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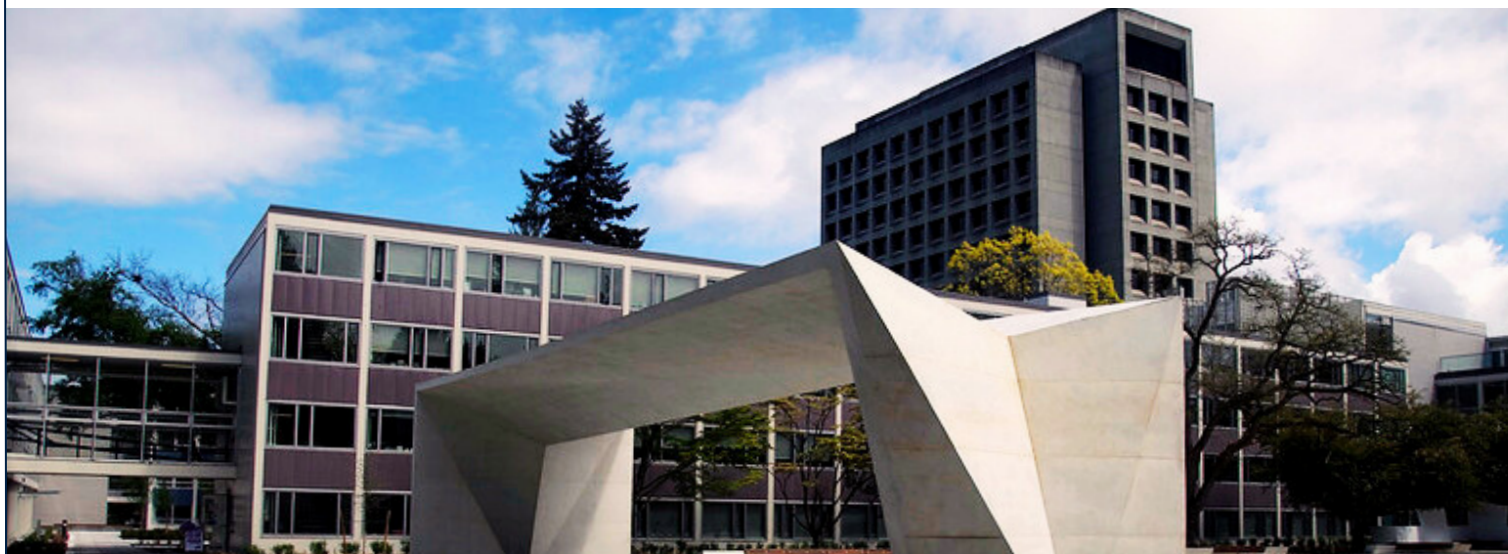
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Centre for European Studies, UBC



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The Fortified Church of Biertan, Biertan, Romania



Detail of a miniature of a wolf, sneaking up on sheep from downwind; from a bestiary, England

- Spring 2023 CES Research Colloquia in Review
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The Centre for European Studies is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) people. The land it is situated on has always been a place of learning for the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

Directors' Remarks**Dr. Ilinca Iurascu**

It's been such a privilege to serve as the Centre's Acting Director this past year. Thanks to all who have generously supported us throughout this period and have helped further develop our programming –the CES advisory board, staff, affiliated faculty across UBC, our colleagues from the Eurasia Research Cluster, collaborators and friends near and far. I am particularly grateful to Elizabeth Nolan for her extraordinary guidance and leadership as the Centre's former Senior Program Assistant, to student assistant Audrea Wang and to Leon Kraft, who completed an internship with us in Spring 2023. Heartfelt thanks also to Rima Hijazi, our new Senior Program Assistant, whose invaluable design and editorial work were the driving force behind the release of this newsletter.

As in the previous year, the Spring 2023 programming of the Centre has included a full range of events: a new thematic speaker series (“Engaging Transylvania”), guest talks and research colloquia. More about these in the current issue. Building on its commitment to the UBC academic community, CES has also continued to support and promote events led and co-organized by its affiliated faculty and participating departments: the conference “Interactions, Exchanges, and Transformations” (Nov. 17-20) on Europe's legal traditions and impact on global gender constructions; the series of international talks “Women's Impact: Byzantium in the Visual Culture of Medieval Eastern Europe” (March 22); the annual Western Ottomanists' Workshop (April 28-29); and the workshop “Thinking with Lauren Berlant” (May 19-20).

This year, the Centre has welcomed several new faculty affiliates, visiting scholars and fellows: Dr. Nataliia Ivchuk, Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at the Rivne State University for the Humanities (Ukraine) and Visiting Scholar in the Department of History at UBC; Dr. Mónica López Lerma, Associate Professor of Spanish and Humanities at Reed College; and Dr. Ibrahim Muradov, from the Department of International Relations and Audit (Dnipro University of Technology, Ukraine), Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Department of Political Science at UBC. To them and all who have shared their scholarship with us this year: thank you.

Grateful to be part of the CES academic community and looking forward to Dr. Ervin Malakaj's leadership as the new Director of the Centre starting this Fall!

