BIRGIT MERSMANN, CHRISTIANE KRUSE, ARNOLD BARTETZKY (EDS.)

IMAGE CONTROVERSIES

Contemporary Iconoclasm in Art, Media, and Cultural Heritage

DE GRUYTER

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Printed with the support of the Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe in Leipzig. This measure is co-financed by tax funds on the basis of the budget approved by the Saxon State Parliament.

Printed with the financial support of Muthesius University of Fine Arts and Design, Kiel.

With special thanks to the Institute for the Advanced Study in the Humanities at the University of Duisburg-Essen, the Fritz Thyssen Foundation and the Institute of Art History at the University of Bonn.

ISBN 978-3-11-077348-4
e-ISBN (PDF) 978-3-11-077357-6
DOI https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110773576

Library of Congress Control Number: 2024930573

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the internet at http://dnb.dnb.de.

Cover image: "Ehemaliger Standort der "Hockenden N***" von Arminius Hasemann in der Leuchtenburgstraße, Berlin Zehlendorf". Photo © Christiane Kruse
Cover design: Katja Peters
Proofreading and copy editing: Andrea Scrima
Editorial editing: Engel Friederike Holst, Christina Neubauer
Typesetting: LVD GmbH, Berlin
Printing and binding: Beltz Grafische Betriebe GmbH, Bad Langensalza
www.degruyter.com

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BIRGIT MERSMANN, CHRISTIANE KRUSE, ARNOLD BARTETZKY

Contemporary Iconoclasms

Introduction

Throughout history, virtually every culture that has invented images as insignia of its symbolic power, representations of identity, and value tokens of its past has also experienced hostile attacks on its pictorial symbols (cf. Parzinger 2015). In contemporary societies that see themselves as enlightened, tolerant, and liberal towards others, acts of image destruction would ordinarily be considered obsolete. However, the exact opposite can be observed: current iconoclasms are not performed exclusively by totalitarian regimes and directed against contemporary pluralism and its representatives; even in pluralistically structured contemporary societies that define themselves as liberal democracies, we see reemerging iconoclasms breaking out with renewed violence. In global, national, regional, and local political conflicts of the twenty-first century, collapsed monuments, desecrated images, and the violent destruction of cultural heritage take center stage (Herndon/Kila 2017; Higgins 2021; Thompson 2022). Iconoclastic actions against testimonials of visual material culture and history act as dynamite in the public sphere and media arena of political, religious, national, and identity conflicts. Even the contemporary art world is shaken by politicized controversies over which visual artworks can or should be shown in exhibitions and public spaces, which images are intolerable due to their offensiveness (cf. Kruse/Meyer/Korte 2018), and where the freedom of art is threatened by censorship and cancel culture (Rauterberg 2019; Ng 2022; Bartetzky 2023). At documenta fifteen (2022) in Kassel, Germany, image exhibition conflicts over allegations of anti-Semitism (Ruangrupa 2022; Markl/Feuerherdt 2022) escalated to the point where a controversial image—the banner *People's Justice* by the Indonesian artist collective Taring Padi—was permanently removed from the international art show.[1]

Besides art exhibitions, monuments in public spaces (such as world heritage sites), national historical sites, memorial and religious sites, and museum institutions as preservers of art and cultural heritage are increasingly threatened by iconoclasms. Where terrorist organizations and radical political/religious groups ignite violent clashes, the destruction of monumental world heritage sites is considered a particularly effective political triumph for the media. From 2014 onwards, the strategic practice of media-conscious "performative iconoclasm" (Falser 2020) has been brutally demonstrated by the Salafi-Jihadist military organization of the Islamic State—known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110773576_001

(ISIL)—, which deliberately detonated the UNESCO world heritage site of Palmyra in Syria and performed a nationwide destruction of religious, cultural, and educational sites in Iraq, including mosques, shrines, monasteries, churches, libraries, and artifacts in the Mosul Museum. Almost around the same time, a new type of American iconoclasm (Adam 2020) emerged that involved the dismantling and destruction of confederate memorials (Timmerman 2019; Brown 2020). The phenomenon of "urban fallism" was born, defined by the urban sociologists Sybille Frank and Mirjana Ristic as politically engaged actions of contesting, transforming, and/or removing a monument from urban space (Frank/Ristic 2020). Monuments of public figures involved in Anglo-American colonial settler history, such as explorers, political leaders, and slave traders, became the target of decolonizing and anti-racist iconoclastic attacks. Statues of Christopher Columbus were vandalized or completely knocked over throughout the US, but also in Latin American countries and Spain. The statue of English slave trader Edward Colston, for instance, was toppled from its pedestal in Bristol in a publicly staged *Black Lives Matter* protest event of "urban fallism" and sunk in the River Avon. With the aim to decolonize public space, anti-racist assaults, derogatorily termed "woke iconoclasm," also targeted humiliating portrayals of Black people and women (see Kruse's analysis of the beheading and removal of the public sculpture of the *Squatting N**** in Berlin-Zehlendorf in this volume). Even national identification symbols of political liberation, such as the republican statue of Marianne in the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, fell victim to iconoclastic attacks during anti-government protests carried out by the so-called "Yellow Vests" movement in December 2018.

In contrast to the toppling of statues, we also see the re-erection and renewed veneration of statues of historically disgraced political figures in the public sphere. This new trend of iconophile restoration can be exemplified by the installation of a Lenin statue in front of the main office of the Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany (MLDP) in 2020; a subsequent erection of a Karl Marx statue in Gelsenkirchen in 2022; and the 2022 re-erection of toppled Lenin statues in the Ukrainian cities of Nova Kakhovka und Henichesk by the Russian occupiers. Moreover, an increase in the inauguration of Stalin monuments in particular regions of Russia, such as Novosibirsk, can be observed. The epochal parallelism of these phenomena—the reemergence of iconoclasm perpetrated against heritage sites and statues *and* the reinstallation of monuments—makes it clear that contemporary controversies over images are an expression of (geo-)political shifts and socio-cultural transformation processes, be they post-socialist/communist/Soviet, de-colonial/neo-imperial, post-migrant/racist, post-democratic, or neo-liberalist. A wide variety of these transformative aspects of contemporary iconoclasm is discussed in this volume.

The first section, "Iconoclastic Politics. Clashes over Monuments," sheds light on the contemporary manifestations, practices, and agents of iconoclasm directed against monuments and memorials. In looking at the motivations for and the instrumentalization of iconoclastic actions in specific historical contexts and domains of public culture, the section reveals how closely iconoclastic politics as "a form of control, censorship, and expression" (Adams 2020) is intertwined with racial, ethnic, cultural, social, religious, and/or gender identity politics, escalating in the current "culture wars" and their ideological battles (Adams 2019; Hlavajova/Lütticken 2020).

In particular, after reaching a climax in the nineteenth century with the erection of national monuments to historical events and persons, the situation of the monument as a powerful imagined figuration of shared history and collective memory has become uncertain and controversial. Once intended to serve the identity of a nation and the representation of a state, the monument raises the question as to how a society sees itself. It stands as *pars pro toto* in public space. Its violent downfall reveals the ambivalence of political history that a society (no longer) wants to commemorate (see Brundage's discussion of contemporary disputes over Confederate memorials in the modern American South). In terms of statues, biographies of personalities that have been celebrated as role models are examined. At stake is the visual message of the monument: the image of human power, humanity, and humankind that should be overthrown along with the monument, and the image—a different or blank one as a reminder of the former image elimination—that should take its place. If a monument in its traditional commemorative and mediating function is no longer up-to-date, new forms and functions need to be considered. Where to put the toppled monument is a central issue up for discussion, while the question as to how to recontextualize the monument in such a way that it may be tolerated by its enemies can serve as a form of political education, or even bring about future reconciliation. Apart from the controversial debate over the future of old monuments, the erection of new monuments and memorials is a challenging task open to discussion: what new image allows for identification *and* a controversial discussion of history, persons, and events without risking a new attack on the statue?

Losing the monument on site means losing a historical place of remembrance and a source of tradition that informs us about the preferred values and worldviews of a community at the time of its erection. At the same time (as Günther argues by introducing the concept of "social iconoclasm" in reference to the iconoclastic policies of ISIS), the destruction of cultural heritage also causes a loss of the ontological significance of concrete material objects and sites for specific social practices in the present, i. e., the establishment, retention, and transformation of social identities of local and transnational communities. The smashing of idols, mausoleums, and heritage sites, as practiced by ISIS, is not only geared towards an amnesia of cultural and pictorial history, but also an obliteration of identities.

The essays comprising the first section study iconoclastic policies in relation to issues of national and religious identity, erasure of historical relics, reinterpretation of the past, and anti-racist activism (see Bartetzky's contribution on uncomfortable monuments between decommunization and decolonization). Spanning from national to global image and heritage politics, they demonstrate the extent to which radical political beliefs and religious ideologies such as Islamism, Christian/Protestant fundamentalism, white suprematism and settler colonialism, Blackism, woke ideology, and (de-)communism/(neo-)Marxism motivate and trigger iconoclashes over monuments.

The second section of the book discusses contemporary idol disputes in museums, the visual arts, and the public sphere that occur at the interstice between materiality and immateriality, matter and magic. The new feature and logic of contemporary global idol disputes in the twenty-first century became manifest in the destruction of the monumental Bamiyan statues in

Afghanistan by the Taliban in 2001. Characteristic for this was that the shifting argumentation was strategically tailored to the changing political situation, and that the question as to whether the war-like iconoclastic attack on the statues was meant as the destruction of religious idols, artworks, or a cultural heritage site remained ambiguous (Falser 2020; Mersmann 2021). In the politically motivated argumentation of the Islamic fundamentalist Taliban, the focus of evaluation shifted from the protection of Afghan cultural heritage (Muhammad Omar's first decree), i. e., the preservation of art and cultural assets in Afghanistan (including the Bamiyan statues), to the destruction of idols as a religiously motivated iconoclastic practice (Muhammad Omar's second decree: "The breaking of statues is an Islamic order," cit. in Falser 2010: 83f.). The international art and cultural community, in turn, tried to prevent the threatened destruction of the Bamiyan statues by liberating them from their status as idols (or at least their potential status) and elevating them to art objects, more precisely: art museum and cultural heritage objects. In this argumentative context, Muhammad Omar accused the director of the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, Philippe de Montebello, who had offered to buy the statues, of being a buyer of idols. The discourse accompanying the iconoclastic destruction of the Bamiyan statues illustrates where the contemporary lines of conflict in the idol disputes run, namely between religiously motivated image and heritage eradication on the one side and the international culture and museum politics of art and heritage protection on the other, as practiced and regulated by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) under the umbrella of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. This dividing line raises several new and urgent questions regarding the repositioning of iconoclasm in relation to the legacy and values of Western modernity. Must not the protection of art and cultural assets, a key factor in the modernizing agenda of the secularly enlightened West, also face the accusation of practicing Occidentalist idolatry? That is, the sacral auratization and spiritual transcendentalization of material object culture? When, under what conditions, and in which situations does the act of reconstructing destroyed cultural heritage transform itself into an iconoclastic gesture? What iconoclastic art forms and ritual practices provide counter-concepts to the Occidentalist idolatry of material culture? (see Hüwelmeier's contribution on malevolent/benevolent iconoclasm in her ethnographic research on image practices and politics in late socialist Vietnam and Genge's postcolonial repositioning of fetishism and idolatry within the Négritude art movement). In view of the rise in the desecration of images and the revival of executions in effigy in political conflict situations (see Müller's transhistorical study on punishing images), are we facing a new magical charging of images whose form and function could be defined as political idolatry? It appears that iconoclastic acts of violence staged with media impact and disseminated via social networks are the idolatrous image currency of the digital network society.

Investigations of iconoclasm and the museum are a relatively recent research trend, fueled by an increased interest in the role of museums for society, their potential in terms of identity/diversity-building, and the ongoing museum debate on decolonization and restitution. According to Boldrick, museums have acknowledged "the critical roles destruction and loss play in the lives of objects and in contemporary political life" (Boldrick 2020: n. p.). The fact is that politically and/or religiously motivated idol disputes have not only been brought into the art and museum world from the outside; they are also intrinsic to the institutional setting and conceptual framing of

what Bennett has termed "the exhibitionary complex" (Bennett 1988). What does it mean to tear religious icons and idols out of their sacred contexts and to present them anew in an art exhibition or ethnographic museum? Bruno Latour already posed this question in the framework of the exhibition *Iconoclash. Beyond the image wars in science, religion and art* at the ZKM in Karlsruhe in 2002 (Latour/Weibel 2002). What is the impact on issues of restitution when iconoclastic dimensions of colonial collections are brought into play? Do museums and exhibitions serve a new form of iconoclasm when they exhibit and curate devotional images and objects, idols, and fetishes—for instance artifacts of Prophet Muhammad? (see Arab's critical reflection on iconoclastic museum practices, in particular the deselecting, veiling, and removing of images of the Prophet Muhammad at the Tropenmuseum/National Museum of World Cultures in Amsterdam between 2015 and 2020). In doing so, do they make themselves guilty towards religious communities from the regions of origin of the respective images as well as from the local area? In the aftermath of the attack on the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* and heated debates on offensive pictures, the Victoria & Albert Museum was forced to remove a devotional picture of the Prophet Muhammad from its online database. Can the museum space protect idols from their potential destruction by iconoclasts? (see Meyer's contribution on the display of *legba* idols and *szoka* charms of the Ghanese Ewe in the museum). The contributions in the book's second section demonstrate that museums are directly involved in image controversies over sacred/religious images, whether it be as preservers, dismantlers, or censors, and that it is time to study the positioning of museums between iconophilia and iconoclasm from an interdisciplinary perspective.

The third section focuses on forms of mediation of iconoclasm in contemporary art and cultural heritage. Mediation is understood threefold as 1. the distribution and circulation of images of iconoclasm in and across different media; 2. processes and practices of transference and reenactment; and 3. intervention in image disputes to react to, comment upon, or resolve the conflict. Acts of image destruction imply visual mediation and communication. They are commonly followed by a flood of images that stage, perform, and instrumentalize the iconoclastic action for either its original or different purposes. In addition to these source images that serve the documentation and circulation of iconoclastic violence, there exists a rich variety of secondary mediating images of a post-iconoclastic conditionality that aim at reacting to and reflecting upon the act and relic of contemporary iconoclasm. The essays in this section address the critical role art plays in reappropriating, recontextualizing, and reinterpreting contemporary iconoclasms (see Ohls's conceptualization of *econoclash* deduced from eco-reflective discourses in contemporary art), their inducements, concepts, and strategies of aggression, intervention, and eradication. Criticality enacted through iconoclastic strategies has developed a dynamic idiosyncratic life in art and visual culture (see Schwingeler's analysis of iconoclasm as an artistic strategy in video game art). In the same context, the papers in this section explore mediating phenomena of post-iconoclasm that have so far received little attention in iconoclasm research, such as the artistic re-inscription or resurrection of a fallen monument on site (see Schieder's examination of the "art of monument fall") or the virtual and/or physical reconstruction of destroyed cultural heritage (see Mersmann's discussion of reconstruction proposals for the destroyed Bamiyan Buddha statues under the notion of "substitute images").

The research contributions collected in this volume emphasize the demand for further studies to look deeper into the double-sidedness and dialectical nature of iconoclasm, the connections and tensions between destructive and (re-)constructive/creative iconoclasm, malevolent and benevolent iconoclasm. Phenomena of post-iconoclasm, such as the complete elimination, digital reconstruction, artistic re-inscription, or institutional reappropriation of the destroyed image/fallen monument through heritagization, musealization, and theme-park-ization form an emerging research field that needs to be developed further. With the advent of digital image(ing) cultures, the meaning of iconoclasm as a place-centered and site-specific practice of violence against art and cultural heritage must be rethought. There is a need for a repositioning of (post-)iconoclastic place-making at the interface between physical on-site and virtual online space. To understand the struggle for hegemony in current culture and image wars, it is key to study the intertwinement of online and offline cultures of iconoclasm and the mediation of image violence, such as the memeification of iconoclastic actions, on the internet and in social media. Besides iconoclasm as a reflective practice and performance of criticality in art, the role of exhibitions and museums in triggering, reflecting, and negotiating image controversies in contemporary post-migrant societies requires closer examination and illumination.

Notes

1 The curating collective Ruangrupa was alleged to have collaborated with and showcased the work of organizations, activists, and artists that support the Anti-Israeli BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) movement or express anti-Semitic views. The banner *People's Justice* by the Indonesian artist collective Taring Padi, centrally installed on Friedrichsplatz in Kassel in front of the main entrance to documenta, was seen as representing anti-Semitic motifs. In an image-censoring reaction following publicly conducted disputes between Taring Padi, the curating collective Ruangrupa, the documenta management, the ministry of culture, and experts on art and anti-Semitism, the banner installation was first covered and—after a short period of public presentation—completely removed from the documenta exhibition. This incident has fueled a fierce debate on art and censorship, one in which iconoclastic (re)actions must be repositioned.

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I. ICONOCLAST POLITICS: CLASHES OVER MONUMENTS

CHRISTIANE KRUSE

Beheading the Squatting N***

Decolonizing the Public Space

A Statue Is Beheaded

Prior to June 18, 2020, the destruction of a statue depicting a Black woman exhibited in public space had not yet occurred in Germany; to my knowledge, no such incidents have occurred anywhere else in Europe. This is due, on the one hand, to the simple fact that there are very few statues of Black women in spaces freely accessible to the public (apart from museums and art galleries),[1] and on the other to the fact that while a large number incorporating depictions of Black women do indeed exist in a European, and particularly German, art context, these are for the most part canonized works housed in protected spaces, be they museums, galleries, or private collections. Works of art depicting Black women are generally valued because they have already been recognized as art. In this context, one cannot, in the following investigation of an individual iconoclastic act, speak of a "reemerging iconoclasm." As one in a series of iconoclasms that have occurred throughout the course of the post-colonial critique of colonialism in the western world, however, the case fits well in this collection of essays.

During the night of June 18, 2020, a life-sized statue of a kneeling woman, which I'll refer to in this essay as *Squatting N*** (Hockende N***)*, was beheaded by unknown vandals in Berlin's Zehlendorf district (Fig. 1 a–b). The head was broken into two halves, the face and the back of the head (Fig. 1c),[2] and the statue covered in blue spray paint, particularly around the pedestal, which bears an inscription with the title and name of the sculptor, Arminius Hasemann (1888 Berlin–1979 Berlin). The sculpture was standing on a public strip of green in Leuchtenburgstrasse, opposite Hasemann's former place of residence and near another of his works depicting a faun (Fig. 2). The head, which the vandals left lying on the ground next to the statue, was stolen after the crime and later recovered. The torso is currently in storage in the district's Legal Office, separately from the head, which is held in the Parks Office. The whereabouts of the statue's face are unknown. Both the *Faun* and *Squatting N**** were on display in the artist's garden until Hasemann's death in 1980, when, on a local initiative, they were moved to the site facing the sculptor's parental home and residence, which was slated for demolition. A group of monkeys was donated to the Zoological Garden (see *Bildhauerei in Berlin*—Hasemann).[3] In

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110773576_002

1 a Arminius Hasemann, *Squatting N*** (Hockende N***)*, 1920s (after the destruction 06/18/2020)

1 b Pedestal with blue painted inscription plate

1 c Arminius Hasemann, *Squatting N****, detail: Back of the head (after the destruction 06/18/2020)

2000, thanks to the Zehlendorf local historical society and the funds they raised, the two figures were cleaned and signs created for the works.

Years had passed, and no one seemed bothered by the sight of *Squatting N**** and the *Faun,* which paid tribute to the sculptor and his former home and workplace. The *Squatting N**** became a political point of contention on August 7, 2019, however, when, at the prompting of the ISD (*Initiative schwarzer Menschen in Deutschland* or Initiative of Black People in Germany) and the *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen* (Alliance 90/The Greens, a green political party in Germany), the district assembly (BVV) of Steglitz-Zehlendorf submitted a request for the removal of the statue from public space. The decision to comply with the request was made on January 22, 2020.[4] In April of 2020, the director of the City History Museum Spandau, Dr. Urte Evert, received an inquiry asking if the statue could be included in the exhibition "Enthüllt" (Unveiled) at the Zitadelle, the District Museum in Spandau, which displays political monuments from Berlin that have been removed from public space because their history is considered offensive.[5] Among the works shown here are the head of Nikolai Tomsky's statue of Lenin, the *Zehnkämpfer* (Decathlete) by Arno Breker, and the sculptures Wilhelm II commissioned for his "Siegesallee" (Victory Avenue) of Brandenburgian Prussian rulers. In June 2020, it was agreed that the *Squatting N**** statue would be relocated to the "Enthüllt" exhibition. Following the work's destruc-

2 Arminius Hasemann, *Faun*, circa 1920s, Berlin Zehlendorf

tion on November 10, 2020, the district assembly responsible, in Spandau, rejected the request that the *Squatting N**** be presented in "Enthüllt" and documented alongside the circumstances of the iconoclastic act. The destroyed sculpture had become a political issue, an *iconoclash* (Latour 2002) that ignited conflicting opinions about how to deal with images embodying racist statements. In absence of an agreement regarding how or whether the ruined figure should be displayed, it is currently being kept under lock and key (*Tagesspiegel*, July 9, 2020).

In the following, in order to understand this iconoclastic act and to assess how best to deal with the statue's fragments, I will present various views on and interests in the case in an art historical and visual cultural investigation. The first aspect requiring clarification is the (art-) historical context of the sculpture at the time of its creation as well as its unusual iconography, which I would like to situate in the context of German colonialism. A subsequent step addresses the question of how the sculpture can be assessed in the current debate on national and global colonialism, which needs to be more thoroughly understood. A third point to consider is the local conflict, the fact that the statue became the focus of political contention between conflicting interests, an iconoclash (2002). The final point will deal with the statue's future presentation.

The Sculpture's (Art-) Historical Context

In stylistic terms, the sculptures *Squatting N**** and the *Faun* are closely related. Both are undated. The *Squatting N**** is depicted as a life-sized, scantily clad woman in a wrapped

3 Arminius Hasemann, *Squatting N****, circa 1920s, formerly Berlin Zehlendorf

garment whose nude upper body is gaunt, but whose arms and legs are markedly strong and muscular (Fig. 3). Her outsized arms are crossed, with the right hand resting on her opposite leg and the left hand holding a round fruit between her legs. Viewed from the side, what stands out are the hunched back and an exaggeratedly long and powerful neck, which merges into a countenance of coarse features and a receding forehead. She's wearing a turban-like headscarf and carrying a full pouch of water on her back; together with the fruit between her legs, it identifies her as a farm worker resting from her labor on the land. Stylistic features—a cross between Art Nouveau, with the graphic, linear curves in the folds of the fabric and the powerful limbs, and Expressionism, which emerges in the simplified shapes of the face and hands—suggest a date somewhere in the 1920s. Art historically, this was the Expressionist decade in Germany; politically, it was the time of the Weimar Republic, World War I, and, as a result of

the latter, the Versailles Treaty of 1919 and the end of German colonial rule. It's unknown who commissioned the statue, but a commission is likely, because the stone the statues are sculpted from, shell limestone, is costly (Lorenz 2000: 75). The sculpture's material and size indicate an intention to install the figure outdoors. Iconographically, the sculpture of the *Squatting N**** belongs in the context of paintings and sculptures representing Black people in Expressionist art, including those of Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Erich Heckel, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, and Emil Nolde, to list only a few familiar names. It differs markedly from these artists, however, even beyond the subject matter. An iconography depicting the agricultural work of Black people, particularly women, is without precedent in Expressionist sculpture. At the most, there are drawings by artists like Max Pechstein, who sketched people harvesting taro on his 1914 expedition to the South Sea colony of Palau (Soika 2016: 80). There are no known sculptures by members of the *Brücke* in Dresden and Berlin depicting women farm workers, or of the *Blue Rider* in Munich, meaning that Hasemann's life-sized sculpture is an individual iconographic case requiring elucidation. The sculpture's visual and cultural historical context is multi-faceted. All over Europe, from the mid-nineteenth century, Black people from colonized regions and beyond were recruited for ethnological expositions, world fairs, and colonial exhibitions to simultaneously satisfy people's curiosity about "exotic" humans and to legitimize colonialism. African villages were built presenting recruited Africans engaged in everyday activities in order to demonstrate European progressiveness in comparison to people from Africa and other countries, who were denigrated as "primitive," as Hilke Thode-Arora describes the situation in the 1920s:

> The people who were hauled off to Europe and presented to audiences as attractions served as examples of ethnic types and were intended to convey information about 'race.' (. . .) Visitors to human exhibitions wanted to 'discover' things, expected to encounter strange cultures and peoples, and reserved the right to make decisions about their bodies (. . .). Photographs missionaries had brought back with them, racist products and collectibles imported from the USA, as well as advertisements, comics, children's books, exotic novels, songs, toys, movies, plays, and 'blackface' performances by white people wearing make-up—the culture industry was teeming with garbled messages about African people. This distorted set of images, laden with historical and folkloric prejudice, was the mental baggage visitors brought with them to ethnological exhibitions; it was what prompted them to go in the first place, while at the same time creating the setting for the experiences the Black performers underwent in Germany. (Thode-Arora 2021: 140–141)

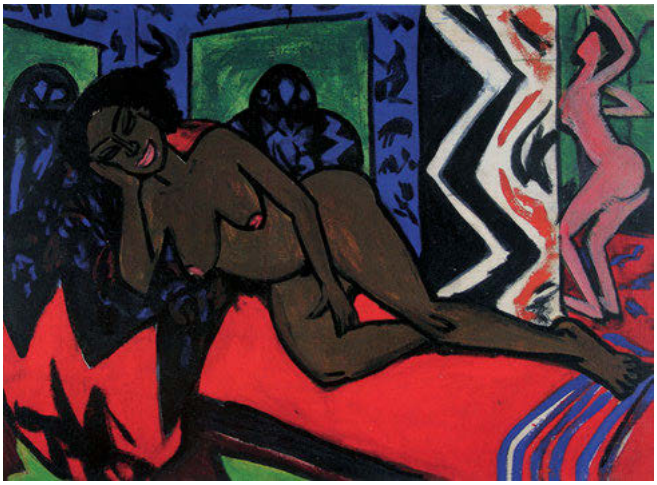
In Hamburg, when Carl Hagenbeck organized his first Völkerschau in 1874, it marked the beginning of the privately organized "crowd magnets" staged in most German cities. The first of two state-organized colonial exhibitions took place in Berlin in 1896 as part of the trade exhibition in Treptow (the show was titled "Zurückgeschaut," or a look back), followed by numerous private ethnological shows. "When selecting *individuals* for an ethnological exhibition, the most important criterion seemed to be appearance. Preference was given to those who most closely corresponded to a region's ideal anthropological type" (Thode-Arora 1989: 64). The idea was to display the spectacular physical strangeness of a largely "unacculturated 'original people'" in the

midst of a "picturesque-looking everyday life" (ibid.: 61). Thus, the racist and degrading view projected onto non-whites, which had prevailed throughout the entire Western world in the course of the nineteenth century in the interests of establishing a "white master race," forms the frame of reference for ethnological exhibitions as well as for the *Squatting N****.

As mentioned above, the *Squatting N**** is depicted as a farm laborer. In his book *Arbeit in Afrika* (Work in Africa), the legal historian Harald Sippel examined a competition put on by the German East African Society in 1885 on the topic "What is the best way to educate Negroes to work on plantations?" (Sippel 1996; Schubert 2001: 65–119) Out of 64 essays, a prominent jury awarded prizes to two texts, one of them by the London merchant Hermann Bibo, which was published in 1887 as a monograph with the same title as the competition. In the course of its 46 pages, it explains the education of colonial peoples for the purposes of labor. In the colonies' German-run plantations, cheap workers were to be trained for "civilization," which was intended to serve as the "ethical and moral justification for the colonization of foreign peoples" (Sippel 1996: 315). Bibo's text includes a passage describing how a plantation worker should be dressed:

> In the case of the Negro as well as the Negress in tropical Africa, the upper part of the body must remain free during work. They also find stockings and footwear annoying; one gives to both sexes the Scottish 'kilt' made of cotton fabric, which is fastened around the body with no more than a belt (. . .). On the other hand, they require (. . .) a handsome and practical headgear—that of the Roman Contadina, with a short folded veil of white calico lightly covering the neck, is fully sufficient for work in the fields. (Bibo 1887: 40)

The indigenous forced laborers were accused of being "averse to work," "lazy," and "indolent," or, as Bibo writes, exhibiting a "natural tendency to idleness" (ibid.: 13). This derogatory image from colonial reality is also part of the sculpture's context and the iconography of *Squatting N****. In 1910/1911, Brücke artists in Dresden invited Black people into their studios and photographed, drew, and painted them. Ernst Ludwig Kirchner and Erich Heckel depicted the artists recruited for the Schumann Circus with the American-sounding pseudonyms Sam, Milly, and Nelly as nude dancers, as a "Black Venus" or "Negro Couple" to provoke the prudish Wilhelmine Prussian society with the sexuality of Black people, which was imagined to be "unbridled" (Strzoda 2006: 78–95, Weikop 2018: 109–114, Kelly 2021: 156–161). The implementation of an iconography traditionally seen as belonging to high culture, such as Kirchner's sleeping Venus (Fig. 4), shows the objectifying instrumentalization of the Black models for the rebellious artists' own purposes: a Nietzsche-inspired rejection of the bourgeois aesthetics of "well-established older powers" and, as stated in the Brücke program of 1906, of "civilization" and "bourgeois 'values'". Not long before World War I broke out, this attention to nature, to exoticism, and to the so-called "primitive" forms of the artifacts coming from colonial territories and exhibited in ethnological museums was intended to initiate a "purification process" of culture many artists and intellectuals were demanding at the time. Although the pictures of Sam, Milly, and Nelly present body shapes and physiognomies with 'racially' identifying traits, it was certainly not the intention of the Brücke Expressionists to paint their figures with the contemptuous aesthetics



4 Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, *Sleeping Milly (Schlafende Milly)*, 1911, Bremen, Kunsthalle

that had been widespread in racial doctrines since the Enlightenment. In any case, there are no caricaturing racial features to be found in the physiognomy of Kirchner's *Sleeping Nelly*, as they were conveyed in a stereotypical manner in the racial discourses of the nineteenth century. The figures were supposed to provoke through their simplistic and exaggerated forms, but not be repulsive or ugly. Indeed, the intention of the art was to shock people by sexualizing 'foreign' naked bodies in such a way that viewers could witness racial prejudice being thwarted by their own sexual desire. Post-colonial Western art history argues that avant-garde artists are part of systemic racism in that they use colonialism for the purposes of their art precisely because, as in the case of *Schlafende Nelly* (Sleeping Nelly), it "reduces Black bodies to a locus of desire and enchantment" (Kelly 2021:159).

In contrast, Hasemann's *Squatting N**** does not show the Black body in the sexually charged way some of the Brücke artists use. The figure's secondary sexual characteristics, her breasts and buttocks—forms the Brücke artists overemphasized as big and round—are concealed in *Squatting N**** by the arms crossed in front of the upper body and by her seated position. The chest of *Squatting N**** is depicted as sunken or emaciated, as if to obviate a sexualized view. Instead, Hasemann gave the figure long, overly muscular limbs and a physiognomy endowed with features that have been delineated in racial discourses since the eighteenth century. Johann Joachim Winckelmann's *History of the Art of Antiquity* (1763) identified a European-centric ideal of beauty dating back to antiquity that defined a people—Winckelmann does not yet speak of 'race,' but of "peoples"—as a difference in form, and devalued the Black as "ape-like":

> The flattened nose of the Kalmyk, the Chinese, and other distant peoples, is likewise a deviation: it interrupts the unity of the forms (. . .). The thick, pouting mouth that the Moors have in common

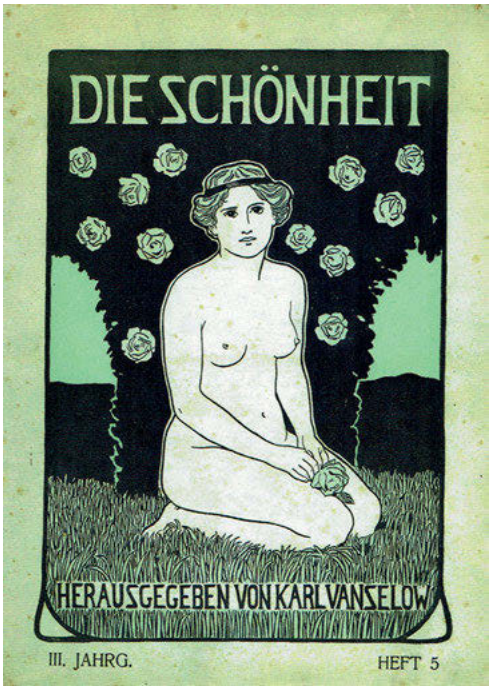
> with the apes in their land is a superfluous growth and a swelling caused by the heat of their climate, just as our lips swell up from the heat or from sharp, salty moisture or, in some men, with violent anger. (Winckelmann 1763/2006: 194)

One integral part of the visual frame of reference for *Squatting N**** are the illustrated volumes with photographs taken in the colonies, which were particularly focused on the female body, as were the two tomes Albert Friedenthal published in 1911 containing 1,084 illustrations of undressed or partially undressed people:

> With this work, it was my intention to write about the women of all peoples while paying special attention to their physical, mental, and spiritual characteristics. My knowledge is based on direct observation gained during 25 years of travel through most of the countries of the world and evaluated in anthropological and ethnological studies carried out over many years. (Friedenthal 1911: V)

The ethnologist Michael Wiener notes a "popularization of the ethnological subject (. . .), which subsequently appeared in an increasing number of illustrated volumes" (Wiener 1990: 75–76). At the beginning of the twentieth century, an interest in "early human history" emerged, and "ultimately, people believed that pictures from the lives of 'savages' and 'primitives' could be used to illustrate human history" (ibid.: 74–75). The interest in the everyday life of indigenous peoples at the beginning of the twentieth century apparent in the photographs is also evident in Hasemann's sculpture. In viewing the images of agricultural and manual labor in the photo books, city-dwelling readers felt they were looking back at pre-industrial Europe, and interpreted this as a "sign of a disappearing world": "While the 'savage,' otherwise denigrated as 'primitive,' experienced a new appreciation as the embodiment of a way of life that was disappearing in Europe but possessed lasting value and stood in contrast to the belief in progress that had dominated the early nineteenth century, it nonetheless remained only one element of an ideal expressed artistically in the picture," one that did not, moreover, exert an ameliorative effect on aggressive colonial policy or on local ethnological research practices (ibid.: 161). Hasemann's *Squatting N**** can therefore be interpreted as a work that symbolizes this retrospective view of humankind, in which notions about an original, primitive form of humanity living off its manual labor, embodied by a Black woman, blend with the realization that metropolitan industrial society had lost its former subsistence economy. The discovery of Neanderthal Man in 1856, whose "animal form" was sometimes explained as a "renunciation of God" in comparison with medieval concepts of the "Savage Man" (Auffermann/Weniger 2006: 184), goes hand-in-hand with the statue's form, which carries racist connotations. The emergence of the "ancestors of modern humans," particularly their physiognomy, interested anthropologists and artists alike, among them Amédée Forestier, who reconstructed the Neanderthals as "ancestors of anatomically modern humans" in 1911 according to Arthur Keith's specifications (ibid.). "Consequently, we are presented with a Neanderthal who hardly differs from modern humans and has all the appearance of a thoroughly human creature—a strong, Stone Age culture bearer shown seated by the fire in his working and living environment" (ibid.: 185). On

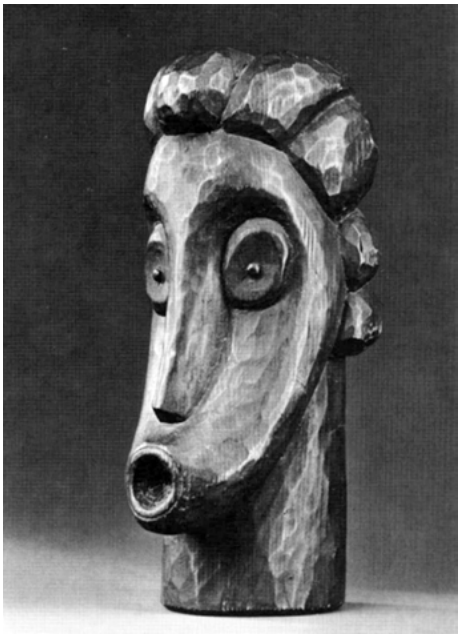
5 *Crouching Venus*, 3th century B. C., Rom, Museo Nazionale Romano



6 *The Beauty* (1905) 3 (5), cover

the other hand, some ethnographers considered Neanderthals and people from non-European cultures to be "savages".

Hasemann's kneeling figure invokes the iconographic motif of the crouching Venus, a European ideal of female artistic beauty par excellence dating back to the visual art of antiquity (Fig. 5). Hasemann takes the ancient archetypal form of the goddess—who, surprised to discover people observing her bathing, suddenly realizes her nakedness and quickly tries to cover it in an elegant gesture—and vigorously reformulates it into a counter-image of a woman whose body is massive and coarse. The hunched back, the shoulders slumped despite their muscularity, the masculine-looking breasts, and other above-mentioned features of an "ugliness" summarily attributed to the "Moors" or "N****" in the racial discourses of the time, call for a comparison to the "crouching Venus", which occupies a prominent place in the collective visual memory of the art-educated bourgeoisie and beyond. The cover image from 1905 of the magazine *Die Schönheit* (Beauty) (Fig. 6), which was published in connection with the German social reform movements, depicts the physical and artistic ideal the middle class worshiped and once again underscores the aesthetic difference in Hasemann's sculpture, which devalues a cultural stage of humanity as 'primitive,' 'savage,' and 'ugly,' be it found in Africa or the Neanderthal. The effect that Hasemann's *Squatting N**** had on viewers around 1920, the year it was presumably created, differs from the provocations of the Brücke and other Expressionist artists, whose works presented a frank and objectifying sexualization of Black people through an exaggeration



7 Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *Blue-red Head (Panic Terror) Blauroter Kopf (Panischer Schrecken),* 1917, Berlin, Brücke Museum

of female body forms, as discussed above. While the Expressionists, such as Kirchner, painted naked Black bodies in order to provide the bourgeoisie and the academic painting they subscribed to with a provocative counter-image, in the case of Hasemann, we can see a depiction charged with racism and contempt, which is reinforced by opposing it with the Western art motif of a woman named Venus canonized as "divinely beautiful." Im comparison with Venus and *Die Schönheit*, the *Squatting N**** becomes a caricature of Black people, in this case, the Black woman, as was part and parcel in the racial discourses of the Weimar Republic. The sculptor, by grossly exaggerating bodily and physiognomic features recognizable as "African," thus reinforces racist defamation.

The statue's counterpart, the *Faun*—whose half-human, half-animal figure stood during this period both for its licentiousness and its proximity to nature and hence distance to civilization—fits in with this racist, denigrating caricature of Venus and beauty (see Westermann 2017, Fig. 2). In Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), the satyr embodies the epitome "of a longing directed toward the primordial and natural," as the Greeks viewed it, but by no means the likeness of a monkey that he accused his contemporaries of. On the contrary: "In comparison with him, the man of culture was reduced to a misleading caricature." (Nietzsche 2008) Hasemann's *Faun* purses his lips to whistle natural flute notes, while his goat's face takes on the features of African masks, much in the way the expressionist Karl Schmidt-Rottluff interpreted them in 1917 in his *Blauroter Kopf (Panischer Schrecken)* (Remm 2018) (Fig. 7). Hasemann's clumsy figure of the "bearded satyr" is certainly not a picture of the "true man (. . .)

who cried out with joy to his god" as Nietzsche portrays him (ibid.). On the contrary, Hasemann's *Faun* becomes a caricature of the sublime figure that Nietzsche made into a paragon of the modern artist.

The Artist in Context

Hasemann was certainly not one of Nietzsche's followers; nor did he count among the Expressionists or other avant-garde movements from the 1920s. His sculptural work addressed popular themes with the superior, parodic gaze that spoke to the bourgeoisie of the Weimar Republic and their racist nationalism. He was known for editions of his graphic art, specifically the woodcut series *Circus* (1920) and *Don Quixote de La Mancha* (1922), which were made possible by the success of his book *Himmel und Hölle auf der Landstrasse* (Heaven and Hell on the Road, 1915), an essentially trivial report on his wanderings as a young artist that failed to appear in any of the contemporary anthologies of vagabond literature. Right from the start, he introduces himself as a bohemian looking for a job without "pressure" and yearning for something greater: "I've always had respect for the large stone figures and ornaments on old buildings," he writes, and suspects that the difficulties of creating such "enduring stone images" provided the impetus that drove him to sculpture. He recalls that his grandfather told him about Michelangelo, "whose name I had a lot of trouble pronouncing; I kept forgetting it" (Hasemann 1915/1922: 6), an echo of Marinetti's *Manifesto of Futurism* (1910) resonates in his contempt for Italian art tradition which play no role in *Himmel und Hölle auf der Landstrasse*. Thus, the two figures' oversized limbs address Michelangelo, whose "grandfatherly" art Hasemann doesn't pay homage to but rather derides through caricatural exaggeration. In a foreword, the book's anonymous editor, who induced Hasemann to "record his experiences," expounds upon the artist's journeys in unmistakable populist nationalist parlance. "Only Germans embark on journeys! And the power in those who wander can bring blessings to the German fatherland" (ibid.: VII). At the same time, the editor puts in a word for German colonialism, which was locked in competition with the French. Instead of fighting in the French Foreign Legion, he argues:

> A German legion for the German colonies! That alone would be a lot of work. (. . .) Create a place for him [the German, C. K.] in the German colonies where no one asks where he comes from, but rather what he can do! And you will see how the German, the born soldier, gladly spills his blood for the fatherland instead of for a foreign people. (ibid.: VIII)

In keeping with this is the fact that Hasemann trained with the sculptor Hermann Volz (1847–1941) at the Großherzogliche Badische Kunstschule (Grand Ducal Baden Art School) in Karlsruhe in 1910–1912. "As an artist and teacher, Volz, one of the most successful sculptors of monuments in the monument-hungry nationalist period following 1871, embodied the nineteenth-century academic tradition." (Schmidt 2012: 66)[6]

From that point on, Hasemann's travel chronicle no longer recounts art historical concerns, but rather his encounters with various characters, for instance in Melilla on the African continent:

"People in brown robes and with brutish gestures, Negro boys, Spanish soldiers (. . .)." (ibid.: 152) He did not, however, utter a single word concerning German colonial rule in Africa. As a sculptor, Hasemann never became known outside Berlin. A native Berliner, he underwent academic training as a sculptor and graphic artist in Karlsruhe and Charlottenburg and adapted to Berlin's shifting political majorities or, as his sole biographer Detlef Lorenz notes:

> Just a moment ago, he was still an active Nazi [1932 membership in the NSDAP, so-called 'cultural warden' (Kulturwart) in the local Zehlendorf chapter, C. K.]; now [following the end of the war, C. K.], Hasemann was drafted into the construction staff of the Red Army and was soon in a leading position, involved in building the Treptow Memorial (. . .), and a short time later in the reconstruction of the State Opera Unter den Linden. (Lorenz 2000: 79)

From Neighborhood Darling to Political Issue

It's no longer possible to explain why *Squatting N**** and the *Faun* remained in the artist's garden, given that the sculptures' size and material suggest they were commissions. One presumes a designated spot in Tiergarten, where ethnological exhibitions took place. But public interest in them had decreased and was no longer encouraged because the fear of "racial mixing," i. e., sexual contact between Germans and Africans, was too great on the part of the National Socialists, who criminalized it in 1940 (Aitken/Rosenhaft: 2013, 194–229; Dreesbach 2005: 25). What is certain is that the two statues in front of the artist's former home and studio had no more than a regional impact limited to the Steglitz-Zehlendorf area. When the *Squatting N**** was installed with funding from the cultural budget of the Steglitz-Zehlendorf district, it was probably not intended to honor a racist whose art was barely known in 1980 and whose National Socialist past people would have preferred to forget. In 1970, Hasemann was commissioned to create a bronze monument for Friedrich Ebert, another indication of the opportunistic attitude that had also led him to conceal his membership in the NSDAP (Archive CU 20). After the artist's death, the statues became the property of the Steglitz-Zehlendorf district (Archive CE 6). The neighbors' petition states that the two statues "can be saved from destruction" and "contribute to beautifying our street" (Archive CU 21 and 22) and was initiated as an art project. For years, nobody was bothered by the unapologetic racism of the *Squatting N****. People either passed by without noticing or acknowledged her with a glance of approval. The people of Zehlendorf, however, honored the pair of sculptures in 2000 with an inscription and cleaning paid for by public donations. In terms of image theory, *Squatting N**** was a "weak image" (Kruse 2017) that attracted no more than local attention.

The sculpture became a political issue on January 22, 2020, when the *Initiative Schwarzer Menschen in Berlin*, together with Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, secured its removal from the Steglitz-Zehlendorf district government. And it is precisely this fact that makes it a "strong image" in the terminology of image theory (Kruse 2017). The justification the cultural policy spokesman for the Greens offered, which led to the decision, was her portrayal as "naked, monkey-like, and simple-minded" and "strongly prone to conveying racist stereotypes. (. . .) In the framework of

exhibitions in the Ethnological Museum, an appropriate context could be created to explain and prevent racism." (BVV Spandau 1471/V 1/22/2020). The desire to remove the sculpture coincides with two fatal attacks on Black people, William Tonou-Mbobda in Hamburg and Rooble Warsame in Schweinfurt. The men died under circumstances that have as yet to be clarified. The murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, which eventually brought down dozens of monuments in the US and Europe to individuals accused of racism, particularly slave traders, coincided with the discussion over renaming Berlin's Mohrenstrasse into Anton-Wilhelm-Amo-Strasse, initiated by various Africa activists. On June 15, 2020, the monument to Bismarck, a dispute over whose colonial policy had recently broken out, was smeared with blood-red paint in Schleepark in Hamburg. In other words, mid-2020 saw an increased willingness to topple monuments, a reaction to systemic racism and the historical erasure of colonialism and the slave trade in Germany with violence against defamatory imagery. In the course of these events, *Squatting N**** was beheaded and covered in blue spray paint in Zehlendorf. I use the term "beheaded" here, because the unknown perpetrators had a particular intention in destroying the statue, which I will discuss in the following. In any case, the decapitation was aimed specifically at violently separating the head from the statue's body.

Who did the act address, and who—apart from the members of the *Initiative Schwarzer Menschen in Deutschland*—had an interest in the sculpture being removed from public space? Did the iconoclastic act target a conception of art on the part of a Weimar Republic-era sculptor whose National Socialist past as an armed 'cultural warden' had since come to light (Lorenz 2000), but had not attracted attention until 2019? A white sculptor who presumed to depict a Black woman in such a way? Or was it aimed at German history and a reluctance to come to terms with the crimes committed against Black people during colonialism? The display, without commentary, of a nearly naked Black woman next to the figure of a faun, a creature considered to be licentious?

First of all, it should be noted that it wasn't a monument that was toppled that day in Zehlendorf, on June 18, 2020—a work of art was vandalized in a criminal sense. Unlike in Bristol with the statue of Edward Colston (June 7, 2020), a slave trader; in London with the slaveowner Robert Milligan; or in Oxford with the statue of Cecil Rhodes, all of whom were men who had committed racist acts and were pushed off their pedestals in effigy by members of the Black Lives Matter movement (see Schieder in this volume).

So was the iconoclastic act, the statue's decapitation, directed at the sculptor Hasemann and the work's message, which was racist and insulting to Black people? In this case, it was the sculptor who was beheaded, with the statue as his surrogate. In this instance, the act should be considered in the context of renaming public streets and be ascribed to the Black Lives Matter movement, which addressed the German public in June of 2020 as a project collective with the website *tearthisdown.com*[7]. The collective, made up of the ISD, the artist group *Peng!,* and supported by the Berlin Zoff Collective for Visual Communication and the feminist performance collective *Swoosh Lieu*, called for "[reporting] remaining traces of colonialism" and located these on a map of Germany, in order to develop strategies to eliminate systemic racism in German society (tearthisdown.com). Under the keyword "mark," the website asks its visitors: "Who is actually being honored, and for what? Criminals for crimes, that won't do! Off with their heads,

down from their pedestals, cover them in paint, put a sign over them-there are many possibilities. But marking them is not enough, we're looking for other ways. Many things can be a monument, and in case of doubt, floating in the water also works." (ibid.)

The website of the project collective *tearthisdown.com* may have played a role in the statue's decapitation—but its call for toppling monuments explicitly targets colonialism's active criminals and not their victims! Was Hasemann a colonial criminal? On July 15, 2021, *Peng!* was found to be party to the vandalism perpetrated against the statue; due to their calls for property damage to objects embodying colonial content, the State Office of Criminal Investigations (LKA) in Berlin reported them to the Joint Center for Countering Extremism and Terrorism (GETZ) of the federal and state governments, as Niklas Schrader (Die Linke, MdA Berlin) established in a minor interpellation. Subsequently, investigations were opened against two members of *Peng!* due to "incitement to commit crimes according to § 111 of the Criminal Code (StGB)" (response to Interpellation No. 18/28239, August 10, 2021). The response confirms that the "investigating authorities are examining (. . .) whether a connection exists between the property damage perpetrated and the website's published content." (ibid.) Also listed here are "damage to property, Leuchtenburgstrasse" in a reference to the *Squatting N**** statue located on that very site. The decapitation action brought together very different energies of the iconoclashes of the year 2020 in a kind of flash point of which the beheading of *Squatting N**** in Zehlendorf was one part.

The question as to whether Hasemann should be described as a colonial criminal brings to mind the controversial debate over Emil Nolde held in Berlin in 2019 on the occasion of the exhibition "Emil Nolde—A German Legend. The Artist During National Socialism" at Hamburger Bahnhof. Nolde was a documented party member of the National Socialists (Soika/Ring/Fulda 2019). But while Nolde, Hasemann, and others were part of the criminal Nazi system, they should not be condemned as criminals according to the criminal code. Their works bear evidence to history; these are objects whose historical and political statements need to be researched and evaluated. Precisely this is the objective of this essay.

One fact that cannot be overlooked is that the ISD Berlin initiated the removal of the statue from public space in a democratic process and not in a call for iconoclasm. The request was introduced to the BVV Steglitz-Zehlendorf with the support of a political party (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen). On January 22, 2020, it was decided there that the statue would be removed.

The AfD's Interest in the Statue Fragment and the Exhibition "Unveiled"

On April 8, 2020—after the BVV decision at the local political level in Steglitz-Zehlendorf and prior to the beheading—*Squatting N**** was transformed from a neighborhood art project into a political monument in Berlin. On that day, Urte Evert, director of the Zitadelle district museum, in response to a request from the BVV Steglitz-Zehlendorf, expressed interest in including the sculpture in the exhibition "Unveiled," where the story of *Squatting N***,* as described above, could be appropriately documented and presented together with other statues removed for political reasons from Berlin's public space. Immediately after the beheading, district councilor

Gerhard Hanke (CDU), as the chief decision-making authority over the district museum's program, decided not to include the statue fragment in the "Unveiled" exhibition. This decision ignited a political dispute over monuments that was largely fueled by the far-right political party Alternative for Germany (AfD), one that continues until 2023. On July 14, 2020, the political spokesman for culture, Dr. Dieter Neuenburg (AfD), wrote an open letter to Spandau's Mayor Kleebank in which he played down the statue's racist content as well as Hasemann's Nazi party membership and position as a "culture warden" as a "mindset alleged in retrospect [on the part of the Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, C. K.]." Neuenburg saw the artist quite rightly "ostracized due to creations such as the *Squatting Negress* (. . .), with the National Socialists denouncing the style and subject as 'degenerate'" (Neuenburg (AfD), open letter from July 15, 2020). The fact that this was exactly the reason why the *Squatting N**** remained in Hasemann's garden is part of the statue's history: its expressionist caricaturing style is what made it suspicious in the eyes of the Nazis. A squatting N*** had no place in the "racially pure" stylistic ideal based on classical antiquity. It was probably Dieter Neuenburg's Facebook post of June 22, 2020, three days after the beheading and before his open letter, that made Gerhard Hanke decide not to exhibit *Squatting N**** in the citadel. Neuenburg had now vehemently posted his verdict on the artist and the statue in public. He also wrote about the act and the perpetrators as though there were facts available about them:

> The work of art by Arminius Hasemann from the 1920s is considered an important example of Expressionism. An act of barbaric vandalism of this kind, modeled on similar actions in the USA and Great Britain, must not be tolerated. The spiritual instigators behind this act are the Greens, who already called for the sculpture to be sanded down in August 2019 because it allegedly perpetuated 'racist stereotypes.' The fact is, many important works of art from all periods could be branded in this way. This is cultural-historical iconoclasm without rhyme or reason. In this context, we must also examine a potential connection between the crime and the 'Black Lives Matter' movement. We demand that not only perpetrators such as those in Zehlendorf, but also politicians who have forgotten history and culture, be stopped at last in order to protect artistic freedom. (Neunburg (AfD), Facebook post from June 22, 2020)

Neuendorf quotes the *Berliner Morgenpost*: "Masked individuals bashed off the head of the bust of a 'negress,' presumably with a baseball bat. The state security police are investigating." (ibid.) Over the next few months, the AfD in the BVV Spandau campaigned for the statue to be included in the "Unveiled" exhibition on the grounds that the beheading should be documented as an act of vandalism on the part of the Black Lives Matter movement, a motion that has been repeatedly rejected (AfD applications, BVV Spandau).

The arguments of the AfD's cultural spokesman are a populist distortion and concealment of facts; the agenda is to repress Germany's colonial past and deny the sculpture's racist statement while declaring it to be great art. Before post-colonial criticism accused it of being a blind spot in German art history, this argument was applied to the reception of well-known Expressionist artists such as Nolde. The intention of the AfD, however, is not to contribute to clarifying colonial art history, but to blame their political opponent, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, for

the iconoclastic act and claim that the victims of racism are the perpetrators. The fact of the matter is that to date, authorities have been unable to identify either the perpetrators or the instrument used in the crime. The blue paint damaging the sculpture and its inscription—the hue of which is identical to the AfD's signature party color—is conspicuous, however. The AfD's fierce reaction to the iconoclastic act must be interpreted as a rejection of a democratic process in which it has no particular interest: the decolonization of the city of Berlin (*Junge Freiheit*, June 25, 2020). According to Martin Steltner, spokesman for the Berlin Public Prosecutor's Office, "the perpetrators have not been caught and there is no prospect of them being identified." (Phone call with Martin Steltner on August 19, 2021)

Where to Put the Fragments?

The fact that the statue fragments are currently stored in different locations in the Steglitz-Zehlendorf district testifies mainly to the contentious nature of the post-colonial debate, especially in Berlin, Germany's capital. It's a debate that has only just begun. As long as the statue remains invisible—and not, as was called for, publicly shown in the exhibition "Unveiled" as both a historical testimony to colonialism and racism in Germany and as a postcolonial object of decolonization—the question remains as to how colonialism and racism are to be adequately documented and presented. In the light of this essay—and this should be considered carefully by those who hold political responsibility—, keeping the statue fragments under lock and key will go down in the history of the *Squatting N**** as yet another example of post-colonial iconoclasm. To not show them amounts to concealing colonialism and racism and thus perpetuating it. In an article in the *Tagesspiegel*, Tahir Della (ISD) makes a case for a contextualized exhibition. He "welcomes the decision of the Spandau district office," but thinks something has to be done with the statue. Just "showing it without a concept doesn't make much sense," he said. The question remains: what does one want to present to the viewer? He states that he's available for discussion, but the district office has not yet contacted him. Della would also welcome a plaque on the Zehlendorf site; he wouldn't destroy the object. "We have to find a way to address it." (*Tagesspiegel,* July 9, 2020)

Translation: Andrea Scrima

Notes

1 Paz Sanz Fle, a white Spanish artist living in the Netherlands since 1989, creates life-sized clay statues depicting Black women, which are installed in public parks. While their presence has provoked discussions relevant to my own observations, I will not go into them here. As far as I know, none of these works have to date been destroyed. (www.pazsanz.nl)

2 According to the inscription, the statue was called "Squatting Negress," a title I'd prefer to avoid here to resist perpetuating colonialism's racist derogatory terms.

3 See a selection of Hasemann's visual works on the website https://bildhauerei-in-berlin.de/creator/hasemann-arminius/ (accessed 04/13/2022).
4 Minutes of the Steglitz-Zehlendorf BVV of August 7, 2019 (request) and January 22, 2020 (decision).
5 According to e-mail correspondence with Dr. Evert on 05/27/2021. On the exhibition, see https://www.zitadelle-berlin.de/museen/enthullt/ (accessed 06/30/2022).
6 Volz was present at the "First German Art Exhibition" in 1937 with the small bronze *Orestes, den Furien entfliehend* (Orestes Fleeing the Furies). He was a teacher to other artists included in the exhibition (Schmidt 2012: 92, 127). Hitler purchased the Volz bronze *Jugend* (Youth), which was also on view in the exhibition (http://www.gdk-research.de/de/obj19401958.html).
7 At last access 08/30/2022 the website was no longer available, the link is considered broken.

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CHRISTOPH GÜNTHER

Socioclasm

Idol-Breaking and the Dawn of a New Social Order

Ever since the Islamic State and its predecessors[1] began contesting the power of state authorities in Iraq and Syria and eventually announced the establishment of a caliphate in June 2014, not only their activities have attracted worldwide attention but also, and particularly, the group's still and moving images. Using retail movie equipment and software, the Islamic State's personnel and supporters have produced elaborate and, at times, sophisticated videos that were widely circulated online and off. The videos have helped the group to create, structure, and give meaning to its imagination of a Manichean world order presented as a pristine Islamic alternative to any other form of organization of governance and society. Consequently, these images have been an important part of the Islamic State's social-revolutionary project and constitute one of the various means of the group's contentious politics, entangling symbolic and concrete competition.

In this chapter, I scrutinize the ways in which the Islamic State has rendered this competition meaningful through the destruction of cultural properties and the visualization of these acts in moving images. I argue that the group's attacks on these properties are not simply iconoclastic acts and articulations of its defiance of distinct religious objects and their veneration. Rather, in attacking these properties, the Islamic State's ideologues have sought to prevent distinct social practices that are important constituents of social identities of local and transnational communities and their individual members—although such calculation may not be evident in the Islamic State's rationale itself.

While iconoclastic acts always happen in social contexts, are shaped by sociopolitical (and not purely religious) agendas, and have social repercussions, studies of iconoclasm and iconoclasts have rarely made these perspectives fruitful for understanding attacks on cultural properties. I take the destruction of two Shiite sites as case studies to expand on the premises of these studies and develop the concept of "socioclasm"—a strategy of purification that involves the destruction of cultural properties because they are perceived as integral elements of social identities and practices of local and transnational communities and their individual members. As a heuristic, socioclasm, I argue, helps widen our perspective from a sharp focus on the religious and symbolic to the ways in which these attacks have been manifesting the Islamic State's aim for an all-encompassing spatial, material, ideational, and intellectual purification of

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110773576_003

1 Still from video *Quṭā' al-Turuq (Al-Battar Media,* 2017*)*

the socioreligious landscape—and hence to comprehend the complexity of these actions and their manifold effects, repercussions, and dynamics.

Elsewhere, I have proposed a further theoretical expansion that I describe as "iconic socioclasm" to reflect the fact that the Islamic State extensively utilized socioclastic actions to produce and disseminate still and moving images of these destructions (Günther 2022: 142–144). It accentuates the point that many cultural assets have been destroyed not only to wipe them out but also to produce and disseminate images and keep alive the memory of the destruction. In other words, these sites were destroyed to annihilate elements of individual and collective memory and to create the memory of their annihilation (see also Brubaker 2013). These images thus signify, conjure, and testify to the Islamic State's power as it aims to construct social identities and build a new social framework on the ruins of destroyed monuments, obliviated social and religious practices, and the religious authorities it has killed.

Beyond videos and photo reports whose titles indicate the destruction of cultural properties as the main subject, one also finds imagery depicting the destruction of cultural properties deeply embedded in the Islamic State's general teleology. An example of such imagery can be found in a video published by the Islamic State in 2017 to polemicize against various renowned Sunni theologians opposing the group's ideology (Al-Battar Media 2017). In an introductory sequence praising the Islamic State's achievements one beholds a short scene in which a voice-over asserts that the Islamic State has granted victory to monotheism and destroyed idolatry (*naṣarat al-tawḥīd wa-hadamat al-shirk*) while a partially animated montage is shown. Viewers see two simultaneous motions: on the right-hand side, the minaret of a mosque that remains unnamed collapses, while a man dressed in camouflage holding the Islamic State's black flag rises from the ground to the center of the image (Fig. 1).

Although it is a short scene in a longer video produced to bolster the Islamic State's claim on the prerogative of an authoritative interpretation of Islam's holy sources, the six-second-long composition paradigmatically illustrates the way in which the group conceptualizes its own position in between the dialectics of *tawḥīd* (monotheism) and *shirk* (polytheism, idolatry). Presenting themselves as the vanguard (*ṭāliʿa*) empowered by God to restore and preserve the pristine creed of the Prophet Muhammad's community among contemporary Muslims, the Islamic State's ideologues claimed to establish divine ordinances. Accordingly, they declared to exert legitimate social, political, and theological authority over the populations living under the group's rule in Syria, Iraq, and other countries. Engaging in the construction and manipulation of social identities has therefore never been ephemeral to the Islamic State's ideologues as they sought to bolster the group's military campaigns and guarantee the persistence of its social-revolutionary project, which they understand as an epitome of an eternal fight between *tawḥīd* and its antipodes (Günther 2022). In their view, this requires a violent purification of the earth from any material or immaterial manifestation of *shirk*, *kufr* (disbelief), and *ṭāghūt* (tyranny, literally juggernaut), leading to a complete transformation of all domains of society on both an intellectual and material level.

