine and refrigeration machinery, which were located in the rear). Engineers planted dynamite along the hull with the aim to separate bow from stern by force, but heavy waves interrupted this plan. After being stuck on the rocks for two weeks, the sea finally achieved what the engineers had failed to do and smashed the ship in half, after which the rear was towed by tugboats to the nearby port of Falmouth. The bow section of the *Highland Fling*

2   *Lloyd's Register of British and Foreign Shipping. From 1st July, 1906, to the 30th June, 1907. Volume 1 – Steamers* (London, 1906).

was left on the rocks, until it was smashed into oblivion by a storm on the night of 23 January.[3]

At Falmouth the *Highland Fling* was documented in a series of dramatic photographs by the local studio of Gibson & Sons. The Gibsons ran a multigenerational business and hailed from the Scilly Isles – an island group southwest of Cornwall long associated with maritime disasters. Exactly 200 years before the calamity of the *Highland Fling*, another series of navigational errors had sunk four ships of the Royal Navy and killed 1500 sailors as well as an admiral on the cliffs of the Scillies. The disaster of 1707 famously sparked the eighteenth-century quest for more precise longitudinal measurements, and it was perhaps this piece of local history that had given the business's founder, John Gibson (a sailor turned photographer in the 1860s), and his sons their taste for maritime tragedy. Pictures of the wrecked *Highland Fling* were probably taken by John's son Herbert, who, over the course of his career, photographed countless ships in varying degrees of destruction.[4]

Tragic as it was, the fate of the *Highland Fling* was by no means unusual. Surviving images of the shattered ship bear witness to the dangers of seafaring even at the dawn of the twentieth century. The dimensions of the remaining half of the hull are impressive, dwarfing the men labouring in its shadow, yet the advances of the industrial age were no match for the violence of wind and sea. Yet the apparent catastrophe of the shattered *Highland Fling* conceals something as mundane as it is invisible. Strewn across the lowest point of the hull lie sand and rocks, which the labourers are slowly removing by means of their shovels and wheelbarrows.

3   'The Marine Insurance Market', **The Times** (London), 9 January 1907, 13; 'The Marine Insurance Market', **The Times** (London), 10 January 1907, 13; 'The Marine Insurance Market', **The Times** (London), 14 January 1907, 15; 'The Marine Insurance Market', **The Times** (London), 15 January 1907, 15; 'Shipping Disasters', **The Times** (London), 21 January 1907, 9; 'Wrecks, Casualties, &c.', **The Times** (London), 24 January 1907, 10; 'The Marine Insurance Market', **The Times** (London), 4 March 1907, 14.
4   John Fowles, **Shipwreck**, repr. ed. (London: Jonathan Cape, 1979).

These are not the remains of the cement cargo the ship was
transporting to South America, which was packaged into barrels,
some of which are still visible. What the labourers are removing is
in fact the ship's ballast.[5]

Fig. 02
**A rare image of a precious resource:
dead weight.**

5   Gibson & Sons of Scilly, *A View Directly into the Hull of the Cargo Steamer
     Highland Fling (1890)*, c. 1907, Photograph, G14155, National Maritime Museum
     Greenwich, London, Gibson's of Scilly Shipwreck Collection, https://www.rmg.
     co.uk/collections/objects/rmgc-object-1113560.

The word 'ballast' is used almost exclusively as a metaphor today. But ballast was an integral part of seafaring. Its purpose was to lower a ship's centre of gravity and to stabilise it at sea. This was done by loading cheap and heavy materials like sand, small stones and rubble into a ship's hold, which lowered its waterline and reduced its tendency to pitch and roll. As ships travelled to the farthest corners of the globe, they carried ballast from and to ports all over the world. Ships needed the most ballast when they were running empty, but even fully loaded ships carried it. Especially during the winter months, shipmasters took care to load additional ballast. Looking at ships of similar size and displacement, the *Highland Fling* (which sailed in January) would have easily carried between 200 and 500 tonnes of sand and stones as ballast.[6]

Ballast was evidently necessary for safe travel at sea, but at the same time it routinely disrupted trade. Purchasing ballast and paying for the labour of loading and unloading it was a recurring expense, but what made ballast particularly vexing were the lengthy delays while ships waited to be ballasted. Shipping was a highly competitive industry in which the priority was to keep ships profitably at sea with cargo rather than wasting precious days in port. Waiting for ballast-men to load ballast after stevedores had unloaded cargo (or vice versa) considerably extended the time in port to the point where captains opted not to unload all their cargo rather than to wait for ballast. While global economic connections intensified, the necessity to carry ballast weakened and sometimes severed such connections.

As a mundane nautical component, ballast was deeply ingrained in the everyday practice of seamanship. As such, it is almost invisible in pictorial records. There are some depictions showing how it was loaded or unloaded, as well as a few anaemic photographs taken by archaeologists of ballast recovered from sunken ships. The images from Falmouth are a rare exception because they show ballast while it was in its proper place –in situ at the deepest point of a ship's hold. This is important because whether any amount of sand and shingle counted as ballast or not was wholly determined by the nautical context: only their use at sea transformed sand and shingle into ballast. The very same materials could later be used to pave roads or build houses without a second thought given to their erstwhile nautical purpose.[7]

Another interesting aspect of the photographs is that the cross-section shows neither a double bottom nor double hull. Towards of the end of the nineteenth century, many ships had adopted double hulls, which made them more durable. The space in-between was waterproofed and used as a tank that could be filled with seawater. Water is less dense than sand and stone, but

6   S. J. P. Thearle, 'The Ballasting of Steamers for North Atlantic Voyages', *Transactions of the Royal Institution of Naval Architects* 45 (1903): 118–33.
7   Mats Burström, *Ballast. Laden with History*, trans. Charlotte Merton (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2017), 51–59.

it is free and could be loaded and unloaded much more quickly. This solved some of the disconnective issues associated with solid ballast. Today, water ballast is used on almost every ship and has contributed significantly to the spread of invasive micro-organisms around the world.[8]

Not all water ballast was kept in double hulls. On board the *Highland Fling*, the water was most likely carried in large tanks located at the bow and stern of the ship and is therefore not visible in the cross-section. While it is often argued that solid ballast, like sand and stone, was quickly replaced by water, the images of the *Highland Fling* demonstrate the persistence of solid ballast. At the turn of the century, most steamers still used a mixture of water and solid ballasts, as well as the weight of their fuel, to stabilise the ship.[9]

The stranding of the *Highland Fling* might be a cautionary tale of navigational incompetence or the persisting dangers of maritime mobility a century ago. But what makes this image of tragedy exceptional is that it documents an otherwise almost invisible and forgotten aspect of seafaring.

Bibliography

Burström, Mats. *Ballast. Laden with History*. Translated by Charlotte Merton. Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2017.

Carlton, James T. 'Attack of the Invasive Species!' In *The Ocean Reader. History, Culture, Politics*, edited by Eric Paul Roorda, 473–82. Durham: Duke University Press, 2020.

Fowles, John. *Shipwreck*. Repr. ed. London: Jonathan Cape, 1979.

Gibson & Sons of Scilly. *A View Directly into the Hull of the Cargo Steamer Highland Fling (1890)*. c. 1907. Photograph. G14155. National Maritime Museum Greenwich, London, Gibson's of Scilly Shipwreck Collection. https://www.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/rmgc-object-1113560.

———. *A View of the Stern Section at the Break in the Hull, of the Cargo Steamer Highland Fling (1890) in Drydock at Falmouth*. c. 1907. Photograph. G14156. National Maritime Museum Greenwich, London, Gibson's of Scilly Shipwreck Collection. https://www.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/rmgc-object-1113561.

Lloyd's Register of British and Foreign Shipping. From 1st July, 1906, to the 30th June, 1907. Volume 1 – Steamers. London, 1906.

Martell, B. 'On Water Ballast'. *Transactions of the Royal Institution of Naval Architects* 18 (1877): 336–48.

The Times (London). 'Shipping Disasters', 21 January 1907: 9.

The Times (London). 'The Marine Insurance Market', 9 January 1907: 13.

The Times (London). 'The Marine Insurance Market', 10 January 1907: 13.

The Times (London). 'The Marine Insurance Market', 14 January 1907: 15.

The Times (London). 'The Marine Insurance Market', 15 January 1907: 15.

The Times (London). 'The Marine Insurance Market', 4 March 1907: 14.

Thearle, S. J. P. 'The Ballasting of Steamers for North Atlantic Voyages'. *Transactions of the Royal Institution of Naval Architects* 45 (1903): 118–33.

The Times (London). 'Wrecks, Casualties, &c.', 24 January 1907: 10.

---

8   James T. Carlton, 'Attack of the Invasive Species!', in *The Ocean Reader. History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Eric Paul Roorda (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 473–82.

9   B. Martell, 'On Water Ballast', *Transactions of the Royal Institution of Naval Architects* 18 (1877): 336–48.

Covid and the theatre: a constant state of disruption?
Christopher Balme

As the summer of 2022 draws to a close, I am reminded of the famous advertisement for the film *Jaws* (1975): Just when you though it was safe to go back in the water... (For an impressionable teenager growing up in New Zealand next to a beach frequented by sharks, including Great Whites, this was not just rhetoric but calculated risk assessment). However, for the world of theatre, music and the live performing arts, this summer seemed to be safe to go back into the auditorium. Restrictions were loosened, masks discarded, and there was nothing preventing the theatres from experiencing a boom: an explosion of pent-up energy which would send audiences streaming back into their subscription-season seats.

Except – it didn't happen or at least not in the expected numbers. Across the world theatres and opera houses have registered a certain reluctance on the part of audiences to get back in their seats. Britain's leading theatre trade magazine *The Stage* headlined on 22 August 2022 during the Edinburgh Festival: 'Covid is having "enormous but silent" impact on EdFringe'.[1] The final weeks of the theatre season in Germany were dominated by the term *Publikumsschwund*, i.e. dwindling audiences, and in far-off New Zealand theatres struggled with intermittent openings and closures, as Covid infections rose and fell.

---

1   Giverny Masso, 'Covid Is Having "Enormous but Silent" Impact on EdFringe, Say Artists', ***The Stage***, 22 August 2022.

Each of these cases is slightly different, but they all share a number of characteristics. The combination of cast and staff illness, spectatorial hesitancy and governmental restrictions creates suboptimal conditions for live theatre. Although discrete factors, they are often interrelated: for instance, recurrent infections in the cast lead to regular cancellations of performances, which in turn disillusion audiences, and even seasoned subscription-ticket veterans lose interest after the third cancellation.

This article draws on a comparative study of theatre in the UK and Germany.[2] While still ongoing, we can provide some provisional insights and propose observations on the current iteration of theatre in crisis mode. Theatre under global pandemic conditions has proven to be a fruitful field to investigate dis:connectivity. The closure of theatres in March 2020 was a genuinely global measure and experience.

Most theatres and indeed cultural venues of any kind shut down and remained that way well into 2021. Although the immediate impact is clearly economic, as the whole workforce employed in the performing arts sector was effectively laid off or placed on

2   'Theatre After Covid', Institute Website, The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. University of London, 2022, https://www.cssd.ac.uk/Research/Research-Outputs-and-Projects/Current-Research-Projects/theatre-after-covid.

various furlough schemes, the long-term effects may be much wider. The closures produced absence in the form of a complete dearth of live performance. The flow of productions and personnel which is local, national and international (especially opera) was interrupted for months, even years as carefully calibrated timetables evaporated; and hastily improvised workarounds (detours) in the form of streaming became all the rage. As the pandemic progressed, the topics changed from sheer economic survival to the pros and cons of digitalisation, to the mechanics of social distancing in a theatre auditorium. Currently, we are beginning to see the outlines of theatre under post-pandemic conditions: a loss of audience confidence, recurrent illness and uncertainty in programming.

Where have all the spectators gone?

In July 2022, the word of the month in the German theatre scene was *Publikumsschwund*. Numerous newspapers and magazines carried headlines featuring the term and all agreed that theatres had had a bad season even though there were few to no restrictions. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* published a long article titled *Der Einbruch: Dem Theater fehlen die Zuschauer* (The collapse: The theatre lacks spectators),[3] in which the authors, theatre critics Peter Laudenbach (Berlin) and Egbert Tholl (Munich) presented results of a journalistic survey they had undertaken. Artistic directors (Intendanten) reported that theatres had lost half of their subscribers in the past two years – a brutal slump, also caused by the fact that many houses had to suspend their subscriptions in winter because of the pandemic restrictions. Prominent stages such as the Berlin Volksbühne were happy if they managed to sell 25% of seats. At Dortmund's city theatre, artistic director Julia Wissert had an average of 44 paying spectators per performance over the past season – in a house with 500 seats. The harshest polemic is reserved for the Munich Kammerspiele:

> *The biggest failure of the Münchner Kammerspiele in the current season was a play about living and dying with Covid in intensive care. And apparently fewer and fewer audience members feel like being lectured from the stage with banalities critical of capitalism and the latest twists and turns of identity politics. Here the pandemic acts like an accelerant. It intensifies an audience crisis that badly managed theatres have brought on themselves. Their self-referentiality and arrogance are not likely to be a wise survival strategy in the face of failing audiences.*[4]

---

3   Egbert Tholl and Peter Laudenbach, 'Der Einbruch. Dem Theater Fehlen Die Zuschauer.', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 11 June 2022, https://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/theater-publikum-corona-krise-berliner-ensemble-1.5619166?reduced=true.

4   Tholl and Laudenbach (Author's translation).
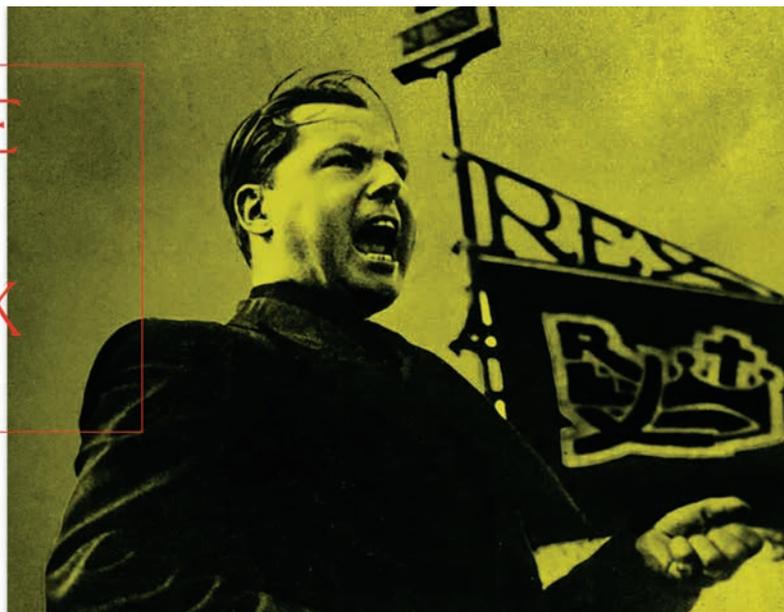
© Leon Degrelle

The polemic against certain forms of 'progressive' theatre is further sharpened by showing that theatres following mainstream programming, such as the Berlin Ensemble (84% capacity) or Munich's own Volkstheater, could demonstrate robust attendance figures. The authors conclude that spectators are looking for either familiar titles, great acting or 'genuine stories'.

While the author-critics clearly have a critical axe to grind in respect to post-dramatic, experimental theatre (which programmatically eschews all three criteria), a recent empirical survey confirms the overall drop in attendance. In July 2022 the Deutsche Bühnenverein (the German-speaking theatre-managers association) presented the official theatre statistics for the previous season. Compared to 2018/2019, the last pre-Covid season, the 2020/21 season demonstrates a colossal 86% drop in attendance figures.[5] These figures represent the highpoint of the corona pandemic as well as periods of intermittent reopening and do not take account of the 'recovery' in spring and summer 2022. The figures are by any account dramatic and represent a major interruption of an established cultural practice: attending theatre.

