

PICTURING ETHNIC LANDSCAPE IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

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Abstract

This is a summary of a larger project on 'Visual Encounters with Otherness/Alterity in Eastern Europe'. It involves a large group of researchers from several countries, whose aim is to collect visual materials from various countries in the region, showing who and how used to be marked as stranger or foreigner. Here I present the main points and conclusions resulting from the implementation of the current phase of the project, limited to the nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries.

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Artykuł jest streszczeniem większego projektu na temat wizualnych przedstawień Obcego i obcości w Europie Środkowej i Wschodniej. Angażuje on dużą grupę badaczy z kilku państw. Ich celem jest zebranie materiałów wizualnych z różnych krajów regionu, by pokazać kto i jak był określany jako Obcy. Poniżej prezentuję główne punkty i wnioski zebrane w obecnej fazie prowadzenia projektu, ograniczone do XIX i pierwszej połowy XX wieku.

Key words: images of the Other, alterity, visualisation, Eastern and Central Europe.

Images (paintings, graphics or, nowadays, illustrations, drawings, photographs) have always been present in human life. Dissemination of typography, especially the increasing number of publications and magazines appearing in the second half of the nineteenth century, contributed not only to a growing number of writings, but also to a diffusion of images. Initially images, which were just an addition to articles and information, represented the topic of the text or one of its motifs. Their purpose, which can be described in terms of the visualising function,¹ was to illustrate the

¹ The visualising function is associated with two aspects. Firstly, in rhetoric it is kind of description, which supposed to create in reader feeling of observing the events or even being involved in the action. Secondly, in iconography the bringing to light function stress the role of the visual materials – documentary part.

described events; thus emphasising the role of images as reflections of reality. On the one hand, adopting the new rules of the natural science opened a new cognitive horizon (Pratt 2011; Kristof 2013), and on the other, it popularised the practice of cataloguing and describing reality, which gained significant importance in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Descriptions of voyages were now filled not only with categories attributed to objects, but also illustrations documenting the existence of different variants of each category. Drawings, illustrations of landscapes, people and exotic plants, and later photographs were supposed to introduce readers and those who saw them at exhibitions to the distant reality known to the authors of such accounts. However, was this visualising function, understood as documenting what words and text refer to, the limit of the possibilities for the use of illustrations in the second half of the nineteenth century? Or did images also fulfil other roles in the lives of contemporary audiences?

Even a superficial overview of a variety of images shows that apart from the form, the new technologies and the content, the functions of images differed and changed depending on a given cultural context too. In this article, I am limiting myself to looking at several main areas of visual representation of reality, which differ with respect to the medium (drawing versus photography) and the aim they serve (mapping versus interpretation/distortion of reality).²

Certainly, with the development of the press and the emergence of new media employing images, the range of usages of the images widened. What was interesting to a draftsman, illustrator, photographer or caricaturist? In the beginning illustrators and draftsmen just supplemented the articles and the information presented in texts. There are many examples of that in the Polish press of the second half of the nineteenth century, for instance: drawings of Belgrade seen from a ship, which supplemented the story of a journey down Danube river, or images from the Balkan wars, which illustrated the war correspondents' reports.

With time drawings and images became more independent and started to represent reality regardless of the texts they were attached to. It was possible due to the new forms of images, such as caricature or photography, both of them fulfilling the visualising function through illustrating or documenting particular events. Appearing since the 1860's, caricatures documented the contemporary reality in a humorous manner. However, this form of image soon emancipated and developed into interpretative representations, which provided a commentary on reality. Continuing with the Balkan examples, we can mention the well-known figure of a Turk. As a symbolic image, the Turk figure on the one hand refers to a distant reality, and on the other hand it is a metaphor, which represents a certain idea of Orient recognisable for the readers.

² This approach does not exhaust the subject. Visual representations can be considered in regard of other axes of division and categories.

