

Negative Anthropology: An International Comparison of Various Types of Right-Wing Spaces

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Is there an architectural and urban planning agenda at work behind the politics of contemporary (neo-) fascists and populist, radical and extremist right-wing forces? The Right-Wing Spaces research project, which has been running since 2018 at the Institute for Principles of Modern Architecture (Design and Theory) (IGmA) at the University of Stuttgart, suggests that the answer to this question is fairly unequivocal, at least in the German context: 'architecture ... seems to have become a key tool of an authoritarian, populist right with a revisionist take on history.'¹ The interim findings of the project were presented in 'Rechte Räume: Bericht einer Europareise' (Right-wing spaces: report on a journey through Europe), *ARCH+ 235* (2019), an issue that was guest-curated by IGmA, as well as in my 2020 essay collection *Rechte Räume: Politische Essays und Gespräche* (Right-wing spaces: political essays and conversations).

Within the scope of this research, a four-part typology of right-wing spaces has been produced for the German context. This was meant to link right-wing strategies with the appropriation of space in both the city and the country and to render these spaces legible through a kind of 'negative anthropology'.² A number of specific factors should be mentioned here: 1) the role played by secluded houses out in the countryside in creating a bridgehead; 2) the construction or purchase of – again rural – settlements to protect against the 'dying out of the people' (*Volkstod*); 3) the appropriation of sites – once again out in the country – with a rich history, such as castles, stately homes and manors,

to serve right-wing concepts of tradition or provide an experience of ethno-nationalist community; and, last but not least, 4) 'corrections' to architectural history in the form of reconstructions – preferably in the urban setting.³ This list can now be extended to include a fifth type of right-wing space that manifests mainly through social media. Although the typology focuses on Germany, I will also assess its usefulness outside of this context.

Let us start with three prefatory observations. The first relates to anthropology, and to negative anthropology in particular: what kind of contemporary relevance can be accorded to a theory of humanity that once promulgated the idea of the 'Untermensch'?⁴ For Theodor W. Adorno, the answer was plainly 'none at all', as is evident in his *Negative Dialectics* (1966), a book in which he sought to lay to rest the anthropologies of philosophers like Max Scheler, Helmuth Plessner and Arnold Gehlen, inhuming them with the following words: 'That we cannot tell what man is does not establish a peculiarly majestic anthropology; it vetoes any anthropology.'⁵ A few years later, another proponent of Critical Theory presented a major philosophical work with a similar thrust: in 1969, Ulrich Sonnemann published his book *Negative Anthropologie: Vorstudien zur Sabotage des Schicksals* (Negative anthropology: preliminary studies on the sabotage of fate). In it, he took a similar line to that of Adorno, sharply repudiating the option of positive anthropology in the sense of a human imaging method. The work concludes by saying that 'people cannot, with the best will in the

world, conceive of what they are, because they are becoming what they think.⁶ Despite the anti-anthropological agenda espoused by the Frankfurt School, anthropology finds itself in rude health: witness the plethora of books that have been published in recent years with a ‘hyphenated form’ of anthropology – such as *Bild-Anthropologie* (image-anthropology) or *Medien-Anthropologie* (media-anthropology) – in their titles.⁷

Recently, there has also been increasing talk of an ‘architectural’ or ‘design anthropology’. It was the Zurich historian Jakob Tanner whose book *Historische Anthropologie zur Einführung* (Historical anthropology: an introduction, 2008) elucidated the fact that, in the eighteenth century, ‘historiography and anthropology emerged as scientific disciplines more or less simultaneously’.⁸ The science of humanity found a solid footing at about the same time as the idea of “history” as a collective singular concept (*Kollektivsingular*) and a category of consciousness.⁹ An anthropology conceived of as separate from history would always, in Tanner’s view, remain scientifically bound to the reckless irresponsibility of a figure like Christoph Meiners, who in 1785 published his *Grundriß der Geschichte der Menschheit* (Outline of the history of mankind), the first world history in which the author adopts a ‘polarising racist stance’.¹⁰ In doing so, Tanner says, he ‘helped promulgate a universal historical plot based on an opposition between the “beautiful light-skinned” race and its “ugly dark-skinned” counterpart’.¹¹ This had terrible consequences: ‘With Meiners, “racial conflict” and “racial purity” became occidental obsessions.’¹² Tanner thus seeks to respond to anthropology’s birth defect – the tendency to regard the field as a history-free zone – by incorporating it into historiography, an approach that is also adopted below. The patterning processes inherent in human (territorial) behaviour – which can sometimes take concrete form as right-wing spaces – need to be analysed with the help of anthropological approaches. That is on the one hand. On the other, such analytical approaches

should always work against the processes of consolidation; they should not accept the concomitant situation as natural but rather critique it. Anthropology is not ‘negative’ per se; it only becomes negative if it grants stability, if it seeks to perpetuate and if it is not labelled as negative in the sense of being undesirable.

A second observation is important here. As the author has already made clear in other writings, there is not just ‘one’ right – instead, it is better to speak of a ‘dual right’ inasmuch as there are the anarcho-capitalist, free-market ultras (the ‘libertarian right’) and the anti-capitalist protectionists (the populist, ‘national socialist’ right).¹³ In contrast to the latter group, which I will focus on below, the former only rarely acts in ways that are openly racist and anti-Semitic.

