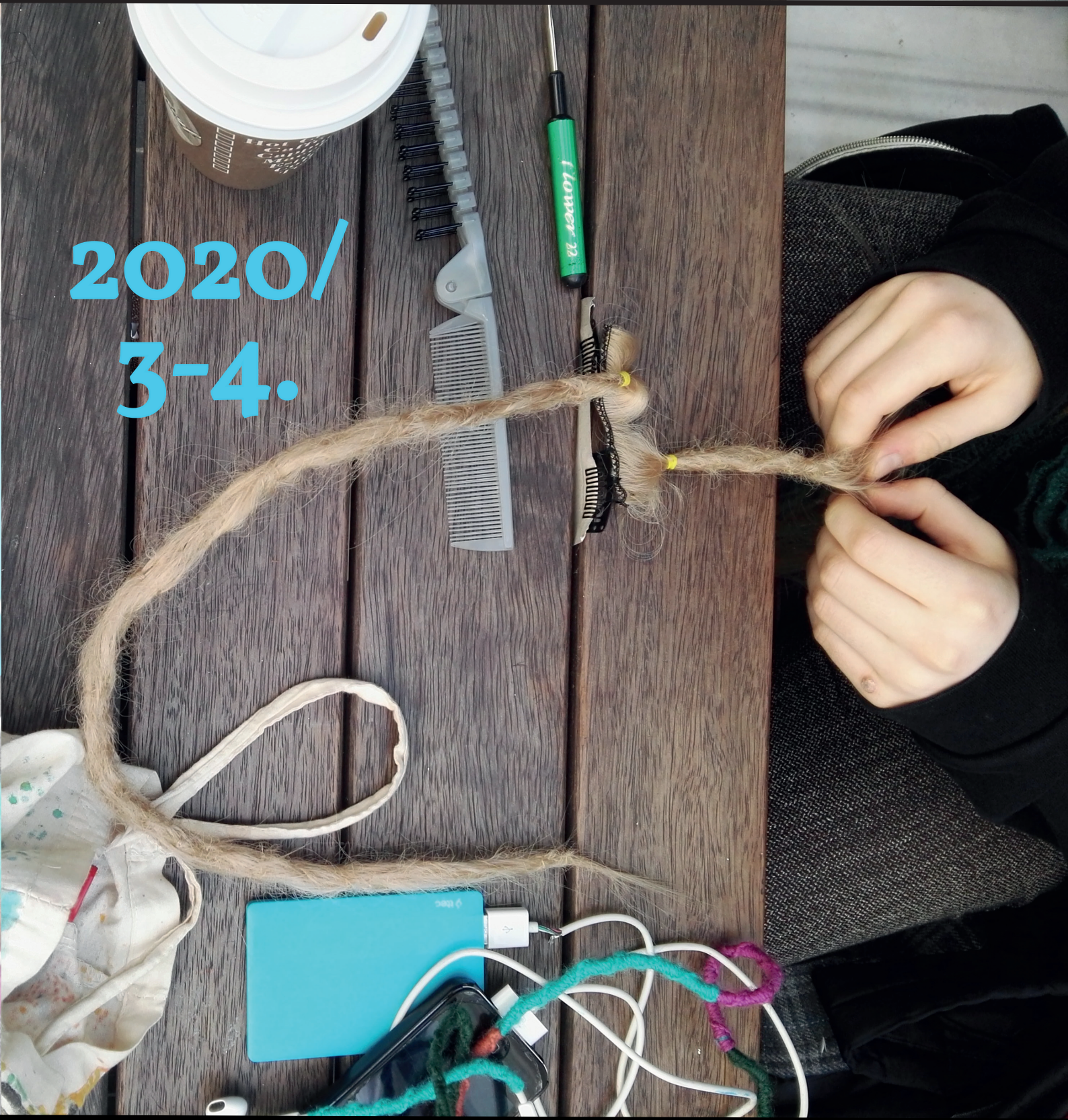


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Modern Mythologies | Modern Mitológiák

Richard Papp

Eternity of the moment | On modern myths from an anthropological perspective

*“There is something money can’t buy.
For everything else there’s MasterCard.”*

The recurring slogan of the less than one-minute MasterCard commercials is a concise statement of the "basic experience" of modernity. The needs of a cash-based economy do not meet every man's needs. There is something "more" that we need, but which is also inseparable from the "security" that can be bought with money. We need the "money", the socio-economic environment of modernity, but this is not enough for the "completeness" of human life.

In Thomas Hylland Eriksen's (2001:104) "Tyranny of the Moment: Fast and Slow Time in the Information Age" the time usage of modernity is characterized by the "fast and momentary" that replaces the former "relatively slow and linear". In a "fast and momentary" world, therefore, "moment" is of key importance. "It is not because of the phenomenal global success of Nestlé's main coffee product that the term instant is a key concept for an attempt to understand the present age. The moment, or instant, is ephemeral, superficial and intense. When the moment (or even the next moment) dominates our being in time, we no longer have space for building blocks that can only be used for one or a few configurations with other blocks. Everything must be interchangeable with everything else now. The entry ticket must be cheap, the initial investment modest. Swift changes and unlimited flexibility are main assets. In the last instance, everything that is left is a single, overfilled, compressed, eternal moment. Supposing this point is reached some time in the future, and both past and future are fully erased, we would definitely have reached an absolute limit (recall Virilio "There are no delays anymore"). It is difficult to imagine this happening – there are many universal human experiences that only make sense as duration. However, in several fields, the

tendency towards extreme compression of time is evident: some of them perhaps unexpected, such as consumption, work and the very formation of personal identity.” (Eriksen 2001:119)

According to Eriksen (2001:131), "the tyranny of the moment" is a social experience in modernity that, in addition to "consumption", "work" and social interactions, defines "personal identity" as well as the "intimate sphere" of the individual. The quoted anthropologist describes the culture of modernity in the presence of three contemporaneous components. In this context, societies of modernity can only be described and analyzed with economic (capitalism), political (modern democracy) and ideological (individualism) aspects. After the First World War - in the words of Eriksen - "modernity has become dominant" and has enabled "the global flow of people, goods, ideas, and ideas" to become more and more intensive (Eriksen 2010:310).

If we accept Eriksen's views above, the question arises as to what ethos these socio-economic-political and ideological processes are creating. If in modernity the accelerated time is dominated by both social practice and individual lifestyle, and if we really live under the "domination" of the moment, what ideas of mythological ideology legitimize this for us? Do we really live in the "tyranny of moment"? If so, why do we accept this reign? Or maybe we do not perceive the moment merely as "tyranny" or "symbol of tyrannical domination"?

After all, Eriksen himself at the end of his book, when he shares with his readers his "protection of slowness" solutions, suggests that one should, among other things, make himself aware of the following: "I live in the present moment whenever it suits me, and refuse to be interrupted by the next moment." (Eriksen 2001:157)

From the foregoing it may appear that in modernity "we cannot do anything else" but "seize" the moment, because moments of reality surround us, that is social reality. But can you find "true life" in those moments? What does "true life" mean in modernity and does it have some "permanent-content"? Are there time-concepts such as "eternity" and "outside of time" in contrast to "the tyranny of the moment"? And if so, what are the bases of these concepts? Is there a mythological system of modernity that sets the foundation, holds it together, and explains the reality of social experiences and ideologies of modernity, and thus ensures its continuity? How can you describe everything that you can't buy for money – as it is phrased in the MasterCard advertisements - and what makes

sense of being in modernity and maintaining modernity? How can we recognize these values and find out how we can live with and by them?

“Mythology explains itself and everything in the world. Not because it was invented for explanation, but because by its very nature it is also its feature to give an explanation” – writes Károly Kerényi (Kerényi 1984:267). From the perspective of anthropology of religion, myths are stories that “the ones who pass them on and those received them, consider them to be the narratives of reality” (Bowie 2006:267-269, Segal 2004:3-6).

For a group, the myths express the absolute truth. (Haviland 1990:387-389) Therefore, myths are not just “mosaic pieces” of a culture, but they do permeate the culture, as they are present in the everyday life, in the seemingly tiny moments of life, so – for many anthropologists of religion at least – to understand a culture, “mythology is the magnet”. (Boglár 1995:89)

In connection with the above, a deeper understanding of the cultural components and ideology of modernity can be contributed to the analysis of mythical stories that are accepted by those recipients of myths who consider them to be real stories and stories of reality. Of course, it is not easy to talk about these stories in general, because the diversity of the recipients and the individual readings make the meaning of these stories multi-toned. Not to mention that neither the cultures of modernity form a homogeneous group. At the same time, it is worth considering the intercultural narratives that have become massively consumed in the cultures of modernity and which have influenced the way of thinking and the ethos of local communities.

In addition, it is worth studying in more detail the stories that address the issues surface in modernity; those readings about the reality of modernity, ontological and anthropological issues that have also reached, or are reaching the majority of people living in modernity. Therefore, in my writing I analyze primarily works of great success, in which at least one of the aspects mentioned above is present. Watching movies, the experience of the cinema is also the kind of event in the cultural practice of modernity, in which the ritual “condensed” time that allows the experience of myths can be found. (Eliade 2006:38)

A movie, viewed in the cinema with company or even alone, creates the opportunity for auto-communication, to identify with the reality of the film and its characters. Thus, the narrative of the film, during the ritual of watching the movie,

becomes the story of total reality, and the summarized and conveyed meanings in it thus live on, may live in the consciousness, attitudes and cultural practices of the recipient.

The reality summarized and presented by the films can create and maintain motivations for the viewer that influence and thus determine his decisions, values and actions alike. (Geertz 2001:81-85).

The analysis of the stories of the films can be justified by the consideration of the economic (and sometimes political) components of modernity. Whether a large-scale, high-budget film is a financial downfall or a reward for filmmakers does make a difference. If the film does not properly "deliver" "reality", if it is unable to influence the viewers, then financial gain is lost. At the same time, if it "moves" the masses, if it is able to present "reality" or something "real", if it can create the possibility of transformation and identification, it can make hundreds of thousands of movie viewers persistent consumers.

I still intend my analysis to be only a thought-experiment, which can promote the possibility of thinking together about modernity, our current cultural experiences. The purpose of my writing is to glimpse into the narratives that speak to us in the language of modernity about what to do with our lives and how to look for the "true life", a "happy permanence" in the "world of moments."

Immortality, the state and place of eternal life and happiness can be found in most cultures (Eliade 2006:90). Eden, as the "original state," where there is no temporality and where one can experience the eternity of "true life", without dying, sickness, and experiencing everyday problems, is one of the decisive objects of myths. According to Eliade, "at the beginning of humanity's religious history, as well as at the end, we find the same desire for Paradise". (Eliade 2006:107)

Without addressing the question of whether mankind's "history of religion" really came to an end, the question may arise: does desire for Eden live on in modernity? How do modern myths depict and describe to us Paradise and the experience of Eden? Does it manifest and, if so, the concept of eternity in the "culture of moments"?

In the movie, "The Beach", the protagonist feels he has found the Garden of Eden. With the help of a secret map, today's tourist-traveler gets to a wonderful exotic island of Southeast Asia, where in the commune everyone can enjoy the independence from social norms and structures, and the pleasures of the Nature of Eden.

Using Victor Turner's *communitas* theory to describe: a group, "break-away" from modernity and independent of social structures, created the *communitas*, an Edenic micro-society of mutual equality in a "threshold- or boundary-state" of liminality (Turner 1997). It is worthwhile to examine the characteristics of this Edenic micro-society: one can freely establish sexual relationships, grow and use marijuana, frolic in the sea, enjoy the sun and each other's company.

In principle, everyone in the group is equal, the leading role means a manager-type status. At the same time – as Turner also describes – in this kind of "Edenic commune" structuring inevitably starts to take place, not to mention the fractures between people, and the recognition that nature does not always offer its friendliest side to man.

In the film, all this is culminating in the tragedy of one of the young men, who, after a shark has ripped off his leg, gets excluded by the community, because his suffering becomes unbearable to them. There are more and more problems built into the story, suggesting that a human community (whatever the circumstances are) cannot live in the "Garden of Eden". "Human existence" does not allow the constant experience of Eden. However, at the end of the film, the protagonist, when the commune - after a series of tragic events - got expelled from the Beach, recalls the events, and summarizes the film's message:

"And as for me, I still believe in Paradise. But I learned that you should not look for it at all costs. No matter where you go, if for a moment you feel it was worth going there, it was worth it. Once you experience that moment, you will remember it forever."

According to the summary of the film, it is true that the Edenic state cannot be experienced by a community in the long run (not even in the "Edenic environment" of the world), but this is not what matters. Paradise exists, in the "moment" in which the experience of Eden has become possible. If this "moment" is realized, then this moment becomes eternal, no matter what happens after the "moment" passes. Eden, according to this, is experiencing the eternity of the moment. In the moment, the fullness of "true life" unfolds and becomes experienceable.

This narrative feeds on and, at the same time, modifies the Eden images and ideas of cultures and historical ages from which the modern myths derive. In modernity, of course, survival of these can also be observed, but a narrative that consistently talks differently about the possible experience of Eden also emerges.

Just think of the shamans, or the icons that provide a clear pattern of access to Eden. Either the shaman's journey, or an icon is a "window" to the "real-eternal" world through which Eden manifests itself to us. Religious works (including films retelling religious myths from *Brother Sun, Sister Moon* to *the Little Buddha*) also show us the image of the Edenic state.

At the same time, the motif of searching for Eden is still present in modernity. We can not find Eden in our own "modern", "civilized" world, so we can only find it "somewhere else", "outside". We can also find the cultural-historical and ethnological background of this reading when we think of the ideas of "Island-Gardens of Eden" that live from ancient myths. The film, *The Beach* is also linked to this mythological narrative, but puts the emphasis on something else: no matter where you go, no matter where you are looking for it, Eden can be "experienced" only for moments. However, if you can "experience" the "moment", you are really experiencing the eternal Eden.

As it has been depicted by Renoir in his painting, "Bal du Moulin de la Galette", the feet of dancing, chatting, living the "true life" couples are walking in the sky, dancing on the clouds. The painter has depicted one of the most significant mythical meanings of modernity in his painting: Eden is within us. To experience it, however, depends on man. Eden can be experienced only if one can recognize and realize the eternity of the moment.

In Woody Allen's movie, "Manhattan", the protagonist (after he left his young lover and realized what a mistake it was) lies on a couch and thinks about what makes worth living: "Groucho Marx, for one... and then the second movement of the Jupiter Symphony. Louis Armstrong, the Potato Head Blues. Swedish films, of course. Sentimental Education from Flaubert. Then Marlon Brando. Frank Sinatra. Cézanne - those fantastic apples and pears. The crabs at Sun Wo's." (Cf. Allen-Björkman 2010: 164-165)

They are not just single "instant" moments, but momentums referring to the accumulated beauty of moments in life: movies, actors, books, music, paintings, "apples", "pears", and "crabs" - these eternal experiences revealed in the passing moment are the "meaning of life." According to this, Eden may not be permanently experienced in life, but it can be glimpsed at even if only temporarily, thus can be experienced in modernity, too.

Eden that can be experienced through everyday life is perhaps most vividly presented by the Wim Wenders' film, *Wings of Desire*. At the beginning of the movie (after listening to several people's everyday thoughts and problems), we can hear the

conversation of two angels sitting in a modernity's rushing, built-on-moments-symbol of car, describing to each other their latest experiences gathered among people.

After their descriptions, one of them ponder over the differences between angelic and human existence. Let us recall part of the movie, and the related dialogue, looking at it from the angelic, "spiritual" world (which, from the human point of view, is the world of the Edenic realm), it is precisely the temporary nature, fragility, and contradiction of human existence that becomes the holder of "true life" for the conversing angels.

For them, a lunch, a neckline, feeding a cat, or stretching the toes under the table worth incomparably more than the monotony "enthusiasm for the spirit". In this light the evil, the lie or the savage are also inspiring, because those are all part of "true life".

The viewer can listen into the conversation of angels,

"How good transcendence is, to prove from day to day to eternity what is purely spiritual in men. "Sometimes I get fed up with my transcendent existence. I don't want to always hover above. I'd rather feel a weight within that would end this boundlessness and tie me to earth."

I'd like to say for every step or windstorm: now, now, and now, and now, and no, as always, forever and ever. Sit in the main square at the card-table, say hello or just nod. *"Each time we took part in something, it was pretending. Wrestling, allowing a hip to be put out, pretending to catch a fish in pretense. We have pretended to be sitting at tables drinking and eating. Only pretense. Having roasted lambs and wine served. Out there, in the desert tents. Only pretending."*

"I don't want to have a child or plant a tree, but it would be nice to come home after a long day to feed the cat like Philip Marlowe. To have fever. Fingers stained black by reading the newspaper. To be excited not only by spiritual things, but by a meal. By a neckline, by an ear. To lie, through one's teeth. Being able to feel your bones moving along while walking. At least to guess instead of always knowing everything. To be able to say "Ah, oh, and hey, instead of: Yes, Amen".

"Yes. To be able to enthuse for evil. To draw all the demons from the pedestrians that pass. And finally plunge into the world. To become a savage."

"Or to feel how it is to take off your shoes under the table... and move your toes, barefoot, like that. "

"Stay alone. Let things happen. Keep being serious. We can only become savages in as much as we keep being serious." Do nothing but watch, gather, justify, strengthen, protect, to be transcendent, excluded, and to remain a concept only."

In the City of Angels, Hollywood's adaptation of the Wings of Desire, a similar conversation is taking place between two angels, one of whom (the protagonist) lost his beloved soon after he, for his love, gave up his angelic existence in exchange for the life of a human:

"This is life. You are alive now, and one day you will die. How is it, anyway?"

"What?"

"The touch."

"Wonderful."

"If you knew this was going to happen, would you have done it?"

"A whiff from the scent of her hair. A single kiss of her lips. A brief touch of her hand is worth more than the entire eternity without it."

The theme of love plays a central role in both, the Wings of Desire and the City of Angels. It is interesting that the female protagonists of the films (the trapeze-artist of the Wings of Desire, and the doctor of the City of Angels) occupy an "intermediate place" between "heaven and earth" (Krauss 2005: 114).

Both female protagonists, the trapeze-artist in the Wings of Desire (who is able to visit the angelic world in a dream), as well as the doctor in the City of Angels (the one who struggles with death every day trying to save the lives of her patients) live in a "liminal state" that gives them the opportunity to meet with the male protagonist angels. These angels, in the same time are "liminal beings" as well as compassion for human life, desire and love, which they cannot experience in their etheric, non-Edenic world, have arisen in them. The two worlds are able to meet and unite through feelings of love and kindness. The angels do not merely become human for their loved ones, but in them, and in the love they have experienced with them is summed up all that is worth living for. And "true life" means human life. In the sex scene of the City of Angels, the angel feels the all-consuming fire. However, the fire he experienced is not the fire of damnation, for despite the unexpected, sudden tragedy, the loss of his love, he was able to experience the moment of true Eden. This is demonstrated by the protagonist in the scene at the end of the film, when he jumps into the crushing wave of the ocean representing devastating infinity and fertility at the same time, in front of the eyes of angels lining up on the ocean shore.

In the last scene of the *Wings of Desire*, we can see that the main characters, the man and the woman, can share the hovering between heaven and earth: as the angel holds the rope for her while she dances in the air. A whiff from the “scent of her hair”, “a single kiss of her lips”, “a brief touch of her hand”, experiences moments of love – as the male protagonist phrased it in the *City of Angels* – is worth “more than the entire eternity without it.” Considering all this, the question arises: can we find the eternity of human life in the stories of modern myths about love?

In Luc Besson’s film, *The Fifth Element*, the "evil" planet is invariably approaching the Earth. An "evil" is a celestial body that exists for destruction itself. The new weaponry is incapable of destroying it: the nuclear weapons that have been meant to work against it will only nourish its power, which lives and thrives on destruction. Saving the Earth depends on a small team. The only hope for mankind is the Fifth Element, who comes to Earth every five thousand years to protect the humans with four stones of the four elements: fire, water, Earth and air. This is a chance for humanity.

Is it worthwhile to save this world at all, where there has been so much suffering, needless hatred and wickedness accumulated and continue to accumulate? His shock and uncertainty remains until the last moment, even though "evil" has entered the Earth's airspace and after a few seconds mankind will die... With a gasping whisper, she shares her dilemma with protagonist, a burned out, frustrated taxi driver, who since he met and got to know her, fell in love with her, and with that, his life has gained meaning again. As she tells him, it makes no sense to save this world, he agrees with her, but points out, in spite of that, there is one thing still worthy of maintaining human life with all the pain and cruelty: and that is love. To emphasize his declaration, even though with difficulty, while he embraces her, he confesses to the savior of mankind that he is fond of her, he loves her. And the "fifth element", after experiencing the power of love, eventually unites with the four elements and the Earth and humanity is saved.

This is how the modern myth of love, by Luc Besson's film, *The Fifth Element* is presented. According to the movie’s narrative, love is the “essence of true life”, a treasure that is worth living for in spite of all the miseries. In fact, it is what gives meaning and endurance to human existence and other aspects of life.

The myths of love have probably the widest mythological repertoire with the greatest number of narratives in modernity. Advertisements, the internet media, literature, and fiction permeates the world of TV series. Defining the majority of films also

tell the story of the myth of love, raising and answering the basic questions of modernity that affect the lives of all of us: What is the world like? Who man is? What is the meaning of life? And how are we as men, women, and lovers?

Mythical meanings of love and sexuality are an integral part of the mythological systems of cultures (cf. Oláh 1986). Hierogamy, sacred sexual union, and the sacrality of sexuality also play an integral role in the decisive roots of cultural history of modernity. Greek mythology, the Bible, artistic works and narratives from the Renaissance emphasize the sacred character of love unions, not to mention the erotic aspects of European folklore.

The Biblical teachings are no exception, since the Bible sees in the unification of the two bodies (male and female) the possibility transubstantiation to the likeness of God (1 Mos, 27: 2-24). Jewish and Christian traditions saw and see the feasibility of fulfilment of it within the social framework of marriage, protected by norms and laws the sanctity of sexuality within it.

At the same time, European folklore and art have often interpreted marriage as a symbol of social compulsion, which is more likely to hinder the possibility of experiencing true love, just think of the tragic stories of European love ballads.

In both cases, however, the emphasis is on the sacral significance of love and sexuality and with it the emphasis of their vulnerability. According to the biblical reading, marriage may be in danger, while according to non-biblical reading, external norms can stand the way to the fulfilment of "true love". In both cases, threat comes from the society.

The narrative of "inexplicability" of love and desire is also related to this: "There are three things that are too amazing for me, four that I do not understand: the way of an eagle in the sky, the way of a snake on a rock, the way of a ship on the high seas, and the way of a man with a young woman." – says the Book of Proverbs (30, 18-19)

Love is expressed in the joyful and tragic tales of the European folklore and love related pieces of art (Hoppál-Szepes 1987).

Thus, what has been said, love is thus a sacred, endangered by society, unexplainable "treasure", value and excitement of which is created and maintained by a combination of those mentioned aspects in human relations and culture.

Modern myth projects this in the movie, during the "condensed-mythical" time and experience of film-watching. They project, make "true" love and sexuality experienceable, and thus have an impact on the cultural practice of everyday life. They act as "stimulants"

that continue to live on in the fantasy of love-desire, in the motivations and the love-sex life of the recipients (Duncan-Keesey 2007:9-10).

It is very difficult to sort out and formulate a more general view of the unbelievably many cinematic works, but the question is inevitable: How do some films summarize our experiences, our ideas, our knowledge, our desire of love? How do we love? What do we experience in love? Is love really giving us the meaning of life, as the Fifth Element tells us? And if so, who, how and how long can one experience it?

The two main characters of the film, *Blue Lagoon*, as survivors of a shipwreck, grow up on a "paradise island" where "the guilt of adult society is unknown" (Duncan-Keesey 2007:78). The two young adolescents innocently and sincerely discover their own sexuality and love. The film in long scenes shows the nakedness of the two young people, as they happily and innocently swim in the ocean while they discover love and each other's body. The pure, innocent, sincere and beautiful young people on a tropical island, in the world of "Edenic state" can experience the "true meaning of life". The beautiful, exotic island, the world of the Garden of Eden is far from everything that can be associated with society. True, this state of living is formidable as they must face nature by themselves, but it is also a "civilization-free" world where "true-paradisiacal" love can be "really" experienced. At the same time, the film depicts the longing of departure from Eden, and retreat to society.

But the "enchantment" of society is just a memory for the two youngsters, as they were but children when left ashore in "Eden", and in their paradise island home they only recall the ideal scenes from the memories: the pictures of a wedding, the harmonious signs of human-social coexistence.

So, they hold only the "good", and "precious" patterns and images of society, from which, representing the human world, emerges an imaginary and desired "Eden". However, the "real Eden", looking from the viewer's perspective, is what the youngsters are experiencing, for the viewer "knows" from his own experience that "Eden" is not the same as "civilization." The end of the film also suggests that the desire to leave the "true Eden" behind has irreversible, tragic consequences: the young couple, as a young parent, will eventually lose, as they lose the "true Eden".

With this, the film re-narrates and deepens the myth of "true-Edenic love": at a young age, away from society (in spite the fact that it can be lost and only temporary all "Edenic" existence) "true love" can be experienced in life.

It is no coincidence that the story of Blue Lagoon takes place on a "paradise" island, as neither is the age of the protagonists. "The Island of Eden", far away from "civilization", also provides a liminal place to experience "true love and real life", as does the age of the protagonists. The "innocence" and "purity" of the not-child but not-adult age of adolescents is a liminary phase in the life of a man, in which the I of the "child-paradise" is dominant, what has not yet been "infected" by the world of social structures and the pressure of need to adapt to it.

In light of this, it is not surprising that in latest Hollywood film adaptation of Romeo and Juliet in the costume ball scene, where the two lovers meet, the director has Romeo dressed as a knight and Juliet as an angel. The two "sincere", "innocent" living their love "purely" and with "true passion", the "knight" and the "angel", make it representable the love-myth narrative – summarized by Shakespeare, one of the "mythical ancestors" and "myths-teller" – that determines and legitimizes the culture of modernity.

The essence of this narrative is already conspicuously illustrated by the poster of the film: in the middle of the picture we see the two lovers threatened by weapons on both sides. The story is well known, "true love" is overcome by the cruelty of "civilization", the "inhumane" social structures, and the inability to experience and maintain "true life". But the question arises: did "true love" really be defeated for Romeo and Juliet? Didn't that short time, those few moments Romeo and Juliet could have shared "worth it", despite death? Can't the moment of "true love" defeat death?

Through the example of the lovers uniting in death, the message of Shakespeare and the film emphasizes that from the point of those living the "true life", even if it inevitably leads to tragedy, the "meaning of life" is "true love", which is stronger and more important than the typical of society's world of "no true-human existence".

Among the modern myths, it was probably James Cameron's Titanic which most vividly presented and answered these questions. It is no coincidence that the Titanic received eleven Oscar awards (including the Best Film Award), and for many years was the most popular cinematic film in the world, as the director of the film from scene to scene, deliberately "condensed" the narratives of the modernity-love myth.

James Cameron embedded these narratives in a mythical frame, whose "truth" was legitimized by the "true" historical event of the Titanic's sinking. The tragic story of the Titanic that "everyone" knows, is an event in the memory of modernity. What's more, this

is a story mystery of which makes the film particularly suitable for presenting mythical narratives.

These narratives are also reinforced by the story locations of the film. The protagonists (who, like the above-mentioned films, are "innocent" young adults) travel between the two continents on the ocean. The ocean as a symbol of "infinite" water symbolizes sexuality (fertility, moisture), destruction (danger, death) and shorelessness (immenseness). It is no coincidence that the key scenes of the film are tied to the ocean. In one of those scenes, Rose, the female protagonist, jumps into the ocean trying to kill herself. Her desperate action is prevented by her future love, Jack.

In the same way, perhaps the most well-known scene of the film, when Rose offers herself to the "unification" with the ocean on the stern of the ship, while Jack embraces her from behind. Their love is also due to the endless freedom between the shores of the ocean, but it also is the cause of Jack to die.

As I mentioned, the ocean liner passes between two continents. The two continents, Europe and America are the world of social structures of modernity, where social stratification determines the lives of people belonging to different social strata, including the limits of experiencing love and sexuality. At the same time, the Titanic is a liminal space in which these boundaries may disappear; the ship is on the ocean, even if only temporarily, but it breaks away from the world of social structures. Social structures have a negative impact on the lives of both. Jack is a poor boy whose artistic ambitions are limited by his social situation. Rose is the offspring of a social elite family that have lost its wealth and therefore she should marry a rich monster. So, in the world of social structures, Rose was unhappy and wanted to commit suicide. At the same time, on the Titanic things may happen that are impossible in the world of social structures: she can experience "true" love with a young man who belongs to a completely different social stratum and who comes from a completely different life situation.

The symbol of the ship in Greek and Christian mythology may mean traveling to the afterlife and the attainability of eternity. The Titanic can thus be the mythical venue of both separation from social reality, and "true-eternal life", where the story of the "true" values of life can be told.

The fulfillment of love of the two young people presents this mythical "fulfillment" in detail, including many exciting mythical narratives and symbols. The fulfillment of love of the two young people is described in decisive scenes of the film. The road to fulfillment

begins in Rose's suite. They are alone. She leads him into her luxury cabin where Jack immediately recognizes a painting. "It's a Monet" – he says in amazement.

It is no accident that the film refers to the impressionists. Both Rose and Jack share the receptivity of "modern", "unconventional", "revolutionary" art at the time. The fundamental narrative of modern art mythology is the "liberation" from social conventions. This was accompanied by the revolutionary revival of contemporary nude images, "free" and "natural" depiction of female eroticism, differing from academic norms, let's just think of Olympia of Manet, the other dominant impressionist painter.

In light of all this, it is not surprising that Rose asks Jack, the painter, to paint her completely naked in her suite. In the scene of creation of the painting, she plays the role of the "model" playfully, innocently, and purely. Rose, at the same time, is both playful and determined. In her determination youthful purity and the confident will of a woman's desire manifests itself simultaneously. During a previous conversation, Jack told her that earlier he has painted "working girls", Parisian prostitutes. Referring to that conversation, Rose in this scene asks him to paint her the way he painted "that French slut". In this request, the liberation from social conventions, desire for the freedom of a "true woman", and "pure" eroticism through the liberating power of art are realized. Her posture, her naked body with the diamond necklace she wears, holding her head (as she self-assertively looks at the painter) both refers to Goya's Maya, Modigliani's nude images, or the previously mentioned Monet's Olympia. Liberated from conventions, "natural", "realistic" erotic nudity, makes the body's free, independent beauty mythical.

Narrative of the film is framed by the memory of the elderly Rose. The scene of creation of the painting is summarized by the reminiscing Rose by saying: "Jack was a true artist." According to the modern art-mythology, formulated in the twentieth century, the artist is "the alpha and omega of value creation" (Dossi 2008: 107). According to the new concept of art from the time of the Impressionists, this value means realization of "freedom", "independence", "taboo breaking", all of which "which makes it possible for a person to escape for a moment the collective state-of-trance conformism" (Dossi 2008: 110-111).

This "escape" enables people to see and live the "true life". Mythical creator, hero of all this is the artist, its catalyst and "civil religion" is the art (Dossi 2008: 111). This is how (and because of it) the "eternal moment" of Rose and Jack's love is introduced by the act embedded in the art of painting nakedness. This mythical moment is to protect the

multiple liminal state that excludes, may exclude the worlds of "external" social realities. The young lovers travel on the ocean, between the continents of social structures. On the ocean, between the continents, they are sailing on the migrating "island" of the Titanic. Inside the ship, they hole up in her suite, hiding from the world of social realities.

At the same time, the world of social realities poses a threat to their "true-Edenic" world of love. The suite belongs to Rose's fiance who sends his bodyguard after her. The bodyguard finds the two lovers who have to escape from the suspicious and aggressive man.

First, they take the elevator down to the boiler room. The lovers "descending" to the "lower world" of the ship run through the boiler room. The fire of the furnaces burning in the boiler refers both to hell, to total separation from the world, but also to the eternal fire of desire. Alluding to the experience of a "true", "innocent" desire the ethereal float of Rose's long white dress, as we observe her run in slow motion through the boiler room. Their escape finally ends up in the bottom of the ship: lovers found themselves an even more hidden, even safer, more liminal space in the space of multiple liminality. Rose and Jack find shelter in one of the cars in the ship's storeroom.

In the car a red rose, symbolizing the connection of love, sexuality, and Rose appears. The scene, in this hidden and perfect for a sexual union type of setting, begins with a parody of social conventions. Jack is sitting in the driver's seat while Rose is sitting behind him in the seat reserved for a distinguished passenger.

"Where can I take you, Miss?" – Jack asks jokingly.

Then the ultimate crossing the limits of social norms, stepping into the moment of "true life" takes place. Rose pulls him back and replies:

"Up to the stars!"

On the back seat, locked in the car with full protection of liminality, Rose and Jack finally consummate their love. Naked body of the two lovers coalesce. Culmination of the scene, when Rose's hand appears on the steamed-up window, as with the print of her palm she indicates the climax of her pleasure.

We see them bathed in sweat. Their passion is fulfilled on the ocean, on a ship traveling between continents, in the most hidden part of the vessel, inside on the back seat of an out of sight, closed car. The blissfully entwined naked bodies, the moisture, the sweat symbolizes the mythical safety of the mother's womb and the timelessness of creation. In the fulfillment of their love, the moment of happiness of "true life" can thus be

realized. However, the question arises: How long can it be maintained, can the happiness experienced in the moment made permanent?

The subsequent scenes of the film continue right after the collision with the iceberg when due to the scheme of Rose's Jack gets arrested with the accusation of stealing the diamond necklace. The scenes after the fulfillment of love suggest that permanence of "true life" undermined, made impossible, and destroyed by both nature and society.

As we know, Jack is rescued by Rose, but eventually, after the sinking of the Titanic, Jack sacrifices himself for Rose. The ship, the ocean, the spaces of liminality are, therefore, mean death and the end of their love. At the same time, as in *Romeo and Juliet*, in the "message" of the Titanic, we see that death does not make the eternal moments of "true life and love" temporary. It is true that Jack and Rose could only "temporarily", only for moments have experienced the fulfillment of their love, but in those moments, they experienced "eternity." This experience is "worthwhile" as, according to the film, it survives all the dangers and tragedies, including death. At the end of the film, there is a flashback of Rose's last dream, a vision: Rose, after transformation to eternity, finds herself on the Titanic where Jack is awaiting her. This is how the liminal space of the eternal moment becomes the eternal Garden of Eden for the lovers, where they in their lives could have experienced the eternity of "true life". This is how the film; Titanic becomes one of the incomparable representations of modern myth of love and permanence.

The diamond necklace, mentioned multiple times in the film, is an important symbol. The story of the film is built on the search for this necklace: A group of treasure salvagers has found the drawing of Rose in nude. Rose tells them the story, while the group is trying to find the diamond with the help of description of the events. At the end of the movie, it turns out that Rose had the necklace for all that time, and throws it back into the ocean just before she dies.

As we know, diamonds are the symbols of permanence, steadfastness, and purity in known mythologies (Biedermann 1996: 135). In the film, the diamond necklace first is linked to the world of social structures, since it is with what Rose's fiancé, her future husband, is trying to "buy" her love. Later, Jack paints Rose wearing this necklace, then with the accusation of stealing it, he gets arrested, and finally Rose throws the necklace into the ocean. The diamond thus represents the tension of contradiction between social prestige and "true life". Rose, by not giving it to the treasure salvagers but dropping the

diamond into the ocean, suggests that the socio-economic value of diamond is unimportant. The diamond is only valuable and “permanent” as the symbol of “the moment of eternal love”.

Opposite the “permanency” of diamond is the “permanence” of the iceberg, the symbol of catastrophe and death. It may seem that besides the social structures, laws of nature also carry the forces of unattainability of true and permanent happiness. The rigid reality of nature, the cosmos, points to the temporary nature of life and the fragility and vulnerability of man.

This is why it is significant that the Titanic collides with the iceberg right after the consummation of love, as it is no coincidence that one of the most successful modern myths of “true life” and “eternal love” is the film related to the tragic story of Titanic. “Reality of the iceberg”, catastrophe of the Titanic reminds us that one ought to find the “true”, “permanent” values of life while he can. Message of the film is to find and experience “eternity” in those moments that offer the attainability of “true life”. Thus, the film summarizes the mythical narrative of eternity “condensed in moments” as the object and purpose of the desire of happiness in modernity.

The “moment of eternity” or the “eternity of moment”, according to the reading of the Titanic, can be attained and experienced most realistically in love and sexuality. By observing the cultural practice of modernity, we can come to the same conclusion. I believe, Kate Fox’s views on the characteristics of contemporary English sex life are also realistic in the broader context of modernity. Fox believes that experiencing free, “true” sexuality “where we can be ourselves” in the “rule-free zone” can happen outside the world of social structures and norms (Fox 2008:346-347).

During the phases of dating, couples step by step strip off, block out the outside world until they finally make love to each other. “Good sex” is achieved when “culture” and “society” are locked “out of bed” and the lovers can “really” and “naturally” be themselves. Thus, the two “true self” can experience the reality of “true life” in the sexual act. Thus, the “bed” becomes the liminal, hidden Eden of intimacy. It is no coincidence, therefore, that in modernity, many people have experienced their most lasting, memorable sexual experiences, in liminal locations and situations, such as at conferences, camps or parties. The “real sexual experiences” in these cases are facilitated by the “suspension” of social structures and daily routines. For most couples, the honeymoon,

the temporary withdrawal from the world, means the "Edenic" experience of their sexual life. The "temporary Eden" thus becomes a "lifelong", "eternal" experience and memory.

Going back to the movies that reach the masses, it does not mean the films analyzed (and hundreds alike) manipulate the people living in the culture of modernity. Movies only summarize the meaning of culture, ethos and desire of people, and thus 'impact' everyday practices.

Clifford Geertz in his study *The Religion as a Cultural System*, discusses the dual aspects of cultural symbols. Accordingly, the symbols display and „of sense” summarize the meanings of culture. At the same time, the "for sense" aspect of symbols has an impact on cultural practice. The people who understand the symbols are motivated by the "message" hidden in the symbols, to act and live act and experience given state of mind according to the coded message. So, man does not only create his symbols but also "live" by his symbols (Geertz 2001:79).

With this in mind, films can be interpreted as constructions carrying symbols and myths (Sutton-Wogan 2010:16). In popular films, the symbolic-mythical narrative of "eternity of the moment" appears in "of sense" as one of the most important aspects and values of the culture of modernity. All of this has a "for sense" impact on the moviegoer masses of consumers motivated and "ready" to experience the "moments of eternity".

Today, thousands of consumer industry products, modern beauty cultures, tourist advertisements, or even thousands of popular spiritual messages use these symbolic mythical narratives. Therefore, further detailed research and analysis of these can help us to deepen our understanding of our time and ourselves.

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Karin Budrugeac

Doctors as saints | How artworks for a social campaign showed divisions in Romanian society

Introduction

In late April 2020, during the lockdown due to the spread of the coronavirus, Romanian artist and Art Director of McCann Agency, Wanda Hutira (35), depicted doctors as saints, using imagery of several religions, for a publicity campaign meant to show appreciation for the medical personnel who is under severe strain. Because the #supportthedoctors campaign was led by an advertising agency, the illustrations were exposed on billboards in several cities, including the Romanian capital. This sparked heated reactions from the Romanian Orthodox Church (ROC) and its followers, condemning the use of Christian imagery and virtually attacking the author of the illustrations. The Church's complaint was backed by Bucharest City Hall, which requested the images to be taken down from the billboards as they were offensive to the beliefs of a part of the population. The advertising agency took down the billboard and argued that they had based their decision on the fact that the focus of the conversation should be on the positive message of the campaign. The whole unwinding generated an online controversy and a division between those offended by the artworks and those defending them, primarily on Facebook, Romania's most popular social media platform.

This episode is only one in a series of ideological clashes that take place in Romanian society and that cause conflict between followers of the Romanian Orthodox Church and a more progressist part of the civil society. My interest was to understand the hateful reaction of the Christian online community and the reasons behind the personal attacks on the artist. In order to do this, I drew on the national context of the policies of „state emergency” and its implications for the religious community, political debates and media publications that show a larger context to how the Romanian Orthodox Church intervenes in socio-cultural matters, and also the perception of medical staff in Romanian society. Social media research was also an important aspect, because most of the debates

also have a social media component. My online research of press articles and declarations of all the persons involved (the artist, representatives of the Romanian Orthodox Church, anthropologists, other artists) was completed by personal communications with the artist.

Doctors as „miracle workers”: a context for the campaign

The creative brief of the agency, which was the same in other countries, was that doctors be portrayed as the heroes of these times. In all countries, doctors in hospitals have been in the first lines in the fight against the coronavirus since February or March 2020. In Romania, the situation has been made even more difficult for them because of a lack of medical personnel that was known of since before the crisis and, during the crisis, by a lack of protective equipment and a faulty management in many medical units. As a consequence, the entire medical personnel of several Romanian hospitals have been contaminated with coronavirus. Public debates were rife with ethical dilemmas: should doctors be free to choose going to work? Or is the right to choose a privilege that other professions simply do not have? ¹

The last few years have been very difficult for the medical profession altogether, several scandals related to political ties of hospital managers and cases of corruption have been recently revealed. In 2016, a journalistic investigation uncovered a scandal concerning the fact that disinfectants used to clean equipment, operating theatres and floors in more than 2000 Romanian hospitals were diluted². The investigation generated a severe lack of trust of the public in the Romanian medical system, seen as corrupted and inefficient. In the context of the coronavirus, many people feared having to go to a public hospital and generally, the strict measures of lockdown that started as early as the 22nd of March, were respected throughout the country.

In a country where the Orthodox Church still has a big influence, and where a majority of people are orthodox – at the latest national census, in 2011, 86,5% of the population declared itself to be orthodox –, saints are very easy to recognize for a large

¹ (Romanian only) <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-coronavirus-23772082-coronavirus-romania-avem-dreptul-judecam-medicii-care-dau-demisia-fata-pandemiei-covid-19.htm?fbclid=IwAR3X9BoJnMAiLgOEh7naE0VL55bFR1xKx8i9oaf8tnogOv0ZHoH65FHk2g>

²<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/05/diluted-disinfectants-scandal-rocks-romania-hospitals-160514133623511.html>

segment of the population. They can more easily be seen as heroes by more people than the ones who would recognize, for example, pop culture figures of superheroes such as Batman or Spiderman (some of the proposals from McCann Belgrade for the same campaign). It is common for doctors to be associated with „miracle workers" and saint figures in Romanian media. Gheorghe Burnei is a famous Romanian pediatric orthopedist who was called frequently on Romanian television „the miracle worker" and also „the angel of children". After the publication of an investigation that showed he performed experimental operations that have had deadly or debilitating consequences on his patients and that also linked him to several cases of bribe and corruption, he is for the moment unable to practice and under trial facing several charges³. Media presented him as an inventor that could make children that suffered from debilitating bone diseases walk again. The media even nailed the term „the Burnei method" for his treatment of Lobstein disease (also known as glass bone disease), an intervention that costs around 50.000 Euros. There is no scientific or international recognition of this method.

The six illustrations of the campaign depicted doctors as deities of different religions: Shiva, third god of the triumvirate in Hinduism, responsible of destruction and re-creation, Buddha and Guan Yin (or Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara), goddess of compassion, mercy and kindness in Chinese Buddhism, Virgin of Guadalupe of Roman Catholicism and from Orthodoxism, the Christ and Mary. Islam and Judaism being aniconic religions, there were no depictions of doctors associated to them. All the illustrations were made by Wanda Hutira, Art Director at the McCann agency, also known for her work for several social causes and one of the artists having contributed the most to the last years civil movements and protests. Wanda has a distinctive feminine style and often uses illustrations that depict female sexual organs in a symbolic way. She believes that art is always a bearer of socio-political meaning and as a feminist, in the last few years has done work for social projects against domestic violence or in the defense of sex workers, from illustrations to murals in the city. She is also an object creator and has a line of jewels and bags (Ostra Berdo), the latter being made mostly out of recycled materials and rugs. The hate wave that ensued was primarily generated by the depictions of Orthodox icons, and more specifically by the one of the Christ. The Romanian Orthodox Church had no reaction towards the use of images from other religions and no other Churches came out to speak

³ <https://medium.com/romania-corruption-watch/gheorghe-burnei-the-god-complex-trumps-the-hippocratic-oath-3d32710e9e6a>

against them. The spokesperson of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Bucharest, Ștefan Tarciziu, said the Catholic Church is not taking a stand, and that he personally appreciates the perspective of the artist in trying to „artistically express a beautiful idea through the imagistic language of several religions”⁴.

A „blasphemous act” adds to tensions surrounding Orthodox Easter during lockdown

The illustrations of doctors as icons first appeared online on the 14th of April when they were posted by the agency on Facebook and shared by the author. The negative reactions only started coming two weeks later, after they appeared on billboards in several cities and began to be noticed by the public. Ensued the publication of articles on extremist websites and seemingly also on Orthodox groups, that were linking to the Facebook profile of the author. The same day, the spokesman of the Romanian Patriarchate gave a statement calling the posters „a visual mistreatment of Christian iconography”, a „caricature” of Christianity and „a blasphemous act”⁵.

The author’s Facebook post with the six images got more than 3.300 comments in a matter of hours. A part of those comments came from people who considered she was insulting the Christian religion by depicting regular people as saints. The terms *blasphemous and satanist* was frequently used, the author was insulted and even received a few death threats, both in comments and in private messages. There were also comments regarding the author’s nationality, because her name is not a traditional Romanian name: the family name Hutira is of Slovakian origin and the first name, Wanda, is of Polish origins. The counter-reaction was to condemn this „unchristian” attitude of hate and also to call out on censorship of the freedom of expression from the authorities and on the immixtion of the Church. The comments could be classified in three categories

⁴ (Romanian only) <https://www.libertatea.ro/stiri/desene-wanda-hutira-medici-sfinti-2975111>

⁵ Vasile Bănescu, spokesman of the Romanian Patriarchate: „I believe it to be a ridiculous campaign promoting a dystopian vision of the situation induced by the pandemic. An embarrassing attempt of symbolic rapture and visual mistreatment of Christian iconography, bad taste nourished by inculture and by a hideous ideology that only knows how to caricature christianity. How to otherwise explain the iconic deification of characters that are linked to the image of doctors, grotesquely sublimed as „saints”, with a christic appearance? It is not just a blasphemous act but also an insult to the very honorable profession of doctors who, like all of us, do not think they are saints or improvised saviors and do not demand a public cult.”

of seemingly even proportions: a category of people feeling insulted and insulting the author and her work, a second category insulting the first category and a third category praising the work and showing support to the artist.

Blasphemy is a complex theological concept that is at use here in a more familiar sense of insult, humiliation, provocation and attack to the sacredness of the icons and the saints, and to Divinity itself, notes the anthropologist Radu Umbreş⁶. In this case, blasphemy functions as David Nash develops in his article in the anthology „Negotiating the Sacred II: Blasphemy and Sacrilege in the Arts” „Blasphemy was, and is, more than a transgressionary activity. Its long history suggests that controversies about blasphemy are places where definitions of the universe and its working are debated; places where identities are forged and where communities debate issues about public order.”⁷

In Romania, most believers and even people who call themselves non-believers have icons in their houses. One of the most common icons to be found in Romanian churches but also in households is the one of Christ Pantocrator, usually translated as „almighty”. In this common imagery, Christ holds the New Testament in his left hand and makes the gesture of teaching or of blessing with the fingers of his right hand, gesture that makes him very easily recognizable. The name of the Christ is written on each side of the halo surrounding his head, as „IC” and „XC”. In Wanda Hutira’s reinterpretation, the New Testament is replaced by a medical tablet and the blessing fingers are holding a stethoscope, the letters written on each side of the halo are „CO” and „Vid 19”. The author also added two symbols to the icon that are common not only to doctors but to the entire population during these times: a bottle with the chemical formula of ethanol, C₂H₅OH, which is commonly used as a disinfectant during this period, and a camera with „Zoom” written on it, a hint of the way people are meeting these days when gatherings of more than 3 people are not allowed in Romania.

In a recent article, „When icons make you sick”, Elena Romashko, , compared the reactions believers had after the restrictions dues to Chernobyl with the ones during coronavirus, in terms of the physical need to hold on to their personal icons, to touch or kiss relics and icons while gathering in churches. Both contaminations (Chernobyl and

⁶ (Romanian only) Symbols, intentions and significations in the pandemic icons

<https://www.iscoada.com/home/blog/simboluri-intentii-si-sens-in-icoanele-pandemiei>

⁷ Nash, D. (2008). Blasphemy and sacrilege: A challenge to secularisation and theories of the modern? In Coleman E. & Fernandes-Dias M. (Eds.), *Negotiating the Sacred II: Blasphemy and Sacrilege in the Arts* (pp. 11-22). ANU Press. Retrieved May 8, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt24hb6q.7

coronavirus) made these rituals a source of public danger, but people want to believe that religious objects are above contamination. During this major international crisis, people's personal crisis are exacerbated, and their need for religion even stronger, which explains their increased need for communion, which is not a thing Orthodox Christians do that often, usually, says Romanian anthropologist Simion Pop⁸. For Easter celebrations, which mark the resurrection of Christ and are the most important ones in the Orthodox Church, believers gather in big numbers in churches and around them, in a ritual of passing the „holy light” from one to another. The „holy light” is considered a miracle by orthodox priests, a miracle that happens every year in the chapel of the Holy Grave where the body of the Christ is supposed to be, and where a candle or a torch is said to catch fire on its own. After this miracle, the „holy light” is delivered from Jerusalem by plane to orthodox countries and has to reach believers the same night, with the national patriarchates being responsible for the distribution to all churches. This complex annual enterprise has been compromised in almost all of the orthodox countries by the safety measures related to the coronavirus.

As anthropologist Radu Umbreş noted, very few of the believers are actually ignorant of the scientific explanation of the danger of contamination due to the coronavirus, but it is better for them to act as if it is not real or does not apply to religious context or rituals⁹. A press release of the Orthodox Church from the 27th of February 2020, almost one month before the lockdown, stated that believers should avoid kissing icons in churches and bring their own spoons for the Eucharist, which is commonly given to Christians in Orthodox churches from the same spoon, in order to avoid the transmission of the virus. Several conservative intellectuals and radical opinion leaders criticized the decision, considering it to betray the Orthodox faith. Patriarch Daniel, head of the Romanian Orthodox Church, reacted to this by making a public statement only 24 hours after to say that the previous press release was only aimed at believers who are “too afraid” and whose “faith is weak” and that the rituals would be pursued as usual. “The Church will not be quarantined, because the Church belongs to Christ, and not to a human

⁸ (Romanian only) An anthropologist explains the need for religion in times of crisis

<https://www.scena9.ro/article/religie-coronavirus-antropolog>

⁹ (Romanian only) Easter during the Coronavirus. Why do people act differently in fighting the pandemic?, Europa Liberă

https://romania.europalibera.org/a/pa%c8%99tele-%c3%aen-vremea-coronavirusului-de-ce-oamenii-adopt%c4%83-comportamente-diferite-%c3%aen-combaterea-pandemiei-/30559103.html?fbclid=IwAR3CZMaBb2BqxRd-N0EU7FRGHez8tHBy8_ivFX0pRlaLwz0lxYnKbt3fEvl

authority”, was a statement given by the Romanian Patriarchate to the press a few days later.

Easter celebrations were supposed to take place in the night between the 18th and 19th of April, while the severe measures of lockdown prohibited people from going out of their houses for other reasons than basic necessities or emergencies and never more than three at a time. If the celebrations had taken place as usual, thousands of believers would have gathered in cities all over the country with candles to receive the light and take it to their homes as a symbol of Christ’s resurrection. The danger for contamination was considered by the authorities to be extremely high. The Romanian Orthodox Church first announced that the services will take place normally, and invited Christians to come to churches during Easter night. The Church even signed a protocol with the Minister of Internal Affairs to ensure that believers who wanted so could attend the Church services and that the Police forces were to bring the “holy light” to the rest of the believers to their homes. Three days before Easter, the Romanian president made a public declaration contradicting the protocol and the involvement of Police officers in the religious services, reminding that the current emergency state forbids Easter religious services to be open to the public. The decision was finally respected throughout the country and with very few exceptions Easter celebrations remained private, and broadcasted on television.

The immixtion of the Romanian Orthodox Church in public displays of art

The mixture of the ROC in Romanian public affairs is not uncommon, the Romanian Orthodox Church intervenes in decisions that go from public education (opposing the introduction of sexual education in schools or trying to force keeping Religion as an obligatory class) to civil rights (backing the legislative initiative to change the Constitution in order for it not to allow marriage between same sex partners in 2018). The two strongest political parties in Romania are known to have ties with the Orthodox Church. There is an ongoing controversy around the fact that the Romanian Church is exempted from most taxes (VAT and profit tax)¹⁰. The other big controversy is around the

¹⁰ (Romanian only) The reaction of the Patriarchy after the proposal of taxation of the Church <https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/actualitate/social/reactia-patriarhiei-dupa-propunerea-de-impozitare-a-bisericii-760943>

construction of the National Cathedral (People's Salvation Cathedral), on a public domain of 110 thousands square meters near the Palace of Parliament that has been given by the state to the Romanian Orthodox Church. The money for the construction of the Church itself are difficult to estimate due to a lack of transparency, in the autumn of 2018, the Church declared an expenditure of 110 million Euros, 75% coming from state funds, including substantial contributions of Bucharest City Hall and of the municipalities of all the 6 sectors of the city (the Cathedral being located in sector 3 of the city). Calculations made by journalists found however that the Church's estimates were wrong and that more than 121 million Euros at that time came from state funds ¹¹. A big problem is the lack of state investments in education, health or research. According to the National Institute of Statistics (INSSE), at the end of 2017, there were 576 hospitals in Romania, of which 367 public hospitals, and over 28.000 cult spaces, pertaining to the 18 cults recognized by the Romanian state, over 16.500 being churches and monasteries of the Romanian Orthodox Church, so 50 more times more churches than hospitals. These facts led to introducing slogans like „Vrem spitale nu catedrale” / „We want hospitals, not cathedrals” in recent protests throughout the country.

There is a precedent regarding public art manifestations using religious symbols and where the Church and City Hall worked together in creating a situation that was qualified as censorship by the public opinion. In April 2015, a mural was painted by several street artists¹² on one of the buildings in the very center of Bucharest, Sfântu Gheorghe Square, namely Saint George square, from the name of the prominent military saint and martyr of Christianity, celebrated on the 23rd of April. The mural was financed by an NGO organising underground touristic tours of Bucharest and showed the saint in his battle with the dragon, entitled „Saint George and the playful Dragon”. An orthodox fundamentalist blog wrote very soon after the mural was painted that it was a Masonic painting. The nearby church reacted by saying that it was a pamphlet of Saint George, and not “an icon”, but didn't publicly attack it. A complaint was filed to the City Hall that the ROC didn't recognize as issuing. The next day the mural was repainted by the City Hall, before a protest against the censorship, programmed on the 8th of May, could take place. There was a reaction of support of the censored artists by other Romanian artists who

¹¹ (Romanian only) The Cathedral of the People's Manipulation, Să fie lumină <https://safielumina.ro/catedrala-manuirii-neamului/>

¹² Obie Platon, irlo and Mr. Ker.

virtually repainted the wall by making references to "Je suis Charlie" and ridiculing the Romanian Orthodox Church¹³. Although there was no formal stance from the Orthodox Church against the mural, the public opinion considered that the decision of the City Hall to censor the painting was clearly in anticipation of the opposition of the ROC. The mural was repainted by the same artists on a wall of the Faculty of Arts in Timișoara, the city where the Romanian Revolution started in December 1989, this time picturing the Saint as being defeated by the dragon.

