

New Europe College Yearbook 2012-2013



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DENIS SKOPIN
BÁLINT VARGA
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New Europe College
Yearbook 2012-2013

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NEW EUROPE FOUNDATION NEW EUROPE COLLEGE

Institute for Advanced Study

New Europe College (NEC) is an independent Romanian institute for advanced study in the humanities and social sciences founded in 1994 by Professor Andrei Pleșu (philosopher, art historian, writer, Romanian Minister of Culture, 1990–1991, Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1997–1999) within the framework of the *New Europe Foundation*, established in 1994 as a private foundation subject to Romanian law.

Its impetus was the *New Europe Prize for Higher Education and Research*, awarded in 1993 to Professor Pleșu by a group of six institutes for advanced study (the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, the National Humanities Center, Research Triangle Park, the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in Humanities and Social Sciences, Wassenaar, the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences, Uppsala, and the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin).

Since 1994, the NEC community of fellows and *alumni* has enlarged to over 500 members. In 1998 New Europe College was awarded the prestigious *Hannah Arendt Prize* for its achievements in setting new standards in research and higher education. New Europe College is officially recognized by the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research as an institutional structure for postgraduate studies in the humanities and social sciences, at the level of advanced studies.

Focused primarily on individual research at an advanced level, NEC offers to young Romanian scholars and academics in the fields of humanities and social sciences, and to the foreign scholars invited as fellows appropriate working conditions, and provides an institutional framework with strong

international links, acting as a stimulating environment for interdisciplinary dialogue and critical debates. The academic programs NEC coordinates, and the events it organizes aim at strengthening research in the humanities and social sciences and at promoting contacts between Romanian scholars and their peers worldwide.

Academic programs currently organized and coordinated by NEC:

- ***NEC Fellowships (since 1994)***

Each year, up to ten NEC Fellowships open both to Romanian and international outstanding young scholars in the humanities and social sciences are publicly announced. The Fellows are chosen by the NEC international Academic Advisory Board for the duration of one academic year, or one term. They gather for weekly seminars to discuss the progress of their research, and participate in all the scientific events organized by NEC. The Fellows receive a monthly stipend, and are given the opportunity of a research trip abroad, at a university or research institute of their choice. At the end of their stay, the Fellows submit papers representing the results of their research, to be published in the New Europe College Yearbooks.

- ***Ștefan Odobleja Fellowships (since October 2008)***

The fellowships given in this program are supported by the National Council of Scientific Research, and are meant to complement and enlarge the core fellowship program. The definition of these fellowships, targeting young Romanian researchers, is identical with those in the NEC Program, in which the Odobleja Fellowships are integrated.

- ***The Black Sea Link Fellowships Program (since October 2010)***

This program, sponsored by the VolkswagenStiftung, invites young researchers from Moldova, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, as well as from other countries within the Black Sea region, for a stay of one or two terms at the New Europe College, during which they

have the opportunity to work on projects of their choice. The program welcomes a wide variety of disciplines in the fields of humanities and social sciences. Besides hosting a number of Fellows, the College organizes within this program workshops and symposia on topics relevant to the history, present, and prospects of the Black Sea region.

- ***The Europe next to Europe (EntE) Fellowships Program (starting October 2013)***

This program, sponsored by the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (Sweden), invites young researchers from European countries that are not yet members of the European Union, targeting in particular the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, Serbia), Turkey, Cyprus, for a stay of one or two terms at the New Europe College, during which they will have the opportunity to work on projects of their choice.

Other fellowship programs organized since the founding of New Europe College:

- ***RELINK Fellowships (1996–2002)***

The RELINK Program targeted highly qualified young Romanian scholars returning from studies or research stays abroad. Ten RELINK Fellows were selected each year through an open competition; in order to facilitate their reintegration in the local scholarly milieu and to improve their working conditions, a support lasting three years was offered, consisting of: funds for acquiring scholarly literature, an annual allowance enabling the recipients to make a one-month research trip to a foreign institute of their choice in order to sustain existing scholarly contacts and forge new ones, and the use of a laptop computer and printer. Besides their individual research projects, the RELINK fellows of the last series were also required to organize outreach activities involving their universities, for which they received a monthly stipend. NEC published several volumes comprising individual or group research works of the RELINK Fellows.