Dr. Ilinca Iurascu, CENES

Dr. Ervin Malakaj

It is my distinct honour to take on the role of Director of the Centre for European Studies. The centre has been an intellectual home for me outside of my home department since I started at UBC in 2018. The colloquia, collaborations, and ongoing programming around vital topics related to European studies make the centre a vibrant intellectual site on campus. Over the coming months I look forward to overseeing the centre's intellectual programming.

One of my main points of interest will be to facilitate gatherings in which scholars from across campus and across disciplines can come together for intellectual exchange. If you are interested in participating in this venture in any way or have ideas of how the centre can best support your work, don't hesitate to reach out to me.

Dr. Ervin Malakaj, CENES
Incoming Director, CES

CES Faculty News

Dr. Katherine Bowers: Recipient of a 2022 UBC Faculty Research Award and 2023 British Academy Visiting Fellowship.

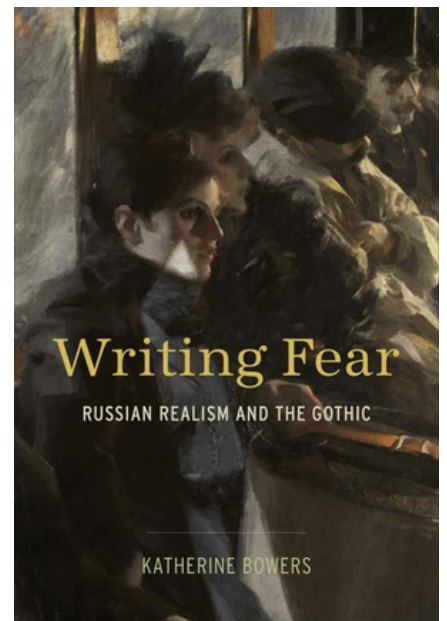
Dr. Katherine Bowers received two major fellowships for her study leave from May to December 2023. She was awarded the UBC Killam Research Fellowship, which will support a research trip to the UK during her study leave. The Office of the VP, Research and Innovation hosted a reception on June 6, 2023 to acknowledge the recipients' achievements. Dr. Bowers also was awarded a 2023 British Academy Visiting Fellowship, which supports a summer research trip. From May-August, Dr. Bowers was hosted by the University of St Andrews in Scotland while from October-December she will be a Visiting Fellow of Clare Hall, Cambridge. Dr. Bowers' new book project is titled "Unstable Environments: Reading Climate Catastrophe Across the Long Nineteenth Century."



Dr. Katherine Bowers

Two Co-Edited Journal Special Issues Release

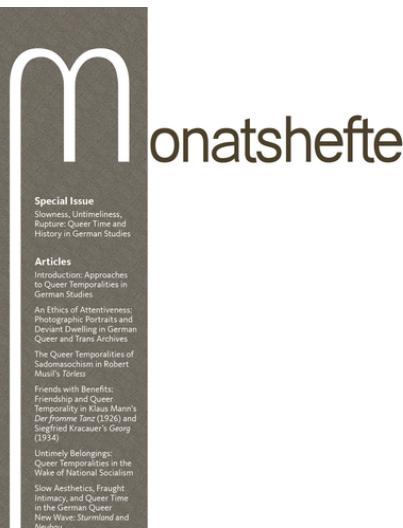
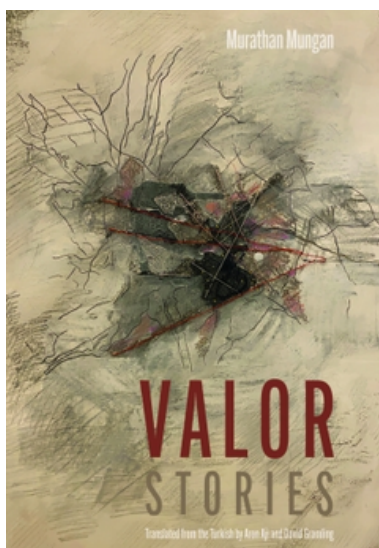
CES Affiliates Dr. Kyle Frackman and Dr. Ervin Malakaj published two co-edited special issues in leading German Studies journals *Monatshefte* ("Slowness, Untimeliness, Rupture: Queer Time and History in German Studies,") and the *The Germanic Review* ("Queer Time and Contemporary German Cinema,") which explore queer temporality in various facets of German culture. The special issues arose from a 2020 conference on queer German Studies hosted at UBC.



Dr. Katherine Bowers' most recently published book, *Writing Fear: Russian Realism and the Gothic*, which explores Russian literature's engagement with the gothic by analyzing the practices of borrowing and adaptation.

Translating *Valor Stories* - Sohbet

On March 30, Dr. David Gramling and his co-translator Dr. Aron Aji (Director, MFA in Translation, University of Iowa), presented a two-hour sohbet ("chat") on their translation of Murathan Mungan's *Valor: Stories* (Northwestern University Press, 2022), hosted by the Turkish Literature Series held at the University of Texas-Austin.



CES Faculty News

Book Release: Dr. Ervin Malakaj's first monograph *Anders als die Andern* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2023)

The Weimar Film Network will be hosting the online book launch for Dr. Ervin Malakaj's first monograph *Anders als die Andern* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2023) on 23 August, 2023 at 9:00 am PST. Register [here](#) to reserve a spot!