In both cases, the ROC denied the censorship by invoking their role as protector of believers who were offended by the artworks.

Progressive Civil Society reaction

Civil society is a term claimed by both the conservatives and the progressive. Conservatives often state that the church is the true civil society in Romania, the one that advocates human rights (as for anti abortion campaigns, for instance). I will therefore specify that I am referring to the progressive part of civil society.

Usually, the progressive part of the Romanian civil society reacts with protests and heavy use of humor to aggressions coming from the state, authorities or the Orthodox Church. In the case of the #supportthedoctors campaign, the online protest took the form of the sharing of the author's illustrations (over 200 shares) and related posts in support of the artist, sometimes accompanied by the tagline "Je suis Wanda" as a rappel to "Je suis Charlie" or the use of the profile picture frame of the icon depicting the Christ.

The humor oriented against the Orthodox Church flourished these past years. BOR, the acronym for the Romanian Orthodox Church (Biserica Ortodoxă Română), is commonly used in pejorative language, as is the renaming of "People's Salvation Cathedral" into "People's Dupery Cathedral". Pejorative terms are also used to mock the believers, such as "christianopaths" (creștinopați in Romanian) which not only derives from psychopaths or sociopaths, but due to the linguistic closeness between creștin (Christian) and cretin (idiot) also suggests the believers to be narrow minded.

¹³ Photo gallery, Romanian only <https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-administratie-locala-20107384-fotogalerie-pictura-murala-realizata-peretele-unei-cladiri-din-piata-gheorghe-din-capitala-fost-acoperita-presiunea-bisericii-ortodoxe-romane-facebook-aparut-serie-imagini-care-ridiculizeaza-situatia.htm>

In the #supportthedoctors case as in others, ROC's reactions have been ridiculed as "hypocritical". Firstly, the statement that icons cannot portray common people, and they are reserved to saints, invoked by several commentators, was challenged by many examples where the patrons of churches are painted on the churches' walls, even contemporary political figures can be found on the walls of churches they paid for. This counter-argument brings back one of the main accusations against the Romanian Orthodox Church, which regards the fact that it loses its orthodoxy (understood here as inflexibility) when it comes to money. Contrary to the reinterpretation of the Christ, the paintings do not show the patrons with an aura, they are painted as regular people that enjoy the saints' company. Several commentators to Wanda's post have underlined the blasphemy to concern the use of the halo, illustrating the aura, and making it clear that the depictions are of saints.

An interesting and critical perspective in the progressive side came from leftist intellectuals that made their voice known against the censorship of the artworks but had also a nuanced interpretation of their meaning and their use. Dan Perjovschi is maybe Romania's best known contemporary artist and also a civil rights activist¹⁴. Asked to give an opinion on the subject he raised questions regarding the real interest behind the campaign, which he says it was pretty obvious to cause a conflict and divide the public and not to be thankful to doctors and create unity in difficult times. There is also a difference between being critical of the institution of the Romanian Orthodox Church and insulting Christians for their beliefs. In the same line of thought, art in the public space should be even more subject to critics and opinions and it should be held responsible for its discourse.

The fact that the artworks were part of an advertising campaign, even if a non-commercial campaign, might be one of the reasons why, contrary on the 2015 Saint George mural, there was no protest of artists against the censorship in the case of the illustrations of doctors. Debates have also been held whether this type of commissioned

¹⁴ Since 1990, following the demise of Communism in Eastern Europe and the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, the artist has contributed hundreds of witty and incisive observations to literary and political journals, such as *Contrapunct* and *22*. The latter was the first independent oppositional weekly published in Romania in the aftermath of the Democratic Revolution. Taking its name from the date December 22, 1989, the historic day on which Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu was ousted from power, *22* is the brainchild of the Group of Social Dialogue, a think tank of dissident writers, artists, and philosophers who endorse freedom of expression and human rights. As an illustrator for *22*, and as its former art director, Perjovschi has transformed drawing into a medium of information and political commentary. <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/24>

art created by Art Directors has the same value as if the art was commissioned to an independent artist or more so, if the initiative was the one of an independent artist.

Conclusions

The measures taken by all the states in order to protect their citizens from the spread of the coronavirus have affected many aspects of social life. In the context of the prohibition of gathering that hit Christians during the most important Orthodox celebration, the division between believers and seculars has once again surfaced, on the subject of a series of illustrations depicting doctors as saints and being shown in public spaces.

The ways the Romanian Orthodox Church acted as to protect its believers in this time of general confusion and fear is questionable. The ROC's actions and reactions, in some cases backed by the authorities, in others in conflict with the state, showed more aggression than moderation or a willingness to appease a population already on the edge in a time of uncertainty. The public position of censorship the Church usually takes regarding art also shows its reluctant to prove more flexible in civil matters, in this particular case, it instigated to hate speech and censorship, instead of unity. In this conflict, the more progressive part of society condemned the censorship by the use of the same defenses as usual, (virtual) protest and humor, often directed at other believers, in a condescending way, that makes dialogue difficult.

The aim of the campaign to unify believers and non-believers in their support of the medical personnel during the crisis failed to be accomplished; on the contrary, it only managed to mark the divisions between them. Discussions on the margins of the conflict brought some interesting perspectives on whether artworks for an advertising campaign have the same value as the ones by independent artists and if the degree of responsibility isn't different when art is put in the service of social campaigns.

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Lili Almási Szabó

Negro Matapacos: street dog, hero or patron saint of protestors?

Abstract

Objective and context: The objective of this study is to analyze the dog-human relation in case of the Chilean mongrel dog, Negro Matapacos, known as hero to the society. The first Chilean riot dog is characterized by a heroic personality that has important supportive functions in response to public precariousness. Without any physical barriers the dog transfers certain social values during and after his life. This article deals with different aspects of his heroic character and explores how he is seen by the protestors on political, social and personal levels. The experience of both life and death is key to the Andean mythology even in contemporary practices. The dog's rich iconography in urban, political and personal spaces evidences the evolution of the dog-human relation. The animal becomes from street dog to patron saint of protestors. **Methodology:** There was no prefixed methodology in the framework of this study, but rather it was driven by personal experiences during the 2019-2020 protests and by theoretically relevant approaches. The dog's iconography helps the reader to engage with anthropological interpretations as well as with aesthetics.

Keywords: Negro Matapacos, animal heroes, human-dog relation, urban saints, protests

Introduction: Chilean protests now and back

Currently in 2019-2020 civil protests are being organized in the capital city, Santiago, and all over Chile in response to the increasing costs of living, inequality and privatization processes in the capitalist neoliberal system. A raise in Santiago Metro's subway fare triggered the evasion of some stations mid-October. The groups of protestors kept growing day by day, reaching a peak of over 1,2 million people in Baquedano square on

25th of November¹⁵. These facts give us the context of this study. However, in this article my aim is not to detail the cycle of protests and the sociopolitical crisis Chile is facing since 18th of October 2019 but to draw attention to one of the heroes of the protests and his relation to the protestors and others.

Black Cop-Killer, the hero among all street dogs

This hero became known from the years of 2011-2013 during students' demonstrations in Santiago, asking for a better educational system. He is *Negro Matapacos* (in English: Black Cop-Killer), a black mongrel dog who gained popularity due to its participation in the protests on the side of students (Figure 1). His figure reappeared in the collective consciousness when 2019 protests started. Since then, the dog became an international icon of protest thus he "spreads the spirit of revolution" (Anania, 2019). Quickly arriving to remote lands with the help of social media, Negro Matapacos with his red bandana around the neck was used as a symbol to start riots in New York (see Figure 2). In many countries the image of the dog appeared to show solidarity towards the Chilean protests (see Figure 3). To mention two examples, in Japan, the statue of Hachiko¹⁶ dog was accessorized with a red bandana (Calderón, 2019), as well as the statue of Balto¹⁷ in Central Park, New York (Cooperativa.cl, 2019).

Jaime Rodríguez (2013), sociologist from the University of Chile says that there are certain things that are happening on the streets, and are logical on the streets, they are validated only there. This black dog is one of those things. The dog reflects *what it is* to be on the streets. According to the sociologist, he also reflects a feeling of absolute precariousness. He is the dog of the streets. Not any kind of domestic dog, but a street dog in a vulnerable situation. The people on the streets are demonstrating against

¹⁵ President of Chile Sebastián Piñera announced a state of emergency on 18th of October after 81 metro stations were seriously damaged, 17 of them burnt. The Chilean Army force was authorized to intervene in protests that use vandalism as a tool of expression. The riots have expanded over the major cities of the country and protests claimed 31 human lives as of 31st of January 2020 (Ulloa & CNN, 2020). The country claims that the recent cycle of protests is the "worst civil unrest" since the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, considering the total worth of damage to public infrastructure and the number of actively participating protesters (Núñez, 2019).

¹⁶ Hachiko is a famous Japanese dog from Sibuja who became known because of his unique loyalty to his owner. He usually waited for his owner to get back from work at the railway station. After the man died when he was away, Hachiko kept waiting for him for over nine years in the same place.

¹⁷ Balto is the famous Siberian husky who transported diphtheria antitoxin from Anchorage, Alaska, to Nenana, Alaska in 1925, times of the deadly diphtheria epidemic.

precariousness of the citizens that occur parallel to the current governmental system. Symbols are very important here, because the character of the mobilization is determined through them (Rodríguez, 2013). A sense of unity can be revealed. There are thousands of photos of this dog on the internet. He appears with the bandana around his neck, surrounded by protestors, attacking policemen (see Figure 4 and 5). The “street dog”, which is below everything and everyone, disputes the power of “those above”. These are *the small* against *the big* powers. Humble people against the highest powers in hierarchy (Rodríguez, 2013). The black dog embodies the fight for a better future.

Placing the street dogs of Santiago and their relation to humans in context, we must understand that the city is home to around 250 thousand dogs (Schulz, 2010), in the rural areas of the country altogether the number of street dogs is estimated to 255 thousand (CNN, 2018). My experience confirms the high number of dogs wandering the streets. They walk in packs, obeying traffic lights, making no physical harm to humans. Santiago’s street dogs live in perfect harmony with humans in the city, sharing urban spaces. Street dogs form a part of the country’s urban culture thus we can understand why according to sociologist Jaime Rodríguez (2013) dogs can be reflections of people in the iconography of the protests.

Friend and faithful companion of a generation, even afterlife

A person - or in this case an animal - who shows the prototypical hero features of bravery, sacrifice, conviction, risk-taking, and moral integrity for an honorable purpose is likely to provide psychological and social functions for individuals who encounter (or cogitate) about them (Kinsella, Ritchie, & Igou, 2015). Matapacos fulfills both psychological and social functions to people towards an honorable socio-political purpose: the state reforms. In what way does Matapacos provide psychological help to protestors?

Other scholarly work indicates that persons use metaphors, myths, or symbols to give coherence to their lives (Campbell, 1988). Perhaps heroes, similar to powerful myths and metaphors, are used as tools for dealing with uncertainty (Van der Bos, 2009). Both leaders and heroes are described as offering guidance and leadership through the complexity of daily life. This is interesting given that many heroes do not occupy formal leadership positions (Kinsella, Ritchie, & Igou, 2015). A hero can become a leader in times of threat or unfulfilled needs, especially in situations when the individuals perceive social

isolation, uncertainty or simply low self-esteem (Kinsella, Ritchie, & Igou, 2015). The atmosphere of the neoliberal country was already characterized by unfulfilled needs and feelings of instability. Furthermore, the protests starting in October 2019 did provide the massive perception of uncertainty due to military intervention, wide-spread vandalism, ongoing governmental debates. As a reason, we may suspect that the figure of Negro Matapacos provided guidance to people, who felt that they were threatened by uncertainty on psychological, social levels.

In my view, we can find the first pillar of the mentioned psychological help in the following qualities. We find proof to his fearlessness in a song honoring him says: “It is said he is the Cop-Killer that does not fear any rifle. That the police do not want to see him on the free protests to resist. It is said that in the fight he was an example and in the city they call him the *companion of freedom*” (see Annex 1 for full text and original language version) (Unknown Author, 2020). These lines introduce him as a fearless figure, even in a war-like situation facing police and rifles. An interviewed young protestor explains: “As I see, teargas and water does not do any harm to dogs. Black Matapacos always came with us since the very beginning of the riots” (Ramirez, 2013). In these short sentences - according to public opinion - we have found reference to his bravery and his risk-taking personality, and his overall capacity to face policemen.

His restlessness to participate in protests was explained by Mrs. María Campos, the owner¹⁸ of Negro Matapacos in an interview:

“First I realized that he came home with a bandana in his neck. Somebody gave it to him. Second, he did not act like before, knocking the door gently, but he turned desperate to leave home. He became desperate when he knew there were riots outside, and he left flying to Alameda¹⁹. Once I was in the city center crossing a nearby street, and suddenly I saw him as he was leading a students’ protest towards Plaza de Armas.”
(Ramirez, 2013)

Here we understand that besides his bravery there is restlessness connected to the figure of the mongrel dog, that gives him a humanly aspect. He is usually “desperate” to go to the protests and he is witnessed “leading” the protests. His ability as a group leader is fueled by urge and excitement towards any protests. He is a canine leader unquestionably

¹⁸ Negro Matapacos was originally a street dog, but after meeting a few times with Mrs. María Campos on Paseo Ahumada he begun to visit her at home and finally settled there (Martinez, 2012).

¹⁹ The other name of Libertador Bernardo O’Higgins Avenue in Santiago, frequent home to protests.

accepted by a human group. According to Kinsella, Ritchie and Igou (2015) the qualities of bravery, leadership and strenuousness can be linked to the social functions that a hero accomplishes.

The second pillar of the psychological support this dog provides to protestors may be found in the similarities between both parties. Cesar Millan, the internationally well-known dog expert says “it becomes very obvious, by reading a dog, how stable or unstable his human companion is. Our dogs are our mirrors” (Millan, *Be the Pack Leader: Use CESAR'S WAY to Transform Your Dog . . . and Your Life*, 2008). In the Chilean case, we experience how street dogs can be perceived as *reflections* of their owners, the “people of the street” (meaning passers-by). Moreover, Cesar Millan (2008) argues that in a dog-human relation both parties can read each other’s emotions. As Rodríguez (2013) mentioned, there is a parallel understanding of precariousness that both people and dogs experience in today’s Chile.

To build up the third pillar of psychological support, we should look at the *immortality* of Negro Matapacos. According to Kinsella, Ritchie and Igou (2015), heroes are often spatio-temporally distant (e.g., sometimes dead or remote). The black dog passed away from old age in August 2017, but his heroic figure is still fulfilling supportive function in 2019-2020 protests. If a hero creates a lasting impact it can achieve symbolic immortality. I would approach this question in an anthropological perspective in two dimensions. To the philosophical or spiritual dimension, immortality is understood as the continued existence of an immaterial soul or mind beyond the physical death of the body. As an example, the soul may be reborn. On a cultural or social dimension, the extension of life can refer to the continuous reproduction of the values represented by the hero, that continues even after life biologically terminates. In other words, there is a cultural heritage that is being passed on. To my understanding, the figure of Matapacos achieved symbolic immortality in both dimensions. Chilean protests are still being guided by him today, upon his values and his spiritual presence.

Mrs. Campos continues telling us about the story of Matapacos. Among her words we may find proof of the dog's spiritual immortality.

“The day when there is a student protest outside, he knows about it. As if he was a reincarnation of someone else. It is very, very strange. You know, I have a traditionally catholic friend, she is the only one who talks to me about fears. She said, probably he is an evil creature, because he behaves unlike a dog. I am also a faithful Catholic believer.

But I know, he represents the youth. This dog cannot be any evil spirit. He wouldn't let me bless him if he was." (Ramirez, 2013)

After saying this in the documentary of Ramírez (2013) we see her bending towards the dog and drawing three crosses with her fingers to his forehead while saying a prayer for his safe return, then kissing him (see Figure 6). As she says, she repeats this ritual every time before he goes to the protests.

According to the well-known Chilean folklorist Oreste Plath (1955) the dog as an animal also achieves mysterious aspects in the Chilean popular imagination. In these forests of folklore, diabolic dogs, dog-men and the superstitions associated with howls or barks abound. Black dogs, for example, can be entities from a dark and parallel world, especially if they appear at night and surrounded by strange circumstances (Plath, 1955; Salazar, 2015). Knowing this, we can link this concept to the fears of Mrs. María's friend who thought Cop-Killer might be a diabolic creature.

Mrs. María mentions the black dog, Matapacos, might be the reincarnation of somebody²⁰ due to his humanly behavior. "It is said that he is the reincarnation of a student previously passed away on protests" explains a forty-year-old taxi driver I have interviewed in December 2019. The reincarnated soul of a student in this dog is mentioned by secondary-school students as well in the documentary made by Ramirez (2013). A boy says: "It is said that he is a reincarnated student and that stuff." The director asks: "So you all think he is the reincarnation of a dead student?" "Yes" – they all say unanimously nodding their heads and smiling (Ramirez, 2013). To the public opinion, the student passed away in protests among schoolmates, that would explain why the dog follows students to protests. The story matches the previous concept of immortality by Kinsella, Ritchie and Igou (2015), this time taking a religious interpretation of *afterlife* in a spiritual dimension.

So, what happens after the death of the Chilean mongrel in 2017? On the second, cultural dimension we can observe the continuous reproduction of the values represented by the hero. Other dogs are taking similar heroic actions, also they are treated as heroes. They are fulfilling similar functions to Negro Matapacos. The first example is Pepe Matapacos (in English: Pepe the Cop-Killer) (Figure 7). He is described with a combative

²⁰ We only know for sure that Matapacos first showed up in 2010, but we do not know his exact birth date. I have tried to make some research to find out who the reincarnated person might be. But for that, we would have to engage with the very process of reincarnation, which, to my view, would be a questionable topic to discuss in this article.

attitude towards police officers in protests of Concepción city. He especially dislikes the police water cannons and armored vehicles (MundoMascota, 2019). He was evidenced when trying to bite the waterjet in the air. He usually follows students to protest escaping from home, similarly to Negro Matapacos. His revolutionary attitude explains why Pepe is inheritor of the “surname” Matapacos. However, he suffered skin injuries and had visionary problems due to constant contact with toxic teargas (MundoMascota, 2019). The second example to Chilean canine heroes of the recent protests is Rucio Capucha²¹ (in English: Hooded Blond) (Figure 8). He is one of the inheritors of the missions of legendary Negro Matapacos in Santiago city (MundoMascota, 2019). The dog was captured by photographers with a similar red bandana in his neck. Rucio Capucha is seen as a loyal friend of protestors even though, after getting injured on site, he was medically treated and later adopted (MundoMascota, 2019). The story of this unfortunate accident made volunteers organize the removal of street dogs from protests due to their expulsion to teargas and the high possibility of getting injured by police vehicles. The encounter with these canine heroes generates a social connectedness among protestors.

On the cultural dimension, the mentioned two dogs have similar personal characteristics to keep on fighting against governmental repression of protests. They symbolically inherited surnames as reference to the protestors and Negro Matapacos. On the other hand, the action of giving a name has a possessive aspect, at the same time it is a sign of closeness. Surnames can be understood as direction indicators of the life course of the individual (in this case, dog). The two dog’s mission is to continue what Negro Matapacos and his human followers have started. Surnames are given by humans to the dogs. To that point, citizens are the ones that bring Matapacos and his heritage to *new life* by naming them as inheritors. As there is unanimous acceptance of the two animals among the heroes of the protests²², we suspect a strong social connectedness behind.

²¹ The word *capucha* makes a reference to hoodies. Protestors often wear facial masks and/or hoodies to protect their nose and mouth from teargas. This is why protests are sometimes referred to as *encapuchados*, in English, hooded. The word *rucio,-a* is a local variant to *rubio,-a*, meaning blond. The name of the dog Rucio Capucha translates as “Hooded Blond” or as “Blond with a hoodie”.

²² Besides canine heroes there are fantasy characters as well among the leaders of the protests. As an example, the group of the New Chilean Avengers 2019 is formed by Negro Matapacos; Pareman or Capitan Alameda (a man with face cover holding a stop-sign as armor); Spiderman (a man with a Spiderman costume); Nalcaman (a man dressed up from head to toe with leaves of the nalca plant); Pikachu (a woman with a Pikachu costume) (Arros, 2019). Their characters entertain massive protests in Santiago city.

Not only a hero, but a patron saint of protests?

We can consider the dog as a special bridge that connects and accompanies humans and non-humans both through life and in its passage to the world beyond²³ (Weinberg, 2019). In everyday contexts, dogs can mean company and at the same time protection to humans. Anthropologist Marina Weinberg (2019) discusses how this dog-human syntax is transformed when one of the companions leaves for the world of the dead. As she highlights, particularly in the Andean region "death is conceived as the beginning of a long transformation" where the identity of the dead "is built along the ritual action, which consists of the transformation, whose destiny is to be reborn in the other life" (Weinberg, 2019). Two years after his death, how did this canine-human relation transform between Negro Matapacos and his fellow protestors? I try to walk the reader through some examples of artworks honoring him, in order to understand this unique relation that the society maintains with the canine even after life.

Criss Salazar (2019), independent chronicler and amateur urban history researcher writes about Negro Matapacos, the first Chilean riot dog. The mongrel already became a consolidated legend and "patron saint" of the protests. (Salazar, 2019). From this we can see that after the dog passed away, the society has placed him above, to a spiritual sphere. Altars around Santiago city are honoring the dog. The most important one was installed outside of the GAM (Centre Gabriela Mistral) in Santiago (Figure 9) where we see his lifelike statue surrounded by flowers, candles, graffiti paintings and posters of victims of the recent confrontations.

Some street graffiti also shows strong resemblance to altars. There are two that especially called my attention by the side of the GAM Center (Centro Cultural Gabriela Mistral) (Figure 10 and 11). These artworks show angelic figures placing a crown upon the head of Matapacos. He appears as an urban saint with a strongly meaningful symbolic setup around him. Other than on altars or wall-paintings, we see the saint-Matapacos's icon on postcards, appearing with glory above the head (Figure 12). A similar icon was made for both Negro Matapacos and Rucio Capucha (Figure 13).

²³ Marina Weinberg (2019), social anthropologist from Argentina in her article *Especies compañeras después de la vida: pensando relaciones humano-perro desde la región surandina* tries to find answers to the questions: What does death do to human-dog relationships in the Andean world? In other words, how is this dog-human syntax transformed when one of the companions leaves for the world of the dead?

Paper and metal sculptures of the dog can be found in Iquique and in Plaza Baquedano in Santiago. A paper-maché sculpture near Baquedano square (Plaza Salvador and Plaza de la Aviación) was of key importance in the first few months of 2019 protests (Figure 14). The biggest-ever-known Matapacos sculpture was carried by protesters on riots, memorial ceremonies were made around it, later was symbolically damaged by police forces. The sculpture was used in various functionalities, among them to create a sacred space to the memorial of victims. Smaller sculptures of the dog were captured by photographers in places damaged by the protesters (see Figure 15). In that place, the statue “invokes his presence” according to the photographer (Colina, 2019).

Additional artworks, poems and songs (Annex 1) were written, postcards, stickers, tarot card designs (Figure 16), magnets, wall-paintings (Figure 17) were made in his honor. Even a dance²⁴ on a festival’s stage was dedicated to Negro Matapacos. A video game was developed by *Nemoris Games in Unity* in honor of the riot dog, in which the gamer must take the place of the icon of protests, Matapacos (Figure 18). The mission of the game is to prevent armed forces from approaching protesters (Matteucci, 2019). Cartoons were also published on Twitter (Figure 19) among other heroic pictures and memes about the dog (Figure 20).

Personal items with his image, such as T-shirts, phone cases, earrings, nail designs, cigarette holders surely mean a personal closeness to the dog. Tattoos, to my view, are showing a deep dimension of this personal closeness (Figure 21). The revolution itself can mean a deep and unforgettable experience to any participants, but a tattoo image may mean that Matapacos is the essence of all that experience. With a tattoo, the owner decides to be accompanied by the dog for a whole life. The riot dog does not only have a political and social significance to people but there are personal and emotional attachments as well.

These artworks are all reminding us to the heroic figure of Negro Matapacos, at the same time these make him *alive* even after life. His inheritance is being transferred to the next generation; the socially recognized values are being passed on. In a sense, his representation on objects make protestors feel his presence on an everyday basis.

²⁴ In the Festival of Olmué 2020 the folklore group *3x7 veintiuna* danced the last *cueca* in the honor of Negro Matapacos. Announced by the singer of the band, Daniel Patricio Muñoz, both the song and the dance was celebrated by the audience (Henríquez Ordenes, 2020).

To make a deeper political analysis of the dog's wide iconography, we may consider riot flyers and posters that use his image (Figure 22). Flyers and posters calling for assemblies all over the country memorialize the black dog. To mention another symbolically important object, bandanas are sold on streets to protestors, mainly in red color (Figure 23). Besides being commemorative, those tiny textiles also fulfill important functions: protestors can use them as face-covers against teargas and to prevent later face-recognition by cameras of authorities.

In summary: from street dog to patron saint

According to Cesar Millan, if you give your dog any opportunity for him to lead you, he will take it (Millan, 2007). Negro Matapacos, a humble street dog took the lead of a whole society. The youth knows Negro Matapacos as a faithful comrade who endured tear gas and water cannons, and who only ever attacked or barked at policemen (Anania, 2019).

In a universal sense, individuals who die on the battlefield are usually recognized by the society as *heroes*. They are the ones that remind us of history and to the sacrifices the society made in the hope of a better future. They seem to defend the highest values of the community and fight against dangers. Even though Negro Matapacos did not die on the event of a protest, he did suffer there thus he became recognized by the Chilean and by the international society as a hero.

Heroes show moral fortitude, protect against threats, help fight disillusionment, promote cultural values and norms, help to create meaningful life based on society's values. May a patron saint do something similar? A patron saint would enable us to do what no one else will, to be heroes ourselves. Chilean youth is fighting for a better future and Negro Matapacos has a role in that fight. His virtues are to instill hope, to be a role model, to save, to inspire, to act against evil or danger, to motivate, to guide, to show morals and values, to remind people about good. His altars and wall-paintings are filled with meanings in the eyes of the society. They are filled with hope towards a better world, with equality and dignity to Chile.

Figures



Figure 1 – The most known portrait of Negro Matapacos. Source: (Chilevisión, 2019)



Figure 2 – Negro Marapacos's figure is used in New York's 2019 protests. Source: (Chilevisión, 2019)

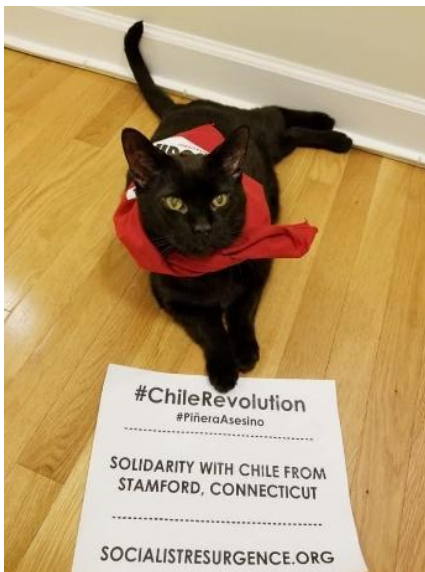


Figure 3 – Foreign protesters show solidarity with banners in Santiago (2019). Poster in Melbourne, Australia, to call for solidarity with Chile (2019). Below: home photo with black cat wearing red bandana to show solidarity with Chile, from Stamford, Connecticut (2019). Source: Twitter, 2019.



Figure 4 – Source: Henríquez Ordenes (2020).

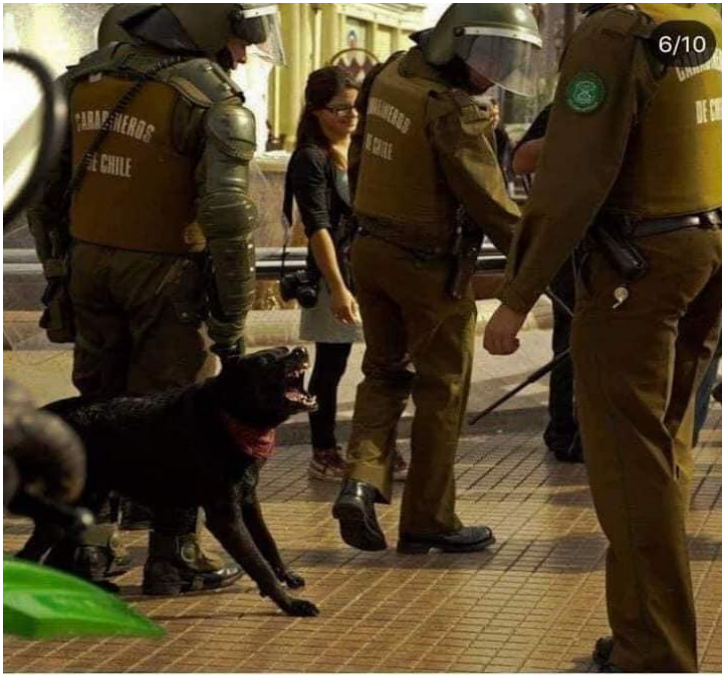


Figure 5 – Negro Matapacos attacking policemen. Source: Henríquez Ordenes (2020).



Figure 6 – Mrs. María blessing the dog before he leaves home. Source: Documental Negro Matapacos (Ramirez, 2013).



Figure 7– Pepe Matapacos and his iconic photos from protests in Concepción, 2019. Source: Twitter (2019; 2020).



Figure 8 – Three iconic pictures of Rucio Capucha photographed at interventions of police using water cannons. Source: Instagram (2020), Twitter (2020).



Figure 9 – The altar created in the honor of Negro Matapacos was installed outside of the GAM (Centre Gabriela Mistral) in Santiago. Source: (Cooperativa.cl, 2019)



Figure 10 – Artwork on the outer walls of GAM. An angel holding the burning constitution of Chile is riding on the back of the Black Cop-killer. Both appear as angels, wearing wings. The artwork is surrounded by stickers, posters and graffiti with diverse messages of protestors. Source: own photo (2019).



Figure 11 – Artwork on the outer walls of GAM. We see women protesters and an angel placing a crown on Cop-Killer's head. He appears as an angelic figure with wings. In the hands of the angel-like protester we see a frying pan and a wooden spoon, typically used on the Chilean protests to make noise. Source: own photo (2019).



Figure 12 – Iconography of Negro Matapacos as an urban saint. Source: Instagram (2020), Twitter (2020).



Figure 13 – Postcard designs of Negro Matapacos and Rucio Capucha, appearing as patron saints. Source: Instagram (2020), Twitter (2020)



Figure 14 – Pedestrians taking photos on Plaza de la Aviación with the giant paper-maché sculpture of Negro Matapacos and Mapuche flag. Source: Radio ADN (2019).



Figure 15 – Matapacos sculpture used in demonstration sites, almost as an “invocation”. Image source: Urbatorium website of Chilean urban legends. Photographer: Enrique Colina, who walks and photographs the figure of the dog made of paper-maché in different locations. Source: Urbatorium (2019), Salazar (2019).



Figure 16 – Tarot card designs: Left, labelled as “the brave” showing Matapacos holding the Chilean flag, surrounded by teargas used by the local police; center, labelled as “the student”; right, labelled as “the force”. Sources: Berant (2019), matapacos.cl (2020).



Figure 17 – Wall-painting at Plaza Nunoa, Santiago. Source: own photo, January, 2020.



Figure 18 – Protests' scenery from videogame. Source: (Matteucci, 2019)



Figure 19 – Cartoon distributed online by MalaTienda on Twitter (MalaTienda, 2019). Source: Twitter, MalaTienda (2019).



Figure 20 – Drawing of a fantasy design of Baquedano Square’s main statue that depicts the heroes of the revolution 2019-2020. On the front we see Negro Matapacos; on the side the protestors’ mass dated to 18th October 2019; on the top very first students who jumped over the entry of the metro station to show their anger after the rise of the metro pass prices. Originally in the square we see a monument to General Baquedano, however during the 2019-2020 protests this public space was home to massive manifestation. Source: Twitter, drawing made by Carla Infanta (2019).

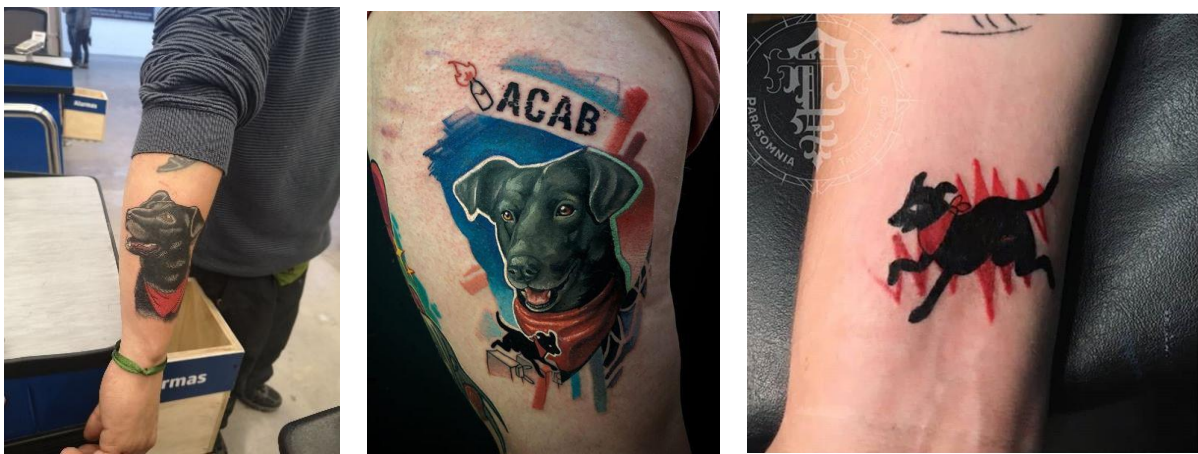


Figure 21 – Tattoos made in honor of Negro Matapacos. Source: Twitter (2019).

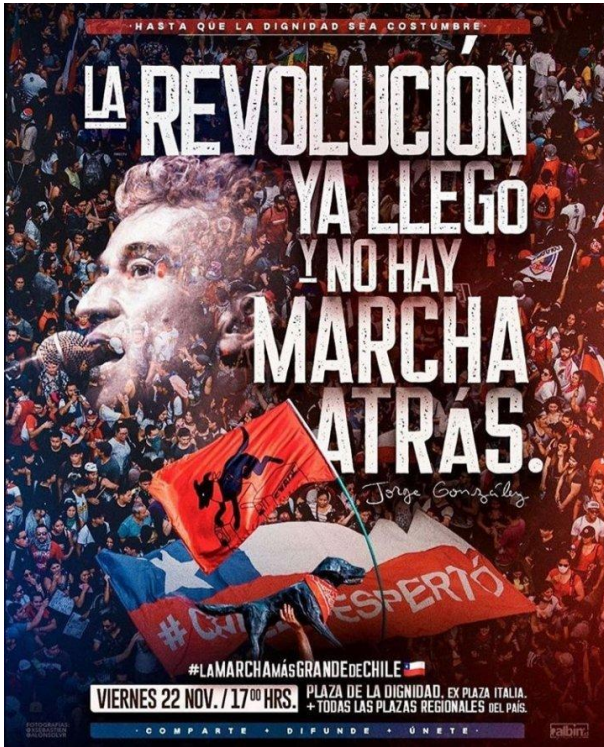


Figure 22 – Call for 22nd November protest, 2019. “The revolution is already here, there is no way back”. Beside the illustration of Jorge González, we see a flag with Matapacos’s figure and a papier-maché sculpture of the dog. Source: Twitter (2020).



Figure 23 -Red bandana often sold by street vendors in Santiago during and after protests. The message says: “Fight as a mongrel, less TV, more street”. Source: Clearpix Studio Webshop (2020)

Annexes

Song to honor Matapacos

Spanish version (original)

Por unos colmillos blancos que entre tanto humo viera relucir,
y esa rabia que escondía no sé qué secretos y era para tí.
Cuando viejo se marchó de este mundo tan hostil,
me nubló un presentimiento al verlo partir.
Dicen que es el Matapacos que no le teme a ningún fusil,
que la yuta no le quiere ver por las protestas libre al resistir.
Dicen que en la lucha fue ejemplo y en la ciudad lo llaman el companero de la libertad.
Solo sé que ausente va que aúlla desde las estrellas,
que amarrado nunca estuvo declaraba su rebeldía.
Solo sé que al viento va jugueteando entre sus pelos,
que el fuego brilla en sus ojos cuando el gobierno comienza a reprimir.
Dicen que era como un rayo
cuando el Negro los corría hacia el cartel,
junto a sus amigos quiltros²⁵
que nos acompañarán hasta vencer.
Yo no sé si volveré a verle libre y gentil.
Solo sé que sonreía por el porvenir.
Solo sé que sonreía por el porvenir.

English version (own translation):

For some white fangs that amongst so much smoke I saw shine,
and that rage, he hid I don't know what secrets were for you.
When at old age he left this world so hostile,
it clouded my feeling as I saw him leave.
It is said he is the Cop-killer that does not fear any rifle.
That the police do not want to see him on the free protests to resist. They say that in the

²⁵ *Quiltro* is an expression used for dogs, particularly for mongrel dogs in Bolivia and Chile (Real Academia Espanola, 2020).

fight he was an example
and in the city they call him the *companion of freedom*.
I only know that he is absent, that he howls from the stars,
that he was never moored declaring his rebellion.
I only know that the wind plays in his fur,
that the fire shines in his eyes when the government begins to repress.
They say it was like a lightning
when the Black chased them back to the station
along with his mongrel friends
who will accompany us until the end.

I don't know if I will see him free and gentle again.
I only know that he was smiling for the future.
I only know that he was smiling for the future.
Source: Unknown Author (2020)

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Dorjpagma Batsaikhan

Interpretation on Hunnu Rock | Is The HU's folk metal smash hit reinventing Mongolian identity?

Introduction

The HU is a Mongolian folk metal band founded in 2016. Three years ago they posted their music video for their track "Yuve Yuve Yu" on YouTube which became a smash hit with around 47 million views and today they reached the international status of a most successful folk metal band. The metal music world is praising their sudden rise out of nowhere, and emphasizing their way of connecting with the crowd though the band does not sing in English. In November 2019, the president of Mongolia awarded them with "Chinggis Khaan" medal, the highest state honor for their contribution in representing and advertising Mongolian culture through their "Hunnu rock" music. Visually, their image ostensibly resembles Mongol warriors with long braided hair and leather armor costume. Most of their lyrics are adapted from folklores, oral tales and often propels nationalist sentimentalism. Along with The HU's sudden rise into the music world, Mongolia had become enticing for the international fans with all the majestic histories and unfamiliarity. In this paper, I'll throw light on to what extent their music is inviting the implication of Mongolian identity, by analyzing their musical context.

Hunnu Rock

The band consists of four members all of which are professional folk musicians. They play custom made traditional instruments: horse-head fiddle (*morin khuur* - two string fiddle with horsehair and horse-head carving), Mongolian guitar (*tovshuur*), and Jew's harp (*tumur khuur*). Creating intricately unique, yet strikingly heavy rock metal visual image, carvings of the horse-head fiddle and Mongolian guitar hints at their intention to combine traditional elements with a modern twist. With long braided hair, leather outfits and edgy accessories, the band members' image depicts how ancient Mongol warriors would look

in the present day. For the audience, it is a totally new scenery for Mongolians when the HU plays a horse-head fiddle standing and banging their heads at the same time. It breaks the traditional image of a sedate folk musician playing the national icon of a horse-head fiddle.

Their musical style combines heavy metal riffs on horse-headed fiddle with a traditional folk rhythm that imitates horse gait. As the lead throat singer and horse-head fiddle player Gala says, Mongolian traditional music has so many rock elements. That's why they all loved to listen to rock and heavy metal music parallel to attending national conservatory. The HU calls their music "Hunnu rock" music. Hunnu is the name of an ancestor empire of Mongols in the 8th century, known as The Huns. Their name "The HU" is the root word for a human being in Mongolian, and refers to the Hunnu empire as well. This new genre-bending (Peake, 2020) Hunnu rock is the authentic and unique style of rock music, incorporating traditional throat singing, sound of horse-head fiddle with Western style components. Throat singing is a guttural way of singing that makes sound of both upper and lower tone harmony at the same time. Sung this way, what they're singing about is only audible to native speakers. However, the hammering drums, electric riffs on the fiddle and rhythmic blast are what Western listeners love about.

The band released their first album, "Gereg", in September 2019. The word *Gereg* is the name for a diplomatic passport (silver or golden tablet) used in the 13th century Mongol Empire. Their album name *Gereg* symbolically represents their music as a passport entitled to "conquer" the world. The album has nine tracks, and the most famous ones are "Yuve Yuve Yu" and "Wolf Totem". Most of the lyrics are about the heroism of Mongolian nomadic warriors, war cries and folklores. Their song, "Yuve Yuve Yu" (What's going on), is a wake up call lamenting the current situation of Mongolians not living up to their destiny,

[...]

Taking our Great Mongol ancestors name in vain, what's going on?

Taking an oath yet not honouring it to fulfil, what's going on?

Hey, you traitor, kneel down

Hey, prophecies be declared

*You've born in ancestor's fate yet sleeping deeply, can't be awakened,
what's going on?*

Blindly declaring that only Mongols are the best, what's going on?

Born to live as nobles yet, can't unite as one, what's going on?

Why is it difficult to raise our nation up? what's going on?²⁶

Making a social critique, they denounce and deny modern Mongolianness of being unfaithful, lazy and boastful without any good achievements. Metaphorically, Mongolians are asleep and blind at the moment, not realizing their inner Mongolian spirit to triumph as a nation; ideal Mongolianness was lost after the fall of Chinggis Khaan and it needs to be reclaimed. The main premise of why Mongolians are not incarnating their great destiny is not being united as one nation. So, the ultimate conquest would be national solidarity, just as how it was under the rule of Chinggis Khaan.

[...]

With the future of eternal prosperity,

The Wolf totem Mongols have the blessings of Heaven

Born with undeniable fate to gather nations

The Lord Chinggis declares his name on earth will come back, will come back

Oh Black Banner be awakened, be awakened

Oh the Khanate rise and rise forever

The last verse symbolically acknowledges the “chosen people” narrative, and the inevitability of future prosperity of Mongolia. For Mongolians, Chinggis Khaan is a concept rather than a national pride figure of history. Chinggis Khaan is an overarching paternal concept, that ensures collective hope toward a promised future. This concept of a great father watching over us from the sky affords people the quintessential end destination of national unity that is not yet to be reached.

Conceding on how hit music reflects the discursive realm of specific society (Buelens, 2013), another song of The HU, “Wolf Totem”, reveals an anonymous enemy that Mongolians need to defeat with the blessing of the totem,

If you come as snakes

We'll become Garuda birds and fly over you

If you come as tigers

We'll face you as lions with blue mane

HU HU HU HU HU HU HU HU

[...]

²⁶ source from www.azlyrics.com

Let's cut through them with speed of falcons

Let's burn within as the hearts of wolves

Let's stampede with our strong horses

Let's defeat them with the wisdom of our Great Chinggis Khaan

“Wolf Totem” is a battle cry song. One might be reminded of an invocation of the war god. There is always an enemy to fight and defeat. Yet, it is not vocalised who the enemy is. Interestingly, the music video of the song shows a gathering of choppers, riding through the steppe and chanting “hu hu hu” behind the band. The imagery of bald men with tattoos and swastika flags instantly brings a picture of extreme nationalist groups that were active in the 2000's. Said groups were organizing anti-Chinese campaigns which ended in hate, violence and dispersed Sinophobic discourses. Though there was no indication about foreigners and especially the Chinese as enemies in The HU's song, it is indubitably implicated as a plea to be nationalist. Even non-native fans are writing comments like, “China started building another wall because of this” (Daken-D, 2020).

In Bille's (2015) writing on Sinophobia among Mongolians, he argues that Sinophobia is expressed as a process of disengagement and a denial of any Chinese bearing on the formation of Mongolian identity. Hence, Mongolians reveal willingness to reassure Western cultural legacy, specifically from the Soviet Union regime. The violent anti-Chinese sentiments recurrently voiced in Mongolia are fused with celebrations of otherness associated with Western modernity (Bille, 2015). Also, Uradyn (1998) made elaboration on the historical episodes that constructed Mongolian nationalism rooted in the fear and anxiety of Chinese domination and contamination, consequently leaned toward the favouritism of the USSR brotherhood. The HU's new genre of Hunnu rock itself is traditional music reinvented to fit in a Western rock music, as the band's producer explains. Bold nationalism thus is the main context of Hunnu rock and it's being perceived as preserving traditional culture and keeping up with modernism while distancing from China.

Music in constructing national identity

The music itself is a way of communicating one's ethnic identity. Music as performance, functions as an ethnic boundary in the process of the construction and manifestation of ethnic identity (Memduha I., 2017). Folk music certainly demonstrates the specific

distinctiveness of a group, accentuating the boundaries of difference and particularity from within. A group of people who shares collective cultural memory and history can have the same emotional feelings of belonging that communicate through folk music. Dutkova-Cope (2003) writes folk music is one of the tools of ethnic manifestation and it provides the feeling of belonging to the group, as well as it being in their common language and coherent in their own cultural context. So for Mongolians, listening to The HU's music awakens that Mongolianness feeling of belonging and pride toward the cultural heritage.

Furthermore, Machan (1988) claimed that it also appears that folk bands are trying to prove their music's adaptability to "an industrial and urban age, new ways of life, and changing values" (cited by Dutkova-Cope, 2003). Just as the culture itself is a process in change, art is not immune to change as well. Even folklore, folk music and traditional art have an inevitable determination to change in form, as we have The HU today.

Nonetheless, The HU is not the first and last band devoted to reinventing folk music to adapt new influences. The pioneering band to be considered is Altan Urag, which was founded in 2004. Tsetsentsolmon B. (2015) wrote about how the Post-Socialist Mongolian government was encouraging nationalisation and commercialisation of folk music as an act of reinventing national identity. Though this post-socialist wave of popularisation on nationalised music promoted the number of modern ethnic rock and ethnic jazz bands to pop up, The HU's international fame is phenomenal. Altan Urag (Golden Lineage) got quite famous nationally, creating more contemporary style folk music, but not necessary to fit in western music style. Beside that, The HU's visual image delivers the sophisticated modern day warrior embodiment to the world. In other words, The HU exhibits imagined Mongolianness.

In the 2000's, the Mongolian Government focused on reconstructing national identity through reviving traditional culture in a modern form. Such efforts included restoring traditional scripts, national holidays and folk arts. For example, the government passed several regulations and laws on protecting, preserving and promoting cultural heritage. Along with the newly introduced policies, fundings and public awareness on the concept of cultural heritage scaled up. As one of the key elements of traditional culture, revival of folk music was a significant concern. According to Tsetsentsolmon, numerous state initiatives took place such as: in 2005, Mongolian President ordered creation of State Sovereign Fiddle (*Toriin Khan Khuur*) and its exaltation, and establishment of Mongolian State National Great Orchestra (*Mongol Toriin Undesnii Hugjmiin Ikh Nairal*) etc. Resulting

from a series of acts, the *morin khuur* became one of the key symbols of national identity in post-socialist Mongolia (Tsetsentsolmon B., 2015). Generally, any art related to *morin khuur* incorporates nationalistic sentiments. Peter Marsh (2009) claims that the *morin khuur* was reimagined and reshaped as a 'popular nationalist icon' and 'iconic symbol of national identity' after Socialism (cited in 2015). As the band's main instrument is a horse-headed fiddle, without the consideration of their musical content, they already employ nationalist icons. This means that the Mongolian audience creates their own expectation to hear about mythical lyrics and traditional folktales as long as there is a horse-headed fiddle. Further, with the voluntarily pre-determined expectation established through the icon of *morin khuur*, the band's music asserts fierce emotion of nationalist pride through their lyrics as mentioned earlier.

When the post-socialist Mongolian government took action to define national identity after political and cultural repression, looking back into history and reviving national pride was the only reasonable approach. Munkh-Erdene (2008) explained that nationalism became the chief ideological way of deconstructing the past socialist identity and of constructing a new identity. In the process of constructing a new identity based on national pride, Chinggis Khaan re-emerged as a symbol of independence and sovereignty in rejection of Mongolian's dependent image. Of course, the band has a song called "The Great Chinggis Khaan". Indeed their music is very nationalist in content and commercial in form.

Yet, Tsetsentsolmon (2015) argued that in post-socialist Mongolia, as the continuation, transformation and amplification of the state-socialist culture-building process so as to become *nationalist in form and commercial in content*, referring to the case of Altan Urag band. I genuinely agree with his premise on how the process of reviving tradition to create new cultural identity led to the transformation of folk music into the form of commercial, in order to immerse out into the global consumer market. Perpetuating the process, contemporary music production is still maintaining the transformation in a continuum, as well as The HU's outburst. This transformation is negotiated and adapted to modern call. As a result, The HU's music is nationalist in content, provoking people's ethnic identity grasped by pride, and commercial in form as it incorporates head-banging, Western heavy metal touch. To this extent, The HU is reconstructing a Mongolian national identity that can be lived up for modern nomads.

However, this is not a sudden emergence around national identity, rather it is a continuation of previously started post-socialist shift in Mongolian music culture since 1999.

Romanticised exoticness

To analyse how people are reacting to Hunnu rock, Mongolian audiences are seeing the band's music as a medium (Memduha I., 2017) to represent who we are to the world. Comments like the following appears often under their music video:

"So proud of HU that arised from 3 million of us" (Galbadrakh)

"Thank you for conquering the world with morin khuur on behalf of Mongolians" (Nergui).

On the other hand, foreign audience's comments are about how they have no idea about the lyrics, yet feeling much adoration for the strangeness and majesty of the band's music. Also, while some people compared their music to viking music, trying to familiarise the music to themselves by placing it in a similar category, other people credited their long lost ancestral connection to Mongols, claiming to have a genetic relation to Mongols that is now being revived and asserted by The HU's music. For example:

"I feel like riding a horse through the mongolian steppes" (brentprodz)

"When you find out you are 0.0007% Mongolian" (Romanian Legionary)

"Mongolians = Asian Vikings" (The Bath Salt God)

Interpreting these impressions, international fans are in the position where anthropologists are so familiar with, which Western people romanticise the exoticness and orientalism of "other's" culture. In their eyes, Mongolians have a unique nomadic lifestyle, living in the untouched wilderness and making folk music about our splendid fate to conquer the world.

Geertz (1976) explained how "Other's" art seems very appealing and intriguing as there's almost something to decipher, something to be explored through the process of appreciation, as well as not complying to the universal sense of beauty (according to the Western set criteria of beauty). Further Geertz commented that such perspectives may or may not exist, but if it does not seem to enable people to respond to exotic arts with more than an ethnocentric sentimentalism in the absence of a knowledge of what those arts are about, or an understanding of the culture out of which they come (1976). Therefore, we can interpret the rise of The HU among the Western audience as an enduring

romanticisation of nomadic culture with such a fascination. The less the audience knows about the foreign culture, the more it seems mysterious and alluring. Here I don't suggest whether it's to be judged as good or bad, further than mere explanation of how a certain genre of music is being experienced.

Another explanation is suggested by cultural anthropologist Kip Hutchens, nomadism and horse culture have been romanticised, and the emphasis on freedom and heroes tends to appeal to the stereotypical male heavy metal fan (Katya C. 2019). As the aforementioned Youtube comment revealed how fans felt like riding a horse and became Mongolian listening to The HU, Hutchen's argument can be the right answer on how heroism and glorification of nomadism fits in heavy metal fan fantasy.

Rather, I suggest that Hunnu rock is advancing the imagined stereotypical Mongolian identity to the Western listeners. Since the art form takes its meaning from its cultural context, that art is a mirror for culture and society, one may unwittingly imply that the essential reality, the "real thing" lies not in the art at all but in the context (Flores T., 1985). Hunnu rock's "real thing" is much of a nationalist mission for Mongolians, whereas for foreign listeners it's another addition to the idealised image of Mongolia embodied in contemporary form.

Conclusion

The newly emerged Hunnu rock music of The HU is reconstructing Mongolian national identity with its visual and musical context. For native listeners, their music communicates to identify our nationalist sentiment through symbolic icons of traditional instruments. The band's exotic visual image and music style raises nationalist pride along with social critique narratives inside the lyrics. Hence, it would not be considered a totally new phenomenon for Mongolians, as there is a history of post-socialist revival campaigns of national identity sponsored by the government. The emergence of the band is a continuation of the pre-established wave of transformative ethnic art. However, this time, Hunnu rock appeared as nationalist in content and western-styled commercial music in form. For the external audience, The HU's music is more Hunnu rock to them than to Mongolians. Because, as exotic as it sounds like the name of it, the band's music is romanticised about their unusualness and authenticity. The HU offers them an advanced imagination of Mongolian stereotypes fused with modern twists.

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Social Problems and Processes | Társadalmi problémák és folyamatok

Afina Nurul Faizah

The 1965 – 66 Indonesian Genocide and Indonesian Exiles | The Collective Memories of Statelessness among Indonesian Exiles in Budapest and Prague

Abstract

There was no exact number to predict how many Indonesian exiles who managed to return to Indonesia after the fall of the New Order regime in 1998. Most of these exiles were intellectuals who were granted a scholarship by the beginning of 1960 to study abroad, mostly in Soviet countries, in the hope to return to Indonesia to develop the country to fulfill Soekarno's dream to de-Javanize Indonesia. He perceived the goal to be necessary as Java island was built as the center of the development agenda during colonialism. His plan was then ruined by the purge conducted by Soeharto in October 1965.

The coup, followed with a massacre, resulted in death for at least half a million Indonesians. It also impacted the well-being of Indonesian intellectuals who studied abroad. They could not return to Indonesia unless they declared the condemnation of Soekarno and his ideology. The New Order regime, led by Soeharto, did not allow these intellectuals to return to Indonesia. This thesis will explain the collective memories of the Indonesian intellectual exiles in Central and East Europe managed to keep about the Indonesian coup, genocide, and other political turbulence. The collective memories of these exiles hold a possible confrontation with the stance of historical amnesia in the country; one of the impacts of the New Order regime.

Keywords: *Indonesia, genocide, 1965, New Order, collective memory, postmemory generation, exiles, historical amnesia*

Introduction

The 1965-66 massacre emerged a remarkable critical point throughout Indonesian history as it knocked down the pro-communist government while performing a violent purge in the archipelago. It was a historical event that changed Indonesia for more than five decades; a particular incident that made millions of Indonesians lose their civil rights (Eickhoff, van Klinken, & Robinson, 2017). It was also momentous, as it navigated Indonesian foreign policy as it heads to Western interests and investment. The bloodbath killed at least half a million Indonesians and detained around a million others without any trial. The study will involve the ex-Indonesian students' memory in the Czech Republic and Hungary about the 1965 genocide. These Indonesian students were categorized as exiles (Sipayung, 2011) post the 1965-66 genocide as they were systematically denied Indonesian citizenship. The research is performed in a hope to discover the collective memory of this Indonesian diaspora in the region, as most of them were stateless and rejected to be Indonesians by the Indonesian government.

