

## “If you want to be classy, have Yugoclass.” Postmodern Cultural Images of Josip Broz Tito

MARTA HARASIMOWICZ



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2478/se-2021-0015> © Ústav etnológie a sociálnej antropológie SAV  
© 2021, Marta Harasimowicz. This is an open access licensed under the Creative Commons.

*Marta Harasimowicz, Charles University Faculty of Arts, Department of Czech History nám. Jana Palacha 1/2, 116 38 Praha 1, Czech Republic; e-mail: martamaria.harasimowicz@ff.cuni.cz*

The article deals with internet memes related to the person of the socialist leader of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito. For purposes of our research, we define internet meme as conventionalized text-iconic composition, built on a basis of a specific scheme. In intentions of contemporary narratology we also consider it as a text of its kind and its creating, reproduction, transformation and reading process – as a special discursive activity.

Based on analysing the primary material occurring and spreading on internet, we provide a typology of the representations of Tito from a narratological and semiotic point of view, and regarding its function in current discourse on socialist Yugoslavia. We focus mainly on cultural meanings generated by this meme culture, its relation to the narratives formed in the context of official and unofficial representations of the leader during the socialist era and to a wider context of contemporary popular culture. Pursuant to the analysis, we try to follow the features of postmodern cultural images of the socialist Yugoslavia and its leader, and relation of these narratives to nostalgic and social-critical attitudes in the contemporary world.

*Key words:* Josip Broz Tito, Yugoslavia, internet memes, cultural memory, cultural images of the past, narrativity

*How to cite:* Harasimowicz, M. (2021). “If you want to be classy, have Yugoclass.” Postmodern Cultural Images of Josip Broz Tito. *Slovenský národopis*, 69(2), 274–293, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2478/se-2021-0015>

As stated by Stuart Hall, *the event must become a “story” before it can become a communicative event* (Hall, 1980: 129). Mythization and “narrativization” of history have been always used by societies to strengthen the sense of community and to build collective identity. To a similar extent there are also important elements forming collective memory.

Contemporary narratology emphasizes the universal nature of narrative mechanisms: the same mechanisms can be observed on the background of high culture, as well as in

the popular one. Moreover, narrativity and its cultural consequences go beyond the limits of textual phenomena in the strict sense. In this context, it should be noted that the phenomenon of narration is not only a fertile subject of research as a result of the textual application of specific narratological procedures, but also as a carrier of various kinds of cultural representations and a field of negotiation of meanings between the subject of a given statement and its recipient (Bílek, 2007: 101). Finally, the analysis of this phenomenon could be a “laboratory” where we can follow the mechanisms of production, transformation, and distribution of specific visions of the world and its evaluation. As noted by Petr Bílek, *in the sphere of the so-called high culture, constructing an idea is only a subset of the desire to achieve the aesthetic function of a work; in the sphere of pop culture, however, it is an autonomous communicated value and clearly articulated reference which can be – and actually, often is – consumed by the recipient* (ibid.: 102).

On the background of various manifestations of mass culture which can be situated on the border between textual, visual, and oral culture a special case seems to be the phenomenon of internet memes. It operates on the assumption of a specific communicative situation, in which a kind of negotiation of meanings – taking place on the basis of interaction with the recipient – is an important aspect.

The article focuses on internet memes related to the person of the socialist leader of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito. We will concentrate mainly on cultural meanings generated by these memes, its relation to the narratives formed in the context of official and unofficial representations of the leader during the socialist era and to a wider context of contemporary popular culture. Based on considering the meme as a text of its kind, we will trace a typology of the representations of Tito from a narratological point of view and regarding its function in current discourse on socialist Yugoslavia.

Josip Broz (1892–1980) was born into a peasant family in Croatian Kumrovec and became involved in the communist movement after WWI. In the years 1934–1941 he progressed as a professional revolutionary in the service of the Comintern and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, where he gradually gained a strong position and, in 1939, became the party general secretary. During WWII he was the leading figure of the Yugoslav Partisan movement. From the end of the war until his death, he was the authoritarian leader of the state (from 1974 officially as “lifelong president”). After the rift with Stalin in 1948, he pushed through a vision of the international position of the Yugoslav state as an area not belonging either to the Eastern or Western bloc. He was also one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1956.<sup>1</sup>

The functioning of Tito’s image is a unique example of the mythization of a historical figure in popular culture. The attitude of public opinion towards Tito – both in the global and local dimensions in the countries of the former Yugoslavia – ranges from unequivocally negative assessments (describing him as a ruthless dictator or war criminal) through positions that relativize his actions, to the attitudes that treat him as a permanent object of adoration or nostalgia (cf. Radović, 2013: 135–141). As there is no consensus around the moral assessment of his person and the political heritage of his era, the contemporary cultural image of Josip Broz is formed in constant tension

---

1 For more information regarding his life, see works of Jože Pirjevec (2018 [2011]) or Ivo and Slavko Goldstein (2018).

between various discourses and contradictory horizons of expectations. This tension strengthens the attractiveness and subversive potential of narratives centred around him (which is especially emphasized in the case of memes narrating him in a positive spirit). Representations of Tito thus actually become a medium of nostalgia as well as of expressing critical attitudes towards the current political situation or desires related to social life.

Various shapes of the “Titostalgia” in former Yugoslav countries have been already examined by some area-based scholars, such as culturologist Mitja Velikonja (2010 [2008]), social historian Todor Kuljić (2011) or anthropologist Srđan Radović (2013). A collective monograph *O Titu kao mitu* [About Tito as a Myth] edited by Kristi Mathiesen Hjemdahl and Nevena Škrbić Alempijević (2006) should be listed as an important contribution to the academic debate about contemporary public reception. The book *VlasTito iskustvo, past present*, edited by Radonja Leposavić (2005) is also an attempt to approach the issue of cultural image of the Yugoslav President and the Titoism in general in an interdisciplinary perspective. A large monograph was devoted to topics of cultural (mainly visual) representation of Tito in the past and partially in present context also by Polish researcher Magdalena Bogusławska (2015). Nevertheless, the amount of material and its rapidly changing contexts, forms and media constantly provide wide possibilities of analysing it in various ways, both in intentions of social, historical (such as memory studies) and cultural sciences. The present study is intended as an attempt to supplement the existing “Titologist” works with the analysis of new specific material and explaining it from the perspective of cultural semiotics.