- ***The NEC–LINK Program (2003 - 2009)***

Drawing on the experience of its NEC and RELINK Programs in connecting with the Romanian academic milieu, NEC initiated in 2003, with support from HESP, a program that aimed to contribute more consistently to the advancement of higher education in major Romanian academic centers (Bucharest, Cluj–Napoca, Iași, Timișoara). Teams consisting of two academics from different universities in Romania, assisted by a PhD student, offered joint courses for the duration of one semester in a discipline within the fields of humanities and social sciences. The program supported innovative courses, conceived so as to meet the needs of the host universities. The grantees participating in the Program received monthly stipends, a substantial support for ordering literature relevant to their courses, as well as funding for inviting guest lecturers from abroad and for organizing local scientific events.

- ***The GE–NEC I and II Programs (2000 – 2004, and 2004 – 2007)***

New Europe College organized and coordinated two cycles in a program financially supported by the Getty Foundation. Its aim was to strengthen research and education in fields related to visual culture, by inviting leading specialists from all over the world to give lectures and hold seminars for the benefit of Romanian undergraduate and graduate students, young academics and researchers. This program also included 10–month fellowships for Romanian scholars, chosen through the same selection procedures as the NEC Fellows (see above). The GE–NEC Fellows were fully integrated in the life of the College, received a monthly stipend, and were given the opportunity of spending one month abroad on a research trip. At the end of the academic year the Fellows submitted papers representing the results of their research, to be published in the GE–NEC Yearbooks series.

- ***NEC Regional Fellowships (2001 - 2006)***

In 2001 New Europe College introduced a regional dimension to its programs (hitherto dedicated solely to Romanian scholars), by offering fellowships to academics and researchers from South–Eastern Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia, and Turkey). This program aimed at

integrating into the international academic network scholars from a region whose scientific resources are as yet insufficiently known, and to stimulate and strengthen the intellectual dialogue at a regional level. Regional Fellows received a monthly stipend and were given the opportunity of a one-month research trip abroad. At the end of the grant period, the Fellows were expected to submit papers representing the results of their research, published in the NEC Regional Program Yearbooks series.

- ***The Britannia-NEC Fellowship (2004 - 2007)***

This fellowship (1 opening per academic year) was offered by a private anonymous donor from the U.K. It was in all respects identical to a NEC Fellowship. The contributions of Fellows in this program were included in the NEC Yearbooks.

- ***The Petre Țuțea Fellowships (2006 – 2008, 2009 - 2010)***

In 2006 NEC was offered the opportunity of opening a fellowships program financed the Romanian Government through its Department for Relations with the Romanians Living Abroad. Fellowships are granted to researchers of Romanian descent based abroad, as well as to Romanian researchers, to work on projects that address the cultural heritage of the Romanian *diaspora*. Fellows in this program are fully integrated in the College's community. At the end of the year they submit papers representing the results of their research, to be published in the bilingual series of the *Petre Țuțea* Program publications.

- ***Europa Fellowships (2006 - 2010)***

This fellowship program, financed by the VolkswagenStiftung, proposes to respond, at a different level, to some of the concerns that had inspired our *Regional Program*. Under the general title *Traditions of the New Europe. A Prehistory of European Integration in South-Eastern Europe*, Fellows work on case studies that attempt to recapture the earlier history of the European integration, as it has been taking shape over the centuries in South-Eastern Europe, thus offering the communitarian Europe some valuable vestiges of its less known past.

- ***Robert Bosch Fellowships (2007 - 2009)***

This fellowship program, funded by the Robert Bosch Foundation, supported young scholars and academics from Western Balkan countries, offering them the opportunity to spend a term at the New Europe College and devote to their research work. Fellows in this program received a monthly stipend, and funds for a one-month study trip to a university/research center in Germany.