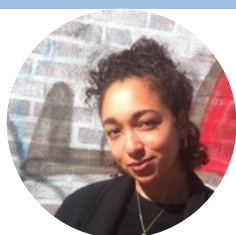
Dr. Malakaj's book concerns the aesthetics of mourning at the core of Richard Oswald's early queer melodrama. The monograph is part of a broader research arc concerning pre-1933 queer German cultures, which also includes a book in progress on early queer media theory and occult cultural practice tentatively titled "Divinatory Cultural Techniques: Queer Media Engagement, 1900-1933."

The 'Hot'-comes Conference

Dr. Ervin Malakaj and Dr. David Gramling organized a three-day conference, "Creating Just Outcomes and Assessments, Together" (a.k.a. The 'Hot'-comes Conference) between March 31-April 1. The conference was attended by 100 teachers and researchers across German Studies, and was part of the organizers' work with the DDGC Collective: Diversity, Decolonization, and the German Curriculum. You can access the conference website and program [here](#). This is the fourth DDGC conference since Dr. Malakaj co-founded the Collective in 2016. The conference yielded exciting new outcomes which teachers and students can adopt and develop at various institutions of learning in Canada and internationally.

DDGC 2023 Conference Program

Luminaries. Keynotes. Plenaries. Panels.
Collectivity!

Recent Publications

Dr. Ayasha Guerin



Dr. Renisa Mawani



Dr. Alexander Fisher



Dr. John Christopoulos

- Dr. Ayasha Guerin's article "Matter and Memory: Black Feminist Poetics and Performance in Berlin" has recently appeared in the journal *Meridians*. Duke UP. 22 (1) 2023: 115-145.
- Dr. Renisa Mawani's book chapter "The Law of the Sea: Oceans, Ships, and the Anthropocene" has been published in Peter Burdon and James Martel (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Law and the Anthropocene* (Routledge, 2023): 115-129.
- Dr. Alexander Fisher's contribution on "Munich" is part of the recently published *The Museum of Renaissance Music: A History in 100 Exhibits*, edited by Vincenzo Borghetti and Tim Shephard (Brepols, 2023): 351-6.
- Dr. John Christopoulos has co-edited (with Diego Pirillo) a Special Issue of the journal *Religions* 14 (5) 2023, entitled "Rethinking Catholicism in Early Modern Italy: Gender, Space, Mobility".

Interview with Dr. Ervin Malakaj

CES intern Leon Kraft sat down with Dr. Ervin Malakaj (CENES), the author of the first English-language monograph dedicated to Richard Oswald's early queer melodrama *Anders als die Andern* (*Different from the Others*), to talk about his recent and ongoing scholarly projects.

What got you interested in *Anders als die Andern*?

I initially encountered the movie in a graduate seminar on Weimar Cinema. I was doing research on *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and while reading up on the history of the film I stumbled on a mention of *Anders als die Andern*. *Anders als die Andern* was described as the first homosexual movie with ties to the early homosexual rights movement. As a queer scholar and a big fan of Weimar cinema, I was super intrigued about the link between queer rights advocacy and early cinema development.



Dr. Ervin Malakaj

Do you also teach that movie?

I teach it almost every time I teach my Weimar Cinema class. Because the film is not available in an authoritative version online, integrating it into courses has been a bit challenging. However, the film museum in Munich has recently issued a new edition of the film in new restoration. With the help of the UBC library I will be able to get students streaming access to the film.

How do students respond to the film?

I think students are absolutely astonished about *Anders als die Andern*. They, like me when I was a student, come to Weimar cinema expecting to study canonical films of the era. They expect Fritz Lang, F.W. Murnau, and G.W. Pabst. And when they come to the first sessions of the class where we talk about *Anders als die Andern* they are absolutely blown away. This was one of the most popular films when it was screened at the beginning of the Weimar Republic. The film was much more popular than the *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* for instance. And still, it does not enjoy the same scholarly attention. So, when students come to my class they have this moment of astonishment, the same way that I did when I first encountered *Anders als die Andern*.

Would you consider *Anders als die Andern* a canonical film?

For the most part, titles dominate the popular imaginary about Weimar. *Metropolis*, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *Nosferatu*, and *The Blue Angel* are films people familiar with Weimar Cinema would mention. Having said that I think that's one of the exciting aspects about *Anders als die Andern*. Currently, the scholarly and public interest in the Weimar Era is rising in particular because of the period's progressive sexual politics. *Anders als die Andern* and cultural objects like it come to the fore more and more. And its status as canonical film is underway. This is what I am trying to do with my book on the film: to articulate why *Anders als die Andern* is one of the most important films of the era.

What inspired you to write a book about the film?

When scholars talk about this film, they at times overdetermine its status as an artifact of early sexology. Magnus Hirschfeld, the famous founder of the Institute of Sexual Science, was involved in the making of this film. This fact cast the film for some scholars as a historical artifact through which we could understand Germany's early homosexual rights movement. What I am doing with my project is foregrounding the fact that this film was, however, first and foremost a product of the popular culture of its time and not of sexology. Even though it was intended as a so called "enlightenment movie" (in German, "Aufklärungsfilm") — a sort of sexual hygiene film that was intended to shift popular sentiment of a particular variety that was weighing down homosexual life at the time — people went to see it because of its melodramatic content.