## A MEME AS A SOCIAL AND LITERARY PRACTICE

In a broader sense, the term “internet meme” is understood to mean any activity, content, theme, style, or object that is spread on the web via its organic, bottom-up distribution or reproduction by individual web users. The term “meme” was originally introduced by Richard Dawkins in his work *The Selfish Gene* (1976). Referring to genetics, Dawkins defined it as a small cultural unit of transmission spread from person to person by copying or imitation, and contributing to dissemination of behaviours, beliefs, or artefacts. According to him, in its functioning, the meme reminds us of gene: it is about a medium of replication which undergoes variation, competition, selection, and retention (Shifman, 2014: 9). As key features of a given meme necessary to succeed, he listed characteristics such as copy fidelity, fecundity (understood as the rate of spreading) and longevity (Knobel, Lankshear, 2007: 201–202). Although transferring the biological analogies on culture studies (including larger concepts of memetics as an autonomous methodology) was often criticised as insufficient to describe the whole complexity of human behaviours, the meme concept has been enthusiastically embraced by internet users (Shifman, 2014: 13). As remarked by Michele Knobel and Colin Lankshear (2007: 202), in popular understanding, the meme concept has narrowed its meaning as a reference to online phenomena and is basically presumed to describe the *rapid uptake and spread of a particular idea presented as a written text, image, language ‘move’, or some other unit of cultural ‘stuff’*. On the contrary to original Dawkins’s concept, this actualized definition rejects the longevity as a crucial trait of

the meme, which allows focus on short-lasting fads (Shifman, 2014: 13). In such use of the term, special attention is dedicated to ephemeral audio-visual content present on the web, as viral images, or videos. In the most trivial comprehension of the word a meme is frequently equated with a humorous picture with a text part, distributed via internet. For the purposes of our research, we operate, however, with more accurate definition of internet meme as conventionalized text-iconic composition, built on a basis of a specific scheme. Such a definition permits us to respect to some extent the self-identification of meme consumers (which is important for reflecting an actual communication situation) and at the same time allows the rigorous determination of the studied corpus.

Reflecting special semiotic and syntactical features of memes, Lankshear and Knobel identify it as a kind of new literacy practice (Lankshear, Knobel, 2003). They underline three recognizable patterns of literary characteristics which contribute to fecundity of memes: a) some element of humour; b) a rich range of intertextuality (often based on everyday life phenomena or popular culture); c) anomalous juxtapositions, usually of images (Knobel, Lankshear, 2007: 209). Based on the cited definitions and deep analysis of primary material, we can suggest the following distinctive features of the contemporary internet meme culture as a literary and semiotic formation:

- (usually) anonymous authorship,
- ephemerality,
- brevity and shortcutting,
- strong influence of conventions (repetitive key words, sentence structures and graphics, a small variety of fonts used, over-representation of the English language – also in memes referring to local contexts),
- self-referentiality in relation to the genre,
- tendency to decontextualize the underlying visual and thematic material,
- frequent references to emotions,
- comicality (often based on irony).

While a tendency of decontextualization is strongly linked to juxtapositionality described by Lankshear and Knobel, the self-referentiality closely related to the intertextuality should be noted. The internet meme by its nature is a significantly dialogical phenomenon which tends to engage both its author or disseminator and the recipient in a broad play on words, in which knowledge of a wide context is a basis of the reading process. To achieve this purpose, it can exploit any other cultural text which can be also another meme. As stressed by Julia Kristeva, every intertextual play is a kind of planned relation between the author and the recipient, in which any text is *constructed as a mosaic of quotations* and as an *absorption and transformation of another* (Kristeva, 1980: 65–66). In this context Dorota Zdunkiewicz-Jedynak (2016: 59) notes that in the case of the memes the intertextual decoding is even more complicated as in the case of the traditional literacy because of its reference to various systems of signs coexisting in one meme: iconic and verbal as well as associated both to virtual, ephemeral context and off-internet background. Inducements for the recipient to make its reception intertextual can then be found at the iconic level (e.g., by duplicating an iconic element or part of it), and at the level of verbal text – by duplicating syntactic structures or innovative usage of the language (2016: 72). On this background the so-called meme templates emerge, which are thereafter reproduced in creative variations.

As described by Zdunkiewicz-Jedynak, the process of recontextualization does not necessarily end with the transformation of the image of the original viral and its encapsulation by the text component (2016: 60) but can be followed by creating new compositions more freely referring to the primary material (cf. Owens, 2019: 103). A specific position of the visual component is also pointed out: it is often excerpted from larger units, recycled, or copy-and-pasted (Bristow, 2019: 18).

In relation to the conditions of originating and dissemination of internet memes, contemporary scholars tend to consider it as an example of modern folklore (McNeill, 2009: 84). Lynne S. McNeill reminds us that the key circumstance of the emerging folklore phenomena is oral communication and face-to-face context of learning and performing. In this context, she notices similarities between traditionally understood orality and the communication within social networking sites and internet communicators. She also notes that the majority of internet users from the generation of so-called “digital natives” do not clearly distinguish between virtual communication and the real-life context and treat their virtual social connections as genuine, stating that the folklore emerges everywhere where the informal, everyday social interactions take place (ibid.). A similar conclusion is reached by Shifman, who claims that the internet memes – exactly like traditional folklore – express deep social and cultural structures (2014: 15) and reflect a wider social mind-set (2014: 5). A key feature of the meme culture also emphasises organic, from-below based mechanisms of creating, transferring and transmission of itself. Dan Bristow (2019: 18) notes in this context also certain similarities of the memes to folk art and its fondness of inscriptions.

In connection with the development of the meme culture, many theorists (cf. Goerzen, 2017; Konior, 2019) point to its expansive nature as a medium of communication. Bogna Konior (2019: 50) remarks that memes became a focal point of current political divisions and the online cultural identity war. On the other hand, the scholars stress increasing orientation of internet culture on irony and sarcasm (cf. Owens, 2019: 95–97). However, as noticed by Owens (ibid.: 100), many young internet users utilize humour and irony – through the form of memes – to express deeper emotions. The meme thus becomes a universal tool to formulate and share a wide range of feelings and views. The rising of a “Meme Generation” – as a generation strongly attached to that medium – is even mentioned in this respect (ibid.).

In their article from 2007, Lankshear and Knobel propose a brief typology of memes regarding to its purposes based on specific analysed material (2007: 218).<sup>2</sup> Among the listed types we can underline the two largest sets of motivations: social commentary and absurdist humour. Fan-based memes can be considered as another broad type of memes (Knobel, Lankshear, 2005: 13) which appeal to a community of specific groups of users and are to strengthen their feeling of belonging. As a counterpart of these three groups of meme types, marked by authors as “static” (reproduced with little variability) a further type is identified, described as remixed memes: *replicated via evolution*,

2 Although there are further possibilities to precise theoretical anchoring of such typologies – e.g. following Jakobson’s model of language functions, internal structure of meme types (cf. Woch, Napieralski, 2016) or humour styles and virality (Taecharungroj, Nueangjamnong, 2015), this categorization still seems to be accurate in distinguishing the basic framework of the meme as a literacy practice.

*adaptation or transformation of the original meme vehicle* (ibid.). The authors remark in this context the collaborative nature of creating those replications which is often based on absurdist, ironical (sometimes internal) humour. In fact, however, none of the types listed above exists uniquely in isolated form: contrariwise individual aesthetical and literary motivations and strategies intervene to other ones and contribute to the emergence of more and more memes which transform primary compositions or templates to new ones.

