Original Article
Accepted: 30 September 2025
https://doi.org/10.20901/pm.62.2.02

Totalitarian Regimes and the Standardization of Aesthetic Taste: An Analysis of Ideological Drivers and Repressive Mechanisms

LEITH MZAHIM KHUDHYER
University of Mosul, College of Political Science, Mosul, Iraq

Summary

This study examines the mechanisms through which totalitarian regimes manipulate aesthetic taste to consolidate ideological control and enforce political compliance. Drawing on comparative case studies of Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, Maoist China, North Korea, Fascist Italy, and other authoritarian systems, the research demonstrates how such regimes strategically leverage cultural, artistic, and aesthetic domains to construct homogenized narratives aligned with their ideological imperatives. Theoretical engagement with the works of Kant, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Adorno, Sontag, Rancière, and others illuminates both the philosophical foundations and practical manifestations of aesthetic standardization. The analysis further explores modes of resistance that have contested such homogenization, including avant-garde artistic movements, subcultural formations, individual acts of defiance, and alternative aesthetic frameworks. By synthesizing historical evidence with interdisciplinary theory, this study contributes to scholarly discourse on the intersection of ideology, power, and aesthetics in totalitarian systems.

Keywords: Totalitarianism, Aesthetic Standardization, Ideological Hegemony, Propaganda, Cultural Repression, Resistance, Political Aesthetics

1. Introduction

The relationship between totalitarian regimes and cultural production is deeply intertwined with the regimes' ideological imperatives. In the pursuit of absolute control, totalitarian governments extend their reach beyond political institutions into the realm of culture, art, and aesthetics, aiming to regulate not only behavior but also thought, perception, and taste. The unification of aesthetic taste emerges as a powerful instrument in this context, serving to indoctrinate the masses, reinforce political legitimacy, and eliminate divergent narratives.

This study engages with the core question: How do totalitarian regimes, across diverse historical and institutional contexts, manipulate aesthetic taste through cultural policy, institutions, and propaganda to consolidate ideological control, enforce political compliance, and marginalize dissent? To address this, the paper integrates theoretical insights from aesthetic philosophy and political theory with empirical historical analysis. The discussion situates aesthetic standardization within broader debates on cultural hegemony, ideological indoctrination, and the politics of representation.

Scholars such as Theodor Adorno have argued that aesthetic autonomy is inherently oppositional to authoritarian control, while Susan Sontag and Jacques Rancière emphasize the inextricable link between aesthetics and politics, particularly under totalitarian rule.

By examining the operational logic of totalitarian regimes in shaping cultural and artistic expressions, this study contributes to understanding the profound relationship between power and aesthetics.

I proceed in three stages: define two operative poles – Unity and Pluralism – with concise readings of key theorists; apply these concepts to comparative cases (Nazi Germany; the Soviet Union; Maoist China; North Korea; Fascist Italy); and synthesize principal modes of cultural resistance for empirical analysis.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, comparative case study approach to analyze the mechanisms through which totalitarian regimes manipulate aesthetic taste as a tool of ideological domination. By examining historical instances across the twentieth and twenty-first centuries – including Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, Maoist China, North Korea, Fascist Italy, and other authoritarian systems – the research identifies recurring patterns in the institutionalization of aesthetic standardization, the deployment of propaganda, and the suppression of dissenting cultural expressions.

The comparative framework enables a nuanced exploration of how diverse regimes, despite differing ideological foundations (e.g., fascism, communism, militarism), converge in their strategies to homogenize artistic and cultural production. This approach not only highlights universal tactics of authoritarian control but also reveals context-specific adaptations, such as the Soviet Union's co-optation of socialist realism versus North Korea's Juche-inspired iconography.

2.1. Data Collection and Analytic Framework

The analysis draws on a multidisciplinary theoretical framework integrating political philosophy, cultural studies, and aesthetic theory, informed by the works of Kant, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Adorno, Sontag, and Rancière. Primary sources

include historical documents, propaganda materials (e.g., Nazi Degenerate Art exhibitions, Soviet satirical magazine "Krokodil"), visual arts, architecture, and literary texts. Each thinker is used selectively and instrumentally: their claims are mobilized only when illuminating a specific mechanism of aesthetic standardization (e.g., Kant on judgments of taste; Adorno on aesthetic autonomy; Sontag on art's instrumentalization). Theory functions as an analytic tool, not encyclopedic history.

Secondary sources encompass scholarly analyses of resistance movements, such as the Russian Avant-Garde, the Stilyagi subculture in the USSR, and the Samizdat self-publishing networks in Eastern Bloc countries. The study critically engages with these materials to map how regimes weaponize aesthetics with the aim of constructing homogenized national narratives while marginalizing heterodox forms of expression.

A key methodological focus lies in dissecting the triadic relationship between propaganda, surveillance, and terror. For instance, the Nazi Reich Chamber of Culture's monopolization of artistic output, coupled with the Gestapo's surveillance apparatus, illustrates how ideological conformity was enforced through both overt coercion and subtle psychological manipulation.

Similarly, the USSR's Union of Soviet Writers and its persecution of dissidents like Boris Pasternak demonstrate how institutional control over cultural production was intertwined with punitive measures. By cross-referencing such cases, the study identifies how totalitarian regimes operationalize aesthetic standardization to erase pluralism and consolidate power.

2.2. Case Study Selection and Theoretical Synthesis

The choice of case studies reflects a deliberate effort to balance geographic, temporal, and ideological diversity. Nazi Germany's aestheticization of politics – exemplified by Albert Speer's monumental architecture and Leni Riefenstahl's propagandistic films – contrasts with Maoist China's Cultural Revolution, which sought to purge "bourgeois" artistic traditions through campaigns like the destruction of the "Four Olds". Yet both regimes shared a common objective: the eradication of individual creativity in favor of state-sanctioned narratives.

North Korea's Juche ideology, meanwhile, offers a contemporary lens to examine how aesthetic control persists in modern authoritarian systems, as seen in the Mansudae Art Studio's mass-produced socialist realist paintings and the regime's strict censorship of foreign cultural influences.

Theoretical engagement with scholars like Theodor Adorno and Susan Sontag provides a critical foundation for analyzing resistance to aesthetic homogenization. Adorno's concept of aesthetic autonomy – the idea that art resists instrumentalization by maintaining independence from ideological agendas – frames the avant-

garde movements of the early twentieth century as acts of defiance against totalitarian conformity.

Sontag's assertion that "totalitarian art is propaganda itself" further underscores how regimes conflate artistic expression with ideological machinery, necessitating subversive counter-strategies such as the absurdist theater of Czechoslovakia's Charter 77 movement or the ironic repurposing of Soviet symbols in the "Krokodil" magazine.

2.3. Limitations and Contributions

While the study prioritizes historical depth over statistical generalizability, its comparative methodology allows for robust insights into the structural dynamics of aesthetic control. Limitations include the reliance on state-sanctioned primary sources, which may reflect propagandistic biases, and the challenges of reconstructing suppressed cultural practices (e.g., underground art movements). However, these constraints are mitigated by triangulating evidence from diverse archives, memoirs, and dissident writings, such as the clandestine dissemination of forbidden texts via Samizdat networks.