Finally, I come to the third observation: the argument that follows is concerned with the complex relationship between flesh and stone, between human and structure, between action and building, between ideology and artefact.¹⁴ It should be emphasised that there is no quasi-natural connection between ideology and artefact in the sense of ‘fascist’ or ‘democratic’ architecture – yet the two are not completely divorced from one another either. Just about every building emerges in a particular political and economic context, which can be endorsed or reshaped by relevant human actions. There is no such thing as ‘right-wing architecture’, but there are ‘right-wing spaces’ – relational spaces or action settings of various complexions that routinely materialise as container spaces (but can also be modified or repurposed as necessary).¹⁵ The comments that follow should make this clearer.

Secluded country houses as bridgeheads

The country estate of Botho Strauß (b. 1944) has been suggested as the prime example of this typology in the German context. Located in the Uckermark in the little village of Grünheide, about 80 kilometres north-east of Berlin, it was here that the German poet retreated as indignation

spilled across the features sections of the newspapers following the publication of his essay 'Anschwellender Bocksgesang' (The rising tide of tragedy or, more literally, The swelling song of the he-goat) in *Der Spiegel* in 1993. Criticism was heaped on him for writing such sentences as 'That a people seeks to assert its moral law over others and is ready to make blood sacrifices for it is something we no longer understand and, in our liberal libertarian self-centredness, consider wrong and reprehensible.' But the building in Grünheide was not the final destination in a process of retreat, but rather the start of a land grab of sorts – the house, as it were, in which the eponymous 'he-goat' could sing his song. This had become clear by 1997 at the latest, when Strauß published his screed *Die Fehler des Kopisten* (The copyist's errors), an essayistic stream of consciousness disgorged while taking his son on a stroll through the countryside around his home. Adopting the tone of a member of the far-right NPD party, he wrote: 'The Germans got high on their sense of the collective for five or six years. As punishment, they must spend a millennium examining how this could have happened.'¹⁶ Admittedly, Grünheides – that is, right-wing strongholds in the depths of the country – are not confined to Germany. Take Switzerland, for example, where in the remote reaches of Riederalp in Valais, German writer Thor Kunkel (b. 1963) mobilises his Kunkelbakker advertising agency in support of AfD election campaigns. Or the UK, where writer, musician and political activist Troy Southgate (b. 1965) used the cover of his book *National-Anarchism: Theory and Practice* (2012) to create a striking domestic image of the rural 'exit strategy' facilitating the creation of ethnically homogeneous peoples.

In the context of rural properties that are part of a land grab, it is worth mentioning the Feistriz estate owned by Austrian right-wing populist Jörg Haider from 1986 until his death in 2008. Located in the Rosental Valley in southern Carinthia, the forest estate with its large tracts of woodland had been appropriated from its owner – Mathilde Roifer,

a Jewish woman with Italian citizenship – in 1939, as part of a 'dejewification programme', as it was referred to in official records. Josef Webhofer, Haider's great-great-uncle on his mother's side, became the new owner. The forced sale was intended to bolster German culture in a traditionally Slovenian-speaking area. As Andreas Rumpfhuber has shown, Webhofer made a symbolic reparation payment in 1954 in an attempt to authenticate the contract, which was no longer legally watertight after the Second World War, but the ownership position remained unresolved.¹⁷ The situation was only put on a secure legal footing in 1986 when Webhofer's son, Wilhelm, donated the property to Haider – the newly elected chairman of the FPÖ (Austria's right-wing Freedom Party), whose support was shored up by the party's German nationalist wing – in exchange for a life annuity: proceedings could now no longer be brought against the Webhofers to have them surrender the property and Haider was able, according to Rumpfhuber, to 'liberate' at least a portion of Carinthia, the expression he used in 1984 in a nod to the Kärntner Abwehrkampf (the 'Carinthian defensive struggle') and the 1920 plebiscite to determine whether Carinthia should remain part of Austria: 'We shall not content ourselves with Carinthia remaining free and undivided. This state will only be free when it becomes a German state.'¹⁸ An attempt by Roifer's heirs to reopen the case in 2000 was unsuccessful.

The motif of homestead secession focused on nationalist integrity is most flamboyantly exemplified in the domestic situation of the Italian writer Gabriele D'Annunzio (1863–1938). Between 1919 and 1920, as a rebel leader in Fiume, D'Annunzio became a source of inspiration for Benito Mussolini's brand of fascism. Later, in 1921, shortly after the failure of the Italian Regency of Carnaro, he moved into a villa on Lake Garda that he had converted, together with the architect Giancarlo Maroni, into an estate whose eccentric grandeur was matched only by its militaristic flair. [Fig. 1] Not only did the extensive 9-hectare grounds contain garden sculptures in the

shape of rifle cartridges, they were also boosted in the mid-1920s by the addition of the battleship *Puglia*, which D'Annunzio received as a gift from the Italian navy in 1923. [Fig. 2] Other features include an Ansaldo SVA.10 airplane that he had flown during the First World War and an SIAI S.16 flying-boat. In 1939, a year after D'Annunzio's death, Maroni submitted plans for a mausoleum to enshrine him, which was then indeed built in 1955 on a hill on the estate. Inspired by Etruscan Roman burial sites, the mausoleum took up motifs from Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*, as can be seen in its three annular stone platforms: the Victory of the Humble, the Artificers and the Heroes. D'Annunzio's mortal remains lie in a towering sarcophagus supported by four monumental pillars, surrounded by ten more sarcophagi dedicated to the 'Heroes of Fiume'. During his lifetime, the poet had actually styled his park – which was funded by the Italian state – *Il Vittoriale degli italiani* (The Italian monument to victory), a literary distortion of the fact that the site actually owed its existence to a military defeat. The name was subsequently used to denote the entire complex.