## JOSIP BROZ TITO ON THE INTERNET

Thematizations of Josip Broz on the internet originate in the early stages of development of the user web. According to the findings of Mitja Velikonja (2010 [2008]: 77), the first webpage dedicated to him was launched in 1994 under the address *www.titoville.com* by Slovenian screenwriter Martin Srebotnjak and informatician Matija Marolt. The web in English focused on collecting various pieces of information and artefacts related to Tito, such as his speeches, photos, biographical information, and jokes about him or contemporary commentaries on his person. Along with the growing popularity of the internet and personal web pages, the number of slightly educational or explicitly yugo-nostalgic pages increased. Not surprisingly, a key moment in this context was the rise of social networking sites which allowed a wider public easy posting and sharing of any content. Currently we can quickly find a great number of intensively followed accounts which are devoted to themes related to the memory of socialist Yugoslavia and its leader or are supposed to present and spread yugo-nostalgic attitudes, such as Facebook fan pages and groups (e.g. *Titova Jugoslavija*, *Titomanija*, *TITO – Istina povijesti*, *PRIZNAJEM*, *JUGOSLAVEN SAM*), YouTube channels (e.g. *YU 0 Laki / Jugoslovenski partizani*) or Instagram profiles (e.g. *jugoslavija.sfrj*, *yugo.wave*, *Yugonostalgia*). Some of those accounts were launched for commercial purposes; the majority of them are, however, user initiatives from below. Specific cases are, of course, the accounts of various local civic organizations referring to Tito's legacy at the political level.

Textual-visual compositions theming Josip Broz can be divided into several types. Firstly, these are amateur-created images, usually representing his person accompanied by state symbols or maps of Yugoslavia and accompanied by simple enthusiastic statements. Its text layer most often exploits political slogans or quotes retaken directly from the official canon of the socialist period or works with straightforward declarations of love and gratitude towards him (such as “*Thank you for a happy childhood, Comrade Tito*” – Fig. 1, “*This is my President*” etc.). Those graphics are usually spread in more exclusive communities of nostalgically based users from the former Yugoslav countries. The texts are habitually in Serbo-Croatian and occur in direct context of sharing memories of life in socialist Yugoslavia or remembering Tito. The basic communication function of these pictures can be considered as emotive or even phatic (users put them as comments or separate posts in groups purely to express their own support or to prompt positive reactions within the community – as in the case of one, quite frequently shared picture with the Marshal accompanied simultaneously by slogans “*Forever in our hearts*” and “*Let's see how many likes he deserved*” or many





Fig. 1: Thank you, Comrade Tito. Thank you for a happy childhood. An example of graphics disseminated in openly nostalgic Facebook groups. Source: Čustović, H. H. JEDAN JE MARŠAL TITO !! (2021, May 31). [Attached image]. [Facebook group post]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=4063259810408176&set=g.1355574627846785>

graphics containing just Tito's image juxtaposed to greetings of a nice day or happy holidays).

As the second type, we could define memes in the true sense of the word, as it has been described in the previous part of the article. Their places of occurrence are not so typified. We can find them both in some yugo-nostalgic channels (mainly popular among younger users, such as Instagram accounts) and in profiles targeted more generally on sharing various types of memes, often within groups or pages focusing on exchanging memes related to the Balkans (e.g., *The Balkans*), Slavic culture (*Slavorum*, *Squatting Slavs in Tracksuits*) or history (*History Memes*). Besides Facebook and Instagram, a traditional channel for sharing such content is also *Reddit* which provides more user forums devoted to exchanging thematic memes. Other profiles emerge on this basis, which deal exclusively with collecting the thematically circumscribed content and sharing it – Facebook fan page *Josip Broz Tito memes* is probably the most consistent among such channels. The content itself is usually in English and is more often based on using internationally known meme templates and references to other internet virals. In contrast to the openly nostalgic communities mentioned above, in the case of proper memes, verbal interactions between users are usually very limited and relate merely to matters of consuming and commenting on memes – no wider joint context of communication is present. In a way, however, also included in this set can

be some content spread by satirical left-wing oriented Facebook pages operating in the former Yugoslav context and area, such as *Dnevna doza marksizma-lenjinizma* [Daily Dose of Marxism-Leninism], *Karl Marks, verovatno* [Karl Marx, probably] or *Seksualna tenzija između jugoslovenskog komunizma i srpskog nacionalizma* [Sexual Tension Between Yugoslav Communism and Serbian Nationalism]. The content published by these pages is perceptibly linked to the (post)Yugoslav political and cultural context and usually requires deeper knowledge background, referring to a wide range of other personalities and events within the history of Yugoslav communism and the left thinking. The languages mainly used are Serbian and Croatian and the content itself tends to provoke more politically oriented reactions.

The third type of present textual-visual representations are artistic depictions which reproduce the convention with the aim to purely express author's subjective feelings or opinions, often related to the theme of personal memories or political attitude (as an example the Facebook page *MXJ Files* and series *Maja u Vejstlendu* created by artist Marijana Jakelić can be mentioned). A detailed comparison of these three codes of displaying Tito on the internet is certainly another interesting challenge in the field of semiotics but would also demand a separate study. That is why for purposes of this paper we will concentrate only on the second type listed above.

The anonymity of the meme culture and its typical convention, based on communication in English, makes it difficult to determine whether (and to what extent) the analysed material is created in the cultural context of the former Yugoslav countries. The vast majority of popular memes about Josip Broz Tito operate in English. A basic analysis of the structure of users actively responding to these memes on social networking sites allows us to conclude that the community of their recipients is international and is not limited to members of nations for whom Tito's legacy is a part of collective memory. Therefore, despite the obvious and numerous references to the realities of Yugoslavia and post-Yugoslav area, it is difficult to clearly define the analysed phenomenon as a manifestation of post-Yugoslav memory culture in the strict sense, and it is fairer to consider it in terms of global popular culture.

Due to the ephemeral and decentralized nature of meme culture in general, it is also quite difficult to estimate when the first such memes emerged. The first updates on *Josip Broz Tito memes* Facebook page are dated to April 2015. The oldest user updates on the site *KnowYourMeme.com* are more or less of same age (although one of the main goals of this site is to provide the information about origin of occurrence of particular memes, there are not any explications related specially to the phenomenon of the "Tito memes" listed there). cursory searches on Twitter allow us to state that the first content of this kind on this social networking site can be also dated to 2015–2016. In the case of these early memes, a low degree of visual conventionalization and intertextuality is evident. The conceptual basis is usually some elementary historical information or simplest juxtaposition of interesting photo and brief slogan/comment. Following user comments, it is however, visible that even that content provoked reactions of the virtual community.

In terms of general typology of memes, most of the content devoted to Josip Broz seems to match to a fan-based and humourist type, sometimes combined with social-critical type as well. The memes expressing negative attitudes towards Tito (typically depicting him in an anti-communist manner as a cruel dictator, blaming him for



internal problems of Yugoslavia, or presenting him as an inferior rival of other historical figures as e.g. Enver Hoxha) are extremely rare in widely accessible profiles and platforms. This suggests similarity to other spheres of humour such as orally spread jokes – as remarked by Velikonja, also in political jokes, both from Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav period, Broz usually acts as a positive character (Velikonja, 2010 [2008]: 177).

