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# WORKING THROUGH A MONUMENTAL BREAK UP: IDEOLOGICAL TRANSITIONS, IRONIC MONUMENTAL DISRUPTIONS, AND PUBLIC DELIBERATION

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**Working through a Monumental Break Up: Ideological Transitions, Ironic Monumental**

**Disruptions and Public Deliberation**


**by**

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**ABSTRACT**

**Working through a Monumental Break Up: Ideological Transitions, Ironic Monumental Disruptions, and Public Deliberation**

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At present the literature of counter-monument studies does not account for the complex interactions of irony and nostalgia in memorial spaces. The three case studies examined in this project show that nostalgia can produce critically engaging spaces of deliberation depending on how ironic commemoration intervenes in comic or tragic frames. In order to show that more rhetorical focus is possible, I have challenged the conceptualization of counter-monument studies through what I have termed the "ironic monumental disruption." Monument studies must address how the idea of the counter-monument, in which the "counter" supposedly resides in the artifact itself, valorizes monolithic critiques and fails to recognize that contexts, interactions, and artifacts all shape the symbolism of the commemorative site. Alternatively, ironic monumental disruptions offer critical and deliberative opportunities in their interactions with visitors and provide more conceptual insight into transitional commemorative practices. The monuments reviewed in this project initially appeared to provide additional reinforcement for escapist, capitalist narratives, but my examination of them has revealed that allowing for (ironic)

commemorative contradictions provides discursive openings for publics unknowingly silenced by a lack of public deliberation. Commemorative irony produces valuable insights into the current historical moment and the representational issues created by ideological transitions. The citizens of Bosnia, Bulgaria, and Hungary express varying levels of nostalgia about their communist past, which is why the commemorative sites within these countries create a valuable spectrum of ironic and nostalgic entanglements. Commemorative irony produces valuable insights into the current historical moment and the representational issues created by ideological transitions.

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**Introduction**

A 2008 global survey conducted by Gallup found that the Eastern and Southeastern European countries of Bulgaria, Serbia, and Romania were among the "10 most discontented countries in the world."[1]  According to another survey conducted in Hungary in 2009, "70 percent of those who were already adults in 1989 say they were disappointed with the results of the regime change," and in Bulgaria "60 percent say they lived better in the past, even though shopping queues were routine, social connections were the only way to obtain more valuable goods, jeans and Coca Cola were off-limits and it took up to 10 years' waiting to buy a car."[2] The results of the surveys suggested that the people of Eastern and Southeastern Europe were dissatisfied, in large part, because their living conditions had not substantially improved from their communist days.

Eastern and Southeastern Europeans appear to be increasingly disappointed with the unstable life capitalism has produced in the post-communist era.  As the economic downturn continues to widen the gap between Western and Eastern Europe, it also increases the social and economic disparity within the newly transformed Eastern European and Baltic countries in the region.  Within the new capitalist system, many Eastern Europeans find that their spending power is as low as ever but their desire for goods has skyrocketed.  Some Eastern Europeans reported that their "thirst for materialism," was at an all-time high.[3]  A 2009 *Reuters* article suggests, "A big chunk of the loans taken in the boom years was spent on fancy cars and yachts, flat TV screens, designer clothes, silicon surgeries and exotic trips abroad."[4]  Ultimately, as their economies continue to struggle, Eastern Europeans and Southern Slavs find themselves looking back on their communist chapter with nostalgia while simultaneously craving all of the material goods that come with a market-driven economic system.  Both populations appear to be

increasingly disappointed with the unstable life capitalism has produced in the post-communist era.

No doubt, there are many portals through which to examine nostalgia for the communist past and disillusionment with the capitalist present. One of these is the study of monuments. Central to this study is the way in which monuments reflect and engage the ideological dualities expressed by discontented or "disappointed" citizens in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Within the field of communication, scholars recognize monuments as the materialization of public memory and identity. As such, monuments can create some of the most visible and controversial sites of ideological tension and public deliberation. Recently, monumentality scholars have identified a "new" category of study—the counter-monument—to explain the inevitable controversies that arise from solidifying a memory in stone.

Proponents argue that a "counter-monument," critiques or contradicts traditional commemorative practices and institutions of power, and consequently, forces a re-conceptualization of those commemorative practices and their effects on public memory. But, there continues to be a division among scholars in the field of communication regarding traditional monument studies and the efficacy of the more recently identified study of counter-monuments. My purpose is to overcome this limited conceptual binary by bringing the concept of irony into the study of monumentality, and demonstrating that irony is a common and rhetorically powerful memorial strategy particularly well-suited for vexing historical situations.

In chapters to come, I argue that counter-monument studies place too much emphasis on the symbolism of the artifact and not enough value on the contextual, historical, and political interactions of the artifact and its audience. It is precisely because of the overvaluation of the representational politics of the artifact (largely absent of its context) that some scholars of

counter-monumentality are not recognizing the rhetorical potential of irony when applied to

nostalgic (and in many cases traumatic) narratives.[5]   In particular, counter-monument studies

could benefit from a better understanding of how irony disrupts and responds to nostalgia, in

what I believe is best described as a process of "ironic monumental disruption."  Ironic

monumental disruptions have the potential to create a kind of public deliberation presently

unaccounted for within the conceptualization of counter-monuments.

**IRONY AND NOSTALGIA IN AN AMBIVALENT AGE: ARGUING FOR THE**

**CONCEPT OF THE IRONIC MONUMENTAL DISRUPTION**

Ironic monumental disruptions offer valuable insight into shifting ideological narratives

and investments.  The interplay of irony (as it is represented through monuments) and nostalgia

within comic or tragic frames of acceptance shapes how audiences perceive historical

experiences, former ideologies, and even their own political subjectivities.  Specifically, irony

and nostalgia act as counterparts that can create oppositional readings of an artifact depending on

the commemorative context.

Understanding the relationships between all of these rhetorical elements helps illuminate

the political potential of the concept of the ironic monumental disruption.  While irony is

commonly understood as a reversal of meaning, irony's critical potential for monumentality

comes through its ability to reveal contradictions between surface forms and deeper contextual

meanings.[6]  On the other hand, nostalgia is defined as an emotional attachment or "sentimental

longing for the past."[7]  Many scholars see nostalgia as a debilitating affect that allows people to

idealize the past rather than engage with the political present. In fact, counter-monuments are

constructed in part to combat nostalgia (as it is symbolized in the form of monuments) on the

landscape. But the scholars of counter-monumentality are overlooking the commemorative

potential of nostalgia and irony.  Irony is a powerful rhetorical tool that can unhinge the ossifying effects of nostalgia because it can negotiate and even highlight competing loyalties for the ideological past and present.

Furthermore, in order to explain the potential of irony and nostalgia as they shape representational practices and create deliberative spaces, I rely on Kenneth Burke's conceptualization of frames of acceptance.  Burke defines 'frames of acceptance" as "the more or less organized system of meanings by which a thinking man [*sic*] gauges the historical situation and adopts a role with relation to it."[8] For Burke, there are both comic and tragic frames of acceptance.  I use the concepts of comic and tragic frames to explain how the relationship between nostalgia and irony can transform a commemorative space and its political potential.[9] Specifically, nostalgia creates and constrains the way people experience and understand the world.  Thus, within a comic frame, irony and nostalgia can open up a space of playful reflection and deliberation. The comic frame seeks to point out the flaws in the system (in this case the system is the ideology of both communism and capitalism). The goal of the comic frame is not to overthrow the system, but to playfully challenge it in hopes of provoking a meaningful response among audiences.  Conversely, the tragic frame is not playful.  The tragic frame seeks to place blame on a person or idea in hopes of putting the episode to rest.  The lack of any significant nostalgia for the idea or place represented transforms irony from a playful critique into a critical accusation.[10]  I define all of these concepts further in the next chapter.

Finally, the recent construction of ironic monuments in Eastern and Southeastern Europe, (and the ironic repositioning or reappropriation of monuments constructed during the communist era) poses new questions for researchers of monumentality. Whether these monuments mock history or represent a different history altogether, they serve as ironic monumental disruptions

that reposition both artifact and audience.  As such, I will analyze three ironic monumental disruptions in Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Hungary as exemplars of a larger monumental trend in post-communist Europe.  The case studies reveal how nostalgia for the rejected ideology of communism is at odds with ambivalence for the present ideology of capitalism.  Thus, the three case studies demonstrate the deliberative potential of irony-driven monuments as they respond to nostalgic narratives constructed into comic and tragic frames.   The next section contextualizes the specific commemorative sites used for this study and poses the critical questions utilized throughout this project.

**THE CAST OF CHARACTERS, COMMEMORATIVE QUESTIONS, AND DEFINITIONAL CLARIFICATIONS**

To demonstrate that the irony-driven monuments of Eastern and Southeastern Europe have the potential to create a new commemorative ethic that allows for necessary contextualization, engages audiences, and produces deliberation, I examine the defacement of the Soviet Liberation monument in Sofia, Bulgaria, the erection and removal of the Bruce Lee monument in Mostar, Bosnia, and the discursive repositioning of Memento Park artifacts in Budapest, Hungary, as important and vexing political outlets for "histories" in transition.  While news outlets originally reported on the statues as absurd and politically problematic representations of memory, the unusual monuments have actually encouraged the public to ask interesting questions about the ethics of commemoration and public engagement.[11]  Celebrating (mostly foreign) popular icons as national heroes or choosing to resurrect monuments that celebrate old and sometimes oppressive histories has angered people who felt victimized by the communist regime.  But the unusual display of monuments has garnered particular interest

abroad because, at least on the surface, the statues seem to defy traditional commemorative ethics by replacing or remaking history rather than acknowledging lived experiences.

The citizens of Bosnia, Bulgaria, and Hungary express varying levels of nostalgia about their communist past, which is why the commemorative sites within these countries create a valuable spectrum of ironic and nostalgic entanglements. At present the literature of counter-monument studies does not account for these complex interactions. The field must find a place for commemorative irony as it produces valuable insight into the current historical moment and the representational issues created by ideological transitions.

Thus, the questions that guide this project are complementary and contingent. Three overlapping concerns shape the discussion of monument-building in post-communist Europe, and they are: ironic representation and disruption, nostalgia as it operates within comic and tragic frames, and counter-monument politics. The first concern of the project is the potential of ironic representation. To build on the earlier definition, Burke states that irony creates a "strategic moment of reversal."[12] Burke suggests that irony is a comic corrective that can create contested meanings and set different political agendas.[13] In Burke's definition, irony's representational and disruptive potential become clearer. In terms of the former, irony has representational potential because it can reference more than one idea and allow for a more complex construction of political identities. In terms of the latter, irony creates contested meanings, which in turn creates space for critical confrontations. The critical confrontations come in the form of physical or symbolic disruptions, which serve to dislocate the commemorative space from its original context. Irony and disruptions compliment and overlap each other conceptually as both rhetorical strategies call accepted meanings into question and

unsettle monuments from their discursive foundations.  In this way, the two provide new insight into monument studies when examined as critical material extensions of each other.

The concept of the ironic monumental disruption holds political potential precisely because it unsettles and reorients the relationship between public memory and monumentality. In other words, if monuments are the materialization of public memory and that memory is contingent upon a reasonably coherent national identity, how do societies with transitional, traumatic, and nostalgic historical narratives represent themselves in the interest of communal understanding?  What alternatives do societies in transition have to commemorate their past and present?  I would tentatively propose that irony as a rhetorical tool can provide communal understanding without demanding absolute narrative coherency.  Ironic monumental disruptions potentially create then bridge some of the inevitable gaps of meaning presented by historical and ideological transitions.  By building additional frames of reference, irony draws attention to contested ideas and creates more space for deliberation.[14]

The next conceptual tool needed to understand the potential deliberative power of ironic monuments is nostalgia.  According to Maya Nadkarni, many Eastern and Southeastern Europeans have expressed frustration that life is so difficult under capitalism and they long for the economic certainty of communism.[15]  The nostalgia that many articulate in post-communist Europe is not so much a definitional "longing for home" as it is a longing for an "already lost and irretrievable" object of desire.[16]  In other words, nostalgia is an affective experience or connection to another time and place that typically provides escapism from the present.  Some scholars suggest that nostalgia is an uncritical emotional response that erases the material reality of a problematic past, but nostalgia actually provides a very important foundation from which to examine comic and tragic frames in Eastern and Southeastern Europe.   Nostalgia encourages a

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connection to the past that is largely discouraged after ideological transitions.  Depending on the degree of nostalgia expressed in Bosnia, Bulgaria, and Hungary specifically, these societies have relied on nostalgia to reflect on the past or to reaffirm their connection to the present.

Revisiting the previous definition of tragic and comic frames, Cheree Carlson defines frames as "symbolic structures by which human beings impose order upon their personal and social experiences.  Frames serve as perspectives from which all interpretations of experience are made."[17]  Nostalgia offers to the comic frame the dual perspective it needs to enact a rhetorical critique. Nostalgia is an important component of the comic frame because, without it, it is difficult to understand why non-representative statuary is still standing.  The comic frame contextualizes the nostalgia present in commemorative works by providing historical, ideological, and political connections.[18]  Conversely, ironic monuments situated within an un-nostalgic tragic frame do not have as much deliberative potential because they are not creating diverse perspectives through conflicting representations.  In the case of the tragic frame, continued nostalgia makes it more difficult to place blame on an idea that is still emotionally valued.  But if little nostalgia for the past is actually present, then the tragic frame simply reinforces the desire to place blame on an easily identifiable factor and move on.  In order to purge one's self or one's community of the past, the past must be simplified and dismissed.  In both modes, peoples of Eastern and Southeastern Europe have constructed (comic and tragic) frames of understanding in order to process their newly re-envisioned past and present.

The presence of nostalgia in Eastern and Southeastern Europe is not surprising considering the rapid transformation of the region.  What is intriguing is that irony toys with and disrupts nostalgia creating commemorative spaces that defy time and space.  Irony allows people experiencing transitional histories access to the idea or desire for the past and also allows them a

means by which to contemplate desires and ideas without entirely abandoning their past or present political investments. So the question becomes: How would the scholarship of public memory and monumentality change if it accounted for the political and ethical potential of monuments that ironically challenged nostalgic narratives? Conversely, what new understandings of monumentality could the field produce if it recognized that irony enacts different critiques depending on the conceptual and contextual frames offered within nostalgic spaces?

Finally, the enactment in monumental form of ironic monumental disruptions has the same potential as a counter-monument to critique, but irony does so by reversing or toying with an accepted meaning rather than by refuting it. Additionally, the ironic monumental disruption utilizes nostalgia as an additional form of critique rather than a psychological obstacle like counter-monuments do. Unlike the current conceptualization of counter-monument studies, the concept of the ironic monumental disruption can account for various political, psychological, and ideological transitions.

At this point, I do not aim to discard counter-monument research entirely, but I will show the need for more conceptual clarity. Presently, many scholars in the field of monumentality label all atypical or confrontational monuments as counter-monuments. Counter-monuments tend to critique hegemonic commemorative practices through their abstract symbolism and impermanence. But the monuments in Eastern and Southeastern Europe are not "countering" state-sponsored discourses or critiquing hegemonic commemorative practices as much as they are creating dialogue through the presentation of unexpected incongruity (namely, ironically producing and confronting nostalgia). In that vein, what if a monument acts not as a counterpoint but rather as a placeholder or a disruption of political space so that the members of

the community are encouraged to engage rather than reject their understanding of the past?  The monumental enigmas in Eastern and Southeastern Europe reveal that the scholars of counter-monument studies must account for ironic commemoration if they are to more fully conceptualize critical, disruptive practices.

For introductory purposes I have examined the dissatisfaction that permeates the citizenry of Eastern and Southeastern Europe, the uneasy duality of ideologies, and noted the role of nostalgia and irony in monument (specifically, counter-monument) studies.  The following section discusses the three commemorative sites chosen as case studies in greater depth in order to identify the important relationship between irony and nostalgia as they transform national identity, public memory, and present new avenues of research for the scholars of monument studies.

## POST-COMMUNIST COMMEMORATION AND KUNG-FU: SITUATING THE CASE STUDIES

Rather than reconciling the nostalgia for both the promise of communism and capitalism, Eastern and Southeastern Europeans are looking to combine history and Hollywood in an attempt to keep both ideologies and their ideals alive in the form of irony-driven monuments. The three monuments that form the case study section of this project are all formations of ironic monumental disruptions, but they reflect distinctive responses to varied nostalgic investments. The monuments in Bulgaria and Hungary (the Soviet Army monument and Marx and Lenin statues respectively), symbolize communism quite literally, while the Bruce Lee monument (in Bosnia) indirectly references the loss of communist Yugoslavia.  In fact, the real curiosity is that the least literal acknowledgment of the past (Bruce Lee in Bosnia) represents the most nostalgic population.  Alternatively, the most literal interpretation of communism (Marx and Lenin statues

in Budapest) represents a largely un-nostalgic population. All of these monuments uniquely perform dual narratives as they nostalgically reflect their communist chapters and erase, deface, and mock historical, political, and social values in their respective countries.

While the three case studies detailed subsequently are illustrative of the negotiations of public memory in a rapidly transitioning society, it is important to note that they are not complete anomalies. Rather, there are a series of monuments that are stretching the parameters of monumentality as it has previously been studied and categorized. In this vein, Hungary, Bulgaria, and the former Yugoslavia have erected and desecrated statues ranging from those of Bruce Lee to Bob Marley, Canned Beef to Captain America, Stalin to Superman, and Rocky Balboa to Robin (of Batman and Robin), all claiming to acknowledge a history of violence, governmental oppression, and failed (or idealized) multiculturalism.

These particular artifacts run the spectrum from comical to combative, but they share a commonality in their attempts to bridge the gap between past and present, rejecting communism while nostalgically recalling its stability. The June 2011 vandalization of Soviet statuary in Bulgaria reveals that public memory and Russian politics are sources of on-going tension in this region. The debate surrounding the construction of monuments in Belgrade, Serbia reveals the complex nature of monument-building and its pressing political, social, and psychological implications. Finally, the reappropriation and removal of communist statuary in Budapest, Hungary reveals a less ambivalent (nostalgic) representational ethic. In order to gain greater insight into ironic commemorative practices, the next section examines the delicate political balancing act Bulgarians must play with their Soviet Statuary. Sofia, Bulgaria becomes the first stop on the post-communist tour.

**Bulgaria**

The contestation over communist-era symbols is nothing new in Eastern Europe.  In

2009, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev created a Historical Truth Commission to combat the

"falsification of history."[19]  The purpose of this committee was to quiet the "aggressive" anti-

Russian campaign in the Western media.[20]  What Medvedev did not mention was that the

committee hoped to silence any unfavorable discourse regarding the Stalinist era in the former

USSR states.  Natalia Narochnitskay, a member of the new Historical Truth Commission asserts

that the West is "almost hysterical" in their "prejudice against Russia and Russian history."[21]

Russian historian Robert Service of Oxford University was quick to challenge President

Medvedev's committee stating that Medvedev is attempting to "control history as a means of

controlling the present."[22]  But Medvedev is not alone in his pursuit to stifle criticism.  Over the

last five years, the Russian parliament has repeatedly proposed a "memory law," which would

make it a criminal offense to "infringe on historical memory in relation to events which took

place in the Second World War."[23]

The memory laws legally protect monuments constructed during the Stalinist era.  These

pillars of memory continue to be some of the most debated and contested sites of representation

in recent years. The removal or recontextualization of post-World War II Soviet-era statuary is

particularly complicated because the monuments symbolize political, ideological, and historical

chapters which significantly shaped Eastern Europe as it is today.  Consequently, the Eastern

European governments that chose to purge their cities of communist statuary reported

tremendous international backlash from their Russian neighbors.[24]  Russian politicians have

expressed their disgust that countries helped by Soviet armies are now trying to tarnish a glorious

past by defacing their monuments.[25]  The complicated post-communist narrative that has arisen

in the past twenty years continues to be a source of great ongoing political tension in the former Eastern Bloc.

Sofia, Bulgaria's Soviet liberation monument illuminates the ideological tension in the region. The "Liberation" monument in Sofia was a gift from the Russians who initially forced out the Nazis only to later control Bulgaria as a satellite state. Certain populations within Bulgaria still maintain a sense of nostalgia for their communist past, but loyalty to this former ideology is also a source of friction in the country. Vandals and artists alike frequently paint over the monument's pedestal as an act of protest. Within the last year, a graffiti group transformed the soldiers on the pedestal into comic book characters and western icons with the words "in step with the times" painted across the granite face of the monument. Several Bulgarians commented in the local newspaper the *Sofia Echo* that they liked the colorful augmentation and thought the new message was comically relevant.[26] The Russian government was not as amused and insisted that the city remove the graffiti.

**Yugoslavia**

Located directly west of Sofia, but much less Westernized, are the countries of the former Yugoslavia. The former Yugoslavia serves as a particularly poignant example of how ideological anxiety can take on material form. Many people living within the Baltic region maintain a strong sense of Yugoslavian and thus communist identity. It is not uncommon for locals to speak fondly of the Yugoslav years. Nostalgia for the past is so strong in this part of the world that a few scholars have warned about the dangers of romanticizing the ideals of Yugoslavia or the phenomenon of "Yugonostalgia."[27] In fact, an uncanny manifestation of Yugonostalgia popped up in a popular city park in Mostar, Bosnia. The park became the site of the first monument to Bruce Lee, beating Hong Kong by a day. A local sculptor in Croatia and a

German organization known as the Urban Movement joined forces to create the Lee monument. The monument was a controversial choice with many townspeople demanding that the city of Mostar commemorate an historical figure and not a Hollywood fantasy. Within the same year of the monument's erection, unknown perpetrators defaced it. The Urban Movement decided to remove the statue and place it in a warehouse indefinitely.

Bruce Lee is not the only unusual manifestation of memory in the former Yugoslavia. The recent construction of Rocky Balboa, Bob Marley, and even George W. Bush monuments have concerned some locals who insist that the statues are eclipsing real political problems by not trying to represent the "reality" of the past. In fact, a group of fifty local artists and intellectuals in Serbia, later known as the Monument Group, organized a number of public meetings in order to address the politics of monument building. Prominent Serbian visual artist and founder of the Monument Group, Milica Tomic, called the Serbian monument to Bruce Lee, "a dangerous joke in which history is being erased and replaced by Mickey Mouse."[28] She also stated, "This turning to Rocky or Tarzan is unhealthy and dangerous. We need to find a way of representing our grief, our responsibility and our despair. Until we do that, Serbia cannot come to terms with the present and the future."[29] For the rest of the world, the Yugoslav War ended in 1995 with the signing of the Dayton Agreement, but the memory of rape camps, NATO bombings, and the death of 140,000 Yugoslav citizens still haunts the people of Southeastern Europe today.[30]

In an attempt to put their inglorious past behind them and to combat commemoration like Bruce Lee, the local Serbian government, launched a design competition entitled "Sculptural design for a memorial to the 'Fallen Fighters and Victims of 1900-1999 Wars in the Territory of Former Yugoslavia (including those killed in the NATO bombing)'" in November 2002.[31]

Within the same month of the competition announcement, the Monument Group, led by Tomic, gathered to discuss how to respond to the memorial project.  Tomic explained that the group was encouraged by the competition as it recognized the vital role art plays when representing the complex politics of war; additionally, they hoped that the monument would finally give voice to the Yugoslav people.[32]  Over the course of a year the competition took on different names, different agendas, and different political battles.  Croats, Serbs, and Bosnians never jointly reached a consensus on the best way to represent the Yugoslav War and eventually abandoned the competition.  They in fact never even agreed on a name for the competition itself.

To the present day, the Monument Group continues to struggle with the ethics of representation and commemoration in former Yugoslavia.  The competition revealed that community members did not know how to speak for the victims. More specifically, the community realized they could not even agree *who* was the victim.  The design competition became a reflection of the larger conflict faced by much of Europe as it tries to understand a history still in transition, with the most important question being, how does one commemorate a contentious past without simplifying it, or worse, celebrating it?

The design competition demonstrated that an artistic reproduction of history was not going to appease a community with varied political investments.  Furthermore, the competition proved that trying to "capture" a contested historical experience was a virtual impossibility.  The continued debate all over Eastern and Southeastern Europe suggests that shifting ideologies require a different commemorative ethic than the traditional monument versus counter-monument binary.[33]

While the various groups involved in the memorial project believed that the rhetorical framing of the competition was to blame for its failure, the more likely explanation for rhetorical

tension was that the traumatic histories are still evolving and continually defying discursive representation.  The defiance of linguistic and material representation continues to prevent the people of Eastern and Southeastern Europe from commemorating their past.  Another intriguing consequence of the memorial project is that the discussion surrounding the political and commemorative obstacles has invigorated the public sphere and created active political engagement in parts of former Yugoslavia.  The conflict created by the design competition created a space where Serbs were encouraged to reflect upon their history and gain a deeper understanding of their involvement in the war and what it meant to be a Yugoslavian.  This discussion has proved invaluable to those still trying to make sense of their current political and national identity.

**Hungary**

The third and final site I will investigate is Memento Park, a major tourist attraction in Budapest, Hungary.  Budapest looks like a case study in memorial confusion, but the public spaces within the city appear to embrace the emerging contradictions.  For Budapest, like many other Eastern and Southeastern European cities, its monuments run the spectrum—representing everything from guilt to anger to nationalist pride—depending on what chapter people choose to evaluate.  The curious obstacle Hungarians face today is how to represent their historical narrative of communism while simultaneously expressing a new capitalist sensibility.

Historians have extensively documented Hungary's history of war and conquest. Its central location between superpowers left it vulnerable to wars and ideological feuds throughout the twentieth century.  The Hungarian capital of Budapest served as the primary battleground for many political and territorial disputes.  Budapest now looks like any Western European country in its city center with McDonalds, Costa Coffees, and Hilton hotels.  Where Budapest

distinguishes itself from many other Western cities is in its elaborate and sometimes

contradictory statuary that seems to reflect a complex national identity.  Monuments ranging

from the grand to the grim line virtually every park in the city.  World War I and II monuments

line Budapest's major boulevards. On the shores of the Danube River, there are bronze shoes to

remember the victims of the Holocaust.  Within several prominent squares are famous Magyars,

the Asian nomads that founded Hungary.  Walking from the downtown metro station to the

ornate Parliament building, you will likely run into giant statues of Doberman Pinschers, Ronald

Reagan, and the pro-communist-turned-Hungarian-revolutionary Imre Nagy.

For the most part, Hungarians have successfully put their historical and ideological

tensions behind them by relocating their most contentious monuments to the outskirts of town in

Memento Park.   In 1993, the Hungarian government helped supply Memento Park with statues.

Every year thousands of tourists pay approximately seven U.S. dollars to "talk with Stalin" as it

is advertised on their website along with bright red banners stating, "Here are the removed

commie statues."[34]  In 2006 the park created a grand entry to the park using a monumental

reproduction of Stalin's boots and in 2007 the park added a film depicting the life of a Soviet

spy.  Other than the additions in 2006 and 2007, the park may not acquire any new statues.

According to a park tour guide, this is because the artist and architect, who originally envisioned

the park, saw it as a visual metaphor for the transition from communism to democracy.  The

artist believed that adding to the park would throw off its message and its ideological balance.[35]

Memento Park is distinctly different from the previous two case studies because the

audience produces the commemorative space rather than the audience in dialogue *with* the

artifact. Additionally, the monuments in Bulgaria and Bosnia are positioned (through irony) to

acknowledge competing ideological investments, where Memento Park insists on undermining

its former ideology (communism) for the sake of propping up its current commitments (capitalism). Thus, the representational ethics of the spaces are varied and create a range of political subjects. The ongoing debate in, Bulgaria, the former Yugoslavia and the monumental frenzy in Budapest, Hungary, reveal that commemorative artifacts can operate like material microcosms of public memory.  Because monuments are such useful rhetorical and historical representations, scholars wanting to research shifting ideological politics should examine monument-building practices in Eastern and Southeastern Europe in order to understand how Europeans are articulating their "post" communist identities.

The three case study sites and the additional commemorative sites listed in Figure 1 (below) demonstrate a spectrum of new ways to challenge (or reinforce) public memory by creating unexpected political openings—openings that expose memory's elusiveness for those without a consistent narrative to stabilize it.  After years of colonization by other countries or ideologies, the people of Eastern and Southeastern Europe are refusing to blindly participate in traditional modes of commemoration; instead, they seem to be reflecting their disdain for the past and frustrations in the present by utilizing ironic monuments that serve to mock misplaced loyalties.  I argue that these monuments continue to be valuable for two reasons. First, ironic monuments allow the people of these countries time and space to terms with their past and present through personally interrogating the meaning of these monuments rather than having their feelings expressed for them. Second, they create valuable intellectual and affective spaces for societies still in transition to engage in public dialogue for the first time in decades.

The following table shows the range of monuments explored in this project.  The selected case studies are not isolated examples; rather, they are representative of a type of emerging commemoration better understood through the conceptual framework of the ironic monumental

disruption. The primary focus of utilizing these three distinct case studies is to develop a clearer understanding of the ethical possibilities of embracing irony, memory, and monumentality and offer new outlets of research for those currently relying on the language of counter-monuments. The monuments referenced within this project are listed below along with their location, year of erection, and if they have been altered in any way. The table does not include monuments abandoned in the conceptualization process or built for more typical or traditional reasons (*e.g.*, the actor who played the original Tarzan was from Serbia).[36]

| Former Federation | Country | Statue | Year | Altered |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Albania | George W. Bush | 2011 | |
| | Croatia | Winnetou | 2009 | |
| Yugoslavia | Bosnia | Bruce Lee | 2005 | Staff broken/removed (2006) |
| | | Canned Beef | 2007 | Frequently tagged |
| | Serbia | Rocky Balboa | 2007 | Frequently tagged |
| | | Bob Marley | 2008 | |
| Eastern Bloc | Hungary | Ronald Reagan | 2011 | |
| | | Statue Park | 1993 | Stalin Boots (2006) |
| | Bulgaria | Soviet Liberation | 1954 | Ronald McDonald, Santa Wonder Woman, Captain America, Superman, the Joker added (2011) |

*The pedestal to Samantha Fox entitled "Rumors" and the monument to Tarzan are also in Serbia.

Figure 0.1

Ironic Monuments in Eastern and Southeastern Europe*

Figure 0.1 reveals a wide spectrum of monuments that present a new set of possibilities and questions for monumentality studies. With noted exceptions in Memento Park and the original Soviet Liberation monument, the other monuments listed here represent Western figures, celebrities, or pop culture icons. These unusual artifacts suggest that global forces not local politics shape public memory, but the monuments may reflect a more localized and increasingly nostalgic public sentiment than they readily admit. Additionally, the fact that the monuments are "altered" reveals another layer of commemorative anxiety. While irony disrupts the place of commemoration and creates additional space for reflection, physical confrontations with these newly created spaces shows that public dialogue is most freely encouraged when there is no explicit political message but rather a general feeling of anxiety about a lack of consensus. This observation is particularly important when countries face ideological transitions without the advantage of stable historical narratives to prop up their present politics. Important questions of representation arise as the audience is encouraged to interrogate their present situation removed from (local) contested historical narratives altogether.

**AN OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS**

Over the course of my examination of these monuments, it became evident that different histories may result in, or in fact, require different spaces and—in order to interrogate these "different" spaces—a new critical (and ironic) interpretation is necessary. Ironic monumental disruptions create space within larger contextual frames to interrogate the ethical foundations of memory, but still leave open the possibility of creating ongoing reflection and dialogue. These unusual markers of memory may serve as one of the most productive outlets for giving voice to multiple identities and histories.

With this overarching argument in mind, I turn to a brief overview of the following chapters. While this introductory chapter contextualized monument-building in the former Yugoslavia and Eastern Bloc, Chapter one will develop the rhetorical foundation of this project with a review of the public memory and monumentality literatures. Additionally, Chapter one explores representational tensions and protest strategies within monument studies by reviewing and contrasting counter-monuments, irony, and nostalgia. Chapter two will outline Hungary's, Bulgaria's, and Yugoslavia's relationships to communism before and after 1989. I contrast Yugoslavia's genocidal civil war with Eastern Europe's political and economic shift away from communism. The chapter concludes with an outline of Eastern Europe and former Yugoslavia's distinct relationships to socialism and their subsequent transition to shock therapy capitalism. I argue that the distinct transitions away from communism manifest themselves in each country's monumental responses. Chapter three will focus on the theoretical and methodological foundation for the project. Most significantly, I interrogate the conceptualization of counter-monuments in hopes of creating critical space with—and justifying the need for—the playful interventions of the concept of the ironic monumental disruption.

While irony aids communication scholars in their understanding of art, literature, and even the postmodern condition, ironic monuments are largely unexplored.[37] The case studies that compose Chapters four, five, and six apply and examine the notions of irony, nostalgia, and comic and tragic frames to elicit a more comprehensive understanding of the function of monuments and counter-monuments. Irony may not apply to all acts of commemoration, but the case studies undertaken in this project demonstrate that there are more critical options than a simplistic understanding of traditional monuments versus counter-monuments. The conceptualization of ironic monumental disruptions broadly creates a new avenue of research for

monumentality scholars and specifically develops new spaces of deliberation in Eastern and Southeastern Europe as those publics create their own political subjectivity in relation to communism, the civil war (in Yugoslavia's case), and their current economic status.

The case study in Chapter four builds on the discussion of Eastern Europe's economic transition in order to examine the Soviet "Liberation" monument in Sofia, Bulgaria. The Liberation monument shows the rhetorical potential of creating an ironic monumental disruption through a revisionist act of vandalism. Bulgarians repeatedly deface the Liberation monument as they work through competing political identities and residual nostalgia for their communist chapter. The interplay of capitalism and communist loyalties creates a comic frame from which to explore public memory in this region. The altered monument creates an important space for public reflection. Alternatively, removing the monument would send a strong message that it was time to abandon Bulgaria's communist history.

Chapter five addresses the controversy surrounding the statue of Bruce Lee in Mostar, Bosnia to show how the construction and removal of the monument reveals the interplay of trauma, irony, and a strong nostalgia for a never-realized multicultural ideal. The comic frame is again relevant in the case of Bruce Lee as Bosnians express conflicted allegiances to the East and the West, communism and capitalism, popular culture and history. The Lee monument faced the most immediate and direct confrontation of all the case studies and was removed entirely and placed under security.

Chapter six explores Memento Park in Budapest, Hungary as an attempt by the Hungarian people to create an ironic space using the similar ironic strategies utilized during the communist years. While the other case studies produce irony through an interactive dialogue between artifact, audience, and their larger political and material contexts, Memento Park does

not produce a space of interaction.  Tour booklets and tour guides encourage tourists to consume the monuments as historical jokes in an effort to minimize their symbolic power.  Tourists are not encouraged to nostalgically contemplate the meaning behind the monuments, but they are encouraged to ironically buy a piece of nostalgia in the form of a Lenin mug.  Additionally, Memento Park does not encourage reflection or deliberation like the other sites; rather, it utilizes a tragic frame which insists that communism is to blame for the Hungarian peoples' social, economic, and political problems in the twentieth century.  In Hungary, Memento Park reinforces the Hungarian people's decision to abandon the ideology of communism, but never actually considers any other alternative.  As such, the tragic frame positions everyone in the park to come to the same conclusion: Communism is a monumental joke.

Finally, Chapter seven will serve as the conclusion of the dissertation along with a brief discussion of monuments recently built in Europe that fit within the conceptualization of the ironic monumental disruption.  The dissertation will close with a discussion of the importance of disruptions as they continue to open up space for debate and shape political subjects who struggle to formulate an identity after their political and ideological transition from communism. The political act of commemoration is especially important to Eastern and Southeastern Europe as it continues to negotiate conflicting ideologies, national identities, and violent histories.  Even those who initially opposed the erection of the Mickey Mouse-esque monuments have started to see them in a new light. Only two years after expressing frustration over the Bruce Lee monument, Tomic acknowledged that while she still has apprehension about the statue erasing the reality of Yugoslavia's bloody dissolution, she hoped that the monument's recent removal might create an interesting space for significant political reflection.[38]  Her change of heart is telling as it suggests that these monuments may not *strictly* (or even metaphorically) represent

the pain of war but their physical or symbolic desecration may tap into a deeper conflict —an unwillingness to either entirely accept or entirely abandon the past. Whether it was the gradual separation of Hungary from the USSR or the bloody confrontations that erupted as Yugoslavia collapsed, citizens of former socialist Europe must question how their past fits into their future.

**THE POLITICAL PROMISE OF IRONIC MONUMENTAL DISRUPTIONS**

In order to explore the concept of an ironic monumental disruption and the intriguing complications that arise from "playfully" representing unstable historical narratives, I intend to provide scholars within the field of public memory and monumentality a new theoretical lens for exploring the relationship and political promise of ironic monumental disruptions. The application and conceptualization of the ironic monumental disruption will provide interesting insights into the politics of place and the anxiety produced by societies in ideological transition. The new string of irony-driven monuments serves as ideal artifacts for understanding how ideological tensions play out physically, politically, and psychologically.

In other words, the people of Eastern and Southeastern Europe appear to be negotiating competing desires. The three case studies examined within this project reflect the interplay of nostalgia and irony as they compare and contrast the promise of communism's stability and the unrealized economic and political freedom of capitalism. The following chapter reviews the literature of public memory and monumentality in order to establish the rhetorical foundation for the concept of the ironic monumental disruption and its deliberative potential.

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[1] Anna Mudeva, "Special Report: In Eastern Europe people pine for socialism," *Reuters*, November 8, 2009, http://www.reuters.com/article/2009/11/08/us-communism-nostalgia-idUSTRE5A701320091108.
[2] Mudeva, "Special Report."
[3] Mudeva, "Special Report."
[4] Mudeva, "Special Report."
[5] It is important to note that irony is particularly valuable in that it engages affective experiences like nostalgia and trauma—both of which rely on a (at least perceived) psychological distance to engage their respective objects of desire.
[6] Kenneth Burke, *Grammar of Motives*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1959), 517.

[7] Constantine Sedikides, Tim Wildschut, Jamie Arndt, and Clay Routledge, "Nostalgia: Past, Present and Future," *Current Directions in Psychological Science, Vol. 17, no. 5* (October 2008): 304-307

[8] Burke, Attitudes toward History, 5.

[9] For our current definitional purposes, the comic frame plays with meaning while the tragic frame looks to place blame.

[10] The interaction of nostalgia, irony, and comic and tragic frames are defined and explored in more depth in Chapter one and throughout the case studies.

[11] Dan Bilefsky, "Balkans' Idolatry Delights Movie Fans and Pigeons," *New York Times*, November 11, 2007, accessed on May 9, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/11/world/europe/11balkans.html.

[12] Kenneth Burke, *Grammar of Motives*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1959), 517.

[13] Kenneth Burke, *Grammar of Motives*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1959), 517.

[14] Traditionally, the field of communication has valued the ability to "narrativize" or place ideas in narrative form. Scholars from Walter Fisher to Pierre Janet have written extensively on the psychological need to narrativize in order to make sense of the external world. Fisher suggests that narratives give meaning to our day to day existence while Janet insisted that the only way to work through trauma was to narrativize a comprehension-defying experience.

[15] Maya Nadkarni, "The Master's Voice: Authenticity, Nostalgia, and the Refusal of Irony Postsocialist Hungary," *Social Identities*, Vol. 13, No. 5, (September 2007): 612.

[16] Nadkarni, "The Master's Voice," 621.

[17] Cheree Carlson, "Gandhi and the Comic Frame: 'Ad Bellum Purificandum,'" *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, vol. 72:4 (November 1986): 447.

[18] By non-representative I mean a monument that does not fit within the contemporary ideology or, in the case of Bosnia, a monument that does not reflect any kind of localized history.

[19] James Rodgers, "Russia Acts against 'False' History," *BBC News*, July 24, 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8166020.stm.

[20] Rodgers, "Russian Acts against 'False' History."

[21] Rodgers, "Russian Acts against 'False' History."

[22] Rodgers, "Russian Acts against 'False' History."

[23] Rodgers, "Russian Acts against 'False' History."

[24] Kristen Schweizer and Tunde Kaposi, "Budapest's Drive to Junk Soviet Memorial Risks Offending Russia," *Bloomberg,* February 22, 2007, accessed December 4, 2010, http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aGInyRu_NC9I&refer=europe, para. 3.

[25] Rodgers, "Russian Acts against 'False' History."

[26] "Painting the Soviet army monument is vandalism: Bulgarian Minister of Culture," *Sofia Echo,* June 20, 2011, accessed on November 28, 2011.

[27] Zala Volcic, "Yugo-Nostalgia: Cultural Memory and Media in the Former Yugoslavia," *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, Volume 24, 1 (March 2007), 21-38.

[28] Dan Bilefsky, "Balkans' Idolatry Delights Movie Fans and Pigeons,"

[29] Bilefsky, "'Balkans' Idolatry Delights Movie Fans and Pigeons."

[30] Marlise Simons, "For First Time, Court Defines Rape as War Crime," *The New York Times,* June 28, 1996, accessed on September 10, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/specials/bosnia/context/0628warcrimes-tribunal.html.