- ***The GE-NEC III Fellowships Program (2009 - 2013)***

This program, supported by the Getty Foundation, started in 2009. It proposed a research on, and a reassessment of Romanian art during the interval 1945 – 2000, that is, since the onset of the Communist regime in Romania up to recent times, through contributions coming from young scholars attached to the New Europe College as Fellows. As in the previous programs supported by the Getty Foundation at the NEC, this program also included a number of invited guest lecturers, whose presence was meant to ensure a comparative dimension, and to strengthen the methodological underpinnings of the research conducted by the Fellows.

New Europe College has been hosting over the years an ongoing series of lectures given by prominent foreign and Romanian scholars, for the benefit of academics, researchers and students, as well as a wider public. The College also organizes international and national events (seminars, workshops, colloquia, symposia, book launches, etc.).

An important component of NEC is its library, consisting of reference works, books and periodicals in the humanities, social and economic sciences. The library holds, in addition, several thousands of books and documents resulting from private donations. It is first and foremost destined to service the fellows, but it is also open to students, academics and researchers from Bucharest and from outside it.

Beside the above-described programs, New Europe Foundation and the College expanded their activities over the last years by administering, or by being involved in the following major projects:

In the past:

- ***The Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Religious Studies towards the EU Integration (2001–2005)***

Funding from the Austrian Ludwig Boltzmann Gesellschaft enabled us to select during this interval a number of associate researchers, whose work focused on the sensitive issue of religion related problems in the Balkans, approached from the viewpoint of the EU integration. Through its activities the institute fostered the dialogue between distinct religious cultures (Christianity, Islam, Judaism), and between different confessions within the same religion, attempting to investigate the sources of antagonisms and to work towards a common ground of tolerance and cooperation. The institute hosted international scholarly events, issued a number of publications, and enlarged its library with publications meant to facilitate informed and up-to-date approaches in this field.

- ***The Septuagint Translation Project (2002 - 2011)***

This project aims at achieving a scientifically reliable translation of the Septuagint into Romanian by a group of very gifted, mostly young, Romanian scholars, attached to the NEC. The financial support is granted by the Romanian foundation *Anonimul*. Seven of the planned nine volumes have already been published by the Polirom Publishing House in Iași.

- ***The Excellency Network Germany – South–Eastern Europe Program (2005 - 2008)***

The aim of this program, financed by the Hertie Foundation, has been to establish and foster contacts between scholars and academics, as well as higher education entities from Germany and South–Eastern Europe, in view of developing a regional scholarly network; it focused preeminently on questions touching upon European integration, such as transnational governance and citizenship. The main activities of

the program consisted of hosting at the New Europe College scholars coming from Germany, invited to give lectures at the College and at universities throughout Romania, and organizing international scientific events with German participation.

- ***The ethnoArc Project–Linked European Archives for Ethnomusicological Research***

An European Research Project in the 6th Framework Programme: Information Society Technologies–Access to and Preservation of Cultural and Scientific Resources (2006-2008)

The goal of the *ethnoArc* project (which started in 2005 under the title *From Wax Cylinder to Digital Storage* with funding from the Ernst von Siemens Music Foundation and the Federal Ministry for

Education and Research in Germany) was to contribute to the preservation, accessibility,

connectedness and exploitation of some of the most prestigious ethno-musicological archives in Europe (Bucharest, Budapest, Berlin, and Geneva), by providing a linked archive for field collections from different sources, thus enabling access to cultural content for various application and research purposes. The project was run by an international network, which included: the “Constantin Brăiloiu” Institute for Ethnography and Folklore, Bucharest; Archives Internationales de Musique Populaire, Geneva; the Ethno-musicological Department of the Ethnologic Museum Berlin (Phonogramm Archiv), Berlin; the Institute of Musicology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest; Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (Coordinator), Berlin; New Europe College, Bucharest; FOKUS Fraunhofer Institute for Open Communication Systems, Berlin.