Settlements and territories as bastions

As with the first type of rightist space, international parallels can also be found with the second type, rural settlements defying the imagined dying out of the people. Although minimal ideological differences can be noted – in Germany, for instance, some of the more recent ethno-nationalist settlements (such as in Koppelow in Mecklenburg) should be seen in terms of a specifically German 'neo-Artaman movement' – settlers with a nationalist disposition can also be found in other Western countries joining forces to form bottom-up collectives with a discriminatory agenda.¹⁹ In France, for example, Les Brigandes – the all-female identitarian band with xenophobic views who always appear in Zorro masks – have been singing about 'France notre Terre' (France, our country) or 'Le Grand Remplacement' (The great replacement) in angelic voices since 2015.

As 'hippies from the right', the band members and their relatives live in a communal family of about thirty people in La Salvetat-sur-Agout in the Hérault department of Occitanie. There have been similar communities in existence in the US for quite some time – in Oklahoma, for example, where right-wing extremist Robert G. Millar (1925–2001), a leading figure in the Christian Identity movement, established Elohim City in 1973, a DIY settlement that seems both quasi-archaic and retro-futuristic: since Millar's death, the community has been run by his son John in his role as pastor.²⁰ The US is also home to the Northwestern Territorial Imperative, an extreme-right separatist project that is probably the most territorially ambitious settlement of its kind to date. Founded by American neo-Nazi Harold Covington (1953–2018), the 'ethnostate', covering a huge region in the US Northwest – the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho and parts of Montana – was to be declared an 'Aryan homeland'.

The right-wing esoteric Anastasia movement makes its demands in public with a far greater sense of reality – and a political programme that is not always evident at a quick glance. It is inspired by *Anastasia: The Ringing Cedars of Russia*, a series of novels in ten volumes published by Russian writer and entrepreneur Vladimir Megre (b. 1950) between 1996 and 2010 (and appearing in German between 1999 and 2011). Numerous rural communes have since sprung up whose residents followed the ideals of the allegedly real Anastasia – living on a 'family estate in the country' in notional 'harmony with nature' – first in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, and later in Australia, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the US and Germany. Megre's books give clear recommendations on how to design this mode of living. The recipe includes the following: 1) a country residence with a hectare of land, three-quarters of which should be wooded, the whole to be ringed by a wall or a living fence, such as a hedge; 2) a vegetable garden complete with a pond, a fiftieth of a hectare in size, which should be laid out in the unwooded open space – this vegetable



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Fig. 1: *Il Vittoriale degli italiani* (The Italian monument to victory): The eccentric grandeur of Gabriele D'Annunzio's garden and villa on Lake Garda is matched only by its militaristic flair. Photo: Wikipedia.

Fig. 2: The battleship *Puglia* was added to *Il Vittoriale degli italiani* in the mid-1920s, when Gabriele D'Annunzio received it a gift from the Italian navy in 1923. Photo: Wikipedia.

garden should in turn be enclosed by a hedge to keep out animals such as chickens or goats; 3) a total of more than three hundred edible and beneficial plant species, which are to be cultivated on the estate, including apples, sweet or sour cherries, flowers, strawberries, cucumbers, raspberries, currants, gooseberries and tomatoes – a sunflower should also be considered, as well as a 'family tree'. This all serves as staffage for the ideology of a purportedly natural gender order, based on a patriarchal, heteronormative, anti-Semitic set of beliefs, in which Jews themselves are to blame for their persecution over the centuries.²¹ The official register of Anastasia settlements currently lists over 213 of them with internet addresses and more than 230 in Russia alone.

In the former Yugoslavia we can find two particularly striking examples of settlements that are laying the ground for a society with an identitarian profile, thus striving to avoid an imagined dying out of the people. The Serbian French filmmaker and musician Emir Kusturica has built two planned 'towns' there since the start of the new millennium: the wooden mountain village of Drvengrad (timber town), sometimes also referred to, somewhat absurdly, as *Küstendorf* (coastal village); and its stone counterpart, Andrićgrad, a newly built quarter of Višegrad in Bosnia and Herzegovina just 25 kilometres from Drvengrad.²² [Figs. 3, 4]. Both 'towns' were built as part of film projects: Drvengrad for *Life Is a Miracle* (2014) and Andrićgrad for the planned screen adaptation of Ivo Andrić's novel *The Bridge on the Drina* (1945). The bridge in the title is within sight of Andrićgrad. While Drvengrad is still infused with a Third Position amalgam of left and right – with streets named after popular leftist heroes such as Che Guevara, Yuri Gagarin and Joe Strummer, on which hawkers peddle souvenirs bearing the image of war criminal and former Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić – the situation in Andrićgrad, as Gal Kirn explains, has clearly tipped over into right-wing nationalist historical revisionism:

While in *The Bridge on the Drina* Andrić attempts to cover a period of four centuries, describing the coexistence in the region of the various ethnic groups and religions, including Islam, together with all the conflicts that have taken place, Kusturica only has an Orthodox church built in Andrićgrad – there is no sign of a mosque. When the press pointed this out to Kusturica, he stated that a mosque had no place in Višegrad. He said there had never been a mosque there, nor a Catholic church. And for that reason, neither of them would be built there.²³