Digital futures

During the deepest and darkest lockdowns in 2020, the brightest light shone digitally. Whether theatres streamed old recordings of past productions or began to produce bespoke productions for the internet (with various degrees of hybridity in between), digital theatre appeared to hold the key to new possibilities for theatre. Fans of German theatre based in New York suddenly gained gratis access to the digital vaults of the Schaubühne in Berlin going back

Fig. 02
Luc Perceval's production of Yellow – The Sorrows of Belgium II: Rex at NTGent, an exploration of Belgian collaboration with the Nazis, was made available as a livestream in March 2021. New performances in November 2022 are no longer streamed. Image: https://www.ntgent.be/en/productions/yellow-ntgent

5   Detlev Baur, 'Betriebsunfall oder Zeitenwende?', *Die Deutsche Bühne*, July 2022, 39.

APES**T - THE CARTERS

233,487,186 views • Jun 16, 2018   👍 2.3M   👎 248K   ➤ SHARE   ≡₊ SAVE   •••

to the 1970s, whereas disciples of Milo Rau's NTGent, arguably the most talked-about theatre in Europe, could watch new productions online in high-quality, digital streams for a modest price (fig. 2).

The hype was, however, more discursive than actual. Characteristic for discursive hype is a collection of essays published quickly in autumn 2020: *Lernen aus dem Lockdown? Nachdenken über Freies Theater* (Learning from the lockdown? Reflections on independent theatre).[6] As the title indicates, the main focus is on the independent sector, which was especially hard hit by the total shutdown of all live performance. The embrace of digital technology, for example, is one of the more emphatic stances we find in the independent scene, which implies a critique of entrenched positions. For example, in the article by Michael Annoff und Nuray Demir, *Showcase im Splitscreen: Videobotschaften an die Dominanzkultur* (Show case in a split screen: video messages to the dominant culture):

> In the silence of the home office, old audience-development dreams are awakened, in which new groups of visitors are won over without having to change themselves ... But theatre will only emerge

---

6   Haiko Pfost, Falk Schreiber, and Wilma Renfordt, eds., *Lernen aus dem Lockdown? Nachdenken über Freies Theater* (Berlin: Kindle Edition, 2020).

Fig. 03
The Carters APES**T. YouTube screenshot.

stronger from the crisis if it starts from scratch: with its programming and its dramaturgies. In 2018, The Carters shot their 'APES**T' video at the Louvre and quickly had more clicks than the museum had visitors all year.[7]

To date 233 million views on YouTube suggest indeed that a rap video filmed in a high-culture temple finds more interest than a production from the independent performance scene.

Their point is that the video is a beautifully filmed and iconographically resonant work referencing numerous memes and tropes of Black culture, which demand exegesis using the tools of performance analysis. As the authors put it: 'Mona Lisa had to settle for the role of an extra, like an aging silent film star'.[8] There is also a definite pessimistic undertone in their argument: 'In the 2020 crisis, TikTok dances go through the roof. The audience figures for the lockdown programmes of German-language cultural institutions, however, are languishing in double digits'.[9]

Can this discrepancy be bridged? The tension between the past and the future is framed in the Carters' video as a form of Afrofuturism, and as a more universal digital future, a theme that runs through the collected essays like a red thread. It is a tension that remains unresolved, intentionally so, as the exponents of the metaphysics of presence defend positions against or in contrast to the advocates of the digital future.

In the cold light of empirical research, the digital future appears less than incandescent. The survey cited above counted a total of 245,464 tickets sold for digital theatre, a small fraction of total sales (under pre-pandemic conditions the German-speaking theatres sell about 20 million tickets per annum). At least an increase in productions has been noted. In the last pre-Covid season of 2018/19, a total of zero digital productions was recorded versus 18% in the 2020/21 season, although the ticket sales suggest the attendance was quite modest.[10] Some theatres have introduced digital production units alongside the traditional divisions of drama, opera and dance. It remains to be seen whether they are here to stay. Theatre institutions around the world pin their claims for legitimacy and hence public funding on providing (performing) art as a 'live', not a digital experience.

7　　Michael Annoff and Demir Nuray, 'Showcase im Splitscreen: Videobotschaften an die Dominanzkultur', in ***Lernen aus dem Lockdown? Nachdenken über Freies Theater***, ed. Haiko Pfost (Berlin: Kindle Edition, 2020), 17 (Author's translation).

8　　Annoff and Nuray, 17 (Author's translation).

9　　Annoff and Nuray, 17 (Author's translation).

10　Baur, 'Betriebsunfall oder Zeitenwende?', 40.

Health and wellbeing

Liveness has proven to be the Achilles heel of theatre during the pandemic. While health concerns may keep some spectators away, they are potentially replaceable by other, less risk-averse, visitors. Infections among casts have been much more problematic. A single Covid case on the part of an important performer can lead to the performance being cancelled. Quarantine regulations in most countries generally enforce a period of isolation until a negative test can be produced (a minimum of five days). Theatre in New Zealand (and not just theatre) has been bedevilled by the household rule, which means all members of a household must quarantine when one member is infected.

On the level of systemic comparison, we can observe the same problem leading to different but equally debilitating outcomes. In Germany, the repertoire and ensemble system – of which the country is so proud that it has applied to the UNESCO for ICH status (Intangible Cultural Heritage) – has proven to be particularly susceptible. Because a theatre keeps so many productions in repertoire, and many actors are often chronically overworked, parts are not understudied. When an actor playing Macbeth, or any other larger role, contracts Covid the performance is usually cancelled. Opera can handle the situation better on account of its classical repertoire. An ailing Madame Butterfly can be replaced at short notice by dozens of willing substitutes, who need only learn the moves of the mise en scène. The English theatre system, with its long runs and culture of understudies, has also fared better. Nevertheless, the independent theatre scene everywhere has suffered as the recent Edinburgh Fringe painfully demonstrated. The 'enormous but silent impact' quoted at the beginning of this essay refers to the absences and gaps created by cancelled performances caused in turn by sickness among cast members and venue staff. Linda Crooks, executive producer of the Traverse theatre in Edinburgh is cited as saying: 'There's several things we are trying to reconcile. We're still managing what can be – on occasions – a highly debilitating virus that can knock out shows. We are trying to build back audience confidence and any mention of the first issue can impact on the second, which in turn hits the very fragile bottom line hard – against a backdrop of exorbitant costs.'[11] The Edfringe, as it is now known, is unique as a festival because it functions without curatorial control.[12] Groups and artists self-fund to attend and hope for the big break. While this state of precarity is not comparable to the long-term contracts enjoyed by German actors

---

11   Cited in: Masso, 'Covid Is Having "Enormous but Silent" Impact on EdFringe, Say Artists'.

12   Audience attendance at the Fringe dropped by 25% compared to 2019. See: Giverny Masso, 'Edinburgh Fringe Ticket Sales down 25% across Key Venues', *The Stage*, 28 August 2022. This was attributed to a combination of high accommodation costs, disruption to public transport and high fuel costs.

at publicly funded theatres, the dynamics are similar, except for the direct financial risk incurred.

Outlook

Even in highly divergent theatre systems such as the German and the British, the effects of the pandemic have, and continue to be, highly isomorphic. Just as the pandemic generated remarkably similar responses around the globe, so too have theatres followed a roughly similar playbook. Consigned to lockdowns in the first phase, cautious openings and then renewed closures in the second and third phases, followed by more or less complete reopening since early 2022, theatres have done all in their power to return to the status quo ante. The utopian energy of the initial lockdowns, where dreams of a new theatre were articulated, has dissipated and been replaced by a high degree of uncertainty and pragmatic responses. The interruptions, gaps and workarounds created by the pandemic have, however, opened up new spaces that make a return to path-dependent patterns of production and reception ever more problematic. And the heating costs for the coming winter have not yet been factored in....

Bibliography

Annoff, Michael, and Demir Nuray. 'Showcase im Splitscreen: Videobotschaften an die Dominanzkultur'. In *Lernen aus dem Lockdown? Nachdenken über Freies Theater*, edited by Haiko Pfost, 16–22. Berlin: Kindle Edition, 2020.

Baur, Detlev. 'Betriebsunfall oder Zeitenwende?' *Die Deutsche Bühne*, July 2022, 38–40.

Masso, Giverny. 'Covid Is Having "Enormous but Silent" Impact on EdFringe, Say Artists'. *The Stage*, 22 August 2022.

–––. 'Edinburgh Fringe Ticket Sales down 25% across Key Venues'. *The Stage*, 28 August 2022.

Pfost, Haiko, Falk Schreiber, and Wilma Renfordt, eds. *Lernen aus dem Lockdown? Nachdenken über Freies Theater*. Berlin: Kindle Edition, 2020.

The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. University of London. 'Theatre After Covid'. Institute Website, 2022. https://www.cssd.ac.uk/Research/Research-Outputs-and-Projects/Current-Research-Projects/theatre-after-covid.

Tholl, Egbert, and Peter Laudenbach. 'Der Einbruch. Dem Theater Fehlen Die Zuschauer.' *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. 11 June 2022. https://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/theater-publikum-corona-krise-berliner-ensemble-1.5619166?reduced=true.

Surviving disconnections: global history behind North Korean engagement with Tanzania in the 1960s
Seung Hwan Ryu

On 30 January 2020, *Rodong Shinmun,* the official newspaper of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK), reported that North Korea had adopted the national emergency anti-epidemic system due to the outbreak of Covid-19.[1] Although North Korea did not officially confirm any Covid-19 cases until May 2022, Chad O'Carroll and James Fretwell wrote that commercial flights, train services – except for intermittent cargo deliveries – and shipping activity between North Korea and both China and Russia were heavily influenced by the pandemic.[2] While North Korea is notorious for its isolation from international society, the pandemic caused North Korea to be eventually disconnected from neighbouring countries in the 2020s.

Although China and Russia have been the closest allies of North Korea since its independence from Japanese colonial rule in 1945, the Covid-19 outbreak was not the first time that North Korea has experienced disconnection from its patrons. In the 1960s, North Korea was more or less directly involved in the conflicts among socialist countries. One significant disconnection was the Sino-Soviet split, and the other was North Korea's exit from the international socialist division of labour, which Nikita Khrushchev

1   'Sinhyŏngk'oronabirusŭgamyŏmjŭngŭl Ch'ŏljŏhi Makki Wihan Pisangdaech'aek Kanggu [Searching for Emergency Measures to Contain Coronavirus]', *Rodong Shinmun*, 30 January 2020.
2   Chad O'Carroll and James Fretwell, 'Pyongyang Officially Claims No Infections within Its Territory, and Has Taken Strict Steps to Stave off an Outbreak', *NKPRO*, 26 March 2020, https://www.nknews.org/pro/covid-19-in-north-korea-an-overview-of-the-current-situation/?t=1585236870435.

위대한 수령 김일성동지와 함께 줄리어스 케이. 니에레레대통령각하는 무대에 오르시여 공연성과를 축하하여 출연자들에게 꽃바구니를 전하시고 그들과 함께 기념사진을 찍으시였다.

proposed to facilitate economic cooperation among socialist countries through the coordination of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) in 1962. These disconnections induced severe political and economic ramifications for North Korea and Kim Il Sung (1912-94), but they also marked the beginning of a new connection between North Korea and African socialist countries, particularly Julius Nyerere's Tanzania.

Why did North Korea establish a close connection with Tanzania in the 1960s? Among several explanations for this neglected connection, I focus on North Korea's disconnections with its socialist allies as its primary historical background condition. Then, I describe the earlier phase of North Korean-Tanzanian relations to demonstrate how the two countries understood and perceived each other as post-colonial socialist partners.

Disconnections: rifts in the socialist world and North Korea

The Sino-Soviet split, which refers to the confrontation between the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union caused by different interpretations of Marxism-Leninism and disagreements on their methods of handling US imperialism,[3] was one of the most prominent and influential disconnections in the socialist sphere during the Cold War. Their dispute not only reshaped the topography of the Cold War into a tri-polar one but also had repercussions for their socialist neighbours. According to

Fig. 01
Julius Nyerere and Kim Il Sung congratulating the actors and actresses after watching a musical ‹Song of Paradise› in Mansudae Art Theater (Rodong Shinmun March 28, 1981), photograph by the author.

3　　Lorenz M. Lüthi, 'The Sino-Soviet Split and Its Consequences', in *The Routledge Handbook of the Cold War*, ed. Artemy Kalinovsky and Craig Daigle (London: Routledge, 2014), 75.

Lorenz Lüthi, the alliance between the Soviet Union and China gradually collapsed from 1956 to 1966, mainly due to ideological disagreements, and their relations eventually improved in the late 1980s.[4] This disconnection in the socialist world had repercussions for North Korea, which had often received financial and technical aid from its patrons after its independence and especially during the post-war reconstruction of the mid-1950s.

The alliance between the Soviet Union and China turned into a confrontation after Nikita Khrushchev's 'secret speech' during the 20th congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February 1956 that called for de-Stalinisation and 'peaceful coexistence' with the capitalist bloc. Even though scholars provide different explanations for North Korean-Soviet relations in the late 1950s, Tae Seob Lee argues that there were no major disputes between February 1956 and September 1961.[5] Lee infers that the Soviets threatened to intervene between October and November 1961, based on Kim Il Sung's emphasis of 'rebirth through own efforts' (Charyŏkkaengsaeng) in December, which was a reaction against the earlier attempt to intervene.[6] Furthermore, Khrushchev's pressure on North Korea and other socialist countries in Eastern Europe to join the CMEA and participate in the socialist division of labour eventually triggered North Korea to publicly denounce the Soviets as revisionists and imperialists in 1962. As a result, North Korea stagnated economically as a mere supplier of raw material.[7] Park contends that Kim Il Sung could not renounce his principle to prioritise the development of heavy industry to light industry and agriculture that the Soviet Union had asked him to reconsider in the mid-1950s. Heavy industry had remained a North Korean priority since the end of the Korean War.[8]

Along with the Soviet Union's pressure on North Korea to join the socialist division of labour, the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 inspired North Korea to reinforce independence and self-defence instead of relying on the superpower.[9] North Korea's decision to disconnect itself from the CMEA in 1962 led the country–at least in its foreign policy–to take a pro-Chinese stance. However, diminished aid from the Soviet Union led to a slowdown in economic growth, where Kim Il Sung admitted a

4   Lüthi, 75, 84–85.
5   Tae Seob Lee, *Kimilssŏng Ridŏsip Yŏn'gu* [Kim Il Sung Leadership Studies]
     (Seoul: Tŭllyŏk, 2001), 284; Sooryong Jo argues that de-Sovietisation in North
     Korea began in 1954 when the cabinet wrote the guidelines of the First Five-
     Year Plan (1957-61), and Kim Il Sung declared its de-Sovietisation in 1955 when
     the term 'Juche' was first used in public. See: Sooryong Jo, 'Pukhanŭi Che1ch'a
     5kaenyŏn Kyehoek(1957-61) Ch'oan'gwa t'alssoryŏnhwaŭi Kaesi [The Draft of
     the First Five-Year Plan (1957-61) and the Beginning of De-Sovietization in North
     Korea]', *Yoksa Hakbo*, no. 249 (2021): 183–215.
6   Lee, *Kimilssŏng Ridŏsip Yŏn'gu* [Kim Il Sung Leadership Studies], 284.
7   Lee, 285–86.
8   Ah Reum Park, '1962nyŏn Pukhanŭi "Sahoejuŭi Kukchebunŏp" It'al Punsŏk
     [Analysis of Democratic People's Republic of Korea's Departure from the
     "International Socialist Division of Labor" in 1962]', *Critical Studies on Modern
     Korean History*, no. 45 (2021): 457.
9   Lee, *Kimilssŏng Ridŏsip Yŏn'gu* [Kim Il Sung Leadership Studies], 286.

de facto economic recession in the New Year's address in 1965 and encouraged foreign trade and accept foreign technologies to overcome the crisis.[10] As North Korea perceived dogmatism on the part of China, where Mao focused on enforcing Cultural Revolution and not cooperating with the Soviet Union in supporting North Vietnam, Kim Il Sung emphasised national independence and self-reliance again while searching for alternative partners among socialist countries in Eastern Europe and the newly independent countries in Asia and Africa.[11]