[31] The following is a timeline of the competition. The competition was announced as part of a collaborative project hosted by three local organizations: The Military Invalids' Association, The Fighters of Wars Since 1990 Association, and the Association of Parents of Soldiers Killed in NATO Bombing "Victims Support Group." In December 2002, a public discussion of the competition was held. One of the initial promoters of the competition, "Victims Support Group," sent representatives to give their support for the project, but the public debate ultimately led the group to call for a cancellation of the project as it was currently envisioned. By January 2003, the Monument Group sent a letter to the City of Belgrade Ministry of Culture asking them to cancel the competition and reorganize it after conducting more extensive public debates. In June 2003, the Ministry of Culture responded to the Monument Group, stating that the design competition was "announced by mistake," and that it would be cancelled due to the public outcry.[31] By July 2003, a new competition was announced by the Ministry of Culture for the "Victims of 1900-1999 Wars in the Territory of Former Yugoslavia." The Monument Group was asked to participate in the new call but declined, believing that their inclusion was a politically motivated act on the part of the government to co-opt dissenting voices. The new competition was closed in September 2003 with 57 entries. The Ministry of Culture's chosen jury unanimously decided that no prizes would be awarded as the competition

suffered from an "unclear textual explanation." Over the next two years, various public discussions and panels were organized around the memorial dilemma. By December 2005, the Ministry of Culture created yet another competition entitled "Victims of the Wars and Defenders of the Fatherland from 1990-1999." In October 2006, the jury finally decided to award a second place prize with no first place winner. The Monument Group responded to the completion of the competition by continuing their public meetings and eventually compiling a book, *The Politics of Memory*, which followed the progression of their public discussions. By October 2007, the Monument Group organized a conference titled, "Politics of Memory – Where the Genocide Was, Shall the Political Subject Be."[31] The conference sought to address how the people affected by the war, not the government responsible for it, should ultimately dictate how the public remembers.

[32] "Timeline," Grupa Spomenik/ Monument Group, accessed on July 4, 2011, http://grupaspomenik.wordpress.com/timeline/, para 1. Please note that "Yugoslav people" was used rather than Serbian people. The Monument Group recognizes that the war ended the Yugoslav state but sees the future of Southeastern Europe to be reliant on the communal identification of the Slavic people. The desire appears to be simultaneously nostalgic and future-oriented.

[33] The debate surrounding the design competition is just one example of the struggles many countries within Eastern and Southeastern Europe face as they try to articulate a contested historical narrative for the sake of commemorating it. While those involved in the memorial project agree that Yugoslavia's history needs to be remembered for the sake of its peoples, there is no consensus on what language appropriately frames peoples' experiences. Ultimately, the members of the design competition were never going to be able to articulate an appropriate title that did not simultaneously heighten and erase others' memories and experiences. Kenneth Burke insists that the choice of title operates ideologically as it becomes a selection of *one* articulation of an event. Burke uses the concept of "terministic screens" to illustrate how one theory, or even title, can reframe one's perspective. By establishing a title for the design competition, the Monument Group and the original committee members would frame the war of the '90s for generations. Their inability to reach a consensus reveals a gap in the ongoing memory and meaning of the events. See Kenneth Burke, *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1968), 45-46.

[34] "Information, Sights, Concepts," *Memento Park*, accessed on October, 10, 2011, retrieved from http://www.mementopark.hu/.

[35] Anonymous interview 05, conducted in Budapest, November 22, 2011.

[36] By typical or traditional, I simply mean that the monuments have a clear referent that makes sense in the context of the community or historical narrative.

[37] Linda Hutcheon, "Irony, Nostalgia, and the Postmodern," *University of Toronto English Library*, January 19, 1998, http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/criticism/hutchinp.html. Also, see Carole Blair, Marsha S. Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci, Jr., "Public Memorializing in Postmodernity: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial as Prototype," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77 (1991): 263-288.

[38] Milica Tomic, personal interview, June 12, 2011.

**Chapter One:  Public Monuments to Political Transitions:**

**Rhetorical Foundations**

While the former Stalinist states of Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia have distinctly

different histories, geographical conflicts, and ethnic demographics, they have all experienced

abrupt ideological, economic, and political shifts in the past 30 years.  Through Eastern and

Southeastern Europe's transition from communist to capitalist states, monument-building has

become one of the most visible symbols of ideological anxiety.[1]  Many statues to the old regime

remain, but in a slightly altered form; similarly, newly constructed monuments appear to have

little interest in reflecting on the past.  The tendency to commemorate fiction over fact and

fantasy over reality has puzzled those who study commemorative works.  But ironic and iconic

monuments in post-communist Europe appear to be creating paradoxical spaces with political

promise.  A political dialogue has arisen in response to monuments such as the reappropriation of

a Soviet soldier as Ronald McDonald and the statue of Rocky Balboa.  Is it possible that these

material disruptions have the power to question larger institutions of memory precisely because

they reshape memory in such ironic and unobtrusive ways?

Scholars of public memory and monumentality require new understandings of the

representation and creation of political subjects as they are constructed and dismantled through

ironic monumental disruptions.  In order to develop the rhetorical foundations of this project, I

review the literature regarding monumentality and counter-monuments, public sphere theory in

post-socialist Europe, public memory and its use of nostalgia, and monumental protest strategies

with respect to irony.  Additionally, I discuss the entanglement of nostalgia with Burkean comic

and tragic frames in order to show that some spaces hold more ethical and deliberative potential

than others.  As additional evidence of ironic monumental disruption's deliberative potential, I

explore the various strategies the public has employed in their confrontation with these monuments ranging from indirect confrontation (*e.g.*, placing monuments in less offensive contexts and leaving them alone) to direct confrontation (*e.g.*, the desecration of monuments) in order to evaluate how irony is challenged and critiqued further in already unsettled commemorative spaces. The case studies explore all of these strategies further as they help to inform and shape public memory and identity.

Finally, the chapter reviews different avenues of research within monumentality by contrasting traditional monuments with counter-monuments in order to demand more rhetorical specificity and find a more defined place for irony within the literature. The conceptualization of ironic monumental disruptions within monument and counter-monument literature becomes particularly valuable in the dissertation's methodological and theoretical foundations in Chapter three. For now, how ironic monuments are treated appears to depend on the degree of nostalgia the affected public is still experiencing. This chapter demonstrates how the concept of the ironic monumental disruption fits within the larger study of monumentality as a complementary terminology that maintains rhetorical and historical specificity while expanding the field's theoretical foundation.

All of the monuments examined within this project, while envisioned differently, erected separately, and desanctified uniquely, create valuable space for public discourse—a public discourse that was and is still needed in hopes of making sense of the present. What is so fascinating and perplexing about the seemingly incongruent iconic and pop-heroic statues of Eastern Europe is that they have taken authority out of the government's hands and aroused a lively discussion within the public sphere. At first glance all of these commemorative spaces appear to be "countering" history but some of them are actually encouraging its evaluation by

toying with it—creating an altered public memory and consequently providing productive political openings through the materialization of irony.

## THE EMERGENCE OF "PUBLIC" MEMORY[2]

When pressed to identify the moment that communism collapsed in Eastern Europe, many Westerners would quickly respond that it was the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.[3] While that date has symbolic value, the answer ignores the complex historical and rhetorical events leading up to and following that pivotal destructive reckoning.[4] The fall of communism did not occur overnight, and the transition Eastern Europe faced as it shifted from communism to capitalism was, and still is, marked by political, social, and ideological tensions. Within a decade's time, communist ideology, which had shaped a sense of community, became obsolete as capitalism refashioned new political and social identities. The rapid economic transition to privatization, also known as "shock therapy," produced an equally jarring cultural shock, as religion was encouraged again and Eastern Europeans with means were able to take advantage of the newly restructured economy. Many saw their lives change drastically during this time. One of the biggest changes came in the emergence of a newly formed public sphere.

Cezar Ornatowski explains that in the wake of communist fall-out, Eastern Europe struggled "to rearticulate the relationship between rhetoric and history as it pertains to the (re)constitution of the 'public.'"[5] Public sphere theory has been a part of the critical lexicon since Jurgen Habermas published *Structural Transformation in the Bourgeois Public Sphere* in 1962. In that text, Habermas defined the sphere of influence as the peoples' use of reason to arrive at a consensus on issues of public concern.[6] Gerard Hauser explains,

> Society's self-production is historically situated and intrinsically tied to its rhetoric… We locate the possibilities for social action in and through our rhetoric. It is the agency by which we make and remake our political and social relations… which is to say that rhetoric is among the social practices by which society constitutes itself.[7]

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Ornatowski builds on Habermas and Hauser, claiming that the creation of the "public" in Eastern Europe was further complicated because of "Real Socialism's" oppressive policies toward political discourse.[8]  As an example of Eastern Europe's struggle to voice their political identity, Ornatowski states that eight months before Poland's national election, Prime Minister Mieczyslaw Rakowski used the first person singular form, for the first time, "even referring to the communist party—typically heretofore spoken of exclusively as 'the' party, implicitly the only party realistically possible—as 'my party,' thus allowing, at least rhetorically, the possibility of the existence of other parties."[9]  Rapidly, the notion of the public sphere came into being as reflected through public discourse.  Societies transitioned from ones without civil society or public practices to commodified public spaces.

Hauser extends the discussion of the public sphere in his study of civil society in Poland. Hauser explains, "Inventing publicness invariably poses the problem of integrating conflicts."[10] Habermas states that autocratic states with no civil society cannot have "publics;" therefore, the transition from communist state to Polish nation enabled the formation of publics alongside the new doctrine of shock therapy capitalism.  Describing Eastern Europe's transition from Stalinism, Hauser states:

> With their traditions suspended, their national struggle under communism was to create models for integrating into a political system in which they lacked power.  This effort has persisted in the post-1989 world and invariably involves an understanding of their own historicity.  Appropriating historicity entails acts of selection and emphasis on which self-understanding is based and which provide the resources to invent publicness.[11]

Hauser departs from Ornatowski by concluding that the Poles were able to successfully shift from a communist identity to a Polish identity by maintaining narratives of Polish cultural memory throughout the regime changes.[12]  Hauser saw the shift to publicness as an on-going thread with one rhetorical frame traded out for another and still another.[13]

The entire international community repositioned itself within a new global politics after communism's collapse. Noemi Marin reaffirms this transformation, asserting that in

> societies in transition the relationship between rhetoric and history is fundamentally "unsettled," since the linear relationship established by the communist regimes had been disrupted. This very unsettled character provides a "space of rhetorical invention" for the discourses competing in the new developing public sphere, in which "history" as multiple, fragmented public arguments is put to a variety of new uses.[14]

Within the span of a decade, Eastern European's needed a new vocabulary as they began to articulate a new national identity with new political allegiances and re-envisioned historical experiences. As Hauser suggested, the rhetorical (re)constitution of publics became a central force in the construction of a new identity. Therefore, with the new post-communist era vocabulary, new forms of public memory and representation emerged as well.

**THE MATERIALIZATION OF PUBLIC MEMORY AND IDENTITY: MEMORY PLACES, NOSTALGIA, AND COMIC AND TRAGIC FRAMING**

How our collectivity constitutes us is in large part decided through a selection of representational forms that indicate to ourselves and others what we should remember and what we should forget. Irwin-Zarecka explains that securing, "a presence for the past demands work—'memory work'—whether it is writing a book, filming a documentary or erecting a monument."[15] This memory work produces, "the 'infrastructure' of collective memory," and "makes an engagement with the past possible."[16] In fact, the stakes of memory often coalesce "in objects, sites, and monuments."[17] These representational forms have tremendous power to shape and create various publics and, in some instances, will even serve to reinforce nostalgic desires for the "authentic" past. Monuments influence our understanding of the world by showing us what we value, who we are, and where we have been. With the infrastructure of

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memory in mind, this section explores the complex interaction between memory places, nostalgia, and frames of acceptance.

Memory places create "a specific kind of relationship between past and present that may offer a sense of sustained and sustaining communal identification."[18] Blair, Jeppeson, and Pucci argue that monuments construct important "memory places" that depict our present values and "instruct" us on how we saw the past and what we should deem valuable in the future.[19] Examples of memory places are the Astronaut's Memorial in Florida, Mount Rushmore in South Dakota, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. All of these monuments encourage the American public to reconnect with their patriotic ideals or question their blind loyalties.[20]

But memory places can take on various shapes and push distinctly different agendas. Scholar Greg Dickinson has written extensively on sites such as Old Pasadena and even movies like Pleasantville creating a nostalgic desire for a "simpler" time and place.[21] While scholars define nostalgia as a deep longing for home, new research on nostalgia suggests that it is also a longing for an idealized origin. As such, memory places are ideal commemorative sites for the production and engagement of nostalgia.[22] Dickinson asserts, "Memory offers to consumers the possibility of coherent identities firmly situated within a warmly remembered past."[23] Memory places have the ability to capture moments of historical pride or erase moments of historical disgrace, but what makes them [memory places] so unique is that along with building a source of identity and filling in the gaps of memory, they also encourage the viewer to consume their so-called authentic selections of the past.

Nostalgia scholar Zala Volcic argues that there are several forms of nostalgia commonly experienced in countries and communities undergoing significant historical transitions. Volcic

broadly researches public memory in Yugoslavia and specifically studies a form of revisionist nostalgia which "presupposes the existence of a verifiable historical reality in order to transform and reshape it in accordance with contemporary political priorities."[24]  Other forms of nostalgia include the aesthetic, which is "primarily a cultural phenomenon calling for the preservation of an authentic Yugoslav past," and an escapist, utopian nostalgia, which is a "commercial phenomenon that celebrates and exploits the longing for an idyllic Yugoslav past."[25]  Volcic's research points to the fact that nostalgia continues to shape political identity after the fall of communism in Europe in hopes of cashing in on an unstable historical narrative.

Considering the abrupt transition from communism to capitalism, it is not surprising that the European people might seek out a time with more stability, coherency, and community. Before 1989, being a part of the Eastern bloc or Yugoslavia offered a strong sense of communist identity, but now, capitalism has fractured that unity and replaced it with a sense of competition. As Dickinson suggests, "memory, space and identity regain importance in the contemporary moment…contemporary identities are performances that utilize the resources of memory; these performances occur in and are structured by landscapes of consumption."[26]  Popular nostalgia-driven memory sites like Yugoland in Serbia and Memento Park in Hungary encourage paying customers to reflect on the past.[27]  Whereas the former channels a deep longing for a country that no longer exists, the latter challenges communist nostalgia with its display of emasculated figurines.  Both sites encourage tourists to buy communist trinkets for the ride home.  Dickinson explains that nostalgic memory places help counter the anxiety of our postmodern condition stating, "In a post-traditional period, a time of deepening memory crisis, secured place becomes harder and harder to maintain, giving rise to nostalgia to cover the discomforts of the present."[28]

What is so fascinating about the complex interaction between memory places and nostalgia is that while nostalgia can channel public desire, it can also offer a means by which to explore ideological investments or—in the case of Eastern and Southeastern Europe—"uncover the discomforts of the present."

As referenced in the introduction, nostalgia is an affective experience produced within and shaped by a selection or frame of reality. For Burke, frames produce our understanding of ourselves in relation to the world around us. Burke explains that "frames" possess the ability to shape a person's construction of reality and arouse a complex response in line with that perspective.[29] For Burke, rhetors use frames to build "the mental equipment (meanings, attitudes, character) by which one handles the significant factors of his time."[30] In the case of Eastern and Southeastern Europe, nostalgia-driven memory places create the mental equipment and in turn shape the current reality of the various publics trying to understand their past in relation to their present.

This project explores the rhetorical potential of nostalgic memory places by utilizing Burke's discussion of comic and tragic frames of acceptance. Briefly reviewing both concepts: the comic frame does not take ideas at face value and mocks the idea of "Truth," while the tragic frame looks to alleviate personal guilt and place blame on a symbolic scapegoat.[31] The comic frame "challenges the status quo by a corrective ideology which confronts and demeans the failings of the operating ideology," but ultimately continues to participate in the current system.[32] Burke explains, "The comic frame should enable people *to be observers of themselves*, *while acting*. Its ultimate would not be *passiveness,* but *maximum consciousness…* it would provide a rationale for locating the irrational and the nonrational."[33] On other hand, tragic frames are

powerful structures that highlight social victimage and require some form of purifying

mechanism to alleviate guilt.[34]

Comic and tragic frames of acceptance provide valuable insight into public memory and

monumentality as they are both concerned with the construction and representation of

perception.  Specifically, frames of acceptance reinforce how commemorative works shape a

selection of reality so that people may find a place within it.  Applying these frames to our case

studies, the Bulgarian and Bosnian people display their nostalgia within comic frames while the

Hungarian people articulate their memory and identity within a tragic frame.  The comic framing

of the ideological contradiction in Bosnia and Bulgaria allows for an intervention (or disruption)

of ironic meaning.  This in turn creates a space of deliberation as the public is encouraged to

examine their nostalgic investments in contrast to their present conditions.  The monuments in

Bulgaria and Bosnia encourage the kind of maximum consciousness Burke described previously

as they simultaneously toy with and interrogate their representation and perception of both

communism and capitalism.

Alternatively, the case study in Hungary shows that ironic monuments situated within

tragic (and decidedly un-nostalgic) frames do not encourage the same kind of deliberation as

their comic counterparts.  The tragic frame does not juxtapose ideas for additional consideration;

rather, it simplifies an interpretation and encourages invested publics to sacrifice that idea or

interpretation as a way of freeing themselves from further responsibility (or reflection).  Carlson

explains that tragic frames develop an understanding of the world that relies on a victim and an

oppressor.  Society can only regain order through the punishment or symbolic sacrifice of an

oppressive force.[35]  For Hungarians, the oppressive force is communism with monuments

standing as the ultimate symbol of that former oppression.  As such, purging the Hungarian

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landscape of communist monuments is an important symbolic act of defiance. The framing of nostalgic or not-so-nostalgic memory places (or monuments) creates an important framework to explore the potential of irony.

As referenced in the introduction, the three commemorative sites chosen as case studies for this project all demonstrate varying levels of nostalgia. For example, citizens of the former Yugoslavia express the most nostalgia for their communist chapter and in turn have created the most ironic commemorative artifact in the monument to Bruce Lee. Bulgarians, on the other hand, remain ambivalent about communism. Bulgarian nostalgia for communism appears to ebb and flow as the economy does. As a result, the Bulgarian people have created dynamic spaces of irony by temporarily reappropriating communist statues into Western superheroes. Finally, the country of Hungary has very little nostalgia for communism and so their attempt to ironically address their former ideology serves to reinforce rather than reinterpret their current capitalist loyalties.

The complex interaction between the transformed public sphere and a lingering nostalgia for a time before the public sphere was a theoretical possibility creates conflicting and sometimes confounding representations of memory. While this section examined how memory places are the product of a larger rhetorical framing which interacts with nostalgia, the following section demonstrates how monuments shape (and are shaped by) their interactions with the viewing public.

**MONUMENTS AS IDEOLOGICAL MICROCOSMS**

Monuments can create important sites of cultural angst as their materiality, or physical presence, draws attention to contested collective identities. They can also function as a source of discord and debate in societies working through complicated histories. Even nostalgic

representations of the past can offer new political perspectives through their physical or symbolic

reappropriation or alteration. All monuments have the potential to address diverse interests and

contexts over time. Monument-building is an undeniably political act with significant

ramifications for how a society views its past and present, but monuments do not simply mark

historical and cultural memory; they have the potential to evaluate it, mock it, and respond to it.

Nikolai Voukov notes the importance of monument-building as a response to historical

tensions and transitions,

> The end of socialism as state ideology touched deeply ingrained mechanisms of social
> expression and representation and, together with the changed attitude to the legacy of the
> socialist past, led to deep transformations in the notions of sacred places, ritual sites,
> death and the sacred. Monuments of the socialist epoch were among those sites of public
> memory, which bore most directly these shifts in representation, and their fate as
> destroyed, desecrated, neglected or fallen into oblivion presents an important episode in
> the history of the post-1989 period.[36]

Consequently, the monuments of the socialist era provide useful case studies for examining the

politics of monument-building after an ideological transition. Monuments are microcosms for

larger social, political, and ideological phenomena making them ideal texts for understanding

larger commemorative ethics.

Whereas not all monument-building necessarily improves the health of the public sphere,

recent examples of ironic monumental disruptions suggest that monuments can produce public

deliberation through a complex engagement of affirmation and agitation. For the countries of

Hungary, Bulgaria, and the former Yugoslavia, the debate over former and future

commemorative objects rages on as citizens try to untangle complicated and occasionally

competing memories and identities. In *Framing Public Memory,* Kendall Phillips addresses

public memory's rhetorical foundation, claiming, "The study of memory is largely one of the

rhetoric of memories. The ways memories attain meaning, compel others to accept them, and are

themselves contested, subverted, and supplanted by other memories are essentially rhetorical."[37]

Additionally, Phillips states, "Rhetoric is deeply steeped in a concern for public memories. These memories that both constitute our sense of collectivity and are constituted by our togetherness are thus deeply implicated in our persuasive activities and in the underlying assumptions and experiences upon which we build meanings and reasons."[38] Thus, where memories constitute "our sense of collectivity," monuments serve to give material form to that collectivity and memory. In this respect, monuments in Eastern and Southeastern Europe become the physical representations of a nostalgia-driven public memory and political ideology.

Eastern European studies scholar Nikolai Voukov explains the dilemma of communist statuary stating, "Among the primary problems post-socialist societies faced were how to reintegrate those former emblems of power into the new social and political context and how to acquire distance from the past without losing the memory of it."[39] Leaving a monument from another era untouched sends a message that the idea it represents is still worthy of some veneration or, at the very least, that the history or symbolism it recognizes is still valid. But, as Voukov acknowledges, the negotiation of historical meaning proves even more difficult when ideological and political transitions throw societies into uncertainty.

Other theorists have taken on the issue of commemoration and time as well. According to Paul Ricoeur, commemoration forces a kind of obligated memory that demands the viewing public see the past in a certain way.[40] Ricoeur states that the obligation of memory comes in the form of an injunction or a demand that "you will remember."[41] Ricoeur criticizes the sentiment behind this injunction, explaining that it employs "the future tense to speak of this memory that is given as the guardian of the past."[42] Ricoeur suggests that the political act of commemoration typifies the conflation of time that accompanies obligated memory. For Ricoeur,

commemorative objects such as monuments ask for an audience to repeatedly recall a specific moment that can quickly fall victim to the "tyranny of memory."[43]  For Ricoeur, monuments encourage a form of obligated memory that has the power to replace outmoded historical accounts and becomes a new untouchable marker of a former "reality."[44]

In other words, as whole societies are encouraged to make sense of their world through the art and monuments that surround them, they may find, as Ricoeur suggests, that the memorial model or commemorative object can eclipse the historical narrative.[45]  The displacement of a historical narrative by a nostalgic retelling is particularly worrisome as nostalgia has the power to reshape conflicting memories and to enhance old institutions or whitewash unpleasant experiences.  While Ricoeur's concerns are worthy of further examination, his distrust of commemoration appears to be short-sighted.  Monuments are not dismissing history as Ricoeur suggests; monuments like books, films, and photography are offering a selection of events for public consideration.  For some, the fact that a monument stands as a marker of history automatically elevates it into the realm of the sacred, but monuments are not all static emblems of power. [46]  While monuments do have the potential to elevate certain people and events, they also create important spaces of engagement for publics to come to terms with their historical narratives.  Monuments, as rhetorical phenomena, serve to solidify interpretations of the past and offer idealized depictions of the future.

Monuments are powerful cultural markers precisely because they have the potential to remain in perpetuity.[47]  It is also for this very reason that public memorial sites become susceptible to symbolic and physical threats.  Carole Blair acknowledges, "Any stone or metal structure, though composed of a hard, lasting substance, is more vulnerable to destruction by hostile forces than is a book or even oral speech."[48]  The vulnerability Blair addresses extends

beyond the monument's physical attributes to include its symbolism as well. In other words, the monument's very material exposes it to powerful rhetorical acts that can disrupt or destroy its message.

Currently, the literature on monumentality does not provide much insight into the desanctification of public memory. On the other hand, many scholars have discussed the "sacred" label affixed to most public artifacts. Scholars frequently examine what happens to monuments when their message is no longer valued, but little research exists discussing how monuments can be reappropriated to operate as interactive (and transitional) nodes of public memory. While constructing a material marker of memory may draw attention to an idea or event, it cannot guarantee univocal political engagement or memorial closure. Rather, defiling that same material marker may create a powerful dialogue over its rhetorical and historical meaning.

## CONFRONTATIONS WITH MONUMENTS AND MEMORY PLACES

The concept of ironic monumental disruption has the potential to open up dialogue and demand deliberation through a symbolic confrontation with a monument or memory place. As such, Chapter three further explores the political potential of irony as it takes on monumental form. In addition to ironic disruptions of memory and meaning, the act of a physical confrontation coupled with irony creates an even more complicated and interesting interplay of memory and meaning. This form of desecration encourages the public to ask, Are these monumental artifacts still representative of contemporary times and why was this particular memory targeted? This section reviews various literatures dedicated to material confrontation and desecration. In many ways, the treatment of former artifacts readily reveals the current public sentiment.

Targeting the artifacts (*e.g.*, monuments) of former regimes, or in Bruce Lee's case, an

artifact dedicated to a utopian narrative, is not uncommon. Iconoclasm, or the destruction of

important religious or political symbolism, has been and continues to be a common practice

throughout history. Iconoclasm is an "obliterative act" that "tends simultaneously to unmask and

to enhance the power of images."[49] The focus for this project is not *that* regime changes

inevitably lead to destruction or erasure, but rather *what* this desecration or erasure does to those

who have—or continue to—identify with the material emblems of the past and present.

Specifically, how do acts of desecration enacted through physical vandalism and erasure

transform, enrage, or even pacify affected publics?

The practice of physically damaging sacred spaces is a more direct form of confrontation.

Numerous authors have explored desecration as a way to undermine the authority of sacred

symbols such as the American flag.[50] Additionally, extensive scholarship exists on the ethical

dimensions of vandalism, particularly how it pertains to the sacred spaces of nature.[51] Much like

erasure, acts of vandalism can ignite public deliberation, but many invested publics are quick to

call such acts disrespectful or cowardly. Foote considers the vandalization of sites to be an act of

obliteration or a message that the public no longer wants to face a particularly painful memory.[52]

On the contrary, tarnishing the sacred allows for an engagement of public sentiment which

reveals whether a memory still fits into the current culture. While Foote and others are partially

correct in their reading of desecration, they miss the larger potential this rhetorical act holds.

Whether vandalism elicits anger or sympathy, material confrontations have the political potential

to reinvigorate or create public debate.

Richard Marback references an example of desecration leading to political deliberation in

his article on the defacement of the Joe Lewis monument in Detroit.[53] Locals interpreted the

white paint on the black fist of the Lewis monument as an act of racism while others saw it as a protest against the celebration of violence.[54]  Regardless of interpretation, the act of vandalism operated as a symbolic disruption that opened up a discussion about political space and contemporary issues.  In an interesting theoretical turn, Victoria Gallagher and Margaret Laware also study the Joe Lewis Fist, but their discussion is concerned with its lack of textual legibility.  Whereas Marback studied the Fist as a transformed disruption, Gallagher and Laware find that the monument's "openness to multiple readings" makes it "nearly meaningless to some audiences," therefore, necessitating the construction of a more traditional counter-monument to respond to the Fist.[55]  But the Fist's illegibility may be the precise strategy the people of Detroit need.  In a city with so many contested identities, the monument itself served as a disrupted space in need of further interpretation. The act of desecration opened the monument up to a significant debate about local politics and institutionalized racism.  The "counter" monument to the Fist simply became redundant after the paint incident—a monument built to critique that which was already under critique.

The erasure of place creates the most common form of indirect confrontation.  In *Shadowed Ground*, Kenneth Foote argues that collective sites of shame are typically subject to symbolic erasure.[56]  In his book, *Memory and the Impact of Political Transformation in Public Space*, Daniel Walkowitz outlines several case studies where political upheavals led to the removal or erasure of public monuments.  One specific study shows how local Nicaraguan officials painted over murals and political graffiti with white paint in order to remove signs of contestation.  The physical whitewashing of the country sought to silence the most accessible form of protest.[57]  Furthermore, Zala Volcic's article on communist nostalgia after the war in Yugoslavia reflects the indirect confrontation of disruption, explaining:

The removal of monuments and the changing of street names were small but telling acts, the "invisible losses" that helped to erase a sense of common Yugoslav supranational identity and belonging. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, a new framework of internally unified, integrated, and homogeneous nation-states emerged and erased a coherent Yugoslav identity.[58]

Victoria Gallagher speaks to the negative cleansing effect of symbolic erasure, claiming that the removal of sites of controversy eliminates the possibility of debate by depoliticizing "efforts aimed at cultural understanding."[59] Consequently, Gallagher believes that acts of political erasure produce historical amnesia.[60] While Gallagher's argument is entirely valid, occasionally, acts of erasure can draw attention to an idea that otherwise might be taken for granted or ignored completely. In his work on the National Civil Rights museum, Armada explains, "Somewhere beneath the surface of all presentations of the past lie the potentially defiant voices of marginalized groups awaiting fulfillment in the crucible of public controversy."[61] What many critiques of erasure do not acknowledge is that rather than quieting public controversy, sometimes erasure brings visibility to an artifact's absence.[62] The previous sections have reviewed scholarly literature on monuments, memory places, nostalgia, frames, and confrontation. The next section applies all of these concepts to the case studies in Eastern and Southeastern Europe in order to create conceptual space for ironic monumental disruptions.

**FINDING SPACE FOR IRONY, NOSTALGIA, AND CONFRONTATON IN THE MONUMENTALITY LITERATURE**

Where some monuments reflect cultural or political anxiety, the new string of monuments recently created or reappropriated in Eastern and Southeastern Europe serve as the physical embodiments of the discursive rupture produced by the ideological shift from socialism to capitalism. The commemorative trend in this part of the world appears to be a tangible symptom of the larger political and ideological obstacles still facing Europe today.[63] Periods of

political upheaval inevitably create valuable potential spaces for public deliberation and Eastern and Southeastern Europe are no exception. Monuments can serve as important sites of memory and highly visible platforms through which historical and political ideas are developed and critiqued. In other words, these monuments are not constructing counter-narratives to socialism; they serve as unique materializations of the ironic tension between socialism and capitalism.

The complicated relationship between irony, identity, nostalgia, and representation makes Eastern Europe and its southern neighbor, the former Yugoslavia, important sites for interrogating public memory in the form of monuments and how these forms of identity can affect the public sphere. The people of Eastern and Southeastern Europe are not unfamiliar with irony's subversive potential. Many authors have written extensively on how the Eastern European people used irony during the Stalinist years to maintain a sense of individualism and agency.[64] It becomes all the more surprising that the same populations are yet again utilizing irony to conjure up nostalgic memories within comic or tragic frames as a way to explain the communist epoch in Europe. As people increasingly express nostalgia for a community or state, the ironic response is intensified. Within irony's critical and deliberative space, invested publics may choose to additionally confront transformed representations of memory by ignoring or destroying monuments as a reflection of the current public sentiment. Figure 2 illustrates the correlation of irony, nostalgia, confrontation, and the frames of acceptance in the three case studies examined within this project.
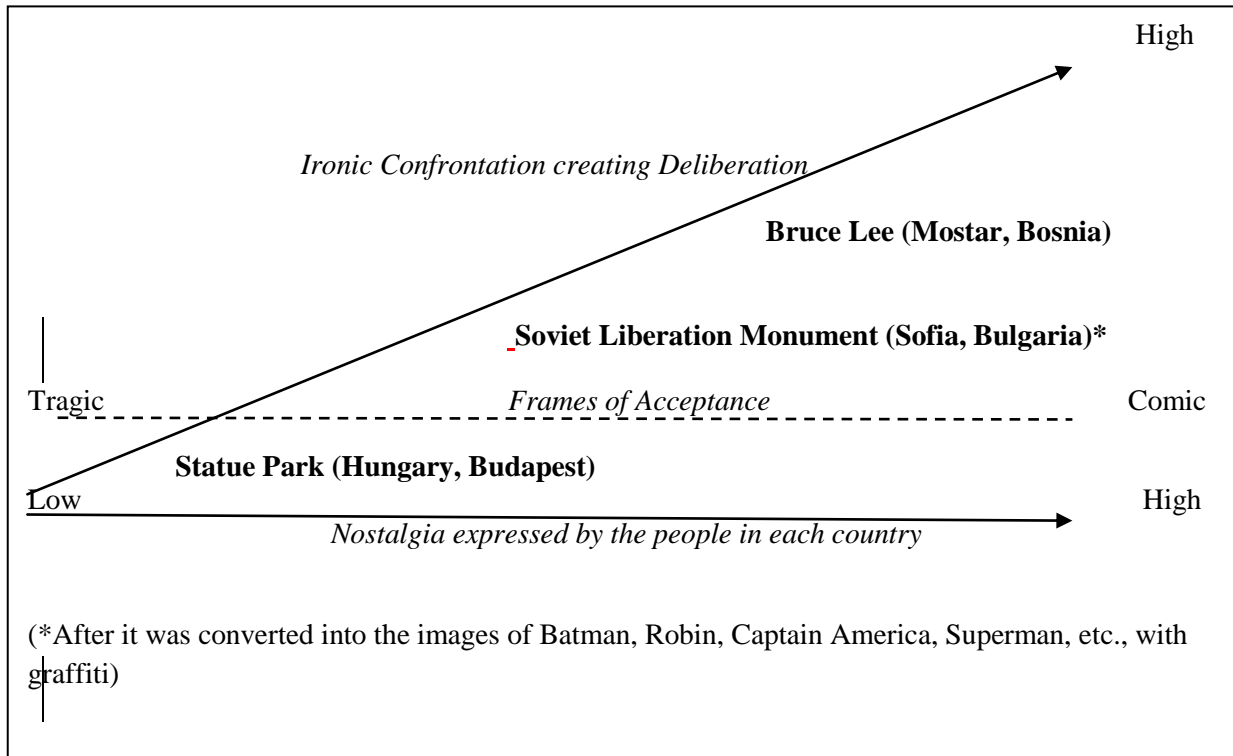
Figure 1.1:

Ironic Monumental Disruptions within Comic and Tragic Frames in Post-Soviet Europe

The above Figure shows the degree of confrontation and subsequent deliberation the three ironic monumental disruptions examined within the case studies created. There is an important correlation between the historical narrative, the current economic situation, and the degree of nostalgia each country expresses for their communist past. These factors appear to shape whether communities construct their national identity within the comic frame or the tragic. For instance, Hungary is the most financially stable country on this list and its citizens are happy to leave the past behind. Hungarians are quick to place blame on communism for their past and present misfortunes. The ironic monumental disruption experienced at this particular site is encouraged rather than interpreted because a tragic frame created within this commemorative space precludes the possibility of significant aleatory interaction between the artifact and the

audience.  Because Hungarians are not as ambivalent about their past, the ironic monumental

disruption is only superficially encouraged within the commemorative space.  Memento Park is

not subject to additional physical confrontations as the monuments are already largely

decontextualized and sanitized.  The lack of confrontation with this site is indicative of the fact

that the metaphorical positioning of these monuments and their comical descriptions

intentionally channel irony but they do not acknowledge any residual nostalgic affect.

On the other hand, "De/construction of Monument," the group who helped fund Bosnia's

Bruce Lee, removed the statue within a few months of its erection because of its frequent

defacement. The statue is now in a secure with no immediate plans for its return to Mostar.  The

extreme nostalgia still present in the Baltic region and the contentious nature of the monument's

multicultural message made it a prime site of ongoing deliberation.  Both Bosnians and

Bulgarians have mixed feelings about their communist past and, as such, have not vilified

communism in the same way Hungarians have.  Ultimately, Bosnians and Bulgarians utilize the

comic frame to question ideological inconsistencies.  Comedy explains what many in the West

see as a calamity (the Yugoslav War, Stalinism, etc).   The erection of Bruce Lee and the

creation of the Western comic book heroes encouraged the global community to ask, Is this a

joke? Thus, Bosnians and Bulgarians got precisely what they had been missing—a more visible

platform from which to question their relationship to global politics.

**ARGUING FOR THE MATERIALIZATION OF IRONY AND ITS INTERACTIONS**

The foregoing section reviewed the public memory and monumentality literature. The

section also explained the need for more deliberative space, in which institutionalized values are

more visible and even possibly more susceptible to various forms of social, political, and

material critiques.  The monuments of Eastern and Southeastern Europe are confronting their

nostalgic memory places with ironic, agitational performances that engage people to assume a vested interest in the politics of commemoration. The various forms of confrontation (namely desecration and erasure) further undermine, but ultimately end up heightening, the ironic and typically unsettling representations of memory. These commemorative spaces show that additional confrontations with ironic placeholders help societies experiencing ideological transitions resituate their relationship between the commemorative object and their lived experience.

Presently, monument studies needs more research on the benefits of irony in monument-building. Some scholars are even hesitant to recognize how commemorative spaces can have irony constructed into them. In fact, scholar Linda Hutcheon has suggested that ironic monuments are not particularly useful objects of study because irony cannot take on a physical presence; rather, the viewing subject produces irony. In *Irony's Edge*, Hutcheon states that

> to call something ironic or nostalgic is, in fact, less a *description* of the ENTITY ITSELF than an *attribution* of a quality of RESPONSE. Irony is not something *in* an object that you either "get" or fail to "get": irony "happens" for you (or, better, you *make* it "happen") when two meanings, one said and the other unsaid, come together, usually with a certain critical edge… [It] is not something you "perceive" *in* an object; it is what you "feel"… it is the element of response—of active participation, both intellectual and affective—that makes for the power.[65]

While Hutcheon is entirely correct that irony can *produce* an affective response, she is too quick to dismiss the rhetorical place of the ironic object. Hutcheon goes so far as to say that "irony and nostalgia are not qualities of *objects*; they are responses of *subjects*—active, emotionally, and intellectually-engaged subjects."[66] This project seeks to untangle this false binary and prove that irony can be both constructed and exchanged.

While there is extensive literature on performative irony and its politics, there is little scholarly literature on irony as a rhetorical strategy within monumentality. Monumental irony

appears to be a newer phenomenon, but the recent construction of ironic monuments in Eastern

and Southeastern Europe suggests that the idea has scholarly potential.  Irony becomes a

powerful way to engage ideas without confronting painful histories, which characterize many

historical monuments.  Traditionally, monuments stabilize the multitude of discourses that

circulate around them, making them ideal cultural texts of interpretation.   But the stabilization of

discourse may in some cases limit the therapeutic and sometimes threatening act of public

deliberation.

It would be easy to simply write off the painted figures of Superman or Santa Claus or

the statue of Bruce Lee as harmless jokes, but, as Jim Collins suggests, with irony, there is "a

hyper awareness on the part of the text itself of its cultural status, function, and history, as well

as of the conditions of its circulation and reception."[67]  All of these monuments reveal their own

awareness.  Various groups built, moved, and vandalized the monuments in hopes of bringing

more attention to and critiquing their messages. The monuments—just like the people who live

with them—are not ready to fully abandon their past; they would rather play with their historical

narrative in hopes of gaining more clarity.  Consequently, all of these seemingly superficial

statues in Eastern Europe and the former Yugoslavia become important cultural nodes for

understanding the representational and political potential of irony.[68]  The ironic statue might not

even acknowledge the history or person it wishes to critique.  Instead, irony creates an opening

within the historical narrative by threatening to ignore it entirely or by offering a reversal of its

intended message. Irony creates conflict without ever admitting to it.

It is because of irony's rhetorical power to highlight an idea with the intent of calling it

into question that it becomes such a useful tool for studying the monuments of Eastern and

Southeastern Europe.  All of these monuments provide some sort of ironic take on public

memory.  Hungarians placed monuments to Stalin in a virtual amusement park, Bosnians destroyed Bruce Lee because his message of "justice" was too offensive for display, and Bulgarians invited Ronald McDonald to boldly occupy the body of a Soviet soldier.  But the real commemorative power stemming from these monuments comes through their ironic forms. They are materially producing a dialogue with their audience that reflects back on them.  It is the interplay and the uncertainty of accepting any one particular interpretation that creates a highly contextualized space filled with many questions and few answers.

In other words, these monuments can disrupt acceptable forms of public memory, create commemorative anxiety, and do it in such a way as to appear relatively harmless or uncontroversial to the uninformed outsider.[69]  Ultimately, ironic monumental disruptions materially demonstrate how societies are coming to terms with their histories.  These monuments "countered" nothing, but they did challenge ideas and histories as counter-monuments claim to do, which is why it is important to situate this new form within the current counter-monumentality literature before turning to additional conceptual concerns in Chapter three.

**MONUMENTS VERSUS COUNTER-MONUMENTS: OVERCOMING BINARIES WITH IRONY**

Scholars continue to overlook irony because of a larger conceptual confusion still plaguing the field of monumentality studies.  When it comes to the intervention of "counter" or critical memories, many scholars in the field create a binary between "traditional" monuments and counter-monuments.[70]  The problem with this distinction is that it oversimplifies both categories of study and does not make a clear case for why either category is expanding or improving monument studies.  Political scientist Elizabeth Strakosch explains the perceived difference between "traditional" and "counter" monuments:

Traditionally, nation-states have built unified political identities around their institutions by mobilizing social memory of a glorious past that erases crimes committed in the process of nation-building. Such stories have been physically embodied in monolithic, didactic monuments that take complex moments of historical conflict and transform them into clear stories of national triumph or martyrdom.[71]

Counter-monuments on the other hand, are "abstract rather than literal forms…capable of allowing the stories of victims and perpetrators to coexist."[72] Strakosch's definitions appear to hinge upon a representational distinction that literal representations reinforce traditional institutions of power and abstract depictions allow for more interpretation and dialogue.

What is clear is that monuments and counter-monuments have the ability to aid in the sense-making process by exceeding the potential shortcomings of language and serving as an alternate mode of expression. Additionally, both monuments and counter-monuments can be subject to desecration or defacement. Both monument and counter-monument have the potential to capture the emotional complexity of human suffering and historical tragedies through an affective exchange. In *Rhetorical Bodies,* Carole Blair explains the affective visual experience, stating that monuments "construct valenced reaction and depths of visitor experience that cannot be described, much less explained, in terms of their symbolism or by reference to the intentions of their makers."[73] At this current juncture in monument studies, it is still not clear how counter-monuments are defining themselves in opposition to every other monument.

This study seeks to provide more precise vocabulary for the study of monumentality by demonstrating that certain critical practices do not fit within a binary logic. This chapter broadly reviewed the literature of public memory and monumentality in order to show how the scholarship is shaping the field and where conceptual gaps still exist. The literature combined with the case studies within this project show that counter-monumentality would greatly benefit as a conceptual tool if it accounted for more focused rhetorical, political, and historical practices.