Old castles and manor houses; new churches

The third type of rightist space involves the appropriation of rural castles, stately homes and manors with a rich historical tradition as vessels for ingrained right-wing attitudes and ethno-nationalist community experiences. This type has been elucidated elsewhere in the German-speaking context, using the examples of the three manor houses of Almoshof, Ermreuth and Kohren-Sahlis in Bavaria and Saxony used by the Hoffmann paramilitary sports club, Götz Kubitschek and Ellen Kositzka's Schnellroda manor and André Poggenburg's Nöbeditz manor, both located in Saxony-Anhalt.²⁴ Here, too, it is possible to make international parallels: in Switzerland, for example, where in 1972 August von Finck senior (1898–1980), an admirer of Hitler and 'Aryanisation profiteer', bought and renovated the medieval castle of Weinfeld in the Swiss canton of Thurgau. [Fig. 5] Today the castle is inhabited by August von Finck junior (b. 1930), the AfD financier, who is worth billions. The third type can be found in France, where writer Renaud Camus – whose Great Replacement conspiracy ideology prepared the soil for the far-right attacks in Christchurch and Halle in 2019 – has lived since 1992 in the Château de Plieux in the Gers department, built between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.²⁵ Camus even claimed that the château inspired his idea of the Great Replacement. In the French context we might also mention Montretout, a small manor house, set in 5 000 square metres



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

Fig. 3: A Third Position amalgam of left and right: Emir Kusturica's Drvengrad (timber town) – sometimes also referred to *Küstendorf* (coastal village) – built in Serbia for the production of the film *Life Is a Miracle* (2014). Photo: Wikipedia.

Fig. 4: Tipped over into right-wing nationalist historical revisionism: Emir Kusturica's Andrićgrad – a newly built quarter of Višegrad in Bosnia and Herzegovina just 25 kilometres from Drvengrad –, built for the planned screen adaptation of Ivo Andrić's novel *The Bridge on the Drina* (1945). Photo: Wikipedia.

of parkland in the affluent Parisian suburb of St. Cloud, with several outbuildings and a view of the Eiffel Tower. Built in the 1830s, Montretout was a gift from Napoleon III, Emperor of France from 1852 to 1870, to his chief of cabinet. Since 1976, it has been the property of the right-wing extremist, Holocaust denier and founder of the Front National party, Jean-Marie Le Pen (b. 1928), who inherited it from Hubert Lambert (1934–1976), an heirless cement entrepreneur and one of the first Front National sympathisers. The estate not only became the Le Pen family residence, but also served as the party headquarters. One of Le Pen's daughters, Yann, still lives at Montretout today.

Outside the German and French context – in post-socialist countries in particular – it is evident that traditional right-wing attitudes and ethno-nationalist community experiences in rural areas are connected, not only with old buildings from the feudal period, but also, primarily, with new sacred buildings. A more specific definition of the typology of rightist spaces is needed here – and this will also allow a better understanding of the situation in Poland, for example.²⁶ A more specific definition of the typology of rightist spaces is needed here – and this will also allow a better understanding of the situation in Poland, for example, where any such spaces are associated with the work of the Catholic media entrepreneur and anti-Semitic priest Tadeusz Rydzyk (b. 1945). In 1991 Rydzyk founded Radio Maryja in Toruń, a national clerical radio station with close ties to the right-wing populist Law and Justice (PiS) party. Between 2012 and 2016, he instigated the construction of the Sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Star of the New Evangelisation and of St. John Paul II in Toruń, an eclectic central-plan building with a canopy roof, golden crown and ring of colonnades surrounding it.²⁷ The rear of the building is furnished with large kitschy wall sculptures with heroic depictions of important battles in Polish history, and on the back wall behind the altar, above an image of Jesus crowned with rays of

light, there is a golden inscription bearing the words 'WASZE RADIO' (your radio) in large lettering, a barely coded conflation of the 'radiant' Christ with Rydzyk's Radio Maryja. One other project for a new sacred building in Poland would have been almost inconceivable without Rydzyk's propaganda: the statue of Christ the King in Świebodzin (2010) – the largest statue of Christ in the world. The work was initiated by the parish priest Sylwester Zawadzki (1932–2014) – a 'great friend of Radio Maryja'.²⁸ Zawadzki's heart was interred at the feet of the statue of Christ as specified in his will. This was an infringement of Polish law (which only sanctions burials in cemeteries, with special permission otherwise required) and resulted in criminal proceedings being brought not only against the priest who carried out the rite, but also the two doctors who had removed his heart.

New religious buildings put to the service of populist or nationalist community experiences are also having a major influence in the former Yugoslavia, helping to characterise the territory there, as Zoran Terzić has shown.²⁹ His book *Kunst des Nationalismus* (The art of nationalism) shows the spectrum of possibilities between inward and outward proselytising, using a telling series of images, including a cross standing as high as a house that was erected by Bosnian Croats near Mostar in the late 1990s. For Terzić this cross represents the 'visual climax of a renaissance of cultural-religious self-aggrandisement', of the kind that is 'typical of the years during and after the war that followed the break-up of Yugoslavia'.³⁰ Another picture shows the Orthodox 'variant' erected in Macedonia in 2002 on the mountain near Skopje, in pursuit of the same goal: 'the demonstrative display of religious suzerainty over the respective (Bosnian or Albanian) Muslim minority'.³¹ The images also include two examples from Bosnia and Herzegovina, one of which shows a modern mosque in Sarajevo built with funding from Indonesia that serves as the base of Bosnia's Islamic community.



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

Fig. 5: Inhabited by an AfD financier: The medieval castle of Weinfelden in the Swiss canton of Thurgau, owned by August von Finck junior (b. 1930) – who inherited it from his father August von Finck senior (1898–1980), an admirer of Hitler and 'Aryanisation profiteer'. Photo: Wikipedia.