While North Korea gradually restored its relationship with the Soviet Union after the ouster of Khrushchev in October 1964,[12] the idea of Juche (Chuch'e Sasang, often translated as self-reliance) became predominant in North Korea, since the regime tried to avoid further ramifications of the Sino-Soviet conflict. While the practical effect of the rhetoric of self-reliance is debatable, WPK newspapers and magazines repeatedly mentioned the significance of self-reliance. In 1965, Kim Il Sung vehemently insisted on Juche as a core principle of the state during his speech at the Ali Archam Academy: '... our Party has made every effort to establish Juche in opposition to dogmatism and flunkeyism towards great powers. Juche in ideology, independence in politics, self-support in the economy and self-reliance in national defence–this is the stand our Party has consistently adhered to'.[13] This precept was also applied to diplomacy, where 'independent diplomacy' was declared official doctrine in 1966. For instance, the WPK published an article in the daily newspaper as well as the monthly magazine of the Central Committee, Embracing Independence, in 1966, pointing out the problems of the international communist movement, including the Soviet Union's and China's attempts to claim dominance over other parties and interference in domestic affairs, which are imperialist stances.[14]

Connections: searching for new partners

In order to realise independence in diplomacy, North Korea established diplomatic relations with newly decolonised countries in Asia and Africa to reduce its reliance on socialist allies and create an anti-imperialist connection. Its endeavour to establish a network with the 'Third World' had already begun in 1955, when

---

10   Lee, 299–301, 311.
11   Bomi Kim, *Kimilssŏnggwa Chungsobunjaeng: Pukhan Chajuoegyoŭi Kiwŏn'gwa Hyŏngsŏng (1953-1966)* [Kim Il Sung and the Sino-Soviet Split–Origins and the Making of North Korea's Self-Supporting Diplomacy (1953-1966)] (Seoul: Sŏgangdaehakkyoch'ulp'anbu, 2019), 427.
12   Kim, 411.
13   Il Sung Kim, 'On Socialist Construction in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the South Korean Revolution, Lecture at the "Ali Archam" Academy of Social Sciences of Indonesia, April 14, 1965', in *Kim Il Sung Works* 19 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1984), 263.
14   'Chajusŏngŭl Onghohaja [Embracing Independence]', *Kŭlloja*, August 1966.

it declared solidarity with the Bandung camp.[15] For instance, the provisional Algerian government and Guinea were the earliest African states to establish diplomatic relations with North Korea in 1958.[16] While some experts argue that North Korea did not have a sufficient economic resources or international status to create its own diplomatic network,[17] its aid to Egypt during the Suez Crisis and to Congo-Brazzaville in the 1960s show that North Korea managed to enhance its influence over African countries during the Sino-Soviet confrontation.[18] As the manifesto of Afro-Asian Networks Research Collective argues, connections among Asian and African countries in the 1950s and the 1960s were not only postcolonial diplomacy, but also 'intensive social and cultural interaction across the decolonizing world' that 'navigated, ignored, and subverted' the world order and power dynamics during the Cold War.[19]

Following a goodwill mission led by Kim Thai Hai, North Korea and Tanzania established diplomatic relations in January 1965. Tanzania was one of the most significant socialist companions for North Korea due to the prominence of Julius Nyerere (1922-99, in office 1964-85) as the leader of African socialism.[20] Moreover, Dar es Salaam was an opportune place to connect with the foreign press and a refuge for African liberation movements in exile, such as the South-West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) and the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO).[21] Rather than merely promoting the personal cult of Kim Il Sung, Juche ideology and military aid, which were eventually used later,[22] North Korea built proximity and familiarity with Tanzania by referring to the shared history of anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggle in the 1960s.

For instance, references to anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggles were repeated in articles on Tanzania and Kim Il Sung's

15   Young-Sun Hong, *Cold War Germany, the Third World, and the Global Humanitarian Regime* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 63.
16   Hong, 63.
17   Kim, *Kimilssŏnggwa Chungsobunjaeng: Pukhan Chajuoegyoŭi Kiwŏn'gwa Hyŏngsŏng (1953-1966)* [Kim Il Sung and the Sino-Soviet Split–Origins and the Making of North Korea's Self-Supporting Diplomacy (1953-1966)], 268.
18   Hong, *Cold War Germany, the Third World, and the Global Humanitarian Regime*, 59.
19   Afro-Asian Networks Research Collective, 'Manifesto: Networks of Decolonization in Asia and Africa', *Radical History Review*, no. 131 (2018): 176, 178.
20   Owoeye Jidi, 'The Metamorphosis of North Korea's African Policy', *Asian Policy 31*, no. 7 (1991): 636; 'A1838', 1 February 1965, 154/11/91, National Archives of Australia.
21   Tycho van der Hoog, 'On the Success and Failure of North Korean Development Aid in Africa Yonho Kim', in *NKEF Policy and Research Paper Series*, ed. Yonho Kim (Washington: George Washington University, 2022), 33; For transnational characteristics and influence of Dar es Salaam in the 1960s, see: George Roberts, *Revolutionary State-Making in Dar Es Salaam: African Liberation and the Global Cold War, 1961-1974* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).
22   These elements appear in North Korea's Africa policy in the late 1960s and the 1970s. A recent publication by Benjamin Young provides a historical overview of North Korea-Third World relations: Benjamin Young, *Guns, Guerillas, and the Great Leader* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021).
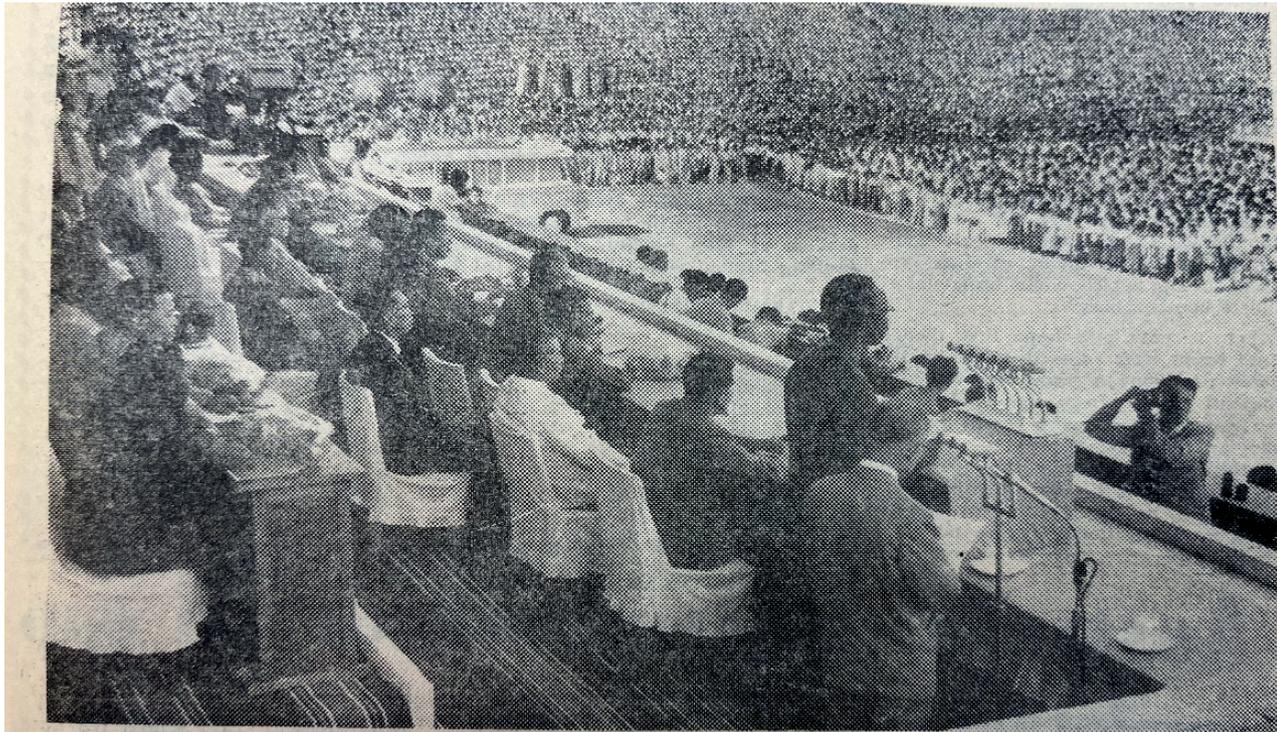
President Nyerere is shown above addressing a mass rally in Pyong-
yang during his State Visit to the Democratic People's Republic of
Korea. Seated on Mwalimu's left is the Leader of the Korean people,
Premier Kim Il Sung.

speech when Tanzanian President Nyerere visited Pyeongyang in June 1968. The editorial of Rodong Shinmun on the day of Nyerere's arrival in 1968 states that the peoples of North Korea and Tanzania were geographically distant, but they had both suffered from colonisation in the past and had a common denominator of struggle against imperialism and colonialism.[23] *Rodong Shinmun* published a half-page article on the history of Tanzania, from European colonialism's suppression to its nation-building process after its independence in 1961.[24] It even mentioned the Maji Maji war as a prominent example of how Tanzanians fought against colonisers and emphasised that the anti-colonial struggle did not end in the 1960s, even after the independence of Tanganyika and Zanzibar, due to the permanent imperialist threat.

Nyerere, who gained prominence throughout the socialist world with the 1967 Arusha Declaration, also considered North Korea as a favourable partner in 1968. A memorandum from the Australian High Commission in Dar es Salaam that evaluated that Nyerere's interest in North Korea noted his appreciation for North Korea's achievements, and that he took North Korea as a model to inform the Arusha Declaration.[25] Furthermore, Nyerere regarded North Korea and Tanzania relations as equals, without dominance,

Fig. 02
Julius Nyerere addressing a speech in front of a mass rally in Pyongyang (*The Nationalist*, June 27, 1968), photograph by the author.

23 'Ch'insŏnŭi Sajŏl, Kwijungan Sonnim [Envoy of Friendship, a Valuable Guest]', *Rodong Shinmun*, 22 June 1968.
24 'Panjejaribŭi Killo Naganŭn t'anjania [Tanzania towards the Route of Anti-Imperialism and Self-Reliance]', *Rodong Shinmun*, 22 June 1968.
25 'Tanzania: North Vietnam, South Vietnam, and North Korea', 10 September 1968, A1838, 154/11/91, National Archives of Australia.

unlike the 'implied inferiority' of Tanzania in its relations with China. Following Nyerere's visit to North Korea, the TANU Youth League invited North Korean experts to learn 'the concept of a true social revolution'.[26] This invitation suggests Tanzania's positive understanding of North Korea as an ideological leader of socialism, as it was the first invitation of external experts to practice revolutionary ideas, according to the *Nationalist*. Nyerere also visited Pyongyang twice more in the 1980s before he stepped down, and Ali Hassan Mwinyi (in office 1985-95) succeeded in the presidency in 1985.

Conclusion

North Korea's establishment of solidarity with Tanzania and other African countries in the 1960s was preceded by the two major disconnections, the Sino-Soviet split and North Korea's withdrawal from the socialist division of labour, which caused crises in its economy and foreign relations. North Korean engagement with African countries, particularly Tanzania, was initiated to overcome the predicament in its foreign relations. In order to build proximity with these countries, North Korea referred to the history of anti-colonial struggle and continuing problems of imperialism. China also used the rhetoric of anti-imperialism in its competition with the Soviet Union to expand its network to include Tanzania and other 'Third World' countries.[27] North Korea denounced the conflicts within the international communist movement – the Sino-Soviet split – to legitimise its independent path and differentiate itself from its socialist patrons.

According to the Modern History of Korea, published in 1979 by Foreign Language Publishing House in Pyongyang, independence, the anti-imperialist stand, and internationalism in foreign activities are three fundamental principles of North Korea's foreign policy.[28] Kim Il Sung argued that these principles were settled 'since the first days of the founding' of the country, but its reliance on the aid of socialist neighbours continued even after its disconnection from the socialist division of labour. Still, these principles helped North Korea explore connections with newly decolonised countries in Asia and Africa, where the rhetoric and shared memory of colonialism and imperialism could unite them with the underlying principle of independence, anti-imperialism and internationalism. Although Tanzania had little contact with North Korea before 1965, Julius Nyerere was attracted not only to North Korea's post-war economic success, but also to the possibility of equal relations–compared to China–and the idea of anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggle. Even though North Korea's self-identification

26 'Koreans to Advise TYL on True Socialism', *Nationalist*, 12 November 1968.
27 Jeremy Friedman, *Ripe for Revolution: Building Socialism in the Third World* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2022), 127.
28 Han Gil Kim, *Modern History of Korea* (Foreign Languages Publishing House, n.d.), 576–77.

as the global anti-imperialist leader might not be as persuasive in later years, its connection with Tanzania demonstrated how North Korea survived double disconnections in the socialist world by identifying new partners and asserting the principles of independence and self-reliance.

Bibliography

'A1838', 1 February 1965. 154/11/91. National Archives of Australia.

Afro-Asian Networks Research Collective. 'Manifesto: Networks of Decolonization in Asia and Africa'. *Radical History Review*, no. 131 (2018): 176–78.

Kŭlloja. 'Chajusŏngŭl Onghohaja [Embracing Independence]', August 1966.

Rodong Shinmun. 'Ch'insŏnŭi Sajŏl, Kwijungan Sonnim [Envoy of Friendship, a Valuable Guest]', 22 June 1968.

Friedman, Jeremy. *Ripe for Revolution: Building Socialism in the Third World*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2022.

Hong, Young-Sun. *Cold War Germany, the Third World, and the Global Humanitarian Regime*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Hoog, Tycho van der. 'On the Success and Failure of North Korean Development Aid in Africa Yonho Kim'. In *NKEF Policy and Research Paper Series*, edited by Yonho Kim, 31–42. Washington: George Washington University, 2022.

Jidi, Owoeye. 'The Metamorphosis of North Korea's African Policy'. *Asian Policy* 31, no. 7 (1991): 635.

Jo, Sooryong. 'Pukhanŭi Che1ch'a 5kaenyŏn Kyehoek(1957~61) Ch'oan'gwa t'alssoryŏnhwaŭi Kaesi [The Draft of the First Five-Year Plan (1957-61) and the Beginning of De-Sovietization in North Korea]'. *Yoksa Hakbo*, no. 249 (2021): 183–215.

Kim, Bomi. *Kimilssŏnggwa Chungsobunjaeng: Pukhan Chajuoegyoŭi Kiwŏn'gwa Hyŏngsŏng (1953-1966) [Kim Il Sung and the Sino-Soviet Split—Origins and the Making of North Korea's Self-Supporting Diplomacy (1953-1966)]*. Seoul: Sŏgangdaehakkyoch'ulp'anbu, 2019.

Kim, Han Gil. *Modern History of Korea*. Foreign Languages Publishing House, n.d.

Kim, Il Sung. 'On Socialist Construction in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the South Korean Revolution, Lecture at the "Ali Archam" Academy of Social Sciences of Indonesia, April 14, 1965'. In *Kim Il Sung Works* 19. Pyongyang: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1984.

Nationalist. 'Koreans to Advise TYL on True Socialism', 12 November 1968.

Lee, Tae Seob. *Kimilssŏng Ridŏsip Yŏn'gu [Kim Il Sung Leadership Studies]*. Seoul: Tŭllyŏk, 2001.

Lüthi, Lorenz M. 'The Sino-Soviet Split and Its Consequences'. In *The Routledge Handbook of the Cold War*, edited by Artemy Kalinovsky and Craig Daigle, 75. London: Routledge, 2014.

O'Carroll, Chad, and James Fretwell. 'Pyongyang Officially Claims No Infections within Its Territory, and Has Taken Strict Steps to Stave off an Outbreak'. *NKPRO*, 26 March 2020. https://www.nknews.org/pro/covid-19-in-north-korea-an-overview-of-the-current-situation/?t=1585236870435.