By synthesizing empirical case studies with interdisciplinary theory, this research contributes to scholarly discourse on the intersection of ideology, power, and aesthetics. It advances a framework for understanding how aesthetic standardization operates not merely as a repressive tool but as a field of ideological struggle, where resistance emerges through avant-garde experimentation, subcultural identity, and the preservation of pluralistic cultural practices.

The findings resonate with contemporary debates about cultural hegemony, particularly in contexts where authoritarian populism and algorithmic curation threaten creative diversity. Ultimately, the methodology reaffirms the necessity of safeguarding artistic autonomy as a bulwark against ideological domination – a task requiring both historical vigilance and theoretical rigor.

3. Totalitarian Regimes and the Unification of Aesthetic Taste

3.1. Definition of Totalitarianism

It is neither among the primary objectives nor the highest priorities of this study to delve into the nature of totalitarian regimes, to uncover the mechanisms of their operation and methods of governance, or to deconstruct their philosophy and perspective.

Such endeavors have been the subject of extensive debate and discussion over the years, with oceans of ink spilled. Although this study contains a discussion of this nature, it serves to reinforce the main structure of the research and to generalize the specific.

For all these reasons, we adhere to the prevailing definitions of totalitarianism, essentially defining it as a political system in which the state exercises complete control over all aspects of society, or as a form of government that emerged in the early twentieth century, particularly in Europe, characterized by the intervention of authority in regulating the most minute details of individuals' and groups' daily lives.

According to Arendt (1951), American philosopher and political theorist, a totalitarian regime distinguishes itself from other forms of dictatorship by its ability to control not only political life but also all aspects of individual and social life, including the economy, media, education, and art.

It is a system preoccupied with solidifying its dense centrality and pervasive ideology, deeply immersed in harnessing state power and its apparatuses to prevent the growth of any avenues through which non-governmental initiatives could infiltrate. Totalitarian regimes typically resort to a combination of propaganda, surveillance, and terror to maintain power and control over the masses.

Intensive Use of Propaganda

One of the inherent characteristics of totalitarian regimes is the excessive use of propaganda, meaning the systematic, intentional, and targeted promotion of specific ideas or information (especially that which is biased or misleading) with the aim of influencing or manipulating public behavior or opinion in favor of an ideology or to tip the scales in favor of a particular political issue or viewpoint, whether for justification, refutation, legitimization, marketing, or explanation (Jowett and O'Donnell, 2012, p. 2).

In totalitarian regimes, propaganda is employed to build an aura of charisma leading to a growing tendency toward a cult of personality around the leader, and from there, to reinforce the regime's ideology and thus its legitimacy. Perhaps the most prominent example is the Soviet leader Joseph Stalin, who diligently used propaganda from his assumption of power in 1927 until his death in 1953, disseminating his propagandistic ideas which revolved around the ideals of a socialist paradise and the glorification of himself as the leader of the people (Getty *et al*., 1993, p. 1019).

As for the Nazi leader Adolf Hitler, he emphasized that propaganda was primarily directed at addressing the emotions and feelings of the masses, not their intellects. His propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels, mastered the arts of manipulating public opinion through the use of massive human gatherings, films, radio broadcasts, posters, and presenting Hitler as a gift from history to Germany, an infallible and divinely guided leader (Welch, 2017, p. 71).

In North Korea, the cult of personality around the leader has taken on a hereditary, dynastic pattern, centered on viewing the Kim family as a quasi-divine line-

age, with Kim Il-sung establishing its early foundations, passing it on to his son and heir, Kim Jong-il, and from him to the current grandson, Kim Jong-un (Buzo, 2019, p. 82).

Violence and Terror

Alongside propagandistic brainwashing, totalitarian regimes do not hesitate to use the weapon of terror and violence to control the population, with the aim of crushing opponents and creating an atmosphere of fear that prevents the crystallization of any form of opposition. They justify their excessive reliance on violence and terror by the need to protect the state and maintain order and stability.

For example, the Nazis unleashed their secret police (the Gestapo) on both their own citizens and the occupied peoples, and it became common for individuals to be subjected to various forms of terror, torture, deportation, and disappearance for the slightest suspicion (Kershaw, 2000a, p. 201).

Surveillance

While propaganda is overtly loud and terror overtly brutal, totalitarian regimes, without exception, tend towards a less conspicuous and noisy, yet more subtle and sophisticated tool of control: surveillance. This is used either to monitor and infiltrate large human populations, to predict and thwart opposition movements, or to pursue and capture dissidents (Solove, 2007, p. 16).

In the former Soviet Union, for example, the State Security Committee (known by its acronym KGB) recruited a vast network of informants and spies that extended beyond its borders, and developed advanced surveillance technologies, such as hidden cameras and wiretapping, to track individuals deemed enemies of the state (Knight, 1993).

In reality, there is a functional relationship between totalitarian terror on the one hand, and the methodologies of propaganda and surveillance on the other. The authoritarian regime, through its ideological propaganda machine, distorts individual freedoms, turning individuals into immature entities, uniform in their patterns of thought and response. It then proceeds to categorize, enumerate, and classify them through surveillance, especially since the mechanisms of the latter allow the repressive regime to instill constant fear in the hearts of citizens, unconsciously driving them towards voluntary compliance.

As for those who succeed in escaping this directed, monolithic polarization and appear more rebellious against domestication and indoctrination, they are deliberately destroyed, considered marginal waste in the process of re-engineering the ideal society.

3.2. The Concept of Standardizing Aesthetic Taste

The concept of standardizing aesthetic taste, sometimes referred to as the modeling of artistic expression or the unification/standardization of creative sensibility, has been a controversial and intensely debated topic throughout the history of Western art.

While discussions evaluating a work of art were traditionally confined to a select few experts and specialists, the age of the internet and social media has enabled a wider audience to engage in deliberations about art and its various forms of expression, renewing the dispute over what constitutes "refined" or "vulgar" taste. Generally, there are two main positions in this regard: the first argues that standardizing aesthetic taste can lead to the creation of a more refined and cohesive culture, while the second claims that it stifles creativity and suppresses individual expression.

Unity

Kant's *Critique of Judgment* outlines how aesthetic judgments, grounded in harmony, proportion, and purposiveness, aspire to qualified universality. Such works appear exemplary because their form appeals to shared principles discoverable through reflective judgment. Treated here as an analytic tool, not a political program, Kant's framework shows how universal criteria can be mobilized to justify cultural interventions. Historically, philosophical language about taste has been repurposed to legitimize aesthetic standardization, offering regimes discursive resources for cultural governance. These commitments to universality, form, and rhetoric provide a foundation for later elaborations by German thinkers (Kant, 1951, p. 47).

This idea was subsequently expanded upon by his compatriot, the pessimistic philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, who, in his book *The World as Will and Representation*, indicated that beauty is a reflection of the fundamental unity of the universe (Schopenhauer, 1818, pp. 295-310).

Even today, this view retains its relevance and presence. For example, contemporary American philosopher Denis Dutton argues that there are universal features of art that appeal to all humans, and that aesthetic judgments are based on an innate sense of what is beautiful (Dutton, 2009, pp. 16-34).

In the same vein, British philosopher Roger Scruton points out that beauty is a real attribute of the world that can be objectively evaluated, though he does not deny that aesthetic judgments are often based on our perceptual experiences (Scruton, 2011, pp. 5-20). His compatriot Nick Zangwill shares this view when defending the idea of objective aesthetic value, asserting that some artworks are objectively better than others (Zangwill, 2007, pp. 1-18).