Fig. 6: More than just a squat: CasaPound is not only an occupied Mussolini-era building in Via Napoleone III near Rome's central railway station district, but also the nerve centre of a parallel neo-fascist world existing in the heart of central Rome, which includes fashion boutiques, tattoo parlours, osterias, bars, clubs etc. Photo: Stephan Trüby.

As Terzić writes, 'it symbolises the outward proselytisation encouraged by countries like Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Kuwait as part of the process of post-war reconstruction.'³² Finally, on the right, the Turhan Emin Beg Mosque in Ustikolina, the oldest mosque in Bosnia, which was destroyed during the war and subsequently rebuilt and enlarged.³³ The federal government decided, however, that the mosque with the tallest minaret in Europe was to be destroyed again in 2004, in order to make way for a lower mosque more in line with the original.³⁴ This did not happen though. The Christian counterpart to this can be found in Mostar, where a Catholic church has likewise risen to almost twice its previous height after restoration – 'which is perhaps also indicative of a kind of ersatz satisfaction of the masculine impulses that are now no longer involved in the war'.³⁵

Monuments and reconstruction projects in the cause of a sanitised history

The fourth type of rightist space, one that is decidedly urban, is particularly prevalent in Germany.³⁶ We can, however, also find comparable tendencies in Hungary, where they are accompanied by a revisionist policy with regard to monuments of a kind that has so far only been propagated in Germany in AfD papers and via statements associated with this position ('a 180-degree pivot in the politics of commemoration').³⁷ For example, Victor Orbán's national conservative, right-wing populist government has, since 2014, been pursuing a controversial project to restore Buda Castle in Budapest's Castle Quarter.³⁸ Using EU funding, the area is to be developed into a 'symbolic site of Hungarian identity', which implies, first and foremost, a reconstruction of the way it was in the early twentieth century. The reconstruction of the Royal Riding Hall was recently completed, and further reconstruction work is to follow.³⁹ Such construction projects are accompanied by a policy of commemoration that is relocating numerous Hungarian monuments from the socialist era to the outskirts of the city, while erecting new

monuments that conceal the country's history of collaboration with Nazi Germany. One such monument can be found on Liberty Square (Szabadság tér) in Budapest. At the same time this policy also condones the raising of a bronze bust of Miklós Horthy in Budapest's public space, at the entrance to the Temple of Return (Hazatérés Temploma) of the Hungarian Reformed Church – an event that took place in 2013. Under Horthy's authoritarian regime, anti-Jewish, pro-Nazi policies had been pursued in Hungary between 1920 and 1944. The Horthy cult, which was reinstated in the late twentieth century – by 1998, at the latest, when Orbán was elected prime minister – found its most prominent advocate in Hungarian architectural circles in Imre Makovecz (1935–2011). The right-wing architect with national, romantic leanings, who is also known to have expressed anti-Semitic sentiments, worked with sculptor László Péterfy to create an anti-communist monument in Budapest, which was erected illegally on Dózsa György Square in 1996, before being subsequently authorised.⁴⁰ Bearing the slogan '1944–1990: In memory of those who did not die, but whose lives were ruined', the memorial represents a one-sided reinterpretation of the liberation from fascism as an unmitigated calamity that provided the initial impetus that drove the society in the direction of socialism.

Italy is the global paradigm of this kind of nostalgic view of fascism: it is the only country in Europe in which a decidedly urban form of neo-fascism succeeded in establishing itself at a very early stage. CasaPound is a prime example of this. In 2003 a group of neo-fascist sympathisers occupied a six-storey Mussolini-era building in Via Napoleone III near Rome's central railway station district, which they then referred to as CasaPound. Named after the American poet Ezra Pound, an anti-Semitic Mussolini supporter, the building is still occupied, with an unknown number of fascists living in it, 'tolerated by the city administration and condoned by Rome's police, who act as their protectors'.⁴¹ [Fig. 6] CasaPound is more than just a squat:

between 2012 and 2019, it was also the headquarters of the political party of the same name and to this day it is the nerve centre of a parallel neo-fascist world existing in the heart of central Rome, which includes fashion boutiques, tattoo parlours, osterias, bars, clubs and the bookshop La Testa die Ferro in the immediate vicinity of the Colosseum.⁴² This bookshop was named after the newspaper of Gabriele d'Annunzio's irregulars.⁴³ The glorification of Mussolini by CasaPound and other groups can flourish in Italy because the country's brand of fascism is downplayed by large sections of society. This may also explain why the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana – with its quotation from Mussolini's declaration of war on Ethiopia inscribed in large lettering on each of its four façades – has not only served as the headquarters of the Italian fashion house Fendi since 2015, but also appears, without drawing the slightest criticism, as a stylish setting in advertising videos, with Karl Lagerfeld, for example.⁴⁴ [Fig. 7] In 2013, a full two years before it was taken over by Fendi, the Palazzo featured on a CasaPound election poster.⁴⁵