Against this background, the short montage not only shows how one symbol replaces another as the scene illustrates the purportedly inevitable simultaneity of the emergence of a God-given order and the obliteration of its antipodes. The foundation of a purified society, represented by the warrior firmly holding the Islamic State's black flag, must be built on the rubble of those forces opposing pristine monotheism, represented by the collapsing minaret of the Shiite Jawād Husayniyya mosque in Tal ʿAfar, which had reportedly been blown up in July 2014 after the Islamic State seized control of the city.

Obliterating Manifestations of Idolatry

Categories of social identity such as Muslim, Sunni, Arab, Shiʿi, Iraqi, and Syrian are resources that people use to make sense of reality. They provide short-cuts for (potentially complex) systems of beliefs, normative appeals, and orientation as they help people understand who they are, how they are related to others, and how they should behave in certain situations. However, the relation of these ontological resources to one's sense of self is volatile, ambiguous, highly variegated, and determined, among other factors, by an individual's horizon(s) of experience in her or his social environment. The Islamic State's ideologues, whom I describe elsewhere as "entrepreneurs of identity" (Günther 2022), use such categories as tools of communicative and cognitive structuring. They interlink these resources with their ideological framework to offer plausible and meaningful appraisals of social and political events and facts; "fortify" and essentialize specific categories of social identity; stimulate processes of social closure; inspire, shape, and orchestrate individual and collective behavior; justify a claim to power and various resources; and generate conformity to their vision of sociopolitical order.

Presenting the Islamic State as an elite force eager to establish a system of meaning and order that conforms to divine ordinances, the group's ideologues have declared the intellectual

and physical rejection of any violation of divine ordinances an essential element of their pursuit. Not only did they denounce certain objects and practices as material and immaterial manifestations (*maẓāhir* or *maʿālim*) of *shirk*, *kufr*, and *ṭāghūt*. Destroying them was furthermore intended to extensively enforce the group's radical interpretations in all social spheres and ultimately induce wide-ranging attitudinal and social changes by creating maximum conformity to the Islamic State's rule.

A powerful configuration of social practices underpinning the Islamic State's efforts to create broad social changes, the group's *diwān al-ḥisba*[2] acquired a prominent role in attacks on cultural properties. Internationally, the group's attacks on ancient cultural properties (and their medialization in particular) have captured much attention (see, e. g., Cunliffe and Curini 2018). However, attacks on internationally renowned ancient sites have been comparatively few. Several photo reports and videos show that the Islamic State has directed the force of its fighters against cultural properties that were primarily used by local religious communities, among them Christian churches and monasteries; Sufi *zāwiyas* as well as graveyards; Sunni mausoleums; Shiʿi mosques, shrines, and graveyards; and natural objects such as trees.[3] Remarkably, the group has framed its attacks on any site considered a manifestation of idolatry in largely similar terms. It did not differentiate between wider concepts of veneration, honor, or respect but rather subsumed all of them under the rubric of "worship" (*ʿibāda*), regardless of whether the cultural property attacked was an ancient temple complex, a monastery, a mausoleum, or any other site used for religious practices, from graveyards to trees. The variety of cultural properties targeted by the Islamic State, however, indicates the extent to which the group prioritizes certain levels of conflict: mostly affected are sites of Shiite religious practice and Sunni communities whose tenets and religious practices the Islamic State's ideologues denounce as heresy. As they link their claim for "classificatory power" (see Müller 2018) to the call to destroy these sites, the group's ideologues and representatives use the attacks as an opportunity to define and appraise characteristics of "genuine" Muslims adhering to tawḥīd and "the right creed" (*al-ʿaqīda al-ṣaḥīḥa*) as opposing the traits of those communities that practice *kufr* and *shirk*.

Iconoclasm

The rationale presented by the Islamic State's ideologues thus frames their endeavors as reformative acts aimed against any site, object, or practice that could be interpreted as worshipping icons or idols instead of the one God. Focusing on such a rationale that is grounded in religious terminology, much scholarship has scrutinized such deeds in both past and present in a field of study in art history called iconoclasm. Studies in iconoclasm and iconoclasts examine historical events, modes of behavior, ideologies, and attitudes toward images with various agencies, motivations, and intentions in relation to different historical periods, incorporating diverse meanings from the simple hiding and "whitewashing" of images to their complete destruction (Chapman 2018: 3–31).[4]

Iconoclasm in its modern understanding denotes the destruction of images and initially referred to a period in Byzantine history in the seventh and eighth centuries CE. Both the term

and concept have long been associated with discursive and material struggles around the value, meaning, and attributed power of images in the domain of religious (mainly monotheist) doxa, practices, and imaginaries (Brubaker 2012; see also Aston [1988] 2003). For this reason, iconoclasm is often understood as "a religious phenomenon generated from a position of belief and right action as defined within that belief system" (Apostolos-Cappadona 2005: 4282) that centers on "the intentional desecration or destruction of works of art, especially those containing human figurations, on religious principles or beliefs" (p. 4279). Boldrick (2013) takes a more general approach and highlights the embeddedness of such acts in a symbolic order, suggesting that iconoclasm can be understood as "the deliberate breaking or infringement of the physical integrity of culturally significant images and objects (. . .) including sites and landscapes as well as other objects and artefacts that possess a symbolic power" (p. 2).

Acts interpreted as iconoclasm can be traced throughout human history, where we see that "the history of an icon includes repeated and overlapping moments of contestation, appropriation, damage, restoration and amnesia" (Rambelli and Reinders 2013: 40)—all of which affect an icon's physical state, context, or meaning. Clay (2012) also highlights this transformative function of iconoclastic acts and pursues a semiotic approach when he conceptualizes iconoclasm as "a form of material sign transformation with communicational intent" (p. 277), employed by "iconoclasts [who] were sophisticated coders, as well as decoders, of signs and spaces" (p. 240). As an act of communication, such transformative reactions to material culture often take place not only against a complex backdrop of cultural, economic, social, and political narratives, discourses, claims, and power relations; they are also primarily embedded in the intellectual framework of (and are comprehensible in relation to) these contextual factors (Elias 2013) and are intended to be discerned and understood by others, calling upon them to react to the transformation of symbolically valued images, certain objects, and entire sites. In sum, ideas of representation and symbolism seem to be key to understanding the epistemological access that iconoclasm as a heuristic provides to human action and interaction.[5]

While iconoclastic acts always occur in relation to social contexts, are shaped by sociopolitical (and not purely religious) agendas, and have social repercussions, studies of iconoclasm and iconoclasts have rarely made these perspectives fruitful for understanding attacks on cultural properties. I propose the concept of socioclasm to discuss some examples of the destruction of symbolically valued images, objects, and entire sites by followers of the Islamic State. Building on, rather than seeking to replace, the notion of iconoclasm, I develop socioclasm as an expansion of what I have identified as the main epistemological traits of studies on iconoclasm and iconoclasts. I expand the focus from the realm of the religious and symbolic to the social representative quality of these signifiers. My proposal centers on the significance of concrete objects and sites for specific social practices—hence for the establishment, retention, and transformation of people's knowledge about who they are, how they are related to others, and how they should react in certain situations. I argue that the concept of socioclasm accentuates the ways in which processes of discursive and material sign transformation (Clay 2007, 2012) are related to the domain of the social. Moreover, it allows for a comprehensive understanding of the social implications of acts intended to transform the socioreligious landscape through the destruction of properties whose material and symbolic qualities are integral parts of the social

identities of a given community, thus preventing specific social practices that are inextricably linked to specific sites.

Targeting Manifestations of Idolatry as Integral Elements of Social Identities

Above, I described a glimpse at the destruction of one such site: the Jawād ḥusaynīya in the town of Tal ʿAfar in northwestern Iraq. This holy site had been one of several places of worship that were destroyed by the Islamic State in and around Tal ʿAfar between June 24 and June 26, 2014 (Danti et al. 2015: 54–89). Probably named after its donor, Muḥammad Jawād al-Barzanjī (b. 1952),[6] the mosque was adjacent to a complex that housed a shrine dedicated to the memory of Saʿd b. Muslim b. ʿAqīl[7] and a cemetery. As spaces used for communal prayers and religious learning, both sites were vital elements of local Turkmen Shia Muslim religiosity and social life. Furthermore, they had a specific significance for Shiite community building that extended beyond a purely local context. Parts of their complexes were also allocated as ḥusaynīyāt, which are spaces that usually provide a special setting for the collective mourning of the martyrdom of the third imam of the Shia ḥusayn Ibn ʿAlī (d. 680), mourning the deaths (or celebrating the birthdays) of other imams, offering space for a wide range of other religious and social practices, and serving as hostels for pilgrims to Shiite shrines (Sindawi 2008: 365).

The complex that harbored these sites is exemplary for many other properties that were targeted by the Islamic State, since social function and symbolism amalgamate in the realm of religious practice and community formation at this very space. There, members of a religious community—a social collective "that is tied to neither blood nor locality" (Turner 1974: 201)—manifest role and status and create personal bonds of communitas during services, prayers, religious education, charitable activities, and much more.[8] Architectural elements and other visible characteristics demonstrate that these sites are built, preserved, and visited as "signs of belonging in shared memory" (Mieth 1988–2001: 135). Soon after it blasted the complex, the Islamic State issued a photo report capturing the destruction of both sites, describing the attack as "destruction of the ḥusaynīya temple" (*maʿbad ḥusaynīya*; Danti et al. 2015: 55) (Fig. 2).

On the surface, this caption provided the justification for the sites' obliteration. In the Islamic State's view, the sites were used for idolatrous forms of worshipping ḥusayn and must be obliterated in accordance with the principle of *al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-l-nahy ʿan al-munkar*. In emphasizing its designation as *ḥusaynīya*, however, the authors asserted that the meaning of these sites for the Shia extended beyond the realm of the symbolic since they provided spaces for assemblies that linked individual believers to their immediate social collective and helped shape their social identities as members of a wider community. This suggests that the Islamic State's ideologues had a sense of the value of such sites for the cohesion of the Shiite community at large and the social identities of its individual members. Because the sites were used as *ḥusaynīyāt*, they were also destinations of pilgrimages and attracted people from various locations.

Pilgrimage sites in general are of great value for both the collective identity of religious communities and the social identities of individual believers. In this sense, small sites with local

2 Photo Report issued by the Islamic State's Naynawā province, date unknown

significance as well as places that are visited by people from across the globe all "matter to *people* because they tell the story of who we are, where we've come from, and who we wish to be" (Mulder 2016: 6; emphasis in original). These stories are shaped by religious authorities and institutions who "ground themselves in sacred sites and gain power and prestige by promoting certain religious narratives through the embellishment or creation of holy places" (Pinto 2017: 64–65) as well as through the formation and medialization of bodies of knowledge that evolve around these places. A case in point is a twin shrine in the Syrian town of al-Raqqa, which was destroyed by the Islamic State after it seized control over the city in early 2014 (Reuters 2014).

The twin shrine housed the tombs of Uways al-Qaranī and ʿAmmar b. Yāsir, who were contemporaries of the Prophet Muhammad. The shrine had been visited by local tribes who consider themselves descendants of ḥusayn, whereas "intellectual circles linked to the traditional urban notable families [saw it] as a *lieux de mémoire* of Raqqa's urban identity" (Pinto 2007: 123). Although visits by local Sufi communities continued, the twin mausoleum, similar to many other religious sites that were (re)built under the reign of Hafez al-Asad, was "Persianized" in its exterior decoration and architecture and became an established site of pilgrimage for Shiites from across the region. The shrines grew into "objects of conflicting territorialities" (Ababsa 2001: 647) as their expansion was resented by local notables who identified an appropriation (and resignification) of the mausoleum by the regime and "by a religious community they view as 'foreign' (the Shiʿi)" (Pinto 2007: 123; also Ababsa 2001, 2005). The increasing stream of (mostly Iranian) pilgrims into the city also sparked socioeconomic changes (Ababsa 2001: 648), so that an elaborate economic and social infrastructure evolved around the shrines, providing direct and indirect income-earning opportunities for the local populace. Such social infrastructure increases the outreach of religious institutions and authorities through the establishment of

schools, community centers, and charitable institutions for the general population, hence it creates loyalties that extend beyond membership in a religious community. Furthermore, an intellectual environment is built around many such sites in the form of seminaries and other institutions of religious learning as well as book shops, which are also grounded in the "charisma" of the site and pilgrims' activities.

As this and many other examples show, the Syrian regime and its Iranian allies used Shi'i holy places to build social identities around a sense of transnational bonds and commonality among Shiites across the region. However, for the appeals of these entrepreneurs of identity to be accepted (to a certain extent at least) by those people who likewise shape, circulate, appropriate, further develop, and animate these narratives, they must actively make the stories that are manifested in the site part of their self and embed them into their subjectivities and their own religious imaginaries. They are the ones who seek (and answer the call of) these sites, open themselves to the topographical and architectural configuration, experience with all their senses the religious sacra preserved in them, attribute a charismatic aura to these places and objects, navigate their way through the "web of rules and representations that establish certain locations" (Pinto 2017: 63), and process their interactions with other people en route and at the site itself.

It is through these encounters and human interactions that such sites become more than markers; they become meaningful elements of one's social identity. Although people rarely set aside their social status during a pilgrimage, such journeys and the collective practices performed during them help dilute or attenuate social hierarchies between pilgrims, because they allow for shared emotions and experiences that establish bonds between individuals and groups of people visiting the same site at the same time, following similar routes, engaging in similar religious practices, wearing similar clothing, and buying similar accessories on-site.[9] Holy sites, collective practices, and the environment surrounding them create "the experience of a diffuse solidarity that transcends social and cultural differences" (Pinto 2007: 109) and help people construct bonds with and loyalties to other members of their community, both living and deceased.

Many of the elements I have described so far indicate that holy sites in general and sites of pilgrimage in particular are constitutional elements of the collective identities of religious communities. They provide spaces for a wide range of religious and social practices as well as social infrastructures that emerge around them. Operated by religious institutions and authorities and frequented by a broad variety of believers, the sites become embedded in an individual's horizon of experience, intellectual advancement, and personal memories, shaping narratives about one's spiritual journey as well as the development and consolidation of people's "ontological security" (Giddens 1991) in relation to a given social collective. They thus help produce a self-assertive power, which is nurtured and perpetuated by the experience of an identity-creating fusion of individual, place, and ritual through practices linked to the specific site. In this perspective, such sites cease to be mere symbolic or physical representations, but rather constitute the social collective to a significant extent, or even become the groups themselves.[10]

When Islamic State fighters destroyed the twin shrine on March 26, 2014, they attacked a site that displayed "a hybrid symbolic dimension of identity and religion" (Ababsa 2001: 657) created through the expansion of Iranian religiopolitical influence in Syria since the early 1990s.

Through the obliteration of the shrines, the Islamic State thus, albeit in reverse, acknowledged and reasserted the identification of the signifier (the mausoleum) with the signified (the Twelver Shia and its Iranian representatives) on a symbolic level. On a sociopolitical level, however, the attack aimed to repel "the hateful rawāfiḍ"[11] by destroying the social representative quality of the site and the web of social relations between pilgrims and locals that had evolved around it. From the Islamic State's perspective, targeting these sites, I argue, is thus equal to targeting the community at large, because members' social identities are deeply entangled with (and built in relation to) these sites. The group targeted properties that not only offer space for rituals and other practices, religious learning, and community building, but also are valued for their significance for individual and collective identities.

As the above description of the cultural properties suggests, sites of pilgrimage often provide a setting for more than one rite of passage. The belief in the beneficent forces that permeate certain places (and the traditions upholding these beliefs) may not only bring people to conceive of their pilgrimage as a transitional process that transforms their self in relation to many dimensions of the religious and the social, but also prompt people to seek burial at these sites: cemeteries are often located near sacred places. Pinto (2017: 62), for example, notes that people from all across Iraq have their bodies sent to Najaf to be buried in the holy ground that is impregnated with baraka, a beneficent force that is transmitted through the Prophet Muhammad's descendants and emanates from the belief in the physical presence of a human body that is both a symbolic and literal representation of a person and his or her traits. This belief potentially affects both bodies and minds of visitors who can set themselves in relation to this person. It also reinforces links between the deceased and the whole Shiite community and amplifies the idea of its continuity throughout time. Importantly, this accounts for the bereaved, for whom a burial is a social practice that is inextricably interwoven with her or his individual and collectively shared sense of memory, religious imaginaries, and sense of belonging to a community that continues throughout time.

By destroying shrines, graves, and cemeteries, the Islamic State targeted both the veneration and the burial practice and their significance for the ontological framework of the respective communities. In some cases—for example, with the destruction of the twin shrine of Uways al-Qaranī and ʿAmmar b. Yāsir in al-Raqqa—the Islamic State did not content itself with destroying the site of veneration. The group's claim for purification went so far as to exhume the mortal remains from the tombs and remove them before its fighters blasted the gravesite.[12] Their purification strategy was all-encompassing. Blasting the gravesite and removing the remains of the saints, the Islamic State meant to temporarily forestall certain social and religious practices such as pilgrimages and saint veneration. In addition, by transferring the actual object of veneration to an unknown place, they aimed to once and forever do away with any worship practice related to this particular object or person at this particular place. By wiping out a shrine and graveyard, the Islamic State's socioclasm aims to prevent the veneration of saints and adherence to beliefs in beneficent forces that attribute charisma to a certain site. Moreover, the attacks are directed against burials as social practices through which contemporaries can build a social identity by relating their sense of self to a wider community to which they are bound by neither blood nor locality.

Conclusion

The Islamic State understood the establishment of its rule as being based on a missionary, social-revolutionary impetus and the claim to an absolute assertion of its own interpretation of Islam as the only "genuine" representation of divine ordinances. To enforce this claim on an intellectual, practical, and material level made an all-embracing purification of society necessary. During its heyday, the Islamic State's ideologues not only defined the caliphate as a distinct form of organizing authority, society, and human conduct in contrast to forms of socialization deemed illegitimate. Taking the Qur'anic dictum "to command right and forbid wrong" as a guiding principle, they also called to physically turn against any material and immaterial manifestation of monotheism's antipodes *shirk*, *kufr*, and *ṭāghūt*. Consequently, as it seized control over vast territories in Iraq, Syria, and elsewhere, the group also started targeting ancient sites, sites of religious practices of religious minorities, as well as mosques, shrines, tombs, natural objects, and surrounding infrastructures that serve social and religious practices deemed deviant.

Taking the Islamic State's attacks on Shiite holy places as a case in point, I have proposed that the attacks suggest the group's recognition of ontologically relevant attributions of cultural properties and of an ontological communion at work in the interactions of people at and with these properties. Attacks on these sites can hence be understood as attacks on the self-understanding of the attacked community and its individual members. Consequently, threats to the group may also be perceived as threats to the self.

I have argued that attacking these sites therefore not only annihilates certain architectural landmarks and changes the spatial composition of a city or village. In addition to targeting the material manifestation of a certain belief system and the place of its manifold ideational, performative, and affective expressions, the assaults targeted cultural properties, social practices, and the various forms of social infrastructure created around holy sites, whose function as an integral element of individual and collective identities was well understood by the Islamic State's ideologues despite their religious rationale. Their attacks targeted spaces for the creation and experience of senses of belonging and collective senses of memory among local, national, and transnational communities.[13] Such a desecration of sacred spaces and their eventual obliteration ought to affect and damage aspects of the self of each individual member of the respective community, unsettling their ontological security and shattering their intragroup bonds.

As a communicative concept that connects the religious and the symbolic to the material, spatial, and social, socioclasm builds and expands on the perspectives of studies in iconoclasm and iconoclasts. I suggest that the notion of socioclasm can help incorporate these above-mentioned variables, pay heed to the significance of religious systems of meaning, and draw attention to the social representative quality of sites, objects, and specific practices that are vital for building social identities.

Notes

An earlier version of this chapter has been published in the *International Journal of Communication*, 14 (2020), pp. 1830–1848.

1 For the sake of brevity, I use the emic designation "Islamic State" to denote the group that announced the establishment of an Islamic State (*dawla islāmīya*) in July 2014/Ramadan 1435 AH. This includes all stages of the group's organizational and denominational evolution, namely *al-Tawḥīd wa-l-Jihād, Tanẓīm qāʿidat al-jihād fi-bilād al-rāfidayn, ḥilf al-muṭayyabīn, dawlat al-ʿIrāq al-islāmīya, and al-dawla al-islāmīya fi-l-ʿIrāq wa-l-Shām*.

2 On *ḥisba* as an institution and its use by the Islamic State, see Günther and Kaden (2016).

3 It is not possible in this article to provide a comprehensive overview of the destruction of cultural properties at the hands of the Islamic State. Isakhan and González Zarandona 2017 as well as Beránek and Ťupek 2018: 178–186 offer surveys on incidents and point to further literature. Detailed information on single incidents can be found at http://monumentsofmosul.com, http://www.asor-syrianheritage.org/, and https://gatesofnineveh.wordpress.com/ (accessed 11/18/2023).

4 Considering the limited space of this chapter, I will not provide an extensive survey of the rich amount of scholarship on the concept of iconoclasm. I will discuss neither matters pertaining to the history of images in Islam, Muslim debates on the tension between monotheism and the production of images, nor the cliché of Muslim iconoclasm—all of which have received ample attention elsewhere (e. g. Crone 1980; Elias 2012: 100–138; Gruber 2019; Hodgson 1964; Naef 2007).

5 This is not to negate the works of many scholars who draw attention to, for example, the inherently creative, constructive, and performative dimension of historical and contemporary (particularly artistic) acts of iconoclasm (see Fleckner, Steinkamp, and Ziegler 2011; Gamboni 1997; Münch et al. 2018).

6 The site is also named *jāmiʿ al-sayyid Jawād al-Barzanjī.*

7 According to unverifiable local Shia sources, the shrine was probably erected in 1142/532 AH and is dedicated to the memory of Saʿd b. ʿAqīl b. Abī ṭālib.

8 Both social modalities—that is, structure and *communitas*— are part of what Tönnies (2019) has termed *Gemeinschaft*. Also see Turner (1974: 201–208).

9 One may consider this a process in which instances of linking social capital and bonding social capital (see Putnam 2000) become entwined.

10 In this regard, Elias (2012) draws on Gadamer ([1960] 2006: 137) and reminds us of the ontological communion that any religious image has with what it represents. Hence, the affective relationships that people develop with the represented "are the ultimate determinants of the value of a religious image" (p. 41). On the fusion of the signifier and the signified, see also Freedberg (1991).

11 *Rāfiḍa* (pl. *rawāfiḍ*) is a derogatory term mainly used today in Sunni polemics against the Shia. However, the history of the concept reflects political issues and schisms within Shiite Islam itself.

12 Another example of an exhumation can be found in the case of the tomb of ḥujr b. ʿAdī al-Kindī. In this context, Chapman (2018: 21) reminds us of the similarities between attacks on the human body and on images.

13 Here, I rephrase Harmanşah (2015: 170), who characterized attacks on archaeological heritage sites as attacks that aim "to annihilate the local sense of belonging, and the collective sense of memory among local communities to whom the heritage belongs."

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W. FITZHUGH BRUNDAGE

Iconoclasts in Dixie?

The Contest over Confederate Memorials in the Modern American South

In August 2017, protesters toppled a statue of a Confederate soldier in front of Durham County Courthouse in North Carolina (Fig. 1). The desecration of the memorial was only one example of the removal of Confederate memorials between 2012 and 2017, during which twenty-seven communities in the South removed thirty-seven free-standing outdoor Confederate monuments. During 2020 more Confederate monuments, eighty-five in total, came down in the former slave states (Brown 2021: 145). Since then, yet more have been removed, including the massive memorials honoring Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee that formerly towered over Monument Avenue in Richmond, Virginia.

Critics of this twenty-first century iconoclasm deplore that a *Bildersturm* has erupted in the American South. Civic spaces and public art across the region, they warn, are under threat of wanton destruction that calls to mind recent acts of iconoclasm, including the Taliban's demolition of the giant Buddhas of Bamyan in Afghanistan, the radical Islamist militia Ansar Dine's demolition of Sufi shrines in Timbuktu, Mali, and Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant's attack on numerous ancient monuments in Palmyra and Raqqa, Syria.

For those who wring their hands over the campaign to purge the South of icons of Confederate memory, invoking past excesses of iconoclasts meshes easily with jeremiads against "the bullying and censorious combination of Jacobinism, Maoism, and secular Puritanism" that motivates the present-day despoilers of the region's heritage (McClay 2022: 24). Evidence of ever-widening targets of the iconoclasts include monument toppings from Boston to Seattle and beyond. A statue of Edward Colston, who made his fortune in the transatlantic slave trade, was thrown into the harbor of his home town of Bristol, England. Monuments to Christopher Columbus were toppled in Miami and Chicago, decapitated in Boston, and removed by city decree in Camden, New Jersey. In Madison, Wisconsin, a crowd's nihilism culminated in the vandalizing, decapitation, and tossing of a memorial to an abolitionist (!) into Lake Monona.

If iconoclasm does stalk the present-day American South, it is uncommonly restrained and deferential to public law and traditions of peaceful civil dissent. Moreover, the campaign to revise the South's commemorative landscape has barely begun. It almost certainly will require years of activism and litigation to substantially alter a landscape dotted with thousands of monuments. The progress of the campaign in North Carolina is illustrative. In 2010 there were

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110773576_004

1 Pedestal of the toppled Confederate Memorial in Durham, N. C., 2017

roughly 240 prominent outdoor Confederate memorials in the state; now, after a decade of activism, more than 200 Confederate memorials remain. Although memorials in many of the state's major cities have been removed, monuments to Confederate heroes and soldiers continue to grace the grounds of local courthouses and parks across the rest of the state. And largely untouched are towns and counties as well as hundreds and hundreds of streets named for Confederate luminaries. No wholesale "erasure" of the Confederate past, in short, is underway in the United States.[1]

Instead, the current campaign to revise the public spaces of the South is the culmination of an overlooked struggle that has mobilized local activists for more than a half century. At first glance, the shift in public attitudes toward Confederate monuments appears abrupt and indiscriminate. Only recently has it become clear that the cultural and political foundations upon which these monuments rested have eroded so severely that they can now be toppled. The contests over public space in the South illustrate, as Sanford Levison explains, "what happens to public space when the political and cultural cleavages within a given society are fully manifested (Levinson 2018: 18)." Now that the cleavages are exposed, the question is not whether more Confederate monuments will come down but rather which memorials will come down and when they will do so.

The Zebulon Vance monument in Asheville, North Carolina is a case in point (Fig. 2).

Commemorating the Civil War era governor of North Carolina, the austere 65-foot stone obelisk was dedicated in 1898. For more than a century it presided over a downtown square. By the dawn of the twenty-first century the memorial was a public hazard in urgent need of renovation. In 2012 a local heritage group, the Society for the Historical Preservation of the 26th Regiment North Carolina Troops, Inc. formed a partnership with the Asheville Department of Cultural Arts and raised more than $ 150,000 to restore the monument. On June 6, 2015, city

2 Graffiti at the site of the removed Vance Memorial in Asheville, N. C., 2022

leaders, fundraisers and others rededicated it during a civic ceremony. Yet, five years later, the city commission voted unanimously to recommend its removal, setting in process the dismantling of the same obelisk that had only recently been renovated at considerable expense.[2]

For some observers, especially defenders of Confederate heritage, the apparent about-face in Asheville was symptomatic of a contemporary spasm of gratuitous iconoclasm, of "political correctness" run amok. But dismissals of the campaign to remove the monument as a mindless fad ignore the long history of activism to revise the American commemorative landscape. When the Confederate memorials that clutter the present-day southern landscape were erected they provoked caustic commentary from African Americans and Union veterans who recoiled at the celebration of a treasonous cause and traitors. In the days following the dedication of the massive monument to Robert E. Lee on Monument Avenue in Richmond in 1890, John L. Mitchell, editor of the Richmond *Planet* fumed: "The south may revere the memory of its chieftains. It takes the wrong Steps in so doing, . . . This glorification of States Rights Doctrine- the right of secession, and the honoring of men who represented that cause . . . will ultimately result in handing down to generations unborn a legacy of treason and blood . . . it serves to reopen the wound of war." Those present-day champions of Confederate memorials who warn that removing monuments will foment division may be surprised to learn how divisive the monuments were when they were erected. Even a few Confederate notables, including Robert E. Lee, James Longstreet, and John S. Mosby, questioned the propriety of erecting monuments to the Confederacy. Since then, visitors to the region have routinely marveled at the spectacle of monuments to an army and a cause that suffered crushing defeat in a war fought to defend an indefensible institution. The monuments, in short, have remained an irritant since the commemoration of the Confederacy began a century and a half ago (Mitchell 1890; Cox 2021; Domby 2021).

While recognizing that the current national debate over Confederate monuments is only the latest chapter in an ongoing argument, we cannot ignore that the recent campaign to cleanse the landscape of symbols of white supremacy across the South has been, in one crucial regard, wholly unprecedented. It has led to the actual removal of a lengthening list of memorials, including monuments in locales that three quarters of a century ago were the epicenters of resistance to Black equality.

During the past two decades, a confluence of powerful political, economic, and social forces has created the momentum to revise the South's public landscapes. Indeed, the location of campaigns to remove Confederate monuments is one important marker of deep, rapid, and geographically concentrated change in the region. The ongoing struggle for racial inclusion and equality in the South, which extends back to the mid-twentieth century, is an important constituent force. So too is the empowerment of southern Blacks, especially during and after the 1970s. More recent demographic trends, especially in the region's major cities and inner suburbs, figure prominently in regional attitudes about the inherited landscape. Since roughly 1970 the ongoing outmigration of white and black southerners, which had begun at the turn of the twentieth century, gave way to the in-migration of both blacks and whites from the Northeast and Midwest, as well as East Asians, South Asians, and Latin Americans. The small city of Fayetteville, located on the southeastern edge of North Carolina, is but one community to have experienced this demographic transformation. As recently as 1970, less than 1 % of the city's population was foreign born and 61 % were white, mostly born in-state. Five decades later, Hispanics and Asians are 16 % of the city's population, blacks 42 %. What had been a sizeable white majority is now a minority of the city's residents. Not coincidentally, the community has been the site of public debate about the public monuments that grace some of its public spaces. Finally, the infusion of partisan politics into debates about the region's heritage has ensured that those debates are bitterly contested.[3]

The increasingly diverse population in the South compounded some of the effects of the ongoing struggle over the desegregation of public schools in the South. Among the earliest grassroots campaigns to remove Confederate iconography took place in the region's public schools. When desegregation of public education finally gathered speed after 1967, Black parents and students were dismayed by the purging of many Black administrators, teachers, and traditions from "integrated" schools. In response Black parents and students lobbied school administrators to add (actually, restore) Black history in the curriculum and began advocating for the renaming of desegregated public schools. As white flight drained many desegregated districts of white students, and as immigrants, especially from Central America began settling in the South, Blacks and Hispanics often inherited schools named after slaveholders, Confederate generals, or white politicians who had championed white supremacy. Hispanics had no reason to embrace Confederate heroes as their own and Blacks understandably bridled at having to attend schools named after Jefferson Davis, Nathan Bedford Forest, and other white luminaries. In St. Bernard Parish in Louisiana, for instance, Black parents had tolerated that an elementary school was named after a nearby antebellum plantation. But plans to replace the dilapidated school with a new building named after Confederate general P. G. T. Beauregard outraged them. Similarly, a grassroots movement in New Orleans during the 1980s removed the names of all slaveholders from local schools. Within five years faculty and students had renamed twenty-two schools including P. G. T. Beauregard Elementary (now named after Black jurist Thurgood Marshall) and Jefferson Davis Elementary (now named after the city's first Black mayor, Ernest N. Morial); (Brundage 2005: 274–284, 319–320).

These early campaigns seldom took on the Confederate memorials that dominated many of the region's most conspicuous civic spaces. To do so, activists would have needed the support

of civic leaders. White civic leaders were usually averse to doing anything to alienate those remaining white city dwellers who had not joined "white flight" to the suburbs. Likewise, Black civic leaders across the region during the 1980s and early 1990s were intent on avoiding controversy at a time when the region's cities faced severe economic and social challenges. But with each passing year Black politicians became less and less concerned about appeasing older white elites and voters. The gradual revival of many of the region's cities, especially after the mid-1990s, allowed Black local officials to begin to redress chronic underinvestment in urban infrastructure. The advent of cities as centers of cultural consumption and spectacle reintroduced residents to civic spaces that had previously been either abandoned or dormant after business hours. Just as their white predecessors had, Black civic leaders were keen to place their stamp on these public spaces. When they did so they could not easily ignore the inherited Confederate memorials that often adorned their cities.

Shifting demographics in the region's cities also eroded the opposition to revising urban public spaces and commemoration. Especially after 1990, southern cities have been sites of the so-called Big Sort identified by journalist Bill Bishop. The "White flight" of middle-class white southerners to suburbs left hollowed-out urban cores across the region. These areas in turn attracted migrants drawn by the opportunity to avoid the ordeal of commuting, to create neighborhoods of like-minded (especially important for new ethnic communities and LGBTQ residents), and old but desirable building stock that was cheap to rent and own. The region's cities simultaneously became magnets for young southerners keen to escape the region's economically stagnant hinterlands and lured by the relative cosmopolitanism of urban centers (Bishop 2009: 151–155).

The cumulative impact of these demographic trends is evident in Atlanta, Nashville, Durham, and, on a state level, Virginia. In Nashville, the city's conservative white elites had opposed mass transit, downtown development, and other innovations that might disrupt the city's somnolescence. But, during the early 2000s, the arrival of a new liberal entrepreneurial elite began to change the tenor of civic life. This new elite was national and international in its orientation, and was sympathetic to LGBTQ awareness, smart-growth policies, and principles of diversity in public life. Within a generation the metropolitan area doubled in size and added nearly a million residents. Nashville has evolved from a regional vacation destination to one of the nation's major tourist markets. On a smaller scale, Durham has been transformed from a post-industrial wasteland into a mecca for restaurateurs, young tech workers, and others attracted to the city's cultural and ethnic diversity and to Research Triangle Park, a nearby research and technology hub for numerous transnational corporations. In Virginia, the evolution has been equally dramatic. A state notorious for its conservatism is now dominated by the political will of its very diverse northern and Tidewater suburbs. As recently as the 2000s, the state celebrated Lee-Jackson Day and Confederate Heritage Month; more recently its state legislature approved changes in state law to enable communities to remove Confederate and other historic monuments. In Virginia, as in Nashville and Durham, Black and white leaders have mobilized political coalitions that are impatient with traditional conventions of public life in the region, including obeisance to the Confederate past (Haruch 2020; Tavernise/Gebeloff 2019).

An important catalyst for these new political coalitions has been the vociferous opposition of whites who have recoiled with alarm, even disgust at what they perceive to be the destruc-

tion of southern heritage. They have lamented that the Jim Crow South has given way to the desegregated "Sunbelt" South, that suburbanization has transformed huge swathes of the region into landscapes indistinguishable from those elsewhere in the nation, and that immigrants from Latin America and Asia seemed poised to overwhelm the South's "native" white population. For these white southerners alienated by the region's evolution, their heritage is the last bulwark against their absorption into a cosmopolitan national culture they detest.[4]

The most vocal champions of southern white orthodoxy have been a comparatively small but robust coalition of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV), so called neo-Confederates, and avowed white supremacists. Founded in 1896, the SCV failed for nearly a century to muster a large membership or to exercise much influence. Instead, the United Daughters of the Confederacy assumed leadership of the memorialization of the Confederacy. But during the 1970s and 1980s new recruits, including Civil War reenactors and men vigilant against any insults to southern white (male) heritage, invigorated its ranks. The new membership also included white supremacists who looked to the Confederacy as inspiration for the creation of a white Euro-American homeland. The League of the South, founded in 1994, added a patina of intellectual rigor to this neo-Confederate revival by warning white southerners that cosmopolitan academics, liberal and irreligious politicians, foreign organizations, and other sinister forces were intent on the destruction of the white South's values and heritage. The South, they protested, had historically been and should remain an Anglo-Celtic homeland. Equally important, the white South had come closer to creating the ideal Christian republic than any other society so the defense of white southern heritage was, literally, the defense of everything that was sacred (Hague/Sebesta,/Beirich 2008): esp. Chapters Seven and Ten).

With gathering energy during the 1990s, the SCV and allied groups picketed, lobbied, campaigned, and litigated to prevent "heritage violations," which included "any attack upon our Confederate Heritage, or the flags, monuments, and symbols which represent it." Particular energy was devoted to bringing suit against school districts and municipalities that sought to restrict the public display of the Confederate Battle Flag. Although the SCV usually failed in these efforts, it stoked the fears and resentments of members and allies steeped in a white regional memory that dwelled on white southerners' victimhood at the hands of a succession of Union generals, outside agitators, northern legislators, and activist judges.[5]

The hectoring by the SCV dovetailed with increasing politicization of the defense of Confederate heritage during the 1990s. Previously, the defense of white southern "heritage" was the preoccupation of white Democrats, who had, since the Civil War, vowed to protect the region against Yankee agitators and influences. But during the 1970s, Republican insurgents eager to expand the party in the region embraced white southern "heritage" as a means to exploit white resentments and yoke them to the party's fortunes. As part of President Richard Nixon's 1972 reelection campaign, Republican strategists sought to peel off white voters in the South who recoiled from the Democrats' commitment to racial equality, school desegregation, and opposition to the Vietnam War. This so-called "Southern Strategy," which appealed to white suburban southerners who were anxious to preserve *de facto* segregation in the suburbs, allowed the Republican Party to exploit the anxieties of whites without having to categorically oppose racial integration. Nevertheless, the Democratic Party still retained the loyalty of many

white southerners as long old-line white politicos played up their regional loyalties in thick southern accents.[6]

Ronald Reagan's 1980 campaign and subsequent presidency expanded on the foundation built by Nixon and sped up the surprisingly rapid consolidation of Republican strength in the South. Reagan himself evidenced little sympathy for Confederate heritage, but he was not embarrassed to glad-hand race-mongers and voters who had previously championed segregation. Reagan's tacit although unsuccessful support of North Carolina Senator Jesse Helms's tenacious opposition to the establishment of a national holiday in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. was a sign of how far the party of Lincoln had travelled in only a few years.

The emerging coalition of Republicans and Confederate devotees demonstrated its newfound influence in the struggle over the state flag of Georgia during the 1990s. Demands to revise the state flag roiled the state's politics for more than a decade. In response to the Supreme Court's *Brown* decision, which ruled that racially segregated "separate but equal" public education was unconstitutional, segregationist politicians in 1956 had redesigned the state flag to include the Confederate battle flag. When the 1996 Atlanta Olympics brought international scrutiny to the state, Democrats and some business leaders advocated the removal of the divisive Confederate symbol from the state flag. Other politicians, especially Republicans, exploited the issue to depict Democrats as captives of urban Black activists and outside business elites hostile to white southern "heritage." During the 2002 gubernatorial campaign, Republicans pummeled Democratic Governor Roy Barnes for his role in the adoption of a new state flag, rallying the support of rural white males who harbored grievances against what they perceived to be metropolitan, liberal, and elitist policies. For conservative whites, the new state flag became a symbol of "political correctness," affirmative action, multiculturalism, moral laxity, and other perceived modern ills. Similar battle lines emerged elsewhere, including Alabama and Mississippi, whose state flags also incorporated the Confederate battle flag. In South Carolina, controversy arose over the display of the Confederate flag above the statehouse (Martinez/Richardson/McNinch-Su 2000: 303–336; Young 2004; Bluestein 2020).

By the dawn of the twenty-first century the alliance between neo-Confederates and Republicans was so tight that only extraordinary circumstances persuaded southern Republicans to reevaluate their steadfast defense of all things Confederate. For instance, not until after the June 17, 2015 massacre of Rev. Clementa Pinckney, Cynthia Hurd, Rev. Sharonda Coleman-Singleton, Tywanza Sanders, Ethel Lance, Susie Jackson, Depayne Middleton, Rev. Daniel Simmons, and Myra Thompson at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina by a white supremacist did Republican leaders of the state endorse the removal of the Confederate battle flag that had hovered above the state capitol grounds for decades.

The removal of the Confederate battle flag from the South Carolina capitol on July 10, 2015 was widely applauded as evidence of statesmanship and a new commitment to inclusiveness within Republican ranks in the South. Yet arguably the most important response by Republicans has been the proliferation of "heritage protection" laws. While Republicans retreated from defending the Confederate flag, they nevertheless were steadfast in their devotion to the preservation of Confederate monuments in the public spaces of the South. Alarmed first by the outcry after the Charleston shootings, and then subsequently by the desecration of Confederate

3 Confederate Battle Flags on display during the "Unite the Right" Rally in Charlottesville, Va., 2017

monuments by activists energized by the Black Lives Matter movement, Republican legislators in Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Tennessee took the lead in passing laws that imposed onerous requirements, typically including legislative approval, to alter names on buildings or to move or remove monuments. Riddled with ambiguities and resting on untested claims of legislative authority, these laws intentionally impose hardships on any community intent on revising its civic landscape (Cox 2021: 121–168).

When white southern conservatives latched on to the defense of Confederate iconography as a defining tenet they energized those southerners who rejected their exclusionary definition of "southerner" and "southern." The urgency of contesting the dogma was compounded first by the 2015 massacre in Charleston and a white supremacy rally in Charlottesville in 2017 (Fig. 3). Prior to Dylan Roof's murderous rampage in Charleston, Roof had posted photographs of himself with the Confederate battle flag and at shrines of white southern memory. Similarly, the organizers who staged the Charlottesville rally used the pretext of protesting the removal of a statue of Confederate Robert E. Lee as a justification for their spectacle of white supremacy. In turn, President Trump's public comments three days after the tragic death of Heather D. Heyer, a counter-protester in Charlottesville, included a mash-up of arguments that had long circulated among Confederate apologists. He warned against the erasure of history and suggested that "good people" had been present among the crowds of white nationalists. Conservative commentators subsequently drew comparisons between the campaign to remove Confederate symbols and the demolition of ancient monuments by ISIS in Syria and by the Taliban in

Afghanistan as well as the destruction of Jewish art by Nazis in Germany, implying a moral equivalency between American anti-Confederate activists and the most reviled enemies of the United States. Such remarks were consistent with the long-familiar tactic of attacking the nation's preeminent civil rights organization, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), as a racist hate group because it advocated boycotts against states that prominently honored the Confederacy. Remarkably, since 2017, white conservatives have contended that opposition to Confederate heritage is un-American.[7]

The Charlottesville rally vividly confirmed the continuing salience and power of Confederate monuments. Rather than inert, archaic remnants of a long-forgotten civilization, the monuments remain potent symbols to some white Americans, including young whites who have come of age decades after desegregation. After the Charlottesville rally, alarmed residents across the region looked at their local landscapes, seeing with new eyes monuments, street names, school names, and other inherited civic mementos. But whereas the champions of all things Confederate rely on justifications that have changed little since the turn of the twentieth century (e. g., slavery wasn't the cause of the Civil War; slavery wasn't that bad; and Confederates fought for a noble cause they believed in), their opponents have mounted a sophisticated critique of the region's inherited landscapes. Drawing upon a wealth of recent scholarship, they have exposed the corrosive legacy of Confederate memorialization. They stress the interlocking efforts of the codifiers of Jim Crow laws and of memorialists of the Confederacy to sanctify both white supremacy and the memory of the Confederacy. Likewise, they have drawn attention to efforts to harness white historical memory to opposition to racial and gender equality during the past century. Their fundamental claim is that white privilege and power, not "community sentiment," dictated street and public school naming practices across the region and prevented any enduring recognition of non-white heritage in the civic landscapes of the South.[8]

Despite the trenchant critiques of present-day Confederate commemoration, the small number of monuments that have been removed testifies to the challenges that remain. In many states, the laws that impede changes to monuments will continue to thwart activists for the foreseeable future. Even in the absence of those laws the removal of monuments is likely to be a lengthy and messy process. In Virginia, for instance, communities can now elect to remove Confederate monuments. Perhaps in the next few years many northern suburban and Tidewater counties will be depopulated of Confederate monuments. At the same time, many rural counties where Confederate symbols are now important and conspicuous markers of rural dissent will probably retain their monuments.

While local activists continue to wage grassroots campaigns to remove monuments, southerners now confront the question of how to systematically revise the landscapes they have inherited. As noted above, there are literally thousands of Confederate memorials, and thousands of streets named after Confederates. Some communities are pondering where to start the process of commemorative revision and whether only the most conspicuous monuments and iconography should be reinterpreted, revised, or removed. Simultaneously, they also are wrestling with the cost of transforming their public spaces as well as questions about who should have a voice in the process. An especially important looming consideration is what will replace the empty pedestals previously occupied by Confederate heroes. In some communities, espe-

cially Richmond, the removal of Confederate memorials has inspired the most ambitious reconsideration of the city's public art since the late nineteenth century.

Where in the annals of iconoclasm does the "decommemorating" of Confederates properly fit? Some have celebrated or deplored efforts to purge the public sphere of remnants of Confederate memorial culture as a modern-day analog to the destruction of symbols of the *Ancien Régime* during the French Revolution or the toppling of statues of King George III during the American Revolution. Historian Guy Beiner offers a better comparison when he describes decommemorating as "akin to civil war by other means" (Beiner 2021: 44). The struggle underway in the American South is the latest manifestation of a contest over public space and power that whites and people of color have been waging since the American Civil War. At stake is whether the public spaces of the South will acknowledge and represent the region's pluralism, or instead will continue to celebrate only the region's white historical agents and their preoccupations.

Erasure has not been objective of most activists. Of the 108 monuments that have been removed from civic spaces in the South, only the Durham, North Carolina monument has been destroyed. Forty-four of the monuments have been moved from civic spaces to museums or cemeteries where they remain accessible to public viewing but are either subject to curated interpretation (e. g., a museum setting) or are displayed in a space devoted to mourning (e. g., a cemetery). Another forty removed monuments remain in storage while local authorities decide on their final disposition; there is no reason to assume that any of these monuments will be destroyed.[9]

Instead of the wholesale destruction of removed Confederate memorials there has been a conscientious effort in most communities to shift the ownership, preservation, and display of the monuments from local municipal authority to private entities. In Richmond, Virginia, where the iconic Confederate memorials on Monument Avenue have been a focal point of local and national debate, city leaders were intent on ensuring that wherever the monuments went they would not be "re-venerated." But at the same time the councilors did not condone the destruction of the monuments (Delaney 2021; Gershon 2021). Eventually, the City Council decided to transfer the divisive statues to two museums: the Black History Museum and Cultural Center of Virginia; and the Valentine Museum (Richmond City Council 2022). While the Black History Museum's plans for the monuments that it received remain unclear, the Valentine Museum plans to display the statue of Jefferson Davis as part of an exhibit on the glorification of the Confederacy by the statue's sculptor and the museum's namesake, Edward Valentine. By displaying the monument in its present-day condition, including the anti-racist and anti-Confederate graffiti scrawled on it in Valentine's preserved sculpture studio, the museum pledges to interpret the divisive history of Confederate commemoration.

In Richmond and elsewhere, the aim of the movement to remove Confederate memorials is to end the public veneration and honoring of the Confederate past. Historian Charles Hedrick's insistence that *damnatio memoriae* (the condemnation of the memory of a deceased person) be distinguished from *abolitio memoriae* (the erasure of somebody's memory) is especially apt in this instance. The local activists engaged in revising the South's public spaces are present day practitioners of *damnatio memoriae*. At the same time that activists have called for the removal

of Confederate monuments they have advocated for public acknowledgment of the enduring and systemic legacies of slavery and white supremacy. What is underway, unevenly across the region, is a dishonoring, not an erasure, of the Confederate past. In an irony unappreciated by champions of the Confederate heritage, activists calling attention to Confederate monuments have been agents of memory far more than they have been iconoclasts (Hedrick 2000: 93).

Notes

1 Data on Confederate memorials is available at *Commemorative Landscapes of North Carolina*.
2 The Monument is Dedicated 1898; The Vance Monument 1899; Zebulon Vance Monument Preservation Project; Walton 2015; Walter 2020; Bush 2020.
3 The broad contours outlined here can be traced in Schulman 1991; McDonald 2013; Tamir 2021. On Fayetteville, see U. S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Fayetteville city, North Carolina.
4 The essential starting points for an understanding of the discontents of the "neo-Confederates are Horwitz 1999; and Hague/Sebesta/Beirich 2008.
5 The best source on the internal politics and goals of the SCV was provided by staff at the Southern Poverty Law Center. See Beirich/Potok 2002, p. 44; Beirich/Potok, 2003, pp. 61–67, and Heidi Beirich 2004, p. 4.
6 For a provocative and persuasive account of urban politics and white southern conservatism, see Kruse 2013.
7 Trump 2017; Jackson 2019; Herman 2017. For a contrasting conservative position supporting removing monuments, see Hilditch 2020.
8 Among the works on the Lost Cause and its impact, see Blight 2002; Brundage 2005; Cox 2003; Cox 2021; Domby 2021.
9 No definitive inventory of Confederate monuments currently exists. A convenient list of removed monuments is available at "Removal of Confederate monuments and memorials" on Wikipedia. The removal on monuments in North Carolina is tracked on "Commemorative Landscapes of North Carolina". For resources on Confederate monuments in general, see "Whose Heritage? Public Symbols of the Confederacy," Southern Poverty Law Center.

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Towards a Censorship from Below?

Current Controversies over Contentious Artworks and Monuments in East and West

For a long time, the freedom of art was taken for granted in the countries of the West. Art is allowed to make anything its subject, at least within the bounds of what is legally permissible, and to make use of all creative means—this, for the most part, has been the consensus in the art scene as well as in informed public opinion. In the wake of the avant-garde movements of modernism, various provocations and taboo-breaking were increasingly accepted as an integral aspect of art production and the art business. Indeed, they were often responses to public expectation.

Today, however, the freedom of art, and hence of artists, is increasingly being challenged in various parts of the world, including the liberal societies of the West. Again and again, works of art are denounced as ethically or politically intolerable and artists ostracized because of alleged misconduct. Shitstorms on social media, demands that pictures be excluded, exhibition cancellations, and removals of artworks proliferate.

At the same time, controversies over monuments in public space have increased in recent years. There have been countless attacks against monuments in various countries, statues have been knocked off their pedestals by protesting crowds or removed by official decree. For various groups of activists, stakeholders, and governments, a growing proportion of the monument heritage seems more and more unacceptable.

This article focuses on recent campaigns against contentious artworks and monuments in a historical and global perspective, citing case examples in Europe and North America.[1]

Moral Claims Versus Freedom of Art

In recent years, disputes over controversial artworks have increased in both frequency and ferocity. One example of the radicalization of viewpoints was the protest against the exhibition of the painting *Open Casket* by US artist Dana Schutz at the 2017 Whitney Biennial in New York. The painting Schutz made in response to reports of police violence against African Americans shows the body of Emmett Till, a fourteen-year-old African American boy who was lynched by white men in Mississippi in 1955. Schutz used a photograph of the boy's mutilated body, which had been on

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110773576_005

display in an open casket at his mother's request, as a template to galvanize the public. Similar to the famous photo, the painting was intended to be an indictment of the cruelty of racism.

But Schutz's good intentions were denied by her critics. They accused the successful artist of abusing the suffering of Black people for her own career. Artist and activist Parker Bright voiced this accusation in a protest action in which he posed in front of the painting, dressed in a T-shirt reading "Black Death Spectacle". It was a staging for the cell phone cameras of the museum public and immediately went viral on social media. "She has nothing to say to the Black community about Black trauma," was Bright's much-quoted message (Greenberger 2017: n. p.). In the ensuing debate, artist Hannah Black wrote an open letter categorically demanding the removal of the image from the exhibition. She even went a step further by making the "urgent recommendation" to destroy the painting in order to prevent it from entering the art market or a museum in the future. It was "not acceptable for a white person to transmute Black suffering into profit and fun." And even if Schutz's intention was to express the shame of whites for their crimes against Blacks, she should not use their suffering as "raw material" for her art (Greenberger 2017: n. p.).

Parker and Black denied Schutz, as a white artist, the ability to empathize with the suffering of Black people. For this reason, they also wanted to deny her the right to express herself on the subject. Art critic Hanno Rauterberg points out that the consequences for the art world would be threatening if this logic were generally followed:

> Everyone would be reduced to their origins, their gender, their skin color, and art would reinforce rather than broaden notions of personal identity. It would be an art permeated by new reservations, in which it would hardly seem possible anymore for a Christian to dare make a statement about the Muslim spiritual life, for a Turk to address Kurdish culture, or for an Israeli to voice anything about Palestinian suffering[2] (Rauterberg 2018: 29).

While in the case of Dana Schutz demands for the removal of a painting from the exhibition were in vain, the Leipzig painter Axel Krause was indeed disinvited from an exhibition for political reasons (Theile 2019). Krause was supposed to participate in the annual exhibition of a local artists' association in 2019, after a jury had included his paintings in their selection. However, some of his fellow artists protested against showing with him because Krause was close to the far-right party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) and had been critical of Angela Merkel's refugee-friendly policies. As a result, the organizers excluded him from participation. This led to a quarrel, and at one point the entire exhibition was canceled. In the end, it did finally take place—but without Krause.

Whereas in the case of Dana Schutz the subject of her painting in connection with her skin color had caused offense among critics who accused her of cultural appropriation, the content of Axel Krause's paintings, which do not convey any explicitly political messages, played no role in the controversies surrounding his planned participation in the exhibition. It was solely a matter of the artist's political stance. Both cases show, however, that a long-standing principle, widespread in the Western art world, according to which a work of art can be viewed and judged without regard to the artist's person, is increasingly being challenged.

This development is particularly evident in approaches to works by artists accused of sexual misconduct. In 2018, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D. C. caused a stir by canceling a long-planned retrospective of Chuck Close's œuvre (Rauterberg 2018: 69–86). Women who had applied to the famous photorealist painter as models alleged that he had insulted them with sexist remarks. Close denied this and apologized in the event he might have unwittingly committed verbal misconduct, but this did not change the National Gallery's decision. As a result, Close became unacceptable as a person to other public institutions in the United States as well. The Seattle University Library immediately removed a self-portrait of his hanging in a foyer without any further debate. The librarian in charge explained that this was a "prudent and proactive course of action" out of concern for "potential student, faculty or staff reaction to seeing the self-portrait" (Riski 2018: n. p.).

Around the same time, Hamburg's Deichtorhallen canceled a planned exhibition by fashion photographer Bruce Weber after male models accused him of sexual harassment. The justification for the cancelation explicitly stated that the "separation of artist and work (. . .) was not given in the debate" (Rauterberg 2018: 72). In both cases, the accusations led to ostracism of the artist's person, which affected the reception of the work to the point that its presentation in public institutions was henceforth considered inappropriate.

Since then, the debates triggered by the #MeToo movement have led to an increased awareness of artists' sexual behavior, which includes the tendency to ban not only the denounced persons but also their works.

Campaigns Against Libertine Art in East and West

The disputes over art and sexual morality concern not only the conduct of artists of the present and recent past, but increasingly the content and forms of representation from earlier art periods, as well. In 2014, an open letter attracted attention demanding that Caravaggio's painting *Cupid as Victor* (around 1601) be removed from the permanent exhibition of the Berlin Gemäldegalerie (Ruthe 2014; Sterngast 2018). The famous artwork from the early seventeenth century, which shows the god of love as a naked, winged boy, was to be withdrawn from the public's gaze because the "unnaturally provocative position" of the child's body was "undoubtedly intended to excite the viewer" (Ruthe 2014).

The demand was made against the backdrop of the affair surrounding former Bundestag member Sebastian Edathy, who had been accused of the use of child pornography material. The letter was firmly rejected by the museum's management and derided as absurd in various commentaries. Nevertheless, initiatives to ban images suspected of having a negative effect on sexual morals have been mounting in various countries in recent years, and they are not without consequences for exhibition practice.

In the United States, a 2017 petition received considerable attention: art historian Mia Merrill, together with well over 10,000 supporters, demanded the removal of the painting *Thérèse Dreaming* by Balthasar Klossowski de Rola, known as Balthus, at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art (Merrill 2017; Rauterberg 2018: 52–56) (Fig. 1). Merrill objected to the

1 A bone of contention as a case of "voyeurism and the objectification of children" since a campaign in 2017—Balthus' painting *Thérèse Dreaming* at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, currently not on display

depiction of a young girl "in a sexually suggestive pose" by a painter suspected of pedophilic tendencies. She emphasized that she was not calling for the destruction of the painting, but she accused the museum of promoting "voyeurism and the objectification of children" by displaying it without any trigger warning. In her eyes, the picture was a danger from which the public needed to be protected. The museum rejected the claim in this case as well. However, in the meantime, the famous painting is no longer on display. An explanation for its removal is not provided by the museum to visitors.[3]

Interventions to restrict artistic freedom or the presentation of art for the sake of moral norms have a long tradition. What is new, however, is that they are now often demanded by the art public itself. By way of contrast, past interventions of this kind usually came from religious communities or reactionary forces—"powerful institutions that took action against art's provocations, clerical circles that wanted to silence blasphemous statements, conservative parties that wanted to prohibit everything licentious," as Hanno Rauterberg puts it (Rauterberg 2018: 15).

However, in various parts of the world today, censorship of this nature exerted by powerful institutions is still common practice, and may even occur in democratic countries. Especially in states with deeply conservative governments, curtailing artistic freedom can become an agenda for state action.

In Poland, for example, after the national conservative party Law and Justice (PiS) took over the government in 2015, interventions in art, music, and theater aiming at excluding works or performances denounced as offensive have become frequent (Wojciechowski 2017; Majmurek 2021). Particularly notorious was the removal of the photo series and video installation *Sztuka Konsumpcyjna* (Consumer Art) at the Warsaw National Museum in 2019, presumably prompted by the minister of culture's intervention (Cieślak/Piwowar 2019; Hassel 2019; Magazyn 2019).

The 1972 work by Natalia Lach-Lachowicz, a pioneer of feminist art in Poland, depicts a young woman pleasurably sliding a banana into her mouth in an unmistakably erotic pose (Fig. 2). In this series of explicit images, one can see a connection between the sexual connotations and an ironic commentary on consumerist desire in a poor socialist economy. The minister

found this unacceptable for public display, as did the museum director he had appointed, who banished Lach-Lachowicz's series, as well as another video installation considered offensive, to the museum's depot. The reason the director gave was that the exhibition was also visited by many young people, who could be disturbed by such works. The trigger is said to have been a mother's complaint that her son had been traumatized by seeing the photo series and other revealing images. The "banana affair," as it was dubbed in the press, sparked protests in Poland's art scene, which included mockery of the prudishness of conservative guardians of virtue combined with fierce criticism of tendencies toward state censorship.

In its moral impetus, the museum director's action showed clear parallels to demands for the removal of the paintings of Caravaggio in Berlin or Balthus in New York. But the actors involved are quite different. If in Poland it was regressive forces that exerted power, in Western countries the efforts to restrict artistic freedom emanate predominantly from parts of civil society that tend to perceive themselves as enlightened and progressive. The type of political intervention is also different. In Warsaw's "banana affair," it is a traditional top-down pattern,

2 Denounced as offensive and removed to the museum depot in 2019—the photo series *Sztuka Konsumpcyjna* (Consumer Art) by Natalia Lach-Lachowicz at the Warsaw National Museum

whereas in the Western cases, we witness the emergence of the "bottom-up censorship" phenomenon art critic Farah Nayeri describes in her recent book *Takedown. Art and Power in the Digital Age* (Nayeri 2022).

Decolonization of the Monument Heritage

Parallel developments can be observed in approaches to contentious monuments in public space. In recent years, social groups considered to be progressive bottom-up movements have campaigned in various countries for the removal of monuments associated with colonialism and racism.

Already before the murder of George Floyd in 2020 and the subsequent protests of the Black Lives Matter movement, there had been high-impact campaigns by anti-colonialist and anti-racist initiatives against monuments in various parts of the world, such as South Africa and the United Kingdom. In the United States, the previous decade has seen several waves of remov-

3 The transformation of a monument to the Confederacy into a memorial to George Floyd—the Robert E. Lee Monument in Richmond, Virginia, before its dismantling, photo 2020

4 Staging a lynching: the toppling of the statue of Edward Colston in Bristol, June 7, 2020

als of Confederate monuments and symbols in the South, which had fought to maintain slavery in the American Civil War of 1861–1865. In some cases, marches and racially motivated violence emanating from gatherings of right-wing extremists at the monuments provided the trigger. Finally, the outrage over Floyd's death, who fell victim to an excess of police violence, led to a large number of monument removals. Over the course of 2020, nearly 100 Confederate monuments were dismantled (Barczak/Thompson 2021; Blokker 2021; Spiegel 2021; Treisman 2021; Walser Smith 2021, see also the chapter by W. Fitzhugh Brundage in this volume). Others followed later, after protracted deliberation processes. One of the most prominent monuments, the equestrian statue of General Robert E. Lee in Richmond, which had become a focal point of demonstrations against racism and white supremacy after Floyd's death, was not taken down until September 2021 following a long legal battle (Fig. 3) (Ainio 2023). In addition to Confederate generals widely seen as explicit symbols of the oppression of African Americans, attacks have also been directed at various monument figures with a more multi-layered historical significance reduced in contemporary perception to crimes of colonialism and racism, including Christopher Columbus.

After Floyd's death, there were also increased attacks on monuments in Europe, especially in countries that had played a significant role in colonialism. The destruction of the statue of entrepreneur and slave trader Edward Colston in Bristol attracted considerable publicity (Choksey 2020; Hobbs 2021; BBC News 2020). The activists involved staged the monument toppling as a lynching. They ripped the figure from its pedestal, kicked it, and smeared it with paint. They then rolled the symbolically desecrated and maltreated effigy of the slave trader to the harbor and tossed it into the water amid cheers (Fig. 4). The performative enactment of an execution was intended to invoke the fate of the numerous sick or weak African slaves thrown overboard during the transatlantic voyage to America—a symbolic act of revenge with features of an orgy of violence that took place in an exuberant party atmosphere.