In the following parts of the article, we will analyse the types of Tito memes in more detail. Due to its greater representation and semiotic density, we decided to focus exclusively on memes which display him in a positive manner. In general, these memes can be divided into two basic categories: 1) ones expressing views or sentiments explicitly related to the person of Josip Broz or the Yugoslav identity (which can be further categorized regarding specific thematic clusters); 2) ones based on abstract humour. In the last part of the paper, we will focus attention more specifically on memes based on celebrating warm feelings towards the Yugoslav leader as a striking example of the postmodern recontextualization of the former cult of personality.

### “EVERYONE’S FAVOURITE DICTATOR”

Following the meme culture related to the person of the Yugoslav leader, we can easily distinguish its main thematic circles. These can be further divided into motives embedded in specific historical facts, motives articulating the contemporary perspective and timeless threads.

Within content centred on historical issues, the most represented topics are anti-fascism, the liberation of Yugoslavia, the Cold War, the split with Stalin, the unification and disintegration of Yugoslavia and the activities of Tito’s repression apparatus (mainly the infamous camp for political prisoners on Goli Otok). Events from the President’s personal life are also a relatively frequent theme, mostly his marriage with Jovanka Broz and his death. Anti-fascism is probably the most frequent motif, representing Tito as a tireless and brave fighter against fascists, always winning over them, laughing at them or feeding with them his animals. Historical decontextualization is also present here in juxtaposing such textual content to pictures from the period after the WWII. Some memes mix historical topics with contemporary context of the internet life, such as a meme with text: “*When a fascist reports you, but you get unbanned*”.<sup>3</sup> Also memes related to the history of unification and disintegration of Yugoslavia remain relatively invariable and stereotypical at the level of narratives: it usually presents Yugoslav nations as unmanageable and always scuffling entities (as in the meme using the popular Countryballs visual with Yugoslavia explicitly identified with Tito) and the unification as a difficult challenge, fulfillable only by the Marshal. Probably the oldest but still popular memes compare Tito to Stalin (with a conclusion which is flattering towards Tito). A story of the letter which Tito supposedly wrote to Stalin, threatening him with sending one assassin to Moscow after which “*he won’t have to send another*” if Stalin didn’t stop sending assassins to Belgrade, is often presented

<sup>3</sup> For purposes of this paper, we present all texts in the original recorded versions, including any typos or grammatical errors in English. For better clarity, we only add punctuation if it is necessary for the context.

in various graphical elaborations (in some of it the letter is glossed as “*most badass historical quote ever*”).

Among memes introducing Tito as a personage into contemporary context, which is perhaps the most interesting cluster in context of the analysis of current public sentiments towards Broz, we can distinguish memes representing him as an object of a reflection of the external narrator; memes where Tito is the narrator and memes without a clearly definable narrator, where Tito is an acting character. In the first and second case, the main theme of the message is usually evaluation of the newest history of the former Yugoslav countries and the contemporary situation in the region.

Velikonja (2010 [2008]: 110) performed a quantitative and qualitative analysis in his work of the proportion of active/passive role of Tito represented on t-shirts with the results that Broz in an active role (which Velikonja, however, identifies with the role of the speaker in a speech act) was significantly less represented than as a described object. According to the sample we analysed, we cannot confirm the hypothesis that Tito is more rarely represented in a passive way. There are, however, important similarities in the cases where the Marshal is displayed as a speaker in the first person. If Velikonja notices that in such representation Tito is *impersonal, generalized in an imperious manner and strict* (ibid), the same motif is present in relevant memes. The content of the statement is usually rebuking current politicians or political actors in the 1990s and admonition, e.g.: “*Majku vam božju, sve ste zasrali*” [*Majku vam božju*,<sup>4</sup> you screwed everything up], “*Mi smo ni od čega napravili nešto, a vi ste od nečega napravili NIŠTA!*” [We have made something from nothing, and you have made NOTHING from something!], “*The only people that hate me sold the people of Yugoslavia into slavery*” (all accompanied by representative portrait photos). A similar attitude is often presented in memes which operate with an external narrator, as in the meme displaying Tito listening to an excitedly gesturing man (in fact the President of Yugoslav Federal Executive Council Džemal Bijedić but identification of this person is irrelevant for the given narration) supplemented with text: “*These fuckers destroyed Yugoslavia. You really need to comeback*”. The commentary to the current situation of post-Yugoslav countries is also often expressed by comparing Tito with contemporary politicians. In the visual way it is usually based on juxtaposition of pictures of them, provided with a brief slogan. Quite a popular meme, occurring in more variants is for example the comparison of the relation towards the Orthodox Church, using an extraordinary photo of a young monk kissing Tito’s hand as a sign of obedience.<sup>5</sup> In contrast to that emblematic photo, pictures are exhibited of one or more current politicians of the region kissing hands of Orthodox patriarchs. The comprehensible message provided by that visual (condemnation of the submissive attitude of the state officials towards the church) is often underlined by the text part, e.g.: “*Be like Tito. Tito bows to nobody*”. As another, brand new thematization of contrast between Josip Broz and the current political elites we can list a meme based on a photo of Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić visiting

4 Hardly translatable swear-word, literally “your Mother of God”.

5 Some time ago this photo was publicly discussed based on the revelation that the monk could be Montenegrin Orthodox Metropolitan Amfilohije (deceased in October 2020). However, this discovery was never confirmed (see e.g.: *Amfilohije kissed Tito’s hand?* 2015).



Fig. 2: A meme thematizing the contrast between photos of Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić and Josip Broz Tito visiting the White House. Source: *Dnevna doza marksizma-lenjinizma*. (2020, September 5). [Attached image]. [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/ziveolenjin/photos/1437302039805848>

Donald Trump in summer 2020, which has become viral due to its non-explicit humorous potential. The photo presents Vučić sitting on chair in front of Trump's massive desk but at a considerable distance from the table, which evokes his eventual, pupil-like, subordinate position. In the meme, probably originated in left-wing milieu (the meme was shared mainly on leftist fan pages), Vučić's photo is juxtaposed to the famous photo from Tito's visit to the White House, displaying a 'relaxed Tito' smoking a cigar in the presence of the US President Nixon. The photos are marked with the labels: "Expectation" (Tito) and "Reality" (Vučić) which is a literal reference to another worldwide popular meme template (Fig. 2). A similar meme also appeared in the context of the state visit of Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović in 2017 – scoffing at her photo in front of the White House, which was marked by public opinion as undignified and compared to trivial tourist photos (see Barković, 2017).