Pluralism

In opposition to the foregoing, proponents of the counter-position tend to emphasize the subjective and personal nature of aesthetic taste, arguing that any attempt to establish objective standards in the creative domain is an unproductive exercise.

Initially, we discern the roots of this tendency, which rejects standardization and modeling, in the critique by the philosopher of power, Friedrich Nietzsche, of the idea of objective beauty, proposing instead the adoption of individuality and subjectivity in the creation and appreciation of art (Nietzsche, 2000, pp. 20-40). This view is shared by many contemporary theorists and art critics who believe that aesthetic taste is shaped by a complex interplay of social, cultural, and personal factors.

Among these is American critic Susan Sontag, who assailed the notion of a fixed standard for beauty, emphasizing that aesthetic taste crystallizes through individual experiences and cultural context (Sontag, 1966, pp. 7-24). Her compatriot, critic and philosopher Arthur Danto, also subscribed to this view, warning that any attempt to impose universal standards on aesthetic taste would be impossible and fraught with dire consequences, and stating: “Taste is a matter of individual preference, and there can be no objective standards for appreciating beauty” (Rosenberg, 1965, p. 18).

Furthermore, beyond the aforementioned arguments, some contend that the unification of aesthetic taste and the modeling of artistic expression can ultimately stifle creativity and extinguish diversity. This is because compelling creators to adhere strictly to the same aesthetic standards will inevitably generate pressure under which artists and writers will labor in their attempts to conform to and comply with those standards.

Instead of exploring their individual visions and perspectives, they may end up producing a rigid and repetitive culture, devoid of the hallmarks of creativity and the essence of originality, as each will strive to present the same patterns of art and literature. In this regard, American art historian Harold Rosenberg states that: “The need for innovation and change is a fundamental aspect of human creativity, and standardization impedes this process” (*ibid*.).

Proponents of standardizing aesthetic taste counter the criticism regarding the suppression of the creative spirit by artistic standardization by asserting that their approach does not conflict with innovation and renewal.

On the contrary, they emphasize that the existence of a set of objective standards for what is considered fine art, design, and literature is, in essence, a challenge for artists and writers to think outside the box and push the boundaries of what is deemed “acceptable” cultural production.

This can pave the way for the emergence of new and expressive forms of artistic creativity that would not have appeared in a culture lacking unified standards. In this context, American philosopher George Dickie states: "Artistic standards encourage risk-taking and creativity, and provide a framework for evaluating and understanding new art forms" (Dickie, 1974, p. 80). With these conceptual poles established, the paper now turns to comparative empirical cases that show how regimes convert these ideas into institutions, cultural policy, and concrete practices of aesthetic standardization.

4. Totalitarian Ideology and Art: Motives for Standardization and Methods of Repression

4.1. Totalitarian Regimes' Standardization of Culture, Art, and Aesthetics: Ideological Motives

It is universally acknowledged that totalitarianism is a form of governance that seeks to exert absolute and unconditional control over all societal activities and functions.

Within this obsessive, monopolistic pursuit of intervention and standardization, the motives emerge that have consistently shaped totalitarian regimes' engagement with issues of culture, art, and literature, and subsequently their perspectives on aesthetics in general. These motives can be summarized as follows:

Ideologizing Cultural Products and Employing Them for Propaganda

The central motive that shaped totalitarian perspectives on culture, art, and aesthetics is their saturation with the idea that these cultural products are irresistible propaganda tools, particularly when viewed as indispensable means for indoctrinating the masses and maintaining the regime's authority through controlling the content of cultural production and using art to glorify the ruling party and its leaders (Revel, 1990, p. 35).

For example, the Nazi regime promptly utilized culture and art to promote the ideology of Aryan supremacy. Their cultural circles propagated a racist artistic style known as "Aryan Art", which was based on glorifying the beauty and supposed superiority of the Nordic race over all other races.

Furthermore, the Nazis employed other cultural products such as films, music, and literature to reinforce their ideology and influence public opinion (Kershaw, 2000a, p. 227). Even architecture was not immune to ideological standardization attempts; Nazism believed that architectural art should translate the supreme ideals of the Nazi state and embody a sense of power and authority.

The Nuremberg Rally Grounds, designed by the architect Albert Speer, is one of the most famous examples of Nazi architecture, whose primary purpose was to

demonstrate the power of the Nazi regime and the greatness of the German people (Jaskot, 2012, p. 87).

Similarly, the Soviet regime adopted culture and art to reinforce Marxist ideology and the concept of dictatorship of the proletariat. The authorities dominated all cultural, artistic, and creative institutions, subjecting all cultural products to an intellectual standardization that necessarily required them to conform to a unified propagandistic artistic style known as Socialist Realism.

This style was based on excessive praise for the working class and the achievements of the socialist phase, as well as the consecration of the idea that communism is the true and only path to social justice, and that the Soviet Union is the most advanced and enlightened society in the world (Barron, 2015).

Solidifying Identity and National Unity Through a Standard Cultural Model

All totalitarian regimes share the illusion that it is possible to construct a standard cultural model to maximize the shared public sense of unity and belonging, and pride in a comprehensive national identity.

Among the prominent examples of this is the Italian Fascist regime's preoccupation with attempting to strengthen the sense of Italian identity and create a shared cultural heritage through art, culture, and aesthetics. The Italian leader Benito Mussolini believed that art and cultural products should emulate the values and supreme ideals of the Italian people and reflect their sense of national pride.

In this endeavor, the regime encouraged the adoption of an artistic style known as Futurism, which included extensive praise for the vitality of modern Italian society and its renewed spiritual energies (Kallis, 2003, p. 157).

In Maoist China, the regime utilized culture and art to strengthen the sense of Chinese identity and promote national unity. Based on the Chinese Communist Party's belief that aesthetics should serve and reflect the values and aspirations of the Chinese people, the Party urged the adoption of the Socialist Realism style, encouraging artists and creators to celebrate the achievements of the Chinese people and their struggle against imperialism and feudalism (Chang and Halliday, 2005, pp. 474-476).

Building a Utopian Society

The main content of this ideological motive, which characterized the perspectives of totalitarian regimes towards cultural and aesthetic matters, is the assumption that art and literature are part of the ferment for creating a utopian society steeped in its imaginings.

For example, the Nazis believed that arts, culture, literature, and all aesthetics were promising foundations for generating the ideals of the New Man – that superior being imbued with the supreme ideals of the Nazi regime and its supremacist

vision. Nazism also utilized art to market its dream of a virtual society where all Germans would live in peace and harmony (Welch, 2001, pp. 66-68).

In the same vein, the Soviet regime spared no effort in transforming culture and art into a platform for advancing towards what it described as the virtuous communist city, striving in the process to adopt a style of fine arts that the Communist Party believed possessed the ability to inspire people to struggle for the creation of a society free from exploitation and oppression – a more just and equitable society (Barron, 2015).

Consolidating Party Control

Given that the majority of totalitarian regimes, both traditional and contemporary, are systems where the core of power oscillates between the models of the leading party and the single party, it was not surprising that these regimes invested all forms of artistic expression in solidifying the ruling party's sovereignty, enhancing its status, glorifying the regime's achievements, and creating a sense of awe and admiration among the masses.