5 "Tear down this shit"—the recommended approach to colonial monuments in Germany on an activist website, established in 2020

Along with Great Britain, Belgium was one of the countries in Europe that experienced spectacular attacks on the monuments associated with colonialism following Floyd's murder. In Germany, too, initiatives for the decolonization of public space have gained new momentum in 2020. In many cities, they denounce the persistence of Germany's colonial legacy on the streets and call for a critical debate. Sometimes, however, they propagate ideas apparently inspired by the demolition of the Colston statue. An example is the website *tearthisdown.com*, which was founded in 2020 by the artist collective *Peng!* in collaboration with activist groups. It called for reporting colonialist remnants in Germany's public spaces and recommended under the motto

6 The founder of the German Empire in the focus of anti-colonialist activists—the statue of Otto von Bismarck in Hamburg-Altona, smeared with blood-red paint, photo 2020

"Tear down this shit" the following approach to the denounced monuments: "Off with the head, down from the pedestal, paint it, hang a sign on it—there are many possibilities. But marking it is not enough, we're looking for other forms. A lot of things can be a monument, and when in doubt, floating it in the water will do" (https://www.tearthisdown.com) (Fig. 5). The website, which is currently no longer available, may have played a role in some of the subsequent attacks on monuments in Berlin, prompting prosecutorial investigations against members of the *Peng!* collective (see also Christiane Kruse's chapter in this volume).

In the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests, attacks on concrete monuments have increased not only in Berlin. Particularly affected is Hamburg, a city with a history closely linked to colonialism because of its overseas port (Zimmerer/Todzi 2021). In Hamburg, some removals of monuments honoring figures involved in colonialism had already occurred long before 2020. As early as 1967 and 1968, protesting students repeatedly toppled the statue of Hermann von Wissmann (1853–1905), an adventurer, explorer of Africa, military officer and colonial governor of German East Africa, from its pedestal. As a result, the city refrained from reinstalling the monument and placed it in storage. In 2008, after protests and damages, the bust of the entrepreneur, politician and slave trader Heinrich Carl von Schimmelmann (1724–1782), which had been installed only two years previously to honor his commitment to the city, was removed from the Wandsbek Market. After Floyd's death, statues of Otto von Bismarck, the founder of the German Reich, whose role in colonialism has increasingly come into focus, were also the target of attacks. A Bismarck statue in Hamburg-Altona was smeared with blood-red paint (Fig. 6), similar to the Schimmelmann bust in Wandsbek before it was dismantled. Demonstrations were held at the Bismarck monument in the Alter Elbpark against the ongoing renovation, and several initiatives even demanded the demolition of the colossal statue.

Decommunization of the Monument Heritage

The symbolically loaded destruction of monuments is rooted in a tradition that might be as old as monument production itself (Hoffmann et al. 1992; Speitkamp 1997; Gamboni 2018; Parzinger 2021). In the past, statues fell from their pedestals mainly in times of political upheaval, such as the French Revolution (Tauber 2009), the aftermath of the two World Wars, or the fall of state socialism in Eastern Europe (Kramer 1992; Nationalkomitee der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1994; Saunders 2018). In various historical situations, monument demolition had the political function of demonstrating to the people a change of power, making it appear irreversible and thus consolidating it. The destruction of the symbols of a vanquished regime could also have military significance, especially if it was staged by mass media. Thus, the blowing up of the swastika on the Nazi Party Rally Grounds in Nuremberg on April 22, 1945, weeks before Germany surrendered, set a spectacular signal for the downfall of the Third Reich that clearly affected the further course of the fighting. And when pictures of the toppling statue of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad went around the world in April 2003, it sent an unmistakable and effective message to his remaining defenders that the regime stood no chance against the military superiority of the invading forces led by the United States.

7 De-Sovietization of public space in Ukraine—the toppling of a Lenin statue in Khmelnytsky, February 21, 2014

Falling monuments often accompany eruptions of acute political tensions. In Ukraine, the Euromaidan protests against the policies of pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovych beginning in December 2013 were accompanied by a mass destruction of Lenin monuments (Fig. 7), which a Ukrainian neologism dubbed "Leninopad" (Lenin Fall) (Rozenas/Vlasenko 2018; The Future of Ukraine's Past). In its development and performative gestures, the Leninopad phenomenon shows clear parallels to the later monument overthrows in the course of the Black Lives Matter protests. For some of the population, the statues of the Russian revolutionary, large numbers of which had remained in Ukraine despite earlier waves of dismantling since the 1990s, were a bone of contention reminding them of their shared history with Russia in the Soviet Union and of Russia's claim to power in Ukraine. After the annexation of Crimea in March 2014, Leninopad reached its peak, with more than 300 monuments reported to have fallen within a few days. Initially carried out mainly in spontaneous actions as part of the protest movement, the removal of Lenin monuments later became an element of a legally defined, symbolic state policy that Ukraine adopted in reaction to Russian aggression, and occasionally received accusations that it contributed to an exclusive, nationalist politics of history (Tsyba 2017). In May 2015, Yanukovich's successor Petro Porochenko signed a set of laws addressing the decommunization of public space and ordering the removal of the remaining monuments to communism and other Soviet symbols. In total, more than 1,000 monuments to Lenin and other communist personages are reported to have been removed in Ukraine in the aftermath of the Euromaidan protests and the annexation of Crimea.

Since February 2022, Russia has been waging a full-fledged war of conquest against Ukraine, which is increasingly turning into a war of extermination. The extreme experience of violence to which Ukraine is currently exposed also affects the way it deals with the remaining remnants of the Soviet monument heritage. These include memorials commemorating World War II, which were exempt from the decommunization laws. Just a few days after the war began, a Soviet tank commemorating the city's liberation from German occupation in March 1945 was removed from its pedestal in Chernivtsi in southwestern Ukraine (Martens 2022). Since then, other cities have followed suit. De-Sovietization now goes hand in hand with a de-Russification of public space. In Kyiv, Mayor Vitali Klitschko let a prominent monument to Ukrainian-Russian friendship be demolished in April 2022, with great media attention, and announced the destruction of 60 other Soviet-era monuments (Häntzschel 2022). Since then, many more monuments commemorating ties with Russia have been dismantled in Ukraine, including statues of cultural figures such as Alexander Pushkin (Boy 2023).

From the beginning of the full-fledged war against Ukraine, there have been echoes of this reflex against any monuments associated with Russia in other countries as well, especially those that once belonged to the Soviet sphere of power and perceive Russian aggression as a threat to themselves as well, for example the Baltic States. At the same time, in the midst of the brutal war, a re-Russification of public space is taking place in the Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine. In some cities, even Lenin's statues, which had been removed in the course of Leninopad in 2014–15, were reinstalled (Bregman 2022; Deschepper 2022; Fink 2022), demonstrating once more the importance attached to the politics of monuments in armed conflicts.

The dismantling of monuments is a recurring concomitant of power changes and acute conflict situations. It can be initiated by very different actors and pursue different political goals. In many historical situations, it can seem politically logical and sometimes even ethically necessary, such as (just to mention the most obvious example) the case of blowing up the swastika in Nuremberg, which, as a symbol of a murderous regime, was unacceptable in public space and had to be eliminated as a sign of its end. There are also sound ethical arguments for the removal of Confederate monuments, as they are perceived by a large part of the population as offensive symbols of oppression, especially when displayed in prominent public places without any critical commentary, as has usually been the case. Moreover, a mobilizing effect for racist movements is attributed to these images (see the chapter of W. Fitzhugh Brundage in this volume). Similarly, Ukrainians today deserve understanding if they find symbols of Russian domination inacceptable in the face of the acute war experience and the crimes committed by Russian soldiers. One may regret this for the sake of the monuments' historical and in some cases artistic value. But today, while their country is subjected daily to brutal attacks by Russia, it is certainly not the time to lecture Ukrainians in this regard.

Various motivations and ideological backgrounds can fuel the removal of contentious monuments, in particular political and emotional situations. Viewed in a historical perspective, however, systematically destroying monuments that fail to meet the political demands of the respective present seems to be a typical action pattern of dictatorships and authoritarian regimes. The Soviet Union destroyed not only czar monuments, but also countless churches that stood for the former power of Christianity. The Third Reich radically eliminated Jewish heritage

8 Saved from decommunization—the monument to Jerzy Ziętek in Katowice, photo 2023

as well as monuments commemorating political opponents. During World War II, German troops also destroyed numerous monuments in the occupied territories, most systematically in Poland, which the Nazi regime wanted to eradicate as a cultural nation. The GDR removed many monuments that did not fit the communist image of history, such as victory monuments and imperial statues from the time of the German Empire.

However, there are also tendencies in democratically constituted states toward a uniform historical policy that tolerates only monuments seen as ideologically appropriate. Poland, where the former national conservative government also pushed through a decommunization law in 2016, offers an example of this. The law, similar in essence to that of Ukraine and several other post-socialist countries, entails the mandatory removal of all remaining monuments to communism (Instytut Pamięci Narodowej; Derlacz 2018; Pastuszko 2018). It sparked controversies in which critics warned of a return to state censorship in the service of a totalitarian politics of memory—analogous to the trends in Poland's art world described above.

The debates involved not least the question of how to deal with monuments of ambivalent historical figures who, in collective memory, can stand for communism but also for other aspects of history. One such case is the monument to the politician and military leader Jerzy Ziętek in the Upper Silesian regional capital of Katowice (Zasada 2018) (Fig. 8). Ziętek was a functionary of

the communist power apparatus in the People's Republic of Poland. However, he is revered in Upper Silesia for his service to the region and closeness to the people. According to the provisions of the decommunization law, the statue, erected as recently as 2005, had to be removed. However, the municipality of Katowice successfully resisted through an administrative measure by placing the monument's location under the jurisdiction of a museum, thus taking advantage of an exemption in the law that applies to museums.

Reflective Approaches to a Dissonant Monument Heritage in Germany

In post-1990 Germany, the treatment of monuments of the former GDR has caused much controversy (Hoffmann et al. 1992; Kramer 1992; Nationalkomitee 1994; Flierl 2007; Ziesemer 2019). There have been repeated accusations that the new authorities systematically destroyed the visual heritage of the GDR, dictated by pure ideological hatred against the legacy of the socialist German state. The gigantic Lenin statue in Berlin-Friedrichshain, which was demolished in 1991 after a decision by the responsible district assembly, was often cited as prominent evidence. In fact, numerous monuments from the GDR era, and particularly Lenin statues, did not survive the change of political system in East Germany.

However, there are also several examples of conspicuous GDR monuments that are still preserved, although they hardly align with the political ideals of the Federal Republic, and often not at all. These include, for example, a colossal monument of the communist party leader Ernst Thälmann in Berlin, whose removal has been repeatedly demanded in vain, most recently in 2022, as a somewhat bizarre reflex to the Russian invasion of Ukraine (Hollersen 2022). An example of one astonishing career of a GDR monument after 1990 is offered by the monumental Karl Marx head in Chemnitz, which has since become very popular and is used by the city as a promotional icon (Bartetzky 2012: 210–220).

A closer look reveals a picture that contradicts the media perception focused on monument overthrows and spectacular political conflicts over heritage issues. The historian Nina Ziesemer concludes in her thorough dissertation on the treatment of the GDR heritage in Berlin that the preservation of the monuments and their integration into the Federal Republic's culture of remembrance was the rule rather than the exception (Ziesemer 2019). Ziesemer also demonstrates that, contrary to widespread belief, political influence on decisions has in most cases been limited. Instead, relatively unbiased experts from administrations often ensured the monuments' preservation without making any noise. The historian Kirsten Otto arrives at similar conclusions in her book about disappeared monuments in Berlin (Otto 2020).

In contrast with other post-socialist countries, a broad consensus has developed in Germany, at least among experts, in favor of the preservation of controversial, "discomforting" monuments (*unbequeme Denkmäler*). This seems to be the result of long-lasting intensive discourses in science and the media. In a large number of contributions, especially from the fields of heritage studies and art history, various aspects of the idea have been articulated that the dissonant monuments, which contradict today's prevailing world views and remind us of history's aberrations, should be saved—as a reminder to critically reflect on our own convictions and

to question the certainties of the present. In this spirit, the former head of Berlin's monument preservation authority, Helmut Engel, formulated the following maxim at a 1993 conference on how to handle the monuments of communism:

> Preserving history while overcoming it means two things. First, it is improper to let progress go hand in hand with destruction. And it must be possible for the admonishing effect of history to question the one-dimensionality of progress. (. . .) Renunciation of destruction does not include a renunciation of change, but change can now only take place under the premise of supplementing the historical document, whereby the new joins the old in mutual respect (. . .). Thus, the revolution also forfeits the right to overthrow monuments and other witnesses to its hated predecessors (. . .) (Engel 1994: 16).

Such reflective approaches, which aim at preserving and critically contextualizing problematic monuments as historical evidence, seem particularly pronounced in Germany. This is probably the result of its experience with addressing the difficult legacy of two dictatorships in the twentieth century.

Differentiated positions such as these can only develop in liberal democracies. They are generally unwelcome in dictatorships. But they can also have a bad standing in democratically constituted states when illiberal politics of history prevail, or when monuments become targets of political campaigns and activist movements.

Blurring Boundaries between "Bottom-Up" and "Top-Down"

A comparative look at various campaigns to decolonize and decommunize public space reveals striking parallels. They are rooted in the lack of a sense for the ambivalence of certain historical processes or figures and for the diversity in the perception of monuments. Another common feature is the implicit belief in an almost magical power of monuments and their perceived ability to perpetuate political messages, ideologies, and social patterns of the past across all historical changes. From this perspective, the presence of monuments of communism, like the visual relics of colonialism, are seen as a threat to the political and moral condition of contemporary societies. This results in one-dimensional patterns of argumentation that admit only one's own perspective and deny the legitimacy of other approaches.

Similar to the initiatives against contentious works of art mentioned in the first part of this chapter, campaigns against controversial monuments are based on the view that society needs to be protected from harmful ideas and representations in the public sphere. Although attacks on monuments are understandable in emotionally charged situations and particularly following experiences of violence, they sometimes reveal tendencies to educate while intellectually incapacitating the public, which is deemed unequipped to form its own judgments when viewing works of art and historical relics.

In an analogy to recent attempts to restrict artistic freedom, the attacks against controversial monuments in different parts of the world evidence parallel mental patterns despite their

different constellations of actors. If the decommunization laws in Eastern Europe emanate predominantly from conservative-minded national governments, the decolonization campaigns in the countries of the West and in parts of Africa are based on anti-racist activism that is considered an emancipatory movement from below. Thus, in the first case, it seems to be a top-down policy imposed by illiberal forces in power, while the latter offers an example of bottom-up initiatives against the power establishment that seek to overcome a dominant discourse.

A closer look, however, reveals that this apparent contrast is relative. For one thing, decommunization is based not only on the intervention of those in power, but also on the sentiments and demands of at least part of the population. This is particularly evident in Ukraine, where the decommunization law was preceded by the spontaneous destruction of numerous monuments during demonstrations, and where Ukrainians today unleash their suffering from the war and anger over Russian aggression in actions against monuments. On the other hand, the decrease in the number of Confederate monuments in the United States is not only an effect of actions during Black Lives Matter protests, but also, and indeed mainly, a result of administrative acts on the part of local authorities and court decisions.

Moreover, the call for the removal of Confederate monuments enjoys widespread support in the United States, both in some political sectors and in professional communities. The Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) published a declaration in 2020 that blanketly welcomed the immediate removal of these monuments from public spaces. "The removal of Confederate monuments is a necessary and important step (. . .), and one that cannot wait any longer," the statement reads (Society of Architectural Historians 2020). Implicitly, the declaration expresses an understanding for the material destruction of the monuments where the costs for professional removal and storage appear too high. The critically reflective, preservation-oriented approaches to problematic heritage that are so pronounced in Germany seem to be unfamiliar or irrelevant to the declaration's authors, at least in regard to Confederate monuments. At the same time, the SAH statement shows that activism directed against these monuments is now deeply embedded in established scholarship as well.

Not least, regarding this activism as an exclusively bottom-up movement fails to recognize the power of the social media. The mass impact of social media can help once-marginalized social groups and movements gain public visibility and influence over institutions in a way that makes traditional notions of "top" and "bottom" seem outdated (Nayeri 2022). However, this positive effect of empowerment has a highly problematic side. Social media's forms of communication promote simplifications of the argument and forge polarization. The level of excitement enhanced by social media in disputes over controversial works of art and monuments threatens something that is essential in approaching public space in liberal societies: the ability to tolerate and to critically reflect a diversity of representations and messages that do not conform to the political standards and moral claims of the present.

Notes

1 This paper is a modified and updated version of an article published recently in German language—Bartetzky, Arnold (2023), Zensur von unten? Aktuelle Auseinandersetzungen um umstrittene Kunstwerke und Denkmäler, in: Kahveci, Ayşegül Dinççağ, et al. (eds.), *Censored? Conflicted Concepts of Cultural Heritage*, Weimar, pp. 30–45. I thank Adriana Baranski, Bettina Haase, Engel Friederike Holst, Anja Höfer, Wolfram Höhne, Nicolas Karpf, Yuliya Komarynets, Karin Reichenbach, Gáspár Salamon, Kristina Sassenscheidt, Martin Schieder, and Halina Yatseniuk for valuable help and good advice.

2 English translations of this and the following quotes by the author.

3 Status as of August 2023, during the author's visit to the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

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II. IDOL DISPUTES IN PUBLIC SPACE AND ART INSTITUTIONS: CONFLICTS BETWEEN MATTER AND MAGIC

POOYAN TAMIMI ARAB

Pictures That Divide

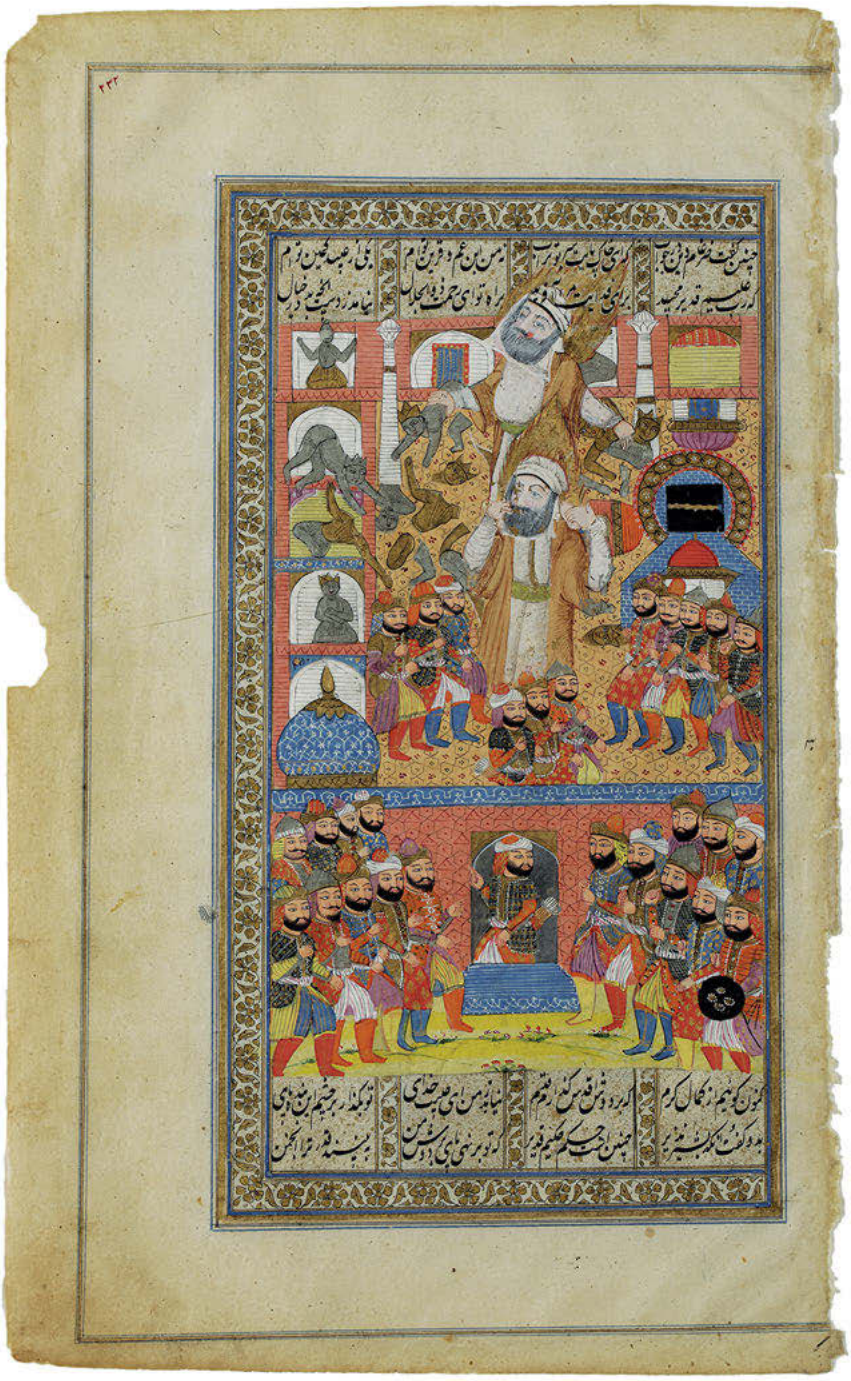
The Prophet Muhammad in the Tropenmuseum Amsterdam

Summer came, and the Tropenmuseum Amsterdam converted its spacious *Lichthal* (hall of light) into a bona fide arcade. The nostalgic Japanese game machines' colorful designs and *bleeps* and *bloops* set the stage for my discomfort as I stepped into an adjacent *Things That Matter* exhibition space devoted to calligraphy in Arabic script. Where a calligraphic image of the Prophet Muhammad had been displayed, I now saw an empty frame. I hadn't thought well of the decision to place the unique Iranian religious image in between a T-shirt, calligraffiti, and an overall eclectic array of Islamic art and material culture (Figs. 1 and 2). Shadow had covered its upper part, and the glass case had reflected too much—but the work's haphazard removal wasn't reassuring, either. Distressed, I took the stairs to check up on a miniature painting in the exhibit

2 *The Prophet Muhammad* by Mus.t.afā Tūtūnchīyān on display in the exhibition *Things That Matter* in the Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam, 2018–2019

1 Muṣṭafā Tūtūnchīyān, *The Prophet Muhammad*, 1959, Iran, calligraphic composition, ink on paper, 60 × 44.5 cm , National Museum of World Cultures (Netherlands), 7031–33

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110773576_006



3 *The Prophet Muhammad and Ali removing the idols from the Kaaba*, eighteenth century, Kashmir, South Asia, 42 × 30 cm, National Museum of World Cultures (Netherlands), WM–68236

Longing for Mecca showcasing the Hajj pilgrimage. The painting's location was marked by a text that warned visitors: behind the double layers of glass and a black translucent screen lay an image of the Prophet Muhammad. A button switched on the lighting—no other object required this—but the painting's beautiful bright reds, blues, and gilded decorations remained obscured. How ironic, I told myself, that the museum covered a painting showing the Prophet and his son-in-law Ali wearing transparent veils. Nota bene, they are depicted in a quintessential act of iconoclasm: smashing idols in Mecca in the presence of their contemporaries (Fig. 3).

I then headed to the meeting. It was supposed to be a conversation with museum curators, personnel, and societal stakeholders—Muslims deemed appropriate to brainstorm on showing, veiling, or removing the images of the Prophet Muhammad. I was invited because of my experience as an assistant curator. I had also helped document and translate the two images in question. But because of my ongoing research into contested visual culture, I'd been told by Wayne Modest, then director of the museum's Research Center for Material Culture, that I was allowed to attend on the condition that I both refrain from taking notes and promise not to write about individual participants' opinions for "Pictures That Divide," my research project on Islam, contested visual culture, and diversity in the Netherlands. When I entered the meeting room, having just learned that the images had already been either removed or hidden behind a screen, I saw that everyone was seated at a table and had been given a notebook and a pen. (There was even a notebook for me.) But to discuss or write down what? I zoned out as the conversation evolved. There was little use in a carefully secured conversation after the fact. Moreover, prints of the images in question remained in a folder so as not to offend. In general, my impression was that both the images themselves and their art historical significance were seen as beside the point. What mattered was their simple categorization as images of the Prophet Muhammad and the offense this implied, which meant looking at them from the assumption that Islam is an essentially aniconic religion.

Such pictures divide—where do we go from there? Subsequent conversations with colleagues working in the fields of museology and art history, anthropology, and religious studies convinced me of the necessity of writing about the politically sensitive topic of how a museum processed images of the Prophet—in this case the Tropenmuseum, one of four ethnographic museums that today make up the Netherlands's National Museum of World Cultures. How did the museum go from collecting these pictures to reframing them to quietly deselecting, veiling, and even removing them? Much has been written about taking offense regarding images of the Prophet Muhammad after the 2006 Danish cartoon affair and the 2015 attacks against the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* (e. g., Flood 2007, Klausen 2009, Veninga 2014, Meyer et al. 2017, Titley et al. 2017, Temperman and Koltay 2018). Most of these studies combine visual analysis with discourse analysis and criticism of broader social and political contexts. With this chapter, I want to contribute to the existing scholarship by providing an ethnographic account of the museum practices involving these pictures and the emotions they evoke—emphasizing up-front that these pictures are not cartoons but religious images made by Muslims. In preparing this chapter, the focus of my research was on the pictures themselves (their iconography, object biographies, and transnational entanglements) and on the people they pulled into the twenty-first-century iconomachy surrounding Islam (museum representatives, exhibi-

tion makers, curators, interns, and academics). I do not provide an analysis of journalistic practices.

To my mind, this research requires taking an anthropological perspective and employing a reflective writing style that situates the researcher in the museum and in society at large. So, let me put my cards on the table: I was brought to the Netherlands by my secular Iranian family, who sought refuge there after the Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988). As a university student, I worked as a teacher for the Tropenmuseum Junior's exhibit on Iran, *Paradise & Co.*, which ran between 2003 and 2006; I worked for the museum again as an assistant curator of West Asia and North Africa from 2015 to 2016. Around twenty percent of the museum's Iranian collection consists of Islamic objects, exceeding any other country's share, and I worked on this subset more than others (see the table graph in Shatanawi 2022: 60). It should come as no surprise that all the pictures of the Prophet that sparked controversy or were feared likely to spark debate belonged to Shiite Islam. In addition, they were all made in modern Iran with the exception of the miniature painting placed behind a screen, which was dated to the eighteenth century and belonged to the Persian-speaking world of South Asia. How these images were understood and framed mattered to me: both because of the abysmal political situation in the Islamic Republic and, to a less-personal extent, because they had become part of the European 'Islam debates' that revolved around the inclusion and exclusion of Muslims as equal citizens. (For an analysis of the heritage/politics aspect of Islamic art and material culture at the National Museum of World Cultures, see Tamimi Arab 2021.)

And so, as an assistant curator working on potentially sensitive materials, I also approached the job as a form of participant observation. I took notes, consulted public and non-public museum documents, conversed with museum staff about museum ideology and exhibition practices, and conducted interviews—on and off the record. My main job at the time was not to research the museum; I was tasked with documenting a collection the museum had purchased from professor emeritus Frederick de Jong of Utrecht University's Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, where I also came to be employed as an assistant professor of religious studies in 2016. Because of the politically sensitive nature of pictures of the Prophet Muhammad, however, and my background as an Iranian-Dutch anthropologist, my analyses of objects—working mainly with the museum's digital archive software, The Museum System (TMS)—weren't purely descriptive. Normative considerations about the frames the museum deployed to teach the public about Islam played a key role. As such, the very question of whether it was ethical to research the museum depended on one's stance on whether it was appropriate to exhibit these pictures of the Prophet.

In the first section to follow, I describe the collecting process since the 2000s. Which pictures did the curator of the Islamic collection, Mirjam Shatanawi, decide to acquire to complement the collection's array of modern visual culture? In the second section, I focus on the museological reframing of such pictures as instances of Islam's diverse visual cultures. What is lost in the process, and to what extent could the pictures escape the frame of Islam as an aniconic or even iconoclastic religion? In the third section, I describe how the Tropenmuseum deemphasized, deselected, veiled, and removed pictures of the Prophet. What do the different strategies of displaying and not displaying tell us, in sum, about the visions underlying these decisions?

By showing aspects of the museum's workings, I hope to inform curators and scholars currently thinking about picture controversies and processes of inclusion and exclusion in plural settings.

Collecting

Mirjam Shatanawi started as assistant curator at the Tropenmuseum in 2001 and acted as curator of West Asia and North Africa from 2004 to 2018. Although she didn't work exclusively on religious matters, she was de facto responsible for much of the existing Islamic collection and was frequently called upon to deal with Islam-related issues. (For a critical account of the collection's history, see Shatanawi 2014, 2022.) Her curatorship took place against a backdrop of international responses to waves of Islamic iconoclasm and violence[1]: the Taliban's destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan in March 2001, one month after she started; the attacks on September 11 that brought down the Twin Towers of New York City's World Trade Center; the murder in 2003 of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh in Amsterdam, one block away from the Tropenmuseum; the international eruption of the Danish cartoon affair (2005–2006); the terrorist attack on the offices of the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in 2015, and, simultaneously, the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which disseminated propaganda videos of men attacking ancient sculptures with sledgehammers, blew up Shiite mosques, bulldozed Sufi shrines, and, when faced with defeat, destroyed an iconic Seljuq minaret dating back to the twelfth century. Throughout her tenure as curator, Shatanawi's response has been to argue for collecting, documenting, reframing, and eventually displaying (and publishing on) the diversity of Islamic visual culture as a first step in thinking critically about contemporary Islam's strained relation to *beelden*, the Dutch word for both "images" and "statues" (compare, for example, Shatanawi 2009, 2012, 2014, and 2019).

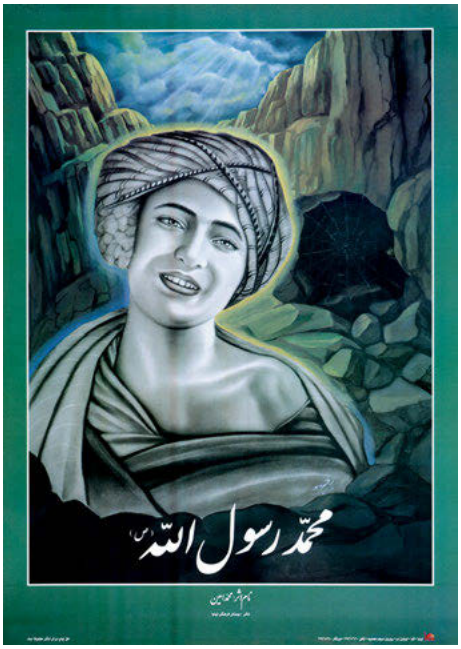
The fact that scholarship about Islamic art *has* advanced beyond the essentialist understanding of Islam as an iconoclastic religion becomes apparent when we look back at previous exhibits. In the late 1990s, an opulent exhibition on Islamic art in Amsterdam's Nieuwe Kerk (New Church) didn't hesitate to share in its catalog that Islamic art was "in essence iconoclastic" (Pitrovski and Vrieze 1999). Such generalizing formulations have been avoided in exhibitions and new wings of Islamic art opened since September 11, 2001, in museums such as the Metropolitan in New York City and the Louvre in Paris. The first significant deconstruction of the concept of Islam as being essentially iconoclastic can be seen in the publications of two art historians: Thomas Arnold's 1928 *Painting in Islam* and Sarwat Okasha's 1981 *The Muslim Painter and the Divine*; these were followed by the most thorough theoretical criticism of this narrow view, Shahab Ahmed's posthumous *What Is Islam?* (2016, also see Gruber 2019, Shaw 2019, and Meyer and Stordalen 2019). And yet, despite this near century of scholarship, curator Shatanawi's concern still stands: notwithstanding deconstructive scholarship or even journalism, in the international context of the early twenty-first century, the frame of Islam as an iconoclastic religion is time and again reinforced in myriad media that report on contexts where iconoclastic attitudes and excessively violent responses to (perceptions of) blasphemy prevail. Displaying

images of the Prophet Muhammad can even paradoxically reinforce this dominant frame when described by journalists as exceptions to the aniconic rule. Exhibiting Islamic art, Shatanawi once remarked, is a "catch-22." She was skeptical of the likelihood of deconstruction effectively calling attention to hybridity and diversity within the existing politicized frames.

Shatanawi's approach can be thought of as avoiding essentialism by keeping an eye out for social and cultural facts, and being hesitant—but not totally unwilling—to take up theological or communitarian wishes. Because Dutch museums in the twentieth century knew little about Islamic iconography, getting the basic facts straight has been an important part of collecting and documenting images of the Prophet Muhammad.[2] For example, a bronze medallion in the Tropenmuseum's collection was bought in the 1970s in Iran. At the time, the local salesman said that the figure on the medallion was the Prophet Muhammad. Back in the Netherlands, the museum consulted Abdul Jalil Jawad, an Iraqi archeologist who denied that such a thing could be true, presumably because there are no images of the Prophet in Islam.[3] Gradually, more information about how the Prophet *had* been part of Islamic visual culture became available. A Moroccan print, bought in 1969, was exhibited for the first time in 2003. It didn't show the Prophet, but rather the outline of his sandals, around which was written in Kufic script, "the blessing of Muhammad" (*barakat muḥammad*).[4] In the changing religious landscape of the Netherlands, with orthodox views being voiced by religious authorities, even such traditionally widespread and respectful imagery has been the target of criticism. Such was my experience when I looked at the object with a Moroccan-Dutch imam, who shook his head at its sight and expressed dismay that the museum chose to display such theologically misguided visual culture.[5]

Shatanawi added to the collection by acquiring lesser-known artworks, such as a nineteenth-century calligraphic composition of the *Qasīdat al-Burda* or *Poem of the Mantle*, a thirteenth-century poetic praise of the Prophet Muhammad.[6] Central in this brilliant pink and gilded work are the ninety-nine names or qualities of the Prophet—not to be confused with the better-known ninety-nine names of God—as well as the roses that represent him and the poem's olfactory allusions. Completely different is a colorful Senegalese reverse-glass painting made in 2003 by a Sunni artist, which depicts the Prophet Muhammad respectfully as a light-emitting human figure flying on the fabled animal Burāq.[7] Iranian artworks and popular visual culture were purchased as part of this diverse global Islamic tradition, manifesting in countries like Suriname, the United Kingdom, Senegal, and China—in other words, going against the classical approach in which Islamic art is associated with the high cultures of Al-Andalus, the Mamluks of Syria and Egypt, and the Asian gunpowder empires of the Ottomans, the Safavids, and the Mughals.

Among these acquisitions in response to Islam controversies were the low-culture and contemporary Iranian posters of the Prophet Muhammad. The Tropenmuseum had in 1997 displayed modern and popular Islamic prints and posters in the exhibition *Bismillah*, showing popular Shiite visual culture from countries like Iran, Pakistan, and India—described by the newspaper *Trouw* as "fascinating Islamic reli-kitsch."[8] These depicted the Prophet Muhammad's name, family tree, and tomb in Medina but not his person as a human figure. The new posters, however, directly portrayed the Prophet in a pose reminiscent of Christ Pantocrator—much like the medallion already in the collection—and in a series depicting the Prophet as a young man



4 Fīrūz Khusrawpūr, *The Prophet Muhammad*, 2001, Qum, Iran, 69 × 48.5 cm, National Museum of World Cultures (Netherlands), TM–6282–14

(Fig. 4).[9] The latter posters, based on eroticized Orientalist pictures of a Tunisian boy, had already been observed by Oleg Grabar and Mika Natif (2003) and traced in more detail by Pierre Centlivres and Micheline Centlivres-Demont (2005). Mirjam Shatanawi acquired the posters in Iran in November 2006, after the Danish cartoon affair erupted in 2005 and continued into 2006. Years later, when Shatanawi and I were discussing the posters with art historian Christiane Gruber in the museum depot, she had forgotten that they had been purchased after and not prior to the Danish cartoon affair.[10] We can surmise that they had been discovered by art historians before the contested cartoons appeared and were thus at hand and available for mobilization, thanks to publications about them, when the issue of depicting the Prophet became part of an international row.[11]

Since the fusion in 2014 of the Tropenmuseum with the National Museum of Ethnology Leiden and the Africa Museum in Berg en Dal, as well as the close cooperation with the World Museum Rotterdam since 2017, the combined National Museum of World Cultures has sought to reevaluate the existing Islamic collections now that they are all accessible in one connected digital system that allows for greater integration of all sub-collections in exhibition designing. From the time of her arrival in 2001, Shatanawi, in cooperation with other curators such as Luitgard Mols, has expanded an already internationally remarkable collection of modern and popular Islamic visual culture. A concise formulation of the reasoning steering this expansion can be found in a funding-application document sent to the Mondriaan Fund in order to ac-

quire the aforementioned collection from Frederick de Jong that I would be working on. The objects were to support the National Museum of World Cultures's wish to have collections that "connect with the multicultural Netherlands of today. The works to be purchased represent important aspects of the Islamic faith and are as such recognizable for a specific target audience of the museum: visitors with an Islamic background."[12] The suggestion to display Islamic visual culture was also combined with the expressed intent to academically research these images, which I take to include their meanings in today's political landscapes. The focus of this particular application for funding was not just on visual culture but also on calligraphy and material culture, culminating eventually in the exhibition space on calligraphy in the permanent exhibit *Things That Matter*. The intent was clearly to acquire objects to complement and add to an already diverse collection. One particular image of the Prophet was highlighted (Fig. 1) and described as follows:

> Miniature paintings of Islamic art frequently depict the Prophet Muhammad, but the Prophet is not depicted as an individual. He is part of a narrative representation or scene. The first standing portraits of Muhammad were made in Iran in the first half of the twentieth century.[13] The National Museum of World Cultures owns a medallion from circa 1950 and several contemporary posters with the portrait of Muhammad. This specimen is a rare early example of such a portrait. The composition is also rare and not known in the literature; Muhammad is depicted as a messenger, whereby the clothing and face of the Prophet are constructed out of calligraphic verses of the Qur'an. The image thus lies between calligraphy and figuration.[14]

Though the application's focus was on calligraphy and visual culture as it is broadly understood, the description of an image as a "portrait" of the Prophet was sufficient for the Mondriaan Fund to view the work from the perspective of contemporary image wars. In its acceptance letter, the fund exclusively focused on the images' potential in relation to this politicized frame:

> According to the commission, the interest for the Netherlands's national collection is crucial. With these works it is possible to trace important connections, such as with the Shiite heritage currently destroyed by IS [Islamic State of Iraq and Syria], or the portrait of the Prophet Muhammad in relation to the contemporary cartoons of the Prophet.[15]

When I joined the museum in 2015, Shatanawi showed me the Mondriaan Fund's acceptance letter while I helped her document the acquired objects. We scoffed at the remark about the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria's iconoclasm. What did *that* have to do with this collection, which largely consisted of calligraphy and visually pious imagery, some dating back decades or made far from the Middle East, such as in Siberia and Xinjiang? But in hindsight, the foundation's assertion wasn't so ludicrous. One of the objects I began documenting was a gouache depicting the mausoleum of Aḥmad ar-Rifāʿī, who lived in the twelfth century and founded the Rifaʿī Sufi order. The iconography elevated the Sufi's status to that of a saint who was seen by his followers as the spiritual heir of the Prophet Muhammad. According to legend, Rifaʿī had been blessed by the Prophet himself when the latter stuck his hand from the grave to greet the saint. Sitting

in my office at the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden, I did a Google search on the Sufi order. The images I found sent shivers down my spine. They showed the Islamic State's bulldozing of a mausoleum in Iraq purported to be Rifa'ī's.[16]

Reframing

Throughout the Tropenmuseum's history, different understandings and dichotomies have determined what Islam was thought to be. Shatanawi believes the museum shouldn't see Islam from an exclusively theological and legal lens, nor should it promote the notion of Mecca as the Islamic heartland, since doing so reduces Indonesia to the periphery. Inspired by a postcolonial turn in the anthropology of Islam, she also doesn't condone the dichotomy of official Islam versus the everyday life of Muslims, or think that museums should push cosmopolitan Islamic philosophy and Sufi poetry as the only way for contemporary Muslims to finally become moderns. The frame Shatanawi argues should be the focus of museums like the Tropenmuseum is that of diversity. In contrast with Talal Asad and Shahab Ahmed, she takes a more positive stance toward the late Abdul Hamid el-Zein's social constructionist notion of multiple "Islams." Therefore, Shatanawi doesn't conceptualize the problem of divisive pictures as being a matter the museum needs a policy about, whether for Islamic visual culture generally or, more specifically, for images of the Prophet Muhammad. Instead, the museum should have a vision for how to display Islam's diversity as a historically contingent, contested, and thus multifarious phenomenon. Shatanawi hoped to show, in other words, the diversity of Muslims, which fit with the National Museum of World Cultures's goal of being a museum of humanity (*museum over mensen*).

And so the museum's Iranian images of the Prophet became part of this idea of reframing as diversity, which could count on support from academics specializing in Islamic history and visual culture. Interestingly, the Victoria and Albert Museum also owned one of the posters Shatanawi had acquired (Fig. 4), though they removed it from their public museum database and by doing so hid the fact that it was in their collection. To this Shatanawi was cited in the *Guardian*, saying:

> These images are a real eye-opener, a powerful example of Islam being different and more diverse than many imagine. (. . .) If Muslims feel offended by images made by other Muslims out of reverence for the prophet, I'm not sure if the museum should decide not to show them. It seems like choosing one interpretation of Islam over the other. These images are not made to disrespect but—on the contrary—to honour the prophet.

Ingvild Flaskerud, a scholar of Iranian Shiite visual culture (2010), remarked similarly, saying: "by not displaying the images, we give privilege to certain understandings of Islam and marginalize others. This is not simply a scholastic issue; it is also a democratic matter."[17] I, too, used this frame to explain the value of works such as the calligraphic image of the Prophet made by Muṣṭafā Tūtūnchīyān (Fig. 1). For example, the Mondriaan Fund interviewed me for their annual report and printed the image along with a quote of mine saying that the acquisitions—from Sino-Arabic

calligraphy to the Bektashi Sufi order's material culture to the Prophet's picture—allow the museum to "tell a more complete and complex story about religious Islamic visual culture."[18]

Among the Tropenmuseum personnel, views about displaying the posters differed; indeed, even single individuals wavered, often changing their stance on the tricky question. Some curators and staff involved with the collection who weren't working on anything Islam-related told me they would consider it a shame if the pictures couldn't be displayed. Others tried to make sense of Muslims' difficulty accepting such pictures' presence, for example, by comparing it with how conservative men and women prefer to not shake hands.[19] The view of Wayne Modest, director of the Research Center for Material Culture, contrasted with Shatanawi's. He was more willing to censure the pictures. "Why should we inflict pain?" he asked me. "Is that productive?" Alternatively, he asked whether the pictures should be covered and made available to only those who choose to look at them.[20] In a conference at the Research Center for Material Culture, Shatanawi and I publicly discussed displaying the posters and the standing portrait, and Modest responded as follows:

> Turn off the camera [smiling, audience laughter]. I was with someone who would constitute herself as Dutch, as indigenous Dutch. Yes, she would at that time, native Dutch; and we had a conversation as we were talking about doing a project in the museum and this was just after the attacks in France. (. . .) Out of that conversation emerged that we had images of the Prophet in our collections, and her response to me in that moment was (. . .) "Yes, yes, let's use it to show them that it is possible." That's what she said. And the second response, she said to me that she felt really secure coming back on the train from Paris because the police were checking everybody that looked Muslim. And so, in that regard, it led to a beautiful conversation, and at the end of it, she changed her mind and she didn't want to use it, to show them that it can be shown. But in that regard, I think that it opens up the possibility and the complexity of it because what Mirjam [Shatanawi] and Pooyan [Tamimi Arab] are suggesting is also that this is not just fear, but it is also to ask the question: What is the responsible moment or way in which one can insert these objects within a particular conversation? Because once one puts it out there, it is inserted in a conversation and one has to think about what does that do.[21]

While Shatanawi and I stressed the diversity of practicing Muslims and people with an Islamic background in the Netherlands, and saw the museum as a place where learning about visual culture could lead to a transformative experience, Modest stressed the reality of the group identities of the larger Muslim minorities of Turkish and Moroccan descent and the fact that these groups deserved to be recognized as such. At the time, to Modest's mind, this view skewed toward not showing the images, even if they were made for use by the Shiites of Iran. The three of us didn't disagree on the values of diversity or inclusion but on what those values should practically imply in the museum for this difficult case. Moreover, the frame of diversity did more than show complexity; it changed the images into things that could touch from a distance and potentially change Muslim others. The broader debate revolved around the nature, desirability, and politics of this transformative influence.

The backdrop for the conversation was primarily the European situation in which Muslims were seen as responding to images in an unenlightened manner by calling for blasphemy laws

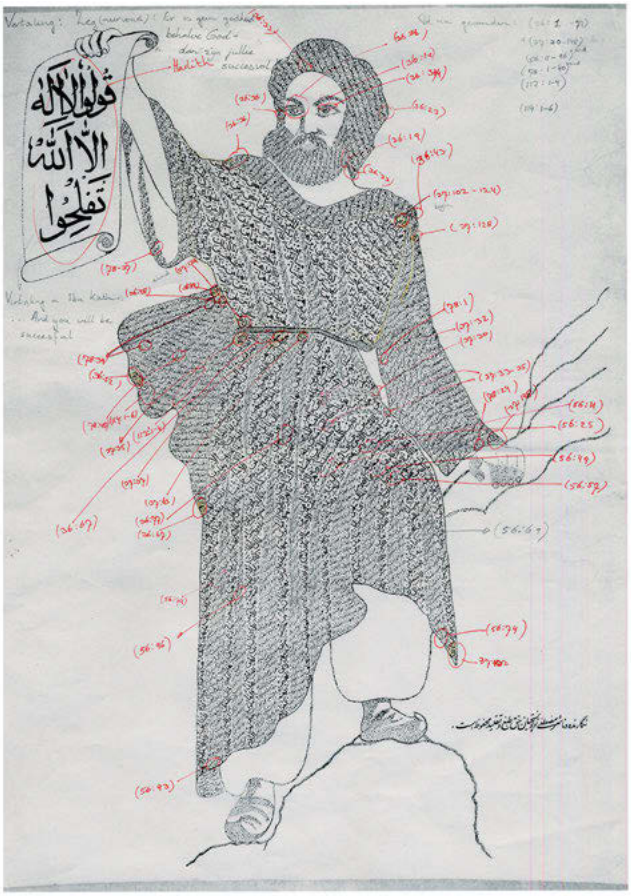
5 *The Prophet Muhammad holding the Qur'an*. Illustration by Jan Verhas (1834–1896 CE), included in Louis Figuier's (1819–1894 CE) Vies des savants illustres du Moyen Âge, Paris, Librairie internationale: A. Lacroix, Verboeckhoven and Cie, 1867, page without number after the preface

or even responding with physical violence. Shatanawi and Modest sought to actively combat stereotypes of good and bad Muslims that did or did not integrate well into societies like the Dutch. The reframing process thus led to the Iranian images of the Prophet being disconnected from the political context in which they were made and evaluated against the horizon of the current vicissitudes of European societies. Many of the mostly secular Iranians of the Netherlands, often refugees who fled Khomeini's theocratic political system, would not approve of this appropriation and reframing. Over the years, in conversations with members of this community, I've heard critical comments—about both this particular case and the broader uses of Iranian and Islamic art in the Western world. Christiane Gruber has indeed shown that the image of the young Prophet functioned in the pro-Khomeini visual culture of Shiite martyrdom (2016: 286–289)—as well as how the images' religious use declined after the Danish cartoon affair and the Islamic Republic's response of organizing their own Holocaust cartoon contest.[22] This prompts the question: What do we know about Tūtūnchīyān's calligraphic composition of the Prophet? In what context was it made, for whom, and for what purpose?

De Jong, who purchased the image in Tehran's Grand Bazaar, provided no evidence for dating it back to the nineteenth century. Its abstracted style is modern, and the composition and accompanying text have appeared on other objects, such as a medallion the Tropenmuseum owned (TM-4313-109), on Shiite *'alams* or metal procession standards (Newid 2006: 173, Gruber 2016: 277, Fig. 10), on prints (Puin 2008, J-4), and even on a large Persian carpet in the same

bazaar (Puin 2008: vol. 3, p. 968). Based on all this, I conjectured that the artist made it in the second half of the twentieth century. When I researched the object, I was unable to date it more precisely, nor could several experts I consulted. The work is signed by Muṣṭafā Tūtūnchīyān, whose last name translates as "tobacco merchant," indicating the maker's merchant-class background. It depicts the Prophet Muhammad in an authoritative manner by appropriating an Orientalist composition from a nineteenth-century European example drawn by the Belgian artist Jan Verhas (1834–1896) (Fig. 5).

Verhas's drawing was printed in a book by Louis Figuier (1819–1894), *Vies des savants illustres du Moyen Âge*. The Iranian artist's adaption sets the Prophet against an abstracted background and decorates his face and clothes with calligraphic verses of the Qur'an's surahs 36, 37, 56, 78, 112, and 114 (Fig. 6). His eyes and eyebrows, for example, are inscribed with the 36th surah:



6 A museum intern's analysis of the calligraphic figure of the Prophet Muhammad, 2015, National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden

> In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Yā. Sīn. By the Wise Qur'an, truly thou art among the message bearers, upon a straight path, a revelation of the Mighty, the Merciful, that thou mayest warn a people whose fathers were not warned; so they were heedless. (Translation Nasr et al. 2015: 1070–1071)

Gruber describes the composition as Moses-like (2016: 274–282), holding instead of the Ten Commandments a scroll that beckons people to Islam: "Say: there is no God but God [and] be successful" (*qūlū lā ilāha illā llāh tufliḥū*). Islam, in this vision, centers around a single God and the Qur'an, inscribed on the human that became the Messenger. The Prophet's countenance appears more potent than in Verhas's version, and his revelatory message is stern—Islam is a straight path: not just personal religious experience but also Law are pivotal in practicing the religion in the world. Nasr et al. note that the verses inscribed on the Prophet juxtapose God's might with his mercy, a reminder that he may exact vengeance if He wills and that justice and piety require obedience. For those who have studied the Qur'an as a whole, the commentators say, the verses can sound "ominous": God's warnings occur prior to a town or city's impending destruction.

What would such an image and texts mean in an Iranian context? Hamid Dabashi understood it at first sight as belonging to the same imagery described in his work on the iconography of the Islamic revolution (Dabashi and Chelkowski 1999).[23] When I took a closer look again in 2022, the graphic designer and typographer Amir Mahdi Moslehi pointed out that the artist signed the work twice, adding the date of 1959 in the lower left corner next to the Prophet's right foot.[24] The image can be said, therefore, to be one of several prototypical images of the Prophet Muhammad as described by Gruber, which became deeply tied to visions of religion and state, and of piety as obedience to the Law—especially when used during mourning rituals such as 'Ashura, commemorating the Battle of Karbala. This particular composition was seen in different types of material culture in the political context after the Islamic Revolution. Such images of the Prophet are often placed, notes Gruber, alongside other Shiite "battle heroes" and with the portraits of the two Supreme Leaders of the Islamic Republic, Ayatollahs Khomeini and Khamenei. "No matter how 'folk' or 'popular' they might appear," she warns, "images of Muhammad are overlaid with a range of solemn narratives about worldly and otherworldly rulership" (Gruber 2016: 276).

The image appears, then, to be a semiotic minefield. Using it for the Tropenmuseum's cosmopolitan mission to combat anti-Muslim prejudice and to promote the value of human diversity required taking political Islam out of it. What remained was a combination of a general reference to Islam and the Prophet and the picture's formal quality of combining text and figuration.

Despite its Islamic credentials, the museum intern who had painstakingly looked up the Qur'an verses with a magnifying glass worried that such pictures spelled trouble. When I told her I wasn't sure if it would be put on display, she told me she found it a shocking image, not for herself—a practicing Muslim with a Surinamese background—but for other Muslims in the Netherlands. She preferred it not to be displayed and emphasized that such modern pictures of the Prophet are "mainly from Iran" and "only a handful of other countries like Senegal." As

such, they are outliers that cannot represent Islam. Moreover, she thought that in a context where xenophobic politicians target Muslims, images of the Prophet would divide people. Though she loved working on the various posters and prints from Pakistan, India, Iran, and Egypt, the intern also said she found this specific topic stressful to think about. She said that ultimately it didn't matter to her what the image was about or how or where it had been made. The sheer fact that it depicted the Prophet gave cause for anxiety—but therein also lay its deconstructive potential.[25] When I broached the same topic with her a few months later, and expressed doubts about whether pictures of the Prophet should be exhibited at all, she commented that Tūtūnchīyān's work *should* be seen so that visitors can reach a more sophisticated understanding of figurations of the Prophet—which is exactly the kind of transformation Shatanawi had in mind.[26]

Framing the work as an expression of Islamic diversity constitutes a less offensive example of figuration than cartoons. Still, the image continued to provoke strong feelings of anxiety, both inside and outside the museum. When I gave a lecture about the pictures at the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2016, the security guard asked me whether I thought her presence was sufficient. When I gave a longer public lecture at Utrecht University in 2017, announced in a national newspaper and on a university flyer—both showing Tūtūnchīyān's work—several colleagues and our department's secretary expressed concern. One professor of Islamic Studies cautioned against displaying such pictures, saying that though it may go well one hundred times, a disaster would need to occur only once. Starting to worry myself, following Gruber I titled my lecture "Devotional Images of the Prophet Muhammad."[27] I now see this adding of the adjective "devotional" as a technique to dampen anxieties and safety concerns. The word suggests that these pictures are at least made with pious intentions, so they are not blasphemous cartoons and don't tap into other offensive imagery. They are thus not simply devotional, full stop, but devotional in a way that marks their meaning and thrust into the political present.[28]

Tūtūnchīyān's work was then chosen to be put on display in 2018 in the permanent exhibition *Things That Matter*. It was not just a pious image but could also contribute to the goal of displaying calligraphy in Arabic script. The image as such became part of a section about the cultural meanings of language, where visitors are encouraged to observe the "beauty" (*schoonheid*) of Islamic calligraphy. In that this image is an artwork in between text and image—in contrast with other pictures of the Prophet the museum owns—the choice for Tūtūnchīyān's work can be understood as a relatively safe option to show variations on styling text and image within Islamic traditions. Nevertheless, finding the appropriate words for describing it to visitors was no easy task. It was made all the more challenging because of the wish to combine in one space the topics of calligraphy and possibilities of figuration across Muslim worlds. As a curator, Shatanawi was supposed to deliver object descriptions that didn't run much longer than sixty words. Based on earlier experiences (cf. Tamimi Arab 2021: 183–186), and since this particular exhibition space was about calligraphy, she didn't want to place Tūtūnchīyān's work in the conceptual frame of an Islamic *Bilderverbot*. The first matter-of-fact version of her object description went as follows:

> The source of this portrait is a Belgian drawing dating from 1867. Iranian artist Mustafa Tutunchiyan altered the depiction by filling in Muhammad's face and clothing with Qur'anic verses. The Prophet holds a scroll inscribed with one of his sayings: "Say: there is no God but God so that you shall flourish."[29] The portrait shows the possibility of varieties [of making works of art or material culture] between image and text.

The "exhibition maker" (*tentoonstellingsmaker*)[30] working with the content curator (*conservator*), however, proposed another version that stressed the sensitivity of the image:

> For many Muslims, depicting the Prophet Muhammad is a sensitive matter. But Islam is not characterized by an absolute image ban, as this drawing shows. There are many opinions about this, which vary with time and region. The artist of this image has drawn the Prophet in a very elegant way in Qur'anic verses so that he is and is not depicted simultaneously.[31]

In this second proposal, although the text denies an absolute image ban in Islam, by doing so the object is again placed in the frame of Islam as a religion that many see as aniconic and iconoclastic. When Shatanawi responded that she wanted to keep the description focused on the unembellished facts of Tūtūnchīyān's work, she received another proposal to hang a separate explanation about the *Bilderverbot*, which would have negatively charged the entire space that revolved around the beauty of calligraphy. Though this proposal wasn't carried out, the final text used in the exhibition was a compromise between the earlier versions and included the topic of image bans:

> The source of this portrait is a Belgian drawing dating from 1867. Iranian artist Mustafa Tutunchiyan altered the depiction by filling in Muhammad's face and clothing with Qur'anic verses. Many people believe that Muslims traditionally avoided creating visual depictions of Muhammad. However, there are differences of opinion on this. This portrait shows that there are many possible ways to combine image and text.[32]

As Shatanawi often argued, this process shows that displaying images of the Prophet Muhammad is hard to properly contextualize and take out of existing politicized frames. Descriptions of images in Islam followed similar frames in the permanent exhibitions at the National Museum of Ethnology and the Africa Museum.

For these reasons, a significant part of reframing objects—in this case as manifestations of Islamic and thus Muslims' diversity—occurs in museum catalogs and academic publications. Shatanawi's book *Islam at the Tropenmuseum* (2014) can be read by a broad interested audience, and allowed the curator to add more nuances to the exhibitions and frames. "[In an exhibition,] I can choose between contexts but not explain everything," Shatanawi remarked in a conversation about the practical technicalities of designing exhibitions at the Tropenmuseum.[33] Moreover, curators of Islamic art don't navigate these meanings on their own. They share decision-making power with museum employees such as directors, content curators, exhibition makers, and other colleagues working for the interpretation, marketing, and educational de-

7 A copy of an Iranian poster of the Prophet Muhammad on display next to a seventeenth-century icon of Christ, Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam, on display in the 2012–2013 exhibition *Encounters: Hidden Stories from the Tropenmuseum's Collection*, 50 × 35 cm, TM–6282–2

partments, who do not have the same expertise and are interested or involved in critical, theoretical curatorship in differing degrees and with different emphases. In these interactions, whether a specific object description is used or not, museum workers and visitors will themselves add meanings, project their concerns, and find problematic issues such as the *Bilderverbot*, even if curators steer away from them.

Removing

The National Museum of World Cultures is home to approximately half a million objects. Among these are some items, such as human remains, that some may consider controversial. According to Modest, however, there are no objects in this collection that similarly prompt fears for the physical safety of visitors and personnel.[34] Although conversations about displaying or not displaying pictures of the Prophet revolved around the ethics of curatorship, these conversations were no doubt colored by the possibility of violence. For example, it would be out of the question to display together the twenty-odd images of the Prophet, all of different styles and from different periods and countries. Lingering fears meant that what was possible in one exhibition and museum may be thought of as crossing the line in another exhibition and museum. The question *To display or not to display?* wasn't answered with a single affirmative or negative, but by a spectrum of possibilities.

One of these possibilities was to show an object but manage it by emphasizing, deemphasizing, and reemphasizing. I am thinking of an Iranian poster depicting the Prophet Muhammad that was displayed in the exhibit *Encounters: Hidden Stories from the Tropenmuseum's Collection* (2012–2013). Shatanawi had it displayed together with a painting of Christ Pantocrator to show the influence of the latter on the former (Fig. 7). The object description was titled "Portrait of a Prophet" and contested the view that there is no figuration in Islam:

> It's a widespread misunderstanding that Islam has no visual images. Some Muslim artists do choose to depict holy persons, while others reject this. There's also no consensus among Muslim theologians about a ban on visual images. Even the Prophet Mohammed is regularly depicted, particularly in Iranian art. This contemporary portrait of Mohammed appears to be strongly influenced by images of Jesus Christ from Christian iconography . . .

In this exhibition, the aim of showing the Prophet's picture was to reveal something that visitors may find unexpected and learn from. While the poster was put on display in the *Lichthal*, it was in the context of an eclectic exhibition that didn't focus on Islam or religion—and as such didn't attract too much attention from the outside world to the possibly controversial poster. But Shatanawi intervened when the staff involved with publicizing exhibitions thought of using the poster for exhibition advertisements, spread on large posters across the Netherlands—now that would have escalated fast! Even when the poster was attached to an exhibition wall, she worried that its eye height and loose attachment made the object vulnerable, for example, if someone wanted to scratch it or tear it off the wall.[35] After a full discussion of the matter with the exhibition team, the original was taken back to the depot and a copy of the poster was hung in its place (Fig. 7).

The picture had also already been published in Shatanawi's 2009 catalog for the Islamic collection of the Tropenmuseum, where she could elaborate on Shiism and Iranian revolutionary propaganda, the *Bilderverbot* in Islam, and Western stereotypes about Muslims. Moreover, when the national newspaper *de Volkskrant* approached the museum in 2015, shortly after the attacks against Charlie Hebdo, this particular poster was selected for publication and thus mass dissemination.[36]

Worries about the pictures' impact should they be displayed in the museum itself did not abate, despite their widespread availability on the internet and in museums and books. Shatanawi recounted how, after the exhibition *Things That Matter* opened,[37] an employee of the Tropenmuseum Junior—the children's section of the museum with an entrance in the same *Lichthal*—discovered what she found to be an insulting presence: Tūtūnchīyān's depiction of the Prophet (Fig. 1). This employee was a practicing Sunni with a Moroccan migration background; her vehement stance was against showing depictions of the Prophet, which not coincidentally belonged to Iranian Shiism. She unnerved the staff with the claim that if such a picture were to hang in the museum, no Muslim would want to visit the upcoming exhibit on the pilgrimage to Mecca on the first floor. At this point, the curator was asked whether she intended to include other pictures of the Prophet in the exhibition *Longing for Mecca* (for a review, see Tamimi Arab 2020). There were two others. One was a large, nineteenth-century Iranian wall hanging from Rotterdam's World Museum's collection, which showed the Prophet and his son-in-law Ali (Fig. 8). She had chosen this object because the museum had received responses to the same Mecca exhibit in Leiden from Shiite Muslims who thought the exhibition excluded Shiism. Shatanawi wished to correct this appearance of Sunni dominance by introducing a large Shiite wall hanging in the new exhibit. However, after the complaint, and after Shatanawi consulted with fellow curator Luitgard Mols and the exhibition project group, the object was withdrawn from the exhibition. Intellectually, Shatanawi said, she opposed this decision. On the other hand,

8 Artist unknown, *The inauguration of Ali at Ghadir Khumm*, mid-nineteenth century, Iran, wall hanging, 410 × 260 cm, National Museum of World Cultures (Netherlands), WM–60940

imagining what her Jordanian father would have felt,[38] she could understand that groups of Sunni visitors would not like to be confronted with a large image of the Prophet.

This meant, in her estimation and also mine, that one religious minority, relatively more influential because of its bigger size, had effectively been privileged. Removing a large object from the exhibit was, in Shatanawi's words, a "concession" to the sensitivities of some Sunni Muslims and to what another curator described to me as a "moral panic" in the museum.