Photography is a similar case. The photographic document³ had a special value as a representation of what appeared in front of the camera. Susan Sontag observed that industrialisation stimulated the social demand for photographers' work and other forms of images. The way the new elites, emerging in this period of economic changes, were showing their high social position using photography, can serve as an example of the images' redefined documentary function (Djordjević 2013). Moreover, the evolution of photography, as a form of art, liberated it from the documentary limitations. All these types of visual media served as channels spreading knowledge about other cultures. Popular accounts of journeys, such as books or press articles, as well as the Kaiser-Panorama, postcards, illustrated supplements published with the weeklies all contributed to this function.

The article presented here is an effect of several years of research⁴ on visual representations of the Other in the cultures of the Eastern European countries. I see it as a partial conclusion, which recapitulates the accomplishment of one of the stages of the bigger research project.⁵ The materials⁶ collected so far come mainly from the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. In accordance to the implications of the visual turn in the humanities, I assume that not only images understood as works of art, but also other common visual representations present in everyday life constitute the object of study in this case.

THE PUBLIC SPHERE OF REPRESENTATION – BETWEEN DOCUMENTATION AND NEW FORMS OF INTERPRETATION AND CONSTRUCTION

The starting point of this study is a particular kind of visual material depicting difference, and, generally, whatever is ethnically, culturally, socially or geographically (e.g. landscape) unknown. Images representing, in one way or another, a distant reality were intended to introduce to the public the remote cultures and artefacts known mainly

³ Photographic documentation has been made since 1839 (Sontag 2001, p. 3).

⁴ During the years 2010/2011 and 2012/2013 I carried out two projects sponsored by the Visegrad Fund. The result of this endeavour were two conferences: *Images of the Other in Ethnic Caricatures*, which took place in Warsaw in 2010, and *Visual Encounters with Alterity* in Budapest, as well as publication of two books: *Images of the Other in Ethnic Caricatures* (eds.) D. Demski, K. Baraniecka-Olszewska, Warsaw: 2010 IAE PAN, and *Competing Eyes: Visual Encounters with Alterity in Central and Eastern Europe* (eds.) D. Demski, I.Sz. Kristóf, K. Baraniecka-Olszewska, Budapest 2013 l'Harmattan. These two volumes consist of over 40 articles devoted to this subject, and present materials from most of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. In addition to academic elaborations the books contain more than 400 illustrations.

⁵ In the coming years, two further conferences will be organised and two volumes (third and fourth) of the same series will be published afterwards. The conferences will be held in Tartu (2014) and Bratislava (2015).

⁶ Collected by many authors and published in the two volumes.

from oral and written sources. They can be situated not only in the relationship with the text, but also as a kind of category of translation, of intercultural encounters, and above all, as the space of representation of the distant and unknown. I understand them as a result of the contemporary confrontation with cultural differences. I am interested both in confrontations with Otherness understood ethnically or culturally, and in explorations of internal differences and of one's own culture.

In the case of the travel accounts I wonder if these are authentic expressions of personal experience, or rather descriptions, which are an effect of adopting language codes for feelings and actions. If that latter interpretation were true, it would mean that the reality is experienced through common patterns and the result is shaped in advance. Images were meant to be faithful representations of reality. At least so it seemed at the time.

Humour and caricature are genres that interpret reality. The choice of topic and intentional deformation of objects and people were tools of constructing the message. Whereas academic descriptions aimed at reflecting the reality in a precise manner, in humour the message was constructed through deliberate juxtaposition of the images' components.

In this kind of research one cannot avoid the basic question of the philosophers: does the world exist independently from us and the images are only the impressions of it left in our minds, or should the visible world be understood as a projection of our internal images? If we acknowledge the recent achievements of the research on brain, we should accept that the objects are only perceived in the brain, in the visual cortex area. This means that in order to arrive at the final image our inner acts of interpretation and construction are necessary.

In this perspective the representations studied as part of the project provide knowledge about those who produced, the cultural and political context these images and their authors come from, and are not a source of unmediated truth. They produce a trace, an inaccurate reflection of an event or of a sequence of events reduced to their context: the figures (of participants), the situation and the interaction between them, and what people imagine and how they interpret these events. I examine the content and the signs of a given representation, but the final image is determined by the position of the viewer in relation to the observed object.