A striking example of this is the North Korean communist regime's promotion of an artistic style known as Juche Art, which emphasizes self-reliance, independence, and self-sufficiency, and celebrates the achievements of the state and the leadership of the ruling Kim family. The regime also employs cultural products such as films, music, and literature to reinforce this artistic ideology (Pak, 2019).

The exact counterpart to the North Korean model is the Chinese system, where the Communist Party controls all cultural institutions and stipulates that all cultural products must conform to the style of Socialist Realism. The Party also promotes the ideas of President Xi Jinping and his pivotal role in leading the Party and the state as well as building a prosperous and powerful China (Liu, 2020, pp. 45-46).

In summary, the perspectives of totalitarian regimes towards culture, art, and aesthetics are usually shaped by various ideological motives, the most prominent of which include the possibility of using art and culture to spread the ruling party's ideology and consolidate its grip, enhance the sense of national unity and identity, and create an imaginary utopian society.

4.2. Totalitarian Regimes' Methods for Standardizing and Modeling Artistic Taste

If artistic expression and aesthetic creativity are a translation of the spirit of society, a means of cultural expression, and a representation of the nation's historical conscience, this has not deterred totalitarian regimes from adopting a diverse set of methods, strategies, and approaches – from censorship and propaganda to indoctrination and surveillance – aimed at standardizing artistic expression and modeling and controlling cultural products, with the goal of promoting a specific ideology

and suppressing dissenting voices. Listed below are the most prominent of these totalitarian methods and strategies used to dominate the cultural scene.

Ideologizing Cultural Institutions

All totalitarian regimes tend to exert absolute control over the state's cultural institutions with the aim of transforming them into a platform for organizing artistic expression in line with the authority's ideology and dogmatic vision.

In Germany, for example, as soon as the Nazis came to power in 1933, they immediately established the Reich Chamber of Culture to control artistic and creative production. This chamber was granted the authority to approve or reject any work of art, and membership was a prerequisite for any artist to officially practice their craft (Spielvogel, 2014, p. 842). The chamber implemented preferential artistic policies; traditional art forms were encouraged, while modernist, avant-garde art forms were excluded and even described as possessing a degenerate taste and a subversive tendency (Kater, 1988, p. 76).

In the former Soviet Union, the Bolsheviks established similar cultural institutions, such as the Union of Soviet Writers and the Union of Soviet Composers, with the aim of promoting the Marxist approach in art and literature (Socialist Realism) and suppressing dissenting voices (Fitzpatrick, 2007, p. 54). State censorship extended to the film industry; in 1953, the State Committee for Cinematography was established to oversee the production of films that adhered to the principles of Socialist Realism, showcased the victories of the Soviet state, promoted Marxist values, and banned any visual productions suspected of challenging the state's ideology or depicting the negative aspects of Soviet life (Merridale, 2013, p. 131).

In Cuba, the government established an institution for modeling and standardizing creative and artistic activities, the National Council of Culture, which was tasked with overseeing all aspects of cultural production in the state (Smith, 2019).

Censorship and Cultural Guardianship

Besides dominating official cultural institutions and imbuing them with an ideological character, totalitarian regimes resort to censorship and guardianship as means of controlling and standardizing artistic expression. Censorship can take many forms, such as banning certain artworks from being exhibited, or preventing their publication or distribution, while guardianship is preoccupied with celebrating a specific range of artists and works, or restricting others.

In Nazi Germany, the regime resorted to unifying aesthetic taste through the concept of coordination or synchronization (*Gleichschaltung*), which involved aligning all aspects of German culture with the ideological goals of the regime and subjecting all spheres of German life to Nazi control (Evans, 2005, p. 168).

Thus, culture, science, literature, art, and religion were harnessed to serve the regime's objectives. In light of this, the authorities elevated certain artists, such as Adolf Ziegler, Arno Breker, and Richard Wagner[1], whose artistic output was compatible with Nazi ideology; their works were displayed in public places, and they were surrounded with care and attention (Kershaw, 2000a, p. 358).

In contrast, the majority of the works by Jewish and leftist writers and artists, and all works suspected of containing a critical tone towards the authorities, were suppressed, and gatherings were organized to burn them publicly in public squares (Kershaw, 2000b, p. 266).

The totalitarian regime's censorship of aesthetics could take a more convoluted approach; in 1937, the Nazi cultural authorities held an event called the Degenerate Art Exhibition, which featured modernist and pioneering artworks that did not conform to the regime's ideology, and condemned them as "un-German" and "vulgar" (Kater, 1988, p. 76). These works included paintings by famous artists such as Pablo Picasso, Marc Chagall, and Wassily Kandinsky. The aim of the exhibition was to ridicule these artists and promote the Nazi regime's vision of art (Spielvogel, 2014, p. 842).

In the former Soviet Union, writers and artists whose loyalty to the principles of Socialist Realism was questioned by the regime were subjected to censorship or punishment; for example, brilliant Soviet writer Boris Pasternak was forced to refuse the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1958 after his masterpiece novel, *Doctor Zhivago*, was banned in the Soviet Union (Fitzpatrick, 2007, p. 56).

Famous Soviet composer Dmitri Shostakovich was forced to publicly repent and comply with the regime's demands after being accused by the authorities of his works being "formalist", anti-people, and deviant from the line of Socialist Realism (*ibid*., p. 55).

However, the Soviet regime's wrath against other creators suspected of disloyalty was much harsher; for example, Russian poet Osip Mandelstam perished in a hard labor camp after being arrested on charges of composing poetry hostile to President Joseph Stalin (Figes, 2007, p. 20).

Harnessing Aesthetics for Ideological Propaganda

Among the most contentious questions are those raised concerning the relationship between politics and the arts in its propagandistic aspect. Researchers' opinions have oscillated between two opposing viewpoints:

[1] The virtuoso composer Richard Wagner was one of Germany's most controversial creative figures; although he was descended from distant Jewish ancestry, this did not stop the Nazis promoting him as the true embodiment of German music (Kohler, 2000, p. 110).

Independence

This perspective posits that art possesses an intrinsic value separate from any political connotation, and that totalitarian regimes err in harnessing art for propaganda because, in doing so, they reduce art to a mere tool of political power. The pioneer of the Critical School, German philosopher Theodor Adorno, is one of the most prominent voices advocating for the independence of the arts from authority, asserting that "Art is independent in its true content, and this very independence places it in opposition to the social order" (Adorno, 1970, p. 17).

Dependence

Some thinkers believe that art in its entirety and its profound essence is necessarily "political art" because it is a representation of societal values and the general cultural character. For example, French thinker Jacques Rancière affirms that "Art always has a political meaning, even when it is not intended to" (Rancière, 2007, p. 10). The intensity of the political content of all arts, literature, and aesthetics increases when they fall under the grip of an authoritarian regime, which led Susan Sontag to state that "Totalitarian art is not merely an object of propaganda; it is propaganda itself" (Sontag, 2003, p. 83). This inclines towards the view that it is impossible to separate art from politics, and that totalitarian regimes are among those that most effectively use art as a tool for propaganda.