For these reasons, Shatanawi insisted on retaining the second object, an eighteenth-century miniature painting made in Kashmir (Fig. 3). Although the miniature painting was eventually kept in *Longing for Mecca*, it was placed behind a translucent black screen, with only optional lighting and a glass case that further blocked the picture from view. By the time this decision was made, due, according to Mols, to some museum colleagues' unease with the painting in light of its "sensitivity" (*gevoeligheid*),[39] Shatanawi had already resigned as curator and was no longer involved in the process. A text warned visitors in Dutch and English: "This ancient [*sic*] religious image from India shows the Prophet Muhammad and the Ka'aba." The suggestion that the image was "ancient" gives the impression that the text was made in haste—though curators were consulted in the process. The object description once again emphasized the potentially problematic nature of an image of the Prophet: "Opinion has always differed as to whether this is permitted." But this cautious strategy backfired, despite the well-meaning intention of giving visitors the choice whether to look or not to look. While the absolute majority of visitors had no comment on the subject, and though the exhibits in both Leiden and Amsterdam indeed drew Muslim visitors to the museums—many for the first time—, the Tropenmuseum nonetheless

received more than a dozen complaints about the images. (I was then asked to discuss this quandary in the closed meeting with which this chapter began.) The combination of such interactions, between museum colleagues and external pressures, resulted in the quick removal of Tūtūnchīyān's work on the ground floor; the veiled miniature painting remained.

By attracting attention to the problematics of the *Bilderverbot*, the miniature painting became a potentially divisive object—though it hadn't been before. It had been on display for years in what was at the time Rotterdam's Museum of Ethnology, now the World Museum—for example, in the exhibition *Dreams of Paradise* (1993–1996).[40] Back in the 1990s, the catalog made no references to the *Bilderverbot*, and described the object art historically as an illuminated folio that gives a Shiite spin to the conquest of Mecca in 630 (Huygens et al. 1993: 82–83). The painting stood in Rotterdam's museum in a semi-permanent exhibition for years since the 2000s, and was also borrowed for an exhibition that attracted Muslim visitors to the St. Catherine's Convent Museum in Utrecht, which displayed the painting without issue in *Holy Scripture: Tanakh, Bible, Qur'an* (2016–2017), an exhibition on the books of the Abrahamic religions. In this image the Ka'aba in Mecca is depicted as a black square; the two great figures in the middle, the Prophet and his son-in-law Ali, are taking out the idols from the surrounding architecture's niches and dropping them to the ground, where they break. The Prophet and Ali's faces are visible through a transparent veil, decorated by flaming halos to distinguish them from their far-smaller troops. Such miniature paintings are notoriously difficult to interpret for visitors. Their splendor requires patience to take in. This folio came from a history of saints, written in Persian Taliq script. The question of whether it was allowed to depict the Prophet was not the issue the maker and his contemporaries wished to ponder. What is shown here is a central motif of Shiism, retold in the form of a dramatic dialogue between the Prophet and Ali. The father-in-law urges the son-in-law to stand on his shoulders to symbolize that Ali is his rightful successor. But Ali is ashamed of stepping on the Messenger's sacred shoulders and pleads passionately: "I cannot, O beloved of God / You place your foot on this servant's eye." Such is the judgment of God, the Prophet replies with solemn certainty: "That you stand upon my shoulders / for all to behold, your value."[41]

Conclusion

The picture frame that had housed Tūtūnchīyān's work, not seen in any other collection of Islamic art, remained empty for over a year. Another artwork showing a Shiite figure, Abbas, son of Ali and martyr of the Battle of Karbala, finally came to hang where the Prophet had been on display.[42] I first encountered this beautiful piece, which also decorated the human figure with calligraphy, in 2016 in the museum depot in 's Gravezande. It was signed by an artist known as Ibrāhīm Zarrīn Qalam (1905–1994)—Ibrahim of the "Golden Pen"—, hadn't been documented or properly photographed, and had lain unused for years. Unfortunately, its (still ongoing) display in *Things That Matter* is disappointing. The calligraphic image's original frame was retained and placed inside the larger frame made for the removed picture of the Prophet, an awkward patchwork solution that reminded me of both the removal and the divisions over the pictures.

The tension between alternative visions for how the museum should deal with Islam and Muslims concerned two main points: a desire to care for minorities seen as vulnerable to discrimination, as espoused by Wayne Modest, now the museum's director of content; and an understanding of Muslims' diversity, in Mirjam Shatanawi's view, which precluded a unified political stance vis-à-vis Dutch and European contexts of inclusion and exclusion—which become all the more jarring when we bring in the many transnational connections that go beyond Europe or the Western world. Modest's approach paralleled the ideal of multiculturalism as espoused by Tariq Modood, who argues for the censuring of works such as Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* and of offensive cartoons such as in the Danish cartoon affair and those published by *Charlie Hebdo* (Modood, Tamimi Arab, and van den Hemel 2021). This model has the benefit that it recognizes the social reality of group identities—but its defense of minorities within minorities, or simply individuals, isn't robust in the face of conservative minority groups wishing to impose their views on others. Considering that minorities' diverse opinions and ways of living also result in clashes between them, well-intended desires to tread carefully become entangled with sectarian conflicts (such as between Sunni and Shiite Muslims) and secular-religious disagreements (such as between secular Iranian refugees and conservative Muslim voices of the Netherlands).

Having acknowledged these conflicts and bitter disagreements, Shatanawi declared during her 2022 PhD defense ceremony at the University of Amsterdam—in response to Modest, who served as an opponent—that calls for museums' decolonization are bound to fail if they do not go far enough in exploring human "multiplicity." Regarding images of the Prophet, such multiplicity involves not only intra- but also interreligious and cultural interactions over time. As I've argued in this chapter, Shatanawi has consistently made the argument that having a vision of the value of diversity in itself—to at least exhibit the facts of plurality or multiplicity—can help to navigate the sensitivities of Islam and visual culture:

> It is questionable whether museums can present nuanced contributions to the image of Islam if their visitor policies reproduce one of its most profound stereotypes: that Muslims are monoliths. What European museums need is a more critical approach to what Islam means in relation to material culture, and to engage in a close conversation of meaning-making with their audiences. There are many ways of looking at Islam, now and in the past, and if there is any meaningful answer to the current debate on Islam it is most certainly found in presenting this myriad of viewpoints and experiences. (Shatanawi 2019: 373)

Working with "the" community or supposed "stakeholders," then, shouldn't easily override curators' art historical expertise (cf. Gruber 2017: 50–51); on the other hand, the museum should continue to strive for inclusivity by engaging with people who feel something dear to them is at stake—some sensuous manifestation of the emotional question of who they think they are or what they want to be, of who and what belong or do not belong (cf. Shatanawi 2012a, 2012b, Puzon, Macdonald, and Shatanawi 2021).

Neither the ideals of multicultural recognition nor deconstructive multiplicity will satisfy all. For me, personally, seeing recently made Iranian pictures in use outside of the Iranian political context felt alienating. I cannot and will probably never be able to unsee Khomeini's ghost hov-

ering behind them. This feeling in me only grows stronger when Iranians inside and outside the Islamic Republic protest the use of Islamic art and architecture—in Europe, North America, and in tourism in Iran—to beautify a religion and even the very political system they decry.[43] It's true that museums always already reframe objects according to the needs of the context, but what is the political context that should matter, and who should be consulted to determine such a thing? I don't think the answer to this question is obvious or singular. Today, no master narrative can finally unveil which strategy museums displaying contested Islamic visual culture should take. Therefore, presenting the myriad of viewpoints and experiences, and trying to learn in the process, remains our best bet.

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Mirjam Shatanawi, Wayne Modest, Christiane Gruber, and many colleagues and former colleagues at Utrecht University and the Netherlands National Museum of World Cultures, as well as the editors of this volume. Special thanks go to Kirsten Janene-Nelson and Andrea Scrima for copy editing. This research was made possible by a Dutch Research Council grant (016.Veni.195.226).

Notes

1 On whether violence can be "Islamic," my view is the same as Shahab Ahmed's, namely: to understand Islam as a human, historical, and potentially violent phenomenon.
2 Parts of this section were worded similarly in a Dutch article (Tamimi Arab 2016).
3 Collection number TM-4313-109; see also the comment on the paper archive card.
4 Collection number TM-3833-305.
5 During a visit to the Tropenmuseum on the occasion of the opening of the exhibition *Longing for Mecca*, February 14, 2019.
6 Collection number 7031–22. This object was acquired by Mirjam Shatanawi together with curator and art historian Luitgard Mols.
7 Collection number TM-6134-7.
8 The posters and prints displayed in the *Bismillah* exhibition are in the collection brought together by Pierre Centlivres and Micheline Centlivres-Demont in *Imageries populaires en Islam* (1997). An expanded overview and iconography of such images can be found in Elisabeth Puin's three-volume *Islamische Plakate: Kalligraphie und Malerei im Dienste des Glaubens* (2008).
9 Collection numbers TM-6282-2, TM-6282-6, TM-6282-7, and TM-6282-14.
10 This conversation took place in December 2016; also see van Brakel and Legêne (2008) on the Tropenmuseum's overall collection policies and approaches, including acquisitions of Iranian posters depicting the Prophet Muhammad.
11 The Tropenmuseum's posters were published in a national newspaper shortly after the attacks against the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*; see Hoe werd profeet Mohammed geportretteerd?, *de Volkskrant*, March 7, 2015.
12 These and other fieldwork or document quotations are all my translations from the Dutch originals.

13 I found one such image in the National Museum of World Cultures's depot in 's-Gravenzande, although it is now dated to be from the second half of the twentieth century. The reverse-glass painting shows a standing adolescent prophet Muhammad (RV-5279-11). Gruber has traced these images back to a French print of the 1950s (2021: 31–48).

14 Verwervingsadvies Collectie Frederick de Jong, May 15, 2015, National Museum of World Cultures.

15 Letter of funding application approval by the Mondriaan Fund, July 16, 2015 (application number 101640547).

16 Razing of Mosul's shrines sparks first signs of resistance against Islamic State, *Washington Post*, July 30, 2014.

17 V&A in row over self-censorship after Muhammad image is taken down, *The Guardian*, January 24, 2015.

18 Jaarverslag 2015, Mondriaan Fonds, p. 28, https://issuu.com/mondriaanfonds/docs/jaarverslag2015, accessed 07/18/2022. The same image was also reproduced in a national newspaper that interviewed me about the problematics of displaying or not displaying pictures of Muhammad; see Afgoderij of Kunst? *Trouw*, April 18, 2017.

19 In-person conversation with the author, March 29, 2015.

20 In-person conversation with the author, June 29, 2016.

21 Curatorial conversation in the conference "Museums, Citizenship, and Belonging in a Changing Europe," Research Center for Material Culture, Leiden, November 24–25, 2016.

22 A story in itself is that Gruber's article about the Iranian images of the Prophet Muhammad worried Taylor & Francis, who were reluctant to publish the images and removed them from the online content when the volume went live. Only after the editorial board threatened resignation did the article go back up, but a small trigger warning was added to the PDF without the knowledge of the author or the editors. Although the article was published in print and the PDF is available on the website of the journal *Material Religion*, the HTML version of the article, which would have included the images, was never published (conversation with former journal editor Birgit Meyer, June 21, 2022; e-mail correspondence with Christiane Gruber, August 9, 2022). In other words, after the attempt to remove the images, the subsequent addition of the trigger warning ventured a reframing, all by persons unconnected with the scholarly process. This is not an isolated incident. For example, Yale University Press concluded that publishing cartoons showing the Prophet Muhammad would risk violence and excluded them from Jytte Klausen's 2009 monograph about the Danish cartoon affair.

23 E-mail correspondence with the author, June 11, 2017.

24 The fine print reads: "I wrote [this] on the date of the 26th of the month Aban [in the year] one thousand and three hundred and thirty-eight [of the Solar Hijri calendar]. Calligrapher Mostafa Tutunchiyan" (*bitarīkh-i bīst va shishum ābān māh yikhizār va sīṣad va sī va hasht nivishtam. nigārandah muṣṭafā tūtūnchīyān*).

25 Conversation with the author at the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden, where the image was researched, April 12, 2016.

26 Conversation with the author at the National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden, August 30, 2016.

27 Devotie-afbeeldingen van de profeet Mohammed in het Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen, Utrecht Religie Forum, April 26, 2017. https://religiousmatters.nl/lecture-devotional-images-of-the-prophet-muhammad/, accessed 07/19/2022. For the newspaper announcement and interview, see Afgoderij of Kunst? *Trouw*, April 18, 2017.

28 This safety measure did not always work, however. In one closed seminar at the University of Amsterdam held on January 24, 2018, where several anthropologists were invited to reflect on our research ethics and unresolved problems, I showed the posters of the young Prophet and explained that the original compositions were erotic Orientalist pictures of a Tunisian boy (see Centlivres and Centlivres-

Demont 2005), which could be traced further back to Caravaggio's *Boy with a Basket of Fruit*. My message proved confusing for a student who was allowed to attend and who also happened to be an Indonesian imam. As I stepped outside the university that day, another professor called to me to ask why I had called the Prophet a pedophile! These sorts of interactions show how pictures that divide can easily spiral out of control.

29 Islamic Studies professors Joas Wagemakers and Mehdi Sajid verified that the Arabic text can be translated as "promising success, thriving, prospering, being happy, and being victorious." In the context of Iran prior to the Islamic Revolution, the meaning of succeeding, i. e., being victorious, makes more sense than the less radical-sounding "to flourish."

30 The term "exhibition maker" is not used in English. It could be compared with the function of "interpretation officer."

31 I translated these two object descriptions from the Dutch. They were provided by Mirjam Shatanawi in e-mail correspondence, March 16, 2018.

32 This English text was used in the exhibition along with a Dutch version.

33 Conversation with the author, February 9, 2018.

34 Conversation with the author, June 29, 2016.

35 Past conversation checked for accuracy in e-mail correspondence with the author, July 21, 2022.

36 Hoe werd profeet Mohammed geportretteerd? *de Volkskrant*, March 7, 2015.

37 This paragraph is based on a conversation with Shatanawi, November 11, 2019. The facts were checked by comparing with Luitgard Mols's account sent to me by e-mail on July 26, 2022. The final draft of this chapter was read and commented on by Shatanawi and Modest, among others, in the summer of 2022. Discussion with Modest revolved around research ethics and my interpretations of the facts, not the chronology of events described in this paragraph.

38 Shatanawi added this explanation after reading this chapter (e-mail correspondence, August 17, 2022).

39 The decision was taken in a meeting organized by the management team and including, among others, Modest and Mols (e-mail correspondence of the author with Luitgard Mols, July 26, 2022).

40 Regarding this chapter, Shatanawi commented that images of the Prophet had also been previously exhibited in the Tropenmuseum. Her conjecture is that the rise in complaints is due to the assertiveness of the new generations of Muslim visitors (e-mail correspondence, August 17, 2022). Moreover, there is no evidence that the majority of pious Sunni Muslims found the presence of the objects so disturbing. For example, the responses to several Facebook posts by a Salafi-oriented group, which organized gender-segregated trips to the Mecca exhibition, were almost all about the practical issues of getting to the museum. The trips were booked full and some people expressed their disappointment that they were too late. There was only one person who left a comment warning about music and the presence of images of the Prophet, which received one follow-up comment. This comment was written after the men's group had already visited the museum. It isn't clear if or to what extent the groups were bothered by the images. It did not lead to canceling their subsequent organized visits to the exhibit (Facebook posts by *Dawah-Groep*, September 2019).

41 My translation: *nayāyad zi man iy ḥabīb khudāy / tu bigẕār bar chashm īn bandah pāy / . . . / kih tu bar nahī pāy bar dūsh-i man / bibīnand qadr-i turā anjuman.*

42 Object number RV-4688-1, National Museum of World Cultures (Netherlands). Compare with a similar work of art by the same maker in the Harvard Art Museum (object number 1963.90).

43 See, for example, Fam Trip: The Tourism Project Hiding Tyranny in Iran Under Turquoise Domes, *IranWire*, June 29, 2022. Though the topic of secularization and views of political secularism is related to this chapter, it was omitted so as to preserve the focus on the museum itself. On my basic understanding of secularization in Iran, see: Tamimi Arab and Ammar Maleki, Iran's Secular Shift, *The Conversation*, September 10, 2020. My normative views regarding political secularism in the Netherlands and more generally are described in Tamimi Arab 2017 and 2022.

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BIRGIT MEYER

‘Idols’ in the Museum

Legacies of Missionary Iconoclasm

Things from the past are targets of conflicting political-aesthetic meanings that become sharply visible in moments of iconoclasm. Calls for the demolition of contested images and objects disrupt conventional mainstream understandings of the past, opening up inroads into alternative histories written from a subaltern perspective (Troelenberg, Schankweiler, Messner 2021). In this sense, the ‘re-emergence’ of iconoclasm, which forms the central theme of this volume, entails above all a ‘re-emergence’ of the past, with all its messy complexity and ugly dimensions, into contemporary public awareness. As “the past is no longer understood as one single story” (ibd.: 3), it has to be rewritten from a relational perspective. A focus on contested images and objects, found offensive by some and cherished by others, is a highly productive starting point for this endeavor (see also Kruse, Meyer, Korte 2018).

The current critical evaluation of highly charged material reminders of national histories and calls for their removal occurs alongside a demand for the restitution of objects kept in European ethnological and other museums to the societies of origin (Sarr/Savoy 2018; Sandkühler, Epple, Zimmerer 2021). This is part of the increasing attention paid to legacies of European nations’ colonial past for current postcolonial, plural societies. It befits open democratic societies to face this ‘re-emergent’ and partly unacknowledged past, which leads deep into a European history of imperialism, colonization, and discrimination and its once heroic figures. In this sense, a focus on current instances of iconoclasm vis-à-vis colonial images challenges conventional narratives of national identity and belonging and poses pertinent questions about the crucial role of images in sustaining and potentially unhinging the political-aesthetic formations (Meyer 2009; van de Port/Meyer 2018) in which citizenship and belonging are forged.[1]

This chapter calls attention to items belonging to a category of religious objects that were targeted by missionary iconoclasms launched in areas of European colonial outreach, yet were spared from actual destruction. These became part of colonial collections that have been kept and preserved in ethnological museums up to the present day. It focuses on a collection of items gathered around 1900 by missionaries of the *Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft* (NMG) among the Ewe in the German colony Togo and some parts of Gold Coast/Ghana for the Städtisches Museum für Natur-, Völker- und Handelskunde—today the Übersee-Museum Bremen. The missionaries strove to make Ewe people convert to Christianity and thus to reject their indigenous

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110773576_007

1 *Legba*-figures in the *Schaumagazin* of the Übersee-Museum Bremen

religion (framed as 'heathendom') and destroy the material forms (framed as 'idols' and 'fetishes') connected with it (Meyer 1999). Some items were not destroyed in the mission field but instead collected and sent to the museum to index 'idolatry' or an early stage of 'nature' religion (Fig. 1). While some appear intact, others bear traces of destruction, possibly through iconoclasm. Reduced to an empty form, they no longer contain the herbs that were placed inside so as to bestow them with spirit power in the world of the late nineteenth-century Ewe (Fig. 2). Having been stored in the museum depot for more than 120 years, these items from the past are also witnesses of that past. As remains of an earlier iconoclasm leveled against indigenous religious traditions, they are reminders of that history.

How to make these items speak, so as to retrieve the forgotten narratives about the past which they contain? What's required is a careful "working through" (von Oswald, Soh Bejeng, Modest 2017)[2] of the colonial and missionary practices, including iconoclasm, by means of which such collections came into being. The trajectories of the items are to be tracked step by step, thereby embarking on an archaeology of the present.[3] Doing so opens up a huge excavation site of colonial and postcolonial entanglements, calling attention to the role of religion therein, which has thus far often been neglected or underestimated. Tracking the actual and above all conceptual trajectory of the items from the indigenous Ewe religion on the West African Coast to the Übersee-Museum in Germany, I seek to contribute to a deeper understanding of a lingering colonial past that so far has been 'forgotten' (understood here as an active act, Fabian 2001), even though the collected items have been in storage for more than a century. It

2 *Legba*-figure bearing traces of destruction, *Schaumagazin* of the Übersee-Museum Bremen

must be unearthed in order to grasp how the logic of modernity emerged in the "mirror of the primitive" (Schüttpelz 2005) and to identify new possibilities for scholarly research from the perspective of a thoroughly entangled history.

The main concern of this chapter, which has three parts, is to work through the mission-induced iconoclasm that underpinned the move of the items to Bremen and that continues to haunt the collection. I understand iconoclasm not only as *material* image-breaking, but also as *semantic* image-breaking, through which the objects as such are preserved in a museum collection,[4] yet are severed from the meaning and power they held for their original users. In the first part, 'idolatry' and iconoclasm are situated in the broader context of Protestant mission work, spotlighting a distinct and persistent Christian perspective with regard to the 'idol' that was enmeshed with the idea of the fetish and offered the frame through which the material forms of indigenous religions were seen. Examining a collection of objects assembled by the NMG missionary Carl Spiess from among the Ewe for the Städtisches Museum, the second part unpacks the frame of idol/fetish imposed on the items collected by him. While missionary and scholarly stances towards them differed, the items nonetheless owed their shipment to the museum to a Protestant iconoclasm which they more or less survived materially. Their preservation in the secular space of the museum implied an alienation from their original settings and a neglect of their spiritual dimension that amounts to what I would like to call a *semantic* iconoclasm that does not target the images as such, but their meaning. The third part addresses future possibilities for these items by discussing the—contested—frames of art and heritage. In sum, this chapter calls attention to the role of missionary activities in assembling colonial collec-

tions, which entails not only the collection of objects as such, but also the imposition of a Christian frame through which the items became instances of 'idolatry' and targets for iconoclasm. In so doing, I want to stress the relevance of the dimension of religion in current societal and scholarly debates about the repercussions of the colonial past in our time.

Idolatry and Iconoclasm

In public views, iconoclasm is mainly associated with the Protestant Reformation, especially the sixteenth-century *Beeldenstorm* in the Low Countries, or with the iconoclastic destructions undertaken by the Taliban and IS. The role of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Protestant and Catholic missions and of contemporary Pentecostals in the Global South in destroying religious items is often overlooked.[5] Spreading the Gospel across the colonized world, missions have been key protagonists in the destruction of their indigenous converts' figures and other material forms.[6] Missions employed a discourse of idolatry that has biblical roots and partly converged with post-sixteenth-century discourses around the 'fetish' that emerged from encounters between Portuguese traders and Africans on the West African Coast. Nineteenth-century missionary iconoclasm is backed by a long-standing Jewish-Christian legacy invoking Hebrew Bible/Old Testament books such as Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, which prohibit the production and use of cultic images, and Exodus 32, which narrates the smashing of the Golden Calf (Böhme 2006: 157–166; Sherwood 2019).[7]

The NMG was active in the area that saw the rise of the concept of the fetish, understood by scholars as a new hybrid that arose from encounters between Europeans and Africans. In his groundbreaking work, William Pietz argues that the pidgin word *fetisso* emerged as a distinct notion in the early sixteenth-century encounters between Portuguese and Africans—many of them Ewe-speaking people—on the West African coast. Though rooted in the Christian concept of idolatry, according to Pietz the idea of the fetish differs significantly from the idea of the idol (1987: 24–36). As he argues, the "logic of idolatry displaced the status of the material object to that of an image, a passive medium effecting relations between spiritual agents according to a principle of resemblance" (1987: 35). He insists that the 'idol' is a specific object that offers a pictorial representation, an image. By contrast, the 'fetish' is a non-pictorial object. The elaboration of the idea of the 'fetish' in the mid-eighteenth century by de Brosses into the idea of 'fetishism' expressed "a new historical problematic outside the horizon of Christian thought" (1987: 36). I agree with Pietz that the notion of the fetish points at the "irreducible materiality" (1985: 7) of an object and, as such, has triggered new thought about objects as embodiments of value. And yet, I think that Pietz overestimates the separation between the discourses on the 'idol' and 'idolatry', on the one hand, and on the 'fetish' and 'fetishism' on the other. Rather than describing an actual, definite split between Christian and secular thought tied to the idol-fetish distinction across European knowledge production, Pietz refers to a—certainly significant—shift from the concept of the idol to the concept of the fetish in a particular strand of Western (post-) enlightenment thought.[8] At the same time, however, as argued by Hartmut Böhme, the emergence of the concept of the fetish transformed the Christian idolatry discourse

and adapted it to the context of the colonization and missionization of Africa (2006: 183). Protestant mission societies criticized both the Roman Catholic Church and indigenous African religious traditions for 'worshipping idols', which they saw as nearly the same thing (Böhme 2006: 184).[9] Far from being superseded by the concept of the fetish, the concept of the idol, partly enmeshed with the former, retained its prominence up to the present time as a phantasm upon which accusation was based in Christian circles.

In the African mission field, nineteenth-century Protestant mission societies such as the NMG used the terms 'idol' (in German *Götze*) and 'fetish' (in German *Fetisch*) interchangeably. These terms were employed as lenses through which indigenous religious objects and the ideas and practices related to them were framed as instances of 'heathendom'. As Gustav Warneck's paradigmatic *Evangelische Missionslehre* (originally published in several parts between 1897–1905, 2015a, b) shows, the basic premise was the idea of a true and only (Christian) God who was to be recognized and worshipped and who would not allow 'idols' to be glorified (2015a: 80). It was the task of the Protestant mission to make this God known to the world, so that 'idol worshippers' would give up the 'idols' they were serving. They were framed as seekers of an 'unknown God' to whom the missions would lead the way. To Warneck's dismay, this brought the mission societies that were active in the colonized world into potential conflict with the lenient, accommodating attitudes of colonial administrations with regard to both Islam and indigenous religions. While these 'false' religions certainly were to be discarded, Warneck stressed that missionaries were not to lapse into wild anger or ironic polemics. Instead, they were to undertake a careful study of even the tiniest shining elements of 'idol worshipper' beliefs that could be taken as a starting point for a move from the darkness of 'heathendom' to the light of Christianity (2015a: 545).

While "fetishism" and "idolatry" were often used interchangeably by missionaries, Warneck was aware that both terms belonged to different, albeit partly overlapping, discourses. He explicitly rejected the idea that 'fetishism' formed the lowest stage of religion, as was held by scholars in anthropology and comparative religion:

> Even those who let religion begin with the most obtuse fetish worship cannot tell us how a log, a stone, or even the sky, the sun, lightning, thunder, etc., could have been worshiped as divine if an idea of God had not already existed, no matter how obscure or hidden, which one brought in connection with the sensory objects. The existence of an idea of God is therefore religion's prerequisite, even at its most basic level (2015a: 228, translation Andrea Scrima (AS)).[10]

Warneck expresses a position also held by the missionaries of the NMG (see below). The idea of an evolution of religion from material origins hooked to a thing (the 'fetish'), as suggested by Hume and Comte, was rejected in favor of a longstanding theological concept of a kernel of an idea about God (*Gottesidee*) held to exist universally in all societies across time and space (2015a: 530). While nineteenth-century scholars in anthropology and comparative religion tended to search for the origins of religion from an evolutionist perspective, for Protestants like Warneck, the occurrence of 'animistic' and 'fetishistic' (in the sense of material-centered) religions was due to human degeneration from a presumed initial monotheism.[11] This deplorable

state was to be reversed by making people in the mission fields reject their 'idols', so as to return to the original, unknown one and only God. Mission societies were to lead the 'heathens' out of the 'idolatry' that separated humans from God.

According to this Protestant perspective, indigenous people in the mission fields themselves were truly waiting, albeit without fully being aware of this, to reject their 'idols'. The latter were not simply understood as non-existing figments of the 'heathen' imagination, but as demonic realities that were to be discarded. This implies that the concept of idolatry, and by implication fetishism as a sub-form, was imposed on indigenous populations who were seen in its light all over the globe.[12] Sincere converts were expected to be willing to separate themselves from the artefacts classified as part of *Götzendienst* ('idol worship')—a broad category that included images as well as amulets and charms (*Götzenbilder*, *Amulette*, *Zaubermittel*) (Warneck 2015b: 613). Here it is of great importance to note that the term idol does not only refer to images, as held by Pietz, but also includes non-figurative powerful objects that would fall into Pietz's understanding of the fetish. This proves that in Christian nineteenth-century circles there existed a broad understanding of the concept of idol, taken by Pietz as an image that evokes a resemblance with what it represents, that included things with "irreducible materiality" which Pietz would regard as 'fetishes'. Staying aloof from and discarding all such elements, which Warneck saw as evidence of 'heathendom' and the *Zauberwesen* (magic)[13] associated with it, was the attitude expected from new converts in the mission field.[14] Nowadays, scholars of religion like myself call attention to such religious matters and seek to reapprehend them by means of the category "material religion" (Meyer et al. 2010).

In Warneck's book, one does not find explicit statements about how to handle discarded religious objects. This reflects his—and the overall late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Protestant—idealist focus on ideas rather than practices and objects. While iconoclasm was endorsed as a necessary proof of conversion, iconoclastic frenzy was taken to stand in contradiction to a civilized, modern Protestant mindset.[15] Although the term 'iconoclasm' is not employed by him, conversion to Protestant Christianity amounted to exactly that. Conversion was to prompt people to discard their previous religion and its material objects, and in so doing, substitute a material outlook for a spiritual one. Importantly, the framing of the material culture of indigenous religion as 'idolatry' did not simply stress the need for its destruction, but also constituted its material forms as 'idols' in the mindset of the missionaries, their German supporters, and Ewe converts. As such, these items were set on fire or drowned, or shipped to ethnological museums and missionary exhibitions (Corbey 2019, Morgan 2021: 155–180, Weener 2019) in Europe.

Unpacking the trajectory of items spared from complete iconoclasm and taken to Germany, as is my concern in this chapter, yields insights in missionary and scholarly mistranslations and impositions of frameworks that alienated the items collected from their original use, meaning, and value. They were enveloped in concepts employed to indicate a distance between their former makers and users, on the one hand, and Western collectors on the other. Today, in light of debates about the repercussions of the colonial past and the restitution of looted art, such collections have become a source of embarrassment. Next to looting, in public opinion the call of missionaries to leave behind a traditional religion said to be demonic is found to be quite

scandalous, also among present-day Christians.[16] The only way forward is a careful tracking of the colonial practices, including iconoclasm, through which such collections came into being (see also Bozsa 2019; Corbey 2019: 35–59). The point here is to not only scrutinize the items as such, but also the missionary and anthropological concepts through which they were made meaningful and valuable to Western beholders (see also Jacobs and Wingfield 2015: 11). Thus, unpacking a missionary collection in full implies an archaeology of both the objects *and* the concepts employed to categorize them.[17] This is a complex process of "working through" the archive that must be undertaken from a transdisciplinary and transregional angle, with the co-operation of scholars from Europe and Africa. In the following, my focus is rather more modest; it lies on the interface of the concepts of the idol and the fetish that turned the items collected into evidence of 'heathendom' and 'nature religion', thereby alienating them from their earlier value, use, and meaning for pre-Christian and pre-colonial Ewe people.

The Collection Spiess

The NMG was present in the area, tellingly called 'Slave Coast', that was located between the kingdoms of Asante and Dahomey and inhabited by Ewe-speaking groups since 1847. Around that time, the slave trade was gradually coming to an end; wars between various ethnic groups, partly supported by different Europeans powers, were rampant. As the scene of long-standing European-African encounters, it was a world in disarray. Throughout the first decades, the NMG's work in making converts, exploring the Ewe language, religion, and culture, and building mission posts and schools had limited success and only took off in the aftermath of the 1884/85 Berlin Conference, which mapped out European colonies on the African continent. Together with Ewe evangelists, the missionaries embarked on preaching tours across the 'Ewe-land' that stretched from German Togo into the southeast of the Gold Coast. The gist of the sermons was the call to leave behind 'heathendom' and 'idolatry', so as to eschew the sway of the devil (Meyer 1999). Ewe people converting to Christianity were to stop partaking in rituals on the level of the family and the village and to deliver their personal religious objects, such as *legba* figures and *dzokawo*, to the missionaries in order to be demolished.

Large *legba* figures, as reported by the missionaries, were normally placed at the entrance of villages for the sake of threat and protection, whereas small ones—*legbaviwo*—were kept in compounds and worshipped individually. They consisted of a composite of materials (such as earth, bones, feathers, cowries) and contained herbs, to which they owed their spiritual power. *Dzokawo* (*dzo* meaning fire, *ka* meaning cord), translated as *Zauberschnüre* or 'magic', 'amulets', or 'charms', also consisted of various components and were tied around certain parts of the body for the sake of protection, success in trade, and as a means to fight harmful forces. Fabricated and animated by priests, *legba(vi)wo* and *dzokawo* required sacrifices and offerings of food and drink to maintain them and keep them effective. Having both a visible material and an invisible, spiritual dimension, they were part of an Ewe world of which the biased missionary narratives offer no more than a limited glimpse. It is only by problematizing translations from Ewe to German (and vice versa) and by reading the historical documents against the grain that

it is possible to understand how *legba(vi)wo* and *dzokawo* operated in everyday Ewe practice, synthesizing the material and spiritual dimension in ways that are difficult to express in terms of Western-Christian ideas of a hierarchized opposition of spirit and matter (Meyer 1999, 2020; see also Pels 2012).

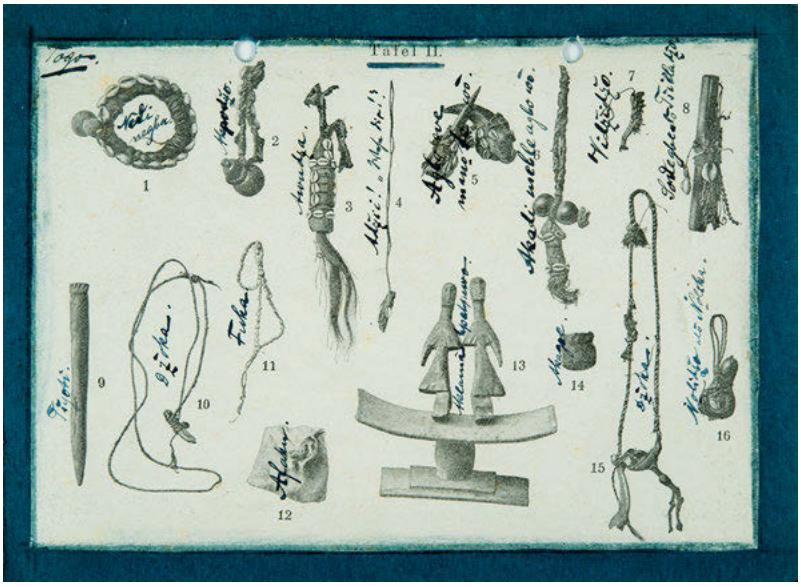
Carl Spiess (1867–1936) was a prominent NMG missionary and major collector.[18] Traveling through Ewe-land with a large team—hammock carriers, load carriers, teachers—, he preached to the 'heathens' and showed magic lantern slides of the life of Jesus, which attracted many viewers. The *legba* figures were main targets of his preaching, in which he referred to them as "fetishes", "handmade gods", and as "dead heaps of earth" (*tote Erdklumpen*). The "nothingness of the idols" (*Nichtigkeit der Götzen*) was a central theme; with the understanding that "nothingness" did not contest their existence as such, but was employed to stress the illicitness of their worship. Preaching to make people convert and collecting the 'heathen' remains was typical for mission activities at the time. Spiess also engaged in this salvage ethnography that paradoxically sought to document and retain what the mission helped to destroy. In the four diaries kept in the mission archives,[19] Spiess reports in detail about his numerous preaching tours and conversations with Ewe people.

In Diary III (1898),[20] Spiess writes about his missionary tours and his collecting on behalf of Heinrich Schurtz (1863–1903),[21] anthropologist at the Städtisches Museum für Natur-, Völker- und Handelskunde in Bremen, today the Übersee-Museum.[22] The following quote by Schurtz testifies to the sustained collaboration of the mission with the museum:

> Since the North German Mission originates in Bremen, the Bremen Museum has often had the good fortune of receiving objects from the Evhe region, especially since the missionary C. Spiess thankfully and so willingly began collecting for the Museum in a systematic manner. The wish had been expressed to him to turn his attention to amulets and magic objects, since he would certainly be the first to succeed in acquiring such objects *and in discovering their purpose with the help of new converts*. Mr. Spiess complied with this suggestion with great enthusiasm and understanding, so that the Bremen Museum today owns a very interesting collection whose value is increased twofold through the sender's elucidations (Schurtz 1901: 1, italics BM, translation AS).[23]

The expression "mit Hülfe Neubekehrter" ("with the help of new converts"), of course, refers to the commonplace idea that conversion implied getting rid of one's 'idols'. In this sense, iconoclasm, though not mentioned explicitly, was the condition under which the collection (Fig. 3: Table for an article by Carl Spiess about Ewe *dzokawo* with handwritten comments, P22240, Historisches Bildarchiv, Übersee-Museum Bremen) came into being. While the collection was thus made possible as newly converted Christians delivered their items to the mission, I have not found indications so far as to what they might have thought about the fact that some items were not destroyed, but instead taken to Bremen.

Schurtz was highly interested in *Zaubermittel*, the "means to do magic," e. g., charms and amulets. In a general essay (1894) on this theme, he argued that in cultural evolution, such means were initially employed as weapons to protect their users against invisible evil forces and,



3 Table for an article by Carl Spiess about Ewe *dzokawo* with handwritten comments, P22240

at a subsequent developmental stage, to actively attack and challenge others. These weapons contain threatening elements of animals (such as horns, teeth, claws), plants (such as thorns and spines), sound-making objects (such as pipes, rattles, bells, drums), phallic symbols, and mirrors, and often have a peculiar (even poisonous) taste and smell. Rooted in an animistic world view, these weapons are employed to ward off invisible enemies. In an analogy to medicine, they operate at the level of conscience and strengthen and focus the will (1894: 64). The oldest form of magic was the amulet, which persisted also in monotheistic traditions such as Islam and Christianity. For Schurtz, magic was not only the origin of religion, but also its persistent, albeit continuously readapted, element. He also explained the use of 'fetishes' along this line, stating that they were set up so as to fend off hostile demons (1894: 61).[24] He was very interested in learning more about the use of charms among the Ewe, who employed them not only for protective but also for active purposes (1901: 1).

Spiess took up the assignment he received from Schurtz with great interest and zeal. He assembled all sorts of items through various means. Of course, as anticipated by Schurtz, he was brought personal objects—especially *legbaviwo* and *dzokawo*—which the new converts handed in. He also received certain objects as presents, for varying reasons. And he bought items from 'fetish priests' and used them for instructive purposes in his sermons before sending them to Bremen. The fact that he was able to purchase such items shows that they were available as commodities,[25] as is still the case today. Apart from successful acquisitions, Spiess also reports that priests and other 'heathen' Ewe refused to sell items to him.[26] Trying to explain the collection of items assembled for Schurtz, Spiess made annotated lists with more or less extensive descriptions (depending on what he could find out from local people, who generally were

unwilling or reluctant to disclose detailed information), supplemented with photographs and drawings. Interestingly, in his reports for Schurtz,[27] as well as later on in his own scholarly publications (e. g., Spiess 1902, 1903, 1906, 1911, 1916), Spiess avoided overtly missionary language—though he still occasionally used 'idol' (*Götze*) and 'heathens'. Apparently, he'd undergone a mental shift from the missionary framing of the items against which he'd preached, calling them idols and fetishes, to an ethnographic framing as *Zaubermittel*.

While Schurtz, a scholar, pursued his own interest in asserting the place of *Zaubermittel* in the evolution of religion, the missionary Spiess did not endorse an evolutionary perspective on the Ewe religion.[28] Echoing the stance of Warneck, he was interested in identifying kernels of ideas about God. In Spiess's work, one can note a shift from a time in which he took for granted the use of terms such as 'fetish' and 'fetishism' to stress the outward materiality of the Ewe religion. As time went by, he insisted that Ewe religion was not *fully* contained under the term fetishism (1903, 1906: 189), while at the same time, the items he collected—from *legbaviwo* to *dzokawo*—were evidence of it. He understood the 'fetish' as an "artificial form" (*künstliches Gebilde*) which was human-made and tangible, and as such found everywhere in Ewe-land. Certain effects (*Wirkungen*) were attributed to these artificial forms. Hence: "A fetish, then, is something imitated or manufactured through which secret, unearthly powers are supposed to bring about good or evil, and fetishism is the study of this" (1906: 190, translation AS).[29] Interestingly, both figurative reproductions (*Nachgebildetes*) and fabrications (*Hergestelltes*) were subsumed under the concept of the 'fetish'. In typical Protestant missionary fashion, Spiess understood the 'fetish' through the lens of 'idolatry' as including *both* images and objects, which had in common that they were each marked for destruction. This was the condition under which the items in the Collection Spiess were assembled and shipped to the museum.

In Spiess's understanding, the difference between images (*Nachgebildetes*) and objects (*Hergestelltes*)—as emphasized by Pietz to assert the distinction between 'idol' and 'fetish'—was irrelevant, as both were taken to be illicit material forms of worship. For Spiess, the central point was that the Ewe religion held an abundance of these material forms, yet was not to be reduced to them. As he insisted (1903), the Ewe already had an idea about an *unrepresentable*, distant God (*Mawu*) as well as a "theory about the gods" (*Götterlehre*) that exceeded the materiality of the 'fetish' as an effective artefact. The *trõwo* (Ewe plural for deities), according to Schurtz, were distinct from 'fetishes' because they were not represented via tangible forms. And while he saw 'fetishism' as part and parcel of 'idolatry' (*Götzendienst*), for which he found plenty of evidence among the Ewe, for him Ewe religion amounted to more than the material substrate of *Nachgebildetes* and *Hergestelltes*. This "extra" that was held to exist in excess of sheer matter was exactly the dimension which Spiess, as a staunch Protestant, sought to spot and enhance. The work of the mission, for him, was to identify and uplift the materially overgrown spiritual dimension which he himself could gradually discern.[30] For him, the 'idols' and 'fetishes' he was assembling and sending to Bremen were the mere material signs of a degenerated dimension of Ewe religion after the fall from the high god. There was no doubt that these items were slated for iconoclasm, or to be shipped to Bremen for anthropological research and public display.

In sum, Spiess's interest in *Götterlehre* linked up with broader debates in missionary circles about the nature of 'heathendom' and echoed Warneck's *Evangelische Missionslehre*.[31] Spiess

increasingly rejected the concept of the fetish as unsuitable, venturing instead the idea that, in searching for the unknown God, Ewe people made "false idols" that they themselves were willing to discard once they saw the light of Christianity. In the midst of all the superstitious investment in material religion, Spiess saw evidence of Ewe developing concepts that were gesturing towards a kernel of an awareness of God as an idea that resisted any materialization. In so doing, Spiess reiterated the longstanding discourse of idolatry as a false and illicit representation of the divine that had to be superseded by no material representation at all. He clearly took a stance against materialism, which had been hotly debated in Germany by the mid- to late nineteenth century. So, from a missionary perspective, the items assembled for the museum were a kind of waste that offered evidence of a near obsolete 'heathendom'. They stood for a particular Protestant attitude towards material religion as potentially idolatrous, and hence as containing false and trifling objects that should be destroyed in the course of the uplifting of Ewe converts from 'heathendom' to Christianity. Their collection as 'idols', and hence also as 'trophies' from the mission field (Jacobs, Knowles, Wingfield 2015) reproduced them as to some extent already familiar objects that evoked the Second Commandment and the Golden Calf, and hence a forbidden human-object relation. The framing of the collection as consisting of 'idols' that were made to survive iconoclasm so as to stress its necessity carries a strong missionary legacy that still somehow haunts the collection.

While Schurtz did not view the objects collected by Spiess as 'idols' but rather as *Zaubermittel*, he nonetheless acknowledged that the collection was made possible due to the missionary work that forced converts to discard and destroy their religious objects. The items sent to Bremen survived the Protestant iconoclasm, although some 'idols' were smashed and bore traces of destruction, as noted in the beginning. And yet the preservation of the collection outside the context of ritual use and veneration brought about a semantic iconoclasm. The items were kept as frozen material forms but no longer treated in line with indigenous ways. While, as noted, I have not come across statements by Ewe Christians who delivered their 'idols' to Spiess about the shipment to Bremen, I think that the items might have appeared to them as stuck halfway between 'heathen' use and full material iconoclasm.

Possibilities for the Future

So far, I have tried to uncover the layer of idolatry and iconoclasm through which the *legbaviwo* and *dzokawo* were framed from a Protestant angle, which also formed the basis of their collection as *Zaubermittel* for the anthropologist Schurtz. This framing involved an alienation from their original use, meaning, and value. Iconoclasm, through which an image or object is slated for legitimate destruction, also worked in a secular manner in the context of colonialism. As pointed out by Brus, Knecht, and Zillinger, "colonial iconoclasm (. . .) defined the terms that transformed animated objects into materiality, sacredness into aesthetic value, and veneration into admiration" (2020: 3). Here, the authors suggest a secular extension of the Christian notion of iconoclasm that is worthwhile pursuing with regard to the Collection Spiess. Saved from total material destruction in the mission field, in the museum the items faced semantic destruction,

even though they were physically preserved. Being dissociated from their context of origin and ritual circuits, *legbaviwo* and *dzokawo* were stripped of their original use, meaning, and value and reframed as 'idols'. Reduced to their material form, they were seen as exponents and evidence of 'heathendom' for Christians and of 'nature religion' for anthropologists. The animated, spiritual dimension they once possessed for their original Ewe users—and discarders—was renounced in favor of their materiality.

But what about the transformation of "sacredness into aesthetic value" and "veneration into admiration" also mentioned by Brus, Knecht, and Zillinger? Certainly, *legbaviwo* and *dzokawo* had a sacred value for their users, and given that rituals were performed to maintain and feed them, they were subject to veneration. But to what extent was an aesthetic value ascribed to them that evoked admiration in the process of being musealized? A selection of items of the Collection Spiess was shown in typical ethnographic display in two vitrines in the Städtisches Museum from the early twentieth century to World War II, when the museum was closed and its collections were stored in a safe place (Seybold 2017). Afterwards, the Collection Spiess as such was never restored, and most of the items were kept in the depot, with some in the *Schaumagazin*.[32]

It seems that until now, they have not, or only barely, been approached from an aesthetic angle, in the framework of art. I found no indication that Spiess and Schurtz saw them as art (*Kunst*). This may have to do with the fact that the *dzokawo* were items for daily use—as part of a "*Zauberapotheke*" ("pharmacy of charms," Schurtz 1894: 61), whereas the *legbaviwo* showed signs of religious use and sacrifice, which made them potentially disgusting to Western-Christian beholders. Moreover, some had been partly destroyed through iconoclasm and looked wretched. Just as idolatry and fetishism offer frames that make an object appear as an 'idol' or a 'fetish', art is also a frame through which the object appears aesthetically valuable. The fact that many objects collected from Africa, such as the items in the Collection Spiess, remained stuck in museums as mere ethnographic objects says more about the long prevailing modes of framing, which were partly shaped by missionary legacies, than about the objects themselves.[33]

New possibilities for reframing may arise. For instance, the recent exhibition *Efie. The Museum as Home* by the Ghanaian curator Nana Oforiatta Ayim in the *Dortmunder U* (10/12/2021 through 6/3/2022) featured works of contemporary artists from Ghana, Nigeria, and Brazil alongside items from ethnographic collections in German museums. She presented this exhibition as a prelude to the aspired 'homecoming' of these items to Africa.[34] She also put on display seven *dzokawo* from the Collection Spiess alongside calabashes containing herbs (Fig. 4: *Dzokawo* at *Efie. The Museum as Home*, curator Nana Oforiatta Ayim) in a vitrine designed by DK Osseo-Asare (Dortmunder U, photo Jürgen Spiler/Dortmunder U). The exhibition also featured a clip from Nii Kwate Owoo's film *You Hide Me* (1970), which made a case for the restitution of African artefacts hidden in the depot of the British Museum more than 50 years ago. The clip shows the unpacking of statues in the depot, with the voiceover stating the purpose of collecting artefacts from Africa as part and parcel of the claim to Western supremacy: "The purpose of the ethnographic collections was to establish for the white man which is the higher civilisation and which are the primitive ones."[35] I see Oforiatta Ayim's exhibition as part of a broader project aiming at restitution, in the context of which objects from Africa are reframed

4 *Dzokawo* at *Efie. The Museum as Home* (curator Nana Oforiatta Ayim), in a vitrine designed by DK Osseo-Asare, Dortmunder U

as art (Savoy 2022), which would ultimately also require a broadening of art as a category (see also Adjei 2020). This frame certainly opens up new possibilities for items such as those in the Collection Spiess.[36]

Realizing the importance of missionary provenance raises the question as to the use, meaning, and value the *legbaviwo* and *dzokawo* possessed prior to being dismissed and reframed as 'idols' by missionaries and original Ewe users. Spiess reported time and time again that non-Christian Ewe were not willing to disclose much about these items, whereas Ewe Christians were equally unwilling to talk much about them in their efforts to stay aloof from 'idolatry'. So, the "Hülfe Neubekehrter" allowed him to assemble objects, but not to develop deep knowledge about them. There is a dearth of knowledge about the items in their original habitat, and it is even questionable whether terms such as 'object', 'artefact', or 'thing', which stress materiality and fabrication, are at all suitable for referring to them in a way that captures Ewe understandings.[37] While it is necessary to document the alienation and misrepresentation of the items through the frame of idolatry (which included 'fetishism') as a first step, the next step should be to find out what present Ewe scholars and priests have to say about the collection.

During a research visit to Ghana in January 2020, I spoke to the contemporary Ewe priest Christopher Voncujovi,[38] who hails from the Volta Region, the main habitat of the Ewe people, and runs his Afrikan Magick Temple in Accra. He granted me three extensive interviews, during which I showed him some selected photographs of these figures and objects from the Übersee-Museum (Fig. 5: Christopher Voncujovi and Birgit Meyer in conversation about a set of *leg-*

baviwo kept in the Übersee-Museum, Accra 2020, photo by Angelantonio Grossi), as well as the illustrations and short descriptions of *dzokawo* and other items in a scholarly article titled "Zaubermittel de Evheer in Togo" by Spiess (1902). Voncujovi has similar large and small *legba* figures in his own shrine. We discussed all the pictures I had with me of *legbaviwo* in the collection, as well as all the *dzokawo* Spiess had described. For Voncujovi, the items were not mere musealized objects, as I had initially introduced them. While they had moved across a long trajectory in the course of which they passed from being framed as religious objects harboring spirit power to 'dead' museum objects, for Voncujovi all these frames—idol, fetish, ethnographic object—did not necessarily transform the items in the collection themselves. He thought that, despite the spatial and temporal distance that separated them from their original users, the *legbaviwo* and *dzokawo* might still contain the spirits enshrined in them. This would imply that they had 'survived' the material and semantic iconoclasm.

In one of the interviews, I translated a statement by Spiess about a native priest who attended baptism classes and still held some "fetish objects" (*Fetischgegenstände*) from which he could not part, yet eventually handed over to the missionary with the words: "All my fetishes were of no use to me, and now I want to break with them completely" (1902: 314, translation AS).[39] Voncujovi found it hard to believe that Ewe converts, especially priests, had done away with these items voluntarily, as the collection described contained very powerful objects. And even if this were the case, he doubted whether proper ritual procedures had been observed. Had rituals been performed to make the spirits leave the items? To his mind, the *legbaviwo* and *dzokawo* were likely to be alive and hungry, eagerly waiting to be called by a priest and fed. Spirits, as he pointed out, need to be fed in order to be effective, and he thought that the *legbaviwo* and *dzokawo* in the museum might be made active again. He had not previously known of their existence in a museum in Bremen, though he knew about the *Norddeutsche Mission*, which was active in his home area and with which part of his family were involved. He stated that possibly the spirits were using me as their messenger and had led me to him. He suggested that the museum staff or an Ewe person living in Bremen get involved, so as to find out about

5 Christopher Voncujovi and Birgit Meyer in conversation about a set of *legbaviwo* kept in the Übersee-Museum, Accra 2020

the items' spiritual dimension, and he also declared that he would be prepared to come to the museum for further research.[40]

He told me that he would like to open up a heritage space for the *legbaviwo* and *dzokawo* in his shrine to come home, perhaps similar to a retirement home.[41] Yet he was aware that for many Ghanaians, these figures would not at all qualify as a form of cultural heritage to be repatriated. Christians still regarded them as powerful 'idols' and 'fetishes' devoted to 'evil spirits' that have rightly been discarded. From the perspective of many, especially Pentecostal Christians, these items do not even deserve to be kept in a museum as expressions of Ewe art and heritage, as they may still harbor indigenous spirits (de Witte and Meyer 2012). While Voncujovi and other priests acknowledge and appreciate their power, these Christians fear it. For the latter, it is the presence of demons and the devil himself, and Pentecostal churches still engage in iconoclasms today. For both parties, the *legbaviwo* and *dzokawo* are spiritual matter that is not neutralized by the secular frame of a museum nor undone through semantic iconoclasm. For Voncojuvi, they may be embraced as living religious heritage, while Pentecostals would discard them as filthy and once again in need of being subjected to a full material iconoclasm. It remains to be seen to what extent fervent Christian believers would be prepared to have such items sanitized—and thus desacralized—as secular forms of art and heritage (see also Weiss 2021).

Conclusion

The Collection Spiess is an example of an African-European colonial and missionary entanglement. Research on the provenance of the items included in it not only requires tracking their trajectory from West Africa to Bremen, but also necessitates a detailed study of the concepts employed to frame them. Exploring the frame of idolatry that formed the initial ticket for their transfer from the Ewe on the West African Coast to Bremen, this essay has sought to spotlight a largely overlooked layer in the archaeology of musealized objects from Africa. Obviously, 'idol' was both a misrepresentation of the use, meaning, and value of the objects for indigenous populations and a mirror in which European questions about the difference between Christianity and other religions in terms of the spirit-matter binary could be addressed and projected onto Africa. While the missionaries of the NMG talked a lot about 'fetishes', they looked at these items through the Christian lens of the 'idol', and it was their main concern to eradicate 'idolatry', which they understood as a false investment in material religion. Iconoclasm was the condition for the move of the items in the Collection Spiess from Africa to Europe. The fact that secular institutions in the heyday of the founding of ethnographic collections in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century dovetailed with the missionary enterprise—which came in handy, as museum anthropologists at the time barely made long field trips—reveals the so far often neglected legacy of missionary Christianity in assembling colonial collections. Ironically, while collections like the one by Spiess have been musealized for more than 120 years, their existence is barely remembered (see also MacDonald 2021). The fact that preservation and forgetting seamlessly fold into each other underlines the importance of a careful "working through" of this kind of collection.

This legacy of religion is often lost to current, secular voices in debates about colonial collections and restitution. Religion, in many ways, is the proverbial 'elephant in the room': present in multiple ways, but difficult to grasp. I hope to have been able to convey that a first step in charting the elephant is a close analysis of the conversion of indigenous sacred items into 'idols', which destined them to iconoclastic destruction in the mission field or a kind of secular semantic iconoclasm occurring in the institution of the museum. A close analysis of the collection brings back into public consciousness the tremendous importance of missionary iconoclasms through which 'idols' were set on the move to European museums. This calls for a deeper reflection on Europe's formative Christian past in general, and the paradox that ensued in the Protestant missionary iconoclastic stance regarding the material culture of non-Christian religions, which it sought to destroy *and* preserve, particularly out of its original context.

Notes

Research for this essay has been made possible thanks to the Spinoza Prize from the Netherlands Foundation for Scientific Research (NWO) and the Academy Professor Prize from the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), which allowed me to set up the research program Religious Matters in an Entangled World (www.religiousmatters.nl) in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Utrecht University. This program works in sync with the research project Heritage and the Question of Conversion, co-directed by Peter Pels and myself, which is part of the program Pressing Matter (funded by NWO under the National Science Agenda scheme). The current focus of the work in both programs lies on religious objects in museum collections. I would like to thank Silke Seybold for generously opening up the depot of the Übersee-Museum Bremen and her personal archive regarding the Collection Spiess and for her overall support, as well as Christiane Kruse, Gertrud Hüwelmeier, Pooyan Tamimi Arab, and Jojada Verrips for their stimulating comments on an earlier version of this chapter and Andrea Scrima for careful copy editing.

1 Paradoxically, the full removal of certain images might ultimately make the past, as it 're-emerges' in moments of iconoclasm, invisible. I stress the potential of debates around (and that call for) iconoclasm to lay bare an unacknowledged past. In my view, the main issue concerning images found to be so problematic that they are under consideration for removal is how the ugly past they enshrine can be saved from amnesia and oblivion. Destruction may be counterproductive, while relocation or reframing, as is the case with the exhibition *Enthüllt. Berlin und seine Denkmäler* (Zitadelle, Berlin Spandau), which features monuments of German historical figures removed from public view in the aftermath of WWII, may prove to be more successful strategies (see also Kruse in this volume).

2 Here I follow Wayne Modest's understanding of "working through" as implying "that one has to question, debate, to feel uncomfortable: to box and fight about the objects and their meanings in the present" (von Oswald, Soh Bejeng Ndikung, and Modest 2017: 15–18). In her impressive book, Margaretha von Oswald (2022) employs this notion to scrutinize the colonial Africa collections at the Humboldt Forum, Berlin, in which the role of missionaries as collectors is conspicuously absent.

3 This essay is part of a collaborative project that involves curator Silke Seybold (Übersee-Museum Bremen), anthropologists Malika Kramer and Angelantonio Grossi, and scholars from Ghana and Togo who have been working on Ewe culture, language and religion (Sela Adjei, Kodzo Gavua, Mercy Klugah) and on the NMG (Kokou Azamede, Ohiniko Mawussé Toffa), as well as priest Christopher Voncujovi (Afrikan Magick Temple, Accra). Funded by the Deutsches Zentrum Kulturgutverluste/

German Lost Art Foundation, our project unpacks the trajectories of items in the Collection Spiess (see below), which has been kept in the Übersee-Museum for about 120 years, from multiple angles.

4 See also González Zarandona, who coined the term "semioclasm" to refer to the "destruction of meaning" of, in his case, indigenous sacred sites and items in Australia (2015: 468). I prefer the phrase 'semantic iconoclasm' because it retains the idea of an image under siege.

5 Tellingly, it does not feature in two recent major works on iconoclasm (Freedberg 2021, Parzinger 2021).

6 Nowadays, in Southern Ghana the rejection and destruction of 'idols' and 'fetishes' is still pursued by Pentecostal and evangelical movements, who see them, in the tradition of nineteenth-century missions, as embodiments of the devil (Meyer 2019: 91–93).

7 The so-called *Bilderverbot* notwithstanding, throughout the history of Judaism and Christianity, room has been made to accommodate such images (Meyer/Stordalen 2019).

8 But even with regard to this strand, it is important to take into account the degree to which the Bible, especially the Old Testament, informed scholarly thought about the 'fetish', as is argued by Boer with regard to Marx's concept of commodity fetishism (Boer 2012: 177–206). Certainly regarding the nineteenth century, knowledge about the Bible shaped the theorizing of authors such as Marx, Engels, and Feuerbach. That this is not well realized in our time is due to a prevailing secular bias regarding scholarly knowledge that regards theology as marginal to philosophical thought.

9 Catholic missions, for their part, also dismissed indigenous religious objects as idols, yet opened up possibilities for the continued hidden existence of indigenous deities behind the figures of Catholic Saints.

10 "Auch diejenigen, welche die Religion mit dem stumpfesten Fetischdienst anfangen lassen, können uns nicht sagen, wie denn ein Klotz, ein Stein, oder selbst der Himmel, die Sonne, der Blitz, der Donner usw. hat als göttlich verehrt werden können, wenn nicht eine noch so dunkle und tief verschleierte Gottesidee bereits dagewesen ist, mit der man die sinnlichen Gegenstände in Verbindung gebracht hat. Also das Vorhandensein einer Gottesidee ist die Voraussetzung der Religion selbst auf ihrer niedersten Stufe".

11 Famously, this view was also deployed by the Catholic missionary and scholar Wilhelm Schmidt in his work *Der Ursprung der Gottesidee* (1912–1955). As is the case with Warneck, here a theological position rooted in the Christian belief about an initial monotheism is mobilized against at the time broadly accepted scholarly knowledge about the evolution of religion towards monotheism. According to Böhme, with this work Schmidt erected "der historisch längst widerlegten Annahme des Ur-Monotheismus ein ebenso gigantisches wie närrisches Monument" ("a gigantic and foolish monument to the long since refuted assumption of a primal monotheism," translation AS) (2006: 201). However, the fact that this idea was refuted by secular scholarship does not imply that it would no longer be deployed in Christian mission circles. Repercussions of this idea can still be found in debates about African notions of a high God (Meyer 2020: 161–164). The point here is that ideas that have been discarded by secular scholarship may still continue to circulate and exert their effects. Religious ideas appear to be particularly resilient. As such, they form an important research focus.

12 In a chapter titled "Collecting and Converting", Raymond Corbey offers an extensive analysis of Protestant missionaries' stance towards *korwar* images, which they understood as 'idols' (Dutch: *afgodenbeelden*), in the Geelvinck Bay (Dutch Papua New Guinea, now West Papua). They were slated for destruction upon people's conversion to Christianity, yet by the same token also collected and sent to the Netherlands (Corbey 2019: 11–79). Clearly, the fight against 'idolatry' shaped the activities of Protestant missions across the globe, and this had a homogenizing effect on the understanding of indigenous deities as evidence of 'heathendom'. In this context, it is telling that an article in the *Zendingsbladje* of the Nederlandsche Zendingsvereniging (i. e., the Dutch Protestant Mission) draws a

parallel between the worship of 'fetishes' among Black people in Africa and the 'heathen' people in the Dutch Indies (1893).

13 The German term *Zauber* (both as such and in word combinations) can be translated into English in multiple ways. In my view, the term "magic" would be closest to *Zauber* and *Zauberwesen* (*Wesen* meaning here 'nature' or 'essence'). I translate *Zaubermittel* as 'means to do magic' or 'charm'. Of course, all these terms belong to broader conceptual issues in the framework of the magic-religion-science triad through which ideological separations of European civilization from a 'pagan' past and 'heathens' elsewhere were articulated and colonization and missionization legitimized. As Hanegraaff puts it succinctly, "the rejection of magic became a hallmark for civilization" (2016: 398).