Nevertheless, allusions to today's world in Tito memes are not limited to actual post-Yugoslav political scenes but touch other political topics as well. Among this category of memes, we can distinguish memes which distinctly express some social critical (left-oriented) attitudes and memes which deal with more general problems without clear reference to any political orientation. As an example of leftist social critique, we can mention a meme which is also a kind of May Day greetings. It is composed of a photo of older Broz in his locksmith workshop and a text: "*Working Tito wishes you happy Worker's Day. Tito hopes you still have worker's rights today*". As more general problems of the world are often thematised, paedophilia, immorality of politicians or violence, we can find e.g., a meme presenting Tito handling a rifle with a note: "*When the world is ruled by evil pedophiles, only Josip Broz Tito can stop them*" or a composition of a documentary photo of Josip Broz gently stroking a schoolgirl and a text: "*When your schoolkids are safe from all the school shooters*" (the second one, with its reference to a specifically American problem, can perhaps prove international dimension of the meme community). A common feature of such types of memes is centring the narration around the figure of Tito as a protector and liberator, which is like depictions of him in memes thematising anti-fascism and WWII. In early spring 2020 the memes referring to the pandemics occurred as well, e.g., one using the photo

from the workshop (the same as was mentioned above) with label: *"Tito making respirators for all those sick people"* or another, in which the visual basis was one of the famous wartime photos of the partisans, supplemented with a text: *"Tito's First Proletarian Brigade ready to fight the coronavirus"*.

The third cluster we can distinguish are memes without clear reference to historical events or contemporary realities, exploring some timeless matters, related to the Balkan identity, selected physical and characterological features of the President or internet everydayness. It can be either topics directly related to Tito as a real person or looser associations. A significant group is formed from memes reflecting South Slavic reality and everyday life, such as the number of memes referring to the Yugo car (considered as emblematic for the memories of Yugoslav past in nostalgic discourses), drinking rakija or eating *ćevapi*. Tito is depicted there in a more comic and ironic way, usually as a satisfied consumer of those goods (e.g. meme presenting smiling Broz with a text: *"When you finally remember where you put your Yugo"* or beaming over some drink, underwritten: *"That smile when you get some rakija"*). Definitely the largest subset of those memes seems to be memes related to *ćevapi*. Allusions to this dish are linked with a large range of various photos of Tito, both from official events (e.g. standing at the lectern and uttering: *"Enough is enough. Goli Otok awaits those who hate ćevapi"*), private life (e.g., picture capturing Tito and Sofia Loren during her visit in the President's summer residence, where Loren is peeling some fruits; accompanied by text: *"What the fuck is this, woman? I thought you had ćevapi for dinner"*) and the wartime (photo of the Marshal dictating a message to his partisan secretary Davorjanka Paunović with the caption: *"Type this into the letter: 'Please send some ćevapi'"*). The great occurrence of this motif is probably not an accident, due to the special symbolic meaning of that dish, being paradigmatic for Yugoslav gastronomic brandification (see Beštić Bronza, Bronza, 2019) and considered as a strong part of both the Yugoslav and the post-Yugoslav cultural identity (ibid.: 125–126, 130–131).

A part of memes are based on simple humour exploiting a comical dimension of given photos which are usually strongly decontextualized. We can see it in the number of memes composed with depictions of Marshal at parties, wearing strange head-coverings or in the company of enthusiastic people saluting him. There are also memes based on the comicality of some wordplay (most often homophony of Broz – Bros or You – YU, a pun: *Despacito – DespaTito* etc.). A significant feature of the meme culture is its self-referentiality, the presence of a great number of memes with plain emotive or phatic function or referring to internet milieu is not surprising. An example of the first mentioned case could be brief expressions of disagreement (a 'relaxed Tito' saying: *"You see? This is why I send people to Goli Otok"* or frowning with a caption: *"Your ideas fucking suck"*) or various greetings (e.g., an archival photo from New Year's Eve with a text: *"Tito wishes you a Happy New Year"*). For the second one we can list a photo of smiling Broz accompanied by the text: *"Your face when four fans like your memes"* or one with a picture of saluting Tito with the text box: *"When you haven't posted in a while and yo followers still liking yo shit"* and the bottom caption: *"Tito salutes those who are loyal"*. The last mentioned meme could be, maybe, understood also as a kind of meta-commentary on the permanence of the existence of Tito's "fandom" long years after his death.

An interesting case is various memes based on the widely popular meme templates such as the "Dolly Parton challenge" (combination of four photos supposed to be used

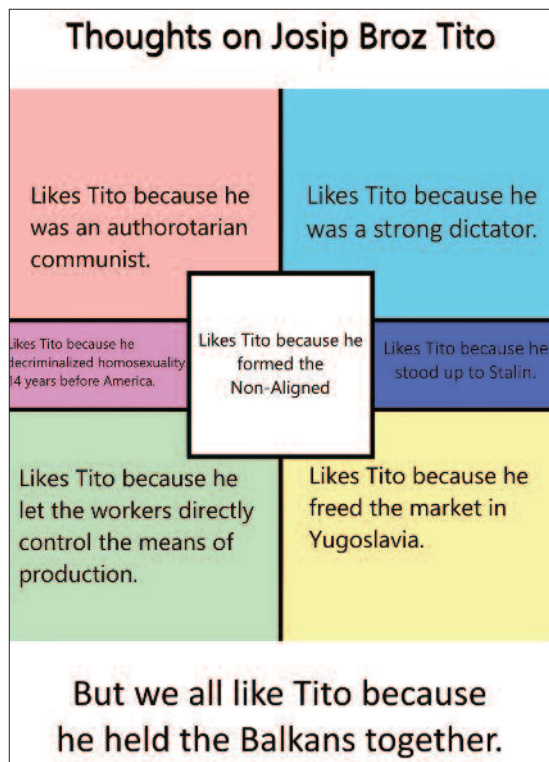


Fig. 3: Application of the Political Compass meme template. Source: Know Your Meme. (n.d.). Political Compass – “Why they like Tito” remastered: | r/PoliticalCompassMemes. Retrieved from <https://knowyourmeme.com/photos/1582276-political-compass>

in four social networking sites: LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and Tinder) or “Political Compass” (set of four images/ narratives which represents specific political attitudes pursuant to authoritarian-libertarian and left-right axes). Motivation for making those memes is probably based rather on the popularity of a given template in some time, combined with a tendency to adapt it for various topics – which is a common feature of the worldwide meme culture (Shifman defines such a type of meme as “egalitarian meme”; see: Shifman, 2014: 58-59). The first applications of the Dolly Parton challenge template to Broz’s photos thus occurred only a few days after original Parton’s appeal on Instagram in January 2020 and had clear comical spirit, being based on the contrast among Tito’s numerous representative depictions and commonly known photos from his private life (such as photos of him sunbathing, grilling with Jovanka or wearing a sombrero).

The Political Compass template

(Fig. 3), which in its parody form has been present on the internet for a longer time (see Know Your Meme, n.d.), has numerous applications in the context of Josip Broz, which operate both with Tito’s effigies (e.g. using his photo with Pope Paul VI for the “authoritarian right” panel), his actual political attitudes and various reasons for supporting him (e.g. “Likes Tito because he freed the market in Yugoslavia” for the “libertarian right” panel).

## FROM A COMRADE TO A SUPERHERO

Josip Broz was an object of strong cult of personality during the whole socialist era in Yugoslavia. From the very beginning this cult was based on mythological aspects (Radenković, 2011b: 128). The most significant of them included the modes of presentation of his origins and the rise to power, heroic narrations about his military achievements or some kind of sacralisation through official rituals and commemorations in the public space (see e.g. Bogusławska, 2015: 52–56; Radović, 2013: 62–87; Velikonja, 2010 [2008]: 16–17, 90–93).