Another problem arises in analysis of images published in books and in the press. They belonged to the public sphere, and therefore today they offer us access to the realm of meanings of a given culture. The visual representation of differences, of their types and their superficiality or depth, provide information on how the reality was perceived, what was important to the people back then, and how the meanings ascribed to a given group shaped its image. The comparative material coming from the same period but from different countries of Central and Eastern Europe offers an especially convenient space for these deliberations.

Most of the materials analysed here come from Central and Eastern European countries, from the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth century. I present an overview of them, thereby aiming to create a space where they can be compared. In a way, I undertake the subject of the history of the European peripheral regions here. Is there a collective experience of Eastern Europe? I come back to these questions at the end of this article. This is not a new problem. According to Larry Wolff, the Enlightenment is responsible for creating the construct of Eastern Europe (Davies 2007, p. 48). Later periods, the nineteenth-century economic growth, the development of new technologies, the modernization of life and the colonial expansion magnified rather than decreased the differences between the East and the West. All these factors have shaped the view on other parts of the world, including Eastern Europe.⁷ Difference seems to be increasingly important. Actually, this involves a variety of differences: social, ethnic, economic, power, etc.

THE ETHNIC OTHER AND THE DISCOURSE OF THE OTHER

The ethnic Others were used both in images based on knowledge and in humorous narratives or images. They arose from contacts, and the mode of the presentation of differences suggests that there were many intermediate possibilities between positive and negative patterns. One should take under consideration their number, content and form. The number of representations of a given group is evocative of the interest inspired by its nationality and culture, and of its relative importance. In Eastern Europe of this period the dominant topics were those related to major countries, such as the USA, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Russia. Apart from these, Jews were another frequently used motif, and in the south the Turks and the Greeks can be found as well. Moreover, the neighbouring groups' features appeared on a significant number of images. In some cases, the ethnic or cultural difference was presented in a special way in order to separate 'them' from 'us'. This is the phenomenon of 'othering', or of emphasizing features that are difficult to accept from the point of view of the author.

As a result a bipolar view emerges, dividing the people into us and the others. The label of the Other can carry any content, such as nationality, group, event or class. Cultural differences construct an identity and its representation. Focusing on differences contributes to defining intergroup boundaries. In this process the construction of the Other becomes important, and the Other is endowed with a set of features as if the Other had no history. While studying visual materials from Eastern Europe, which span a period of eighty years (1860–1939), one observes that there are years, when

⁷ More on this subject in excellent essays by Norman Davies (2007).

the process of raising borders intensified, and others, when some kind of loosening or opening occurred.

In this context, I understand the representations of the Other – in knowledge, in documentation or in interpretation – as metaphors of the encounter with the unknown, or as a strategy of coping with it. For example:

- The Other as an unfamiliar experience, not only culturally and geographically distant, but also removed in time (history)
- The Other as something beyond our cognitive horizon
- The Other as an unrealistic or unimaginable occurrence – The Other as something unacceptable (in our system of values)
- The Other as something threatening to our identity (an enemy, a traitor)
- The Other as an inspiration or innovation (something new, inviting to follow a new route)
- The Other as something that in the old Polish tradition used to be described as “curiositates” and “rarities” (monstrous and sacred).⁸

Highlighting the differences may result from a hierarchical, one-sided relationship between the subject and object of knowledge, in which case the experience of history, the political relations, political conditions of power and local discourses permeate the manner of picturing differences and the Other. The process of othering – that is of projecting on the other side the characteristics that distinguish them from us – leads to essentialism of polar opposites, with one perspective claiming that it presents the objective image of reality. This produces distorted reflections of the world, many of which can be found in the collected sources. At that time the task of the Central and Eastern European authors was to build a modern state and nation, which implied excluding the others who did not fit the image of unity.

From the point of view of today’s anthropologist it can be assumed that there is no beginning, but only an endless game of differences, conflicts and confrontations. The identity of a community is formed constantly by producing and excluding the Others. This often applies to the neighbouring communities or groups, which are a real or an imagined threat. In the process those who are excluded lose the ability of expression and self-presentation, including the visual one. Thus, it seems promising to compare the experience of all the communities of Central and Eastern Europe. Is there an Eastern European way of representing the Other?