Research Questions

Given the background above, there are several questions to address about the experience of living and surviving in the Soviet Union or Central and East Europe in general, as intellectual Indonesians during and after the purge. The formulated main question would be;

“How would the 1965-66 Indonesian genocide affect the personal lives of Indonesian intellectuals in the Central and East Europe and how would that impact the making of the collective memory?”

Several supporting questions among others will also follow and support the main question, such as;

“What did the Indonesian Embassy in East European countries do to the Indonesian intellectuals to follow-up the political change in Indonesia?” The role of the Indonesian Embassy is essential to understand the political situation among Indonesian students in the diaspora. It is necessary to find out the role of the Indonesian Embassy during the period of genocide and the political turbulence. As the 1965-66 genocide

changed the foreign policy of Indonesia, there is speculation that the Indonesian Embassy held a prominent role to control political activism among Indonesian students abroad.

Last but not least, the main question will be followed by a set of two questions of how they perceive and remember about their departing country, Indonesia. This elaborated question, even though not as important as the main question, holds their hope, memories, as well as their stories; **“How would these people perceive Indonesia? What specific memories do they have about the genocide in 1965-66?”**. These questions will be useful to elaborate on their memories and their perspectives on Indonesia. These two questions are supposed to illustrate the genocide, their studies, and their host countries.

I would also like to think about the possibility that the 1965 genocide and its turbulence in Indonesia did not in any way affect the personal lives of some of the intellectuals, even though it was unlikely to happen.

The 1965-66 genocide in Indonesia is not well-known, even though it happened during a critical point of the Cold War (Robinson, 2018). Hence, the stories of the victims of the genocide and the new government were unheard of. The memories and the stories of the victims are vital to understanding the genocide, violence, oppression, and other human rights violations as conducted by the military army during that period. The research of the stateless Indonesians due to the 1965-66 genocide is essential to understand the consequences of the genocide to the Indonesian historiography and the collective memory. The study would also enhance our knowledge about the complexities of the genocide to the identity and memory-making among these exiles.

Theoretical frameworks and methodology

The scholarship of the 1965-66 genocide and the statelessness

The existence of mass killings in 1965-66 in Indonesia is still highly debated, even among Indonesians themselves. There is a high level of doubt in this particular event and historical timeline ever since the genocide was carried out and the silence among the older generation seems to be unbreakable.

It was and still is impossible to speak up about the series of human rights violations in the country. This unbreakable silence helped the older generations hide a significant historical event from their grandchildren, who are now adults. Even though the 1965-66

massacre was one of the biggest atrocities after the Second World War, little is known about the event (Wieringa, 2014). In comparison with Cambodia and Rwanda, Indonesia lags for it has not conducted both the truth-finding and reconciliation process yet.

It is also expected that the impacts of the genocide are not known as the genocide itself is not taking much attention worldwide. The genocide left an enduring legacy of making a large number of Indonesians living abroad stateless and persecuted by the hostile government. The statelessness phenomenon did affect not only Indonesian delegates elsewhere but also Indonesian students who were sent to study.

Bambang Alfred Sipayung (2011), who wrote about the collective memories of the exiled Indonesians, used the term “exilic trajectories” to describe the journey of these exiles in the recipient countries, and to differ their trip and experience from migrants (p. 6). Sipayung argued that there is a unique transition period in terms of citizenship which affected their memories of Indonesia and their imagination of home. These exilic trajectories referred to the act of negotiating the imagined home as space which is emotionally related to the country they were born in.

Sipayung (2011, p. 2) stated that his early observation showed that the memory of the statelessness among these exiles is a lot more critical than the 1965-66 bloodbath. Thus, writing the procedure of the purge was not necessary. In this study, I decided to write the chronology and the mechanism of the massacre to present a thorough understanding of what these students’ families had gone through. It was important to tuck the event to this thesis, so there is a clear picture of how the massacre also ‘killed’ them. The collective memory of these exiles would challenge their sense of belonging and their cultural identity.

The studies of Indonesian exiles of 1965 have been conducted by several researchers, such as David Hill (2008; 2014), Bambang Alfred Sipayung (2011), and Vanessa Hearman (2010; 2009), among others. Their incredible works studied the Indonesian exiles accordingly in the Soviet Union (present-day Russia), the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, and Cuba. Since there is not yet any profile featuring scholarship awardee from Hungary, this study will be unique, not only geographically, but also from other sides, like a family reunion, acquiring citizenship, and sports tournaments.

Collective memory and postmemory generation

Violence, while lethal, possesses the capability to narrate a story and condemn the memory (as well as the history) of the people who are hated. The lives of these hated people will also be hated by the people in the future (Robey, 2017). *Damnatio memoriae*, as what it is described by ancient Romans, is a strategy to politically repress the social and cultural memories, which later emerges the discussion about the behavior of remembering and forgetting. This phenomenon also generates several issues, among others is the power relations between the political elite and the collective tradition (Hedrick, 2000); that history is a constructed narrative and memory.

Damnatio memoriae confirms certain historical events by condemning them; not to abolish the evidence from ancient times but instead to produce new signs of it. The procedure could be done in many ways, such as removal of the statues, name-banning, and barring the funeral procession of the person – people who were cursed by *damnatio memoriae* left with nothing even a tombstone.

The act and intention to forget a specific event will lead to many memory-related complications, such as collective trauma and historical amnesia. Memories are vital as they are attached to human bodies and could evoke specific bodily reactions (Legg, 2005), like vomiting or the increasing rate of blood circulation, among others. Memories could be unpacked by physical triggers and senses as well, like smell, sound, and texture. Hence, identity is not only shown by social representation but also by bodily movements and works; as bodies hold the memory of past identity decisions.

Maurice Halbwachs authored collective memory to allude to the act of remembering by one group about specific occasions which at that point set apart as parts of their personalities (Halbwachs, 1980). He took a gander at how social establishments and setting gained possible specific memories, empowering certain memories while debilitating others (Legg, 2005). A person's character is continuously imprinted in one particular social context, which is inside the collective memory of the people. Our concept of ourselves, even if it is individual, is an impression of the thought other individuals have upon us (Halbwachs, 1980). Another individual's idea is dependably in somebody's memory; in any case, that individual memory could impact the collective memory of the community. Collective memory has one essential purpose; to compose a better future for the community using their experience.

As history also serves the opportunities to search for sunken past to understand the present phenomenon (Halbwachs, 1992), I must put the historical background of the genocide to get a thorough understanding of the issue. Besides suffering from intergenerational trauma, large-scale violence could result in a postmemory generation (Hirsch, 2008). Postmemory generation refers to the next generation of the generation who suffered from the first-hand experience of bearing the trauma.

The generation of postmemory endures the weight of the emotional and psychological burden from their previous generation (Hirsch, 2008). The second and the third generations of the survivors would suffer the grievances and loss from their parents and grandparents. They might be unborn or very little when the violence started to occur. They remember the stories, attitudes, and pictures as parts of their childhood and adolescence. The experience and memory of their previous generations transmit and attach to them to the point that they constitute those as their right.

Methodology

The methods used for this research are qualitative, interpretative analysis of interviews and the critical analysis of documentation and literary accounts of the events and the aftermath. The interviewees are Indonesian exiles in Hungary and the Czech Republic. They initially arrived in these states during the regime of Soekarno to study. The interviews were conducted in both Javanese and Indonesian languages and were done in their houses. The interviewees' names are written in pseudonyms. Sri was a medical student who came to Budapest by the end of 1961 and managed to stay in Hungary until now. Sri's husband, Sasmita, was a pioneer of badminton in Hungary. His name is enshrined as an annual badminton cup in Hungary. He died in 2011 in Indonesia while visiting.

Sosro, the interviewee from Prague, came to what was called Czechoslovakia 55 years ago to study psychology in one of the prominent universities in Prague. Sosro is still actively promoting positive values of being both exiled and forgotten in Europe. He appeared in Indonesia's movie by the title *Surat dari Praha* (Letters from Prague). I also interviewed Ari, Sri's son, who survived the genocide in Yogyakarta, Java island, and went to Europe with Adi, his elder brother, for family reunification. I also interviewed Yudhistira,

previously a mechanical engineering student in Budapest about his view of Indonesian genocide and memories of being exiled. Yudhistira came to Europe the same year as Sosro. Almost all the literature I have read regarding this topic is from foreign publishers since this part of history is not acknowledged in the country, which then limits the scope. There is also limited information about the profiles of female scholarship awardees turned exiles; all of the literary sources I have researched mostly display male students. There would also be occasions when I have to use online news for the recent and confirmed findings of the genocide, or when specific issues related to this historical event had to emerge.

As the topic is sensitive and avoided among Indonesians, also the fact that the genocide was conducted 54 years ago, it is hard to find interviewees who were direct victims of the massacre; as most of them are aging and are not able to hold a decent conversation anymore. I then would like to create a particular case and chapter about my interviewees because of the lack of the interviewee. Sri was already married to Sasmita and had two sons before they came to Hungary, which then makes her testimonies different from other Indonesian exiles, who mostly married residents, like Sosro, who later married a Czech woman. Other mentioned exiles are from secondary sources like news and books.

Data gathering

The research was conducted in July 2017 in both Hungary and Czech Republic. I started contacting the interviewees from my closed social circle and recommendations in Indonesia. The communication is mostly arranged in social media. Even though the Indonesian social gatherings exist to serve the need for networking, the help of recommendations and social circle is significant to be in contact with the exiles in Budapest, Hungary.

I got Sosro's contact from my friend and she introduced me and my research plan to him. Unfortunately, many of Sosro's exiled friends have passed away; some who are alive do not wish to speak about the 1965-66 event. Sosro took me to the places that were 'historical' for him and his Indonesian friends, who also ended up as exiles.

Historical Background

The introduction to the Indonesian genocide: The postcolonial nuance, the Cold War, and the military army

“The Coup was not about the beginnings of a military-dominated state in Indonesia, it was the culmination of a politics in which the military or state-based coercion have been central at least since the colonial era.” (Vickers, 1998, p. 780).

The Indonesian genocide, although it happened in 1965-66, remains to be one of the most relevant political issues in Southeast Asia (Valakche, 2018). The pogroms helped to establish an authoritarian regime that lasted for 32 years in the country and launched military aggression and mass killings in many islands. It is vital to understand the history of genocide and violence from 1965-66 to get an excellent comprehension of the modern history of Indonesia.

It is impossible to eliminate the history of colonialism and the significance of the Cold War to fully understand the environment of the Indonesian genocide that was conducted from 1965-66. The Republic of Indonesia, previously known as the Dutch East Indie, declared its independence from Dutch colonial rule and Japanese occupation on August 17, 1945, not long after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. There is a strange bond of trust between the Indonesians and their military institution (Valakche, 2018). This trust was started to develop by the 1940s when the Dutch East Indie was on the stage to declare their independence from the Netherlands. During this period, the army had a significant part since they set up firm relations with the mass as they preferred *perjuangan* (struggle) movement to the diplomatic solutions, which was a popular choice among the politicians, during the decolonization process. The bond between the military and the mass resulted in the social capital and the influence gained by the military. Hence military leaders obtained respect from the mass.

One other colonial legacy that is deeply ingrained in present-day Indonesia is the use of native auxiliaries to prevent any possible rebellion (Robinson, 2018). The imperial armies were composed mostly by indigenous forces in which they had to combat the anticolonial revolutions in many islands in the imperial archipelago. Commanded by Dutch soldiers, these native forces were deployed to kill and arrest other indigenous inhabitants. Regardless of the fact of how traumatic it was, a similar pattern is imitated and developed by Indonesia's armed forces after the revolution against Dutch (1945-

1949). Later, the authorities in independent Indonesia mimicked the same method to crack down the revolutionary movements in the unreachable islands. The Japanese colonialism, even though it only lasted for a brief period, influenced big time in political development as it promoted the fast-flowing spread of nationalist ideas and accelerated mass political mobilization throughout the archipelago.

They encouraged the natives to organize and stimulate a militant and fighting spirit among the young natives (Robinson, 2018) which later contributed to the making of paramilitary institutions for the youth, known as *lasykar* or struggle organizations. One of the most significant organizations was *Pembela Tanah Air*, or PETA (Defenders of the Fatherlands), established in late 1943 by the Japanese colonial authority. PETA supplied trained soldiers for the Indonesian Army from 1945 until the late 1970s, among them was the then General Soeharto. It was also the Japanese regime that introduced harmful techniques, including torture, arbitrary imprisonment, and collective punishment through these forces. The Indonesian army implemented many of these torturous techniques during the 1965-66 massacre, such as sexual assault, burning with a lighted cigarette, immersion in foul-smelling water, and electrocution (Robinson, 2018). These methods were authentically Japanese wartime practices and copied by the Indonesian army.

The genocide in postcolonial nations mostly occurred due to the decolonization process and the establishment of factions in which the native inhabitants were divided between supporting the nationalist movement or the colonial regime. In the case of Indonesia, the Dutch colonial rule passed a legacy to create “a vacuum of social power” to construct schisms that would incite political rivalries (Robison and Hadiz, 2004, p. 43-44; in Valakche, 2018). The killings occupied a unique chapter in Indonesia’s post-independent historical timeline when it was still facing postcolonial economic challenges. As a postcolonial country, Indonesia had troubles with centralization. The military troops of the Republic were limited to three islands; Java, Madura, and Sumatra, even though it has thousands of islands. The Indonesians who lived in other islands had little knowledge about the new independence and its significance, which were crucial at that time as the Netherlands attempted to reestablish colonial rule after the withdrawal of the Japanese military (Matsui, 2003). It was Soekarno (Vickers, 2005) who led the Revolutionary war against the recolonization of the Netherlands in 1945-1949. The Netherlands was supported by the Allies; which were Australia, The British Raj, and The United Kingdom.

The Republic lost against the Dutch tremendously, and only managed to be independent once more after a series of negotiations. The last agreement, known to be the Hague Agreement or The Round Table Conference in 1949, forced Indonesia to pay the debt of the colonial Dutch East Indie which amounted to 4.3 billion Guilders, or equal to 1.13 billion US dollars (Kahin, 1984), to have their full territory. The agreement benefited the Netherlands more than it did to Indonesia, especially the four-years war resulted between 45,000 to 100,000 dead Indonesians, with civilian casualties trespassing more than 25,000. There were more than 7 million displaced people on Java and Sumatra islands, and the Dutch executed around 6,000 Indonesians in Sulawesi island (Vickers, 2005).

Soekarno implemented *Demokrasi Terpimpin* (Guided Democracy) in an attempt to stabilize the country politically (Pellegrini, 2012). This Guided Democracy would consist of three significant ideologies; *Nasionalisme* (nationalism), *Agama* (religion), and *Komunisme* (communism), which was famous as 'Nasakom.' He leaned on the capability of the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI) to neutralize the dominating army and its power. His support for PKI then intensified the rivalry between these two, especially on gaining trust from the people.

In Bandung, 1955, Soekarno displayed an independent but active foreign policy during the Asian-African Conference. He, along with some leaders of postcolonial nations, initiated the Non-Aligned movement to counter imperialism and colonialism. He developed a foreign policy that allowed Indonesian intellectuals to study and to work abroad, most popularly in both the USSR and China (Hong, 2006), in which he also included military trainees to be in the program (Hill, 2009; 2014).

In 1963, Soekarno, hand in hand with the PKI, encouraged Indonesians to involve in *Ganyang Malaysia* (Crush Malaysia) campaign since the belief that Malaysia would be a puppet state for British imperialism in Southeast Asia (Melvin, 2018). As a campaign, it contained a massive anti-US sentiment. There were numerous attacks on the US embassy and its cultural centers. The US-owned plantations and oil companies, as well as the British ones (Pellegrini, 2012), were also occupied and nationalized in several provinces in Indonesia. The campaign also resulted in the withdrawal of Indonesia from the United Nations by January 1965 (Schwelb, 1967).

PKI, as a political party, aggressively set up military training for civilians for this campaign in Jakarta and other provinces throughout the country. The Fifth Force, or *Angkatan Kelima*, served as the People's Army, was officially declared by Soekarno on 17

August 1965. The aim of this force was to arm workers and peasants, side by side with the army, air force, navy, and police force (Melvin, 2018). Zhou En Lai, the prime minister of China, offered to supply the Indonesian forces with 100,000 Chung light machine guns in a confidential discussion with Subandrio, Indonesian foreign minister (Dake, 2002). However, Zhou's intention was conflicting with General Ahmad Yani, who at that time was the commander of the Indonesian Army as he thought that the making of the Fifth Force was inefficient. With this disagreement, General Parman, an essential figure in the Indonesian military army, discussed particular ideas with a US embassy representative to seize the government (Melvin, 2018).

Howard Jones, a US Ambassador to Indonesia, reported to the US State Department that the Indonesian military decided to perform a coup while Soekarno was still reigning (Melvin, 2018). Jones plotted a scenario in which PKI was the actor to blame for a defensive and abortive coup. At least around 27 million Indonesians were involved in PKI and its affiliations. The involvement and the growing number of PKI members were the results of anti-colonial spirit and agenda that were endorsed by Soekarno and a long struggle of empowering and advocating farmers and other marginalized Indonesians. PKI was adored because of the sense of radical egalitarianism when it was a period of food shortages and the high inflation rate in the country.

Soekarno and PKI, both having a robust anti-imperialist sentiment, condemned the correspondence between the military and the US. The military, on the other hand, was one powerful business actor as they managed and operated the nationalized businesses in the country by the late 1950s. This economic reason added a motivation for the military leadership to remain in a status quo. On the other hand, PKI was tough on advocating land reform, which was wholly approved by Soekarno (Melvin, 2018). The elites and landowners were frightened to lose their possessions, so they donated their lands to the places of worship since they did not want the peasants to possess their lands. With this, the land reform agenda of the PKI was seen as a way to attack religions and faiths instead of questioning the social hierarchies among society. Since then, there was a collaboration among the elites, the religious leaders, and the military army to combat PKI.

The 1965 Coup and the killings

On 30 September 1965, Major General Soeharto plotted the killings of seven Indonesian generals and denounced a coup against Soekarno. As a major general, Soeharto led Indonesia's most elite unit. He managed to gain power after successful propaganda created by the Indonesian military army called *Gestapu* and G30S (*Gerakan 30 September*, The 30 September Movement) (Vickers, 2005; 2010). On the morning of 1 October 1965, the G30S Movement kidnapped and killed seven top generals of the Indonesian army (Budiarjo, 1996; as cited in Pellegrini, 2012), including General Ahmad Yani and Parman. There was also a statement coming from the regime that these generals were sexually abused by *Gerwani* (*Gerakan Wanita Indonesia* or PKI-affiliated Indonesian Women Movement) before the PKI killed them.

The Movement claimed in an early afternoon radio broadcast that they succeeded in protecting Soekarno from a coup as planned by a CIA-backed "Council of Generals" (Pellegrini, 2012; Robinson, 2018, p. 6). A few hours later, Major General Soeharto, who was the surviving army leader, argued that the movement was a PKI's scenario. He began to oust both PKI and Soekarno from power. Soekarno was entirely wiped off from authority by the middle of 1966, and the Indonesian army gained extreme power after this coup. This momentum was the beginning of the silencing of PKI and all "leftist"²⁷ organizations. The Marxist-Leninist teachings had been restricted throughout the country ever since. Benedict Anderson and Ruth McVey, on their famous Cornell's Papers, noted that both the killings of the army generals and the coup were the result of the army's internal conflict (Anderson & McVey, 1971).

Now that Soeharto had exterminated his competitors, the military justified the assault on the "leftists". After the coup, the military had several tactics to make the mass help the army to crush these people "down to the very roots" (Robinson, 2018, p. 6). The killings, which were orchestrated between 1965-66, were a series of human rights violations. Most of the victims were arrested without any warrant. Many had to endure cruel and ill-treatment when they were interrogated. They would be sorted out in three different categorizations after interrogation, depending on their involvement in either

²⁷ The term is in quotation marks to note that both the concept and the term were fabricated by the New Order regime. Anyone who was against the regime would be condemned either by the term leftist or communist. The term "leftist" in quotation marks does not necessarily represent the widely-recognized leftists.

G30S or any “leftist” organizations. The investigation would decide their fates; released, remained in the detention camps, or killed (Vickers, 2010). The killings of the generals helped to establish a new regime, called the New Order, and the massacre of the Indonesians helped to sustain it for the next three decades.

Those who were meant to be killed were sent to the execution sites by the supervision of the military army, local vigilante, or paramilitary groups. They were put in lines and were shot nearby the mass graves, or dismembered pieces by pieces with machetes. This method made 3,500 people killed in only five days. Some were decapitated with *katana*, the Japanese sword. The sections were disposed of into the wells, or into the rivers and any other water bodies. People from East Java confessed to finding human body parts in fish; and ‘the rivers ran red with blood’ was an actual thing. The waterways were then stuffed with dead bodies (Vickers, 2005, p. 158; Robinson, 2018). Only a few received decent entombment.

There are numerous reasons why it is hard to calculate or even estimate the number of victims from the 1965-66 massacre. KOPKAMTIB (*Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Ketertiban* or Operational Command for the Restoration of Security and Order) released a twenty-five pages report in which it concluded that there were a million people were killed; 800,000 in Central and East Java, and 100,000 each in Bali and Sumatra. The report was made by 150 university graduates by the instruction of KOPKAMTIB (Cribb, 1990), which was created by Soeharto on October 10, 1965, to sustain national stability (Matanasi, 2018). The report was made to cater to the needs of the selected Western journalists and academics, but since the very core of the perpetrators released it, there is a fear that these numbers were manipulated.

Many who were killed during the purge never joined the PKI. The ethnic Chinese in some islands were targeted and murdered because PKI established friendly relations with China, and there was (and still is) an assumption that they supported communism. Many Chinese-owned shops were looted and burned. In Bali island, civilians needed to be involved in the massacre to prove that they did not belong to PKI (Vickers, 2005). Members of the Women’s Movement or families and relatives from the Communist families were sexually abused and killed. The militias did not even hold the desire to kill children. In order not to be murdered, these people were recruited to murder.

According to several estimates, 500,000 Indonesians accused of being communists and the PKI’s sympathizers, were systematically killed. Hundreds of thousands were sent

to jails and exiles, and millions were oppressed. However, these numbers are still on dispute since they vary from one source to another (Cribb, 1990). Soeharto was the new president of Indonesia, and by the time he was in power, from 1967 to 1998, the political discussions revolving around this issue were strictly forbidden (Vickers, 2010). There was also a limited account from the press and media as twenty-one newspapers were forced to shut down as all of them supported Soekarno.

There was a hidden motivation for why the massacre did not internationally receive enough attention (Cribb, 1990). The killing was orchestrated right on the very peak of the Cold War, in which the West created a force to exterminate communism in another part of the world. Western countries and media appreciated Soeharto and the regime he constructed; they, in many cases, were comfortable with the knowledge that hundreds of thousands of communists were exterminated far away in the southern hemisphere. The violence against PKI, however, was good news for Western media (Cribb, 1990). Time magazine (1966) published an article by the title "Indonesia: Vengeance with a Smile" in which it comments Indonesia's reorientation in foreign policy as 'the West's best news for years in Asia.' The 1965-66 genocide paved the way for Western power to make a comeback to the archipelago.

Foreign involvement of the 1965-1966 killings

“He casually told the crowd at the Australian-American association in New York ‘with 500,000 to one million Communist sympathisers knocked off; I think it is safe to assume a reorientation has taken place.’” (Millott, 2015, about the Australian Prime Minister Harold Holt in 1966).

The US and UK were fond of the killings as they spread anti-communist policy and involved in scapegoating the PKI both in Indonesia and abroad. The American media even noted the Indonesian communist purge as “a historical turning point.” The British political adviser to the Commander-in-Chief in Singapore wrote to the Foreign Office on 5 October 1965 that “everything possible should be done surreptitiously to blacken the PKI in the eyes of the army and the people of Indonesia.” (Simons, 2000, p. 178 and p. 181; as cited in Pellegrini, 2012, p. 6).

Both the US and the UK were involved in the killings in so many ways. The former supplied the Indonesian army with lists of PKI leaders. The latter provided access to

radios for propaganda purposes and assisted the generals upon overthrowing the communists. The UK also paused the confrontations with Indonesia over *Ganyang Malaysia*, saying that the UK “shall not attack them while they are chasing the PKI” to “ensure that the Army is not distracted from what we consider to be a necessary task” (Robinson, 2008, p. 182). As they wanted to oust Soekarno, they also demanded a reorientation of the Indonesian economy where it would head toward a Western-dominated free market.

Australian Embassy was well-informed about the communist purge. Keith Shann, the Australian Ambassador to Indonesia, personally witnessed around 250 prisoners being captivated by the army. By February 1966, the First Secretary at the Australian Embassy, J. M. Starey, visited several islands in Indonesia and was holding a conversation with an Australian student in Lombok island. He received first-hand information on the killings by the perpetrators and even saw heads on spikes in some villages in Flores island (Millott, 2015). For the record, both Lombok and Flores islands are located in the eastern part of the archipelago, and the northern part of Australia; far from Java island.

In the early of October 1965, Ambassador Shann said he hoped the Indonesian army would fight back the PKI (Millott, 2015). Australian Prime Minister, Harold Holt, was pleased with the sudden change of Indonesian foreign and economic policy, which were turning to be more pro-Western. He then mentioned Indonesia’s communist purge in front of the participants at the Australian-American Association in New York and how the purge would guarantee a policy reorientation.

The aftermath of the killings

The killings assured the West that Indonesia would be on their side as Indonesia rejoined the United Nations by September 1966 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Indonesia, 2015). The confrontation between Indonesia and Malaysia was entirely ended by December 11 that year (Ricklefs, 1993). Around 25 Western firms in the country have recovered and gained control over mines, properties, and other businesses which were nationalized during the reign of Soekarno. There is a large amount of foreign investment for the newly discovered resources like timber, nickel, copper, and other minerals (Stone & Kuznick, 2012, p. 352). The Western’s recently discovered desire over Indonesia is oil, as it is considered to be their most promising industry.

New Order regime spread harmful propaganda about the Indonesian communists. The government also claimed that the massacre was set by the PKI. Hence, there is a massive stigma for communism and atheism. The propaganda is enshrined in popular culture; one of them is a must-see movie titled *Pengkhianatan G30S/PKI* (Treachery of G30S/PKI). The film was obligatory to watch for students every 30 September each year since the production in 1984. It was also broadcasted on national television during that historical date annually (Sen & Hill, 2006). With an abundant number of propagated books, movies, and later the establishment of the Museum of the Extreme Left nearby the place where the army generals were killed, the regime expected the school children to get to know the violent culture of the PKI (Farid, 2005). Both the museum and the movie would also characterize Soeharto as the savior of the nation from PKI's rebellious and vindictive actions.

Indonesian students turned to exiles

Indonesian history of exile from time to time

Sending a critic or a political opponent far to a remote island had been a long tradition during Dutch colonialism, and was resurrected during New Order (Robinson, 2018). It was a habit of Dutch to send rebellious natives with strong anti-colonial sentiments far to the eastern part of the archipelago, mostly to Boven Digul in Papua. They were, most of the time, treated severely and suffered extreme starvation.

Dutch successfully put Indonesian founders to exiles during colonialism for their nationalist thoughts and spirits. Soekarno was one among those who were sent to an exile without trial in 1934. He remained to be in exile during the Japanese invasion of the archipelago in 1942 (Jb, 2014). Some others were authors, like Pramoedya Ananta Toer, who was sent to Buru island without a trial, in the eastern part of Indonesia (Vickers, 2005).

Pramoedya was previously arrested and exiled by the Dutch military army for his book, *The Fugitive*, during the 1945-1949 Indonesian revolution (Toer, 2010). As an author himself, he wrote his *Buru Quartet* (Toer, 1990), a set of books that were later banned until 2000 (Vaswani, 2010). There was no running water, proper food, and no bathroom (Robinson, 2018, p. 222). With such terrible conditions inside the exile, people

who were detained during this period of political turbulence mostly could not live long enough to survive.

The prisoners in exiles were also obliged to perform forced labor for governmental purposes. These political prisoners in exiles had to endure negative stigma. Given the label “ET” or *Ex – Tahanan Politik/Tapol* (Ex-Political Prisoner) on the identity cards after being released from exiles, the shame is contagious to their family members. Since the New Order regime restricted the mobility of individuals in the country, each person has to be *bersih diri* (clean in self), and their family to be *bersih lingkungan* (clean by association). The cleanliness, as a concept, is politically used to stigmatize the “leftist” groups and to establish a collective memory of the communists (Heryanto, 2006, p. 36; as cited in Sipayung, 2011).

The stigmatization of the “leftists” does not stop as it has to be endured by their family members, too. Even these years, the concept of cleanliness dates back to the New Order regime, which would monitor the mobilizations of these ET. Ironically, the “leftists” as a concept and a term, was designed by the New Order regime, and these labeled people were and are not necessarily leftists or adhering to the leftist teachings.

Foreign scholarship and the deluge of students

Soekarno had a vision to de-Javanize Indonesia; the act of decentralizing Java island from Indonesia (Wargadiredja, 2017). After centuries of colonialism, Java island was the center of all developmental planning, in which it was highly prioritized more than other islands in the archipelago. Soekarno dreamt of decolonizing the order and preference that was set by the colonial regime which was mostly centralized in Java island. The centralization of Java disturbs the distribution process of goods and information, while also enlarges the inequality between non-Javanese outside Java island and the Javanese in Java island. Soekarno wanted to eradicate this trouble as he wished for the return of these students to Indonesia and develop the nation.

The visit of Nikita Khrushchev to Indonesia in 1960 was welcomed as he offered hundreds of scholarships for Indonesians in the Soviet Union (Hill, 2014). Djoko Sri Moeljono, a metallurgy student, implied that it was even impossible for each Indonesian student to know each other in Moscow during 1960-1964 as they were the most extensive international students in the Soviet Union.

During his reign, famously known as the Old Order regime, Soekarno paved the way for the young Indonesians to study abroad by providing a scholarship, in the hope that these young people would later return to Indonesia to contribute to its development; particularly in terms of education, throughout the nation. These students, even though financed by the Soviet government, needed to sign a pre-departure agreement to contribute to the Indonesian government upon graduation for up to fifteen years in total. There would be a pledge consisting of eight points, four among them were the loyalty to the Indonesian head of state, the Indonesian government, Indonesia's Pancasila (state ideology), and Soekarno's political and philosophical thoughts (Toer, 2003; in Hill, 2014).

PPI, communism, and the Indonesian Embassy

Indonesian students in Europe would automatically join the membership of the PPI or Association of Indonesian Students (Stutje, 2013). Intentionally, this association was created in 1908 to unite the students from the archipelago in the Netherlands. Due to the colonial period and nuance, the name of the association was previously *Indische Vereeniging* or Association of the Indians. The association at first was apolitical but turned to be nationalist and reformist in 1913, as it had more politicized students coming from the colony.

Four students from the association joined the *Kongress gegen Koloniale Unterdrückung und Imperialismus* (League against Imperialism) in Brussels from 10 to 15 February 1927. Semaoen, the founder of PKI, was also present (Stutje, 2013; 2015). The Dutch press was upset by the speech given by the indigenous students and suspicious about the collaboration between these students and the communists. Mohammad Hatta, the chairman of the association, who later would be the first vice president of Indonesia, was arrested after the conference. The Netherlands perceived Hatta's activity to be a seditious sign, especially since his membership status as the executive committee of the Congress. PPI was always political ever since, even before the establishment of Indonesia itself. After independence, especially during the deluge of Indonesian students in the Eastern Bloc, Indonesian students in European countries would have one PPI in each state. All of them are associated with the Association of Indonesian Students in Europe (*PPI Europa*) (Hill, 2014).

Each PPI is under the control of the Indonesian Embassy in each country. The Indonesian Embassy would also provide essential support such as primary language training, cultural courses, and even financial support. To counter the creation of pro-communist groups among Indonesian students in the USSR, the Indonesian Embassy supported local PPI to annihilate such movement before the 1965-66 genocide (Hill, 2014). There was an intense contestation of power between the Indonesian Embassy and the Soviet indoctrination.

Zainur Ali, an anti-communist student, described that the screening procedure was the cooperation of the Indonesian Embassy, military officers, and *PPI Uni Soviet* (PPI Soviet Union) (Hill, 2014). By August 1966, the Indonesian Embassy in Moscow announced in a written notification, signed by Manai Sophiaan, the Indonesian ambassador at that time, to the Indonesian community that 25 individuals failed the screening as their loyalty to the government was questionable.

A week after the coup, Sosro was called by the Embassy to participate in the screening, as he told me while strolling around Prague's Old Town. He was asked so many questions, and one question still lingers on his mind. He was asked about his opinion of the new regime; he indeed said he would not submit to the new government as it challenged fundamental human rights. Before the screening, he and his PPI friends in Czechoslovakia had assumptions based on the news they heard about the political turbulence in Indonesia.

The statelessness of Indonesian students abroad and its disturbances

Statelessness is one significant collective memory among Indonesian intellectual exiles. These exiles referred to the G30S/PKI as something chaotic and a sudden disturbance to their study as well as their future (Sipayung, 2011). While statelessness exists and is the basis of the collective memory among them, each of these exiles had constructed their memory in their ways. Personal memories are essential to understanding Halbwachs' thought (1950) how the past developed the present situation and how they work for social cohesion.

These students departed from Indonesia as Indonesians after previously being Dutch as they were born during the Dutch colonial period. They are the first generations of Indonesian diaspora right after Indonesian independence (Akmaliah, 2015). They

acknowledge the fact that they were geographically apart from the rest of Indonesians and were intended to return to Indonesia with the plans to develop the country. As the New Order regime emerged and toppled Soekarno, these students were forced to live in liminality (Sipayung, 2011). Liminality was introduced by van Gennep (1960) to describe a state of being in between two different positions, and it emerges specific challenges for identity, which is proven to be hard to cope with among exiled Indonesian students.

Sosro once told how Prague is so touristic that one time, he found out there was no Czech inside a metro tube, only foreign tourists. His words indicated that he does not see himself as a Czech (which he confirmed later on), but as an Indonesian; even though he was technically 'expelled' from Indonesia and is a Czech by citizenship. Even Ari, the son of Sri, still navigates his home in Indonesia, not in Hungary. Their nationalities and related documents are nothing more but papers, in which they do not have more options due to their statelessness.

The coverage of the statelessness of these exiled students was unheard of in Indonesia at least before the presidency Abdurrahman Wahid (Barton, 2008) who reigned in 1999-2001. Wahid was studying in Cairo, Egypt, in 1963, and was involved in a local PPI. When the coup emerged in 1965, he received a mandate from the Indonesian Embassy to write a report about investigations of the Indonesian students in Egypt. During his presidency, Wahid officially welcomed these exiled students to return to Indonesia. In January 2000, he delegated his Minister of Justice to Europe to examine the mechanism of their arrival. This plan, be that as it may, was never executed.

Wahid likewise proclaimed his longing openly to the nullification of the PKI and Marxism-Leninism banning, which was declared as a parliament decree in 1966. The consequence of his desire was the proof that anti-communist movements are still alive and well-fed in the country (Chambert-Loir, 2016), especially coming from Muslim associations, also the fact that the resentment of communism is still perpetuated even though Soeharto already stepped down from the throne.

With the anti-communist movements are alive in Indonesia, exiled Indonesian students in Europe decided to stay in their host countries, making themselves remained as exiles. Chambert-Loir (2016) stated that half of these exiled Indonesians passed away while the other half did not want to return to Indonesia. As most of them already have foreign citizenship (that comes in a package with family life, pension, and social welfare), they did not see their future in their homeland country. They acknowledge that Indonesia

is not a safe place for them to return (Chambert-Loir, 2016). Sri, as well as Yudhistira, voiced out their frustration; they departed from a country with strong anti-colonialist thinking, only to see it turns to be an anti-communist country from afar.

Yudhistira, unlike Sri, is still an Indonesian by citizenship. He passed the screening session from the Indonesian Embassy, and while it means that he was saved from most of the problems most exiles had encountered, the Soviet regime in Hungary did limit his mobility. He still needed to be cautious about spying, which was common among Indonesians. He decided not to go back after finishing his study, accepting an assumption that the student contract was no longer valid as soon as Soekarno was toppled down. He insisted to still be an Indonesian in a hope to contribute later on in the future, as that was his initial intention to study in Europe. Even though it is not too late to apply for Hungarian citizenship, he still resists. Yudhistira was one of the fortunate students who still possess Indonesian citizenship despite the coup and the genocide.

The 1965 coup and the annihilation of communism were written as the foundation of the postcolonial history of Indonesia (Hadiz, 2006) under the New Order, which vanquished the narrative of the Indonesian “leftists” and their anti-colonial struggle. History, for most of the time, is about the politics of forgetting and remembering. As the 1965-66 genocide and its aftermath were never mentioned in any history books, the collective memory of Indonesians has the same fate; particularly the minds of the Indonesians who were born before the tragedy and the Indonesians who politically belong to the left.

The memory from Czech: exile, photographs, and movie

Sosro was born in Madiun, a city in East Java. He was born from a big family with twelve siblings. He grew up in Magelang, a town in Central Java with the biggest Buddhist temple in the world. The city is geographically located near Yogyakarta province. He was raised by *kejawen*²⁸ Muslim parents and was sent to a Catholic school to study. After finishing his study, he moved to Jakarta for a while before departing to Czechoslovakia to study psychology and pedagogy.

²⁸ *Kejawen* (Jw) is a native Javanese faith. Islam *kejawen* refers to the fusion of both faiths.

Sosro might be the only exile that has many photographs of fellow Indonesian students in the Eastern Bloc. While I was staying in his house in Prague, he showed one big cupboard and other cabinets full of pictures and the film negatives. Events classified stacks of black and white photographs are wrapped with white envelopes.

"I always give these pictures to them or their family. They are precious to my heart, and I want their family to feel the same, too."

Sosro took two stacks of photos and told me the situations and stories of them. That time, he decided to meet the daughter of his beloved friend who passed away years ago. He searched pictures of this friend, a Balinese atom engineer, to give to his daughter as a gift. He told me he always does that to the relatives of his exiled friends. Most of the time, he likes to share his memories and photographs online in his social media account. He would write a touching caption about his mind revolving around the events.

Sigmund Freud stated that photography acts more like artificial support of the memory, a materialization of the memory of which someone possesses (Freud, 2005). Photography provides social institutions some space to store memories they shared in that particular visualized memory, as photographs offer help to recognize identity, time, and space (Bate, 2010). As a part of documented archives, pictures do not provide the question for the past; instead, they give chances to question the future and the responsibility of tomorrow (Derrida & Prenowitz, 1995). His photographs helped other Indonesians, especially fellow exiled Indonesians to re-memorize the event. Some were circulated in social media, blogs, and even local news.

He brought with himself a camera set to Europe in 1963. He showed me pictures from Java island before he departed to Czechoslovakia and I let him recall various events and individuals from his past life. With photographs, Sosro hopes to give what he called 'the souvenirs from the past' to the future generations, Indonesians, particularly. He also would like to show Indonesians the beauty of the country. He recalled that before the journey to Czechoslovakia, he had never been out of Java island. While he knew little about the landscape of Amsterdam, Paris, and Rome from books, he had no idea what the eastern part of the continent looked like. Thus, it was difficult to imagine for him to imagine the geographical destination of his study. He took pictures of the country to send to his family back home.

We conversed in the Javanese language as he mostly speaks it. He told me that he only speaks in Indonesian in school, but never at home. He said that the Indonesian

language was not used in his home in Java island. The Indonesian language is not used either in his house in Prague, as his two sons do not speak Indonesian. He, his Czech wife, and two kids speak the Czech language. Sosro told me that he and his wife do not share the same faith. It was common back then in Indonesia even after independence, but he realized it is not permissible by administration these days.

Sosro told me that living in Czechoslovakia was full of struggle. After the coup and 1965-66 in Indonesia, his life dramatically changed. He failed the screening test that was mandatory to take in the Indonesian Embassy. If anything, Soekarno was the one who sent him to study. The Indonesian Embassy decided not to extend his passport, which took his citizenship away. He explained that there were two choices given by the Embassy; condemned Soekarno and acknowledged the new regime. As he could not do either, he failed to get a chance to return to Indonesia.

Even if he got a chance to return to Indonesia, he would not. He understood the consequences well. A few of his friends were killed as soon as they arrived in Indonesia. It was a period of uncertainty as they studied in the Central and Eastern parts of Europe, a region in which Indonesians believe to be socialist and communist. He also said that the regime spied on the families of these students. It was uncomfortable, mainly because he could not be in touch with them.

He had to teach Indonesian language and culture in the university where he finally graduated. He had been teaching for ten years while also had to work odd jobs to make ends meet. When he finally retired, he dedicated himself to help other Indonesians in the city. He would be glad to accompany Indonesian tourists wandering around the town. As someone who is experienced taking pictures, he would voluntarily take photos for them. His second son, Igna, a geologist, once had an expedition to Antarctica. Igna was proud to be the very first Indonesian to be there. However, Sosro told his son that he is a Czech who happens to have Indonesian blood instead of being an actual Indonesian. Sosro has a dilemma with being Indonesian, most of the time he feels he is an Indonesian, but some other times understands that he is categorized as an outcast among Indonesian society. The experience of living abroad as an exile makes him believe more in Soekarno's words not to forget history.

He went to Indonesia several times as a tourist. The first journey was in 1998, after more than thirty years of not seeing his homeland. It was a momentous year as Soeharto finally resigned from the regime, and he said he was involved in a massive demonstration

in Jakarta. Many of the protests were organized by university students who were fed up by the regime and the current monetary crisis. The New Order regime was corrupt, intimidating, and authoritarian. Mass demonstrations emerged in many big cities, coordinated by students. Four university students were shot dead in Trisakti University, Jakarta, by the security forces. Sosro recalled that it was a year of anger and resentment, but he was also proud to be there witnessing one of Indonesia's most prominent changes. When the New Order regime finally ended by the people's power, Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie replaced Soeharto after two months of being his vice president. Habibie was the first and the only non-Javanese to be the Indonesian president. He is also the first Indonesian president post-authoritarian regime (Mietzner, 2008). Habibie introduced freedom of the press, general elections, and civil liberties in the country (Mietzner, 2006). He made a radical move in a country that used to hold a military tradition.

With such change, Sosro was delighted to welcome the new face of Indonesia, but he later was disappointed by the gesture of the government to take care of the people who were heavily stigmatized during the New Order. During the presidency of Megawati between 2001-2004, the minister of human rights, Yusril Ihza Mahendra, suggested that exiled Indonesians abroad should be given forgiveness. Sosro and his fellow exiles claimed the statement to be a disgrace for their existence. He does not understand what fault he committed that he deserves forgiveness from the Indonesian government. For him, it is also unfair that the history books do not reserve a narrative of what happened in 1965-66, even after more than 50 years. Apparently, for him, the post-authoritarian regime does not hold radical change for human rights as he previously expected. It is essential to recognize what was wrong so that we can adequately heal, as he concluded. He understands that Indonesia does not want him. However, he still wants to contribute to Indonesians.

"Thanks to you and all Indonesians, I could study here in Czech. I want to return your kindness by taking you around the city. I hope that is worth taking."

While the national history books refuse to enshrine the event, many books and movies portray the tragedy and mourning. In 2016, an Indonesian film by the title *Surat dari Praha* (Letters from Prague) screened in cinemas. The movie told a story about an Indonesian woman who had to deliver letters from her mother to an old man in Prague. In that movie, Sosro and fellow exiles made appearances. Most of the time, all exiled Indonesians have a similar pattern in life, told me. The movie portrayed the grievance of

being separated from a loved one, the divorce, and the failure to fulfill promises after the 1965-66 tragedy. The main Indonesian man in the movie was told to be banned from returning to Indonesia, which later created miseries to his lover. This movie, with the help of Sosro and fellow exiles, could open the eyes of the young Indonesian generation about the tragic historical event. It is one of Sosro's dedications, aside from photographs, to materialize his feelings and memories as an exile.

The movie is considered safe as it does not display any infringement of the military army; it is only a romance story that is separated by time and space. The 1965-66 genocide could not be told as a whole in either book or movie. Otherwise, it would lead to some problems like in the case of *The Act of Killing* and *The Look of Silence* (Firstyana, 2017). The director for both films, Joshua Oppenheimer, has to make their Indonesian crews anonymous. The film, which displays the violence of 1965-66 from the perspective of the perpetrators and the victims, is not allowed to screen in Indonesia.

Sosro acknowledged *The Act of Killing* and watched it on Youtube, but not until the finish. The movie moved him differently. He relieved that pop culture is more open towards the 1965-66 genocide. On the other hand, he still doubts due to the rampant censorship in Indonesia. His unstoppable effort to force the Indonesian to remember the 1965-66 genocide flame the young Indonesians who traveled to Prague, including me. Many blogs, pictures in social media, and news articles told stories of Sosro.

Sosro succeeded in making the young generation of Indonesians realize that their history books skip one great chapter that their previous generation had to endure. While asked about his view on the collapse of Czechoslovakia, he gave a concise answer. As the collapse did not personally mean anything to him, the event did not tremendously break his heart. It was something that he regretted to happen, but it was not in his decision, as he was a foreigner in its land.

The collective memories from Hungary: exile, statelessness, and family reunion

Sri showed me black and white pictures of her family and recalled her life in Wonosari, Yogyakarta before she departed to study in Budapest in 1959. She studied in a prominent university in Indonesia, namely Universitas Gadjah Mada, the first public university to allow indigenous students to study during the Dutch colonial era. She studied medicine until her third year. Due to complications such as marriage and child-rearing, she stopped

her study and decided to apply for the scholarship to Hungary after the birth of her second son. She has three children; all of them graduated in engineering. Her two children live in Budapest and work as engineers.

She was born as the seventh child from a prestigious Javanese couple, in 1932 during Dutch colonialism. Her father was a Wedana²⁹ assistant in Wonosari, Yogyakarta. She married one of her neighbors, who was at that time an engineering student in what was named as *Technische Hoogeschool te Bandung* (now *Institut Teknologi Bandung*, or Bandung Institute of Technology). Both Sasmita and Sri decided to apply for a scholarship to a foreign country. Sri admitted she was interested in applying to East German and Hungary, but then the couple decided to apply for Hungary. Sasmita got accepted in the department of electrical engineering in what is now called Budapest University of Technology and Engineering. Sri was admitted to present-day Semmelweis University.

As they signed the agreement to come back to Indonesia after the study, they were hoping to be employed in a government office right after they went back. They left their two sons to Sasmita's parents and siblings. Most Indonesian students who studied abroad were unmarried, and those who were married would leave their spouses in Indonesia. The case of Sasmita and Sri here is the gap of knowledge on this scholarship of Indonesian exiles abroad; no study before this mentioned about spouses who turned to be students in foreign countries, and there is, so far, no mention about a family reunion of the exiled Indonesian students with their family outside of Indonesia. Chalik Hamid, who was mentioned in the previous subchapter, had to separate from his wife geographically (Dhani, 2016).

Sri and Sasmita went to Budapest with a long journey. They came to Budapest with one big suitcase by the end of 1959, the very time they encountered their first winter. They lived in the dormitory reserved for international students for some years before they decided to move to a flat. One big reason why they had to move was that Alya, their third child, was born during her second year of study.

She said she was the only female student who already married and had kids while studying; other Indonesian female students were unmarried. Sri received 800 forints each month and recalled the price of a kilo of rice; 16 forints. She and her husband sometimes hosted an Indonesian food party with fellow Indonesian students in Hungary. Back home,

²⁹ Wedana (Jw) is the residence of the sub district officer.

she did not cook for she did not need to. In a foreign country, she has to. She brought along with herself a set of heavy and large mortar and pestle made from stone and fit them in the big luggage. Both weigh around 5 kg in total. Right after their arrival in Budapest, her husband asked what was inside the suitcase, to which she answered the question decades later, precisely in around 2008.

The mortar and pestle were used to make a proper chili condiment and other Indonesian sauce to satisfy the needs of these students living in Hungary. There was a part of her that thought it was necessary to bring this set of traditional utensils; for a home begins by bringing some material from the previous home to the new one. Living abroad does not mean to lose a home, as the home is not located in a fixed place, instead, in an idealized concept (Douglas, 1991), hence the food party as a way to celebrate the home remembrance. The food party was also hosted by the reigning Indonesian Ambassador at that time, according to Yudhistira. It is a common knowledge that Indonesian students in Europe are always hungry, he told me as he laughed.

There were more than ten students in Hungary, but in the present time, they remain only three. Other than Sri and Yudhistira is a Sundanese named Prasetya. Prasetya was an ob-gyn, but I could not interview him since he has Alzheimer's. These days he only speaks Sundanese and forgets most of his life after his deployment to Hungary.

A Hungarian newspaper once published a small article about Sasmita and Sri in 1961. The author of the article stated that Sasmita was a 23-year old-looking gentleman, even though he was already 33 by that time. Sri was described to look like she was only 20 years old when she was a lot older than that. It was written that Sasmita had fought for Indonesian independence for five years. Sri personally confirmed the truth to me, and she also explained that she was inspired to be a doctor after voluntary activities with local doctors and nurses during the 1946-49 revolution against the Dutch. The article also showed their longing to meet their sons, whom they had not met for years.

Tragically, Ari did not remember his parents at all. His aunts and uncles only mentioned that his parents were studying in Europe, but that was it. As photography was not ordinary during Ari's childhood, there was no memory support to help him imagine how their parents looked. Instant photography was not popular in Indonesia at that time, and the left black and white pictures in the house only displayed the childhood version of their parents. Both Sri and Sasmita took some of the photographs to Hungary.

“I seriously have no idea about my parents as I was so small when they departed to study. I did not even care nor believe that I have parents, since they were so far, unreachable, and I did not remember anything of them.”

One of her memories that is valuable for me is the memory of religion. She noted that before her departure to Europe, Indonesia was not interested in making religion as political mobilization. The same way is felt by both Yudhistira and Ari, who always update on the current news in Indonesia and regularly visit the country. In Sri’s house, many black and white portraits show a Javanese family wearing clothes that could be interpreted as improper nowadays; men in *sarung* (skirt-like bottom) and women in traditional tube tops. His memory navigates Indonesians what Indonesia was, and encourages other Indonesians to think back about what the authoritarian regime had to offer for religion as political mobilization. With the news of religious intolerance in Indonesia, they recall their past of Indonesia’s religious tolerance before they left their country for the first time.

The government of New Order accepted the requests from various Islamic organizations to consider policy changes due to issues concerning Muslims. Previously banned in state schools, headscarves can be worn by Muslim female students by the middle of the 1980s. A codification of family law for Muslims was also issued by the Department of Religion which prevents the occurrence of interfaith marriages (Liddle, 1996). These exiles in Budapest gave me a balanced view of interfaith marriages, which were common before the regime started. The questions of prayer frequency, religious affiliations, or the attendance of religious sermons were never asked for a stranger, but it is quite common in Indonesia to receive such questions. According to Ari, the perspective of the religion is now communal instead of linear between a person and their Divine God. It seems to him and Yudhistira that the key actors of decision-making are the religious leaders, which is not the responsibility of religious leaders.

Although what they collectively remember is Indonesia in the past and they now compare it to present-day Indonesia, Halbwachs (1992) argues that time is a matter of social construction; it is valid as long as it offers contents and events for thought materials. Hence, it is not a problem to compare one object in two different historical timelines. Moreover, while it is only the memory of three people, this memory is deeply attached to other people too in a collective way and the context within them. There is a historical flow in the discussion of Indonesia among Indonesian students before New Order and an

Indonesian student after New Order, in which each Indonesian student could perceive and interpret one event using a historical lens. Time serves as a departing point, or more; a social construction, for us to analyze what was and what is, letting us chronologically interpret the events.

Ari, who survived the 1965-66 massacre in Yogyakarta, told me horrific stories of the event. Ari acknowledged how butchered human body parts jammed the river. There is one river near his father's village, and almost every morning, people from the town voluntarily picked up corpses from the river to bury them elsewhere. He did not get a proper explanation from his elders in his family. He remembered one exact night when military officers inspected his paternal grandfather's house. It was in the middle of the night; one of them pointed a rifle to his grandfather's head. No one knew where he was taken that night.

Years later, his grandfather was brought home again, accompanied by the army officers. Ari only knew that he was detained in several cities, but his grandfather never explained the details, the names of the towns, nor the life behind bars. Both Ari and Sri are sure that he was detained solely because the regime considered his family to be unclean. He recalled he was not the only one having a family member imprisoned; many of his classmates also shared the same experience. It was common; people do not just tell the stories to others.

Sri, who at that time in Budapest, was shivering to read the terrible news in her home country. The phone call was expensive, and not every house in Indonesia had a landline phone. The conversation could be heard and tapped by anyone. It was a devastating time as both needed to handle final works. Before the coup, they were ready to return to Indonesia. After the coup, the genocide, and the detainment of her father-in-law, Sri was in doubt. It was her sixth year studying medicine, and she desperately needed time to stay in Europe for a while due to the political turbulence. Her husband was accepted to work in one company nearby Szena ter. When the Indonesian Embassy submitted these students to testify the obedience to the new regime, Sri and her husband decided not to come. There were many factors; first, because the coup was not seen as ethical, second, because they already had Alya, and third, they chose to be invisible as they had children back home. They technically become stateless as soon as their passports expire. Following the coup and the 1965-66 genocide, the bilateral relations between

Indonesia and Hungary were ruined and only recovered in the 1980s (Embassy of The Republic of Indonesia, 2011).

Their stateless status possesses exilic trajectories (Sipayung, 2011), and that would be the difference between them and regular migrants. Sipayung (2011) noted that it was possible for Indonesians to stay and study in socialist countries to seek asylum in the Netherlands. However, the bitter history between Indonesia and the Netherlands in 1946-1949 contributed to the difficulty levels. The 1848 colonial law proclaimed that the people from the colonies were acknowledged as the citizens of the Netherlands Kingdom with socially and politically restricted rights. This law applied to the Indonesians who were born before 1949 when the government of the Netherlands legally acknowledged Indonesians as an independent group. Meanwhile, the students who were studying in the Eastern Bloc were born at least one decade before the acknowledgment of Indonesian independence.

Even though citizenship came in a package with limited rights, the students who seek asylum were treated the way refugees are. The Netherlands immigration policy was loose before its renewal in 1985; they had to apply as political asylums from the socialist bloc and had to stay in shelters for a while before acquiring residence permits. The immigration policy also held a racist notion to treat asylum seekers and migrants. Compared to other migrants, these exiled Indonesians stated that they had a special status (Sipayung, 2011, p. 18), in which the host government perceived these Indonesians to be more Dutch in comparison to another group of migrants.

In Hungary, Sri did not feel the need to apply as she thought there must be a way for her and her family to return to Indonesia without any problem. As Sasmita worked, she continued her study, specializing in being an internist, while also working in several hospitals in the city. Her life changed in 1971 as she was offered help by the International Red Cross to arrange the flight for both Adi and Ari to Europe. The organization would also arrange documentation and bureaucratic matters for the family reunification. The siblings then flew from Jakarta to Budapest by January 1972. Ari remembered that his grandmother took both to the local tailor. She wanted them to have a proper set of suits while flying to Europe. Men's suits were never common in tropical Indonesia and were mostly worn by the Dutch, not by indigenous people. The textile in Indonesia was also lighter than that in Europe, and their suits were pretty much useless to wear:

“I remember her bringing the scissors and her sewing set after some time we arrived here. She kept all the buttons from our suits and told us that we had to let go of the poor fabric.”