- ***Business Elites in Romania: Their Social and Educational Determinants and their Impact on Economic Performances.*** This is the Romanian contribution to a joint project with the University of Sankt Gallen, entitled ***Markets for Executives and Non-Executives in Western and eastern Europe***, and financed by the National Swiss Fund for the Development of Scientific Research (SCOPES) (December 2009 – November 2012)

- ***DOCSOC, Excellency, Innovation and Interdisciplinarity in doctoral and postdoctoral studies in sociology*** (A project in the Development of Human Resources, under the aegis of the National Council of Scientific Research) – in cooperation with the University of Bucharest (2011)
- ***UEFISCCDI – CNCS (PD – Projects): Federalism or Intergovernmentalism? Normative Perspectives on the Democratic Model of the European Union (Dr. Dan LAZEA); The Political Radicalization of the Kantian Idea of Philosophy in a Cosmopolitan Sense (Dr. Áron TELEGDI-CSETRI)***, Timeframe: August 1, 2010 – July 31, 2012 (2 Years)
- ***Civilization. Identity. Globalism. Social and Human Studies in the Context of European Development*** (A project in the Development of Human Resources, under the aegis of the National Council of Scientific Research) – in cooperation with the Romanian Academy (Mar. 2011 – Sept. 2012)
- ***The Medicine of the Mind and Natural Philosophy in Early Modern England: A new Interpretation of Francis Bacon*** (A project under the aegis of the European Research Council (ERC) Starting Grants Scheme) – In cooperation with the Warburg Institute, School of Advanced Study, London (December 2009 - November 2014)
- ***The EURIAS Fellowship Program***, a project initiated by NetIAS (Network of European Institutes for Advanced Study), coordinated by the RFIEA (Network of French Institutes for Advanced Study), and co-sponsored by the European Commission's 7th Framework Programme - COFUND action. It is an international researcher mobility programme in collaboration with 14 participating Institutes of Advanced Study in Berlin, Bologna, Brussels, Bucharest, Budapest, Cambridge, Helsinki, Jerusalem, Lyons, Nantes, Paris, Uppsala, Vienna, Wassenaar.
- ***UEFISCCDI – CNCS (TE – Project) Critical Foundations of Contemporary Cosmopolitanism***, Team leader: Tamara CĂRĂUȘ, Members of the team: Áron Zsolt TELEGDI-CSETRI, Dan Dorin LAZEA, Camil PĂRVU (October 5, 2011 – October 5, 2014)

Ongoing projects

Research programs developed with the financial support of the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research, The Executive Unit for Financing Higher Education and Innovation, National Council of Scientific Research (UEFISCDI – CNCS):

- **PD – Project: *Mircea Eliade between Indology and History of Religions. From Yoga to Shamanism and Archaic Religiosity* (Liviú BORDAȘ)**
Timeframe: May 1, 2013 – October 31, 2015 (2 and ½ years)
- **IDEI-Project: *Models of Producing and Disseminating Knowledge in Early Modern Europe: The Cartesian Framework* (Vlad ALEXANDRESCU)**
Timeframe: January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2015 (4 years)
- **Bilateral Cooperation: *Corruption and Politics in France and Romania (contemporary times)***
Silvia MARTON – Project Coordinator, Constanța VINTILĂ-GHIȚULESCU, Alexandra IANCU, Frederic MONIER, Olivier DARD, Marion FONTAINE, Benjamin GEROME, Francais BILLOUX
Timeframe: January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2016 (2 years)

ERC Starting Grant:

- ***Record-keeping, fiscal reform, and the rise of institutional accountability in late medieval Savoy: a source-oriented approach – Castellany Accounts***
Ionuț EPURESCU-PASCOVICI
Timeframe: May 1, 2015 – April 30, 2020 (5 years)

Other projects are in the making, often as a result of initiatives coming from fellows and *alumni* of the NEC.

Present Financial Support

The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation of Switzerland
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The Federal Ministry for Education and Research of Germany

The Federal Ministry for Science, Research and Economy of Austria

The Ministry of National Education – The Executive Agency for Higher
Education and Research Funding, Romania

Landis & Gyr Stiftung, Zug, Switzerland

Private Foundation, Germany

Fritz Thyssen Stiftung, Köln, Germany

VolkswagenStiftung, Hanover, Germany

Riksbankens Jubileumsfond, The Swedish Foundation for Humanities and
Social Sciences, Stockholm, Sweden

European Research Council (ERC)

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Studies published in philosophy, historiography and literature journals