The representations of the Others can also be discussed as evocative of the relationship between reality and invention (Jezernik 2010). It seems that in the process of constructing the Other, the majority, mostly unconsciously, tries to choose a construct that best fitted the particular situation and the intended aim of the message. In that sense othering is an endless process of figure selection and of ascribing revised meanings to them.

⁸ The latter echoes Rudolf Otto’s pair of categories of *fascinans* and *tremens*.

The visual representations arising within the realistic (science, textbooks) or satiric models (caricatures, satires and humour) ought to be located within the context of the already existing depictions, patterns of narration and rhetorical conventions.⁹ In contemporary research the accent has been shifted from searching the authenticity of cultures (Herder) towards what is created through contact and migration (journeys, diasporas or even tourism).

THE VISUAL REPRESENTATIONS

I understand the notion of visual representations of the Other as a wide category of images (Mitchell 1984), which includes pictures in the press (caricatures, drawings, photographs), books (illustrations, drawings, maps), collections of museums and archives (paintings, prints, engravings, photographs), elements of architecture and urban landscape (architecture, monuments, exhibition pavilions), which were characteristic of that period and of the media available at the time.¹⁰ Society portrays itself and the unknown in a variety of ways, including through images in Mitchell's understanding of the term, illustrations of control and surveillance, and visual clichés.

According to Susan Sontag, initially photography was seen as a sign and a reflection of the world, an extension of the object, referring to something actually existing in the reality, whereas paintings and illustrations belonged to the order of interpretation. She claimed that in that respect the basic difference between then and now was that photography carried information, not experience. Nowadays we would say that both of them evoke emotions.

I am interested in Mitchell's definition of image, because most of the representations in the discussed period fit his understanding of this notion. Two approaches dominate. I would call them the serious one and the humorous one. The first one draws on the intention of representing the reality in an objective, truthful, accurate way (photographs, drawings). The second one concerns the way of using images to give a distorted picture of the reality, an interpretation, not an objective reflection. It is a significant distinction, because the first approach was often taken as a confirmation of existence of an "ideological" image, which served the purpose of "naturalising" a certain version of the reality. The second attitude, however, was a part of public discourse, without claiming the right to some sort of absolute truth. Both kinds the serious and the humorous approach employ the emotional potential of the images. They evoked particular ambience and feelings.

⁹ Johannes Fabian used the term 'denial of coevalness' in imaging the others. According to him, today the cultural difference does not mean the already established, exotic otherness, and self-other relations are now more a question of power and rhetoric than of essence (Fabian 1990).

¹⁰ We omit films in the project.

In a wider perspective two aspects of the image are highlighted: its belonging to the material culture and its simultaneous participation in the sphere of symbolic meanings. According to Bachmann-Medick (2013) there is a contrast between the material aspect of the image production and their ability of making meaningful representation, while also referring to the sphere beyond this representation. In the contemporary analyses there is a tendency to undermine the trust in documentary images. The role of photography in constructing political iconography (and the colonial one in the past) as well as the potential of exploiting of collections of documentary and war materials are coming into focus.

Apart from the colonial and political constructs conveyed by the symbolic images, I am interested in the imaginative dimension of particular genres. In paintings (art) the imaginative potential is usually open and intended for a diverse and layered reception. Caricatures, on the other hand, are meant to be visual commentaries on reality. Both the authors and the viewers are familiar with the same range of notions and stereotypes. Unlike these two forms, photography provides tangible evidence of reality. Susan Sontag expressed it this way: "A photograph passes for incontrovertible proof that a given thing happened. The picture may distort; but there is always a presumption that something exists, or did exist" (Sontag 2001, p. 5).

Elaborating on this subject requires a comparative approach. It is possible due to the wide range of collected materials. Before I present the preliminary conclusions, I would like to emphasize that my deliberations are focused on the collected materials and on researchers' conclusions, and therefore they are not definitive in character. I see them more as a report on one stage of inquiry. The aim of such report is to prepare the next stage of the project.