14 Warneck expects converts to have a will that shows: "1) in dem entschiedenen Ernst, mit dem Heidentum und allem seinem Brauch, speziell mit allem Zauberwesen, zu brechen, auch sich von allen götzendienerischen Gegenständen: Götzenbildern, Amuletten, Zaubermitteln u. dergl. zu trennen, und 2) in der freudigen Bereitheit, hinfort den Geboten Jesu Gehorsam zu leisten und durch einen Wandel im Licht dem Christentum Ehre zu machen. Zu dieser doppelten Willigkeit muss 3) ein elementarer Glaube kommen an Jesus den für uns Menschgewordenen, Gekreuzigten und Auferstandenen, und zwar in dem Sinn einer persönlichen Überzeugung und vertrauensvollen Hingabe, nicht in dem bloßen Aufsagen einer auswendig gelernten Glaubensformel (2015b: 613)". ("1) a resolute earnestness to break with heathendom and all its customs, particularly with all magic, and to separate oneself from all idolatrous objects including idols, amulets, magic potions, etc., and 2) a joyful willingness to henceforth obey Jesus's commandments and to bring glory to Christianity by walking in the light. In addition to this dual aim, they must 3) have an elementary belief in Jesus, who became human for us and was crucified and resurrected, in the sense of a personal conviction and trusting devotion and not in the mere recitation of a prayer learned by rote" (translation AS).

15 As argued by Judith Pollman, both Protestants and Catholics in the Low Countries found the memory of the iconoclasm that had occurred during the course of the Reformation so painful and embarrassing that they avoided it. By the same token, historians also spent little energy on identifying and analyzing the motives of the 'image-breakers' of 1566 in the Low Countries (2016). This changed around the time of the 450th anniversary of the 1566 *Beeldenstorm*, which brought forth more publications and debates about this destructive period, without, however, extending into the mission fields in the Global South, where iconoclasms have been occurring up to the present. The reluctance on the part of Warneck to feature the iconoclasms instigated by missions in a loud manner may also be an effect of this embarrassed attitude, which resonates with the central idea of this volume of iconoclasm being regarded as uncivilized.

16 Currently, mission societies have started to address this legacy (e. g., on the Basler Mission, see Museum der Kulturen Basel 2015).

17 Jacobs and Wingfield regard the categories of trophy, relic, and curio that were employed by British missions to classify objects collected in the mission areas as "artefacts in their own right—human concepts with origins in particular historical contexts, which were picked up and reused in others" (2015:11). My analysis of the concepts of fetish and idol occurs along the same line.

18 Born in Bremen and trained as a merchant (*Kaufmann*), Spiess (also written Spieß) felt called upon to become a missionary. Between 1887 and 1892, he was trained in the seminary of the Basel Mission, with which the NMG collaborated. In 1892, after a stay in London to study the language, he was sent to the mission field, where he worked at different mission posts until 1914, when he returned home shortly before the beginning of World War I, which put a (temporary) end to NMG activities in Africa. During his long span of activities as a missionary, he spent four periods devoted to recreation and recovery in Germany, during which he actively communicated the work of the mission to German audiences. He was married to deaconess Sophie Schmidt, with whom he had four daughters.

19 As part of the archive of the NMG, these diaries are located in the Staatsarchiv Bremen, (StAB 7, 1025/6/I, II, III, IV/76).

20 This diary (StAB 7, 1025/6/ III /76) has been transcribed from Kurrent by Silke Seybold, who generously shared this document with me. The remaining three diaries and other texts by Spiess are still awaiting transcription.

21 Schurtz studied under geography professor Friedrich Ratzel, who developed the field of *Völkerkunde* (anthropology) in Leipzig. In 1893 Schurtz took up the position of scientific assistant for anthropology in the new Städtisches Museum in Bremen, which opened its doors in 1896. Schurtz worked in the museum cataloguing the collection (including the many new incoming items) and creating exhibitions and scholarly publications until his untimely death in 1903. For an extensive discussion of Schurtz's life and work, see Ducks (1996).

22 On the making of colonial collections in ethnological and other museums in Germany at the turn of the nineteenth century, see Habermas (2021), who also refers to the role of missions (ibd.: 83, see also Habermas/Hölzl 2014).

23 "Da die Norddeutsche Mission von Bremen ausgeht, hat gerade das Bremer Museum öfter das Glück gehabt, Gegenstände aus dem Evhegebiet zu erhalten, besonders seit Herr Missionar C. Spiess mit höchst dankenswerther Bereitwilligkeit begonnen hat, in systematischer Weise für das Museum zu sammeln. Es war ihm der Wunsch ausgesprochen worden, dass er namentlich Amuletten und Zaubergeräthen seine Aufmerksamkeit zuwenden möchte, da es ihm als ersten gelingen musste, *mit Hülfe Neubekehrter derartige Gegenstände zu erwerben und ihren Zweck zu erkunden*. Herr Spiess ist dieser Anregung mit grossem Eifer und Verständnis nachgekommen, so dass sich das Bremer Museum jetzt im Besitz einer sehr interessanten Sammlung befindet, die durch die Erläuterungen des Einsenders doppelten Werth gewinnt."

24 According to Schurtz, 'fetishes' and 'images of gods' (he also uses *Idol*—but not *Götze*—once) also contain elements such as horns that refer to the magical function of warding off evil (1894: 59).

25 This stands in contrast to Pietz's proposition that an opposition existed between unsalable objects (charms) and ordinary commodities. As Florence Bernault argues, this contrast "between merchandise that moved freely in the markets, and ritual objects that did not" existed in the European mind, according to which 'fetishes' were "devoid of market value" (2019: 77). However, she offers evidence from historical European-African encounters in what is now Gabon that 'fetishes' and charms could enter into exchange. The contrary idea, in her view, may be due to "the fact that Europeans, not Africans, regarded fetishes as the things that they did not want to buy. From this moment of denial, the fact that local consumers exchanged charms as commodities became a blind spot in Euro-American theory. The Eurocentric idea of the fetish, meanwhile, continued to deny fetishes any aesthetic, cultural, or religious value" (2019: 77). While I still have to conduct more historical research on the sale of *dzokawo* and *legbaviwo*, my hunch is that it would sustain Bernault's view. She is certainly right that the 'fetish' is to be rethought from an African angle.

26 While Schurtz saw the willingness of priests to sell amulets and other items as a sign of the triviality of their intentions (i. e., that they were easily prepared to give up religious items for money), he saw the unwillingness to do so as an indication of a staunch 'heathen' attitude.

27 In the Staatsarchiv Bremen, next to the list of items collected for Schurtz in Diary III (1898), I found two more lists of items collected for Schurtz: 15 February 1899 (40 items) and one in 1900 (38 items, date sent unclear). These are awaiting transcription.

28 In another piece (Meyer 2022), I explore the transformations of knowledge from Ewe people to missionaries to scholars as an instance of "triple mediation" (Chidester 2014) through which knowledge about indigenous practices and customs is increasingly abstracted and decontextualized.

29 "Ein Fetisch ist also etwas Nachgebildetes oder Hergestelltes, wodurch geheime, überirdische Kräfte Gutes oder Böses bewirken sollen, und der Fetischismus ist die Lehre darüber."

30 The renowned NMG missionary Jacob Spieth, who published extensively about the Ewe Religion (1911), held the same view; he sought to identify the origins of a pure Ewe religion that had subsequently been disrupted by other influences. See Meyer 2020: 161–162.

31 It also resonates with the vision of NMG inspector Franz Michael Zahn, who saw the 'heathens' as seeking polytheists who longed for the high god to whom the mission was to lead the way (Toffa 2023: chapter 4), as shown by Ohiniko Mawussé Toffa in his marvelous analysis of Zahn's mission concept as a colonial episteme.

32 There was a display of items relating to Togo, and possibly some items of the Spiess collection also were included. Due to the bad quality of photographs of the post-war display, it is difficult to discern which items were shown. With many thanks to Silke Seybold for this information, and for sharing with me a very illuminating PowerPoint presentation with historical images of the Collection Spiess (Seybold 2017).

33 Harrie Leyten sketches a transition of religious objects collected by Catholic missionaries "from idol to art" (2015). The frame of art, as far as I can see, became more relevant, especially for Catholic missions, in the second part of the twentieth century, and thus much later than the origin of the Collection Spiess. In this context, it is important to realize that a great deal of objects now framed as (looted) art (Savoy 2022) were not framed as art when they were collected. This also implies that the process of restitution does not simply entail the *return* of art objects, but instead a return of objects to a new frame and assigned with a new value (see also Schüttpelz 2021: 51, who cautions against the ethnocentrism implied in the relabeling of ethnographic objects as art).

34 *Efie* in Akan means home. For an introduction of the exhibition see: https://digitales.dortmunder-u.de/storypost/efie/.

35 Documenting parts of the installation, this film (https://kunstundfilm.de/2022/02/efie-kunst-aus-ghana/) shows between minutes 4:28 and 4:34 an installation of powerful artefacts, among them *dzokawo* from the Collection Spiess.

36 In this context, it is interesting to revisit the distinction between 'idol' and 'fetish', even though it was blurred in missionary discourse. As argued by art historian Gabriele Genge, following Pietz, the 'fetish' concept evokes a "new materialist understanding of the object" that is severed from religion and part and parcel of a new secularized modernity on *both* continents (2014: 31). The visual perception of the objects framed as 'fetish' was less relevant than the fact that they were worn in intimate closeness to the body. This indicates an invocation of other senses beyond vision. In this vein, Genge argues, the objects framed as fetishes were not fully contained by "the religious pictorial practices of the West" (ibd.: 33), whereas this was still the case with the concept of the idol. As she points out, this potential of the 'fetish' to move beyond a figural model towards an appraisal of the formless has remained a blind spot in art history. Interestingly, looking at the items as 'fetishes', though a foreign and imposed term, along the line suggested by Genge might open up entirely new vistas that could appreciate the items as works of—abstract, surrealist—art. At the same time, the use of the term fetish is highly contested among African scholars, as highlighted by Appiah (2022), who nonetheless pleads for using the term in a proactive manner.

37 See Sela Adjei (2019) for a contemporary analysis of Ewe Vodu Religion from the angle of art and aesthetics; this study opens new avenues towards the historical missionary materials.

38 I am thankful to my PhD student Angelantonio Grossi, who is working on a study of Ghanaian traditional priests' media practices, for introducing me to Christopher Voncujovi.

39 "All meine Fetische haben mir nichts genützt, nun will ich doch ganz brechen."

40 Christopher Voncujovi agreed to be part of the team that investigates the Spiess collection in the Übersee-Museum, which we visited as a team in September 2022. As pointed out in note 4, in the meantime the legba-dzoka research project has been formed with the aim to work through the provenance and possible futures of this collection.

41 A similar, albeit more longstanding trend to frame a once despised and even criminalized religion occurs with regard to Candomblé in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, where, notwithstanding assaults on the part of Pentecostals, it is reframed and recognized as public art (Sansi 2010). This recognition as art and heritage involves some degree of culturalization, through which the spiritual dimension of Candomblé as religion is potentially eroded.

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GERTRUD HÜWELMEIER

Malevolent/Benevolent Iconoclasm in Late Socialist Vietnam

Prior to and during the American-Vietnam War and its aftermath, temples, pagodas, and shrines in communist northern Vietnam were destroyed and converted into secular sites.[1] Sacred statues and images disappeared, some of them replaced by representations of revolutionary heroes. Popular religious practices were deemed superstitious and banned by the authorities. Over the past two decades, however, particularly in the wake of (post-)socialist neoliberalism, worshipping deities and ancestors has become increasingly prominent in people's everyday lives. Paper votive offerings with depictions of money, humans, and consumer goods are presented to a variety of spirits and burned in the course of rituals. According to the beliefs of many Vietnamese, the dead continue living in a parallel world and are in need of all kind of objects. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in Vietnam, I explore in this essay image practices in a socialist country and argue that the banning or destruction of sacred objects has never been successful in preventing peoples' aspirations to connect with the otherworld.

Referring to Bruno Latour, who has identified various types of "iconoclastic gestures" (Latour 2002: 20) and emphasized their overlapping nature, Rambelli and Reinders (2012: 176) distinguish between unintentional and intentional destruction. Inspired by their concept of *malevolent/benevolent* iconoclasm, I examine different forms of iconoclasm in late Socialist Vietnam. I agree with Rambelli and Reinders, who indicate that "while it would seem that any action resulting in the obliteration of a sacred object must be committed with the goal of harming it, such is not always the case. Parallel to the effects of malevolent destruction are a range of 'benevolent' destructive acts with rather similar physical effects" (Rambelli and Reinders 2007: 20/21). *Malevolent iconoclasm* refers to destruction with the intention to harm sacred objects, while *benevolent iconoclasm*, with the intention to preserve, entails sacrifice (ibd. 23). Thus, intentions of iconoclasts are not mutually exclusive, and it might be that social practices involving both ideas occur simultaneously or consecutively, as I will discuss in detail below.

According to David Morgan, iconoclasm is the destruction, ostracism, or prohibition (proscription) of images (Morgan 2003: 170). But object destruction and its implicit negative intention is not the only indicator of iconoclastic practices. As I will illustrate in this contribution, positive motivations exist as well, in particular with regard to burning offerings for the dead: in

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110773576_008

these cases, the object is thought to be transformed and not destroyed. Morgan draws on examples from art historians, emphasizing that "the power of images" (Freedberg 1989) is present both in Islam and Judaism, as it is in Christianity. However, scholars of anthropology, religious studies, and art history have recently pointed to the "perplexing variety of practices of imagining and picturing the unseen" within and across the Abrahamic traditions (Meyer and Stordalen 2019: 1). Moreover, as people are embedded in different visual regimes, not least due to global entanglements, "conflicts over images and the political aesthetics of cultural representations in a broader sense are likely to increase and accelerate" (Meyer et al. 2018: 10). Since images are found in "manuscripts, architecture, tapestries, homes, mosques, and personal devotional items" (Morgan 2003: 171), they are also printed on paper, mass produced for religious purposes, and sold in marketplaces in many countries of East and Southeast Asia. Historically, the power of images became particularly apparent when religious practitioners met Western missionaries. Most interesting is that in communist regimes, colonial and postcolonial iconoclastic attitudes continue to the present day, as I will illustrate below.

Nature, or more specifically animated nature, has also been destroyed by iconoclasts. With respect to African societies, Guinea in particular, Ramon Sarró reported on the destruction of a sacred bush where initiation rituals took place until 1957. Guinea was a French colony until 1958, and then, up to 1984, "a modernizing socialist state which prohibited past religious practices and set up demystification campaigns to suppress any possible return to the old, 'irrational' religion" (Sarró 2007: 263). Hence, sacred landscapes also became the subject of iconoclastic practices. Besides ethnic conflicts, tensions between 'modern' and 'traditional' religious practitioners play a pivotal role in iconoclasm. In examining the role of mass-produced Jesus pictures in southern Ghana, Birgit Meyer pointed to the clashes between missionary Protestantism and local ideas and popular religious practices, arguing that "the iconoclastic attitude toward these mass-produced pictures is part of a broader Pentecostal crusade in southern Ghana against a particular kind of material culture associated with shrines and artifacts of local religious traditions (. . .)" (Meyer 2010: 101). As these examples illustrate, ethnographic research on image practices refers to the colonial phenomenon of iconoclasm and its afterlife in present-day societies. Drawing on iconoclasm in non-Western societies, my essay argues for an investigation of colonial and post-colonial image practices and explores iconoclasm in a socialist country characterized by a range of diverse religious practices encompassing Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and a number of popular religious practices such as trance mediumship and ancestor worship.

In historically contextualizing iconoclastic practices, I will first look at the destruction of sacred images, statues, and architecture in East Asia more generally. Referring to the concept of *malevolent iconoclasm,* the next part of my essay points to iconoclastic practices after the communist regime in Vietnam was established in 1954. Ideas about superstition in the socialist country, which predominated in the communist world view, formed the basis for damaging temples, pagodas, and village shrines and transforming them afterwards into secular places such as schools or storage rooms in the high period of socialism. The last part of this contribution relates to *benevolent iconoclasm* and investigates the offering of paper replicas to ancestors and gods and their subsequent burning. Performed with a positive attitude, practitioners

intend to please cosmological entities by "sending" them the objects via fire and smoke while asking for support and protection. The question here is whether these practices may be referred to as iconoclasm.

Iconoclasm in East Asia

In East and Southeast Asia, iconoclastic practices are to be found in many areas and have deep roots in the history of a number of countries, such as Japan and China (Reinders 2005). Since the northern part of Vietnam was dominated by China for about a thousand years, I touch on this by referring to China's long-standing cultural influence. With respect to iconoclastic practices, an edict on temple confiscation was promulgated by the Chinese emperor in 1898, and in subsequent years, in keeping with the slogan "'destroy temples to build schools' (. . .), probably more than half of the million Chinese temples that still existed in 1898 were emptied of all religious equipment and activity" (Goossaert 2006: 308). Part of the reason for anti-superstition campaigns in early twentieth-century China was seen in the presence of Western missionaries, whose influence on the Chinese elite contributed to attitudes such as feeling shame "when Western observers ridiculed Chinese temples, icons, beliefs, and rituals" (ibd. 327). Western missionaries also practiced iconoclasm, either by destroying statues, images, and even temples and pagodas in the countries where they evangelized, or by taking away religious objects to their countries of origin. In London, the "Great Missionary Exhibition" of 1909 attracted about half a million Britons, who gazed at images of deified Chinese taken out of their context, alien idols or "borrowed gods" (Reinders 2004: 7). Western visitors were curious about the Chinese "heathen" who believed that carved things can have a life inside of them. For Londoners, these objects were mere cultural artefacts or art objects, but had no meaning in their everyday lives.

Iconoclasm is not a phenomenon born in the West during the Reformation and then transported to African and Asian countries. Rather, it happened in China and in Japan well before Western missionaries arrived. The elite Chinese culture had always been hostile to popular religion, long before the Jesuits came to the country (Reinders 2012: 93). Yet with the arrival of the Jesuits, there was a common interest between the Chinese elites and the Jesuits as representatives of the elite Catholicism of the West in opposing such practices. Nonetheless, popular religious practices formed an important part of people's everyday lives and took place at many sites.

Violence to images in popular Chinese religion, performed by local worshippers, had been reported by several missionaries and does not seem to have any connection to missionary activities. Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), a Jesuit in China during the second half of the sixteenth century, reported on witchcraft used to subdue goblins and phantoms (Reinders 2012: 94). Furthermore, he was informed about iconoclastic practices and noted the humiliation of objects. He realized that people worshipped gods and deities, but when these "idols" did not fulfil the desires of the worshippers, they would beat and thus punish them. Only afterward would they reconcile with them (Gernet 1985: 82, quoted in Reinders 2012: 94). Approximately a hundred years later, another missionary, Louis Le Compte (1655–1728), wrote that Chinese worshippers punished

Figure 3.1 "Feeding the Idol." From *Quarterly Token for Juvenile Subscribers*, 48 (January 1868), p. 3.

1 Feeding the Idol

their gods when the gods refused their requests, although the people had long worshipped them in temples by burning incense and presenting food offerings. "They then tie the idol with cords, pluck it down, drag it along the streets, through all the mud and the dunghills" (Louis Le Compte 1787, pp. 104–5, quoted in Reinders 2012: 94). Soon after, once their desire was satisfied, they brought the statue back into the temple, made excuses for what they had done to the idol, and resumed veneration as usual. This example refers to the parallel registers of *malevolent/ benevolent* iconoclasm. The religious practitioners' intention in this case was not to fully destroy the icon, but to punish the god, thereby accepting the statue's damage. This incident points to the aliveness of the image, to its power and potency.

After Protestant missionaries arrived in China in the nineteenth century, hostility towards Catholics as well as towards Buddhism and all kinds of popular religious practices arose. Protestant missionaries lamented the idolatry of Roman Catholicism and Buddhism and made "great public displays of iconoclasm" and "joined crowds of converts in festive processions of destruction (. . .)" (Reinders 2012: 97). In one display, a peddler working for a Protestant missionary put some sweets into the mouth of an icon to see if it could actually eat them (Fig. 1). As becomes obvious from the image, the surrounding crowd was laughing. It depends on the viewer's interpretation whether the people were ridiculing the methods designed to prove that spirits cannot

Figure 3.2 "Chinese Converts Bringing Their Discarded Idols to a Missionary." From *Church Missionary Gleaner* (September 1, 1900), p. 132.

2 Chinese Converts Bringing Their Discarded Idols to a Missionary

eat, or whether they were laughing over the missionary's foolish assistant, who wanted to convince the people that idols cannot eat.

Feeding the spirits and cooking for ancestors and deities is considered a ritual practice performed in various parts of the world, as anthropologists have shown in recent research (Perez 2011; Marouda 2017; Hüwelmeier 2021a). Thus, food, cooking, and feeding are important elements in communicating with otherworldly entities.

Not only did foreign Protestant missionaries destroy images; Chinese converts did as well, the latter being actively involved in bringing "discarded idols" to a missionary (Fig. 2). However, it remains unclear whether the missionary burned these objects because they were, at least in his eyes, associated with "negative" energies—representations of spiritual entities charged with potency—or whether he took the objects to Western countries to display them in ethnographic museums.

Iconoclastic practices continued to be performed after the Chinese Revolution. In the region of the Tibetan Plateau, for example, the "iconoclastic storm of 1958" affected all ethnic groups, according to what people still remember many decades later. They recalled that "the monasteries were empty. The government destroyed all the temples and statues inside the temples. Nothing was left" (Roche and Wen 2013: 90). As the authors continue, "temples and

monasteries that were not destroyed survived only as storehouses. Religious activities were proscribed, and those who were discovered secretly carrying them out were severely punished, even killed. All religious practitioners were laicized and forced to offer self-criticisms. Religious icons and ritual paraphernalia were destroyed. Every trace of religious life was eradicated and the traditional order subordinated to a new, rational modernist regime of perpetual progress" (ibd. 90). What seems to be obvious here is a continuity of iconoclastic practices in the name of modernism and communism, long after the missionaries had left China.

With respect to Vietnam, missionaries' presence predating French colonial rule has received little scholarly attention (Tran 2018). Portuguese and Italian Jesuits were the first to arrive in the ancient kingdoms of today's Vietnam. Following the ban on Christianity in Japan in 1614, expelled Jesuits traveled to Southeast Asia, some of them arriving in Hội An, a coastal trading city in today's Vietnam, with a Portuguese merchant. As noted by Tran, Jesuits were favored by the rulers of Cochinchina (the southern part of today's Vietnam) of the early seventeenth century due to their skills in language, mathematics, and astronomy, but were later accused of "enticing people to abandon the cult of the ancestors" (Tran 2018: n. p.) and were expelled from Cochinchina in 1629. Later, they returned when trade with Macau flourished.

As the northern part of Vietnam was dominated by China for about a thousand years, there was and still is a great influence with regard to language, architecture, religion, and other aspects of everyday life in this area. Buddhist pagodas were also established in the southern part of Vietnam, where iconoclastic practices were performed by Western missionaries before French colonial rule: in Saigon, for example, a converted pagoda used by European Catholics and a remarkable number of Vietnamese converted by French missionaries prior to colonization was replaced by a small wooden church designed by a French military engineer, Colonel Coffyn (Wright 1991: 175). In Hà Nội, in the northern part of Vietnam, following a fire in 1888, French military engineers demolished "many houses and pagodas" (Wright 1991:185). As a result of urban planning performed by the French, such as building the Hà Nội Post Office next to Hoàn Kiếm Lake in the center of the city, a pagoda was demolished in the late nineteenth century and only a small gate reminds people of its existence today. All in all, during French colonial rule, numerous religious and civic monuments were demolished and a number of objects brought to Paris, not only to the Louvre, but also to the national museum of ethnography at the Trocadéro, established in 1878 (Wright 1996: 135), which in 1938 became the Museé de l'Homme in Paris.

Since the "absence of studies on twentieth-century Vietnamese Catholicism" (Keith 2008: 130) is particularly stark, paralleled by the "almost complete absence of studies on any Catholic community outside of Europe during the late colonial period" (ibd.), iconoclasm in the first half of the twentieth century in Vietnam remains largely unexplored. I would like to point out here that the guerilla war in the northern part of Vietnam and the subsequent liberation struggle against the French colonial regime, particularly in the 1930s and 1940s, resulted in the destruction of Buddhist statues, pagodas, and village shrines, now carried out by communist cadres. "Especially during the 1930s, communism became another driving force behind the Vatican's reforms, as the Church attempted to address many of the issues about which Marxism-Leninism was able to speak so strongly to so many people" (Keith 2008: 132).

After the establishment of the communist regime in the northern part of the country in 1954, iconoclasm continued as well during the high socialist years of state secularism. This means, in terms of architecture, "that historic temples in some districts were desecrated and converted into civic spaces (. . .); in other areas they were left alone and abandoned (. . .)" (Schwenkel 2018: 530). However, sacred architecture in the period of high socialism was not merely abandoned or converted: anti-superstition campaigns, performed by "revolutionary communists," actively contributed to the destruction and damage of statues and images were considered sacred by ordinary people. This reminds us of Latour's statement: "Iconoc*lasm* is when we know what is happening in the act of breaking and what the motivations for what appears as a clear project of destruction are" (Latour 2002: 14), which brings us back to the sometimes parallel registers of *malevolent/benevolent* iconoclasm.

Malevolent Iconoclasm: Anti-Superstition Campaigns in Vietnam

After the end of French colonial rule in northern Vietnam (1954), during the American-Vietnam War (1955 to 1975) and in the years thereafter, when the divided country was reunited under the leadership of the Communist Party, sacred images constituted a provocation for the new political regime. Even after the introduction of economic reforms in 1986, the reestablishment of sacred places and the performance of popular religious practices continued to be described as 'superstition' by the authorities. It took another twenty years for this policy to change considerably, not least due to an economic upswing and the desire of religious practitioners to let the ancestors participate in the new prosperity. As a result, over the past two decades, many people, including high-ranking government members, have become engaged in the spirit world by also financially investing in the beyond.

From 1945 to 1986, anti-superstition campaigns, here considered as *malevolent* iconoclasm, took place in many villages in the Red River Delta in the northern part of Vietnam. During periods of resistance and high socialism, statues were "cast down, burned, or tossed into village ponds" (Kendall et al. 2012: 12). Kendall refers to a shrine-keeper, who told a story about a delegation from the Greater Hà Nội Bureau of Culture and Information visiting his house in the late 1950s, accompanied by a commune representative, that requested he take down the shrine dedicated to Trần Hưng Đạo, an imperial prince, statesman, and military commander from the thirteenth century who had fought foreign invaders and hence is considered a famous national hero. As the shrine had been venerated by the family since generations, the man refused to destroy the altar, arguing that this would be a breach of filial piety. He suggested that he would only take down the altar after the members of the delegation had destroyed their own ancestral altars at home. Alternatively, he proposed that the members of the delegation should themselves take down the altar and carry every piece of the shrine away. The delegation disappeared without touching the shrine.

Anti-superstition campaigns continued in the 1960s. University students were sent to the countryside to 'teach' the peasants, since the performance of popular religious practices such as worshipping gods and deities in the pagoda was considered to be 'false consciousness.' At

that time, high school students were evacuated from Hà Nội to surrounding villages and taught in converted pagodas. Mr. Nguyễn, today in his early seventies, told me that he had wondered about the transformation of the sacred place into a school. But students were afraid and did not dare to ask. People were also urged to perform rituals such as weddings and funerals not by spending money for a lavish meal, but by celebrating in a simple way. Furthermore, it was no longer allowed to perform trance mediumship ceremonies to venerate the mother goddesses or to visit the diviner. Praying at local shrines and pagodas while burning incense and bringing offerings to tutelary spirits and local gods was no longer tolerated. Likewise, Shaun Kingsley Malarney has reported on communal houses, sites of village deities and tutelary spirits that were transformed into rice warehouses (Malarney 1996). Despite the anti-superstition campaigns in communist North Vietnam, according to people I spoke with, trance mediumship was performed secretly even during the American-Vietnam War.

Another incident is of interest here, namely the deification of Hồ Chí Minh (Hüwelmeier 2021b) and the establishment of busts and images representing the national hero in pagodas.[2] His glorification started immediately after his death in 1969, when the Party neglected his will, which called for a simple cremation, placing him instead within the pantheon of great national heroes. However, early stages of his deification had already begun during his lifetime, in the 1960s, when some people in the north "were known to have quietly stated that Ho was a 'living god' (. . .) sent by the heavens to release Viet Nam from its bondage" (Malarney 1996: 123). After *đổi mới* (economic renovation starting in 1986), Hồ's divinity was celebrated by placing portraits or plaster busts in spirit shrines or village communal houses. At the end of 1991, as documented by Malarney, a group of villagers in the south of Hà Nội tried to install Hồ Chí Minh as the village guardian spirit, thereby formally recognizing the spirit of Hồ Chí Minh as possessing supernatural power. Finally, Hồ Chí Minh transformed into a village guardian spirit. Newspaper reports in 1995 indicated that the Communist Party stopped a Hồ Chí Minh cult in Vĩnh Phú province (Malarney 1996: 130). These examples refer to a form of iconoclasm that has been called "replacement strategy" (Morgan 2003: 171). The power of no longer existing animated statues is linked to the power of a sacred place (such as shrine, pagoda, or communal house), where villagers, to satisfy their need for spiritual protection, substituted the empty place left behind by the former sacred statues by a bust of Hồ Chí Minh. However, it is not known whether a ritual master called the deity into the image, thus making the statue or bust a particularly potent site[3] of object agency (Gell 1998).

In revolutionary Vietnam, lost or damaged statues were soon replaced by new deities, in many cases by likenesses of political figures. Brought to mind and visualized through statues and images, they found their way into communal houses and pagodas, as I have discussed elsewhere (Hüwelmeier 2021b). Monuments, busts, and images representing national heroes are to be found in public places all over Vietnam, generating "socialist affects" (Schwenkel 2013) by simultaneously evoking memories of revolutionary periods and heroic actions against foreign invaders. Socialist image practices, such as posters displaying progress and modernity, with the revolutionary hero Hồ Chí Minh at the center of many images, are part of the everyday life in the public space of the late socialist country, in particular in urban Hà Nội, the political center of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Bayly 2020). Such images create "affective spaces" (Reckwitz

2012), thereby linking emotions, history, and materiality in order to design a bright future in late Socialist Vietnam.

As has been illustrated so far, stories about anti-superstition campaigns have circulated over the past decades all across the region of the red River Delta in the northern part of Vietnam. During the resistance against the French colonial regime, and throughout the American-Vietnam War, Vietnamese communal houses (*Đình*) dedicated to worshiping the village deity, the village founder, or a local hero were damaged or destroyed. Likewise in pagodas, where Buddhist and popular religious practices had been performed since centuries, statues representing gods and deities disappeared "due to a mistaken understanding of popular religious practices as 'superstition'. The buildings and their furnishing were used for other, secular purposes, and many historical relics were lost or damaged" (Nguyễn Văn Huy and Phạm Lan Hương 2008: 204). The director of the Vietnamese Museum of Ethnology in Hà Nội, Nguyễn Văn Huy, mentioned the animation ritual of a statue that had been donated to a communal house in a village near Hà Nội in 1996. After inviting various deities with offerings of flowers and fruit, a monk called "the God into the statue three times, asking the God to enter the statue quickly. Pointing incense at the statue's eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and heart-mind, and concentrating on an incantation to awaken the statue body's five senses," the wooden statue changed its nature and became a god (ibd. 207). However, due to a village conflict about the propriety or impropriety of installing a tutelary God's statue in this place, the image was finally moved to the Museum in Hà Nội after it had been ritually desacralized. Practices of iconoclasm and the power of images, the animation of statues and their desacralization still happened ten years after the introduction of economic reforms, when Vietnam was on its way to a socialist market economy characterized by neoliberalism and peoples' increasing desires for (Western) consumer products.

Even throughout the 2000s, as Tam Ngo has reported (Ngo 2020: 796), local authorities in the town of Lào Cai in the northwestern area of Vietnam, near the Chinese border, tried to remove a Mother Goddess temple. Conflicts around this temple only ceased in 2011, after the sacred place was accepted as a national heritage. This resonates with another incident that happened in a remote district of upland Northwest Vietnam next to the border to Laos, where authorities destroyed a funeral house of the Hmong ethnic group which had been built to store sacred wooden objects (Rumsby 2019: 1347). Hence, although government control on religious practices and institutions has decreased throughout Vietnam, to this day the state is quite vigilant about religious practitioners, their meeting places, and their activities, in particular with regard to the emergence of Pentecostal churches (Hüwelmeier 2010: 138), which are considered to be Western imports. Pentecostal Christians for their part are at the forefront of eradicating 'traditional religions' such as ancestor worship and Buddhist practices.

Benevolent Iconoclasm: Burning Paper Votive Offerings

By now it should have become clear that the concept of *malevolent* iconoclasm is to be understood by its intention to harm, such as through disfiguration, humiliation, obliteration, or melting down objects. The idea of *benevolen*t iconoclasm may, however, also include destruction or

damage, but with the intention to preserve or to transform the objects. In the following, I explore sacrifices to ancestors and deities in Vietnam, such as burning paper votive offerings. Similar practices are also known in China, where pilgrims are likewise concerned about communicating with the spirit realm by igniting paper objects previously 'empowered' through ritual (Reinders 2014: 381).

For a long time, the presentation of paper votives, incense, and food offerings has been part of devotional practices to gods and ancestors in Vietnam (Hüwelmeier 2021a; Nguyen 2006). Prior to the introduction of economic reforms, in the high socialist period, there was a prohibition against producing, selling, or consuming paper objects, which were considered 'wasteful' props by the authorities. They were, however, created secretly, albeit not in mass production as they are nowadays. As a result of the introduction of economic reforms since the late 1980s, known as *đổi mới*, the longing for (Western) consumer products, such as the latest TV or cell phone, Gucci bags, and Mercedes Benz cars is articulated in the production and consumption of such goods in paper form in order to send the items to the beyond. Ancestors, as is argued by religious practitioners, should participate in the new prosperity of the country after decades of economic scarcity. As an act of reciprocity, the dead will take care of their loved ones in this world (Hüwelmeier 2016).

After being presented at the home altar during rituals such as the celebration of a family member's death anniversary, paper votive offerings are burned on the balcony or in the yard of the private home. In the absence of a balcony or yard, people burn spirit money, the most popular paper votive item, in the streets of Hà Nội, in particular on the first and fifteenth day of the month, according to the lunar calendar. Similar practices are known from various other countries in the region, such as Singapore, where the government provides bins to burn such items. However, people do not accept the government bins, arguing that the ancestors cannot identify which ashes of the burned votive paper belongs to their children (Bautista 2012: vii–viii).

In order to further elaborate on the concept of *benevolent* iconoclasm in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, I will continue by referring to a variety of popular religious practices. It should be noted here that the burning of paper votive offerings is not considered an act of destruction by locals, implying a negative intention. Instead, it is conceived as transformation in the sense of converting an object into another form (*hoá*).[4] As part of ritual practices, the communication with the beyond is considered an important duty of the living.

The "tomb sweeping ritual," which takes place once a year, is another occasion to communicate with the otherworld. On this day, Vietnamese visit the cemetery to clean the graves and to commemorate the deceased. They bring along food offerings, flowers, and incense and lay the items on the grave while simultaneously paying respect to the dead by talking to them, for instance by sharing the latest family news. In many cemeteries (Fig. 3), dresses, shoes, and other items made from paper are burned next to the grave.

Most of the paper replicas are created in a small village near Hà Nội, where many families are involved in the production of paper offerings. Among everyday objects, some families are engaged in producing animals. Horses and elephants, handmade from bamboo and paper and elaborately decorated (Hüwelmeier 2016), are dedicated to particular deities or (mythical) heroes from the past. In the course of festivals to honor tutelary spirits believed to protect the

3 Burning votive paper offerings on a cemetery in Hanoi, 2018

4 Horses and elephants made from bamboo and paper in front of a sacred place in urban Hanoi 2016

village and its community, the offerings are presented to the gods and finally transmitted to the otherworld by fire and smoke (Fig. 4).

Elephants, horses, and other items such as ferries made from paper are also part of *lên đồng* trance mediumship ceremonies, which are performed in many places in northern Vietnam. The items are considered necessary objects to move and travel in the beyond. A spirit medium, initiated into the mother goddess religion, will organize a ceremony several times a year, inviting a group of followers to worship the spirits of the mother goddess religion, or what is also called the "Four Palaces" pantheon of hierarchically ranked divinities, such as the mother goddesses, mandarins, ladies, princes, princesses, and boy attendants (Fjelstad and Nguyen 2006; Endres 2011). Some of the divinities are considered representations of historical figures, said to have defended the country against foreign invaders in the past and therefore included in the worship. Since the recognition of *lên đồng* trance mediumship and the mother goddess religion as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by the UNESCO in 2016, a boom in performing this ritual can be observed all over Vietnam (Hüwelmeier 2018). While I was participating in trance mediumship performances in private homes, horses and elephants as well as other objects made from paper were brought to the altar to pay respect to the mother goddess, represented by a small statue (Fig. 5).

With the help of a female assistant, the paper horse bowed to the altar, where the spirit/medium was already performing his or her 'dancing' or body movements accompanied by ritual music. Next, the spirit/medium turned around to move a burning incense stick around the head

5 Presentation of paper votive offerings in a trance mediumship ceremony, 2018

6 Burning horses and elephants made from paper and bamboo, 2016

of the paper/bamboo animal several times, thus animating the object. Finally, the object was taken to the balcony on the top floor of the house and burned in an incinerator by male assistants (Fig. 6), and thereby transformed into another form (*hoá*).

Re-dressed by assistants in another colorful costume, the medium is waiting for another spirit to appear momentarily. Careful preparations for the appearance of each spirit are necessary, including ritual music performed by a group of musicians, a costume decorated in a beautiful way, headwear, jewelry, alcohol, cigars and cigarettes, perfume, and a treasure box filled with real money to be distributed by the spirit/medium among the audience. Other props, such as cookies, apples, and beer cans, each in the same color as the medium's dress, are consecrated and given as a gift to the group of followers at the moment the respective spirit comes into presence. 'Blessed' by the spirits and only then considered *lộc* (blessed food), the items will later be distributed to the audience and taken home in huge plastic bags. A common meal concludes the ceremony. Food prepared and cooked by the medium and presented to the spirits first will later be consumed by the whole group. Thus, feeding the spirits points to the importance of food in the performance of popular religious practices in late Socialist Vietnam (Hüwelmeier 2021a).

As we have seen so far, paper votive offerings are made in different shapes, depending on the performance of a particular ritual. Similarly, paper votives in the shape of human figures (*hình nhân*), all hand-made, are burned on certain events and transmitted to the otherworld via smoke and fire. In a ceremony called *lễ giải hạn* (damage defense ritual) which takes place after

7 Paper votive offerings in the shape of humans, 2016

the New Year's Festival in many temples, gods and deities are called upon to provide health and to ward off damage in the coming year. In Hà Nội, I participated in mass events of this ritual in urban pagodas and also in private homes. At home, a group of relatives will gather with a ritual expert to perform the ceremony: among other ritual activities, votive offerings in the shape of human figures, female and male, are presented to the spirits—so to speak as a substitute for the bodies of the living—and later burned in an incinerator on the balcony or in the yard (Fig. 7).

Since the spring of 2020, human figures made of paper are decorated with a Covid mask and then transmitted to the hereafter by fire and smoke (Fig. 8). This practice is significant in two respects. By offering a human figure, locals hope not to die from Covid-19 and ask the spirits to prevent them from becoming infected. On the other hand, practitioners believe that their ancestors also need protection against the virus in the otherworld. For this reason, they not only transmit human figures with masks, but also human figures dressed as nurses as well as a doctor's kit with injection and vaccine.

Conclusion

In various regions of East and Southeast Asia, the intentional destruction of sacred objects already existed before missionaries arrived in China and Vietnam. Over the centuries, however, the veneration of gods and ancestors has survived. But in the twentieth century, due to revolutionary movements and the takeover of power by communist regimes, iconoclastic practices be-

8 Hình Nhân with corona mask

came part of anti-superstition campaigns. After the Việt Minh defeated the French colonizers in 1954 in the northern part of Vietnam, the performance of religious practices was no longer tolerated by the authorities. Sacred architecture, such as pagodas and temples, had been transformed into secular places or warehouses, and images representing deities were destroyed or damaged. Thus, *malevolent iconoclasm* was performed all over the region at certain periods, with the intention to harm, and was characterized by the humiliation of sacred objects and/or by their obliteration and confiscation. A number of objects survived because they were hidden or dismantled by their owners or communities with the intention to preserve, which is considered *benevolent iconoclasm.* As I have illustrated in this essay, objects made from paper are created to be presented to the spirits and then burned in the course of a ritual. During the act of burning, the offerings are believed to be transformed into another form (*hoá*). Considered as a sacrifice and moral duty towards ancestors and deities, material objects therefore function as a means of communication between the living and the dead and hence mediate between different worlds. Since the introduction of economic reforms in the late 1980s and the subsequent development of a socialist market economy, the production and consumption of paper replicas has received a renewed upturn. Recently, paper votive offerings have adapted to the times, and not only iPhones, but also paper replicas in the shape of human figures wearing Covid masks are transmitted to the otherworld. Therefore, material interactions with the beyond connect people and spirits, the visible and the invisible, and the past, present, and future.

Notes

1 This paper draws on ethnographic research in Vietnam, funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) for a project titled "Religion, Media, and Materiality. Spiritual Economies in Southeast Asia" (HU 1019/ 4-1). I would like to thank Birgit Meyer for her generous and incisive comments.
2 See also the deification of Mao in China (Roche and Xiangcheng Wen 2013).
3 With respect to potent places, see Guillou 2017.
4 When people burn spirit money for the dead, they call it *hoá vàng mã*. "To destroy" is translated as *phá hủy*. For example, if somebody burns a Buddha statue, it is translated as *người ta đốt phá tượng Phật*, which is considered a malicious act.

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GABRIELE GENGE

Re-Inventing Totemism

Iconoclastic Traditions in Léopold Sédar Senghor's Concept of the *image idéogramme*

> (. . .) le travail d'organisation n'était pourtant que l'arrêt lui-même, acte simple, analogue à l'enfoncement du pied qui détermine instantanément des milliers de grains à s'entendre pour donner un dessin. (Bergson 2012: 281)

When we consider the prohibition of images and its religious anchoring in Western monotheistic thought, we actually have to admit to taking note of only one of many image-magical traditions in a global present. Resulting from a transcultural opening of the discourse on iconoclasm art history is getting new insights in recent decades. However, religious thought itself has multiplied, demanding an examination of phenomena of the sacred, of profanation, and of all those inherent conditions and practices of the pictorial and its presence or absence that had previously only been implicitly negotiated. Phenomena of the non-figural image and concepts of abstraction appear in a new light; they become part of comprehensive frames of epistemology and knowledge. We may find their elder traditions in an iconoclastic preference advanced in Franco-German ethnology and anthropology,[1] which gathered broader popularity by Wilhelm Worringer's thesis of a "primitive" "will to abstraction" that would adhere to ornament and decoration to avoid the presence of the figural. In the context of post-structuralism, these approaches were accompanied by a revaluation of writing, which acquired aesthetic significance as a medium preceding language.[2] In their wake are newer negotiations of "*Schriftbildlichkeit*", "*Schriftikonik*", or "*Linienwissen*", which take up the connections between image and writing, as well as their material forms in graphism, ornament, drawing, and line.[3] The phenomena addressed here not only expand established notions of a sacred interdiction of images. They are the result of an ongoing and universal image theory and image practice. Their actors in the Global South, however, are only belatedly perceived in the current debate, since they have long been among the representatives of a "*pensée sauvage*" excluded from an academic discourse.

The Senegalese author, intellectual and later president Léopold Sédar Senghor occupies a significant position in this respect. His extensive writings on African-American culture, philosophy and history, as well as their global political interconnections in the context of *Négritude*, have been widely received, especially in the course of the postcolonialism debate, and are

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110773576_009

currently gaining renewed attention (Genge 2021, 2015; Headly 2019; Wilder 2015; Murphy 2016; Diagne 2011). To date, however, his participation in the genesis of anti-modernist and poststructuralist thought has hardly been investigated.[4] The revolution of an African concept of the image, which can be grasped in outline in his concept of an *image idéogramme* from 1952 on, also points in this respect to Jacques Derrida's *Grammatology* published in 1967 and its critical confrontation with logocentric concepts of rationality and phonocentric concepts of orality and language. Senghor developed a broad theory of the image whose transdisciplinary permeability continues to challenge the thinking of art history today. His early writings on the aesthetic perception of African sculpture already indicate that Senghor preferred a refraining from its figural presence undertaking instead a philosophical reading of the matter (Diagne 2011: 45 f.). African poetry, writing, ornamentation and drawing traditions are called upon to establish an anti-mimetic and even iconoclastic understanding of the image and its cognitive power. Senghor's statements have often been critiziced as seemingly essentialist readings of an African concept of the image, but they are at the same time dissolving the metaphysical tradition of religious iconoclasm prevailing in Western Modernism. He established a new reading of the sculpture as "philosophy", as an ontological concept of thought and knowledge. In doing so he opposed the Western interpretation of the "*art nègre*" as precursor of a universal abstract art.[5]

Senghor's Theses on the "ideogrammatic" Concept of the Image

The starting points of Senghor's evocations of the image shaped by textuality or linearity owe much to his preoccupation with the beginnings of a history of the image on the African continent. In his book *Ce que je crois* (1988), Senghor himself refers to the special role of palaeontological research and Neolithic African rock painting, which he had possibly become acquainted with as a student of ethnology in Paris in the 1930s (Senghor 1988: 25, 29), but certainly in 1936 through the illustrated cultural history of Africa by Leo Frobenius (Senghor 1939 (1964): 22; Senghor (1973) 1977: 401 f.). The self-taught and self-proclaimed ethnologist Frobenius, in rejecting the usual primitivist readings that referred exclusively to the fetish character of African sculpture, had not only established the origin of the image, or the "silhouette image" in Africa (Frobenius 1929; Genge 2003: 246 f.). Equally momentous was his description of an African hunting magic that had been initiated by a linear hand drawing and a subsequent "exposure" in the sand and thus had to seem like a present continuation of the outline-like rock painting (Frobenius 1933: 127–131).[6] In both cases, it is especially the impressions gained from a linear silhouette that Frobenius emphasises, probably not coincidentally in the context of Wilhelm Worringer's assertion of Neolithic painting's achievement of abstraction. (Genge 2003: 190).

If in these ethnological readings Senghor has already encountered a way of looking at things that grasps the pictorial more as "line knowledge" and a form of cognition, i. e. in its non-mimetic quality, he reinforces this view once again. Starting from early evocations of the concept of rhythm in the description of African sculpture (Diagne 2007: 37 f.), he subsequently

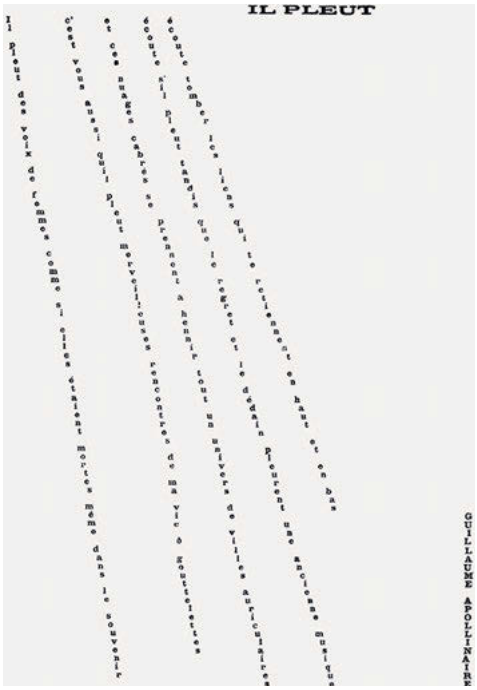
turned to a linear conception of the image. In his early writings, he initially still circumscribes above all poetic procedures of surrealism, which gradually integrate pictorial concepts. According to Senghor, it was only with the Surrealist revolution that it became possible "d'exprimer la Négritude en français", in forms of disintegration and dissolution of the legible and visible.[7] He cites African and Asian script cultures as models that were received by European intellectuals from orientalist and ethnological collections.[8] Here, the first considerations that bring together image and drawing, or image and writing, become discernible.

These early theoretical approaches to the African image reveal limitations, revisions and tentative attempts. They were consolidated in the formulation of an independent Black African aesthetics, which Senghor finally defined in 1956 with the concept of the ideogrammatic image, as a pictorial writing that was "not an image" but had to be understood as a "surrealist image" and "symbol, ideogram".[9] However, these enigmatic formulations of a written pictorial concept are illuminated in the context of Guillaume Apollinaire's surrealist grammar of writing and subsequent pictorial concepts of totemism that can be traced in Senghor's poetic texts.

Guillaume Apollinaire and his Ideogrammatic Concepts of Thought

There is much to suggest that Guillaume Apollinaire's collection of poems *Calligrammes—poèmes de la paix et de la guerre*, written between 1912 and 1917 and originally entitled *Idéogrammes lyriques* (Papst 1980: 2 f.), was of particular influence on the elaboration of Senghor's concept of the *image idéogramme*. It was precisely those poetic drawings by Apollinaire which, with the term "idéogramme", evoked a specific "sign" which, according to the *Dictionnaire de la langue française* of 1873, did not express a letter or sound, but an idea which was to be understood as an "abstraction" of writing and language. Numbers are mentioned as an example, or hieroglyphic writing, in which ideograms represented the "image" of ideas or things. The "idéographie" in turn is named "Terme de philosophie. Peinture des idées par des signes qui sont l'image figurée de l'objet" and thus located in the context of a metaphorical painting of ideas. Especially in Egyptian hieroglyphs, the *Dictionnaire* continues, an equation of "idéogramme" and "idéographique" is possible, thus underlining the philosophical character of Egyptian pictorial writing.[10] The "idéogramme" only became a formative written pictorial medium of surrealism in the wake of Apollinaire, as Laurent Bazin explains. Based on a special interest in Chinese characters, the ideograms are not understood as a means of grasping a reality visible in objects. Rather, they provide insights into modes of thought functioning through the retrieval of mental images. With Apollinaire, according to Bazin, an ideographic consciousness is established that can visualise contexts of meaning (Bazin 2008: 120 f.), because, according to Apollinaire, "lorsque nous parlons, nous transcrivons en images mentales car notre cerveau ne peut guère se représenter les choses composées autrement qu'en allégories" (Apollinaire 1913: 286).

Guillaume Apollinaire breaks with the certainties of written interpretation and uses his calligrammes in such a way that the very object designated, or even an idea associated with it, fall into an irresolvable ambiguity. The shattering of sense and the renouncement of a metaphysical compensation play an important role here. Thus Sacks-Galey refers to the special character of these figure-poems, which are to be understood as "idea-signs" and thus graphic

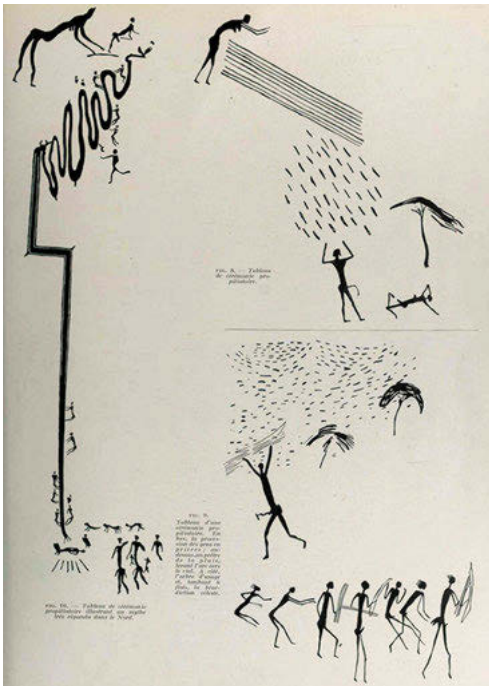


1 Guillaume Apollinaire, *Il pleut*, 1916

representations, but also forms of knowledge and cognition. Text and image appear here in heterogeneous constellations as "script-pictorial" (*schriftbildliche*) (Krämer 2012) utterances:

> L'éclatement de la linéarité formelle du poème, le boulversement de l'équilibre conventionnel de la page écrite et la mise en œuvre de rapports linguistiques inhabituels, compliquent la lecture des textes et, au lieu d'inviter ou d'inciter à la confrontation, provoquent souvent le rejet, l'abandon, la condemnation même. Le poème n'arrive pas à nous comme un objet tout fait don't l'existence est bien définie, reglée une fois part toutes, mais plutôt comme un projet don't le devenir s'établit á chaque nouvelle lecture par la participation active du lecteur. (Sacks-Galey 1988: 7).

The described uncertainties and postponing, processual effects of this specific poetic form can be briefly described using the example of Apollinaire's well-known figure poem *Il pleut* (Fig. 1). In this poem, five awkward and displaced slanting lineations take up a page in the shape of a fan and appear as clusters of dripping letters. The natural phenomenon of a falling downpour thus determines the direction of reading and the meaning of what is read. The letters appear in irregularly arranged typography, while the signature is placed vertically in the right margin as a reference to authorship. By reading the individual letters, a poetic structure of meaning of temporal transgression emerges. The drops can be interpreted as an image veil or shielding of a



2 Illustration from Leo Frobenius' *L'art de la silhouette* (1929)

lyrical self that melancholically abandons itself to heard and imagined memories in the form of voices, sounds and tears and at the same time moves into the present and future in an act of liberation from these "liens" (Sacks-Galey, 1988: 27).

A few years after the publication of Apollinaire's poetic drawing, the art and literary journal *Cahiers d'Art* published a depiction of an African rain myth (Fig. 2), which must seem like a visual correspondence to Apollinaire's poem. With contributions by the author Tristan Tzara, whose son later married a niece of Senghor, and the artist Wolfgang Paaelen, the journal was not only a publication organ of Surrealism. It also made decisive contributions to the rock art exhibitions of Leo Frobenius in Paris.[11] Frobenius had exhibited the rock paintings he had painted mainly by women painters on site in numerous museums with considerable success, in the USA together with works by Surrealist painters. The rock painting shown here is taken from Frobenius' contribution entitled "L'art de la silhouette" from 1929 on the occasion of its exhibition in Paris, in which the author undertakes an appreciation of African silhouette painting.[12]

According to Leo Frobenius, the depiction shows different phases of a "cérémonie propitiatoire", which the author describes shortly. The pictorial narration begins at the bottom left with a reclining figure of a "princesse" buried in a termite mound; it shows the metamorphoses of a tree into a snake that emerges from it and finally ends with the desired rainfall. The rock painting, reproduced in black and white, shows both human and animal figures and plants, as well as references to natural phenomena (rain), which in the printed layout all seem like parts of

a monotonous repertoire of signs and letters: Their graphic uniformity, which differs only by angle of inclination, size and location, i. e. by texture and spatiality, lends them the character of a handwriting that can be perceived not only as visible imagery but also as an equivalent to typography.[13]

The typographic captions, on the other hand, form stabilising foundations and block-like, spatial enclosures for the graphic picture elements. They take up their alignment and create a unified typeface context. The rain myth, here part of a typographic composition of image and text, takes on the character of an *image idéogramme* that oscillates between image and script and merges pictorial and ethnological knowledge.

The combination of surrealist and ethnological written and pictorial positions is not far off, as already discussed at the beginning. Decisive here were the reflections on a pictorial or graphic practice that was oriented less towards the mimetic and more towards a dynamic negotiation of knowledge gained from drawing and line. However, it was above all the writings of the ethnologist Lévy-Bruhl that accompanied the surrealist dissociation of seeing with reflections on a "prelogical mentality" (Freeman 1990: 40).

Lévy-Bruhl's concept of the image develops out of his interpretation of a "primitive" practice of linearity preceding language as can be seen from the following text passage:

> De ces faits, et de beaucoup d'autres semblables que l'on pourrait citer, il résulte que les langues des sociétés inférieures 'expriment toujours leurs idées des objets et des actions précisément de la façon qu'elles se présentent aux yeux et aux oreilles.' Leur tendance commune est de décrire, non pas l'impression reçue par le sujet, mais la forme, les contours, la position, le mouvement, le mode d'action des objets dans l'espace, en un mot ce qui peut se percevoir et se dessiner. Elles cherchent à épouser les détails plastiques et graphiques de ce qu'elles veulent exprimer. (Lévy-Bruhl 1951: 175)[14]

The proximity of language, drawing and writing asserted here by Lévy-Bruhl can, from today's perspective, provide arguments for a pictorial perception that affirms an antecedence of writing and drawing in the generation of knowledge.

Apollinaire's exegeses of images and the applications of primitivist readings in the context of the *Cahier d'art* provide possible approaches to Senghor's *image idéogramme*. At the same time, however, they also reveal the first approaches to a scriptural interpretation of rock painting that exposes models of totemic interpretation as we will see below.

The Totem

Modern manifestations of iconoclastic ideas can probably be found in the most vehement form in the surrealist concept of the image, which Georges Bataille shaped with his radical appreciation of the formless as a deconstruction of the figurative (cf. Didi-Huberman 1995).

In this context, however, it may be no surprise, that even this author shows a stunning interest in African rock painting. To him we owe an exciting exegesis of rock images as evidence for a pictorial representation of totemism. Bataille had seen African rock painting at Leo Frobenius' exhibition in Paris.[15] In his enthusiastic review, which was only published posthumously, he

spoke of the human bodies depicted, whose dynamism and material permeability fascinated him (Bataille 1970: 116 f.). However, he also recognises in them a dissolution of the human figures, that, negating their identity, rather seemed to connect with animals and trees in a collective imagination. Here he takes up the "law of participation" asserted by Lévy-Bruhl in his already mentioned publication, which speaks of a "mystical community" of beings in "primitive" thought:

> Or il ya un element qui ne fait jamais défaut dans ces rapports. Sous des formes et à des degrés divers, tous impliquent une "participation" entre les êtres ou les objets liés dans une representation collective. C'est pourquoi, faute d'un meilleur terme, j'appellerai loi de participation le principe propre de la mentalité "primitive" qui regit les liaisons et les préliaisons de ces représentations. (Lévy-Bruhl (1910) 1951: 76)[16]

Lévy-Bruhl is quite clear-sighted about the challenging radicality of this thinking, which seems to dissolve differences and confuse forms of being in a way that seems "absurd" to his own thinking.[17] His explanation provides an early examination of an anthropological and at the same time philosophical image concept that has circulated as "totemism" since the 19th century through numerous texts by ethnologists and finally been taken up by sociology and philosophy (Genge 2017). According to Bataille, totemism had for the first time been brought to life through African rock painting and previously been only accessible as scholarly knowledge or iconographic material.

Totemism, as Lévi-Strauss described many years later in his text *Le Totemisme aujourd'hui* (1962), pointing to Émile Durkheim and Henri Bergson, among others (Lévi-Strauss 1965: 120 f.), refers to a form of collective practice of thinking described by Western ethnography, in which a selected or assigned animal defines clan membership and also taboos of transgression. In the image of the clan animal, structures of kinship and thus collective social structures are named, as Durkheim already had emphasized in 1912. He speaks of a form of contagion that would be transmitted through images of the totem and would contribute to the social bond (Durkheim 2014: 326). Moreover Durkheim referred to the emblematic image character of the clan image that would be carved into the skin (Durkheim 2014: 345). In this way, he had indirectly named the image as a collective written expression, without, according to Claude Lévi-Strauss, further questioning the scope of totemism as a cultural practice. He himself had operationalised totemic practices as a model of an affirmation and at the same time transgression of the borderlines of nature and culture, or of animal and human, as a classification system of "savage mind".[18] But it is only with Jacques Derrida's *Grammatology* that we arrive at the interpretation of classification itself as an "arche-writing" (*archi-écriture*) that inscribes itself by force and remains hidden until its violent disclosure.[19]

Here lie possible connections to a much earlier poem of Senghor, which figuratively evokes a collective, hidden thinking and thus the invisible presence of a documented totemic epistemological and social order. The title of the poem is *Le Totem* (1945), thus another eloquent testimony to totemism, published in the poetry collection *Chants d'Ombre* (Senghor 1964: 24).

Le Totem
Il me faut cacher au plus intime de mes veines/
L'Ancêtre à la peau d'orage sillonnée d'éclairs et de foudre/
Mon animal gardien, il me faut le cacher/
Que je ne rompe le barrage des scandales/
Il est mon sang fidèle qui requiert fidélité/
Protégeant mon orgueil nu contre/
Moi-même et la superbe des races heureuses . . .

In a specific poetic and seemingly autoreflexive evocation, the poem deals with the magically charged phenomenon of totemism in the image of an affective ancestral figure. Unlike the surrealist authors and the ethnologists, Senghor positions himself not only outside, but even inside an ethnological system of knowledge. He describes as a "scandal" the violent transgression of a different, totemic way of thinking, but also the act of denunciation that results from becoming aware of alterity. Especially with the last line of verse, he evokes the (im)possibility of demarcation from a Western society constituted by racial concepts, which had grasped the human-animal connection as a characteristic of so-called "primitive" races. It is an enigmatic poem whose paratactic rhythm evokes the invisible presence of an ancestor and at the same time clan animal.

According to the Nigerian literary scholar Sunday O. Anozie in a comprehensive study, the poem practices a structuralist interpretation of totemism, which Claude Lévi-Strauss had pursued in an analogous manner. Anozie's analysis of the imaginary "animal gardien" and the equally scientific "barrage" it has experienced in Western discourse exposes the structure of an emblematic image in which a collective knowledge delimits and encloses the pictorial presence (Anozie 1981: 180). As recently as 1959, Senghor had furthermore affirmed his distance to Western knowledge in describing totemism with reference to Lèvi-Strauss's concept of magic. He underlines totemism as a form of African familial social connection with the dead ancestors, which only seems to have monstrous aspects, and would be able to transgress Western thinking (cf. Senghor 1959: 268).

