

of multi-ethnic republics with populations endeavoring to create balance between Soviet communism and western capitalism. The text fails, however, to find clear and nuanced connections between the lenses of the NAM and the semi-colonial/oriental concept of Balkanism. The nexus between Balkanism and art remains unclear, especially when it comes to the stereotypes of “nesting orientalisms” found in former Yugoslavia. This is significant given the argument that art was entangled in the larger politics of emancipation associated with the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY).

Where the monograph particularly falters is in the lack of analysis of certain case studies. For example, it is not clear why Videkanić quickly brushes past the role of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade and its alternative signifying role in Yugoslavia’s and the global cultural aesthetic. After all, the museum and the art exhibited were envisaged to dislocate the hegemonic permeation of acknowledged western cities such as Rome and Paris as beacons of culture, and against which all culture is to be measured and become subservient to. Moreover, that the museum is located in a park with works of the most significant Yugoslav sculptors is significant, although this remains unexplored. There was also scope to further interrogate, or at least come back to in the sixth and concluding chapter, the role of “impossible histories”—which is framed in the first chapter—in terms of the lessons the history of socialist Yugoslavia and the NAM offer to the homogenous and hegemonic conception of nation-states, including the associated art and aesthetics of post-1990s Yugoslavia. Doing this would have clarified the promising concluding words of this monograph by revisiting the aesthetic of socialist Yugoslavia, including its anti-imperialist and anti-fascist agenda: “the aim of this study [is] to further these goals and place them front and center in the emerging nonhierarchical Yugoslav and global art worlds” (Videkanić, 220).

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Confronting Totalitarian Minds: Jan Patočka on Politics and Dissidence. By Aspen Brinton. Prague: Karolinum Press, 2021. 299 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$20.00, paper; \$17.00, ebook.
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Speculation on the relationship between politics and philosophy has existed as long as philosophy itself: in Plato’s Republic, Socrates imagined a philosopher-king so wise that he is able to maximize the happiness of those over which he rules. In *Confronting Totalitarian Minds*, Aspen Brinton often invokes a different Platonic metaphor, highlighting a more oppositional relationship: the allegory of the cave, in which an enslaved people watch the projection of shadows upon a cave wall and take it for reality. Brinton employs this allegory to reexamine the role that philosophers, and in particular Jan Patočka, have played in political dissidence. Dissident philosophers, Brinton argues, are those figures who shatter the illusion of Plato’s shadows, daring to “return to the cave to help others liberate themselves from false ideas” (25).

Jan Patočka is a compelling figure for examining the link between dissidence and philosophy. One of the most prominent Czech philosophers of the twentieth century, Patočka is widely read for his work in phenomenology. A student of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, he is thought to have synthesized aspects of both in his writings on the self, its experience of being-in-the-world, and the responsibilities

therein. It is not hard to find the political dimensions of his thought: Patočka lived and worked under the Nazi occupation, and in the postwar years he moved in dissident circles, one of the more prominent signatories of Charter 77. His death in 1977 is largely attributed to a violent, protracted police interrogation about his involvement in the movement.

Indeed, why might people dissent, knowing that such a fate awaits them? Brinton merges philosophical and political approaches to Patočka, in an attempt to ground the philosopher's theoretical writings with the call to praxis in protest movements. The book is accordingly divided into four key concepts elucidated by Patočka, each of which is then paired with a historical figure or movement so as to expand the implications of his ideas for political dissidence.

First, Patočka's notion of "living in truth" is examined through the legacy of Václav Havel, the only pairing in the book based on an actual correspondence (Patočka was a mentor to Havel, who regularly cited the philosopher). Brinton next addresses the "care of the soul," Patočka's elusive concept for the self's simultaneous otherness in and obligation to the world around it. The author compares this concept to the work of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian who resisted the Nazis and even plotted to assassinate Adolf Hitler. By juxtaposing the two, Brinton convincingly illustrates the organic transition in both figures' lives from abstract philosophical notions of humanity and care to active resistance against totalitarian regimes.

Brinton next compares Patočka's theory of confrontation or *polemos* with the lifework of Mahatma Gandhi. Stages in Gandhi's political life are juxtaposed to Patočka's idea of "three movements of human existence" (143): humans must first "root" themselves in the world, then struggle toward a goal, so as finally to live in unity of mind and body. Brinton's argument that Patočka's tripartite structure can be applied to Gandhi's politics of nonviolence, with Patočka's final movement equivalent to Gandhi's concept of *Satyagraha* (active resistance), is a unique if somewhat forced approach. Instead of insisting upon an enumeration of three movements in Gandhi's politics that directly parallel Patočka, Brinton might have been better served merely to contrast the two figures' theory of conflict more generally.

The last chapter, devoted to the "solidarity of the shaken," compares Patočka's notion of being "shaken" out of indifference with the anti-nuclear movement. The chapter dovetails nicely with the book's conclusion, which applies Patočka's critique of technological progress and scientific reasoning to the modern environmentalism movement. Indeed, both political movements are concerned with the rift made by technology between man and the natural world, a concern similarly found throughout Patočka's phenomenology.

Brinton states clearly in the introduction that by bridging philosophical and political approaches to Patočka, the book will inevitably frustrate readers from either camp. Indeed, the book's most controversial claim might be that there is one thread holding all these places and ideas together: can we really create a theory of political dissidence universally applicable across time and space? Brinton at least offers one approach, allowing readers to draw their own conclusions. Regardless, one should not read the book as an introduction to Patočka's political thought. Instead, a reader already familiar with Patočka will welcome Brinton's attempt to embed the philosopher in a global conversation about dissident movements, as proof of his continued relevance in political struggles.

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