RECURRING THEMES AND FIGURES; THE CIRCULATION OF CONCEPTS AND IDEAS

Usually the aim of the representations of the Other is to show the differences as unchangeable. If we assume this statement as right, some questions arise. Does it always happen in the same way? Is the difference represented always the same? Or maybe the content is always the same, but the form is different? Those are important questions, but I cannot say if there is one authoritative answer.

The analysis of the recurring themes appearing in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century (until the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939) allows us to produce a list of topics for further investigation:

- Characters (figures) assigned to specific nationalities
- Tropes recurring in different contexts
- Clichés versus authentic local topics

In reference to neighbouring groups, difference is evoked using local figures and their attributes, whereas for evoking a distant alterity, personifications and publically known figures are referred to. In the past, clothes served the purpose of ethnic differentiation, supplemented by physical characteristics, but also the background and elements of the landscape. Most of the stereotypes about neighbouring groups were the result of years of coexistence. In cases of certain relationships the stereotypes were purely negative: this includes the Polish-German, Polish-Russian, Polish-Lithuanian, Bulgarian-Greek, Hungarian-Romanian, Hungarian-Slovak, Serbo-Croatian and Estonian-Russian relations.

Among the recurring figures in Central and Eastern European images, some in particular should be mentioned. They occur in the documentary as well as in interpretative version. In the first case they are presented as “documents” of reality, but in fact they are typified,¹¹ unnamed characters; while in the humorous interpretations they are symbolic figures, well known by name on different sides of the borders. They were commonly known, but the features attributed to them varied.

Der Deutsche Michel

Michel, The German also known as Michl¹² or Miska, is a figure from jokes and caricatures. He was popular mainly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, but also in the interwar period in Germany, Austria, the Czech lands, Hungary and Poland. According to Géza Buzinkay the first representation of Michel, the German appeared in 1843 (Buzinkay 2010). He was often portrayed as a hard-working German farmer or an owner of a local business, such as a brewery; a member of the petty bourgeoisie; proud of his work, and sometimes self-ironic. Until the First World War, in the Czech lands and in Poland he used to be presented as overly chubby or as someone taking advantage of his economic power. While in Germany, Austria and Hungary he was seen mostly as a man devoted to work, in the Czech lands and in Poland he was considered as someone economically threatening. In Hungary Michel appeared in the Austrian and the Hungarian version as Miska, the Austrian, and Miska, the Hungarian. In the Baltic States¹³ and in the Balkans, the images of Michel, the German highlighted his cultural attributes, without emphasizing the threat. There, the German nation was not a target of attacks and the Germans themselves were sometimes seen as saviours.

The German Soldier

The other most frequently occurring figure of a German was a soldier. This version of a figure representing a German (Demski 2010; Laineste 2010) recurs in some

¹¹ Either photographs of famous figures or representatives of the nobility.

¹² See also: Altman 2010; Karlíček 2013.

¹³ The exception were the representations of Germans (the so-called Baltic Barons) exploiting their subjects – the Latvian peasants. See also: Gundega Gailite 2010.

Central and Eastern European countries, mostly in Poland, Russia, Belarus, as in the Soviet Union, and sometimes in the Czech lands, occasionally in Romania and later, in the 1930's, in Russia, Estonia, the Czech lands and Hungary. Most of the time the German Soldier was presented realistically, as a cruel invader or killer, but often also in a humorous way, ridiculed for over-militarization. Michal, the German can be considered as a symbol of the threat of expansion and economical domination, whereas the German soldier evoked the sense of aggression.

The Russian (Slavonic) Bear

In the eighteenth and early nineteenth century in the western materials the figure of a bear accompanied Poles, and later Russians, while in the Central European sources it was associated with the Gypsies and in Hungary with Romanians. The bear symbolized cultural and civilizational inferiority, modernity versus barbarity and laziness. Nowadays this image is mostly associated with Russia.

Figures which represented Russia were usually the recognizable images of the tsar, a Cossack, a bear, a soldier and a peasant. At the beginning of the second half of the nineteenth century the bear figure was popularised in German materials. However, it appeared in almost all countries of Central and Eastern Europe, that is in Germany, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Hungary, Austria, Romania, Bulgaria. The bear was associated with both civilizational backwardness and with great force. In the German materials the bears appear as beasts in sleeping their lairs in the East. In Poland and in the Baltic States, e.g. in Estonia, it was presented as more aggressive, as threatening borders and the security of the people. In the rest of the countries of the region it was considered as a harmless creature entering into various relationships with people.