Today, totemism once again occupies a special place in art history,[20] but above all in Philippe Descola's anthropology (2005: 254 f.). Finally, it transcends cultural and biological borders that, according to the Western view, can only be imagined separately, in that the animal plays a decisive role in an "ecology of relationships" that examines cultural practices and epistemological orders of human and non-human beings (Därmann/Zandt 2017: 11 f.).

The poem *Totem*, it can be concluded, provides a significant horizon for Senghor's theses on the *image idéogramme* and thus establishes the ambivalent character of his concept of image derived from deconstruction, which invokes animistic connotations and at the same time denies them. It remains in a persistent and ongoing ambivalence that Jean-Paul Sartre denounces three years later. In his famous preface *Orphée Nègre*, which he published to a collective edition of Senghor's African poems in 1948, there is an exoticistic—and by the way, almost word-for-word adopted—evocation of Black idolatry, the loss of which is just as inevitable as the end of the *Négritude*:

3 Pierre Soulages, 3 décembre 1956

> Only through Poetry can the black men (. . .) communicate with each other in private. And since French lacks terms and concepts to define negritude, since negritude is silence, these poets will use "allusive words, never direct, reducing themselves to the same silence", in order to evoke it. Short-circuits of language: behind the flaming fall of words, we glimpse a great black idol. (Sartre (1948) 1964: 26)

Finally, the *image idéogramme* received its material pictorial correlative some time later in the painting of the French artist Pierre Soulages. Senghor celebrated his first confrontation with a painting by the artist in 1958 like an awakening experience that reminded him of a confrontation with a Dan mask (Fig. 3). It is in particular the proximity of Soulages' works to Chinese characters and Black African ideograms that he simultaneously brings together with rock painting.[21]

According to Senghor, the character of Pierre Soulages' works in their ambivalence of blackened presence, iconoclastic allure of the script and abstract symbolism actually fulfils the specifications of the African ideogrammatic image in an "écriture-peinture" (cf. Mersmann 2015: 180 f.), whose totemic place of origin in art history has yet to be explored.

Notes

The following text partly refers to the research context of the DFG Priority Programme 1688 *Aesthetic Temporalities. Time and Representation in a polychronic Modernity* and my subproject *The Anachronic and the Present: Aesthetic perception and artistic concepts of temporality in the Black Atlantic* whose outcome will be a joint publication with Angela Stercken, appearing next year. There, even the role of a theory of the "ideographic picture" in the context of the New York School and Barnett Newman is getting specific attention, thus affirming the inner connections in the Black Atlantic.

1 "Das Interesse, das die frühe Anthropologie um 1900 an der Linie als einem spezifischen Zeichentypus artikuliert, steht in Zusammenhang mit ihren Bemühungen, das 'primitive Denken' als einen spezifischen Wissensmodus auszuweisen, der sich von den Erkenntnispraktiken der zivilisierten Entwicklungsstufe unterscheidet." (Moser 2017: 153).

2 Looking at ornament as a form of "primitive" iconoclasm in the wiritings of Wilhelm Worringer cf. Genge 2003: 189 f. For similar insights referring to a anti-mimetic understanding of line and drawing with Leo Frobenius and Alois Riegl, cf. Moser 2017, in the same anthology Heinrich Richard deals with a "linear knowledge" of Jaques Derrida and Gilles Deleuze cf. Richard 2017. For its reception in artistic contexts of the Black Atlantic cf. Genge 2015.

3 An important contribution to the understanding of writing as image is provided by Birgit Mersmann's description of writing as an "iconic medium of perception"; writing is thus understood as a "visual-graphic pictorial order", cf. Mersmann 2015: 14, 18. The here recognizable interpretation of writing phenomena refers to the older research on writing imagery, which emerged from the context of the interpretation of hieroglyphics (Koch/ Krämer 1997). Sabine Mainberger uses the term "Linienwissen" to describe a broad context of pictorial phenomena pointing to Tim Ingold's theses on drawing as a "participation in the world" (cf. Mainberger 2020: 10 and Mainberger 2017).

4 "Scholarship long promoted one-sided understandings of Césaire and Senghor as either essentialist nativists or naïve humanists. (…) Negritude, whether embraced or criticized, was treated as an affirmative theory of Africanity rather than a critical theory of modernity." (Wilder 2015: 8 f.)

5 As Regine Prange has rightly pointed out the iconoclastic positions of Western Modernism continued a metaphysical image tradition, cf. Prange 2007: 15, 233.

6 For the interpretation of the described hunting magic cf. Moser 2017: 278.

7 "La Révolution surréaliste, vous le dévinez, aura seule permis à nos poètes d'exprimer la Négritude en français. En désintégrant la phrase, aprés la vision, par l'élimination des mots-outils, en achevant la révolution du dictionnaire par l'octroi de la citoyenneté aux mots techniques et 'barbares'." (Senghor 1952: 142).

8 "Voilà précisément que, par une chance inouïe, depuis le début du Siècle, des penseurs européens livraient bataille á la raison avec les 'armes miraculeuses' de l'Asie et de l'Afrique, qu'orientalistes et ethnologues avaient patiemment découvertes, collectionnées." (Senghor 1952: 134).

9 "l'image négro-africaine n'est donc pas image-équation, mais image-analogie, image surréaliste. (…) Toute représentation est image, et l'image, je le répète, n'est pas équation, mais symbole, ideogramme." (Senghor, 1956: 210). For further readings of this text cf. Genge 2015: 246; Genge 2014: 43 f.

10 "Idéogramme: 'Nom donné aux signes qui n'expriment ni une lettre ni un son quelconque, mais une idée abstraction faite du son par lequel cette idée est rendue dans telle ou telle langue. Les chiffres sont des idéogrammes. Dans les écritures hiéroglyphiques, signes représentant des images d'idées et des choses.' Idéographie: 'Terme de philosophie. Peinture des idées par des signes qui sont l'image figurée de l'objet.' Idéographique: 'Qui a rapport à l'idéographie. Dans l'écriture hiéroglyphique des anciens Égyptiens signes idéographiques synonymes d'idéogrammes. (. . .) En général écriture idéo-

graphique, signe idéographique se dit par opposition à phonétique." (Dictionnaire de la langue française 1873: 6).

11 On the contemporary reception of theses exhibitions cf. Kohl/Kuba/ Ivanoff 2016; Georget/ Ivanoff/ Kuba 2016.

12 "l'art du style des silhouettes s'affirma comme un art qui ayant dépassé de beaucoup le stade de peuples à l'état naturel s'est élevé au niveau d'une haute mythologie classique." (Frobenius 1929: 400).

13 Cf. Krämer 2018: 23 f., dealing with "texture", "spatiality" and "graphism".

14 Lévy-Bruhl's controversial theses are currently understood above all as a line of tradition of a "savage mind" that differs from usual traditional primitivisms, since it allows the "incomprehensibility" of a thinking after all, even if it affirms the colonial discourse (cf. Hahn 2011: 235).

15 On Bataille's interest in cave painting cf. Stavrinaki 2019, 2020.

16 On the critique of a seemingly universal version of this dividing line in structural ethnology in Jacques Derrida and Philippe Descola cf. Därmann/Zandt 2017: 10.

17 "En d'autres termes, pour cette mentalité, l'opposition entre l'un et le plusieurs, le même et l'autre, etc., n'impose pas la nécessité d'affirmer l'un des termes si l'on nie l'autre, ou réciproquement. Elle n'a qu'un intérêt secondaire. Parfois, elle est aperçue; souvent aussi, elle ne l'est pas. Souvent elle s'efface devant une communauté mystique d'essence entre des êtres qui cependant, pour notre pensée, ne sauraient être confondus sans absurdité." (Lévy-Bruhl (1910) 1951: 77).

18 On the question of the universal validity of Lévi-Strauss's classification of nature and culture cf. Därmann/Zandt 2017: 10.

19 "To name, to give names that it will on occasion be forbidden to pronounce, such is the originary violence of language which consists in inscribing within a difference, in classifying, in suspending the vocative absolute. To think the unique within the system, to inscribe it there, such is the gesture of the arche-writing: arche-violence, loss of the proper, of absolute proximity, of self-presence, in truth the loss of what has never taken place, of a self-presence which has never been given but only dreamed of and always already split, repeated, incapable of appearing to itself except in its own disappearance." (Derrida 1997: 112).

20 Cf. Mitchell 2005: 158. Referring to totemism in the context of African intellectual history cf. Genge 2017.

21 "La première fois que je vis un tableau de Pierre Soulages, ce fut un choc. Je reçus, au creux de l'estomac, un coup, qui me fit vaciller, comme le boxeur, touché, qui soudain s'abîme. C'est exactement l'impression que j'avais éprouvée à la première vue du masque dan." (Senghor 1958: 232) For a further discursive interpretation of the passage see Genge 2021.

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MARION G. MÜLLER

Punishing Images

An Iconological Retrospective on *executions in effigy* Past and Present[1]

In digital times, the continued practice of vicarious *executions in effigy* seems to be somewhat outdated. Yet, from Southeast Asia to Latin America, from Europe to North America, this arcane visual practice of punishing images can still be observed in the twenty-first century (see Figs. 2–5). Hence, the contemporariness of *executions in effigy* is obvious. However, what are the functions and meanings of these visual mock executions? What is their connection to past punishing rituals? What may be the reasons for the *executio in effigy's* 'resurrection' in contemporary times? This paper explores the dimensions of vicarious punishment practices in the present day with a retrospective look at past patterns of visual communication in the context of image executions. In a first step, key terms—portraits, *effigies,* and selfies—are discussed. Secondly, past visual practices of punishment are scrutinized. With a specific focus on the United States, current *executions in effigy*, their functions, and their meanings are analyzed. This paper concludes with tentative answers to the three crucial research questions presented above.

From *effigies* to Selfies

The expression "punishing images" elicits two slightly different meanings. On the one hand, "punishing images" signifies the use of images as replacements for punishing a real person ("vicarious execution") (Fleckner 2011; Gördüren 2011; Kemp 2011; Reinle 1984). On the other, "punishing images" implies the use of images thought to possess magical powers, and hence also the power to remotely punish an intended individual or target group (Bredekamp 1975; Brückner 1966; Edgerton 1985; Feld 1990; Fleckner, Steinkamp, Ziegler 2011; Gamboni 2011; Kolrud and Prusac 2014; Pitcher 2020; Warnke 1988b; Zanker 1988).

The Latin origin of the term "effigy" signifies a visual likeness or image (Grøn 1934: 320). Expressions for "execution" also exist in antiquity. Yet, no combination of the two terms "executio in effigie" has been conveyed from classical times (Grøn 1934: 321). It appears that sometime between antiquity and the late Middle Ages, the terms "effigy" and "execution" became fused and took on their morbid new meaning (ibid.). According to Bauch (1976: 249), an *effigy* is the likeness of a dead nobleperson intended for public display, and replacing the corpse.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110773576_010

Hence, even before adding the term 'execution', the term *effigy* was related to the death of the person portrayed. Early depictions and portraiture blossomed during the Florentine Renaissance (Rave 1948). Visual likenesses in the form of costly paintings emerged, which turned the realistic copy of a human face into a precious commodity. Humanist thinkers used Latin terms like 'icon', 'imago', and 'effigies' to denote the human-made likeness (Rave 1948). These likenesses were exquisite and rare. Typically, drawings or paintings of an *effigy* were commissioned artwork (Baxandall 1988; Warnke 1986). Only few could afford these 'visual duplicates' of their own faces. Nowadays, the production structures of images have shifted dramatically compared to those of the Italian Cinquecento. With mobile phones' camera function becoming ubiquitous, 'digital effigy production' is both pervasive and omnipresent. While no longer a privilege, both other-presentations as well as self-presentations ("selfies") are abundant in the digital public sphere (Ullrich 2019). What, however, are the functions of digital self-portraits/selfies? A selfie is an image of an image as a rather recent form of self-portrait (Ullrich 2019: 6). In this context, selfies have been interpreted as symptoms of a narcissistic era (Ullrich 2019). However, Hess (2015) argues that selfies should be considered more neutrally as a social practice. They serve "as a reminder of our contradictory existence in hybridity" (Hess 2015: 1630). Instead of attributing the novel selfie culture to narcissistic tendencies alone, the digital self-portrait is considered a form of self-expression in hybrid environments that serves important psychological functions. Accordingly, self-portraits are a type of psychological reward. The selfie practice entails showing the representation of a real person's likeness being photographed by the same person as photographing one's own mirror. Hence, 'the depicter' and 'the depicted' are identical. This is relevant for understanding digital *executions in effigy* (Fig. 3). A property that *effigies* and selfies share is this dual visual character. They are both images (e. g., the print of James Rivington, Fig. 1; press photographs, see Figs. 2–5) that replicate other images (e. g., the puppet likeness or *effigy* of Rivington; the puppets of Demjanjuk, Trump, Pence, and Putin; see Figs. 2–5). The woodcut (Fig. 1) and the photographs (Figs. 2–5) are images of the first order. However, they depict typically a puppet or portrait—a picture in a picture—which is a second-order image. On a third visual level is the documentation of an image act ("Bildakt")(Bredekamp 2018)—the act of destroying the depicted image. For this paper, those images are under scrutiny that depict individuals being publicly "executed," thus using their portraits and puppets vicariously. Hence, the likeness of the executed individual is used as a tool for punishment, and in turn, a picture is created of the puppet-likeness.

Imagery as Tool for Punishment: *Executio in effigie* and *damnatio memoriae*

The beginning of iconoclasm—the destruction of (religious) imagery—is typically associated with the Netherlands and the year 1566 (Schnitzler 1996; Spicer 2017: 1007). The Dutch *beeldenstorm* is well documented as a mass event that marked the religious warfare that had been spreading across Europe, known as the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. While the Latin term *iconoclasta* already existed in early fifteenth-century England, the term *iconoclaste* first appeared in French usage as late as 1557 (Spicer 2017: 1014). The first, and until now only

comprehensive treatise on *executions in effigy* (Grøn 1934) stipulates that the connection of the two terms can be traced back to the late Middle Ages and Renaissance era. For antiquity, no *executions in effigy* are conveyed (Grøn 1934: 321). Grøn further references a Bremen-based legal author of the seventeenth century who describes many *executions in effigy* as an expression of "people's justice" (ibid.).

Brückner (1966: 109) defines *executio in effigie* as a mock execution with the help of a portrait of the perpetrator. When it comes to the origin of the *executio in effigie*, Grøn (1934: 338) refers to visual magic ("Bildermagie"). Hence, as already indicated at the beginning of this paper, two traditions of visual practice collide in the *executio in effigie*: visual magic and *damnatio memoriae* (Fleckner 2011). Both image practices are of pagan origin (Warburg 1999). According to Fleckner (2011: 210), the *damnatio memoriae* cannot be characterized as a spontaneous iconoclastic outbreak. Rather, in Roman imperial times the *damnatio memoriae* was a legal procedure based on an explicit decision by the Roman Senate. For Fleckner (2011: 210), the *damnatio memoriae* has to be distinguished from iconoclasm, which he sees as either guided by an arbitrary will to destroy or motivated by religious hatred. By contrast, the destruction of "fallen" emperors' depictions is not a spontaneous act. According to Fleckner (ibid.), in antiquity, four different types of political image destructions can be distinguished. The destruction or theft of imperial likenesses after the conquering of foreign territory, the deletion of likenesses by an enemy or a successor in office, the attack by a people's mob on symbols of power or government, and, somewhat different, the modification of the likeness of a former ruler to fit the new ruler. All four functions are similar to, but not identical with the *executio in effigie*. For the current examples discussed in this article, the *damnatio memoriae*, at its core, disrupts the magical identity of depiction and depicted human being. For the *damnatio memoriae* in its four variations discussed above, it is essential that the depicted person be dead or at least out of office. On the contrary, the *executio in effigie* is mostly wishful, magical thinking expressing the desire of the creator(s) of the vicarious execution that the depicted person be hanged (Figs. 1–5). At this point, elements of the vicarious image ("stellvertretendes Bildnis") come into play (Reinle 1984). In functional terms, the vicarious image goes beyond a mere symbolic depiction, because the effigy is real in that it actually represents an absent person (Gördüren 2011). A current penal practice in Bolivia, South America is that of "hanging dolls" on public lampposts (Risør 2010). They represent thieves being vicariously punished for theft. This resembles the *executions in effigy* ritual. Here, Risør (2010) suggests that the function of these hanging effigies are twofold: the hanging of thief likenesses is first an expression of the experienced insecurity in a remote region of Bolivia. Secondly, the hanging dolls represent an "enactment of vercindad (neighborliness)" (ibid.: 465). Penal executions are a privilege of the state. However, if the state does not act, and the victim of theft is the local community, then these image practices can be very much interpreted as an empowerment of marginalized local communities taking law into their own hands (ibid.: 466). Hence, the functions of vicarious executions using visual likenesses transcend the mere penal function of punishment for an absent or magically targeted person. These image practices should be scrutinized further not only historically, but particularly in their current form.

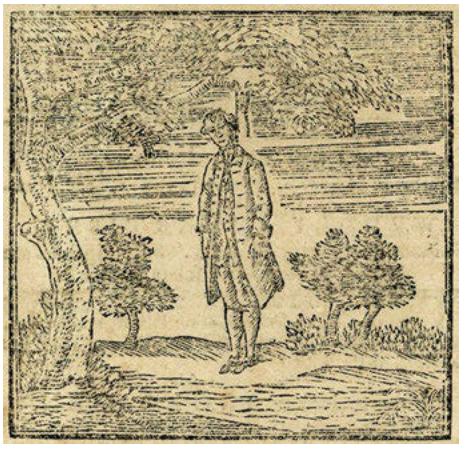
Grøn (1934: 325) suggests two different types of motivations for the *execution in effigy*: religious and political. Religiously motivated reasons to produce visual punishments using a puppet are, according to him, heresy, blasphemy, and sodomy (ibid.). Politically motivated reasons are insulting the monarchy, instigating riots, and high treason (ibid.). The examples used in this paper can be discerned following these two types. A third category, which could be called "mundane *effigies*," includes the hanging or burning of puppets for reasons that are neither religious nor political in the sense that Grøn (1934) defined it. An example of these "mundane effigies" is the practice in Bolivia of executing thieves in effigy by hanging them on public lampposts (Risør, 2010), as described above. This paper focuses on political *executions in effigy* in current times, and in the U.S. in particular.

A Revolutionary Execution in *effigy* in the U.S.

One of the earliest documents of a politically motivated *execution in effigy* dates back to eighteenth-century America. In 1775, at the height of the U.S.-British War, one year before the Declaration of Independence, Royalist New York publisher James Rivington describes his own "hanging *in effigy*" (Fig. 1). On the eve of American independence, Rivington reported an event that had happened shortly before, where his likeness was hanged by a revolutionary mob.

Next to the woodcut Rivington published the following explanation:

> Last Thursday was hung up by some of the lower class of inhabitants, at New-Brunswick, an effigy, representing the person of Mr. Rivington, the printer at New-York; merely for acting consistent with the profession as a free printer. (. . .) Lest this piece of heroism should not be sufficiently known, he has thought proper to exhibit a Representation of the scene in which he was thus offered up a Victim that the fame of the exploit may spread (. . .) (Marzio 1975: 58).



1 James Rivington, *New-York's Gazetteer*, 20 April 1775, woodcut

From this text, we can assume the publisher was worried that his mock execution might be forgotten and hence decided to visualize and publish it. Similar depictions are also known of American Founding Father John Jay, who, in 1794, conceived a treaty with England and was hanged and burned in *effigy* by Jeffersonians opposed to the treaty with the former colonial power. This event entered into later illustrations and engravings like the one in The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints, and Photographs: Picture Collection of The New York Public Library (n. d.). As these two examples of historically conveyed *executions in effigy* demonstrate, for Revolutionary America visual politics was crucial:

> Throughout the Revolutionary era, image makers used the visual media for numerous political purposes (. . .). In the colonies, for example, portraits and statues were produced and displayed in praise of leaders who had defended America's interests, while portraits and statues of other, opprobrious individuals were removed from public forums or destroyed. (Olson 1991: 5).

Rivington's and Jay's *executions in effigy* are documents of iconoclastic image practices during the toppling of the British colonial power and the beginning of a new political system. It is hard to say how pervasive these hangings and burnings of likenesses were in revolutionary and post-colonial America. However, there are some reports that support the notion of a continued mob practice of executing puppets in the political sphere as a public expression of dissatisfaction with political decision-makers. For example, John Tyler, tenth President of the United States (1841–1845) and highly unpopular, was reported to have been burned *in effigy* in front of the White House on Pennsylvania Avenue (Searle 1993). Additionally, the 25th U. S. President William McKinley (1897–1901) elicited anger in Congress and on the streets for not intervening in the impending Cuban war. It is reported (Armbruster 1966) that his likeness was burned in some cities. Yet it is difficult to assess how widespread *executions in effigy* were in the U. S. during the twentieth century, given the poor documentation of these ephemeral images. It is, however, safe to assume that *executions in effigy* were part of revolutionary American founding culture, and in all likelihood remnants of these visual practices linger on in image practices to this day. Hence, it appears, although this assumption needs to be corroborated by more evidence, that in the United States practices of public *executions in effigy* have a tradition that dates back to revolutionary times. Following the cultural historian Aby Warburg (1999), this socio-cultural context is a fertilizer for the revival of these arcane image practices also in times of more recent political upheaval (Fig. 5).

The Functions of Executions in Effigy

In modern times, and particularly in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, the punishing image practice continues to exist (see Figs. 2–5). Its functions and meanings, however, have undergone several variations. Since antiquity, the toppling of rulers and governmental systems was reflected in visual social practices (Bredekamp 1975; Fleckner 2011; Zanker 1988). Power and the visual are intricately linked (Freedberg 2021). Power affords a visual expression

that, in turn, leads to acquiescence if not acceptance inside the immediate power circle as well as outside, in the wider populace. In authoritarian systems based on the rule of a single person, complex, for the most part religiously sanctioned ideologies accompanied the legitimacy of the respective ruler (Warnke 1988b). In democratic systems, power is more abstract and rests on several institutions that balance their power (Müller 1997). However, *effigies* or puppets with the likenesses of politicians are still a "realistic" instrument to condense the abstract notion of power in a visible sign. While magical practices involving visuals existed already in ancient times, no *execution in effigy* practices are known for antiquity (Brückner 1966, 2016; Grøn 1934). Brückner (2016) and Grøn (1934) agree on the period between the twelfth and seventeenth century as the heyday of *executions in effigy*. The Spanish Inquisition not only sentenced thousands of people to death, it also documented its own gruesome practices. Grøn (1934: 328) suggests that under the ruling of 44 Great Inquisitors in the years 1481 to 1808, a total of 31,912 executions plus 17,659 *executions in effigy* were carried out. For the late eighteenth century, *executions in effigy* are documented for revolutionary America. During the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century there are, to the best of this author's knowledge, no documented cases of *executions in effigy*. This, however, does not mean that the visual practice stopped. It just means that there is a lack of visual proof. For the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, there are again several images depicting vicarious executions using a puppet or other likeness, and these image documents cover the whole globe.[2]

Already early *executions in effigy* had the function of an emotional valve. In the first academic treatise on the *executio in effigie* (Grøn 1934: 332) in seventeenth-century Denmark, the intention to arouse the strongest emotions is detailed in the sources. The wealthiest Dane in his time, Kai Lykke, was sentenced to death in 1661 by Denmark's highest court for *crimen laesae majestatis*—high treason against a sovereign. Lykke fled the country, and thus an effigy was executed on the central castle square in Copenhagen. A figure of wood and wax was crafted, about the height of the absent delinquent (Grøn 1934). The effigy was then equipped with a wig and gloves and was moved to the central square, where 400 musketeers, 200 horsemen, and the King and Queen themselves attended its symbolic execution (Grøn 1934: 331). The puppet was blindfolded like a real human would have been, an execution block was placed in front of the effigy, and then its hand was severed first, followed by its head. Hand and head were placed between the effigy's legs, and the figure then paraded beneath the Royal windows. Head and hand were nailed to a pillory. The effigy's body was exhibited for money at the executioner's house and subsequently buried underneath the gallows (Grøn 1934: 331). The major functions of these vicarious executions are unclear. Grøn (ibid.), however, suggests the following: Hatred, revenge, deterring nobility, and demonstrating to ordinary people that, when it came to treason, no distinction was made between noblemen and simple people. Most of these motivations for *executions in effigy* are based on the belief in the magical power of visuals (Grøn 1934: 349).

Outside of the political realm, magical rituals involving human likenesses persisted at least until the twentieth century. Grøn (1934: 335) reports several incidents where (former) lovers burned the *effigy* of their loved ones, thus expressing their hatred for the person incorporated by the puppet. He also reports an incident dating back to 1812 where the former mistress of the

2 John Demjanjuk execution in effigy, *The Washington Post*, 23 September 1993: A3, photo: AP

notorious Lord Byron organized an event during which Byron's likeness was burned and young women dressed in white danced around the burning stake (ibid.).

While the backgrounds of the aforementioned *executions in effigy* are very diverse, they all share a highly emotional goal that the ritual performance of burning a puppet in public communicates. From penal punishment to roaring revenge, *executions in effigy* are emotional expressions designed for public consumption. At the core of the *execution in effigy* ritual might be what Bredekamp (2018) termed the magical dissolution of the threshold between the visual and the act. The excitement and "emotional reward" of participation experienced by people witnessing a vicarious execution with a puppet, particularly when the resemblance between puppet and represented person is striking, could be similar to witnessing a real execution.

In line with the aforementioned expressive functions of vicarious executions is also John Demjanjuk's execution in effigy (Fig. 2). The black-and-white press photograph is from *The Washington Post* of September 23, 1993. Several men are shown, one of them holding a sign with the words (then Israeli prime minister) "Rabin is a traitor." The man in the center holds a string from which a puppet is hanging. The puppet is clad in a white shirt with a swastika on its right arm. The head of the puppet is apparently in flames. Behind the puppet another sign is visible with a swastika and the words "Death to Dem[swastika]anjuk." The caption of the AP press photograph reads "Demonstrators from Kahane Chai organization burn an effigy of Demjanjuk at Kennedy Airport terminal in New York."

The Kahane Chai organization is a militant Zionist, pro-Israeli organization that was banned shortly after the depicted incident. John Demjanjuk was a Ukrainian soldier in the Soviet army during WWII. He was captured by German Nazi troops and allegedly worked as a security guard in German concentration camps such as Treblinka and Sobibor (*The Washington Post* 1993). Demjanjuk, who lived in the U. S., was captured in 1986 and extradited to Israel, where he was sentenced to death for his crimes against humanity committed during the Shoah. However, in 1993 this sentence was overturned by a court of appeals, and Demjanjuk returned to the United States (*The Washington Post* 1993). This is the moment depicted in the photograph. Demjanjuk

3 *President Trump execution in effigy*, 2 February 2017, Fort Wayne, Indiana

is "greeted" at the airport by the Zionist activists, who use a burning effigy to express the high emotionality that the return of an alleged war criminal to freedom had for the Jewish protestors.

Arguably, Zionist activists were setting the stage for the murder of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. Two years later Rabin was called a traitor in the Demjanjuk effigy scene (Fig. 2). In 1995, shortly before Rabin's murder by a Jewish ultraorthodox fanatic, the Israeli opposition leader and successor of Rabin in office, Benjamin Netanjahu, attended a rally "in which he marched ahead of a coffin and two effigies of Nobel Peace Prize winners Rabin and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat that were labeled: 'Death to those masquerading as peace!'" (*The Washington Post* 1996). This *execution in effigy* is not merely "wishful thinking," but a prelude, a dramatic announcement of the real murders to follow.

In 2017, in the USA, shortly after Donald Trump's inauguration as 45th U. S. President, a prosumer photograph appeared on several Internet platforms that showed the *execution in effigy* of the newly elected President (Fig. 3). Trump is shown in a suit, wearing a blue tie and a white shirt partially painted in red, symbolizing blood. Hence, all three colors of the American flag are represented. The President's effigy is holding a Soviet flag in his right hand. The puppet is hanging by a noose high on a tree on private property. According to a local newspaper, *The Journal Gazette*, the owner of the property and the alleged producer of Trump's effigy is appalled by Trump's election:

> The front lawn montage is also adorned with a large American flag. In the stripes, the homeowner has handwritten his complaints against the new president: "No flag big enough to (crush)

the disgrace of a sexist, racist, warmongering, egotistical fascist who believes in greed, torture, wife cheating, dodging taxes, insulting the disabled and veterans, threatening the press and throwing daily tantrums on Twitter." (Duffy 2017)

This effigy (Fig. 3) has two primary functions: first, it is an expression of political opposition, and second, it expresses the personal anger and frustration of the puppet's creator to the public. Distribution modes have changed from the times of Rivington (Fig. 1). The effigy was distributed via several Internet platforms, leading to controversial debates on how individuals should express their political opinions. Similar effigies had been produced for Trump's predecessor in office, the Democrat Barack Obama (Clickorlando.com, June 8, 2012). This form of public discontent with an elected head of state is not novel to the American republic.

The Meanings of Executions in Effigy

Punishing images have complex meanings. Each *execution in effigy* is a visual event in its own right with its own meaning(s). However, some meanings of the visual practice can be generalized. On the one hand, in the absence of the human target, images are being used as a replacement for the absent person (Gördüren 2011; Reinle 1984), and hence these effigies are vicarious objects of punishment. James Rivington (Fig. 1) is an example. In his case, he himself as publisher created the image of his hanged *effigy*. Arguably, this is the earliest visually documented "selfie execution" in history. *Effigies* in punishment rituals serve as replacements for a real person. What is done to the effigy is wished for the depicted person in real life. Hence, *executions in effigy* are a magical practice believing in the realistic likeness being identical with the living person, even if only momentarily. The complexity of visual practices concerning human likenesses becomes apparent. The image possesses a duality not only being a (self-)portrait, as in the case of James Rivington (Fig. 1), but also being a picture of a puppet likeness.

This paper investigates the relationship between the visual ritual and its political implications. When it comes to *execution in effigy*, there is a vicarious element not only on the visual level but also on the contextual level, that of politics, religion, or law, in which a duality can be observed. The visual power is equivalent to the political, religious, or legal power. In punishing the puppet, the executioner or the mob are assuming that their power of violence is replicated in real life with respect to the targeted individual being hanged, burned, or destroyed in effigy. The power of images has been the topic of many an art historical, anthropological, and socio-political deliberation (Freedberg 2013, 2021). In these academic discussions, most of the time either the visual or the power aspects were projection screens for political, religious, or mundane assumptions. Here, a more applied view is taken. Political iconography (Fleckner, Warnke, Ziegler 2011; Müller and Geise 2015; Müller and Özcan 2007) is used as an approach to investigate the use of vicarious imagery in public punishing rituals. These visualizations are sources of inquiry on larger socio-political developments in the making. While it comes as no surprise that arcane image practices reach back centuries (see e. g., Fig. 1), their re-emergence or, in Panofsky's terms, "renascences" (Panofsky 1990) is what strikes the current beholder.

While common in the U. S. during revolutionary times at the end of the eighteenth century (Fig. 1), practices of burning, hanging, or otherwise executing human likenesses, so-called effigies, have hardly been reported in the twentieth century. Here, particularly in the former Confederate South, real lynchings and killings of humans, mainly of black color, were the rule (Tolnay et al. 1996; Wells-Barnett 2014). In these cases, no violent prelude, no mock event was performed. The racist mob violence "needed" no effigies. They performed the real killings as a public spectacle (ibid.). Politically speaking, vicarious execution practices for political leaders have reemerged with controversial U. S. President Donald Trump (Fig. 3). Or so it seems. Perhaps these practices of expressing violent dissent existed all along, but were not reported in mainstream media? Maybe the relatively recent prosumer culture that emerged after social media platforms were started around 2005 is only revealing to a larger public those image practices that were very much alive on a local level throughout the past century? The answer to this latter question cannot be given in this paper, but it should be kept in mind that the digital imagery we perceive is only the tip of the "visual iceberg" created and shared by millions each day.

The hybridity (Chadwick 2017; Kraidy 2002) of the first-level digital imagery depicting *executions in effigy* like the ones of President Trump (Fig. 3), Vice-President Mike Pence (Fig. 4), or Vladimir Putin (Fig. 5) lead to a wide dissemination of these images that are neither audience- nor target-specific. Digital image production and distribution differ from traditional news production and distribution. Digital prosumers are far more focused on their own self-expression

4 "A demonstrator holds a mannequin wearing a noose with 'Traitor' written on it during a protest at the Washington Monument in Washington, DC, on, Jan. 6, 2021", photo: Victor J. Blue/Bloomberg via Getty Images

and less dedicated to a public service information approach prevalent in quality print and television media of the twentieth century.

During the drastic 2021 constitutional crisis in the United States, a large number of protestors gathered in front of the Capitol after having attended a rally by outgoing President Trump. In his speech Trump ignited the storming of the Capitol by ending with a clear message to his supporters "to walk down Pennsylvania Avenue," the street that connects the White House with the Capitol in Washington D. C. (excerpts of the speech):

> (. . .) and I hope Mike (Pence, then Vice President of the U. S. presiding over the count of the electoral vote in the Capitol at the same moment) is going to do the right thing. I hope so. I hope so.
> Because if Mike Pence does the right thing, we win the election. All he has to do, all this is, this is from the number one, or certainly one of the top, constitutional lawyers in our country. He has the absolute right to do it. We're supposed to protect our country, support our country, support our Constitution, and protect our Constitution. (. . .)
> And I actually, I just spoke to Mike. I said: 'Mike, that doesn't take courage. What takes courage is to do nothing. That takes courage.' And then we're stuck with a president who lost the election by a lot and we have to live with that for four more years. We're just not going to let that happen. (. . .)
> And Mike Pence is going to have to come through for us, and if he doesn't, that will be a, a (sic!) sad day for our country because you're sworn to uphold our Constitution. (. . .)
> And we fight. We fight like hell. And if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore. (. . .)
> So we're going to, we're going to walk down Pennsylvania Avenue. I love Pennsylvania Avenue. And we're going to the Capitol, and we're going to try and give. (. . .)
> So let's walk down Pennsylvania Avenue. (Naylor, February 10, 2021)

When it became clear to the pro-Trump protestors that the Vice President would not violate the Constitution and would certify the final vote, the Trump supporters turned malicious on him. The improvised effigy in a white linen, blindfolded and with a noose around its neck (Fig. 4), in all likelihood represents Vice President Mike Pence, who was deemed a traitor. To make it clear, this was written on the puppet in large letters. Amidst national flags and Trump memorabilia like the red MAGA (Make America Great Again) cap in the foreground, this angry crowd marched from the Washington Monument in the background to the Capitol on the other end of the Mall. When they arrived there, chants of "Hang Mike Pence!" were pervasive amongst the mob (CNBC Television, March 18, 2021). In front of the Capitol, gallows were erected. The insurgents posed in front of them. The traitor *effigy* with the noose on the press photograph (Fig. 4) and the gallows are symbols for the QAnon conspiracy theory, highly popular with Trump supporters. For QAnon believers, the "Turner Diaries" are like a founding document. This apocalyptic tale (Macdonald 1978) culminates in "The Day of the Rope." The rope around the Pence puppet could thus be interpreted as a reference to the QAnon movement. The meaning of the mock execution of VP Pence is different from the Trump *execution in effigy* (Fig. 3). Here (Fig. 4), the puppet is a precursor for the intended real execution of the Vice President, who is considered by

5 "People hold up an effigy of Russian President Vladimir Putin gather at the Russian mission with a Vladimir Putin doll in handcuffs during a 'Stand with Ukraine' rally on Feb. 24, 2022 in New York," *Foreign Policy Magazine Online,* 19 April 2022, photo: David Dee Delgado/Getty Images

the insurgents to be a traitor. The *execution in effigy* is, ironically, a 'traditional' punishment for the 'crime' that Vice President Pence is accused of. However, the case is far more serious, since the insurgency nearly succeeded and cost nine lives (Cameron 2022).

Building on the meanings of its predecessors, the Putin effigy (Fig. 5) expresses political protest, if not outrage, at the Russian War in Ukraine. The street scene from an anti-Putin demonstration in New York can be seen in a press photograph shot from a dynamic diagonal camera position and featuring an *effigy* of Russian President Putin wearing shackles with blood on his hands and a sign that reads "Murderer". No rope or other burning attributes are visible. Behind the puppet, a protester is holding a sign that equates Putin with Hitler, demanding "Hands off Ukraine." In this case, the effigy can be connected to the political type, but lacks the features for an *execution in effigy*. Rather, the visual elements show a shaming effigy that demands taking the perpetrator to justice (shackles) and expressing collective disgust and shame at his actions.

Conclusion

Executions in effigy are a two-level visual phenomenon. First, there is the picture, the photograph of a vicarious execution, and second, the visual likeness of a person, a representation as a puppet that is hanged or burned in place of the real person. While this ritual can be traced back to the European Middle Ages, this symbolic practice is once again very present in our contemporary times (Figs. 3–5). The assumption is that *executions in effigy* still fulfill important functions and carry relevant meanings for those creating the *effigies* and those looking at the depictions. In this respect, this form of mock execution using a representational likeness fulfills most criteria of Aby Warburg's *Pathosformeln* (*emotive patterns*) (Bauerle 1988; Becker 2013). In Warburg's view, pathos formulae were coined in antiquity and 'revived' in Renaissance Europe (Bauerle 1988). They are arcane forms of human experience and behavior (Bauerle 1988; Becker 2013). As such they continue to exist, and the first-level visual format is digital photography through which the *executions in effigy* are transmitted to large online audiences. During the twentieth century, three different types of *executions in effigy* emerged globally: the political, the religious, and the "mundane," which include *effigies* relating to petty crimes like theft.

Already at the start of Trump's presidency, *executions in effigy* of the 45th U. S. President emerged online (Fig. 2). Both inside the U. S. and globally, the burning of Trump effigies became a popular outlet for dissent with Trump as a person and with his policies. Similar vicarious visual practices existed for Trump's predecessor President Obama (Clickorlando.com, June 8, 2012). The functions of these contemporary *executions in effigy* depend on the medium of publication. For an individual producer of an *effigy* (Fig. 3), the immediate emotional self-expression in a political context is dominant. First- and second-level imagery are almost identical—the hanging effigy and the picture of the hanging effigy carry the same message. For press photographs in news media both on- and offline, the documentation and information on the emotionality of a political, religious, or mundane event is at the forefront. Here, first-level and second-level imagery typically carry separate meanings. The depicted act of executing a puppet transports the emotionality of the event and the pathos connected to the imagery. The press photograph, however, is framed by a caption, headline etc. in a distancing way that takes away part of the "magic" and heightened emotionality, replacing it with a news frame that contextualizes the depicted violent scenery.

To conclude, *executions in effigy* today are still an important feature of visually communicating highly emotional states. Images depicting an *execution in effigy* are complex visuals that serve various functions and carry diverse meanings, ranging from emotional self-expression to collective pathos formulae. Yet, as diverse as they may be, meanings matter. Some of these vicarious visual executions are "warning signs," announcements of future real attacks on the life of the depicted person. Security forces should take acts of *executions in effigy* seriously and move to enhance the security level for those under vicarious attack. Whether it's simply an act of heightened emotional expression demanding the *effigy* culprit taken to justice or an outright hanging or burning of a person's likeness makes a difference. While the first effigy is generally benign, the second poses a very real threat to life.

Notes

1 This paper is dedicated to Martin Warnke (1937–2019), who inspired this research, and to whom the author is indebted in so many ways. In the fall term of 1989 he offered a seminar together with Horst Bredekamp at the Art History Department, Universität Hamburg on "The problem of the copy in the Middle Ages"

2 The focus of this paper is on the U. S. However, in the author's archive PIAV, examples for *executions in effigy* from Germany, France, Spain, the U. K., Lebanon, India, and Iraq in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries exist, an indication that *executions in effigy* are a globally widespread visual practice.

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III. MEDIATED ICONOCLASM IN ART AND CULTURAL HERITAGE. REACTIONS, REFLECTIONS, AND APPROPRIATIONS

BIRGIT MERSMANN

Posticonoclasm

Image Controversies over Virtual and Physical Reconstructions of Destroyed Cultural Heritage

Posticonoclastic Heritage. Toward Reconstructive Image Acts

The new waves of iconoclasm in the twenty-first century have severely affected the cultural heritage sector. To a large extent, contemporary iconoclastic attacks on cultural heritage sites are performed during internal armed conflicts, state disintegration, or terrorism (Schorlemer 2016: 118 ff.); they aim at damaging or completely erasing the identity, history, and memory of opponent groups, but often also target the universal values of the UNESCO conception of world heritage. In recognition of the fact that "iconoclasm is back," the "destruction of antiquities and cultural objects of heritage seems to be rediscovered as a contemporary form of psychological warfare sometimes secretly combined with 'harvesting' more marketable objects for illegal export." (Kila 2019: 655). It is part of a cultural warfare waged and mediated as a war *on* and *of* images (cp. Mitchell 2011). The MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region particularly suffers from reemerging iconoclasms. Escalating political conflicts have resulted in increasing assaults on archaeological and cultural heritage in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Libya, among other countries, causing what has been described as a "Cultural Heritage Crisis" (American Schools of Oriental Research 2015).

A "benchmark of contemporary iconoclasm" in the cultural heritage sector was the destruction of the monumental Bamiyan Buddha statues in Afghanistan by the Taliban in 2001 (Kila 2019: 655). As a first-case scenario of combined political and performative iconoclasm, staged for media circulation to draw the attention of the international community, it revealed the new image-war feature and armed conflict logic of contemporary idol disputes in the global context of the twenty-first century. Characteristic for this was the shifting argumentation strategically tailored to the changing political situation, together with the ambiguity over whether the war-like iconoclastic attack on the statues was meant as the destruction of religious idols, artworks, or a cultural heritage site. In the politically motivated argumentation of the Islamic fundamentalist Taliban, the focus of evaluation shifted from the protection of Afghan cultural heritage (first decree by Muhammad Omar) to the destruction of the idols as a religiously legitimate iconoclastic act (second decree by Muhammad Omar) (cf. Falser 2010: 159 ff.). During the conflict situation, the international (Western) community tried to protect the Bamiyan Buddha statues by

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110773576_011

liberating them from their (potential) status as idols and elevating them to artworks and world heritage objects.[1] In his article *The Bamiyan Buddhas, performative iconoclasm and the 'Image of Heritage'*, Michael Falser has convincingly argued that the iconoclastic attack on the Bamiyan Buddha statues finally aimed at destroying the West-centric image of art and heritage preservation characterized by the sacral auratization and iconization of material culture (Falser 2011). Facing the danger of further iconoclastic destruction of the site, UNESCO decided to list the cultural landscape and archaeological remains of the Bamiyan Valley as a world heritage site—official status was granted in 2003. Although the responsive heritagization policy of the international community failed to prevent the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues, it can be considered a pathbreaking consequence that opened a new chapter and vision for the post-iconoclastic future of the Bamiyan heritage.

This research contribution aims to shed light on posticonoclastic responses to and reconstructive projections for how to deal with the destroyed images of cultural heritage. Although the contemporary increase in the destruction of cultural heritage during protests, revolutions, and armed conflicts has drawn attention to the precarious, often conflicted, and unsolved situation of posticonoclastic heritage, the investigation of posticonoclasm still represents a marginal field within the historical and contemporary study of iconoclasm. This is particularly true when addressed from the perspective of image research and iconic criticism interested in understanding the motivations, argumentations, and processes behind the de- and re-empowerment of images. So far, the use of the term 'post-iconoclasm'[2] has been limited to defining a post-history in the aftermath of iconoclastic events. The term, however, harbors the potential to be developed into a full-fledged concept and approach when situated at the interdisciplinary interface between art history, image studies, visual and material culture studies, heritage studies, memory studies, and (post-)conflict studies. Major research issues of posticonoclasm could include the afterlife of the physically demolished images/monuments/heritage sites in different preservation and display forms (storage, exhibition, museum, theme park), contemporary memorial and post-conflict reconciliation strategies to compensate for the elimination of history and heritage, the posticonoclastic challenges of visual representation of image absence, the reappropriation, recontextualization, and reinscription of places of iconoclastic assaults by different local, national, and international actors (including political and cultural institutions as well as scientists, artists, designers, and architects), and, last but not least, virtual and physical reconstructions of a destroyed cultural heritage.

The focus of the study of posticonoclasm presented here will be on reconstructive image acts. Visualization and revitalization proposals for the UNESCO world heritage site of Afghanistan's Bamiyan Valley with its destroyed Buddha statues will be discussed and compared. In terms of time, these proposals stem from the post-assault phase leading up to the return of the Taliban to power in August 2021, which put all efforts at revitalization on hold. The question of how the site can be revived using images serves as the baseline for the different concepts of heritage protection and recreation in the case of Bamiyan. In the posticonoclastic stage, the debate over reconstruction and recreation models has turned into a conflict dominated by proponents of digital cultural heritage studies and digital archaeology. In the context of this information and data science approach to virtual *and* physical reconstruction, the

use of digital imaging technology such as digital photography and photogrammetry, 3D visualization, and 3D printing plays a crucial role. It is through and over these reconstructive image acts that new image controversies emerge, centered around authenticity, integrity, and regenerativity.

From an image-theoretical point of view, destructive and reconstructive image acts can be categorized as substitutive image acts. The art historian Horst Bredekamp has established a systematics of image acts that distinguishes between schematic, substitutive, and intrinsic image acts.[3] The *substitutive image act,* characterized by an exchange relation between image and body, aims at vitalization:

> In the process of substitution bodies are treated as images and images as bodies. This is the image act at its most precarious. For the mutual substitution of body and image brings into play processes that range from the illustration of that which is most sacred and of aspects of the natural world, by way of variants of iconoclasm, to political and legal iconography and the contemporary 'war of images'. In both their productive and their destructive aspects, these subjects can hardly be of more immediate relevance to the present time. (Bredekamp 2018: 137).

In the same line of argumentation, the iconoclastic attack on the Bamiyan Buddha statues is understood as a destructive substitutive image act that denies the difference between (human) image and body; the war waged against figural body images targets the elimination of human lives.[4] Drawing upon the mutual substitution of body and image, even the posticonoclastic virtual and/or physical image reconstruction of destroyed cultural heritage could be comprehended as a substitutive image act, albeit a productive and creational one, since it aims at the reproduction and revitalization of the iconoclashed object body. According to Bredekamp's theory of image acts, substitutive media are crucial for constituting substitutive image acts. In photography, among other media, he recognizes a substitutive technical medium of central relevance in which object body and image substantially coincide, at least in the perception of the beholder.[5] Considering that most contemporary attempts to reconstruct destroyed cultural heritage strongly rely on photographic and photogrammetric images for reproduction, it will be critical to also study the substitutive media components of reconstructive image acts.

Substitute Images and Imaginations: Reconstruction Proposals for the Bamiyan Buddha Statues and the Preservation of the Bamiyan Valley

As a cultural-theoretical post-concept, posticonoclasm maintains a referential relationship to iconoclasm. Comparable to the conceptual pair colonialism/postcolonialism, posticonoclasm focuses on a subsequent reflective reprocessing of acts of iconoclasm. In posticonoclasm, iconoclasm is never completely overcome, it continues to exert its effects in manifold ways and can even produce or evoke new iconoclasms. In a special way, this applies to posticonoclastic virtual and physical reconstruction images, whose shape, form, and technical realization are significantly

co-determined by preceding image destructions. Substitutive image acts carry potential iconoclashes into the present and future posticonoclastic discourse. We have to speak of image destructions in the plural, since a single picture is often exposed to multiple, sometimes overlapping iconoclasms in the historical *longue durée.* Especially in the field of cultural heritage, there is usually a mandate and moral obligation to inscribe the preservation of the iconoclastic act(s) of destruction as a memory and memorial into posticonoclastic acts of reconstruction, because a complete visual elimination of iconoclasm would be tantamount to a denial of image violence and thus a loss of the history and identity of the affected site.

Substitutive reconstructions in the posticonoclastic phase are also highly dependent on the type and degree of destruction. In the case of listed World Cultural Heritage sites, UNESCO's conditions and criteria for a preservative image reconstruction that guarantees authenticity must be considered (cp. Mager 2016). Essentially, it is two main documents that guide how to deal with posticonoclastic cultural heritage of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV). UNESCO's foundational document of the *Venice Charter* (1964) prohibits reconstructions of archaeological heritage sites entirely except for anastylosis: "Only anastylosis, that is to say, the reassembling of existing but dismembered parts can be permitted. The material used for integration should always be recognizable and its use should be the least that will ensure the conservation of a monument and the reinstatement of its form" (Article 15).[6] Issues of copy(ing), authenticity, and truth were not yet mentioned in this charter.[7] The *Nara Document on Authenticity* published in 1994 remedied this deficit by adding the concept of authenticity to the preservation guidelines and extending its scope from material to immaterial dimensions. It states that "authenticity judgements may be linked to the worth of a great variety of sources of information. Aspects of the sources may include form and design, materials and substance, and spirit and feeling, and other internal and external factors" (Paragraph 13).[8] The proceedings of the *Nara Conference of Authenticity in Relation to the World Heritage Convention* (Larsen 1995) even recognize the important contribution of heritage preservation to community revitalization, underlining that "heritage resources can foster processes of appropriation and association within a community including concepts of identity and self-determination based on intensive caretaking of heritage assets" (cit. in Toubekis/Jansen/Jarke 2020: 312). In 2017, ICOMOS published its *Guidance on Post Trauma Recovery and Reconstruction for World Heritage Cultural Properties*,[9] wherein reconstruction is considered "as part of an overall recovery process from the events of conflict as process itself that responds to particular situations of overall post-conflict strategy as enactor of sustainable development and community well-being" (ibid.: 312). This extended perspective in the world heritage system certainly stimulated a rethinking and reevaluation of digital reconstructions and physical replicas of cultural heritage enabled by new technologies and practices of data analytics in the field of digital cultural heritage studies; they are considered to not only provide documentary data evidence of lost visual heritage, but also "acquire authenticity depending on their modes of production and consumption, and the networks of institutional and individual relations from which they arise" (ibid.: 326).

To understand the visual argumentations and image controversies over the reconstruction and revitalization proposals for the Bamiyan Buddha statues, it is necessary to briefly recapitulate the act of image destruction and the post-blast heritage situation without describing in

detail the already well-researched procedure and the motivations behind the Islamist iconoclastic act.[10]

In March 2001, the monumental Buddha statues dating from the sixth century AD were blown up by Taliban militias in the strategically contested Bamiyan Valley in Afghanistan. In addition to the two large effigy statues, one of the smaller seated Buddha statues in the Bamiyan Valley and a statue about ten meters high in the neighboring Kakrak Valley were also blown up. Due to the monumentality of the two largest statues of the ensemble, the act of destruction lasted for more than 20 days. According to the eyewitness account of Sayyed Mirza Hussain, a cave dweller in the Bamiyan Valley, the Taliban's iconoclastic attack initially failed to hack away the faces of the Buddha figures or the frescoes in the surrounding niches. For this reason, they attempted to shoot the statues with military equipment such as tanks, grenades, and anti-aircraft missiles. Only when all these means failed to achieve the desired destruction did the Taliban transport tons of more effective explosives and deploy additional Pakistani and Saudi Arabian engineers as successful explosives masters.[11] Some claim that the Taliban leader Mullah Muhammad Omar personally ordered the destruction of the statues, others that it was ordered by Osama bin Laden. The destruction itself is attributed to local Taliban fighters in the service of Mullah Muhammad Omar, as well as to external Taliban fighters, the Deobands and Wahhabis, both strands of Sunni Islam, who allegedly sought to humiliate the local Shia Hazara population settled in the Bamiyan Valley.

The destruction of the Buddha statues of Bamiyan by the Taliban in 2001 was not an initial act of original image destruction; it was part of a millennia-old history of iconoclastic attacks that continues the history of Islamic violence perpetrated against the Bamiyan Buddha images since the eighth century. The Buddha statues had already been damaged and partially destroyed before they were blown away by the Taliban. The means of earlier destruction were approximately the same as those used by the Taliban militias: smashing the faces, shelling the standing full-body figures with military equipment, i. e., cannons and artillery. The special feature of the 2001 act of destruction therefore lies primarily in a difference of degree: as part of an escalating spiral of political events, it aimed at complete destruction, that is, the whole-body annihilation of the Buddha figures, thus representatively exhibiting the war-like violence of eradicating non-Islamic images, religious practices, and world views from the territory of what was then the newly established Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

It is this radical Islamic violence of erasure against the Buddhist images of Bamiyan that decisively impacted and determined the various posticonoclastic conservation measures and offers of reconstruction. How to approach the image of annihilation in the empty niche, the figural absence with a human outline? How to fill the gaping wound left by the iconoclastic act in the landscape of the Bamiyan cliff valley? How to compensate for the almost complete elimination of the western and eastern Buddha images, in which 89 % of the original (rock and superstructure) material was destroyed?

The question of how to present the posticonoclastic image of the Bamiyan Buddha statues has grown into a key controversy, one that has remained unsolved to this day. By and large, it is situated between two poles: "either leaving the site as it is, empty niches as a kind of memorial to the destruction, or attempting to rebuild part or all of a figure, a standpoint taken by the

Afghan government and backed intensely by the local population—to have at least one figure revived from the ruins as an act of symbolic resurrection" (Toubekis/Jansen/Jarke 2020: 309). In the aftermath of the image destruction, a Bamiyan Working Expert group was established in 2002, working in cooperation with UNESCO, the government of Afghanistan, and the Bamiyan province. Symposia about the future of the Bamiyan Buddha statues were held on a regular basis,[12] serving the international exchange over plans for heritage safeguarding and reconstruction. Although a variety of cultural master plans and proposals for the revitalization of the Bamiyan Valley were discussed, no reconstruction plan has been implemented since 2001, offering evidence of the controversial disunity over reconstructive image acts and strategies for the post-trauma recovery of world heritage cultural properties in post-conflict societies. The pressure to act has increased tremendously. In February 2022, i. e., before the Taliban's return to power in Afghanistan in August of the same year, a former UNESCO representative warned that "Afghanistan's Bamiyan Valley will collapse in the next ten years if looting and neglect continue" (Geranpayeh 2022). It is feared that illegal economic development and excavation will threaten the integrity and authenticity of the world heritage site.

Up until now, the safeguarding, documentation, and preservation of the Bamiyan remains were given priority over physical reconstruction. However, even these preservative image acts have not been free of controversy, as the reconstruction of the feet and legs of the smaller Bamiyan Buddha by a team of archaeologists of the German branch of ICOMOS (International Council of Monuments and Sites) led by Michael Petzet has shown.[13] The reinforcement of the lower appendages of the small Buddha figure with iron rods, concrete, and brick was begun in 2013, assumedly with the permission of the Afghan authorities—which later turned out to be false. In conflict with UNESCO's decision of 2011 to not rebuild the Bamiyan Buddhas, UNESCO stopped the unauthorized reconstruction after it was revealed during the Orvieto meeting of UNESCO's Bamiyan Working Group in December 2013. Andrea Bruno, at the time a UNESCO architectural consultant, condemned the act of reconstruction as "irreversible damage, bordering on the criminal" (cit. in Martini/Rivetti 2014). This response makes clear that even a well-intended preservative image reconstruction can be considered a destructive image act when it disintegrates the material authenticity of the broken image.

In the long-term perspective of heritage preservation, safeguarding the original remains of the giant Buddha statues of Bamiyan has become a strategy for the virtual and potentially physical reconstruction of the statues. In 2010, that is, one year before the decision taken by UNESCO to not rebuild the Buddha statues, Michael Jansen, a building historian from the RWTH Aachen in Germany, presented a "cultural masterplan" for the rebuilding of the Bamiyan Buddha statues by using the reconstruction technique of anastylosis. In cooperation with his research team, he created an elaborate 3D computer model of the Bamiyan statues based on the precise geological reconstruction of each fragment. He suggested relocating each original piece at its precise position before the Taliban's iconoclastic attack, noting that "the faults shall remain visible" in the form of supplemental brick material in order to document the destruction "as part of the history of these ancient master works" (Jansen cit. in Ell 2010). This conservatorial position was also applied to the faces of the Buddha figures, which should be preserved in their iconoclastically damaged and effaced state.

The longer the preservation activities were continued in the posticonoclastic phase, during which it was discovered that only 11 % of the original volume was intact and 12 % of the original surface could be reconstructed (Toubekis/Jansen/Jarke 2017), the less probable the physical reconstructive image act of anastylosis appeared as an appropriate and viable option. In 2020, Claudio Margottini and his coauthors wrote: "Nowadays, any possibility of reassembling the original pieces (anastylosis) is excluded, showing how irreversible this iconoclastic work has been" (Margottini et al. 2020: 277); "no use of existing fragments is possible from a technical point of view but also in respect to the OUV [Outstanding Universal Value]" (ibid.: 284). For this reason, alternative substitutive images and imagined scenarios were put forward as a way for revitalizing and resurrecting the fallen image of the Bamiyan Buddhas and their cultural environment. In the following, I will look at three main proposals for the posticonoclastic physical revitalization of the lost image of Bamiyan heritage and compare their reimagining agendas regarding image-aesthetic, actorial, memorial, community-building, and economic factors. The reconstruction proposals, all of which were presented at the 2020 UNESCO conference on the "Future of the Bamiyan Buddha Statues" in Tokyo, express an enormous diversity in approaches to the posticonoclastic image of the Bamiyan heritage; they are partially contrary to one other, exposing where the lines of conflicting images of heritage reconstruction and colliding political interests run. As mentioned before, the main difference of the revitalization proposals lies in either—temporarily or permanently-refilling the empty niche with a reconstructed Buddha image or leaving it blank as a *memento mori* of the annihilating iconoclastic violence. In all discussed proposals, the refilling of the niche relates to the Eastern niche, where the smaller Buddha (38 m high) was positioned—the niche of the larger Buddha (55 m) shall remain untouched, as requested by UNESCO.

Image Anastylosis. Posticonoclastic Resurrection from Local Materials and Actors

After rethinking their first cultural masterplan of 2010 for the physical reconstruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues by means of anastylosis, the team of Georgios Toubekis, Michael Jansen, and Matthias Jarke[14] proposed a "Physical Revitalization of the Eastern Buddha Statue in Bamiyan Using Reinforced Adobe Material" in 2020 (Toubekis/Jansen/Jarke 2020). Although contemporary Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) technologies are foreseen for use in the Bamiyan Cultural Center with its museum facilities to provide "factual information on the previous appearance of the site based on the various scientific hypotheses on the possible color schemes of the Buddha figures and the ancient mural painting," the proposal argues that "it requires a more direct physical experience to allow for a re-enchantment of the site by the people, especially those living there" (ibid.: 310). Departing from this position, the revitalization proposal aims at instantiating a physical image act of "symbolic resurrection" by at least reviving one Buddha figure from the ruins (ibid.: 309). It posits "that an authentic remodeling of the Eastern 38 m Buddha establishing the previous spatial configuration of the figure has to integrate the original fragments, combing scientific analysis of the figure's original physical remains with the careful interpretation of the existing documentary sources" (ibid.: 307). The argument

for a physical revitalization of the Eastern Bamiyan statue is mainly based on intangible historical, religious, and symbolic values such as the unique spiritual sense of place. The regaining of the image-related spiritual power of the former site—where the Buddha statues were viewed as guardians of the valley—is cited as major justification for the posticonoclastic physical intervention to be conducted in accordance with UNESCO's international principles of conservation. To this end, the local community of Bamiyan is called upon to strongly engage in the image reconstruction process. The community-based participatory reconstruction process envisions the recovery and rehabilitation not only of images but of people, their self-esteem, and their identities. Conceived as a post-conflict peacebuilding mission, it is oriented towards psychological healing, national reconciliation, and the rebuilding of society. The reerection of the Eastern Buddha figure shall be carried out "[f]rom people from Bamiyan, for the people of Afghanistan and the rest of the World as a symbol of Peace" (ibid.: 318). The author team is convinced that "efforts in the cultural resources of a nation contribute effectively to peacebuilding and achieving long-term development goals" (ibid.: 309).

To maintain the material and immaterial authenticity of the property, the concept of the revitalization of the destroyed small Buddha figure draws upon the integration of local materials, building traditions, and artisans. Traditional mud/adobe material from the region reinforced by newly improved mortars and silt-clay mixtures shall be used to reconstruct the main shape of the body image of the original small Buddha figure. The reimaging intention is based on an explicit decision to renounce a complete reconstruction of the shape prior to the destruction of 2001 or any previous appearance of the statue, and thus preserve the iconoclastic destruction history already inscribed in the statue before its complete eradication. The rebuilding of the full-body figure with reinforced mud material from the region will follow the traditional wall erection method with rammed earth, called *pachsa*. The outline of the Buddha figure will be carved by sculptors and stone masons from Afghanistan. This involvement of local artisans is sought to assure the authenticity of the artwork and exert a healing effect on the traumatized local community of the posticonoclastic Bamiyan region. Returning to the archaeological reconstruction technique of anastylosis, individual salvaged rock fragments will be embedded within the *pachsa* matrix, thus finding a permanent storage in the resurrected image of the destroyed Buddha. The mixed-material rebuilding of the image, based on a combination of original fragments and new silt-clay material, will adopt the concept of "sacrificial layers," prescribing that newly added elements should always be weaker and less resistant than the original ones. By freeing some space for the traditional *pradakshina-path*, or the circumambulation passage around Buddha's feet, in the remodeling of the Eastern Buddha statue in the niche, the proposal for the physical revitalization makes clear that it even envisages a Buddhist ritual revivification of the heritage site, including the sacralization of the reproduced image.

A similar but reduced presentation method is proposed to preserve the original fragments of the large 55-meter-high Buddha (Fig. 1). For long-term safeguarding, the remaining fragments shall be laid out horizontally in direct vicinity to the empty niche and reassembled in the shape of the original figure. Earth is used to cover the "buried" original material, "it is proposed to shape the proportions of the original figure to enable an experience on the size and mass of the original figure." (ibid.: 311) The staging of a burial of the fatally destroyed Buddha image not

1 Preservative presentation of original rock fragments of the large Bamiyan Buddha in front of the empty niche

only celebrates the memorial value of the broken image (body), but also plays with an imagined resurrection of the figure "from the ruins." The light roof covering the burial place of the destroyed image would allow visitors to view the empty niche and thus imagine a virtual revitalization of it based on the figural shape of the burial ground. The concerted approach to preservation and presentation makes it possible to store the fragmentary original material while at the same time exposing its intangible cultural, religious, and symbolic values as connected to the history and present of the local population.