Book:

The Singular Politics of Derrida and Baudrillard, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014

DERRIDA, HUSSERL AND RELATIVISM

Abstract

This paper charts Derrida's important and often overlooked relation to the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl. My primary motivation is to disabuse the persistent misreadings of his work which would portray him as a relativist. Introducing Husserl's phenomenology, I demonstrate how he exceeds the subject/object divide of post-Cartesian philosophy by a move to an account of consciousness as transcendental. In my second section I follow Derrida's first major publication, which focuses on the late work of Husserl. Through a consideration of the questions of writing and infinity he demonstrates certain failures in Husserl, yet at the same time we will see that Derrida insists on a fidelity to the given that is very Husserlian. I follow this by an examination of the question of language in Husserl's early work. Derrida's conclusion is that language is a trace structure of presence and absence that means that we can never obtain the grasp on what Husserl's calls 'the thing itself' that he believes phenomenology is able to achieve. The structure of presence/absence that Derrida found to undermine Husserl's transcendental ambitions will be further examined in a section on time and the self. In conclusion, I will suggest that while Derrida engages in a penetrating criticism of Husserl he does not abandon his work but rather, we might say, in showing the impossibility of a transcendental conclusion comes to engage in a quasi-transcendental argumentation that confounds those that would accuse him of relativism.

Keywords: Derrida, Husserl, Relativism, Transcendental, Quasi-Transcendental; Phenomenology, Post-Phenomenology.

Différance, the 1968 essay in which Derrida sums up his early thinking mentions many figures – Saussure, Hegel, Lévinas, Freud, Heidegger, Nietzsche – but Husserl is not named even once. That the paper was republished as part of the volume *Speech and Phenomena*, the majority of which is taken up with the English translation of *La Voix et le Phénomène*,

one of Derrida's two major early works on Husserl, suggests a greater recognition of the very deep debt Derrida's early work owes to Husserl. It is a debt that has continued throughout his career, although it is not as often remarked upon, by Derrida or commentators, as it deserves to be.¹ Gasché speaks of 'the unquestionable privilege that [Husserl's] thought enjoys in Derrida's work'.² Derrida himself describes phenomenology as "a discipline of incomparable rigour" and recently said of *epoché*, the reduction, the starting point of Husserlian philosophy: "the notion of *epoché*, has been and still is a major indispensable gesture. In everything I try to say and write *epoché* is implied ... I think it is the condition for speaking and for thinking".³ We might say that what both Husserl and Derrida do is turn from the world as given to think the experience of the world.

The importance of Husserl for Derrida is not surprising if one looks closely at his formation as a philosopher. At the beginning of his career as a published theorist in 1967 – the year of *Writing and Différance*, *Of Grammatology* and *Speech and Phenomena* – Derrida was at the end of serving a fifteen-year apprenticeship in the philosophy of Husserl. He had already published a lengthy *Introduction to Husserl's Origin of Geometry* in 1962, written two substantial papers, *Genesis and Structure* and *Form and Meaning*, and his book-length master's thesis on Husserl of 1954 lay in manuscript.⁴ In focusing on phenomenology Derrida's early career was firmly within the philosophical mainstream of 1950s France. Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Lévinas, Ricouer, among the most prominent philosophers of the time, worked within the phenomenological tradition and created their own distinctive positions out of engagements with Husserl. That said, in returning to Husserl's texts and failing to make a direct engagement with Sartre or Merleau-Ponty – arguably the two best known contemporary phenomenologists – Derrida was challenging to the status quo, going behind the backs of the acknowledged contemporary masters.