Ivan, the Cossack

While the bear signified both the civilizational backwardness and the power of Russia, the representations of the Cossack (Żakowska 2010; Padurean 2010; de Lazari, Riabov 2010) and of the tsarist or Bolshevik soldier referred to the military threat carried by Russia. Russia was presented as a source of aggression and imperial expansion, and the Cossack figure itself had its place in the imagination of many cultures. It appeared in German, Polish, Estonian, Hungarian and Romanian pictures. Another figures representing Russia in foreign media were Ivan or a peasant in rubashka. They expressed the other popular association with Russia: the attachment to tradition.

Tsarist and Red Army soldiers were also popular themes in photography. Moreover, the monuments of Red Army soldiers as winners and liberators were later exhibited in public spaces of many Eastern European cities. The bear was a metaphor of the East, whereas the Cossack and more the contemporary soldier were symbols of aggression and controlling power.

The Jew

The Jews as a subject of visual representations are present in every Eastern European country. The range of themes is broad, from the anti-Semitic version, through the sense of danger Jews posed, through emphasizing the differences in religion, custom and mentality, to a fascination with Jewish culture. In those images the Jews' otherness was stressed, but on the other hand the pictures grasped the assimilation processes. Orthodox Jews were distinguished from the assimilated ones (Dranik 2010; Demski 2010; Rosner 2013; Krekovičová, Panczová 2013). Sometimes Jewish origins were ascribed to political enemies (Szabó 2013).

Jewish figures and themes were subject of photography. This included synagogues, graveyards, Jewish quarters, salesmen, pedlars, distinctive outfits, gestures and the like. Whereas Jews were commonly present in drawings, caricatures and photographs, the absence of their images (such as on monuments) in the public space is significantly and noticeable.

The Neighbours, or Vasek, the Czech, Jano, the Slovak, Pista, the Hungarian and the Polish Soldier

The first of the mentioned figures is Vasek. He was most popular until the end of the First World War, mostly in the Czech lands (Altman 2010), and can be considered as an example of self-representation. He was portrayed as a resourceful and hard-working person, wearing characteristic hat and clothes. In this costume he appears also in Hungarian, Austrian, Slovak, and sometimes, though rarely, also in the Polish visual materials.

Representations of Jano, the Slovak are present only in the Hungarian, Czech and Austrian nineteenth and twentieth century resources (Altman 2010; Krekovičová, Panczová 2013). One might wonder at his absence in the Polish materials. In the Slovak representations he can be recognized by his distinctive outfit, which is white shirt, felted pants, a hat and "kierpce" (TN: shoes traditionally worn by highlanders in this area). In turn, the Hungarian images are peopled by men drawn as shepherds, hired labourers on roads construction projects, often presented in a bad light, for example as drunks.

Apart from the above-mentioned Hungarian Miska, there was also another one called Pista. He was the central hero of many verbal jokes and sometimes also humorous cartoons. He lacked distinctive features, such as the Hungarian nobleman's clothes. The name Pista (Stefan), however, was rather indicative of the average Hungarian. In this form he occurs in Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. Apart from them there was also a Hungarian named Jenoe.

Representations of the Pole as a soldier appear in the Baltic States, Belarus, Ukraine, Hungary and less frequently in Russia (Demski 2010; Laineste 2010; Buchowski 2010; Gołubiew 2010). He used to be present in Poland in the context of military operations during the First World War and the post-war years, for example as a child-soldier defending the borders. In the variation popular among the neighbouring nations, such

as the Lithuanians, other features were highlighted. The threat of the Polish soldier, his aggression are especially visible, but sometimes he was shown as an object of ridicule. For the Russians, Poland is a small predator, funny rather than menacing. The motif of ridicule in this image also appeared in Latvia, Lithuania and the Czech lands. In Belarusian, Lithuanian, and Latvian (Latgalian) contexts he appeared as a figure of a landlord.