Image Cloning by Robotics

The proposal by Claudio Margottini, a specialist in Engineering Geology and Landslide Science, and his team[15] speaks of a "Renaissance of Bamiyan" and presents a total of four alternative proposals for revitalizing the Bamiyan Valley and the empty niche of the Eastern Buddha. The sheer number of proposals from one and the same group indicates that in the posticonoclastic phase, a veritable flood of after-images is produced that range from documentary and memorial pictures to reconstructive and reinventive images. Through this "cascade of images," the spectacularization of substitutive image acts is evidenced. In the proposal, the term "revitalization" is applied to underline that after the iconoclastic destruction, "the restoration just inevitably represents the continuation of life" (Margottini et al. 2020: 277). Compared to the proposal by Toubekis/Jansen/Jarke discussed earlier, the revitalization approach of Margottini and his team is more holistic and environmentally integrative. As a "downstream approach" from the national to the local level, it aims at the "integrated and sustainable development of the whole country as well as of the local Bamiyan community" (Margottini et al. 2020: 278) in the economic, social, and cultural context of the southern branch of the Silk Road. The revitalization of the Buddha niches as central sites of the iconoclastic attack is part of an overall securing of the cultural landscape of the Bamiyan Valley. The proposal to revitalize the Bamiyan Valley includes the reconstruction of the bazaar that, before the war, existed in front of the Great Western Buddha; the revitalization of Shahr-e Gholghola (City of Screams), the archaeological site of the medieval Islamic

town of Bamiyan that was destroyed and massacred by Genghis Khan in 1221 and declared a UNESCO world cultural heritage together with the cultural landscape of the Bamiyan Valley in 2003; the recovering of the red fortress of Shar-e-Zohak, a site originally built during the Buddhist period (sixth to seventh century AD) and transformed into a fortification in the Islamic period; and the rehabilitation of minor sites such as Kakrak, where another Buddhist statue was destroyed during the Taliban attack. This wider reconstructive perspective highlights that the revitalization process is applied to include the diversity of cultural contact zones in the Bamiyan Valley, striving for the recovery and rehabilitation of both Buddhist and Islamic cultural heritage in that region.

Regarding the presentation of the empty Buddha niches, the proposal puts forward an open and variable approach with three options—a physical revitalization, a non-physical revitalization, and a hybrid solution between the physical and non-physical revitalization based on 3D augmented reality. The criteria and aspects considered for the altogether four revitalization proposals are comprehensive and entail a deterrent reiconization based on low-cost, easy replicability in the prevention of new iconoclastic attacks, the temporary status of the proposal and the full reversibility of the remodeled site, the clear distinguishability between newly supplemented and original image parts and their harmonious integration in the reconstructive image setting, as well as the sustainable development of the valley.

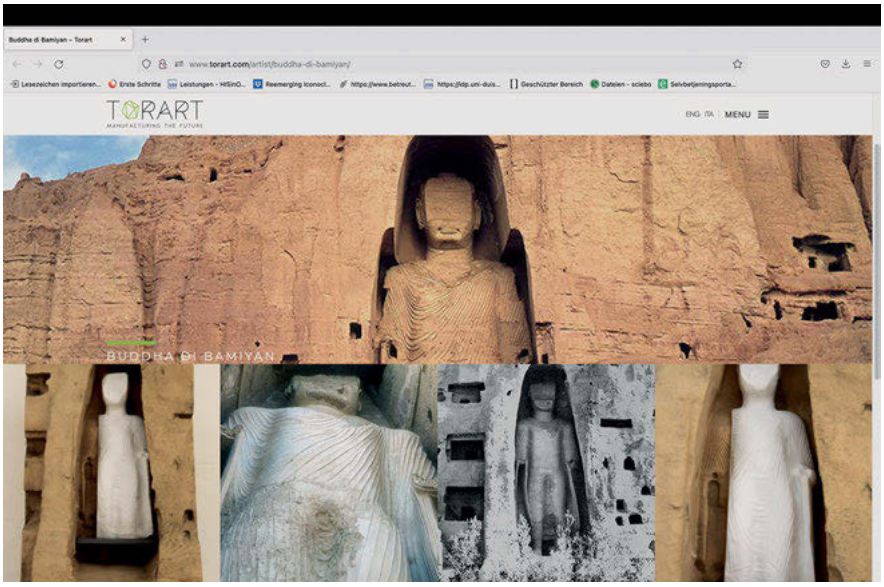
The revitalization proposals for the empty niche of the Eastern Buddha are graded according to their reiconization approach, rising from a "ground zero" of non-(re)imaging through two-dimensional visual representation to three-dimensional full-body reconstruction. Proposal no. 1 relies on an admonitory image of image loss; it opts for renouncing any reimaging act concerning the empty niche of the Eastern Buddha and thus maintaining the lasting memory of the violent iconoclastic act. Beside the clearing of debris, stabilizing and restoring walls, and constructing an underground museum in front of each niche, "no other action should be implemented." Both niches "should be left as they are, as an emblem of human irrationality, to future memory" (Margottini et al.: 286).

Proposal no. 2 draws upon photographic representation as a substitutive image act. It suggests the insertion of a removable 2D fiberglass panel mounted on a supporting scaffolding at the back wall of the empty niche. The photographic image, taken from Andrea Bruno's[16] photographic archive of the Bamiyan Buddhas, should provide the impression of the image situation prior to the iconoclastic attack of 2001. As a low-cost, two-dimensional substitutive visual medium, the photographic reproduction involves "discouraging the idea of an irreplaceable impact of terrorist action" (ibid.: 285).

Proposal no. 3 envisages a partial full-body reconstruction of the Eastern Buddha figure (Fig. 2). In the same line of argumentation, it states that the 3D reconstruction "has to be realized in a way which protects Bamiyan against the threat of future terrorist attack" (ibid.: 288). By "cloning" the small Bamiyan Buddha image and thereby making it available for infinite reproduction, future acts of iconoclasm shall be prevented or made powerless. Although digital methods and robotic technologies are to be used to reproduce the original statue as a replica, the emphasis here is on the artistic value of the image reprocessing. The substitute image production is praised as a "new art creation," as a reconstructive masterpiece "of high spiritual and artistic value" (ibid.). The material selected for the partial reconstruction of the small Buddha

2 Visualization of marble reconstruction of the Eastern Bamiyan Buddha by Torart

figure plays a prominent role in transforming the robot-based physical reproduction of the statue into art. White Carrara marble from Italy—a material connected with the creation of high-art masterworks in sculpture and architecture such as Michelangelo's Pietà—is to be used to avoid the image of a "fake archaeological place" (ibid.: 303), artistically nobilitate the reshaping of the Bamiyan figure, and constitute a link to Italy as the cradle of art and antiquity's "renaissance": "The Buddha's expressive eyes will find, in this noble material, a new light that will again dominate the axis of the world that crosses the Bamiyan Valley as a symbol of a cultural continuity that has come to our day through the millennia. This revival look will be a red line, linking the valley of Buddhas in Afghanistan with Carrara marble quarries in Italy" (ibid.: 288). In order to make the replica (re)movable, only the external shell will be manufactured from Carrara marble. The interior of the figure will be constructed as a skeleton of stainless-steel arms strong enough to support the marble shell, with the physical reconstruction based on "an accurate and authentic virtual reconstruction of the original statue" (ibid.: 301) employing 3D modelling methods. Photogrammetric analysis of historical and contemporary photographs since the 1960s will be combined with a geomatic laser scanning of the empty niche to create a 3D model of the Buddha figure. The final integration of the replica produced via virtual reconstruction into the real environment of the existing niche would then create a kind of "augmented reality image" of the Bamiyan Buddha. Torart, a company of Carrara specialized in the conservational and distributive reproduction of art and cultural heritage and the application of new technologies to the processing of marble, stone, and other hard materials, would be commissioned to translate the 3D image model of the small Bamiyan Buddha into a three-dimensional sculpture (Fig. 3). Using an anthropomorphic robot capable of moving arms and hands in a human-like way, the digital replica of the Buddha figure would be manufactured from Carrara marble. The machine-created physical image is considered a "true and authentic clone" (ibid.: 303), while it's the non-invasiveness of the automatized digital recreation process that secures the truthfulness and authenticity of the replica.[17] The robot-made reproduction of the body shell would take place in Carrara; the manufactured Buddha replica of Carrara marble would then be shipped to Afghanistan to be installed on site in the niche.



3 Homepage of the Torart Company with the Physical Revitalization Proposal for the Eastern Bamiyan Buddha

Proposal no. 4 seems to anticipate potential criticism of proposal no. 3 related to the use of "foreign," externally imported material associated with specific Western art traditions and values. For this reason, it suggests using local stone or local marble in the same color of the Bamiyan cliff as an alternative to white Carrara marble. In this case, the statue would be manufactured by Torart in Afghanistan. After the reconstruction in the country, the anthropomorphic robot would be donated to the local Afghan community.

Taken together, proposals no. 3 and 4 illustrate that the clone-like digital replication not only serves to nobilitate physical reconstruction acts based on virtual reconstruction, but also to celebrate the robotic "machine art" of substitutive image acts in the field of digital cultural heritage. Compared to the use of adobe, straw, and horsehair to model the fine outlines and shapes of the original Bamiyan Buddha statues,[18] the use of a shell made from Carrara marble as one of the hardest and most noble materials applied in prestigious high art expresses the desire for the indestructability and immortalization of the resurrected image and the techno-futurist glorification of art and art (re)production.

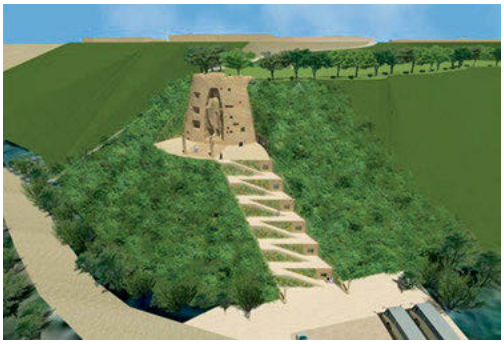
Erection of a New Monument: Offsite Heritage Reconstruction

The "Technical Proposal for Revitalizing the Eastern Buddha Statues in Bamiyan" by Kosaku Maeda and his team[19] prioritizes the promotion of Buddhist heritage education and the cultural-economic revitalization of the Bamiyan region. Reconstruction is equated with restoration,

and the idea of revitalization embedded in a post-conflict regional development plan: "We propose to utilize the Revitalization to boost overall living standards and social activity, through region developing plans including the implementation of better infrastructure, rehabilitation of housing, economic revival, and educational activities" (Maeda et al. 2020: 332). The persistent unstable political situation in Afghanistan (at the time of the formulation of the proposal) finds strong consideration when pondering the potential reconstruction of the Eastern Buddha statue. The authors of the proposal reflect that any attempt at a posticonoclastic restoration of the Buddha figure must be adapted to the ongoing post-conflict situation and commit to the goal "to eliminate all possibilities of the reconstruction causing any hostility" (ibid.: 336). A major guiding thought is that "[a]n abrupt reconstruction of the East Buddha may potentially create friction and misunderstanding given the strong symbolic nature of Buddha" (ibid.: 332). The potential aggravation of religious and political conflicts is put forward as one of the main arguments for the team's final decision to not reinstall a reproduction of the Eastern Buddha in the original niche. The return of the Taliban to governmental power in 2021 and the reestablishment of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has proven that this decision to leaving the original niche empty was a wise act of foresight. It shows how important it is to link posticonoclastic substitutive image acts with the on-site conditions of a post-conflict situation.

The explicit decision against representing the reproduced Buddha image in the original niche is supported by another argument that relates to the inviolability of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the World Heritage site. The team posits that any revitalization of the original niche would undermine the OUV. The particularity of the argument lies in the inclusion of the iconoclastic act of destruction and its post-history into the definition of the OUV: "The Property represents a diverse cultural landscape reflecting the rise and fall of Buddhist culture in the area, the advancement of power of Islam, as well as the more recent global situation of the present day. In this context, the 2001 destruction also constitutes OUV" (ibid.: 335). The entire cross-cultural and conflictual history of the heritage site—its rise and downfall comprising the erection and repetitive destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues—is inscribed into the OUV as a central criterion for preservation and restoration. It even cites the fear of destroying the OUV of the archaeological remains through a reconstructive image act in the original niche—a type of reconstruction that can be classified as involuntary iconoclasm with Bruno Latour[20]—as an additional argument for leaving the original site of the iconoclastic attack untouched. A concern for the OUV of the heritage site and the long-term goal of post-conflict peacekeeping and cultural-historical value building necessitates a non-violent approach of non-interference into the iconoclastic place of destructive, history-eradicating violence.

One main strategy of the proposal to prevent religious friction and reemerging iconoclasm in the Bamiyan Valley is to override the cult value of the Buddha statues and emphasize their exhibition value. To that objective, the Japanese team proposes the construction of three exhibitionary building complexes: 1. the Bamiyan Museum and Cultural Center, designed as a venue for educating the Bamiyan people about the cross-cultural history of the heritage site, as well as a tourism center for improving the living conditions of the Bamiyan people, 2. a storage show room for the remains of the iconoclastic attack, i. e., the original fragments of



4 "New Monument" of Eastern Bamiyan Buddha, bird's eye view from the north

the two Buddha figures, as a reminder of the destructive violence and educational display for heritage conservation and maintenance, and 3. a monument in the shape of the Eastern Buddha as a memorial substitute image to compensate for the destroyed Buddha monuments in the cliff. The so-called "New Monument" (Fig. 4) would be positioned in an entirely new location within the Bamiyan Valley, namely at the crest of one of the surrounding plateaus, to secure a high degree of visibility for visitors and enable, through a parallel visual axis,[21] a view to the empty Buddha niches in the facing cliff "as the symbol of peace" (Okazaki 2013, n. p.). To provide local visitors with the opportunity to recall the valley's original landscape, the monument would be embedded into the natural landscape of the planned Cave Garden as part of the larger museum site. The new Buddha monument would be constructed as a reduced version of the East Buddha. With a height of 13 meters, its dimensions would represent one third of the original Eastern Buddha figure. Patented technology of cloning cultural properties, as developed by the Tokyo University of Art and already applied to recreate the interior space and the murals in the niches, would be used to reconstruct the figure of the Eastern Buddha in the pre-iconoclastic shape of 2001 from glass-fiber reinforced concrete inside a cliff niche. The relocation of the reproduced image to a distant site that is nevertheless in visual range of the original heritage site provides evidence of a non-interference policy to heritage preservation. However, the high-plateau relocation of the reproduced Buddha heritage within a larger museum and exhibition environment becomes itself an iconic, tumulus-like memorial within the Bamiyan landscape that exposes the imaginative power of tourist-based, economical theme park-ization of world cultural heritage. To see the reconstruction of the Bamiyan Buddha as "an effective tourism resource for the Bamiyan province" (Maeda et al. 2020: 331) may explain why an off-site museumization and monumentization appears justified. However, it ignores that the distant image replication politics might reduce or even violate the OUV of the original heritage site. The substitutive sight from afar onto the empty niches visualizing the iconoclastic destruction incorporates a posticonoclastic view that embeds itself into the posteriority of material history and thus escapes its conflict impact assessment. The viewer is positioned on the safe side of reconstructive safeguarding, unable to process the trauma of iconoclasm.

Reconstructive Image-of-Heritage Conflicts in Posticonoclasm

In the cultural heritage sector, the image of posticonoclasm is primarily defined by reconstruction images that take on a restoring, preserving, and revitalizing function. The aim of the reconstructive image act is to get as close as possible to the original image in its pre-iconoclastic shape, with its materiality, texture, artistic and spiritual value. The image of posticonoclastic heritage reconstruction is determined by the paradoxicality of original, faithful image copying permitting the viewer to forget about its substitutive mediality and image status while at the same time reminding him/her of the violence of the iconoclastic act of destruction.

As different and potentially conflicting the reconstructive image proposals for the Bamiyan heritage have proven to be, in particular the revitalization of the Eastern Buddha statue, they concordantly recall that it is the technological heritage reconstruction by means of virtual reality and visual 3D modeling that serves as a preconditional template for the potential physical reconstruction of the destroyed image of heritage. Digital image reconstructions are used to recreate an utmost authentic image of the destroyed Eastern Buddha statue, thus reversing the traditional relationship between original work and reproduced copy. It is the data-scientifically reconstructed image of the destroyed original that obtains the power to initiate the resurrection of a "new" original. For this digital-data-based reconstruction of the destroyed original image, an almost infinite number of single images is required in different media types and genres. The image diversity from which the lost original identity of the iconoclashed image is reconstructed shows an enormously broad range, spanning from historical archaeological and art-historical drawings over analogue and digital tourist photographs and internet images to scientific metric images pre- and post-digital. The search for appropriate images for photogrammetric reconstruction, sourced from museums, libraries, universities, and individuals, is a particularly demanding task.[22] The science philosopher Bruno Latour has argued in his considerations on iconoclasms and a beyond of image wars that a singular, isolated scientific image has no power at all to constitute truthfulness; only by composing a "cascade of images" can an image of reality be created (Latour 2002: 33 f.) Reconstructive image acts, as performed in digital cultural heritage, draw heavily on a cascade of images at the intersection of the sciences, arts, and visual cultures, and have their origin in acts of image search, compilation, assemblage, and superimposition. In terms of their modeling procedure, they can be classified as composite visuals and blended images in which the scientific imaging of visual truthfulness evolves from virtualized image reality.

The posticonoclastic virtual remodeling of physically destroyed cultural heritage as a pathway to its physical reproduction complements substitutive remediation with image distribution. Digital image reconstructions enable the limitless reproduction, circulation, and presentation of world cultural heritage independent of its site-specificity. Heritage and the image conveyed by it becomes nomadic, transformed into a migratory object and commodified product available in the on- and offline mode. Because of this blended existence of datafied reality reconstruction, it annihilates its original sense of place and validity of belonging. Acts of reconstruction of destroyed cultural heritage, be they paintings, sculptures, or even built environments, are no longer place-bound, but can be carried out anywhere in the world.[23] Responding to the increasing risk of cultural heritage of becoming damaged or destroyed due to natural disasters, climate

5 Torart's digitally reconstructed Triumphal Arch of Palmyra presented in New York (2016)

change, terrorist attacks, and military conflicts, a reconstructive digital heritage industry has emerged, with companies such as Torart and Iconem[24] as influential international players. For example, the replica of the Palmyrene Arch of Triumph, the original of which was destroyed in 2015 by ISIS, was produced by Torart (Fig. 5). It was created in a similar way as described in Margottini's proposal for the physical reconstruction of the Eastern Buddha statue in Bamiyan. A digital 3D model was used as a template to machine-carve the copy of the Arch of Triumph out of Egyptian marble. Non-invasive digital technologies are employed to resurrect a downscaled physical image of a monument that has fallen prey to a devastating iconoclastic attack.[25] The "Grand Tour" of the Palmyrene arch's replica, a display of state-of-the art digital heritage preservation and reconstruction technology as well as of post-conflict archaeodiplomacy (Leracari et al. 2016:1), demonstrates the new media mobilization and migratory repositioning of cultural heritage in the age of digitization. However, this posticonoclastic heritage mobilization is not free of cultural-political conflicts and power asymmetries. The Grand Tour of the arc's replica was restricted to locations in the Western world[26] and completely left out the original place of heritage destruction, namely Syria. By celebrating the legacy of Western imperial civilization and worshipping the resurrection of the monument by means of cutting-edge reproduction technology, the exhibition tour of the Palmyrene Arch of Triumph served the Occidentalist fetishization of "Oriental" cultural heritage and contributed to the revitalization of neo-imperialist fantasies. The recent announcement of the Russian government to physically reconstruct Palmyra represents another heritage-political declaration that illustrates the contestation over the reconstructive image-of-heritage and the significance of past cultural civilization in the age of revived imperialism, digital colonialism, and digital archaeology.[27]

Posticonoclastic heritage reconstruction must confront the potentials, challenges, and limitations of digital image replicability. Introduced by the Tokyo University of Arts in Japan, the cloning of cultural properties has surfaced as a new method and practice for the multiplication, preservation, and restoration of visual material heritage. Traditional analogue techniques of reproduction are combined with digital technology such as high-definition photography and 2D and 3D printing to capture the DNA of the cultural property. The "super clone" of the Sakyamuni triad statue, a Japanese national treasure at the Horyuji temple, is a good example of how the cloning of cultural property might change the perception of cultural heritage. The image of Sakyamuni is reconstructed in its original stage of creation. The replica compensates for the damage and loss of image features caused by history and the ravages of time. It possesses the same shiny gold appearance the statue had when it was created in 623; lost or chipped curls of hair are restored and flying heavenly maidens added around the halo behind the figures. The image reconstruction act, which involved local artisans in Takaoka copperware and Inami woodcarving, goes back to the time before the history of destruction and decomposition to reconstitute the original historical shape, structure, and texture that has been visually absent (Yokosawa 2018). For a posticonoclastic heritage, this cloning technology would provide an opportunity to completely reconstruct the destroyed image in its pre-iconoclastic shape, thus canceling the traces of iconoclastic actions. The cloning of the ceiling murals from the Eastern Buddha of Bamiyan by the Tokyo University of the Arts has already begun, making it possible to restore even the original texture of the stone wall paintings.

But how will these regenerative "super clones" of visual heritage be perceived? What is their impact on addressing posticonoclastic heritage? Representing the substitutability of heritage, the simulative revitalization of past material culture, and the reversal of history, they ignite a new debate on the authenticity, faithfulness, and integrity of images. Whereas one faction, which could be classified as techno-enthusiast iconodules, celebrates the uniqueness and outstanding value of the digitally reproduced replica to recreate the original image as a material object, the other faction criticizes the faked nature of the physical reconstruction. In the case of the digital reconstruction of the Palmyrene arch, the replica was condemned as "a grotesque Duchampian readymade that is the fulfillment of ISIS's wishes" (Burch 2017: 72) or devalorized as a Disneyfied image of heritage (Kunthi 2018). Digitally reproduced replicas of cultural heritage spark a new controversy on the media nature of the image. In digital archaeology, "a digitally copied object is neither an original ('the One', or even 'the normative', 'the traditional', or simply 'the material'), nor is it the facsimile ('the Other', 'the new', 'the modern', or 'the digital'). It shares features with both, but it is never one or the other. The replica is material and tangible, however, it is not original and authentic. At the same time, it was created digitally, but it is not immaterial" (Stobiecka 2020: 117). Within this conflict between the singularity of the material and authentic and the multiplicity of the digital and technological is where the new iconoclash within posticonclastic heritage reconstruction is positioned.

Notes

1 Mullah Omar accused the director of the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, Philippe de Montebello, who offered to buy the statues, of being an idol buyer. He himself spoke of the iconoclastic act against the Bamiyan statues as "not having smashed anything." In doing so, he made it clear that ideology determines what is to be regarded as a magical, venerated image, and what is only "a pile of stones" (cf. Reuters 2001).

2 Until now, the substantive term 'posticonoclasm' very rarely shows up in research literature on iconoclasm (cp. Gerstel 2021); usually it is used to differentiate between the pre- and posticonoclastic phase, that is, the before and after of iconoclasm, which thus accordingly describe the historically conditioned transformations in attitudes towards images. However, a theoretical conception of posticonoclasm is still wanting. To highlight the unity of the term as an image-theoretical concept, the author has decided to use a spelling without the hyphen.

3 In Bredekamp's theory, the image act is defined as reciprocal to the speech act. The image is "no longer the instrument, but the actor—indeed, the 'prime' mover, the protagonist." (Bredekamp 2018: 33). In the *schematic image act*, "an ostensibly inanimate entity is, by diverse means, 'animated'—as in the case of the *tableau vivant*, the automaton, or the biofact." In the *substitutive image act* "the 'impress' of a living form is understood to stand in for the original." In the *intrinsic image act*, the "latent capacity is most directly manifest in formal energy: that of line or colour." (ibid.: 35).

4 On the substitution between image and body, also see Bredekamp's study on iconoclasm in Palmyra (Bredekamp 2016).

5 Bredekamp points to the fact that in constructive photo theory, the assumption of a real presence of an object or body in the photographic image has been deconstructed. Against this view, he argues that the idea of a bodily trace of the represented body/object in the photograph is nevertheless not completely suspended (Bredekamp 2018: 154).

6 The text of the Venice Charter is available under www.icomos.org/charters/wenice_e.pdf (accessed 02/20/2022).

7 Christoph Brumann has pointed out that in a technical postscript to the Venice Charter in November 1972, a mention of copies, authenticity, and truth were added (Brumann 2017: 273, footnote 12).

8 The text of the *Nara Document on Authenticity* is available under www.icomos.org/charters/nara-e.pdf (accessed 02/20/2022).

9 The text is available under http://openarchive.icomos.org/id/eprint/1763/ (accessed 02/20/2022).

10 On the motives and media staging of the iconoclastic destruction of the Bamiyan Buddha statues see Falser 2011 and Mersmann 2021.

11 Sayyed Mirza Hussain's statement is documented in Christian Frei's film *Im Tal der Großen Buddhas* from 2005.

12 The most important meetings of the Bamiyan Expert Working Group took place in Orvieto (2013), Munich (2016), and Tokyo (2020).

13 In 2004, rescuing the remains of the Bamiyan Buddha statues began under the direction of ICOMOS (see Petzet 2009).

14 Georgios Toubekis is a researcher at the Aachen Center for Documentation and Conservation at the Faculty of Architecture, RWTH Aachen University in Germany and Matthias Jarke Professor of Information Systems at the same university; Michael Jansen is director of the Research Center Indian Ocean (RIO) at GUtech, a privately-owned German University of Technology in Oman.

15 Claudio Margottini (hab. full professor of engineering geology) is scientific and technological attaché at the Italian Embassy in Cairo (Egypt), adjunct professor at the UNESCO Chair of the University of

Florence, and president of the Scientific Advisory Body of GEOAPP, a spinoff of the University of Florence operating in the field of engineering geology. His team includes Andrea Bruno, Nicola Casagli, Giacomo Massari, Heinz Rüther, Filippo Tincolini, and Veronic Tofani.

16 Andrea Bruno is an Italian architect specialized in the architectural conservation of historic buildings, museums, and public sites. For 40 years, he served as an architectural consultant to UNESCO. In this function, he visited the destroyed heritage site of the Bamiyan Buddha statues and collected photographs from it. Already shortly after the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas in 2001, he presented a proposal to compensate for the missing physical images by placing two-dimensional photo representations on fiberglass panels in the niches.

17 "Digitalization of an element is essential to classify, restore and reproduce an artwork, by creating digital replicas of original pieces through a non-invasive way" (Margottini et al. 2020: 303).

18 The raw shape of the figures was first carved out of the sandstone cliff; for the fine design, a superficial layer of mud-mixture was applied.

19 The team members are affiliated with the Public Collaboration Center at the Tokyo University of Arts, the School of Architecture at Mukogawa Women's University in Nishinomiya, and the Research Institute of Cultural Properties at Teikyo University in Tokyo, and include Shigeyuki Okazaki, Noritoshi Sugiura, Aya Yamaguchi, Masaaki Miyasako, Kazyua Yamauchi, Kenji Tamai, Shigeo Aoki, and Takashi Inoue.

20 In Latour's typology of iconoclastic gestures, type D defines icon-smashers who are "breaking images unwittingly." While trying to protect them from destruction, they are accused of image destruction in retrospect (Latour 2002: 28f.).

21 The proposal describes that "[t]he axis line connecting the entrance gate, the assembly hall, and the amphitheater will intersect at a right angle to the cliff line at the center of the West and East Giant Buddha niches" (https://www.mukogawa-u.ac.jp/~bamiyan/whole_image/whole_image.html) (accessed 02/25/2022).

22 This is well exemplified by the proposal by Margottini et al. (Margottini et al. 2020: 299 ff.).

23 This displacement of posticonoclastic heritage is demonstrated by Margottini's proposal for the recreation of the Eastern Bamiyan Buddha statue in Carrara, Italy, and its shipping to Afghanistan.

24 Iconem is a startup company founded by Yves Ubelmann in 2013. It is specialized in the digitization of endangered cultural heritage sites in 3D. Its team "travels the globe, combining the large-scale scanning capacity of drones and the photorealistic quality of 3D to create digital replicas of our most treasured places, record them for future generations, and champion them today." (https://iconem.com/en/ accessed 11/18/2023) Cf. also Michel/Ubelmann 2019 on the destroyed heritage of Palmyra and the issue of virtual and physical reconstruction.

25 The replica of the arch was created by the Oxford Institute for Digital Archaeology.

26 The copy of the arch was publicly exhibited at Trafalgar Square in London (2016), at the City Hall Park in New York (2016), and in Washington D. C. (2018). In 2017, it was presented at the World Government Summit in Dubai, U. A. E. and the G7 summit in Florence, Italy. In 2019, it was exhibited in Geneva to commemorate 20 years of the Second Protocol to the Hague Convention and in Bern during the 70th anniversary of Switzerland's commitment to UNESCO. See http://digitalarchaeology.org.uk/media for more information and image documentation.

27 The Syrian Arab News Agency has reported that the Russian restoration works for the archaeological Arch of Triumph in the city of Palmyra have started on November 12, 2021 (https://sana.sy/en/?p=229304 accessed 11/18/2023).

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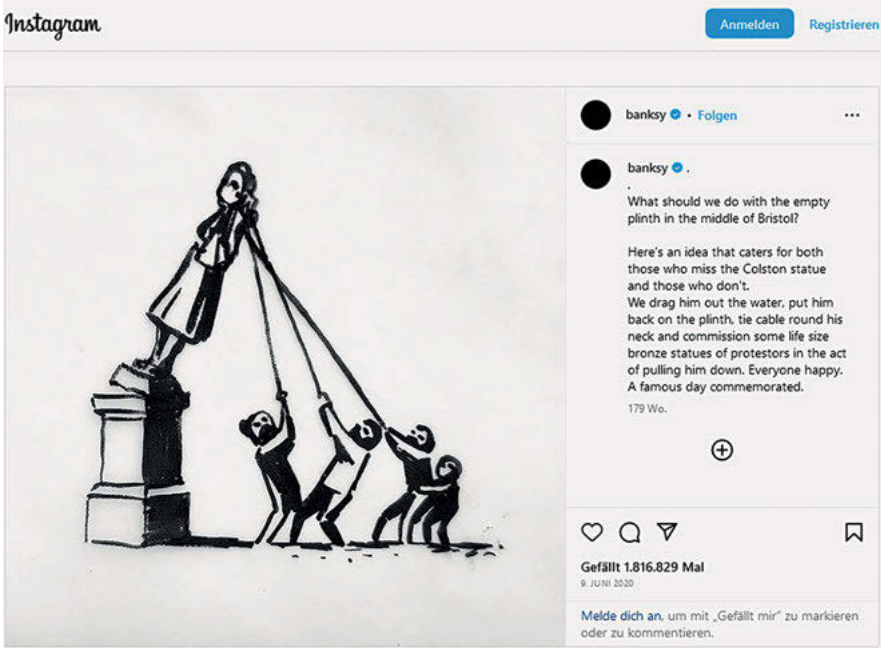
MARTIN SCHIEDER

"What should we do with the empty plinth?"

On the Art of Toppling Statues

An inherent problem of monuments is that, at least in Western cultural concepts, they are created with eternity in mind, yet their interpretation, or the interpretation of what they represent, changes over time and indeed can turn completely upside-down. This explains why not only the erecting of monuments but also their toppling is an integral part of our memorial culture. What we are generally left with is an unoccupied pedestal. "What should we do with the empty plinth?" asked Banksy on June 9, 2020 in a message posted on *Instagram* during the controver-



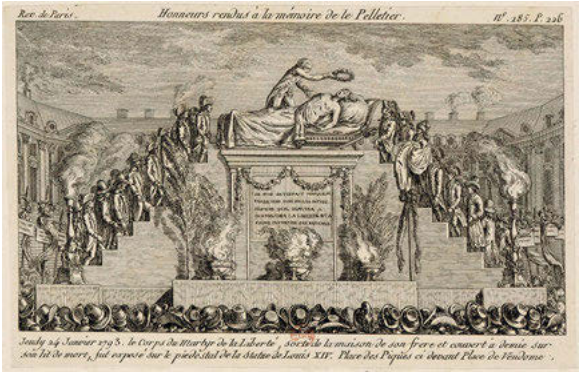
1 Banksy on Instagram (June 9, 2020), What should we do with the empty plinth in the middle of Bristol

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110773576_012

sial debate over the fallen statue of slave-trader Edward Colston in Bristol (Banksy 2020). By way of a suggestion, the artist provided a sketch showing the actual toppling of the statue as a monument (Fig. 1): "Here's an idea that caters for both those who miss the Colston statue and those who don't. We drag him out the water, put him back on the plinth, tie cable round his neck and commission some life size bronze statues of protestors in the act of pulling him down. Everyone happy." A few weeks later, on the empty plinth in Bristol, Marc Quinn erected a black resin and steel sculpture of Black Lives Matter activist Jen Reid, her fist raised in the Black Power salute that she had given on the newly vacated pedestal. The very next day, on the morning of July 16, however, *A Surge of Power* was taken down by Bristol's city council.

The toppling of a monument is an act of iconoclasm, indeed vandalism, in which an artwork is not infrequently damaged beyond repair. Somewhat paradoxically, this act opens up the option to reoccupy the empty plinth, because the empty pedestal is rarely intended to remain as a void of memory. Instead, it is re-used as a neutral carrier material. Thus, since antiquity, emptied pedestals have often been used to carry the new idols and gods. As early as Pliny the Elder reports in his *Naturalis historia* (book XXXV, chap. 2) about the characteristic of iconoclasm in ancient Rome, in which the old heads would only be replaced by new ones—"statuarum capita permutantur (Kiilerich 2014)." During the French Revolution, the pedestals of the monarchy's toppled monuments served as a stage for the heroes and martyrs of the Revolution (Fig. 2); (see Tauber 2009). And in contemporary Berlin, the pedestal of the former national monument to Emperor Wilhelm I at the Palace square was chosen as the site for the Monument to Freedom and Unity, the so-called "Swing of Unity" (*Einheitswippe*)!

If we look at the recent past, it can be observed that artists are increasingly taking possession of the empty pedestals. It enables them, through a new work of art, to depict the symbolic act of destruction as a specific phenomenon of memorial culture, to break out of historical patterns of behavior, develop a counter-narrative or to create a freeze-frame between remembered history, a lived present, and an imagined future. How, then, does the surface of a violently evacuated plinth foster artists' creativity, engagement, and participation? Although, society,



2 Anonymous, Tribute paid in Memory to Louis-Michel Le Pelletier, on the pedestal of the toppled monument of Louis XIV on January 24, 1793, etching, 12,1×18,3 cm

politics, media, and academia are currently taking a high interest in the toppling of statues, hardly any attention has been paid to the question of how artists today appropriate, transform, deconstruct or re-enact such events (see Gamboni 1997; Skissernas Museum 2018).[1] What artistic possibilities, strategies, choreographies, and displays does the toppling of statues open up? Starting from these questions, this essay will attempt to show how contemporary artists turn the toppling of statues into subject of art. What follows is not concerned with representations of iconoclasm and the tearing down of monuments of the kind familiar to us from the Protestant iconoclasts or the French Revolution, whose main aim was to bear witness to the act of iconoclasm for both present and posterity. This classical pictorial tradition persists in our own era, in which photography, television, and, more recently, social media in particular have assumed the function of medialization and *autopsía*. Rather, the aim here is to take a few selected examples of monument topplings that have occurred in connection with Islamism, Black Lives Matter, post-apartheid, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and German-German reunification and to discuss different typologies of artistic appropriation and transformation. Banksy's sophisticated question makes it possible for art and science to reflect on the meaning of the empty pedestal as a specific *lieu de mémoire*.

Reconstruction

Three thousand years ago, Nineveh (present-day Mosul), on the River Tigris, was a major center of the Middle East. It is thought to have been built by King Nimrod, who, the book of Genesis reports, "migrated to Asshur and built Nineveh." Henceforth, the monuments and cultural artifacts of the Assyrian metropolis survived war and dynastic change until falling victim to the terrorism of the so-called Islamic State in March 2015. The world looked on—or away—in horror as the terrorists released videos of themselves on the Internet destroying countless objects in the city and museum of Mosul with sledgehammers and pneumatic drills to cries of "Allahu Akbar." A few weeks later, another video was disseminated on the Internet, this time showing the ancient Assyrian city of Nimrud being blown up and utterly destroyed. UNESCO director general Irina Bokova described this act as an "attack against the Iraqi people" and "the systematic destruction of humanity's ancient heritage," amounting to a war crime (UNESCO 2015). The dissemination of these images of destruction on social media is part and parcel of the Islamic strategy of "Digitally Mediated Iconoclasm," which comprises three phases: the iconoclastic act itself, the documenting of this act, and its digital archiving (Zarandona/Albarrán-Torres/Isakhan 2018).

Among the works destroyed was the so-called *Lamassu of Nineveh*, a winged bull with a human countenance that was revered in the ancient Middle East as a guardian spirit. Nearly three thousand years after the sculpture was installed at the Nergal Gate in around 700 BC, the face of the gatekeeper figure was destroyed with a jackhammer in a matter of seconds. The video begins with a photograph of the British excavation of the statue in the nineteenth century, accompanied by the comment "Worshippers of Satan" in Arabic. In slow motion, in order to heighten the effect, the video then shows the statue fracturing under the blows. In the view of

Markus Hilgert, director of the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin, the political message behind the destruction of this World Cultural Heritage site was about implementing the Islamic prohibition of images before the eyes of the world: "To attack these works of art is to attack the Western concept of exhibiting artifacts and the tradition of conservation and archaeology per se. To attack Iraq's pre-Islamic heritage is to attack the Iraqi national identity" (Brockschmidt 2015). Regardless of religion or ethnicity, every Iraqi, argues Hilgert, identifies with the antiquities of the Assyrian Empire and derives a sense of identity from the ancient cultures of Mesopotamia.

The issue of ancient Middle Eastern cultural heritage acquires additional relevance through its historical circumstances, for another aspect of Nineveh's and Nimrud's past is that the discovery of the ancient cities by the British archaeologist Austen Henry Layard in 1845 lent modern Assyriology a decisive momentum. Almost simultaneously, in 1841, Charles Barry erected the last of four plinths in the northwest corner of his remodeled Trafalgar Square. Originally intended to support an equestrian statue of William IV, the fourth plinth was to remain unoccupied due to a lack of funds. Eventually, in 1999, the Royal Society of Arts initiated the "Fourth Plinth Project," which made the pedestal available for the display of works by contemporary artists for a fixed period of time. Among the invited artists were Hans Haacke and Yinka Shonibare, while the artist selected for the 2018 to 2020 slot was the Iraqi-American Michael Rakowitz, who installed a scale model of the *Lamassu of Nineveh* (Fig. 3), accurate in every detail, in which a steel framework was clad with empty Iraqi date syrup cans. These cans alluded to the human and economic catastrophe caused by the Iraqi wars; Iraqi dates are among the best in the world and were the country's second-largest export after oil until Iraq lost this important source of income as a result of war and sanctions. For the reverse of his sculpture, Rakowitz researched the cuneiform inscription on the wall of the Nergal Gate, which was obscured by the statue standing before it. This panegyric describes the protective function of the *Lamassu*: "It was Sennacherib, King of the World and King of Assyria, who reconstructed the (inner) and outer walls of Nineveh, raising them to mountain height."

3 Michael Rakowitz, The invisible enemy should not exist (Lamassu of Nineveh), 2018, 10.500 Iraqi date syrup cans, metal frame. Commissioned for Trafalgar Square's Fourth Plinth, London

The *Lamassu* on the Fourth Plinth is part of a long-term project named "The Invisible Enemy Should Not Exist" in which, in order to draw attention to the identity-forging significance of the lost cultural heritage, Rakowitz has, since 2006, sought to reconstruct every Iraqi artifact listed since the fall of Saddam Hussein as missing, looted, or of unknown status. Against this background, the statue immediately assumes a multilayered symbolic function. It is a reaction, possessing considerable popular appeal, to the iconoclasm and image-hatred of the Islamic terrorists. Rakowitz explains in an interview that, for him, it is a commitment, "and it's one that will outlive me and my studio, unfortunately, because there are over 8,000 artifacts that are still missing from the Iraq Museum alone" (Rea 2018). At the same time, he sees the reconstruction of the lost cultural heritage as "a placeholder for the thousands of human lives that have gone missing and can't be reconstructed" (Codrea-Rado 2018). There is, he claims, a direct connection between his sculpture and the millions of refugees currently fleeing from Iraq and Syria: "But then I understood that for many people these were the surrogates for those Iraqis, for those lives that had been lost" (Rea 2018). And finally, Rakowitz is commenting on the historical role of British Islamic and Oriental studies, so closely bound up with British colonial politics. He has had to revise his opinion of the British Museum, where items of Middle Eastern cultural heritage are conserved, since learning from the Iraqi archaeologist Donny George, former director of the Iraqi National Museum, how foreign museums had intervened since 2003 to save half of all Iraqi antiquities. Following the Islamist looting, the British Museum and other institutions throughout the world had adopted—as quasi refugees—artifacts that could not be returned to insecure homelands. "This is not to excuse or to be an apologist for any of those questionable circumstances under which things were attained," explains Rakowitz, "but it shows the way that meaning shifts and the way that we as people end up in different places as well" (Rea 2018). With this in mind, it is no accident that Rakowitz's ephemeral monument stands with its back to the National Gallery, facing southeast toward its spiritual home in the Middle East.

Fragmentation

In a certain sense, the white cube can also serve as an empty plinth. Visitors to Haroon Gunn-Salie's debut solo exhibition, *'History after Apartheid'*, at Johannesburg's Goodman Gallery in summer 2015 were plunged into present-day South Africa and the struggle for its cultural heritage, dominated by colonialism and apartheid. Within the clinical white space of the gallery, they were given an almost haptic grasp of a strife-ridden nation's quest for its historical identity. Mounted on the walls were luminous, indeed blood-red, hands in sculptural form holding a hat, a scroll, a scepter (Fig. 4). Titled *Soft Vengeance*, this variable multipartite installation originated within the context of the *Rhodes Must Fall* campaign in Johannesburg, when students demonstrated for the removal of the Cecil John Rhodes statue from their campus, which finally happened on April 9, 2015. The focus of the campaign was on what should be done with the symbols and monuments of South Africa's white-dominated history. Many statues were toppled by the activists or smeared with red paint to draw attention to the nation's colonial heritage and injustices of the past, which endure to this day.

4 Haroon Gunn-Salie, Soft Vengeance, 2015, reinforced urethane, Installation, Goodman Gallery, Johannesburg, 22 August—19 September 2015

Gunn-Salie had originally planned an "act of vandalism towards memorials" but then realized that his concept had been usurped by the *Rhodes Must Fall* campaign. He even went as far as to distance himself from the acts of iconoclasm. "In the current violent context in South Africa, I realised I had to respond in a non-violent way. Vandalism was out of the question. I did not want to engage with symbolic violence at all" (Coussonnet 2015). Twenty years after the end of apartheid, he has written, the vital task was to foster a new South African identity through the transformation of public spaces and by "challenging autocratic symbols of the past, without destroying them." South Africa's many squares and public spaces have been purged of the very "symbols of the trauma of the people" that would have served as reminders of the injustices of the past (Dunbar-Curran 2015). Against this background, Gunn-Salie sees his installation as both a contribution to the national memorial culture and a critical position on the *Rhodes Must Fall* campaign. His evocative sculptures are based on the "bloody" hands of statues of the five historical figures at the center of the public debate—five men who made a decisive contribution to the founding and perpetuating of South Africa as a European settler colony and thereby to the racial segregation and oppression of South African society. These men are the Portuguese Bartolomeu Dias, who in 1488 became the first European to step foot on the southern tip of the continent of Africa; Jan van Riebeeck, who in 1652, on behalf of the Dutch East India Company, established the first Dutch settler community; Paul Kruger, who was elected the first president of the Boer state in 1882; Carl von Brandis, who used exploitative working practices to develop the gold and diamond mining industries; and Cecil Rhodes, who in 1890 developed his imperialistic vision of South Africa as prime minister of the British colony. By focusing on the hands of

these sculptures that carry such a historical burden—making moulds of them, casting them in urethane, painting them red—Gunn-Salie is ascribing a particular symbolic power to them: "These leaders of the past, who stand entrenched in statues, monuments, and memorials, both symbolically and through the legacy of undemocratic history, have blood on their hands" (Dunbar-Curran 2015). The sight of these fragments on the walls brings the past to mind in a very particular way, claims the artist, as they evoke "the 'ghosted' presence unseen beyond the gallery wall." The detached hands represent an "appropriation and a re-articulating of disquieting symbols of preceding power" and are at the same time a "reflection on what their legacy has engendered today" (WAM Museum 2015). The South African critic Lwandile Fikeni cuts to the chase even more explicitly. For him, the "bloody" hands "point to the ways in which white South Africa created its wealth and the ways in which it maintains it till this day. This blood also points to the legitimacy of the grievances of the *#RhodesMustFall* student movement (. . .) and the many other black student uprisings, which have exhumed the skeletons of history which bind their feet and their hands" (Fikeni 2015).

No doubt it is important to place Gunn-Salie's *Soft Vengeance* within the context, no more than sketched out here, of post-apartheid visual culture, analyzed by Annie Coombes in 2003 in her book *History after Apartheid* as "different models of historical knowledge and experience (. . .) in public culture" that are reflected in "a variety of material visual means—in monuments, museum narratives, the reanimation of particular sites and spaces, and through contemporary fine arts" (Coombes 2003: 11; see Robbe 2018: 398–415). But in its painted surfaces and fragmentation, the installation also alludes to the act of iconoclasm per se. In virtually no other political ritual is the power of images as apparent as in the toppling of monuments, in which the body of a ruler is destroyed twice over: firstly, an end is brought to that ruler's power by the *executio in effigie*, in other words a symbolic decapitation *in absentia*; secondly, by means of this symbolic tyrannicide, the political system represented by that ruler is extinguished forever from collective memory by the *damnatio memoriae*, that is, the complete erasure of any means of commemorating the person. This explains why the toppling of statues almost always follows the same unwritten choreography. The ritual begins with the selection of a heavily symbolic statue and the act of tearing it down, whereby the monument is robbed of its erectness and dignity. It is then decapitated; even during the Calvinist iconoclasm of 1561 it was said that no figure should be left with its head attached, exactly as if it were a saint of flesh and blood. Finally, head and torso are dragged through the streets, derided, spat upon, smeared with paint or daubed with defamatory words, and in the process definitively robbed of their aura. Following this fragmentation and displacement, the empty plinth is reoccupied. In this sense, not only does Gunn-Salie's *Soft Vengeance* respond to post-apartheid iconoclasm in South Africa; in its fragmentation and defacement, it also alludes to the anthropological ritual of monument toppling.

Counter-Monument

"But what should happen to the dislodged statue and the empty base?" asked the *New York Times* on August 21, 2018, the day after *Silent Sam*, a Confederate monument that had stood

on the campus of the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill since 1913, was toppled by activists. Leaving Confederate monuments in their original place with explanatory information is as little a solution as translocating them to a museum—the authors declare apodictically. In the first case, the monuments have become "totems for a resurgent white nationalist movement," and in the second, pedagogical concerns are prioritized over "the experiences of African-American residents," continue the authors, and suggest for this reason that "the most effective way to commemorate the rise and fall of white supremacist monument-building is to preserve unoccupied pedestals as the ruins that they are—broken tributes to a morally bankrupt cause" (Kytle/Roberts 2018; see Clinton 2019).

Since the racially motivated Charleston church shooting on June 17, 2015, a debate, both necessary and emotional, is taking place in the USA over the removal of the country's countless Confederate monuments and memorials. In 2017, Baltimore (Maryland) was also caught up in the debate.[2] The city's Wyman Park Dell was the site of a double equestrian statue of Confederate generals "Stonewall" Jackson and Robert E. Lee by the sculptor Laura Gardin Fraser, dedicated sixty-nine years before, in 1948. The almost four-meter-high bronze figures record the legendary meeting of the two generals of the Army of Northern Virginia during the Battle of Chancellorsville in May 1863 (see Osborne 2017). Two quotations run around the plinth. Lee is reputed to have said of Jackson, "Straight as the needle to the pole Jackson advanced to the execution of my purpose," while Jackson in turn swore, "So great is my confidence in General Lee that I am willing to follow him blindfolded." The inscriptions are positioned in such a way that on the front of the monument, which faces west, the last word of the one quotation, "purpose" combines with the first two words of the other so as to read, "purpose so great." According

5 Pablo Machioli, Madre Luz, Baltimore, Maryland, 2017

to the inscription, the Jackson-Lee monument was the gift of J. Henry Ferguson of Maryland, owner of the Colonial Trust Company and suspected to be the descendant of white slave-owners (see Osborne 2017). To the adherents of white supremacy and the Lost Cause, these Southern States generals are heroes of their racist ideology. Thus, the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy used to gather at the monumental sculpture to celebrate the generals' birthdays, on which occasions they would salute the Confederate flag. Following the right-wing extremist Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville on August 11–12, 2017, the purpose of which was to prevent the removal of the city's Robert E. Lee monument, activists in Baltimore sprayed "Remember C-Ville" in large letters on the west side of the plinth, "Black Lives Matter" on the north side, and "Honor History" on one of the steps in front of the monument. And on August 13, in front of the generals, the artist Pablo Machioli installed a larger-than-life-sized papier-mâché sculpture of a black female slave with a raised fist, which he named *Madre Luz* (Fig. 5). In Spanish, *dar a luz* means "to give birth." The slave's breasts are bare and on her back she carries a child wrapped in cloth, while her pregnant belly bulges over her white paper skirt. Alluding to the inscription around the monument, visitors wrote comments on the white surface such as: "love is triumphant," "this new purpose is so great!" and "down with white power."

Elizabeth P. Baltes has analyzed *Madre Luz* as "counter-monument":

> Positioned directly in front of the Lee and Jackson monument in Baltimore, the black female figure stood on the same level as the viewer, defiantly intruding into the viewer's space. Its style, pose, gender, colour, and material stood in stark contrast to the traditional bronze equestrian statues. (. . .) Madre Luz successfully changed the way viewers engaged with the Confederate monument behind it—at least for a time (Baltes 2018).

And indeed, for a moment, these two statues of very different design and with very different messages stood facing one another: a bronze equestrian statue intended to last for eternity and the statue of a woman made of ephemeral papier-mâché; male versus female, two representatives of the white elite in dialogue with a black slave. For this precise reason, the latter radiated immense power. During the night of August 15–16, she *witnessed* a monument being toppled at the orders of the city council and *saw* the two Southern States generals being dismantled and carried away, only to take their place herself!

That very same day, Machioli, with the help of other activists, placed *Madre Luz* on the now unoccupied plinth (see Podue 2017). For a moment it looked as if the slave had triumphed over her oppressors. Yet this self-same symbolic message resulted in the toppling of *Madre Luz* that very same afternoon at the hands of an unknown white objector. This in turn unleashed a vehement reaction: "She looks like a woman, a Black woman. And I think that this is really symbolic of how I feel, Black people feel in this country. And it's like we're always knocked down" (WMAR-2 News 2017). On the recommendation of the Special Commission to Review Baltimore's Public Confederate Monuments, however, the dismantled Jackson-Lee monument is to be given a new home, along with other Confederate statues, at the former Chancellorsville battlefield, preserved by the American Battlefield Trust. Indeed, most of the removals of the re-

cent past were not a direct reaction to vandalism, but were decided by state, regional, and municipal authorities. To avoid protests from monument opponents and supporters, most removals were unceremoniously carried out in the middle of the night. But *What Should be Done with Civic Monuments to the Confederacy and Its Leaders?* asked *Civil War Times Magazine* in October 2017, inviting scholars and journalists to discuss the issue. Their responses covered the spectrum—from retain to remove, from counter-monument to monument park, as in former socialist states. But none suggested simply leaving the pedestal empty (see Civil War Times Magazine 2017).

Montage

A specific form of memorial culture is practiced by the Lithuanian artist Indrė Šerpytytė, whose work interrogates her country's relationship with its Soviet past and post-socialist present. On the basis of her own painful memories of the violent Soviet occupation of Lithuania, which resulted in a number of family members being deported or killed, the artists searches in archives for historical documents that she then projects onto the present. For her serial work *Pedestal* (2016), she was inspired by a visit to Grūtas Park in southern Lithuania, a private initiative in which close to a hundred Red Terror and Stalinist statues, dislodged from their pedestals during the course of the *Singing Revolution*, have found, as it were, their final resting place. This is an example of the sculpture parks that emerged during the process of so-called de-Russification in various former Eastern bloc countries as a way of presenting the statues and symbols of the former occupying power. While other examples include the Memento Park in Budapest and the Maajamäe Monument Park in Tallinn, it is interesting to note that in the reunited Federal Republic of Germany, every attempt to instigate a similar musealization of toppled socialist monuments in the former GDR has so far failed (see Schieder 2019). The Lithuanian statue park, otherwise known as "Stalin's World," opened in 2001 in order "to provide an opportunity for Lithuanian people, visitors coming to our country, as well as future generations to see the naked Soviet ideology which suppressed and hurt the spirit of our nation for many decades" (Gruto Parkas 2023).

In Grūtas Park, Šerpytytė felt she had been transposed into a "kind of Disneyland," and all the more so as mock watchtowers rose up out of the forest as if these figures idolized in the past were not only on show but were being guarded, prisoner-like, in order to ensure that none of them escaped. After becoming aware from her own photographs of the park that none of the statues had a plinth any more, Šerpytytė began researching the statues in the archives:

> Where and how did they stand before, what environment were they in, what did they mean to social, political, and family life? (. . .) I wanted to compare the monuments' present location with where they stood during Soviet times. (. . .) All the big events revolved around these platforms, they were the center of life. Previously, life revolved around them but now they are consigned to the margins (Čepaitė 2017).

6 Indrė Šerpytytė, Pedestal (Neckerchiefs), 2017, ink on vinyl and dibond (archival image courtesy of Lithuanian Central State Archives)

And so Šerpytytė began creating a montage of the color photographs of the uprooted heroes of Communism she had taken in Grūtas Park and historical black-and-white photos showing the original sites of the statues of Lenin and Co. along with the people who were the protagonists of, and witnesses to, these political events. At first glance, the upper and lower halves seem to form a coherent picture, but the artist has carefully cropped the historical photographs so that of the monuments only the plinths can be seen, apparently supporting the dislodged statues in Grūtas Park (Fig. 6). Thus, the photo collages bring together past and present in a dialectical interplay. The contrast between color and black and white reveals the dichotomous life of the statues (veneration on the one hand; oblivion on the other) and marks the historical caesura between yesterday and today that is so difficult to recall: "In my work I treat photography as an emotional expression rather than a documentation process," explains Šerpytytė. "Through my images I attempt to reconstruct my inherited memory in the attempt to make the past more tangible. By rebuilding the inherited history, I try to reclaim it" (Harding 2016). For the artist, memory represents an individual form of engaging with the past, despite being aware that many of her compatriots are forgetting or else, in a process of amnesia, fading out the Soviet past, which, after thirty years of independence, remains all too present. In Lithuania, which, like the other Baltic states, is moving towards the West, there is a reluctance today to remember what once was. "I am convinced that many people only learned what really happened after my exhibition. The Iron Curtain descended during the Soviet era, and we ourselves then decided not

to talk about the past." Against this background, the toppled monuments act, for Šerpytytė, as symbols of the ideology of the past, whereas in themselves the historical events of the monument takedown were of no consequence; even though this was a moment when people gave expression to their long-repressed emotions. At the same time, she warns that as a result of not wanting to remember the Soviet past, people could once again turn to the veneration of old or new idols: "I'm very interested in explaining what a pedestal actually is. People always want to adore, to exalt someone, to put that person on a pedestal" (Čepaitė 2017). If we talk about history, time is a decisive criterion, explains Šerpytytė, referring to Jacques Le Goff's essay *Faut-il vraiment découper l'histoire en tranches?* (2014).

Image Reversal

An idyllic fir grove in Grūtas Park is also the resting place of Nikolai Tomski's Lenin monument that was erected in Lukiškės Square, Vilnius, in what was then Soviet Lithuania, in 1952.[3] Forty years later, on August 23, 1991, after Lithuania had regained its independence, the people pulled down the statue. In his video *Once in the XX Century* (2004) (Fig. 7), the artist Deimantas Narkevičius uses found footage from the Lithuanian National Radio and Television archive and from a freelance journalist to re-/deconstruct the historic takedown in seven minutes and 56 seconds. In the early 1990s, images of falling and dangling statues of Marx, Lenin, and Stalin in the countries of the former Eastern bloc went all around the world. In a sense, they were visual symbols of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the failure of the communist utopia. Perhaps the most familiar example is known to us from the film *Good Bye, Lenin!* (2003), directed by Wolfgang Becker, where in the key scene of the film a helicopter is transporting a dismantled statue of Lenin, flying over Karl-Marx-Allee in East Berlin. Yet in Narkevičius's video, the Lenin monument is not pulled down but put back! The viewer sees a jubilant and expectant crowd of people. An old truck is struggling through the screen with the statue weighing tons. When a

7 Deimantas Narkevičius, Once in the XX Century, 2004, 16 mm film transferred to video (color, sound), 8 min.

crane hoists the statue over the heads of the people from the truck into place on the plinth—where, oddly enough, the ideologue's boots are already in place—, an enormous cheer breaks out and everywhere one looks, the Lithuanian flag is being waved. The Lithuanian flag? How can that be?

By means of a simple trick, Narkevičius seems to transpose the historic film clip from the past into the present: he runs the film backwards! By reversing the images, he on the one hand questions the credibility of any media-based representation of historical events, which can always be subject to, or indeed is intended to serve, the purposes of manipulation. On the other, he deconstructs our chronological conception of history and the distinction it makes between past, present, and future. By, as it were, resurrecting the fallen idol by means of film editing, and allowing him to slip back into his old boots, Narkevičius is also drawing attention to the dangers of the personality cult and the veneration of political symbols, and invites the viewer to confront the unresolved, suppressed past. All of a sudden, Lenin's rhetorical gesture towards the future becomes a pointer to the past. Narkevičius is for this reason critical of Grūtas Park, which he sees as conducting a kind of "entertainment on the past." Instead, he argues in favor of leaving the Soviet statues in place as symbols of the "the folly of humanity" (Narkevičius/Clark 2006). His film loop is intended to allude to history's tendency to repeat itself, and for this reason the *XX* in the title *Once in the XX Century* can also be read as a placeholder for whatever year one cares to mention.

Monument toppling is a historical phenomenon, a tradition that stretches back through millennia. Although iconoclasm may look like a "radical measure to correct history," when all is said and done it is simply a manifestation of the "interchangeability and emptiness of ideological symbols and rituals" and can contribute neither to an individual reprocessing of the past nor to collective memory (Richter 2006; see Schmidt 2008). Monument toppling is only seen as a logical reaction in times of political upheaval, but it follows an understanding of history that excludes any more in-depth analysis. "Everyone seemed to think that removing these objects would lead to immediate changes in society," explains Narkevičius (McLean-Ferris 2014). Monuments may be symbols of oppression but they are also carriers of history. In light of this, Narkevičius condemns the post-socialist iconoclasm. Within the context of the exhibition *Skulptur Projekte Münster 07*, for which he planned in 2007 to either dislocate the 40-ton Karl Marx monument created by the Russian sculptor Lev Kerbel from Chemnitz, the former Karl-Marx-Stadt, to Münster or to make a copy of it, he explains his project as follows:

> Removing monuments from the central squares of eastern European cities is like soft-focusing or distorting historical developments in art and politics. For a new generation of artists and citizens, it is barely comprehensible that for 45 years, freedom of personal expression and any criticism of the prevailing ideology was not tolerated. The Social Realist monuments are an intrinsic part of the era in which they originated (Narkevičius 2007).

What should we do with the empty plinth? It would require a transdisciplinary research project to extensively grasp the creative potential monument toppling opens up for artists, as well as the aesthetic languages, political relevance, global dimension, and cultural diversity their pro-

jects develop. The case studies presented here can only exemplify how monument takedowns open up a potential for artists to examine the power of old symbols or memorial cultures that have previously been silenced or repressed, and to deploy their art in breaking open traditional patterns of thought and historical patterns of behavior. In an age in which political systems are collapsing, societies are being shaken by the ideological distortions and nations as well as individuals are fighting for their identity and cultural heritage, artists comment on the toppling of the idols of the past—through fragmentation or deconstruction, through re-enacting or dislocation, through political engagement or an ironic wink. Nevertheless, it is striking that virtually no artists question the toppling of statues per se; instead, they simply focus on the symbolism of the dislodged statues. At the same time, it is striking that hardly any artist is reflecting on the fallen monuments as works of art (bearing witness to fellow artists from times past) that have been irretrievably destroyed by the act of iconoclasm. Not without good reason, Ai Weiwei leads us to consider whether perhaps every toppling of a monument contributes to amnesia: "I think public statues are like a seal, or some mark on history. We have to respect our memory, but learn from our mistakes" (Adams 2021).

I would like to express my thanks to Rickie Lynne Giesel for her extremely valuable support.
Translation: Richard George Elliott.

Notes

1 On the modern alienation between monument and pedestal, see Springer, Peter (1987), Rhetorik der Standhaftigkeit. Monument und Sockel nach dem Ende des traditionellen Denkmals, Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch 48–49, pp. 365–408.
2 Thus, in the case of the Jackson-Lee monument as well, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake appointed a Special Commission to Review Baltimore's Public Confederate Monuments to develop proposals on what to do with the Confederate monuments (Special Commission to Review Baltimore's Public Confederate Monuments 2016). Although the commission's recommendation (among others) that the Jackson-Lee monument be removed was made back in January 2016, the Baltimore City Council only voted to take it down on August 15, 2017—presumably as a reaction to the events in Charlottesville four days previously.
3 The sculptor Nikolai Tomski was also responsible for the Lenin statue in East Berlin-Friedrichshain that was taken down in 1992.