Beginning with ironic commemoration, this study shows that scholars of monumentality should be less concerned with static categories and should instead look to specific commemorative practices in order to understand how artifacts and communities are jointly reflecting public sentiments.  In order to interrogate localized practices, I propose the concept of ironic monumental disruption as a rhetorical formation that allows old and new monuments, ideologies, and political and historical narratives (rather than a conceptual battle between monuments and counter-monument) to produce a critical dialogue.

As mentioned earlier, Chapter three expands on the conceptualization behind the category of the counter-monument in order to show where the recognition of ironic strategies could be helpful to scholarship. Chapter two, to which I now turn, explores the construction of Eastern and Southeastern Europe's historical narrative.  It is important to understand what policies and ideologies have shaped public memory in post-communist Europe in order to explain its [public memory's] contestation. From the inception of Stalinism in the mid-1940s to the current application of capitalism, Hungarians, Bulgarians, and Yugoslavs have all found ways to make meaning of monumental change.

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[1] See Nikolai Voukov, "Death and the Desecrated: Monuments of the Socialist Past in Post-1989 Bulgaria," *Anthropology of East Europe Review: Central Europe, East Europe and Eurasia* 21, 2 (Autumn 2003) accessed on August 23, 2011, http://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/aer/article/viewArticle/344.

[2] Carole Blair, Greg Dickinson and Brian Ott describe Craig Calhoun's definition of a "public" as "often thought of as an ensemble of stranger interactions, predicated upon boundary conditions, normative standards, and/or particular instantiations between the individual and the state." For additional reading see: Carole Blair, Greg Dickinson, and Brian L. Ott, "Introduction: Rhetoric/Memory/Place," in *Places of Public Memory*: *The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials,* edited by Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott (Tuscaloosa, Al: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 5.

[3] The ideology of Eastern Europe was more accurately defined as "Real Socialism" or Stalinism.  Real Socialism recognizes that developing nations could not implement socialism as it is theoretically designed.

[4] The Berlin Wall's nonexistence is now recognized as a monument as well.

[5] Cezar Ornatowski, "Rhetoric and the Subject of/in History: Reflections on Political Transformation," *Advances in the History of Rhetoric* 9 (2006): 189.

[6] Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of Bourgeois Public Sphere: an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society* (Boston: MIT Press, 1991), 51.

[7] Gerald Hauser, *Vernacular Voices: The rhetoric of publics and public spheres* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 114.

[8] Ornatowski, "Rhetoric and the Subject of/in History," 189.

[9] Ornatowski, "Rhetoric and the Subject of/in History," 200.

[10] Hauser, *Vernacular Voices,* 113.

[11] Hauser, *Vernacular Voices*, 113.

[12] Hauser, *Vernacular Voices*, 133.

[13] Hauser speaks of Poland's transition from "nation" to "society" and so on.

[14] Cezar Ornatowski and Noemi Marin, "Introduction: Rhetoric and History in the Political Transformations in Central/Eastern Europe and South Africa, " *Advances in the History of Rhetoric* 9 (2006): 166

[15] Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance,* 13.

[16] Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance,* 13.

[17] Blight, "If You Don't Tell It."

[18] Blair et al., "Introduction," in *Places of Public Memory*, 36-37.

[19] Carole Blair, Marsha Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci, "Public Memorializing in Postmodernity: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial As Prototype," *Quarterly Journal of Speech (1991):* 264.

[20] For example, Blair and Michel's research on Mount Rushmore in South Dakota shows that Mount Rushmore has an ideological function that pushes an imperialist agenda while simultaneously erasing collective suspicion through its narrative of American fortitude. See Carole Blair and Neil Michel, 'The Rushmore Effect: *Ethos* and National Collective Identity," *The Ethos Rhetoric,* ed. Michael J. Hyde (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2004), 156-196.

[21] See Greg Dickinson, "Memories for Sale: Nostalgia and the Construction of Identity in Old Pasadena," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 1997 Vol. 83 (1997). Also see Greg Dickinson "The Pleasantville Effect: Nostalgia and the Visual Framing of (White) Suburbia." *Western Journal of Communication* 70, no. 3 (July 2006).

[22] Nadkarni, "The Master's Voice," 621.

[23] Dickinson, "Memories for Sale," 1.

[24] Zala Volcic, "Yugo-Nostalgia: Cultural Memory and Media in the Former Yugoslavia," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* Vol. 24, No. 1, (2007), 28.

[25] Volcic, "Yugo-nostalgia," 28.

[26] Dickinson, "Memories for Sale," 2.

[27] Matt Prodger, "Nostalgic Yugoslav Re-creates Land of Tito," *BBC News*, May 10, 2004, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3693853.stm

[28] Dickinson, "Memories for Sale," 5.

[29] Burke, *Attitudes Toward History, 5.*

[30] Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes Toward History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1959), 34.

[31] The "scapegoat" is an entity that receives all of the blame so that others do not have to take responsibility. For additional reading see Kenneth Burke's definitions in *Permanence and Change* and *Grammar of Motives.*

[32] Kimberly A. Powell, "The Association of Southern Women for the Prevention of Lynching: Strategies of a Movement in the Comic Frame," *Communication Quarterly*, vol. 43:1 (Winter 1995): 87.

[33] Kenneth Burke, *Attitudes toward History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1959), 171 (emphasis added).

[34] Kenneth Burke, *The Rhetoric of Religion (*Boston: Beacon, 1961), 172. The "guilt" in the case of Eastern Europe (Hungary specifically) is complex. I would not suggest that the Hungarian people feel guilty for abandoning the ideology of communism. I fully believe that most feel that the ideology was thrust upon them after the War. I think the "guilt" in this case should be expressed more as a justification mechanism. Hungarians have decided to place their hopes on capitalism through a stronger identification with the West. So rather than guilt per se, many are demonstrating allegiance to a new ideology by purging themselves of the old. Hungarians (and Memento Park specifically) have made communism into a one dimensional symbol of oppression.

[35] Carlson, "Gandhi and the Comic Frame," 447.

[36] Nikolai Voukov, "Death and the Desecrated: Monuments of the Socialist Past in Post-1989 Bulgaria," *Anthropology of East Europe Review: Central Europe, East Europe and Eurasia* 21, 2 (Autumn 2003) accessed on August 23, 2011, http://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/aer/article/viewArticle/344," para. 1.

[37] Kendall R. Phillips, "Introduction," in *Framing Public Memory,* edited by Kendall R. Phillips (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004), 2.

[38] Phillips, "Introduction," *Framing Public Memory*, 3.

[39] Nikolai Voukov, "Death and the Desecrated: Monuments of the Socialist Past in Post-1989 Bulgaria," *Anthropology of East Europe Review: Central Europe, East Europe and Eurasia* 21, 2 (Autumn 2003) accessed on August 23, 2011, http://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/aer/article/viewArticle/344.," para. 2.

[40] Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, and Forgetting,* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 90.

[41] Ricoeur, *Memory, History, and Forgetting,* 87.

[42] Ibid., 87.

[43] While it is problematic to separate history and memory entirely, Nora's argument on commemoration relies on the distinction of categories. See Pierre Nora, "The Era of Commemoration," *Realms of Memory*, vol. 3, *Symbols*, ed. Lawrence D. Krizman, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) 91.

[44] Narrative accounts are reconstructions of the past just as monuments are. Both "markers" of memory are subject to revisions.

[45] While it is problematic to separate history and memory entirely, Nora's argument on commemoration relies on the distinction of categories. See Pierre Nora, "The Era of Commemoration," *Realms of Memory*, vol. 3, *Symbols*, ed. Lawrence D. Krizman, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998) 91.

[46] By sacred, I mean "regarded with reverence." For those in the West, you would not dare pull down a monument unless it marked a truly shameful period. Even then, you would get push back on not allowing the past to speak for itself.

[47] Since the 1980s, authors have written extensively on the role of rhetoric and commemoration through the media of architecture and monumentality. All of these scholars have concluded that a monument's materiality allows it an extended presence rarely granted to most other forms of public memory and that monuments are nondiscursive arguments symbolized in stone. Traditionally discursive modes of argumentation, like speeches, are temporally and spatially ephemeral. While speeches were initially written down and then eventually recorded and later broadcasted, the audience could not recreate the immediacy and the affective experience of interpreting the message in the moment. Monuments have a very different function, as their message is allowed to continue through time because of their very embodiment. See Carole Blair, Marsha S. Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci, Jr., "Public Memorializing in Postmodernity: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial as Prototype," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77 (1991): 263-288; Carole Blair and Neil Michel, "The AIDS Memorial Quilt and the Contemporary Culture of Public Commemoration," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 10 (2007): 595-626; Carole Blair and Neil Michel, "Reproducing Civil Rights Tactics: The Rhetorical Performances of the Civil Rights Memorial," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 30 (2000): 31-55; Carole Blair and Neil Michel, "The Rushmore Effect: *Ethos* and National Collective Identity," in *The Ethos of Rhetoric*, ed. Michael J. Hyde (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press), 156-196; Greg Dickinson, Brian L. Ott, and Eric Aoki, "Memory and Myth at the Buffalo Bill Museum," *Western Journal of Communication* 69 (2005): 85-108; Greg Dickinson, Brian L. Ott, and Eric Aoki, "Spaces of Remembering and Forgetting: The Reverent Eye/I at the Plains Indian Museum," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 3 (2006): 27-47 Victoria J. Gallagher, "Memory and Reconciliation in the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 2 (1999): 303-320; Victoria J. Gallagher, "Memory as Social Action: Projection and Generic Form in Civil Rights Memorials," in *New Approaches to Rhetoric*, ed. Patricia A. Sullivan and Steven R. Goldzwig (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2004), 149-171; Victoria J. Gallagher, "Remembering Together? Rhetorical Integration and the Case of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial," *Southern Communication Journal* 60 (1995): 109-119.

[48] Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites," 37.

[49] Michael Taussig, Defacement: Public Secrecy and the Labor of the Negative (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford Press, 1999), 45.

[50] See W. Hopkins, "Flag Desecration as Seditious Libel", *Journalism Quarterly*, vol. 68 (Winter 1991): 814-822 and Richard Goodman and William Gordon, *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, vol. 57 (February 1971): 23-31.

[51] See Gregory, Benton, "From Principle to Practice: Four Conceptions of Interpretation," *Journal of Interpretation Research*, vol. 14 (2009): 7-31 and Sam Ham, "From Interpretation to Protection: Is There a Theoretical Basis?" *Journal of Interpretation Research*, vol. 14 (2009): 49-57.

[52] Kenneth Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscape of Violence and Tragedy*, (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2003), 5-20.

[53] Richard Marback, "Detroit and the Closed Fist: Toward a Theory of Material Rhetoric," *Rhetoric Review* 17 (1998): 74-92.

[54] Marback, "Detroit and the Closed Fist, 75-77.

[55] Victoria J. Gallagher and Margaret R. LaWare, "Sparring with Public Memory: The Rhetorical Embodiment of Race, Power, and Conflict in the Monument to Joe Lewis," in *Places of Public Memory*, edited by Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott (Tuscaloosa, Al: University of Alabama Press, 2010), 87-112.

[56] Foote, *Shadowed Ground,* 2.

[57] David J. Walkowitz and Lisa Maya Knauer, *Memory and the Impact of Political Transformation in Public Space* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 263.

[58] Zala Volcic, "Yugo-Nostalgia: Cultural Memory and Media in the Former Yugoslavia," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 24, no. 1 (March 2007): 32.

[59] Victoria J. Gallagher "Memory and Reconciliation in the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute," *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 2 (1999): 303-320.

[60] Gallagher, "Memory and Reconciliation," 307-308.

[61] Bernard Armada, "Memorial Agon: an Interpretive Tour of the National Civil Rights Museum*," Southern Communication Journal* 63 (1998): 236.

[62] I want to be clear that the rhetorical act of erasure is not without its pros and cons. Erasure has shown short-term promise and on some occasions continues to shape politics long after an artifact is removed. The initial example of erasure that comes to mind is the Berlin Wall. Its removal did not take away the memory, but other less prominent artifacts would likely not have the same kind of staying power.

[63] This project is particularly timely as Europe is, yet again, facing an ideological crisis. With the European Union hanging in the balance, many countries are reexamining their loyalties to an economically unified Europe and questioning whether some countries have exploited their political weaknesses. Specifically, Greece is trying to reevaluate their austerity pact with Germany.

[64] See Maya Nadkarni, "The Master's Voice: Authenticity, Nostalgia, and the Refusal of Irony Postsocialist Hungary," *Social Identities*, Vol. 13, No. 5, (September 2007), and Dominik Bartmanski, "Successful Icons of Failed Time: Rethinking Postcommunist Nostalgia," *Acta Sociologica* 54(3) 213–231.

[65] Linda Hutcheon, "Irony, Nostalgia, and the Postmodern," *University of Toronto English Library*, (January 1998), http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/criticism/hutchinp.html

[66] Hutcheon, "Irony, Nostalgia, and the Postmodern."

[67] Vincent Brook, "Puce Modern Moment: Camp, Postmodernism, and the Films of Kenneth Anger," *Journal of Film and Video* 58 (2006): 13. For further discussion of "hyperconsciousness" see Jim Collins, *Uncommon Cultures: Popular Culture and Post-Modernism* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1989): 335. For additional discussions on "parody" see Linda Hutcheon, *a Theory of Parody: the teachings of twentieth-century art forms* (Cambridge: University Printing House, 1985).

[68] See Appendix A

[69] "Acceptable" in the sense that monuments stand for historical or ideological "Truth."

[70] I want to be careful about this claim because many scholars in monument studies do not fall into this false binary. I am specifically addressing those in the field who rely on the language of counter-monumentality.

[71] Elizabeth Strakosch "The Political Complexities of 'New Memorials': Victims and Perpetrators Sharing Space in the Australian Capital," in Memorials and Museums (Berlin: *Berlin Roundtables*, 2009), 21.

[72] Strakosch, "The Political Complexities of 'New Memorials,' 22.

[73] Carole Blair, "Contemporary U.S. Memorial Sites as Exemplars of Rhetoric's Materiality," in *Rhetorical Bodies*, eds. Jack Selzer and Sharon Crowley (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 48.

**Chapter Two:  Historical Complexities:**

**A Problem of Rhetoric and Memory**

In a June 8, 2011, interview, a woman told the story of her parents fleeing from Mostar, Bosnia, during the Bosnian War in 1995 and seeking refuge in Norway. Her father went to a local butcher shop and tried to explain that he was a Bosniak refugee looking for work.[1] When his language failed him he gestured to the man behind the counter that he too worked as a butcher by dragging one finger along his neck. The man behind the counter called the police to report that the "Butcher of Sarajevo" was confessing his horrific crimes.[2]  Coincidentally, the Serbian government captured the real "butcher," Serbian General Ratko Mladic, a few days before our interview. When asked how she felt about Mladic's capture 17 years after the Srebrenica genocide, the woman responded that he was an old man who got to live his life. There was no justice in his capture now.[3]

The narrative of justice is one many societies rely on when trying to understand tragedies brought on by war.  In *International Criminal Justice*, author George Andreopoulos states that societies believe some form of social balance is restored when those guilty of inhumane crimes are found and prosecuted.[4]  According to Andreopoulos, justice is a product of holding the guilty accountable for their crimes, and it [justice] is an important first step to "secure world order."[5] In Eastern and Southeastern Europe, the reality that so many people in this area of the world perpetrated unthinkably heinous crimes against one another complicates the idea of "justice." Many of these crimes were encouraged under the guise of an extreme nationalism, which seeks to elevate national and cultural identity above all else. The rhetorical dimensions of nationalism are of particular interest here as they continue to construct a sense of history and political destiny for those who identify with the national mythos.  It is, in fact, the rhetoric of nationalism and its

demands for political, cultural, and economic "justice" that have largely shaped Eastern European and Yugoslavian identity in the twentieth century. But whereas nationalism propelled and sustained independence movements in Eastern Europe in the 1970s and '80s, it alternatively led to the bloody disintegration of Yugoslavia throughout the 1990s.

This chapter traces the multiple narratives of Eastern and Southeastern European politics to give context to the current commemorative strategies utilized in these regions today. Currently, the competing ideologies, histories, identities, and memories are most visibly displayed through monuments situated in museums, city parks, and public squares. Monuments built to former ideological narratives typically become one of the first artifacts of the old regime to receive a symbolic makeover. The desire to remove or reappropriate old statues reveals that monuments continue to enforce their political power over the local population. Similarly, the need to build new monuments reflecting a new ideology suggests that monuments can reinforce perspectives in need of additional political and material support. Monuments, much like historical narratives, can be subject to revision; thus, the ability to reshape Eastern and Southeastern Europe's representation of history relies on a willingness to overlook or repress some of that same history. Thus, the goal of this chapter is to offer the reader a deeper understanding of the abrupt historical and ideological transition from communism to capitalism as an explanatory device for the region's lingering nostalgia (and subsequent comic and tragic frames). Additionally, to understand the value of the concept of the ironic monumental disruption and how its rhetorical (monumental) formation creates deliberation, this chapter explores the complex and sometimes contradictory forces that shaped Eastern and Southeastern European identity before and after the transition in 1989.

So in order to gain insight into the rhetorical dimensions of "post" politics and its implications for political representation in Eastern and Southeastern Europe, this chapter explores the changing political ideologies in Hungary and Bulgaria by examining their allegiances during World War I and II, their relationships to the Soviet Union, the subsequent collapse of the satellite state system in the late 1980s, and the abrupt transition to capitalism in the 1990s. The chapter also reviews Yugoslavia's construction of nationality over the past century and why its configuration led to its genocidal end.

Spanning from the 1980s to the mid 1990s, some of the most complex and contradictory political identities began to take form in post-communist Europe under the banners of communism and nationalism. The next section highlights the important historical events which led up to the fall of communism in the Eastern bloc and the devastating war which erupted and subsequently ended the Yugoslav nation. All of these significant historical moments continue to shape how people see themselves as victimizers and victims. Curiously, Eastern and Southeastern Europe's stories, though somewhat overlapping, get rearticulated quite differently. Hungarians and Bulgarians were victims of their physical location between East and West whereas Yugoslavs politically position themselves as neither East or West; instead, destroying their national unity from the inside out. The histories are undeniably similar, but the rhetorical framing is vastly different.

**CONTESTED POLITICAL IDENTITIES**

Episodes of imperialism and oppression mark Eastern and Southeastern Europe's historical narrative. While many of the countries in this region aligned their political interests with Nazi Germany, and before that, the Hapsburg Empire, the people now speak about that chapter as a fatal misstep and as the catalyst of their misery throughout the last half of the

twentieth century. It is, in fact, an interesting rhetorical revision that has left many of the former oppressors as the self-described oppressed. Hungarians, Bulgarians, and Croats all joined the Axis powers, albeit some by force, during World War II. After World War II, many Eastern and Southeastern Europeans were grateful to no longer live under the rule of fascism but quickly found that they had not gained any real sense of autonomy under Stalinism. Many of these same people expressed hope that, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1989, they would finally gain economic and political freedom under capitalism. The monolithic interpretation that 1989 marked the death of communism in Europe is still pervasive in the West, but this interpretation ignores the distinct formation of socialism, which briefly lived on in former Yugoslavia. While Eastern Europe maintained a tenuous relationship with Stalinism, Southeastern Europe willingly embraced Josip Broz Tito's vision of a communist state in combination with free market structures.[6]

While Cold War tensions surrounded Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia positioned itself to avoid political alliances with both the East and West after the infamous conflict between Tito and Stalin in 1948.[7] It was the push to avoid identification with Cold War politics that led to the creation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).[8] Many claim the NAM was the product of Tito's vision to strengthen nations without forcing them to establish ties to superpowers.[9] By 1961, the NAM was established in Belgrade, Serbia (at the time, a state of Yugoslavia), along with India, Egypt, Ghana, and Indonesia. All five nations sought to find a political course that united developing nations rather than making them satellite states for Eastern or Western blocs.[10] The NAM included 55% of the world's population at various points, but the end of Cold War politics quickly undermined the organization's power. The founding nation of Yugoslavia violently dissolved into war in 1992 further undermining the mission of the organization.[11]

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Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians abandoned all political and economic alliances and subscribed to racist ideologies that reinforced genocidal policies. It is imperative to understand the nuances between—and within—Eastern Europe and Southeastern Europe's relationship to communism because their monumental responses reflect their varied historical narratives.

Alternatively, within the span of several decades, Eastern Europe buckled under the weight of Stalinism, a system where "all spheres—economic, social, legal, aesthetic, religious, etc.—were subordinated to political criteria" as set forth by the Communist Party.[12] The transition was relatively peaceful as frequent protests stretching from Poland to Hungary further undermined an overextended Soviet Union. While communism in Eastern and Southeastern Europe ended very differently, both regions faced similar conflicts leading up to World War II. The following sections outline several important conflicts in the twentieth century leading up to the rise and fall of communism in Eastern and Southeastern Europe.

**Foundations of Conflict: World Wars I and II**

As the intersection between Europe and the East, the Balkans became a site of conquest for Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Consequently, the Balkans experienced numerous political and ideological shifts under the authority of various empires and dictators. Occupation by the Ottoman Empire led to the Islamic conversion of many Slavic people, but it was not religion or culture alone that led to the genocidal purges of entire ethnicities. In fact, Norman Naimark suggests that claims of "ancient historical tensions" are patently false.[13] Following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg monarchy, the frontiers in the western Balkans were redrawn and a completely novel South Slav entity was created."[14] Naimark argues that this initial move to produce a strong sense of national identity made the long-term unity of

Yugoslavia virtually impossible.[15] Thus, the true catalyst of the war was the rhetorical harnessing of a fragile nationalism to fuel the anxieties of a historically colonized people.

Much like Yugoslavia, Eastern Europe was also fated to occupy the ideological and physical space between East and West. In fact, Eastern Europe rarely possessed authority over its own governance during much of the twentieth century. Frequent territorial disputes erupted in the region as the empires of Europe crumbled. The land of Eastern Europe served in the south, the Ottoman Empire, in the west, the Austro-Hungarian and Prussian Empires, and in the east, the Russian Empire, by becoming a source for raw materials (including food) and cheap labor.[16]

Against this backdrop of exploitation, the people of Eastern Europe "struggled to develop or preserve their national identities against attempts to assimilate or control them."[17] Ottoman rule dominated Bulgaria throughout the thirteenth century.[18] Corruption and rising nationalism propelled the Ottoman Empire's decline and made it susceptible to foreign invasion by the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which then claimed the territories of Bulgaria, Bosnia, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, and Slovenia.

The division of land between the Austrian and Hungarian empires largely determined how each region would develop. Austrian authorities ruled over Slovenia, Hungary, and the Czech states and encouraged industrial development and local governance. Croatia, on the other hand, fell under the jurisdiction of Hungarian rule and had "fewer opportunities to develop national movements."[19] The hostilities created by the Austro-Hungarian division of lands reverberated around the world when WWI began with the assassination of Austrian Archduke Ferdinand by a Serbian who felt that Bosnia belonged to Serbia and not the Austro-Hungarian Empire.[20]

Larger empires frequently subsumed the countries of Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Adrian Webb describes the divisions during World War I, stating:

> Austria-Hungary, Germany and Turkey, with their Balkan ally Bulgaria, had been pitted against Russia (with its British, French and at the end American, allies on the Western Front) and Italy with their Balkan allies Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Greece. All the empires, on the eastern fronts as on the western conscripted their citizens.[21]

The divisions forced the people living within those countries to take up arms against neighboring countries with overlapping nationalities. It was not uncommon for Russian Poles to fight German Poles due to the boundaries of empires.[22]  Additionally, the infrastructure each empire left behind foreshadowed many of the future economic divisions affecting their citizens today.  The remnants of each empire ultimately shaped how the states of Eastern Europe would eventually adopt and structure democracy and industrialization.[23]

As World War I wound down, it was clear that the Austro-Hungarian Empire would need to be broken up in order to avoid future power grabs. As punishment for their hubris, Europe dismantled Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire in hopes of creating a substantially weaker Hungary with less land and fewer resources.[24]  Bulgaria ceded much of its territory to Greece, Romania, and Yugoslavia. By the War's end, an entirely new Eastern Europe emerged. The capitals of the former empires were resource-rich and built for trade while other cities were underdeveloped, leaving them isolated and susceptible to future exploitation.[25]  After the war, Budapest benefited from elaborate transportation systems and grand palaces, but Bulgaria experienced little development due to its location.  The country continued to rely largely on subsistence agriculture.[26]

 Consequently, the redistricting of land created a new configuration of Yugoslavia that "brought together ethnic groups that were very different in their religions, cultures, economies, and levels of development."[27]  Additionally, much of the territory of Eastern Europe was carved

up and made into autonomous states, but the fragile configuration of new statehood left East and Southeast Europe vulnerable to the influence of its more powerful European neighbors.

With the development of several new Eastern European states, the Russian Revolution of 1917 provided a path for finding a new sense of shared political identity through a common Marxist ideology. The movement within Russia showed the developing states an alternative to their former imperialist oppression. But the ideological transition for Eastern Europe was not smooth, as the identity that they *did* share was one grounded in cultural and religious traditions.[28] Predictably, many Eastern European countries experimented and simultaneously struggled with communism after WWI. Robin Okey asserts that while many in Europe simultaneously had curiosities and misgivings about communism, Hitler's invasion of Poland set into motion a string of events that led to the inevitable (and sometimes forcible) implementation of communism in the lands between central Europe and the Soviet Union.[29]

Not surprisingly, the widespread destruction of World War II was the breaking point for the fragile democracies of Eastern Europe. The political loyalties of the newly formed states quickly dissolved as Bulgaria, Hungary, and Romania fought alongside the Germans as part of the Axis powers. Croatia initially put up fleeting resistance but ultimately emerged as a puppet state occupied by Germany.[30] The Germans appointed Croat-nationalist, Ante Pavelic, as leader of the fascist Ustasa movement in Croatia. Using Nazi extermination techniques, Croatian Ustasas sent local Serbs to concentration camps where they were starved or murdered. The memories of World War II continued to haunt Yugoslavia throughout the twentieth century, as lingering resentment over Croatia's fascist allegiances and demands for independent statehood festered.

Most other Eastern European countries allied with the West because they were resentful of Axis destruction. What appeared in the West as a clear cut alliance between "good" and "evil" was complicated further by the national politics of Eastern Europe. Hitler's vision of a "New Order" capitalized on old, conflicting territorial claims.[31] Eastern states were encouraged to align themselves with the Axis powers in hopes of being gifted newly conquered lands. Okey outlines the Axis hierarchy of power, stating:

> Hungary and Bulgaria retained their independence and extended their frontiers in return for close alignment of their economic and foreign policies with German interests; Hungary, but not Bulgaria, joined the war against Russia… in the second rank came the Slovaks and Croats, dissatisfied minor partners in 1919 who received the trappings of statehood under closely supervised native fascists.… At the bottom rung in the New Order were the victors of 1919, the Poles, Serbs, and Czechs, their states dismembered and administered by puppet collaborators.[32]

These political and cultural hierarchies became especially significant once ethnic cleansing became a tool of control in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Okey describes how "Psuedo-science mingled with vulgar prejudice," as Croatia's president "pronounced the Croats not to be Slavs but Goths."[33] The Croats saw themselves as having distinctly different "racial traits" from the Slavs throughout Southeastern Europe.[34] Racist propaganda described Slavic racial traits as "a markedly disorderly and careless family life."[35]

World War II produced much of the resentment, which would ultimately undermine the subsequent configuration of Yugoslavia. As the war wound down and the Axis powers met their eventual defeat, new superpowers emerged and laid claim to former German territories. Wolchick explains the redistribution of land and power, stating:

> Hungary and Bulgaria, as Axis powers, were simply occupied by the Soviet Union.… In Yugoslavia and Albania, the Soviets played a very limited role in establishing communism. Although the Soviet army helped liberate Belgrade, Josip Broz Tito and the Partisans liberated most of Yugoslavia through guerilla warfare against the German occupiers. Most of the aid they received came from the Western Allies. The Partisans came to power largely through their own efforts. In the process, they also often fought

nationalist Croatian Ustasa forces and Serbian Chetniks who, in turn, fought each other and the Axis occupiers.[36]

Thus, much of Eastern and Southeastern Europe allied with the ideology of communism either through occupation (Hungary and Bulgaria) or self-determination (Yugoslavia).

**The Rise of Communism in Eastern and Southeastern Europe**

After World War II, the Soviet Union occupied most of Eastern Europe under the authority of Joseph Stalin. Stalinism as a specific brand of communism enforced an ideological system that controlled every aspect of political and social life. When tensions arose in the satellite states, the Soviet Union's military units typically put them down by force. According to Wolchick, within the political realm of Stalinism, "The Communist Party structures were the skeleton of the state. The party selected or approved the managerial or politically significant personnel working at all levels of the state bureaucracy and economy."[37] Additionally, Stalinism quickly restructured social relations. The elimination of religious associations created friction within the substantial Catholic and orthodox populations of Eastern Europe. While some resisted the abrupt social transitions, women found a more promising role in society. They were able to work, some for the first time, and become politically involved. Stalinism also pushed the Hungarian people to move from an agricultural economy to an industrial one. Young adults began moving to the cities in order to pursue further education. While Hungary and Yugoslavia voiced mixed emotions about the Soviet model, communism created beneficial economic changes for the less-developed states during its initial implementation. Wolchick asserts, "Stalinist economic policies worked best, at first, in the least developed countries in the region. There they produced rapid growth rates and urbanization as well as high rates of social mobility."

Directly to the south, Josip Broz Tito unified the territory of Southeastern Europe into a communist government in 1946 and later created the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia on April 7, 1963.[38] Tito envisioned a multicultural state where Orthodox Serbs identified equally with Catholic Croatians and Bosnian Muslims. Tito's greatest challenge was establishing a political unity that could trump the ethnic and religious identities constructed over the last century. Tito's solution to maintain peace within these war-torn states was to allow each nation authority over its own territory and parliament. "On the Soviet model, these units would be 'national in form and socialist in content,' meaning that the Communist party, representing the socialist future, would ensure unity through its Leninist principle of democratic centralism."[39]

Within the new government, each republic and province had its own constitution, supreme court, parliament, president, and prime minister.[40] All of the sub-governing bodies were under the jurisdiction of the Yugoslav government made up of President Tito, the federal prime minister, and the federal parliament. Scholar Ivo Banac refutes the idea that communism was thrust upon the people of Yugoslavia, instead insisting that "[w]ithout communism there would have been no postwar Yugoslav state."[41]

The states of Yugoslavia formed a political union and subsequently associated with the USSR to strengthen the area against foreign threats after centuries of colonization from Western Europe and the Near East. In 1948, Stalin expelled Yugoslavia from the Communist Information Bureau by insisting that Tito was disloyal to the USSR. Tito responded to Stalin's expulsion by claiming that Yugoslavia wanted to stand alone.[42] Tito insisted that "Soviet-style communism was ideologically incorrect."[43] Instead, Tito proposed decentralized decision-making in both party and government and sought to have a system of "worker self-management" that opened up the channels of communication between workers and those in management positions.[44] After

Yugoslavia's unceremonious exit, Tito maintained the Soviet model but included free market

structures in order to encourage the development of small businesses.[45]

During the 1960s and 1970s, sporadic skirmishes occurred between the different

republics in Eastern and Southeastern but the USSR and Yugoslavia's powerful central

governments prevented major conflicts from materializing further. The Soviet Union used

violence and intimidation tactics to maintain authority while Tito maintained a balance of power

by using violent force and limiting Serbian claims to territory and political votes in parliament.[46]

Wolchick states that the Yugoslavian balance of power was complicated because

> Serbs and Croats composed the majority of the state's population as well as the
> overwhelming majority of the three largest republics—Serbia (and its autonomous
> provinces, Kosovo and Vojvodina), Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Approximately 24
> percent of the Serbs lived outside of the Republic of Serbia, 22 percent of Croats outside
> Croatia, and tensions between these two groups influenced interethnic relations
> throughout Yugoslavia. Montenegrins generally identified with Serbs, and Muslims lived
> intermixed with Serbs and Croats. Only Slovenia and Macedonia, with their very small
> Serbian and Croatian populations, were not drawn into Serbian-Croatia competition.[47]

In Yugoslavia specifically, the arrangement of a centralized government proved to be highly

beneficial to the poorer states of Bosnia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia, but it drew the ire of

more resource-rich territories like Croatia and Slovenia. The latter felt like their economy was

sacrificed on behalf of the weaker economies, which had little hope for substantial growth.

Much like Hungary and Bulgaria, Yugoslavia experienced a period of economic boom before

reaching a period of stagnation in the late 1970s and 1980s.

**The Decline of Communism**

In Eastern and Southeastern Europe, the beneficial gains produced by a centralized

government were short lived as "[t]he inefficiencies of centralized economies and Stalinist

strategies of development eventually plagued the economies of the region…. [Ultimately,]

shortages of basic goods and the lack of adequate services resulted in poor worker morale and

low rates of productivity."[48]  But it was not until the full-blown international economic downturn of the 1980s that Stalinism began to face insurmountable obstacles. With the Soviet Union and its satellite states deeply in debt, the various countries borrowed more and more money as food became a precious commodity. General Secretary of the Communist Party, Mikhail Gorbachev rose to power in 1985 with the promise of revamping the current economic stagnation and granting satellite states more autonomy. The west lauded Gorbachev for his social and economic overhaul of the Soviet system, but the Soviet federation was on the brink of chaos domestically.[49]

The process of liberalization in the Soviet Republics weakened the central government and encouraged greater democracy. Nationalist movements replaced the old authoritarian systems. Fuelling the Republic's political resentment, food lines and oil shortages were a common occurrence as world economy continued to suffer.  As the USSR became economically unsustainable, governance over satellite states became a lower priority. In a last ditch effort to appease those within the Soviet Republics, Gorbachev granted Eastern European's more self-determination through the Soviet Sinatra Doctrine.[50]  Gorbachev's reforms quickly created an opening for countries like Hungary to establish their political independence.[51]

By 1989, the Soviet system fell apart, leaving a weakened centralized government which could no longer support its various economic and political dependents.  As Wolchick points out, "The fused nature of political and economic power both contributed to the end of communism and complicated the transition away from it."[52] The rapid transformation of the Soviet Union led to an ideological and economic collapse which created a massive economic shock, leaving hundreds of thousands of people in crisis. Within the next two years, the Soviet Union disintegrated entirely.[53]  Stalinism left Eastern Europe with an elaborate configuration of huge

bureaucracies and institutions created to direct the economy as well as the state. In addition to the residual economic structures, communist statuary transformed from a symbol of power to an uncanny presence on the landscape.

The transition from Stalinism occurred at different rates for Hungary and Bulgaria. For the Hungarians, the "communists negotiated themselves out of power without any significant pressure from mass public action other than the peaceful crowds that came to the streets for the reburial of the leaders killed after the 1956 revolt."[54] In Bulgaria the transition came in two parts. "Following a wave of public protests and increasing political pressures against the communist regime, on November 10, 1989, the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) Central Committee announced the resignation of Todor Zhivkov."[55] Following Zhivkov's departure, there was an initial shift when "less repressive Communist Party leaders took over from the old guard," and then those leaders were replaced yet again in future elections.[56] Bulgaria faced several power shifts as different manifestations of the communist party took power until the mid-1990s.[57]

Yugoslavia had an entirely unique transition from communism as it utilized a different brand of Stalinism than that imposed on Eastern Europe; furthermore, its ideological decline happened to "coincide with the breakup of a country."[58] Upon Tito's death in 1980, the dream of a multicultural state began to dissolve as the "Economic problems in the 1980s, including severe inflation and high rates of unemployment, were compounded by pressure from the country's creditors. This economic crisis prompted the richer republics, Croatia and Slovenia, to cut loose from the ballast of the poorer ones, including Serbia."[59] Slovenia and later Croatia saw secession as an easy economic solution. The countries' elitist nationalism fueled the desire to gain absolute economic freedom.

Much of the political conflict in Yugoslavia stemmed from anxiety over a succession

plan upon Tito's passing.  In fact, Tito did not establish a successor upon this death, but he did

insist upon a rotating Presidency that would allow each country to take leadership on a

temporary basis.[60]  Tito believed that the exchange of power would provide checks and balances,

but the richer, more populous countries still found ways to dictate the policy.[61]

**Rise of Democracy/Shock Therapy Capitalism**

Eastern Europe's transition from communism to capitalism was abrupt for most states

and therefore, the shift lent itself to economic and social uncertainty. Whereas Hungary

transformed into a democratic state, Serbia and Croatia eventually became authoritarian states.

Bulgaria initially fell somewhere in between these two ideological poles.[62] Author Evgenii

Dainov states that an extensive overhaul of many Eastern and Southeastern European

governments in "1991 and 1992 ignited a reform package no less dramatic than the Polish 'shock

therapy.'"[63]

Shock therapy is the rapid liberalization of state-controlled economies. The sudden

withdrawal of state subsidies, the release of currency controls, and the immediate privatization of

former publicly-owned assets creates the "shock." In Peter Murrell's critique of shock therapy he

suggests that the masterminds behind the idea, David Lipton and Jeffrey Sachs, have only

abstract understandings of economics and little interest in the reality of societies.[64] He suggests,

"Politics is paramount; economic calculus and immediate economic effects are secondary."[65]

Quoting Lipton and Sachs, Murrell summarizes their stance on shock therapy in Eastern Europe,

"The economic strategy must take cognizance of the political context, which in our view argues

overwhelmingly for a very rapid, straightforward, and sharp program of economic reform."[66] [67]

The rapidly shifting economy did not affect Hungary in the same way it affected other countries.[68] As mentioned before, Hungary had already taken steps toward economic reform and political liberalization over the last several decades so it was able to avoid the Polish "shock therapy" model for the most part.[69]  Instead, Hungary began moving toward private ownership through a social market economy where industries produced consumer goods and services. Even though the transition was less dramatic, the people of Hungary still experienced a rapid shift in living standards as capitalism brought substantial inequity to the region. Furthermore, "The transition in Hungary was complicated by its high debt to the West, the collapse of the Soviet market, and the end of cheap Soviet oil and natural gas supplies.… [Consequently,] between 1989 and 1992, Hungary's GDP had collapsed by 18 percent."[70]

But the application of shock therapy did not come as easily to most of Eastern and Southeastern Europe.  Dainov suggests that elections in Bulgaria revealed that some people were even seeking a return to their former way of life. By 1993,

> [D]ifferences between the different former "socialist countries" appeared [and] Bulgaria slid back into the ranks of slow developers. Reform sagged and at the end of 1994 the ex-communist Bulgarian Sociality Party—the least reformed of its kind—returned to power on a platform of a further slowing down of the transition process and the  recovery of some aspects of the totalitarian system.[71]

Bulgaria had multiple moments of "stop and go modernization," as democratic governments were elected then replaced by less democratic leaders as soon as the economy slipped.[72] In fact, Bulgarian politicians spent much of the '90s unsuccessfully staving off the discontent caused by inflation and unemployment. During this time, Bulgaria began privatizing business, diversifying its trade, and looking to countries other than Russia for resources.[73] Politically, Bulgaria moved toward democracy much slower than Hungary. Wolchick explains that "Sofia's turn toward

Western institutions and economic models accelerated after 1998, when a reformist coalition government was elected."[74]

Yugoslavia's transition to capitalism took slightly longer than its Eastern European counterparts as it coincided with a bloody war. Croatia and Serbia embraced the politics of democracy over a decade's time as they pushed out semi-authoritarian governments through the electoral process.[75] In Bosnia and Kosovo, international troops and peacekeepers organized the first several years of democratization. Only recently have these countries declared their independence.[76]

The process of transition was complex for all post-communist countries. New governments undermined the Communist Party claiming that the communists built a faulty system based on illegitimate economic and political power.[77] Additionally, there was the new creation of parliamentary systems and their corresponding legal structures.[78] Each country privatized their assets, opened up trade with international businesses and redistributed property seized during the communist years.[79] Some of the most substantial shifts occurred in people's social and economic status. Cezar Ornatowski suggests that with the abrupt transition in Eastern Europe, a new "history, geopolitics, culture, economics, and, inevitably, rhetoric" took part in constituting the concept of "the social."[80] Wolchick describes the new reconstruction of social life after the ideological transformation, stating:

> With the shift to the market, restitution of property, and the end of most state subsidies, visible income differentials, which were previously small, increased. Social inequality, poverty, and unemployment also increased substantially. While some people were able to take advantage of the new opportunities available in politics, the economy, and society, many others were not. For the latter group, the end of communist rule entailed largely new hardships, particularly in the early postcommunist period when production and the standard of living fell dramatically in most countries.[81]

As economic disparity influenced social inequities, newly disadvantaged groups found other ways of creating a profit. Specifically, organized crime and revived xenophobia increased substantially during this time.[82]

Interestingly, the dissolution of the Eastern Bloc and Yugoslavia produced the possibility for formerly communist societies to build a civil society, a place outside the purview of the state in which to conduct business and politics.[83] But once economic disparities and interests colonized the newly produced public spaces, the character of public memory and deliberation was fractured by inequality. The former Stalinist states ultimately guaranteed their own inequity alongside their newly found "freedom" from Stalinism. The rise of nationalism and the eventual emergence of the public sphere produced a new economic, political, and social identity that painted the inequality of the present as a necessary response to the oppression of the past.