Rodong Shinmun. 'Panjejaribŭi Killo Naganŭn t'anjania [Tanzania towards the Route of Anti-Imperialism and Self-Reliance]', 22 June 1968.

Park, Ah Reum. '1962nyŏn Pukhanŭi "Sahoejuŭi Kukchebunŏp" It'al Punsŏk [Analysis of Democratic People's Republic of Korea's Departure from the "International Socialist Division of Labor" in 1962]'. *Critical Studies on Modern Korean History*, no. 45 (2021).

Roberts, George. *Revolutionary State-Making in Dar Es Salaam: African Liberation and the Global Cold War, 1961-1974*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021.

Rodong Shinmun. 'Sinhyŏngk'oronabirusŭgamyŏmjŭngŭl Ch'ŏljŏhi Makki Wihan Pisangdaech'aek Kanggu [Searching for Emergency Measures to Contain Coronavirus]', 30 January 2020.

'Tanzania: North Vietnam, South Vietnam, and North Korea', 10 September 1968. A1838, 154/11/91. National Archives of Australia.

Young, Benjamin. *Guns, Guerillas, and the Great Leader*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021.

Seemingly built, suddenly ruined: decolonisation and dis:connectivity in post-colonial Guinea-Bissau 1973-1983

Lucas Rehnman

Here everything seems that was still under construction and it is suddenly ruin.

Caetano Veloso

Che Guevara once stated that Africa was 'imperialism's weak link'[1] with enormous revolutionary potential. Indeed, liberation wars and decolonisation processes on the continent enabled the Western and Eastern blocs to perceive some regions and geopolitical conditions as opportunities to expand their influence. The most famous conflicts in Africa during the Cold War, direct results of the logics of proxy war, exemplify this: the Congo Crisis, the Angolan Civil War and the South African Border War.

Amidst this allegedly cold clash between the two blocs, an often-forgotten third force emerged, the Non-Aligned Movement, created by the pioneering efforts of Tito (former Yugoslavia), Nkrumah (Ghana), Sukarno (Indonesia), Nasser (Egypt) and Nehru (India).

---

1   Ahmed Ben Bella, 'Che as I Knew Him', **Le Monde Diplomatique**, October 1997, https://mondediplo.com/1997/10/che.

This paper departs from the 'forgotten' legacies of the Third World[2] and its practices of solidarity, delving into the phenomenon of Yugoslavian technical cooperation as a vehicle for its soft diplomacy towards Africa. I consider the Yugoslav-African entanglement by focusing on expertise, transnational networks, Cold War geopolitics and Non-Aligned cooperation, which allows me to draw on 'the connections and exchanges, on the back and forth of people, ideas, and things across boundaries'[3], from 'macro' to 'micro' and back again. A key macro-concept here is peripheral modernity,[4] which refers to all Global South, Second and Third World nations during the Cold War.

I focus on Guinea-Bissau from 1973-1983, analysing its modern architecture and public sculpture in terms of the conditions of its emergence, its aesthetic-symbolic meanings and its deterioration. In post-independence Africa, following the modernist credo, construction and infrastructure became key means through which these young nations addressed social problems and expressed their national identities.[5] Guinea-Bissau was no different. Given that history is 'inscribed' in architecture and public art, they are suitable entrances to study and access the complexities, difficulties, contradictions and dilemmas this country experienced from 1963 (the year of the beginning of the armed struggle for independence) to 1983 (the approximate date of the complete dissolution of the socialist project and the subsequent economic liberalisation). I aim to challenge the narrative insisting that former colonies in Africa, once postcolonial, became merely the passive recipients of technical, architectural and cultural knowledge.

Despite being an extremely young, sovereign country that has also suffered coups and civil war, Guinea-Bissau developed its own modernity. However, its post-colonial modernist architecture has received little attention.[6] Is this because modern buildings there

---

2   According to Duanfang Lu, 'compared with other alternative phrases such as "developing countries", "less developed countries", "non-industrialized countries", and "the South", the Third World is more than merely a socio-economic designation. It has come to represent a forceful ideology, a meaningful rallying point, a widely shared mentality, and a unique source of identity. The phrase has proven rhetorically, politically, and theoretically effective. Despite the end of the Cold War, the term "Third World" remains viable in contemporary geopolitical vocabulary, as seen in leading scholarly journals such as Third World Quarterly and Journal of Third World Studies' Lu Duanfang, *Third World Modernism: Architecture, Development and Identity* (London: Routledge, 2010), 19, 20.

3   Sebastian Conrad, *What Is Global History?* (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016), 42.

4   See my ongoing curatorial project: https://ifddr.org/en/cooperations/unvollendetes_museum/

5   Perhaps the best example is the case of Ghana under Kwame Nkrumah. An important influence on Amílcar Cabral's thinking even, Nkrumah's modernity sought to redefine African subjectivity, prioritising African unity over ethnic division.

6   A commendable survey can be found in Phillip Meuser and Adil Dalbai, 'Guinea-Bissau', *Architectual Guide. Sub-Saharan Africa. Western Africa. Along the Atlantic Ocean Coast* 3 (2021): 12–67, but it's the only one of its kind and far from exhaustive.

'are often the result of isolated acts and do not correspond to the development of any architectural culture with local roots',[7] as Ana Vaz Milheiro has sustained, implying that they are nothing more than isolated cases? Manoel Herz implies the same: 'We consciously decided not to document the former Portuguese colonies as their independence took place in the mid-1970s and was mostly characterized by bitter conflict and long wars that overshadowed any kind of national development'.[8] He continues, stating that 'while examples of Late Modernist architecture certainly exist in Lusophone Africa [...] they were built entirely during the colonial era without preempting the intention of decolonization'.[9]

In the next section, I reveal the falsity of these last three claims with reference to a Yugoslavian-influenced modernist architectural legacy in Guinea-Bissau that flourished – and deteriorated – very rapidly. Beyond the undisputable but overlooked Yugoslavian influence and the simplistic corollaries of 'architectural export' and 'knowledge transfer', could Bissau-Guineans have played an active and decisive role in establishing a modern architectural legacy in their country between 1973 to 1983?

Decolonisation and dis:connectivity

After its independence from Portugal, between 1974 and 1980, Guinea-Bissau experienced a short-lived socialist period led by Luís Cabral, the brother of anti-colonial revolutionary leader Amílcar Cabral. The construction of a national identity with a pan-African and universal conscience as well as the concept of a 'New Man', one of Amilcar Cabral's key concerns, had to be

Total of PAIGC's students who concluded their studies abroad 1963-1975

Country	Male	Female	Total
Bulgaria	10	4	14
Czechoslovakia	21	1	22
Cuba	24	10	34
Hungary	21	----	21
Yugoslavia	19	----	19
German Democratic Republic (GDR)	64	63	67
Romania	10	----	10
United States of America	1	----	----
Soviet Union	128	38	166
Total	298	56	354

Source: Estatísticas do Ensino from Comissariado de Estado de Desenvolvimento e Planificação 1975

---

7   Full quote here: 'Modern buildings in these three African provinces [Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé and Príncipe] are often the result of isolated acts and do not correspond to the development of any architectural culture with local roots'. Milheiro Ana, 'Resisting Modernity: Colonization and Public Works. Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé and Príncipe', in *Ilha de São Jorge*, ed. Paula Nascimento and Stefano Pansera (Beyond Entropy Books, 2014), 178.

8   Manuel Herz, ed., *African Modernism: The Architecture of Independence. Ghana, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Zambia* (Zürich: Park Books, 2015).

9   Herz.

Fig. 01
Total of students from the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) who concluded their studies abroad between 1963-1975. Data gathered by Sonja Borges, *Militant Education, Liberation Struggle, Consciousness. The PAIGC Education in Guinea Bissau 1963-1978* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2019), 99.

implemented in diverse areas of cultural, social and political life. Education,[10] cinema[11] and music[12] were able to thrive alongside monument-making and architecture.

In hindsight, though, the period is symptomatic of the postcolonial condition. The Portuguese hardly developed any industry in the territory during colonial times, having focused instead on extraction.[13] Besides, the country had only four professionals formally trained in architecture and construction .[14] The conditions for national development, thus, were unfavourable and could be (partially) counteracted only through international aid and technical cooperation brought forth by Third World solidarity. Yugoslavia, Cuba and especially the Soviet Union played key roles. A number of Bissau-Guineans also were granted scholarships to study abroad, which were mainly offered by socialist European countries (fig. 1).[15]

10   Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, for example, was consulted by Guinea-Bissau's first independent government on how to optimise the processes of attaining literacy on a national scale, among other complex dilemmas. See: Sérgio Haddad, O Educador: **Um Perfil de Paulo Freire** (São Paulo: Todavia, 2019); See also: Paulo Freire, **Pedagogy in Process: The Letters to Guinea-Bissau** (London: Bloomsbury, 2016) See also Augusta Henriques, an important educator and follower of Paulo Freire's methods: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augusta_Henriques.

11   Already in 1967, Amílcar Cabral sent four young Bissau-Guineans to Cuba to study cinema at the Cuban Institute of Cinematographic Art and Industry (ICAIC), namely José Cobumba Bolama, Josefina Crato, Sana Na N'Hada and Flora Gomes, who studied under Santiago Álvarez, a fact that reveals Cabral's vision for national cinema. Sana Na N'Hada completed his important film O Regresso de Amílcar Cabral in 1976. More on Guinea-Bissau's audiovisual production since independence, see: Cunha Paulo and Catarina Laranjeiro, 'Guiné-Bissau: Do Cinema de Estado Ao Cinema Fora Do Estado', Rebeca - **Revista Brasileira De Estudos De Cinema e Audiovisual** 5, no. 2 (2017).

12   Good examples include José Carlos Schwarz and the band Super Mama Djombo. Bissau-born poet and musician José Carlos Schwarz (1949-1977) was politically active and even joined the resistance. He was imprisoned for his participation in the struggle for independence. Following independence in 1974, Schwarz became the director of the Department for Art and Culture and became responsible for Guinea-Bissau's youth policy. Super Mama Djombo was a band from Guinea Bissau, formed in the mid-1960s. They would often play at President Luís Cabral's public speeches, and their concerts were broadcast on live radio. In 1980, Luís Cabral was ousted, and the new regime under Nino Vieira no longer supported the band. They had fewer opportunities to perform and broke up in 1986.

13   'Industry in [Portuguese Guinea] was particularly underdeveloped: some factories for rice peeling, some for the extraction of fish oil and peanut oil, a few ice factories and small workshops for automobile repair, locksmiths and wood cutting, as well as distilleries for alcoholic beverages. There were no industrial companies owned by the colonizers for the exploitation of land or natural wealth: the colony's large economic share was based on native agriculture, the acquisition of its surpluses and the organisation of internal and external trade. The level of industrialisation was close to zero, as was its economic value' (my translation). Cátia Teixeira and Maria Augusta Tavares, 'Guiné-Bissau: O Presente Lança Luz Sobre o Passado', **Diálogos Magazine**, no. 3 (2013): 869–908.

14   Original quote here: 'O primeiro período [1974-1983] é característico, porque o país, praticamente durante 10 anos, teve apenas quatro quadros formados em arquitectura e construção civil.' Milanka L. Gomes, 'Reconstrução Nacional e Balanço Das Principais Ações Realizadas Entre 1974 e 1996 Na Guiné-Bissau Bissau' (CIALP conference intervention, 1996), Private Document.

15   Sonja Borges, **Militant Education, Liberation Struggle, Consciousness.The PAIGC Education in Guinea Bissau 1963-1978** (Bern: Peter Lang, 2019), 98, 99.
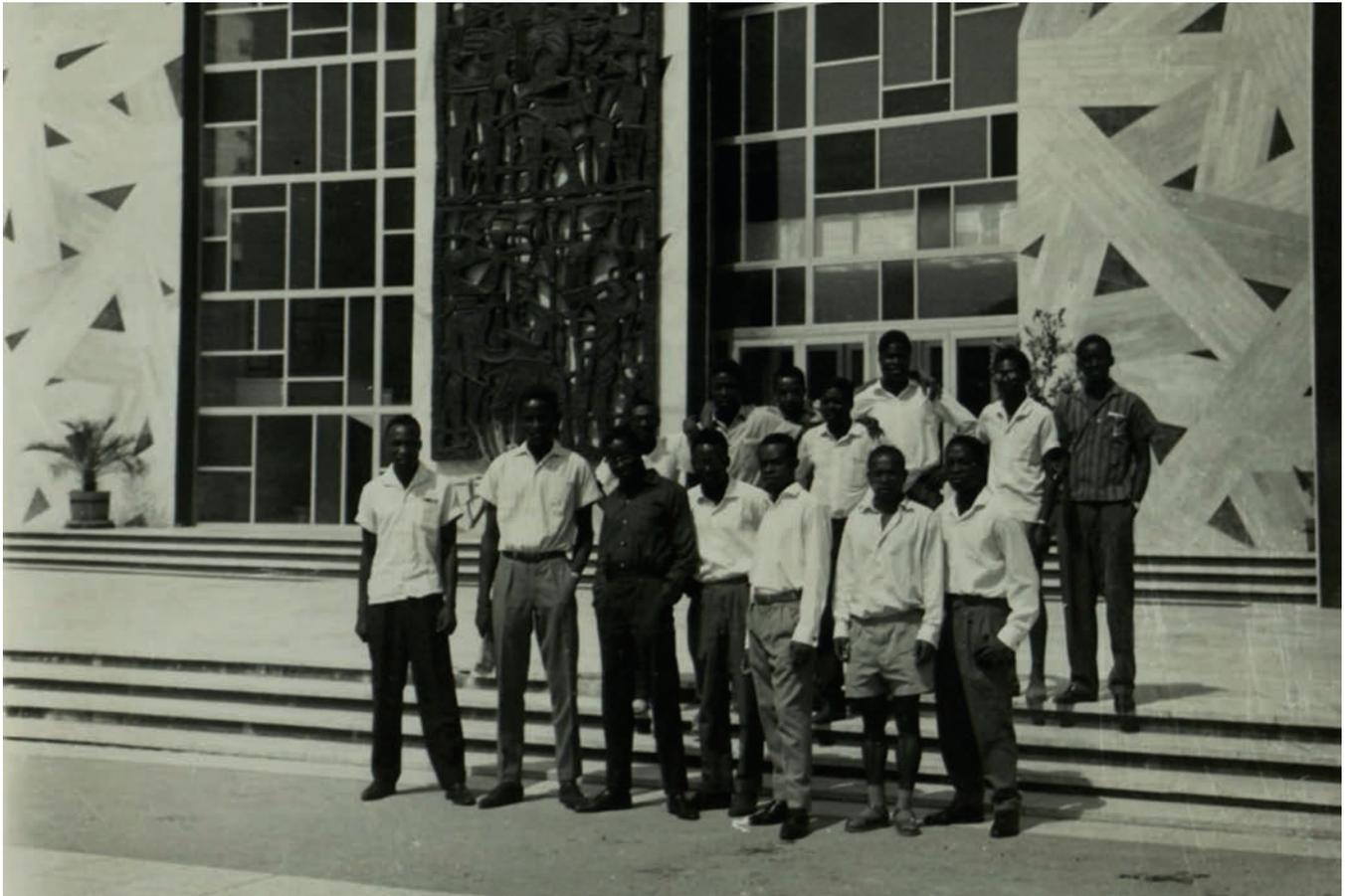
Thus, 'modernism' pervaded new contexts in the name of 'knowledge transfer, overseas aid and new forms of cooperation'[16] and through gift-giving, credit and barter.[17] Yet, the idea of mere 'export' is misleading. 'Modernism' is not exclusive to Western powers. Third World countries have developed their own modernities with a considerable degree of autonomy. The neglect of these modernities and fair assessments of their autonomy highlight the problem of coloniality in the act of making biased history – and even to (induced) oblivion as a convenient political project.