Interview with Dr. Ervin Malakaj

What are your plans for further research?

I am still quite interested in the Weimar era. Currently I am writing about Weimar film theory, in particular writing about embodiment and performer vitality as it relates to the lived experience that stars bring to a given role. For instance, I am completing a project on the early Polish-German film star Pola Negri and how she was cast as an ethnic star performing in many different kinds of ethnicized roles.

Tetka Theory

You received a Canada Council for the Arts grant for a project which is tentatively titled *Tetka Theory: A Queer Life in the Bosnian Diaspora*. What's it about?

It was actually inspired by some of the ways that I come to understand how to navigate my life over the course of the last forty years: through tentative knowledge. There were few resources a person like me, who grew up queer in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Diaspora, to understand who I was. The dominant queer culture didn't quite correspond to my lived experience. And the Bosnian and Herzegovinian culture didn't have many resources I needed in order to kind of figure out life. I had to kind of eel my way around and come to understand the

world through basically trial--and-error. And one of the ways I am trying to articulate this is to through what I call "Tetka Theory". Tetka can mean aunt or auntie. This could be your actual aunt but it can also be your queer elder who is looking out for you and is trying to give you some advice to figure out how to move from one stage to the next. Some of that advice tetkas give is good and can help you move forward. Some of it can be also toxic and doesn't always come from a good place. But the idea is that even though this knowledge is not ideal, it offers something. It is a resource of sorts, even if it is a pained resource. I developed this concept to give these ideas some language that can serve as a conceptual framework for people like me to talk about their experiences.

Would you consider your book an academic text or more of a literary one?

I am very much inspired by what has recently come to be called autotheory. I am consciously turning to a couple of major figures in queer and queer diaspora studies that have been really influential in my own conception of my academic writing but that also have variously informed the way I think about my personal life. So, for me this book is kind of straddling the line a little bit: it wants to be a theoretical text while also being a personal account.

How is the book organized?

According to stations of my life. It begins in my hometown, Doboj, Bosnia-Herzegovina. It's a town that I have visited a couple of times since my family had to flee the war, but it has been quite some time since I've been there myself. This summer I am returning to it for the first time in over 10 years to do personal ethnographic work. Beyond that I am going to Budapest, which was one of the stations on my family's refuge route. I'll go to Vienna and then Xanten in Germany. The latter is a very small town which is to this day houses an operating refugee camp — the same one in which my family stayed when we made it to Germany. I'll visit Wiesbaden, my second hometown in Germany, Berlin, Chicago, St. Louis, Houston, and finally will return to Vancouver. I am so grateful for the grant, which is funding travel to each one of these sites.

Will the book also be published in languages other than English?

I am writing it first and foremost in English. I could write it in Bosnian or in German, but in this moment, I feel drawn to English. I am also conceiving of this as a project for the North American Bosnian and Herzegovinian Diaspora, and the second generation now coming of age. Through translation it could, however, also become a different kind of book, for other kinds of audiences, and I would very much welcome that.



Spotlight on CES Staff

Meet CES Senior Program Assistant

An experienced educational advisor, Rima Hijazi has joined the Centre for European Studies earlier this year as our new Senior Program Assistant. Building on her studies in science (B.Sc., UBC) and education (M.Ed., SFU), Rima is excited to share her expertise in creating inclusive, cross-disciplinary research environments. We are looking forward to working together and continuing to develop the Centre's programming over the next years. Welcome to CES, Rima!



Rima Hijazi

An Internship with CES

During the past spring semester, Bauhaus-University exchange student Leon Kraft completed an internship with the Centre for European Studies. Leon, who is currently enrolled in the Media Studies MA Program in Weimar, works on infrastructure studies and the history of cultural techniques. Below, he reflects on his recent internship.



Leon Kraft

As part of the UBC - Bauhaus-University Weimar exchange program, I had the opportunity to complete an internship with CES. I must admit I felt a little nervous at first, but thanks to everyone's help, especially Senior Program Assistant Elizabeth Nolan, I found the right balance of support and autonomy I needed in order to fulfill my tasks. I really enjoyed the range of programs and events I participated in during my internship, and the insights I gained about the day-to-day work involved in running the Centre. Helping with the organization and promotion of the "Engaging Transylvania" talk series was especially rewarding, particularly the open dialogue with speakers and attendants.

I also dedicated time to my own study interests while at UBC. The CES affiliates and CENES faculty members have been immensely supportive in this regard, providing research advice and recommendations which I will continue to apply while working on my thesis. The highlight of my exchange program was the invitation to give a talk at UBC, entitled "The Monstrous and The Posthuman: On Filmic Depictions of Cyborgs".

To sum it up: I really enjoyed my internship. I feel like I learned a lot and I will miss my colleagues and the friendly and professional atmosphere here. I hope to maintain my connection to the Centre of European Studies and the University of British Columbia over the years to come.



Spring 2023 Thematic Speaker Series in Review: “Engaging Transylvania”

Engaging Transylvania is a speaker series hosted by the Centre for European Studies dedicated to the cultural and political imaginaries of Transylvania.