The international community seized upon the instability of Eastern Europe to offer loans and become further entwined with the rehabilitation of the market economy. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank became key players in the reconstruction of Eastern Europe along with the European Union. All three organizations exerted significant influence on the policies adopted by the various governments in the region and even "on the institutional design of these societies and polities."[84] In fact, recent elections have reflected the current concerns many Eastern Europeans have that they simply trade one exploitative empire for the next. Specifically, there are "certain segments of the population in all of these countries, who ask whether they have traded rule by Moscow for rule by Brussels."[85]

Yugoslavia did not have the same relationship with the Soviet Union that Bulgaria and Hungary did; therefore, its transition to capitalism took on a different course. Since the 1950s, Yugoslavia was relatively open to Western influences. Unfortunately, the West's influence

mostly came in the form of loans which crippled the Yugoslav economy. "By 1990, Yugoslav debt to Western banks had grown to $20 billion. Unemployment reached 15.9 percent and, in the least developed region, Kosovo, 38.4 percent. At one point in 1989, inflation had grown to 1,750 percent."[86]

Furthermore, the onset of "shock therapy" in the 1990s was destined to dismantle Yugoslavia, which had not "fully embraced the implications of liberalizing reforms that would lead to significant privatization of economic assets."[87] Shock therapy instantly increased economic inequality across and within republics. With the end of communism, "corruption flourished; the open market turned into robber capitalism; the elites found ways to control natural recourses and industries."[88] Former Yugoslavians responded to the upheaval by becoming apathetic to the promise of democracy. Large sections of the population stopped voting as democratic deliberation grinded to a halt.[89] Deprived of former social and political institutions in post-communism—and robbed of their democratic representation—many Yugoslavs turned to nationalism.[90]

**Nationalism**

It is important to note the shifting identities and affiliations in Eastern and Southeastern Europe in order to understand why overly simplistic delineations between monuments and counter-monuments do not adequately address the complex entanglement of public memory in this region. As explained before, monuments serve as the materialization of memory and identity, and with the rise of nationalism, monuments built to celebrate communist ideals of egalitarianism and unity looked utopian and outdated. While the communist system "provided leaders with unprecedented power to conduct 'social engineering,' none of these regimes succeeded in creating homogeneity in societies where multiple groups had earlier competed with

each other for national rights."[91] No foreign power was ever able to establish loyalties to an internationalist ideal that could temper a nationalist identity.  But as aggressive nationalism served as a source of tension for the communist cause, it became the natural solution to organize people's anxieties after their previous social and political institutions deteriorated.  Nationalism provided a powerful rhetorical discourse with economic dimensions that "recognized" which ethnicities and cultural practices should gain supremacy in post-communist Europe.  Ultimately, nationalism proved relatively beneficial in the Eastern European countries of Hungary and Bulgaria as protests gave way to political change, but a more divisive configuration of nationalism created political and social chaos in former Yugoslavia.[92]

According to Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities*, Eastern and Southeastern Europe adopted their unique formations of nationalism through years of foreign imperialism. Referring to Yugoslavia and some of its Eastern European neighbors, Anderson states:

> A very large number of these (mainly non-European) nations… took from linguistic European nationalism its ardent populism, and from official nationalism its Russifying policy orientation. This is why one sees… a genuine popular nationalist enthusiasm and a systematic, even Machiavellian, instilling of nationalist ideology through the mass media, the educational system, administrative regulations, and so forth."[93]

The entanglement of a populist (European) and an institutionalized (Russian) nationalism created a unique Eastern and Southeastern European identity that demanded ideological space for "the people" while still demanding full allegiance to the state.  These two brands of nationalism were complicated further by Western political theories of self-determination in the early twentieth century. While both Eastern and Southeastern Europe had foreign pressures shaping their nationalistic identity, Eastern Europe had a Soviet national ideology imposed upon them while Yugoslavia imparted its version of nationalism from within. This distinction may explain why the two areas faced such different challenges after 1989.

After the fall of communism, the West predicted that Eastern Europe would fall in line with the majority of Europe and look to the European Union (EU) for guidance. Instead, Eastern Europe relied on a construction of nationalism that would value territorial sovereignty and culturally homogenous nation-states.[94] Wolchick explains, "As with other political ideologies, nationalism is forward-looking in the sense that it articulates a vision about a national future; at the same time, nationalist strategies almost always call for turning to the past for self-definition."[95] The continued allegiance to nationalism was surprising to those in the West who were convinced that profitability and autonomy would trump politics constructed through ethnic and national identity.[96] But the idea of "nationhood" appealed strongly to populations controlled by foreign empires for centuries. Emerging leaders within the former Stalinist states espoused rhetoric based on the "inalienable rights of groups rather than individuals."[97] Nationalism offered the people of Eastern Europe the means to embrace "democratization as the opportunity finally to achieve or consolidate national sovereignty over territories they claimed as their 'national homelands.'"[98]

The interesting paradox was that some of the countries in the Eastern bloc had not actually experienced nationhood before they were quickly subsumed into the Soviet Union, making local leaders' appeals to nationalism a rather transparent but nonetheless effective political ploy.[99] Some have gone so far as to argue "that it was the process of democratization that engendered manipulative elites' interests to employ nationalism."[100] Regardless of the motivations and political timing of nation-based identities, nationalism emerged as a popular ideology for political leaders and the voting public alike.

Nationalism in Hungary took on a very different form than other places in Eastern Europe. Hungary's nation-building strategy relied more on a "sense of common cultural

'nationhood' across existing state borders" rather than an expansion of territory to encompass all similar ethnic identities or co-nationals within its borders.[101] This kind of nationalism is known as trans-sovereign nationalism. Trans-sovereign nationalism does not seek any border changes, like most other forms of nationalism. It demands that people remain loyal to their "homeland" by fighting assimilation in their current country of residence.[102] Therefore, it was the lack of territorial demands and a quickly emerging market economy that kept Hungary from dissolving into violent protest.

In Bulgaria, the ideological transition from communism to capitalism proved as difficult as the economic transformation. Bulgarian's accepted a Russifying nationalism that never gained traction in Hungary. Consequently, Bulgarians maintained a strong sense of political loyalty to Stalinism. In fact, communist rule shaped much of Bulgaria's understanding of nationalism. In Yannis Sygkelos's book, *Nationalism from the Left*, he insists that Bulgarian communists were able to control the narrative of Bulgarian nationalism by shaping "the (re)construction of the past via history-writing, state-driven education, and the single and obligatory history textbook. Within the political project, the BCP [Bulgarian Communist Party] put all its efforts into controlling publications and institutions related to history-writing."[103] With a single interpretation of history available, Bulgarians continued to look to the Soviet narrative for inspiration. Sygkelos asserts that "Soviet patriotism of the 1930s exerted a strong influence on history-writing under the Bulgarian communism regime… [it] favored a factological narration on a national basis, demanding a nationalistic interpretation and a reverence for the national past, a simplified linear historical trajectory and… an emphasis on individuals as national figures."[104] After the fall of communism, many Bulgarians had to re-conceive their national identity. To this day, Bulgarian national identity is still in flux as it does not precisely align with other Baltic

nations or Eastern Europe.  While the people of Hungary and Bulgaria used their national identities to forge democratic movements, the leaders of Yugoslavia were utilizing extremist rhetoric based on xenophobia and economic inequality to organize the distrust of their people.

**Yugoslavian Nationalism and the Yugoslav War**

The people of Yugoslavia, much like those in Eastern Europe, struggled to re-envision their national identity after communism could no longer quiet nationalist loyalties.   In the case of Yugoslavia, the disintegration of the entire Yugoslav federation coincided with the decline of communism.  The rapid transformation created by economic stagnation, genocides, and political and geographical divisions left a traumatic void of meaning that the countries of Serbia, Bosnia, and Croatia are still struggling to commemorate.  To understand why narrativizing the past is so difficult for many in the former Yugoslavia, it is necessary to trace the dissolution of its [Yugoslavia's] political, social, and ideological structures.

Yugoslavia's relationship with nationalism transitioned from a source of identity to the foundation of a bloody civil war within the last decade of the twentieth century.  Tito had been successful in mitigating regional economic inequalities, but the reality remained that Slovenia and Croatia had substantially more money and resources than their neighboring countries. Once the transition from communism began to transform Yugoslavia in the late '80s, the new states— ranging from the richer (Slovenia, Croatia) to the poor (Serbia, Montenegro, and Bosnia)—found themselves feuding not only over resources but also over formerly suppressed regional, cultural, and religious distinctions. Comprehending how the territory of Southeastern Europe spiraled into war relies on a deeper knowledge of the area's geographical location, political corruption, nationalistic loyalties, and artificial multicultural composition.

Regardless of how people re-narrativized Tito's legacy, Serbs felt that Tito had left them without political power. They were a poor country with a longstanding tradition of sacrificing their identity to prop up a larger state. Serbs also believed that Tito pandered to the Bosnians, ultimately opening the door for civil unrest.  In an act of political defiance, the Serbs tried to reassert their power by claiming Kosovo as their rightful Serbian land. Serbs view Kosovo as the cradle of Serbian civilization; therefore, it retains powerful religious and cultural meaning for them to this day. Additionally, Kosovo was the sight of several important historic Serbian battles and still maintained a large Serbian population at that time.[105]  Naimark explains, "The breakup of Communist Yugoslavia at the end of the 1980s unleashed forces of national antagonism that recapitulated, in some ways, those of World War II."[106]

The dissolution of Communist Yugoslavia left an ideological void, which rising political stars Slobodan Milosevic from Serbia and Franjo Tudjman from Croatia sought to fill with nationalistic rhetoric.  While many assign blame solely on Milosevic, Tudjman used the moment to further his political aspirations as well. During the 1980s, Slobodan Milosevic began his ascent to power by asserting a new Serbian Nationalism. His racist ideology altered the constitutional balance of power as Serbs began pushing other ethnic minorities out of the Serbian state.[107] Reinforcing historical ethnic tensions, Milosevic set about dismantling Tito's legacy.

Ian Traynor asserts that Milosevic was "[f]ueled by a profound Serbian persecution complex, a deep sense of historical grievance that Serbia had sacrificed itself for Yugoslavia, first in 1918 and then in 1945."[108] Milosevic's answer to his persecution complex was a state-mandated ethnic cleansing campaign. Initially the violence seemed limited to the Republic of Srbska in the northeastern tip of Bosnia and the southwestern side of Serbia, where many Bosnians, Croatians, and Serbs had settled.  Ivo Lederer explains, the fact that, "the frontiers of

the Serbian state did not coincide with the boundaries of the Serbian nation lent a galvanic

quality to the very notion of Serbian nationality while, politically and ideologically, every

Serbian national program perforce looked to changes in the international status quo."[109]

Milosevic's rapid ascension to power worried other non-Serb republics such as Croatia

and Slovenia. Whereas most of Yugoslavia organized around a Slavic national identity, Slovenia

and Croatia had maintained their historic ties with Hungary and the rest of Western Europe. Both

of these resource-rich countries sought to secede from Yugoslavia quickly after the economic

downturn of the '80s in hopes of aligning themselves with the Western world.

It was clear by 1990 that nationalist "form" and socialist "content" had backfired as each

country put their own political desires first.[110] General Franjo Tudjman, although democratically

elected, capitalized on nationalist sentiment to gain more power throughout his tenure. Tudjman

was widely known throughout Croatia as the author of a book title *Absurdities of Historical*

*Realities*, which claimed that the Ustasas never committed genocide against the Serbs in World

War II.[111] Tudjman recognized the potential of creating a nationalist fervor in order to achieve

an independent Croatian state, which had been an ongoing desire for the Republic for

centuries.[112] Upon seeing Slovenia gain independence from Yugoslavia on June 26, 1991, with

relative ease, Tudjman knew it was only a matter of time before he could gain internal support

for the same.[113]

With Serbia and Croatia's new brand of nationalism gaining momentum, the

governments of the two states began limiting political and civil rights for the different ethnic

minorities living within each nation-state's borders.[114] Initially European viewed the harassment

of minorities within Serbia and Croatia as a product of cultural and political tension, but once

Serbia began targeting pockets of Bosnia, it became clear that Serbs were planning to expand

their territory through genocide and military conquest.[115] Croatia and Serbia began building up their military forces, which was made more complicated due to the fact that the Yugoslav People's Army or JNA consisted of soldiers pulled from all of the different nations. Croats, Bosniaks, and Serbs had to decide whether their loyalty was to Yugoslavia or to their nationality. With memories of Serbian persecution at the hands of Croat Ustasas during WWII still fresh, Milosevic and Tudman set the stage for a bloody conflict.

Yugoslavia's fate as the most violent example of communism's implosion is interesting because its genocidal end had less to do with communism and more to do with a brand of nationalism that had previously emphasized a collective identity articulated through a single national culture.[116]  It was, in fact, the multicultural composition of Yugoslavia that led to such a convoluted and complicated civil war.  Families and friends found themselves divided by the political and cultural conflict. The following creates a timeline of events, ranging from the first occurrences of violence in the early 1990s to the Serbian persecution of the Albanians in the last part of the century. All of these individual wars fall under the larger category of the Yugoslav Wars.

In June 1991, a series of wars erupted between the JNA and the Slovenian defense.[117] At times, the Croatian army allied with the Croatian Serb militias and the JNA, but by May of 1995, the Croats aligned themselves solely along nationalist lines.[118] In the third war from 1992-1995 in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bosniaks found themselves fighting "at times consecutively and at times simultaneously against the Bosnian Serb, Bosnian Croat, and rebel Bosnian Muslim forces while the Bosnian Croat forces at times fought against, and at other times collaborated with, both Bosnian Muslim and Bosnian Serb forces." [119]

By 1995, the international community intervened on behalf of the Bosniaks against Serbian aggression. The political alliances were complex to say the least. By October 1995, "the Bosnian Muslim and Bosnian Croat forces, jointly with the Croatian army from Croatia, armed by the U.S. and supported by the U.S.-led NATO air-bombing campaign, defeated the Bosnian Serb forces (left without the support of the Yugoslav military in Serbia)."[120] Without a doubt, Bosnian Serbs enacted some of the most heinous and unthinkable crimes against humanity during this time period. Ethnically-motivated rape camps appeared in the Republic of Srbska. Serbs created the camps in order expand the population by raping and impregnating Bosniaks with Serbian babies.[121] It is projected that 20,000-50,000 Bosniak women were raped and tortured during the Bosnian War from 1992-1995.[122]

Sadly, Serbs were not alone in their violent aggression. Croatian and Serbs both targeted weaker minorities in and outside of their countries. All violence was ethnically motivated, but the poorer nation of Bosnia became the easiest target. Ultimately, the fighting in Bosnia ceased with the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement on December 14, 1995. The Agreement laid out a plan for a "loose confederation that holds the Muslim-Croat federation and the Serb republic in the common state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, dividing the Muslim-Croat federation into separated national cantons and allowing the Bosnian Croats to maintain a close link with the Croatian state."[123] The various countries eventually agreed to the compromise, but the crippling effect of the war had already taken its toll with over 100,000 Yugoslavians dead and the national infrastructure destroyed.[124]

The aftermath of the war produced no further clarity for those involved. Ultimately, the world believed that the war was a product of Serbian nationalism, which was and is true, but this narrative leaves many unanswered questions. Croatians placed blame on Milosevic's extreme

nationalism, but they [the Croats] could not escape their own fascist history during WWII. Serbia had a larger population while Croatia had the financial resources. All sides used nationalism as a justification for rape, murder, and destruction.

**TRANSITIONAL HISTORIES AND SHIFTING RHETORICAL IDENTITIES**

Today, the people of Eastern and Southeastern Europe are still trying to make emotional and political sense of the events of the past century.  For the most part, Eastern Europeans have chosen to distance themselves from their fascist and communist pasts, but the rhetoric of victimization still looms large.  Museums and monuments all over Eastern Europe and the Balkans recount the tragedies faced in the twentieth century.  The Hungarian "House of Terror" painfully points out that the people of Budapest are both victims and victimizers.[125]  Bulgarians have struggled as well, rhetorically, to frame their past for the sake of their current narrative. Ties to communism still forge an important sense of identity for a country struggling to survive during the current economic recession.  Finally, the citizens of the former Yugoslavia have a distinct, yet equally complex, relationship to their post-communist identity as well.  Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians see the tragedy of war as intrinsically linked to the end of the communist state.  For those still struggling to make sense of the past, nostalgically embracing their communist chapter means not having to yet face the reality of war.

And so Hungarian, Bulgarians, Serbians, Croats, and Bosnians continue to negotiate their "post" identities by redefining and delegitimizing the past. In the most extreme example, Yugoslavians had to rebuild their lives around religious and national allegiances after their entire Slavic communist identity disintegrated. The rhetorical position of being "post-" communist creates a complex political identity that seeks to solidify the former ideology in order to position

society in contrast to it.  The language and values of communism, a worldview, which had been

ingrained since birth for many, was now deemed valueless.

Noemi Marin describes the significant rhetorical shift brought on by the transformation of

post-communist Europe. She suggests that while some history is too painful to revisit, other

histories fall victim to ideological transitions that make certain identities and even vocabularies a

thing of the past.   Marin explains this shift stating;

> "1989" collapses rhetorically communist discourse as a historical discourse into an
> unsettled discursive formation…Thus the demise of communist rhetoric re-positions
> public discourse in the interrogative, asking questions on political practices and
> vocabularies of "past" or "post," on re-invention of arguments from history and collective
> memory, on the fragile notion of legitimacy for heroes and villains alike.[126]

In response to their re-positioned rhetorical identity, the people of Eastern and Southeastern

Europe sought out ways to represent a new value system that could vilify communism and

promote democratic institutions as the new voice of the people.  Thus, commemoration became

and remains an important mediator of the past, "post," and present.

Trying to recall identities and ideologies in the post or past tense has been a traditional

focus of commemorative works. Monuments are charged with the unusual task of (re)presenting

the various voices (of the peoples' past) that society may no longer value. The collapse of

historical and political narratives—as well as whole societies—speaks to the productive outlet of

ironic monumental disruptions as a way to confront this ideological anxiety.  The abrupt shift of

worldviews in Eastern and Southeastern Europe may also explain the choice to mock memory

rather than consecrate it. Monuments in this part of the world appear to be offering a rhetorical

outlet for those still hoping to understand how present struggles are predicated upon their

abandoned past.

Recognizing the nature of transition with its linguistic, political, and economic narratives in flux, it is not surprising that formerly communist countries are still struggling to commemorate their histories while untangling themselves from the abrupt ideological void of the past. This chapter provided a historical and rhetorical overview of the rise and fall of communism, the emergence of nationalism, the Yugoslav War, and the introduction of shock therapy capitalism. A rhetorical perspective is of particular value for this project as it helps the reader understand the need for complex memorial responses especially when a history is catastrophically fractured. Within the complex ideological space of Eastern and Southeastern Europe, sectarianism needs to be represented in public discourse as much as narratives of justice or unity, which explains the utility of ironic monumental disruptions.

To explore the political and rhetorical possibilities of ironic monumental disruptions, the next chapter turns to the methodological and theoretical foundation of this project. I pay specific attention to the current conceptualization of counter-monuments and how the literature needs to develop a dynamic rhetorical construct for challenging "traditional" and transitional institutions of power.

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[1] Bosniak denotes a Bosnian who is Muslim. Other configurations of nationality commonly heard are Bosnian Serbs who typically live in the Republic of Srbska and Bosnian Croats who likely identify as Catholics living in the territory of Bosnia.

[2] Anonymous interview 02, interview by author, Mostar, Bosnia, June 8, 2011.

[3] Anonymous interview 02, June 8, 2011. The Srebrenica genocide occurred in 1995 when General Mladic massacred 8,000 Bosniak refugees living in the Republic of Srbska. Srebrenica is considered the largest mass killing in Europe since World War II. The massacre was officially ruled a "genocide" by the UN based on evidence of the forcible removal of 30,000 Bosniaks from the area.

[4] George Andreopoulos, Rosemary Barberet, and James Levine, *International Criminal Justice: Critical Perspectives and New Challenges* (New York: Springer, 2011).

[5] Andreopolous, et al., *International Criminal Justice*, vii.

[6] For further reading see Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia: the third Balkan War* (London: Penguin Group, 1996).

[7] For further reading see Jeronim Perovic, "The Tito-Stalin Split: A Reassessment in Light of New Evidence" *Journal of Cold War Studies* 9, (Spring 2007): 32-63.

[8] "Background," The Non-Aligned Movement, accessed on August 28, 2011, http://www.nam.gov.za/background/history.htm

[9] For further reading see Cedric Grant, "Equity in Third World Relations: a third world perspective." *International Affairs* 71, 3 (1995), 567-587.

[10] "Background," para 6.

[11] "Background," para 1.

[12] George Schopflin, "The End of Communism in Eastern Europe," *International Affairs* 66 (1990): 4.

[13] Norman Naimark*, Fires of Hatred: Ethnic cleansing and twentieth century Europe* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2002), 141.

[14] Naimark, *Fires of Hatred,* 140.

[15] Ibid.*,* 141.

[16] Sharon Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 5.

[17] Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics*, 5.

[18] Ibid., 5.

[19] Ibid., 6.

[20] Ibid., 8.

[21] Adrian Webb, *The Routledge Companion to Central and Eastern Europe since 1919* (New York: Routledge, 2008). 5.

[22] Webb, *The Routledge Companion,* 5.

[23] Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics,* 5.

[24] Ibid., 9.

[25] Ibid., 5.

[26] Ibid., 5.

[27] Ibid., 9.

[28] Webb, *The Routledge Companion,* 14.

[29] Robin Okey, *Eastern Europe, 1740-1985: Feudalism to Communism,* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 181.

[30] Wolchick *Central and East European Politics,* 10.

[31] Okey, *Eastern Europe,* 182.

[32] Ibid., 182.

[33] Ibid., 183.

[34] Ibid., 183.

[35] Ibid., 183.

[36] Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics,* 12.

[37] Ibid., 15.

[38] Tito was bestowed with the title, "President for Life." He was seen as a true Yugoslavian with relatives of Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian descent. He also maintained a home in every region so as not to appear biased toward any particular region.

[39] Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, 145.

[40] John. F. Burns, "Pessimism Is Overshadowing Hope in Effort to End Yugoslav Fighting" *New York Times,* May 12, 1992, World Section, A10.

[41] Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia: Origins, History, Politics* (Ithica, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984).

[42] Naimark, *Fires of Hatred,* 146.

[43] Wolchick *Central and East European Politics,* 14.

[44] Wolchick *Central and East European Politics,* 14.

[45] Naimark, *Fires of Hatred,* 146.

[46] Aleksander Pavkovic, "A Reconciliation Model for the Former Yugoslavia," *Peace Review* 12 (2000): 103-109.

[47] Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics,* 91.

[48] Wolchick *Central and East European Politics,* 16.

[49] "Gorbachev becomes Soviet leader," BBC News, March 1985, http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/march/11/newsid_2538000/2538327.stm.

[50] Wolchick *Central and East European Politics,* 22. The Sinatra Doctrine was named by Gorbachev as a joke. He claimed that the countries established through the Warsaw Pact needed to have their way.

[51] Ibid., 21.

[52] Ibid., 15.

[53] Ibid., 22.

[54] Ibid., 22.

[55] Ibid., 253.

[56] Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics,* 23.

[57] Ibid., 23.

[58] Ibid., 24.

[59] Susan Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institute, 1995), 73.

[60] To this day, Tito's legacy is constructed through two distinct perspectives. One side praises Tito for being able to achieve a political balance by holding separatists within Serbia, Slovenia, and Croatia in check. This perspective saw Tito as achieving multicultural harmony during his Presidency. Inevitably without his leadership, old ethnic tensions re-emerged and took up the pre-war nationalist struggles. The other side believes that Tito played into the nationalist fervor by heightening antagonisms between the various ethnicities. For instance, Tito granted Bosnian Muslims their own nationality in 1968 to keep the peace, but later tried to undermine their new political influence when it threatened to undermine Serbian dominance. See Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*, 145-147.

[61] Naimark, *Fires of Hatred,* 145.

[62] Ibid., 32.

[63] Dainov, "Bulgaria: a stop-go modernization," 91.

[64] Peter Murrell, "What is Shock Therapy?" *Post-Soviet Affairs* (1993): 113.

[65] Murrell, "What is Shock Therapy," 113.

[66] David Lipton and Jeffrey Sachs, "Creating a Market Economy in Eastern Europe: The Case of Poland," *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1990), 87.

[67] Some have argued that the rapid reform of economic policy in Poland was a success, but many have suggested that Poland's overall standard of living has suffered as unemployment and poverty continue to plague the country. See "Study Finds Poverty Deepening in Former Communist Countries," *New York Times*, October 12, 2000, World Section.

[68] Wolchick *Central and East European Politics,* 4-5.

[69] Frye, *Building States and Markets after Communism*, 193.

[70] Wolchick*, Central and East European Politics,* 224.

[71] Dainov, "Bulgaria: a stop-go modernization," 91.

[72] Dainov, "Bulgaria: a stop-go modernization," 91-92.

[73] Ibid., 264.

[74] Ibid., 251.

[75] Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics,* 5.

[76] Ibid., 5.

[77] Timothy Frye, *Building States and Markets after Communism: The perils of polarized democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 207.

[78] Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics,* 24.

[79] Ibid., 24.

[80] Cezar Ornatowski, "Rhetoric and the Subject of/in History: Reflections on Political Transformation," *Advances in the History of Rhetoric* 9 (2006): 187.

[81] Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics,* 25.

[82] Timothy Frye, *Building States and Markets after Communism,"* 207.

[83] Habermas describes this process as it emerged in the eighteenth century alongside market capitalism.

[84] Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics,* 26.

[85] Ibid., 26. Brussels is the seat of the European Union and NATO headquarters.

[86] Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics*, 280-281.

[87] Ibid., 280.

[88] Naimark, *Fire of Hatreds,* 153.

[89] Ibid., 153.

[90] Wolchick 154.

[91] Ibid, 87.

[92] National allegiances were a source of conflict throughout the twentieth century. During the 1920s, Europe emerged from the First World War and "relied on the Wilsonian principle of national self-determination" to create new states. According to Wolchick, "The demographic patterns of the region made the delineation of clear 'national' borders impossible. The states created to bring justice to previously subordinate national groups of the monarch also became multinational, with new 'titular' nations attempting to establish political and cultural hegemony over national minorities." See Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics*, 83.

[93] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, (London: Verso, 2006), 113-114.

[94] Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics*, 83.

[95] Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics,* 83.

[96] Frye, *Building States and Markets after Communism*, 150.

[97] Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics*, 83.

[98] Ibid., 83.

[99] Frye, *Building States and Markets after Communism*, 150.

[100] Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics*, 83.

[101] Ibid., 101.

[102] Ibid., 101.

[103] Yannis Sygkelos, *Nationalism from the Left: The Bulgarian Communist Party and the Second World War and the Early Post-War Years,* (Leidan, Netherlands: Brill Publishing, 2011), 163.

[104] Sygkelos, *Nationalism from the Left,* 164.

[105] Naimark, *Fires of Hatred,* 147.

[106] Naimark, *Fires of Hatred,* 140.

[107] Ian Traynor, "Slobodan Milosevic," *The Guardian*, March 13, 2006, http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/2006/mar/13/guardianobituaries.warcrimes (accessed May 2009).

[108] Traynor, "Slobodan Milosevic," para. 17.

[109] Ivo J. Lederer, *Nationalism in Eastern Europe* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 405.

[110] Naimark, *Fires of Hatred,* 147.

[111] Ibid., 154-155.

[112] Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia* (New York City: Penguin Books, 2006), 91.

[113] Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, 87.

[114] Burns, "Pessimism," A10.

[115] Genocide is a politically loaded word which carries large ramifications. Some to this day do not feel as if the word is an accurate term for what happed in Yugoslavia, but an overwhelming majority of the international community does.

[116] John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith, *Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 4–5.

[117] The JNA is the Yugoslavian National Army

[118] Pavkovic, "A Reconciliation Model for the Former Yugoslavia" *Peace Review* 12:1 (2000), 103–109.

[119] Ibid., 105.

[120] Ibid., 105.

[121] Aida Cerkez, "UN official: Bosnia war rapes must be prosecuted," *Washington Post*, November 26, 2010.

[122] Cerkez, "UN official: Bosnia war rapes must be prosecuted."

[123] Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics*, 92.

[124] By March 1998, violence erupted again between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo. It was at this point that the United States and NATO decided to militarily intervene again. The Kosovo War would be Yugoslavia's last stand. Between 1992 and 2003, communist Yugoslavia shifted from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia consisting of Serbia and Montenegro and (their unrecognized claims to) Kosovo to Serbia and Montenegro. By 2008, all of the former remnants of Yugoslavia had dissolved, with Kosovo making a unilateral declaration of independence which is still not observed by Serbia today. See Sabrian P. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavia's: State-Building and Legitimation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 600.

[125] The House of Terror is located on Andrussy Street in Budapest, Hungary. It housed both the Arrow Cross Party (Nazi party) and the Hungarian Communist Party.

[126] Marin, "The Other Side(s) of History," 210.

**Chapter Three:  Ironic Monumental Disruptions:**

**Methodology and Theory**

While the countries of Hungary, Bulgaria, and Bosnia still maintain a strong presence of what some scholars refer to as "traditional" monuments (*i.e.*, monuments that were built by the state and tend to represent their version of the historical event), the people of Eastern and Southeastern Europe appear to be challenging the foundations of monumentality and memory by producing—what I have termed—ironic monumental disruptions.  This chapter discusses data collection for the three case studies before explaining what the concept of the ironic monumental disruption is and how it is distinct from the counter-monument.   Additionally, the chapter also examines how the category of the counter-monument has falsely pitted itself against monument studies, ultimately limiting its conceptual and political potential.  Again, I assert that the "counter" category is not without value but public memory and monumentality scholars must challenge the field to more fully explain contextual, historical, political, and material commemorative practices.  As I have been arguing, irony has the potential to engage (and dismantle) larger ideological, historical, and political contexts as they shape audiences and artifacts.  Additionally, studying the ironic repositioning of monuments provides a more conceptually sound rhetorical and historical analysis than the present scholarship on counter-monuments.

As mentioned in the introduction, proponents of the counter-monument category place too much emphasis on the artifact itself when conceptualizing its critical potential.  In theory, counter-monuments defy typical means of representation by refusing the sacred label bestowed upon them and "countering" the dominant political and social values of the time.  Many who rely on the concept of the counter-monument to explain their artifacts of study overlook that

commemorative objects develop within varied contexts and respond to and are engaged by multiple audiences making their meaning time and place contingent.  In other words, the idea of counter-monuments is not historically specific enough to provide insight into the vast array of social, political, and ideological issues which accompany commemorative works, and instead of trying to identify a large category with universal features; monumentality scholars need to examine the on-the-ground practices of creators, disruptors, and their former and current contexts.

Returning to the recent examples of ironic monumental disruptions, Rocky, along with his comrades Bruce Lee, Batman, the United Nations' inedible "Canned Beef," just to name a few, all defy traditional strategies of commemoration and instead materially serve as symbolic placeholders or comical protests of a history still under revision.[1]  All of the monuments encourage ironic engagement by utilizing the audience's expectations of traditional commemorative strategies but reversing the implied symbolism of the space.  Ironic monuments create distinctly different spaces than counter-monuments because ironic monuments need political, historical, and ideological contexts to be understood.  Furthermore, ironic monuments encourage the audience to question which (and whose) reality is depicted.

In order to attain more rhetorical specificity and offer more insight into shifting political and ideological investments, I have used the literature in this chapter to argue for the concept of the ironic monumental disruption as it applies to the three case studies in Bulgaria, Hungary, and the former Yugoslavia.  This new terminology is particularly valuable because it engages local conflicts and nostalgic representations while still allowing for conceptual fluidity during times of social and ideological transition.  The idea of investigating local politics and commemorative practices through comic and tragic frames will be discussed in greater depth later in the chapter,

but for now, the disruption is a useful tool for negotiating frames because it does not demand that all symbolism be undermined or permanently altered; rather, it offers a way to address transitional discourses as they intervene and unsettle formations of public memory. Specifically, the "disruption" materially changes the political space of public memory by confronting it and recognizing its own impermanence. In addition to the disruption, irony agitates discourses and discursive frames by indirectly referencing other ideas and creating additional political space. This chapter revisits both disruptions and irony as important rhetorical strategies in the case of transitional histories.

Many of the ironic monumental disruptions (*e.g.*, Rocky, Bruce Lee, and Captain America) occurred in the last decade. The monuments serve as unique placeholders while the various countries in which they reside continue to work through political and ideological transitions. As evidenced by the debate surrounding the construction of the monument in Belgrade, Serbia, sometimes literal symbols cannot accommodate all of the invested parties. Ironic monumental disruptions, on the other hand, function more like a symbolic placeholder. The ironic monument is less concerned with literal representation and more concerned with creating space for deliberation. Irony can even make nostalgic spaces more deliberative without simply reinforcing or contradicting former values and symbols. The aforementioned monuments of post-communist Europe depict the anxieties societies face when trying to represent a (capitalist) present divorced from a (communist) past. In order to further develop the theoretical framing for this project, the next section begins with an overview of the methodology before turning to the conceptualization of monuments, counter-monuments, and ironic monumental disruptions.

**DATA COLLECTION**

     Foundationally, monuments of all forms are on some level material nodes of identity and memory; therefore, how they are ironically depicted and subsequently destroyed speaks to the local and sometimes even national psyche.  The interplay between how these monuments are constructed and destroyed becomes an intriguing snapshot of the current public sentiment.  As is typical of a case study, I began by observing what I believed to be an unexplained phenomenon-- the "ironic" monuments appearing in Eastern Europe.  Subsequently, through research and observation I noted that this did not appear to be an isolated occurrence.  In order to evaluate the discourses surrounding these monuments, I conducted interviews, internet research, textual analysis and on-site observations to acquire a deeper understanding of how these monuments influence local and national bodies on political and psychological levels.

     In 2008, I travelled to former Yugoslavia to see a monument dedicated to Rocky Balboa in Zitiste, Serbia.  It was an election year, and the citizens of Serbia had to decide between aligning their political interests with or in opposition to the West.  One leader promised continued ties with Europe while the other rose to prominence on an anti-Western platform which promoted a more aggressive nationalism.  Ultimately, the pro-Western leader won by a narrow margin, but not before the entire country of Serbia momentarily reverted back to some of their old hostilities. Locals watched Western journalists suspiciously.  Serbs were careful to avoid certain political rallies taking place in abandoned buildings in the city.  Citizens were paranoid, and outsiders were not particularly welcome.

     While these complicated political dynamics were unfolding, the Italian Stallion sat innocuously in the middle of a village square.  In many ways, Zitiste appeared to be the village that time forgot.  There was one bus stop, one general store, and no real traffic to speak of.

Powerful political memories of the past surrounded by weeds lined the town square. The monument to Rocky stood next to a granite maternal figure from the communist era and another monument celebrating Serbian pride. Even more intriguing was that this ideologically contested space in Zitiste seemed to fit into a larger trend of monument-building throughout Eastern and Southeastern Europe.

In order to better understand the monumental trend and its representation possibilities, I evaluated the three selected commemorative sites in their past and present historical, political, ideological and artistic contexts. I began my research by reading news coverage of the controversies surrounding each commemorative site. I reviewed regional, national, and international newspaper articles and press releases discussing the monuments. Then, I researched commemorative controversies occurring in the same city or region that might shed light onto larger concerns of public memory. Next, I created timelines for all of the sites tracing each country or region's history from pre-World War II until the present day (Yugoslavia was originally traced back to the Ottoman empire in order to understand the recent development of Southern Slavic identity). Within this search I paid close attention to the formation and dissolution of national identities, social movements, and political and ideological transitions. I researched the websites promoting the monuments (when available) and observed the commemorative spaces. If there was a guided tour of the site, I participated in it. If there was a tour book to accompany the monument, I analyzed it. I conducted interviews with artists and intellectuals directly involved in the production of these monuments.[2] Additionally, I interviewed and corresponded with people living in the same communities as these monuments. Most of these interviewees had no say in *who* got commemorated and *how* they were displayed.[3] I followed the same research process at every site in hopes of gaining insight into

commemorative politics on the local level and how they helped or harmed citizens in the sense-making process.

I selected the three commemorative sites because they all utilized ironic representational strategies but produced distinctly different forms of public deliberation. All three served as unique configurations of irony, nostalgia, and politics. The decision to examine the artifacts as both nostalgic and ironic objects existing within comic or tragic frames emerged from the research and interviewing process. I researched local and national discourses about communism *and* communism versus capitalism to analyze how citizens of Eastern Europe and the Balkans talked about their past and present conditions. It became apparent through this research that nostalgia was largely the byproduct of a contemporary struggle to come to terms with the inequality of capitalism. But nostalgia also emerged as a way to bridge the gap between the loss of a failed ideal and the harsh reality of war and economic inequality. Communist nostalgia encountered a major exception in Hungary, which was positioned to accept capitalism before communism (Stalinism) began to falter. While Hungarians rarely mention nostalgia for the "old days" it became a recurring theme in Bulgaria and Bosnia. Hungarians were quick to dismiss their communist past as decidedly "tragic," and expressed a desire to reinvent themselves with capitalism. Bulgarians and Bosnians, on the other hand, seemed to have mixed allegiances to both capitalism and communism. The strange amalgamation of the two ideologies suggested that the people of these countries recognized the irony of resenting and longing for the promise of both communism and capitalism. In many ways, the ironic performances in Bulgaria and Bosnia illustrate more awareness of a comic frame and its deliberative potential.

Once I established the nostalgic framing of the commemorative spaces, the ironic intervention came into relief. The conceptual choice to evaluate these spaces as ironic

monumental disruptions, again, stemmed from the fact that most of my interviewees suggested that the unintentional or unspoken meanings behind the monuments (and/or their desecration) interested the locals more than their original symbolism.[4] Irony was demonstrated in the way objects were represented (Bruce Lee), treated (Western comic book heroes), and discussed (Memento Park), but it was the interplay of irony and nostalgia that created the most engaging spaces. As a slight side note, it also became clearer through the tours and post-communist literature that irony was a frequently used comic corrective during the Stalinist days. Thus, I read all of the commemorative sites as a dialogue between irony, nostalgia and their corresponding comic frames.

While the construction of most of the case study monuments was a political act beyond the control of the local community, the destruction of the monuments expresses a powerful public sentiment of anger, frustration, and anxiety. My goal is to better understand how engaging ironic monuments transforms a nostalgic place into a deliberative space—turning the public from passive participant into active agent. The people of Eastern and Southeastern Europe are anxious about their current economic conditions and are disappointed that capitalism has not brought them more wealth and autonomy. The ironic monumental disruption serves as the materialization of their mixed loyalties just as its destruction reveals the complex anxieties of mixed allegiances.

Building on this methodology and its emerging themes, the next section demonstrates how the conceptualization of counter-monuments cannot presently account for many of the discursive relationships uncovered through additional contextualization. As such, the following section explores the representational limits of counter-monuments and proposes a rhetorical alternative with the concept of the ironic monumental disruption.

**COUNTER-MONUMENTS: POLITICAL POTENTIAL AND CONCEPTUAL PROBLEMS**

The goal for this project is not to replace the concept of the counter-monument with the ironic monumental disruption. The concepts are not synonymous. Irony cannot account for all critical commemorative practices, but the incorporation and application of the ironic monumental disruption is important as it demonstrates that more conceptual focus is possible within the field. There needs to be a more uniform understanding of what counter-monuments are and what they do in order for the conception to be useful and applicable. Unless counter-monuments can be more uniformly understood, they provide a framework that allows for the inclusion of most monumental forms that are not state-sponsored while over-simplifying the function of monuments in general.[5]

While many scholars have recently aligned themselves with counter-monument politics, scholar James Young, as referenced in the first chapter, has relied on this terminology to define his work almost exclusively. Currently, Young is a popular and influential proponent of counter-monument politics. Many public memory and monumentality scholars cite him as the originator of the counter-monument concept. Young's article, "The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today," and his book *At Memory's Edge* remain some of the most frequently quoted sources for counter-monuments.

Young is skeptical of the monumental form and believes that it allows for historical revisionism.[6] In discussing counter-monuments, Young asserts that, "By defining itself in opposition to the traditional memorial's task, the counter monument illustrates concisely the possibilities and limitations of all memorials everywhere. In this way, it functions as a valuable 'counter-index' to the ways time, memory, and current history intersects at any memorial site."[7]

For Young, monuments try to supplant public responsibility for historical crimes by promoting a one dimensional and largely uncomplicated representation of the past.[8]  While Young's criticisms are important and echoed by Pierre Nora and Paul Ricoeur in some respects, not all monuments enact the same kind of meaning and influence on the landscape.[9]

According to Young, counter-monuments are "brazen, painfully self-conscious memorial spaces conceived to challenge the very premises of their being."[10]  Young sees counter-monuments as artifacts that encourage "participation rather than mere consumption," while providing space for alternative voices.[11]  Young's research hinges on his claim that counter-monuments challenge the idea of sacred places and institutionalized memory.  One such counter-monument is an anti-fascist memorial in Hamburg, Germany, which invites people to write on it as it slowly sinks into the ground.  Young concludes that once the monument finally becomes level with the landscape the "burden of memory" returns to the visitor.[12]

Young's interpretation, while thought-provoking, leaves many questions unanswered, the most pressing one being, How are counter-monuments categorically different from other monumental forms?  In Young's current definition, "participation," and "spaces that change over time and seek to stimulate memory" appear to be definitional necessities for counter-monuments, but almost all commemorative spaces encourage some kind of audience participation or reflection.  Additionally, the "task" of most monuments is to create a space for publics to reflect.  If the counter-monument is not encouraging public deliberation, then what is its purpose?

Young never adequately explains why something is or is not a counter-monument; he offers very few guidelines for identifying counter-monuments; and finally, by capitalizing on the "counter" distinction, he reinforces the idea that the object itself—not the people interacting with it—hold all the power.  Additionally, what little definition there is for the counter-category

appears to slip at times. The counter-monument sometimes critiques itself, at other times it critiques monument-building in general, and yet at other instances, it gives voice to counterpublics. It is unclear when the counter-monument distinction applies and how counter-monument politics create enduring political space for the people they represent.