Considering Guinea-Bissau, three understudied historical figures are relevant to my argument: Alberto 'Tino' Lima Gomes, the first Minister of Public Works[18] and a local who studied architecture and engineering in Yugoslavia on scholarship;[19] his wife, Yugoslavian

---

16   Duanfang, *Third World Modernism: Architecture, Development and Identity*, 26.

17   Łukasz Stanek, 'Gift, Credit, Barter: Architectural Mobilities in Global Socialism', Archive and Editorial Project, *E-Flux Architecture* (blog), 2020, https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/housing/337850/gift-credit-barter-architectural-mobilities-in-global-socialism/.

18   'Boletim Oficial Da República Da Guiné-Bissau, Numero 40', 11 October 1978, Fundação Mário Soares, Arquivo Mário Pinto de Andrade, http://www.casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=10249.003.

19   He went to Yugoslavia to study through a scholarship support and returned with heavy luggage and an engineer/architect diploma after independence' (my translation). Graça Tabanca Graca Luís, 'Caderno de Notas de Um Mais Velho', Blog, *Luís Graça & Camaradas Da Guiné* (blog), 9 November 2016, https://blogueforanadaevaotres.blogspot.com/2016/11/guine-6374-p16700-caderno-de-notas-de.html.

Fig. 02
African scholarship holders in Slovenia (trip to Velenje), 1963. From the photo collection of the Museum of Yugoslav History.

Fig. 03
Memorial building for the unilateral declaration of independence of Guinea-Bissau on 24th September 1973, Lugadjol, east of Boé. CC license. Online here: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Memorial_building_independence_Guinea-Bissau_Madina_de_Bo%C3%A9.jpg

architect Milanka Lima Gomes, who designed a number of buildings and public monuments as a naturalised Bissau-Guinean; and Nikola Arsenić,[20] a Yugoslavian architect who worked under a long-term technical cooperation agreement and was very prolific while living there. I won't analyse all their buildings. The point is, rather, to infer a 'forgotten' legacy from a selection.

One of these notable constructions is the memorial building for the unilateral declaration of independence (fig. 3), planned and coordinated by both Alberto and Milanka Lima Gomes, consisting of a functional rotunda[21] with a vernacular thatched roof made from cibe palm trees (*borassus aethiopum*), bamboo and straw, it was built to officialise the unilateral declaration of independence. This event was celebrated on top of the hill near Lugadjol on 24 September 1973.[22] The construction occurred during the rainy season, against the odds, and was completed in less than three months.

20   See Nikola Arsenić's short bio in **The Vanished Dream** (Siddhartha Films, 2016), http://thevanisheddream.com/category/cast/.

21   Interestingly, according to Geraldo Pina, "in Guinea-Bissau, circular houses have often been regarded as representative habitat of the native population." Meuser and Dalbai, 'Guinea-Bissau', 26.

22   Recognition became universal following the 1974 Carnation Revolution in Portugal. For a brief description of the unilateral declaration's ceremony, see my own text: Lucas Rehnman, 'Amílcar Cabral d'après l'art Conceptuel or The Liberation Struggle as Conceptual Art', The Whole Life, 24 March 2022, https://wholelife.hkw.de/amilcar-cabral-dapres-lart-conceptuel-or-the-liberation-struggle-as-conceptual-art/#footnote13.

Apart from the practicality that the vernacular roof offered under those challenging conditions, there is another layer to consider, that of an aesthetic statement: hybridism. This is much less evident – or practically absent – in the buildings and sculptures yet to be discussed, but I'll address that question later.

Surely more ambitious and formally inventive is the former presidential residence, which is located on Bubaque Island in the Bijagós archipelago and is now falling into ruin (fig. 4). Despite its deceivingly brutalist appearance, the concrete structure was originally painted white and was covered by bituminous sheets.

This body of architectural work here presented can be seen as a creative ingestion and digestion of foreign architecture, meaning that not only a mere borrowing of white modernist forms and solutions took place, but that a local appropriation, interpretation and transformation of the modernist vocabulary also occurred, amounting to an original, hybrid architecture worth documenting and preserving.

Except for the memorial building (fig. 3), there is nothing in these structures that makes them unmistakably 'African', I admit, but aesthetically, they clearly reflect pan-Africanism and Non-Aligned modernity. This, in itself, in a former Portuguese colony, already makes them original. Contradicting Manoel Herz, they were not built in the colonial era and do preempt and reflect 'the intention of decolonization'. Compared with Ghana's architecture of 1961-1970 (a country that, by the way, also received Yugoslav architects under technical cooperation agreement), their affinities and autonomous character become evident: a mix of 'Eastern European

Fig. 04
Luís Cabral's house in Bubaque island. State-funded and designed by Milanka Lima Gomes (1976) and Nikola Arsenić (1978). Still from © *The Vanished Dream* 2016

Fig. 05
RTP África building / Namintchit restaurant, Bissau, 1976. Designed by Nikola Arsenić. Photo by © M.M. Jones (instagram: @Bauzeitgeist), November 2018

modernism',[23] 'tropical architecture' and vernacular elements, 'they cannot be reduced to a sum of European 'modernisms'.[24]

The public sculptures, on the other hand, are, visually speaking, ostensibly 'Yugoslavian' and do not reference the rich and diverse local arts of Guinea-Bissau in any way (fig. 7). Nationalists deployed modern European aesthetics to represent emancipation: a paradox?[25] From an art-theoretical perspective, these sculptures are 'modernist' in the worst way; they plainly ignore their

23   It would be false to speak of '"socialist modernism"', because '"alleging a certain formal or visual essence of "socialist modernism" makes just as much sense as trying to identify inherent aesthetic features of a "capitalist modernism", a label that no one but the most hardened socialist realist critic would take seriously, because it too broadly equates cultural and political categories".' Vladimir Kulić, Wolfgang Thaler, and Maroje Mrduljas, eds., *Modernism In-Between: The Mediatory Architectures of Socialist Yugoslavia* (Berlin: Jovis Verlag, 2012), 17.
24   In: Łukasz Stanek, 'Architects from Socialist Countries in Ghana (1957–67): Modern Architecture and Mondialisation', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 74, no. 4 (December 2015): 416–42.
25   Full quote here: 'Only in postcolonial history writing is agency sometimes attributed to Africans, but, even then, typically only to nationalists who, paradoxically, deployed a modern European architecture to represent emancipation.' In: Ikem Okoye, 'Where Was Not Modernism?', CCA Articles, n.d., https://www.cca.qc.ca/en/articles/77238/where-was-not-modernism.

surroundings and their socio-cultural implications. In short, they do not take 'context' in consideration, a prerequisite of public art since the 1960s.

Monuments, even more than the architecture of the period, raise the complex question of independent Africa's hasty belief in 'development' and whether such belief has been beneficial to the new nations (a question that Amílcar Cabral himself, as an 'assimilated' local of Cape-Verdean parents, Marxist thinker and agronomist, embodied in unresolved ways).[26] If ,however, one considers the University of Ife, later renamed Obafemi Awolowo University, in Nigeria, in which Israeli architect Arieh Sharon attempted to marry modern architecture with an African visual vocabulary to the verge of stereotype, the abstract, pretentiously transcultural Yugoslavian design is arguably preferable, since it does not fall into the trap of white appropriation of another culture. Bissau-Guinean architecture and public sculpture discussed here are thus more honest.

26 Regimes in the new African nations adopted the Enlightenment's scientific heritage without any discussions of its cultural implications. This was problematic [...] as the 'machine was not neutral'. It could also be added that this was not only the case with the scientific heritage, but applied equally to the artistic heritage as well.' In: Bojana Piškur, *Southern Constellations: The Poetics of the Non-Aligned* (Ljubljana: Moderna galerija, 2019), 16 and Piškur specifies the meaning of 'machine' as follows: 'Machine as one of the instruments of cultural transformation that was brought to a space whose own cultural history had not prepared them for this new device' a. And: 'Colonialism brought the machine into spaces whose own cultural history had not prepared them for this new device, and besides, the machine and mechanization had been one of the instruments of cultural transformation. A machine is imbued with cultural forms; the tractor, for example, changes the relationship of farmers to their fields, each other, and the place of the plough in their cosmological world. The tractor would not leave [...] social relations unchanged. [...] The bulk of the social order inhabited the machine and grew around it'; In: Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York: The New Press, 2007).

Fig. 06
Possibly Bubaque Hotel (56 prefabricated bungalows), 1975-1978, now in ruins. Designed by Milanka Lima Gomes, Alexandar Drndarsk and Nikola Arsenić. Still from © *The Vanished Dream* 2016

Mojca Smode Cvitanović wrote that Non-Aligned mutual cooperation 'lost its enthusiasm' from the early 1970s onwards,[27] though Guinea-Bissau appears to be an exception. In 1979, Fidel Castro became the new chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, and Tito died a year later. The movement's credibility decreased during the 1980s, coinciding with a successful coup in Guinea-Bissau. With the end of socialism in Eastern Europe in the early 1990s, the definition of 'non-alignment' finally changed entirely. Canonical architectural historiography, however, didn't fully catch up with either Yugoslav or African architecture – an oversight that reveals an unfortunate prolongation of Cold War logics long after its end.[28]

Fig. 07
Monument for the Martyrs of the Pidjiguiti Massacre, known as Mon di Timba ('the fist of Timba'), a public sculpture located in the country's capital, Bissau, state-funded and designed by Nikola Arsenić (1975-1978). Building technique: reinforced concrete covered with slate sheets. Still from © *Memória / Calling Cabral*, directed by Welket Bungué.

27 Full quote here: 'The need for foreign personnel in developing countries was most stressing right after their independence, which was regularly and effectively accommodated by Yugoslavia, in line with its own political interests. The change in trends of technical cooperation, however, occurred in the early 1970s as a result of the events on both sides. In Yugoslavia, the living standard improved. The developing world, on the other hand, suffered a number of political and economic crises causing social instability. The generational shift and decentralization of Yugoslavia further weakened the integrity of the non-alignment policy, which lost its enthusiasm, proved to be less pragmatic than expected. This redirected technical cooperation towards partners who were able to secure economically and socially stable conditions for assignments.' In: Smode Cvitanović, 'Tracing the Non-Aligned Architecture: Environments of Technical Cooperation and the Work of Croatian Architects in Kumasi, Ghana (1961-1970)', *Histories of Postwar Architecture* 3, no. 6 (2020): 34–67.

28 Full quote here: 'Eastern European architecture as a whole has largely been left out of the discipline's modern canonical history, an oversight that not only underscores an ongoing Eurocentric (Western) bias, but also reflects the prolongation of the cultural logic of the Cold War long after its end'. M. Stierli and Vladimir Kulić, *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2018).

Conclusion

Modernist practices from 1973-1983 were decidedly not merely 'a projection from outside'. On the contrary, the rapid (even if fragile) consolidation of modernism in Guinea-Bissau has been a process where locals have worked actively to make themselves modern, instead of merely being made modern by outside forces. The principal actor coordinating all the construction projects in the country during the period was Bissau-Guinean-born, the Minister of Public Works Alberto 'Tino' Lima Gomes. The Yugoslav fundamental participation notwithstanding, local agency was decisive and shouldn't be overlooked.

Now, what unspent fuel remains from the anti-colonial struggle and the early post-independence days to be reignited today? Or, more modestly and realistically: how can scholarly work and intellectual engagement counteract oblivion as a convenient political project? Because pan-African, socialist and Third World dreams, visions and abandoned projects might have a contemporary 'utility' or usefulness; they can be unearthed to be remembered, retold, reclaimed, redreamed and thus inform our political imagination.

As it was shown, the unfulfilled promises of the 1973-1983 period are aesthetically latent in the ambivalent documents of the era, be they buildings, memorials or propaganda. Simultaneously 'cultural' and 'barbaric', it falls on posterity not to allow the latter to prevail.

Bibliography

Ana, Milheiro. 'Resisting Modernity: Colonization and Public Works. Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and São Tomé and Príncipe'. In *Ilha de São Jorge*, edited by Paula Nascimento and Stefano Pansera, 165–86. Beyond Entropy Books, 2014.

Ben Bella, Ahmed. 'Che as I Knew Him'. *Le Monde Diplomatique*, October 1997. https://mondediplo.com/1997/10/che.

'Boletim Oficial Da República Da Guiné-Bissau, Numero 40', 11 October 1978. Fundação Mário Soares, Arquivo Mário Pinto de Andrade. http://www.casacomum.org/cc/visualizador?pasta=10249.003.

Borges, Sonja. *Militant Education, Liberation Struggle, Consciousness.The PAIGC Education in Guinea Bissau 1963-1978*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2019.

Conrad, Sebastian. *What Is Global History?* Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2016.

Cvitanović, Smode. 'Tracing the Non-Aligned Architecture: Environments of Technical Cooperation and the Work of Croatian Architects in Kumasi, Ghana (1961-1970)'. *Histories of Postwar Architecture* 3, no. 6 (2020): 34–67.

Duanfang, Lu. *Third World Modernism: Architecture, Development and Identity*. London: Routledge, 2010.

Fig. 08
Commemorative stamp with Amílcar Cabral's mausoleum represented, a monument located in Fortaleza de São José da Amura, Bissau, state-funded and designed by Zoran Jovanović, built in 1977. Online here: https://es.123rf.com/photo_62014353_mosc%C3%BA-rusia-alrededor-agosto-de-2016-un-sello-impreso-en-guinea-bissau-muestra-el-mausoleo-amilcar-c.html

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy in Process: The Letters to Guinea-Bissau*. London: Bloomsbury, 2016.

Gomes, Milanka L. 'Reconstrução Nacional e Balanço Das Principais Ações Realizadas Entre 1974 e 1996 Na Guiné-Bissau Bissau'. CIALP conference intervention, 1996. Private Document.

Haddad, Sérgio. *O Educador: Um Perfil de Paulo Freire*. São Paulo: Todavia, 2019.

Herz, Manuel, ed. *African Modernism: The Architecture of Independence. Ghana, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Zambia*. Zürich: Park Books, 2015.

Kulić, Vladimir, Wolfgang Thaler, and Maroje Mrduljas, eds. *Modernism In-Between: The Mediatory Architectures of Socialist Yugoslavia*. Berlin: Jovis Verlag, 2012.

Meuser, Phillip, and Adil Dalbai. 'Guinea-Bissau'. *Architectual Guide. Sub-Saharan Africa. Western Africa. Along the Atlantic Ocean Coast* 3 (2021): 12–67.

Okoye, Ikem. 'Where Was Not Modernism?' CCA Articles, n.d. https://www.cca.qc.ca/en/articles/77238/where-was-not-modernism.

Paulo, Cunha, and Catarina Laranjeiro. 'Guiné-Bissau: Do Cinema de Estado Ao Cinema Fora Do Estado'. *Rebeca - Revista Brasileira De Estudos De Cinema e Audiovisual* 5, no. 2 (2017).

Piškur, Bojana. *Southern Constellations: The Poetics of the Non-Aligned*. Ljubljana: Moderna galerija, 2019.

Prashad, Vijay. *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World*. New York: The New Press, 2007.

Rehnman, Lucas. 'Amílcar Cabral d'après l'art Conceptuel or The Liberation Struggle as Conceptual Art'. *The Whole Life*, 24 March 2022. https://wholelife.hkw.de/amilcar-cabral-dapres-lart-conceptuel-or-the-liberation-struggle-as-conceptual-art/#footnote13.

Stanek, Łukasz. 'Architects from Socialist Countries in Ghana (1957–67): Modern Architecture and Mondialisation'. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 74, no. 4 (December 2015): 416–42.

–––. 'Gift, Credit, Barter: Architectural Mobilities in Global Socialism'. Archive and Editorial Project. *E-Flux Architecture* (blog), 2020. https://www.e-flux.com/architecture/housing/337850/gift-credit-barter-architectural-mobilities-in-global-socialism/.

Stierli, M., and Vladimir Kulić. *Toward a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2018.

Tabanca Graca Luís, Graça. 'Caderno de Notas de Um Mais Velho'. Blog. Luís Graça & Camaradas Da Guiné (blog), 9 November 2016. https://blogueforanadaevaotres.blogspot.com/2016/11/guine-6374-p16700-caderno-de-notas-de.html.

