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The *Krisis* two-part special issue on care arrives in a phase of the COVID-19 pandemic in which the Global North forges a “return to normal,” that is, to pre-pandemic social and political orders which were already in crisis, and also to revamped processes of neoliberal globalization playing out in nationalist spaces. Borders closed (except to capital); governments prioritized national economy over workers in healthcare, factories, warehouses, and other frontlines; global north nations hoarded vaccines and healthcare resources; anti-Indigenous, anti-Black, anti-Asian, anti-migrant, xenophobic and ableist violence reinvented itself within, and traveled across, borders; militarized, right-wing, and imperial nationalisms resurged around the world, with the February 24, 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine becoming the latest most visible manifestation.

As the pandemic laid bare devastating structural violence, perhaps the imperative to “return to normal” could be understood as the writing of a globalized memory that obscures the more than six million dead to COVID-19 worldwide. *Political Memory and the Aesthetics of Care* by Mihaela Mihael, published in January 2022, invites a reading against the backdrop of these reproductions and restructurings. While the book does not explicitly discuss our current context, it gestures to ways of understanding the struggle over how we remember the forms of violence of the past two years and how we tell stories about them.

Political Memory and the Aesthetics of Care reckons with the un/accountability of systemic violence in the formation of official public memory. Perhaps the most powerful forms of remembering include the nation narrative, constituted by simplistic understandings of action that authorize the nation form as an outcome of revolution and decolonization or as a transition to justice. As Mihael emphasizes, national reformation and institutional memory-making projects—unable to narrate the constitutive violence of the nation form—cast history in terms of victim/perpetrator figures and erase the widespread complicity with violence that exceeds the logics of agency and a victim-perpetrator dyad. This erasure not only renders invisible the work and the economies of systemic political violence, but also places state violence and complicity with it outside of official memory, absolving accountability for the very violence that made the nation's formation and a national temporality possible.

This erasure is complementary to an exceptionalized and canonized political vision expressed in terms of heroic resister figures. In effect, the complexity of political violence is narrated as simple antagonisms among victims, perpetrators, and resisters, where the resisters represent a unified, purified political vision. The official and public privileging of “resistance” singularizes political possibility and erases interlocutors, activities, and visions that demonstrate political plurality, collectivity, and unassimilability. Fixed in place by the official account, the “absolute hero colonizes political memory,” closing the community's “hermeneutical space” which ultimately reproduces “the very practices and relationships—economic, political, and cultural—that led to violence in the first place” (7). Mihael argues that the official disavowal of complicity and official exclusion of alternative or competing memories constitute a “double erasure” that the book seeks to expose.

The first chapter, “Tracing the Double Erasure,” defines the concept and traces the moves of the double erasure. This chapter exposes the temporality of systemic violence that plays out in the remembering and telling of history. In underscoring the continuities and genealogies of violence, Mihai exposes how the official public imagining of a clean break from the preceding order marks the start of a distinct national timespace and a new history. This temporal, historical, and juridical reimagining of violence as outside of the “new” order consequently occludes the structural and relational nature of violence. It also avails individualistic, moralistic, and punitive frameworks for responding to systemic violence. These limited frameworks affirm the historical casting of characters of victim, perpetrator, and hero.

The rest of the chapter puts complicity and resistance into context and argues complicity and resistance must be understood as relation. With careful attention to Pierre Bourdieu’s accounts of socialization, Mihai’s “alternative social-ontological sketch” maps the relational powers of habitus (generated in social/ized positionality, including gender, race, sexuality), individual inter/actions sourced by practical sense emergent in and by unconscious, internalized social ordering (including statist structures of social ordering), and doxa or societal common sense which normativize what counts as truth, “including official truths about its history and its agents” (33). Mihai stresses that individuals’ positions in the making of history are constrained to official temporal frameworks, as:

position is not fixed but changes over time, reflecting changes in both the context and the agents themselves. Individuals’ sense of time, their capacity to build on the past to imagine a future and to invest emotionally in that future are interrelated aspects of their socially embedded experience, which have repercussions on how they navigate the muddy waters of systemic wrongdoing, in more complicit or more resistant ways. This highlights the need to think about the temporality of action—that is, the ways in which the past and the future are brought together in the habitus (34).

Mihai therefore breaks down a completely different understanding of action: action must be understood beyond terms of individual agency. Action is situated in ideological, racialized, gendered, classed habitus and in doxastic power of nationalist memory production, circulation, and reproduction in ways that validate existing orders of race, gender, and class. Therefore, a focus on systemic political involvement and complicity with violence would reveal “fissures in the national doxa and recuperate the heretic, counterhegemonic common sense that have historically challenged it” (38).

Chapter two, “The Aesthetics of Care,” theorizes artwork as a response to, and a strategy of, a political memory that works against doxastic power and hegemonic sense-making. Mihai’s methods for exposing the fissures in the national doxa and recuperating unassimilable sense and sensing reckons with what I interpret as the *archives* of official memory. Lisa Lowe has argued that the organization of institutional archives—archives that mediate what Mihai poses as official memory—works to resolve the contradictions and uncertainties of state capacity. For Lowe and others, the archive is conceptualized as the terrain and the framework that politicizes and spatializes

erasure, silence, absence. *Political Memory and the Aesthetics of Care* constructs and offers a counter-archive of works by artists, activists, historians, and social scientists that hesitate, interrupt, and thus politicize anew temporality, sense, and memory. Mihai's archival selections include artworks that speak to the double erasure, de-heroify nationalist versions of history, and create hermeneutical space in response to violence, for the sake of community.