Another element of mythization was emphasizing specific features of Tito, such as courage, bravery, strength, justice, and physical beauty (Radenković, 2011b: 130). Such a mode of representing Josip Broz was very common not only in the media or official art but also in many emergences of spontaneously created folklore. Rastko Močnik (2005) speaks in this context about Tito's popular image as a pop-romantic artistic stylization and points out that the mere register of his iconographic representations is substantially inexhaustible (p. 207). Such elements are also present in the memes which are expressed in concentration on similar personal features and frequent reproduction of a specific set of biographical topics: either very generally outlined (anti-fascism, unification of Yugoslavia) or specific, as his eventual "badass" letter to Stalin mentioned above.

A specifically framed affirmative attitude which achieves symbolical extent is, perhaps surprisingly, evidenced in memes which thematise the topic of the Goli Otok political prison. References to Goli Otok often appear in memes designed as an expression of disagreement, rage or contempt for the opponent ("Yes, yes, off to Goli Otok you go", "That look when they are so bad not even Goli Otok could save them", "Wait, didn't I send you to Goli Otok before?" – usually accompanied by a portrait photo of Tito, sometimes glowering or – on the contrary – applauding). However, we can also find more sophisticated memes. Their context are the problems of the contemporary world and the virtual sphere: racism, corruption, paedophilia, crime, but also boredom or stupidity (Tito with a stern facial expression supplemented by a text: "That look when you're about to send them to Goli Otok for being dumb"). Such memes can be certainly considered as a reflection of current discourse in the former Yugoslav countries, where the prison figures as an emblem of quickly dealing with villains of all kinds and is often evoked in the context of sentiments for the "strong-hand" government (some time ago the media reported, for example, about a slightly ironic petition for re-opening the camp in Croatia; see Milekic, 2018). Nonetheless allusions to Goli Otok can also be regarded in more symbolical way as a depiction of an attribute of power. The efficiency of the ruler who uses a repressive apparatus as a tool for establishing the justice is a manifestation of



Fig. 4: One of the thematizations of the Goli Otok camp in memes, using a photo of Tito performing a gesture that could be interpreted as pointing a finger or driving out. Source: Josip Broz Tito memes (2019, February 24). [Attached image]. [Facebook status update]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/JPBmemes/photos/2515145415165781>

his strength and rightness. Tito acts here again as a paternal figure of a protector (Fig. 4).

An interesting case is memes expressing positive feelings for Tito: like dreaming of meeting him, declaring devotion, mourning him or celebrating fascination of his person. As an example, we can use the meme composed of a photo of Tito's meeting with an American astronaut, along with the text: "*This man will go to the Moon. For You, Yugo Boss*". Sometimes some ambivalent comicality is present, as in variants of the meme based on iconic photos of Tito with his dog Luks from the partisan period, accompanied by texts such as "*Best friends of man: Tito and dog*" or in the meme composed from photos of the Japanese influencer Mari Kondo and quotes "*This one sparks joy*" / "*This one doesn't spark joy*" juxtaposed to Tito's portrait and photoshoot from his funeral. A specific category are pictures based on the "relationship goals" formula, depicting Tito's relationship with his wife Jovanka, which present it as a model of harmony and mutual devotion (not entirely in accordance with historical truth). Narrative schemes like that are typical for fan-based memes (cf. phenomenon of memes dedicated to Polish TV chef Robert Makłowicz), but in a way also refer to the narrative structures that accompanied Tito's official image in the socialist Yugoslavia. We can, for example, find some parallels to short stories about young pioneers dreaming about meeting Tito (like in France Bevk's children's book *Knjiga o Titu* [Book about Tito], 1989 [1955]), festivities based on expressing love and gratitude as the Day of Youth was, or oaths of allegiance contained in popular songs of the era. Memes operating with some elements of direct sacralisation occur as well. In a lighter version we can follow it in the case of a commemorative meme shared on the occasion of 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death, where Tito is stylized as a Jedi Master or in a meme placing his photo on the background of sun rays with a text: "*Tito coming from heaven to bring us back to wonderland*". Nevertheless, there are also memes engaging explicit reference to sacrality, e.g., one using a mutual photo of Broz and Pope Paul VI holding a book, supplemented with text: "*Here, Tito, it says you're Jesus right here*" or a strip with Jesus telling him: "*Ustaj družo Tito, vreme je da se vratimo!*" [Get up, comrade Tito, it's the time for us to come back!].

A peculiar tool of mythization in the socialist era was, however, also the numerous thematizations of Tito, which, following Bakhtin (2007 [1965]), can be included in the "culture of popular laughter" – such as jokes and anecdotes about his person. Those types of stories in socialist Yugoslavia either emerged from below, as folkloric expression of particular opinions and shared sense of humour or was initiated and reproduced by official actors: as in the case of the collection of anecdotes about Tito published in 1972 on the occasion of his 80th birthday under the title *Tito u anegdotama* [Tito in anecdotes]. Some such anecdotes were even spread by Tito himself in various formal and private situations (Radenković, 2011a: 257). The type of humour, of course, significantly differed depending on the extent of formality: while published anecdotes had mostly the form of kind humour, those which appeared and circulated in informal milieus often had rougher traits. Nonetheless, as noted by Radenković, there is no fixed border between joke and anecdote (ibid.), and so neither narrative layer of these various forms of humorous stories were based on strictly separate sets of properties. As stated by Radenković, Tito's most common features in these stories are his cunning, cleverness, and insolence (ibid.: 259). A strong parallel with traditional Balkan folklore



### Girlfriend:

- has feelings
- will probably cheat on you
- takes forever to get dressed
- might be ugly

TITO



- cold lifeless eyes as he slaughters nazi scum
- never turns his back on a fellow comrade
- can literally run naked through a forest with an MP40
- sexiest man of his time

Fig. 5: In a meme based on the “girlfriend comparison” template, Tito is marked as the sexiest man of his time. Source: [Wallachiaball]. (2018, December 16). Tbh Tito was pretty hot. [Online forum post]. Retrieved from [https://www.reddit.com/r/HistoryMemes/comments/a6ptw6/tbh\\_tito\\_was\\_pretty\\_hot/](https://www.reddit.com/r/HistoryMemes/comments/a6ptw6/tbh_tito_was_pretty_hot/)

(e.g., so-called Nasreddin Hodja tales) can be found here. All these motives are repeatedly reproduced in memes as well, especially in the context of Yugoslavia’s unique position during the Cold War (e.g., memes underlining Tito’s self-confidence, when he smoked a cigar in the White House).