Teixeira, Cátia, and Maria Augusta Tavares. 'Guiné-Bissau: O Presente Lança Luz Sobre o Passado'. *Diálogos Magazine*, no. 3 (2013): 869–908.

The Vanished Dream. Siddhartha Films, 2016. http://thevanisheddream.com/category/cast/.

dis:
connec-
ted
objects –
finds and
findings

Letters from Fanning Island
Roland Wenzlhuemer

Porthcurno is a little village at the tip of Cornwall. Following the scenic South West Coast Path further westward, one passes by stunning cliffs and sandy beaches, arriving at Land's End, England's most westerly point, after around eight kilometres. Getting to Porthcurno requires a bit of effort. The train from London to Penzance takes at least five hours, if all goes well. From the Penzance railway station there are hourly buses to Porthcurno. The 15-kilometre ride takes another 45 minutes. Alternatively, one can hire a taxi. In that case, however, some sang-froid helps as local taxi drivers tend to career down the narrow roads of western Cornwall as if they were on the M25. Bus and taxi alike go as far as a car park, from which it is a five-minute walk down the village main road to Porthcurno beach about which *Visit Cornwall* raves: 'With gorgeous fine soft white sand washed by a sea that turns turquoise in the sun and high cliffs on both sides providing shelter, it's an oasis of stunning natural beauty'. They are not exaggerating.

However, a sudden urge to inform loved ones at home of the beauty of Porthcurno can be quite a complicated affair. For a long time, the mobile reception in the village was notoriously weak. It's a popular joke among the locals that one must climb one of the surrounding hills for decent reception. Though an old joke, it is not completely off the point. I felt it myself while visiting spring 2011. In many ways, Porthcurno is a remote place. But that's only part of the story that the joke is alluding to.

Porthcurno's beach is not just a wonderful place to relax and dip a toe in the sea. It also provides easy access to the sea on a coast otherwise marked by steep cliffs. There are no strong currents, there is no major port close by, that stretch of sea does not see too much maritime traffic, and it is very far to the west. Taken together, these attributes convinced the Falmouth Gibraltar and Malta Telegraph Company to choose Porthcurno beach (instead of Falmouth, as was originally planned) as the landing site for an important telegraphic connection to British India.

The cable link went online in 1870 and was immensely successful. Two years later, the Falmouth and other telegraph companies were merged into the Eastern Telegraph Company, which soon became the biggest communications company worldwide. Many other global cable connections out of Porthcurno followed, and the little place in western Cornwall soon developed into the world's most important cable station. At its height, 14 telegraph cables with traffic from all over the globe landed at Porthcurno. For about half a century, it was the world's communications hub. This is why the old joke about the mobile reception still works.

This is also why I visited Porthcurno in 2011. Though the village is no longer a global communication hub, it is still the rightful home of the Porthcurno Telegraph Museum, a wonderful institution about the history of global communications. The telegraph museum also hosts the business archive of Cable & Wireless, the Eastern Telegraph Company's successor company. The archive holds a plethora of documents about the history of telegraphy in general and the

Eastern's global operations in particular. It is an inevitable port of call for anyone working on a book about the global telegraph network, as I was then. Still, as archives go, it's a relatively small and specialised place that does not see too many researchers. It sports a family atmosphere. The archivists really appreciate visitors taking an interest in their holdings. They, in turn, take an interest in their visitors' work and go out of their way to help. This is probably why I found a manila folder waiting for me on my usual desk when I came to the archive one morning. It carried a post-it note from the head archivist asking whether the contents might interest me.

It turned out to be very interesting indeed. The folder contained colour copies of three lengthy letters written between March 1914 and January 1915 by an unnamed telegrapher stationed on Fanning Island in the Pacific and posted to a friend in Canada. These letters make the remoteness, the isolation from the rest of the world, in which the telegraphers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often performed their duties palpable across generations.

Fanning Island is a small atoll situated around 1450 kilometres south of Hawai'i in the middle of the Pacific. From 1889 it was part of the British Empire. Beginning in 1902, the island came to be used as a relay station in the first trans-Pacific telegraph connection. This cable, run by the Pacific Cable Board, linked British Columbia via Fanning, Fiji and Norfolk Island with Australia and New Zealand. In combination with a second cable laid one year later and run by the Commercial Pacific Cable Company from San Francisco over Honolulu to Manila, these cables inaugurated the trans-Pacific line and the closure of the last major gap in the global telegraph network at the dawn of the twentieth century.

The two Pacific cables thus symbolised a new climax in the communicative networking of the world. But the staff who were stationed along this route were evidently woven into an appreciably more complex tapestry of connectedness and isolation. Even in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, the telegraphic links between cable stations like Fanning and the rest of the world were outstanding. Hundreds of telegrams were sent each day down the cables and were transcribed in the relay stations. News from all over the world was received and passed on. The staff at the stations – above all the telegraphers – were always on top on world affairs.

Telegraphers were intimately connected with the world but geographically many of the relay stations were extremely remote, as these three letters make very tangible. Only every couple of weeks or months did a supply ship pay a call to stations such as Fanning. This infrequency impaired personal communications with family and friends, who could only be reached by post and not by telegraph. Perhaps more direly, it could also impede food supplies and necessary medical treatment.

DOC//S/107/1

Fanning Island
17 March 14

My dear Hollingworth
                    The old "Kathleen
Mavourneen" has played us another
dirty trick & leaving a day before
her time; So this has left me
with only an hour to answer yours
of 21st Nov: 1913.
            That sounds as if I were away
down at McMurdo Sound with a
South Pole expedition doesn't it!!!
            The mail communication here
though is something scandalous &
horribly exasperating.
            We had a hell of a time
during the siege.
            Completely out of flour, therefore
no bread; but we substituted with
those thick square ship's biscuits
which they feed the natives on,
and for which I have to thank
them for leaving me a Souvenir

Fig. 02
A paper letter from a hub of global lightspeed communication in the 19th century. Photo by the author.

In one of the opening paragraphs of the first letter, the writer apologises for penning the letter in considerable haste. The supply ship suddenly had to leave a day earlier than planned, rushing everyone who wanted to entrust letters to the ship. 'That sounds as if I were away down at McMurdo Sound with a South

Pole expedition doesn't it!!!', the frustrated writer admits. He later describes the scarcity of supplies on the island when the supply ship was delayed (which seems to have happened rather frequently):

'Completely out of flour, therefore no bread, but we substituted with those thick square ship's biscuits which they feed the natives on, and for which I have to thank them for leaving me a Souvenir in the shape of a broken tooth! No dentist here, so what you going to do about it!!!'

In the third letter dated 8 January 1915, the writer eventually addresses his friend after a long period of silence, apologises and then gives 'a true version of the German invasion of [Fanning Island]' during the first month of World War I. The island had been raided by a landing party from the German cruiser Nürnberg who held the British telegraphers captive and destroyed all the communications equipment. The staff on the island had been informed about the Nürnberg approaching Fanning, but could do nothing about it. It is in these passages that the tension between connectedness and isolation is particularly apparent.

Also, the story of how copies of these letters landed at the Cable & Wireless business archive in Porthcurno is in itself full of detours and disconnections. The unnamed author, who only signed with the alias 'Napoleon', sent his letters to his good friend who was a telegraphist in Montreal. The friend kept the letters. They remained in his estate and eventually found their way to the addressee's granddaughter who, in 2010, contacted the Porthcurno archive about the letters and later let them make copies to be stored there. Thematically, the letters were a wonderful addition to the holdings, but they fit a business archive only a little awkwardly. They were hard to file and catalogue according the system of the archive and stood out. That's basically how the copies eventually landed on my desk that morning – thanks to a wonderfully supportive archivist who saw a possible connection here.

While reading these letters and their accounts about the isolation and disconnectedness of Fanning, I first became aware that globalisation is not just about connectivity, that our standard narratives are missing a crucial component here. However, I was already in the final stages of a book project on the history of the global telegraph network. In the book I did advocate for a nuanced look at the so-called communicative 'shrinking of the world', but in the end I concentrated on the global connections and information flows carried by the telegraph. The book's main argument was built around issues of connectivity. The letters, with their emphasis on disconnections, did not quite fit. They did not make it into the manuscript. Still, they fundamentally changed how I thought about global connectivity. It took some time until I could see how and where they fit into the larger picture.

I started to develop a little piece about the plurality of global spaces and later turned this into a chapter in a book introducing the field of global history. Writing up these texts, I started to recognise how global connections and disconnections interact in

particular settings. In a way, these letters from Fanning stand at the core of what we do at global dis:connect these days. To me, they are truly dis:connected objects, if there ever were any.

Photo:
**The library at global dis:connect.
Photo courtesy of Lambert Strehlke**

past
events

On a reading and discussion with Timo Feldhaus in conversation with Urs Büttner, 4 July 2023
Burcu Dogramaci

We at global dis:connect were privileged to host a reading by Timo Feldhaus from his book Mary Shelley's Zimmer. Als 1816 ein Vulkan die Erde verdunkelte (Rowohlt, 2022). The event was lively and well-attended, due in no small part to the conversation with Urs Büttner, a scholar of 19th-century German literature. The discussion yielded many insights into dis:connective events related to the eruption of Mount Tambora volcano (Sumbawa, modern Indonesia) and its aftermaths – historical, literary and artistic.

Fig. 01
Urs Büttner and Timo Feldhaus (right)

First, the climate changes in Europe and the Western Hemisphere at the time were not inextricably associated with the eruption in the opposing hemisphere. Timo Feldhaus thus ties and connects natural events and, for example, the creation of Mary Shelley's book *Frankenstein; or The Modern Prometheus* (1818) in a climatically clouded Europe. Such connections did not seem evident in the 19th century. Although contemporary scientists and artists alike evinced great interest in weather phenomena, this knowledge was not widespread at the time.

Mary Shelley's life and work around the inception of her Frankenstein novel is the nucleus of Timo Feldhaus's book. Its chapters are repeatedly interrupted by other stories and appearances by her contemporaries from Turnvater Jahn and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe to the painter Caspar David Friedrich. The result is a composite view of unusual constellations, unconnected and connected events, science fiction, romantic relationships, nationalism, the science of clouds and natural disasters.

Fig. 02
Connecting fiction with history, authors with readers.

The global politics of give and take: a workshop with Susanne Schütte-Steinig and Sabine Sörgel in two parts
Sabine Sörgel

Our performance workshop started from the premise of 'give and take' in the global dynamics of social and economic exchange to investigate the notion of 'dis:connect' from a phenomenological perspective. By emphasising sensual touch in the encounter with personal objects, we sought to abstract from the visual and intellectual engagement that is often the focus of such transaction in other contexts. The debates on the restitution of art objects from the Global South to their countries of origin was also at the back of our minds, yet we did not want to make this our direct and obvious starting point. Rather, we sought to address some of those issues at a micro-level of interhuman exchange and communication.

Our shared interest in objects and hands also arose from a common background in yoga, meditation and somatic practice. We both wondered about how such practices affect communication and how we cope with the global intersections of contemporary crises, as the wider consequence of the many so-called darker sides of global modernity and racial colonial capitalism.

Our initial conversations started over socially distanced walks and coffees in the Englischer Garten. Susanne Schütte-Steinig soon showed me a sketch of two wooden boxes facing each other closely resembling a basic puppet theatre. Except that in this case, the puppeteers use their own hands only, whilst their bodies are held in upright stillness, resting their chin on a soft foam pad, legs shoulder-width apart in a relaxed posture, with their pubic
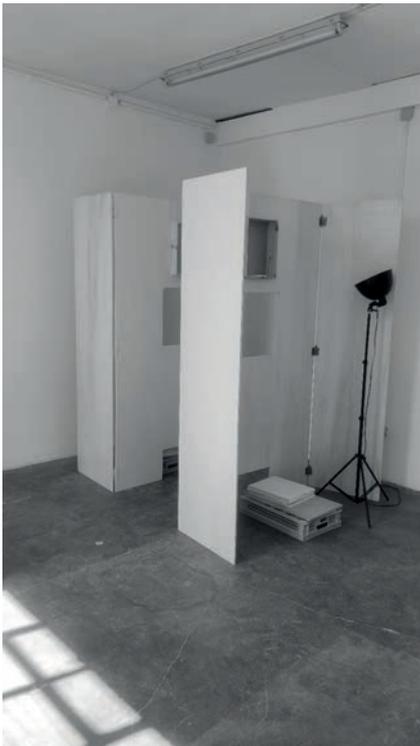
bone just underneath the open window facing their partner on the opposite side (figs. 1, 2 and 4).[1]

That sketch ended up depicting the position held by our workshop participants for several heartbeats a couple of months later, half-way through my research fellowship. And whilst each participant centred their hands on their chest, focusing their attention inwards before offering their object for exchange, I wondered about the shadows of globalisation in that empty space (fig. 4).

# Part one: interviews at global dis:connect

Interviews are a common method in various types of research, including oral histories, anthropology and history. They are also a common feature of the TV and social-media world, and many of us will have sweated through an interview as the final hurdle to getting their dream job. However, our artistic workshop was not particularly interested in any of these interview techniques and formats. Rather, the focus was to be solely directed towards the object itself, as well as the gestures of the hands holding it.

The objects were therefore initially chosen by each participant with the following instruction:

Fig. 01
**In lieu of the audience:
The Gaze of the Touch-Spectre**

Fig. 02
The somatic "box set"

---

1   There is no audience in the conventional sense, only the camera (alias 'The Touch-Spectre'), which zooms in on the exchange of hands and the space in/between. No one claps, the beginning and end are decided by the two participants only and guided by Susanne's movement instructions and action score.
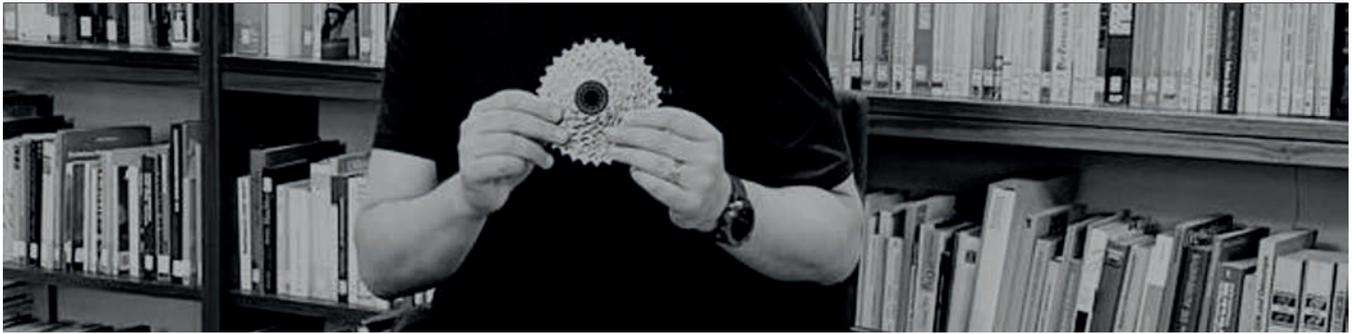
(1) Bring a personal object related to your current research project, either an archival source or an everyday tool, that is indispensable to the way you work at your best.

Later in the artistic process, this instruction was modified to say that the object would have to be three dimensional and fit between two hands and no larger than a laptop screen, for the practical reason that it had to fit through the window set-up as well, as we became more and more interested in the idea of being able to hold something of personal value in your actual hands from both a kinetic and felt-energetic perspective. Some of the interview questions arose from my academic research on the Jungian notion of the shadow to investigate the darker aspects of globalisation, as those repressed parts of the Western European psyche run havoc in the present shaping of contemporary crises, from the resurfacing of unaddressed systemic racism to the extraction of resources and climate change. The aim of the interview was thus to interrogate the extent to which Europe itself, and perhaps academia and academics more than others, must question many commonplace Enlightenment values and liberties, which have historically been built on the exclusion and exploitation of human and non-human 'sources of life' from the Global South.[2]

Susanne's artwork, on the other hand, addresses some of these questions through her practice in dance and architecture to investigate the in-between space of encounter through the performative engagement with objects she designs and choreographs as set spatial scores and actions. Through dance and body work, we each had a point of reference that connected us throughout the initial conversations on the theme of 'give and take' that led to the following set of interview questions for the workshop participants:

(1) Why did you become a historian (researcher)?