“Untypical for a Transylvanian Lady? Gender and Nationalism in Modern Science”

by Dr. Borbala Zsuzsanna Török - Universität Wien (Austria)

March 28, 2023



“Between Exoticism and Colonialism: Historicising Transylvania in Bram Stoker’s Dracula”

by Dr. Madeline Potter - University of York

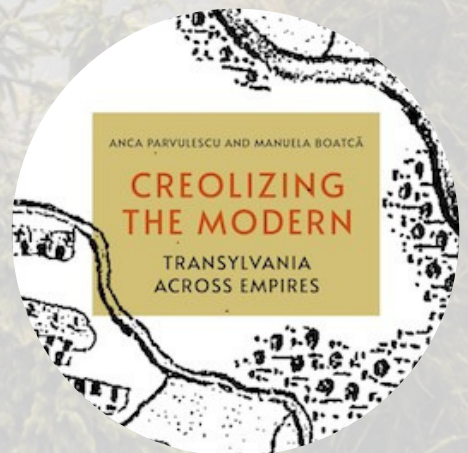
March 13, 2023

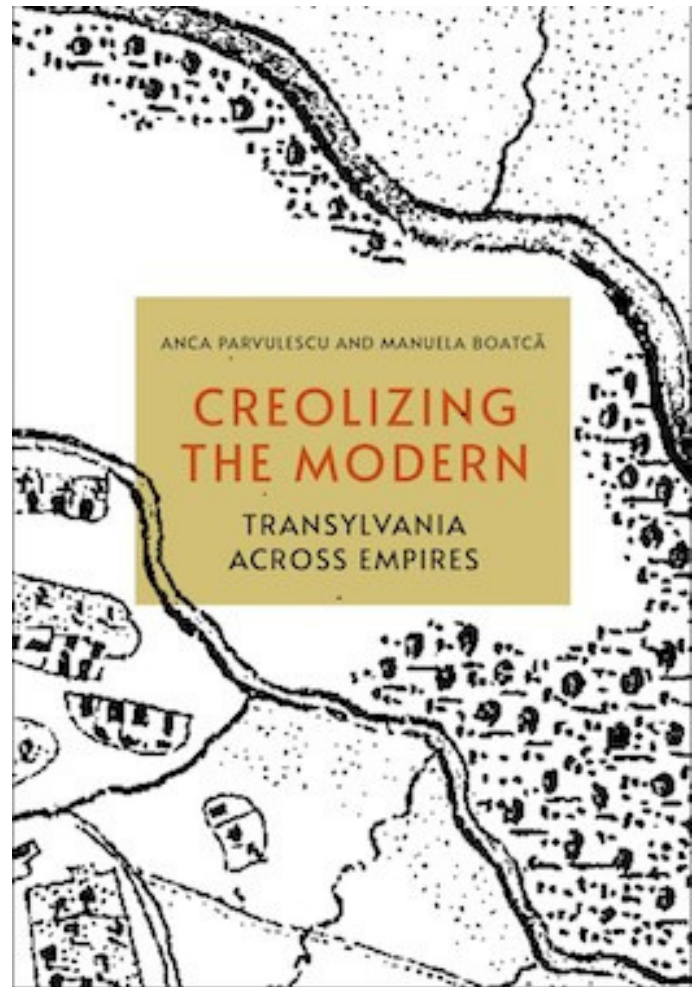


“Creolizing the Modern: Transylvania across Empires”

by Dr. Anca Parvulescu - Washington University St. Louis (USA) and Dr. Manuela Boatcă - Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg (Germany)

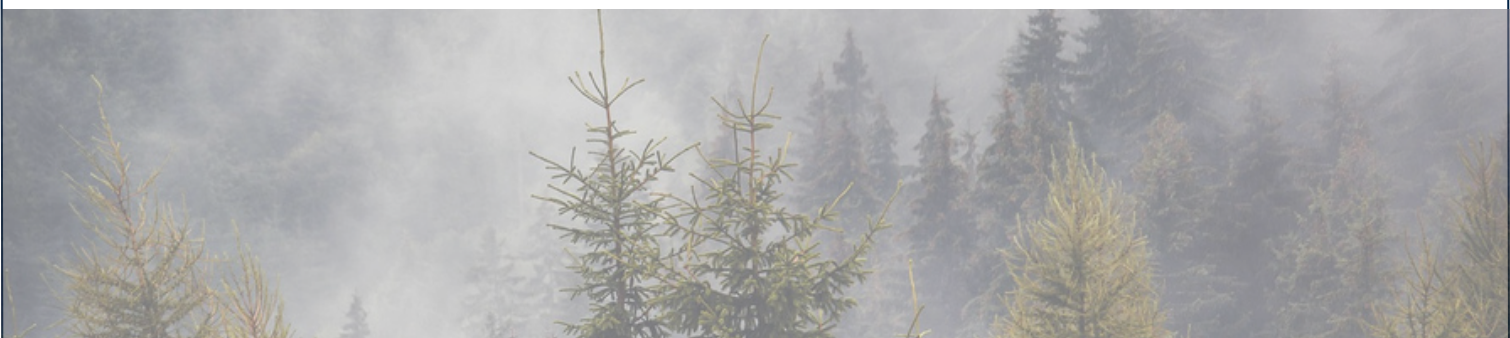
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Book Launch: *Creolizing the Modern: Transylvania across Empires*