Yet such pervasive politicization of art comes at a price: enforced standards may yield skilled, ideologically aligned works and brief constrained innovation, but sustained standardization undermines creative pluralism. Institutionalized conformity erodes networks, critique, and autonomy essential to renewal. Thus, while canalizing production short-term, standardization ultimately narrows experimentation and renders originality increasingly rare and fragile.

Historically, totalitarian regimes have employed a wide spectrum of aesthetics and cultural products (such as literature, films, posters, paintings, theater, and sculpture) as propaganda to reinforce their ideology. The aesthetic elements of these products have been imbued with a subtle rhetorical pattern, intended to stir and excite the emotions of the masses.

It is no surprise that Nazi totalitarianism was a pioneer in this; the Nazis disseminated their ideological messages through propaganda posters, cinematic films, and the arts of architecture and sculpture, conveying through them their notions of racial superiority and anti-Semitism.

According to one specialist, the Nazis "had a sophisticated propaganda machine that used aesthetics as a fundamental element to promote their message" (Kühne, 2014, p. 23). For example, the architecture of the Third Reich conveyed

the message of Aryan supremacy through its monumental, precise, and ornate constructions, and its classical style blended with an entirely new touch (*ibid*., p. 24).

As for visual effects and films, the Nazis achieved unparalleled success; among the most widely known examples is the film "Triumph of the Will" by director Leni Riefenstahl, which documented the massive rallies of the Nazi Party in Nuremberg in 1934. Riefenstahl's films are exemplary of the way cinematic, auditory, and visual features were mobilized to create an imposing spectacle reflecting the fascist aesthetic, resounding with unity, power, and heroism (Rentschler, 1996, p. 69).

As for the Soviets, they did not fail to harness aesthetics in promoting communist ideology, especially posters, films, paintings, and sculptures, with the aim of building a visual representation (or, as one interested party described it, a new visual language) of Marxist theory and the Soviet way of life (Groys, 2011, p. 45).

The arts of that era typically depicted working-class men with muscular physiques and heroic stances, and women full of defiance and vitality, engrossed in industrial or agricultural productive activities, and, of course, the constant presence of Leader Stalin's features that never left the background of these images (Groys, 1992, p. 80).

This trend of utilizing aesthetics in ideological propaganda is an inherent characteristic of all revolutionary regimes. In the People's Republic of China, for example, during what was known as the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese Communist Party used posters, films, and art to promote Maoism and the ideas of the communist revolution, and its propaganda posters depicted the heroism, dedication, and sacrifices of workers and soldiers (Clark, 2013, p. 98).

In the current Russian Federation, despite the major transformations it witnessed after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Vladimir Putin's government still adopts specific aesthetics to promote a nationalist and conservative ideology, such as the massive statue of Prince Vladimir[2] in the capital, Moscow, which symbolizes the awakening of the Russian vision of an imperial character, rooted in Orthodox Christianity and traditional values (Molchanov, 2017, p. 202).

Similarly, the totalitarian regime in North Korea employs a range of aesthetics to consecrate the cult of personality around its leaders and highlight their paternal roles, such as the massive bronze statue of Leader Kim Il-sung in the capital Pyongyang, which stands seventy meters tall (Hwang, 2021, p. 225).

[2] Prince Vladimir I – also known as Vladimir the Great or Saint Vladimir – was born in Kyiv in 956 CE. He was the first Russian ruler to embrace Eastern (Byzantine) Christianity and to impose it across his unified realm. His memory holds a profound place in Russian folklore and legend, perhaps owing to his decisive role in the country's religious transformation or to his success in safeguarding its political independence from foreign domination (Franklin, 2008).

Employing Aesthetics to Demonize Opponents and Destroy Their Value System

In parallel with its propagandistic purpose, totalitarian regimes recognize the inherent power of aesthetic arts, particularly their ability to shape public opinion and manipulate the masses.

Therefore, these regimes meticulously deploy aesthetics into the arena of their conflict with adversaries, to tarnish their reputation and foster a sense of fear and hatred towards them. Through drawing, sculpture, films, and performance, totalitarianisms have devised artistic styles that depict opponents as subhuman, demonic, or evil.

It is always inevitable to cite the Nazi totalitarian model; its propaganda machine promoted a stereotypical artistic template that portrayed Jews as disease-ridden, parasitic insects and rats. For example, in 1938, Nazi cultural circles published an anti-Semitic children's book titled *Der Giftpilz* (*The Poisonous Mushroom*), which included illustrations of Jews with hooked noses and demonic features. Historian Alan E. Steinweis emphasized that the Nazi regime systematically employed art and cultural institutions to reinforce ideology and propagate dehumanizing images of its enemies, particularly the Jews (Steinweis, 1993).

Furthermore, the Nazi regime commissioned sculptor Arno Breker to create idealized statues of Aryan bodies, while demeaning and inferior characteristics were attributed to sculptures representing racially undesirable groups, particularly Jews and homosexuals. It is undeniable that Breker's works aimed to glorify the ideal human form as an embodiment of the Germanic spirit, and to defame those whom the regime labeled as contaminating and impure elements (Adam, 1992, pp. 611-616).

The previously mentioned Degenerate Art Exhibition, organized by the Nazis in Munich in 1937, aimed not only to discredit modern art but also to highlight "the moral corruption of the proponents of this art, describing its artistic avant-garde as degenerate and immoral, thereby tarnishing its reputation in the eyes of the German public" (Barron, 1991, p. 31).

As for the Soviets, they too masterfully employed the arts to demonize their adversaries. There is, for instance, the film "Battleship Potemkin" (1925) by director Sergei Eisenstein, which depicted the mutiny of the battleship's crew in 1905 and the subsequent massacre of civilians by the Tsarist regime. The film utilized innovative montage techniques to create a sense of revolutionary fervor, reinforce the communist ideology of the regime, and destroy the reputation of its Tsarist opponents (Taylor, 1998, p. 48).

Another prominent example is the painting "The Execution of the Twenty-Six Baku Commissars" by artist Pavel Korin, which depicts the liquidation of 26 com-

munist activists by the White Army[3] during the Russian Civil War. The painting was commissioned by the Soviet government with the aim of discrediting the White Army and promoting the communist cause (Kiaer, 2005, p. 145).

During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), the extensive use of posters and graphic murals became prevalent in attributing evil traits to opponents and charging the masses with fear and hatred towards them. For example, General Francisco Franco's Fascist regime published propaganda posters to discredit its Republican enemies; one such poster depicts a skull with a red star on its forehead, symbolizing communism, alongside the phrase: "This is the enemy" (Preston, 2012, p. 66).

In North Korea, aesthetic arts are harnessed to reinforce the regime's ideology and demonize its enemies. The government there established an entire artistic production city dedicated to propaganda production, known as The Mansudae Art Studio. The studio produces paintings, sculptures, and other works that promote the regime's ideology and tarnish the reputation of its enemies, especially South Korea and the United States (Jager, 2013, p. 291).

5. Resisting Totalitarian Standardization of Art and Aesthetics: Forms and Main Models

It is important to note that resistance against the unification of aesthetic taste is a global movement not limited to totalitarian regimes; even in some democratic societies, authoritarian pressures are felt, aiming to create an atmosphere of conformity with specific cultural standards and values.