Among the other, less known representations, there are figures such as Ioan, the Rmanian, in Hungary. Moreover there are Serbs, who in the German variant were seen as conspirators, while in Russia they were defenders of the Orthodox Church. Neighbours who were less important and smaller in size n were usually pictured standing next to or being in the background of the main character. The Gypsies were most often depicted in Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, but were almost absent in the nineteenth and early twentieth century press. They appeared more commonly in photography. Just as exotic, and therefore interesting, were regional groups like Hutsuls, Vlach, highlanders and colourful local groups, which were distinct from the others.

The separate category was constituted by exotic images of Africans and Asians, who were present in every country at that time. The Negro, the African, a representative of the black Africa was common in all countries, from Estonia, Latvia, through Poland, to Hungary and others. In this case the diverse contexts of these representations are of particular interest. Eastern European countries did not have colonies, so their ideas drew on the experience of the Western European colonial empires. Edina Kicsindi showed that the first image was that of a warrior, a noble savage, but it was demonized after the Boer Wars. In the later years the dark skin acquired a new meaning and became synonymous with political dishonesty, which was an attribute ascribed to the local Eastern European politicians (Kicsindi 2013). The African also appeared on illustrations in children's books, in schoolbooks, and on photographs taken during the distant travels.

Europe

Another category includes allegoric representations and the representation of a woman or a child. Among the most interesting images are allegories of Europe. In many variations we can see the Mother Europe also known as Madame Europa (Petrov 2010; Zakowska 2010). We can find this figure in the German, Russian, Austrian, and Hungarian materials, as well as in the Polish, Romanian and Bulgarian ones. Europe was drawn most frequently as an old woman or a lady. She was presented as a distant being, with whom one had lost contact and who was missed. She herself had no agency to change the fate of her children. In the Russian version Europe was contrasted with Mother Russia, and then Mother Europe was pictured as an old, foreign, elegant woman. Europe was also shown as an orchestra without a conductor, playing out of tune or not harmoniously; or in another case as a madhouse. There are no photographs, and as far as I know, no monuments of Europe.

Woman

In what context did drawings and images of women as metaphor of countries or nations occur? First of all women were pictured as victims (Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, or, in regional versions – the Dobruja and Fiume) (Demski 2010; Padurean 2010; Tamás 2010). According to Ágnes Tamás, in the Hungarian materials she could represent nations (hence Croatia), and not ethnic groups. Depending on the context and the perspective of the drawing artist, woman was presented as a vicious and old, looking only for what there is to steal, or as a prostitute (Romania). Allegories of nations were present in caricatures, drawings, and in sculptures.

The New Woman (Huebner 2013) was a popular subject of the interwar period in the Czechoslovakian press. Beginning in the 1920's the representation of the modern woman could be found in all countries, but the perception of modernity differed. The figure was the subject of drawings and caricatures, and in the case of photographs, images of modern women living in Western Europe were published.

The feminization of the enemy was another important theme – in this case the feminine features were ascribed to the enemy (e.g. in Russian caricatures Pilsudski was depicted as his own mistress).

The Child

On the one hand, the child figure suggests innocence, being a victim of superior strength of the enemy's invasion, evokes unbalanced forces (in Poland) (Demski 2010). However, on the other hand the child represents the backwardness and lack of intellectual competence of a nation (Romania) (Padurean 2010). Nevertheless in Slovenia children symbolized a new-born country (Jezernik 2010). As a subject of monuments, they represented sacrifice of the nation.

The war period brought an increase in the number of visual representations of violence and suffering, of winners and victims. Their varying contexts are particularly interesting. Among such themes there is also plague, cannibalism and death. They can be understood as associating violence and threat with the Others. In the language of the symbolic, violence and aggression are the measures of otherness. Firstly, they illustrate the necessity of managing the unpredictable (representations of death, cannibalism, illnesses, victims), secondly, they show the circumstances of invasion and defeat. Themes of violence and aggression should be interpreted as a reflection of the situation of a need to verify the boundary and the axis of grievance.