The journey to Europe was mesmerizing. Before they went to Jakarta, they had to say goodbye to all their friends and family members, for fear of never seeing each other anymore.

“It was their first time to be that cold that they could not even realize it. Their clothes were fancy, but they were wet. It was the first meeting of my three children,”

recalled Sri.

While Ari told me about the first years of adaptation in Hungary, he said to me that he and his brother were longing to play badminton. They always played badminton together back home in a huge backyard. The father, Sasmita, decided to give it a chance. He and his sons played badminton, and among the first ones to do so in Hungary. The sons joined a badminton club, and from time to time they had to compete in several cities. As they were stateless, they had to realize there was no way for them to fight in an international match abroad. Adi once nominated, but he had no other option but to let go of it.

By the 1980s, the family became a Hungarian family since the government decided to give them citizenship. It was done to prioritize both sons to compete in an international badminton match abroad. They then started roaming in Europe from one badminton match after another. Sasmita was also remembered as a badminton coach in Hungary. There is even a national badminton coup named after him. Badminton is a way for Sasmita and his sons to remember and to celebrate their home country; a place that always has space on their hearts yet did not offer a room to stay. However, recent anti-foreign sentiment in Hungary makes it impossible for the badminton coup to be attended by the Indonesian Ambassador. Here, Ari is conflicted, as he is reminded that he is foreign. Aside from being politically engaged towards Indonesian politics, he is also critical to the Hungarian one. The current government reminded him of the feeling of living under the New Order regime.

“I came from Orba³⁰ to Orban (regime); both are similar,” explained Ari about his political stand and perspective of the current regime.

³⁰ Orba is a shortened version of Orde Baru, or New Order regime

The family mainly speaks in Javanese, and only Alya speaks Indonesian. It was hard for the couple to raise Alya in the Javanese language, so they decided to do it in Indonesian and Hungarian language. Javanese language, as well as the stone mortar and pestle, serves as a souvenir from home, bringing the past nuance under control inside the house (Douglas, 1991). All four were born on Java island in a Javanese-speaking region. Hence, it was more natural for them to converse in Javanese than in Indonesian. The Indonesian language is relatively a lot easier than the Javanese language, which has three registers and each register possesses different vocabularies, lexicon, and grammatical rules (Uhlenbeck, 1964). Alya was taught the Indonesian language because it is the national language, while the Javanese language is only understood by fellow Javanese.

After graduating from her internist specialization, Sri dedicated herself to be a sports doctor. For her, the job was more flexible compared to the regular internist in the hospital. With this job, she did not have to stress out that much. She needed to check up the performance and health condition of athletes. Even today, these athletes still recognize her when they accidentally met on the street. She told me that life is generally good in Budapest, especially after the family reunion. She did not worry that much because of her exiled status. Both her and Sasmita worked, their family moved to a bigger apartment near the grand market, and their children were doing fine. They were busy with their new life in the diaspora.

Adi decided to go back to Indonesia by 1996, by a strong faith that Soeharto would resign sooner. He was mistaken, as Soeharto was still reigning until 1998, and remained influential to the Indonesians until his death in 2008. With a foreign passport, Adi could go to Indonesia as a visitor, but due to the political climate of the regime, he was heavily spied on. He went to Yogyakarta, only to stay in some lodging instead of his family's residents. Graduated from Budapest University of Technology and Economics, he had difficulties in applying for jobs in Indonesia. He then worked in the Hungarian Embassy in Jakarta for some period. Both Sri and Ari did not tell me much about Adi, for he is in Indonesia and that could risk him.

Ari married a Hungarian in Hungary and he told me that his first daughter, Brenda, spoke entirely in Indonesian during her early years, hence confused her kindergarten teachers. From that on, Ari realized that it is better to let them understand and speak Hungarian. As long as they grew up, then he started socializing the usage of the Indonesian language. Both Brenda and Roza, Ari's second daughter, went to Indonesia for

Darmasiswa; a scholarship provided by the Indonesian government. Both the daughters were so motivated to go and visit their extended Indonesian family. Brenda was placed in Borneo island to study at Mulawarman University, in South Borneo province.

Ari told me that he felt a bit guilty that he did not interact with his children. When each of his children grew up, he thought it was vital for them to learn more about his upbringing, his hometown, history, and his languages. Ari motivated his daughters to apply Darmasiswa for it is a perfect opportunity to learn more about Indonesia, even though he was disappointed by the government. He believed the scholarship could get their children a thorough understanding of Indonesia and the complexities of his identity. As Brenda originally studied architecture at Budapest University of Technology and Economics, she painted her father's house in Yogyakarta, as soon as she could get the chance to fly there from Borneo island. The city was the same as what her father used to tell her, as well as the location of the house. His house is near one of the famous Hindu temples in the city. She met many of his father's extended family members and friends. Her experience of Darmasiswa gave her intimacy with Indonesian culture, Javanese in particular. Her motivation to apply for the scholarship was mostly because of Ari; his roots, memory, stories, and his long-distance nationalism towards Indonesia.

Long-distance nationalism was coined by Benedict Anderson to explain the political articulations from the diaspora community who are timely and geographically apart from their homeland (Anderson, 1994). Anderson argued that long-distance nationalism could be common particularly after capitalism and advanced technology of transportation and communication. These exiles not for once identify themselves with Dutch, although they were born during the colonial regime, but Indonesians, even though they are far away from the country. Their nationalism is a reflection of Soekarno's vision to develop the nation.

2019's presidential election is the same as 2014's previous election, presenting Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto, resulting in a victory for Joko to be the current Indonesian president. Both leaders are Javanese and Muslims, but they came from different upbringings. Joko Widodo, or widely known as Jokowi, is a successful businessman who came from a humble family. On the other hand, Prabowo went from a politically elite group. He was a Lieutenant General of the military army and the former son-in-law of Soeharto. As Aspinall and Mietzer (2014) argued, Prabowo suggested tendencies to destroy democratic institutions. He was known to be the person behind the

abduction of activists in 1997-1998. To add more layers, he was also responsible for a series of human rights violations and genocide in East Timor, in 1983.

Before Jokowi, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) reigned Indonesia for ten years. SBY, like Soeharto and Prabowo, also reserves a significant position in the Indonesian military army. The victory of Jokowi in 2014 shed new light as he is neither a political elite nor an army. Yudhistira, Ari, and Sri are vocal voicing their choice of the candidate, although only Yudhistira owns the right to vote. While Jokowi could not level up the tolerance in Indonesia due to the Prabowo-backed coalition in the people's representation (Emont, 2015), Jokowi is still a better choice than Prabowo, according to Yudhistira.

"I endured all the hardships to be an Indonesian in Europe. Holding an Indonesian passport is never easy. I still want to contribute to Indonesia as an Indonesian in exile."

For Yudhistira, voting for Jokowi is a contribution to resurrect Soekarno's vision to de-Javanize the country. Indeed, under Jokowi, the development in Indonesia is no longer Java-centric. Jokowi, as an incumbent, could break the mindset of Java Centrism among Indonesians (Pinter Politik, 2017), something that was missing from the previous presidents. More importantly, Jokowi is not coming from an elite military, unlike his rival Prabowo. Jokowi is also famous among people living in Central Java, as he previously was a mayor of Surakarta. The way he brings himself makes people want to befriend him as he is humble, honest, and not arrogant.

There is a palpable resentment from these exiles towards the military army. Two Indonesian ex-presidents came from the military, and both survived more than one election. Yudhistira recognizes both generals to be corrupt political leaders. SBY, in his ten years of presidency, had several severe corruption scandals, among them is the project of electronic identity cards (Wijaya, 2018). Soeharto is even the biggest corruptor in the world of all time while abusing his power and authority in Indonesia for more than three decades (BBC, 2004). His corruption was his most significant achievement, at least according to these exiles. He silenced activists, intellectuals, and eventually killed them. For both Yudhistira and Ari, the military army should not interfere with the civilian politics as Indonesia already had enough to learn about the abuse of power and the violation of human rights that they never want to proceed. Yudhistira had participated many times as a part of the election committee in the Indonesian embassy as he always wanted the presidential election to run properly.

“It is a pity that Indonesian students these days are politically passive.”

Yudhistira considered that Indonesian students in Europe are not politically vocal. As agents of changes, Yudhistira hopes that Indonesian students could change the ruin of the New Order regime in the government system. He also hopes that there would be an improvement in development and the increasing rate of transparency in Indonesia. Jokowi did change the country radically as he solves problems in Indonesia by using a different approach. As Indonesia is older by age, he hoped that the country is also wiser to conduct the truth and reconciliation process for one of its darkest histories.

While asked about the appearance of the 1965-66 genocide in Indonesian pop culture, Ari and Sri want those appearances to side and support the victims. There are many things that side with the regime already, hence it is necessary to display the mourning of the victims. Once, Alya invited Sri and Ari to watch *The Act of Killing* and *The Look of Silence* in a Budapest’s local cinema. It was horrific for them, although they are grateful that their grievance is validated by a movie that is also watched by young Indonesians. Ari is eager to find out the news and articles about fellow exiles and political prisoners on the internet. When he was told about the case of Soesilo Toer, he was shocked, and so was Sri.

Ari confessed that he already witnessed many historical events in life; the 1965-66 coup and massacre, the fall of the Soviet Union, and the integration of Hungary to the European Union. For him, the breakdown of the Soviet Union was not in any way comparable to the 1965-66 massacre in his hometown. The collapse of the Soviet Union was for the better, according to him. The Soviet Union was a corrupt, centralized, and closed regime. Unlike the sudden 1965 coup, the disintegration of the Soviet Union was predictable since the reign of Gorbachev who demanded openness and political reformation. Sri also added that the fall of Soviet had nothing to do with her life, mainly because the salary a doctor receives in Hungary is still small, even today.

“My salary was still small. Technically, a doctor’s salary is always small even without the collapse of the Soviet regime.”

Analysis

The mark and memory of the dead

Filep Karma, a Papuan activist, explained the brutality of the Indonesian military upon treating the Papuans; the same brutality to abolish those who are against the regime. As many people were tortured, imprisoned without any trial, and killed, Karma questioned the graveyard of those who were murdered. The military did leave severe signs; the instruction to silence and to forget those who were taken and killed; that the civilians must remember to forget. "If they died, then where are their tombs? There are tombs without names, and names without tombs." (Karma, 2014, p. 7)

The Indonesian historiography fails to include the "leftist" movements from the national memory, which was predictable especially after an aggressive, authoritarian regime. The establishment of the authoritarian regime helped erase the existence of postcolonial perspective and studies in Indonesia, despite being one of the most colonized regions in Asia. The tyrannical rule systematically murders the "leftists", who would have been potential in criticizing and supervising the decolonization process (Dalziel, 2019). The extermination of the "leftists" also means there was a minimum critique towards the historiography of Indonesia during the New Order (Zurbuchen, 2002). The discussions and the mentions of the killings were avoided, and the Indonesian history book has no record of the event. There is an unbreakable silence about the beginning of the regime. Indonesians, since that on, are comforted with strict historiography and unhealed wounds.

After the fall of the New Order, there was a contrast transition from military dictatorship to democracy. The change was then becoming a fertile ground for activists to demonstrate and request for the new governments to guarantee the implementation of human rights. Since then, there was an intense engagement of civil societies, government agencies, NGOs, and international actors that decided to focus on the cooperation in the South.

The victims of the New Order had a solid ground to ask for justice for the human rights violations that were committed by the military army against Indonesian citizens. Indonesian Ministry of Justice and Human Rights issued a bill for the truth and reconciliation. Groups of Indonesian victims tried their best to collect evidence from the military dictatorship, among others are the mass graves of the 1965-1966 victims. Mass

graves are categorized to be a violation of the international humanitarian law for the dead to have the right to a marked and individual grave. After World War II, evidence from mass graves was used to charge the war criminals. Mass graves were also used in several international criminal tribunals and were used to investigate the crimes committed by military armies in Latin America. Across Indonesia, there are hundreds of mass graves, but the authorities have noticed only a few with simple signboards. There is constant alertness about the remembering of the 1965-66 victims and stigmatization of those who were killed and exiled (McGregor, Melvin, & Pohlman, 2017).

A group of ET, namely YPKP 65 (*Yayasan Penelitian Korban Pembunuhan 65*; The Foundation for Research into the Victims of the 1965 Massacres), discovered 122 mass graves in Sumatra and Java islands, with around 14,000 corpses were buried in total. The number could be bigger. The foundation asked for the protection of the mass graves from vandalism and destruction (BBC, 2016). Bedjo Untung, the head of YPKP 65, discovered another 16 mass graves in Purwodadi alone. The search of the mass graves is still ongoing (Saputra, 2017), and the report of the findings of the mass graves have been submitted to the Attorney General.

The existence of the mass graves is essential and valid proof of the 1965 killings. The Indonesians whose family members were killed during the genocide finally are closer to understand the decades of silence that was imposed during the New Order. The people who were involved in the discovery of the mass graves had shown the support for digging the past and bringing justice. Many of the victim families also want proper burials for their loved ones, like the families in Kaloran, Wonosobo, Central Java. In 2001, they, along with YPKP, decided to unearth the mass grave in Kaloran, identified the corpses and gathered the religious leaders to prepare funeral ceremonies for the dead. Their plan was ruined by what Umar Said, a joint leader of the YPKP, described as the legacy of the New Order. There was a mob preventing YPKP and the victims' families from reburial of the corpses. Banners with "Burn the PKI skulls!" (McGregor, 2012, pp. 245-248) were displayed in Kaloran.

The mob was backed by *Laskar Jihad*, a paramilitary wing led by Ja'far Umar Thalib in 2000 recruited young Salafi-Wahhabi men (McGregor, 2012). The members of the group claim that Zionism and communism are enemies of Islam. The reburial of the corpses also threatens the very group who conducted the killings in Kaloran, the New Order regime. The reburial was planned to be accompanied by religious chanting and

prayers as a form to dehumanize the dead after so long being labeled as 'atheists' by the regime, killed, piled, and dumped in a mass grave. The YPKP and the victims' families indirectly challenged the perpetrators for the prosecution process. The failure of the reburial of the identified corpses leads YPKP to worry about conducting the exhumation of other mass graves.

Kasut Perdamaian, or Shoe for Peace, followed a similar aim as YPKP (McGregor, 2012). This initiation was led by young Indonesians, namely Albertus Suryo Wicaksono and Esther Yusuf. Albertus Suryo believed that digging up the mass graves meaning digging up the past tragedy. Both Albertus and Esther want these corpses valued as human beings. However, Shoe for Peace, similarly like YPKP, receives no legal intervention for this initiative. The responses from the Indonesian government of the exhumation and reburial of the 1965 victims are negative. In post-authoritarian Indonesia, the historical account from the victims is naturally challenging the so-called national history. The goal of the mass graves' identification was to present an undebatable proof of the 1965 killings.

If the Attorney General approves the findings, there would be a formation of an Ad Hoc Human Rights Court (McGregor, 2012). Because the military caused the killings and other series of human rights violations, the case of the findings of the mass graves does not go anywhere. SBY, a former military general, is also the son-in-law of Sarwo Edhie, the key actors of the 1965-66 killings. As SBY became the president of Indonesia from 2004 to 2014, he was more unwilling to investigate the mass graves and the murders than Wahid. SBY, in general, did not act appropriately for human rights violations during his reign. Indonesian Supreme Court recommended SBY to the formal rehabilitation of the 1965 victims in 2007, to which he did not give any reaction.

The exhumation of the 1965 mass graves triggers the sense to reclaim the memory that is condemned by the New Order regime as it encourages people to recognize the very memory that is buried by the national history. The unmarked mass graves and the government's persistence to hide them will make the memory of the victims condemned. Their memories would be similar to the people who received *damnatio memoriae*. They are not given space to explain themselves nor the memory they carry. The dead would be remembered as infidels and PKI members who do not deserve proper burial and praying ceremonies, for they were against both the government and religion. There is an immense

effort from the government and the paramilitary groups to shut down those who tried to unleash the memories of the victims.

Acknowledging the collective memory of the victims is vital for it has a potential weapon to combat the 'legitimate' memory. The mass grave provides a counter-memory of Indonesia's violent past and creates a space and discussion for trauma. The exhumation of the mass graves is only a small step to reveal decades of silence and violent culture in Indonesia as it all started by the killings of civilians in 1965-66. The mass grave is as important as the 1965-66 massacre as it provides proof that there were people killed in a period to assure the change in Indonesia's foreign and domestic policies. The denial, the ignorance, and the condemnation of the mass grave would dishonor the collective memories among the victims' families. With the event being unmentioned in history, the 1965-66 massacre serves as a tool to further oppress those who are against the New Order regime.

The memory of the living and religion as a political mobilization

It is important to note that the 1965-66 massacre was politically, religiously, and ethnically conscious. Jess Melvin (2017), stated that the killings constitute a genocide since there was an intense witch-hunt of atheists and unbelievers, resulted in them being killed as they were associated with being communists. This association also justified the killings as performed by religious bodies, calling it a sacred duty (Robinson, 2017). A confidential telegram was discovered in 2017 by the National Security Archives, presenting an instruction to kill PKI as an obligation:

"Muhammadiyah sources report that preachers in Muhammadiyah mosques are telling congregations that all who consciously joined PKI must be killed. "Conscious" PKI members are classified as the lowest order of infidels, the shedding of whose blood is comparable to killing chicken.

Comment: This appears to give Muhammadiyah Muslims wide license for killing. Policy of reformist Muhammadiyah very similar to "final interpretation" issued by

conservative NU suggesting Muslim opinion here practically unanimous on disposal of PKI members.”³¹³²

Indonesia used to offer a more diverse perspective, particularly about religion, in the 1950s. Many Islam-oriented political parties used Islam as their principle and struggled for the making of Islamic state ideology. Secular parties like PKI were welcomed to put the Islamic parties. Not long after the coup and the massacre, Soeharto, with his political base in the army, settled a short-term alliance with Islamic groups to exterminate PKI to the very roots. The cooperation led the Muslim majority to believe that they would be given a significant portion of the new regime. The religious observance was also encouraged as a way to combat atheism, a schism that is attached to communism according to the government. The Religion Department was intensified and given a nonpartisan leadership. State Islamic colleges were broadened and provided extra funding. Soeharto's foundation also started a program that helped donate mosque building in the archipelago (Liddle, 1996). From this, it is understandable that Soeharto's regime gained popularity among the majority of Muslims in Indonesia. Islam, as a religion, is also used as a political mobilization to ensure the duration of the military-backed regime.

The Indonesian school system was hastened under the New Order regime. With Western-style education as aspired from a postcolonial state, the state school lured village children and their parents to educate their children to get decent jobs. Religion courses were mandatory in all kinds of schools, be them in private or public schools. The regime also released permits for private schools, mostly Islamic schools so that they can operate just the way the state schools are but with added religious courses. Elite Muslim schools are flourished everywhere, and so are the Muslims who performed the pilgrimage to Mecca (Liddle, 1996). The comprehensive religious education constructs religion-abiding citizens with a monolith interpretation and understanding of Islam. There was a drastic growth of the Muslim middle class, too. Many educated Indonesian Muslims are indeed devout ones.

³¹ (American Consulate Medan (1965, Dec 6). RG 84, Entry P 339, Jakarta Embassy Files, Box 14, Folder 7 pol 23-9 September 30th Mvt. dec 1-31, 1965, National Security Archive, Suite 701, Gelman Library, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C. <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//dc.html?doc=4107028-Document-18-Telegram-184A-From-American>).

³² Both Muhammadiyah and NU (Nahdlatul Ulama) are the largest Muslim organizations in Indonesia

It then became clear for the Muslims to realize that Soeharto built an authoritarian regime and he had no purpose of distributing the power with any affiliations (Liddle, 1996). The government suppresses the Islamic parties as well as an attempt to make them disown their intention to establish Islam as a state ideology (Hasan, 2014). The younger generation of Muslims were important actors between the 1960s and the 1970s as they finally promoted their religion as a force in the country. The prohibition of the PKI and their ideology created a space for the increasing Islamic positive sentiments in the country.

With the extermination of “leftists”, problems like social inequalities could not be addressed and answered as there is a continuous stigma about the language of class struggle. Islam, as a religion, then be the immediate answer and a language to protest the inequality in the country during the New Order regime. The religion became a place to address problems of social, political, economic, and morals (Hasan, 2014). Starting from the 1980s, the violent cases in Indonesia were labeled as “extreme right” instead of naming it as a part of Islamic militancy (Liddle, 1996, p. 622). The violence included the airplane hijacking, the bombings of banks own by Chinese Indonesians as well as the explosion of Borobudur temple in Java island. There were also clashes between Muslims and state authorities.

The memory of Indonesian exiles in the Central and Eastern parts of Europe contains a complex problem, probably way too late to be solved. As soon as the New Order regime silences the “leftist” and criminalizes the atheists, the government provides religion as political mobilization. Religion was used to construct generations of state and religion-abiding people with no critical-thinking, which smoothen the legacy of the supreme leader. The Muslims were shown as heroes by the end of the New Order merely because they expected they would have given power; they rebelled out of their disappointment towards the regime.

The silence that was constructed by the regime was made impossible for older generations to narrate their wound and trauma of colonialism and the 1965 massacre. The colonialism was taken lightly in Indonesian history textbooks during the reign of Soeharto as he developed closer and friendlier ties with the Western world (Purwanta, 2018). A new historical discourse of colonialism was produced by the New Order, which did not see the phenomenon as an unjust act but instead as an introduction of modern

development. The indigenous inhabitants were placed as the object of colonizer's policies, and the treatment they endured was an unintended outcome.

Hieronimus Purwanta (2018) unveiled the change of colonial discourse in his research. In the 1994 history textbooks, the Dutch colonial policies in education only took space as much as one paragraph. He also found out that even in a history book that carries the 2013 curriculum, Dutch colonialism was mentioned as a meant to spread the commercialization system. There is also a misleading logical flow that *Indische Vereeniging* and their role in the Indonesian national movement was because the association was largely contributed by Western culture and education. These students of the association then were told to compare the education system in both their land and the Dutch kingdom before they decided to adopt the Western education system. The history books reduce the actual colonialism; in another way, invalidate the bloodshed of the indigenous people who were killed and suffered from historical trauma. Moreover, the Dutch colonialism was not seen as the gate of grievance, but instead, the entrance to advanced technology and invention.

The colonial history and massacre are supposed to be taught as those were the first extensive record of the murderous act in present-day Indonesia (Raben, 2012). There is an endless list of excessive violence and colonial atrocities, and no attempt from Dutch to calculate the loss of the indigenous people during their reign. Lack of adequate data and vague interpretation of killings made it impossible to count the number of dead civilians. Several purges were done in several islands. The killings of indigenous Bandanese in Banda in 1621, the purge of Chinese in the greater Batavia area by 1740, and many more until 1945 independence. Even after Indonesian independence, Dutch managed to murder under the name of decolonization circa 1946-1949.

Another implication of the usage of this kind of history textbooks produces a generation of Indonesians that are clueless about Indonesian identity, as the history books do not precisely and thoroughly display Indonesians before them (Purwanta, 2018). It is easy for them to suffer from xenocentrism, a condition that perceives their indigenous culture to be lagged and more prone to treasure foreign elements to be their ideal instead (Wallach, 2002). The colonial discourse in Indonesian history textbooks will reveal a lot about the Eurocentric historiography instead of the history from below.

With the absence of the 1965-66 purge and the limited information of colonialism, the young Indonesian generation who were born and raised during the regime would

have no idea about the trauma that involved their previous generations. As the silence was constructed with a set of the military army, it was impossible to transmit such knowledge from one generation to another. It is necessary to acknowledge and comprehend the wound before healing it. There is a generation of unspoken trauma in Indonesia and remains unrevealed (Wieringa, 2014). The implicit human rights violation during colonialism and the New Order regime would create approval of violence, to the point that the children who were raised in that community would find it is natural for the government to display violent behavior. These years, Indonesian students, mostly those who are studying in Europe, discovered the events of 1965-66 from several discussions and seminars, which eventually led them to believe they had been fed by the government's propaganda their whole life.

The Indonesian students in Europe, according to Wieringa (2014), were angry and shocked to discover the painful chunk in national history. They then established a study group to research the 1965-66 purge. The other young Indonesians might not be enjoying the same thing, as they were fed by New Order propaganda. With the strictly revised and monitored historiography, collective memories of the victims are needed to understand the continuous impact of colonialism and the heavy violence during 1965-66 among Indonesians.

Collective memories, in this case, are inseparable from the postmemory generation, for the memories of the victims who were oppressed by the regime are passed to their second and third generations who do not in any way share the same experience. The first generations of the victims experienced first-hand violence. The images, memories, experiences, even exilic trajectories then passed as legacies to keep to their next generation, which is the postmemory generation. Collective memories could not stand alone without the existence of the next generation. Both collective memories and the postmemory generation could challenge the nationally-acknowledged historical narrative of the 1965-66 massacre and even colonial history.

The case of Brenda and her father would perfectly illustrate how collective memories could not stand alone. As someone who witnessed and survived the 1965-66 massacre, Ari passed on cultural and historical information to his children, among them is Brenda. Brenda, who finally went to Indonesia for a scholarship, navigated her journey and experience thanks to Ari's intangible legacies, such as his experience, his language, and his memory. A similar case is also observed between Alya and her mother Sri with the

use of the Indonesian language. Alternatively, Sosro with his photographs, ready to be delivered to his friends' family members and Yudhistira with his encouragement towards the current Indonesian students to vote.

Photographs, as media, could transform intangible memories to be tangible ones. Looking at the case of Ari with his forgetfulness of his parents, photographs indeed could help support memories of particular persons, sites, and time. Photographs also provide spaces for someone to have inquiries about the future and the duties in the time to come. While the technology back then was limited, particularly in Indonesia, it is easy to repro the pictures taken from disposable cameras. The circulation of these photographs is unlimited these days with the help of technology. People could 'remember' easily with the help of modern tools. There are many ways the postmemory generation could remember the trauma of their ancestors with advanced technology to transmit audio-video and internet distribution.

The role of postmemory generations shall not stop on memorizing. They need to transmit the message and visual archives (if available) to their next generation. Both collective memories and postmemory generations could pave a new understanding of the 1965-66 massacre by using an alternative approach. Even though there are some art products like songs, movies, and romance about the massacre, the excessive and intense anti-communist movement in Indonesia would pressure this young generation to believe the official history. Intergenerational trauma is inevitable (Coyle, 2004) as at least two previous generations of today's young Indonesians suffered from traumatic past and there was (and still is) no way for them to transmit such experience. If these older generations succeeded in passing on the experiences and the memories, the rampant propaganda of the regime would likely invalidate their memories.

The killings undoubtedly impacted on an intergenerational, or even, a multigenerational trauma. The trauma is well-nurtured ever since the regime was supporting the interests of Western countries (Farid, 2005) which then changed the Indonesian historiography. The trauma is needed by the regime to silence the people who have the potential to challenge the capitalist nature in Indonesia. The trauma is not only about the killings, but it is also about the piles of dead bodies, the butchered human bodies found in the river and fish, the rape, the torture, and the detainment. It is about the screening and spying as performed by the Indonesian Embassy in the Eastern Bloc. It is also about witnessing religious leaders encouraged to kill people. This trauma is what

bonds the silence among the civilians. The trauma of the 1965-66 massacre also serves as a warning and a reminder for the civilians about the price they have to pay for refusing the New Order regime.

The collective memories of Sosro, Sri, Ari, and Yudhistira contain helpful information for Indonesians, especially Indonesian students who study in Europe. From the long duration of interviews, a proper interpretation using Halbwachs' interpretation of time (1992) would be sufficient to understand the messages they are trying to convey. Their perspective and memory of Indonesia largely depend on the actual past, which would be useful to navigate the missing links of the past and the present time. The New Order regime did not automatically stop the moment Soeharto resigned from the presidency. His children, colleagues, and military army are still actively promoting his values in Indonesia. The case of Adi was one of the examples of returning to Indonesia and declared as unclean; preventing him from socializing and applying for jobs in government or related institutions.

The collective memories of these Indonesian exiles are hoped to be a part of the remembrance of the 1965-66 massacre as they contain missing information and details about Indonesian development in general. Some of those missing details are the colonial legacy of centralized government, the failure of performing de-Javanization, the growing of politicized religion, and the abandonment of history. There is also a brain drain phenomenon after the massacre. A family of four engineers and a doctor was in their diaspora and could not return for political reasons. When one of them, Adi, did, it was inciting problems. The same with Sosro and Yudhistira, who excel in their studies and work. All Indonesian students in the Eastern Bloc had to excel in their studies due to the agreement with Soekarno. They also had to do it because that was the ultimate reason to land for jobs in the diaspora. For Sosro, he had to work even before he graduated as there was no financial support sent to him, probably because the 1965 coup also disengaged the cooperation between Indonesia and Czechoslovakia.

The statelessness, the family reunion, and the stigmatization are among the things they have to endure due to the 1965-66 purge. The stigmatization remains strong as proven by the deportation of Tom Iljas, an Indonesian exile with Swedish citizenship. Their collective memories could be passed to people who were not present during certain tragic events to witness them. The collective memory, with the help of the postmemory generations, could help re-narrate Indonesian history. Postmemory generation, separated

by time and space from their ancestors, suffer the way their elders did, but differently. They 'remember' it with the support of pictures, stories, and behaviors.

The statelessness of Ari, Sri, and Sosro created a massive challenge for their identity-making as they live in liminality. It was hard for them to realize that their identities were stolen as a consequence of the 1965-66 massacre. They also have to endure stigma as an added burden; people who run and refuge, people who are "leftists", and the betrayers of the nation. As there is no legal step yet for truth and reconciliation, there is likely a small chance for them to have their stigma restored before they die. The statelessness is also the primary motivation for all the exiles I interviewed to have a long-distance nationalism, even though they are no longer Indonesians by citizenship (except for Yudhistira). After 54 years, with the slim chance of reconciliation process and the aging condition of the survivors, cultural attempts such as collective memories are essential to approaching this issue.

The existence of both collective memory and the postmemory generation could combat the historical amnesia, as Indonesians are prone to it. Since there is limited available information about the trauma their previous generations had to endure while the New Order power remains, historical amnesia is expected to exist in the country. The last two generations of Indonesians grew up without having an adequate understanding of their history. Even though the 1965-66 massacre could be found in pop culture in Indonesia, the resistance of the issue is still ongoing. The gathering of 1965-66 mostly aging survivors, were dissolved and were forcibly evicted in Bukittinggi, West Sumatera, 2015 (Burhanudin, 2016). In Surakarta, Central Java, the same suppression was done for a seminar with healthcare for the 1965-66 survivors as the theme. These two generations notably have no idea about the massively corrupted and manipulated history and heavily rely on the grand narrative of the New Order regime. As getting information and knowledge about Indonesia's past time in Indonesia is proven to be difficult, historical amnesia could alternatively be ended by getting information abroad. However, this solution is not feasible and only works for particular social groups (educated and financially able to support themselves).

With the persistence growth of historical amnesia in Indonesia and the aging of the 1965-66 survivors, the postmemory generation and the memories they hold still need to come in secret. As long as the military is still in power, the young Indonesian generation will remain religiously abiding and possess almost zero critical thinking. The postmemory

generations could release the archives of the collective memories of the 1965-66 survivors only with the condition that the nation is ready enough to confront their amnesia and work on the truth and reconciliation process to restore the national history. While the act of remembering and forgetting is undoubtedly political, forgetting is inevitable due to natural traits, such as aging. The case of Prasetya reminds us that we need to perform preventive actions to eternalize the memory of the survivors or the victims before it is too late. It could be the memory loss, or it could also be the death. As memory is related to the physical body, the moment someone died, that moment is a loss of memories they possess.

Conclusion

The postcolonial nuance is inseparable from the 1965-66 massacre in Indonesia. Between the Dutch colonial period and the New Order regime, there was a period of the Old Order; a regime that was firmly against colonialism and its aspects. The New Order regime was restoring the archipelago to have a good relationship with the Western countries, something that was opposed by the previous regime. The postcolonial nuance is also vital to analyze the issue as the victims and also the survivors of the massacre endured the trauma of colonialism.

There is also damnation of memories for the victims and the survivors of colonialism and the New Order regime. The New Order historiography assure Indonesians that colonialism was meant for bringing a better future and that the Soeharto was the savior of the country for exterminating the “leftists” and the disbelievers. At least two generations of Indonesians have no access to the alternate history where they could critically think and imagine about what happened during those periods. These two generations and many more in the future will continuously hate the victims and the survivors of the purge, as shown by many incidents in Indonesia recently.

The 1965-66 Indonesian exiles in Central and East Europe, particularly in the Czech Republic and Hungary, hold a collective memory of statelessness, desperation, and longing of their homeland. The repressive and evil side of the Indonesian government was extended to the Indonesian Embassies in the Eastern Bloc. The Indonesian Embassies did the screening, investigation, and spying to control the “leftist” movement among the

student population. The cleanliness, as a concept, is used to socially control the mobilization of the “leftists”, be them in or outside of Indonesia.

These exiles memorize Indonesia as a country with a strong notion of anti-colonial sentiment and are disappointed with the current position of anti-communism and the mobilization of religion. The collective memories of the 1965-66 exiles, or the survivors in general, need the existence of postmemory generation, who will make the memories to be everlasting. The collective memories of the survivors of the 1965-66 massacre would challenge the grand historiography of the New Order regime, and mainly to confront the historical amnesia that Indonesia is suffering from currently.

With the aggressive and powerful state of military army post-New Order regime, it is unlikely to release the collective memories or to show the survivors of the massacre to the public. The collective memories of the survivors would help the postmemory generation to navigate better in a country with manipulated and corrupted history.

This research is hoped to enrich the knowledge of the young generations of Indonesia about the statelessness of Indonesian students abroad. There are several possibilities to carry research with a similar theme in the future, like the second generation of Indonesian exiles in the ex-Eastern Bloc, the long-standing sentiment against the military army among the Indonesian exiles, or the political notion of the PPI from past until the present time. It is also going to be beneficial to conduct this study using critical ethnographic methodology as more information could be gained with this method. Studies of Indonesian students turned exiles are unusual and uncommon as their trajectories represent nothing close to migration nor asylum-seeking. Hence, a different approach is needed to analyze the issue.

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Kata Szabo

Everywhere, but nowhere | The social mobility of Calabrian Millennials

The aim of the current research is to look at the Millennials' perception of the effects of their mobility after several years living outside of Calabria. What kind of gap has been created in Calabria due to their migration, what have they brought with themselves when they left? Are they planning to stay far or have they found what they were looking for and what they were told they will find in the new environment? If they decide to return, will they find what they have left behind? Can they be re-integrated into Calabrian culture? In order to better understand the effects of globalization and mobility on the lives of these individuals and thus on Calabria itself, we propose to look at the narratives of this generation to see why they have left Calabria, and if they wish or try to come back to their roots.

In order to follow and contribute to the previous works on the 'Mezzogiorno' (the South of Italy) a fieldwork of five months has been conducted with the central base in a village called Platania and an Erasmus traineeship at a primary school in Lamezia Terme, which is one of the largest cities, and infrastructural centers of Calabria. Lamezia is where most Calabrian banks, companies are located, the international airport, and one of the main railway stations can be found here. For this reason, it is considered a significant location in Calabria and a provider of a workplace for the nearby villages. The participation and observation in the local activities, festivities, conversations, interviews helped the research analyze and understand how people construct their identity, what it means to them to be Calabrian, how they describe the present-day situation of Calabria and Italy and if there are any attempts to induce change or what the future of Calabria is from their perspective. With the help of terminologies used by the locals the aim is to describe their traditions and the overall culture—which includes among other things the everyday life, habits, consumption patterns, traditions, religion, language use, political and economic systems.

The following case study aims to represent how the Calabrian identity and hence drawing parallels between their bond to this territory and how ethnicity and nationalism are formulated in a society. By doing so, we would like to introduce the link and the possible obstacles the youth is facing when they try to re-enter the Calabrian scene.

Ethnicity and nationalism

As the scope of anthropological research was growing, the way of looking at peoples changed through time as well. Around the '60s and '70s, with the beginning of globalization, innovations in technology, industrial and agricultural development, human right movements it was inevitable to find an approach to people and groups in a way that does not convey the previously accepted prejudicial, 'racist' understanding. Anthropologists were trying to define ethnicity in order to better understand how societies work, how cultures are built up and what their role is (Barth, 1969; Geertz, 1973; Jenkins, 1994). As later it will be presented by a few examples, the definition seems very ambiguous and difficult to grasp. Nonetheless, nowadays, with the speed of information spread, the flexibility and ease of reaching places, the technological advancement, social media, relocation, migration – just to mention a few – make it even more complicated to define what one's ethnicity really is or what it means to belong to an ethnic group. In the light of globalization “[t]he embrace of cultural difference became the new moral imperative” (Munasinghe, 2018, p. 8). By doing so we aim to create an understanding of how people construct their ethnic identity in order to better understand the problems, contradictions, and struggles of societies.

What is ethnicity?

The earlier definitions of ethnicity were saying that “ethnicity has something to do with the classification of people and group relationships” (Eriksen, 2010, p. 5) and how a set of people believe to belong together, share a common origin or descent and this way form a group together that is culturally 'different' from the 'other' groups. The idea of belonging to something constructed and shared by the members and contrasted to other groups' characteristics or values make the ethnic identity stronger. Ethnicity has a very important role in society and culture as it shapes people's world-view, morals, ethics, aims,

behaviors, and they provide a guidance to the group of people who belong to that ethnicity. However, as also in the case of nationalism, ethnicity is not existent 'naturally' in the world—people did not have ethnicity at the primordial times; it is a 'label' that we use to define groups and create our own identity. Such differentiation, however, could not exist without other groups' labels and without making a clear separation from those who are perceived to be 'different' and 'not us'. The best way to understand what one's own ethnicity is, is by "explor[ing] the ways in which ethnic relations are being defined and perceived by people; how they talk and think about their own group and its salient characteristics as well as those of other groups, and how particular world-views are being maintained, contested and transformed" (Eriksen, 2010, p. 2).

In addition, the existence of a group is strengthened and defined by ethnicity which can be viewed as "an aspect of the relationship between groups and that it was caused by threats, real or imaginary, to an existing 'ecological pattern' of mutual adjustment. In other words, the social mobility—downwards or upwards—of any ethnic group would lead to tension in relation to the other groups" (Eriksen, 2001, p. 25). It may serve a 'strategic' role rather than as a definition for one's cultural belonging. As we look at 'ethnic' labels throughout history they usually serve as a 'header' for various cultural traits of a group - traditions, folklore, religion, clothing, music etc, and this way creating an image, stereotype and bias of a group as "all invented traditions, so far as possible, use history as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion" (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1983, p. 12). In other cases, such labels might also serve as a tool to create conflict between two ethnic groups.

When the Calabrian 'label' gets attached to a person – which happens by birth as certain elements of identity are ascribed to us based on where we are born – they 'automatically' will belong to a certain group which will define them in certain ways for the rest of their lives. For this reason, when the young leave Calabria they will always be 'Calabrians' even if they try to refuse it – by the wider society they will always be identified as Calabrians because the birth location serves as one of the primary indicators of one's identity in the social context. As a result, they will always be facing their own value systems and characteristics and even more so when they are in a different environment than their own. When returning to Calabria, they might be able to look at this 'Calabrian-ness' through a different lens as a result of their experience from outside, but they would

not be able to objectively question its validity as certain elements are embedded in them for life. This will be further explained when looking at nationalism.

Once ethnicity is defined, people are 'told' which group they belong to and in what ways they are different (or as some think 'better') than the other groups, a sense of community, ethnocentrism is created and this is when 'nationalism' can be constructed and instated as well.

What is 'nation' and 'nationalism'?

An everyday usage for the term 'nation' is usually as a synonym for 'country or state' but what is really a nation and what does nationalism stand for? Nationalism is considered to be a political construct to group people who belong to the same ethnicity and share language, religion, culture, land (Birch, 1989; Eriksen, 2010). When creating a nation, again a distinction from other nations is set up and people of that nation are empowered with a stronger sense of belonging to something, like a fellowship, something that can be considered as a 'family'. Even if they do not actually know the whole extent of their nation, just one segment of it, the nation is, as Anderson (1983) termed, "an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" which is "imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (p. 49) – and this way they would protect, praise, fight and die for their 'nation' that has been created around them. Furthermore, as Birch (1989) explains: "A nation is best defined as a society which either governs itself today, or has done so in the past, or has a credible claim to do so in the not-too-distant future" (p. 6) creating a 'tradition', a history. Creating a 'nation' and the 'nationalism' attached to it is a thorough, planned, and strategic action which, again according to Birch (1989), it has certain stages by which not only a country and its political, economic system is built but also the knowledge, attitude of people part of that nation. They will become 'trained' in what to believe in, how to act, how to fight for what they are. Birch (1989) explained the process of nation creation and we will demonstrate these stages and later analyze them from the Calabrian perspective to better understand how it works in real life.

Stage One

The first stage in order to create a 'nation' is "the creation of symbols of national identity, such as a head of state, a flag and a national anthem" (p. 9) this way providing certain elements the members can relate to, call it their own and which can also serve as further distinction from the 'others'.

Stage Two

Secondly, "the establishment of national political institutions which bring all citizens under the same laws and are also seen to be representative of the various sections of society" (p. 41) will give the 'nation' a sort of 'guidebook' that will describe all 'proper' behavior and will serve as a summary of what the 'nation' means to its people.

Stage Three

Thirdly, the nation would set up "an educational system which gives children a sense of national identity, teaches them about their common history, and (directly or indirectly) inculcates patriotism" (p. 9) and this way creating their cultural heritage and knowledge that they will carry within them and which can be so deeply embedded in one's identity that it will always be reflected in their actions and which will again further deepen their distinction from 'others'.

Stage Four

This final stage, "the development of national pride" (p. 10) is the one that is the ultimate separation from anything else that is not one's own nation. This is the creation of the nationalist ideology that puts one's own nation in the center and creates a boundary around its people. However, as Anderson (1983) describes, each nation is "limited because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations; No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind" (p. 50) – because they are all part of one big group, that is humanity, but within this due to (mainly) political reasons, groups i.e. nations are created for better administration and control of people and their activities.

It is important to reiterate that humanity does not have either ethnicity nor nations to begin with, these are all socially constructed categories that define the characteristics, boundaries of a group of people. This group can be small or very large and the groups can also have subgroups which usually may be a source of tension and conflict within a society. However, nationalism as an ideology, does not wish to create tension or aggression towards other nations, it is a sort of, as Eriksen (2010) called it, "cultural

homogenisation” (p. 125) (even if many cultural traits are not unique to that nation only and can be found in other nations’ culture as well). “Nationalism stresses solidarity between the poor and the rich, between the property-less and the capitalists. According to nationalist ideology, the sole principle of political exclusion and inclusion follows the boundaries of the nation—that category of people defined as members of the same culture” (Eriksen, 2010, p. 123) – but it does not engage with any particular political view or direction, it does not claim that other nations are inferior or superior, it is only a distinction from other nations. Nonetheless, once the term ‘nationalism’ is created many misinterpretations and misuses occur as well and political parties often implement it in their propaganda and use it as a weapon against other nations. In these cases, nationalism can be interpreted and understood in different ways but it is essential to highlight that the original meaning of the term does not carry any hostile or offensive note within itself.

The Calabrian case

First of all, as we have seen earlier, when establishing a nation and creating the ideology of nationalism, it is important also to create a homogeneous identity and system that is usually controlled by the government (or the emperor or other leadership). In this sense the government is the decision maker and it is within its power to decide what parts to support, develop or finance and also to maintain integrity throughout the country as the “national integration is partly a by-product of other social and economic developments, partly the result of deliberate government policies” (Birch, 1989, p. 42). As the study of Eckhaus (1961) shows, “the South’s prospects for development were roughly equivalent to those of the North at the time of unification” (p. 286) but due to various factors the Southern development did not occur or at least not as rapidly and significantly as the Northern one. What caused this difference in development and what are the major factors that played the role of hindrance in the South?

According to Eckhaus (1961), one of the reasons for the lack of growth in the South can be found in the industrial revolution during which the manual labor has been replaced by machines, automated equipment which also enabled mass production rather than handcrafted, lower quantity (but perhaps higher quality) products, and by the improvement and more prominent role of agriculture in the North. While in the Southern parts the small businesses, family owned manufactures were still widespread, in the

North the larger factories, industrial areas took over while increasing the trading possibilities and also the general income for the people working there. This new industrial wave also provided more workplaces and in order to become more successful the government invested more in the development of these parts. As a result it encouraged people to settle down in the North as it seemed more beneficial and the prospects for a better standard of living appealed to many people. By the governmental contributions and “[b]y developing national institutions and exploiting tactics of political socialization, the attempt is made to replace local and sectional loyalties by an overriding sense of national loyalty” (Birch, 1989, p. 37) and urge people to relocate and start a new life somewhere where it is more ‘communally approved’, where the friends, family members go to. Birch (1989) described this phenomena as the following: “The unplanned component of integration is commonly called social mobilization. It is basically the process by which industrialization induces workers to leave their native villages so as to seek work in the new industrial areas, thus eroding the social communities of rural areas and mobilizing the workers for absorption into the larger national society” (p. 36). By now, as it could be seen in the Calabrian community, due to globalization and its features the Millennials were even more greatly influenced to move away from home continuing the process that has started after the unification. Even though the mobility is the same, the effects might be different nowadays as the youth’s settlement does not seem to provide the ‘reality’ that has been depicted to them. Through the process of ‘nation-creation’, however, instead of a national integrity, a division is created and the social balance is disturbed as the picture of the underdeveloped South is continuously strengthened and seen as a location where there is no future for the young. The idea has been implemented that success and satisfaction equals to developed industry, travelling, busy metropolitan life. Meanwhile, the Calabrian image remained depicted as a romanticized rural area where only handcraft manufactures, slow-paced lifestyle are possible.

As we could see through the steps of nation-creation if we use this model to depict how the Calabrian community is created, we can use the examples from the case study to construct the same model in which the nation will equal to the Calabrian region. By doing so, we can interpret the isolation of the area and the difficulty for the youth to commit to it based on the identity that has been created through the community-creation process.

Stage One

The first stage as with the nation is the “the creation of symbols of national identity, such as a head of state, a flag and a national anthem” (Birch, 1989, p. 9). In the case of Calabria, it can be viewed as the ‘traditional products’, songs, tales that commemorate their Calabrian history and that enhance their difference compared to other regions.

Stage Two

Secondly, “the establishment of national political institutions which bring all citizens under the same laws and are also seen to be representative of the various sections of society” (p. 41) can be viewed as the socially inherent rules of behaviour and customs - for example, the act of “fare una bella figura” (Castellanos, 2010, p. 62). It can be viewed as a socially agreed proper behavior as well as the previously mentioned roles of the ‘social person’. If a member of the community does not follow these ‘laws’, sanctions and punishment will be inflicted upon them (Eriksen, 2015).

Stage Three

Thirdly, the community sets up “an educational system which gives children a sense of national identity, teaches them about their common history, and (directly or indirectly) inculcates patriotism” (Birch, 1989, p. 9). As we could see through the examples of the ‘Teatrop’ or the seminar of the professor, they are enhancing the education of children about how to adhere to the Calabrian values, what history they have to back up their identity and thus create a patriotic ideology. By doing so, they will become more aware of their differences from others, and grow up carrying values of hospitality, being sly and cunning, as well as the idea of the ‘vagabondo’ – which they describe as someone who is lazy and careless about work and the community. Even though these latter characteristics can be perceived as negative, they generally highlight these as being Calabrian. For this reason, if the children grow up in this mentality, they will attach to these attributes and it might lead to their notion that in Calabria they cannot achieve anything.

Stage Four

This final stage, “the development of national pride” (Birch, 1989, p. 10) is related to all the above mentioned – the idea that the Calabrian food is the ‘best’ in Italy or that they are more socially open than those of the North all add to the Calabrian identity. It is important to note that those who have left become influenced by other cultural features and we are not implying that this identity is absolute. The model serves only as an interpretation of how several cultural elements of the Calabrian culture could contribute to the struggles

of the youth who have left this area. Owing to the fact that they express their dissatisfaction outside and their wish to move back to the region, it is important to look at how they view their culture and what obstacles they see that stops them from actually moving here.

The above description shows that they have been raised in an environment that strongly expresses a Calabrian identity that is separated from the other parts of Italy. They feel excluded and isolated and they view Calabria as underdeveloped and empty because of the ideology of what a prosperous community should look like. The effects of the division of the South and the North along with the images depicted by globalization make the Calabrian region look behind the times. As mentioned earlier, it became romanticized and viewed as a source of idyllic pastoral life where one has to become removed from the 'world' and give up 'reality'. In the narratives of these individuals as well as the locals, they often describe Calabria as another reality, a place that stands on its own far from everything else. However, we have to keep in mind that the distance and isolation is all relative and it depends on our perception of the world which has been mostly defined by the 'Western' population. If we view Calabria from this angle, it is far from the large European capitals, it is often not accessible by one flight only and many villages do not have public transport access to them. In this light, it is indeed isolated and remote as "men make their own history, that what they can know is what they have made, and extend it to geography: as both geographical and cultural entities – to say nothing of historical entities—such locales, regions, geographical sectors as "Orient" and "Occident" are man-made" (Said, 2003, p. 5). There has been an imaginary distance set up between the 'West' and the rest of the world which is not only in terms of physical distance or geographical location but in levels of 'development' and cultural 'advancement'. If some cultures are not as the Western ones, they are often considered lower degree or less developed. Additionally, even though Calabria is within Europe and thus would be considered as the 'Occident', there seems to be a peripheral view on this area and it is often described as the 'third world' which would suggest that it belongs to the countries that are not 'Western'. As a result, it might be viewed as less developed and functional than other regions as "the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures. There is in addition the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient, themselves reiterating European superiority over Oriental backwardness, usually

overriding the possibility that a more independent, or more skeptical, thinker might have had different views on the matter” (Said, 2003, p. 7).

However, if we try to move away from this Occidental approach and rid ourselves from the preconceptions of how a successful and ‘advanced’ society or culture should look like and we remove the imaginary spaces, the Calabrian community can be just as central as anything else based on from where we look at it. The fact that there are no work places such as office work, technological or industrial companies, for example; and there is scarce human resources it does not mean that there would be no possibility to settle down and live in Calabria, it does not mean that Calabria is unsuitable for living. It has the same natural resources as any other region, it has the same potentials as any other place in Italy or Europe – if we look at its geography we could even say that it is more prosperous than some others as there is both sea and mountainous areas which enable various activities. Calabria’s current situation can be interpreted in the light of today’s accelerated lifestyle, assumed needs and necessities, career and social goals, that this region is not as developed and suitable as the North is perceived by people. It is however not possible to simply change one’s mindset and worldview and reprogram them to see Calabria as a land for their future because, as we could see through the description of ethnicity and nationalism, it has been wired into them that their goals have to be different as their culture dictates it. Nevertheless, it is the anthropologists’ task to look at such communities and study them not as something other than our own but as an element of the global society so that we can better understand how each small piece builds up a whole large picture.

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Szóke Noémi

Szerződéses jogfosztás³³

A munkaolimpia kifejezés a londoni munkaerőpiac elvárásainak nagyságrendi mértékét igyekszik kifejezni, ahol élsportolókat megszegényítő teljesítményt várnak el a dolgozóktól, mindezt rossz bánásmóddal és kiszámíthatatlan jövedelemmel párosítva. Egy olyan duális munkaerőpiacon – ahol a primer állások a hazai dolgozókkal, míg a szekunder állások a hazai marginális, és még preferáltabban a migráns dolgozókkal vannak betöltve, utóbbiak között a versenyhelyzetet mesterségesen megteremtve, a szekunder ágat tovább szegmentálva – olyan szerződéstípusokat hoztak létre, melyek meglétével a munkavállalók a jog égisze alatt tapasztalhatják meg a jogfosztottságot.

A munkaközvetítő ügynökségeknél bevett gyakorlat, hogy szándékosan csalnak az óraszámokkal. Ezeket aligha lehet „tévedésnek” vagy hibás könyvelésnek nevezni, hiszen ahhoz túlságosan gyakori és rendszeres, minden dolgozónál jelentkező probléma. Mivel a szállodák nyilvántartása korrekt, érkezéskor és távozáskor is aláíratják a jelenléti ívet az ügynökséges dolgozókkal, majd ezt elfaxolják az ügynökségnek, a csalás egyértelműen a közvetítő kontójára írható.

„Sok stressz ért minket az ügynökség miatt. Ez román ügynökség. Egyfolytában lenyúltak pénzzel. Tehát mindig-mindig. Úgyhogy egyfolytában menni kellett, követelni, fenyegető levelet kellett nekik írni, fizessék ki. Csalnak, csalnak egyfolytában. Jó, lehet, hogy röhejesen hangzik, hogy nem stimmel a fizetésem egy órával. De ha már egy évben minden hónapban nem stimmel egy órával, és ez csak én vagyok. És háromszáz alkalmazottjuk van. Akkor sok kicsi sokra megy. Engem rettenetesen bosszantott, hogy én teljesítménybérbe vagyok. Amennyi szobát takarítok, annyit fizetnek. Akkor, ha most elcsalnak egy órát, az azt jelenti, hogy két szobát tökéletesen ingyen takarítottam ki. És rendkívül bosszantott, hogyha nem fizettek ki. És emiatt, már egy idő után szerintem, ha megláttak az irodába, akkor már csak fogták a fejüket.

³³ Részlet a *Munkaolimpia. A londoni munkaerőpiac kizsákmányolási technikáinak antropológiája* című készülő doktori disszertációból.

Mi nem stimmel már megint. Komplet napokat nem fizettek ki. A holidayt nem fizették ki. Egyszer két hétig bárányhimlős voltam, 30 évesen. Jupiii! Két hétre 88 fontot kaptam. Igen. Szóval ilyen apróságok.” (33 éves nő)

Az ügynökség alapgondolata az, hogy mivel összevissza küldözgetik az embereket, ahol összevissza órákat dolgoznak, sose azt, ami eredetileg ki volt jelölve, hanem kevesebbet, vagy többet; van, hogy egy nap több helyre is kiközvetítik, egyik étterembe reggeliztetésre, másik szállodába bankettre, a kettő között járkálnia kell a városban, mert – a nagy távolságok miatt – arra nincs idő, hogy értelme lenne hazamenni. Ez a sok keresztszervezés mind a zavarodottság és figyelmetlenség irányába mutat, melyen az ügynökség könnyen talál rést a könyvelés megmászására. Egy idő után a munkavállaló megtanulja, hogy tételesen vezesse magának a ledolgozott órákat, mert azok sosem stimmelnek. Annak ellenére, hogy a különbségeket észreveszik, a harcos magatartás, mint fentebbi interjúalanyomnál, a legritkább esetben jellemző.

Heti szintű egy-két óra elcsalása esetén az alany általában fáradtan legyint, s úgy dönt, nem éri meg a harcot. Mikor szeretne harcolni, sincs meg hozzá a kommunikációs képessége, ezért inkább csöndben marad. Vagy épp fél, hogy többé nem kap munkát, így inkább meg se mer szólalni. Ha félénken, gyenge angoltudással mégis megpróbál magáért kiállni, akkor agresszívan lehenyerlik és megsemmisítik.