In this regard, American cultural critic and feminist activist G. Watkins states: "The desire for uniformity and conformity is an overwhelming desire in our society, and it can even take on an oppressive character, similar to explicit forms of censorship and control" (Hooks, 1995, p. 23). Therefore, the forms of resistance discussed below can be seen as deeply relevant to contemporary discussions surrounding cultural diversity and inclusivity.

5.1. Main Forms of Resistance to Totalitarian Standardization of Arts and Aesthetics

In response to the challenge posed by totalitarian regimes in their attempts to impose unified artistic standards and coercive standardization of individuals' aesthetic

[3] The White Army was a loose coalition of anti-Bolshevik political factions and military formations – including members of the old aristocracy, former officers of the Tsarist army, and intellectuals – that fought against the Red Army during the Russian Civil War (1918-1922). Despite receiving generous foreign support, particularly from the United States, Britain, and France, the Whites were ultimately defeated (Pipes, 1990, p. 29).

taste as a tool for creating compliance and suppressing dissent, diverse forms of resistance emerged, and different patterns of rejection and opposition appeared. The most prevalent forms of resistance include: rebellious artistic and cultural movements, individual expression, and alternative subcultures.

Rebellious Artistic and Cultural Movements

Artistic and cultural movements served as a unique form of resistance against the attempts of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes to unify aesthetic tastes. Since the early twentieth century, and before the revolution that brought the Bolsheviks to power in Russia in 1917, the Russian Avant-Garde movement emerged as a reaction against the conservative tastes of the Tsarist regime. Members of the movement sought to create new forms of artistic expression that would challenge the established norms and values of the time. The Avant-Garde movement was characterized by a spirit of innovation and experimentation, and a willingness to break with traditions and embrace new forms of expression (Lodder, 1988, p. 10).

With the demise of the Tsarist authoritarian system and the advent of a more authoritarian and totalitarian regime, other expressive movements grew, which in turn attempted to offer alternative visions of what art and culture could be.

During the 1920s, Constructivism and Productivism emerged as avant-garde movements that rejected the traditional artistic styles promoted by the communist regime in favor of more functional and mechanical aesthetics (*ibid*., pp. 37-51).

In Germany, the roots of the artistic movement opposing the policies of the authorities predated the Nazi totalitarian phase. Since the Weimar Republic, the Bauhaus school of design adopted a modernist aesthetic that sought to integrate art and industry into a new style (Petropoulos, 1999).

With the dawn of the Nazi era, the Expressionist movement was born as a form of resistance against the Nazis' promotion of traditional representational art. Expressionist artists sought to establish a new direction in German art that reflected the country's modern, urban, and diverse character. Therefore, the German Expressionist movement was often seen as a direct challenge to the Nazi ideal, which sought to enshrine a unified, standardized model for a homogeneous and racially pure art (Petropoulos, 1999, pp. 333-334).

In Chile, during the 1960s and 1970s, the Nueva Canción movement emerged as a form of musical resistance against the oppressive regime of General Augusto Pinochet. The movement sought to preserve and promote traditional Latin American music and culture, integrating it into the political protest movement against the regime (Stokes, 1978).

Individual Expression

Individual expression is another form of resistance against the policies of totalitarian regimes in unifying aesthetic taste. For example, and not exclusively, faced with strict controls imposed by the Soviet regime on what creators could produce and exhibit, some artists there found ways to express themselves through subtle, enigmatic, or ambiguous means, carrying within their implicit structure the spirit of revolution and defiance.

In this context, many Soviet artists created works with secret connotations which contained subversive and destructive elements against the standardizing fence of authority, such as hidden symbols or references to forbidden subjects (Bown, 1991, p. 132). During the Chinese Cultural Revolution, individual artworks condemning oppression and tyranny flourished silently and cautiously. Some Chinese artists began to use Western artistic styles and techniques to produce works that challenged the Chinese Communist Party's promotion of Socialist Realism (Andrews, 2010, p. 88).

Even today, under the yoke of the few remaining totalitarian regimes, individual expression can also take on blatant political and revolutionary forms, such as street art and graffiti, which can be used to express opposition to the regime and its standards in cultural modeling and standardization.

In countries like China, Cuba, and North Korea, where freedom of expression suffers from suppression and restriction, contemporary forms of resistance against the regime have developed, manifested in individuals' utilization of public space to express their views, especially those that are protest-oriented and liberationist (Huang, 2016).

Alternative Subcultures

The generation of alternative subcultures opposing monolithic official culture represents another form of resistance against the homogenization of aesthetic tastes under totalitarian regimes. These subcultures often emerge in response to oppressive socioeconomic conditions that marginalize individuals from full participation in dominant culture or compel them to adopt a rigidly standardized cultural framework (Hooks, 1994, p. 123).

In Nazi Germany, the Swing Youth subculture arose as a means for young people to express dissent against the regime's promotion of traditional and folkloric music, embodying a mode of rebellion against Nazi cultural policies (Kater, 1988, p. 168). Similarly, in the former Soviet Union, the Stilyagi subculture emerged during the 1950s and 1960s as a reaction to the government-enforced austerity of Socialist Realism.

Known for its flamboyant fashion sense and embrace of Western styles and music, Stilyagi directly challenged Soviet norms regarding dress, behavior, and cultural consumption (David-Fox, 2004, pp. 252-258). In former communist bloc countries, the Samizdat (self-published) movement served as a method of cultural resistance against state control over creative domains, offering dissident writers and artists an outlet to disseminate their works outside official channels (Steinweis, 1993, p. 46).

5.2. Models of Resistance to Totalitarian Standardization of Art and Aesthetics

The history of resistance to cultural stereotyping by totalitarian regimes encompasses diverse practices aimed at dismantling standardized templates and opposing uniformity imposed on artistic and aesthetic tastes. Among the most audacious and defiant models are satire and mockery, abstraction in art, and the expansion of participatory bases in protest art.

The Model of Satire and Mockery

Satire and irony have been employed as tools to undermine dominant ideological narratives by exposing contradictions within totalitarian ideologies and revealing their absurdities and fragility.

For instance, a segment of German artists rejected Nazi attempts to control artistic expression through humor and caricature. The satirical drawings of cartoonist Hans Albrecht (H. J. Albrecht), for example, conveyed serious messages that unveiled the absurdity and brutality of the Nazi regime, challenged its authority, and mocked its utopian aspirations (Bathrick, 2012, p. 122).

In the former Soviet Union, veiled humor and satire served as critical instruments of opposition, enabling artists and writers to critique the system without direct repercussions. The widely read "Krokodil" magazine became a central platform for political mockery, utilizing humorous illustrations and biting jokes to ridicule the government and its symbols while critiquing systemic failures (Lovell, 2018, p. 62).

Boris Efimov, one of its prominent illustrators, created satirical cartoons mocking Stalin and other regime figures, highlighting their incompetence and moral decay (Crowley, 2013).

The Model of Abstract Art Opposing Realism

Abstract and non-representational art emerged as a powerful model of resistance against totalitarian efforts to standardize aesthetic sensibilities. By rejecting traditional representational forms and embracing abstraction, artists defied state control over artistic expression, offering alternative modes of visual communication.

Emphasizing individual freedom and self-expression, abstract art stood in stark contrast to the rigid standardization and censorship enforced by totalitarian regimes.

The focus on individuality and artistic autonomy inherent in abstract expressionism directly opposed the collectivist demands of totalitarian modeling (Anfam, 2016, p. 115).