And while counter-monuments do create an intriguing new lens by which to examine commemorative practices, the relatively recent development of the field may explain its lack of conceptual clarity.[13] Arguing that some monuments have more critical politics than others is not without value, but it is not presently clear when a commemorative artifact qualifies as a counter-monument or does not. A lack of conceptual focus further complicates the "counter" category by making it difficult to position it in opposition to other monuments.[14]

Currently, scholars of counter-monumentality are taking advantage of a lack of conceptual focus in the field. Rather than explaining specific monuments in terms of their form and function, scholars are labeling all unique commemorative phenomenon as counter-monuments. The problem with allowing a category to become a default for outliers is that it [the category] will potentially conflate or ignore inconvenient political, historical, and rhetorical anomalies. There are seemingly few parameters on what does and does not constitute a counter-monument and where exactly it fits within the research of monumentality, public memory, and public sphere studies. For now, many scholars argue that counter-monuments are better suited to challenge authority and promote democracy by being "abstract rather than literal forms [that] accommodate ambivalence, multiplicity, and change."[15] The definition creates a few boundaries, but mostly invites more questions.

To return to the very definition of "countering,"—to counter is "to act in opposition to" or "responding to something of the same kind, especially in opposition."[16] But the current

theoretical framing of counter-monuments does not actually demand that "counter" monuments oppose *something of the same kind*. While Victoria Gallagher and Bernard Armada's pieces on *The Fist* and the National Civil Rights Museum, respectively, do address monuments or memorials directly countering other monuments or sites of memory, but many of the scholars who employ the language of counter-monuments do not have such a strict interpretation.[17] For instance, Elizabeth Strakosh writes in "The Political Complexities of 'New Memorials,'" that counter-monuments are abstract, interactive, and anti-pedagogical.[18] But what Strakosh and others overlook is that *any* monument, counter or otherwise, can embody abstract or interactive elements and challenge classical notions of art or institutions of power.

The paradox of the counter-monument categorization is that in order to offer a counter-index or refutation, counter-monuments must first fix the "traditional" monuments' meaning before they can respond in kind. The problem with the "counter" distinction exists on two levels. One, monuments are not intended to be fixed symbols and two, counter-monuments only "fix" themselves further by this binary logic making them less well suited to address diverse historical and political experiences.

The fixing of a memory "place" leads to conceptual reductionism that both monuments and counter-monuments need to avoid. It is important to offer a more fluid conceptualization of monumentality that recognizes the dynamic relationships between public memory, politics, and commemoration. Robert Asen warns against producing a binary between the entity (the public) and its opposition (the counter-public). He states, "Directly seeking the counter in counterpublics may itself lead to reductionism insofar as the effort produces a binary opposition of counter and public.… This danger may be averted by emphasizing manifold relations among multiple publics, some of which may articulate an explicitly counter status."[19] Asen's concerns

are well-founded as scholars within counter-monument studies continue to force the label of

"counter" monuments and memory on their commemorative markers. Cautioning against the

current push to generalize a "counter" status, Asen states:

> Reductionism is likely to stem from explicitly fixing or implicitly relying on persons,
> places, or topics as necessary markers of counterpublic status. That is, though
> counterpublics emerge in constellations of these three elements, reductionism manifests if
> theorists and critics regard a particular person, place, or topic as necessarily defining the
> limits of a counterpublic. All three potential reductions portend unfortunate
> consequences for studies of a multiple public sphere.[20]

Asen's remarks are particularly vital here, as a monuments' ability to respond to their various

audiences depends upon an open, multiple interpretation and exchange of meaning. Constructing

an oppositional category serves to further define and confine all monuments. The scholars of

counter-monument studies do a disservice to all of monumentality studies by claiming such static

positions of memory.

Beyond reductionism, it is still not clear what the "traditional memorial's task" is and

how it differentiates itself from the counter-monument. For example, Young seems to view the

interaction between "time" and physical "material" as one of the obstacles that traditional

monuments cannot overcome without further reifying their message. In his article, "Counter

Monuments: Memory against Itself in Germany Today," Young attempts to formulate the

categorical differences between monuments and counter-monuments using an example from

Hamburg, Germany. He states:

> The material of a conventional monument is normally chosen to withstand the physical
> ravages of time, the assumption being that its memory will remain as everlasting as its
> form… the actual consequence of a memorial's unyielding fixedness in space is also its
> death over time: a fixed image created in one time and carried over into a new time
> suddenly appears archaic, strange, or irrelevant altogether. For in its linear progression,
> time drags old meaning into new contexts, estranging a monument's memory from both
> past and present, holding past truths up to ridicule in present moments. Time mocks the
> rigidity of monuments, the presumptuous claim that in its materiality, a monument can be
> regarded as eternally true, a fixed star in the constellation of collective memory.[21]

Young suggests that *because* traditional monuments try to control future interpretations by solidifying past ones, they cannot ethically represent the present. Young argues that lasting materials used to make "traditional" monuments reveal that they are static emblems of elite power. For Young, counter-monuments challenge the idea that stone "guarantees the permanence of a memorial idea attached to it."[22] But a monument's materials cannot account for how others will physically respond to its memory. Additionally, his statements also suggest that monuments cannot challenge notions of the sacred and they cannot take on new meanings in future contexts. For Young the counter-monument evolves or changes with time and "In its conceptual self-destruction, the counter monument refers not only to its own physical impermanence, but also to the contingency of all meaning and memory—especially that embodied in a form that insists on its eternal fixity."[23] With his line of thinking, traditional monuments, as they are constrained by obligations of time, can only force messages onto their audiences, rather than allowing the audience to understand the monument uniquely during its time and space.

But stone alone does not guarantee how others will interpret or understand a monument's message. Young's claim also appears to suggest that permanence, not reconciliation, agitation, or even irresolution is the aim of monument-building. Monuments are frequently defaced and destroyed in the hopes of protesting a particular message, but this kind of adjustment of public memory does not fit into Young's current categorization. Young does not fully acknowledge that defacing a monument can simultaneously take away or further instill an object's supposed authority. There are numerous ways to take away a place's untarnished significance, but desecrating a place does not necessarily make it a counter-monument. And the presence of a traditional monument does not necessarily make it conservative, either.

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Counter-monument scholars see "traditional" monuments' unchanging message and heightened status as emblematic of their institutionalized power, but a significant number of monuments seek to challenge historical myths or institutions of power without relying on the politics of counter-status.[24] Monuments such as the Ludlow Memorial represent a massacre that pitted labor against big business. In fact, monuments frequently construct a tension between the elites and the masses. They can call temporality into question: being first versus coming next. They can even interrogate the status quo: honoring the past versus undermining it. Counter-monuments claim to acknowledge more diverse voices not readily represented in traditional, state-sponsored monuments, but this distinction neglects to recognize that monuments do not *only* reflect the ideology of the powerful. They have the ability to mark a multitude of memories, times, ideas, and critiques. Both monuments and counter-monuments can "resist" institutions of power. [25]

Steven Johnston also asserts that public memory studies needs the category of counter-monuments to operate as a political tool that introduces dissenting voices into self-aggrandizing sacred spaces. Johnston argues that the contestation of meaning is actually the cornerstone of democratic society.[26] He suggests that sacred space runs counter to the ideals of democracy because it honors "the eternal and unchanging, symbolic of truth and fidelity, eliciting reverence and awe, demanding deference and devotion, committed to unity and consensus."[27] Johnston's definition falters as he confuses a monument's "placeness"—as in a place with some symbolic value or a place given symbolic value by the very act of erecting a monument there—with the problematic notion of sacred space. The largest theoretical issue Johnston faces is that sacred space is in many cases a matter of perception, which is subjective and contested.

Finally, proponents of the counter-monument category claim that such monuments question the relationship between the art object and the viewing public.  Young states that a counter-monument "undermines it own authority by inviting and then incorporating the authority of a passersby."[28]  But Young creates his own conceptual contradiction.  In the same article, Young paraphrases one of the Hamburg monument's creators, asserting that "all such [monument] sites depend for their memory on the passerby who initiates it—however involuntarily… sites alone cannot remember, that is the projection of memory by visitors into a space that makes it a memorial."[29]  In other words, the artist did not create his piece with the intention of it claiming the passerby's authority; rather, the monument becomes animated by the passerby's presence.  Even excusing the misappropriation of the artist's intent, are not all monuments constructed with the goal of engaging in dialogue with the passerby?  Are not all monuments mediated through their interactions with people?  Young's artist seems to be suggesting that counter-monuments—like all monuments—cannot alone remember; their meaning is dependent upon people engaging with them. Regardless of material, time, and intent, all monuments rely on some kind of human engagement in order to communicate their message.  At times, Young advocates for the existence of counter-monuments because they "return the burden of memory" by *not* being constructed out of the same lasting materials as "traditional" monuments.

However, it is still unclear how a counter-monument is able to invite another's authority or return the burden of memory any more or less than any other monument. Would not all monuments invite the "authority" of any onlooker's gaze?  As an object of art and memory, do not all monuments seek to give some authority to the viewing public who must decipher their meaning while simultaneously resisting their appropriation?  In this way, are not all monuments

political works of art that create irresolution and take on the burden of on-going and frequently contested memory?  Furthermore, are not all monuments largely reliant on their audiences for continued meaning?  Rather than reducing an artifact's meaning down to its materials and intent, the next section explores how the conceptual framing and disruption of irony speaks to artifact and audience, history and political context. Especially in the case of nostalgic representations, irony creates a new ethic of commemoration that engages the public with the politics of art and the politics of place.

## POLITICALLY ENGAGING COMMEMORATIVE (ART)IFACTS THROUGH IRONY: ACCOUNTING FOR MATERIALIZED NOSTALGIA

Scholars of counter-monumentality have gotten away from their rhetorical roots in their insistence upon a "counter" category.  Specifically, all monuments are the products of their material, political, and historical contexts.  This section returns to the political foundations of monumentality in order to emphasize how monuments function in their various contexts and position themselves in dialogue with their audiences.  After establishing political and rhetorical foundations, the literature turns to the potential of irony to interrogate these foundations.

It is valuable to note that Young's conceptualization of counter-monuments does raise important question about every monument's critical potential.  As scholars continue to use the concept of the counter-monument to explain atypical commemorative practices, they have written extensively on an artifact's potential to defy static forms, challenge authority, and change its relationship to its viewing public.  While it is a little simplistic to assume that only designated counter-monuments can perform said critiques, the idea that monuments can destroy, mock, and reposition themselves creates intriguing rhetorical potential.

Currently, the literature regarding counter-monuments seems to show that these artifacts can critique themselves, which is an intriguing rhetorical tool until the monument is gone (*e.g.*, the Hamburg monument that slowly sinks into the ground). Once it is gone, then all the viewer has left is a memory, reflecting upon an idea's absence, in its absence. Young needs to focus his critique and study the unique rhetorical contexts of his commemorative sites. Communication scholars Danielle McGeough and Catherine Palczewski attempt to add more contextualization to the counter-category by insisting that "actual or symbolic destruction (*e.g.*, toppling Saddam Hussein's Fardus Square statue or Estonia's relocation of the Bronze Soldier of Tallinn) of monuments" should be included in the research as well.[30] While the act of vandalism itself appears to be more accurately described as a mode of confrontation (not a counter-monument), the newly reappropriated monument should be recognized as a transitional art object or political disruption of space when interpreting the monument's critical potential.

Young and other counter-monument scholar's erroneously removed the art from politics and the politics from art that when they conceptualize counter-monuments by their materials. Political theorist Jacques Ranciere states, "Art promises by virtue of the resistance which constitutes it."[31] Monuments serve as material reminders that artistic and political representations cannot be easily divorced. Ranciere describes this exchange, "If art is to be art, it must be politics; if it is to be politics, the monument must speak twice-over: as a résumé of human effort and as a résumé of the power of the inhuman separating the human from itself."[32] As such, monuments as art objects cannot simply be divorced from the humanity which animates them. Ranciere unequivocally states:

> The artwork is not only "in view of" a people. This people is part of the very condition of art's "resistance," that is to say the union of contraries which defines it at once as an embrace of fighters set in a monument and as a monument in a process of becoming and struggle. The resistance of the work is not art's way of rescuing politics; it is not art's

way of imitating or anticipating politics – it is properly speaking their identity.  Art is politics.[33]

Thus, monuments create a place where people gather to make sense of their world.  Whether the artifact is in its original critical form or has been transformed in order to articulate a new perspective, both need to be studied in order to understand how the monument(s) shape the viewing public and vice versa.

As a work of art with highly visible politics, monuments can continue to shape various publics by creating continued irresolution.  In fact, Young states that "[t]he surest engagement with memory lies in its perpetual irresolution," [34]  But few monuments, whether they are categorized as "counter" or "traditional," seek to shut down public deliberation and dialogue.  Monuments structure the affective experience of memory; thus, they can embrace on-going participation, irresolution, agitation, and even confrontation. Ranciere explains,

> The artist works "in view of" an end that this work cannot achieve by itself: he or she works "in view of" a "still-missing" people.  But, in the second place, this work itself is presented as a bridging of the gap that separates the artistic embrace from the revolutionary embrace.  Vibrations and embraces assume a consistent figure in the solidity of the monument.  And the solidity of the monument is simultaneously a language, the movement of a transmission: the monument "confides to the ear of the future" the persistent sensations that embody suffering and struggle.  These sensations are transformed into vibrations and the revolutionary embrace, which contribute their stone to the monument-in-becoming.[35]

In line with Ranciere's critique, theorist Gilles Deleuze argues that monuments are not, in fact, simple emblems of the past: "A monument is not the commemoration, or the celebration, of something that has happened; instead it confides to the ear of the future the persistent sensations embodying an event: the constantly renewed suffering of men and women, their re-created protestations, their constantly resumed struggle." [36]  Deleuze sees a monument's representational power coming from its "constant process of becoming" and the ongoing contestation it creates.[37]  Even monuments poorly received by critics for being practically imperialist can change over

time, depending on their audience and the current state of politics.[38]  Monuments, as demonstrated to varying degrees in the three case studies, have the potential to create fluid memories without losing sight of the people who engage them.

Returning to the three case studies in Eastern Europe, many communication scholars might categorize these materialized ironic "responses" as counter-monuments, but the conceptualization of counter-monuments cannot account for the fact that these monuments are constructed of lasting materials, are intended for mass consumption, and have been routinely desecrated or disavowed.  The concept of the ironic monumental disruption reveals why the category of the counter-monument is limiting.  The introduction of irony demonstrates the benefits of creating a more fluid and performative conceptualization that allows for a more dynamic intervention of memorial meaning.  Irony does not rely on a specific kind of material to perform a critique; rather, it engages expectations of art, politics, and their representational ethics to create a multifaceted message.  In hopes of creating a tool to expand the representational and political possibilities of monuments rather than constrict them, this project proposes that we adopt the concept of the ironic monumental disruption to understand transitional ideologies and nostalgic commemorative practices.  The "disruption" allows those within monument studies to articulate specific political and rhetorical practices without getting lost in the broad conceptualization of "countering."  The following section breaks down the concept of the ironic monumental disruption into its various parts in order to understand how it engages artifacts and audiences.

**IRONIC MONUMENTAL DISRUPTIONS: A CONCEPTUAL BREAKDOWN (OF TERMINOLOGY)**

Irony is everywhere in Post-Soviet Europe. Whether it was the little subversive jokes told during the communist era, or the communist themed restaurants in the capitalist era. In Hungary, freedom of expression is greatly encouraged unless a person wants to express an uncritical view of communism. The following section briefly reviews the comic or tragic framing of communism and capitalism in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. The framing ultimately determines what mode of ironic expression is most valuable as it creates the most open form of deliberation. With the frames established, this section turns to the concept of the ironic monumental disruption. The term is broken down in order to produce more rhetorical clarity about its conceptualization and application.

The disparate frames and corresponding monuments dedicated to communism in Eastern and Southeastern Europe reflect the distinct political ideologies and ironies taken up in those two regions. In Eastern Europe, communism is frequently conflated with Stalinism and made into a symbol of evil. The public perception that communism is evil and must be purged is carefully demonstrated through a tragic frame. For instance, Hungarians commemorate their communist chapter with museum attractions and tours all dedicated to its violence and terror. But not all Eastern Europeans necessarily look back on their past with resentment. Some Bulgarians recount the past quite fondly—even nostalgically—having recently built a museum to one of their former communist dictators. Additionally, Yugoslavians see the war of the 1990s, not communism, as their traumatic and largely unresolved historical chapter. It is not unusual to hear present-day Bosnians or Serbians wax nostalgic about the Tito (communist) years.

As referenced earlier, waxing nostalgic about communism has become its own source of revenue as Eastern Europeans cash in on communism in the form of clothes and kitsch. The entanglement of communist nostalgia and capitalist consumption has created a comic frame particularly susceptible to ironic critiques. And within the tragic and comic framing described above, people are finding new ways to confront the past and question the present. The ironic monumental disruption creates space for public deliberation within these respective frames. But as discussed previously, some frames (comic) invite interrogation while others (tragic) preclude it. The next section defines the amalgamation of disruptions, irony, and deliberation as they constitute the concept of the ironic monumental disruption.

**Disruptions**

Breaking down the concept of the ironic monumental disruption into its various parts helps situate its political potential within the studies of monumentality and public memory. A "disruption" by definition is a rupture or interruption; it is the act of throwing something into confusion or disorder.[39] Disruptions create the momentary intervention of memory that Young and others seek without falling into a false dichotomy constructed against monuments. Whereas counter-monuments call upon the fixing of an idea in order to refute it, the concept of the ironic monumental disruption does not fall prey to the same rhetorical traps. Disruptions are not static and make no larger claims to lasting in perpetuity. Disruptions play with the idea of a linear memory by calling chronological sequence into question. A disruption does not stand as an external critique *of* a monument; it enacts said critique *on* the monument and its memory.

In many ways the ironic monumental disruption mimics the strategy of detournement.[40] Detournement is a symbolic act that parodies or plays with the imagery of capitalism by reappropriating its former meaning in order to question larger institutions of power. In

"Censorship and Iconoclasm—Unsettling Monuments," John Peffer describes detournement as an act of "witty erasure or intrusive addition."[41]  It is worth noting that detournement plays with settled formations of meaning and typically incorporates an ironic element, but the two ideas have a major theoretical departure in their intent.  Guy Debord explains, "The two fundamental laws of detournement are the loss of importance of each detourned autonomous element—which may go so far as to lose its original sense completely—and at the same time the organization of another meaningful ensemble that confers on each element its new score and effect."[42]

Detournement seeks to make the symbolism of its target meaningless, and while disruptions can have that effect, disruptions are not necessarily seeking the replacement of old meaning; rather, disruptions are politically powerful precisely because they conjure up old narratives in juxtaposition to current discourses.  Both the past and present are equally vital to the monument's political meaning, and irony is a mediator between the two poles.  Ironic monumental disruptions seek to empower the larger public, not simply dismiss the symbolism of the past.

**Irony**

While the disruption creates space for reflection and critique, irony creates a confrontational engagement between the ideas presented and the subsequent interpretation of them.  Ultimately, the space of translation between articulation and representation creates an engaging political space for those choosing to interpret it.  Irony subtly reveals a political disconnect in public memory by conveying a message in contrast to its explicit symbolism.[43]  It becomes clearer through the case studies how important irony is to understanding the dissonance created by the gap between the lived experience and the desire to make sense (and ideally forget) the painful past.[44]  Irony serves as an important mediator between the two poles as it creates the

affective response needed to encourage a critical engagement.  It is precisely in the space of

mediation and risky interpretation that irony creates valuable openings for political dialogue.

Author Lawrence Bogard speaks to the interpretative power of irony, stating, "An audience

member may 'get' the irony as intended, may not even understand it to be ironic, or may receive

it in an unintended way… Irony has an edge, and it is risky for it can cut both ways."[45]

Rather than "countering" memory, irony opens up a space of deliberation that encourages

a confrontation with the past and present.  Interestingly, monuments that make no claims to

expressing enduring counter-messages are more open to adapting and adjusting to different

contemporary audiences and contexts.  Shane Michael Boyle addresses how irony produces

valuable anxiety in decontextualized spaces, stating:

> The presentation of a legible political message through non-rational or bewildering
> means corresponds closely to what Ranciere exhorts in his vision of suitable political art
> where legibility of the message negotiates with a "perceptible shock" caused by the
> uncanny.  With this said, a radical performance… offers an interesting example of such a
> "negotiation between opposites."[46]

The negotiation of opposites, which leads to a reversal of meaning or dual meanings, is

fundamental to irony's subversive potential.[47]  Burke suggests that irony is dialogical and offers

a "perspective of perspectives."[48]  Burke explains, "'What goes forth as A returns as non-A.'

This is the basic pattern that places the essence of drama and dialectic in the irony of the

'peripety,' the strategic moment of reversal."[49]  Irony is able to unobtrusively challenge the

status quo because, as Kenneth Burke explains, irony creates tension and then presents it [the

tension] as inevitable.[50]  Burke not only views irony as a comic corrective, but he also believes it

has ethical dimensions.  He argues that "irony depends upon the perspectives of Others."[51]  For

Burke, irony opens up the world to alternative views and has transformative potential.

Much like Burke, performance scholar Tomaz Tobako asserts that "irony is a key rhetorical resource, an asset whose assistance can transform a non-democratic, monologic, and monistic environment into a more democratic, more dialogic, and more pluralistic one."[52] Tobako insists that performative irony is a powerful tool for political protest. Tobako defines performative irony as "the dissonance established by activist performers between their performance and the 'original' authority they refer to and whose structures they play with."[53] Tobako uses the democratization of Poland in the late 1980s to illustrate the potential of performative irony. He describes many protesters organizing a carnivalesque atmosphere to seem nonthreatening but still disruptive. Demonstrations, like the one in Poland, prove how powerful irony is and that it "can afford political expression in circumstances where direct dissent is hard to formulate, risky, or unwise."[54]

Irony is a useful tool for recreating the memorial model into a material disruption because it challenges the idea that memory is to be straightforward and uncontested. Fernandez and Huber write that irony "can be expected in situations of unequal power when discourses, interests, or cultures clash."[55] Precisely because of the unequal power relations, irony innocuously provides "space for subordinated persons to voice resistance, imagine alternatives, build community, and mobilize for better times."[56]

Many scholars have seen the political potential of irony in the public sphere. This political potential stems from the fact that irony encourages "participation through interpretation."[57] Thus, irony "does not impart a static, predetermined message onto a passive audience.… It is up to the listener to sort out the significance of the dissonance embedded in the ironized performance."[58] Irony's ability to agitate creates valuable space for reflection, which in turn, creates an ability "to shed a 'different light on' political and social concerns."[59] In "Play

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with Authority!" Michael Shane Boyle writes, "[I]t is only through a perceptible shock, one which is indexical to a legible political message, that an artwork can have a substantial and non-authoritarian political effect. Ranciere asserts that this 'shock' is most often caused by an uncanny element in the work that resists social signification."[60] The "uncanny element" resisting signification is a byproduct of irony and has the potential to destabilize other discursive formations. Ultimately, an ironic monumental disruption produces a deliberative potential by creating a space of reflection through agitation and not through a physical binary or a discursive counter-point. Additionally an ironic monumental disruption "situates" monuments only momentarily but the memory of the disruption remains. The space is forever changed.

Recognizing the importance of creating diverse, unsettled political spaces, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe insist, "The multiplication of political spaces and the preventing of the concentration of power in one point are, then, preconditions of every truly democratic transformation of society."[61] Whereas monuments are usually accused of concentrating too much power in one site, ironic monuments question those forms of power by encouraging the audience to challenge their assumptions as well.

To summarize, the destabilizing nature of irony opens up new readings on old forms (*e.g.*, monuments) and frames. Furthermore, irony provides a politically valuable and dynamic means by which to enact a critique and reveals multiple layers of meaning that continually resituate the subject. The interplay of ironic monumental disruptions with comic and tragic frames creates an on-going transmission of meaning that interrogates the past and present and avoids falling into a reductionist trap. The monuments in Eastern and Southeastern Europe provide particularly valuable examples of irony's potential to agitate and incite physical responses. Ironic monumental disruptions can create political openings, but it is the aggressive

interaction of confrontation with overtly nostalgic narratives of the past or in this case, comic and tragic frames, that force people to assess their ideological investments.

**HOW THE CONCEPTS SHAPE THE COMMEMORATIVE ARTIFACTS**

At the beginning of this chapter, I outlined the methodology for this project. I discussed how I situated the monuments within their historical, ideological and political contexts. Additionally, I argued that the current conceptualization of the counter-monument could not account for many of the emerging discursive and nondiscursive formations in Eastern and Southeastern Europe so I proposed an alternative rhetorical tool in the ironic monumental disruption. The rest of the chapter defined the concept of the ironic monumental disruption as a counterpart to nostalgia in order to understand its political potential. This section builds upon the previous methodology and conceptualization to explain how I am using the concepts of irony, nostalgia, and comic and tragic frames to analyze the commemorative artifacts.

Returning to the foundation of irony, Dana Cloud expands on Wayne Booth's definition stating, "In literary contexts, irony is a marker of adept double-coding, but irony need not be intentional or skillful; sometimes an ironic stance toward a text attributes motive and value to the text and its maker beyond what may have been intended."[62] Irony became a central tool for analyzing the three case studies because it positioned the artifacts and their audiences in a simultaneous dialogue with larger historical and political contexts. I used irony to read the exchange between explicit representation and indirect reference (sometimes by the noticeable absence of certain symbolism within the larger commemorative context). I used the "double-coding" of irony to examine competing layers of meaning and the political ramifications of accepting dual readings within the same commemorative space. In other words, I read the artifact as an ironic manifestation of public sentiment –a product of both the artifact and the

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audience—because they [the monuments] ironically performed dual ideological narratives while the audience engaged and interpreted the explicit and implicit performance. Irony allowed for multiple readings of the artifacts *and* the audiences as they were ironically position on conscious and unconscious levels.

Similarly, I read nostalgia as an affect expressed by audience and constructed into the artifact. After determining that much of the Soviet statuary was left up for the sake of upholding "history," with some parties even expressing a longing for that history, I decided to read the monuments' continued presence on the landscape as a sign that the old ideological construct was still needed to make sense of (or give context to) past and present narratives. Nostalgia was a significant conceptual tool because it helped position the artifact and the audience, much like in the case of irony, between dual perspectives. The past (ideology) that many expressed longing for was a virtual impossibility in the present political context, but the Soviet-era monuments (or fantasy driven monuments in Yugoslavia) create a space where the memory of the past can still be entertained. Nostalgia and irony positioned both artifact and audience to embrace and reject the commemorative narrative.

Lastly, nostalgia also helped shape the comic and tragic frames, which determined how the audience positioned themselves in the larger commemorative context. Put differently, I used Burke's comic frame to show that play [in this case irony] could produce deliberative potential when it was understood as a product of—and a response to—lingering nostalgia. On the other hand, Burke's tragic frame revealed that populations' expressing little or no nostalgia could still ironically engage nostalgic tokens of the past, but the deliberative potential would not be the same. Where the ambivalences of the comic frame produced space for debate and reflection, the tragic frame insists that affected groups abandon deliberation and assign guilt so that society may

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move on.   Thus, the comic and tragic frames position audience quite differently in respect to their understanding of the artifact and their interaction with it.  The next three chapters explore all of these concepts as they rhetorically shape how audiences and artifacts will continue to make sense of the past.

**METAPHORICAL AND LITERAL TRANSITIONS TO CAPITALISM AND BACK**

This chapter reviewed the data collection process and how it resulted in the methodological framing of the larger project.  Additionally, this chapter examined how counter-monument literature distinguishes itself from traditional monument studies and why counter-monuments need additional conceptualization.  Finally, I divided the concept of the ironic monumental disruption into its various parts in order to demonstrate how it functions as a rhetorically focused alternative to the category of the counter-monument. The actual materialization and engagement of irony creates a valuable space for political intervention and interrogation.  Furthermore, understanding ironic monumental disruptions within their varied frames shows scholars of counter-monument studies that additional contextualization creates the opportunity for more rhetorically sound research.

The case studies presented in the subsequent three chapters apply the concept of the ironic monumental disruption to various frames in order to demonstrate how the disruptive rhetorical act of irony can produce important ethical openings.  All monuments contain the possibility to disrupt and critique their own meaning regardless of their "counter" designation. These case studies in Eastern and Southeastern Europe reveal that scholars of monumentality need more specific rhetorical tools in order to untangle historical and ideological narratives.  In that vein, the concept of the ironic monumental disruption guides this project as it asks how

monuments can enact and reflect their own critiques and how publics can find agency in the interaction between the material memory of the past and the material reality of the present.

Curiously, monuments acknowledging the transition away from Stalinism and commemorating the new era of capitalism are relatively invisible; rather, the shrines to capitalism take a more pervasive and intrinsic form in the corporate signage surrounding the major cities of Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Even though the ideological transition has transformed Eastern Europe more rapidly in the past 20 years than the half-century that preceded it, very few monumental acknowledge this shift. In some ways museums, art collections, and staged exhibits most explicitly reference "transitional memory." It is not surprising that the dream of capitalism is not on display. Many Eastern Europeans want capitalism to be the answer to their economic troubles, but physically placing (a monument to) capitalism next to the memory of communism runs the risk of alerting the public to another ideological system susceptible to corruption and failure.

What is apparent is that Captain America, Canned Beef, Bob Marley, and others are not simply comical figures of the past or idealized creations for the future; they are placeholders for a conflicted and contested set of memories which once occupied significant intellectual, social, and political space. These examples of ironic monumental disruptions in the former Soviet bloc are a product of a contradictory public memory that needs more time and space to work through its lost ideals and inconsistencies. The ironic intervention allows the public to embrace a narrative with multiple perspectives but no definitive answers.

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[1] The comedy is, of course, rather biting, as the "Canned Beef" monument in Sarajevo stands as a reminder that, when Bosnia was under siege in the mid '90s, the U.N. came to their rescue by sending food that was unsuitable for pets. Additionally, by the time many of the items finally made it to Bosnians, they were already expired.
[2] For additional information on the IRB process and the questions asked during interviews, please see Appendix B.
[3] All interviews have been coded by number and will remain confidential in an effort to protect privacy and avoid further confrontation.

[4] Granted, those comments must be taken in context because the monuments held tremendous value and political power in their time.

[5] Based on the loose definitions of counter-monuments, it appears that most monuments could technically find their way into the category as well.

[6] The monumental form refers to commemorative practices that try to offer an unproblematic depiction of the past, or in some cases, just monuments generally.

[7] James Young, "The Counter Monument: Memory against itself in Germany today," *Critical Inquiry*, (1992): 277-282.Young, "The Counter Monument," 277.

[8] Young, "The Counter Monument," 277-282.

[9] Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, and Forgetting,* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2004), and Pierre Nora, "The Era of Commemoration," *Realms of Memory*, vol. 3, *Symbols*, ed. Lawrence D. Krizman, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

[10] James E. Young, "The Holocaust as Vicarious Past: Art Spiegelman's 'Maus' and the Afterimages of History," *Critical Inquiry*, 24, no. 3 (1998): 270.

[11] Steven Johnston, "Political Not Patriotic: Democracy, Civic Space, and the American Memorial/Monument Complex," *Theory & Event* 5, Issue 2, (2001): 542.

[12] Young, "The Counter-Monument," 276.

[13] Young's work focuses on counter-monuments in Germany which create "memorial spaces that change over time and seek to stimulate memory rather than provide an official or authentic account of history." See James E. Young, "The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today." *Critical Inquiry* 18 (1992): 271.

[14] The counter-monument literature also fails to define a "traditional" monument, in all likelihood, because there is no conception of a "traditional" monument. Instead, all of the counter-monuments fall within the spectrum of different monumental manifestations.

[15] Elizabeth Strakosch "The Political Complexities of 'New Memorials': Victims and Perpetrators Sharing Space in the Australian Capital," in Memorials and Museums (Berlin: *Berlin Roundtables*, 2009), 22.

[16] Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online, s.v. "counter," accessed on November 12, 2011, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/counter.

[17] See Victoria J. Gallagher and Margaret R. LaWare, "Sparring with Public Memory: The Rhetorical Embodiment of Race, Power, and Conflict in the Monument to Joe Lewis," and Bernard J. Armada, "Memory's Execution: (Dis)placing the Dissident Body," in *Places of Public Memory*, edited by Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott (Tuscaloosa, Al: University of Alabama Press, 2010).

[18] Elizabeth Strakosch "The Political Complexities of 'New Memorials': Victims and Perpetrators Sharing Space in the Australian Capital," in Memorials and Museums (Berlin: *Berlin Roundtables*, 2009), 21-26.

[19] Robert Asen, "Seeking the 'Counter' in Counterpublics," *Communication Theory,* Vol. 10, Issue 4, (November 2000): 426.

[20] Asen, "Seeking the 'Counter' in Counterpublics," 426.

[21] Young, "Counter-Monument," 294.

[22] Young, "The Counter Monument," 295.

[23] Young, "The Counter Monument," 295.

[24] "Historical" in that they were built at some point in the past.

[25] Steven Johnston, "Political Not Patriotic: Democracy, Civic Space, and the American Memorial/Monument Complex*" Theory and Event,* Vol. 5, Issue 2 (August 2001), 542.

[26] Johnston, "Political Not Patriotic: Democracy," 542

[27] Johnston, "Political Not Patriotic: Democracy," 542.

[28] Young, "The Counter Monument," 279.

[29] Young, "The Counter-Monument," 286.

[30] Danielle McGeough and Catherine Palczewski, "Counter-Monuments, Contested Memories and Public Accountability," in *Concerning Argument*, ed. Scott Jacobs (Washington: National Communication Association, 2009): 536.

[31] Ranciere, *Dissensus,* 177.

[32] Jacques Ranciere, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. Steven Corcoran (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 172.

[33] Ranciere, *Dissensus,* 172.

[34] Young, "The Counter Monument," 270.

[35] Ranciere, *Dissensus,* 171.

[36] Gilles Deleuze, *What is Philosophy?* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994 [French original, 1991]), 176–77.

[37] Deleuze, *What is Philosophy?* 176–77.

[38] See Balthrop et al., "The Presence of the Present"

[39] "Disruption," American Heritage Dictionary, Fourth Edition (London: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2000).

[40] For additional reading see Guy Debord, *Internationale Situationniste #1*, trans. Ken Knabb *in Situationist International Anthology*, 2006, http://www.bopsecrets.org/SI/.

[41] John Peffer, Censorship and Iconoclasm—Unsettling Monuments," *Anthropology and Aesthetics* No. 48, (Autumn 2005), 45.

[42] Guy Debord, *Internationale Situationniste #1,* 5.

[43] Explicitly, these monuments show Western symbols of celebrity. Whether the subjects are fact or fiction, they connote (Western) ideals of patriotism, democracy, and justice.

[44] It is important to note that irony is not a one-size-fits-all rhetorical tool. Irony has been critiqued for being too conservative and too cynical in times of social upheaval. Many theorists have voiced concern that irony reduces controversy to the politics of display. But in the case of Eastern and Southeastern Europe, irony is particularly complex because it was a tool of agency during the communist years so its continued utilization speaks to an important discursive formation that affects a post-communist subjectivity and political identity. For additional reading see Slavoj Zizek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, (New York, NY: Verso, 1989).

[45] Lawrence M. Bogad, *Electoral Guerrilla Theatre: Radical Ridicule and Social Movements* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 37.

[46] Michael Shane Boyle, "Play with Authority! Radical Performance and Performative Irony," Thamyris/Intersecting No 21 (2010): 211-212.

[47] See Linda Hutcheon, *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony* (New York: Routledge,

[48] Burke, *Grammar of Motives*, 512.

[49] Burke, *A Grammar of Motives,* 517.

[50] Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969), 517.

[51] Jeffrey W. Murray, "Kenneth Burke: A Dialogue of Motives," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 35 (2002), 22. Burke is not speaking of the Lacanian "Other." He simply means—others.

[52] Tomaz Tobako, "Irony as a Pro-Democracy Trope: Europe's Last Comic Revolution," *Controversia,* 5, (September 2007), 25.

[53] Boyle, "Play with Authority! 209.

[54] James W. Fernandez and Mary Taylor Huber, "The Anthropology of Irony," in *Irony in Action: Anthropology, Practice, and the Moral Imagination,* eds. James W. Fernandez and Mary Taylor Huber (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 1.

[55] Fernandez and Huber, "The Anthropology of Irony," 17.

[56] Tobako, "Irony as a Pro-Democracy Trope," 26.

[57] Nina Felshin, *But is it Art? The Spirit of Art as Activism* (Washington DC: Bay Press, 1995), 16.

[58] Bogad, *Electoral Guerrilla Theatre,* 213.

[59] Bogad, *Electoral Guerrilla Theatre*, 210.

[60] Boyle, "Play with Authority!," 209.

[61] Ernesto Laclau and Chantall Mouffe*, Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (New York: Verso, 1985), 178.

[62] See Dana Cloud, "The Irony Bribe and Reality Television: Investment and Detachment in The Bachelor," *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, Vol. 27 Issue 5 (December 2010): 415-416 and Wayne C. Booth, *A Rhetoric of Irony* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 148 and 193.

# Chapter Four

## Comic (book) Commemoration: Stalinism, Nostalgia and Ironic Monumental Disruptions

## in Sofia, Bulgaria



Figure 4.1

Before and after images of the Monument to the Soviet Army in Sofia, Bulgaria[1]

In November 2010, Bulgarians held a rally at the Monument to the Soviet Army, or as it is widely known, the Soviet liberation monument demanding that the government tear down the Stalinist artifact. Some of the protesters compared communism to Nazism while others held up signs saying, "The [Berlin] Wall fell, the Monument is still here."[2] In January 2011, Bulgarians again protested at the Soviet liberation monument in Sofia holding signs proclaiming, "We are no Russophobes but we are also no slaves."[3] Counter-demonstrations immediately formed as other Bulgarian citizens expressed concern that removing the monument would serve to effectively erase history. The demonstrations in Sofia reveal that there is considerable ambivalence about the historical "facts;" but, the demonstrators appear to be negotiating complicated narratives and ideological tensions through their monuments.

Whereas Hungarians and (eventually) Yugoslavians chose to move their contested memories to controlled spaces, Bulgarians have left one of their most contentious monuments in their city making it vulnerable to physical confrontations and public demonstrations. While some scholars believe that Bulgarians have maintained stronger loyalties to their communist past than their neighboring countries, others claim that Bulgarians simply suffer from a misplaced case of nostalgia.[4] Scholars and lay people alike point to the continued presence of Soviet monuments as evidence for their claims.[5] But a recent reappropriation of the Soviet liberation monument suggests that rather than a case of misplaced nostalgia, Bulgarians may see the value of leaving contested statuary in place because it allows for a (highly visible) means of public deliberation.

The Soviet liberation monument has long been a site of tension in Sofia. The communist-led Bulgarian government built the monument in 1954 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Soviet "liberation" of Bulgaria in 1944. In the past 20 years, various groups have vandalized

the liberation monument, but a makeover in June 2011 placed the Soviet liberation monument

back in the global spotlight. The "vandals" painted Western figures and comic book heroes onto

the statues of Soviet soldiers in the middle of the night. After the initial controversy dissipated,

the group Destructive Creation claimed responsibility for the graffiti. Depending on one's

political perspective, the vandals or artists, who revamped the Soviet liberation monument,

created an intriguing site of ironic commemoration, ideological confrontation, and nostalgic

association. This chapter uses the political and physical landscape of Sofia, Bulgaria, to show

that alternative rhetorical frames and strategies open up new configurations of memory and place

and create valuable spaces of deliberation.

In this chapter, I argue that Bulgarians' ambivalence toward both communism and

capitalism has created a comic frame from which they [the Bulgarian people] interpret the ironic

intervention of the newly refashioned Soviet liberation monument. The political potential of

Destructive Creation's ironic makeover stems from the fact that both ideological systems are

relevant and rife for critique; they are juxtaposed to create an unsettling context in need of

further interrogation and deliberation. Thus, the defacement and subsequent restoration of the

liberation monument serves as a prime example of the deliberative potential of ironic

monumental disruptions utilized within a comic frame.

Additionally, this chapter demonstrates how the ironic monumental disruption operates

differently in Bulgaria than in Hungary or even the former Yugoslavia. Because many

Bulgarians have expressed ambivalence toward their communist chapter and the artifacts

produced during that time, the people of Sofia appear to be negotiating their current ideological

tensions by re-envisioning Soviet monuments through irony. The Bulgarian people's reliance on

a comic frame is clear as they take one perspective and juxtapose it with another ultimately showing the limitations and possibilities of both.

Finally, this case study's representational complexity stems from the fact that the ironic monumental disruption created through the act of vandalism is only temporary. An additional confrontation with the ironic monumental disruption happens when the government scrubs off the graffiti (removing the new monument and replacing the old), but even the cleansing act of erasure opens up the monument to additional interpretation. Thus, the monument recaptures its government sanctioned and (arguably) nostalgic representation of communism, but continues to hold the memory of its vandalism. The introduction of irony into a comic frame reveals that even temporary disruptions have the power to engage various formations of nostalgia and produce varied perspectives. The monument literally and metaphorically takes on new meaning when it represents two seemingly opposed ideological narratives. And as the monument is resituated within a new representational narrative in need of interpretation, the Bulgarian people are also resituated as (potentially) engaged political subjects. Curiously, Bulgarians find themselves simultaneously pulled toward resenting communism and longing for it, but each intervention of meaning and memory opens up additional spaces for reflection and deliberation.

I discussed the methodology for evaluating ironic monumental disruptions in Chapter three, but a quick review of the method helps contextualize the findings in this particular case study. After the monument was redesigned, newspaper editorials and blog entries produced a few overarching themes which were used to further contextualize the monument and gain insight into public sentiment on the national and international level. Very few articles reported that the vandalism outraged the Bulgarian people. Those angered by the graffiti claimed it was because the "vandals'" destroyed property.[6] People were not outraged that the soldiers were symbolically

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"ridiculed;" they were upset that an artifact with fifty plus years of history was changed.  I coupled the initial response to the event with a deeper political and historical contextualization of the monument.  I used all of the complex and contradictory sources of identity and representation to determine that Bulgarians saw their communist history through a comic frame.  The Bulgarian people did not want to blame communism for the country's problems; they wanted to entertain the fantasy that communism and capitalism still held promise for them.