Indeed, it is possible to argue that with the exception of Lévinas, Derrida makes little direct engagement with his philosophical elders, this is because right from the beginning of his thinking he conceives of his project as a much wider cultural one. Far from being austere philosophical in returning to the detail of Husserl (although, as usual, he is meticulous in that respect too), Derrida is a philosopher making a deep and consistent engagement with the thought of his contemporaries, and particularly with what the French call 'the human sciences'. Rather than being the dusty scholar of Husserlian obscurities, Derrida sought to take on significant elements of his culture, our culture, in a game, not merely played for the

sake of it but one with the most important political stakes.⁵ However, if we come at such work without taking account of Derrida as philosopher, and in particular, his work on Husserl we risk going considerably awry.⁶ The frequent accusation of 'relativism' levelled at Derrida is the product of such a flawed reading of his work and can only be made by completely misunderstanding his stance *vis à vis* Husserl, himself one of the most vocal philosophical critics of psychologism and relativism.⁷ In recent work Critchley has been among those who stress the importance of Husserl as a source of a strong critique of relativism that runs through Derrida's work.⁸ I will come back to this in concluding that his work on Husserl leads Derrida to a position that could be called quasi-transcendental.

Transcendental Consciousness: Beyond Subject and Object

Husserl commenced his academic life as a mathematician.⁹ Indeed, Derrida suggests that, as we shall see: "the mathematical object seems to be the privileged example and most permanent thread guiding Husserl's reflection".¹⁰ His 1883 PhD at the University of Vienna was on *Contributions to the Calculus of Variations*. In 1891 he published his habilitation entitled *The Philosophy of Arithmetic*. Husserl had yet to articulate his philosophy fully at this stage but a crucial breakthrough was made in his highly original understanding of the concept of number. His argument was that rather than being the product of a sensuous intuition, categorial objects such as number, are given in categorial activity.¹¹ It is hard to underestimate the importance of this move which Husserl was to fully develop in the decades to come. The two previously existing options had been to say that number can be accounted for solely using logical means (which involves tortuous and unconvincing arguments) or that it is the product of an act, which is more plausible, but leads to accusations of psychologism and subjectivism. What Husserl does is to argue that number is indeed the product of an act of combining but it is not the act of a consciousness that stands in opposition to a world that is being enumerated. Husserl effectively makes a leap here that departs from the notions of subjectivity that have dominated thought since Descartes. An understanding of consciousness that is not a mere psychologism or subjectivism is the first fundamental step of Husserl's philosophy.

Husserl – along with Aristotle, Descartes and Kant – has been called one of the great beginners in philosophy. He aimed at *Philosophy as a*

Rigorous Science, to use the title of an early essay and by this he meant to give philosophy indubitable foundations. This led him to begin with our consciousness as that to which we unquestionably have access. He is not Descartes, for this is consciousness as given, and not some cogito that is deduced and which still remains as the one indubitable thing in a surrounding world. Consciousness itself, not some derived cogito, is what is indubitable and through it we have access to a pure transcendental subjectivity. An important concern in Husserl's late work is that modern science (and here he included philosophy since Descartes) had led to a 'theoretical self-objectification', that modern thought sought to gain an intellectual mastery of the world as a basis for physical mastery. Husserl wished to give an access to the world that opened questions of experience and meaning without making the claims to mastery of the whole that others had, hence the motto he constantly repeated: "back to the things themselves" ("*zurück zu den Sachen selbst*").¹² Indeed, it is an almost constant refrain: in *Ideas I* he spoke of the need "to go away from words and opinions back to the things themselves" and in the text of *The Paris Lectures* he insisted that "science demands proof by reference to the things and facts themselves, as these are given in actual experience and intuition".¹³ For Husserl, philosophy is concerned not with that which is measurable but with meaning.

Husserl argued that modern, post-Cartesian, philosophy with its central problem of how to connect representations "within the mind" and things "out there" worked on the basis of entirely mistaken assumptions. Thus although he called his philosophy phenomenology, he rejected Kant's distinction between phenomena and noumena, between the appearance of reality in consciousness and the things-in-themselves: Husserl saw himself as going beyond mere noumena to the things themselves. Engaging in a thorough critique of the modern assumption that the end of knowing is located within the mind's interior space, he also repudiated Locke's interpretation of 'mind' as an inner space set off from the rest of nature. He argued that the perceived separation of subject and object occurs because of the 'fatal mistake' of overlooking the intentionality of thought, that consciousness is essentially orientation towards an object. Intentionality was Husserl's key to overcoming the subject-object dichotomy. It was in the fifth investigation of *Logical Investigations* that Husserl first advanced this element of his theory and he continues to return and refine it on numerous occasions.