Ahhoz mind kommunikációban, mind kiállásban nagyon magabiztosnak kell lenni, hogy az ügynökség meghátráljon, és utólagosan átutalja a ledolgozott órákat, de ilyen fellépése jó, ha ezerből egy embernek akad. És akkor is megnehezítik a dolgát, megint egy egész napot eltölthet az irodában, várakoztatják, levegőnek nézik, minden lehetséges módon akadályozzák, hogy úgy érezze, egész egyszerűen nem éri meg az ügy a fáradtságot, és végül feladja. De rátermett alannyal a legritkább esetben találkoznak, hiszen nem véletlenül szakosodtak a kiszolgáltatott emberekre. Azok képtelenek megvédeni magukat jogfosztottság esetén.

Így aztán nem világosítják fel őket, hogy bizonyos idő után, a ledolgozott munkaórák arányában, nekik tulajdonképpen szabadság is járna. Mikor a dolgozó utólagosan tudomást szerez róla, közlik vele, azt még előző évben kellett volna kivennie, most már búcsút mondhat neki, ilyenkor négy hét szabadságpénztől (és pihenéstől) fosztva meg az illetőt. Betegség esetén hasonlóan járnak el, a “nem dolgozol, nem keresel pénzt” elve működik.

Minden lehetséges módon meglopják az alanyokat, van, hogy kevésbé látványos, kis léptékű elcsalásokkal, míg másoktól egy komplett heti munkát eltűntetnek. A lényeg az, hogy a bánásmódon túl az ügynökség által foglalkoztatott dolgozók gyakorlatilag legálisan jogfosztottak a munkaadóval közvetlenül szerződésben álló dolgozókkal való összehasonlításban. Mivel egy ilyen munka minden téren kevesebbet nyújt, ebből egyenesen következik, hogy nem választás, sokkal inkább kényszer következménye.

A legmeglepőbb, hogy már a közalkalmazotti szektorban is bevezetésre került az alkalmi munka, olyan pályára kényszerítve ezzel a tanárokat, ami abszolút méltatlan foglalkozásukhoz.

„Sikerült egy tanári ügynökségnél regisztráltatnom magam, ahonnan kaptam vizsgafelügyelő munkát, de nagyon kevés óra volt, tehát kevés volt a pénz is, ezért inkább több órát dolgoztam, mint pincér, hogy a pénzem meglegyen.

Mesélj légy szíves részletesen a munkakörödről!

Számomra az agency life olyan, mint egy modern „emberkereskedelem”. Embereket rendelnek ahhoz, hogy az étel ki legyen szállítva az asztalokra, illetve hogy a hotel dolgozóinak az életét megkönnyítsék, ha egy nagyobb rendezvényt tartanak, de azontúl, hogy ezt a munkát elvégzik, semmi egyéb jogokat nem élveznek. Ebből következik, hogy a hotelben dolgozó szerződéses munkavállalónak számít az agency-sel szemben, mert az agency csak egy kiegészítő személy. A tanári agency már egy-két fokkal nekem jobbnak számított, mivel a munkákat e-mailben kaptuk, nem kellett bejárni, viszont annál gyorsabban is kellett reagálni rájuk, mert akár két perc alatt is elvitték a meghirdetett munkát. Ez nagyon frusztráló volt, mivel nem ülhetek egész nap a gép előtt arra várva, hogy hátha lesz majd valami. Továbbá ott is, ha nem kapsz iskolánál szerződést, akkor napról napra, értsd: jobban napra élsz, mint a pincéres agency-nél. Például kaptam egy e-mailt, hogy menjek el egy címre és ott leszek majd exam invigilator. Hogy ez mit jelent, azt ott tudtam meg. Azt jelentette, hogy segítettünk a tanároknak fel set up-olni a termet, ahova bejöttek a gyerekek, és vizsgáztak, mi pedig a vizsga tisztaságára ügyeltünk. Ez egy három, maximum négy órás munka volt. Az órabérem 8,5 font volt. A pincérkedéssel pedig 6,31.” (29 éves nő)

Fenti interjúalanyom az egyetlen a harmincből (sőt, az összes magyarból, akivel kint találkoztam), aki anyanyelvi szinten beszéli az angolt. Benne az akarat is megvolt, hogy életén javítson, fáradhatatlanul jelentkezett változatosabbnál változatosabb állásokra, egész kálváriát járt be interjúk ügyében – eredménytelenül. Mikor erre a tanárokat közvetítő ügynökségre rátalált, azt hitte, élete végre sínre kerül. Ez ugyan még mindig nem szerződéses munka, de mégiscsak magasabb szintű állás. A rendszer is intelligensebb, hiszen nem várják el a dolgozóktól, hogy személyesen jelenjenek meg az ügynökségnél. Csakhogy kiderült, az online munkaelosztás tud épp oly frusztráló lenni, hiszen egy állás kipoztolása után a jelentkezők percekben belül elkapkodják azt. Vagyis megint készenléti állapotot várnak az alanyoktól, azzal kiegészülve, hogy ilyen típusú munkából jóval kevesebb óraszámot lehet elérni, vagyis a jobb órabér ellenére kevesebb jövedelmet termelni. Ami rögtön vissza is kényszeríti a dolgozót a kezdeti, alacsony szintű felszolgáloi pozícióba.

Szerződéstípusok

Vegyük sorba, milyen szerződések mentén alkalmazzák – ezzel egyben hierarchiába sorolva – a munkavállalókat, feltárva ezzel a szekunder munkaerőpiac további négy szegmensét.

1. Az ügynökséggel kötött szerződés gyakorlatilag semmiféle tényleges munkavégzésre nem kötelezi egyik felet sem. A jelentkező csupán regisztrál, az ügynökség pedig kiközvetítheti munkára vagy sem; a jelentkező pedig ugyanúgy: elfogadhatja a neki felajánlott alkalmi munkát vagy nem. Az elvbeli egyensúly azért borul fel, mivel a jelentkező dolgozni szeretne, még hozzá olyan óraszámokban, ami fedezi egyrészt megélhetését, másrészt – ideális esetben – megtakarítani is tud mellette, a gazdasági migráció eredeti célja szerint. Ezzel a hatalmi mérleg teljes egészében az ügynökség oldalára billen.

2. „Bekerülni a rotába” ugyan nem egy szerződés típus, de a ranglétra következő lépcsőfoka. Némileg csökkenti az ügynökség hatalmi befolyását – éppen ezért nem is szeretik –, ha a munkaadók maguk figyelnek egyik-másik kiközvetített dolgozóra, felismerik, hogy az átlagnál jobban dolgoznak (értsd: még jobban terhelhetőek), s elkezdik beleírni őket a munkabeosztásukba, akár csak a saját dolgozóikat. Ezzel persze a jogi viszony köztük nem változik, tehát a dolgozó továbbra is az ügynökséggel áll

szerződésben, fizetését tőle fogja kapni, mégis kiiktatódik az az elem, hogy munkaóráinak száma a közvetítő kénye-kedvétől függjön. Amennyiben a munkaadó heti megrendelésénél feltünteti az ügynökségnek, hogy X, Y, Z-t kéri ezeken a napokon ettől eddig, akkor ők kénytelenek eszerint cselekedni, és azt az embert erre a munkára kiküldeni. Azt persze ne gondoljuk, hogy az ügynökség nem biztosította be magát arra az esetre, ha ezt a bizonyos dolgozót el akarnák orozni tőle.

„Az agency-vel tudtommal van egy olyan szerződésük, ami kimondja, hogy az agency dolgozókat nem vehetik át. Vagy nagyon ritka, tudtommal, kettő emberről tudok, esetleg három, akit átvett a hotel, de őket azért, mert borzasztó jó melósok voltak, tehát nagyon jó munkaerő volt, és őértük harcoltak, de az összes többit, azt így dolgoztatják.” (22 éves nő)

Az ügynökségek természetesen azt szeretnék, ha a dolgozók nekik termelnék a jövedelmet, ily módon kifejezetten érdekeik ellen való, hogy az alanyokat a munkaadók magukhoz átszerződtesék. Úgy gondolják, hogy a szállodák, amennyiben állandó embereket akarnak, toborozzák azokat a saját humán erőforrás osztályukon keresztül, s ne az ő alkalmazottaikat vegyék el, akiknek regisztrációjába/kiközvetítésébe már ők fektettek energiát. Ennek megakadályozására betonbiztos szerződési záradékot íratnak alá a munkaadóval, melynek értelmében nem alkalmazhatják saját állományukban az általuk kiközvetített munkavállalókat, e szabály megszegése esetén pedig több ezer fontos bírsággal sújthatók. Ez természetesen nem érné meg egyetlen cégnek sem, főleg nem egy olyan piacon, ahol egy meghirdetett állásra százával sorakoznak a jelentkezők.

Az a vágyálom tehát, ami az ügynökséges dolgozóknak él, hogy majd valamelyik hotel talán átveszi őket, leginkább hiú ábránd, s gátolja őket abban, hogy ténylegesen elinduljanak és tegyenek valamit a sorsukért (vagyis jelentkezzenek állásokra). Csak mert ez olyan kézenfekvő és egyszerű megoldás lenne, itt már ismerik őket és tudják róluk, angolul ugyan beszélni nem tudnak, viszont keményen dolgozni igen, s akkor nem kellene önéletrajzokat írni, tesztek kitölteni, meg interjúkra járni, hanem minden egy csapásra megoldódna.

Ebbéli vágyukat egyébként táplálja, hogy millióból egy embernek ez tényleg sikerül; mint a rabszolga kereskedelemben, a munkaadó hajlandó tárgyalásokat folytatni és fejpénzt fizetni egy kiváló teherképességgel bíró alkalmazottért. Az ily módon

„megvásárolt” dolgozók egyébként rendkívül büszkék státusukra, már-már legendák keringenek róluk; személyiségük kiteljesedik, büszkeségtől dagadó szívük pedig éveikig képes táplálkozni abból a pozitív élményből, hogy ők annyira értékesek, a szálloda hajlandó volt értük fizetni – és alkalmazni őket egy nulla órás szerződéssel. Amivel meg is érkezünk az atipikus szerződések másik fajtájához.

3. Mikor először találkoztam ezzel a fogalommal, az egy munkaadótól jövő telefonhívás alkalmával volt, akik a kipoztolt önéletrajzom alapján kerestek meg. A hívás egy szállodától jött, s a munkaadó közölte, hogy nulla órás szerződést tudnak nekem felajánlani, mire megkérdeztem, az mit is jelent valójában. „Mi hívunk, te jössz” hangzott a száraz, velősen megfogalmazott válasz. Kétszeresen is elképedtem: egyrésztől ennyire nyíltan és gátlástalanul le merik festeni a rendszer működését, másrésztől létezik ez a jogilag elfogadott formula, melyben a munkaadók úgy alkalmaznak embereket, hogy semmiféle létbiztonságot, még minimálisat sem ígérnek, ellenben a dolgozóktól elvárják, hogy az éppen aktuálisan felmerülő munkára ugorjanak.

“Nullaórás contract-tal, ki az, aki elvállalná a nullaórás contract-ot, én sem vállalnék el. Mert soha nem tudhatod. Lehet, hogy ezen a héten van munkád, a következőn semmi, lehet, hogy az egyik héten meghalsz, mert 90 órát kapsz hirtelen, a másik héten semmi, ez így, ez így nem...”

Ez ugyanúgy hangzik, mint az agency munka.

Ugyanúgy hangzik, de a contract-os helyedre állandóan be kell járnod, tehát ott nincsen olyan, hogy azt mondd, hogy bocs, ma nem érek rá. Hanem oda be kell, hogy menjél aznap, amikor behívnak. Az agency-nek pedig mondhatod azt, hogy ma nem érek rá” (22 éves nő)

„Nullaórás szerződésnél nincsen garantálva az, hogy én egy héten hány órát dolgozhatok. Ők azt akarják, hogy ha adnak 10 órát, akkor 10 órát, ha 40 órát, akkor 40 órát. Ez a probléma ezzel. Nincs meg az a garantált óraszám, ami a megélhetéshez kell. Hanem annyit adnak, amennyit ők akarnak.” (36 éves férfi)

Ezzel a munkaadóknak is – akárcsak az ügynökségeknek – biztosítva van az a rendszer, hogy kényük-kedvük szerint történjen a munkaelosztás, még ha közvetlenül velük szerződik is a munkavállaló. Egyoldalú kötelezettségvállalásra szerződtetik a dolgozót,

melyben a maguk részéről nem vállalnak semmit. A munkavállaló annyiban jár jobban egy közvetítőhöz képest, hogy nem kell minden nap másik munkahelyre járnia, illetve a szabadságot/ledolgozott óraszámokat nem tudják elcsalni tőle. Habár a jogai némileg erősödnek, biztos bevételre továbbra sem számíthat.

„A baj ott kezdődött, hogy főszakács csere történt, és jött egy indiai ürge, aki megreformált mindent és elkezdett adni ilyen heti 24 órát, meg ilyen hasonlót, ami nem bizonyult elégnek a kezdetben megígért 48-hoz képest, úgyhogy ez készített elég gyors váltásra.

Ennek mi értelme volt, lecsökkenteni felére a munkaidőt?

Az volt az értelme, hogy úgy gondolta, hogy jobb több ember kevesebb órával, mint kevesebb ember több órával, mert, ha egy ember kiesik, akkor baj van. Azt mondta, hogy lehet más munkát is, nem csak ezt az egyet, hát kerestünk másik munkát, csak ezt meg otthagytuk.” (29 éves férfi)

Annak ellenére, hogy a létbizonytalanság a dolgozókat mindig fluktuációra készíteti, a munkaadókat teljesen rabul ejti annak a vélt előnynek a gondolata, hogy sok embert állományban tarthatnak anélkül, hogy fizetniük kellene nekik. Ugyanabba a hibába esnek, mint a közvetítők: sok dolgozót akarnak tartani kevés munkán, semmint kevés embert sok munkán. Annak ellenére erőltetik ezt a szisztémát, hogy látják, amennyiben nincs elegendő munkájuk, a munkavállalók végül változtatásra kényszerülnek.

4. Csak a munkaadóval közvetlenül létesülő, teljes állású (heti 40 óra) szerződés képes biztosítani a munkavállalónak a normális élethez szükséges feltételeket; ez az a szint, amikor a dolgozó megnyugodhat, s mind gazdasági, mind mentális alapon egyensúlyba kerülhet.

Láthattuk a folyamatokat: a legelső szinten állandó pszichológiai hadviselés folyik a dolgozni akaró és a munkát elosztó hatalom között, melyet ráadásul a munkavállalónak kétszer is meg kell vívnia: először az ügynökségnél kell kitartását bizonyítania, míg végül kiközvetítik egy céghez; ekkor azonban még semmi nem garantálja, hogy a cég valóban ad neki munkát, vagy ha ad is, azt milyen óraszámban. A munkavállaló kiszolgáltatottságával addig manipulálnak, míg a megaláztatásokra immunissá válik, s maga is elfogadja, hogy ő egy bármikor lecserélhető „tucatember”. Belenyugszik a kiválasztási folyamatokba, s ezzel együtt a létbizonytalanságba is. Utóbbi még a kettes és hármas fokozatnak is

sajátossága, hiszen nem garantált a megfelelő mennyiségű munkaóra – míg végül valaki a négyes szinten teljes értékű dolgozóvá válik.

Ez részben el is vezet minket az elégedettség forrásához: mire a másodlagos piac mind a négy szegmensét bejárta a dolgozó, úgy érzi, olyan fejlődési utat járt be, ami megelégedettséggel tölti el, hiába, hogy továbbra is az alacsony szektornak ugyanabban az állásában dolgozik. Büszkesége hatalmas, az újonnan érkezettek pedig felnéznek rá, mint egy komoly karriert befutott, megérkezett emberre. Ez a pozíció rögtön a többi migráns fölé helyezi, s bármilyen abszurdnak tűnik is, ebben a szürreális valóságban tényleg teljesítmény, ha valaki eléri a 40 órás munkastátust, az újonnan jövőknek pedig ez a pozíció tényleg egy távoli, már-már elérhetetlennek tűnő célként lebeg a szeme előtt, így csodálatuk nem groteszk, hanem reális valóság. Mármint ebben a világban.

Miklos Szabo

She knows there's no success like failure | Critical revisitation of a first attempt of anthropological research

“If you fail at something long enough, you become a legend.”

– Willie Nelson³⁴

Reading good anthropological texts is a mostly uplifting experience, but sometimes brings about mixed feelings. Yes, mostly an awe, but also something akin to that of insignificance. A great anthropological article or book, based upon unique experiences, are captivating narratives; an embodiment of struggles, a lifetime of work, a payoff for a determination and clairvoyance rooted in such an early age, that leaves the reader with a feeling of underachievement. Especially when the narrative is tied together with such intellectual elegance that it is inescapable to feel such accomplishment is out of one's league. Or, perhaps I am just committing the basic ethnocentric error of believing that my feelings are somehow representative of others. Either way, since I am almost entirely sure that I have not yet achieved such an anthropological triumph, I decided to take a more resourceful approach and in a series of papers I will go through my researches, that for one reason or another did not work out, or did not blossom into a long standing fieldwork, and therefore–, and bring to light humiliations long forgotten? For one, these stories might be entertaining, and hopefully useful for others, without the alienating effect of previously mentioned displays of greatness. So there is hope for an educational purpose, but it is also true that anthropologists like almost nothing better than to talk about themselves, so this is as good a reason as any. Finally, it would be wise to continue along the long tradition in anthropology of critical self observation and also reconsider what we understand to be

³⁴ Nelson, Willie 2012 *Roll Me Up and Smoke Me When I Die: Musings from the Road*. Harper Collins

successful, and our outcome centred perspectives that are so deeply embedded even into critical social sciences. Bob Dylan sings in Love Minus Zero, from where I have borrowed the title of this article, “She knows there's no success like failure” ... but of course continues, “...and that failure's not success at all”. So with high hopes, and good humour let us begin the critical review of my very first attempt to do field research.

I started my cultural anthropology MA in 2010, and I was certain that anthropology is what I wish to do for the rest of my life. For one, it resonated with how I approached the world, and it seemed fun enough but also respectable enough to substitute for a “real carrier”. Little did I know that for the most part of the next ten years I will be teaching anthropology more often than actually being one. During the first semester, one of our teachers invited all the students to take part in her long running fieldwork in a small village near Budapest, in a Romungro community. To my surprise, I was the only one interested. Long story short, on a cold autumn afternoon I found myself on a muddy road, outside a nice but unfinished house surrounded by scattered building materials, that seemed more to be a natural part of the landscape after years of negligence and wet conditions. The air was nauseating from the sweet stench of cheap firewood and incinerated waste. All around me members of the family of Romungro musicians who, for a time, became the central participants of my professors fieldwork eyed me suspiciously. I must have been a strange sight for them - a suspicion that has been confirmed by later discussions - but to be fair it had more to do with me than them. I would have been an unusual sight basically everywhere outside the underground indie-rock circles: longish blonde hair, Chelsea boots, skinny trousers, and a jacket that was not just impractical but completely unfit for the season or the rainy weather, nervously smoking expensive cigarettes. Here I feel the need to explain my appearance, this will also be important in understanding how exactly I managed to strike up a relationship with these people, and also some aspects of self identification that will play a role in the deconstruction of why I was not ready to do research. Before I started to take my university education seriously (I guess some of my former professors would debate if the point existed when that actually changed), I was in a somewhat successful rock band, from which I have been fired about two years prior, and at this point, being in two unsuccessful musical projects I was still in the process of abandoning the idea that I might become a rockstar. In short, I stuck out like a sore thumb, both mentally and physically. I was only an hour drive from my home, and still felt out of my element, which is again not saying much because I felt the

same when I went to the store next to my apartment. But, underneath my nervousness, and the painful averseness that I made no effort at all to blend in, I was happy, and for a while I felt almost like a proper anthropologist.

About a week before the appointed meeting with “the field” I started my preparation. The problem was that I did not know how to do it. Gradually, a nervousness took over me, as I was not a very social person, and meeting new people never came easy to me - a strange characteristic for someone who wants to work with people - but I thought that the somewhat formulated relationship between the “subject” and the “anthropologist” might help me. This alone signals how little I understand what actual human relationships, or anthropological data gathering looks like. In absence of professional or personal experiences, I did what every graduate student would do, and turned to a basic textbook for how to do it. In my case this was Eriksens (2001), “Small places, large issues”. Of course I could have just relied on my professors, who were all accomplished anthropologists, with their fair share of research, who for the most part were very much opinionated about fieldwork, and how it should be conducted. However these stories and anecdotes, as entertaining as they were, for me offered little solace. In my understanding their research methods relied more closely on their personality traits, and what they already “brought” from their personal background, and seemed unhelpful for someone who had very little trust in his own social skills, and was, for the most part, just an average middle class intellectual. There is an ongoing discussion about privileges, which I will not in any way debate here. However, acknowledging that to be average is in a way to be privileged, still it also means an underlying deficit because if you are average, you are just that. So Eriksen (ibid:24) it was, and his genius chapter on fieldwork. As good as it is, at the time it did not help me much. Eriksen’s argument fell in line with that of my professors: ultimately it will be you doing the research, therefore your personal attitudes will be determining the discourses between you and your surroundings. You are a social parachuter with a malfunctioning ripcord, of course you can steer your fall, but whatever you do, the ground is indifferently waiting for your impact. What you can have at least some control over is the way you present yourself towards others, but you can not determine the way they will be decoding your “performance”. So, preparation starts with the basic understanding of who you are, and what your aims are regarding your research. I was in trouble. According to Erik Erikson (1967) identity is greatly determined by the environment; the discourse between the person and the greater community. Who you

think you are needs to be reflected by others. In this way it is safe to say that we are forcing identity into others while others force identity into us; without our social environment we do not exist. Also, one can not achieve self sameness without a reaffirmation from the outside world. Which makes perfectly good sense when considering humans are essentially social apes, and for the most part of their evolution their well being relied on other members of their group. And, it might be considered as an explanation why most young adults wish to be as far away from their parents as possible, and why student exchange programs, fresh starts in new cities or countries are popular life choices in western cultures. This falls in line with Eriksen's (2001:25) basic argument, that the field will assign certain roles to the researcher. Through his inquiries about the culture he will place himself in an identity formulating discourse with the community, and the outcome will be as much a result of his self representation as its interpretation by his surroundings. So it is one thing to know yourself, but it also greatly helps if you have some basic understanding of how the researcher will see you. As I already mentioned, I was already making mistakes, not as much in how I represented myself, but rather by not preparing to cope with the reactions. Most importantly, if I had some sort of understanding of myself, and my shortcomings, I did not at all understand how the people I wanted to interact with would understand me.

As I have earlier mentioned, it was the Carpathian Romani, or Romungro, community that my professor was researching at the time - and still does - but later changed her focus to a more applied anthropological approach. This particular community caught her attention because it is one of the last communities that still speak the Romungro dialect, and have a clear Romungro identity, which is remarkable considering the hundreds of years of oppression and forced assimilation they needed to withstand, and need to endure today (Fiáth-Kovai 2002). But, of course, that identity itself is in a way problematic. What it means to be Roma in Hungary is to be the familiar "Other" (Zizek, 1993:206), towards whom it is easy to identify oneself as a Hungarian. Without going into detail as it is not the aim of this article, the Romungro arrived to Hungary in the 15th Century, making them the first Romani people to do so, and in the 18th Century when a centralized effort was made by the Hungarian Crown to assimilate them, which from our presentist perspective could be considered cultural genocide. As a result, two thirds of the Romungro population 'left' their identity and language behind. But, the Hungarian majority did not allow a full assimilation, and solidified the Hungarian Roma in a position

of assumed poverty and inferiority towards which it can identify itself as developed and cultured. This shameful historical baggage is exactly not that; it is very much alive, and greatly affects Hungarian society today. As it is the nature of these things, systematic racism also affects the self identification of the Romani themselves. First of all, the "Roma" as a general term does not exist from the perspective of the Romani, but only through the observation of the majority society (Mavra, 2015). The Roma see themselves as Romungro, Beas, Vlah, and they are only understood as a homogeneous group from an outside perspective. The tricky part is that they themselves also know how others perceive them. Minorities often find themselves in the position where they need to navigate multiple realities. Not just their own, but that of the majority society. They know who they are, and also know who they are perceived to be. This however does not mean that they exist as idealistic "pure" communities, who look at the ongoing oppression with stoic wisdom, and despite the majority societies twisted and untrue assumptions, they remain open and understanding towards it. Within and between communities and towards the majority society we find the same struggles and systems of oppression and prejudices as we would anywhere else (Mavra, 2015). So, as much as they are aver of the prejudices, stereotypes assigned to them, they in turn understand non-Roma the very same way, through stereotypes and prejudices. This knowledge is sometimes used to counter the feeling of oppression in social interactions. Using known stereotypical behavioural patterns, for purposes of intimidation, they deal with the frustrations deriving from the everyday materialisations of prejudices. For example, the family I have spent some time with would start to act in a more "Romani fashion" meaning more according to the stereotypes of the majority society (louder and more verbally aggressive), when going into a store, to somehow regain a certain amount of control over the social situation in which they were immediately treated with suspicion just for being who they were. But, I must also mention that this reaction, while no doubt based upon multitudes of personal experiences of ill treatment, was as often a reaction to self evident prejudice as to one that they only imagined to be real. I guess the humanistic takeaway would be that this is exactly why societies should be more invested in the way their members treat each other, but again this is not that article, so I leave it at that. At this point what I did not understand was that as much as their world was unknown to me, and my world was similarly unknown to them. Because I for a fact completely misunderstood my professor's words when she said that the Roma live in a dual reality and understands both,

while we (members of the majority society) only understand ours. In my understanding that meant that while I would be only familiar with my stereotypes and cultural knowledge, the Roma would have a detailed overview of the majority society with a keen eye for details. This of course is not true, as previously discussed, but more importantly I was making a historical anthropological mistake, and assumed a minority community to be inherently different from the surroundings that it is ultimately a part of.

As the preparation week was coming to an end, I had to make decisions on very basic practical things. How to get there, what to wear, and what to do once I arrived. My professor in one of her lectures discussed in detail how the community reacted when she arrived with a new car, and how important material representation of wealth was in this community. So, at first I was considering borrowing an old soviet car because while my own was not at all a fancy new thing, but it was dark coloured, and German, which I fully understood would be mistaken for wealth, or might be a source of grudge or even result in the theft of the vehicle. The other thing I knew was that they are using wood burning stoves for heating, and so whatever I will be wearing would then surely smell of smoke, so I was considering dressing in my hiking clothes, for easier maintenance. Also, I was considering putting hand sanitisers in my pockets, because I was uncertain if there was running water in the village or not. As these thoughts were running through my head, and I started to picture myself in my hiking clothes, with my little sanitisers, and a borrowed car, I was hit by an inescapable feeling of shame. Am I that full of prejudices? Am I so far removed from reality that this is what I think of people with less fortunate social standing? Also, the big one: would I consider all this if they were not Roma? Admittedly, this is the least comfortable part to revisit, but it would be a grave oversight on my part if I would not address this out of self interest to preserve an immaculate self image, or to avoid the moral judgment of the reader. The mistake that I made here was that - bathing in a self congratulating liberal confidence - I have forgotten that I too was part of my society in which all of these feelings of alienation and fears are deeply embedded. How unprepared I was is clearly signalled by the fact that before that moment of reckoning I did not even consider that I might be facing such an obstacle; after all I was an urban intellectual, a liberal, a believer in social justice and a self proclaimed all around good person. I honestly can say that one of my many privileges is that I was fortunate enough to be brought up with an immediate surrounding in which other nationalities, ethnicities, minorities were never ever mentioned in a derogatory fashion, or used as counter examples of values or

beliefs. But, that is the problem of immediate surroundings, that they are exactly that, immediate; leaving the rest of the world to creep in under the door. For years, my recollection would be that I have never met a Roma person up until my late teens, and therefore (being completely absent from my world) I also haven't encountered negative stereotypes towards them. In my family the only mention of Roma would be related to that of my mother's cousins dancing career. Admittedly, that is not a close encounter. He lived with a Roma family and learned music and dance, and he very much admired them. So, for a long time I thought that all my early impressions were positive, and as a result, I was free of prejudice. Later, I had to reconsider this and realised that through half understood sentences from neighbours, primary school teachers, and the jokes, tales of mechanics and electricians I have met when accompanying my father to his workplace, all were more than successful transferring into me the deep set cultural knowledge of who the Roma were considered to be by the majority society. Just because I would not consider myself a prejudiced person does not mean that I am not in possession of the shared cultural knowledge that stereotypes and prejudices are based upon. If something really useful came out of this research and the preparation, it is that I had to face the fact that my own perspective on the Roma would be a combination of romantic exoticism and oppressed feelings of fear and distrust, and because of this newly found insight I could manage and organise my feelings, and arrive to a deeper understanding of the problem that would be very useful later on when I found myself researching racism, racial thinking and genocide. Back then it just allowed me to pull myself out of the ambivalent thoughts that brought about the stress of an unfamiliar situation. The first step towards the honesty that is required when considering anthropological research should be based upon not just the realisation that our subjects should not be mistaken for idealised perfect human beings, but also that we ourselves should never think of ourselves as such. Equally important is that we should not find some perverted solace in the self shaming, or exaggeration of revelations over our own shortcoming. I just hope that I am now just avoiding that. Also, later I had to realise that what I was facing was nothin new or unique. What was chewing my soul was the same conflict between a willingness to understand human diversity and basic human nature that has ailed anthropology since Malinowski and arguably even long before. So, as the day of my pre-organized meeting approached, I decided that if this research will work it will need to work with who I am, and no other way. Meaning an analytical honesty towards oneself and others. It is as true in

anthropological research as in a personal relationship, if you make up a lie in the beginning, it might bring you a momentary success, but it will become a burden as later you will need to keep appearances up as you move forward. With this final self adjustment I thought I was ready for the research. It turned out, in one regard, that my preparation has been semi successful, as I did not think that my previous contact with people I thought to be Romani, or who themselves identified themselves as Romani would in any way help me to figure out who these people were. Unfortunately, this is where the reality of multiple participants in research comes into play. I might have been pleased with myself for addressing my darker impulses, but again I was invested in myself, instead of the research. Just because arriving with prejudices in check, does not mean that the community would welcome you with open arms. I had to realize that unpretentious self representation is not the same as not paying attention to the possible reactions of the field. With my appearance I created an image that the community translated using their stereotypes and prejudices, and decided that I am most certainly a crazy millionaire. An assumption on their part that created such a distance between us that with my than available skillset I could not overcome. To be more precise, I was unable to break that image, nor could I use it for the benefit of the research, but most importantly it grew on my nerves, which made my interaction with the field increasingly annoying.

However, there was a more relevant reason for why this research would be problematic from the beginning. I need to underline that my point is not to somehow argue that this attempt went down the drain because the community could not cope with my presence, but precisely the opposite. My greatest oversight might be self evident by now for the reader, especially considering what I have been discussing in detail, and what is absolutely missing: a research topic. I have mistaken myself with the “protagonist” of the research. My enthusiasm, and my keenness to finally try myself in field research, led me to believe for a minute that this is going to be about me; that somehow this is my story and the community will somehow serve as a background for my journey as an anthropologist. This was clearly signalled by the fact that so far I have not mentioned what I would have wanted to actually research, and that is because, up until that point, I did not even consider that. Granted, when reading any basic introductory book about anthropology, one will find a lot of emphasis on the person of the researcher. Basically, in anthropological research the data gathering, management, and, most importantly, the interpretation are products of a single individual, and therefore is important to have a

clear view on where we stand, and how the involvement alters the outcome. But, an understanding of that should never be misunderstood for self-importance. Of course a mistake like this is very easily made, for most anthropological narratives would one way or another built up around the individual, and most prominently when giving lectures and bringing in personal experiences. As this article itself is seemingly mostly about me... which in a way it is. During the first semester of my masters program I sat through hours and hours of lectures filled with personal stories of how one felt, what one did and what one drank... truly captivating, and entertaining stuff. Naturally, as someone who could not wait to be part of such adventures, I made the mistake of focusing more on the stories and less on why exactly they were recounted. So, one could say that my mistake of thinking that research would somehow be my opportunity to live out an imaginary role of the researcher came as a natural consequence of that. But, as with most mistakes, here it is also true that it has not to be one forever. It took some time and retrospective analysis to actually get the true importance of such narratives. Through these very personal accounts my teachers did not only allow me insight into how one could cope with field situations, but also gave an opportunity to see their shortcomings and the limits of their thought processes. With hindsight it is very humbling to see how people with decades of field work experiences were still trapped in circular arguments, scratching the surface of social problems, or how one could slide into ideological commitment that would make objective analysis very hard. This is not to say that they did not create important, or ingenious work. I would argue that they are good anthropologists and teachers exactly because of this openness. In anthropological training it is important to share shortcomings that can be identified within oneself, but it is also important that through the honesty of the narrative, it becomes possible to see the ones that would otherwise remain unnoticed. The individual will always be crucial in anthropological research, as you, the researcher, will be alone. You alone will experience, taste, feel or hear what your field will have to share with you, but Malinowski's famous advice to Evans-Pritchard still is valuable today "don't be a bloody fool" (Eriskon, 1995:26). And, that is exactly what I have been because I did not know what I wanted to know.

What I knew was that I would need something to connect with the community, or at least members of it; hopefully something that we had in common. The previously mentioned family's major source of income would be seasonal unskilled construction work, but the three siblings were also playing music, something that made them popular

not just in their own community, but in the neighbouring villages. I thought that will be my opening through which I will connect to them, as it is said that music can do that. Well not always, but here another issue arises that I was unprepared to deal with, the fact that this was someone else's field. Of course I have been invited, but still it later started to feel more like an intrusion. The process of developing a relationship with the field is itself a process greatly determined by every social factor present for they do not exist in a vacuum. The hierarchies, power struggles, oppressions, socio-economic factors, in short the whole social reality is there to play its part. Some communities understand better what it means to be researched, especially the ones that have greater insight or can reach into the "cultural sphere" where the outcome of the research will have its impact. Meaning that these communities sometimes like to adore themselves in the mirror image of scientific analysis, often inviting the anthropologists even long after the research to give a lecture on his work. These will also be the ones that will be equally enthusiastic to call the research bogus, or unconstitutional if less than pleased with the picture drawn by it. For less informed or physically further away communities, these would be no concerns, as who really cares what that chap from Iceland has to write about us here in the Amazon. Admittedly, this is something that has greatly changed with globalisation. In my particular case, we have the most immediately problematic situation, when conducting research in a community that belongs to a historically disenfranchised minority. The exact way in which a minority is being treated, oppressed, neglected is also very much diverse, and it could be argued that there are no two alike. What is however probably universal is that minorities will try to cope with the situation, and survival strategies will be created, and these historically developed complex patterns will affect every participant. The aspect of this problematic situation that I wish to address is the role the members of a Roma community will sometimes rely on when interacting with an anthropologist. Here I will also talk about the relationship between my professor and her field, or at least my understanding of it, so I feel the need to say that I wish not to be unjustly critical, and I do not wish to imply that what I have observed and the way it affected me, would jeopardise her research results or what she would later come to accomplish there. In this case the community understood my professor to be a teacher, a member of the majority society, and therefore someone who should be treated with a certain amount of respect, and as someone who might be in a position to provide help to the community if they can provide what she is looking for. A basic understanding that the majority-society is mostly

interested in them when in need of something, and also the understanding that it is just natural to make a fair exchange out of the relationship. The basic methodological problem of this relationship will always be that now the community feels that they are invested in your research. They will be more than eager to provide what they think you are looking for because they are hoping to be rewarded for your success. I would argue that this is an obstacle that is very hard to get over, not impossible, but I guess it is telling that my professor actually postponed the traditional field research, and opened up an after school support program, and now focuses on action anthropology. From my perspective it became problematic from the beginning. My professor introduced me to the family, and it felt very formal, but warm and welcoming. Of course they were very much interested in me, but it was more directed towards my financial capabilities. They asked me how much money I make, then about my parents, what they do, and what brand of car my father is driving. Of course they were interested in what makes me want to come and spend time with them, what would be my payoff for this. They have shared with my professor that I must be a very rich man, and most probably completely insane. Music in a way did help us to connect, but especially my offer to bring a field recorder and make an album out of their more traditional songs. So unwittingly I made a deal, I offered a deal, and now they were trying to repay me. The next time I visited them, now alone and with my trusty field recorder, they took me around the Roma part of the village, and wanted to give me something. Tried to figure out what I would be interested in, unsurprisingly as we made our rounds, all the topics emerged that I was familiar with from the lectures of my professor. When I seemed unimpressed with the usual topics, they even talked about things that they would not discuss with my professor, for example recreational drug use and where people would purchase it or gather to partake. This might have been a very interesting topic, but I felt (probably rightly so) that I am not prepared to research such a delicate problem, one that brings about multitudes of ethical questions. So I just insisted on music. I am interested in music and that is it, so music it would be.

The problem was that I could not understand for a while that they thought I was interested in the music a “gadjo” would be usually interested in, which is “traditional” music. A music that they themselves were not interested in, but they would not say that. They would play music that could be understood as such, but as I came to understand these would be popular songs, performed in a traditional way. It became even comical when I would ask about the origin of a song, to be informed that it was actually pop music

from the 80s with Romani lyrics. But, I must admit it did happen with Hungarian lyrics, for our musical universes were not sharing a lot. I remember one instance when three musicians were riding in my car, and after two minutes they begged me to look for some proper music on the radio because that noise (Radiohead) made them dizzy. For the next few months I kept going back and recording songs and the more time I spent there the more I understood that they were catering to my interests and not so much opening up. After a while however they did finally share with me their honest perspective on these songs. They have been invited to play at an event at my University, and on our way back to the village they told me that at a big party in a pub or at a wedding they would play these songs very differently, but they know the way “we” like them. At that moment I realized that all this time the synthesizers, electric guitar and drum machines that were occupying their rooms never have been used in my presence, nor did they ever ask me if somehow I could record them. Once they told me that I would go crazy if I would hear how they play these songs with the drum machine, but I have not been invited. They were very grateful when I gave them a few copies of the recordings, but I was also certain that this would not go on. They thought that they needed to give me something that for them was not endearing, and I could not somehow convince them that I was interested in what they were interested in. After a while I started to feel that I am more welcome out of a courtesy towards my professor, and more and more caricaturistic and insincere attempts were made to somehow allow me into the community, including the offer to marry someone. Such things of course should never be taken seriously, but rather signals that my presence started to become a problem for the community. This might have been a point where I could have reconsidered my presence there, by making some symbolic gesture, or I could have just accepted the circumstances, and pushed forward. This would have only been a real option if I would have been in possession of such an assessment of the situation. Due to the lack of my experience and mostly of a real commitment toward a research question, I just felt exhausted. The whole thing started to feel like a struggle, without any possibility of a valuable outcome. It was over.

That's it, the “full” account of my first attempt. With that I have arrived at the last mistake I committed during this attempt, and that is I have vanished. I had all the intention of returning, but as the months went by I would have felt more and more uncomfortable to do so. My professor told me once that it was really not nice that I left them without a proper goodbye, which is true. But, I also felt that my disappearance, as hurtful as it was,

came much more as a relief. I ended up writing a short essay on the topic and my experiences, that at least got me a few credits during my Phd program. Most often I would, as a cautionary tale, bring the experience up in my lectures, which turned out to be another mistake, as this practice – through the interpretative transmission of student gossip – ended with an unfortunate resentment on my professors part. So it is clear that I am not only making mistakes in anthropological methodology. Luckily by the time I decided to walk away, I was already planning, and finding resources for my “big research” in America, where I will have ample opportunities to make a brand new collection of mistakes.

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**On the Cultural and Social Meanings of
Gender | A társadalmi nemek kulturális és
szociális jelentéseiről**

Trime Halili

(Post) Social–Communism/Feminism nexus | Divergent voices and their impact on the role of women in the society

It has been around three decades since the drastic but gradual changes of political systems and the transformations of a big portion of the states of the South-East and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union. Under the communist regimes, taking place beforehand, for the majority of these countries, creating and introducing a personal or particular socio-political thought, which was different from the one that the state and its policy adopted, could result with severe consequences of many forms, both on individuals and communities. This prompts us to question the role of ideas which are external, new and/or unfamiliar to specific ideologies and political systems in power which enjoy such a degree of hegemony that in turn then conditions the silence of any divergent voices. Moreover, this further gives rise to the need of identifying internal contradictions and blind spots of ideologies which proclaim to foster freedom, equality and the right to an equal value of all voices, and which in practice categorically oppose and hence dispute themselves.

While illustrating the characteristics and analyzing the way of thinking of Winston, the main character of the well-known Orwell novel *1984*, Edmond Van de Bossche, in his article says: “The large mass of common people do not find in themselves the need to think independently, to question or to investigate what they have been taught. His fellow intellectuals have sold their inalienable right to think freely for security and a semblance of physical well-being.” (de Bossche, 1984). The fact that totalitarian systems were able to impose themselves thrivingly into the masses, comes as a result of a misunderstanding and of the amount of unimaginable effort, which is not always conscious, that is required and expected from people living in that system, in order to survive. In his book “1984” Orwell describes such a situation: “They simply swallowed everything, and what they swallowed did them no harm, because it left no residue behind, just as a grain of corn will pass undigested through the body of a bird.” (Orwell, 1949). These statements, considering the time in which the book was written, appear to be a legitimate and a

possible reason for the setting up and functioning of the totalitarian systems for such a long time.

However, it leaves us with a series of questions: what occurred to those whose ideas about justice differed and conditioned them to act differently and separately from the prevailing stream? Which were the consequences that they faced in life? How striking was the oppression? How are these situations reproduced today in post-communist systems who are still in transition? Questions also arise about the turns the injustice took and still takes in the name of 'justice' and 'equality' as well as the impact resistance of people has in today's reality.

In this paper I observe the specific trend of women as opposing voices from within and against the social-communist regimes, during and after it, through ideologies which seek to address the gender based discrimination of women in general, and women leaders and activists, as well as their secondary role in the society. The example focus will be particularly in the communist regime in Albania, drawing attention to the main interferences and also possibilities of women to build a different reality for them, while surviving social and economic transformation. More specifically, I use the case of Musine Kokalari as an illustration which best exemplifies the incompatibility of a communist ideology grounded on equality as a conceptual pillar and the discursive practices which stand against its declared theoretical values and principles. To be able to refer to those women who have confronted the communist regime and its political systems in Albania, as well as their role, we must shortly and broadly consider the historical agenda of the various governing systems that preceded this regime.

After five centuries of Ottoman rule, under which a different religion was implemented and a new conservative mentality was exercised especially towards women, Albania gained its independence in 1912. During this time, in order not to assimilate and guard their cultural identity and traditions, people turned towards the family which became the most important institution. The role of the woman in the family (and in society) was based mainly on conservative principles and her contribution to the economy was mainly domestic.

After a short time of democratic governance Albania became a Monarchy under King Zog who abolished the Islamic laws and did not allow the covering of women's faces. However, his reign in itself remained in reality a military dictatorship which did not permit a change in the mentality of the population.

After the Second World War, the communist regimes were established and their idea proclaimed it would give women *equal* rights. In Albania, the post-war regime brought to some extent a change in the status of women. Even though previously the traditional families were functioning by means of patriarchy, these kinship links transformed, losing their potential as a cause of a new system being put in place, such as development of industry, agriculture etc. During these times of 'Cultural and Ideological Revolution' the party "encouraged women to take jobs outside their homes in an effort to compensate for labor shortages and to overcome their conservatism" (Zickel, Iwaskiw & Keefe, 1994).

In 1967, Albania's communist leader Hoxha himself declared on women's rights that "the entire party and country should hurl into the fire and break the neck of anyone who dared trample underfoot the sacred edict of the party on the defense of women's rights" (Logoreci, 1978, p. 158). Because marriage was now supposed to be based on the full equality of both spouses, the concept of the father as the head of the family, recognized by pre-communist civil law and considered essential to family life, was officially deprived of legitimacy. A husband and wife would now have the legal right to choose their own residence and professions. (Zickel, Iwaskiw, 1994).

A transformation of gender relations was occurring and despite progress during the communist regime, significant inequalities remained. Predominantly female work force generally had male supervisors. Women were underrepresented in certain professions. Furthermore, until 1991, abortions were illegal and women were encouraged to have "as many children as possible" (Falkingham & Gjonça, 2001, p. 309-318), in addition to working outside the home. Throughout its functioning and existence, the communist regime continued valuing and defending a different system which is not based on patriarchy but equality. Nevertheless, the confrontations against the regime continued in different forms, from various groups. Educated women who dared to raise their voices and demonstrate the materialization of the regime, were persecuted and portrayed as the 'enemy of the people', or 'a very dangerous enemy of the regime'. Usually in these persecutions one fails to find a single rational reason ingrained in the conceptual faults of the systematic ideologies of these women, which would lead in condemning them as dangerous people. The aforementioned, and one remarkable personality to illustrate this would be Musine Kokalari and her life story.

Divergent voices: The case of Musine Kokalari

Considered arguably as one of the first female Albanian writers of the époque, Musine Kokalari was also a scholar and a politician, respectively the founder of the Social-Democrat Party in Albania during 1944 (Dervishi, 2019). She received a doctorate in literature from the *Sapienza* in Rome, returning back to Albania in 1941 where she continues to write in her local dialect, inspired by the Albanian folklore and history (Halla, 2019). The importance of Kokalari's writing is two-fold: her stories are among the few depictions we have of women's lives of that time, and they also serve as a first representation of the ethnographic heritage of southeastern Albania (Sinani, 2011). She is also one of the women writers who suffered one of the worst convictions in Eastern European communist countries and was not allowed to write anymore, because of the nature of her writings, beliefs and also political activism against the regime.

Kokalari was sentenced to 20 years in prison by the military court of Tirana, as a *saboteur and enemy of the people* and after her release, until the day she died she was sent to a small Northern Town of Albania, where she lived in internment and complete surveillance, having to earn a living doing hard work as a construction worker and street sweeper. Some scholars maintain that she was denied the right to leave the town during her 17 years stay. She died from breast cancer at the age of 64 without receiving proper medication and was buried tragically in utter silence with the only person present at her burial being the town hall's gravedigger (Shatro, 2016).

In February 2017, on the occasion of the 100 years of the anniversary of her birth, by demand of her family, her dossier, hidden and unknown for so many years, was opened for the first time, to inspect the past and find out the names of those who had persecuted her for 38 years. Among many astonishing things, what can be discerned from several information concerning this dossier, is what Žižek calls the "superego" of the communist regime and the "psychoanalytic notion of it" describing it as a terror and demand of sacrifice, acting on behalf of the "Big Other" (Zizek, 2005); 'for the good of the people'.

Despite the theoretical commitments of these regimes regarding justice and equality, mainly based on Marxist theories, claiming that the women should be included in the fight of the revolution for equality, in the 'materialistic' reality, these regimes have failed to include the component that they proposed. While talking about this 'failure' of

socialist revolutions to establish sexual equality (apart the social justice), as well as the conflict between theory and practice, in an interview in 1976 Simone de Beauvoir says: “Just look at Soviet Russia or Czechoslovakia, where (even if we are willing to call those countries “socialist”, which I am not) there is a profound confusion between emancipation of the proletariat and emancipation of women. Somehow, the proletariat always end up being made up of men. The patriarchal values have remained intact there as well as here. And that – this consciousness among women that the class struggle does not embody the sex struggle – is what is new. Yet most women in the struggle know that now. That’s the greatest achievement of the feminist movement. It’s one which will alter history in the years to come.” (Gerassi, 1976).

The relationship between the two ideologies – communism and feminism, as well as their confluence or divergence, seems to be deeply encompassed by their conceptual clashes or synergies. Whereas the particular case of Kokolari, is a demonstration of the materialization of the regime, it is also an analogy to other women who shared the same fate: a double domination imposed parallelly from both, the patriarchy in their societies on one side, and the regime that was the product of and the source of the same on the other. While reading passages of her dossier which reveals the ways that she was persecuted, or more precisely how her persecution and conviction was decided, one fails to find a single rational reason ingrained in the conceptual faults of her systematic ideology which would lead in condemning her as a ‘dangerous person’. She is mostly portrayed as the “enemy of the people”, or “a very dangerous enemy of the regime” but this is in no case supported by an explanatory argument due to the impossibility of categorizing her writings as anti-nationalist or anti-populist (Dervishi, 2019). The evidence of her crimes appears to be not only observant, but forced, in order to suppose a possible danger from her side. An example from the dossier that was recorded and handed to the regime forces by her everyday followers, was this observation: “While she was walking along the river alone, and we were coming from the other side of the road, she turned the button of her coat two times. Maybe she was filming something” (Dervishi, 2019), leaving any reader wondering about the ideological paranoia and danger of turning a button two times, and leaving all mass media users nowadays puzzled about the countless times they escaped jail while recording every single occurrence around themselves.

Struggles Beyond social-communist regimes: Musines of today

Considering the constant systematic transitions in the region for the past three decades, as well as the social realities that went through different extremities, the difficulties for the organization of emancipatory feminist spaces to be produced, remain. Goldfarb (1997) in his article explains:

“Contrary to the official propaganda of the communists, there was significant gender injustice in the old system and contrary to the hopes of democrat liberals, and civil society advocates, the injustice has not only not disappeared during the so called democratic transition, but in a certain way it has even intensified.” (p. 236)

While examining the role of feminism and the international aid that has attempted to rebuild post socialist countries, the complex historical legacies of socialism have often been ignored by the so called “bourgeois feminism of the broad West” (Ghodsee, 2004). With the increase of the religious influence especially in post social-communist period, religious beliefs gained further freedom of expression, as well as possibilities for further field operations, which as a value might be seen as positive but it was often misused to radicalize and enforce different conservative dogmas on the mainly secular post-socialist societies belonging to different ethnic and religious cultures. The conservative influence enforces on young women to focus on finding life partners to marry rather than seeking professional development and self-realization. The outcome of these situations reflects on socio-economic reality, particularly for the majority of girls and women, who find themselves having a role in society that is based mainly on conservative principles whereas her contribution to social, educational and cultural life is mainly domestic and secondary.

In a talk for Deutsches Haus at NYU and the Department of German at NYU, speaking on “Is Hegel Dead – Or – Are We Dead in the Eyes of Hegel? A Hegelian View of the Present Age.”, Zizek evokes Wolf Bierman who once wrote that, while the spiritualist question is “Is there life after death?” the materialist question is: “Is there life before death?” (Zizek, 2015). The discussion about such an important political and also cultural matter could help promote an idea through women whose act of rebellion during these regimes were futile while they were alive, but after their death they became important female figures and inspirations. The struggle seems to be ongoing in the post regime systems and realities. The legacy of divergent voices transcends ideologies, political

systems, countries, communities and other forms of political and social structures. The question of life before *or* after death, in cases like these, requests the transcendence of the dichotomous nature of its answer into an “and” instead of “or”. Despite the lack of organized movements and the lack of achieving an agreement regarding the importance of the participatory voice of women in the society in the Balkan region, divergent voices have risen, being, among others, inspired by those before them, as they continue to inspire those coming after, through small performances and activism.

Within the constraints of this paper it is unfeasible to elaborate on the foundations these voices might have laid in the aftermath of communism and their importance today. It is, nevertheless, of relevance to only touch upon the fragile nature of liberal democratic values which, just like those of communism, should by no means escape an exposure to divergent voices. As Suzanne LaFont states, “Communism, at least, promised to liberate women through increased opportunities in education, employment, and political representation. It failed, because it failed to eliminate patriarchy. Unfortunately, the introduction of the market economy and democracy holds no such promise” (LaFont, 2001, p. 203). In his article ‘Why Is There No Feminism after Communism?’, Goldfarb, among many interesting controversial discourses, using a whole lot of eminent and renowned personalities, discusses a possible attempt of forging a new understanding of the nature of contemporary and historical patriarchy and the need for a feminist consciousness and social movement, asking: how are women confronting the problems of building a civil democratic order today? (Goldfarb, 1997).

While not only in Albania, the most recent phenomena more specifically focus on the role of women as revolutionary agents of change, such as the *Me Too* and *Time is Up* movements. They have been able to expose a silenced dimension of perfectly functional systems, known to be archetypal examples of liberal democracies, and have nevertheless remained within the frames of considering such an act as one of an inherently democratic nature and a characteristic to democratic systems. Conceptual contradictions which reveal discrepancies between theory and practice, ideology and embodiment, continue to persist. The voices for equality between women and men being portrayed as a democratic value, put into question the numerous years when this value was actively and systematically being oppressed by the same democratic systems. The voice for the marginal, the oppressed, and the silenced has been appropriated through promises by every ideology. It is a matter of discussion whether such promises derive from a genuine

quest for equality or whether they materialize the same through the different practices, and it is those who diverge from the mainstream that bring forward the differences between the two.

To conclude, for further arguments, it should be taken into consideration the influence and meaning that the case of Kokalari and the divergence of feminism within totalitarian regimes, can have in post-communist societies nowadays. Are the new 'trending' values and debates of equality and feminism compatible with the socio-political reality of women in transitioning countries (e.g. Albania, Ex-Yugoslavian space), considering that a good part of discourses and values of the communist era are still present and arguable? And in which ways divergent discourses cross the ex-communist countries and how are they reshaped and embodied into the new global framework of the 'symbolic' concept of equality?

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Bettina Bakos

Marriage habits in a Sikh community

Abstract

The intent of this paper is to determine the meaning of arranged and love marriage in India and to explore how the youth today make their choices in marriage, how much is the influence of parents and society on their life.

Key terms

marriage habits, Sikh community, participant observation, caste system, endogamy, exogamy, arranged marriage, love marriage, matchmaker, matrimonial advertisement, dowry, sati, joint family system

Prologue

This paper is based on the data of my first cultural anthropological fieldwork and the basic questions of my research are how the Indian marriage system exists, what kind of forms it has, are these forms separated or are there some relations between different types of marriages. To answer my questions, I have done one and a half year of fieldwork to find out the views of youth and the older generation on marriage customs and how their personal choices have affected their own relationships.

I have been intrigued by the Indian culture for a very long time and that is the main reason I studied Indology in Budapest. In this Bachelor course, I had an unique opportunity to examine the Indian culture in more detail and to learn Hindi, Sanskrit and Pali languages. After my Bachelor studies I pursued Masters in Cultural Anthropology and in this I learnt the methodology of anthropology and hence therefore I travelled to India for my fieldwork.

Thanks to the Campus Mundi Scholarship Programme that I could come to Kolkata in 2018. My fieldwork took place between November 2018 and February 2020. During

this time I was able to do a deep and meaningful long-term research. My topic changed a few times. In the beginning my plan was to focus on the Brahmin caste, but I had some difficulties finding my exact community, finally my main informants were Sikhs and my interest turned towards the Sikh community and their marriage habits in a suburb of Kolkata.