Though this phenomenon is not confined to the West, the modern history of Western sculpture depicting monarchs and generals is permeated by selective memories that conceal, or even glorify, racism, colonialism and slavery. It is only recently that a broader movement has been stirred into action to protest this – most notably in the US, particularly after the brutal murder of Black American George Floyd by white police. The anti-racist organisation Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) has counted more than 1,700 so-called Confederate monuments in the US, that is, sculptures that seek to cherish the memory of the generals of the Confederate States of America (1861–1865) who fought, in an ultimately losing struggle, to maintain the slave economy in the southern states. A Confederate monument policy steeped in the ideology of white supremacy established itself in the aftermath of the War of Secession, enjoying a heyday in the early twentieth century.⁴⁶ Countless equestrian

statues of Confederate generals like Robert E. Lee were put up across the country, and in 1909 work began on a giant relief of three Confederate figures that was carved into Stone Mountain near Atlanta: covering an expanse of rock the size of a football field, the artwork, which was not completed until 1972, immortalised Lee along with Confederate President Jefferson Davis and General Thomas 'Stonewall' Jackson. One of the sources of funding for the project was the Ku Klux Klan. The equestrian statue of Lee in Charlottesville, Virginia, which was erected in 1924, has recently been a regular focus of public debate. When the city decided to remove the statue in 2017, a massive protest was organised by conservative and far-right groups. Shortly afterwards, American right-wing extremist Richard E. Spencer and his acolytes organised torchlight processions during which they chanted slogans like 'Jews will not replace us'. Spencer helped organise the Unite the Right rally, which saw a right-wing extremist drive his car into a group of anti-racist counter-protesters on 12 August 2017, killing thirty-two-year-old civil rights activist Heather Heyer. After being shrouded for a short period, the Robert E. Lee memorial is now once again a prominent feature in the urban space, just as it always has been.

Rightist spaces in the media

The four types of 'real' rightist spaces presented here should be augmented – if we are to gain a better understanding of the specific characteristics of the present we live in – so as to include a fifth, more recent category: media spaces. To be more precise, this category covers spaces of transmission that go out via media and social media in particular. This trend is allied with a general disenchantment with the promise that the cyber-utopianism of the early 2010s – which was linked to phenomena like the Occupy movement, Anonymous, WikiLeaks, the mass protests in Spain and the Middle East – would inevitably contribute to an improvement in democratic conditions.⁴⁷ According to cultural theorist Angela Nagle, the wish expressed by people like

Manuel Castells and the computer magazine *Wired* for 'the swarm, the hive mind, citizen journalism and user-generated content' has been fulfilled – 'but it's not quite the utopian vision they were hoping for'.⁴⁸ In her 2017 book *Kill All Normies* Nagle writes,

just a few years ago the left-cyberutopians claimed that 'the disgust had become a network' and that establishment media could no longer control politics, that the new public sphere was going to be based on leaderless user-generated social media. This network has indeed arrived, but it has helped to take the right, not the left, to power.⁴⁹

The author cites a specific year as the end of an epoch, a sea change in history:

The year 2016 may be remembered as the year the media mainstream's hold over formal politics died. A thousand Trump Pepe memes bloomed and a strongman larger-than-life Twitter troll who showed open hostility to the mainstream media and to both party establishments took The White House without them.⁵⁰

And by 2016 at the latest, it had become clear too that the virtue of transgression, which had once had a leftist flair, now exhibited rightist tendencies: the online right, says Nagle, is 'the full coming to fruition of the transgressive anti-moral style, its final detachment from any egalitarian philosophy of the left or Christian morality of the right'.⁵¹

It is obvious that transgressive elements can become stable features in the landscape, especially in places where the limiting density is low – that is, in rural areas. These are precisely the places, then, where rightist spaces are commonly found – 'packaged', as it were, in social media – celebrating in camera-friendly fashion, at a safe distance from any antifa activists, their disengagement from an urban culture that is perceived as (left-wing) liberal. In Germany, for example, we should mention here the secluded property in Lübtheen in Mecklenburg

of neo-Nazi and NPD politician Udo Pastörs – an estate built in a landscape conservation area that the NPD YouTube channel DS-TV (Deutsche Stimme) used as the backdrop for a 'summer interview' in 2016 with the seignorial-looking owner; or the manor in Schnellroda, which has, since 2002, not only been the home of neo-fascist Götz Kubitschek and his family, but also the base for his Institut für Staatspolitik (ifs), his YouTube channel *kanal schnellroda* and his publishing house Antaios.⁵² It is also where the aptly named magazine *Sezession* is published. A similar sense of (trans) mission can also be found in other countries – for example, in the Anastasia movement, mentioned above, which rightist spaces have used to hack into an enterprising blockbuster structure that can be summarised as follows: a series of novels preaches a reactionary way of life in the rural family residence; such settings then manifest in reality in multiple places, achieving relative self-sufficiency in economic terms on the back of agricultural products like cedar oil or tea; these products are then marketed via centralised websites.⁵³ One of these sites also has a dating platform for like-minded heterosexuals, designed to ensure the ideology's transgenerational transmission.

In urban settings, architecture can also be part of a right-wing media strategy. However, unlike in rural areas, in cities it is hardly ever a matter of appropriating land in the sense of making concrete territorial gains. Instead, it is all about political gesturing. In right-wing propaganda, cathedrals have been tasked with representing the 'European values' that are seen as being under threat. This was made particularly clear when French writer and right-wing extremist Dominique Venner committed suicide on 21 May 2013, shooting himself in the mouth at the altar of Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris. His motives for this were set out in his final blog entry – titled 'Le manif du 26 mai et Heidegger' (The 26 May demo and Heidegger) – in which he once again opposed, as he had in many of his previous books, the 'Great Replacement' and 'North African



Fig. 7: Inscribed by a quotation from Mussolini's declaration of war on Ethiopia: The Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana, completed in 1940 in the EUR district in Rome, serves as the headquarters of the Italian fashion house Fendi since 2015 and appears as a stylish setting in advertising videos. Photo: Stephan Trüby.