In order to examine questions of irony and place, the chapter begins with a brief overview of the political and historical issues Bulgarians faced during Stalinism's decline.  Bulgaria's communist past is important as it continues to shape the commemorative conflicts in the present.  Next, the chapter discusses the recent protestations surrounding the Soviet liberation monument to show that this particular commemorative site serves as an important physical and symbolic space for the Bulgarian people.  Finally, the chapter examines the reconceptualization of the Soviet liberation monument as an ironic monumental disruption to show how an act of vandalism can create an important space of public deliberation.  In other words, the product of Bulgarian's mixed loyalties appears to be a monument frequently subjected to symbolic reappropriations.  The vandalized monument simultaneously acknowledges, celebrates, and undermines both the past and present encouraging an important dialogue over the construction of public memory.

**BULGARIA AND STALINISM: SATELLITE STATE INSECURITIES**

As one of the poorest members of the EU—and still reeling from recent austerity measures—Bulgarians have become even more nostalgic about their former communist ideology.[7]  As referenced previously, Bulgarians did not view Stalinism with as much skepticism as Hungarians did.  The Bulgarian people had fewer misgivings about the communist agenda because their national identity was more closely linked to the Soviet Union than Eastern or

Western Europe in many respects.[8]  Bulgaria would later become one of the Soviet Union's most

loyal allies.  However, Bulgaria had little choice but to fully embrace Stalinism at the end of

World War II as the Soviet military seized power in German-occupied Bulgaria in September

1944.[9]  Since 1989, stories and news reports from Eastern European and the Balkans have

surfaced that after the Second World War "Soviet forces came as occupiers as much as

liberators," making the "Liberation" monuments particularly painful.[10]  Consequently, after the

fall of communism in 1989, Bulgarians had to pick up the pieces of a fallen ideology and carve

out an entirely new identity now that they no longer saw themselves as members of a satellite

state.[11]

    As discussed in Chapter two, Todor Zhivkov's forced resignation began the transition

from communism to a market economy in 1989.  Interestingly, Bulgaria's transition to capitalism

was conducted mostly by "former communist apparatchiks and security-service officers," who

worked to minimize backlash against the old communist system.[12]  Bulgaria's relationship to

communism was strong, and voters replaced the old communist guard with various formations of

the Bulgarian Socialist Party until 2009.  The 2009 elections saw the Socialist Party pushed out

amidst "corruption allegations and economic failings," but Bulgarians have voiced concerns that

they abandoned the ideology of socialism too quickly during these tumultuous economic times.[13]

The tumult appears to be manifesting itself in unusual ways.  As globalization has left Bulgaria

in a financial crisis and monuments to communism continue to receive makeovers, Bulgarians

are unsure how to represent their memory of the past.

    While locals Bulgarians continue to debate the artifacts of communism, local government

officials have attempted to remind them [Bulgarians] of their past misgivings by creating a

Museum of Socialist Art, which opened September 19, 2011.[14]  The museum currently displays

the largest collection of communist-era art in Eastern Europe according to the Bulgarian government.[15]  The museum showcases "more than a dozen towering statues of Lenin and flat-capped workers pointing solemnly toward utopia and a 13-foot-tall red star that used to top the Communist Party headquarters here in Sofia." [16] The idea behind the museum is to turn these revered objects into kitsch. Finance Minister Simeon Djankov insists that, "We want to close this period. We're trying to kill the boogeyman and put it in the museum… A lot of people here have a romanticized view of communist times and we need to show the unvarnished truth."[17]

However, loyalties to Bulgaria's communist past are still strong as the local Socialist Party unveiled a new monument to Todor Zhivkov, the last communist ruler before the transition in 1989, within the same month of the museum's grand opening.[18]  Loyalists of Zhivkov also financed a renovation of his museum which contains hundreds of communist artifacts as well.[19] Memories of communism vary widely as the curator of Zhivkov's museum Galia Pikova explains that,

> Communism here was soft... Me and my parents didn't suffer in any way—we had work and money.  I was 12 years old in 1989 when communism fell.  That year I was skiing during winter in East Germany and spent summer on the Black Sea coast.  It was wonderful. Now, that's not possible.[20]

While the memory of communism remains divided in Bulgaria, locals remain torn between celebrating an oppressive past and present.  Bulgarians like Galia Pikova fear that, while the past may not have been entirely free, it may have allowed for more personal dignity.  It is a strange paradox as communism, not capitalism, is usually accused of erasing difference for the sake of the larger community.  In Bulgaria's case, austerity measures brought on by unbridled and corrupt capitalism have forced many in Eastern Europe to bend to the larger will of the EU.  Consequently, it is not entirely surprising that nostalgia for the glory days of communism is on the rise as Western influences continue to externally manipulate a bleak Bulgarian economy.

Bulgarians' interpret their communist chapter differently than Hungarians. As such,

Bulgarians display their public artifacts with more pride, but also more ambivalence. The

desecration or vandalism of the Soviet liberation monument suggests that Bulgarian citizens

want to embrace a more direct confrontation with memory. Knowing *what* memory is another

story entirely. In "Death and the Desecrated: Monuments of the Socialist Past in Post-1989

Bulgaria," Nikolai Voukov explains that the Soviet liberation monument remains one of the most

contested symbols of communism and is interpreted and altered to represent vastly different

ideas and interests depending on the political climate. He explains:

> Declarations in support of particular monuments, attempts to organize rituals and
> ceremonies in the way they were performed before 1989 and campaigns for cleaning
> monuments on memorial days and anniversaries were the usual counteractive measures
> taken in monuments' support. In turn, these acts were responded to with declarations
> condemning "re-communization processes" and with strikes and protests against the
> reinstallation and renovation of monuments. In most of these monumental dramas there
> is a thick network of political implications and motives related to dealing with
> monuments during this period.[21]

Voukov addresses an ideological tension on clear display with the defacement of the

Soviet liberation monument in Sofia, Bulgaria. As mentioned previously, the monument remains

a controversial artifact dating all the way back to its original erection. The political tension the

monument continues to express may come, in large part, from the fact that "liberation" has been

fleeting for the Bulgarian people. Bulgarians continued to transfer their economic and political

power to external forces as their national identity was subsumed by fascism then communism

then capitalism. The liberation monument serves as a reminder that Bulgarian identity is an on-

going project.

**THE SOVIET LIBERATION MONUMENT:  PROTESTING THE PAST AND PRESENT**

The original Soviet liberation monument in Sofia, Bulgaria, like numerous others located throughout Eastern Europe, acknowledges the Soviet victory over the Nazis in 1944-45.  The monument was an important symbol during the Stalinist era, serving as a pilgrimage site for communist leaders such as Todor Zhivkov and Georgi Dimitrov."[22]  The liberation monument is an example of Socialist-Realist art, which aims to further the goals of communism and the working class by depicting egalitarianism and communal identity.  Soviet-Realist art was an important source of propaganda during the USSR's expansion.  At the top of the stone formation, the monument depicts a Red Army soldier surrounded by a Bulgarian man and woman.  On the platform below these figures are life-like cast-iron soldiers captured in heroic action poses.[23]

While the liberation monument has remained at the center of the same park for over 50 years, it is still a site of frequent contestation.  During a rally in January 2011, one demonstrator insisted, "This is a symbol of Bulgaria's disgrace! If it is not removed, we, or our children, or our grandchildren will one day build a new monument right next to it, exposing this monument."[24] Sofia's news agency *Novinite* claims that the Liberation monument is one of the "most controversial issues today… because it is a matter of historical memory relevant to the nation's coming to terms with its own communist past with some sort of a consensus."[25] Other citizens have voiced frustration that the Bulgarian people have fixated on this monument rather than the structural and political problems facing their country today.[26]

Many protesters suggested moving the monument to a less prominent place or museum much like other Eastern European and Baltic countries have chosen to do, but journalist Ivan Dikov admits that moving Soviet-era statuary has jeopardized diplomatic relations with Russia in

the past.[27]  Dikov also explains, "The communist heritage epitomizes probably the greatest problem of the Bulgarian society since 1990 – its adamant and severe division along the pro/anti communism lines which time hasn't managed to water down yet."[28]  Dikov's solution is to place an inscription that denounces "Stalinism, the Soviet occupation of Bulgaria, and the imposition of a political regime by a foreign power," because it will "guarantee that contemporary society will get out of the monument its positive message of a struggle against tyranny – rather than replacing one type of tyranny with another."[29]

**SUPERHEROES AND SOVIET REALISM: CONTRASTING VALUES**

Dikov's reflections on artistic and political tyranny became particularly valuable as six months later on June 17, 2011, a group of nine anti-communist graffiti artists called "Destructive Creation" vandalized the Soviet Army liberation monument.[30]  The monument became an overnight sensation when Destructive Creation recreated all of the Russian soldiers into colorful caricatures such as Batman and Robin, Santa Claus, Wonder Woman, Captain America, and Ronald McDonald. The *Sofia Echo* also reported that the flag held by one of the Soviet soldiers (painted to look like Ronald McDonald) was refashioned with the stars and stripes of the American flag.   The monument had the words, "in step with the times," spray-painted across the pedestal leading many international news outlets to revel in the idea that capitalism and communism were battling for ideological supremacy.

The ironic display of hero-worship was intriguing.  Batman kills to keep the streets safe and the Joker enjoys producing playful chaos whenever possible.  In addition to these characters, Santa Claus and Ronald McDonald (arguably) remind the Bulgarian people that capitalism produces an insatiable desire to consume.  Transforming humble Soviet soldiers into fictional Western characters displays the rhetorical potential of the ironic monumental disruption in a

historical commemorative space.  As stated by scholar Linda Hutcheon, "Irony is one of the means by which to create the necessary distance and perspective" to one day begin to remember.[31]  A site that was once a source of nostalgia for Bulgaria's communist past revealed that old and new ideological narratives could be contained in one place.  All that separated communism from capitalism was one coat of paint.

The most recent display of vandalism in the Bulgarian capital of Sofia seems to illuminate the political possibilities and challenges of confronting more explicitly representational art. The artists left the material of the Soviet liberation monument intact, but they transformed the meaning with a new coat of paint. The *New Zealand Listener* produced an editorial celebrating that in one night, "the life-size Red Army soldiers of a Soviet monument were transformed into a cast of western pop culture [characters]."[32] Even the *Sofia Echo* seemed to enjoy the playful critique while maintaining neutrality, stating, "For some it was an insult and for others it was an inspiration."[33] Occupying the second camp, columnist Boika Penchev applauded the courage of the then anonymous artists, later identified as Destructive Creation, for challenging a national "mentality that leaves Bulgaria a country that resists change…. The anonymous painters did not just paint over the grey figures of the monument…. They painted over the grey face of power itself."[34]  Penchev's interchangeable use of the term "monument" and "power" is intentionally thought-provoking as he concludes that "monuments are there constantly to remind us of who has the power to impose an 'official' memory of the past."[35]

The "vandals" revealed themselves two months after the initial facelift.  Communist sympathizers in Bulgaria and Russia demanded that the government punish the "criminal" act. Much to these sympathizers' dismay, the Sofia Prosecutor's Office dropped the criminal inquiry into the so-called "hooligan behavior" without further explanation.[36]  The monument has since

been cleaned by an organization known as "Bulgaria-Russia," but its repeated desecration is

sparking interest and discussion within Bulgaria and abroad. Immediately following the clean

up, t-shirts with the redesigned monument began popping up for sale in Sofia.[37] And within ten

days of the monument getting repainted, the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee, the Sofia Poetics

organization, and the 'Transformers' art movement organized "a public discussion regarding the

monument's future."[38] Some suggested commemorative alternatives to the current monument

like a more abstract monument or a counter-monument, but others worried that a counter-

monument would only serve to further reify the original message. Put another way, protesters do

not want the liberation monument knocked down just so another monument can be constructed to

obliquely "honor" Bulgaria's communist chapter. The next section illuminates how monuments

on the Bulgarian landscape express nostalgia and create deliberative opportunities for ironic

interventions.



Figure 4.2          Figure 4.3

AP Photos/Vandalized Monument (4.2) and Soviet Army monument before it was vandalized (4.3)

**MATERIALIZED NOSTALGIA IN STALINIST MEMORIES AND MONUMENTS**

The loyalty that many Bulgarian people express to their communist history and its corresponding monuments is not surprising. In many ways, communism provided a safety net and a guarantee of social equality that many Bulgarians sorely miss today. But it is the entanglement of the memory of communism and Stalinism that creates such strange understandings of the past. Longing for the ideology of communism is a distinctly different desire than maintaining the monuments to the Stalinist regime.[39] Nikolai Voukov explains that the "liberation" monument progressed through time as a "symbol of enslavement throughout the years of socialism, a memorial sign to the war dead, an element of the recent history currently emptied of powerful meanings and [then] merely a reminder of the curiosities of the socialist past."[40] Voukov asserts, "the inability to come to an ultimate conclusion about the limits of representation determined the monument's fate and contributed to its continued survival."[41] The limit of representation that Voukov addresses is intriguing as it suggests that Bulgarians are not sure how they should incorporate the liberation monument for the future. The fact that some of the Bulgarian people hold up the Soviet liberation monument as the last vestige of communism suggests that a misplaced nostalgia is making history and ideology interchangeable. Ultimately, the comic frame becomes an important tool for untangling nostalgia for the past and the political contradictions it produces in the present.

Scholar Zala Volcic addresses the conflation of memory, authenticity, and history stating that, "Nostalgia offers an idealized version of an unattainable past that can stunt the cultural imagination."[42] Volcic and others explain that the desire for a former "reality" is a natural response to fragmentation or uncertainty, but they warn about its political ramifications. Cultural theorist Fredric Jameson claims that nostalgia is inauthentic and transforms "real" history into

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entertaining spectacle.[43] Nostalgia produces an "embarrassing . . . cultural fantasy," that

Jameson insists is an "obstacle to historical knowledge rather than a resuscitation of historical

understanding."[44] Jameson suggests that with nostalgia, "We seem condemned to seek the

historical past through our own pop images and stereotypes about that past, which itself remains

forever out of reach."[45] In other words, for many scholars nostalgia becomes the fantasy-driven

outlet that obfuscates political action.[46] Jameson's concerns are precisely why the comic frame is

so vital to understanding the commemorative politics in this particular case study. The comic

frame does not allow nostalgia to be completely indulged; rather, the comic frame imposes the

same critique on nostalgic representation as it does on historical "Truth."  The juxtaposition of

these two perspectives creates unsettled discursive formations in need of further interpretation.

Thus, for the purpose of creating heightened visibility for complex narratives, nostalgia is

not inherently "bad," or debilitating for public deliberation and critique.  It provides yet another

outlet for understanding transitional histories.  Russian scholar Svetlana Boym discusses the

collapse of the Soviet Union in terms of a "restorative" nostalgia which "feeds upon a sense of

loss of unity and cohesion" [47]  While Boym's work will be more extensively utilized in the next

chapter, it is worth noting that the liberation monument in Sofia serves as an important

manifestation of a contested ideological and political nostalgia. The reappropriation and

immediate cleaning of the monument shows that Soviet ties and communist loyalties still

strongly inform Bulgarian identity, but, capitalism continues to break up the nostalgic narrative

and critique its current applicability.  But the question arises, How does the ideological

confrontation of old statuary with new superheroes serve to more fully expose both narratives as

imperfect solutions to the politics of their time?  It appears that the incorporation of irony into a

nostalgic commemorative site produces the possibility for a different kind of dialogue—a

dialogue that is not only about the politics of place but also about the failure of larger political systems.

**RESPONSES TO THE "VANDALISM"**

While the monumental makeover was only temporary, the national and international response it received revealed that the reappropriation of the Soviet liberation was a political act with significant ramifications.  National politicians quickly aligned themselves on ideological sides with Finance Minister Djankov explaining, "I don't approve of the vandalism, but I appreciate the artistic qualities of those responsible… I'm more of a fan of Superman than Lenin."[48]  Other political figures were not as willing to laugh off the desecration. Bulgarian Minister of Culture Vezhdi Rashidov described the painted figures as an act of "vandalism" and ignored questions about the graffiti's artistic value, labeling aesthetics "a different matter entirely."[49]  He insisted that Bulgaria "had its history of socialism, which could not be simply erased."[50]  Furthermore, he stated that the Soviet Army monument was, "the property of Sofia municipality… the painting of the monument was a crime."[51]  Rashidov concluded his statement on the act of desecration hyperbolically claiming, "We (Bulgarians) are the only ones led by some kind of destructive force when it comes to monuments of socialism."[52]

Internationally, Western Europe enjoying the symbolic tussle with the London *Daily Mail* editorializing:

> Twenty years ago you would have been shot for stepping too close to this monument in Sofia in Bulgaria. But after the smashing of the Berlin Wall, statues celebrating communist rule appear to be fair game to the graffiti artists of the former Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe.[53]

But the most vocal protests have come from those who served as a source of inspiration for the monument.  The *Guardian* reported, "Moscow was not amused. In a statement issued Wednesday, the foreign ministry urged Sofia to expose and punish the 'hooligans behind the

vandalism' and stop the 'desecration of the memory of Soviet soldiers who fell in the name of freeing Bulgaria and Europe from Nazism.'"[54]

While the people of Sofia are still debating the ethics of graffiti, some insist that the graffiti makeover was an important reappropriation of an outdated memory. Editor-in-Chief of the *Sofia Echo* Clive Leivev Sawyer stated that the graffiti was "The defining image from Bulgaria in 2011…[It] pointed to issues lying unresolved beneath the surface…The debate that raged, ultimately briefly as all such debates tend to do in Bulgaria, exposed not only an ambivalence about relations with Russia (Moscow's embassy huffily protested about the insult to Soviet soldiers) but also an ambivalence about Bulgarians' view of their own past."[55] Local newspaper editorials suggested that the defaced monument was a critique of misplaced hero-worship and suggested that one form of imperialism was simply being replaced with another.[56] The effect of the makeover was slightly more complex and nuanced than a simple grudge match, but the increased attention the "new" monument received was undeniable. Finally, blogs were flooded by Bulgarians and international onlookers all wanting to weigh in on the vandalism. Many wrote that this was the "kind of graffiti I can get into," while others suggested that those who were offended were taking art too seriously.[57] One anonymous Bulgarian blogger wrote,

> I think painting over this piece turns something terrible, that made a terrible statement to the people who have to see it every day, into something more meaningful. Something positive to help the people move on and remember their history, but know they've changed…Sometimes defacing art makes the piece better.[58]

Others unequivocally stated that monuments should be left alone.[59] Curiously, there was little consensus on how this monument should be treated in the aftermath of its vandalism. The next section expands upon this discourse to offer insight into how nostalgia and irony combined to unsettle a historical site and its contemporary message.

**IRONY, NOSTALGIA, AND THE COMIC FRAME: CREATING DELIBERATIVE SPACE**

The ironic monumental disruption created by the transformation in pop icons of the Soviet soldiers produced a new perspective from which to evaluate an old artifact. The transformed monument metaphorically "liberates" and recontextualizes all of the figures within the old commemorative space. The ironic repositioning of these historical and popular figures actually heightens a sense of nostalgia for the past while creating space for more open dialogue. It is not only the response people have to the graffiti placed on the monument that is worth examining; it is also the ironic positioning of the monument within a comic frame.

Within the comic frame, irony created an outlet for the discussion of communist nostalgia and capitalist imperialism. Scholar Hugh Duncan writes that, "Comedy [the comic frame] offers a way of challenging those social hierarchies which are vulnerable to change and enduring those which are not."[60] It is important to note that the "vandals" were not re-envisioning the monument in hopes of claiming that communism was wrong and capitalism is right. The artists created the ironic monumental disruption to address larger ideological structures and to make the public aware that lingering questions persisted.

The vandalized monument (or the memory of it) serves to disrupt the historical narrative of Russian authority and instead demands that the viewing public question all of their loyalties as they consciously or unconsciously worship at the feet of Western capitalism. The immediate cleansing of the space does not take away the image or the knowledge that Bulgarian independence relies on an ideological fiction that gives capitalism considerable control. While the psychological discomfort encouraged by this ironic disruption affects the informed public, the artifact itself becomes the ideal site for a self-imposed critique. It is as if the object creates,

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then holds, its own contradiction. Thus, the space has the potential to both produce and respond

to irony while inviting Bulgarians to engage in their own clarifying performances.

Additionally, the ironic monumental disruption served as a microcosm for a much larger

discussion of monuments, ideological imperialism, and political and national identity.  In an

editorial published almost a month after the graffiti incident, Boika Penchev explained the

rhetorical significance of the reappropriated art, stating,

> Monuments are an attempt to cloak clashing interpretations of history behind figures of
> bronze or granite. But it is impossible to escape the war over the past. Especially where
> the Soviet army and its monument are concerned. That's why arriving at its visual
> transformation is a logical step. What is surprising in this case is the intelligence and
> artistic subtlety of the work. Painting a Soviet soldier as Batman is a sacrilege. It's an
> "undermining of historical memory" when history is rewritten in a non-organised way,
> without the sanction of the party and state. And that is the case before us.[61]

Penchev thoughtfully concludes, "Despite the clean-up, the monument will never be the same—

the photos and memories will stay."[62] Penchev is correct in recognizing that while the monument

will not stand as a "counter-monument" through time, its momentary reappropriation as an ironic

monumental disruption calls upon those who witnessed or read about the act of vandalism to re-

envision the monument's symbolic meaning.  The ironic monumental disruption created through

the addition of superheroes opens the monument and its contested memory up to critiques and

questions not easily articulated—or nearly as visible—in the public sphere otherwise.

It is precisely because the liberation monument so fluidly and effortlessly constructs

irony into its symbolism that the people of Sofia are indirectly encouraged to examine their

nostalgic narratives in contrast to their present social, political, and economic conditions.

Ultimately, the revamping of the Soviet liberation monument into an ironic monumental

disruption suggests that the Bulgarian people and especially the members of Destructive Creation

see problems in their relationship to both communism and capitalism.   But rather than seeking

reconciliation, Destructive Creation has created a space of engagement. This "space" is precisely what has been missing for the Bulgarian people—a people who have been frequently subsumed by various ideologies and political alliances. Operating within the comic frame, irony encourages the Bulgarian people not to place blame but assert themselves as political agents by examining their nostalgic representations and investments.

The ironic intervention and disruption of the liberation monument provided a space for speculation, interrogation, and outrage. Simply taking on the narrative of communism or capitalism in its singularity could not have produced the same kind of public engagement that the monument received. The uncanniness produced through the ironic transformation even encouraged people not interested in the monumental debate to question what shaped their present Bulgarian national identity. The juxtaposition of the two ideological poles provided the fluid space necessary for the Bulgarian people to situate their transitional narratives long enough to actually discuss them.

Finally, the ironic disruption created by the graffiti reveals an interesting fracture in the current identity and ideology of the Bulgarian people. The comic frame allows for a contradictory formation of communist nostalgia to couple with the inevitable "hero-worship" created by the promise of capitalism. Interestingly, the monument, much like the Bulgarian people, is not entirely willing to "pick" an ideological side. The confrontation of the two perspectives is what produces the momentarily engaged public. But rather than fully confront a deeply conflicted identity and mixed ideological loyalty, Bulgarians have chosen to keep both representations in dialogue. Where the conceptualization of the counter-monument would place the symbolic value of the monument in either the "old" or "newly vandalized" monument, the rhetorical (comic) framing of the historical and ideological space allow the ironic monumental to

engage multiple perspectives and various publics.  In many ways, the attention drawn to both ideological positions creates an ethical space of deliberation—ethical, in that, both perspectives receive commemorative space and any invested public may contribute to the dialogue.[63]

## CONCLUSIONS ON CAPTAIN AMERICA

Whereas Hungarians moved their communist past outside of town and created a space of political mockery, Bulgarians are symbolically and ideologically stuck between their past and present.  In the contested political space of Sofia, the promise of one ideology crashes into the fleeting promise of another. It appears that Bulgarians have the unusually difficult task of embracing an ideological transition with the promise of individual freedom while simultaneously recognizing that individualism comes with substantial social and financial hardship.  It is possible that the unfulfilled promise of capitalism prevents Bulgarians from letting go of their former narrative of communism both physically and psychologically. It is also possible that choosing not to choose (consciously or unconsciously) keeps the *promise* of both ideologies alive.

It is precisely because Bulgarian identity is trapped at an ideological crossroad that the ironic monumental disruption is so revealing of a larger political sentiment.  The new message constructed into the old monument asks that both capitalism and communism come into dialogue for the Bulgarian people.  The juxtaposition of both perspectives reveals that the citizens of Bulgaria are continuing to couch their contradictory loyalties.  This chapter demonstrated how Bulgarians produce their historical (and conflicting ideological) narratives within a comic frame that uses nostalgia as a way to mediate the past and make sense of the present.   While some cultural critics and scholars have accused those embracing nostalgia of misplacing their political obligations, this case study has shown how understanding or representing memories of the past

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through a comic frame creates space for an ironic intervention.  Specifically, in the case of these

commemorative sites in Eastern and Southeastern Europe, ironic monumental disruptions

become valuable tools for evaluating transitional histories with contradictory allegiances.  As

this case study has shown, Bulgarians do not seek to fully reassign a new identity to their historic

sites; rather, they seem to be more comfortable with the irresolution created by contested

interpretations.  In other words, Bulgarians appear to be committed to a space of ideological

confusion that finally allows *them* the ability to define and critique the past and present on their

own terms.

The next chapter examines the potential of physically constructing ironic representations

into monuments.  The Bruce Lee monument in Mostar, Bosnia, appears to be an ironic

contradiction.  Lee stands for peace after a time of war.  The martial arts icon has no ties to the

Balkans or their genocidal war but he represents the multicultural ethic that Yugoslavia once

embraced. Of course, Yugoslavia's former multicultural ethic was a central force that led to the

devastating civil war among the people of Serbia, Bosnia, and Croatia.

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[1] The graffiti caption in the second image says: "In step with the times."
[2] Ivan Dikov, "The Soviet Army Monument in Sofia: Keep It but Explain It!,"
*Novinite Insider*, Features Section, January 27, 2011, http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=124623.
[3] Dikov, "The Soviet Army Monument in Sofia,"
[4] See Zala Volcic, "Yugo-Nostalgia: Cultural Memory and Media in the Former Yugoslavia," Critical Studies in Media Communication, Vol 24, 1, (March 2007), 21-38.
[5] Ivan Dikov, "The Soviet Army Monument in Sofia: Keep It but Explain It!,"
*Novinite Insider*, Features Section, January 27, 2011, http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=124623.
[6] Clive Leviev-Sawyer, "Monumental Controversy" *Sofia Echo*, June 24, 2011, accessed on April 24, 2012, http://sofiaecho.com/2011/06/24/1111895_monumental-controversy
[7] Parkinson, "It's a Bird!"
[8] Ivan Dikov, "The Soviet Army Monument in Sofia: Keep It but Explain It!,"
*Novinite Insider*, Features Section, January 27, 2011, http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=124623.
[9] Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics,* 252.
[10] Rodgers, "Russian Acts against 'False' History."
[11] Leviev-Sawyer, "Monumental Controversy."
[12] Parkinson, "It's a Bird!"
[13] Parkinson, "It's a Bird!"
[14] Parkinson, "It's a Bird!"
[15] Parkinson, "It's a Bird!"
[16] Parkinson, "It's a Bird!"

[17] Parkinson, "It's a Bird!"

[18] Parkinson, "It's a Bird!"

[19] Parkinson, "It's a Bird!"

[20] Parkinson, "It's a Bird!"

[21] Nikolai Voukov, "Death and the Desecrated: Monuments of the Socialist Past in Post-1989 Bulgaria," *Anthropology of East Europe Review: Central Europe, East Europe and Eurasia* 21, 2 (Autumn 2003) accessed on August 23, 2011, http://scholarworks.iu.edu/journals/index.php/aeer/article/viewArticle/344.

[22] Clive Leviev-Sawyer, "Monumental Controversy" *Sofia Echo*, June 24, 2011, http://sofiaecho.com/2011/06/24/1111895_monumental-controversy

[23] "Painting the Soviet army monument is vandalism: Bulgarian Minister of Culture," *Sofia Echo,* June 20, 2011, accessed on July 19, 2011, http://sofiaecho.com/2011/06/20/1109190_painting-the-soviet-army-monument-is-vandalism-bulgarian-minister-of-culture.

[24] Ivan Dikov, "The Soviet Army Monument in Sofia: Keep It but Explain It!," *Novinite Insider*, Features Section, January 27, 2011, http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=124623.

[25] Dikov, "The Soviet Army Monument."

[26] Dikov, "The Soviet Army Monument."

[27] Dikov, "The Soviet Army Monument."

[28] Dikov, "The Soviet Army Monument."

[29] Dikov, "The Soviet Army Monument."

[30] Joe Parkinson, "It's a Bird! It's a Plane! It's…A Hero of the Bulgarian Revolution? Mixed Feelings toward Communist Past Make for Monumental Arguments in Sofia, *Wall Street Journal Online*, September 28, 2011, accessed on March 4, 2012, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111903703604576586460192203834.html.

[31] Linda Hutcheon, Irony, Nostalgia and the Postmodern, University of Toronto English Library, January 19, 1998, http://www.library.utoronto.ca/utel/criticism/hutchinp.html.

[32] Toby Manhire, "Banksy of Bulgaria."

[33] Clive Leviev-Sawyer, "Monumental Controversy" *Sofia Echo*, June 24, 2011, accessed on April 24, 2012, http://sofiaecho.com/2011/06/24/1111895_monumental-controversy

[34] Boiko Penchev, "The Superheroes of Soviet Sofia," Dnevnik, July 8, 2011, http://www.presseurop.eu/en/content/article/765421-superheroes-soviet-sofia

[35] Penchev, "The Superheroes of Soviet Sofia."

[36] Parkinson, "It's a Bird!"

[37] Toby Manhire, "Banksy of Bulgaria' paints the Red Army pop," *New Zealand Listener*, July 13, 2011, http://www.listener.co.nz/commentary/sofia-bulgaria-monument-pop-art/

[38] "Bulgarian Sofia Municipality to Discuss Controversial Soviet Monument's Future," *Bulgarian News*, June 29, 2011, accessed on August 20, 2011,
 http://www.thebulgariannews.com/view_news.php?id=129739.

[39] I say they are different with some trepidation as the monument is understood as " holding" the memory and keeping it visible.  While it does function as a public marker, it is precisely because the marker is such a visible marker of the oppressive Stalinist years that it creates so much controversy.

[40] Voukov, "Death and the Desecrated."

[41] Voukov, "Death and the Desecrated."

[42] Volcic, Yugo-nostalgia, 25.

[43] Fredric Jameson, Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), 150.

[44] Volcic, Yugo-nostalgia, 25-26.

[45] Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," in *Postmodern Culture*, ed. H. Foster (London, England: Pluto Press, 1985), 118.

[46] Or in this case, undermines the very real political potential of communism by remembering it as a historical chapter rather than a political philosophy.

[47] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic books, 2002), xviii.

[48] Parkinson, "It's a Bird!"

[49] "Painting the Soviet army monument is vandalism."

[50] "Painting the Soviet army monument is vandalism."

[51] "Painting the Soviet army monument is vandalism."

[52] "Painting the Soviet army monument is vandalism." In reality many countries have faced similar acts of sabotage with some even having fatal consequences. In 2007, one man was stabbed to death when ethnic Russians rioted in protest against Estonia's decision to remove a Bronze Soldier statue dedicated to the Soviet Union. See Tom Parfitt, "Russia not amused at Red Army statue re-invented as Superman and friends," *The Guardian*, June 22, 2011, accessed on August 20, 2011, http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jun/22/russia-red-army-memorial-painted.

[53] Emily Allen, "Is it a bird? Is it a plane? No, it's Superman and friends... painted on Soviet war statue by the Banksy of Bulgaria," *Daily Mail*, June 17, 2011, accessed on August 20, 2011, http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2004814/Is-bird-Is-plane-No-Superman-friends-painted-Soviet-statue-Banksy-Bulgaria.html#ixzz1Vj2F8o91.

[54] Parfitt, "Russia not amused."

[55] Clive Leviev-Sawyer, "In Pace with the Times," *Sofia Echo*, Editorial page, January 6, 2012.

[56] "Painting the Soviet army monument is vandalism: Bulgarian Minister of Culture," *Sofia Echo,* June 20, 2011, accessed on July 19, 2011, http://sofiaecho.com/2011/06/20/1109190_painting-the-soviet-army-monument-is-vandalism-bulgarian-minister-of-culture.

[57] "Soviet war statue in Bulgaria gets a pop art facelift," *Blog*, June 19, 2011, http://ikono.org/2011/06/soviet-war-statue-in-bulgaria-gets-a-pop-art-facelift/

[58] **"**Soviet war statue in Bulgaria gets a pop art facelift.**"**

[59] Street art on the Soviet Army monument in Sofia, Bulgaria, Blog, June 12, 2011, http://bloggiestbloggyblog.com/2011/06/21/street-art-on-the-soviet-army-monument-in-sofia-bulgaria/

[60] Hugh Dalziel Duncan, Communication and Social Order (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002), xxvi.

[61] Penchev, "The Superheroes of Soviet Sofia."

[62] Penchev, "The Superheroes of Soviet Sofia."

[63] As recently as February 2012, the monument was yet again vandalized; this time, an unknown group attached the Guy Fawkes image more widely known as the Anonymous mask to protest the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) legislation talks in Western and Eastern Europe. As such, the liberation monument continues to be a symbolically valuable site for public deliberation.

## Chapter Five: Bruce Lee's Broken Staff:

## Bosnia Battles both East and West



Figure 5.1

Tourist Attractions: Bombed-out bank next to a park and the shelling of city streets in Mostar, Bosnia

## POST-YUGOSLAVIA: THE BALKANS FACE AN IDEOLOGICAL CROSSROADS

Bosnia, and to a lesser degree Serbia, maintain the remnants of dilapidated buildings and sidewalks riddled with bullet holes for the sake of war tourism. In Serbia's case, much of the destruction is the product of strategic NATO bombings during the wars of the 1990s. At the metaphorical epicenter of the destruction is the town of Mostar, Bosnia. Mostar was home to a diverse population of Serbs, Croats, and Bosniaks before the war. The city appeared to be the multicultural ideal with mosques and Catholic cathedrals occupying the same city blocks. During the reconstruction of Mostar, many artists and intellectual critics expressed concern that the rebuilding the city would lead to the erasure of history. They suggested that the only thing worse than a genocide fueled by a failed dream of multiculturalism would be its erasure from memory. They insisted that the people of the former Yugoslavia needed a way to reckon with

the failed experiment of their country by creating art that fit with the contemporary desire for peace.[1]

In hopes of acknowledging a contested past, the Urban Movement and the Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Arts came together to create the Bruce Lee monument in Mostar, Bosnia, as a part of the "De/construction of Monuments" project. The Bruce Lee monument was the brainchild of Mr. Veselin Gatalo, President of the Urban Movement in Mostar and Dr. Nino Raspudić a university professor in Zagreb. The Urban Movement explained that, without a commemorative intervention, racist political agendas of cultural amnesia and violence would proliferate.[2] But Mostar is not the first city to build an unusual commemorative response in the former Yugoslavia. As mentioned in the introduction, Rocky Balboa, Bob Marley, Tarzan, Samantha Fox, and most recently, George W. Bush have all been erected in the Balkans in the last ten years. All of these monuments vary in terms of why and when they were constructed. The people responsible for the monuments suggest that the community needed a direct or indirect way to work through the political and ideological aftermath of the Yugoslav War. Thus, it is no coincidence that the monument to Bruce Lee sits in the same park as the monument to the fallen Old Bridge across the street from the skeletal remains of a bombed-out bank.

The Urban Movement decided that, rather than try to place blame on any particular party by representing a history of the Balkan conflict, they would erect a bronze statue of Bruce Lee to celebrate more noble ideals of justice and multiculturalism. The Urban Movement chose Bruce Lee as their representative figure because they were "confident of [his] noble mission to bring us back to the streets.… [Bruce Lee is] a popular icon, a champion of justice whose ethnic background is absolutely irrelevant to us all."[3] Curiously, the actor Bruce Lee had no historical ties whatsoever with the country of Bosnia or the former Yugoslavia, but Gatalo explains that

"Lee was a hero to teenagers all over the country in the 1970s and 1980s."[4]  In other words, when support for communism in Yugoslavia began to wane, the people looked to communist China and capitalist America for their vicarious action hero escapism.  Unfortunately, within a decade's time, the people of Yugoslavia would see their country spiral into chaos as violence became a daily occurrence.

What the Urban Movement and the supporters of the monument did not anticipate was that the monument would quickly become a site of contestation and public deliberation.  Many Bosnian citizens who were still reeling from the wars of the 1990s were not interested in honoring Bruce Lee's stated values; instead, they read him as yet another manifestation of the out-of-touch political machine in Serbia and Bosnia—the same political machine that failed to pick up the pieces after the war.  As such, newspapers published editorials about the monument's politics or lack thereof.[5]  The anxiety over Lee's meaning resulted in debates about what his physical presence meant.  Was he positioned defensively as promised, or was his nunchuck leaning toward the country of Serbia?  The questions, while seemingly insignificant, produced tremendous acrimony about historical grievances and failed political promises.

This chapter examines the Bruce Lee monument in Mostar, Bosnia as an example of an ironic monumental disruption.  While the previous chapter explored a temporary ironic disruption constructed into a monument, this chapter explores the political potential of a monument constructed *as* a permanent or on-going ironic monumental disruption.  In this chapter, I argue that the historical narrative of communism, the Yugoslav War, and the ideological transition to capitalism have created a comic frame similar to the one seen in Bulgaria that is well-suited for an ironic monumental disruption.  Both countries have sizable populations expressing nostalgia for a time before capitalism or the war.  Neither of these

populations is creating commemorative works that place blame (representatively speaking) on one particular entity or ideology in an attempt to achieve closure and embrace their current situation. But the comic frame in Bosnia is distinct from Bulgaria's in that much of their [Bosnian's] ambivalence toward the past and present is the product of a civil war that makes nostalgia for the past particularly difficult to understand.

To evaluate the relationship between the comic frame and the rhetorical act of the ironic monumental disruption, this case study examines extreme nostalgia in an ideologically ambivalent place (Yugoslavia). Research began in 2005 at the time of the erection of the monument and the local and national debates which followed. I coupled the debate surrounding the monument with stories of Yugoslavia's creation as a communist state and its dissolution to develop the comic frame. Finally, within several months, the monument was desecrated and subsequently removed in order to protect it from further damage. Interviews were conducted after the monument's removal to examine how the erection and destruction of the monument affected local Bosnians (and the memory of Yugoslavia more broadly).

In order to prove that the ironic monumental disruption is, in fact, an ironic monumental disruption that intervenes within a comic frame to produce deliberative spaces, the following sections examine the rhetorical narrative of the Yugoslav War, the new post-Yugoslav identity the war produced, and the lingering sentiment of Yugonostalgia. Next, the chapter examines how irony has coupled with nostalgia in the monument to Bruce Lee in Mostar, Bosnia, to produce a surprisingly ethical space of commemoration for those still struggling with the traumatic memories of war. All of these entangled sources of identity lay the foundation for the ultimate destruction and removal of the pop monument, which encouraged Bosnians to articulate their interpretations on the monument, local politics, and misplaced nostalgia.

Figure 5.2: The Removal of Bruce Lee in Bosnia [6]

## THE END OF MULTICULTURALISM AND A POST-YUGOSLAV IDENTITY

The Yugoslav War was undeniably traumatic as Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians found themselves murdering their neighbors only to later mourn the loss of multiculturalism. Long before a bloody civil war led to the Balkanization of Southeastern Europe as we know it today, the country of Yugoslavia was an ethnically and religiously diverse patchwork of Slavic identities. Even though the configuration of a Southern Slavic identity was a relatively recent phenomenon created by Josip Broz Tito after World War II, as a leader he was largely successful in convincing the citizens of Yugoslavia to identify politically and culturally with the new Slavic community.

While Chapter two outlined the history leading up to the Yugoslav War, it is important to note that many scholars identify a distinct shift in Yugoslav identity following the 1986 publication of the Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. Many scholars suggest that the memorandum was the first act of aggression on the part of the Serbian government under the leadership of Slobodan Milosevic. In the Memorandum, "Leading Serb

writers and scholars… gave notice of a public turn in the ideology of the Serb intelligentsia. The memorandum signaled the shift from the promotion of Yugoslavism, colored with a tinge of Serbian patriotism, to outright Serbian nationalism and even pan-Serbism."[7] Subscribing to this doctrine meant that the Serbian elite were abandoning humanistic Marxism entirely.

Another important turning point came on June 28, 1989, during the celebration of the 600th Anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo (where Serbs fought the Ottoman Empire). In honor of the event, Milosevic called a mass rally for Serbs living in the area now known as Kosovo. Milosevic insisted that Serbia had suffered too much for Yugoslavia and that wherever "Serb bones lie buried in the soil" that was Serbian land.[8]  Furthermore, Milosevic and the Serbian nationalists claimed that "Bolshevik-Titoism" almost led to their national extinction.[9]  Scholar Nicholas Miller described this pivotal political rally as the moment when "the ethnic model for political action defeated the civil."[10]

By the end of Slobodan Milosevic's 13-year reign, Serbia was on the brink of chaos.  A mix of nationalist extremists and mobsters had taken control of the governance of the state. Serbia's gross domestic output was less than half of what it had been when Milosevic took his seat, industrial output was at around a quarter of the 1988 level, and hyperinflation had taken hold, making the Serbian currency nearly worthless in the mid-nineties.[11]

In the wake of the destruction of the wars, all of the respective leaders of the republics claimed that they were within their rights to fight for the "national liberation of 'their' territory from foreign occupation or aggression."[12]  Orthodox Serbs saw themselves as liberating their land from the Islamic Ottoman occupiers.  The Bosniaks were defending themselves against Serb oppression.[13]  Kosovars were fighting on behalf of Albanians targeted by Serbs, and the Serbs were fighting against the Croatian and Bosnian Muslim as they [the Serbs] sought to protect

themselves from "Roman Catholic (Croat) and Islamic (Bosnian Muslim) rule."[14]  In this narrative, there was no truly innocent party.