My main informant was *Gulab*, a 30 year old Sikh man. *Gulab* and his family helped me understand the local people's thinking. From May 2019 I started to live under the same roof with him and his mother. The place of this research was unplanned and I would rather say that 'the field found me'. My fieldwork finally took place in a suburb area of Kolkata, around 20 kilometres and a two hours drive away from the city center. Due to travel expenses, distance and the time factor, the local people spend most of their time in their locality. The middle class who own cars sometimes go to the city, but most of the people do their daily activities (like working, studying, banking, visiting doctors and grocery shopping) in their suburb. For these reasons I could call the area of my fieldwork a village and even my informants often referred to it as a village. The wealthy members of this community, like the family with which I lived, are well-known in the surrounding districts. The mentioned family run a restaurant in a central location and are popular members of the local Sikh community. Around the local Gurudwara (Sikh temple) eighteen Sikh families live, where *Gulab's* family has a house that their grandparents built and where presently their relatives stay. I visited the Gurudwara and the grandparents' house weekly with *Gulab* and his mother. In this family the father passed away two years ago. This nuclear family includes the mother (*Monpreet*), the son (*Gulab*) and the daughter (*Ridhi*) and their extended family are *Gulab's* aunt and his cousins (*Maaya* and her sister). *Gulab's* friends and family also provided assistance in my fieldwork.

In the community the youth was about my age, between twenty and thirty years-old, their parents were around fifty to sixty years-old. These families helped me understand better, how the youth and the older generation think about social problems. Most of the older ladies had arranged marriages and are now widowed. Most of the youth were single and unmarried.

In the Gurudwara community it was easy to make friendships with the younger generation and also with the elderly. It is important to mention that I got a lot of help and support from *Gulab's* family.

Discussion was convenient with the English speakers, and we could talk about all the questions related to my research topic smoothly. Along with the semi-structured interviews, I did a long-term participant observation in the community that helped me to collect data for this paper.

Introduction

As I experienced, in the Indian society, the caste system still persists. To understand the Indian society, traditions and customs, Indian family model and the marriage system, it is necessary to talk about the caste system.

The Indian caste system separates the society into different groups (*varnas*³⁵). We can imagine it as a social hierarchical system where the *Brahmin caste* is on the top (priests), under them the *Kshatriyas* (warriors), then *Vaishyas* (skilled traders, merchants), and below there are the *Shudras* (unskilled workers). There is another caste, called *Chandalas* (untouchables), which is outside the caste system. The caste system is not only present in Hinduism, but also in other religions, like Muslims, Christians, Buddhist, Sikhs, Jains in the Indian social system.

It is very important to understand the caste system because it still has influence on most of the people in India. It affects all the stages in their life, from childhood to marriage and until they die. There are different groups called '*jati*' which is a classification of different societal members for example '*Sonars*' which was a classification or name given to goldsmiths. This form (*jati*) is also determined by birth, later on we will see why this is so important in marriage too. However the caste system was banned by the British but it still exists.

Historically India was a Hindu state, all their traditions were Hindu, which means all the other religions got influenced by Hinduism in India. The Islam brought the Sufism to India in the 14th Century which had different rituals than the orthodox Islam. Later in 16th Century a new religion was born, called Sikhism, which is a mixture of the Hinduism and Islam. All the religions have different status in Hinduism. For example Hindus believe that Buddha was a reincarnation of Vishnu, and in this way Buddhism is a part of the Hindu mythology. As I know from my Sikh informants they believe that Sikhs are Hindus

³⁵ Varna means colour

too. Going beyond this train of thoughts we realise that all the different religions are a part of the Hindu caste system. My informants usually used the term of Sikh, Muslim, Bengali Hindu as a caste.

Beside the historical reasons the present political situation also explains why I tried to define the Indian marriage habits throughout the Hindu caste system. In 1947 the Pakistan and the region of Bangladesh got separated from India. Today India is a secular state with a Hindu majority, Pakistan is the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Bangladesh is also an Islamic country.

The Brahmins still hold most of the power in the Hindu society and mostly they are the leaders in politics. Thus my observations encouraged me to create a framework of interpretation through the hierarchy of the Hindu caste system so I analysed my data through the filter of the caste system and I have tried to find out the answers for the following research questions: How big is the influence of the caste system; how big is the family burden and dependence; are individuals subordinated to society and family; can we talk about parental will and social pressure when the youth make their decision on marriage; what is important, the individual or the family status; do we talk about individual or family happiness; considering all these questions is the tradition changing, if yes, why? What about the different forms of marriage? Which type is mostly common, the arranged or the love marriage? How do the youth get married; who finds them partners; is there any matchmaker or matrimonial advertisement like before? Do they still give dowry? To find answers for my questions I did a 'traditional' anthropological fieldwork.

My methodology

I did *participant observation* to understand the culture of the community holistically. The main point of Anthropology is that anthropologists go to a community and do long-term fieldwork. (Eriksen, 2006, p. 40) During the fieldwork the researcher becomes a 'good friend' and the same happened to me as well. I believe that during my fieldwork in Kolkata, the length of time I spent there was of great importance. For almost a year and a half, I have tried to observe all aspects of local life. In addition to marriage, I was interested in the local political situation, economy, education, health care. *Eriksen* said the most

important thing for the anthropologist is to be involved in local life as much as possible. These words guided me in my fieldwork.

As I found the exact field and community for my topic, some aspects of my research were a little transformed, and in fact, during the fieldwork, I created my own specific methodology, adapted to the field, the research community, and my informants.

When we arrive in India the culture seems very different from the European culture. I felt those differences later on too, but instead of focussing on the differences I tried to develop a communication strategy based on the similarities, that could answer my questions.

Thanks to the time I spent on the field, I did not have to rush my interviewees, we had time to get to know each other and find time for conversations and interviews. At first, Indians seemed a bit introverted, especially when the discussion shifted towards more intimate topics, they generally found it difficult to open up and talk on topics of family 'secrets', sexuality.

The Bollywood movies also show this conservatism, where depiction of a kiss on the screen has only become accepted recently, while in Hungary, for example, it has been common since the 1960s. (Babos, 2019.) In the case of my informants this kind of isolation was observed as well, which, by the way, they consider a sign of respect; they spoke with certain boundaries on specific topics. Even after getting to know each other for a long time the voice recorder seemed to cause discomfort to my interviewees. Many times I felt like if the voice recorder was not there or if we had not called our meeting as an 'interview', I would have gotten more elaborative answers.

It also happened in the initial phase of the research that during an interview recorded with a dictaphone, the informant did not answer exactly the question that would have been really interesting for the subject of my research.³⁶ Nevertheless, in order to clarify my questions and understand the marriage habits, I conducted seven in-depth interviews with some members of the community and the members of the family I lived with during my stay in Kolkata. The interviews were semi-structured. I was usually prepared with a few questions that helped me get around my topic, finding a way back to the topic in the event of a turn. I started with general questions as an introduction, then narrowed it down to the family circle, and then I was curious about the personal opinion

³⁶ I asked my interviewee about his sister, how it is possible that she did not get married at her age (she was around 40 years-old), and my informant rejected to answer me.

of the informant. If the conversation was very erratic, I intervened and shared my opinion in a few sentences, taking care not to influence my interviewees' opinion much. However my notes, which I recorded on a daily basis during face-to-face conversations, were more helpful to my data collection. Many times sentences and opinions were shared that would never have been said during an interview.

I took notes in my fieldwork diary at the end of the day and took notes on my phone regularly so that I would be able to quote literally. The main language of my fieldwork was English; I did all the interviews and wrote most of my notes in English. My fieldwork diary was bilingual, English and Hungarian. I also wrote another diary in which I described my personal feelings, but these two diaries merged after a few months and eventually, along with the phone notes, a larger data set was composed from which I was able to work on my thesis.

My researcher position was fully involved with the Sikh community. They knew it from the beginning that I was collecting data for my anthropological thesis. According to *H. Russell Bernard's* division, (Bernard, 2006, p. 347) I participated in the life of the community as an observer for the majority of my fieldwork. As an '*insider*' who tried to become a full member of the community while recording data in my research topic. As a family member, I did cooking, shopping, attending family gatherings and religious events and collected all the possible information during this time. Based on the data which I collected on my field, I will describe the arranged marriage system in the next chapter.

Arranged marriage

Endogamy and exogamy in the caste system

Based on the interviews and the collected data during my fieldwork I would like to cite examples that have shown that certain endogamous and exogamous rules still exist in certain parts of India. The majority of young people, boys and girls I have met in the community reported that they have been imagining their spouse to be an Indian since their childhood. So basically *nationality endogamy* was observed. One of my informants said: '*I could imagine my life with only an Indian girl. Who would understand me better as an Indian?*' It has been shown in the studies of others that the majority envision their marriages with Indians who speak the same language. (Rao & Rao, 1980)

Speaking of a common language in my community, it could mean Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, or English. But I must note that in the Sikh community, Punjabi is the mother-tongue what they use in their community and family. Thus, Punjabi native speakers also prefer Punjabis when choosing their mate. On a religious basis, the majority of my Sikh interviewees expressed opposition to Muslims. Few of my informants said it has a historical reason that they have been in war with Muslims, others said that they just think differently, that is why they could never get on the same page with them. Still we can not say there is *religious endogamy* in the community, because some of them have shown willingness to marry Hindu, Christian or even Muslim. Moreover, I have met a lady (*Gulab's aunt*) who came from a Hindu family, from Bihar and got married to a Sikh man (*Gulab's father's brother*) and she adopted the Sikh religion.

If we use the 'Sikh' term as a caste within the Hindu caste system, as my informants said it regularly, then we can also talk about caste endogamy, as my informants stated that they would primarily marry a 'Sikh caste' in the future. To the question of why, I usually got the answer: 'Why not?'. In those answers I sometimes felt as if I were reading over and over again the book of Lajos Boglár (Boglár, 1978) where his informants always said 'we do like this because our ancestors also did like this'. My interviewees could not explain where this deep determination came from. Of course few of them were more open-minded, and even they described their parents as modern and accepting. I also had an informant who lived abroad and he became more open-minded, as he said, and he considered it conceivable that he would marry outside of his caste. He stated that neither caste, nor religion or affiliation matter. He would marry outside of his caste (*inter-caste marriage*), outside religion (*interreligious marriage*), with Indians or even foreigners.

In the case of exogamous marriage, my interviewees considered similar aspects of what influenced their choice of partner. They would marry outside their caste, but not with Muslim. By affiliation, the majority do not want to marry Bengali, they are distrustful of them. About the other Indian states my informants had different views. For example, some of them do not like to marry someone from Bihar, others would never get married with South Indians.

For my question about what qualities are important in a man; also in many cases I got similar answers – 'kind, nice, educated, good carrier' – status and income are among the most important factors while appearance is not. Even though appearance still plays a significant role in marriage advertisements. My daily observations have also confirmed

that appearance matters a lot in India, and skin colour is still one of the most important factors. During the interviews, none of my informants said it, but it was visible in everyday life; on the other hand they also took care of their own skin very seriously. Almost all year around they protect themselves with sunscreen to never get tanned, and both seniors and youngsters used homemade creams to make their skin lighter and brighter. They would never bask in the sun, they always walk in the shadow of an umbrella. Where I used to live, there was a swimming pool which was open only in the early mornings or late evenings when the sun was not too bright. The locals never wanted to use the swimming pool during the day. Just as they take care of their own skin color, they find the light skin colour attractive. They often commented on how beautiful I am and how beautiful my hair is. Most of the time I felt it was just praise for my white skin and blonde hair.

It can be seen that young people's intentions to marry are varied, but some similarities can also be observed. In the choice of a partner, not only the appearance and inner attributes matter, but also caste, religion and affiliation matter.

According to the tradition, it would be easier for them to find someone within the community, someone who has similar thinking, the same caste, religion, speaks the same language, loves the same food. This path would be the easiest and most appropriate for many of them. However, my research field was not in Punjab, it took place in West-Bengal. As I mentioned, *community endogamy* is not typical, only eighteen families live in the premises of Gurudwara, many of the young people have already migrated out of Bengal, so it is very difficult for those who stay in Bengal, far from Punjab³⁷, to find a Sikh partner within the caste. Even the entire Sikh community in Kolkata is not too big³⁸. In my community if someone wants to get married within a caste, they need help to find a partner. Of course, I have also come across cases when they had love marriages. In some cases, the relationship developed from teenage love to marriage. Today, young people in the community are trying to get to know each other in their workplace, or there was also an instance for those living abroad to marry a foreigner; but among those who have stayed within the community, they fail to find a match in their environment, place of residence

³⁷ The Sikh religion was founded by Guru Nanak in the 16th Century. The center of Sikhism is located in Amritsar, the state of Punjab, where the most sacred Sikh temple, the Golden Temple, stands. The Sikhs used to live in Pakistan and Punjab, settled predominantly in Punjab after separation, and now they live in large numbers in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand.

³⁸ According to a 2011 survey, the population of Kolkata was 4,496,694. Together with the agglomeration there are 14,035,959 people. In terms of religious distribution, for the city of Kolkata, 76.51% of the population was Hindu, 20.60% were Muslim, and only 0.31% were Sikhs. source: Kolkata City Census 2011

or workplace, so they ask the help of their parents and trying to find a Sikh, Punjabi partner within the caste, online or through relatives' relationships.

Historically, the matchmaker was a profession, but nowadays mostly the friends and family help to find a match. In the next chapter I will present the role of matchmakers after a brief historical overview. Through the work of the matchmakers, I will point out how the process of choosing a partner develops in the case of an arranged marriage.

The matchmaker

In the following, I would like to describe the defining aspects of arranged marriage, such as the phenomenon of the matchmaker, marriage advertisements, and dowry. I will first give an old example from 1946 in order to see how much the arranged marriage system has changed, and then I will describe the matchmaking process of the arranged marriage that was followed during my fieldwork.

D. N. Mitra summarized the Hindu marriage traditions in his study called *A Hindu Marriage in Bengal*, 1946. (Mitra, 1946) The author speaks about marriage, but did not categorize it as *arranged marriage*. Regarding the role of the matchmaker, negotiations deserve more attention. In the agreement between the two families, the matchmaker helped, (called *ghatak* or *ghatki* in Bengali). The matchmaker was well acquainted with both the boy's and the girl's house, sometimes he was a friend or relative, but sometimes they also turned to marriage brokers. At this time, if the work of the matchmaker was successful, which means the young people got married, the matchmaker was entitled to get their fee or honorarium for their work. Quoting *Madhurima Mukhopadhyay*; the matchmakers '*were responsible for maintaining the caste purity and hierarchy.*' But as a result of colonization and urbanization, matchmakers were pushed back into the countryside, and in Kolkata, due to its huge area and high population, their work became difficult. For this reason, *Madhiruma Mukhopadhyay* said, the matrimonial advertisements appeared from the early 1870's. (Mukhopadhyay, 2012)

As I mentioned above, the role of matchmaker could have been played by a close friend, relative, or an unknown person. In my fieldwork, I have found that relatives or parents play this role these days. It happens that they visit a matrimonial company, but according to my informants, this is rare. They said it is the duty of the parents to get their children married. My data shows that it is mostly done with the help of relatives. I

interviewed some widowed mothers in my community. For example, in the family where I stayed, the mother, *Monpreet* (59 years-old, widow, mother) said about her daughter's marriage: '*Everyone is asking me to Ridhi in the Gurudwara. My sister is also asking me. We have to pay. We have to pay for the wedding, have to give gifts. I will give my golds, diamonds, she has a car in Mumbai, we will give that. We will buy some clothes for them, that's all. Their father has died. Now I have to get her married. We have to keep their father's status.*' After the death of the father, the mother fully took on the role of matchmaker. She mentioned many times that she had already worked a lot, raised her children, now she has to get them both married. The role of matchmaker is a duty and a task that you have to perform because of the social pressure and adherence to the norms and traditions. Because of constant questioning from the community and family, she felt it was necessary to get her twenty-nine-year-old daughter married as soon as possible.

According to the example given by the family, I would like to describe how the process of matchmaking takes place today in a middle-class Sikh family in Kolkata, where the role of the matchmaker was taken over by the mother.³⁹ Based on the data collected in the field, I can state that the position of matchmaker among my informants is very often done by the parents, who thus play a decisive role in choosing their child's partner. This process of matchmaking reveals that it is an arranged marriage. As the mother performs the matchmaker duties, she is the 'primary filter'. *Monpreet*, the mother, started looking for someone at the request of her daughter, *Ridhi*; who said if she finds a 'suitable' partner for her, she will marry him. After that, the mother started looking for the 'right partner'. And the searching process was done by contacting some relatives, including those living in the United States. The *American aunt* began questioning her friends and relatives as to whether there was a free bachelor. When candidates were found, some photos were forwarded to the mother (*Monpreet*) on WhatsApp. Those pictures of the bachelor candidate were sent by the parents to the American aunt. On both sides, the parents arranged the match for their children. The intermediate woman was the *American aunt*, but after bringing the two families together, she stepped out of the process, and from there the parents were in constant telephone contact and continued the negotiation.

³⁹ *Monpreet*, the mother took on the role of matchmaker, saying about his son: '*I want him to be free. Not giving him tension.*' That is, she wanted to arrange the marriage of his daughter so that task would not fall on the girl's brother later.

The negotiation started with a few photos and a short introduction, but in the beginning, the *American aunt* played an important role in convincing the two families. She did that by saying good things about both families, in general: a wealthy Sikh family, a very good family, a child studying and living abroad. That is, she described the social status of the family. From the introduction, it became clear to me that religion and ethnic origin (Sikh and Punjabi) were priorities. In addition, the extended family gives a positive image and the financial status of the family can not be neglected either. Having a child who has studied or lived abroad indicates that it is a wealthier family.

In the case of physical attributes, photographs help choosing, and they always send each other the following information: the boy or girl's age, height, education, place of work, and in which city the candidate lives. This is important because some Indian cities have much better income opportunities like Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore. It was the same with 'my family', where *Ridhi* worked for an international IT company in Mumbai. So they do not talk about income, but jobs and careers are emphasized. There are no separate castes among the Sikhs, so it does not have to be indicated, they do not usually write about skin color, but the photo shows it anyway.

Monpreet, the mother showed me the candidates regularly. Many of them wore turban, which could have several meanings. If the man wears a turban and has a long beard, he can be very religious, which means he does not smoke, does not drink alcohol, and he is vegetarian. This was very attractive to the mother, as she was also a religious Sikh, in contrast, her children were not religious; they ate meat and drank alcohol.

Monpreet mostly sent pictures of her daughter in which she wore traditional Indian clothes, such as kurti or lehenga⁴⁰. The mother wanted to show that her daughter appreciates the traditional values. I note that at ceremonies, cultural events, family gatherings, they wear traditional Indian clothes, because they find the woman beautiful, elegant like that, and it is also a social expectation at a wedding, funeral or religious event.

The attributes sent on WhatsApp are almost the same as those listed in matrimonial advertisements. But perhaps few aspects play a bigger role in newspaper and online ads, so I would talk about those too. Later, I would like to give an example from another family I met in my community where the girl wanted to get married and one of her plans was to publish an online ad on a matrimonial site.

⁴⁰ Kurti: a longer shirt what they wear with leggings or jeans

Lehenga: a traditional festive wear, it is a long skirt what they wear with a top and scarf

Matrimonial advertisements

As I mentioned in the previous chapter that as a result of urbanization, marriage advertisements appeared in the printed press from the end of the 19th century. This still exists today. The *Times of India* is the country's oldest daily newspaper in English and one of the best-selling newspapers. On Sundays, a separate section is dedicated to marriage advertisements. The situation is similar with the daily newspaper *The Telegraph* in Kolkata where advertisements also appear on Sundays. The matrimonial advertisements



Matrimonials advertisements from the Times of India, 10.02.2019.

in newspapers were also interesting for my research because they served as evidence of the existence of both arranged marriage and the caste system in India.

The attached picture above is from *the Times of India*. Week by week, I followed what inner and physical characteristics were highlighted in the ads. I noticed many similarities. The ads are divided into brides and grooms. Within this, the editors separated some groups based on the main criterias like caste, community, occupation, religion, language, citizenship, and a general category where caste does not matter (*general: cast no bar*). The editing of the column made it completely clear that the castes are divided, on the other hand we can see that for example the Brahmin wants to get married to another Brahmin, within the same caste.

If they write down the names of the castes and classify themselves under these categories, it would be difficult to claim that the caste system has ceased to exist in India. Of course, there is change in matrimonial advertisements, as I said more and more people are writing that caste does not matter. On the other hand, I find it is interesting that sometimes those who indicate their caste (such as a Brahmin girl looking for a groom) also indicate that the caste does not matter. But still, they write their own caste in the ad.

In the sent introductions on WhatsApp and in the newspaper's advertisements they also describe the girl or the boy, and write about their preference. In addition, the newspaper ads often include the parents' current or previous job; in the case of Kolkata they sometimes mention which part of the city the family stays. This detail also shows the social and financial status of the family. Moreover age, height, education, occupation are also written. In the case of girls beauty and slimness (*b'ful and slim*) are preferred and considered to be good attributes, while among men handsome ones are preferred. In the case of both genders, they find the fair skin more beautiful. Addition to the skin complexion generally the beauty standard in India is a physically fit, in the case of women slim type, in the case of man a bit muscular body shape is preferred, just as the Indian celebrities look like. Taller men are considered more attractive, when I have asked my informants why they attract to the lighter skin and why the taller height is better, they said it is just more beautiful and unique, because most of them are shorter and have a darker complexion, so the difference make the white and tall people attractive.

In the matrimonial advertisements of *The Telegraph* I would like to highlight a difference: Bengalis put great emphasis on astrology and horoscope in all areas of life. Analyzing horoscopes is the most important thing at a wedding, so marriage advertisements often talk about it as well. Hindu astrology distinguishes three kinds of temperaments, called *ganas*: *Deva gana*, divine; *Rakshasa gana*, demonic; *Manushya gana*, human nature. Bengalis usually refer to these *ganas* (in Bengali it is called *gon*) because not all *ganas* get on well with each other according to Hindu astrology.

In terms of astrology, another important type which is often mentioned in Bengali advertisements, is the *manglik*. The phenomenon of *manglik* is very interesting because of its special rite. Being *manglik* is also determined by birth. It is possible to calculate it online; you just enter your birth place and exact birth time and the program calculates whether you are *manglik* or not. The *manglik* type is unfortunate for women, but does not matter for men. Being *manglik* means that a person was born under the influence of the planet Mars, and thus has a '*Mangala dosha*'. It is believed that a marriage between *manglik* and *non-manglik* ends in disaster; with the death of the husband or divorce. Therefore, *manglik* girls tend to perform a rite where they are married to a tree, an animal, or an object, thus taking them off their harmful *mangala dosha*, so later they can marry their partner. Even though purification is possible, people still do not like *manglik* girls, they think it is better to avoid them.

The horoscope has further significance in choosing the exact date of the wedding. They ask the help of an astrologer who calculates the right day for the wedding based on the birthdates of the bride and the groom. In this way the wedding day will bring good luck for their marriage.

I would like to turn back from the significance of the horoscope to the marital advertisements. According to my informants, the newspaper advertisements are mostly posted by parents and relatives. In addition, by the development of technology, another platform has emerged where parents, relatives, or friends also can help publishing ads; these are the online ads and online dating sites. Nationwide, one of the best known is *Shaadi.com*.⁴¹

This site is created for the ladies and gentlemen, where they can add their own data and their preferences as well. This page was created for spouse search only. Everyone who registers here does it with a serious, marital intent. In my community, I met a Sikh girl who planned to sign up for this site. *Maaya* thought at her age she had to get married, but she could not find a partner within the Gurudwara community. In her interview, she also talked about how she wanted to find a partner and what her personal criterias were for the right husband candidate. In the following, I quote from her interview.

Maaya, 26 years-old, Sikh, single girl:

Question: 'What age do you think people get married?'

Answer: These days nobody is going to get married earlier. I think after 27 they start thinking about getting settled and it takes time, at the age of 30 to settle. There are many cases when the parents force them to get married...

I don't think appearance matters, nature matters, how loving he is, and of course his career, whether he's settled or not, education, career, income doesn't matter, but it should be ok to live happily...

Q: What about the religion, caste?

A: That's nothing, that's also not so important in my family, they can accept any religion, and I also don't have to, if I go for love marriage, I don't think...

Q: What about Muslims?

⁴¹ <https://www.shaadi.com/>

A: Not Muslim, I think... because I think I won't be able to adjust with that family. Till now whatever people I've met in this religion I don't think they are so open-minded, I think I won't have adjusted.

Q: What about Christians?

A: Ok.

Q: Atheist?

A: No problem. It's about the nature of the man, I don't think there is any problem... I think in the village areas it's very common, you have to marry in your own religion, and the place where I live, the most common religion in Bengali, so they can get their own religion easily...

Thinking of the people also matters. In Barrackpore it's not so easy for the people to accept to any religion, they do, they accept but still they talk at the back... They usually talk, you know, at the back. They use to say many thing...

My sister also told me to find a guy for me. So I told her, if you are working outside, you have friends and all, you can find, she told me I don't have, you just find.

Q: How can you find?

A: Matrimonial sites... online... I think newspapers are old fashion... you have to create your own profile, even my friends are forcing me to create a profile, they have not tried it, but they were telling if you are not creating, we are going to create it for you I don't know, let me think sometime, don't hurry so much, let's see what happens...

You are going to give you your criteria, like the person whom you want, a religion... I have to post picture about myself than you have to give choices what choices you want like religion there are many things options like religion which religion you are going to prefer, and the age and also you know you can also choose they are from where to where you want to find if you want to find somebody from the local you can get... if I'm going for the arranged marriage I will prefer to find somebody who is from my religion and I don't think I will find this place. Punjab or outside I'm going to prefer NRI⁴² ... lets see what happens... I will take this year, after this year I will put it to the matrimonial site... Actually my profession is also like that, I'm teaching in school, there are no male teachers, there are staff, but there is no male teacher, so how can I interact with people, opposite gender. So I don't have that

⁴² NRI means Non Resident of India

opportunity, so that's why I don't have... Most of my friends are girls and they're also in relationships started from school life, or the college... they are all from the school...

Life has changed a lot, people are also finding partners on Facebook or social media, but it's also hard, if you don't know the person, yes if you know she or he is local you can go and meet, but he is far away, it's very risky, maybe he is a fake person, he can tell anything, it's risky, even on matrimonial sites you don't know the person, if he is staying so far... I'm thinking a lot whether I should do it or not. '

I recorded the interview with *Maaya* at the end of my fieldwork, after a long acquaintance. I feel like this was one of my most successful interviews. This interview reflects very well what was more widely observed in my fieldwork. According to *Maaya*, the age of marriage has increased and partner-seeking encounters obstacles in their community. Therefore, she also plans to post an ad on one of the dating sites. Her expectations are less about physical attributes, than internal ones. For *Maaya*, it is important that her partner is kind, and she also highlighted his career as a significant factor. In terms of caste system and religion, her family is accepting, they get on well with anyone, but she has excluded Muslims, they are the only ones she thinks she can not get on the same page with. She noted later in the interview that she would prefer someone who is from her own religion (Sikh). Since there is no way to find someone in the community or in her workplace, she was planning to look for a spouse online. Before the interview, she also told me that she would ask her mother to find a suitable partner for her. She believes in love marriage, but she completely accepts arranged marriage too, she thinks it can turn into love. Moreover, she thinks that love marriages often end in divorce.

Based on *Maaya's* interview, it can be stated that for her religion, parental consent, and social judgment are also influential factors when choosing a partner. She plans to find a partner with the help of her parents or her friends, but in any case, parental consent is paramount, as the wedding will be 'arranged' by her mother.

Maaya was motivated, she wanted to get married in the near future, while in the other family where I lived, encountered more parental influence. The mother (*Monpreet*) wanted to get her daughter (*Ridhi*) married. The mother asked me several times for help in saving photos of her daughter, which she would be able to send to the boy's families, and also she wanted us to register her daughter on one of the dating sites. Her daughter, *Ridhi*, said if she found a suitable partner for her, she would marry him. And the mother

thought she would be able to choose the right man, because she thought her daughter would be unable to do so.

Quoting the mother, *Monpreet*: '*She doesn't know what is good for her. She can't decide, she can always make bad choices.*' In my view, the mother had a very big influence on the decision of whom her daughter will marry. The mother wanted to follow the traditional path by choosing the right husband according to the horoscope, and conducting the wedding in the traditional way by giving dowry.

An interesting point of my research was that when I asked someone directly about arranged marriage, they immediately said that it no longer exists, or only exists in the countryside, in the city almost everyone has love marriages. Initially, I understood it as meaning that there is no longer marriage that the parents arrange, but the youth decide on their own. Eventually my experiences showed the opposite, that arranged marriage is very common among the urban middle class, where the parents find a partner for their child, and the child can only marry with the consent of the parents. The other topic which had a very similar reaction was the *dowry*. My community's members easily replied that there were no more practices of giving and accepting *dowry*. Yet during my fieldwork I heard about *dowry* several times, and in fact, I had the opportunity to observe the handover of the *dowry* at a Sikh-Hindu wedding. In the next chapter, I will share my experiences about *dowry*.

The dowry

During my fieldwork, I became aware that *dowry* is still a central topic in getting a girl child married. Just think about the words of *Monpreet* that I quoted earlier. According to the tradition the girl's family's duty is to pay all the costs of the wedding and even to give 'symbolic' gifts to the boy's family.

Unlike the *bride-price or bridewealth*, where the groom's family gives gifts for the girl, in the case of *dowry*, the girl's parents give gifts to the boy's family. In the case of an arranged marriage, in the past the *dowry* was the most important issue. Essentially the successful arrangement of the wedding depended on the size of the *dowry*. Traditionally, they gave money, gold jewelry, gifts, such as furniture, clothes, bedclothes, or even a house or car. (Uberoi, 1993, p. 232) According to the members of my community, cash is less typical these days, but the other gifts mentioned above still appear at weddings. We can

also see from *Monpreet's* example what she intends to give to the groom's family to get her daughter married: some of her golds that she collected during her lifetime, a family-owned diamond ring, an existing car, and clothes for the boy's family. The list of gifts are a reflection of tradition on one hand and on the other hand, *Monpreet* stated that her main goal is to maintain the status of the family, by which she wants to strengthen the position of her family within the Gurudwara community.

Patricia Uberoi writes that the *dowry* has an aspect of compensating the groom's family for accepting a 'non-productive' family member. (Uberoi, 1993, p. 233) I partly agree with *Uberoi*, if we talk about the times when most of the women were housewives, or in today's age we can call those women a 'non-productive' member who does not have any income, because these women must be supported by the boy's family after the



wedding for the rest of their lives. On the contrary, the question arises: what about the working women of today? *Ridhi* was an independent young woman with high monthly income. In her case, the *dowry* can not mean compensation, it can mean only respect for the tradition and strengthening of the family status within the Sikh community.

During my research I had the opportunity to observe the rite of giving *dowry* at a wedding in Punjab. The marriage was between a Sikh boy and a Hindu girl. It was an arranged marriage, their parents posted marital advertisement and that is how they met. After a few months of knowing each other, they decided to get married. After that, the parents 'arranged' the wedding. The rites took place according to the Hindu traditions, with the exception that the groom received the dagger (*kirpan*) at home in the morning, according to the sikh customs.

The groom's family started from the boy's house, and before entering the wedding venue, the family received a symbolic *dowry*, gifts from the bride's family. First the two fathers exchanged garlands (mala) then the groom's father got a blanket, an envelope, and a gold bangle.

The father of the boy received the dowry in February 2020, Punjab. They were taking pictures of the father-in-laws, after he was handed over a warm blanket, some money in the envelope and a golden bangle in the box.

After that, the girl's uncles gave gifts to the boy's uncles. Everyone got a blanket and an envelope. I had the opportunity to see one of those envelopes, which contained two hundred rupees, which is less than three US dollars. As we see the amount is very symbolic, although I do not know how much money was given to the groom's father. I do not know how the two families agreed on the dowry, nor could it be known to me whether the boy's house received a larger amount before or after the wedding. What I could still observe was what gifts the groom received. The girl's family handed over the gifts together before the newlyweds left the wedding venue and went to the boy's house.



Traditionally, he received clothes and bedclothes and a gold ring.

The groom got clothes, bedclothes and a golden ring as *dowry* from the bride's groom in February, 2020, Punjab. Next to the groom the bride sat.

The gifts were an integral part of the wedding, but the size of the *dowry* was symbolic, due to the financial situation of the girl's house or the agreement between the two families.

This Punjabi wedding is also an example of how traditions change: they are already married outside their caste, they give *dowry*, but the extent of the *dowry* is not always so great that the girl's house has to take out loans for a lifetime; the *dowry* is rather symbolic.

Based on the information from my informants I think that the *dowry* shows a declining trend. Yet the studies still show how much abuse happens because of *dowry* in India. (Willigen & Channa, 1991) How many women are killed if their family is unable to pay the full amount of the *dowry*. In 2011, 8618 deaths were reported that could be linked to *dowry*, despite the fact that giving and accepting *dowry* has been banned since 1961. (Banerjee, 2014)

Other researchers have observed an increasing trend in the rate of *dowry* across India. According to *Priya R. Banerjee*, in some North and South Indian communities, the

rate of *dowry* can be as much as eight times a man's annual salary, and *Rao* said there was a 15% increase in the rate of *dowry* between 1921 and 1985. (Banerjee, 2014) According to my informants, amongst the middle class, they sometimes pay a bigger amount of *dowry* in cash, but in the upper class, or in the modern-minded middle-class families, they tend to give only gifts.

But nonetheless I have come across that *dowry* amongst the middle class is disappearing, or at least the rate is declining, instead they give token amounts or gifts. This may be due to the fact that the families I met, considered themselves modern-minded. Their daughters were working, which means that by marrying these girls the boy's family would get an extra breadwinner, not a person to support. The symbolism of *dowry* may also be due to the fact that the marriage is not always arranged; and on the occasion of love marriages, according to my informants, they do not usually give *dowry* in cash, they only give gifts. According to members of my community, in Rajasthan or in Kerala, it is still a tradition to pay larger amounts, but the Punjabis or the Bengalis are also more likely to give gifts, especially to their own daughter. Maybe we can trace this behaviour to the past when women could not inherit, could not own real estate and only had personal assets or possessions. Today, the wife can inherit one part after the husband's death, yet in the case of the *dowry*, this tradition has remained that the mother gives her daughter her movable property to secure her future. My interviewees found people who give a larger amount as *dowry*, to be 'stupid'. In addition to all this, the locals have enlightened me as to the fact that the amount of *dowry* may seem to be declining to me or seems symbolic, just because the families keep the cash *dowry* paid in a secret, because it is prohibited by law.

The presence of arranged marriage

During my nearly one and a half years of fieldwork, I was able to learn about the traditional aspects of institution of the Indian marriage and also observe the changes. In my Sikh community, they preferred to marry within their own caste, but youth are also increasingly open to out-caste marriages as well. Affiliation and religion are still important, but the most important factor is the opinion of the parents. Many of them allow their parents to decide about their groom or bride. Often these young people are dependent on their parents, their whole lives. I have noticed that they often rely entirely

on the opinions of their parents when they make any decision in their life, like buying a new car, house, travelling, studying, changing jobs, etc. And in the case of marriage, the parents play a particularly central role, from the process of finding a partner, to the organization of the wedding, to the everyday life of their marriage. Everyday life must be taken literally, as the 'joint family system' is still dominant in India where the larger family lives together, not just the nuclear family, like father, mother and children. (Uberoi, 1993, p. 418) Cohabitation with paternal grandparents is still the most common form today. In these families, obedience to parents and grandparents is a basic requirement. Therefore, it matters a lot where their daughter moves or what kind of girl the boy's family has to accept. In order to avoid possible difficulties, arranged marriage was preferred by the parents in my community because in this way they had an influence on the selection of their children's spouse.

According to virilocality, newlyweds usually live with the boy's parents. So the bride will have to deal with the whole family. This is why it is considered important in arranged marriages that they should be from the same caste, same religion and same class if possible. They think life is easier if they speak the same language, love the same food, respect the same traditions, have similar expectations. It may seem simplistic, but in fact, when two families arrange a marriage, they primarily satisfy each other's economic and social needs. We can talk about emotional and sexual needs, but arranged marriage is primarily for economic and social interests. The family status must be maintained, offspring must be reproduced. It is necessary to meet the daily needs of the husband, such as three times fresh food on the table, clean clothes, and a clean house. They have to raise the children, and in addition to all this, the wife is also responsible for caring for her in-laws. In India, a virtuous woman lives for these duties and responsibilities. From an early age, girls are raised to respect their husbands and never leave them. I came across plenty of examples where the wife was a victim of domestic violence, still she did not leave her husband. Of course there can be several reasons for this.

For example in their tradition, the respect for their husband is necessary. Another reason, that also is in their tradition, is that a Hindu or Sikh woman can marry once in her life. Furthermore, one of the strongest reasons why most wives are unable to leave an abusive husband is that they are housewives; they do not have any income or savings. And they moved away from their own family when they got married, so they can not go back there (usually because of financial reasons). Thus, in an arranged marriage, divorce is

almost out of the question. In the event of a divorce, the status of the family would be damaged, the husband would not be able to take care of his daily needs and the wife will not be able to go anywhere.

Only in very rare cases they divorce and based on my observations, those women who got divorced, they were educated, they had a job and monthly income. Nevertheless, divorced women are still stigmatized in the Indian society. Most of my informants believed that love marriages always have problems and many of them ended in divorce, while in arranged marriages, the spouses stay by their partner's side for a lifetime. *George Peter Murdock* defines this as a stabilizing method in the case of an arranged marriage alliance. According to *Murdock's* interpretation, when parents choose a spouse for their children, they take responsibility for their children's marriage, so they intervene, try to reconcile, sort out the problems when the problems arise initially. (Murdock, 1950) After all, as I mentioned, divorce is a stigma worn not only by the divorced man or woman, but by the whole family, and in case of divorce the status of the whole family is violated.

Despite all this, divorce of a registered marriage is legally possible and more and more people are living with it as they enter into love marriages. In the next major part I describe the phenomenon of love marriage.

Love and arranged marriage

Most of the studies collected during my research were about arranged or love marriage. In the previous social science studies they talked about 'arranged' and 'love' marriage as two mutually exclusive indicators. Today, however, it can be seen that both in the studies and in the stories I have heard during my fieldwork, arranged marriage can also transform into love; and we will see in this chapter that love marriage is arranged as well, as parental consent is mostly essential. In fact, arranged and love marriages are not two sharply demarcated forms, but we can talk about the coexistence of these two forms, and their transformation due to a change in the culture.

During my fieldwork, I found that religion and caste play a very big role in arranged marriage. In the case of an arranged marriage, whether by parental determination or by the decision of the child looking for a partner, the religion and the caste were among the first considerations. If we are talking about arranged or love marriages, the vast majority of marriages in India are still arranged. *Serena Nanda* also began her famous study with

the words, *'In India, almost all marriages are arranged. Even among the educated middle classes in modern, urban India, marriage is as much a concern of the families as it is of the individuals.'* (Nanda, 1998) I have seen a similar distribution during my fieldwork, but I have to note that in addition to arranged marriage, love marriage is also gaining ground. Love marriages are common among Bengalis, but in this case, too, parental consent is required. Of course, it is easier for parents to agree if the young people are from the same caste and same religion. Difficulties arise when parents do not agree to the marriage. *Patricia Uberoi* puts it appropriately about love marriage when she calls this kind of system *'arranged love marriage'*, where love marriage is only possible with the permission of the parents. (Uberoi, 2006, p. 36) I also found this form in my field. When it came to a love marriage, it would always take place with parental consent. On the other hand, parents considered it very important to maintain their family status through arranging their child's marriage, and also their judgment within the community was very important. I have spoken before about the importance of social judgment in the case of arranged marriage, there is no difference in the case of love marriage. The opinion of the community is still important to parents. It also counts amongst young people, but during face-to-face conversations and interviews, the older age group mentioned this factor several times, while young people mostly stated that for them it is enough if their family accepts their partner, the opinion of others (means the community) does not matter for them.

I felt that young people were more open to love marriage, while parents saw this as a 'western thing'. They believed that the concept of love marriage comes from the Western countries. I did not discover tensions between the generations in the families I met, this could be because the parents were more accepting, not against love marriage, and the young people also accepted the idea of arranged marriage. In case they could not find a suitable partner for themselves, they have full trust in their parents' decision. Love marriages were very rare amongst the elderly, so for them the arrangement of their child's marriage means following tradition, which means deciding and arranging their children's marriage like earlier, which helps them to maintain the status of the family. That is why it does matter after marriage, what kind of girl enters the boy's family or what kind of family their daughter has to move to.

From the conversations and interviews with the parents, I understood that they like to make decisions about their child's future, but they can be also permissive in the case of love relationships. Thanks to such open, modern-minded parents, who accept a

different thinking of marriage, love marriage is slowly gaining ground in India, and the young people can decide for themselves whom to spend their whole lives with.

In the next part, I would like to present those factors that have made love marriage widespread in India.

The rise of love marriage

Traditionally arranged marriage has been widely accepted in India since ancient times, but throughout history it has had various influences. In the Middle Ages, during the Mughal era, and from the 17th century onwards, when Europeans colonized Indians and showed them different customs of their own. Eventually, the British colonized the largest areas and stayed for three hundred years. As the British were present in different proportions in terms of territory, their influence was also various in the countryside or in the big cities. The main centers of the East India Company were on the coastlines of India: Calcutta (today we call it Kolkata), Bombay (now called Mumbai), Madras (now known as Chennai). In these cities, British were present in greater numbers from the early 17th century. Kolkata, where I did my fieldwork, was the capital of British India until 1911, when the capital was moved to Delhi. During the very long coexistence, a certain cultural exchange and cultural interaction was inevitable.

The interethnic relationships also influenced the image of marriage. Previously, arranged marriage was the accepted form in India and then the arrival of the British brought some changes. Over time, in Europe or even in the United States, love marriage became dominant. Today, we can not even imagine our marriage not being based on a close, love bond. It is incomprehensible to us how someone can marry another person without knowing each other. In contrast, the young people, I have met during the research, still believe that parents have more experience, are wiser, so they are able to find the right partner for them. And if the candidate is a good person, then why wouldn't the marriage be successful? Why can we not fall in love after marriage? – This is how the youth in India protect their own view about arranged marriage. (Nanda, 1998)

In case of Indian marriages, concrete changes also took place under the influence of the British, as child marriage was banned in 1872 during colonization. In the case of child marriage, girls were often married before their first periods. Of course, all the child marriages were arranged, most of the time the bride and groom saw each other for the

first time on the wedding day. However the millennial tradition was not entirely abolished in practise by British decision although it was made illegal. Legalisation against Child Marriage has gone through many amendments over the years, the latest one being in 2006. Under Indian law a child is a girl under the age of 18 and a boy under the age of 21. So a child marriage means if someone marries a child, as defined by the law Under the 2006 Act, whoever violates the law is punishable by two years' imprisonment and / or a fine of one hundred thousand rupees (around 1300 USD). (Anon., 2006) (The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006) Yet many do not fear of the magnitude of punishment, and even these days many people force their daughters into child marriage. According to a 2012 article in the *Times of India*, between 2005 and 2009, 46 percent of girls were married before the age of 18. (Sinha, 2012) There are differences in numbers among different states and, of course, tradition changes, especially in the urban middle and upper classes. Most of the girls I met during my fieldwork (between the ages of 25 and 30) were still single. In the case of West Bengal and Kolkata, the child marriage rate is lower anyway, which may be due to education. The British brought with them the English education system and introduced Kolkata to the ideals of 'Victorian romance and love'. After that, in India, love marriage was associated with the concepts of 'progress, choice, agency and modernity'. (Mukhopadhyay, 2012)

Quoting *Madhurima Mukhopadhyay's* thoughts: *'Paradoxically, the Hindu marriage system became more and more premised upon nonconsensual' arranged 'marriage to which the very idea of the consensual' love 'marriage became an increasing threat. In the discourse of cultural nationalism, there emerged a strong defense of love after marriage (Hindu) against love before marriage (western).'*' (Mukhopadhyay, 2012) *Mukhopadhyay* also defines love marriage as western. Hereinafter, arranged marriage refers to the traditional adjective, love marriage to modernity. She refers to *Henrike Donner*, who said that as a result of globalization, marriages in the urban middle class are arranged but parents and children are fully involved. *Mukhopadhyay* also refers to *Patricia Uberoi*, who came up with the idea of *'arranged love marriage'*. (Mukhopadhyay, 2012)

Overall, we see that in addition to the British influence, social scientists are finding the roots in modernity and globalization that have led to a change in Indian marriage habits. In the Indian media, and also among my informants, love marriage was referred to as a 'Western' phenomenon rather than a 'modern' one. They did not like the opposition of 'modern' and 'traditional'. They found themselves 'modern', even if they believed that

the arranged marriage system is better than having a love marriage. The majority envisioned the West as some kind of immoral spoiled world, yet thanks to technological advances (television, internet, movies), the 'Western' infiltrated pretty slowly into India. Just as we Hungarians were crazy about McDonald's in the 1990's, it was no different in India. Everything that came from the West or USA, was considered 'special, cool, better'. I am thinking here of movies, series, music, fast-food restaurants, soft drinks, chips, clothes. In the next chapter, I would like to talk about the effects of the Indian media on how love and love marriage are presented today.

Representation of love in the Indian media

Going further on the train of thought of *Madhurima Mukhopadhyay's* study, the author states that movies in Bollywood (made in Mumbai) and Tollywood (made in Kolkata) had a great impact on young people. The observation confirmed that out-caste love and marriage, live-in relationships are still a common theme in Indian movies. *Luka Chuppi* (2019)⁴³, for example, is about a couple who have to keep it secret that they live together without marriage. The film was based on the fact that still nowadays mainly in the northern states young people who turn out to live together before marriage are lynched. There is still news in the media that young people have been abused because they had a relationship with someone from another caste.

Another very successful film released in 2018, *Kedarnath*⁴⁴ shows the love story of two young people. The story unfolds through idyllic images and then the love of the young couple meets the girl's parent's resistance because the boy is Muslim and the girl is Hindu. At the end of the film, during a natural disaster, the Muslim boy saves the girl's life. They present a story of self-sacrifice and true love between a Muslim and a Hindu.

These films contrast the 'traditional' way of thinking of parents with the modern, 'Western' way of life of young people. By tradition they can get married only if they are from the same caste, religion, and they can only live together if they are married. On the other hand the 'Western' way is when they have relationships before marriage, they want to live together and get to know each other, have sexual relationships as well and are also

⁴³ <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt8908002/>

⁴⁴ <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7027278/>

open for out-caste marriage. The mentioned movies illuminate the path which shows change where love marriage, out-caste marriage, premarital cohabitation have a place, just as people live in the Western countries. These films are indeed opinion-forming and their aim is to open people's eyes. The actors and actresses in the movies are often worshipped as 'gods' by the locals.⁴⁵

For example when actors fall ill, they pray for them together and make offerings. Indian actors are not simple celebrities; rather, they are 'icons', whom they want to resemble; the biggest stars are almost 'demigods' for locals. Whatever these stars do always makes a splash. My informants explained to me that on Earth the celebrities have that lifestyle what everyone would like to have, so copying their dressing habits, hairstyle, and singing their songs brings the ordinary people closer to them and their lifestyle, which is actually the highest level we can reach in this life. And of course when the celebrities get married, it gets everyone's attention in the country. For example, in the year of my research, the wedding of the year was announced twice in India. Two of the most famous actresses got married in the 2018-2019 wedding season.⁴⁶ The first wedding was when *Deepika Padukone* and *Ranveer Singh* became one in November. The couple exchanged vows in Italy. Since their marriage, their picture spreads like a meme, where *Ranveer*



The iconic picture was taken about Deepika and Ranveer at their wedding.

Singh looks at *Deepika* with gleaming eyes. Not surprisingly, a lot of girls want to be '*Deepeka*'. Plenty of Indian women crave a man who looks at her like how *Ranveer* looks *Deepika*. (Sharma, 2016)

Internet advertisements say fall in love and find your partner. As we move forward on this line of thought, then we realize that the message of love marriage lies coded. If you are in love too,

marry your loved one and you will live happily ever after.

⁴⁵ After spending two years in India, I did not get surprised, that people actually can worship anyone and anything. Like in the holiest city, Varanasi, they believe everything is holy there, even the 'cow dung'. In Hinduism and Sikhism I have also seen so many examples how the people get devoted to 'pandits', religious leaders, and worship them too as holy people.

⁴⁶ In India, the wedding season is in the winter. Typically in December, January and February, but marriages that occur earlier or a month or two later as well.

A month later, the press reported another celebrity marriage: in December 2018, *Priyanka Chopra* married *Nick Jonas*, an American musician, in Jodhpur. Nick Jonas is a foreigner, but if that were not surprising enough in India, the groom was ten years younger than *Priyanka Chopra*. Their marriage is a pure love marriage, and they proclaimed it as love marriage all over India. A traditional Hindu rite was also held, yet the event pointed out the transgression of traditional rules, and showed the possibility of free will.

For two months, the press was loud about the news of these weddings. Photos of happy, smiling couples could be seen everywhere. On the internet blogs you could read detailed descriptions of their wedding venues, makeups, dresses. Who would not want the same wedding, the same love? In India, too, girls dream about their big day. The image of their dreams are a bit different from ours in that they are not wearing white dresses at their wedding, but colorful ones. White is the color of mourning in India. At a Hindu



Priyanka and Nick Jonas on their wedding, wearing traditional Indian clothes.

wedding, the bride traditionally wears a red dress (sari), at Sikh weddings the colours, such as pink, peach, yellow are common. But it can happen that at wealthier families' weddings the bride wears white dress, like in western countries. (For Christians in India, too, a white dress is the custom.) During my time in India, I attended an engagement party, which in terms of decoration, number of guests, hospitality looked the same like a wedding party in Hungary. There, the bride wore a white glittery dress. Her hair and makeup also reminded me of an American beauty-queen.

The whole event was organized in 'western style'. As the fashion of wedding style today, the decoration was also dominated by white colour, although traditionally white is the color of mourning, yet this engagement had white floral decorations everywhere. The guests danced to English hits. Despite their Hindu religion, meat and alcohol were served.



The bride wore a white gown, the other guests did suit and tie, and only a few of the old ladies wore Indian clothes at the engagement party.

The evening was very similar to a wedding or engagement dinner in Hungary, with the difference that in our country the boy surprises the girl with the ring, in this event, according to Indian custom, the young couple exchanged rings, as we do at the wedding ceremony. The engagement and ring exchange can take place much earlier than the wedding, but the engagement is usually held on the first day of the wedding week. In India, it would also be difficult to surprise the girl, as in the case of 'arranged and love marriage', when the two families already have had to agree to their marriage. Of course, as a result of 'Western fashion', there are cases when they pop the question by surprise, but according to my informants, it is starting to spread more in the

upper class or in the middle class who live abroad, because they are much more influenced by American and European customs.

My participation at the mentioned engagement party also confirmed that 'Western fashion' is infiltrating India pretty slowly. Wedding habits are beginning to transform in the middle and upper classes. It is becoming more and more typical that alcohol and meat dishes are served at the wedding, and in addition to traditional Indian sweets, the tiered cake is also becoming indispensable here. And with the Western wave, the desire for love marriage is also starting to spread.

Most of the young people, Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs I met during my research, envisioned the love marriage with an Indian. The image of 'white woman' was equal to an immoral woman⁴⁷, while the Indian woman respects the tradition, she is like the 'perfect type mother'. In the following, I would like to briefly present the image of the ideal Indian woman, and describe what kind of woman and wife the men, among my informants, have a desire for / wish to live with.

⁴⁷ According to my informant, *Gulab*, who said, in his age group they met the idea of a 'white woman' through porn movies in the 1990's. *Gulab* thus explained the general stereotype that a 'white woman' is considered an unreliable, immoral, sex-hungry woman in India.

The ideal Indian woman

To understand the thinking of the ideal woman in India, I need to provide a brief historical explanation.

I am talking about a traditional custom which was banned during British colonization, called '*sati*'. '*Sati*' is a rite in which a widowed wife voluntarily throws herself at the burning bonfire when her husband is buried. The word '*sati*' means virtuous woman. This custom comes from the Indian tradition that a wife had a duty to take care of her husband, and to pray for him. If the husband died, it was through the wife's fault because she did not perform her duties properly. According to the Hindu conception, after the death of the husband, the widow's life became meaningless, she could not remarry, even if she became a widow at a very young age. From there, the family and the community started denying her and endowing the widow with unfortunate negative qualities. Even if the widow stayed with the family, she got less food than the rest of the family, she was allowed to wear only white clothes, and no jewelry. Therefore, it so happened that the virtuous widow went to her husband's bonfire out of her own determination or under the pressure of the family. As I mentioned, the practice of '*sati*' was banned in the early 19th century, yet there are still cases, especially in rural villages, where widows are burned alive at the funeral bonfire. Cases usually do not reveal whether they were made voluntarily or forced by family. (Gáthy, 2017) Sometimes news report incidents of widows getting gas poisoning in their apartments or cars. Most of the people think that the family commits these murders against the widows, but they are disguised as an accident or suicide. Today the '*sati*' as a rite is forbidden by law. My community members are utterly against '*sati*' and condemn it, but they agree that the woman, whom they marry, must be virtuous. She can not remarry, even if her husband dies. Obviously there are changes; earlier the wife used to serve her husband and the family, and later she ate alone, nowadays it is possible for the whole family to sit and eat together. Also the widow women can wear other colours, not only white, but the widow ladies, whom I met in the Sikh community, wore only light colours traditional dresses. As we continue to talk about the dressing sense in India mostly the younger generation follows the 'western fashion'. They wear jeans with T-shirts or tops. But their dressing habits are influenced by their daily routine. For example, *Maaya*, who was a teacher, could not go to work in jeans, and it was required to wear Indian clothes at the school (like '*kurti*' or '*sari*' at

festival occasions). To avoid the judgment of the community and gain acceptance *Maaya* dressed in a 'traditional' way where it was necessary. *Monpreet*, the widow mother, used to wear jeans, T-shirt in her younger age, but after marriage, her father-in-law allowed her to wear only 'traditional Punjabi clothes', and now she does not want to change, because she said, everyone knows in her community, that she is a widow, and widow women should not wear vivid colours, or tight short dresses.

During my fieldwork, I found that women, who dress 'traditionally', were less open to the 'modern world', while the girls, who wore 'western clothes' were more open-minded. *Maaya*, wore mostly Indian clothes, and her view about her marriage and her attitude towards her Sikh community was also 'traditional'. While *Ridhi*, who lived in Mumbai, was completely modern in her dressing; I saw her mostly wearing leggings with a T-shirt. Mumbai, the city where she lived, and her international work environment may have influenced her dressing, I could say she was more 'western-minded'. She loved travelling, was not religious, she was out-going, she often hung out with her male colleagues and friends. Of course, it is not just dressing that makes a woman in India 'traditional' or 'modern'. There are certain rules of behavior that an ideal woman must follow. I fully agree with *Maitrayee Chaudhuri* when she describes the ideal woman as follows: *'The ideal woman would be a judicious blend of traditional qualities of domestic skills, knowledge of religion rituals and practices and modern abilities acquired through education and employment opportunities. In more common parlance the perfect Indian woman ought to be smart but not too smart, traditional but not too much.'* (Chaudhuri, 2012)

Mothers and men, I met during my fieldwork, had similar expectations, and the matrimonial advertisements also portrayed a similar image of women. The ideal woman would know the local language, be able to cook local food, know the rites and practices, be religious so she can protect her husband with her prayers. The ideal woman should be educated, so if needed, she is able to get a job. She may be hardworking, communicative, but not too talkative, loud, or gossipy. Be pretty but not ostentatious. She should be open-minded, 'modern', smart, but not too smart. Lastly, be traditional, but not much, *Chaudhuri* writes. If any man finds such an ideal woman, his parents will be happy for his marriage. In the case of arranged or love marriage, the image of ideal woman, ideal wife was the same. In the next chapter, I will present those conditions of love marriage, without which marriages often fail.