In arguing that philosophy should focus on intentionality he explicitly asked that we bracket all questions of existence. In the transcendental reduction the ego turns on its own constitutive acts thereby obtaining an apodictic insight that becomes the foundation for a universal science. As Luft notes, “the realization of the essential subject-relatedness of all worldliness necessitates this transcendental turn”.¹⁴ In returning to the subjective Husserl is not stepping out onto some slippery relativist slope, rather, right from the start of his career Husserl is one of the strongest critics of relativism, particularly in the psychologistic form it predominantly took at the turn of the twentieth century. His return to the subjective, through the *epoché*, does not terminate in the culturally bound self but passes to ideality and the universality of the transcendental. Through a focus on the cultural and intellectual objects individual subjects create but which become available for all to use Husserl sought the transcendent in the immanent. As Bernet puts it, “all truth rests on a subjective achievement, namely intuitive fulfilment that is a synthesis of recognition leading to an apodictic certainty and self-assurance”.¹⁵ The meaning arrived at by the phenomenologist at the end of his investigation is not only his meaning but the only valid meaning such objectivity can have. Having abandoned the indubitable foundation within mundane being that Descartes sought for science, Husserl opened what he saw as a whole new realm of indubitable being never noted before; that of transcendental consciousness. We might say that the central insight contained in Husserl’s “discovery” of transcendental consciousness is that the subject does not have an experience of the world but rather is the experience of the world. As Lawlor underlines: “the transcendental ego is not ontically separate from the psychological ego in the way that one thing stands outside of another”.¹⁶ The transcendental that Husserl seeks is not something beyond the world as it is for speculative metaphysics, rather it is a transcendence in immanence. As Derrida pithily puts it, “this ideality is not an existent that has fallen from the sky”.¹⁷

When Husserl sets out to make philosophy a rigorous science he does not mean that it should borrow some sort of methodology or proceed in the same manner as actually existing sciences. He argues that positive science abstracts and creates an artificial structure divorced from the world of our original experience and its results are valid only under certain criteria (which is all very well given what it seeks to do – he is not anti-science). If Husserl approached philosophy with something of the ambitions and inclination of a mathematician, he firmly drew a distinction between the

changeless and static essences of mathematics, describable with perfect exactitude and fixed once and for all, and other types of essence for which he argued the knowledge of them must conform to the types of essence they are. Far from imposing a model taken from the sciences on philosophy, Husserl aimed to place over the particular sciences of the 'how', a universal science of the 'what'. In contrast, in establishing philosophy as a rigorous science, Husserl seeks to place it on an absolutely presuppositionless foundation. The absolute starting point of his philosophy is not a basic concept, a fundamental principle or a cogito but rather the field of original experiences. Hence his philosophy is called phenomenology. "Back to the things themselves" is often presented as a Husserlian motto.

In phenomenology there is no induction or deduction or any of the other methods used by the sciences. Rather, in order to leave what Husserl calls "the natural attitude" and perceive in an original and radical way we must employ what he calls "the reduction". We thus learn to see originally and radically. Husserl seeks to maintain fidelity to what is presented to us and to avoid abstractions and constructions through the employment of the reduction. There are, in fact, a number of different types of reduction employed in Husserl's work and endless arguments among commentators about them. One of the most important being "the eidetic reduction", which allows us to raise our knowledge from the level of facts to that of ideas. By essence Husserl does not mean empirical generalities but rather pure possibilities whose validity is independent of experience. Through ideation, a procedure of variation that owes much to mathematics, we move from individual givenness towards generality rather than the other way around. Husserl is careful to constantly distinguish his descriptive eidetics from the exactness of mathematical essences. A further important step, "the phenomenological reduction" takes us from the world of realities to that of presuppositions. It leads us back from the cultural world of the sciences to primordial experience. Again we must underline that what concerns Husserl is to guard immediate experience and the world as it manifests itself.