Dr. Manuela Boatcă, Dr. Ilinca Iurascu, and Dr. Anca Parvulescu

As part of their talk for the thematic speaker series “Engaging Transylvania,” Dr. Anca Parvulescu (Washington University) and Dr. Manuela Boatcă (University of Freiburg) have introduced us to their new study *Creolizing the Modern: Transylvania across Empires* (Cornell University Press, 2022). “Bridging the humanities and social sciences,” *Creolizing the Modern* provides “innovative decolonial perspectives that aim to creolize modernity and the modern world-system.” The focus on “historical Transylvania, at the intersection of the Habsburg Empire, the Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary, and Russia,” has offered the authors “the platform for their multi-level reading” of a region that has “inherited multiple, conflicting imperial and anti-imperial histories.”* The volume has already received several awards (the René Wellek Prize from the *American Comparative Literature Association*; the Barrington Moore Award from the *American Sociological Association*) and honourable mentions. Continuing their dialogue with the UBC audience, the authors have kindly accepted to share a few thoughts on the contexts of the book’s publication:



*<https://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/book/9781501766565/creolizing-the-modern/>

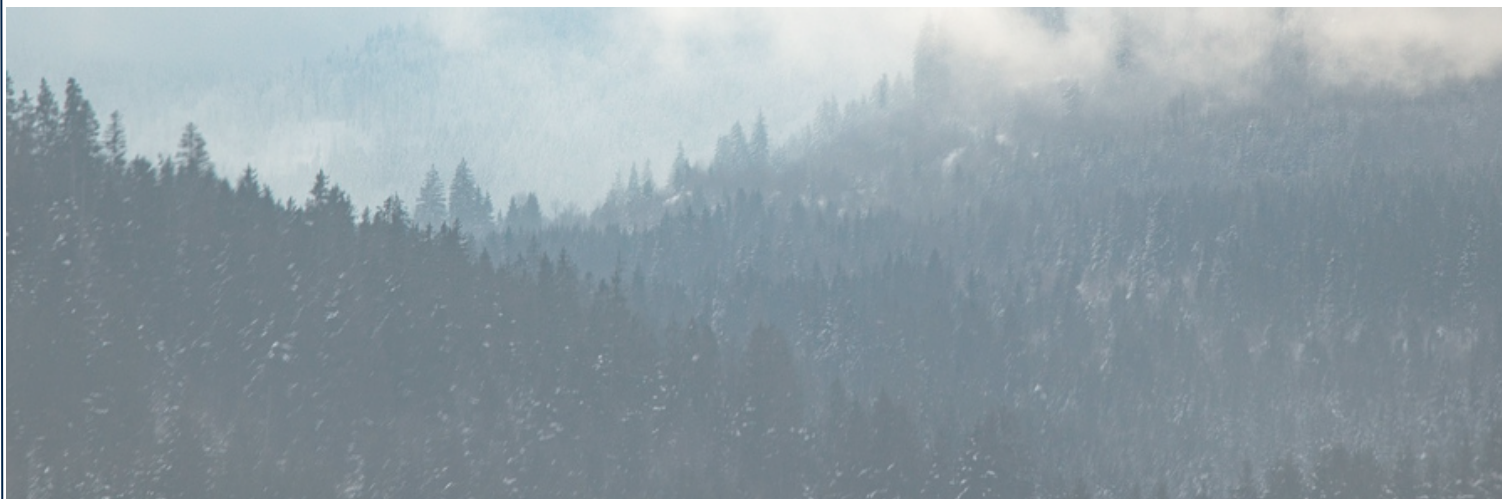
Book Launch: *Creolizing the Modern: Transylvania across Empires*

Dr. Anca Parvulescu, Professor of English, Liselotte Dieckmann Professor of Comparative Literature, Washington University in St. Louis.

European Studies has often had a rather defensive reaction to debates in postcolonial studies. Writing this book, we embraced the dialogue with postcolonial studies—as well as decolonial theory and world-systems analysis. We show what it might mean for these debates to think about the European East—a region like Transylvania—as part of the geography of postcoloniality. We do so by tracing a historical relation between coloniality and interimperiality. The latter concept helps us explain the predicament of regions in the European East that have been situated between or at the crossroads of empires—the Habsburg Empire, the Ottoman Empire, and the Russian Empire—all of which had a global reach and were in competition globally with the colonial reach of the Spanish or British empires but are rarely discussed in relation to them. The result, we hope, is a creolized notion of modernity, historically and problematically tied to Europe as a concept, and which we model on Transylvania’s long road to the modern. And a creolized image of Europe, which hopefully might lead to a creolized European Studies.

Dr. Manuela Boatcă, Professor of Sociology and Head of School of the Global Studies Program, University of Freiburg.