and Arab immigration' as well as the introduction of same-sex marriage in France.⁵⁴ Attitudes of this kind had a major impact that spread far and wide when, on 15 April 2019, Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris was ravaged by a fire that had caught light in the course of renovation work on the roof. The fire was still burning when the right-wing architecture blog *Architectural Revival* started fuelling anti-Muslim conspiracy theories by announcing that 'dozens of Catholic churches all across France have been attacked since the start of the year'.⁵⁵ Accordingly, the comment columns featured statements like 'Coincidence? I think not' or 'Reports make a connection with the renovation work? Maybe the work of turning it into a mosque.'⁵⁶ It is entirely consistent with these utterances that two years earlier, in 2017, *Architectural Revival* made the following comment about the visualisation presented in Staab Architekten's winning design for the redevelopment of the area around the southern entrance to the cathedral in the centre of Cologne: 'Modern architecture is demoralising. A concrete-box design for Cologne. The eradication of German identity paves the way for the German folk to be replaced.'⁵⁷

The rightist spaces in the media that open up in *Architectural Revival* and on other platforms find their central motif in the cathedral. The image of the (burning) cathedral is a bundling together of people's most paranoid fears about seeing what is 'theirs' disappear. At the same time – in a particularly bizarre sleight of hand in recent intellectual history – a derogatory discourse about 'the Cathedral' as an all-encompassing system created by a Western liberal continuum of universities and the press has become established in the context of the 'Dark Enlightenment', an idea promulgated by neoreactionary (NRx) thinkers like Nick Land and Curtis Yarvin, aka Mencius Moldbug.⁵⁸ There is thus much to be said for seeing 'the Cathedral' – oscillating between threat and threatened – as the central vanishing point of the typology of rightist spaces developed here as part of a negative anthropology.

Notes

1. Stephan Trüby, *Rechte Räume: Politische Essays und Gespräche* (Basel: Birkhäuser, 2020), 138. The Right-Wing Spaces research project is headed by Philipp Krüpe (IGMA) and myself, https://www.igma.uni-stuttgart.de/en/research/research-projects/page_0002_0001/.
2. The term 'negative anthropology', which was heavily influenced by Ulrich Sonnemann's book of the same name, implies, in the best Adornian tradition, a negation of anthropology in general – notwithstanding the subtitle (Preliminary studies on the sabotage of fate), whose suggestive power needs to be tested here to establish its real substance. See Ulrich Sonnemann, *Negative Anthropologie: Vorstudien zur Sabotage des Schicksals* (1969; Frankfurt am Main: Syndikat, 1981).
3. Trüby, *Rechte Räume*, 113.
4. The following passage follows up, to a large extent, on remarks I published in an article titled 'Die Aktualität der (Architektur-)Anthropologie' in 'Think Global, Build Social!', *ARCH+ 211/212* (Summer 2013), reprinted in Stephan Trüby, *Absolute Architekturbeginner: Schriften 2004–2014* (Munich: Fink, 2018), 207.
5. Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Continuum, 2007), 124.
6. Sonnemann, *Negative Anthropologie*, 324.
7. Hans Belting, *Bild-Anthropologie: Entwürfe für eine Bildwissenschaft* (Munich: Fink, 2001); Matthias Uhl, *Medien, Gehirn, Evolution: Mensch und Medienkultur verstehen; Eine transdisziplinäre Medienanthropologie* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2009).
8. Jakob Tanner, *Historische Anthropologie zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junius, 2004), 28.
9. *Ibid.*, 38.
10. *Ibid.*, 48.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. Trüby, *Rechte Räume*, 37.
14. Richard Sennett, *Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization* (New York: Norton, 1994).
15. On the distinction between relational and container spaces, see Markus Schroer, *Räume, Orte, Grenzen: Auf dem Weg zu einer Soziologie des Raums* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006).