(2) Why did you choose to bring this object?

(3) What is your fondest memory of visiting an archive?

---

2   Achille Mbembe addresses this point in several of his works and the term 'sources of life' reflects on the energetic and creative essentials of living that have been sacrificed to the necropolitical project of Western colonial modernity whilst they remain a constant source also for the rebuilding of new African subjectivities.

Fig. 03
A sprocket cassette from Taiwan

**Hand on your heart, are you ready
to give your object?**

(4) What is your relationship to the European Enlightenment?

(5) Did you ever experience theft, steal something or was something stolen from you?

The interviews were planned so as to meet our participants in our everyday work surroundings at the *global dis:connect* offices and to introduce the object as a personal object closely tied to both the researcher's sense of self as well as their profession and research.

As a researcher at *global dis:connect*, I was very aware of the risks this workshop was asking my colleagues to take. A professional habitus is hard to acquire, difficult to shed and marks so much of our market value as humanities researchers in the contemporary world. Therefore, we were careful to create an open situation of mutual trust that would make it very difficult for the researcher to automatically fall into their default academic habitus of presenting themselves through an elaborate talk or paper, but rather to give us an impromptu and spontaneous response of no more than three to four unprepared sentences.

Such initial thoughts and associations, as a matter of fact, enabled an open encounter with the participants' objects as a form of disconnect rather than a carefully crafted argument that would usually have to be closed to persuade. It was thus that I hoped to get hold of the shadow aspects entailed in this form of presentation. On the day of the interviews, we had four participants from global dis:connect share their objects and responses, whilst the camera captured the 'handling of the object' in a posture of care no wider than the camera frame between lap

and top and the gestures one makes in this sacred space between the pelvis (lap) and the heart (top).

Part two:
the Yoga of talking hands

Disconnected from our everyday working environment, the invitation to Susanne's Atelier in Munich's Baumstraße offered the researchers an opportunity for a performative encounter with each other and our objects in a different setting. The day was sunny and two more members of *global dis:connect* were able to join us, as they had recovered from a Covid-19 infection the previous week. In their cases, we had no accompanying interview to go with but only their yoga of hands.

Not unlike the European Enlightenment, yoga practice has also journeyed across the globe into our living rooms and local gyms. Yet, as a practice it predates the European Enlightenment by centuries and perhaps is the more sophisticated for it. Although many people around the world practice yoga and meditation these days, there is still a tendency to consider these spiritual and physical activities separate – as separate as is the body from the mind, even now, for some of us brought up in a false sense of neutral objectivity grounded in notions of Enlightenment philosophy and the split that was supposedly created there.

In this second part of the workshop, it was our chance to break with the Enlightenment conventions of European research and bring these disconnected spheres of research and artistic practice

Fig. 05
The Yoga of Hands and the Space In-Between

together. With the help of the artist's skill to re-connect the disconnected through her theatrical set-up, we hoped to shed some light on the shadow aspects of global exchange practices in other realms.

And as each participant entered Susanne's installation, they found themselves no longer able to hide behind elaborate words or even in a photographic representation of themselves as in aesthetic realism, because all but their hands touching was withheld from their own view. In this vulnerable moment, the hands started talking their own language, as they were led by the energy of the individual heartbeat.

The wounded researcher

A week after the workshop, I listened again to the interviews in search of the shadows of our hidden thoughts, those truths we so often do not dare to speak. This is to say that in each of our thoughts there is always a disconnect from all that is not thought in that moment so that an in-between space marks this shadow area that is always also at work in thought processes. As Merleau-Ponty continues to explain this idea in an essay called *The Philosopher and his Shadow*:

> Just as the perceived world endures only through the reflections, shadows, levels, and horizons between things (which are not things and are not nothing, but on the contrary mark out by themselves the fields of possible variation in the same thing and the same world), so the works and thoughts of a philosopher are also made of certain articulations between things said.[3]

These 'certain articulations between things said' are now captured in the yoga of hands and the silent negotiation that takes place in the in-between encounter of Susannne's edited film of this performative installation in two parts. Deprived of their elaborate wordings, the researchers in this project opened themselves to become vulnerable to the essence of touch. This in-between space holds, for me, the colon in the conceptual idea of the centre's name: 'dis:connect' then offers an opportunity to account for the shadow aspect of that absence, which is only made visible by all that is not seen much less explained, but merely felt in an instance of touch.

3   Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signs* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 160.

Bibliography

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Hicks, Dan. *The Brutish Museums. The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution*. London: Pluto Press, 2020.

Iyengar, B.K.S. *Light on the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*. London: Thorsons, 1993.

Mauss, Marcel. *The Gift. The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. London/New York: Routledge, 1990.

Mbembe, Achille. *Critique of Black Reason*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Signs*. Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1964.

Mignolo, Walter. *The Darker Side of Western Modernity. Global Futures, Decolonial Options*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2011.

Priyamvada, Gopal. 'On Decolonization and the University'. *Textual Practice* 35, no. 6 (2021): 873–99.

Romanyshyn, Roman. *The Wounded Researcher. Research with Soul in Mind*. London/New York: Routledge, 2013.

Savoy, Bénédicte. *Africa's Struggle for Its Art. History of a Postcolonial Defeat*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022.

Schütte-Steinig, Susanne. *Going to Paradise*. München, 2022. www.sss333.de.

Global dis:connect Summer School 2022 – a connected view
David Grillenberger

From 2 to 5 of August 2022, 20 scholars, including PhD students, the organisers Nikolai Brandes and Anna Sophia Nübling, and the student assistants, gathered in Munich during a scorching heat wave for *global dis:connect's* inaugural summer school. Our engaging discussions and presentations emitted as much energy as the sun itself. Titled *Postcolonial interruptions? Decolonisation and global dis:connectivity*, our very first summer school at *global dis:connect* focused on dis:connectivities in processes of decolonisation. The topic was apt, as decolonisation in itself is a very sudden (or sometimes very slow) interruption. It admits literal disconnects between former colonies and the empires that conquered them and simultaneously maintained connections to these empires. The process of decolonisation emphasises the colon in 'dis:connectivity' that, in this case, might represent the tension between independence and the continuation of relationships.

After a (literally) warm welcome from co-director Prof. Christopher Balme and a get together in our garden on Tuesday (2 August), we gathered in *global dis:connect's* library the next morning to hear the first master class by UCLA's Ayala Levin. In her talk about *Continuity vs. discontinuity from colonialism to postcolonialisms*, Levin emphasised African actors' agency, as, for example, when choosing Israel and China as partners for architectural projects. Both nations have framed themselves as former colonial subjects and 'developing countries' fit to help African nations' 'development'.

© Annalena Labrenz and David Grillenberger

Following Ayala's master class and a short coffee break, Seung Hwan Ryu presented the first PhD project of the day, speaking on the relationship between North Korea and Tanzania. In his talk (*Surviving the disconnection. North Korea's social internationalism in Tanzania during the Cold War* – for a closer look, check out Seung Hwan's post summarising the talk on our blog), Seung Hwan posed the question how North Korea was similar but different from other socialist globalisation projects. He emphasised 'North Korea's in-between geopolitical position', between China and the USSR after the great disconnect that was the Sino-Soviet split. For some, Seung Hwan's talk might have evoked memories of the fantastic Danish documentary *The Mole*, which features present-day North Korea and its dealings in Africa, which have attracted the UN's attention in 2020.

Next among the presentations was Lucas Rehnman, a Brazilian visual artist and curator, who presented his curatorial project. His project (*Unfinished Museum of Peripheral Modernity*) on postcolonial modernist architecture in Guinea-Bissau poses an interesting what-if question: what if Bissau-Guineans did not simply follow external influences in the context of 'foreign aid' and 'technical cooperation' but instead worked actively and creatively as architects, establishing an architectural legacy that deserves attention?

Fig. 01
Ayala Levin's master class

After the lunch break, Adekunle Adeyemo presented his project on Israeli architect Arieh Sharon's Obafemi Awolowo University Campus in Ile-Ife. Adekunle argued that the campus is a good example of modern architecture in Africa. He emphasised dis:connectivity when he argued that it was precisely the decolonial disconnect from the British empire that led Nigeria to look for new connections to Israel, as Ayala Levin also pointed out that morning. Adekunle framed the processes that led to Sharon's designing the campus as a 'Fanonian rupture', as a crack in existing structures, which allows new things to fill the void.

The last to present her project on our first full day together was Rahel Losier. Rahel spoke on the topic of *Sahrawi educational migration to Cuba from the 1970s to the present*. Chris Balme, one of the discussants, pointed out that the conflict in Western Sahara central to Rahel's talk was one of our time's 'forgotten conflicts' and that the relationship between Sahrawis and Cuba is a forgotten story. It is absent in history, one might say. And what could be more fitting than absences for the questions of *global dis:connect*? Rahel approached her research topic artistically as well and created a brilliantly unique comic out of the interviews she conducted for her project. The presentation of her first comic also initiated an interesting discussion on whether and how artistic practice could help to better formulate research questions.

Fig. 02
The gd:c summer school takes a field trip to the Museum Fünf Kontinente.

One, yet many (but not too many).

After an extended coffee break – much needed after engaging discussions and scholarly debates – Maurits van Bever Donker finished the day with a lecture, unintentionally representing the topic of 'dis:connectivity' in that he had to give his lecture remotely from South Africa. At 7:30 p.m., we all met for dinner and reflected on a long day of interesting projects and our new acquaintances.

The next day, Thursday, 4 August, started with decolonisation and epistemology. First up was another master class, this time held by Prof. Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni of Bayreuth University. He focused on three meta-topics: epistemology, decolonisation and dis:connectivity. Sabelo emphasised especially how knowledge itself could also be colonised and – referring to Dipesh Chakrabaty – suggested provincialising Europe in an institutional sense too, meaning that Western universities must reflect on the relationship between knowledge and power and how non-Western universities can get a more equal footing in global science.

The perfect follow-up to Sabelo's talk was Tibelius Amutuhaire, who spoke on *The realities of higher education decolonisation: possibilities and challenges to decolonise university education in East Africa*. Tibelius noted that, in most African universities, continuing eurocentrism is apparent in the exclusive use of Western (often foreign) languages to disseminate knowledge. Although, as Tibelius argued, African universities should lead the decolonisation efforts. In his master class, Sabelo J. Ndlovu-

Gatsheni also referred to the role of peer-reviewed journals, of which the most prestigious are still located in the West. Tibelius's takeaway was that one of the main problems today is the continuous re-education of 'false' knowledge.

It was not only African countries and peoples who were subjected to colonialism, but also Asian countries like Pakistan, which was the focus of Talha Minhas' presentation. By focusing on the case study of Pakistan's construction of its nationalist project, Talha discussed the theoretical and methodological challenges global history faces. He analysed the 'master narrative' of a Muslim claim to their own state in South Asia, especially in opposition to the British Empire. In the following discussion, gd:c co-director and one of this day's discussants, Roland Wenzlhuemer argued that Talha's topic could very well be a self-observational project that could tackle global history and its problems.

The afternoon started with Hannah Goetze's presentation. Her talk focused on weaving, whose own literal connectivity makes it all the more interesting from the perspective of disconnections. Hannah analysed two different subjects: Lubaina Himid's artpiece *cotton.com* and Amalie Smith's book *Thread Ripper*. Weaving, Hannah argued, is closely connected to the internet as well as history and the future of computers in both works. So, in a way, they are stories about networks, be they woven or digital.

Up next was Flavia Elena Malusardi, whose research project aims to look at the cultural space Dar el Fan in Beirut and how women's identities were shaped there between postcolonialism and cosmopolitanism. For example, the anti-establishment movements of the 1960s also resonated in Beirut and intersected with decolonisation and the Cold War. Founded in 1967 by Janine Rubeiz, Dar el Fan also promoted ideas of gender equality and visibility and offered women a space where they could enjoy extensive freedoms in an otherwise often still conservative society.

The last of Thursday's presentations focused on post-apartheid in South Africa. In his project, Brian Fulela analysed the novels of three different South African authors: K. Sello Duiker, Lgebetle Moele and Sifoso Mzobe. He examined the role and place of psychoanalysis in these novels and what psychoanalysis can bring to research on post-apartheid South Africa. Central to his project are feelings of trauma, loss and the subjectivity of post-apartheid, which are very much emotions and feelings of dis:connectivity.

The next day, Friday, began at the Museum Fünf Kontinente in the centre of Munich. We were greeted by Stefan Eisenhofer and Karin Guggeis, who are responsible for the museum's Africa and North America exhibitions. They showed us through the Africa exhibition and spoke on the difficulties of provenience research. Both also accompanied us back to *global dis:connect* to attend the remaining presentations.

The first presentation of the day came from Lucía Correa, who is researching the ethnographic collections of French-Swiss Anthropologist Alfred Metraux. Ethnographic museums, Lucía argues, were a new way of thinking about human history with an emphasis on material culture. Meanwhile, Latin America is in the process of deconstruction and working with native communities to decolonise museums and their collections, since the colonialist perspective that motivated the founding of ethnographic museums is no longer viable. Metraux considered his collections a way to 'remember' the indigenous populations, which he perceived to be rapidly disappearing as a result of Western expansion in the 1930s. It is easy to see how absences – one of the key concepts informing dis:connectivity – play an important role in Lucía's research and the future of ethnographic museums in general.

Next up was Claudia di Tosto's talk on *Austerity and muddled optimism: the impact of decolonisation on Britain's participation at the 1948 Venice Biennale*. Claudia spoke on the recontextualisation of Britain's exhibition in the context of decolonisation after World War II. In her presentation, she focused on one case study, namely 1948 and two artists that were prominently featured at the exhibition: J.M.W. Turner – a 19th-century artist – and Henry Moore – a 20th-century artist and contemporary painter at the time of the Biennale. Claudia argued that Britain used its 1948 pavilion to project the image of a nation that was using humanism as a rhetorical tool to both cover the demise of the empire and still lay a claim of superiority over its former colonies.

After our lunch break, Johanna Böttiger presented a very eloquently written essay in which she spoke on the topic of black dolls during the years of the Jim Crow laws in the USA. Children, argued Johanna, were an embodiment of coloniality and different stereotypes came with the colour of children's skins – even in dolls, as black dolls were subjected to violence by white children. Certainly no child's play, learned behavioural patterns like segregation or racism were also expressed in the form of children and dolls.

The last presentation of our time together was testament to the breadth of backgrounds the participants brought with them. Franziska Fennert, a German artist living in Indonesia, presented her project *Monumen Anthroposen* as a film. The project consists of a 'temple', a monument complex, that is built in Indonesia and made from waste that is being transformed into a new product. Franziska's aim was to redefine the relationship between humans, the planet and each other. In the long run, the 'Anthropocene Monument' should act as an infrastructure for upcycling that benefits its surrounding region.

Franziska's presentation concluded our time together in Munich – at least from a scholarly perspective – and heralded the beginning of a convivial get-together with some traditional Bavarian music,

beer and Brezen (soft pretzels). The participants agreed that the concept of dis:connectivity informed their research, and their varied backgrounds made for an engaging discussion and a lot of valuable comments.

It is almost staggering that a phenomenon such as decolonisation, which is so essentially dis:connective – the simultaneity of severing ties while still maintaining some and sometimes the stress they cause for the people involved – waited so long for the dis:connectivity treatment.

gd:c global dis
:connect

Ruminating on a hunch at Filamentous Magic Carpets
Anna Sophia Nübling

On Sunday 14 August 2022, the Lenbachhaus hosted an event in its beautiful garden: *Filamentous Magic Carpets,* curated by the writer and *global dis:connect* fellow Enis Maci. The event was part of the exhibition 'Rosemary Mayer. Ways of Attaching' at the Lenbachhaus. The event was inspired by the artist's engagement with textile materials, weaving and matters of form that resonated with Enis Maci's own interest in the 1990 science-fiction film *Habitat and the Internet* conspiracy saga surrounding the user 9MOTHER-9EYES9HORSE, which she explored while at global dis:connect.