Today many of those threads are considered as hate speech. However, those controversial subjects, the subversive humour, reappear and become popular as visual representations in the periods of social crisis. They have "revolutionary" significance in breakthroughs moments, such as war, economic crisis, disappearing sense of security. We can notice prejudices and stereotypes in the tendencies to ascribe higher values to the more developed cultures.

CLUES, CLISHÉS AND LOCAL THREADS

Who was represented in caricatures, on photography, and who was a subject of monuments? As we saw, there is no one rule. The monuments belonged to the public sphere, and were engaged in power relation. The caricatures reflected the public discourse, usually expressing both the voices of opposition, and of the ruling classes. Photography was used mostly for documentary purposes.

The themes of visual representations in Central Europe differ from those in Western Europe. First of all it seems that ethnic issues are more important, especially for small countries, in Eastern Europe. Negative images were meant to reinforce and demarcate the boundaries, and they helped in defining common identity. Members of those smaller countries were also shown as tiny in contrast to the powerful neighbours. These features like being frail and incapable of defence were visualised in victim-like figures; it could have been an innocent and defenceless woman or girl (Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Romania). In this part of Europe Russians, Germans, Jews, Turks and Greeks were considered as the most terrifying.

What indeed seems surprising is the invariability of some figures. Conceptions of one another and interactions between the neighbours can be seen in few dimensions. Metaphor is a tool by which people tend to simplify their world image, in order to make the reality more understandable and also less distant from the common experience. Nevertheless it created stereotypes.

Very often the aim of the visual representations was to express what was elusive. The interesting aspect of the Other are the emotions evoked by some symbols and motifs. Emotions are a very effective instrument in defining the borders of particular community in dangerous times.

Some of the figures and themes emerge at the level of discourse about international relations, while others are present in the local discourse between neighbouring countries. This means that certain figures and symbols have been adapted to the needs of the relationships. At the same time some local themes did not go beyond the local circulation. The answer to the question of what determines the transition from local to wider circulation would be extremely interesting. At this point, I would simply extract these two types of themes.

If we compare all kinds representations of the Other in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, they can be grouped into constellations of alterity. There are different ways of presenting materials and its division into categories, and as Magdalena Żakowska stated, one of them is distinguished the war representations, the moral representations and civilizational (hygienic) representations (Żakowska 2013). Each one of them uses a different code. Perhaps we can find more axes of categorization.

Tropes listed above appear in different cultural contexts and present particular view on reality pictured in visual materials. This set of themes and figures results in a specific

way of perceiving world. On this basis, one can make an attempt to reconstruct the eastern outlook on reality. I am referring to the term derived from Mary Louise Pratt (2004). A characteristic feature of her perspective was polarization and reduction of the reality to the image of a bipolar character. What seems to differentiate the eastern perspective from the western one at that time, is the number of local, ethnic and neighbourly motifs. Images of the Other create a common sense imagination. The way they are presented repeats the western pattern of looking down on others. However, there is also plenty of images “from below”, which point at the victim, the forced submission or the competition for primacy in the assimilation of cultural patterns.

At the same time maintaining the nations’ memory and their own traditions can be observed. The concepts of splendid past were typical for nations without sovereignty. The topic of defending the Christianity and the Western values appears in the Polish, Slovenian, Croatian, Hungarian, but also Finnish and Estonian images. In every generation we can find the process of identification with Europe, simultaneous with highlighting the distinctiveness of its eastern part.

The polarized view on reality, shared by both Eastern and Western Europeans, without a doubt persisted through the whole period discussed here. The next stage of the project will be collecting and analysing materials from later periods, which hopefully will bring more data. Possibly it will bring the answer to the question about when this bipolarized image began to weaken and when a more multidimensional view on reality came into being. Changes of visual devices, of visual techniques, and appearance of new media, produced new spaces where this process of othering could find expression. The process of change in sensibility is also visible. It seems to be slower than new technologies and innovations, however, it brings new representations of the Other.

But what will happen, if we reject the othering mechanism? These days the aim of the researchers is to deconstruct people’s concepts and notions. As we can read in Božidar Jezernik (2010) works, nowadays the vital issue is to find a way of constructing self-images without compromising anybody, so it would not lead to exclusions. Is it possible? These questions remain open.

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