16. Botho Strauß, *Die Fehler des Kopisten* (Munich: Hanser, 1997), 107.
17. Andreas Rumpfhuber, 'Unbehagliche Räume: Die Darstellung und Strukturierung von Raum durch Österreichs Rechtspopulisten', in 'Rechte Räume: Bericht einer Europareise', *ARCH+* 235 (May 2019): 140.
18. Jörg Haider, quoted in *ibid.*, 147.
19. On the 'neo-Artaman movement', see Trüby, *Rechte Räume*, 120.
20. Trüby, *Rechte Räume*, 210.
21. See Carl Kinsky and Sebastian Hell, 'Ökologie, Rassenlehre und Antisemitismus: Die "Anastasia-Bewegung" in Hessen', *Lotta* 77, 12 February 2020, <http://www.lotta-magazin.de/ausgabe/78/kologie-rassenlehre-und-antisemitismus>.
22. Work on Drvengrad began in 2000. Andrićgrad was completed in 2014.
23. Gal Kirn, quoted in 'Nationale Mythen im ehemaligen Jugoslawien: Gal Kirn im Gespräch mit c/o now', in 'Rechte Räume: Bericht einer Europareise', *ARCH+* 235 (May 2019): 107.
24. Trüby, *Rechte Räume*, 123.
25. On the Great Replacement conspiracy, see Renaud Camus, *Le Grand Remplacement* (Paris: Reinharc, 2011).
26. Wojciech Czaja, 'Polen und Politik: Das Land des Lex Dyktator', in 'Rechte Räume: Bericht einer Europareise', *ARCH+* 235 (May 2019): 174.
27. *Ibid.*, 180.
28. 'Radio Maryja', Sanktuarium, updated 2021, <https://sanktuariumswiebodzin.pl/radio-maryja>.
29. Zoran Terzić, *Kunst des Nationalismus: Kultur – Konflikt – (jugoslawischer) Zerfall* (Berlin: Kadmos, 2007), 59.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.*
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*
36. In Germany the phantom pains connected with severe wartime destruction coupled with the particularly conservative disposition to be found in many of the country's architects as compared with fellow professionals in other countries, and the determination among broad sections of the population to rid the cityscape of prestigious GDR architecture with its socialist legacies have combined to form a misalliance that has led to reconstruction projects like the Garrison Church in Potsdam and Frankfurt's new Old Town. It is no coincidence that both projects were initiated by right-wing radicals. On the conservative disposition of many architects in Germany, see Trüby, *Rechte Räume*, 151. On the political origins of the reconstruction projects for Garrison Church in Potsdam and Frankfurt's new Old Town, see *ibid.*, 137.
37. This was called for by AfD politician Björn Höcke in a speech he delivered in Dresden in 2017. see Matthias Kamann, "Was Höcke mit der „Denkmal der Schande“-Rede bezweckt", *Welt*, 18 January 2017, <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article161286915/Was-Hoecke-mit-der-Denkmal-der-Schande-Rede-bezweckt.html>
38. Zsuzsanna Stánitz, 'Neuschreibung der Geschichte: Das Beispiel Ungarn', in 'Rechte Räume: Bericht einer Europareise', *ARCH+* 235 (May 2019), 150.
39. This includes the Stöckl Staircase, the Széchenyi Library and the Main Guard building. *Ibid.*, 155.
40. For Makovecz's anti-Semitism, see Eva S. Balogh, 'An interview with Imre Makowecz, a favorite of Viktor Orbán', *Hungarian Spectrum: Reflections On Politics, Economics, and Culture*, 15 May 2011, <https://hungarianspectrum.org/2011/05/15/an-interview-with-imre-makowecz-a-favorite-of-viktor-orban/>.
41. Volker Weiß, 'Neofaschismus in Italien: Popkulturell anschlussfähig', in *Frankfurter Rundschau* 257, 4 November 2010, 34–35, <http://oireszene.blogspot.de/2010/11/07/neofaschismus-in-italien-popkulturell-anschlussfaehig/>.
42. Heiko Koch, *Casa Pound Italia: Mussolinis Erben* (Münster: Unrast, 2013), 18.
43. Julian Bruns, Kathrin Glösel and Natascha Strobl, *Die Identitären: Handbuch zur Jugendbewegung der Neuen Rechten in Europa* (Münster: Unrast-Verlag, 2016), 118.

44. The Palazzo was built by Ernesto Lapadula, Giovanni Guerrini and Mario Romana in Rome's EUR district between 1938 and 1943. The lettering, 'Un popolo di poeti di artisti di eroi di santi di pensatori di scienziati di navigatori di trasmigratori' (A nation of poets, of artists, of heroes, of saints, of thinkers, of scientists, of navigators, of migrants), is a quotation from Mussolini's speech declaring war on Ethiopia on 2 October 1935. The Lagerfeld ad can be seen at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tD_TdBmZqMo.
45. Koch, *Casa Pound Italia*, 99.
46. Trüby, *Rechte Räume*, 201.
47. See Angela Nagle, *Kill All Normies: Online Culture Wars from 4chan and Tumblr to Trump and the Alt-Right* (Winchester: Zero, 2017), 10.
48. *Ibid.*, 3.
49. *Ibid.*, 27.
50. *Ibid.*, 3.
51. *Ibid.*, 39.
52. For the 2016 interview with Udo Pastörs, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7FBkhQYREM>.
53. These sites include <https://www.ringingcedarsofrussia.org> and <https://ringingcedars.international>.
54. Dominique Venner, 'Le manif du 26 mai et Heidegger', 21 May 2013, <https://www.dominiquevenner.fr/2013/05/la-manif-du-26-mai-et-heidegger/>.
55. Quoted in Philipp Krüpe, 'Reaktionäre Architektur-Memes in den sozialen Medien: Von Paul Schultze-Naumburg zu 4chan', in 'Rechte Räume: Bericht einer Europareise', *ARCH+* 235 (May 2019): 39.
56. *Ibid.*
57. *Ibid.*
58. See Nagle, *Kill All Normies*, 12.

Biography

Stephan Trüby (b. 1970) is professor of architecture and cultural theory and director of the Institute for Principles of Modern Architecture (Design and Theory) (IGmA) at the University of Stuttgart. Prior to this he was professor of temporary architecture at Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design (2007–2009), headed up the MAS Scenography/Spatial Design postgraduate programme at Zurich University of the Arts (2009–2014), taught architectural theory at Harvard University (2012–2014) and was professor of architecture and cultural theory at the Technical University of Munich (2014–2018). Major publications include *Exit-Architecture: Design Between War and Peace* (Springer, 2008), *The World of Madelon Vriesendorp* (AA Publications, 2008, with Shumon Basar), *Germania, Venezia: The German Entries to the Venice Architecture Biennale since 1991 – An Oral History* (Fink, 2016, with Verena Hartbaum), *Absolute Architekturbeginner: Schriften 2004–2014* (Fink, 2017), *Geschichte des Korridors* (Fink, 2018) and *Rechte Räume: Politische Essays und Gespräche* (Birkhäuser, 2020).