In 1999, The Hague indicted Milosevic for war crimes in Kosovo and later gave the additional charge of genocide for his alleged involvement in the massacre of 7,000 Muslim men at Srebrenica in July 1995.[15]  His trial began in 2001, with Milosevic refusing to recognize the charges, claiming that Yugoslavia had experienced a civil war, which did not constitute genocide.[16]  Before sentencing, Milosevic suspiciously died in his cell from a heart attack in 2006.  He was never formally punished for his crimes, but his legacy haunts the Balkans to this day.

At the heart of the current instability facing a post-Yugoslav identity are the traumatic events leading up to and following the war.  Extreme nationalism manipulated by power-hungry leaders transformed a cohesive federation of Southern Slavs into a disjointed collection of contentious national identities. While establishing a *former* identity might not strike many in the West, who have relatively "stable," long-standing  national identities, as important, it is a political and cultural imperative for people facing transitional histories.  Not only does acknowledging a former identity allow for a coherent historical narrative, but it also creates a striking point of opposition for those hoping to take their country in a new direction.

Currently, the republics of the former Yugoslavia, more than any other Eastern European country, are struggling to determine how to understand and represent their former and future national identities.  In fact, Yugoslav national identity is both the culprit and the victim of the Yugoslav War.  Shirin Deylami explains that, "claims to nationality operate differently than other identity claims. This is because national identity is instantiated through sameness rather than difference."[17]  Michael Shapiro adds that a stable national identity "embodies a coherent

culture, united on the basis of a shared descent."[18]  But the desire for sameness and coherency ultimately led to Yugoslavia's unraveling.  Yugoslavia tried to encourage loyalty to a larger nation, but the relatively recent constructions of a Southern Slav identity coupled with an economic crisis made coherency impossible to maintain.  Eventually, the lack of a longstanding historical (Yugoslav) identity led to the rise of nationalism, which was informed, in large part, by nostalgia for a past that never was and a belief that too many sacrifices were made for a Southern Slav identity.

## YUGONOSTALGIA AND THE COMIC FRAME: WHERE COMMUNISM MEETS CAPITALISM

The complicated entanglement of national identity claims, misplaced ideological loyalties, and nostalgia created a commemorative nightmare for Southern Slavs hoping to acknowledge the past with the intent of putting it behind them.  Because understanding, much less collective understanding, proved so difficult, the Urban Movement along with local artists looked elsewhere for answers.  Specifically, the organization looked East and West in hopes of finding a history more to their liking.  This is precisely the historical revisionism that Jameson wrote about when he stated that nostalgia prevents the "lived possibility of experiencing history in some active way."[19]  But the active engagement of history that Jameson craves cannot be forced upon traumatized subjects; rather, some publics will need more time and distance to make sense of their lived experiences.

Curiously, the pop monuments of the former Yugoslavia actually create space for the possibility of an active engagement with the past by encouraging further memory work within a comic frame.  Cheree Carlson explains that, "comedy is defined in the Burkean fashion as a perspective that reduces social tension and adds balance to our world view."[20]  Reducing social

tension is advantageous for the day-to-day existence of communities, but the entanglement of conflicted memories along with transitional identities makes "balance" difficult to achieve.   In this case, the comic frame houses a war-torn Yugoslavian identity and a nostalgic desire to return to Yugoslavia.  Thus, the frame holds nostalgic contradictions in the form of Yugonostalgia.

While Chapter four examined the Bulgarian people's longing for the time before capitalism, Yugoslavia has an even more strained relationship with nostalgia.  Many citizens of former Yugoslavia paradoxically long for the return of the Yugoslav state.  Curiously, the prosperity and peace many citizens nostalgically recall was made possible through the (sometimes) forceful suppression of ethnic and religious differences.   The Yugoslav state was unable to maintain cultural and political unity and dissolved into a bloody civil war by the end of the century.  In recent years, many Eastern European scholars have explored the idea of Yugonostalgia as it continues to shaped public memory in the Balkans.[21]  Yugonostalgia is a "revisiting of the collective experience of citizens whose individual lives were embedded in the social life of the collapsed state."[22]   Some scholars view this affective longing for the past as politically and emotionally counter-productive while others have insisted that Yugonostalgia produces a connection to the past that is culturally valuable.[23]

Regardless of the ethics of nostalgia, the people of the former Yugoslavia have, by choice or by default, embraced a memory of the past that whitewashes many of the crimes committed in the name of their country.  Evoking a vision of the past to promote politics in the present is nothing new for the people of the Balkans. Throughout the 1980s and '90s, politicians capitalized on the discontent of their citizens. As fewer resources became available, more skirmishes erupted near various national borders.  Politicians like Slobodan Milosevic and Franjo Tudjman suggested that the Serbian and Croatian people, respectively, were forced into an

uneasy union based on Slavic identity rather than their "natural" cultural or religious affiliations. Milosevic and Tudjman's arguments relied on what Svetlana Boym calls a "restorative nostalgia," which capitalizes on a nationalist sentiment aimed at "reviving, rebuilding, and providing an 'awakening for the masses.'"[24] Milosevic used the idea of Kosovo as a sacred homeland constantly under siege by the Albanians to rally the Serbian people into action. Tudjman insisted that Croatia, like Slovenia, had more similarities with Western Europe than the Balkans. Consequently, Milosevic and Tudjman were able to rhetorically construct a (nostalgic) victimized national identity that was in need of military defense.

While Milosevic was able to successfully create nostalgia for a nationalist-based Serbian identity, it was the surprising nostalgia that developed after the war which shocked public memory scholars. For Boym, the people of the former Yugoslavia are expressing nostalgia for nostalgia. In other words, the people of Yugoslavia long for the construction of an identity shaped by a false nostalgia. Additionally, they are mourning the loss of an unsustainable dream while not recognizing their own participation in its failure.

Public memory scholars other than Boym have analyzed the role of nostalgia in Southeastern Europe as well. Dubravka Ugresic has adopted the position that nostalgia can be a productive reckoning with the past but can also fall victim to a capitalist contradiction.[25] For Ugresic, Yugonostalgia serves as a way to repackage the socialist era so that consumers can feel good about buying into it. Finally, Zala Volcic has written extensively on Yugonostalgia building on the last two authors to create more categories of nostalgic inquiry. Volcic suggests that Boym argues that restorative nostalgia "attempts a transhistorical reconstruction of the lost home… [It] does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition."[26] Alternatively, reflective nostalgia "rests on the ambivalences of human longing and belonging and does not shy

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away from the contradictions of modernity... [it] thrives in the longing itself, and delays the homecoming wistfully, ironically, desperately."[27]

Volcic believes that both restorative and reflective nostalgia can be productive for identities and ideologies in transition, but she fears that Yugonostalgia has capitalized on a form of mourning that erases the violence of the past. Volcic is convinced that Yugoslavia suffers from a form of nostalgia "that positions itself as a therapeutic longing for the past" by hiding the powerful structures that benefit from such an uncritical perspective.[28] Volcic concludes, "The threat of nostalgia lies in its benign form, which allows the various social actors to rewrite and repackage for resale the years of Yugoslav unity. It also allows them to continue to deny responsibility for the wars and their aftermath."[29]

For the purposes of this discussion, the crux of the argument relies on the recognition that irony encourages those longing for an idealized or unrealized past to question both their current desires and what it is they *think* they have lost. In fact, according to Volcic, the hope to return to a time when Yugoslavia was still possible is an inherently ironic desire. Volcic explains,

> These celebrants of Yugo-nostalgia suggest they can resuscitate what was best about the old Yugoslavia, now that it has been destroyed. In this respect, Yugo-nostalgia serves as an avoidance mechanism that postpones indefinitely a crucial reckoning with the socialist past and the role it played in exacerbating the tensions that erupted in the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s.[30]

Similarly, Croatian author Dubravka Ugresic expresses concern that the irony of Yugonostalgia is lost on its enablers. Volcic summarizes Ugresic stating, "If socialism relied on the promise of a Utopia yet to come, capitalism feeds on a sense of loss—a lack to be filled in with consumer goods."[31] Therefore, "Yugonostalgia mobilizes a sense of loss that is, ironically, borrowed and exploited by the postsocialist promoters of capitalist commerce."[32] Ugresic's insights are interesting for two reasons. One, it is poetically ironic that Yugonostalgia yearns for a time in the

past when the *promise* of a future dream was possible, precisely because it was unrealized. Two, the complete contradiction of lived experience and historical revisionism suggests that a space of ironic reflection may be the best strategy currently available for public reconciliation.

The following section describes the erection of the Bruce Lee monument and the reaction to its subsequent removal. Additionally, I explore the ironic elements of the Bruce Lee monument before moving onto the larger ethical implications of its physical and symbolic demise. Finally, the section examines how the ironic monumental disruption is particularly well-suited to intervene in nostalgic narratives and create space for public deliberation in the aftermath of war.



| Figure 5.3 | Figure 5.4 |

Bruce Lee monument in Mostar, Bosnia and the pedestal after the monument was removed

## BRUCE LEE'S REPRESENTATIONAL POLITICS: AN IRONIC MONUMENTAL DISRUPTION IS REMOVED BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

On November, 26, 2005, the Urban Movement along with the people of Mostar erected the monument to Bruce Lee; within a few days, someone vandalized it. Lee's nunchuck was broken off and the pedestal on which he stood was marked with graffiti. The Urban Movement initially cleaned off the monument but vandals targeted it again. Finally, the city removed the monument for "repairs," but it never returned. Dunja Blazevic, who was involved with the "De/construction of Monuments" project, and is currently on the board of the Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Arts, explained that they [the board] were all hopeful that the monument would be taken out of storage and placed back on display because it "was such a shame" to remove it. [33] Local Bosnians within Mostar have had a very different reaction to its removal. In an article in the *Daily Times*, an anonymous local proclaimed, "Once again we've shown what Balkan savageness is!"[34]

While the immediate response might have been one of disbelief or disgust, more recent interviews suggest that the people of Bosnia are rather cynical about the monument and its desecration. One woman explained that the monument seemed like an impractical publicity stunt. She suggested that people around town were annoyed by the monument because the money should go to people who were genuinely suffering.[35] She explained that the erection of the monument had a negative impact on the town because it drew attention to how little had changed.[36] Furthermore, she claimed that people around town believed that the city did not remove the monument because it was in harm's way, but rather, because its repeated defacement drew further attention to the conflict still brewing locally. She speculated that local politicians removed the monument because rather than connoting peace, it revealed that tensions within the

city were as bad as ever. The frequent attacks got people talking and that encouraged further criticism of the current political system.[37] Another Serbian man simply explained, "That monument is a joke."[38]

Initially, the Bruce Lee monument garnered tremendous media attention as the international community tried to make sense of Yugoslavia's history in the context of this commemorative act and vice versa. For the most part, the reaction was playful with a few headlines bordering on the condescending. NPR called it a "Unique Statue Choice," while several other news outlets chose to parody one of Lee's films, *Enter the Dragon*.[39] Other outlets withheld judgment but were perplexed as to the meaning of the monument.

On the most basic level, the Bruce Lee monument is an ironic choice to symbolize peace as the man behind the statue is internationally known as the most recognizable face of kung-fu fighting. He made his reputation along with his tremendous wealth as the star of violent entertainment. The Urban Movement also seemingly contradicts themselves when they stated that Bruce Lee could virtually offend no one; yet, they positioned him facing north in a traditional defensive martial arts pose. The choice to have Lee facing north was intentional as the UM feared that, in any other position, Lee would appear aggressive toward Croats to the west or Serbians to the east.[40]

Also, Lee is a particularly curious choice because he is a visible symbol of the Eastern world meeting the Western. His success can largely be attributed to the fact that he was able to appeal to both America and China, Hollywood and martial arts. Yugoslavia, on the other hand, worked tirelessly to avoid aligning themselves with either Eastern or Western ideological positions. Zala Volcic explains, "With the emergence of the Non-Aligned Movement in the 1950s, the 'neither-East-nor-West' positioning became one of the main mantras of Yugoslavia's

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political identity."[41]  So in an attempt to construct a model of peace, justice, and multiculturalism, the Urban Movement relied on both the East and West in order to offer a path for the future of Yugoslavia. Whether the group was intentionally positioning themselves in opposition to NAM politics is unclear.   The fact that Bruce Lee served as the ideal multicultural representation for Bosnians suggests that an old sense of identity (refusing ideological alignment through NAM) is fading or forgotten.

Beyond the ironic decision to construct a Bruce Lee monument, the monument itself is a valuable example of an ironic monumental disruption.  Bruce Lee as a Hollywood celebrity is not ironic; Bruce Lee as the epitome of peace and multiculturalism situated in the middle of a war-torn city with no ties to him whatsoever is decidedly ironic.   The monument defies commemorative expectations and redefines what constitutes a valuable public memory.  It is not only the artifact itself that produces irony; the monument's ironic read is entirely contingent upon the viewing audience's engagement with it.  But while the monument has an uncanny— even illogical presence—it serves as an important disruption and placeholder of meaning for the Bosnian people who are still coming to terms with their historical and ideological narratives.

The monument to Bruce Lee demonstrates the rhetorical power of ironic monumental disruptions.  Its erection created tremendous debate, and its frequent defacement led to discussions of the failed political policies of an inept Bosnian government.  While people still strongly express nostalgia for Yugoslavia throughout Bosnia and Serbia, the citizens of these countries also recognize that the tenuous union they formed ended in an unspeakably violent cultural and political implosion.  The idealized (or failed) cultural narrative of Yugoslavia as it is depicted through the monument to Bruce Lee creates enough confrontation with the past to open up discursive space for further deliberation.   Consequently, the destruction and eventual

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removal of the Bruce Lee monument encouraged the Bosnian people to critically examine their lives after the war; a discussion which was unthinkable immediately following the trauma and tragedy of the 1990s.

**MULTICULTURAL MARTIAL ARTISTS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTANCE**

On a theoretical level, the Lee monument creates important space for the discussion of trauma, identity, and representation. As referenced in the introduction, creating and representing the narrative of the Yugoslav War was—and is—a virtual impossibility. While a genocide of that magnitude defies comprehension, the relative newness of the events and the incoherency brought on by transitional ideologies further complicates and constrains the possibility of monumental representation.[42] In regards to the former, Jacques Lacan explains that traumatic events, such as genocide, refuse symbolism, and consequently articulation and understanding but that does not mean that the trauma does not continue to affect those subjected to it. He claims,

> Trauma, insofar as it has a repressing action, intervenes after the fact. At this specific moment, something of the subject becomes detached from the symbolic world that he is engaged in integrating. From then on, it will no longer be something belonging to the subject. The subject will no longer speak of it, will no longer integrate it. Nevertheless, it will remain there, somewhere.[43]

The monument to Lee creates a displacement of meaning that allows traumatized subjects access to an affective space that does not directly confront the idea of war. Local artists in the Balkans seem to recognize the limitations of comprehension and representation as well and instead have created affective rather than literal connections to the events of the 1990s. Channeling affect through monuments is nothing new; rather, it is *how* these artists chose to capture the affective dimensions of violence, nationalism, and prejudice that proved perplexing.

But it is likely precisely because Bruce Lee, Bob Marley, and others initially appear so nonthreatening and incomprehensible those local officials give them any public space at all. As

a case in point, the Bosnian government did not intervene or refuse the Urban Movement's request to erect a monument to Bruce Lee because they wrongfully assumed that it would go largely uncontested. Choosing a symbol simply because it seems inoffensive and removed from history is unusual to say the least; the fact that that inoffensive symbol ended up being highly contested, vandalized, and removed speaks to the undeniable but unstable political power of commemoration.

Even the man behind the monument chose the subject based on the fact that it could not possibility offend anyone. When *Christian Science Monitor* asked Gatalo to explain why the Urban Movement chose Lee, Gatalo responded, "He's far [enough] away from us that nobody can ask what he did during World War II, during World War I, or what his ancestors did under Turkey. He's... not Catholic, not Orthodox, not Muslim…. Bruce Lee is part of our idea of universal justice—that the good guys can win."[44] While the desire to "win" seems odd in this context and likely speaks to a decade's long war with no "winners," the newspaper did note that "the Bruce Lee tribute will stand as the only monument raised in postwar Bosnia without an uproar. Bruce's greatest virtue… is that he had no dog in the Balkans' centuries-old religious fight."[45]

Lee provided escapism from the harsh reality of Yugoslavia's collapse. The problem was that the Bosnian people did not seem entirely ready to escape the past; on some level, they seem to enjoy fantasizing about its possibility. What remains of this multicultural symbol of peace is an empty granite pedestal with Lee's name and several etchings that say "Snooki and Jwoww were here," along with a smattering of jokes and obscenities in both English and Bosnian. [46]

**COMMEMORATIVE ETHICS AND CONSUMPTION: HOW TO REPRESENT WAR**

Finally turning to the commemorative ethics of the Lee monument and its eventual

destruction and removal, the concept of the ironic monumental disruption proves valuable

precisely because it does not demand that people confront their past in a *particular* way; rather,

the rhetorical act of disruption simply asks its audience to bring all perspectives into a

momentary dialogue. Many scholars have suggested that it was—and is—the inability to create

a cohesive and coherent understanding of national identity after the war that has led to the

intrusion of a Western, capitalist-based mythos and the subsequent creation of non-representative

commemorative works.[47] Yet again, a transitional history that simultaneously admires and

admonishes both capitalism and communism is difficult to represent without reifying one

position over another.

Serbian visual artist Milica Tomic and others have explained that rather than confront the

devastating war that ended only a decade ago, Serbs, Bosnians, and Croats have instead chosen

to ascribe a new set of values to their countries by commemorating a history and multicultural

narrative that never was. Additionally, Volcic reiterates her concerns, stating, "The politics of

Yugoslav identity have not been eliminated but transformed and commodified within the context

of political and economic globalization. Capitalism warps the past in order to commodify it. This

impairs the chances for the emergence of real democratic reform based on the historical struggle

against authoritarianism."[48] While Volcic and Tomic are not wrong, the commodification and

consumption of Yugonostalgia in the current commemorative practices is not apolitical or anti-

democratic; it is the exact opposite.

In an interview with Tomic, she expressed concern that all of the Western, pop statues

came from a new culture of consumption and not production.[49] She, much like Volcic, feared

that a lack of understanding and identity encouraged a "turning to pop culture."[50] Tomic's

insights into popular culture and its obscuring effects are worth examining. Tomic creates a

binary between art and culture and says that art has the potential to create a rupture in meaning

that "produces social and political power," while culture, especially popular culture,

"domesticates the rupture."[51] She insists that the artist or intellectual's job is to force the rupture

and be a part of the "world of production not the world of consumption."[52]

Tomic insists that it is important "to produce a living memory not a political project;"

fortunately, the ironic monumental disruption of the Lee monument reveals that both realities are

possible.[53] The monument's ability to extend time and ironically play with nostalgic identities

creates space for subjects to interrogate their understanding of the war and its ideological

implosion. Interestingly, Tomic does not necessarily see the postponement of reckoning as an

inherently bad thing. She states, "You can't start thinking and producing theories and

remembering exactly in the moment when it happens or stops… you need time to understand

what happens.… [M]onuments [like Lee] are postponing the moment of reckoning."[54] Much

like Lacan, Tomic suggests that the memory is still there, somewhere, but creating time and

distance for this memory to express itself can be both politically productive and paralyzing.[55]

While Volcic and Tomic have important and valid critiques, they must also recognize that

Lee and its companion monuments are the product of a confrontational irony that longs for a

time when Yugoslavia was neither East or West. The promise of Yugoslavia was still possible

and monuments were frequently erected in its [the idea and the federation's] honor. As such, the

monument to Lee bridges several symbolic gaps in Yugoslavia's memory. First, it purports to

represent a multicultural ethic, a buzzword from the old Yugoslav days that led to the unraveling

of the very foundation of the former federation. Second, Lee channels the recent introduction of

capitalism as he represents both the East and West *while* drawing attention to the fact that Yugoslavia is noticeably absent.  Third, in Lee's destruction, the monument encourages people to question what underlying message the statue promotes and why that seemingly innocuous symbolism invites destruction.  Ultimately, the monument forces the various invested publics to forge complicated connections of identity, representation, and memory while questioning their contradictory understandings of past and present.

The deliberative potential of engaging and consuming even the most naïve commemorative work is precisely why the concept of the ironic monumental disruption is a useful tool of inquiry. While nostalgia could easily obscure real historical and material realities in the former Yugoslavia, the (act of the) ironic monumental disruption encourages an engagement with multiple ideological perspectives.  The erection of the Lee monument reawakened old memories and anxieties about the war, its meaning, and how it shapes the future of the Balkans.  Tomic confirmed the potential of the ironic monumental disruption when she stated: "Even if you do something in a naïve, wrong way, it still has big potential," to produce a living memory.[56]  She insists that "pop art has the potential of misleading or misinterpretation, but that is ok, I have nothing against it… even if it's not perfect, it brings its own knowledge, and by that, I mean, political and social power."[57]  She sees value in the Lee artifact because his commemoration draws further attention to the tragedy of a failed Yugoslavia and the inadequacy of static commemorative practices.

While Tomic's own political investments lean toward performance art, she is warming to the Bruce Lee statue.[58]  She explained that her initial concerns over this particular piece of art have changed.  She sees real political potential now that is has been erected *and* removed.[59]

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Tomic was intrigued that the removal of the monument had created a critical dialogue within the city of Mostar.

## RESPONDING TO IRONIC MONUMENTAL DISRUPTIONS: CONFRONTATIONS WITH COMMEMORATION

Out of all of the case studies, the defacement and subsequent removal of the Bruce Lee monument is the most confrontational example of an ironic monumental disruption and its deliberative potential. Bruce Lee's monument in Mostar, Bosnia, demonstrates how irony can serve as a mediator between both the memory of Yugoslavia and the extreme nationalism that led to its demise. Ironically, the rhetorical harnessing of nostalgia through comic frames produces both the longing for Yugoslavia and the nationalism which made the Slavic federation impossible. As stated before, the juxtaposition of irony and nostalgia provide productive frameworks from which to analyze traumatic histories. Consequently, this case study shows that physical confrontations with ironic monumental disruptions have the potential to create additional psychological and political benefits.

While the ironic monumental disruption encouraged the process of reflection and dialogue in the aftermath of the war, it was the violent confrontation and removal of the Bruce Lee monument that really garnered attention on the local level. Author Michael Taussig argues that "defacement in general tends simultaneously to unmask and to enhance the power of images."[60] Building on Taussig, John Peffer claims that such acts of vandalism are usually about "seeking attention, depriving an image of its power, and diminishing a political power by assailing its symbols."[61] He also states that examining these acts of vandalism is important because "we can witness individual attempts to come to terms with the problems of political and artistic representation, entangled as they have been, in the contradictory terms of [an outmoded]

ideology."[62] The erection and subsequent removal of the Bruce Lee statue shows that there is on-going nostalgia for both multiculturalism and nationalism even while recognizing that both manifested themselves in the failed experiment of Yugoslavia. In other words, Bruce Lee is a testament to irony and an acknowledgment that it is sometimes easier to live with contradictions that obscure tragedies.

Consequently, the other pop monuments appearing in Yugoslavia have the potential to provide productive spaces of reflection as well—especially when traumatic histories are uncovered through metaphorical and physical acts of desecration. Recognizing the interdependence of nostalgia (as it is produced through a comic frame), irony, and desecration in the former Yugoslavia, Bruce Lee will likely not be the last monument constructed and destroyed while acknowledging the utopian dream of Yugoslavia. For now, even the memory of Lee [and the leftover pedestal] serves as an ironic monumental disruption that transforms public space and creates anxiety-provoking discursive openings for Bosnians to engage.

In a final note on irony and nostalgia, the pedestal of the former Bruce Lee monument stands in clear view of a giant cross on the hillside. This hill is known as Hum Hill and it marks the spot where Catholic Croatian snipers and Orthodox Serbs murdered Bosniak civilians. The local Catholic Church constructed the cross in 2000 so that they could "spread the fruit of peace to all sides of the world."[63] The Muslim population in town said that the cross was disrespectful, but Catholic groups claimed that Ottoman (Muslim) Turks built the Old Bridge and that Christians deserved a symbol of their own.[64] The cross on Hum Hill is particularly painful because the hill served as the site of a sniper's nest where Catholic Croat soldiers murdered hundreds of Bosniaks. Literally and figuratively, whoever controlled the hill controlled the entire city.[65]

It is perfectly poetic that Bruce Lee's pedestal stands in the shadow of Hum Hill. The scars of war remain visible and the inability to peacefully reconcile multiculturalism lives on. The removal of the monument by city officials was the impetus that encouraged people to talk more freely about inept city politics and political violence.[66] Regardless of what the Urban Movement intended, the Bruce Lee monument has become an important symbol of the government promoting politics over the welfare of its people. Most importantly, the former monument to Bruce Lee reminds the people of Mostar that the past still casts a shadow on the present.

To conclude this case study, the Bruce Lee monument shows the political potential of the concept of the ironic monumental disruption for monumentality. This chapter demonstrated how the Lee monument is an ironic monumental disruption that represents a narrative directly contradicting its stated ideals and the historical reality of the former Yugoslavia. Put simply, a comic frame situates the monument and gives the artifact and the memory it represents more historical, political, and memorial context. Thus, the monument relies on the audience to engage it and give it its representational power. Additionally, the monument to Lee serves as a disruption of commemorative space that allows Bosnians psychological distance so that they can try to untangle their relationship to the Yugoslav War. The monument creates distance by indirectly drawing attention to the nostalgic fantasy many Bosnians express about Yugoslavia. The monument also shows that one memory can be symbolically replaced with another. Finally, the ultimate destruction and removal of the monument shows that Yugoslavians still need more deliberative spaces to work through their past in the present. The next chapter builds upon the conceptualization of the ironic monumental disruption to show how irony interacts with a tragic frame to produce decidedly different deliberative spaces.

Figure 5.5                                        Figure 5.6

Close view of Lee pedestal and Cross on top of Hum Hill in Mostar, Bosnia

[1] "Timeline," Grupa Spomenik/ Monument Group, accessed on July 4, 2011,
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[2] Dunja Blažević, "De/construction of Monument," Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art, accessed on April 12,
2010, http://www.projekt-relations.de/en/explore/deconstruction/index.php.
[3] Blažević, "De/construction of Monument
[4] "In Brief: Bruce Lee comes to Bosnia," *The Guardian*, 29 November 2005,
http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2005/nov/29/news1
[5] "In Brief: Bruce Lee comes to Bosnia,"
[6] "The Lost Bruce Lee Sculpture of Mostar," *Atlas Obscura: A Compendium of the World's Wonders, Curiosities,
and Esoterica*, Retrieved on August 20, 2012, http://atlasobscura.com/place/bruce-lee-sculpture-in-mostar
[7] Norman Naimark*, Fires of Hatred: Ethnic cleansing and twentieth century Europe* (Boston: Harvard University
Press, 2002), 149.
[8] Naimark*, Fires of Hatred,* 152.
[9] Naimark*, Fires of Hatred,* 153.
[10] Nicholas. J. Miller, Between Nation and State: Serbian Politics in Croatia before the First World War (Pittsburgh:
University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997), 179.
[11] Tom Gallagher, *Balkans after the Cold War: From Tyranny to Tragedy*, (New York: Routledge, 2003),
Introduction.
[12] Sharon Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers,
2007), 105.
[13] Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics,* 106.
[14] Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics,* 106.
[15] Ian Traynor, "*Obituary*: *Slobodan* Milosevic," *The Guardian*, March 13, 2006.
[16] Traynor, "*Obituary*: *Slobodan* Milosevic."
[17] Shirin Deylami. "Desiring Nation: Subjectivity, Hegemony, and the Production of the Nation-State," *International
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http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p73101_index.html, 4.
[18] Michael J. Shapiro, *Cinematic Political Thought: Narrating Race, Nation, and Gender*
(New York: New York University Press, 1999), 40.
[19] Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press,
1991), 21.
[20] Cheree Carlson, "Limitations on the Comic Frame: Some Witty American Women of the Nineteenth Century,"
*Quarterly Journal of Speech,*  Vol. 74:3 (1988): 310.

[21] For further reading see Dubravka Ugresic, "The Museum of Unconditional Surrender (Amsterdam: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 2002) and Zala Volcic, "Yugo-Nostalgia: Cultural Memory and Media in the Former Yugoslavia," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* Vol. 24, No. 1, (2007).

[22] Volcic, "Yugo-Nostaglia," 27.

[23] See Nicole Lindstrom*, "Yugonostalgia: Restorative and reflective nostalgia in former Yugoslavia." *East Central Europe Studies* Vol. 32:No. 1 (2006), 231-242.

[24] Timothy Barney, "When We Was Red: *Good Bye Lenin*! and Nostalgia for the 'Everyday GDR.'" *Communication and Critical/Cultural* Studies 6 (2009): 136.

[25] Dubravka Ugresic, *the Museum of Unconditional Surrender* (Amsterdam: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 2002).

[26] Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), xviii.

[27] Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, xviii.

[28] Volcic, "Yugo-nostalgia," 28.

[29] Volcic, "Yugo-nostalgia," 28.

[30] Volcic, "Yugo-nostalgia," 34.

[31] Volcic, "Yugo-nostalgia," 21.

[32] Volcic, "Yugo-nostalgia," 21.

[33] Dunja Blazevik, interview by author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, June 16, 2011.

[34] "Vandals Hit Bruce Lee Statue in Bosnia," *Daily Times*, November 30, 2005, http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2005\11\30\story_30-11-2005_pg9_5

[35] Anonymous Interview 07, interview by author, Mostar, Bosnia, June 18, 2011.

[36] Anonymous Interview 07, interview by author, Mostar, Bosnia, June 18, 2011.

[37] Anonymous Interview 07, interview by author, Mostar, Bosnia, June 18, 2011.

[38] Anonymous Interview 06, interview by author, Belgrade, Serbia, March 20, 2008.

[39] Robert Siegal, "Bosnian City's Unique Statue Choice: Bruce Lee," *NPR*, September 13, 2005. http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4845621
See Alexander Zaitchik, "Mostar's Little Dragon: How Bruce Lee became a symbol of peace in the Balkans," *Reason Magazine*, April 2006, http://reason.com/archives/2006/04/01/mostars-little-dragon

[40] Robert Siegel, "Bosnian City's Unique Statue Choice: Bruce Lee," *NPR*, September 13, 2005, accessed on August 10, 2011, http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=4845621.

[41] Volcic, Yugo-nostalgia, 23.

[42] Traumatic memories need time and distance in order for them to be more fully comprehended. Sigmund Freud's early definition of trauma argued that, "it was not the experience itself which acted traumatically, but its delayed revival as a memory." The key to his definition rested in the interplay between the two events that would create "a temporal delay or latency through which the past was available only by a deferred act of understanding and interpretation." For additional discussion see: Ruth Leys, Trauma: A Genealogy (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 20.

[43] Jacques Lacan, *the Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, Book 1 (New York: Norton, 1993), 191.

[44] Beth Kampschror, "Bosnians Agree: Commemorate Bruce Lee," *Christian Science Monitor*, November 23, 2005, http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/1123/p07s02-woeu.html

[45] Kampschror, "Bosnians Agree: Commemorate Bruce Lee."

[46] Two cast members from a MTV program, which promotes drinking, tanning, and (thankfully for society's sake) having protected sex.

[47] See Volcic, "Yugo-nostalgia," and Ugresic, *the Museum of Unconditional Surrender.*

[48] Volcic, "Yugo-nostalgic," 35.

[49] Milica Tomic, interview by author, Belgrade, Serbia, June 20, 2011.

[50] Milica Tomic, interview by author, Belgrade, Serbia, June 20, 2011.

[51] Milica Tomic, interview by author, Belgrade, Serbia, June 20, 2011.

[52] Milica Tomic, interview by author, Belgrade, Serbia, June 20, 2011. While Tomic's binary is intriguing, it is an impossible distinction to make as art is a product of the "culture" and the art that each culture produces is, in turn, necessarily consumed. Furthermore, culture is a problematic term to say the least, but I read it here specifically as a post-Yugoslav culture, or a culture that is trying to make sense of its Yugoslav past.

[53] Milica Tomic, interview by author, Belgrade, Serbia, June 20, 2011.

[54] Milica Tomic, interview by author, Belgrade, Serbia, June 20, 2011.

[55] See Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*, 191.

[56] Milica Tomic, interview by author, Belgrade, Serbia, June 20, 2011.

[57] Milica Tomic, interview by author, Belgrade, Serbia, June 20, 2011.

[58] Milica Tomic, interview by author, Belgrade, Serbia, June 20, 2011.

[59] Milica Tomic, interview by author, Belgrade, Serbia, June 20, 2011.

[60] John Peffer, *Art and the End of Apartheid,* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 222.

[61] Peffer, *Art and the End of Apartheid*, 223.

[62] Peffer, *Art and the End of Apartheid,* 222.

[63] Emily Gunzburger Makas, "Representing Competing Entities in Postwar Mostar," *Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars lecture*, November 16, 2005, http://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/318-representing-competing-entities-postwar-mostar.

[64] Makas, "Representing Competing Entities in Postwar Mostar."

[65] Makas, "Representing Competing Entities in Postwar Mostar."

[66] Anonymous Interview 08, Interview by author, Mostar, Bosnia, June 15, 2011.

**Chapter Six: Memento Park in Budapest, Hungary**



Figure 6.1

The view at the entrance of Memento Park

**ALL ROADS LEAD TO REAGONOMICS: BUDAPEST "LIBERATES" ITSELF FROM COMMUNISM**

Within the past year, Hungary's abrupt ideological transformation manifested itself in the construction of a life-sized statue of Ronald Reagan in the same square as the infamous Soviet Liberators of Hungary monument.[1]  In 2007, and again in 2011, local groups asked the Hungarian government to remove the Liberation monument from downtown Szabadság tér (Freedom Square).  The monument is the last monument to communism still standing in

Budapest. The hammer-and-sickle adorned obelisk commemorates Hungary's gratitude to the Red Army for defending their homeland against the Nazis. Even more interesting, the monument is the only one in town that requires its own security detail.[2] The "Liberation" monument continues to anger Hungarians as they repeatedly desecrate it. Vandals have scratched the Russian figures off or painted over them forcing the Hungarian government to surround the space with two layers of iron fencing and police protection.[3] The debate over the Liberation monument's prominence rages on as well. The communist symbol angered Hungarian Janos Meszaros who claimed that it was an unworthy political compromise. "In the world of symbols, this is the murder of a country…. The fact that it's still standing after 1989 is an insult. The communists ruined Hungary. This statue reminds me of it."[4]

For many Hungarians, the solution is to remove the statue. But Russia's ambassador to Hungary, Igor Savolsky, has warned, "This is an unworthy sacrilege. If this statue is removed, it would greatly worsen the atmosphere of binary relations."[5] Since 1996 a treaty stating that Russian artifacts cannot be disturbed has legally protected the monument. Adding insult to injury to those who suffered under Stalinism, the monument displaced the Hungarian flag which resided in the same place for centuries.[6] In the event that the government takes down the monument, they will relocate it to Memento Park, a space dedicated to Hungary's political history of communism.

The choice to erect a Ronald Reagan monument within the controversial space of Freedom Square comes as little surprise. In order to diminish the memory of the Liberation monument, local officials added President Reagan as a compromise. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban was overjoyed by the new Reagan monument. He discussed Reagan's "undying merits" and explained that Reagan liberated Europe from the Soviets by giving "hope that

despite the difficulties we should persist in the struggle for freedom and independence."[7]

Interestingly, President Reagan never actually visited Hungary, but he now has two statues in the

city of Budapest.[8]

Speaking to the unusual configuration of politics in the capital city of Budapest, journalist

Marton Baranyi stated, "Reagan will be like David walking past Goliath… The place will have a

new meaning and a new atmosphere."[9]  The Reagan monument reveals that the ideology of

capitalism along with struggles for national autonomy have created some unusual bedfellows.

The memories of 1945 (Soviet "liberation"), 1956 (Hungarian Revolution), and 1989 (decline of

communism) continue to be pivotal moments for Hungarian identity today.[10]
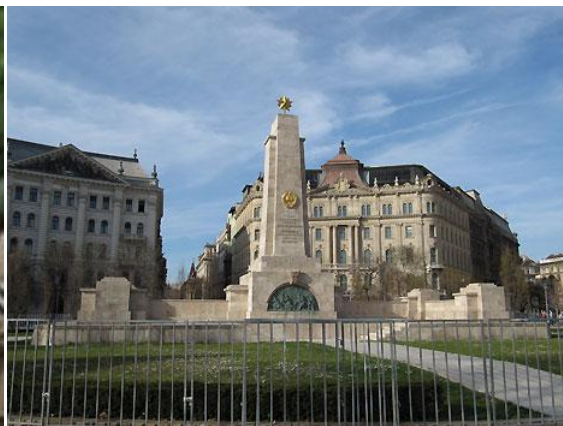


| Figure 6.2 | Figure 6.3 |

AP Photo/Reagan Monument in Budapest and Soviet Liberation Monument in Budapest, Hungary

This final case study uses the city of Budapest and its commemorative project, Memento

Park, to illustrate why the concept of the ironic monumental disruption is a useful tool for

understanding the politics and ethics of commemoration.  I approached Memento Park

differently than the other two case studies because no additional controversy ever accompanied

its original erection.  No one harmed or adjusted the monuments once they were within the walls

of the park. Tour guides and the official tour book create the irony in this particular case.  Both

narrate the walk through the park and provide "context" for the tragic framing.  The tragic frame "requires a sacrificial scapegoat who suffers, dies, or is banished by society in a symbolic attempt to rid itself of chaos, disease and impurity."[11]  Specifically, Memento Park uses the tragic frame (combining the lack of nostalgia with irony to ridicule the former power of the monuments and physically banish them to the outskirts of town) to mock the monuments and arrive at a singular conclusion—communism was misguided. While the previous two chapters demonstrated how ironic monumental disruptions operated within comic frames—where both communist and capitalist nostalgic fantasies were indulged and engaged—this chapter demonstrates how an ironic intervention produces less deliberation, but creates more conclusions when interrupting a tragic frame.  In the case of Hungary, communism is the scapegoat for all societal ills.  The "choice" to adopt the economic and ideological system of capitalism appears over-determined in the park. The park does not even present communism as a viable choice.

In order to understand how Memento Park shapes its audience and vice versa, I analyzed the commemorative site from multiple angles. Initial research used newspaper articles and website postings to determine how the local and international community viewed the park. Additionally, I research controversies within the city of Budapest to understand how other commemorative artifacts are treated.  Next, I used Hungary's historical to highlight major ideological shifts.  Finally, I studied the monuments in their original locations along with their new locations to see how recontextualizing them altered their message.  Within the park, I extensively relied on the tour guide, the tour book, and the website to guide the "read" of the commemorative space.  All of these various contexts shaped the decision to use irony as a rhetorical lens. But while it was clear that the tourists were supposed to ironically mock the

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monuments, what was unclear was how this interaction affected the space's deliberative potential.

The stories used to explain the statues, the on-site interviews, and the deeper contextualization of Budapest and the commemorative space suggested that Memento Park was crafting a message that worked in opposition to an idea (communism) rather than allowing for an open space of interpretation that allowed people to come to their own conclusions. Diverse perspectives were not encouraged; rather, the message, consciously or unconsciously, is reinforced that communism was a bad joke. Memento Park created no space for nostalgia while interacting with the monuments. The space already contained the answer to the historical "problem" of communism. Democracy [aka capitalism] was and is the answer.

The "conclusion" is not surprising considering that Hungarians do not look to communism for escapism like their Bosnian and Bulgarian neighbors. The Hungarian people's relationship to communism (specifically Stalinism) is decidedly un-nostalgic and they have narrativized those years as an oppressive chapter reminiscent of fascism before that. Without any lingering nostalgia (or desire to re-envision the dream of the past), Hungarians appear more than happy to place blame on communism as a way to explain many of the countries' social, political, and economic ills.

In this vein, Hungarians produce a distinctly different commemorative space where they perform nostalgia as a way to encourage consumption not reflection. The ironic intervention serves to reinforce Hungary's new (capitalist) ideological loyalties not open up space for debate. Where Bulgarians created a temporary ironic monumental disruption through graffiti and Bulgarians constructed an ironic monumental disruption into a monument, the creators behind Memento Park have not attempted to represent and engage irony as much as they have insisted

on an ironic read of Memento Park. It is important to note that the performance has its own

political value (i.e. humor helps Hungarians assert themselves over their past oppression), but it

does not serve to open up the same ethical spaces of open deliberation as the other two sites do.

This chapter demonstrates that ironic monumental disruptions produce alternative reads

when implemented within a tragic frame where the conclusions have already been determined.

Memento Park does not display its statuary in hopes that visitors will make sense of a contested

space. Those who personally experienced Stalinism in Eastern Europe are encouraged to use the

space of Memento Park to toy with the monuments' former messages of authority. Audiences

not directly affected by communism (or who were born after Cold War politics had diminished)

see the park as an ill-conceived historical chapter to be overcome in the natural progression

towards capitalism. Neither audience is encouraged to engage in dialogue with the artifacts of

Memento Park or to try to understand the monuments' deeper historical, political, and

commemorative contexts. Channeling an ironic monumental disruption through a straw man

argument simply presents communism as a static, foolhardy, ideology. The space fails to

encourage deliberation because it forces the audience to begin with the conclusion that

communism was a simple joke.