Although the critique of methodological nationalism has been around for decades, sociology still tends to operate with nation-states and reified regional entities as units of analysis. When the Russian invasion of Ukraine is framed as “war in the midst of Europe,” it is nation-states and a shifting notion of Europe that are invoked, with no recourse to historical regions such as Galicia or European empires such as the Habsburg one, who are indispensable to understanding the stakes of the conflict today. In the book, we therefore suggest that it is imperative to productively complicate the notion of “Europe” by rethinking it from one of its Eastern margins. Our project implies counteracting the prevailing self-definition of Europe as a geographically, culturally, religiously, and racially coherent entity by focusing on one of its subaltern formations, Transylvania. Its location on the European continent, yet in the rural periphery of several of Europe’s imperial powers, renders it an ideal candidate for the larger decolonial project of “creolizing Europe.” Creolization as a way of rethinking, reframing, and creatively recomposing categories structuring sociological analysis—from Europe to Transylvania, and from the modern to the comparative method involves the creolization of theory by retrieving subaltern histories and experiences in both colonial and imperial situations and reinscribing them into social theory.



Spring 2023 CES Research Colloquia in Review

The CES Research Colloquia are series of presentations of recent work accomplished by
Affiliate Faculty

**"Biblical Forgery and the Carceral State, ca. 1000"
Research Colloquium**

by Dr. Mo Pareles
April 19 2023



Dr. Mo Pareles

**"Metaphors of Invasions in
Contemporary Spanish Documentary"
Research Colloquium**

by Dr. Anna Casas Aguilar and Dr. Mónica
López Lerma
April 12 2023



Dr. Anna Casas Aguilar



Dr. Mónica López Lerma

"Unsetting the Structure: The Russia-Ukraine"

by Dr. Ibrahim Muradov
February 15 2023



Dr. Ibrahim Muradov

Spotlight on Spring 2023 CES Research Colloquia

Dr. Mo Pareles (Department of English, UBC), who gave this year's final research colloquium, shares remarks on their forthcoming monograph *Nothing Pure: Jewish Law, Christian Supersession, and Bible Translation in Old English* (University of Toronto Press, 2024), which explores the cultural translation of Jewish law in pre-Conquest England.



Detail of a miniature of a wolf, sneaking up on sheep from downwind; from a bestiary, England, c. 1200-c. 1210, [Royal MS 12 C. xix, f. 19r](#)

Dr. Mo Pareles:

Early English culture depended on a Judaism translated away from Jews. *Nothing Pure: Jewish Law, Christian Supersession, and Bible Translation in Old English* (University of Toronto Press, forthcoming in May 2024) illuminates the paradoxical process by which the abjection and dehumanization of Jews, a bitter milestone in the history of European racism, was first articulated in the cultural translation of Jewish literature. Early English translators developed a mode of what I call supersessionary translation, which attempted to subject the legacy of Judaism to the control of a culture that had purportedly superseded and replaced it. I locate Old English Bible translations within the history of cultural translation, arguing that these translations should not be understood as romantically liberated fragments of a suppressed mode of literacy, but instead as authorized vernacular works, privileged texts that appropriated and attempted to subsume a Jewish source culture.

In the late tenth and early eleventh centuries, England had no known Jewish population and was geographically removed from the periodically anti-Jewish roil of the Continent. Nevertheless, the translation of Jewish law was central to the formation of Christian identity and at the heart of Early English theopolitical projects. My book provides new readings of the Old English Heptateuch and of the works of Ælfric, Abbot of Eynsham (ca. 955-1010) and Wulfstan, Archbishop of York (d. 1023), including texts not previously categorized as translations. *Nothing Pure* ultimately demonstrates that supersessionary translation shaped all aspects of early English religious culture, from assertions of episcopal and monastic sovereignty, to justifications for slavery, to gender and sexual norms.

Spotlight on Spring 2023 CES Research Colloquia

The Centre for European Studies is a hub for research exchange and academic dialogue at UBC and beyond. This year, we had the opportunity to invite visiting scholar Dr. Mónica López Lerma (Reed College) and postdoctoral fellow Dr. Ibrahim Muradov (Dnipro University of Technology, Ukraine, and Department of Political Science, UBC) to talk about their research and academic experiences at UBC.

Dr. Mónica López Lerma:

As a CES visiting scholar, I have been engaged in two research projects this year: first, an edited collection entitled *Espacios y límites de la (in)justicia en la España contemporánea*. Its aim is to examine the main conceptual discussions around spatial (in)justices in contemporary Spain, including the ethical and political challenges and inequalities of neoliberal and capitalist production of space. On the one hand, Spanish cities continue to be the centre of capital investment and real estate speculation, thus perpetuating the neoliberal processes of gentrification, exclusion, and segregation. On the other hand, this process widens the gap between urban and rural worlds, intensifying the latter's depopulation and abandonment. Finally, beyond the rural-urban dichotomy the current era of the "Anthropocene" forces us to think about a topography of spatial (in)justice that addresses the effects of climate change and its relationship with capitalism.

In my new research project, provisionally entitled "Documentaries Against the Law," I seek to provide a detailed examination of the narrative, structural, and aesthetic affinities between trials and documentaries through a close analysis of contemporary Spanish documentary films. This project aims to examine how these documentaries transform factual information, everyday situations, ordinary people and events and turn them into evidence. What discursive and interpretative frames do they deploy to present facts and events as truthful, accurate, and credible? What aesthetic and cinematic devices do they use to do so? What affective responses do they evoke and generate in viewers?