In this effort, Mihai builds on Alia Al-Saji's concept of affective hesitation to theorize the capacity for revising memory in hegemonic common sense. Mihai foregrounds how this imaginative capacity can be accessed by the work of art; "artworks can play a transformative role to the extent that they trigger affective but also cognitive, emotional, and moral hesitations" (52). Hesitation can interrupt and politicize the individual's practical sense and habits of perceiving, remembering, and imagining as the subject faces "epistemic friction," a process Mihai elaborates from the work of José Medina. Epistemic friction can develop in the hesitation opened up by the artwork, and friction enables the imagination to "prosthelytically include previously dissonant instances—of victimhood, complicity, or resistance, within our repertoire of hermeneutical resources, which we actualize practically in time" (53). Accordingly, the *work* of art for Mihai is in the operations of prosthesis and also in "seductive sabotage" or the pleasure that is part of the art experience—which might sabotage habits and habitus.

Mihai argues that her archive of artworks—films and novels produced in the wake, and in reflection, of systemic violence—complicate the complicity/resistance dyad, reframe heroic action beyond the terms that serve national doxa, carve out temporalities, experiences, vulnerabilities, and rationales that remain unaccounted for in nation narratives, and offer alternative visions of the past. This archive might be understood as a counter-archive to nationalized public memory. Mihai's knowledge production and reflection might be understood as practice in community. In constructing this archive, Mihai works as "curator" in the original sense of the word: care-taker.

The rest of the book takes care, curates, and, in effect, archives films and novels that "pluralize a community's space of meaning" (57). Mihai offers a care ethics that always-already integrates interdependency and relationality, which opposes liberal philosophical models that privilege the subject in accounts of sociality. Care ethics necessitate the framing of violence through relationality. In relationality, the memorialization of resistance (and complicity) no longer makes sense. Caring therefore is relational practice and practice in relationship: "we begin to care in the act of caring" (59). As practice, caring works against instituted and systemic suffering, oppression, exclusion, and assimilation. Thus care ethics oppose "socialized misremembering," which accepts official memory, and the nation narratives that regulate common sense, and instead offers hermeneutical space in which seeing, thinking, and feeling otherwise become possible.

The final three chapters of the book tackle three global sites reckoning with the temporality of official memory's double erasures: France, Romania, and South Africa. Mihai takes care to expose the double erasures, summarizes the memorialized official story, and presents an archive that counters the story to restore what has been erased across the three sites. She looks to fiction and film by Louis Malle, Jacques Laurent, Patrick Modiano, Brigitte Friang, Marguerite Duras, and Alain Resnais in post-war

France; Norman Manea, Dan Pița, Herta Müller, Călin Peter Netzer, and Corneliu Porumboiu in Romania following nearly a quarter century of Nicolae Ceaușescu's dictatorship; and Zoë Wicomb, Achmat Dangor, Tatamkhulu Afrika, John Kani, Ivan Vladislavić, and Ralph Ziman in post-apartheid settler colonial South Africa. As Mihai provides views over nationalist memory in France, Romania and South Africa, the analyses in each and across these sites and chapters also provide tools for deconstructing doxa and for curating and creating archives of heretic political visions at other sites of systemic political violence around the globe.

Mihai's theory of the double erasure and its functionality can be used to analyze a variety of contexts around the globe. This is her most impactful contribution to the fields of political theory, philosophy, history, and historiography. Therefore I am curious how the book situates the temporality of the double erasure in relation to classic and recent theories of nation time and historical narrativity. Mihai qualifies her care and contributions within the scope of political theorization of systemic violence; her aesthetic investigations demonstrate the capacities of artistic care as located in refusenik artistic production (i.e. the artwork-object). Yet there are some missed opportunities to engage with intellectual comrades in Asian American Studies, Black Studies, queer and trans theory, and abolitionist feminist theory who reimagine the care of reading, hearing, and seeing erasures, silences, and absences in the archives by politicizing the "where" and the "how" meaningfulness gets located in the work of art.

Most importantly, Mihai's book shows us how to understand action differently. In the present moment, as we struggle against the writing of political memory within enclosed perceptual experiences and hermeneutics, we might draw from Mihai's theorization of mnemonic care. This would require careful attention to coalition-based politics of care that emerged in the internationalist George Floyd uprisings of 2020, especially agents, actions, solidarities, and successes that escape existing languages, including that of national frames; ephemeral, intangible ground-level mutual aid efforts that confront state abandonment of Black, Indigenous, migrant, woman, queer, trans, and poor and working-class populations; and abolitionist critiques including art and aesthetic practices against the normalization of systemic state-sponsored violence in carceral society.

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Biography

Dr. Sue Shon is Assistant Professor of Critical and Cultural Studies at Emily Carr University of Art and Design. She researches and teaches critical race and ethnic studies and comparative diasporic literatures and visual cultures. She is working on a book project, *Racial Sense and the Making of Aesthetic Modernity*, which tells the story of how race acquired a visual feel due to constraints in the language of modern human perception.