Among the archetypes realized in building the image of Tito as a meme hero, however, we can also find contemporary narrative figures. In this respect, the most interesting groups of memes seem to be those that use the motives of the bodily attractiveness of the Yugoslav President as well as his hedonist behaviour and style. The image of Josip Broz is generally subject to creative modification there, which goes beyond the representation of a historical figure and becomes a carrier of a kind of autonomous narrative, the primary function of which is to articulate the aspirations and ideals of the community of meme users. Memes themselves often depict Tito as an

attractive gentleman (e.g. one composed from his iconic photo in formal dress with the slogan *"If you want to be classy, have Yugoclass"*), a romantic (photo from the partisan period with a text: *"Chilling out there in nature thinking of your girlfriend far away"*), and a good friend – in some cases using direct references to the aesthetics of the Westerns or spy stories (e.g. Tito in sunglasses smoking a cigar, with the caption: *"My name is Tito and I just killed James Bond"*). Sometimes a kind of erotic fascination is expressed as well (various memes describing him as *"hot"*, *"sexiest man of his time"* – Fig. 5, etc.). On the other hand, Tito himself is also often represented as a seductive man with a great libido. In the underlined emblems of corporeality, such as passion, seductiveness or sybaritism (which are often combined into a shared story with the themes of Tito as a warrior and rebel) it is not difficult to find analogies with pop culture superheroes or iconic narratives based on the western popular culture, such as the James Bond films (cf. Štochl, 2007: 36).

## CONCLUSION

Postmodern narrations about Josip Broz which are expressed in meme culture in fact exploit and mix diverse semiotic registers, among which we can find those meaningfully attached to the mythology of the former socialist regime, those which are purely nostalgic and others, which on a basis of the "Titostalgic" code tend to build brand new narratives. In this context it is an interesting example of "reincarnation" of a former cult of personality in new historical and media conditions.

It is significant that both classic mythological stories and most superhero stories take place in a kind of timelessness. A similar suspension in time can be observed in the case of memetic narratives about Josip Broz. Tito's Yugoslavia functions here as a kind of heterotopia that becomes a "screen" for the projection of the longings and dreams of a virtual fan community, and a backdrop in which a fascinating story about a better world and its charismatic architect unfolds. The archetypal and universal nature of mythical heroes requires their actions to be predictable – Umberto Eco (1972) speaks in this context about the consumability of the hero. Tito as an "internet superhero" thus becomes an object of narrative appropriation of its kind in intentions of telling a story about a lost better world which was (but maybe still is?) possible. The nostalgia for Yugoslavia as a heterotopia conceived in this way is rather a conscious subscription to an intuitive set of values, emotions, and signs, which is however, strongly influenced by real collective memory. The study of individual narrative threads and its longevity (and – contrariwise – specificity) can help us shed light on why Tito became a "story" at all and why we still search for such stories today.

*The work was supported by the Charles University grant SVV No. 260557.*



## REFERENCES

### Primary sources:

- [*Hi to YUGOSLAVIA*] [@yugo.wave]. (n.d.). *Posts*. [Instagram profile]. Instagram. Accessed March 07, 2021 from <https://www.instagram.com/yugo.wave>.
- Amfilohije kissed Tito's hand?* (2015, October 16). Accessed March 07, 2021, from <http://www.rtcg.me/english/montenegro/106863/amfilohije-kissed-titos-hand.html>.
- The Balkans*. (n.d.). *Home* [Facebook page]. Facebook. Accessed March 07, 2021, from <https://www.facebook.com/TheBalkans>.
- Barković, N. (2017, January 5). PRED OGRADOM KAO TURISTICA: Kolinda se žešće osramotila u Dnevniku. Accessed June 8, 2021, from <https://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/kolindina-se-zesce-osramotila-u-dnevniku-htva/942289.aspx>.
- Bevk, F. (1989 [1955]). *Knjiga o Titu*. (M. Idrižović, Trans.). Sarajevo: Svjetlost (Original work published 1955).
- Dnevna doza marksizma-lenjinizma*. (n.d.). *Home* [Facebook page]. Facebook. Accessed March 07, 2021, from <https://www.facebook.com/ziveolenjin>.
- History Memes*. (n.d.). *Home* [Facebook page]. Facebook. Accessed March 07, 2021, from <https://www.facebook.com/hist0rymemes>.
- Josip Broz Tito memes*. (n.d.). *Home* [Facebook group]. Facebook. Accessed March 07, 2021, from <https://www.facebook.com/JPBmemes>.
- JUGOSLAVIJA / YUGOSLAVIA* [@jugoslavija.sfrj]. (n.d.). *Posts*. [Instagram profile]. Instagram. Accessed March 07, 2021 from <https://www.instagram.com/jugoslavija.sfrj>.
- Karl Marks, verovatno*. (n.d.). *Home* [Facebook page]. Facebook. Accessed March 07, 2021, from <https://www.facebook.com/karlmarksrvr>.
- Know Your Meme*. (n.d.). Accessed March 08, 2021, from <https://knowyourmeme.com/>.
- Milekic, S. (2018, May 22). Croats joke About Re-Opening camp For THIEVING POLITICIANS. Accessed March 07, 2021, from <https://balkaninsight.com/2016/11/10/croats-joke-about-re-opening-communist-prison-for-politicians-11-10-2016/>.
- MXJ Files*. (n.d.). *Home* [Facebook page]. Facebook. Accessed March 07, 2021, from <https://www.facebook.com/mxjfiles2>.
- PRIZNAJEM, JUGOSLAVEN SAM. (n.d.). *Home* [Facebook page]. Facebook. Accessed March 07, 2021, from <https://www.facebook.com/PriznajemJugoslavenSam>.
- Reddit*. (n.d.). Accessed March 08, 2021, from <https://www.reddit.com/>.
- Seksualna tenzija između jugoslovenskog komunizma i srpskog nacionalizma*. (n.d.). *Home* [Facebook page]. Facebook. Accessed March 07, 2021, from <https://www.facebook.com/slobomitevolimo>.
- Slavorum*. (n.d.). *Home* [Facebook page]. Facebook. Accessed March 07, 2021, from <https://www.facebook.com/Slavorum>.
- Squatting Slavs in Tracksuits*. (n.d.). *Home* [Facebook group]. Facebook. Accessed March 07, 2021, from <https://www.facebook.com/groups/594991430663850>.
- Štaubringer, Z., Popović, M. (1972). *Tito u anegdota*. Beograd: Mladost.
- TITO – Istina povijesti*. (n.d.). *Home* [Facebook page]. Facebook. Accessed March 07, 2021, from <https://www.facebook.com/TitoIstinaPovijesti>.
- Titomanija*. (n.d.). *Home* [Facebook page]. Facebook. Accessed March 07, 2021, from <https://www.facebook.com/TitomanijaJosipBrozTito>.
- Titova Jugoslavija*. (n.d.). *Home* [Facebook group]. Facebook. Accessed March 07, 2021, from <https://www.facebook.com/groups/domovinousrcutenosimo>.
- YU 0 Laki / Jugoslovenski partizani*. (n.d.). *Home* [YouTube Channel]. YouTube. Accessed March 07, 2021, from <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9la74mRzGM43yOPxUEoJOW>.
- Yugonostalgia – Jugonostalgija* [@yugo.nostalgia]. (n.d.). *Posts*. [Instagram profile]. Instagram. Accessed March 07, 2021 from <https://www.instagram.com/yugo.nostalgia>.