Habitat is a science-fiction high-school comedy that examines the ecological discourse about the ozone hole and its disastrous consequences for life on earth in the late 90s. With the sun to incinerate all life on Earth in the near future, a scientist invents an inexplicable life form that expresses constantly emerging, shifting and disintegrating forms.

The story of 9MOTHER9EYES9HORSE is a mashup of familiar conspiracy theories with LSD-fuelled paranormal occurrences around fleshy tunnels into other dimensions. Both narrations deal with implications of beholding the world through the lens of connections. The film is about a global ecological 'system' in which everything is connected with everything and that enables both a sense of attachment to what is called nature and technicist notions of its readjustment.

The saga shows that, if done excessively, imagined connections can lead to the paranoia of conspiracy theories. Each in its own

way, they challenge the notion that everything is connected and raise the (utopian) question of how a lifeform or a community might look when not fraught with the danger that notions of connectedness can entail, when they weave worlds too tightly. They inspire thoughts about a mode of living and thinking that would go beyond unifying, holistic notions of the self and of social entities to a way of thinking difference, alterity and a form of life that can entail such difference.

As the exhibition showed, Mayer thought about her artworks as being at the 'borderline to chaos'. That is, they are about forms that are hardly forms. In this sense, her work, too, is engaged with a way of thinking not in closed, well-ordered entities, but of dissolving rigid forms into ones that change, that can't be fixed, and are therefore open to different interpretations and otherness. The life form in the film and Mayer's textile sculptures and installations don't dismiss any connections or attachments, but, as Enis Maci proposed with this event, inspire thought about how we imagine such connections, because they have implications for how we act.

Following a 'hermeneutics of suspicion', as she called it, Enis Maci juxtaposed different artistic and scientific approaches and perspectives to 'ways of attaching' by association, which fruitfully complemented and communicated with each other. Under a bright sunny sky, the event started with a talk between Enis Maci, Eiko Honda and me. This was followed by readings from the publication Filamantous Magic Carpets, which the event launched (– mind the connection: the title is a citation from the book *Utopia* by Rosemary Mayer's sister Bernadette Mayer). It brings together texts of writers (Sophia Eisenhut, Marius Goldhorn, Jonas Mölzer, Mazlum Nergiz and Pascal Richmann) and scholars (Eiko Honda and me). A concert by the sound artist Rosaceae and a film screening of *Habitat* completed the program. The light atmosphere of those special hours, the words that wafted through the warm air were ephemeral and will remain inscribed in the memories of those present, but what remains is the written word.

Check it out at https://www.maerzverlag.de/shop/buecher/literatur/filamentous-magic-carpets.

The Filamentous Magic Carpets blast off at:

18.11.: Zentralwäscherei, Zürich
With Mazlum Nergiz

20.11.: Zeil-Antiquariat, Frankfurt (Main)
With Mazlum Nergiz

Fig. 02
Rosaceae in mid-performance (photo: Luzia Huber)

Infrastructures of musical globalisation, 1850–2000

23 to 25 June 2022, Historisches Kolleg, Munich Friedemann Pestel & Martin Rempe

Infrastructures rarely come to mind when making or listening to music. This holds equally true for discovering or playing with unfamiliar sounds from different world regions. As an ephemeral and affective experience, music of whatever origin is difficult to capture, locate and pin down. And yet, without the emergence, development, transformation and deterioration of infrastructures, many musical experiences would have taken quite a different path – particularly at the transnational and global levels. Studying such infrastructures, broadly framed as material conditions as well as the explicit and implicit prerequisites of making music across borders since the 19th century, was at the heart of our workshop.

Actors involved in musical life, both historical and present, have taken infrastructures such as places and institutions of musical performance for granted, be these public, private or anything in between. They only receive greater attention when they do not meet artistic, economic, political or public expectations. Hence, the presence, lack and transformations of infrastructures are inextricably intertwined with the production of musical culture. They present driving forces, counterforces and lateral forces of musical practices broadly speaking. It was the forms and means, the reach and functions and, ultimately, the dis:connectivities of infrastructures that prompted intense and controversial discussions among the workshop participants from Europe and North America.

The papers covered an impressive geographical range with contributions on North and Latin America and the Caribbean,

The Historisches Kolleg thankfully and appropriately offers marvelous acoustics. (Photo by the author)

on a global Europe and a global Soviet Union, on Central Africa as well as on South and East Asia. Chronologically, we focused on the 19th and 20th centuries as a key period for both global history and the history of infrastructures. Likewise, the papers featured a great variety of musical genres, ranging from opera and classical music to jazz, Congolese rumba and Afrobeat as well as to Soviet pop music and so-called 'traditional music' of indigenous peoples. Finally, the spectrum of infrastructures was pushed to the extremes: transnational networks of theatre agents (Charlotte Bentley and Matteo Paoletti) served as infrastructures of musical dis:connectivity as well as international organisations like UNESCO (Anaïs Fléchet) and European and African collecting societies (Véronique Pouillard), music education institutions (Alexandre Bischofberger) and the music industry (Friedemann Pestel), pitch standardisation negotiations (Fanny Gribenski) and genre discourse (Thomas Irvine and Christopher Smith) and, last but not least, cultural ministries (Michel Abeßer) and national embassies (Zbigniew Wojnowski).

This broad conceptualisation of infrastructures of musical dis:connectivity turned out to be very fruitful for the discussions since it provoked even more inventive ideas from the invited commentators about what else, in the context of music, could

be framed as infrastructure: music itself as an infrastructure for human memory and everyday human life (Dirk van Laak); musical instruments as infrastructures of sound making (Jürgen Osterhammel); and the crucial question of how infrastructures in a narrow sense, such as electricity and the production of shellac played in the making of music (Oliver Janz) were among the most fascinating ones. Also, considerable thought was devoted to the conceptual boundaries of infrastructures and how they differ from structure(s) and networks. Roland Wenzlhuemer, in his keynote, drew our attention to the spatial dimension of infrastructures by highlighting the significance of – otherwise largely disconnected – peripheries for connectivity in communication.

Additionally, from an anthropological viewpoint, the important difference between infrastructures as an emic category and an etic category was stressed (Christina Brauner). There was, however, no consensus about how much teleology comes into play when doing research on infrastructures: while some argued that path dependency is key to understanding infrastructures' effectiveness (Heidi Tworek), others warned of normative assumptions about the latter. These and many more aspects of the relationship between infrastructures and making music across borders underline how useful the dialogue between music history and infrastructure research can be. Also highly inspiring were the discussions about the distinction between the established perspective of musical 'institutions' and the perspective of 'infrastructures' that might direct our attention to less articulated, less formalised settings of musical production.

Several workshop participants emphasised the necessity of pluralising and de-Europeanising the idea of a musical globalisation. As the papers made evident, many musical globalisations have recurred since the mid-19th century with their own underlying infrastructures, mechanisms, geographies and limitations. Even within a single genre, such as European opera, the logics of circulation, appropriation and refusal differed considerably between the mid-19th century American South, which was driven by commercial motivations, and the countries of southern Latin America under the grip of fascist Italian diplomacy during the 1920s.

Nonetheless, a retreat from European musical metropoles and a reorientation to emerging American centres, such as New York and Buenos Aires, was common to both Americas in the decades around 1900, as was also the case in the emergence of Cuban music conservatories, which took as much inspiration from there as from Europe. Wojnowski extended de-centring one step further by emphasising the strong Western bias in Eurocentric accounts. There is call to study Eastern European attempts to globalise 'their' musics as well, even though they largely failed, as his case study on Soviet musical diplomacy in the emerging Third World demonstrated.

Whereas the commonplace of 'musical connections' is often taken for granted in music scholarship, the significantly greater challenge is to write about music that does not travel or, more precisely, music that is prevented from travelling. Though the lens of infrastructures cannot solve this problem, it can, at least, hint and highlight moments of musical dis:connectivity. A recent example mentioned at the workshop is the streaming platform 'Forgotify', which assembles millions of tracks and songs that are available on Spotify but have never been played. In a historical perspective, infrastructures like 'Forgotify' can direct our attention to other 'hidden' agents of musical dis:connectivity that have so far been understudied, such as collecting societies and international organisations. Likewise, the workshop revealed how little we know about the actual trajectories, interests, strategies and frictions related to seemingly global musical icons, be it the career of a conductor like Herbert von Karajan or an ostensibly unequivocal musical reference such as the pitch.

The dialogue among the papers, commentators and the workshops' discussants also helped to reveal what was lacking or underrepresented among the variety of phenomena, spaces and actors the workshop covered. For example, wars as particular moments of both musical dis:connectivity, infrastructural mobilisation and destruction did not loom large in the discussions. Likewise, explicit counterforces to musical globalisation remained in the background. Musical unions, which often acted as gatekeepers against foreign musicians and their musics, are an apt example. While the workshop has mapped the field and revealed many productive approaches to it, much more research on infrastructures of musical dis:connectivity is needed to better understand the many histories of musical globalisations.

up-coming events

08.12.2022 – 09.12.2022, Colonial violence beyond the borders of empires: dis:connections, transfers and mobilities, ca. 1850–1954

Munich, Germany
Käte Hamburger Research Centre *global dis:connect*, Ludwig Maximilian University Munich
University of Cologne, Cologne

Organisers:
Dominique Biehl (University of Basel, Basel)
Ulrike Lindner (University of Cologne, Cologne)
Tom Menger (Ludwig Maximilian University, Munich)
Markus Wurzer (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale)

In recent years, historians have increasingly sought to write imperial history beyond the borders of individual, 'national' empires. Such transimperial histories have influenced several research programmes. However, this approach has barely grazed one crucial aspect of colonial rule: violence. More than a decade ago, Robert Gerwarth and Stephan Malinowski postulated a common Western 'colonial archive' on violence. We still know little about the exact forms of this archive, who contributed to it, how it might have been composed, and whether it was indeed as exclusively 'Western' as Gerwarth and Malinowski assumed. In this workshop, we would like to answer some of these questions and advance the research programme as a whole.

To do so, we address various aspects of transimperial connections concerning colonial violence. Conceptually, we consider their specific nature, while empirical case studies will approach the various dimensions in which these entanglements manifested themselves. Finally, contributions also seek to complicate the notion of connectivity. One of our hypotheses is that colonial violence presents a more complex field of connectivity than we might find in other transimperial histories. Therefore, we seek to analyse points of disconnection, of absences, detours, misunderstandings, distortions and creative/hybrid appropriations. We ask whether and how transimperial histories can change our view of the various theories of nationally specific colonial cultures of violence.

Covering a wide range of empires and European and non-European actors, papers tackle specific conflicts, epistemic structures, practices, cooperations, expert exchanges, ideals of masculinity and processes of remembrance that extended colonial violence beyond the borders of individual empires. The workshop will feature keynotes by Bernhard Schär (University of Lausanne) and Kim Wagner (Queen Mary University of London).

Fig. 01
Troops of the Eight-Nation Alliance stand together during the Boxer War in China, 1900 (image colourised by Julius Jääskeläinen, CC BY 2.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=91532070**)**

International Workshop
organised by
David Armitage, Harvard
Sujit Sivasundaram, Cambridge
Roland Wenzlhuemer, LMU Munich

Oceans disconnect

Venue
Historisches Kolleg
Kaulbachstraße 15
80539 Munich

21/22
November
2022

Käte Hamburger Kolleg
global dis:connect
LMU Munich
Maria Theresia Straße 21
81675 Munich
gdc@lrz.uni-muenchen.de

Call for papers

13.06.2023 – 15.06.2023, Nomadic Camera. Photography, Displacement and Dis:connectivities

Workshop at the Käte Hamburger Research Centre *global dis:connect* Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich

Organisers:
Burcu Dogramaci (Käte Hamburger Research Centre, LMU Munich),
Winfried Gerling (European Media Studies – University of Applied Sciences Potsdam/ University Potsdam and Brandenburg Centre for Media Studies (ZeM), Potsdam),
Jens Jäger (University of Cologne) and
Birgit Mersmann (University of Duisburg-Essen)
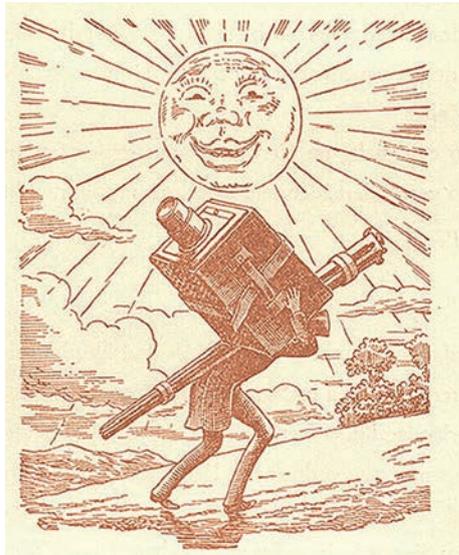
Processes of migration and flight after 2015 and their depiction, perception and distribution through photography form the initial point of the workshop and subsequent publication *Nomadic Camera*. The research project seeks to investigate the technical, medial and aesthetic relationship of photography and contemporary migration, historical exile and flight as the pivotal discursive setting in which specific forms of mobility extending from the mid-nineteenth century to today have been negotiated.

The concept adapts the term 'nomadic' – a transitory form of existence – beyond static concepts of being and national boundaries (Demos 2017). 'Nomadic' refers to a form of mobility that establishes continuities and discontinuities with other terms, such as 'travel', 'displacement' and 'exile' (Kaplan 1996). At the same time, displacements are intrinsically related to experiences of connectivities and disconnectivities, including place-making and belonging, ruptures between life and work in the past and present, experiences of loss and challenges of beginnings.

Viewing photography as a formative part of this history of mobility and migration, we will examine the interconnection between the concepts of 'nomadic' and 'camera'. From its introduction in the early-19th century and throughout numerous technical developments and innovations, photography has been a mobile medium closely tied to equipment, social conditions and cultural framings. Setting out from this hypothesis, the workshop and publication *Nomadic Camera* will centre around the following questions: how are dislocations interconnected with the technical evolutions of the mobile medium of photography? In which way do

Fig. 01
Erich Stenger, Die Geschichte der Kleinbildkamera bis zur Leica, Wetzlar 1949, S. 16

camera technologies presuppose and affect the visual formulation of exile, migration and flight experiences? What modifications in aesthetics and style, methods and practices of photography do temporary mobility, geographical relocation and resettlement imply?

The workshop organisers seek contributions that analyse the interrelation of photography and displacement from a variety of interdisciplinary perspectives and diverse methodologies, theoretical approaches and thematical framings. The workshop and the resulting publication will be arranged into four main sections:

Section A: Techniques, technologies
Section B: Body, agents, performativity
Section C: Media narrations, narratives
Section D: Circulation, archive, memory.

We invite also artistic visual essays in addition to scholarly contributions.

The Käte Hamburger Research Centre will cover hotel and return travel costs within Europe or, for those coming from other continents, a significant portion of return flights (details determined after acceptance) for those invited to present. The workshop will be in English. Presentations should be 30 minutes in length. Remote participation will be possible, as the workshop will be held in hybrid form.

Expanded, elaborated contributions based on selected talks from the workshop will be published in an edited volume. Final drafts must be submitted by 15 November 2022. Applicants should note the turn-around time between the workshop and the final submission date.

Proposals of up to 300 words should indicate the preferred section. Please send them along with a half-page CV to Burcu Dogramaci (burcu.dogramaci@lmu.de), Winfried Gerling (winfried.gerling@fh-potsdam.de), Jens Jäger (jens.jaeger@uni-koeln.de), Birgit Mersmann (birgit.mersmann@uni-due.de) by 15 November 2022.