Conditions for successful love marriage

In the previous subsection, I presented a picture of the ideal woman and referred to the type of woman, with whom men and his parents would be satisfied. A beautiful and educated wife should be 'modern' and 'traditional' too in her habits as much as possible. According to general opinion, that kind of woman becomes a good wife and mother. In the case of love, however, among the youth the emphasis is on other qualities. *Ridhi* told me several times what she did not like in her ex-boyfriend and what values she was looking for in her future partner. She wanted a caring, kind, funny man next to her. In the case of love, religion, caste, or skin colour was never mentioned. In contrast, *Ridhi* and his brother, *Gulab*, confirmed that they would only marry someone who is accepted by their mother (*Monpreet*). I have also asked *Maaya* what kind of man she would like to marry and she also mentioned the consent of her mother as one of the most important conditions.

My conversations with the youth turned my interest to the conditions and difficulties of love marriage. I became interested about when a love marriage took place and when it did not. I have already talked about premarital cohabitation (live-in relationship) which is reprehensible in the general opinion, but in the more open-minded families premarital relationships are allowed by parents. However, I have seen a discrepancy between when a daughter and when a son has a relationship before marriage. In the family, where I stayed, both the children, *Ridhi* and *Gulab*, had relationships before marriage (the daughter had sexual relationships, the son had live-in relationship). However, the issue of the wedding came up when *Ridhi* had a relationship, in the past. She was dating a boy from another caste. That was her first relationship, and her parents accepted her boyfriend, so the father asked his daughter if she was serious about this relationship and if she would get married with him. I think it would have been less detrimental to the status of the family if their daughter had not married a Sikh boy, but in the late 2000's it was not acceptable in the suburbs of Kolkata, that a girl has premarital relationships, that she was going out and dating a boy before marriage was considered reprehensible. Thus, the father encouraged her to get married, so he could protect the family from judgment in their community. Finally, they did not marry in spite of the parents' consent. The family's first born, *Gulab*, also had relationships, but the parents did not ask him to get married.

My observations showed that in the case of love marriage, the influence of the parents is as great as in the case of arranged marriage. A wedding can only take place if it is 'arranged' by the parents. *Uberoi's* theory of 'arranged love marriage' was completely valid for the youth I met during my research. However, I saw differences in the conditions of the parents in the case of love marriage, where external features such as skin color and height did not matter much. Education was not among the most important influencing factors, nor was family status. The most important factor that I have seen was the caste and the religion.

In families who believed in caste endogamy, a candidate from another caste had no chance of getting married. For 'modern' thinking families, where the other caste, other religion did not cause any problems, the most important role was played by the following: family's judgement, status, boy's or girl's education, career, inner attributes and finally physical characteristics.

During my research, I met only a few couples who had out-caste love married. According to my informants, love marriages are common among Bengalis in Kolkata. Bengalis often get married at a very young age, for example they marry their first girlfriend from high school. But typically Bengali Hindus marry Bengali Hindus. The isolation of Bengalis is not only observed in their marriage habits. They do not really like making friendships with other castes' members. *Gulab* reported that he had always felt excluded at his schools in Kolkata, where because of his appearance and name, everyone knew he was not Bengali. So most of his friends were not Bengali, their parents were also from different states of India.

Of course, the alienation or prejudice of the Bengalis is not true for everyone, a good example of which is a couple I met through *Gulab*. The husband and wife also grew up in the suburb of Kolkata, they went to school together. The husband is a Sikh man, the girl is a Bengali Hindu. The parents accepted their love relationship on both sides, so they got married a few years ago. In my view, the girl's integration was a bit easier because they did not live together with the boy's family. The boy is a member of the Indian Air Force and his station is far away from Kolkata, in the state of Punjab. They visit home only twice a year. The separation of them in this case was due to the husband's job, but in India large family cohabitation is still typical today. Living under a roof, the cultural differences is a more difficult issue as the girl has to live with the boy's family and fit fully into it. In my research community, they regularly disapproved of those young couples who lived

separately and thus did not take care of the boy's parents. According to my informants the accepted form was the '*joint family system*'. I will present this system in the following chapter.

Cohabitation in the 'joint family system'

The rule of virilocality is not a custom only in the case of arranged marriage. Even during a love marriage, the most common practice is that the girl moves into the boy's family. I have met several families where grandparents, parents, sons and their families lived together. This system is called a '*joint family system*' by social scientists. *Irawati Karve* defines it as '*a group of people who generally live under one roof, who eat food cooked at one health, who hold property in common...*' (Mathai, 1995) In my view, the '*the joint family system*' is still so dominant today among both rural and urban areas because of the lack of social welfare system in India. Due to the overcrowding of public hospitals and the lack of a pension system, parents and grandparents are fully dependent on their children. A large part of the Indian population lives in poverty and the majority live in deep poverty, where there is no possibility of the family property or house being shared, so the most obvious solution to this day is for the family to live under one roof. And this habit dictates that the boy, the breadwinner, stays at home with his family, and the girl, even if she has income, moves into her husband's family. Men, I have met, reported that they had a duty to support their parents as they had no pension or health insurance.

During my fieldwork, I met only one family where the husband moved into the girl's family, which may have happened, because the girl's family had good business and wealth. The family ran a school where the husband was given a leadership position, so he moved from Tamil Nadu to Kolkata. But my informants mostly reported that the girl had to accept to leave her family. They do not like girls who visit their family very often after marriage. The wife needs to be able to fit into her new family. *Monpreet* explained this to me that it is difficult for every girl, but we know that once we have to move away from our family and live far away. But in one generation the world has changed a lot. Thanks to low-cost flights, distances in India have also been 'reduced'. We can be in daily contact with anyone through internet video calls, we do not have to be completely separated from our family. Yet the most important thing, I have noticed during my research, is the belief that caring for the boy's parents is the responsibility of both the boy and his wife. In the

families where they had both boy and girl children, the girls were not planning to take care of their parents in their future, while the newly arrived girl, I mean the wife of their son, had a duty to care for her husband's elderly parents. The '*joint family system*' helped me understand the concept of '*arranged love marriage*' in India. This kind of cohabitation comes with a lot of compromises. I think there are more compromises for the out-caste marriages. Parents still have a serious influence on their children's choice, because the marriage can provide financial security for them and for their children. Overall, if we see the dependence on the caste system, the lack of social services in India, or just simply think about how difficult it is to live together under one roof, it becomes understandable why it matters a lot to the parents whom their children marry.

The future of love and arranged marriage

The year and a half that I have spent on the field has shown that love marriage is gaining ground in India. The phenomenon of love marriage is strongly present in both the media and the local youth's vision. As a result of modernization and globalization, love marriage is becoming more and more widely accepted. In families where parents are more open-minded, children are more likely to choose a partner for themselves. They can make their own decision on the basis of love. But I also got to know that a love marriage can only take place if their parents give their consent. So the term by Uberoi, '*arranged love marriage*' came through better in my researched community as well; we can talk about '*arranged love marriage*' rather than love marriage. While in arranged marriages I found that parents are the 'primary filters' in their children's choice, in love marriages the decision is in the hands of young people. In the case of arranged love marriage, the parents act as a 'secondary filter', but their opinion is also very decisive.

According to my informants, love marriage is an increasingly widely accepted phenomenon, but my data collection has shown that there is no sharp line between arranged and love marriage. The two forms coexist. The youth in my community believe that arranged marriage can also be love; and a love marriage must be accepted and arranged by their parents. There have already been examples of love marriage in my community. Based on my observations, I believe that a process is just beginning now that will later allow young people to choose their partner based solely on their own decision and for parents to treat their children's decision with confidence and understanding.

During my fieldwork, in the case of arranged marriage, the basis of parental acceptance were the aspects of the caste, religion and status of the family. Often, social factors were more important than an individual's personal characteristics. On the other hand, the conversations with the youth have shown that religion already plays a smaller role in their generation. Based on this, I think it is conceivable that in addition to abandoning the practice of religion, the importance of religion and caste will also decrease eventually in the choice of their spouse. The knowledge of English language and the long years of study abroad will increase the number of out-caste marriages. Maybe in a few generations the marriage ads will disappear, or at least transform, and caste will not be one of the most important characteristics of a human being.

At the end of my essay, I would like to summarize the experiences of my research and summarize the conclusions I made by analyzing the data collected during my fieldwork.

Summary

This paper is based on data collected during my first anthropological fieldwork. I conducted my research using participant observation methodology for a year and a half in the suburbs of Kolkata. After a long search, my research field was finally provided by a Sikh community, where I had the opportunity to get to know the daily life of the community and make an attempt to understand what forms of marriage habits exist today and what the locals think about marriage.

A fundamental research question is whether there is still arranged marriage in India, if so, what is the role and perception of arranged marriage in the society. In a short time, I realized that arranged marriage is a form which is still present, as evidenced by the marital advertisements in the newspapers in addition to the reports from my informants. To my question of who and what influences the choice of their partner, I could give two answers: one is the social pressure, which, in my opinion, is due to the caste system that still exists today. This hierarchical system prescribes endogamous and exogamous rules, which are still important today, especially play a decisive role in marriage. I am talking about caste endogamy, because it is still a custom in the Indian society to marry within their own caste. Many are afraid or condemned of out-caste marriage. In addition to the caste, the other significant aspect is religion, which has a great impact on the daily life of

my researched community, including marriage. The other influencing factor in partner choice is the will of the parents. In fact, the social pressure prevails through their will. Parents are the ones who try to arrange their children's marriages with respecting the traditions. They do this because if they find a suitable partner for their child, by this I mean the most important factors like same caste, religion, family background, education, then the status of the family is not violated and even their role and adjudgment within their community can be strengthened. Parents consider it as their duty and task to get their children married in order to strengthen their family status.

In most of the families in my researched community, the father passed away, so the widowed mothers hold the position of head of the family. I have found that children are subordinate to their parents in almost every area of life and listen to them in their decisions. Their individual happiness was subordinated to the family happiness. Young people live their lives as 'part of a big whole' in which they try to meet social expectations and norms throughout. Of course, culture is changing, as young people become more and more open-minded, and they are more interested in the 'Western world'. In the Sikh community, I would describe parents as 'modern, open-minded' middle-class adults who respect tradition and they were not against out-caste marriage or love marriage. Thanks to this, the possibility of love marriage has already appeared in the vision of youth, but the form of arranged marriage has also been accepted by them. They are socialized in the fact that parents are wiser than them, they can get to know people better, so in a situation as important as marriage, they can make a better decision. Marriage is also interesting in India because according to the rule of virilocality, the girl moves to the boy's family and lives together in the '*joint family system*'. I think that this kind of coexistence is facilitated if the bride and the groom are from the same religion and caste, so their expectations and customs are similar. The change, however, is already visible. In my research group, I not only observed a loosening of the endogamic rules of marriage, but I also noticed a change in an important aspect of arranged marriage, I saw how the tradition of giving *dowry* is changing. My informants did not report huge amounts of cash *dowry* but rather they talked about symbolic amounts or gifts as they are keeping the tradition alive. In addition to arranged marriages, love marriages are also becoming more and more accepted, according to my interviewees. Based on my observation and interviews I have come to the conclusion that we cannot draw a sharp line between arranged and love marriage. There are marriages which are fully arranged by the parents, but in my research

community, this form does not mean that the bride and the groom meet for the first time on their wedding day. During my fieldwork, the young people always knew each other before their wedding. They meet several times and only get married if they like each other. In addition to arranged marriage, under the influence of 'modernity', the 'West', and the media, love marriage is also a present form, but my observations led me to conclude that love marriage can only take place if the parents also give their consent from both the sides. My informants have convinced me that an arranged marriage can be transformed into love; and in a love marriage, the parents must agree. Thus, instead of the separation of arranged and love marriage, the following division is more appropriate in my research: '*arranged then love marriage*' and '*arranged love marriage*'. In the practice of both forms, compliance with social norms and subordination to parental control can be identified, through which parents can keep their family status, which is still very important in the hierarchical system.

I hope that I was able to introduce a narrow corner of the Indian marriage habits. The aim of my thesis is to provide an up-to-date picture of the changes in Indian culture by focusing on the issue of marriage. About why and how the habits and customs of the locals change. At the same time, it is important to note that I did not intend to present the entire Sikh religion or the marriage traditions of the people of the whole of West-Bengal, as this would not have been possible either by the time spent on the field or by the methodology of the research.

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**On the Cultural Effects of the COVID
Pandemic | A COVID-járvány kulturális
hatásairól**

Kiss Máté

Miniszterelnöki Facebook videók és politikai antropológiai értelmezési kísérletek járvány idején

„A bácsika azóta is energikusan harcol a fenti célokért. Elérni nem érte el őket, de ez voltaképpen szerencse, mert energikusan harcolhat tovább.”

Spiró György: *Kőbéka*

Bevezetés

Mit tehet, merre fordulhat, hogyan használhatja tudományterületének szempontjait a kulturális – e diszciplínán belül pedig a politikai – antropológia tudáskészletét, elméleteit, példáit ismerő, alkalmazó társadalomtudós egy olyan helyzetben, ami elsősorban természettudományos, orvosi, egészségügyi beszédmódokat hív elő, efféle keretben értelmeződik? Legalábbis első, felületes s természetesen szubjektív pillantásra, vagy az elmúlt egy hónap híreit, hangulatát felidézve erre juthat, némileg elkedvtelenedve a szobájában ülő antropológus. Egy-egy pillanatra azt is gondolhatná, ha nem az orvosi antropológiával, vagy, ami még ígéretesebb specializáció ezekben a hónapokban, egyenesen a járványok antropológiai elemzésével foglalkozik, kétséges, hogy miről és miként tudna releváns kérdéseket és azokra válaszlehetőségeket felvetni egy hivatalosan is világjárvánnyá minősített betegség időszakában.⁴⁸

E helyzet és az antropológus valószínűtlen megmentői a politika terepének aktorai, a politikusok. Hiszen a döntéshozás folyamatai, ezek végrehajtása, a politikai konfliktusok nyilvános, vagy kevésbé nyilvános megvívásai s főképp ezek megjelenítése, elbeszélése, értelmezése a közösség számára nem szakadtak meg. Tartalom és néha forma is megváltozhat, átalakulhat, ám a politika színpadának szereplői továbbra is cselekszenek, hatnak. Időről időre úgy tűnhet, hogy a különféle politikai cselekvések és

⁴⁸ Írásomat április 21-én fejeztem be.

összecsapások hírei, interpretációi meg is szakítják a járványról szóló diskurzust, és áthelyezik például a politikai rendszerről, hatalomról szóló értelmezések keretrendszerébe, ahogyan a különleges jogrend bevezetéséről, szavazásáról, jelentéséről, hatásáról szóló vitákban történt.

A vizsgálat tárgya, kérdései és néhány elméleti megfontolás

Rövid írásomban több okból is egy nyilvánosan hozzáférhető, sőt kifejezetten a nyilvánosságnak szánt politikai akciósorozatot kívánok elemezni. (Az akció és sorozat szavak külön-külön és másféle interpretációban is hozzákapcsolhatók választott témám vizsgálatához.) A hatalom belső folyosóira, termeibe, vagy, kevésbé fennkölt képekkel élve, irodáiba betekinteni, ahol a döntések megszületnek, a tervek készülnek, egy nem önkéntes elvonultságra készítő és kényszerítő időszakban sem az egyszeri antropológus kiváltsága. Így az marad, ami látható, hallható, amit fogyasztásra a köznek szánnak. E széles körbe beletartozhat minden, amit egy politikai szereplőként értelmezett aktor nyilvánosan mond, cselekszik, esetenként persze olyan is, ami a politikus akarata ellenére válik publikussá. A magyar miniszterelnök Facebook videóit kétségkívül közfogyasztásra szánták és szánják megkomponálói, függetlenül az időszaktól. Írásomban azoknak a videóknak egyes elemeit, vonásait elemzem, amik a koronavírus, a járvány témájával foglalkoznak, vagyis a betegség magyarországi megjelenése után kerültek a közösségi oldalra.

Fő kérdéseim közé tartozik a stílus(ok), beszédmódok, a képi világ, helyszín vizsgálat, értelemszerűen főként az antropológiai tudásokat és közeli határtudományok eszközkészletét bevonva. Tehát a klasszikus toposzoknak tekinthető rítus- és szimbólumelemzések nézőpontját felhasználva, etnográfiai példákat idézve haladok, hogy ezek az általánostól talán eltérő nézőpontok, szemléletmódok másfajta interpretációkkal gazdagítsák a politikáról szóló beszédfolyamot. S azért is, hogy egy ismerősnek hitt jelenségről, vagy szereplőről, másféle, nem bejáratott utakon és módokon is lehessen gondolkodni, ezáltal relativizálni az ismertet, vagyis, az antropológia klasszikus irányát megfordítva, idegenné, távolivá tenni azt, ami közel van, Eriksen „homeblindness” (Eriksen 2006:48) fogalmát felidézve, némiképp élesíteni tekintetünket a megszokottra.

Az értelmezés, a vizsgálat megkezdése előtt felvillantok néhány olyan megfontolást az antropológiai értelmezés lehetőségeiről, a politikai nyelv, cselekvés

olvasatainak problematikájáról, amik reményeim szerint egyfajta elméleti alapot, hátteret biztosítanak. Az interpretív antropológia egyik kulcsszövegében, a *Sűrű leírásban*, e hagyomány egyik atyja rögzíti és magyarázza azt az állítást, hogy „az antropológiai írások maguk is értelmezések, ráadásul másod- és harmadkézbéliek” (Geertz 2006:725). Azaz ebből a látószögből nézve a kutató értelmezéseket értelmez, ezek szükségképpen fikciók, de, ahogyan Geertz kiemeli, ez nem hamisságukat, elképzeltségüket jelenti, hanem a szó eredetéhez visszatérve azt, hogy „csináltak”, „alakítottak.” Értelmezések persze eszerint a vizsgálat tárgyai, vagyis jelen esetben a miniszterelnöki videók sora is. Kétségtelen, hogy ezek is csináltak, alakítottak, s ezen túl szándékuk és tartalmuk alapján „csináltatni” és alakítani is akarnak azáltal, hogy helyzeteket értelmeznek, értelmezési recepteket kínálnak fel vagy adott esetben akár konkrét utasításokat közölnek, ismertetnek.

Az úgynevezett valóság, igazság és fikció, hazugság szembeállítását elemzi a diszkurzív politikatudomány nézőpontjából Szabó Márton is, aki végül megállapítja, tarthatnak egy politikai szólamot, témát vagy mítoszt hamisnak, képzelgésnek az ellenfelek, kritikusok vagy akár az utókor, „ha azonban nyilvános formáról van szó, amely megragadható és értelmezhető többek számára is, akkor a fikció, tűnjék bármilyen képtelenségnek mások szemében, politikai realitás, amelynek nem a léte, hanem a természete és működése kérdéses csupán” (Szabó 2016:151). Ezen alapvetésekből kiindulva kívánom elemezni a (legtöbbször) rövidke filmeket, videókat, melyeket tehát konstrukcióknak, értelmezéseknek tekintek, s amiknek működési mechanizmusait, attribútumait kísérlem meg bemutatni, nem pedig tartalmukat kritikai szemmel vizsgálni és értékelni.

(Egyfajta) politikai antropológiai nézőpontú értelmezési kísérlet

Március negyedike (a vírus első említése óta, ezen a platformon) és április huszadika között ötven videót publikáltak Orbán Viktor Facebook oldalán. Ezek legtöbbje a miniszterelnök egy-két perces bejelentkezése, egy-egy útjának, teendőinek végigkövetése, és csupán nyolc olyan videó van, ami az országgyűlés ülésén való felszólalások, sajtótájékoztatók vagy a pénteki rádióinterjúk megvágott részleteit mutatja be. Tehát a mozgóképek legtöbbje kifejezetten erre a fórumra, ebbe a speciális virtuális térbe készült, így ennek sajátosságaitól sem függetlenítheti magát az elemzés, hiszen

egyres stílusjegyek, elemek összefügghetnek azzal a képpel, ami a Facebookra való ideális tartalmakról, megfelelő formáról a készítő, ötletgazdák fejében él.

Elsőként a filmekben megjelenő két jellemző helyszín ürügyén reflektálok a hatalommal bíró embert körülvevő, a személyes hatalmát vagy éppen az állam erejét, netán ezek egybefonódását megjelenítő szimbólumokra és ezek lehetséges értelmezéseire. Fentebb a hatalom kíváncsiskodó, kémlelő szemek elől lezárt tereire utaltam, azonban ezekben a videókban mégiscsak pillantást vethet a néző (legyen az többé-kevésbé semleges érdeklődő, rajongó, utálkozó) erre az egyébként elfedett világra. Természetesen ez a tekintet egy engedélyezett, vezetett, kreált tekintet, pusztán az és úgy ismerhető meg, látható és hallható, amit a készítő ismertetni, láttatni, hallatni kívánnak. Az, hogy ez a virtuális látogatás a hatalom belső tereibe csupán időleges, néhány percig tarthat, egyértelműen jelzi az alkotások hossza, végük a látogatás végét is jelzi. S legtöbbször a néző egy-egy mondatot, mondatfoszlányt, jellemzően az üdvözlést, a bevezető mondatokat kaphatja el, majd a videónak vége, a többi néma csend, legalábbis a képernyőn, míg az aktuális tanácskozás vélelmeshetően folyik tovább.

A már-már intim betekintés és kizárás gesztusainak kettősségére, váltakozásának érdekességére és ennek egyszerű, de hatásos szimbolizálására feltehetően a készítő is ráérezhettek, így ezt tulajdonképpen hangsúlyozzák is. A becsukott, vagy becsukódó ajtó képe, akár éppen a főszereplő által, ráirányítja a figyelmet a zártságra, a titokra, de legalábbis a tárgyalandó témák fontosságára, komolyságára, kényességére, pontos határt von a tájékoztatás, közlés és a nyilvánosságra nem tartozóknak ítélt információk, események között. Ez az aktus, az ajtó bezárása és ezzel egyetemben a kíváncsiskodó pillantás megszüntetése rímelhet Zempléni András titok meghatározásának egy elemére, jelesül arra, hogy a titok „egy elválasztott és félretett tartalom vagy szubsztancia” (Zempléni 2000:182). Az elválasztás itt láthatóan, hangsúlyozottan, talán dramaturgiai célból történik, és kiemeli a titok egy másik, paradox attribútumát, „hogy csak úgy tud fennmaradni, ha valamilyen módon a címzettek jelzést kapnak róla[...]” (Zempléni 2000:183).

A két jellemző helyszín, ahol a tanácskozások zajlanak, ajtók nyitódnak és csukódnak, a Belügyminisztérium és a miniszterelnök várbeli irodájának helyet adó volt karmelita kolostor épülete. Az első az operatív törzs kora reggeli üléseinek helyszíne, ahogyan erre a videók is utalnak az időpont kiírásával, vagy esetenként Orbán Viktor

osztja meg munkája kezdetének időpontját.⁴⁹ A második tér pedig az akciócsoportok esti, napvégi találkozásának ad helyet, egyébként itt vált meghatározó szereplővé, lezáró jelképpé az ajtó is.⁵⁰ Állam és hatalom központi épületei és intézményei ezek, ugyanakkor nem pusztán építmények, építőanyagokból összerakott fizikai tárgyak, hanem megtelnek cselekvéssel, interpretációkkal, nagy szót (talán túl nagyot is) idecitálva, kultúrával.

Geertz karizmáról, királyokról és központokról írott művében, bár történelmi példákat elevenít fel, a jelent (legalábbis az ő akkori jelenét) sem hagyja figyelmen kívül. „Ezek azok – koronák és koronázások, limuzinok és konferenciák – amik meghatározzák a centrumot mint centrum, és az ott zajló történéseknek megadják azt a kisugárzást, hogy ezek nem pusztán fontosak, hanem valamilyen furcsa módon kapcsolatban állnak azzal is, hogyan épül fel a világ”⁵¹ (Geertz 1983:124). Interpretív szemszögből vizsgálva, a hatalmon levő tehát nem pusztán az erejét, követőinek számát, meggyőzőerejét használja fel, hanem jelképek, szimbólumok, rítusok és ceremóniák sokaságát, melyek a világról és a benne való életről is állítani akarnak valamit, vagy akár befolyásolni is kívánják ezeket. Kétségtelen, hogy a Geertz által felidézett első Erzsébet angol királynő díszes, vallásos jelképektől hemzseggő didaktikus menetei, Hayam Wuruk jávai uralkodó véget nem érő pompázatos útjai, és a marokkói királyok folytonos mozgása trónjuk megtartásának érdekében első olvasásra sokkal jelentőség- és jelentésteljesebbnek tűnnek, mint a magyar miniszterelnök fekete kisbusszal való megérkezése egy hajnali órában a Belügyminisztérium elé.

Hasonlóképpen, ezek a többé-kevésbé jól ismert, megszokott helyszínek is eltörpülhetnek azok mellett a képek, leírások mellett, amikben Geertz bemutatja a királyi központok, paloták komplex rendszerét. Ugyanakkor ellentmondásos módon éppen ez lehet, ami jelentőségükre és potenciális jelentéseikre rámutathat, nem a túlzott kiváltságosság hangsúlyozása, hanem éppen az egyszerűség, a közülünk valóság bizonyítása vagy ennek kísérlete. Bár az is igaz, hogy a miniszterelnöki, elnöki autók vagy konvojok elsőbbséget élveznek, vagy akár városok, városrészek teljes lezárását kényszeríthetik ki ma is, függően utasaiktól. Épületek pedig sugallhatják a pompa vagy

⁴⁹ Például: „Nyolcadik nap, 5:55. Operatív törzs, Belügyminisztérium”

<https://www.facebook.com/orbanviktor/videos/2391151241175681/>

⁵⁰ „Nyolcadik nap, 19:58. Akciócsoportok ülése”

<https://www.facebook.com/orbanviktor/videos/2768824819903907/>

⁵¹ Saját fordításom, az eredeti angol szöveg a következőképpen hangzik: „It is these--crowns and coronations, limousines and conferences--that mark the center as center and give what goes on there its aura of being not merely important but in some odd fashion connected with the way the world is built.”

egyszerűség képeit, (ahogyan a karmelita kolostor neve sem utasítja el az utóbbi értelmezést, sem a videókban látható dísztelen, fehér folyosói) mégis központtá, a hatalom terévé a hatalmat birtokló személy, vagy személyek csoportja teszi őket.

A következőkben a külsőségeket, helyszíneket elhagyva, vagy inkább ezeket szóval és tettel megtöltve, a kisfilmekben elhangzó beszéd néhány jellemző stílusjegyre, ismétlődő formájára fordítom figyelmem. Azt már fentebb rögzítettem, hogy a politikai szövegeket valóságosként, úgynevezett valóságunkra hatóként értelmezem, ennél a pontnál pedig, a tettek megemlékezésénél, kiemelném, szintén a Szabó Márton féle megközelítésmódra támaszkodva, hogy „nemcsak a szövegek, hanem a cselekedetek is olvashatóak, mert a cselekedetek szövegszerű struktúrával bírnak” (Szabó 2016:69). A végignézett ötven videó alapján két alapvető, hangsúlyos stílusjellemzőt különböztetek meg a miniszterelnöki beszéddel vagy beszélgetésekkel kapcsolatban. Az egyik nagyobb jellemző csoport az informális, köznapi szavak, szófordulatok használata, míg a másik, gyakorta előforduló kifejezések halmaza a katonai, militáns terminusok alkalmazása vagy stílszerűen: bevetése. Ha a tettek, cselekvések körét szemléljük, akkor is hasonló elhatárolást tehetünk.

A járvány magyarországi megjelenése után létrehozott és videókban is szereplő, nagy nyilvánosságot kapó formális egységek nevei hangsúlyosan katonai, rendészeti érzetet, hangulatot keltenek: operatív törzs, akciócsoportok. A filmek főszereplője is gyakorta használ efféle jellegű szavakat, szófordulatokat, vagy akár reflektál a katonaságra mint egykori élményre, és összekapcsolja a jelenlegi helyzettel: „6 órakor ül össze minden nap az operatív törzs, ott kezdjük a munkát, és minden nap este fejezzük be, általában az akciócsoportok vezetőinek a jelentéseit hallgatjuk meg. Kicsit katonaság-szaga van a dolognak, de szerencsére voltunk katonák, így át tudtunk állni erre az életmódra.”⁵² De éppen így betegekről szóló dialógusban is alkalmazza a vezénylés terminust, a különféle eszközök beszerzésére pedig a portyázást. A militáns jelleget tovább erősíti a Belügyminisztérium előtt álló rendőr tisztelgése, s bár valószínűtlen, hogy ez a gesztus a jelenlegi helyzet folyománya, ám az, hogy a maximum kétperces videókban ez benne maradt, kétségkívül hangsúlyozza ezt a momentumot. Hasonlóképpen ezt az értelmezést erősíti az a jelenet is, amikor március tizenötödikén, a repülőtéren, belgrádi

⁵² <https://www.kormany.hu/hu/a-miniszterelnok/beszedek-publikaciok-interjuk/orban-viktor-a-kossuth-radio-jo-reggelt-magyarorszag-cimu-musoraban-20200320>
„Kilencedik nap. Kossuth Rádió”
<https://www.facebook.com/orbanviktor/videos/622185845296929/>

útja előtt a magyar honvédség nevében köszönti a miniszterelnököt egy katonanő, és nemzeti ünnep lévén, kitűzi neki a kokárdát.⁵³ De így jelentenek természetesen a megszemlélt kórházak katonai parancsnokai, vagy éppen a maszkokat gyártó fegyintézet kamera elé kerülő személyzete is.⁵⁴

Az informális, köznapi kifejezések és helyzetek használata, propagálása valamilyen kép, reprezentáció konstruálása céljából bizonyosan nem számíthat újdonságnak, ahogyan erre F. G. Bailey utal is, amikor a tömegek megnyerésére két tipikus utat, stratégiát mutat be. Egyik jellemző út az emberek felett álló, isteni vagy félisteni magasságokba törekvő vezető képe, a másik pedig az emberek közül egy, a nép egyszerű gyermekének szerepét magára öltő politikus alakja. (Bailey 2001:68–71) A politika intézményes, formális vagy akár ritualizált beszédmódját, elvárt retorikai stílusát megtörő politikusok nem korunk termékei, ahogyan Bailey kiemeli, huszadik század eleji példákat is felemlítve.⁵⁵

Ugyanakkor itt tér vissza az elemzés szempontjai közül a médium kérdése. A Facebook, mint platform bizonyos értelemben követeli a rövid, személyes formát, azok a kifejezések, melyek mondjuk egy interjúhelyzetben, ünnepi szónoklatban furcsának tűnnének, éppen a kulisszák mögé pillantás tapasztalata miatt válnak természetessé. Az operatív törzs ülésekor elhangzó „elnézést, csak most tudtam végezni a másik melómmal, ezért jöttem kicsit később”⁵⁶, a reptéren Palkovics miniszternek szóló „bent találkozunk”⁵⁷, a hőmérés harmincnégy fokos eredményére való reflektálás, a „pálinkát kell innom”⁵⁸ vagy a lélegeztetett beteg megszemlélése után a „nem néz ki jól”⁵⁹ megjegyzések mind értékelhetők úgy, mint a politikusi vagy akár nem politikusi beszéd informális szférájába tartozó elemek. Az ön-, illetve politikusi reprezentáció egyik részét jelentő hétköznapiság megjelenítése és hangsúlyozása nem kizárólagos, a rövidke

⁵³ „A haza minden előtt” <https://www.facebook.com/298090296092/videos/141823857170458/>

⁵⁴ „Harmincegyedik nap. Mobil járványkórház, Kisunhalas”
<https://www.facebook.com/orbanviktor/videos/528613601137019/>

„Harmincegyedik nap. Fegyház, Kiskunhalas”
<https://www.facebook.com/orbanviktor/videos/627302134516734/>

⁵⁵ Lásd például: Parkin, David (1997): A politikai nyelv. In: *Politikai antropológia*. Zentai Violetta (szerk.). Budapest, Osiris Kiadó.

⁵⁶ „Operatív Törzs” <https://www.facebook.com/298090296092/videos/671347490341603/>

⁵⁷ „Tizenharmadik nap. Befutott a keleti portyázók újabb szállítmánya. Több mint 3 millió maszk, 100 ezer teszt, 86 lélegeztetőgép Kínából”

<https://www.facebook.com/orbanviktor/videos/232213294589368/>

⁵⁸ „Harminckettedik nap. Balassa János Kórház, Szekszárd”
<https://www.facebook.com/orbanviktor/videos/711941662751463/>

⁵⁹ „Harmincadik nap. Szent Imre Kórház”
<https://www.facebook.com/298090296092/videos/3200834619962867/>

beszámolóiban is hallhatunk költői képekkel operáló, a főszereplőtől megszokottnak tekinthető mondatokat, például az ellenzéki parlamenti képviselők nem-szavazatát úgy értékeli: „léket kapott a védekezésünk hajója, de sikerült befoltozni.”⁶⁰

Egy másik, antropológiai, antropológusi szemszögből vizsgálódó pillantást érdemlő, analógiáért kiáltó mozzanat lehet a rendeletek aláírásának, lepecsételésének aktusa, amiről külön filmcsekék is felkerültek a miniszterelnöki oldalra.⁶¹ A döntések, rendelkezések hivatalossá válásának, talán még kifejezőbb szóval, szentesítésének sokféle formát ölthető gesztusa nyilvánvalóan nem a modernitás terméke. Az Egyesült Államok Kongresszusát vizsgáló Jack McIver Weatherford úgy ítéli meg saját társadalmának kultúráját, hogy „Amerika a papírrítusok kultúrájává vált” (Weatherford 2005:264), ám számomra kétséges, hogy ez csupán a hetvenes évek Amerikájára volna igaz, és nem lehetne efféle szemszögből interpretálni saját világunkat is.

A politikai terv, elhatározás formába öntött, látható és tapintható, megszövegezett tárgyai, a papírok tekinthetők rituális tárgyakként. „Más tiszteletben álló rituális tárgyakhoz hasonlóan a papírokat lehet dédelgetni és mutogatni, de nem szabad összehajtani, meggyűrni, vagy megcsonkítani” (2005:261) írja Weatherford a modernitásban való létezésnek – sokszor szó szerint is – életbevágó kellékeiről, melyek, bár az állam csúcsáról indulnak újtukra, behálózják az egész közösséget és a mindennapi életet is. A videóiban pedig éppen azt láthatjuk, amikor az állam végrehajtó szervének vezetője a testet öltött rendelkezéseket tulajdonképpen életre hívja, aláírásával és a pecsételéssel valósággá vagy legalábbis elvárt, követendő és kikényszeríthető lehetőségekké alakítja őket.

Weatherford egy másik alkalmazhatónak, megfontolandónak tűnő analógiája a kongresszusi politikusok „nagy emberré”⁶² válásának különféle taktikáit vizsgáló fejezetrészből kölcsönözhető. A nyilvánosságot, közvéleményt meghódítani akaró, mindenhol (de főként válságövezetekben) ott termő, sokszor elnökjelölti ambíciókat dédelgető kongresszusi tagokat a sámánokhoz hasonlítja. Mely sokkal hízelgőbbnek tűnik

⁶⁰ „Huszdik nap. A védekezés folytatódik”

<https://www.facebook.com/orbanviktor/videos/166614884461752/>

⁶¹ „Huszonötödik nap. Aláírtam a kormányrendeletet. Hétfőtől díjmentes lesz a közterületi parkolás Magyarországon”

<https://www.facebook.com/orbanviktor/videos/357042781870497/>

„Tizenhatodik nap. Kijárási korlátozás. Rendelet aláírva, pecsételve”

<https://www.facebook.com/298090296092/videos/582579745674014/>

⁶² Lásd például az online hozzáférhető *Antropológiai, etnológiai, kultúratudományi kislexikon* „Big Man”, „nagy ember” címszavait: <http://mek.oszk.hu/10200/10291/10291.pdf>

mint a kongresszusi, vagyis ebben az esetben „benszülött”, émikus megnevezése ezeknek a politikusoknak, ami nem más mint a „cirkuszi ló”. Az amerikai antropológus a sámánok, orvosságos emberek tevékenységének analógiájára e politikusok cselekvéseinek mechanizmusát a következőképpen írja le: „Éppúgy, mint minden sámán, ők is összekeverik a világ valós tragédiáit és veszélyeit temérdek láthatatlan és nem létező tragédiával és veszéllyel, hogy olyasmi iránt ébresszenek félelmet, amelyekről a leendő áldozatoknak az a meggyőződésük, hogy megvédeni őket egyedül a sámánnak áll hatalmában és akaratában” (Weatherford 2005:95–96).

A leírás első pillantásra sokkal pontosabban illeszthető például az elmúlt évek bevándorlásellenes kampányaira vagy Soros Györgyöt mint világméretű összeesküvéseket szervező alakot felfestő narratívájára. Ugyanakkor érdemes egyfelől figyelembe venni, hogy ezek a politikai történetek, mítoszok bár háttérbe szorulhattak a járvány uralkodó diskurzusával szemben, azért időről-időre újra felbukkannak, akár össze is kapcsolódnak, másfelől a sámán analógiájával értelmezett politikus alapműködése nem szükségszerűen változik meg egy valóságos krízishelyzetben sem. A közösség hitének, bizalmának fokozása, biztosítása, a lelkesítés, a biztonság, a szervezettség, a védelem ígérete és ennek performatív véghezvitele, például a kórház és más intézmények végiglátogatásával, majd végül ezen utak esszenciájának megjelenítése a nyilvánosság számára, mind-mind értelmezhető e sámáni analógia keretei között.

Összegzés

Zárásképpen hangsúlyoznám, hogy ennek a (reményeim szerint) provokatív elemeket elemzésbe emelő, netán kérdéseket felvető, talán új nézőpontokat felvillantó, legjobb esetben vitára sarkalló elemzéskezdeménynek a legfőbb célja egy ismertnek vélt, ismertként számon tartott és így-úgy megítélt politikai szereplő tetteinek és ezek rögzített bemutatásának interpretációja volt, különféle, szándékosan távoli példákat, analógiákat idézve. Kétségtelen, hogy az értelmezés folyamata különböző további elemek, rétegek vizsgálatával bővíthetné és szükségszerűen bővítené is a kiragadott jelenségek és ezek magyarázatainak sorát, hiszen a „kulturális elemzés lényegéhez tartozik, hogy: befejezetlen. S ami ennél is rosszabb, minél mélyebbre hatol; annál kevésbé teljes” (Geertz

2006:738). Ám ebben a rövidke írásban a számomra leghangsúlyosabb mozzanatokot kötöttem össze az általam használt és kedvvel forgatott antropológiai irodalom alkalmazhatónak vélt eseteivel, beszámolóival vagy fogalmaival, így került középpontba a beszédstílusok, a hatalom tereinek, központjának kérdésköre, a modernitás rítusai között értelmezhető politikai szertartás egy apró példája és a többi fentebb taglalt témakör.

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Kovács Endre

Összeesküvés elméletek és spiritualitás a koronavírus tükrében

Bevezetés

Az utóbbi időben az élő interjúzás a vírushelyzet okán bevezetett korlátozások miatt nem járható út, ezért hogy kutatásom során közelebb kerüljek a kérdéseim feltárásához, az értelmezendő adatokat Facebook bejegyzésekből, cikkekből és az interneten fellelhető videókból gyűjtöttem össze. Az így összegyűjtött adatokon túl elemzésemben korábbi tapasztalatokra és személyes beszélgetésekre támaszkodtam. A digitális platformokon megjelenő narratívák értelmezése új kutatási perspektívát nyújtott, mely felhívta figyelmem az összeesküvés-elméletek és a spiritualitás kérdéskörének fontosságára. Jelen írásomban ebből kifolyólag az összeesküvés-elméletekkel és a spiritualitással kapcsolatban felmerülő kérdésekre keresem a lehetséges válaszokat a koronavírus tükrében. Az úgynevezett konspirációs teóriák egy rengeteg lehetőséget és témát magába foglaló halmaz, így főleg a spirituális vagy az érzékszervekkel nem tapasztalható valóságot feltételező vírus-összeesküvés-elméletekre fókuszáltam. Fontosnak tartom megjegyezni, hogy ezek az elméletek – főleg, ami a vírust illeti – egyáltalán nem függetlenek a politikától sem, legalábbis az általam tapasztaltak alapján nem, így az egész témakör gyakran komoly politikai kérdés is az adott csoport, vagy csoportok számára.

A vírus tetőzése alatt felszínre törő feltételezett, komplex összeesküvés-rendszerek a tapasztalataim alapján határozottan reflektálnak a politikára is, ami fontos abban a tekintetben, hogy mennyire járul ez hozzá a spirituális identitáshoz. Emellett azért is fontos kérdés számomra, mert a modern értelemben vett spiritualitást nehéz elhelyezni az élet bármely területén, főleg a politikában. Bár a gyűjtött példák extrém esetek és szélsőségesnek tűnnek, valójában a magyar hétköznapi pártpolitikai narratíva is olyan kifejezésekkel él, mint a túlzónak tűnő „szektás” csoport tagjai, a kifejezések mögött meghúzódó ideológia pedig talán általánosnak is mondható, gondoljunk csak a nemekhez társított „princípiumokra”. Néhány összeesküvés-elméletben határozott

politikai állásfoglalást fogunk látni. Mindezek alapján azt gondolom, hogy komolyabban kell venni a modern spiritualitás állásfoglalását, mert meghatározó számú ember vallja magáénak, és ugyan ezt gondolom az összeesküvés elméletek népszerűségéről is.

Írásomban olyan kérdésekre keresem a választ, ami segít megérteni a dolgok összefüggését: vallás-e a New Age, mi köze van a konspirációs elméletekhez a spiritualizmusnak, mi köti össze az „UFO vallásokat” az újpogánysággal és miért ilyen meghatározóak a közéletben mind az összeesküvés-elméletek, mind a modern spiritualitás, ha a jelenség önmagára, mint a többségi „birkanép” közül kikerülő „ébredzők”-ként⁶³ tekint?

A konkrét elméletek sokaságában nehezen tájékozódnak a „hívők”, a gyűjtésem alapján elmondható, hogy a többség nem tudja eldönteni mi a konkrétum bizonyos jelenségekkel kapcsolatban, de az mindenképpen biztos számukra, hogy valamilyen gonosz, rosszindulatú és rejtett erők munkálkodnak a világunk rosszabbá tételén, és rengeteg a közös jellemző, többek között a fentebb említett nemi identitás (*princípium*) kérdésében is.⁶⁴ Az összeesküvés-elméletekben mindig megjelenik a jó és a rossz éles kettéválása és szembenállása, amit *manicheus gondolkodásnak*⁶⁵ hív a szakirodalom (Kapitány–Kapitány 2018: 32; Oliver–Wood 2014: 953). A rossz oldalon állhatnak „gonosz” emberek is, akik irányítják a világot, de gyakran ezek gonosz entitások vagy rossz szándékú földönkívüliek is lehetnek. Az általam figyelt csoportok és emberek reakciója a koronavírusra bár különbözőek, mégis kiválóan mutatják az összeesküvés-elméleteket vallók közös világszemléletét.

⁶³ Ezek a kifejezések nagyon gyakoriak az összeesküvés elméletet terjesztők csoportjában. A „birkák”, akik még nem látják a hétköznapi történések mögött meghúzódó összeesküvéseket, az „ébredzők” pedig azok, akik már kezdik megkérdőjelezni az általános magyarázatokat, ezzel kezdenek „ráébredni a valóságra”, ezzel mintegy leleplezik a szerintük valóságos és rosszindulatú háttérhatalmat.

⁶⁴ A hagyományos férfi és női szerepek szakralizált magyarázata, eszerint gyakran a férfi és a nő, egy kétpólusú világfelosztás két jól elkülöníthető, de egymást kiegészítő része. Ez többnyire feltételezi, hogy a természetes társas viszony egy férfi és egy nő között jön létre, és azt, hogy a nemek mögött egy magasabb természeti duális erőpár nyilvánul meg. Magyarországon nem találkoztam spirituális körökben ettől nagyon eltérő elképzeléssel.

⁶⁵ A manicheizmus egy szinkretista, perzsa eredetű vallás volt, mely magába olvasztotta a zoroasztriánus kozmológiát, mely szerint a gonosz Ahriman folytonos harcot vív a jó Ahura Mazdával.

Spiritualizmus, New Age és „Konteo”

Az összeesküvés-elmélet kifejezést először Karl Popper használta a *The Open Society and Its Enemies* című könyvében, melyben így körvonalazza azt: „Az összeesküvés elméletek a vallási hiedelmek szekularizációjának az eredménye.” (Robertson 2015: 6)

Ez az idézet magyarázatot adhat arra is, hogy miért függ össze a vallás a spirituális étellel, illetve arra, hogy az önmagukat spirituálisnak vallók miért utasítják el az intézményesített vallásosságot. Nem elhanyagolható a „spirituális, de nem vallásos” (SBNR – Spiritual but not religious) emberek száma, így a jelenség önmagában figyelemreméltó. Egy spirituális közösségben végzett terepkutatásomban is ez a spirituális, de nem vallásos identitás érhető tetten. Ennek a közösségnek a világnézete teljesen össze van fonódva az összeesküvés-elméletekkel. Néhány eset kivételével ez nem igaz, de korábbi tapasztalataim is azt támasztják alá, hogy a spiritualizmus, ezoterizmus és New Age szinte elválaszthatatlan a konspirációs elméletektől. Az alábbiakban bemutatok egy különleges Facebook posztot, ami magába foglal szinte minden elméletet, melyeket külön gyűjtöttem, így hiánypótló kiindulási alapnak tartom. A poszt és a többi gyűjtés pontos forrásáról sajnos nem közölhetek pontos adatokat, mivel az személyi jogokat sért. A poszt először érthetetlennek tűnhet, de a továbbiakban fejezetekre bontva megkísérlem kibontani a lehető legtöbb elemét, amin keresztül remélem, hogy feltárul az egész vizsgált világszemlélet és megtörténik annak megértése. A koronavírus köré olyan komplex világképet alkottak meg, amiben több meglévő összeesküvés-elmélet bőven megfér egymás mellett. Lássuk a posztot:

„a most zajló eseményekről röviden, összefoglalva, főleg az angolul beszélni nem akarók kedvéért (nekik ugyanis csak a világ híreinek a szűk kis százaléka marad, míg valaki le nem fordítja):

- van koronavírus, ami egy sima - de genetikailag felturbózott - influenzavírus*
- önmagától nem halálos, egy nap alatt kiköhögöd, kivéve ha közben 5G sugárzással gyengítik az immunrendszered*
- az elit terve a sok halál volt, a kötelező védőoltás, és végül a totál-kontroll újvilág, ezért a kijárási tilalom alatt még gyorsan felszereltek pár 5G antennát és próbálnak még pár halottat csinálni*
- a kötelező védőoltással megcsinálták volna a teljes populáció rejtett becsipelését - így már viszont erre sem kerül sor*

- a Napból hihetetlen erős DNS upgrade-elő sugárzást kapunk, ami segítene minket tisztán érzékelő isten-emberekké válni - az 5G viszont épp ez ellen lett kitalálva, hogy a DNS-t károsítsa és ostoba birka szinten tartsa a populációt

- Trumpék közben a hadsereggel folyamatosan tartóztatják le és füstölik ki a háttérhatalmi elit démonjait a földalatti bunkereikből, ezért vannak mindenhol folyamatos, apró 'földrengések'

- akik követték eddig Trump és Q tweetjeit, azok pontosan látják hogy az történik, amit hónapokkal ezelőtt beharangoztak

- a letartóztatott gyerekevő, adrenochrome zabáló hollywoodi szörny-színészek, mint T.Hanks és Madonna, már a cellájukban készített fotókat posztolnak, illetve kártyatrükkökbe bújtatott okkult üzenetekben figyelmeztetik egymást az elkerülhetetlen bilincsről ami jár nekik

- a mainstream médiát közben átvették Trumpék, úgyhogy már onnan sem csak a félelemkeltés fog folyni

- ha nagyhatalmú elit tagokról, királyi család-tagokról, cégvezérekről azt olvasod hogy 'koronavírusos lett', az azt jelenti hogy berácsolták és várja a hadbírószági tárgyalását az emberiség ellen elkövetett bűnökért

- Trump is és mindenki 15 nap 'sötétség'-et emleget, úgyhogy valószínűleg egy jó darabig nem lesz se internet, se tévé, de lehet hogy áram sem - viszont 5G sem!

- ez lehet egy elkövetkező nagy Napkitörés miatt is, de a lényeg hogy szükséges egy teljes rendszer-újraindításhoz

- utána új pénzrendszer lesz, Trumpék már elvileg semlegesítették a FED-et, a hiteleket már ugye eltörölték, valószínűleg soha többé nem látjuk már ezt az adósságalapú elnyomó pénzvilágot

- lehet számítani a feltétel nélküli alapjövedelem bevezetésére is, ezt pár országban már el is kezdték (Hong Kong, Anglia, USA, Kanada stb.)

Egyelőre ennyi jutott eszembe, a többiek nyugodtan tovább fűzhetik az info halmazt.

aki röhögéssel reagál, az legyen szíves, egyúttal töröljön is az ismerősei közül, hisz nincs egymásra szükségünk, se neki, se nekem."

A fenti poszt egyáltalán nem számít egyedinek, a különböző elméletek kombinálása egy globális összeesküvés részévé szinte magától értetődő a kutatott csoportokban. Ez logikusan következik akkor, ha az ember elsajátítja ezt a látásmódot, mivel minden dolgot kénytelen megkérdőjelezni maga körül. Egy személyes beszélgetésem alkalmával, mikor

a NASA csalásairól volt szó, az egyik beszélgetőpartnerem kiválóan világított rá erre a gondolkodásmódra. Ő azt mondta, szerinte nem tudhatjuk, hogy a Föld lapos-e vagy gömbölyű, de szerinte nem is fontos ez a kérdés, ahogyan szerinte azoknak sem igazán ez számít, akik a lapos Föld mellett érvelnek. Szerinte ezek az emberek élni akarnak azzal a jogukkal, hogy megkérdőjelezzék a fősodratú elképzeléseket általában bármiről, és olyan alaplolgokig mennek el, amit a nagy többség nem mer megkérdőjelezni. Ezzel röviden összefoglalta az én álláspontomat is, azt gondolom van igazság ebben. Ha a konspirációs teóriák hívei valóban ezzel a logikával gondolkodnak, akkor miért ne állítanának össze egy komplex világképet és vetítenék azt rá a körülöttük lévő világ jelenségeire? Valójában úgy működnek, mint bárki más, például én magam, amikor ezekről az emberekről, mint beazonosítható csoportról gondolkodom.

Az idézett posztot a következő fejezetekben kategorizálom és az esettanulmányaim alapján megpróbálom kifejtetni azokat.

„A vírus nem létezik” teória

„- van koronavírus, ami egy sima - de genetikailag felturbózott – influenzavírus”

A kezdeti kijelentés, miszerint „van koronavírus” egy fontos állásfoglalás a konspirációs elméleteken belül, mivel elterjedt nézet az, hogy a vírus valójában nem létezik:

„...Nincs vírus, csak politikai pánik keltés!

Sehol a környező országokban nem emelkedett az előző évekhez képest a halálozási szám, inkább csökkent.

Sima gyenge mezei influenza járványra ültették ezt az egész hisztériát, mert jelentősen kezdett nőni a világban a tudatos emberek száma, akik valódi - ISMÉTLEM, VALÓDI - változást akarnak, mert ez az ember és életellenes fogyasztói rendszer mára fenntarthatatlan, ahogy a Földanya további kiszipolyozása is!

Tehát kellett egy világméretű pánik, hisztéria és félelemkeltés, ahhoz, hogy több legyen a negatív energia a világban. Ez kezd most lecsengeni és majd jön egy újabb hazugság, melynek látszik az iránya az elhúzódó vírusjárvány c. újabb pánikkeltéssel.

Az első sokk hatás kezd lecsengeni és egyre gyorsabban ébrednek az emberek a valóságra, és kezdik kiismerni a viláгурalomra törők aljas módszereit.

Itthon nálunk kicsit lassabb a folyamat, mert az orbáni maffia média terjeszti a rémhíreket! A valós helyzetről, ami más országokban történik nincs igazán média hír, csak a netről lehet összecsipegetni a valóságot.”

A fenti poszt alapján láthatjuk, hogy egy bizonyos háttérhatalomnak az érdekében áll, hogy ne lássák az emberek a valóságot és ehhez a vírus is csak egy eszköz a kezükben. Alább egy másik példa látható arra, hogy egyesek szerint a vírus nem létezik:



Ezekhez képest látni fogjuk, hogy sok konspirációs elmélet igenis feltételezi a vírus valóságát, ahogyan a kezdeti narratíva is erről nyilatkozik meg.

5G, mint vírussal összefüggő összeesküvés terv része

„- önmagától nem halálos, egy nap alatt kiköhögöd, kivéve ha közben 5G sugárzással gyengítik az immunrendszered”

A második kijelentés egy külön témakör. Az 5G, mint összeesküvés része már korábban megjelent, és nagyon jól kombinálható a vírussal, amit rengetegen meg is tesznek. Az 5G az ötödik generációs mobilhálózat rövidítése. Mivel az alaptézise a konspirációs elméleteknek, hogy a háttérhatalmi erők uralják a cégeket, eszerint a logika szerint magától értetődő, hogy az 5G is az ő rossz szándékuk eredménye. A két elmélet találkozására nem találtam egyetlen forrást, de azon az állásponton vagyok, hogy a fentebb említett logika alapján automatikusan állnak össze a „*puzzle darabkák*”, csak hogy egy, a kutatás alatt elsajátított kifejezéssel éljek.



Ördög 5G toronnyal, egy 5G ellenes témához kommentelve

A következő képernyőmentésről bemutatok egy összefoglalót a vírus és az 5G kapcsolatáról. Emellett a védőoltásról is szó esik, valamint külföldiek Magyarországra való tudatos betelepítéséről, ami szintén egy nagyobb gonosz terv része. Ebben már kihallhatunk néhány aktuálpolitikai kérdést és egy nagyobb körökben elfogadott összeesküvés-elméletet. A végső üzenet egyértelművé teszi a politikai identitást.

CSAXÓLOK, HOGY

Kapott információk alapján írom, nem magamtól vagyok ilyen okos. Én valóban előbb magam tanulok, és csak utána tanítok. Az 5G okozza állítólag a vírust.

A Vodafone volt főnöke kiszivárogtatta a koronavírus és az 5G közötti összefüggést.

Az 5G sugárzás hatása SEJTMÉRGEZÉST OKOZ, HATÁSOS SUGÁRZÁS, ez hozza létre a testben a sejtekből a vírust. Az 5G sugárzás által létrehozott toxikus anyagokat az emberi test sejtjei próbálják eltávolítani. Így kivonja az 5G sugárzás a sejtekből a vitaminokat, mérgeket és ez hozza létre a vírust.

AZ 5G SEJTMÉRGEZÉST OKOZ, EZ A COVID19 VÍRUS A TEST REAKCIÓJA A SUGÁRZÁSRA.