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HAUKE OHLS

Econoclash

The Transformation of Habitats through Ballast in Contemporary Art

An econoclash is a brief pause and reflection in the face of news about humans' ongoing destruction of the 'natural' environment. Climate change, mass extinction, and pollution are some of the most urgent crises of our time and the subject of image production. Mass media images are usually based on strategies of isolation and maximum impact: on the one hand, this blurs potential connections and relegates the structural problems to the background. On the other, it also means that many transformations do not consciously resonate with the broader public, since they do not produce such images. Artworks, on the contrary, have the potential to open up this limited view through the issues they address and, even more, through the process by which they are created. They have the potential to produce an econoclash and thus epistemic images. These images are the result of a clash that is not easy to perceive; classifying them entails ambivalences. The word "econoclash" is a compound of several terms, which makes clear how widely ramified and nested the reflection on the relationship between culture, nature, and the production of images through art is. "Econoclash" initially contains "ecology" and "iconoclash," subsequently "ecoclasm" and "iconoclasm," and thus evokes the connection of ecological themes in art with a visual representation in the broadest sense based on collision and transmutability.

This essay analyzes a long-term artistic project in which econoclashes have crystallized into artworks. The diverse discourses that inevitably emerge when the poetic realization of an econoclash coalesces into a work of art are crucial. Maria Thereza Alves has been working on *Seeds of Change* since 1999, which is composed of several individual projects, each associated with a different site. As another econoclash, the conclusion of this essay contains a reference to Simon Starling's *Infestation Piece (Musselled Moore)*, a sculpture that he created—or rather allowed mussels to create—from 2006 to 2008. Both examples are, each in their own way, diametrically opposed to the fast-moving flood of images of isolated events.

What Is an Econoclash?

As mentioned above, it is necessary to bring several terms together if artworks are to show what results from the transformation of habitats and what subtle processes are associated with this.

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110773576_013

The term "ecology," as originally defined in 1866 by Ernst Haeckel, refers to the reciprocal relationships that living beings require in their environment for their continued survival, in other words the connections they make with other biotic and abiotic entities (Haeckel 2020: 286 ff.). A definition of this kind inevitably poses a problem of demarcation because, depending on the point of view, any number of processes on the planet would have to be included in ecology, which is why a variety of attempts have been made to define the term more precisely.[1] With regard to the econoclash, the openness of Haeckel's understanding of ecology is advantageous, since it covers processes that initially seem entirely disparate. In addition, along with ecology, it is possible to include the concept of "economy" in the term "econoclash"; both ecology and economy share the same ancient Greek root "oikos". Economic trade is, as will become clear several times in the essay, a major driving force of ecological upheavals.

The second main point of reference—the iconoclash—also has a broad scope. The term "iconoclash" (itself a compound word) was introduced by Bruno Latour for an exhibition he co-curated in 2002 at the ZKM (Zentrum für Kunst und Medien) in Karlsruhe. In the accompanying catalogue, Latour makes a very general distinction between three types of representation: religious, scientific, and artistic.[2] Within these three categories, a cascade of images emerges, whereby each image always leads to the next one (Latour 2002: 66). "Iconoclash" is therefore not synonymous with "iconoclasm," but a turn to images in constant flux that refer to one other. Moreover, it is not possible to say whether an iconoclash is destructive or constructive. In this context, the term "image" is not limited to a pictorial representation but refers to any mediation that provides access to something outside itself (Latour 2002: 10). The iconoclash draws attention to the mediators, and its images are to be interpreted as such (Latour 2002: 70).

The term "ecoclasm" has not yet been comprehensively defined. Charlie Blake and Patrice Haynes, for example, associate it with Félix Guattari's "ecosophy" and demand a renewed turn towards materiality for the humanities (Blake/Haynes 2014: 3; Guattari 1994: 12–22). In a completely different context, the English linguist Frederick Parker-Rhodes used the term "ecoclasm" several times in a lecture he gave at the fourth annual meeting of the Biometric Society in Boston in 1951: "At present the activities of man are producing an ecoclasm for almost all organisms, but this has not had time to take effect." (Parker-Rhodes 1952: 178) It is impressive that, already in the early 1950s, Parker-Rhodes warned of humanity's impact on the environment and its anticipated long-term effects. As he saw it, ecoclasm is the destruction of niches within nature, causing species to disappear. At the same time, however, he also points out that an ecoclasm for one group can have the opposite effect on another (ibid.). Destruction thus always implies new creation. But this cannot be considered balanced, since the new niche contains less biodiversity than the previous one. In this regard, the term "iconoclasm" brings aspects of violence and collision into the econoclash. It is not sufficient to merely refer to the constant change of images contained in the term "iconoclash"; it requires a subtle level of destruction on which the econoclash takes place and which artworks make visible through their images.

The econoclash is therefore to be located in an in-between area; it is an ambiguity that produces images of 'natural' processes, which themselves produce images of, for example, the transformation of habitats. They enable us to reflect on the human and non-human processes directly and indirectly involved in them and how to determine the ecology of these images. In

this respect, these econoclashes are far more forceful than the individual fates and superficial imagery of catastrophes. They are nearly marginal images (in Latour's sense) of transformations through clashes and reciprocal relationships that lead to new transformations and thus to new images. In doing so, they make a wide range of experiences possible. What follows from the interstitial space of the econoclash is the activation of the audience, which is forced to think.

This makes it possible for an artwork to be a medium of knowledge and for the econoclash to be the content of that knowledge: the econoclash can be related to Timothy Morton's observation that absolute statements are a hindrance in the age of anthropogenic climate change, which is why he introduces the term "truthfeel" (Morton 2018: 14). The danger of apodictic statements lies either in their denial (a narrative of right-wing populist to nationalist parties worldwide) or in a dystopian pessimism that humanity has already destroyed its own foundations for life. Both disrupt the momentum of necessary action. In another publication, Morton has referred to this dichotomy as a "hyperobject": climate change is too encompassing in its temporal and spatial extent to be fully grasped by human consciousness (Morton 2013: 99 ff.). An econoclash starts mediation by creating new images within the ecological sphere. In various aesthetics, notably in Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's *Lectures on Aesthetics* (*Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*), works of art have been given an intermediate space. For the German philosopher, artistic works have a status that goes far beyond mere sensual representation and thus objectification; they participate in the (subjective) sphere of the Absolute Spirit (*absoluter Geist*), in which the experience of truth can occur (Hegel 2016: 56 ff.). This truth generates itself from the mediation, a mutual negativity that finally dissolves. The work of art, however, has an ambiguous status here. Neither entirely in the objective nor strictly in the subjective sphere, it stands as an intermediate link in the space that bridges the sensual and the spiritual (Hegel 2016: 60). With the potential of an ontological difference, works of art provide a special place for reflection.

Econoclashes that only become visible due to artworks (slowly) produce a sequence of images, each of which is framed in a polyphony of themes. In the context of Alves's and Starling's works, these are of the seafaring kind and, more specifically, involve the use of ballast (solid or liquid) to stabilize ships. This, in turn, is closely linked to capitalist trade relations and ecological imperialisms and invasions.

Solid Ballast: Sand, Seeds, Plants, and Their Invasive Imperialisms in Seeds of Change

> Ballast plants are a prime example of the fact that much of what we regard as natural is actually the result of human action in the past; they are living testimony to our ancestors' behavior and to the close relationship between natural history and cultural history. (Burström 2017: 98)

It is impossible to estimate the exact amount of ballast transported in the history of seafaring: During the *Age of Sail* alone, which spans the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, several million tons of ballast crossed the oceans and was continuously replaced (ibid.: 14). Some of the earliest archaeological evidence that a ship carried ballast comes from a shipwreck in the Bronze

Age, but ballast must have been used for stability since the beginning of seafaring (Buckland/Sadler 1990: 114).

"Ballast" refers to all materials that do not belong to the actual cargo of the ship and must be carried in addition to freight to ensure the vehicle's maneuverability. In the era of wooden sailing ships, it consisted mostly of sand and stones or other (natural) materials that were sufficiently available at ports. Depending on the weight of a ship's cargo—people as well as goods—ballast had to be added. For example, one of the most famous ships in history, the *Mayflower*, with 180 deadweight tons, required around 133 tons of ballast (ibid.: 120). The great English sailing ships of the eighteenth century, the *East Indiaman*, with 400 to 1,200 tons total weight, relied on 100 to 300 tons of ballast (Burström 2017: 14).[3]

Ballast was often added at the port of departure and removed from the ship at the port of arrival. Since illegal dumping quickly clogged the shipping channels, official "ballast sites" were introduced in ports and "ballast masters" hired to monitor them (ibid.: 11). The materials that accumulated on ballast sites could thus be reused by other ships, and they were also used to build houses and roads and to fix foundations. The constant recycling of the ballast led to an ongoing exchange; materials from different places were continually recombined. This exchange, however, left some materials at the new site, when, for example, the solid ballast had to be completely replaced after a certain period of time due to hygienic reasons (ibid.: 19) or when the port of destination had a trade surplus and ships could sail with less ballast. Later, ballast sites were closed after the reconstruction of port facilities or simply forgotten. The exchange of ballast created a "secondary redistribution pattern" that became established alongside the trade in goods; after several millennia of maritime trade, ballast has permanently changed the landscape of port regions around the world (Buckland/Sadler 1990: 116 f.).

The use of ballast as a (mostly unnoticed) concomitant material of capitalist trade and the slow but continuous change it initiates make it a typical carrier of an econoclash. Contrary to the intentions of how ballast has been treated, i. e., as a serviceable surplus that requires considerable manual labor, it can by no means be called a "passive material," as with it "arthropods, mollusks, and plants" leave ports and continents (Lockwood/Hoopes/Marchetti 2013: 76).

Maria Thereza Alves's project *Seeds of Change* focuses on vegetation: the artist draws our attention to the migration of plants whose seeds can survive in solid ballast and germinate in a new place, sometimes even establishing themselves and becoming 'native' flora over time.[4] In her project, the visualizations Alves generates of these processes become tangible in their full extent when applying the concept of "econoclash." Alves began the long-term project in Marseille in 1999 and has since carried out a total of seven research projects as well as five associated projects.[5] Alves usually starts by searching archives for former ballast sites. On this basis, she creates a tableau with photographs and texts that provides stereoscopic insights into the genesis and consequences of shipped ballast for the respective port. In addition, Alves takes soil samples from possible ballast sites and tries to get the seeds they contain to germinate in order to subsequently identify the plants. The artist emphasizes that "*Seeds of Change* does not duplicate scientific work within an 'art' context but rather contributes with original research" (Alves 2015: 75). Her projects consist of new ways of understanding and describing a place and combine scientific and historical methods with artistic-poetic approaches. The insights gained

cannot be adequately explored through discourses such as aesthetic research or an epistemology of practice (Haarmann 2019). Rather, Alves's research cuts close to the production of knowledge by revealing marginalized perspectives and creating counter-archives, which can increasingly be observed in contemporary art (Holert 2020: 59).

In some cases, attempts were made to complete the projects with community gardens consisting of ballast plants; this was planned in Marseille, for example, but the city's then newly elected right-wing government prevented the construction of a ballast garden near an immigrant neighborhood (Alves 2008: 39). Reactions such as these already reveal the political dimension of ballast and the living beings transported in it. Richard William Hill, referring to *Seeds of Change*, speaks of a "potent space" resulting from the "intersection between botany and ideology," as the presence of supposedly "foreign plants" establishes a direct link to the (forced) migration of a country's colonial history (Hill 2018: 275). Ballast is not a mere allegory but an index of history: "It is a material record waiting to be brought to life if we can gather the cultural and botanical resources to see it." (ibid.: 289) The concept of the econoclash ensures that ecological consequences are also considered. The ballast sites detected by Alves, the archival records, her photographs of places and plants, and especially the new plants that have grown as a result of her research exemplify the course of history with all its associated events. An approach of this nature echoes Walter Benjamin's historical materialism, in which a single artifact holds the potential to abruptly bring forth the course of history from a marginalized perspective (Benjamin 1991: 271–274).

The tableau *Seeds of Change: Marseille* was created from 1999 to 2000 and consists of seven photographs, a copy of a letter from 1816 in which a ballast site is mentioned, and a map of Marseille's harbor area (Fig. 1). Each of the numbered images is accompanied by a short text in a documentary aesthetic common to all the *Seeds of Change* tableaus. The texts show, for example, that Marseille was already engaged in maritime trade in the Mediterranean around 600 B. C. and involved in the slave trade in the thirteenth century, and that the ballast depot

1 Maria Thereza Alves, *Seeds of Change: Marseille*, 1999–2000

Bassin de Carenage had an official entry in 1855, subsequently disappeared from the maps, but was uncovered again due to the construction of a new car tunnel (Alves 2015: 81).

The *Seeds of Change* entry on Alves's official website includes a sort of "additional reading" list of three scholarly articles addressing the slave trade in Europe and the associated sea routes. It is far from the case that maritime trade, and thus the redistribution of ballast, necessarily involved slaves—much of the trade took place within Europe or in the Mediterranean region (Campling/Colás 2021: 31–34). However, the connections between capitalist imperialisms, settler colonialism, and slave trade are topics Alves wishes to address with her work: the former ballast sites she investigates are places where ships that previously sailed the Middle Passage and were involved in the slave trade also unloaded their ballast.

One of the essays recommended by Alves deals with the high profitability the French overseas slave trade achieved in the eighteenth century: by the end of the 1780s, France had succeeded in becoming the largest long-distance trading nation in the world, and this was mainly because the French slave, colonial goods, and plantation system was more efficient than the English one (Daudin 2004: 144 f.). French merchants known as "outfitters" collected capital and gave out promissory notes in return. The first voyage of the infamous triangular trade was to the colonies of West Africa to exchange French products for slaves, followed by an ocean crossing to the West Indies, where colonial goods or raw materials were traded with the plantation owners and the loading and unloading of ballast became a part of every port stopover. In France, slaves and colonial goods were traded by the same merchants; in England, this was largely separate, resulting in a higher volume of empty voyages "in ballast" (ibid.: 146–150). Nevertheless, French ships also had to carry ballast, which was then unloaded at the various ballast sites, for example in the port of Marseille. The exchange of ballast and the stories that emerge from the seeds transported within that ballast are the overriding concern of Alves's *Seeds of Change* projects.

However, it should not be assumed that the triangular trade was the norm or proceeded without interruptions, rescheduling, and additional trips. This becomes clear from two other texts, one by Kenneth Morgan and another by R. B. Sheridan, that Alves includes on the reading

2 Maria Thereza Alves, *Seeds of Change: Bristol*, 2007

list on her website. Both examine the British overseas slave trade at the time of the Empire; one of them explicitly studies the port where Alves conducted another research project, *Seeds of Change: Bristol*, created in 2007 (Fig. 2). The tableau likewise consists of photographs and text, as well as a cut-out map of Bristol and the Avon to its mouth in the Bristol Channel. As Morgan was able to show through the shipping patterns he analyzed for Bristol, during the height of the Empire in the eighteenth century, Bristol was the second most important port in England after London. In addition, Bristol was a fundamental part of the British slave trade until the 1740s, but was then superseded by Liverpool (Morgan 1989: 509, 517).[6] Seafaring merchants tried various strategies to avoid inefficient travel in ballast. Instead of triangular trades, three-fifths were direct routes between two ports; in addition, there were the so-called "multi-routes," which usually involved two or three additional ports, but there could also be "pentagonal, hexagonal, or even more complex routes," as well as "roundabout routes" between ports in the Americas, when waiting for goods for the ocean crossing was necessary (ibid.: 512–520). Sheridan attempts to dispel the "prejudice" of frictionless triangular trade as early as 1958; according to him, this pattern only existed in early Caribbean slave and colonial goods trade (Sheridan 1958: 250). Several aspects are responsible for this, but a crucial one is the development of a credit system based on promissory notes that brought cheap money into this inhumane economic system. These so-called "bills of exchange" became the most valuable cargo for British merchants on the return voyage to their home port; the lack of weight due to solid cargo then had to be made up with ballast (ibid.: 253). Shipping patterns and busiest routes, which depended on goods availability, demand, exchange rates, and weather conditions such as wind determined the exchange of ballast between ports and thus between continents (Morgan 1989: 520). This is one of the marginalized aspects that Alves's econoclash makes visible. It becomes clear that there is no imperative causality in the distribution of ballast and the plants that (possibly) germinate from it. For example, seeds from West Africa and the West Indies were not necessarily found in Marseille, Bristol, or Liverpool—but they could be. Moreover, the interconnections through trade are manifold, so that mankind has created with its capitalistic endeavors a contingent (cultural) system that is the hyper-accelerated version of natural distribution mechanisms. The addition of the ecological perspective through the econoclash highlights the entanglements of the 'cultural' and the 'natural' and shows the extent to which the artwork is intertwined in these discourses.

Alves's photographs of harbor sites in *Seeds of Change: Bristol* refer to documented or potential ballast sites, including Wapping Quay, where botanists have detected "non-native flora growing on ballast," and Grove Quay, where *Amaranthus albus* was found, a plant from North America (Alves 2015: 113). There are also six photographs of members of the local community involved in the work, residents of Bristol whose task was to reactivate the seeds from the soil samples taken from the (potential) ballast sites. For this, it is crucial to know that plant seeds can survive for centuries in the soil, depending on the species, and then germinate under favorable conditions—these can be created by active planting and breeding but also by habitat disturbance, such as water, fire, excavation, or animal grazing (Heli 1996: 176). Emerging from the Bristol soil samples was an "Argentinean and a Portuguese plant, which linked the Bristol-based adventurer Sebastian Cabot with the Anglo-Portuguese slave trade in Brazil" (Fisher 2008: 8).

3 Maria Thereza Alves, *Seeds of Change: A Floating Ballast Seed Garden*, 2012–2016

Some of the participants from the local community were themselves from the regions where the plants had their original habitat.

The hybrid project of historical-archival, botanical, postcolonial, and artistic research resulted in a follow-up work titled *Seeds of Change: A Floating Ballast Seed Garden*. This work consisted of a barge moored in Bristol Harbor from 2012 to 2016 and planted with seeds from documented ballast sites (Fig. 3). The barge could be entered by visitors who then found themselves surrounded by lush greenery. All seeds that germinated on the barge came from sites where centuries, possibly millennia, of commercial trade are condensed. This trade included the domestic shipping of agricultural goods, which is one of the threshold moments from feudalism to commercial capitalism, and the distribution of coal along the English coast on bulk carriers, one of the threshold moments to industrialization (Campling/Colás 2021: 59–65). Likewise contained within the seeds is one of the darkest moments in human history, the institutionalized slave trade and colonialism's exploitative practices. As a visual metaphor, the barge has the potential of establishing an authentic site of memory because the plants could have been present in the form of seeds during one of the crossings. This, however, is only one (direct) level of this project, which is neither verifiable nor particularly crucial, because metaphors are vivid ideas with an intrinsic ambiguity (Huss 2019: 292–299).

The planted *Seed Garden* and the other *Seeds of Change* projects visualize aspects of human culture that have been forgotten, repressed, insufficiently considered, or even leveled. Alves photographs unnoticed areas, wasteland, and places covered over by construction. These

places can still be located, and they contain remnants from the time when the European states dominated the world with their wooden merchant marines and fully formed capitalism based on imperialism (Wood 2017: 147–165). Alves adds another layer to her projects through her focus on plants. As autotrophic entities, they do not depend on other living beings, because they derive their energy from sunlight. This makes plants a metaphysical and factual 'before' and the shapers of the environment into which all animal life, including Homo sapiens, enters as an 'after'. Since plants (the cyanobacteria as the first living beings capable of photosynthesis) created the atmosphere and the oxygen we breathe, Emanuele Coccia considers them the necessary starting point of any philosophy and the prototype of "In-der-Welt-sein" ("being-in-the-world") (Coccia 2020). From the beginnings of the land creatures to the capitalist maritime trade networks of modern times and Alves's *Seeds of Change* projects, everything is based on an ecology with plants.

A final and essential aspect of Alves's *Seeds of Change* projects is that much of the photographed, specified, and cultivated plants may seem familiar to viewers. The schizophrenia of native and non-native, how these distinctions change over time, and what prejudices, ideologies, or racisms accompany them are recurring reference points in art historical research on *Seeds of Change* (Fisher 2008: 36; Hill 2018: 282 f.; Lukatsch 2021: 238; Fowkes/Fowkes 2022: 155). Many of the plants Alves identified in ballast sites in England had arrived on the island in the eighteenth century through intensified trade, but represent a supposedly 'authentic' flora of the island. The distinction between native and non-native in Alves's *Seeds of Change* can certainly be understood allegorically, so that from the ballast plants and their exchange through colonialism and capitalism, one can infer the forced migration of people, thus opening up debates about cultural identities and their respective construction.[7]

Native and non-native is not only a distinction made for humans, on the basis of which (right-wing) populism or open racism is played out. This distinction also occurs in biological taxonomies and causes controversy here, as well: books like *Invasion Ecology*, which analyzes how "invasion patterns" of (non-human) living beings come about through human influence, operate with the term "non-native" (Lockwood/Hoopes/Marchetti 2013: 25). The authors, however, use the term in a more specific way to describe species that, due to human intervention, are outside their 'natural' range, which they were not previously able to leave due to geographic boundaries, or were only able to leave through dispersal mechanisms of geological dimensions. Human distribution patterns are "faster, more dynamic, more complex ecologically and genetically, and often encompassing a larger geographical scale" (ibid.: 29). Moreover, there is a direct correlation between a nation's trade volume and the number of non-native species in its habitats (ibid.: 39). The European ports studied by Alves have a significantly higher proportion of previously non-native species in their flora and fauna due to their intensive global trade relations. The term "invasive" is used by the authors only when the newly introduced species has a negative impact on the ecosystem, meaning that other species are displaced. A negative impact is forty times more likely to happen with non-native plants—but it only takes about 100 years for a species to change its status from non-native to native (ibid.: 10 f.). Here, it becomes clear once again just how constructed the demarcation of a cultural and natural sphere is. Alves's econoclash is not only the visualization of this topic, but a condensed summary of the various,

in part opposing discourses, which can only be brought together through the artworks and the images they produce.

In order to avoid the discourse of "native" and "non-native" being used for identity politics, Karrigan Börk has proposed the term "guest species": this ensures a clearer view of the possible positive consequences for the 'host' ecosystem (Börk 2018).[8] In this context, Tomaz Mastnak refers to a different historical process, namely that the valuations of native and non-native were reversed at the time of colonial conquests, which is why he calls for a "botanical decolonization." In settler colonialism, native plants were considered undomesticated in the 'New' World, and so conquerors had to import their non-native plants to secure food supplies (Mastnak 2014: 367). The native plants were dependent on human cultivation to provide a benefit, and if this did not succeed, they met the same fate as the native people and were replaced (ibid.: 375).

The contextualizations of Börk and Mastnak are revealing in terms of the ideological charge given to a topic like the (desired and undesired) migration of plants. With *Seeds of Change,* Alves occupies precisely this interstice of imperialist aspirations and colonial arbitrariness in the attribution of positive and negative characteristics, as well as the unintended concomitants of capitalist trade, namely the distribution of plants through seeds that can then determine the landscape, or at least be reactivated as witnesses to the imperialist processes. As Alves gathers information and germinates soil samples, the entire project operates on a subtle level of calling attention to and decolonizing marginalized processes. The extent to which ballast plants can have an ideological component is made clear by the fact that in Marseille, the creation of a garden was prohibited, while in Reposaari, Finland (another site of a *Seeds of Change* project), the plants introduced by ballast were known to the inhabitants, who had already been cultivating them for some time (Alves 2015: 87).

When an artistic project is defined as an econoclash, the agency of the non-human comes to the fore. This is closely related to a critical posthumanism that Rosi Braidotti calls "*zoe*/geo/techno framework": a mediatized, non-human materialism that seeks to adopt a geological and grounded scale (Braidotti 2019: 122–152). What follows for *Seeds of Change* is that, as a first step, the focus should be on the migration of plants and their influence on old and new habitats, together with the changes they bring about. After that, a productive reconnection can take place that pays attention to the mutual influence—the reciprocal coexistence in the ecology and the ever-new images produced by it. This kind of posthumanism is neither a denial of the human subject nor an affirmation of an entirely horizontal ontology. Rather, it is about recognizing the reciprocal effects of how plants, through a human construct such as capitalism, migrate intentionally and unintentionally, but at the same time, how the migration of humans and their colonial 'successes' (which gave rise to capitalism in the first place) also depended significantly on plants.

The term "ecological imperialism" was coined to describe these mutually dependent effects. In his still much-cited monograph on the subject, Alfred Crosby shows the extent to which imperialism is a team success of humans and other living beings that have evolved together—in an ecological understanding—since the Neolithic Revolution (Crosby 2004: 293). Crosby coined

the term "portmanteau biota" for this, the "collective name for the Europeans and all the organisms they brought with them" (ibid.: 270). The idea behind this argument is that a symbiotic relationship had developed on the Eurasian continent due to the close connection between humans, animals, and plants, which produced pathogens as well as resistances. Imperialist efforts were successful in those areas with a similar climatic zone to Europe, which had been separated from the Eurasian continent for a long time and were settled by migrations in the early days of mankind, in the Paleolithic. There were "two waves of invaders of the same species, the first acting as the shock troops, clearing the way for the second wave, with its more complicated economies and greater numbers." (ibid.: 280) By "clearing the way," Crosby means eradicating the large land mammals in the Americas and Australasia, which led to a transformation of the ecosystem; following Parker-Rhodes, this could also be described as "ecoclasm." In the age of "nautical globalization" (Sloterdijk 2013: 77–81), when the 'New' World was 'discovered', the indigenous inhabitants had no defense against the pathogens of the Neolithic Revolution. Moreover, plants carried by Europeans, including seeds in their ship ballast, were able to spread rapidly in the new habitat because they too had evolved in another ecosystem (Crosby 2004: 152). The word "weed" is often used for plants with these characteristics; as an unspecific term, it simply means that the plant spreads quickly and outgrows others: the (European) weeds introduced to the Americas or Australasia transformed the soil such that subsequently, the settlers' domesticated plants could be better planted (ibid.: 169).[9]

What follows for *Seeds of Change* is that the ballast plants, the supposed 'non-natives', sometimes also called weeds, are just another facet of a global exchange. It has a paleontological dimension, but can be brought into a direct line of connection with European imperialisms, which were based on ecological advantages. The ballast plants in European ports are just another aspect of these global upheavals instigated by Homo sapiens. *Seeds of Change*'s econoclash makes this tension obvious: constant changes in habitats result from a global network of processes in which the dichotomy of nature and culture is hardly discernible. Finally, how this development has been transformed once again in the age of neoliberal hypercapitalism, and what type of econoclash follows from it, is analyzed in the following conclusion on the basis of Simon Starling's *Infestation Piece (Musselled Moore)*. In this context, the change from solid to liquid ballast in seafaring is crucial.

Conclusion. Liquid Ballast and Mussels in *Infestation Piece (Musselled Moore)*

With his work *Infestation Piece (Musselled Moore)*, Simon Starling produced another econoclash (Fig. 4). Over an eighteen-month period from 2006 to 2008, he kept a steel replica of Henry Moore's *Warrior with Shield* from 1953–1954 submerged in Lake Ontario. Originally created for the exhibition *Simon Starling: Cuttings [Supplement]* at the Power Plant in Toronto in 2008, *Infestation Piece (Musselled Moore)* is today installed in the collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario. The exhibition space has a window facing Lake Ontario and is close to the Henry Moore Sculpture Centre at the Art Gallery of Ontario, which houses his bronze *Warrior with*

4 Simon Starling, *Infestation Piece (Musselled Moore)*, 2006–2008

Shield. During the period underwater, Starling's steel replica rusted and was colonized by mussels, after which it was exposed to heat to dry the shells and treated with resin to slow down the decaying process (Golovchenko 2020: 17 f.).

Starling's intention with the artwork was to unite several narratives: for him, it's a confrontation with fellow countryman Henry Moore, whom he by no means regards as artistically important for his own approach, but is "the first English artist to have a truly global career and one that reached its peak in the early days of the Cold War." Starling sees him as a "catalyst for a number of investigations into contemporary issues" (Starling 2013: 646 f.). He also admits that *Infestation Piece (Musselled Moore)* could be seen as "iconoclastic" but that he is "not really concerned with destroying Moore's work but rather augmenting it" (ibid.: 647). Furthermore, Moore's *Warrior with Shield* came to Toronto in 1955 on the recommendation of English art historian Anthony Blunt, who was the director of the Courtauld Institute in London as well as a Soviet spy (Starling 2016). In addition, the Canadian city had approved a public fund for Moore's sculpture *Three Way Piece No. 2: Archer* from 1964–1965, which led to opposition from national forces because he was a foreign artist. As a result, the sculpture, now a city landmark, was purchased with private funding (ibid.).

The mussels that populate Starling's *Infestation Piece (Musselled Moore)* carry overtones of the Cold War and a distrust of 'foreign invaders', while also referencing unintended transformations of habitats through capitalist trade. Starling refers to the dense shell clusters as "zebra mussels," which were first introduced to North America in the last days of the Soviet Union,

when international trade between the two world powers began to intensify (Starling 2013: 647).[10] Zebra mussels are highlighted as an invasive species par excellence, as their rapid spread in a new ecosystem has been repeatedly observed. The first zebra mussels are believed to have been introduced to Lake Erie in the mid-1980s; within three years, they had become established in all of the five Great Lakes—and thus Lake Ontario as well (Benson 2014: 10). The mussel species are thought to have a less than positive impact on their new habitat, or at least an ambivalent one, as they physically outgrow native mussels, which can no longer absorb enough nutrients. (Lockwood/Hoopes/Marchetti 2013: 233). Due to their sheer mass, they also filter a greater amount of water, causing an overall alteration in water quality; this can lead to an "invasional meltdown" resulting in further habitat changes (Bennett 2020: 233). Starling had the replica made of steel, as bronze is a toxic material for this mussel species and affects their ability to attach to a surface (Kobak 2014: 334). The 'natural' habitat of zebra mussels is the Ponto-Caspian Basin (Black Sea, Sea of Azov, and Caspian Sea), from where they spread to Europe in the nineteenth century through canals and maritime trade routes (Karatayev/Burlakova/Padilla 2014: 696). Starling does not consider this latter aspect in the description of his work because, after all, the mussels could have migrated to North America from another European port outside the Soviet Union in the mid-1980s.

What is certain, however, is that the zebra mussels arrived in the Great Lakes through ships with (liquid) ballast tanks. The switch from solid ballast such as sand to liquid ballast, namely water, occurred with the rise of steamships in the 1860s (Campling/Colás 2021: 219). Due to the much higher manufacturing costs of steamships, they continued to compete with wooden sailing ships for several decades, but this finally ended around 1930 (ibid.: 238). Regardless of the wind direction, transportation by steam and now diesel ships became more scalable, leading to a global fragmentation of the value chain. The respective balancing of the weight of the container ships takes place automatically and without human labor, in each case by taking on and discharging water. This is done on a far higher scale than during the Age of Sail, on the one hand, because international trade has increased exponentially, and on the other because transportation by container ships follows a completely different logic: while sailing ships made a round trip from a few ports, a container ship has between 10,000 and 50,000 transactions annually in various ports, where removed cargo is replenished (ibid.: 258). There are estimates that 10,000 species are transported in ship water ballast each day, and approximately 80 % of all marine invaders have arguably arrived unintentionally with liquid ballast (Lockwood/Hoopes/Marchetti 2013: 40). The fact that the replica of *Warrior with Shield* is overgrown with mussels representing current international trade has a productive dimension that includes the changes in marine logistics and geopolitics in the twentieth century.

These brief remarks on Starling's artwork are intended to show how the idea of an econoclash could be taken further in different contemporary artworks. Both *Seeds of Change* and *Infestation Piece (Musselled Moore)* produce images in the sense of Latour's expanded understanding of the image, which he introduced to determine an iconoclash. Moreover, a cascade of images inevitably continues, leading to transformations on several levels: first, there is actual alteration of 'images' through the artistic process. In the case of Alves's projects, it is the germination of plants whose seeds are reactivated; in Starling's work, it's the colonization by mussels

of an art-historically famous Henry Moore sculpture, which lends it a completely different visual appearance. Both artworks also, however, carry ecoclastic dimensions, while new niches are created by the ecological changes. The images that the econoclashes produce are thus also generated by a collision and not merely by continuous change.

A key difference between the artworks is that in Alves's *Seeds of Change*, the potential for ever-advancing change is inscribed, as the newly cultivated ballast plants are allowed to grow in the new habitat, whereas Starling's sculpture changed unobserved over a period of eighteen months, after which an attempt was made to preserve it in its altered condition. The focus, however, should clearly be on broader transformations. The econoclash creates images in the minds of its recipients, allowing them to participate in processes that would otherwise remain hidden from them. These two examples are about the reciprocal ecology of humans with their environment. It is not simply a matter of human constructs such as colonialism, imperialism, and capitalism affecting non-human beings; in some cases, the latter create the very conditions humanity and its constructs require to survive. In a subsequent step, non-human beings show the (unintended) effects caused by humans. Artworks as econoclash thereby offer a translation of these disparate processes on a scale that is manageable for the human mind.

Notes

1 Haeckel had based his concept of ecology on Charles Darwin's research; as subjects in the natural science began to be differentiated, it added not only new definitions but also new fields of research, so that "ecology" became an umbrella term (Begon/Howarth/Townsend 2017).

2 The demarcation of the three types of images is vague and a division into these three separate areas has probably never existed. Developments in contemporary art in the twenty years since the catalogue was published make a separation between "art" and "science" even more difficult.

3 For sailing ships, the greater the freeboard (distance from the waterline to the deck) and the higher the masts, the more ballast is needed for stabilization.

4 *Seeds of Change* has been described as an "extension of her earlier active engagement in ecological issues," as Alves worked early on at the intersection of postcolonialist activism and eco-justice (Fisher 2013: 8). As a child, due to the military dictatorship in Brazil, she moved with her parents from her birthplace in São Paulo to New York and became politically involved in indigenous rights; regarding her commitment to climate change, for example, it can be pointed out that she co-founded the Green Party in São Paulo in 1987 (de Llano 2015: 32 ff.). The connection between migration and ecology in her projects has been repeatedly explained with reference to the artist's personal history (Lukatsch 2021: 227; Demos 2016: 159).

5 Each of the seven research projects is titled *Seeds of Change* along with the city and year: Marseille 1999–2000, Reposaari 2001, Liverpool 2004, Exeter and Topsham 2004, Dunkirk 2005, Bristol 2007, Antwerp 2009/2019. Associated projects include: *Seeds of Change: A Floating Ballast Seed Garden* from 2012 to 2016 in Bristol; *Seeds of Change: A Garden of Ballast Flora* in 2019 in Leuven; *Seeds of Change: Marseille, a video* from 2009; *Seeds of Change: New York: A Botany of Colonization* in 2017; and *Seeds of Change: A Ballast Flora Garden*, also in New York, in 2018.

6 As mentioned earlier, Alves also produced a *Seeds of Change* work in Liverpool. The texts in the tableau specify the surplus profits that could be made by trading only slaves versus colonial goods: it

took "4–6 ships of colonial goods" as an equivalent for one slave ship, so the faster trip in ballast from the colonies to England was preferred and an enormous amount of ballast was unloaded in Liverpool (Alves 2015: 99).

7 This level is one of the central aspects of Alves's *Seeds of Change* and has accordingly been frequently discussed in the research; this is also the reason why this essay employs a different type of consideration in interpreting the artworks, in order to address certain aspects that have received less attention. This does not, however, mean that debates about identity are not crucial.

8 In a *Nature* article supported by 18 of his colleagues, Mark Davis also called for a focus on impact rather than origin. In their view, the debate about native and non-native species in biology is still too much determined by outdated stereotypes and lines of argumentation from the Cold War (Davis 2011). In an essay, Maja and Reuben Fowkes analyzed artistic projects that deal with non-native and invasive species respectively. The artworks address how, for example, introduced species become cultural symbols of identity or how supposedly invasive plants help repair post-industrial wastelands (Fowkes/Fowkes 2021).

9 Crosby's influential text has been repeatedly criticized for overemphasizing environmental factors, which are instead "background influences on historical processes" (Beinhart/Hughes 2007: 10–13). Crosby has also been accused of "ecological determinism"; for a summary of such criticism, see Bennett 2020: 231 ff.

10 It is not possible to verify from the available information whether the mussels attached to the sculpture are indeed exclusively zebra mussels and not quagga mussels, another invasive and more widespread species in the Great Lakes.

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STEPHAN SCHWINGELER

Attacking the Surface

Iconoclasm as Artistic Strategy in Video Game Art

Academic discussions of video games have largely failed to consider the relevance of video games in an artistic context. In this contextual space, however, completely new forms of gamespace and gameplay emerge that critically challenge the medium. Artists deconstruct, defamiliarize, and disrupt the games and thus expose their operating modes. This is accomplished through iconoclastic strategies that attack the games' (audio-)visual surfaces. In a sense, the video games are stripped and their structures laid bare and made visible. The results may even lead to the creation of paradoxical artifacts—namely unplayable, dysfunctional games.

In this essay, I will first discuss the different artistic strategies that developed historically in the context of video games as source material. Second, I will introduce *SOD* (1999) and *Untitled Game: Arena* (1998–2001), both created by the Dutch-Belgian artist couple JODI. As I will demonstrate, in terms of their artistic style and the strategies they employ, these artworks draw on earlier works. Opacity and transparency will play a key role in the discussion, as media strive for immediacy (transparency) while generally referring back to themselves and their mediality (opacity).[1] Media artifacts constantly oscillate between these two extreme states, which are thus co-dependent. The medial and material qualities of video games are supposed to remain invisible to, and unnoticed by, their players. Accordingly, a key artistic strategy is to disrupt the video game's aspiration to immediacy and to highlight its medial characteristics.

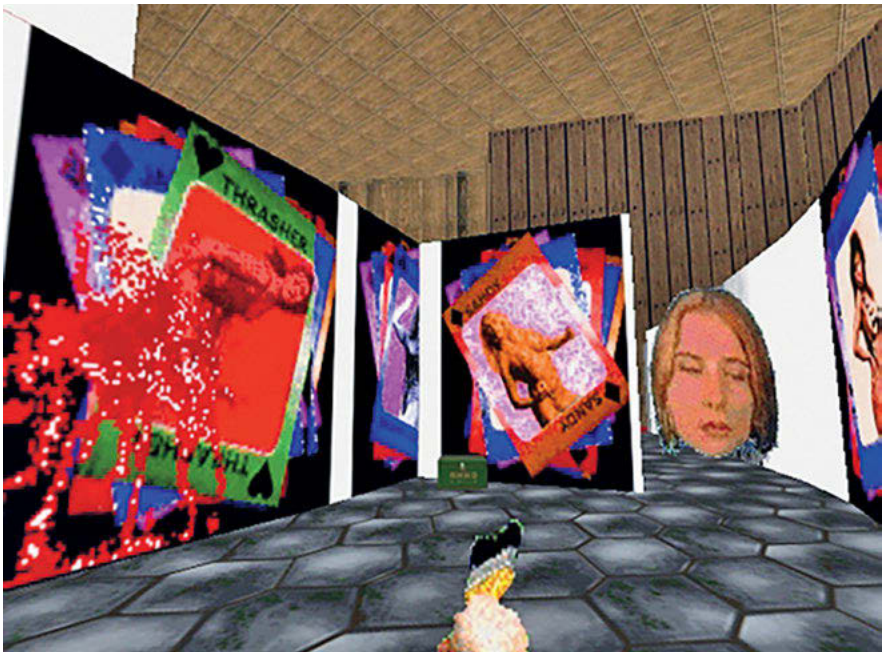
The concept of disruption will be central to the following observations. The term perfectly describes the appropriations and modifications of the source material I will discuss below, as these artistic interventions disrupt the successful reception of the artifact, in many cases in an iconoclastic manner.[2] The shift from transparency to opacity thus becomes a consciously implemented artistic strategy, which Bertolt Brecht might have included in his concept of "alienation." (Brecht 1961, 1967) These strategies allow artists to quite literally make the medium visible—even as they attack its visual surface. The medium becomes *obstinate*, as it no longer operates or functions the way it *should*.[3] Whereas media generally "operate beyond the threshold of our perception," disruption spotlights the medium in question (Rautzenberg 2009: 154; Krämer 2003: 82).

https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110773576_014

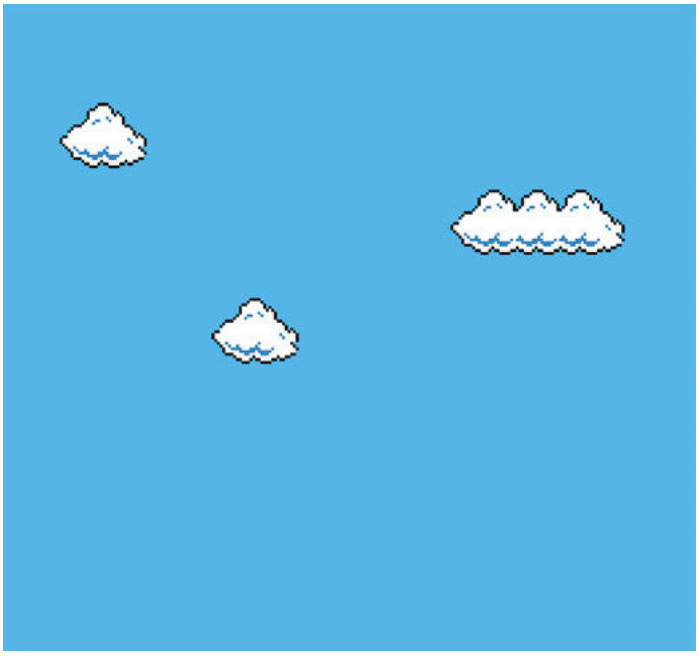
Artistic Strategies: Attacking the Visual Surfaces

Different artistic strategies may be identified in computer game art, illustrating the various ways in which artists treat computer games as source material. A first strategy could be termed *redecoration of the source material.* This strategy describes the modding of existent video games and their audio-visual interfaces, as is the case in the total conversion in *Arsdoom* (Fig. 1), which became the first video game modification in an art context.

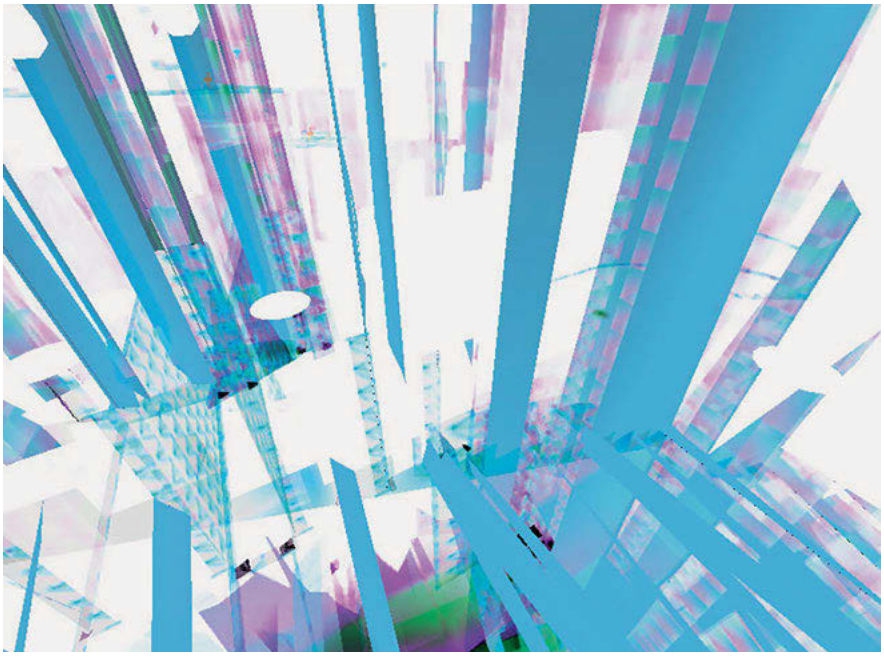
In 1995, Peter Weibel, then art director of Ars Electronica, asked architect Orhan Kipcak to produce an artwork for the media art festival. Kipcak, in cooperation with architect and mathematician Reinhard Urban, conceptualized an interactive work. The result was a video game modification based on the first-person shooter *Doom II* (id Software, 1994), created by using different level editors and the software AutoCAD. *Arsdoom* presents a digital model of the Brucknerhaus in Linz, digitally reconstructed on the basis of the original construction plans. Tellingly, the Brucknerhaus served as the venue for Ars Electronica 1995, and in the game, the player encounters the digitized faces of various artists and other personalities connected to Ars Electronica, including Peter Weibel, Jörg Schlick, and Ecke Bonk. In addition, the weapons players can employ in the FPS point to figures in recent art history, such as Joseph Beuys and Nam June Paik (Kipcak 1995: 262–264; Jansson 2011). In *Arsdoom* it is possible and intended that artists and artworks alike are 'destroyed' through iconoclastic gestures: Hermann Nitsch's 'weapon' in the game is pig's blood, for example, triggering the effect of sullying the artworks



1 Orhan Kipcak, Reinhard Urban, *Arsdoom*, 1995. Image citation from Schwingeler 2014: 198



2 Cory Arcangel, *Super Mario Clouds* 2002–2009. Image citation from Schwingeler 2014: 230



3 Tom Betts, *QQQ* 2002, Image citation from Schwingeler 2014: 210

on the wall with a splatter of red stains. The weapon associated with Georg Baselitz causes the artworks hanging on the wall to be flipped upside down.

Reduction and abstraction of the source material functions as a second strategy. Artists cultivate *voids and imperfections* as, for example, in Myfanwy Ashmore's *mario battle no. 1* (2000). In Ashmore's modification, all obstacles and opponents are deleted from *Super Mario Bros* (Nintendo, 1985). In Cory Arcangel's *Super Mario Clouds* (Fig. 2), what remains of the original game are the clouds passing by the viewer from right to left in front of the pale-blue background.

The strategy of abstraction, on the one hand, aims at highlighting the games' interfaces and thus at a *staging of the audiovisual*, as in *QQQ* (*Quake III Arena* by id Software, 1999; mod *QQQ* 2002, Fig. 3) by British artist Tom Betts, which is deliberately saturated with graphics glitches. On the other hand, it aims at (and partly complements) the process of image and sound development and highlights the *representation of the code and the computing process*, as in Margarete Jahrmann and Max Moswitzer's *Nybble-Engine-ToolZ* (2002), an installation which "converts information (text, images, sound) on the hard disk into three-dimensional abstract movies and projects these onto a 180-degree circular screen."[4]

Modifications of the rules of the game and game-discordant actions in the source material itself form a third strategy. For example, in *Velvet-Strike* (Brody Condon, Anne-Marie Schleiner, and Joan Leandre, 2001), pacifist images are attached to the walls of *Counter-Strike* (Valve, 2000) maps, while in Joseph DeLappe's online gaming performance *dead-in-iraq* (2006–2011), the artist staged an online protest against the war in Iraq during a session of *America's Army* (United States Army, 2002) by posting the names of soldiers killed in action in the Iraq War via the game's chat function.

The combination of these strategies may produce paradoxical artifacts: unplayable games. JODI's *Wolfenstein 3D* mod *SOD*, the map *Arena* from the series *Untitled Game*, and the game *Glitchhiker* (2011) provide examples of this most extreme form of obstinacy. Unlike the other two examples, *Glitchhiker* is not a modification but an original game. As such, it is not based upon a commercial game that it has appropriated; instead, *Glitchhiker* is an independent computer game production.

All of these artistic strategies disrupt the operating principles of their source materials by consciously transforming transparency into opacity. These strategies aim at raising awareness of the video game's technical limits through formal aesthetic experiments, the construction of dysfunctionalities, incoherence, and the limitation of interactivity. I will discuss JODI's *SOD* and *Arena* in more detail in order to illustrate how these cultural artifacts work with their source materials.

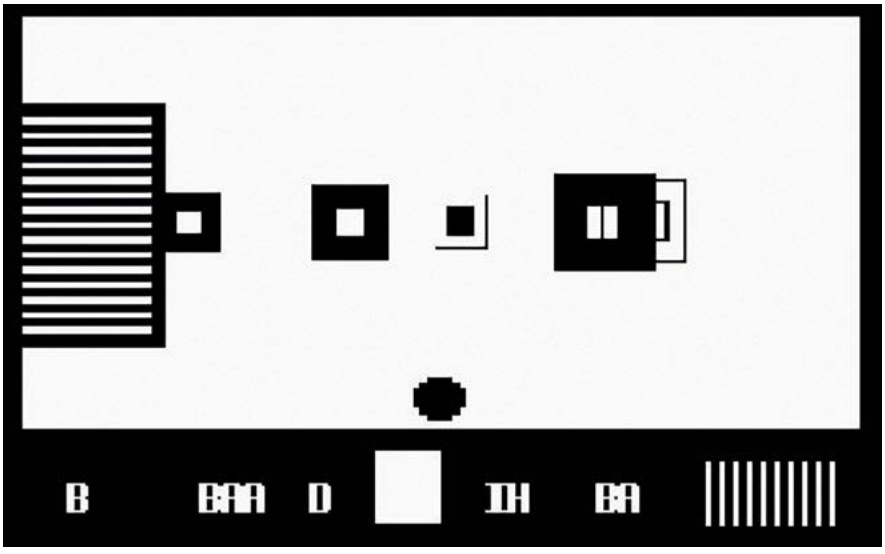
From Non-Representational to Unplayable Game: *SOD* and *Untitled Game: Arena*

SOD is based on the commercial video game *Wolfenstein 3D* (Fig. 4). In the modification *SOD*, all representational textures have been eliminated and substituted with black-and-white ge-

ometric shapes by tampering with the code (Fig. 5). The image's configuration exposes the first-person shooter's underlying illusion that by entering a room and consequently moving through it, players can own it through abstraction.

Graphic abstraction accordingly leads to a loss of control on the player's part, which may coincide with irritation, disorientation, or frustration. As a result, the game's playability is

4 John Carmack, John Romero, id Software, *Wolfenstein 3D*, 1992. Image citation from Schwingeler 2014: 296



5 Screenshot from JODI, *SOD* (1999)

restricted and the user's input effectively transforms the game into a play with the image itself. Thus, the player no longer pursues the objectives of the original game but rather manipulates the image by twisting and turning it. JODI thereby demonstrate the true essence of video games, namely their being image and space machines, "perspective engines," as Francis Hunger has called them (Hunger 2007). In addition, the strategy allows JODI to highlight the video game's underlying mechanics—namely that users manipulate images and then trace the changing visual content back to their own actions. As a result, *SOD* is not merely an abstract video game, but a concrete one that relies on basic geometric and stereo-geometric shapes to construct its images.

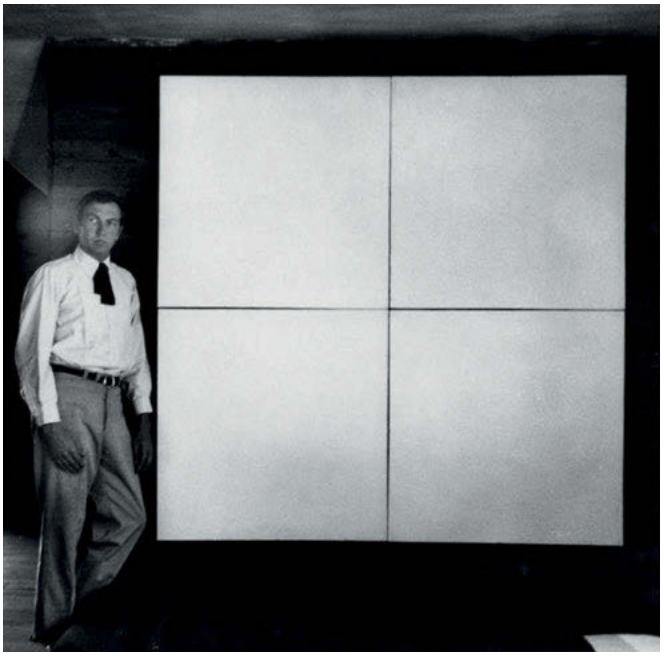
Hence JODI reflect on the relationship between video games and realism by drawing attention to the building blocks of video game images and to players' actions and agency. Gerrit Gohlke has remarked that the majority of mainstream video games is committed to a "hyperrealist culture of excellence." Here "all simulation skills of occidental art tradition are employed to create a mass market product" (Gohlke 2003: 19). Importantly, video game imagery draws on photography and film. As a result, video game simulation implies that video games do not simulate physical reality (as perceived through the human senses), but rather seek to produce photorealism, since the photographic and filmic image still radiates authenticity. As Lev Manovich has appropriately observed, "the reason we may think that computer graphics has succeeded in faking reality is that we, over the course of the last hundred and fifty years, have come to accept the image of photography and film as reality" (Manovich 2001: 181).

In fact, video games' claim to authenticity exceeds the photographic image. Götz Großklaus has suggested that computers can create images disconnected from real-world sources; video game images are not 'just' copies of the real world, but (hyper-) real in their own right (Großklaus 1995: 134). In other words, computers allow us to generate images that appear real, but cannot be real. Significantly, the images not only look real, but the simulated objects also act and behave as though they were real. They are subject to simulated laws of nature, which further intensify their reality effect. The end result is a hyperrealism that replaces the laws of nature with random rules of mathematical models, creating a new kind of mimesis (Freyermuth 2004: 5). Since the simulated object has no reference in the real world, the simulated object needs to be legitimized and authenticated, for example through splatter on the (non-existent) camera lens and optical refractions (in the absence of a camera or the requisite light source).

In their œuvre, JODI have repeatedly varied their type of interference in the source material, turning this variation into their signature artistic strategy. The level *Arena* from the series *Untitled Game* represents an extreme case (Fig. 6). Here, the visual interface of the FPS *Quake* (id Software, 1996) has been completely erased. The video game remains operable, however, and continues to react to the player's input. When the avatar is hit, the frame turns into a shade of red for a fraction of a second. While I do not mean to compare video games and painting, the artistic strategy applied in *Arena* establishes links to monochromatic paintings such as Robert Rauschenberg's *White Paintings*, 1951 (Fig. 7), which depict nothing but white canvas.

This radical act of deletion plays an important role in another one of Rauschenberg's works, as well: the effaced drawing of Willem de Kooning *Erased de Kooning Drawing*, 1953 (Fig. 8). Rauschenberg had asked the abstract expressionist de Kooning for a drawing as a pres-

6 Screenshot from JODI, *Untitled Game: Arena* (1996–2001)



7 Robert Rauschenberg, *White Paintings*, four panels, installation view, 1951. Image citation from Latour/Weibel 2002: 392

ent, then meticulously erased it and exhibited it as his own artwork. When observed closely, traces of the removed drawing are still visible. Whereas Rauschenberg's artwork represents a palimpsest, *Arena* resembles a tinted glass behind which the video game's processes continue running. In JODI's *Arena,* information on the game remains visible in the form of extradiegetic traces surrounding the monochromatic surface. Paradoxically, the deletion of image information draws the player's attention to the video games' visuality. The blank screen, which the viewer's imagination is called upon to fill, points to the absence of the image and thus places the image at the center of the artwork.[5]

Conceptually, *Arena* may be likened to *Zen for Film*,1964 (Fig. 9) by media artist Nam June Paik. In *Zen for Film*, Paik runs an unexposed, *blank* film through a projector (cf. Gehring 2006). Paik thus screens what he has called an "anti-movie," explaining that the film "only represents itself and its material quality" (qt. in Helfert 2017). The medium's operating principles and intrinsic characteristics take on a life of their own and eventually become the artwork's actual content.

Video game art often employs a rhetoric of negation: as soon as the video game no longer performs as expected, its operating principles are acknowledged ex negativo. As ideas such as Paik's "anti-movie" and Brecht's "alienation effect" suggest, interferences render the immanent characteristics of a medium explicit. Artists thus develop *alternative models* to commercial video games while breaking their rules. In this way, their artworks reflect not only on the design of

8 Robert Rauschenberg, *Erased de Kooning Drawing*, 1953. Image citation from Latour/Weibel 2002: 111

9 Nam June Paik, *Zen for Film*, 1964. Image citation from Latour/Weibel 2002: 400

computer games as defined by what Gerrit Gohlke has called a "performance-oriented, hyper-real culture," but also on the general relation between man and machine in the circuit of cybernetics and in the magic circle of play (Gohlke 2003: 19).

Notes

This text is an adjusted version of Schwingeler 2019.

1 Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin have argued that digital media "oscillate between immediacy and hypermediacy, between transparency and opacity" (Bolter/Grusin 1999: 19). Connected to a broader, non-media-specific discourse in art criticism, Emmanuel Alloa describes the terms "transparency" and "opacity" as follows: "Repeatedly ascribed different names and thus having remained inconspicuous, T. and O.—as terms whose history still remains to be written—form the two poles in between which the discussion of artworks oscillates and in which it concretizes. T. (and its synonyms translucence, permeability, transitivity etc.) generally stands for a view which regards works as open 'windows' to meaning lying behind. O. (and its alternative denotations such as impenetrability, intransitivity, presence etc.), in contrast, generally means a perspective that traces the works back to their tangible immanence" (Alloa 2003: 445 f.).

2 Communication studies scholar Ludwig Jäger considers opacity as a disruption in the communication process. He calls transparency and disruption "two aggregate states of communication" (Jäger 2004: 68).

3 Martin Heidegger introduced the concept of obstinacy in his theory of equipment, which he develops in Being and Time and which can be applied to tools. Peter Geimer was the first to point to its implications for media theory, in connection with the disruption of photographic images. The terms "transparency" and "opacity" correspond with the Heideggerian notions "ready-to-hand" and "present-at-hand"; "unready-at-hand" oscillates between the two. Three modes can be distinguished: conspicuousness, obstrusiveness, and obstinacy. Geimer explains: "These modes appear when equipment loses its being ready-at-hand, when it, instead of being ready at the hand of its user, it is not in its place, denies its service or starts to disturb" (Geimer 2002: 324).

4 "Nybble-Engine-ToolZ. A server-software-experiment developed as artist-in-resident project by Margarete Jahrmann and Max Moswitzer (2002–2003)," V2_Lab for the Unstable Media, http://v2.nl/archive/works/nybble-engine-toolz/ (accessed 11/20/2023).

5 For a discussion of the term "blank" in art criticism, see Kemp 1998.

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Credits

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Fig. 1 National Museum of World Cultures (Netherlands), 7031–33; Fig. 2 photo: Pooyan Tamimi Arab; Fig. 3 National Museum of World Cultures (Netherlands), WM-68236; Fig. 4 National Museum of World Cultures (Netherlands), , TM-6282-14; Fig. 5 Illustration by Jan Verhas (1834–1896 CE), included in Louis Figuier's (1819–1894 CE) *Vies des savants illustres du Moyen Âge*, Paris, Librairie internationale: A. Lacroix, Verboeckhoven and Cie, 1867 ; Fig. 6 photo: Pooyan Tamimi Arab; Fig. 7 photo: National Museum of World Cultures (Netherlands); Fig. 8 National Museum of World Cultures (Netherlands), WM-60940.

Arnold Bartetzky

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Gabriele Genge

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Christoph Günther

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Gertrud Hüwelmeier

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Gertrud Hüwelmeier; Fig. 8 Photo: FB BS. Trần Văn Phúc. https://alobacsi.com/goc-hai-huoc-ve-dich-viem-phoi-do-virus-corona-n407930.html (accessed: 11/17/2023).

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Fig. 1 a Bezirksamt Steglitz-Zehlendorf von Berlin, Fachbereich Kultur; Fig. 1 b photo: Christiane Kruse; Fig. 1 c Bezirksamt Steglitz-Zehlendorf von Berlin, Grünflächenamt; Fig. 2 photo: Christiane Kruse; Fig. 3 Bezirksamt Steglitz-Zehlendorf von Berlin, Fachbereich Kultur; Fig. 4 *Kirchner und Nolde: Expressionismus Kolonialismus*, exhibition catalogue Brücke Museum Berlin 2021, S. 157, Fig. 2; Fig. 5 Peter C. Bol (ed.), *Die Geschichte der antiken Bildhauerkunst*, vol. 3 *Hellenistische Plastik*, Mainz 2006, Fig. 119a; Fig. 6 *The Beauty* (Die Schönheit) (1905) 3 (5), cover; Fig. 7 Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, *expressiv, magisch, fremd*, Kathrin Baumstark / Magdalena M. Moeller / Christiane Remm (eds.). 2018, exhibition catalogue Bucerius Kunstforum, Hamburg, S. 128, Fig. 50.

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Fig. 1 © Idea: Michael Jansen, Visualization: v-cube, in: *The Future of the Bamiyan Buddha Statues. Heritage Reconstruction in Theory and Practice*, ed. by Masanori Nagaoka, UNESCO 2020 (open access), p. 311.; Fig. 2 © Torart; Fig. 3 http://www.torart.com/artist/buddha-di-bamiyan/ (accessed: 11/17/2023); Fig. 4 © Shigeyuki Okazaki, Toyo University of Arts, in: *The Future of the Bamiyan Buddha Statues. Heritage Reconstruction in Theory and Practice*, ed. by Masanori Nagaoka, UNESCO 2020 (open access), p. 343; Fig. 5 http://www.torart.com/artist/arco-trionfale-di-palmira/ (accessed:11/17/2023).

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Marion G. Müller

Fig. 1 https://allthingsliberty.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/effigy-570x550.jpg (accessed: 11/17/2023); Fig. 2 photo: AP from private archive PIAV, Marion G. Müller; Fig. 3 https://chriscrawfordphoto.com/chris-details.php?product=2610 (accessed: 11/17/2023); Fig. 4. https://i.insider.com/5ff638b26d61c10019cce0af?width=900&format=jpeg&auto=webp (access: 16 January 2021); Fig. 5 https://foreignpolicy.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/GettyImages-1238734990.jpg?resize=1536,1024&quality=90 (accessed: 11/17/2023).

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