The following section briefly highlights two important ideological shifts in the

progression of communism to show how Stalinism informs the current commemorative project

and why nostalgia is decidedly absent. Next, I discuss the inspiration behind and the visitor's

experience within Memento in order to see how the ironic monumental disruption intervenes

within this space. Finally, I examine the commemorative site in order to see how visitors are

positioned in relation to the statuary and why deliberative potential has been silenced.

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**GOULASH COMMUNISM AND THE KADAR COMPROMISE: CAPITALISM MEETS COMMUNISM**

As discussed in Chapter two, the Soviet Union made Hungary into a Soviet satellite state after the War, but communism never sat well with Hungarians who aspired to align themselves ideologically with Western Europe. Many Hungarians insisted that the Soviet enforced their model of governance without the Hungarian population's consent.[12] Whether or not the population consented is still up for some debate. Elections immediately following WWII reflected the political tensions between Hungary and Soviet-style communism as the 1945 election saw the more nationalistic Smallholders receive 57% of the vote, while the Hungarian Communist Party and Social Democrats received 17% each.[13] The Communist Party in Hungary would claim sweeping political dominance within the next two years, but some historians have called the legitimacy of these elections into question.[14]

The tension between nationalist Hungarian pride and Soviet imperialism erupted only a few years later when the Soviet Union demanded that the Hungarian Prime Minister Imre Nagy step down, leading to an armed revolt by the Hungarian people. The brief chaos that ensued became known as the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 in which the Hungarian people fought the Soviet Union for democratic reform in the streets of Budapest. As a revolutionary act, "Hungarian leaders declared the country's neutrality and announced plans to adopt a multiparty system," but this action was, yet again, put down by Soviet force.[15]

In the wake of the turmoil, Hungarians destroyed communist monuments and were subsequently arrested by local communist officials. This would not be the first or the last time that Hungarians made a bid for national and economic reforms. Shortly thereafter, the Soviets selected Janos Kadar to replace Nagy and reassert a more traditional communist power. The

Soviets eventually squelched the insurrection and tried Nagy for treason. To prevent Nagy from becoming a symbol of martyrdom, the government hanged him and buried him face down in an unmarked grave.[16] Once the period of Soviet occupation ended, Kadar slowly moved his government toward a more Western model. Economic changes were implemented that allowed for more private enterprise and greater wage differentiation.[17]

The restructuring of the economic system became known as "Goulash Communism," which was a tongue-and-cheek way of saying that, like the popular stew goulash, the Hungarian people were going to embrace a mixing of economic ingredients and ideologies. In hopes of gaining the support of formerly alienated Hungarians, the "Kadar Compromise" promoted the proliferation of private enterprise and encouraged more dialogue and debate about cultural and political life.[18] These ideological changes continued to reshape the social and economic landscape of Hungary leading up to the fall of communism in 1989.

Curiously, the Hungarian government credits many of these changes not solely to the Hungarian people themselves but to their Western counterparts. Upon the erection of Ronald Reagan's statue in Freedom Square, the Hungarian government released a statement saying that they wanted to honor President Reagan for "bringing the Cold War to a conclusion, and for the fact that Hungary regained its sovereignty in the process."[19] Regardless of President Reagan's perceived involvement in Eastern European politics, memories of 1989 continue to find their way into the city.

The starts and stops of democratization continue to be visible in Budapest today. The Hungarian people participate in a delicate balancing act between erasing and enhancing the past and present. In Budapest monuments line almost every street corner and address virtually every historical period in all of its glory, all except communism. The government removed or

reappropriated most of the historical reminders of communism within the city. They placed

some of the monuments in museums and destroyed others. A few monuments were saved and

place within Memento Park in the countryside. The once prominent monuments are now

accessible by a bus ride and a $20 tour ticket.

**THE INSPIRATION BEHIND MEMENTO PARK**

After 1989, the city of Budapest faced a dilemma: what should they do with their

monuments to communism? The city organized a committee with the task of identifying any

offensive statuary. As the Memento Park visitor's guide explains:

> As a result of this committee, a list of 42 statues was put together which provided the
> basis for the architectural proposal of the Statue [Memento] Park. The subject generated
> lots of interest: in newspaper articles, TV and radio programs numerous opinions on what
> the statue park should be like. Eventually two main streams of thought emerged: the more
> serious recommended a 'shame-type' solution; others thought a grotesque 'Irony Park'
> would be better."[20]

The guide explains that they were fortunate to find another route altogether when architect Akos

Eleod proposed a design based on the poem "One Sentence about Tyranny" published during the

1956 uprising by Hungarian poet Gyula Illyes. Eleod explains his choice stating, "This Park is

about dictatorship, but as soon as this can be talked about, described and built, the park is already

about democracy."[21] But Eleod is not operating under a false assumption that the park will affect

everyone in the same way. He recognizes that the tyranny of dictatorship will not resonate fully

to those who have never experienced it. He asserts,

> A foreign tourist, for whom dictatorship is merely something they have read about, has
> completely different thoughts when in the park than the person with a tragic past, who
> lived here, survived and under the aegis of these statues takes the drama of his own
> ruined life into the park with him. But the silence is shared.[22]

Eleod's description of the emotion contained within the park is a powerful reminder of why we

preserve the past for future generations. But in this same vein, the designer faced ethical and

political dilemmas as he tried to preserve the contested historical narrative.  Eleod struggled to

represent the past without neutralizing it or elevating it. He explains his rhetorical trap:

> I needed to summarize the individual thought-provoking elements of a historical series of paradoxes into one conceptual thought process. Paradox, because these statues are both the reminders of an anti-democratic society and at the same time pieces of our history; paradox, because they are symbols of authority and at the same time works of art; and finally, paradox because despite the fact that they were without a doubt originally set up for the purpose of propaganda, in assigning them a new location, I deemed it important to avoid the possibility that they would become anti-propaganda, which would have been no more than a continuation of dictatorship mentality.[23]

Ultimately, the visitor's guide celebrates Eleod's accomplishments, claiming that he found a way

to avoid all of the pitfalls of commemoration and instead created a space that honors the "dignity

of democracy."[24]  While the designer envisioned a noble park honoring dignity, not parody or

derision, the unintended consequence of this vision is a narrative teeming with irony and political

protest.  By attempting to avoid both nostalgia and irony, Eleod has unknowingly produced a

strong anti-communist, pro-capitalist message.



Figure 6.4                                                        Figure 6.5

From the front gate of Memento Park and Worker's Movement Memorial

**A COMMUNIST GRAVEYARD**

In 1993, the Hungarian government financed Memento Park to house all of the remnants

of Hungary's communist past.  Even though the government relocated the commemorative

markers to the outskirts of town, the politics surrounding them still reverberate throughout

Budapest.  The removal of the statues has ultimately drawn more attention to the communist

ideology it sought to repress as thousands of tourists travel to see the monuments within the park

each year.[25]  The "Hammer and Sickle Tour" is a popular expedition guided by locals barely old

enough to remember communism.  Customers take the Statue Park bus to a rural neighborhood

outside of Budapest to walk through the park and buy a few kitschy souvenirs.

The existence of Memento Park shows that the people of Budapest still allow the

displaced monuments to shape their cultural identity while simultaneously hoping to dismiss

their communist past.  Art Historian Geza Boros explains that through Memento Park,

> An "atmosphere of dictatorship" is created by these threatening monumental reminders of
> authority.  However, in their new location, the positioning of the statues and
> accompanying buildings demonstrate to us that they are now simply the historical
> witnesses of the fact that there was once an era which expressed itself through these
> threatening symbols.[26]

Physically, Hungarians have kept the statues, and thus, the "history" intact, but they are choosing

to transform the story communism represents.

The designer of Memento Park recognizes that history cannot be erased entirely; rather, it

should be used to understand contemporary times.  Furthermore, the memorial space in Budapest

creates a tension between desecrating/erasing history and making it highly visible for

consumptive purposes.  But not everyone likes the decontextualization of Memento Park. Many

Hungarian scholars suggest that moving the monuments is analogous to erasing the past. Istvan

Rev, a history professor at Central European University, states, **"**The statues might have served a

better purpose if they had been left in place and labeled with information about their era. You've

removed the visible signs of our past, and it makes it easier to think that we had nothing to do

with communism. We cannot deny that they are part of our history. Rather than target a statue,

we should deal with the decades of dictatorship."[27] While all Hungarians cannot agree on the

appropriate course of action when it comes to these painful physical reminders of the past, it is

clear that Memento Park produces a complicated and compelling space of memory from which

to examine the rhetoric of place and the concept of the ironic monumental disruption.



<div align="center">

Figure 6.6          Figure 6.7

Stalin's Boots after 1956 and Cubist Marx and Engels

</div>

**STANDING IN THE SHADOW OF STALIN: A DESCRIPTION OF MEMENTO PARK**

As mentioned previously, Memento Park resides within the larger confines of Statue

Park. Statue Park is approximately the size of a football field and sits in the middle of a vacant

lot in a rural neighborhood outside of Budapest. Whereas spaces of this magnitude are typically

allotted privileged locations in parks or, at the very least, within the city proper, Statue Park is

relegated to the periphery.  Houses, power lines, and highways are all visible from the park and add to its misplaced, or possibly displaced, feel. There is a surprising amount of dirt and little else in the way of landscaping. The placement of the park was undoubtedly an intentional choice as it diminishes the power of the statues by not allowing them to take up significant space within the city of Budapest. The park is almost reminiscent of an abandoned drive-in so typically seen in the American West. The objects speak to an important past that no longer has a place in contemporary times.

The entry gate of Memento Park displays the great philosophers behind communism. The world's only cubist statues of Marx and Engel flank one side of the red brick entryway while Lenin occupies the other. Directly south of the temple-like entryway is a long stretch of dirt in the shape of a trapezoid. This space is known as Witness Square. Both sides of Witness Square house propaganda films and artifacts from the communist era along with detailed narratives about the inspiration and construction of Memento Park. Most poignantly, Witness Square consists of a giant brick pedestal with a pair of boots atop it. This pedestal is an exact replica of the former grandstand which housed an eight meter tall monument to Joseph Stalin. During the revolution of 1956, Hungarians cut Stalin's monument down to his boots to show that his dictatorship was an object of ridicule.[28]  The revolution was short-lived, however, and the communist powers in Hungary tried to reclaim this sacred space by affixing a red star to the pedestal and holding national rallies there.[29]  Today, this historical space is a parking lot, but the remnants of that revolutionary moment live on in Statue Park.

While not necessarily the architect's intent, Memento Park echoes the playful critique of communism encapsulated in Stalin's "boots."  Tour guides gleefully tell stories about covert acts of sabotage and pitiful abuses of power.  Eleod insists that the park recognizes the "sensitive

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dignity of Art" and the power of propaganda, but the stories used to explain Memento Park are

not about art's dignity, they are about the Hungarian people reclaiming dignity by mocking what

they perceive as distasteful propaganda.  For instance, one particularly comical story told by the

tour guide involved the granite relief of a Soviet soldier in the throes of battle.  Water discolored

the stone in a rather unfortunate place on the soldier's pants.  The guide suggested that

Hungarians reveled in the public embarrassment of the Soviets and took it as a sign that at least

God saw their suffering and had a sense of humor about it.[30]



Figure 6.8:  Soviet Soldier

Other humorous stories punctuate the tour in the park as well. The mocking of statuary

seems harmless and commonplace, but these little critical acts are important agentic acts.  During

the communist period in Hungary, ridiculing the Soviet Union was treasonous, but, as evidenced

by the Russian response to removing the Soviet Liberation monument, there still appears to be

consequences for questioning the memory and motives of this historical chapter. Even the threat of punishment did not prevent Hungarians from making light of their situation. During the communist era, Hungarians would occasionally sneak a slice of bread into Lenin's outstretched hand. Slavoj Zizek explains the power of this little act of disobedience, asserting, "The materialization of ideology in external materiality reveals inherent antagonisms which the explicit formulation of ideology cannot afford to acknowledge."[31]

Another monument that drew the ire of the Hungarian people was the monument to the Hungarian Socialist Republic. This monument, built in 1969, is one of the largest in Memento Park. The guide insisted that the monument looked absolutely terrifying in its original placement. Located on the Pest side of the city, the monument looked like "a huge giant was running out from among the trees of the City Park."[32] In order to combat the image of this intimidating figure, the people of Budapest began jokingly referring to the monument as the "cloakroom attendant." A common joke was that he was chasing after a patron saying, "Sir, you forgot your scarf!"[33] These days, people enjoy imitating the "cloakroom attendant" or sliding down his pedestal. The monument's shockingly grand scale makes it an easy target for visitors wanted to undermine its aggressive message.

Figure 6.9                                    Figure 6.10

Statue of Lenin and Cloakroom Attendant


Many of the other monuments have comedic bents as well. Locals placed one Soviet
monument in cement up to his knees to show how limited his power now was.  Another female
figure, of which there are only two in the park, was also an object of critique as the guide pointed
out how "sturdy" she was.  The guide suggested that a "real" Soviet woman was supposed to be
hearty and hardworking, "let's just say, not exactly a supermodel."[34]  Mocking the Soviet ideal
was a central focus of the tour.  The communist refashioned Soviet busts so they would appear
more attractive—or more Greek and less Russian.[35]  While most of the commentary was
speculative, the speculation reveals that the public was willing to get in their subversive critiques
wherever they could.

Figure 6.11                                    Figure 6.12

Soviet Woman   and Russian/Greek Bust


The theme of revision also reverberates widely throughout the park. There were many stories of the communist government altering the historical narrative to place their policies and people in a better light.  In fact, the two monuments that stand opposite of the temple-like entryway have several competing stories surrounding them.  The two figures are the last stop on the "Hammer and Sickle Tour."  Captain Steinmetz and Captain Ostapenko are considered important figures in the Siege of Budapest of 1944.  Steinmetz was a Hungarian-born captain in the Soviet Army. He was an integral force in the surrender of the Hungarians during WWII and died shortly thereafter.  The Soviet-backed government insisted that a political dissident murdered Steinmetz.  They [the government] then used the captain's demise as a rallying cry for communism.  Local Hungarians say that he blew himself up when he drove his own car over a landmine.

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Similarly, the Soviets blamed Captain Ostapenko's death on a German captain who they later executed for the crime.  By all accounts, Ostapenko was likely not killed by enemy fire, but rather, died at the hands of bad luck or possibly even friendly fire.[36]  The Soviets went to great lengths to prevent this story from going public.  They claimed that Ostapenko was a martyr for the cause and dedicated a statue to him in 1951.  Ostapenko's statue became one of the most debated in the 1990s, as Hungarians resented the Soviet symbolism but grew accustomed to his presence located near the gateway to the city of Budapest.[37]  Finally, the Hungarian government removed his statue and placed it prominently in Memento Park, but the story of his inglorious end lives on for many Hungarians.  The tour of tyranny ends at this point. The guide proudly points out that the tour now takes a turn for democracy. The pathway to the exit is paved in white stone and represents the new terrain of freedom.

But the terrain of freedom is not without its own propaganda.  The white rocks lead the visitor straight to the gift shop where they are able to purchase mugs adorned with Lenin's face. There are old communist postcards and key chains for sale as well.  T-shirts with Marx's likeness run about $30. Whether the message is intentional or not, the viewer is encouraged to buy their way out of communism.

Figure 6.13: Steinmetz and Ostapenko

All of these stories, while amusing and occasionally heartbreaking, suggest that the architect might have created a relatively closed space of reflection. Hungarians used these monuments as reminders of their own dignity—of the dignity they forged by mocking their lack of perceived dignity. The Soviets (and the Communist Party in Hungary) created the monuments to represent a universal notion of brotherhood and communal sacrifice, but the aggressive intimidation which accompanied these messages undercut the [monuments'] political promise. The disconnect between the promise of equality and the historical experience of suffering could conceivably open up a space of deliberation, but unfortunately, the deliberation is already conducted on the visitor's behalf. The statues (as they are paired with the tour narrative) consciously attempt to perform as ironic monumental disruptions but ultimately fail to create much deliberative space because there is no real claim being made on behalf of communism. Rather, the monuments simply reinforce the pre-determined message that communism failed to break them because *it* was an ideological failure. The lack of nostalgia or respect shown to the

communist statuary in Memento Park reveals that while the appearance of deliberation is there,

the reality for Hungarians is that communism was never really a valid choice.

## IRONIC MONUMENTAL DISRUPTIONS: CONFLATING IRONY AND TRAGIC FRAMES

As the other case studies have show, the dynamic application of irony can produce

deliberative spaces while avoiding the pitfalls of reductionist critiques.  Irony creates critical

space for dialogue by juxtaposing political positions and representations in order to highlight

institutions of power, nostalgia, or gaps in the ideological narrative. Author Shane Michael Boyle

explains that ironic critiques

> achieve political significance not by commenting on or reflecting the dominant social or
> political configuration, but rather through inserting the possibility of play into the system
> or exposing the fictive foundations of structuring power.  Again, these radical
> performances effect change not through didacticism, but rather by virtue of their play
> with authority, established hierarchies and normative values. As a type of prefigurative
> politics, they create something altogether different from the strategically imposed order
> of power. They create spaces of play that have no predetermined end or meaning.[38]

Additionally, Boyle speaks to the potential of ironic protest within the space of Memento Park,

insisting, "The effect of performative irony is not predetermined but rather depends on a

subjective and contextually-dependent interpretation that is triggered by the performer's

purposeful imperfect citation of the rituals and operations of strategic power."[39]  Building on

Boyle, monuments-as-art typically encourage their viewers to have some distance between

person and object. Whether this is physical or psychological distance is unimportant; it is simply

the idea that the artwork is presenting an important idea for reflection. In this vein, Boyle insists

that irony stimulates critical reflection and "should not merely be seen as pedagogical or

didactic. It does not impart a static, predetermined message onto a passive audience."[40]

Unfortunately, the analysis of Memento Park suggests that it [the park] utilizes critical irony to solidify an idea and then oppose it.  Much like the politics of counter-monuments, Memento Park creates a one dimensional depiction of communism (devoid of its ideological context) in order to contradict it.  Irony does not perform in Memento Park as it does in the other sites because of its tragic framing of historical perspectives.  Scholar Allen Carter explains how tragic frames transform identity stating, "At one moment the chosen victim is a part of the clan, being one of their members; a moment later it symbolizes something apart from them, being the curse they wish to lift from themselves."[41]  For Hungarians, communism becomes the former source of meaning and stability that must be sacrificed in order to show a new allegiance to capitalism.

 Namely, the park asks visitors to embrace "freedom" by rejecting communism and accepting capitalism.  Tourists assert themselves over (what is depicted through the Hungarian tour guide as) a naïve ideology by being "in" on the jokes.  Memento Park literally comes with instructions (in the form of a $15 tour book) on how to view the statues, what jokes accompany each statue, and how one should progress through the tour. [42]   It is no coincidence that tourists are encouraged to buy communist tokens on the way out of the park.  You can own a piece of the memory.

Memento Park and its accompanying Statue Park do have their own political value but they do not live up to their stated intent.  Instead, Memento Park functions more like a closed circuit with the tour book dictating how the artifacts should be read.  The monuments become antagonistic critiques of a former history with little space for further interpretation.  The park positions the viewer to critique each monument's privilege through acts of ironic sabotage not ironic engagement.  But as the other case studies have shown, it is the complex interplay of the

production and engagement of irony within open (or comic frames of meaning) that produce

spaces of unsettled deliberation.  The Hungarian government salvaged all of the monuments in

Memento Park to demonstrate that institutionalized power can be reclaimed and re-narrativized

(in order to impose a critique on itself in the tragic frame).  The problem is that the resolution to

this commemorative space is already a foregone conclusion. The space does not address any

nostalgia for the past.  The space does not invite or encourage interrogation. The site holds no

respect for the memory of communism at all, so it ends up reproducing its own propaganda.

As a case in point, Memento Park serves as a place where locals can consume their old

history and describe how they laughed in the face of Stalinism.  Statue Park is not about play; it

is about power.  Viewers are not encouraged to engage the ideas behind the monuments; the tour

book and tour guide ask them to dismiss the historical episode.  Communism appears entirely

devoid of meaning and context in the sanitized commemorative space.   The representational

distinction is important in how it shapes the subjectivity and identity of those attending the park.

The viewer is physically encouraged to walk away from the monuments without questioning

how things could have been different.  The road to freedom is paved with tchotchkes.

Needless to say, commemorative sites do not *need* to honor perceived sources of tragedy

in order to communicate loss, but the designer constructed this site with that stated purpose.  The

government salvaged the monuments precisely because communism was an undeniable part of

Hungarian history—a history the park's creator wanted to acknowledge.  But while making these

monuments into silly jokes might create empowerment, irony, in this case, does not encourage

further deliberation.  Ironic monumental disruptions have the ability to continue to speak to

contemporary times by responding to ideological shifts but they need real political

"perspectives."  Scholars like Young (and performances as witnessed in Memento Park) project

the "eternal truth" label onto monuments making them overstated symbols rather than sites of engagement.   As discussed by Jacques Ranciere in Chapter three, we build monuments with the hope of bridging a gap between an idea and a "still-missing" people.[43]   Using these monuments to represent a fixed idea (communism was a miserable joke) misses the explicit intent of the space.

The architect responsible for the site explained that he built Statue Park so visitors could reflect on tyranny and injustice.  But much like Riceour explained in Chapter one, it is the tyranny of memory that takes center stage in Budapest.  The way the park arranges and engages its monuments encourages visitors to mock their memory and former power.  Tourists are encouraged to buy the Lenin mug after smirking at the Lenin statue.  The park does not want visitors to honor this site; it wants them to buy a piece of it on the way out the door. While the park is officially referred to as a museum and even occasionally as a graveyard, the most accurate description of these monuments is that of a virtual communist petting zoo.[44]  You are free to touch and mock the former symbols of power.  Visitors are encouraged to feel superior to this particular chapter of history because it did not foresee its downfall.  The park wants you to smirk at the monumental hubris. In this way, Memento Park provides a great space for critiquing symbols of power but misses an opportunity to encourage ongoing dialogue.

Ultimately, the visitor within Memento Park recognizes a failed historical narrative as one economic system is traded out for another.  Memento Park is an unfortunate misstep because monuments have the potential to create an important outlet for people still wanting to understand their present in terms of their past.  Duncombe recognizes how ironic monuments produce productive political openings by concerning themselves "less about presenting facts and more about how to frame these facts in such a way that they make sense and hold meaning for

everyday people."[45]  The monuments of Memento Park exemplify the desires of oppressed

people trying to regain their agency, but only real choices can produce real agency.

**CAMPAIGNING FOR CAPITALISM**

Monuments tend to remain relatively unchallenged until historical narratives are

interrupted by new philosophical and ideological paradigms.  In the case of Hungary, the country

underwent these rapid shifts almost overnight.  Whether it was the adoption, challenge to, or

overthrow of Stalinism, or the instant adoption of capitalism in 1989, Hungarians have quickly

abandoned powerful ideologies that once offered them a national identity.  These abrupt

narrative shifts have created unsettled formations of public memory that need nuanced

commemorative representations in order to articulate their complexity.

But Memento Park misses the opportunity to disrupt political spaces and produce

alternative discourse.  Of course, the Park is not incredibly accessible for those who once lived

with the communist monuments anyway.  One local did confess that she and her friends would

like to visit the space, but its location on the outskirts of town made it too much of a hassle.[46]

Regardless of audience, Memento Park brings all visitors to the same conclusion. The park

encourages Hungarians to reassert their national identity while reinforcing a capitalist ideology.

While a reinforcement of Western ideology may not seem groundbreaking or even surprising, it

is an important by-product of this political space because it absolves Westerners and non-

Westerners alike for never intellectually engaging any other ideological alternatives.

The visitor's guide for Memento Park ultimately describes the two-pronged effect of the

space, stating, "Memento/Statue Park has a dual message: to call forth the atmosphere of

dictatorship and to simultaneously provide the opportunity for this chapter to be processed and

critically analyzed."[47] But while this space does provide the opportunity for criticism on the part

of the Hungarian victim, it appears to conflate the tyranny of dictatorship with communism and contrast it with a "civilized" democratic capitalism.

Whether the architect intended the promotion of capitalism is of little consequence. The very first stop on the Hammer-and-Sickle tour is to gawk at the baby blue Yugo parked behind the gate entrance. The guide took great pride in calling the Yugo a piece of garbage.[48] The guide suggested the car was an amusing but unfortunate relic of their past. Needless to say, the combination of Lenin standing on top of Soviet Realist architecture, next to a Yugo, in the shadow of a communist kitsch gift shop creates a very clear message.



Figure 6.14: *You go! No, Yugo!*

Memento Park asks tourists to consume its story while simultaneously positioning them to reject the communist ideal.

Jean Baudrillard captures the contradictory message of Memento Park best when he asks, "What is the reason for the strange acculturation phenomenon whereby advanced people seek out signs extrinsic to their own time or space, and increasingly remote relative to their own cultural [existence]?"[49] Visitors to Memento Park seem to be answering this question quite differently. Visitors untouched by Stalinist oppression seek out these sites to reinvest in the Western

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ideology of capitalism and to take pleasure in the fact that they "controlled" their own destiny.

For the people of Hungary, returning to Memento Park means that they are keeping memories of

oppression alive, even if only to show that they are the masters of their fate.  This sentiment was

never more clearly expressed than by the antagonistic narrative surrounding the Lenin

monument.  The story goes that in the 1980s Lenin's monument was found with a sign hanging

around his neck.  The inscription on the card read: "Stop smirking, Lenin, this will not last

forever, after one hundred and fifty years we didn't become Turkish either."[50]

## CONCLUSION: TRAGIC IRONY

All three of these case studies showed the potential of the concept of ironic monumental

disruptions and the representational ethics they could provide. The case study of Memento Park

revealed that irony within a tragic frame produces a different kind of deliberative engagement.

While Memento Park still produces its own kind of ethical representation, it does not provide the

same kind of deliberative space that the other two case studies present.  Each site revealed a

balancing act between irony and nostalgia, deliberation and manipulation.  The three countries of

Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Hungary all commemorated their past with an ironic twist, but the citizens

of those countries remember and represent their pasts in starkly different ways. The juxtaposition

of irony and nostalgia (or lack thereof) revealed that histories in transition sometimes need a

little more time and space for reflection, while other histories are content to preclude reflection

on behalf of their new ideological loyalties. The next chapter addresses future avenues of

research for ironic monumental disruption as rhetorical (monumental) interventions.

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[1] The Soviet Liberators monument in Budapest, Hungary was built within a few years of the Liberation monument in Sofia, Bulgaria.
[2] "Soviet monument in Budapest Vandalized," February 16, 2010, accessed on February 20, 2012, http://www.politics.hu/20100216/soviet-monument-in-budapest-vandalized/
[3] Kristen Schweizer and Tunde Kaposi, "Budapest's Drive to Junk Soviet Memorial Risks Offending Russia," *Bloomberg,* February 22, 2007, accessed December 4, 2010, http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aGInyRu_NC9I&refer=europe, para. 7.

[4]Schweiser and Kaposi, "Budapest's Drive," para. 6.

[5] Schweiser and Kaposi, "Budapest's Drive," para. 3.

[6] Schweiser and Kaposi, "Budapest's Drive," para. 3.

[7] Veronika Gulyas, "Ronald Reagan Statue unveiled in Budapest," *Wall Street Journal*, June 29, 2011, http://blogs.wsj.com/emergingeurope/2011/06/29/ronald-reagan-statue-unveiled-in-budapest/.

[8] Jonathan Seidl, "New Ronald Reagan Statue to Be Unveiled in Hungary," *The Blaze*, World section, June 28, 2011, accessed on February 20, 2012, http://www.theblaze.com/stories/new-ronald-reagan-statue-to-be-unveiled-in-hungary/

[9] Seidl, "New Ronald Reagan Statue to Be Unveiled in Hungary."

[10] The uprising was so central to Hungarian identity that a monument to the revolt was erected outside of the Parliament building where the riots began. The monument is a stone reproduction of the Hungarian flag with the national seal cut out.

[11] Adrienne Christiansen and Jeremy Hanson, "Comedy as Cure for Tragedy: Act up and the Rhetoric of AIDS," *Quarterly Journal of Speech,* Vol. 82, (1996): 159.

[12] George Schopflin, "The End of Communism in Eastern Europe," *International Affairs* 66 (1990): 12.

[13] Schopflin, "The End of Communism in Eastern Europe," 12.

[14] Schopflin, "The End of Communism in Eastern Europe," 13.

[15] Schopflin, "The End of Communism in Eastern Europe," 20.

[16] In 1996, Hungarians staged a reburial and placed Nagy and several other political figures from this time in newly marked graves. A monument to Nagy currently stands next to his grave.

[17] Sharon Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 216.

[18] Wolchick, *Central and East European Politics,* 20.

[19] Gulyas, "Ronald Reagan Statue unveiled in Budapest."

[20] Boros, *In the Shadow of Stalin's Boots*, 4.

[21] Boros, *In the Shadow of Stalin's Boots*, 6.

[22] Boros, *In the Shadow of Stalin's Boots*, 7.

[23] Boros, *In the Shadow of Stalin's Boots*, 6.

[24] Boros, *In the Shadow of Stalin's Boots*, 4.

[25] " Frequently Asked Questions," *Statue Park*, accessed on February 22, 2012, http://www.szoborpark.hu/index.php?Page=Faq&Lang=en

[26] Boros, *In the Shadow of Stalin's Boots*," 3.

[27]Schweiser and Kaposi, "Budapest's Drive," para. 20.

[28] Boros, *In the Shadow of Stalin's Boots*, 54.

[29] Boros, *In the Shadow of Stalin's Boots*, 55.

[30] "Hammer and Sickle Tour," *Absolute Walking Tour*, Budapest, Hungary, November 21, 2011.

[31] Slavoj Zizek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (London: Verso, 1997), 3-4.

[32] Boros, *In the Shadow of Stalin's Boots*, 47.

[33] Boros, *In the Shadow of Stalin's Boots*, 47.

[34] "Hammer and Sickle Tour," *Absolute Walking Tour*, Budapest, Hungary, November 21, 2011.

[35] Boros, *In the Shadow of Stalin's Boots*, 34.

[36]Krisztián Ungváry, John Lukacs, and Ladislaus Löb, *The Siege of Budapest: One Hundred Days in World War II,* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 121.

[37] Boros, *In the Shadow of Stalin's Boots*, 51.

[38] Michael Shane Boyle, "Play with Authority! Radical Performance and Performative Irony," Thamyris/Intersecting No 21 (2010): 213.

[39] Boyle, "Play with Authority," 212-213.

[40] Boyle, "Play with Authority," 212.

[41] Allen Carter, *Kenneth Burke and the Scapegoat Process*. (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 18..

[42] Geza Boros, *In the Shadow of Stalin's Boots: Visitors' Guide to Memento Park* (Budapest: Private Planet Printing, 2010), 3.

[43] Jacques Ranciere, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics*, trans. Steven Corcoran (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 171.

[44] Neil Woodburn, "Red Corner: Communist Statue Parks," February 16, 2006, accessed on February 24, 2012, http://www.gadling.com/2006/02/16/red-corner-communist-statue-parks/.

[45] Duncombe, *Dream*, 20.

[46] "Budapest," *Absolute Walking Tour*, Budapest, Hungary, November 20, 2011.

[47] Boros, *In the Shadow of Stalin's Boots*, 4.

[48] "Hammer and Sickle Tour," November 21, 2011. Yugos were cars made in Soviet-allied Yugoslavia in the 1970s and '80s. They were known for spontaneously falling apart or catching on fire.

[49] Jean Baudrillard, *the System of Objects: Radical thinkers (London: Verso, 2006),* 79.

[50] Boros, *In the Shadow of Stalin's Boots*, 33.

## Conclusion: Final Thoughts on Irony and "Post" Identities

The potential of ironic monumental disruptions in Eastern and Southeastern Europe is just beginning to be explored. On July 6, 2011, Albanians erected a nine foot tall statue of George W. Bush in the tiny Albanian village of Fushekruje. The monument-raising happened to coincide with Albania's bid for membership to the European Union. The bronze monument depicts Bush in a shirt with rolled-up sleeves and slacks. The hope was to capture his affable nature. Albanians erected the monument to honor the former President's 65th birthday, but more significantly, they built the monument to honor the fact that Bush was the first U.S. President to visit Albania after the Yugoslav War (and the fall of communism). According to journalist Leon Cika, "Albanians have a special affection for the United States, which they credit with ending their country's Cold War isolation and leading NATO's 1999 bombing offensive that halted ethnic cleansing of Kosovo Albanians by Serbian troops."[1]

In 2007, then President Bush toured Albania and encouraged the country to join the NATO military alliance. Curiously, Albanians do not reflect on Bush's visit as a political mission. Prime Minister Sali Berisha explained that, "Albanians' pro-Americanism has its roots in our attempts... to build our deserved future as a free nation, as a free country."[2] On a strangely emotional note, Thomaidha Kaziu insisted, "I will not die without meeting him again."[3] Kaziu explained that the President told her she looked like his mother. Kaziu explained their connection, stating, "He left his mother in the United States but he found a mother here."[4]

Figure 7.1

Reuters photo/Former President Bush in Albania[5]


President Bush is not the only Western President to find his way to the region. Former

President Bill Clinton also received a statue in Kosovo for "taking action to stop Belgrade's

1998-99 war against Albanians in Kosovo."[6] The monuments are unsettling at best, but their real

political contributions may come at a later date. For now, President Bush and countless other

monuments hold the potential to be sites of regional, national, and international confrontation

and deliberation. The global effects of capitalism may be taking root all over the world, but that

does not mean that the ideology must go unquestioned. The critical application of irony to

nostalgic or even fantasy-driven commemorative practices can open up new interpretations of

historical narratives and provide productive strategies for continued interrogation.

The three case studies examined in this project show that nostalgia can produce critically engaging spaces of deliberation depending on how irony intervenes with nostalgia in comic or tragic frames. Throughout the case studies, I have utilized Burke's comic and tragic frames to explain why irony and nostalgia take on such different formation is Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Hungary. I have argued that, while all of these countries have experienced transitional histories, they have adopted unique commemorative strategies to articulate their current ideological investments. For Bulgaria and Bosnia, the people of these nations are not ready or willing to completely abandon the ideal of communism (or in some instances, the nostalgic representation of communism as a time before war and capitalism brought social and economic uncertainty). But Hungarians have kept the memory of communism alive largely for consumptive purposes. Thus, Hungarians create space for nostalgic representations but only so that tourists (and the Hungarian people as well) can interact with them through a capitalist lens.

In this dissertation, I have challenged the conceptualization of counter-monuments in order to show that more rhetorical focus is possible through what I have termed ironic monumental disruptions. The field of monumentality is troubled by scholars labeling their objects of study as counter-monuments but not being able to identify what constitutes the "counter" position and how it operates differently because of the self-professed distinction. Scholars within the field need to recognize that monument studies can achieve more conceptual clarity by going back to its rhetorical foundation and analyzing monuments in their political, ideological, and historical contexts. In order to understand how (ironic) monuments affect the public and how the public's interaction with them produces valuable deliberation, the field must make space for ironic practices. The concept of ironic monumental disruption does not seek to directly counter old ideologies or traditions but rather brings the past and the present into

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dialogue, which is why it thrives within Burke's comic frame. Additionally, the concept of the ironic monumental disruption has the potential to trouble nostalgia and respond to shifting ideological narratives without simply reinforcing hegemonic discourses. Ironic monumental disruptions offer critical and deliberative opportunities in their interactions with visitors and they provide more conceptual insight into transitional commemorative practices. Monument studies must address how the idea of the counter-monument, in which the "counter" supposedly resides in the artifact itself, valorizes monolithic critiques and fails to recognize that contexts, interactions, and artifacts all shape the symbolism of the commemorative site.

Through my dissertation, I hope to provide scholars of monumentality new avenues of research as they explore commemorative phenomenon (like irony) that largely fall outside the current monumentality literature. Specifically, I encourage scholars to evaluate monuments as interactive nodes of memory with valuable historical, political, and ideological contexts. Placing too much emphasis on the audience or the artifact misses the important relationships and connections monuments make. I urge scholars to evaluate the entire space rather than default to a counter-monument categorization. This dissertation has relied on three central questions of irony, nostalgia (as it shapes subjectivities and frames of acceptance), and counter-monument politics. In addressing these questions throughout the case studies, I hope to open up new conceptual possibilities for irony and representational ethics in the field of monument studies.

The monuments reviewed in this project initially appeared to provide additional reinforcement for escapist, capitalist narratives, but my examination of them has revealed that allowing for commemorative contradictions provides discursive openings for publics unknowingly silenced by a lack of public deliberation. Whether a society has moved its historical artifacts outside of town, painted over them, or destroyed them, they are creating

critical spaces of reflection. In the three case studies examined here, irony was the disruptive tool used to engage a spectrum of nostalgic representations in order to encourage further deliberation. As a larger category of study, counter-monuments stand to gain from the continued conceptualization of the ironic monumental disruption as it pushes counter-monument studies to address artifacts with more historical and rhetorical specificity.

More monuments do not necessarily need to be built in order to counter or question the politics of commemoration; the power of the ironic monumental disruption comes from the fact that previous institutions of memory are interrogated and then challenged through physical or symbolic disruptions. Public memory and monumentality theorists should be seeking more grounded ways to examine historical narratives struggling through transitions. For now, the ironic monumental disruption provides the necessary outlet for histories still in the making.

## "CANNED BEEF" AND THE FUTURE OF FEUDING IDEOLOGIES

Eastern and Southeastern Europeans have complicated histories. They have histories filled with war, violence, imperialism, and devastation. The fact that anyone can look back on the last 100 years and laugh is a miracle unto itself. The new genre of pop monuments throughout this region suggests that irony helps affected publics cope with loss and create new outlets for political deliberation. This truth is no more evident than outside a museum in Sarajevo, Bosnia. Tanks surround the museum's outdoor café. Children use the tanks as a ghoulish playground of sorts. Next to these disturbing military artifacts is another monument constructed through the De/construction of Monument project in Sarajevo.[7] Locals call the monument Canned Beef. It represents the "generous" food donations made by the United Nations during the Yugoslav War. The food was largely expired by the time it reached the Bosnian people, and while citizens were grateful for help, they were resentful that their plight

was such an afterthought to the Western world.  Curiously, both the tank-as-a-toy and the inedible food "donation" serve as prime examples of ironic monumental disruptions.   Located within 10 feet of each other, the tank and the canned beef remind the people of Sarajevo that the tragedy of war is not that far removed but the memory appears to be a non-threatening source of amusement for the next generation.  For those with a memory of the Yugoslav War, this space ensures that they will continue to question both the failed promises of the past and present.



Figure 7.2                                        Figure 7.3

United Nations' Canned Beef      and Tank outside of museum cafe

Collecting the research for this project proved to be a humorous and heartbreaking experience.   Interviews were not the only way to gain insight into a world still reeling from tragedy.  In many ways, the people of Eastern and Southeastern Europe have moved on, but the memory is still there. The young woman in Zitiste, Serbia, who said, "I don't speak English"

when I asked her for directions, clearly recalls that the U.S. bombed Serbia (with NATO backing) on "behalf" of the Albanian population in the former Yugoslavia.  The young Bosnian man, who was likely no more than eighteen, told me that the book I was reading, the *Fall of Yugoslavia,* was filled with lies even though he had no memories of his own from that time.  He explained that, according to his grandfather, Yugoslavia was a wonderful chapter for their nation and he [the young man] wished they could return to that time.   A middle-aged Serbian woman on a train told me I looked like her daughter while another Bosnian woman in a grocery store said I looked cold and hugged me.  A Croatian man in the airport told my German travelling companion that they shared a history.  He was referring to a policy of mass extermination of minority populations.  One woman from Budapest stated that she was twelve when communism ended in Hungary but she mostly recalled faint memories of learning Russian coupled with distinct memories of religion being (re)introduced after 1989.[8]

As a final thought, monuments produce living memories; they are not just static selections of the past.  Monuments change over time depending on their context and viewing audience.  They have the potential to simultaneously provide closure and more confrontation.  They are powerful markers of memory, and like memory, their work is on-going.  Today, the citizens of Eastern and Southeastern Europe have worked tirelessly to put the past behind them while recognizing that they would like to revisit it again in the future. Their methods may appear unorthodox, but their messages are powerful not in spite of but because of their vexing contradictions.

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[1] Leon Cika, "Albanian Town Thanks George W. Bush with Statue, *Huffington Post*, July 06, 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/07/06/albanian-town-george-w-bush-statue_n_891638.html.
[2] Cika, "Albanian Town Thanks George W. Bush with Statue."
[3] Cika, "Albanian Town Thanks George W. Bush with Statue."
[4] Cika, "Albanian Town Thanks George W. Bush with Statue."
[5] Cika, "Albanian Town Thanks George W. Bush with Statue."
[6] Cika, "Albanian Town Thanks George W. Bush with Statue."

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They are also responsible for the Bruce Lee monument in Mostar, Bosnia.

[8] Anonymous interview 09, interview by author, November 21, 2011, Budapest, Hungary. None of my interviewees referred to this period as Stalinism. Rather they used 'communism' as a blanket statement for the economic system in Hungary between 1949-1989.  Some respondents occasionally broke down this time period further into the 'Stalinist era' or strict communism and the 'Kadar era' or goulash communism. While this is an unfair conflation of the two, I am choosing to use the interviewee's language as it constructs her or his memories.

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Anonymous interview 05.  Interview by author.  Budapest, Hungary, November 22, 2011.

Anonymous interview 06.  Interview by author.  Belgrade, Serbia, March 20, 2008.

Anonymous interview 07.  Interview by author.  Mostar, Bosnia, June 18, 2011.

Anonymous Interview 08.  Interview by author.  Mostar, Bosnia, June 15, 2011.

Anonymous interview 09.  Interview by author.  Budapest, Hungary, November 21, 2011.

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