

Counter-memorialization

Marijana Hameršak

Counter-memorialization refers to processes of memorializing losses that are not recognized as worthy of remembrance by the dominant political framework. This kind of suffering, moreover, is the product of that very same framework. Maurice Stierl (2016) introduced the concept of counter-memorialization in the discussion on forms of **grief-activism**, grief and protesting against the human casualties of border control. Taking into consideration the analysis of several recent European activist commemorations of **border deaths** on the one hand, and theoretical considerations about the political potential of counter-hegemonic commemorative practices on the other, Stierl sees counter-memorialization as a form of “merging of grief for particular and general losses with a radical critique of the EUropean border regime” (2016: 184). For instance, the memorial portraits on the [Memorial page](#) of the Transbalkan Solidarity collective were published “in honor of all the deceased, women, men and children, who died while residing, settling in or migrating to Europe by land or sea”, and as a call for “justice for every life lost and taken, for every drowning, for every detention and camp confinement, every bullet fired, every pushback, torture, beating and starvation that led to a human dying!” The focus is on grief for the victims of a concealed crime embedded in the social order, which can take the form of **aggressive humanism**.

Counter-memorials, analogous with the concept of a memorial (Young 2006), include divergent commemorative practices, from digital memorials, to actions in public spaces and material objects, monuments, e.g., when talking in the context of the south-eastern borders of the EU, from the aforementioned Memorial Page, to actions commemorating the death of **Madina Hussiny** in Zagreb in December, and the memorial textile artwork [Prijelaz / The Passage](#).

15/4/2022

Literature

Stierl, Maurice. 2016. “Contestations in Death. The Role of Grief in Migration Struggles”. *Citizenship Studies* 20/2: 173-191.

Young, James. 2006. “Tekstura sjećanja”. U *Kultura pamćenja i historija*, uredile Maja Brkljačić i Sandra Plenda. Zagreb: Golden Marketing, Tehnička knjiga, 197-216.