Ehelyett azt akarják elhitetni, hogy ez egy élő vírus, ami elkapható. A VÍRUST NEM LEHET ELKAPNI MERT AZ NEM ÉLŐ. A VÍRUS A FEDŐSZTORIJA AZ 5G SUGÁRZÁSNAK.

EZ az egyik LEGNAGYOBB ÖSSZNEPI MEGTÉVESZTÉS! Azt akarják elérni, hogy a betegségtől rettegő emberek maguktól könyörögjenek a gazdáiknak, hogy kaphassanak védőoltást! Vajon milyen is? Amiben ott lenne egy nanorobot, amivel rabszolgaként a tudatodat, érzelmeidet is lehetne hullámhossz szerint befolyásolni, és onnantól kezdve az életedet is ki-bekapcsolhatják, hiszen csak úgy tekintenek rád, mint hasznot termelő engedelmes igavonó baromra, aki ha már kiöregedett, mehet a vágóhídra. Ez a merénylet az emberiség szelekciója, sárba tiporva a méltányos öregkor illúzióját és a gyermekek jogát ahhoz, hogy szerető nagy szüleik velük lehessenek és megérhessék, hogy még fiatal felnőttként is velük lehessenek, nemcsak kis vagyonukat, hanem tudásukat is megörökölve. Mindenki tudja, hogy a nagyszülők lakásaira leginkább a felnövő unokáknak van szüksége. Most idegeneket akarnak a megüresedett lakásokba is, de a mindenféle uzsorakamattal és hazugságokkal kreált tartozások miatti kilakoltatások után sem magyarok költöznek a mások fészkebe, mint a kakukktojások.

ÉBREDJ MAGYAR!

A fenti képmentésben szereplő magyarságtudatra később külön térek ki.

Az 5G sugárzás káros hatásait többféleképpen értelmezik, előfordul, hogy a belénk ültetett nanorobotokat irányítják a segítségével:

„akkor szélesítsd a látókörödet, ne a világot próbáld a szemellenzőidbe gyömöszölni. minden egyes élő ember teste, beleértve őket is, tele van nanobotokkal, szilíciummal és szilícium alapú féreg-szerű mesterséges élőlényekkel, amiket elektronágneses terekkel, többek közt az ötgé segítségével manipulálnak és irányítanak. igen, ezt csinálják már évtizedek óta, és most jön majd a finálé az oltással.

felejtsd már el azt a baromságot hogy 'mérget permeteznek' soha az életben nem mondtam ilyet, csak te ismételted! a totálkontroll agendájukhoz szükséges anyagokat permetezik és

ennek az agendának a része az ötgé, az oltások, a víruspara, a dns manipuláció és minden amiről fogalmad sincs."

A fenti posztban az is megfigyelhető, hogy néha feszültség van egy feltételezett összeesküvés több különböző megközelítése között. Abban azonban úgy tűnik, egyetértés van, hogy egyértelműen rossz szándékkal használják az internetszolgáltatók a sugárzásokat:

*„túl kevés volt a halott? hát majd most lesznek, hogy szebb legyen a statisztika!
köszönjük mobilszolgáltatók!
a kijárási tilalom alatt zavartalanul tudjátok majd felszerelni az antennákat, hogy együtt
dögöljünk meg egy globális mikrohullámú sütőben!
szép munka, kicsit kapkodtok itt a végén, de azért remélem sok lesz a profitotok meg az
osztalékotok, mielőtt a hűbéruraitokkal együtt eltakarodtok a fagyos pokol legmélyére
örökre elpusztulni!"*

Külön fejezetben be fogok mutatni egy újpogány csoportot, melyben az 5G-ről így vélekedik a csoport vezetője:

„A Vírus egy gazdasági összeroppantási szándék fedősztorija , amire az Euból köteleznek mindenkit, hogy egy "mentőakciót" tudjanak "segíteni" majd nekünk.. Van vírus de közel nem akkora parával mint ahogy azt kikiáltották, kivéve ha azokat a kurv@ 5G tornyokat folyamatosan el nem kezdik aktiválni , amik meggyengítik a sejtfalait az embereknek..Érdekes ,hogy Vuhánban , Milánóban és Amcsiban van a legnagyobb lefedettsége az 5G-nek..milyen véletlen..Mivel trilliókat ígérnek ha betelepíti egy ország az 5G hálózatot, ezért a sok pénzéhes korrump politikus azonnal rámar gondolkodás nélkül.Kivéve egy két országot ahol azért már kezdik átlátni ,hogy mire is megy ki a játék..Gyorsabb internetkapcsolat kell emberek? Majd az életünk árán gyorsabbak lehetnek a letöltések a mikrohullámú sütőben, ami miatt a sok méhecske is elpusztult a környezet minden énekesmadarával együtt. Ha egyszer felocsúdik a félmajom szintről az emberiség akkor talán nem játszanak többé Istent a "vezetőinknek" tartott egyedek..Eldöntötték a Cantrail (aluminium , strácium , brámium a fejünkre szórva)mellett az 5G-vel,hogy hulljon a férgese Istent játszva önmaguk előtt tetszelegve...."

Védőoltás

„- az elit terve a sok halál volt, a kötelező védőoltás, és végül a totál-kontroll újvilág, ezért a kijárási tilalom alatt még gyorsan felszereltek pár 5G antennát és próbálnak még pár halottat csinálni

- a kötelező védőoltással megcsinálták volna a teljes populáció rejtett becsipelését - így már viszont erre sem kerül sor”

A harmadik állításban a védőoltás a legfontosabb elem. Ez egy elég régi félelem, klasszikus összeesküvés-elmélet és számomra ez az egyik legkérdésesebb terület. Korábban már egy ismerősöm felhívta a figyelmemet rá, hogy bizonyos érzéseim, főleg a félelmeim abból fakadnak, hogy a korábbi oltásaim alkalmával nanorobotokat fecskendeztek belém, amik befolyásolják az érzéseimet és ezeket valahogy el kell távolítanom a testemből. Fentebb láthattuk, hogy ez aktualizálódik és kiegészül az 5G hatásaitól való félelemmel, illetve a vírusra is reflektál, így alkotva egy komplex egészet. Mások, a meddőség vagy különböző testi és szellemi fogyatékoságok állítólagos megszaporodását vezetik vissza a kötelező oltásokig, mint okig.

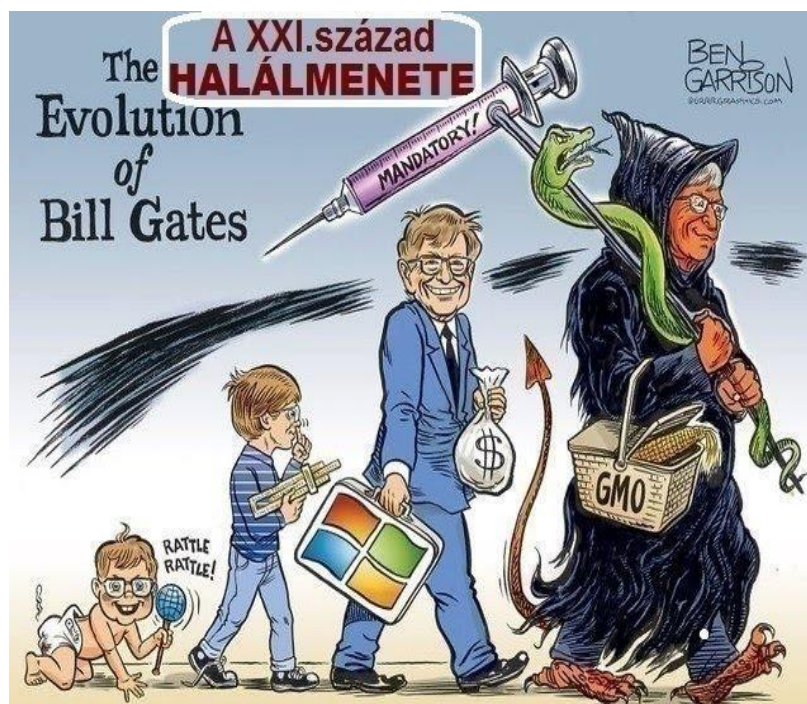
Az alábbi képernyő mentés egy másik érdekes jelenséget takar, a szavak sajátos értelmezését, amivel a háttérhatalom folyamatosan megüzeni a szándékát, így térve ki a felelősség alól, hogy hazudnának az embereknek:



Ebben az esetben megjelenik a hindi nyelv, de a háttérhatalom sajátos kódnyelvért általában a héberben határozzák meg, így egy folyamatos antiszemita attitűdöt tartanak

fent. A saját antiszemitizmusukat és rasszizmusukat tagadják, mivel a zsidó többséget a zsidó elit áldozatának tartják, néhány esetben pedig az egész zsidóságot egy felsőbb gonosz hatalom által megvezetett népnek, vagyis arra hivatkoznak, hogy nem a zsidó – illetve néhány esetben más – nép egészét vetik meg, csak egy részét. A poszt utolsó sorai megemlítik az oltást, mint a népiirtás egyik lehetséges eszközét. Az utolsó komment reményét a háttérhatalom végében a QAnon elmélet következményeként tekintem, amire szintén külön fejezetben fogok kitérni.

Az oltások mögött megjelenő gonosz karakter Bill Gates szokott lenni, ahogy azt az alábbi kép is mutatja:



Hatékony védekezés a *bill-féle* vírus & vakci-
na ellen: Leghatékonyab **ALTERNATÍVA**
az... **ÖsMagyar IDEOLÓGIA-**
IDENTITÁS Tudat(vakcinája) !

design-grafik: *andrás(Murányi)*

**A Nemzethü Kuruc-Sajtó Fórum -
Köztájékoztatásában**

Alapító Lapgazda: Murányi András / Magyar Érdékvédelmi Társadalom/
Közélet kritikus-publicista

Közzétételi Kiadó-AlapítóTárs: Kuruc András-főszerkesztő / Magyar Érdék-
védelmi publicista

A kép üzenete és forrása erős nemzettudatról tanúskodik. Néha az emberiség egésze mellett a nemzeti identitást is a háttérhatalmak áldozatának tartják. Erre fogunk

látni mind magyar, mind amerikai példát is. Az oltások és a nacionalista áldozat szerep összefüggése kivételes példa a képen, máshol eddig ezzel nem találkoztam.

Rezgésszint emelés és „UFO vallás”

„- a Napból hihetetlen erős DNS upgrade-elő sugárzást kapunk, ami segítene minket tisztán érzékelő isten-emberekké válni - az 5G viszont épp ez ellen lett kitalálva, hogy a DNS-t károsítsa és ostoba birka szinten tartsa a populációt”

Az emberiség felemelkedése magasabb spirituális szintre, ami a DNS átalakulásával zajlik egy klasszikus példája az utópista, millenarista elképzelésen alapuló UFO vallásoknak, mint amilyen a „Fény Harcosai” közösség. Ezekben a vallásokban általában az embereket segítő és a fejlődésüket megakadályozó idegen lények jelentik a világunkra ható felsőbb erőket.

Ez a hirdetés a reinkarnáció tanával operál, és úgy tűnik, a Föld egy nem kívánatos helyé vált számukra, viszont vannak más világok az univerzumban, ahova érdemes lenne újra születni. Láthatjuk, hogy a megromlott Föld ismérvei a már említett összeesküvések jelenléte, az 5G, a bőr alá ültetett chip, a koronavírus, de az ún. *chaimtrail* is megjelenik, miszerint a repülőik által hátrahagyott kondenzcsíkok valójában az emberek mérgezése érdekében kipermetezett vegyi anyagok. Az egész elképzelés alapvetően más, mint az általam eddig ismert tézisek. A posztban is említett DNS által való emelkedés és a Föld spirituális fejlődése egy lehetséges pozitív jövőképet mutat a Föld fejlődéstörténetében. Itt rajtunk múlik, hogy a szeretettel emeljük-e a föld és az emberiség „*rezgésszintjét*”. További kutatást igényelne, hogy a nyelvezetet felfejtsem, mivel számomra egyelőre rejtély, hogy mit takar a Föld 3D-s és 5D-s mivolta, de a narratíva szerint ez a fejlődés megy végbe hamarosan, ha csak meg nem

akadályozzák ezt a gonosz erők a Földet irányító háttérhatalom segítségével. A lehetséges fejlődést az alábbi kép is bemutatja:





Az utópisztikus elgondolás a New Age mozgalom egyik klasszikus eleme (Heelas 1996: 28; Hanegraaff 1996: 341-344), paradox módon mégis néha a New Age szellemisséggel együtt futó összeesküvés-elméletek nem minden esetben vázolnak fel pozitív jövőt. A következő fejezet egy különleges példája lesz annak, hogyan bukhat el potenciálisan az emberiséget rabságban tartó gonosz.

QAnon

„- Trumpék közben a hadsereggel folyamatosan tartóztatják le és füstölik ki a háttérhatalmi elit démonjait a földalatti bunkereikből, ezért vannak mindenhol folyamatos, apró 'földrengések'

- akik követték eddig Trump és Q tweetjeit, azok pontosan látják hogy az történik, amit hónapokkal ezelőtt beharangoztak

- a letartóztatott gyerekevő, adrenochrome zabáló hollywoodi szörny-színészek, mint T.Hanks és Madonna, már a cellájukban készített fotókat posztolnak, illetve kártyatrükkökbe bújtatott okkul üzenetekben figyelmeztetik egymást az elkerülhetetlen bilincsről ami jár nekik

- a mainstream médiát közben átvették Trumpék, úgyhogy már onnan sem csak a félelemkeltés fog folyni

- ha nagyhatalmú elit tagokról, királyi család-tagokról, cégvezérekről azt olvasod hogy 'koronavírusos lett', az azt jelenti hogy berácsolták és várja a hadbíróági tárgyalását az emberiség ellen elkövetett bűnökért
- Trump is és mindenki 15 nap 'sötétség'-et emleget, úgyhogy valószínűleg egy jó darabig nem lesz se internet, se tv, de lehet hogy áram sem - viszont 5G sem!
- ez lehet egy elkövetkező nagy Napkitörés miatt is, de a lényeg hogy szükséges egy teljes rendszer-újraindításhoz
- utána új pénzrendszer lesz, Trumpék már elvileg semlegesítették a FED-et, a hiteleket már ugye eltörölték, valószínűleg soha többé nem látjuk már ezt az adósságalapú elnyomó pénzvilágot
- lehet számítani a feltétel nélküli alapjövedelem bevezetésére is, ezt pár országban már el is kezdték (Hong Kong, Anglia, USA, Kanada stb.)”

A kezdő poszt utolsó pontjai mind egy jelenségre mutatnak, a QAnonra. Az amerikai QAnon jelenség magába foglal rengeteg olyan elemet, amit az összeesküvés-elméletek külön tartalmazznak. Kiváló szimbólumként szolgál egy komplex világkép leírására, többen hivatkoznak rá egyértelműen (ahogy az indító posztban is) és a vírusra az általam olvasottak közül a leghatározottabb magyarázattal reagál.

Az egész egy 4chan nevű oldalon indult, ami tulajdonképpen egy online képtábla, olyasmi, mint a Facebook idővonala, csak névtelenül lehet közzétenni képeket és szöveges tartalmakat. Regisztráció nem szükséges és így semmilyen személyes adat nem jelenik meg az oldalra látogatók előtt. Innen indult az elmélet – az oldal sajátossága miatt kideríthetetlen forrásból - miszerint a háttérben munkálkodó „deep state” egy pedofil és sátánista csoportosulás, akik a föld alatt tartanak fogva elrabolt gyerekeket. Ehhez a csoporthoz rengeteg híresség, politikus és más vezető tartozik, többek között Tom Hanks, a brit uralkodói család, Barack Obama – és úgy általában az amerikai demokrata párt tagjai - és még sokan mások. Ők irányítanak mindent a háttérből, a politikusok nagy részét, a médiát, Hollywood-ot és a nagy techcégeket, óriásvállalatokat. A posztoló magáról azt állítja, hogy „Q” szintű hozzáférése van az Egyesült Államok államtitkaihoz. Ehhez rakták hozzá az anonim szót és így ragadt rá a posztolóra a QAnon név. Az elmélet azonban nem áll meg itt, a lényege az, hogy az alapvetően rossz szándékú „mély állammal” több jelenlegi politikus felvette a harcot, élükön Donald Trumppal. Ő azon küzd, hogy kiszabadítsa az elrabolt és föld alatt fogvatartott, még életben maradt gyerekeket.

A jelenlegi vírus-helyzettől függetlenül 2017-ben vette kezdetét az elmélet terjedése, ami túl nőtt a 4chan-en, 2018-ban magyarul is megjelentek róla cikkek⁶⁶, képviselői pedig felvállalják magukat a fizikai világban is felvonulások formájában. A QAnon saját Twitter-oldallal is rendelkezik, a vírusra pedig határozottan reagált. A vírussal kapcsolatos elmélete a csoportnak, hogy az valójában nem létezik, és az egészet a jó oldalon harcolók szervezték annak érdekében, hogy indokolt legyen a karantén és fegyveres erővel szabad utat kapjanak a föld alatti járatokban bujkáló háttérhatalom kifüstölésére és a tömeges letartóztatásokra.⁶⁷

A fent bemutatott elmélet olyannyira nem egyedi, hogy egy 2015-ös tanulmány alapján minden elemét rá lehetne húzni egy régóta tartó és történetileg messzire nyúló jelenségre: „A konspirációs elméletek kutatásával kapcsolatban három megközelítés alakult ki. Először is, a történelmi és antropológiai tanulmányok azt vizsgálják, hogy bizonyos vallási csoportok a szélesebb kultúrában összeesküvés-elméletek tárgyát képezték és képezik, amit vallásokról alkotott összeesküvés-elméletekként definiálhatunk. Ezek a narratívák gyakran vallásokat építenek, amelyek az ellentétjét testesítik meg annak, amit morálisan jónak gondolunk. Ilyenek például a boszorkányokról való elbeszélések Európában, az Egyesült Államokban, vagy a posztkoloniális Szubszaharai Afrikában. Ennek a narratívának a modern verziója jelenik meg az erőszakos sátáni rítusoktól való félelemben, amely a 80-as 90-es évek Egyesült Államát és Egyesült Királyságát is jellemezte. Ezek az állítólagos sátáni rítusok tömeges gyermekrablásokról és bántalmazásokról szólnak, illetve felnőtt áldozatokat is követelhetnek, mely történetek időről időre felbukkannak. Az USA jobboldali összeesküvés-elmélet hívei gyakran feltételezik, hogy egyes politikusok és az elit más tagjai titokban egy Luciferiánus vallás tagjai, és okkult rítusokban vesznek részt olyan helyeken, mint a Bohemian Grove.⁶⁸ Más esetekben létező vallások vagy más csoportok

⁶⁶ A témában megjelent cikkek forrása: <https://444.hu/2018/08/07/trump-tamogatoi-kozott-elkezdett-terjedni-hogy-az-elnok-az-egyesult-allamokat-iranyito-satanista-pedofilok-ellen-harcol> (Megtekintve: 2020. 05. 17.); <https://merce.hu/2018/08/20/a-kulturharc-a-magyar-qanon-osszeeskuves/> (Megtekintve: 2020. 05. 17.); <https://www.vasarnapihirek.hu/fokusz/qanon-es-az-elmebaj> (Megtekintve: 2020. 05. 17.)

⁶⁷ A QAnon bemutatására az alábbi cikkeket használtam fel: <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2018/jul/30/qanon-4chan-rightwing-conspiracy-theory-explained-trump> (Megtekintve: 2020. 03. 19); <https://washingtonmonthly.com/2020/03/18/the-coronavirus-is-conspiracy-theory-gold-for-qanon/> (Megtekintve: 2020. 03. 19)

⁶⁸ Kaliforniában lévő terület, mely csak a Bohemian Club tagjainak ad lehetőséget a belépésre.



A képen Trump szimbolikusan kimenteti a gyermekeket

Többen hivatkoznak a QAnon-ra, és a leszámolás utáni világban szintén egy keresztény millenarista utópia érhető tetten, ami egyéb személyes hitbéli meggyőződéssel egészül ki. A New Age szellemiség egyéni szintre szabva engedi meg a különböző hitrendszerek kombinálását (Heelas 1996: 23), személyre szabását, amely része a detradicionalizálásnak. Ez a szellemiség láthatóan igaz az összeesküvés-elméletek kombinálására, többen ki is emelik, hogy magunk „kutassunk” a „valóság” után, ahogyan azt ők is tették. Az alábbi posztban nem csak a QAnon jelenik meg, hanem mellette a spirituális és pozitív jövőkép is:

„Ha lezajlik ez az egész tisztogatás, a gyerekeveőket letartóztatták, és minden férget eltávolítottak a hatalmi pozíciókból, új világ (és nem újvilágrend) köszönt majd ránk, olyan, amit eddig vártunk.

A hiteleket valószínűleg eltörlik majd a petrodollárral együtt, új pénz lesz, ufókkal kapcsolatos felfedések, újra szabadenergia, természetközelség, stb.

És az Aranykorba már nem hozhatjátok magatokkal a húsevést sem, mert az újra lerontaná az egész rendszert. Úgyhogy készüljetek fel hogy 1-2 generáción belül mindenki vege lesz!

És nem divat-vegán. A tejjel ugyanis semmi baj, sőt igen fontos. Miért?

Legyen elég annyi, hogy Krisna tehénpásztor. A szerelme, Rádha mellett, imádja a tejet, tejfölt, édességeket, a természetet és az állatokat.

És nem, nem kell az Istent semmilyen alakban imádni, ajnározni, ugyanis semmi szüksége rá.

Aki szolgálni akarja Őt, az adja oda Neki a dacos-gőgös önimádó egóját, és ajánlja fel magát Neki, maradéktalanul, hogy megvilágosodjon, és így Ő munkálkodhasson az emberen keresztül.

Ez a legnagyobb szolgálat.

~

Az Ég Fiai-ból pár idézet, igencsak megszívlelendő mind:

~

'Mindent szabad, ami nem árt másnak!

Ne bánts, ne árts, istápolj, segíts!'

~

'Jó istenek nem várnak áldozatot, mert utálják a hízelkedést!'

~

'Nézzetek szívetek mélyére, az ott rejlő igaz gyönyörűségre, és mint őseitek közül jó néhányan, ilyen szívvel dolgozzatok mások, és így önmagatok javára.

Ne járva közelítsd Istent, mert nem leled sehol!

Nézz magadba, kövesd Őt bensődben,

kövesd érzelmeiddel, kövesd tekinteteddel és eszeddel.

Járd az Utat saját belső végtelen térségeidben.

Az Út végén megtalálod Őt, s ha megtaláltad,

te sem vagy többé, Ő sincs többé, mert egy leszel Vele.'

~

'Továbbá ne feledjétek: ami tegnap jó volt, máma esetleg elviselhető, holnap meg elviselhetetlen talán.

Ez az örök fejlődés törvénye. Mindenről saját idejében, saját környezetében bizonyosodik be: hasznos-e, káros-e.”

A poszt elején lévő helyzet a QAnon által elterjesztett Donald Trump vezette leszámolásról szól, amiről a poszt szerzője többször beszámol. A harmadik bekezdésben megjelenik az „Aranykor” kifejezés, amit a tapasztalatom szerint a hindu időfelfogásból kölcsönöz a modern spiritualizmus. A hindu időfelfogás ciklikus, melyben a világ teremtésétől négy fő korszakon megy keresztül a teremtett világ – vagy mennek keresztül a világok – mielőtt elpusztul, hogy aztán újra megteremtődjön. A teremtéshez közeli kor a legkedvezőbb, az utolsó pedig a legszenvedetelibb. Az első korszakot szokták „Aranykornak” fordítani. A hindu és buddhista vallásban manapság az utolsó korszak kezdetén élünk, mégis sok New Age „guru” annak a végét hirdeti, amit nem a világ elpusztítása vált fel, hanem automatikusan kezdődik az „Aranykor” újra. Megjelenik a „divat-vegán” kifejezés, amivel szemben a tejtermékeket magába foglaló vegetáriánus étrend kerül elő, ez pedig Krisnával, vagyis a hinduizmussal van alátámasztva. Ez jól tükrözi a mainstream kultúra elutasítását, így a divattá vált vegán étrend pejoratív értelmezése kerül elő. Ezt követően a valódi úton járás kerül kifejezésre, ahol egyértelműen az intézményesített vallások rítusrendszere kerül elutasításra, vagyis látható az említett detradicionalizáció. A hamis ego elvetése is említésre kerül, aminek következménye a megvilágosodás.

Újpogányok

Talán hozzám hasonlóan más is azt gondolhatná, hogy egy magyar ősvallással foglalkozó csoportnak nem feladata a fenti állásponthoz hasonló elképzeléseknek teret adni, mégis prekonceptióim nemcsak helytelennek bizonyultak ezen a téren, valójában néha másról sem szól egy ilyen csoport fő aktivitása, mint az összeesküvés-elméletek terjesztése, sőt, a háttérhatalom elleni aktív fellépés, melyet adott esetben mágiával kívánnak visszaszorítani. Paul Heelas beszámol róla, hogy a New Age követői gyakran egy távoli múlt szellemiségét kívánják felidézni, amely szellemiségben az újpogányság is megjelenik (Heelas 1996: 41), így „vallásilag” ebben a fejezetben is a New Age szellemiségben időzünk. A fentebb említett mágikus beavatkozásról egy feltöltött videó tanúskodik. A mágia során a táltos magyar nyelvű kántálás során megáldott három nyílvezzőt, melyeket szimbolikusan a háttérhatalom szívébe lőtte, amit egy felrajzolt


háromszög közepén lévő szem jelképezett. Mindhárom nyíl kiváló pontossággal fúródott bele a földre fehérrel rajzolt háromszög közepébe. A mágia gyakorlása kulcsfontosságú az újpogányságban (Hanegraaff 1996: 79-80), figyelemre méltó, ahogyan ezt a központi elemet, vagyis a mágiát az összeesküvés-elméletekben szereplő gonosz erők kiiktatására alkalmazzák.



Képrészlet a videóból. A háttérben látszik a felrajzolt ábra

Hogy a mágia mennyire volt eredményes, az alábbiakban kiderül. Ebben a konzervatív értékeket valló, újpogány táltos hittel foglalkozó magyar Facebook csoportban megkérdeztem a dolog kimeneteléről az emberek véleményét, és van, aki nem fogadja el ezt a narratívát, de volt szó a háttérhatalom sikeres megsemmisítéséről, sőt, a

csoport vezető táltos határozottan ezt vallja. A következő képen egy kimásolt változata látható az eredeti posztnak, amit a csoport vezetője, a táltos posztolt ki:



RENDSZER ÁLLÍTÁS A HÁTTÉR HATALMI ERŐKRE (jelen helyzet) // FORDUL A KERÉK ...

Nemrég állítottunk a Magírral egy család állítást amiben a háttér hatalmi dolgokat néztük..Csak a lényegét mondanám.

A HÁTTÉR HATALMI ELIT :(Illuminaty) Arcsal a földnek fekvé kezdte a rendszer-állítástban a tevékenységét..Ez azt jelenti ,hogy nekik annyi , ki vannak feküdvé, és erejüket vesztették. Legalább is aki a rendszerállítástban lefekszik a földre annak annyi az elvesztette az aktivitását és az erejét!

PÁPA: A Pápa most úgy fest ,hogy csak saját magában van legalább is nem irányította senki a háttérből, inkább magában elvan migráns ügyi háttérnyomás helyett leginkább a Deffender munkáját kémleli, és visszahúzódott. KORONA VÍRUS : A korona vírus a rendszer állításunkban mint szereplő (ő sem tudta ,hogy mit játszik csak választott egy számot ahogy a többi és némán lejátszotta)

folyamatosan két ujjat előre tartva mindenkihez oda ment és szurkálta a többieket majd összeesett magába. Ez azt jelenti ,hogy szépen leül és erejét veszti..

REPTILEK: A reptilek végig a koronavírust próbálták feltámasztani, azaz azt a személyt próbálták talpra emelni aki a COVID 19-et játszotta . ez arra utal ,hogy ezek a hüllőféreg szellem entitások vannak emögött is mint tömeges likvidátorok.. Nem jött össze!!!

DEFFENDER : Végig el volt foglalva valamiféle adminisztratív ténykedéssel függetlenül a dolgoktól , majd a végén a háttérhatalom irányába ment, hogy megvizsgálja..Persze senki sem tudta semennyire ,hogy ki kit vagy mit játszik. Szóval nyomoznak , megfigyelnek!

FÖLDÖNKÍVÜLI SEGÍTŐ ERŐK : Ezek az erők végig jelképes életfákat (mezőről tépett kis növényeket) próbált adni mindenkinek, de nem igazán figyelt rájuk senki. Ez valószínű azt jelenthette ,hogy figyeljünk az életre és mindarra amit az élet fája jelent..

AZ EMBERISÉG : Az emberiség (aki ezt a minőséget játszotta tudatlan) a peremen kavargott magában a játék szélén és egy gödörbe révedt . A hölgy aki játszotta ezt a minőséget szívfájdalomra panaszkodott . A gödör valószínű egyfajta érzelmi válság lesz. Nem állt benne, csak nézte..Ez nem mindegy természetesen.

5G Az 5g végig telefonált a főnökével és nem tudott oda jönni a játékba mert nem tehetette le a telefont. Ő az utolsó számot kapta ami maradt neki , és tökéletesen hozta a mobilszolgáltató tevékenységét hisz a távolban telefonált . ÖSSZEFOGLALVA VALÓBAN VÉGE VAN NEKIK. A HÁTTÉR HATALOMRA NÉZVE, A RENDSZER ÁLLÍTÁSBÓL AZ IS KIDERÜLT ,HOGY NEM SEGÍT NEKIK MOST SENKI ÉS NINCS TÁMOGATÁSUK..!

A poszt rengeteg különböző összeesküvés-elméletet magába foglal, melyekből néhányra a későbbiekben külön kitérek. A narratíva fő motívuma, hogy a háttérhatalomnak „befellegzett”.

Éz nem jelentené önmagában azt, hogy a QAnon elmélet volt hatással a posztolóra, de később egy újabb poszt megerősítette ezt a gyanúmat. Mivel számomra nem volt egyértelmű a fenti elmélet, aktiváltam magam a csoportban egy kérdéssel, amit alább újabb képekkel prezentálok a hozzá érkezett válaszokkal együtt, ahova a fent idézett spirituális vezető is végül kommentelt. Fontosnak tartom az egész diskurzust beidézni, mivel az egyszerre mutatja be a témában rejlő bizonytalanságot és a többféle megközelítési módot. A posztom és a kommentek az alábbi képernyőmentéseken láthatóak:

Kovács Andre
22 órája · 🌐

Sziasztok! Egy kérdéssel fordulnék hozzátok. Nagyon sok oldalról különböző magyarázatokat lehet olvasni a háttérhatalom, vagy "mélyállam" mostani hanyatlásáról. Van ahol konkrét fizikai leszámolásról beszélnek, van ahol spirituális szinten írnak arról, hogy meggyengült a dolog. Ha tényleg hanyatlásnak indult a háttérhatalom, ti miben látjátok az okát és hogyan zajlik ez? Szem már irt ezzel kapcsolatban korábban, csak nekem nem teljesen tiszta, lehet hogy a válaszok másnak is hasznára válnának, úgy látom sokan nem tudnak eligazodni, mi a pontos folyamat. Előre is köszönöm!

14 ❤️ 22 hozzászólás 1 megosztás

Tetszik · Hozzászólás · Megosztás

További 11 hozzászólás

Vozárová

En most ebből azt élem meg, hogy a multik még több haszonra tesznek szert, azok akik dolgoznak, még nagyobb nyomás alatt, és kevesebbet. Jól jön nekik hogy a béreket visszafogják. A spekulánsok és akiknek van hozzá gyomruk, most ár emelésekkel, becsapásokkal nyereségre tesznek szert. Most a nyúzzuk le az utolsó bőrt is a népről állapot van. Szerintem. Viszont naponta dolgozok rajta meditáció ima álltam hogy a szeretet, egészség, béke, hála energiái, rezonanciái uralkodjanak. Rám ez az egész úgy hat hogy szomorú vagyok, ha ezt érzékelem próbálok örömmé változtatni. Nem mindig megyen.

Tetszik · Válasz · 12 ó.

Bakos

Vozárová Tudd, hogy nem vagy egyedül. Kapcsolódjon meditáció an a szeretet energiájához. Rengeteg dolgot tudsz tenni. Mondok egy példát (az alvó emberek véleménye nem érdekel) a példa: 16 éve kezdtem változni, tanulni. Tisztánlátó és gyógyító vagyok. Testvérem Amerikában tanul Magyargyógyítóktól 2 éve. Múltkor fáj a fejem. Épp beszélgettünk. Kértem, hogy gyógyítson az energia gömbel amit kapott fentről. Amerikából lelkesíkon gyógyítás kaptam. >tt volt nálam a gömbje és láttam amint körözött a testem körül. A fej fájásom elmúlt. Közérzetem rendbe jött. Én is tanítottam őt. Most ő gyógyított engem. Higgyétek el végtelen csodára vagyunk képesek amikor kiérdemeljük. Fiam a Mesterem is. Kirándultunk, a hegy tetején gyógyított. Olyan szeretet energiát közvetített a kezembe amit életem folyamán soha semmilyen földi körülmények között nem tapasztaltam. Isteni tiszta energiát kaptam. A lelkem feszített az energia. Iszonyat zokogás fogott el Amit tanítom energiájával mérsékelt, hogy elbíriam. Meditáljatok. Akinek szüksége van segítségre keressen. Segíték szeretettel. Higgyétek magatokban, mert a csoda bennetek van. Segíteni kell a felszínre hozni. ❤️🙏🏻🙏🏻

Tetszik · Válasz · 11 ó.

Válasz írása...

Hladics

Pont ezen gondolkodtam 2 napja, hogy vajon hogy zajlik. Köszí, hogy feltetted a kérdést!

Tetszik · Válasz · 22 ó.

Szabó

https://youtu.be/e_0sk_Jr8HI

YOUTUBE.COM
Gene Decode - Qanon - Föld alatti Bázisok - DUMBS - POTUS - GESAR...

Tetszik · Válasz · 22 ó.

Tth

Azt mondja, a Föld körüli űr, a légkör és a felszín nagyjából kész van. Nem tudom, akkor miért nem távolították már el a műholdakat és az 5G-t, ami legjobban érinti az egész bolygót.

Tetszik · Válasz · 12 ó.

Szabó

Tth Egyelőre fontosabb a gyerekek és a fogva tartottak mentése, nem? Teljesen tisztában vannak a helyzettel, kidolgoztak egy tervet, van is erről video a Terv a címe. Úgyhogy nyugi.

Tetszik · Válasz · 4 ó.

Séthy

Ha olyan mély, csak be kellene temetni! 😊

Tetszik · Válasz · 22 ó.

Putnik

nagyon bízom benne, hogy így lassan egy szép világ jön el, remélem itt is (ha ide lassabban is jut el)

Tetszik · Válasz · 22 ó.

Tth

Erről a témáról vannak posztok és információk a Stop 5G Magyarország csoportban mostanában, én is többmindent kérdezek ott, mert annyira nem tudunk semmit. Persze, hogy mi az igaz ebből az egészből, azt sem tudhatjuk. Nagyon rossz ez a bizonytalanság, én már ott tartok, hogy az 5G is egyáltalán vajon nem-e szolgál minket ebből a szempontból? Kérdések tömkelege.

Tetszik · Válasz · 22 ó. · Módosítva

Tth

Nem tudom elképzelni pl. a több ezer kimentett embert hol tudták elhelyezni? Van annyi kórház?

Tetszik · Válasz · 22 ó.

János

Sajnos kamu az egész... Sokan keverik a háttérhatalmat a multikkal. A háttérhatalom fog a legnagyobbat kaszálni. (Mint ahogy minden válságon) Aprópenzért fognak megszerezni tényleges anyagi javakat. - szer-intem

Tetszik · Válasz · 21 ó.

Bakos

Sok éve tudjuk, hogy be fog következni a változás. 16 Ével ezelőtt jött információ, hogy „jön az idő amikor az információkban rettenetes káosz lesz. Nekünk menni kell az útunkon. Most teljesen ott tartunk. Mindenkinek azt javaslom a szeretet energiát fejlessze magában Segítsen másoknak is a, fény felé menni. Csak az biztos amit mi érzünk a lelkünkben. Avval teremtünk jobb Világot. Fénylények segítenek, de a fizikai szinten csak mi tudjuk megtenni amit kell. 🙏🏻🙏🏻❤️

Tetszik · Válasz · 19 ó.

Adrienn

Mindenféle bántás, vagy ítélkezés nélkül mondom, sokan kívülről várják az információt, az emberiség kb 98-99%-a. Ne félj az egyedüllétől! Figyelj befelé, csendesedj el és legfőképp ne félj! Az egyedüllét illúzió! Erősítsd a kapcsolódás a Forrással, Istennel, az Eggyel. Az egyedüllét azért tűnhet ijesztőnek (az elején), mert hozzászoktunk ahhoz, hogy mindenhol információt tömkelege zúdul ránk és gondolkodnunk sem kell. Esetleg a szabad választás illúzióját keltik bennünk, és azt hisszük van választásunk. És pont ez a céljuk! Ne gondolkodj! Ne legyen időd gondolkodni, ha mégis akkor az már ijesztő az információval bombázott emberiség korában. Az meg végképp, hogy befelé figyelve saját magad keress és tégy fel kérdéseket a saját Felsőbb Énednek. Mert céljuk az is hogy félj. Félj az önnállóságtól, a saját utadon járástól, az árral szemben menéstől (persze ésszel és gondolkodva!). Igaz, minek is, ha már ők úgy is megtervezték az életedet helyetted? Neked/nekünk már csak a számárvezetőt kell követnünk.

Ha lenyugszol, erősíted a kapcsolatot az Eggyel, ha kizárod a zavaró tényezőket minőségi szintet lépsz teljes önvalód megismerése felé. A lényeg a fókusz. Ahol a fókuszod, azt teremed. Nekik pedig az a céljuk, hogy kívül legyen a fókuszod, mert ez az ami a káoszt táplálja. Ha eléred, hogy a fókuszod stabil maradjon a saját felsőbb vezetőddel, nincs szükség külső információkra, mert azt egy magasabb kontextusból egyenesen a Forrástól kapod majd. És minél többet gyakorolsz, hogy stabilan tudd tartani a fókuszodat, annál nagyobb rend lesz benned és körülötted. Ahogy bent, úgy kint. Ahogy fent, úgy lent. Bátorság! 🙏❤️🙏

Tetszik · Válasz · 18 ó. · Módosítva

Tth

Igy igaz, én még gyakran ugrálok kifelé, de ezzel csak azt érem el, hogy összezavarom magam, és várom a csodát, vagy teljesen elmegyek negatív irányba. De ha bent vagyok, minden rendben van, és válaszokat is kapok.

Tetszik · Válasz · 12 ó.

Adrienn

Tth Pontosan. 😊 Én is ki-be "ugrálok" még. Ez egy tanuló folyamat. Maga az ÚT.

Tetszik · Válasz · 11 ó.

Miki

Parasztvakítás, elterelés....Semmi sem utal arra sajnos...

Tetszik · Válasz · 14 ó.

Tth

Lehet ez is egy elterelés saját magunkról, a befelé figyelésről, hogy ne is gondolkozunk, mert kívülről megmentik az egész bolygót. Szerintem ez nem is lenne korrekt, és eleve a természet sem így működik. Mindenki választás elé lesz állítva, és mindenki azt fogja kapni, amit szeretne és ahogy gondolkodik. Különben semmi értelme nem lenne a felemelkedési folyamat lehetőségének. Olyan nincs, hogy valami külső erők mindenkit megmentenek. Azért lesznek előttünk választási lehetőség ek, és már most is észrevehető a szétválasztódás egyéni látásmódok alapján. Az nem igaz szerintem, hogy nem kell tennünk semmit, mert mindenki ugyanazt fogja kapni. Nem, döntési lehetőségeink lesznek, úgy gondolom. Egyénileg kell mindenkinek magán dolgozni, ez alapján fogunk oda jutni, amit érdemlünk és ami a további fejlődésüket szolgálja.

Tetszik · Válasz · 13 ó.

szolgálja.

Tetszik · Válasz · 13 ó.

Adrienn

Tth pontosan így látom én is a helyzetet. Elképzelhető, hogy mennek számonkérések, bár úgy lenne, és itt lenne az ideje, de úgy gondolom, azt nem így fogják nyilvánosságra hozni még az egyszerű embereknek, hogy megbízhatatlan oldalakra szivárogtatnak. Ha ez egy komoly leszámolás, akkor nem szabadna összemosni egyéb, megcáfolható erőtetett, manipulált álhírekkel. Annyira akarják az emberek, hogy belevisszik saját nézőpontjaikat, és képesek akár ferdíteni is, és belegondolni mindenbe, hogy de ez azt támasztja alá, hogy zajlanak a folyamatok. Azt csak remélni tudom, hogy nem a direkt félrevezetés a cél. Nem egyszer belefutottam, ellenőriztem, aztán kiderült, hogy nem igazak ezek a hírek. Ettől függetlenül, bízom a legjobbakban. Az biztos, hogy nem ühetünk ölbetett kézzel, és majd várjuk hogy majd lesz valahogy. Magunkat kell megdolgozni, fejleszteni. Nekem egy a lényeg, hogy Földanya és lakói gyógyuljanak.

Tetszik · Válasz · 1 ó.

Válasz írása...

Szemző

Ahogy mondtam megnéztük ezt a folyamatot rendszerállítással, és a Hátterhatalom, mély állam arccal a föld felé fordulva feküdt. ez azt jelenti, hogy nekik annyi ..Szétestek. Az ok valószínű az lehet, hogy visszasült a puska, és a "bábok" tervet szöttek (tudtak a vírus kezdeményezési szándékáról ugye az illuminaty részéről) bábmasteriek ellen .Tudták, hogy csak ha tényleges Karantén van akkor van esély őket összegyűjteni. Ez a Szövetség vagy más néven Deffender a rendszerállításban valóban a Hátterhatalmat játszó ember mögött kémkedett, legalább is a nyomába eredt..A szereplők nem tudták mit, vagy kit játszanak, mert nem lett elmondva nekik, csak a végén. Tehát megerősítelek, most ez zajlik. Rá fogunk majd nézni újra, hogy hól tart a folyamat.

Tetszik · Válasz · 2 ó.

Hozzászólás írása...

A linkelt komment-másolatok közül a legutolsó a csoport vezetőjének kommentje, aki tömörebben utal a fenti posztjára, tisztázva az álláspontját.

Végül a mai naphoz képest (2020.05.28) tegnap érkezett az a poszt, ami egyértelműsítette bennem a QAnon hatását, valamint pontot tett a vita végére is. A poszt eredeti formájában a következő:

„Tisztelt tagok.. Ne osztogassatok a háttérhatalmi felszámolásról ellenvéleményt itt mert nem osztjuk a jelen helyzetben Q -ra vonatkozó hiteltelenítő leminősítéseket..Mindenkinek meg lehet a véleménye a "hiszem ha látomról", de itt masszívan valljuk azt ,hogy ez az egész háttérhatalmi takarítási folyamat elindult! Mire alapozzuk mindezt? A Magír közössége a háttérben folyamatosan rendszer-állításokat csinál amivel tisztán és egyértelműen nyomon tudjuk követni, hogy mi is történik a berkeken belül..Ez a rendszer annyira tökéletes (nem szól bele az emberi agy, és egó), hogy század milliméter pontosan képesek vagyunk ezt ellenőrizni, és belenézni amibe csak szeretnénk mint igazság..Én elhiszem ,hogy mindenki látott már karon varjút, de ne alkossanak véleményt ezekről a témákról olyanok akik nem tudnak visszaigazolható módon visszaellenőrzéseket kapni teljes objektivitással! Természetesen mindenki abban hisz amiben szeretne, de mi ezt a ténykedést már jó rég óta csináljuk bármilyen téma felderítésében. Itt többen vannak akik részt vettek már ilyeneken, és pontosan jól tudják, hogy mennyire igaz, és mennyire bele tudunk látni ha akarunk bárki kapcsolatrendszerébe.. Többször végeztem ország rendszer állításokat is amiben tökéletesen megtudtuk a színfalak mögötti eredményeket kérdéseinkre, hogy mi lesz ennek és ennek a választásnak az eredménye, esetleg, vagy, ki kicsoda a színfalak és a maszkok mögött és mit vetít.. Az ezek általi eredmények után tudatosan mint ország védői és őrzői mágikusan fel tudunk lépni eredményesen..Már teszteltük többször és működik , mert a közösségünk miután egy "hullámhosszra jut" a MAG iánk sokkal sokkal erőteljesebb mint ha nem csináltunk volna előtte rendszerállítást..Szóval még egyszer ne KACSA hírezen itt nekünk senki ha megkérhetem ezen az oldalon a " Q " általi tevékenységekről..Köszönjük.”

A „Q” betű a QAnon-ra utal, ahogyan azt más posztolók is használják. Az említett csoport tagjainak száma egyébként meghaladja a 3600-at (ma, 2020.11.21-re 4900-ra bővült).

A fenti példából, a QAnon eredetéből és más tapasztalataim alapján arra a következtetésre jutottam, hogy az összeesküvés elméletek hívei politikailag jobboldali nézeteket vallanak. Az összeesküvés elméletek és a politikai jobboldal között azonban nem biztos, hogy egyértelmű az összefüggés (Oliver–Wood 2014: 954; Robertson 2015:

6). Az én kutatásomban a Facebook profilok és a csoportok alapján, valamint az összeesküvés elméleteket valló emberekkel való beszélgetéseim alapján viszont továbbra is úgy tűnik, hogy ezeket az embereket a konzervativizmus és a nacionalizmus jellemzi, illetve gyakran vallanak antiszemita és/vagy egyéb rasszista eszméket.

Az említett csoport egyik bejegyzésének egy részlete:

„Ez egy előre kitervelt jehovista stratégia, szándékosan lettek elszaporítva a cigányok, pontosan azért mert akik ezt mesterségesen felduzzasztották, egy beépített bombát gyártottak, de nem csak nálunk, hanem az összes fehérek lakta országban, Amíg azért fizetnek a cigányoknak, hogy hivatásszerűen szüljenek pénzért a semmibe, ez a helyzet csak fokozódni fog. Többi európai ország rosszabb helyzetben van máris, mert pl németeknél már a fele lakosság idegen, nálunk még "csak" negyede cigány. Tudományosan igazolva van már, hogy az emberi viselkedés szinte teljesen genetikai kód, zsidó ármány az, hogy a környezet, és a nevelés a döntő, ez nem igaz, az csak a genetikai hajlamot hozza elő csupán.”

Bár a kommentek alapján sokan erősek és túlzónak találták a leírtakat, a genetikai megkülönböztetés, a zsidó összeesküvés és a magyarság kiemelt szerepe, a nemzeti tudat és annak „szellemi” és „fizikai” szinten való tisztántartása nem kérdőjeleződik meg, csupán a más nemzetekhez való viszony képezi vita tárgyát, mely vitában többen az együttérzést teszik elsődlegessé a gyűlölködéssel szemben. Ebben az együttérzésben azonban mégis benne van egy lesajnálás, gyakori téma a „lezüllött zsidók” szerepe, akiket a „gonosz” csak felhasznál, így ők maguk is áldozatok.

Egyik oka az összeesküvés elméletekben való hitnek lehet a tehetetlenség érzése, amiben egy ilyen összeesküvés megnyugvást hozhat, mert segít elfogadni és megmagyarázni az élet nehézségeit (Hofstadter 1965). Ha tehát azt gondoljuk, hogy valamilyen számunkra idegen erők, adott esetben pl. a zsidóság kontrollálja a bankrendszert, akkor egy egyszerű magyarázatunk van a szegénységre, akik ezek szerint feltételezhetően nem zsidók (Abalakina–Paap–Stephan–Craig–Gregory). Így egy nehezen megemészthető és komplex jelenségre van egy egyszerű magyarázatunk, amiben nálunk sokkal nagyobb külső erők érvényesítik az akaratukat. Talán Magyarország és az országhoz társított a magyar nemzet Nyugat-Európához képest viszonyított „nehéz sorsát” is könnyebb egy szándékos magyarelles erő kontrolljának betudni, mint összetett jelenségek halmazában tájékozódni és a nehézségeket az élet részeként elfogadni.

Egyéb jellemzők

A vírust tekintve úgy alkot mindez egészet, hogy a gyűjtött adataim forrásai – bár különböző megközelítéssel – egy átfogó csoportot alkotnak. Bár biztosan van rá példa, sem a kutatás alatt, sem előtte vagy utána nem találkoztam olyan egyénnel, akinek életszemléletét meghatározták a konspirációs teóriák, de emellett nem tölt be fontos szerepet az ezotéria és a „spirituális” szemléletmód. Emlékezzünk a kezdeti idézetre:

„Az összeesküvés-elméletek a vallási hiedelmek szekularizációjának az eredménye.”

(Robertson 2015: 6)

Emellett mindig azonos a fentebb vázolt gender-szemlélet valamilyen fokú változata, valamint a nemzet jelentősége is. Ez szélsőséges esetben xenofóbiában nyilvánul meg, legenyhébb formájában csak a különböző embercsoportok határozott szétválasztásában, amely során a nemzetiség, mint küldetéstudat játszik szerepet, *„minden nemzetnek megvan a maga dolga, feladata”*, gondolják sokan a New Age szellemiségben. Gyakran hisznek a biológiai determinizmusban, a női és férfi agy különbözőségében, a különböző etnikumok genetikai sajátosságában, amit kiegészíthetnek olyan spirituális magyarázatok, mint a karma tanítása. Előkerül a csoport és nemzet karma fogalma, ami meghatározza az adott embercsoport sorsát, így genetikailag „karmikusan kódolt” szokásrendszer válik a szocializációtól függetlenül meghatározó viselkedés mintává, *„nem véletlenül született oda, ahova”*, vagy *„nem véletlenül született magyarnak”*, mondják. Ez magában hordozza a reinkarnáció elméletét, amit szintén vallanak az általam figyelt összeesküvés elméleteket vallók. Politikailag nehezen besorolható emberekről van szó, mivel egyszerre van jelen a detradicionalizáció, ami például az intézményesített vallásokat illeti, és egyszerre az „ősiség” vágya, a dolgok eredeti rendjének a visszavárása, esetleg keleti, régi szokások piedesztálra emelése, illetve vélt „valódi” magyar vagy európai értékrendek követése.

Egyszerre jelenik meg az autoritás elutasítása és más területen való bevezetése, a hierarchia jelenlegi formáinak elutasítása és más formában való újraépítése. Emellett bár erős a kollektivitás szerepe is, mégis határozottan individualista emberekről és csoportokról van szó. Az újpogány identitás a sámán, médium, táltos stb. szavakat széles körben alkalmazza bármilyen intuitív emberi képességre, ami felértékeli az egyén szerepét. A belső, őseredeti „én”-t helyezik szembe a hamis egóval és ezt a valódi „én”-t teszik egyenlővé Istennel, a buddhatermészettel, a Nagy Szellemmel stb. A korábbi,

konspirációs teóriákat valló beszélgetőpartnereim között akadt tibeti buddhista, hindu vagy ezoterikus keresztény, de a többség elvetette a vallási skatulyát és spirituális úton járónak vagy igazságkeresőnek titulálta inkább magát. Ebben az identitásban a „mi” és az „ők” az ébredezők és a spirituálisan lemaradottabbak, vagy materialisták kettőségében mutatkozik meg az oppozíció. Azt gondolom, ez erősen hozzásegíthet ahhoz, hogy az „ébredezők” minden körülöttük lévő dolgot megkérdőjelezve, a fősodrától való távoltagegét véget kezdzenek a „színpalak mögé” látni és így az összeesküvés-elméletek világába sodródnak:

„Neo -> No -> One”

„A Rendszer nem akarja hogy beszélj. Azt akarja hogy hordjál maszkot, engedelmeskedj, aludj. Majd ők megmondják mi legyen a véleményed, és mindent elintéznek helyetted.

Aki fel akar ébredni a kollektív kómából, annak NEM-et kell mondania mindenre amit a Rendszer kínál.

NEM-et a félelemkeltő híreikre, a tálcán kínált 'tudomány'-ukra, az uszító kampányaikra, a poloptikus és bürokratikus színjátékukra, a hazug történelemre amit belénk programoztak, a robot szintű oktatásra, a profitalapú ORV-ostudományukra, a birkafarm vallásaikra, és mindenre ami állításuk szerint értünk van, de közben csak altatásban tart mindenkit.

Azért kell NEM-et mondani, hogy az Ember NEM-es legyen.

Nem pedig NEM-telen droid.”

Összegzés

Azt gondolom, a dolgozat megírása közben és az adatgyűjtés alatt sikerült közelebb kerülnöm annak a megértéséhez, hogyan kapcsolódnak össze az említett témák egy egészé, és milyen gondolkodásmód jellemzi a vizsgált embercsoportokat. Megerősítést nyert az a prekonceptióm, hogy a spirituális, szakrális világ az emberi létezésben nem választható szét a hétköznapi valóságtól. Az a gondolkodásmód és világnép, amelyet alkalmazunk a nem megmagyarázható vagy érzékelésen túli világra, meghatározza döntéseink sorozatát és az életünk kimenetelét és mindennapi gondolatainkat, amelyekkel végső soron felépítjük és folytonosan fenntartjuk a valóságnak nevezett világunkat, adott esetben pedig felülírjuk azt, aminek szintén egy absztrakt gondolatfolyam az előfutára. Az adatgyűjtés során és a megemésztésük alatt fokozatosan

tárult fel és vált érthetővé, hogy a kutatott világkép annyira meghatározó, hogy érdemes komolyabban foglalkozni vele, mivel ezek a csoportok határozottan vesznek részt az „én” és „ők” közös valóságának a megteremtésében is, így a megértés elengedhetetlen, már csak a konfliktusok elkerülése végett is.

Emellett számtalan új kérdés is felmerült, így mindenképp további kutatást érdemel a téma. A további megértést elősegítené a fizikai valóságban is végzett terepmunka, az adatközlőkkel való közös gondolkodás, beszélgetés és az életükben való részvétel. Emellé viszont mindenképpen fontosnak tartom a virtuális kutatást is, mert ez egy olyan aspektusát mutatta meg a kutatott jelenségnek, ami a fizikai térben nem biztos, hogy teret kapott volna. A kettő együtt alkothatna egy egészet. Így hálás vagyok, hogy a terepkutatás ezen aspektusára is kísérletet tettem, mivel belátást nyertem, hogyan egészítheti ki a virtuális kutatás egy adott téma egészét. Sőt, ezen keresztül olyan emberek is elérhetőek, akik meghatározóak más világképek formálásában, de nem biztos, hogy a fizikai térben is aktívak és meglehet, hogy a jelenlegi világunkban egyre gyakoribbak lesznek az ilyen egyének. A témával kapcsolatban további kérdéseim maradtak, például hogy hol választható szét egy új vallás a New Age mozgalomtól, ha az erős hasonlóságot mutat, és továbbra is az, hogy ezekben hogyan és miért helyezkedik az összeesküvés-elméletek összessége? Bár a csoportok gondolkodásmódjának megértésével erre valamilyen válasz megszületett bennem, de a kép még így sem teljesen tiszta.

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