### Secondary literature:

- Alempijević, N. Š, Hjemdahl, K. M., Belaj, V., Frykman, J. (Eds.) (2006). *O Titu kao mitu: Proslava Dana mladosti u Kumrovcu*. Zagreb: FF press.
- Bakhtin, M. M. (2007 [1965]). *François Rabelais a lidová kultura středověku a renesance* (J. Kolár, Trans.). Praha: Argo (Original work published 1965).



- Beštić Bronza, S., Bronza, B. (2019). Čevapi: A Paradigm of Yugoslav Gastronomic Brandification. In: R. Fotiadis, V. Ivanović, R. Vučetić (Eds.), *Brotherhood and Unity at the Kitchen Table: Food in Socialist Yugoslavia*. Zagreb: Srednja Europa (pp. 117–131).
- Bílek, P. (2007). James Bond a major Zeman: Sémantika narativní ideologie. In: P. Bílek (Ed.), *James Bond a major Zeman: Ideologizující vzorce vyprávění*. Příbram: Pistorius & Olšanská (pp. 100–118).
- Bogusławska, M. (2015). *Obraz władzy we władzy obrazu: Artystyczne konceptualizacje wizerunku Josipa Broza Tity*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo "Libron".
- Bristow, D. (2019). Introproduction. In: A. Bown, D. Bristow (Eds.), *Post Memes: Seizing the Memes of Production*. Punctum Books (pp. 17–24). doi:10.2307/j.ctv11hptdx.3.
- Dawkins, R. (1976). *The Selfish Gene*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Eco, U. (1972). The Myth of Superman. *Dia-critics*, 2(1), 14–22.
- Goerzen, M. (2017). Notes Towards the Memes of Production. *Texte zur Kunst*, 106, 86–107, <https://www.textezurkunst.de/106/uber-die-meme-der-produktion/>.
- Goldstein, I., Goldstein, S. (2018). *Tito*. Novi Sad: Akademska knjiga.
- Hall, S. (1980). Encoding / Decoding. In: S. Hall, D. Hobson, A. Lowe, P. Willis (Eds.), *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972–79*. London: Hutchinson (pp. 128–138).
- Knobel, M., Lankshear, C. (2005). *Memes and affinities: Cultural replication and literacy education*. Paper presented at the National Reading Conference, Miami, FL.
- Knobel, M., Lankshear, C. (2007). Online Memes, Affinities and Cultural Production. In: M. Knobel, C. Lankshear (Eds.), *A New Literacies Sampler*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc (pp. 199–239).
- Konior, B. M. (2019). Apocalypse Memes for the Anthropocene God: Mediatic Crisis and Memetic Body Politic. In: A. Bown, D. Bristow (Eds.), *Post Memes: Seizing the Memes of Production*. Punctum Books (pp. 45–76). doi:10.2307/j.ctv11hptdx.6.
- Kristeva, J. (1980). Word, Dialogue and Novel. In: L. S. Roudiez (Ed.), *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. New York, NY: Colombia University Press (pp. 64–91).
- Kuljić, T. (2011). *Sećanje na titoizam: Između diktata i otpora*. Beograd: Čigoja štampa.
- Lankshear, C., Knobel, M. (2003). *New Literacies: changing knowledge and classroom learning*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Leposavić, R. (Ed.) (2005). *VlasTito iskustvo past present*. Beograd: Samizdat B92.
- McNeill, L. S. (2009). The End of the Internet: A Folk Response to the Provision of Infinite Choice. In: T. J. Blank (Ed.), *Folklore and the Internet: Vernacular Expression in a Digital World*. University Press of Colorado (pp. 80–97). doi:10.2307/j.ctt4cgrx5.7.
- Močnik, R. (2005). Tito: Pop-Romantic Mastery. In: R. Leposavić (Ed.), *VlasTito iskustvo past present*. Beograd: Samizdat B92 (pp. 207–211).
- Owens, J. (2019). Post-Authenticity and the Ironic Truths of Meme Culture. In: A. Bown, D. Bristow (Eds.), *Post Memes: Seizing the Memes of Production*. Punctum Books (pp. 77–113). doi:10.2307/j.ctv11hptdx.7.
- Pirjevec, J. (2018 [2011]). *Tito and His comrades*. (J. Pirjevec, Trans.). Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press (Original work published 2011).
- Radenković, L. (2011a). Anegdote o Titu i njegovim savremenima. *Godišnjak Katedre za srpsku književnost sa južnoslovenskim književnostima*, VI, 255–264.
- Radenković, L. (2011b). Tito jako bohatar mityczny. In: M. Bogusławska, Z. Grębecka, E. Wróblewska-Trochimiuk (Eds.), *Komunistyczni bohaterowie: Tom I: Tradycja, kult, rytuał*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo "Libron" (pp. 125–138).
- Radović, S. (2013). *Grad kao tekst*. Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek.
- Shifman, L. (2014). *Memes in Digital Culture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Štochl, M. (2007). Špioni a my. In: P. Bílek (Ed.), *James Bond a major Zeman: Ideologizující vzorce vyprávění*. Příbram: Pistorius & Olšanská (pp. 32–39).
- Taecharungroj, V., Nueangjamnong, P. (2015). Humour 2.0: Styles and Types of Humour and Virality of Memes on Facebook. *Journal of Creative Communications*, 10(3),

- 288–302. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0973258615614420>.
- Velikonja, M. (2010 [2008]). *Titostalgija*. (B. Dimitrijević, Trans.). Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek (Original work published 2008).
- Woch, A., Napieralski, A. (2016). La « norme » et les échanges en ligne: une étude des mêmes politiques des internautes polonais. *La Linguistique*, 52(1), 151–172. Accessed June 9, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24886347>.
- Zdunkiewicz-Jedynak, D. (2016). Intertekstualność współczesnej komunikacji internetowej: Intertekstualne odwołania wewnątrzgatunkowe w memach. *Poznańskie Spotkania Językoznawcze – Poznań Linguistic Forum*, 32, 57–73.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MARTA HARASIMOWICZ (ORCID: 0000-0002-3391-1770) – is a PhD candidate in Czech History at Charles University Faculty of Arts. She graduated from Comparative Literature at Charles University Faculty of Arts (thesis theme: *Czechoslovak Spartakiad as a Case Study of Modern Myth*). From 2017 to 2019 she was a member of the Czech research team within an international Horizon 2020 project *Cultural Opposition – Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Dissent in the Former Socialist Countries*. From 2018 to 2020 she participated in the project *The Experience of State Socialism Reimagined*, realized by the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes. She specialises in a contemporary history of Czechoslovakia, cultural history of former socialist countries (with special regard to Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Poland) and museum studies. Her major research interests are cultural images of the past, nostalgia as a cultural phenomenon, socialist festivities and the relation between ideology and performativity. She is currently working on her PhD thesis on narrativity and narrative strategies in popularisation of contemporary history in Central European and former Yugoslav countries.