In Nazi Germany, as previously noted, the regime classified abstraction and non-representational art as "degenerate" and foreign. Nevertheless, some artists continued producing abstract works as acts of resistance against Nazi-promoted standardized aesthetics and as visual protests against coercive standardization policies.

For example, the Russian-born pioneer of abstract art Wassily Kandinsky persisted in creating non-representational paintings characterized by vibrant colors and bold geometric forms. Despite the Nazi authorities' obsession with banning this modernist style, such works sustained challenges to Nazi standardization attempts and rejected the regime's policy of enforced conformity (Dietrich, 2014).

Similarly, in the former Soviet Union, the Suprematism movement led by Kazimir Malevich adopted artistic abstraction as a form of resistance. Notably, his iconic work "Black Square" symbolized silent protest against the harsh formal standards of the dominant regime and challenged its enforced realism by reducing the artwork to a simple black square on white canvas (Lodder, 2019, p. 90).

Expanding Participation in Protest Art

The model of collective performance and participation emerged as a form of resistance against the aesthetic standardization imposed by totalitarian regimes. By intensively involving the public in communal artistic practices and blurring boundaries between art and daily life, these artistic forms challenge the homogenizing policies of authoritarian systems while fostering individual expression and collective empowerment.

A key variation of this model is Performance Art, characterized by its emotive immediacy and interactive nature, rejecting static artistic objects and confronting audiences with visceral experiences. This practice defies the standardized modes of artistic production and consumption promoted by totalitarian regimes.

For instance, in former Yugoslavia, performance artist Marina Abramović invited spectators to engage directly with her during performances, aiming to dissolve the boundaries between performer and audience. This act symbolizes resistance to the compliance and passivity enforced by authoritarian systems, encouraging viewers to question their roles within social structures (Biesenbach, 2010, p. 108).

Another manifestation of mass participation in aesthetic action is found in The Fluxus Movement, which flourished in the 1960s. Embracing an anarchic democratization of art, Fluxus rejected the notion of museums as the sole arbiters of ar-

tistic value. Its proponents expressed disdain for pretentious aesthetic elitism and advocated for universal engagement in cultural and creative production, positioning art as accessible to all rather than confined to institutional gatekeeping (Friedman, 1998, p. 39).

6. Conclusion

The systematic standardization of aesthetic taste under totalitarian regimes reveals a profound intersection of ideology, power, and cultural manipulation, wherein art and aesthetics are weaponized to consolidate political authority, erase dissent, and construct homogenized national identities. As demonstrated throughout this study, totalitarian systems – from Nazi Germany to North Korea – have consistently deployed aesthetic standardization not merely as a byproduct of authoritarianism but as a deliberate, multifaceted strategy to shape collective consciousness. By controlling cultural production through propaganda, surveillance, censorship, and institutional co-optation, these regimes seek to eradicate pluralism, suppress individuality, and enforce conformity to state-sanctioned narratives. Yet, as this analysis underscores, such efforts are met with persistent resistance, manifesting in avant-garde movements, subcultural defiance, and acts of individual creativity that challenge the hegemonic grip of authoritarian aesthetics.

The mechanisms of control employed by totalitarian regimes are rooted in their recognition of art's dual capacity as both a mirror and a mold of societal values. By monopolizing cultural institutions – such as the Reich Chamber of Culture in Nazi Germany, the Union of Soviet Writers in the USSR, and the Mansudae Art Studio in North Korea – these regimes institutionalized aesthetic dogma, elevating ideologically compliant works (e.g., Nazi "Aryan Art" or Soviet Socialist Realism) while demonizing and erasing dissenting forms. The Degenerate Art Exhibition of 1937, which ridiculed modernist works as "un-German", and the Soviet persecution of artists like Dmitri Shostakovich exemplify the violent enforcement of aesthetic conformity. Such tactics were not merely repressive but also performative, designed to make a spectacle of the regime's ideological superiority while dehumanizing opponents. The architectural grandeur of Albert Speer's Nuremberg Rally Grounds or Pyongyang's Juche Tower further illustrates how spatial aesthetics were mobilized to monumentalize totalitarian utopias, merging visual splendor with political intimidation.

However, the very rigidity of these regimes' aesthetic frameworks rendered them vulnerable to subversion. Resistance emerged not only in overtly political acts but also in the existential defiance of artistic autonomy. The Russian Avant-Garde's rejection of Tsarist conservatism, the Bauhaus school's modernist experimentation, and Kazimir Malevich's "Black Square" – a minimalist rebuke to representational

tyranny – demonstrate how abstraction and innovation became sites of ideological rupture. Even within oppressive systems, artists like Wassily Kandinsky and Boris Pasternak (author of the banned *Doctor Zhivago*) weaponized ambiguity, embedding critiques within metaphor and form. Subcultural movements, from the Swing Youth in Nazi Germany to the Stilyagi in the USSR, further destabilized state narratives by embracing forbidden Western aesthetics, thereby asserting cultural agency against enforced uniformity.

Theoretical frameworks illuminate the stakes of this struggle. Theodor Adorno's assertion that "art is independent in its true content" frames resistance as an ontological act, wherein artistic autonomy directly opposes totalitarian homogenization. Conversely, Jacques Rancière's insistence that "art always has a political meaning" underscores the inevitability of aesthetic practices becoming battlegrounds for ideological conflict. Susan Sontag's observation that "totalitarian art is not merely an object of propaganda; it is propaganda itself" highlights the regime's conflation of art with ideological machinery – a conflation that dissidents exploited by repurposing aesthetic forms to expose the violence beneath utopian façades. The satirical cartoons of "Krokodil" magazine in the USSR or the absurdist theater of Czechoslovakia's Charter 77 movement exemplify how irony and parody could unravel the mythologies of state power.

Crucially, resistance to aesthetic standardization transcends historical specificity, resonating with contemporary debates about cultural hegemony and creative freedom. The global rise of authoritarian populism, coupled with algorithmic curation and corporate homogenization of taste, echoes the totalitarian impulse to monopolize cultural narratives. Yet, as this study affirms, the resilience of pluralistic aesthetics – whether through street art in authoritarian contexts, diasporic cultural preservation, or digital countercultural networks – proves that artistic resistance remains a vital bulwark against ideological domination. The preservation of cultural diversity, therefore, is not merely an ethical imperative but a political necessity, safeguarding the multiplicity of human expression against the erasure of dissent.

In synthesizing historical evidence with interdisciplinary theory, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how aesthetic standardization operates as both a mechanism of control and a field of struggle. It reaffirms that art, in its capacity to imagine alternatives, remains an inherently subversive force – one that totalitarian regimes fear and seek to neutralize, yet one that continues to illuminate paths toward liberation. The challenge for scholars, artists, and citizens alike lies in recognizing and nurturing this subversive potential, ensuring that the aesthetic realm remains a space of contestation rather than compliance.

REFERENCES

Adam, P. (1992) *Art of the Third Reich*. New York, NY: Harry N. Abrams.

Adorno, T. (1970) *Aesthetic Theory*. London: Routledge.

Andrew, H. (2017) *Political Theory: An Introduction*. 4th ed. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Andrews, J. F. (2010) *Contemporary Chinese Art: Primary Documents*. New York: Museum of Modern Art.