Dr. Ibrahim Muradov:

I joined the University of British Columbia in September 2022, even though I had not anticipated taking this step in my academic career. Russia's unprovoked and unjustified, full-fledged war against Ukraine led to my decision to leave in March 2022, out of concern for my family's safety. So, I became one of Ukraine's many displaced scholars. Thanks to the generous efforts of many wonderful people at UBC, particularly Dr. Lisa Sundstrom in the Department of Political Science, my family and I found safety here. While conducting my academic research on the Russia-Ukraine war and teaching related courses at UBC, I am also carrying out my responsibilities remotely at the Dnipro University of Technology. Since the beginning of the invasion, my home university has moved to teaching online. While some of my students left the country, the majority have stayed in Dnipro. Living in a constant state of war makes their learning experience excruciatingly difficult.

Since the start of the invasion, our online classes have not only helped them hone their understanding of international relations but have also allowed us to see each other and check in on one another. Organizing classes in Ukraine became obviously challenging and risky, particularly during the winter. During our classes, Russian missile attacks in Dnipro were not infrequent. One moment I will likely never forget is when someone raised their hand to ask permission to leave the class due to explosions near their house. Yet the students have never given up learning and have often insisted on continuing our lessons despite the air raid sirens. While they are determined to resist the invasion, they are also eager to hear about the support of the international community. To this end, I arranged a meeting between my students here and those in Ukraine to facilitate a dialogue between their respective worldviews. One of my UBC students pointed out: "While talking with the Ukrainian students, my perspectives broadened, as I learned how their lives have been impacted by the war, not just economically or geopolitically, as I am used to reading about, but from a personal perspective, something I would not have known before." Another person mentioned: "One of the students, Anastasiia, explained how she wanted to leave Ukraine before the invasion; after the start of the war, however, she realized she needed to stay. She explained that her motivation is to be part of the new Ukraine, the less corrupt Ukraine, and the more democratic Ukraine."

The meeting also left a lasting impression on my Ukrainian students, who felt that their resilience and fight for freedom had made an impact on the international community. Even though it is still unsafe to return, I am determined to maintain my teaching responsibilities in Dnipro, because I am confident there will be a need for qualified people to rebuild the country following Ukraine's victory.

Ukraine in Focus: Dr. Nataliia Ivchyk, "The Bridge over the Chasm of Oblivion."

Dr. Nataliia Ivchyk is Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at the Rivne State University for the Humanities (Rivne, Ukraine) and Visiting Scholar in the Department of History at UBC. A specialist in Holocaust Studies in Ukraine and East Central Europe, Dr. Ivchyk has joined the Centre for European Studies this year as its newest affiliated faculty member. In the following essay, which focuses on the city of Rivne in Ukraine, she discusses questions of symbolic space, the construction of collective memory and its political pasts and presents, and speaks about the recent projects launched by the Centre for Studies of Memory Policy and Public History, *Mnemonics*, which she co-founded in 2016.



Dr. Nataliia Ivchyk

The Bridge over the Chasm of Oblivion: Creating Spaces of Holocaust Remembrance in Ukraine

Rivne is one of the twenty-six regional centres of Ukraine. It is a city of about two hundred forty thousand inhabitants located in the northwestern part of the country, which, like many other cities in Ukraine, is the inheritor of a multicultural history. But before going any further, I would like to start with one of my most vivid memories of the city, when, on a summer day, my mother and I were riding the bus to our countryside cottage near an area called Sosonky. At some point, I looked out the window and asked my mother about the road we were passing and where it led. My mother fell silent for a while and then confessed she did not know. In reality, that road led to the site of one of the worst massacres of Jewish citizens of Ukraine. But the site clearly had no place in the city's memory.

The story of my childhood illustrates the role of the state in constructing collective memory around certain historical narratives. By describing Rivne's symbolic space, I will try to show the place of the Holocaust in the memory of its citizens. Meanwhile, I would like to note right away that it is impossible to characterize local memory without including the state component. In this case, it would concern the public space, which is in a sense a landscape of memories.

Symbolic Space is a Landscape of Memories

Public space is a site of historical memory that reflects both the past and the present. Space is a site that transmits value messages that a city addresses to its residents or visitors. Its "language" is a product of both the historical heritage and political elites who have constructed memory based on convenient historical narratives. By marking the space with certain signs and meanings, the participants in this process try to create an environment of dialogue.

The state and local political elites, who make decisions at some point or another, decide the subjects of commemoration. First of all, they choose to commemorate what should not be forgotten, what should unite and consolidate the citizens of the state, regardless of their ethnicity and religion, into a single whole. At the same time, these political actors try to find answers to another dilemma: what images have disappeared, for various reasons, from the memorial narrative of urban spaces. After all, these images can be revived, or vice versa, can continue to be silenced and doomed to oblivion. Therefore, symbolic space is political in nature.

Symbolic space has the power to enforce the significance of certain events, the activities of public and political figures or cultural representatives, and yet it can also silence certain stories of the city's or state's past, deliberately concealing them, as was the case with Sosonky, where there were no signs or plaques commemorating the events that had taken place there. Thus, my mother, among many others, was just unaware of them. These mechanisms - enforcement and concealment - are inherent in the construction of collective memory and ensure its functioning.

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