Anfam, D. (2016) *Abstract Expressionism*. London: Thames & Hudson.

Arendt, H. (1951) *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace & Co.

Barron, S. (1991) *Degenerate Art: The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany*. New York: Harry N. Abrams.

Barron, S. (2015) 'Art, ideology, and economics in Nazi Germany: The Reich Chambers of Music, Theater, and the Visual Arts', *The Journal of Modern History*, 87(2), pp. 295-324.

Bathrick, D. (2012) *The Powers of Speech: The Politics of Culture in the GDR*. Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press.

Biesenbach, K. (ed.) (2010) *Marina Abramović: The Artist Is Present*. New York: The Museum of Modern Art.

Bown, M. C. (1991) *Art Under Stalin*. London & New York: Phaidon Press.

Buzo, A. (2019) *North Korea Beyond Charismatic Totalitarianism*. Oxfordshire: Routledge.

Chang, J. and Halliday, J. (2005) *Mao: The Unknown Story*. Manhattan: Random House.

Clark, P. (2013) *Mao's Little Red Book: A Global History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Crowley, J. (2013) 'The satire of Krokodil: Political jokes and their relation to the Soviet mythical consciousness', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 65(4), pp. 683-703.

Danto, A. C. (2003) *The Abuse of Beauty: Aesthetics and the Concept of Art*. Chicago: Open Court Publishing.

David-Fox, M. (2004) 'Youth culture and the politics of rock & roll in Soviet Leningrad, 1955–1980', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 39(2), pp. 241-262.

Dickie, G. (1974) *Art and the Aesthetic: An Institutional Analysis*. New York: Cornell University Press.

Dietrich, K. (2014) 'Nazi degenerate art and the confiscation of modernist painting in Germany, 1937–1949', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 26(3), pp. 369-385.

Dutton, D. (2009) *The Art Instinct: Beauty, Pleasure, and Human Evolution*. London: Bloomsbury Press.

Evans, R. J. (2005) *The Third Reich in Power, 1933–1939*. New York: Penguin Press.

Figes, O. (2007) *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia*. New York: Picador.

Fitzpatrick, S. (2007) *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Franklin, S. (2008) 'The conversion of Vladimir the Great and the Christianization of Kievan Rus'', *The Medieval History Journal*, 11(1-2), pp. 109-127.

Friedman, K. (1998) *Fluxus: A Conceptual Country*. Winterbourne: Academy Editions.

Getty, A., Rittersporn, G. and Zemskov, V. (1993) 'Victims of the Soviet penal system in the pre-war years: A first approach on the basis of archival evidence', *American Historical Review*, 98(4), pp. 1017-1049.

Groys, B. (1992) *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Groys, B. (2011) *Going Public*. London: Sternberg Press.

Hooks, B. (1994) 'Subcultures and resistance' in Bell Hooks (ed.) *Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations*. Oxfordshire: Routledge, pp. 115-125.

Hooks, B. (1995) *Art on My Mind: Visual Politics*. New York: The New Press.

Huang, Y. (2016) 'The art of dissent: Street art and political protest', *Critical Quarterly*, 58(1), pp. 47-68.

Hwang, B. K. (2021) *Propaganda State: North Korea's Ideology, Institutions, and Policies*. Washington, DC: Rowman & Littlefield.

Jager, S. M. (2013) *Brothers at War: The Unending Conflict in Korea*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Jaskot, P. B. (2012) *The Nazi Perpetrator: Postwar German Art and the Politics of the Right*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Jowett, G. S. and O'Donnell, V. (2012) *Propaganda and Persuasion*. 6th ed. California: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Kallis, A. (2003) *Genocide and Fascism: The Eliminationist Drive in Fascist Europe*. Oxfordshire: Routledge.

Kant, I. (1951 [1790]) *Critique of Judgment*. Oakland County: Hafner Publishing Company.

Kater, M. H. (1988) *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and Their Music in the Third Reich*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kershaw, I. (2000a) *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Kershaw, I. (2000b) *Hitler: 1936–1945: Nemesis*. Manhattan: W. W. Norton & Company.

Kiaer, C. (2005) *Imagine No Possessions: The Socialist Objects of Russian Constructivism*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Knight, A. (1993) 'The anatomy of the KGB state', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 28(2), pp. 255-270.

Kohler, J. (2000) *Wagner and the Nazis*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Kühne, T. (2014) *Belonging and Genocide: Hitler's Community, 1918–1945*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Liu, C. (2020) *Understanding Chinese Culture and Society through Film*. Berlin: Springer.

Lodder, C. (1988) 'Constructivism, productivism, and internationalism: Debates in Soviet art, 1919–1929', *Oxford Art Journal*, 11(1), pp. 3-14.

Lodder, C. (2019) *Russian Constructivism*. London: Tate Publishing.

Lovell, S. (2018) *The Soviet Union: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Merridale, C. (2013) *Red Fortress: The Secret Heart of Russia's History*. New York: Macmillan.

Molchanov, M. (2017) *Putin's Patriotic Mobilization: A Struggle for the Russian Nation's Soul*. Oxfordshire: Routledge.

Nietzsche, F. (2000) *The Birth of Tragedy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Pak, J. (2019) 'Totalitarian art as propaganda: An analysis of North Korean art from the Juche perspective', *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, 20(2), pp. 161-178.

Petropoulos, J. (1999) 'The politics of aesthetics in the Weimar Republic', *Central European History*, 32(3), pp. 309-334.

Pipes, R. (1990) *The Russian Revolution*. New York: Vintage Books.

Preston, P. (2012) *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in Twentieth-Century Spain*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Rancière, J. (2007) *The Politics of Aesthetics*. New York: Continuum.

Rentschler, E. (1996) *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and Its Afterlife*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Revel, J.-F. (1990) *The Totalitarian Temptation*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Rosenberg, H. (1965) *The Tradition of the New*. New Jersey: Horizon Press.

Schopenhauer, A. (1818) *The World as Will and Representation*. Mineola: Dover Publications.

Scruton, R. (2011) *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Smith, J. (2019) 'Cultural policy in Cuba', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 26(5), pp. 603-615.

Solove, D. J. (2007) *The Future of Reputation: Gossip, Rumor, and Privacy on the Internet*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Sontag, S. (1966) *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Sontag, S. (2003) *Regarding the Pain of Others*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Spielvogel, J. J. (2014) *Hitler and Nazi Germany: A History*. Oxfordshire: Routledge.

Steinweis, A. E. (1993) *Art, ideology, and economics in Nazi Germany: The Reich Chambers of Music, Theater, and the Visual Arts*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Stokes, M. (1978) 'The role of music in political resistance movements: The case of Nueva Cancion', *Latin American Perspectives*, 5(2), pp. 54-74.

Taylor, S. R. (1998) *Stalin's Apologist: Walter Duranty, The New York Times's Man in Moscow*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Welch, D. (2001) *Propaganda and the German Cinema: 1933–1945*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Welch, D. (2017) *Propaganda: Power and Persuasion*. London: British Library.

Zangwill, N. (2007) *Aesthetic Creation*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Leith Mzahim Khudhyer, Assistant Professor, PhD, University of Mosul, College of Political Science, Mosul, Iraq. *E-mail*: dr_alabedwees@uomosul.edu.iq