Consciousness, Husserl argues, is always consciousness of something, it is always directed in some way. This is what he calls "intuition". This is a quite misleading name, for what he means is not an instinctive knowing, but rather the fact that the mind is always directed to objects under some aspect. Our consciousness is always orientated to that which it is not and it belongs to the essence of our consciousness to form a meaning and constitute its own objects. The character of the known object depends on

the character of the act by which it is grasped. Intentionally has nothing to do with relations between two objects – and Husserl does not begin with the reality of the object – but always with a unified consciousness. Through intuition we discover the transcendental Ego, a “transcendence in immanence”. For Husserl consciousness and its directedness is the philosophical key.

Husserl went on to publish a number of other works, among them the *Formal and Transcendental Logic* and the *Cartesian Meditations*, constantly refining and elaborating his position while seeking to provide a definitive “introduction” to phenomenology for his readers (almost all his books contained this word in their subtitle). It is impossible to specify even an outline of this work here but I would like to note the emphasis in the later works on the themes of life-world and history. In taking up these topics, one of Husserl’s hopes was that his phenomenological analyses could serve as correctives to the naturalism and historicism which he recognized as two of the most powerful ways of thinking in modernity. Naturalism, as characterized by Husserl, rests on the thesis that the entire realm of nature, including human nature, is comprised only of entities and processes susceptible of quantitative analysis was of concern for the way in which it occluded questions of meaning and value. Those who advocated historicism, regarded the conceptual systems of both the natural and the human sciences as world views whose presuppositions are determined by contingent historical transformations, were obvious opponents for a philosopher who proposed the existence of transcendental consciousness. But it is to a second hope that lies behind the turn to the lifeworld and history that I will now turn, examining in greater detail the late work of Husserl on “the crisis” and Derrida’s reading of it.

Derrida’s Intentional Compromise of the Ideal

Derrida published two main texts on Husserl, both focusing on problems in his treatment of language and on what this might mean for the phenomenological project as a whole.¹⁸ In particular he examines the way in which Husserl uses various accounts of language to act as an assurance for phenomenology’s production of ideality. Of the two major texts, the first, an introduction to the ‘Origin of Geometry’ of 1936, deals with Husserl’s consideration of the relationship between writing and ideality at a very late stage in the latter’s career.¹⁹ In the second, *Speech*

and *Phenomenon*, his 'farewell' to Husserl, Derrida considers the account of signification given in the *Logical Investigations*, regarded as Husserl's first major work.²⁰ In the *Origin of Geometry* Husserl asserts that writing is an essential condition of possibility for the existence of ideal entities. This is an ostensible reversal of his early position in *Logical Investigations*, where he champions speech – indeed the internal monologue as the most "pure" form of speech – as providing the only secure form of signification. As we shall see this contrast is only apparent and in both cases Derrida undermines Husserl's stated position using his own arguments. Derrida's conclusion is that neither speech nor writing can found ideality yet this is not an argument against transcendentalism tout court (in conclusion, I will have more to say about Derrida's own "quasi-transcendental" position). Certainly, Derrida's account of language from the outset refuses the central tenet of empiricism: belief in the possibility of access to an object given in itself. Language, he reminds us, is already constituted and, in that sense, the empirical is only approachable on the basis of something already existing, beyond the object, something ideal. This is partly what Derrida means when he said in the quotation I made in my first paragraph that the epoché is an "indispensable gesture ... the condition for speaking and for thinking".²¹

In his *Introduction to 'The Origin of Geometry'*²², Derrida underlines Husserl's own stress on the importance of writing for the constitution of ideality. Culture, from the most basic anthropological sense to the heights of modern art, depends on the possibility of some form of idealization, of the creation of objects that do not occur in the physical world. Derrida accepts what Husserl has to say here about the distinction between real and ideal objects. For Husserl an ideal object has its origin in human activity, and in that sense it is non-natural, what might be termed "technical". Human activity, culture, has produced a realm of ideal, or "spiritual", objects that cannot be perceived by the senses, can only be known in their sense-content or meaning and have no location in space. Being thus safe from the changes in nature and the possession of no one subject, this gives them the incomparable advantage, for Husserl, of being universally available. They become for him his norm, the "absolute model for any object whatever".²³ As a philosopher who sought ideal and transcendental meaning, it might initially seem surprising to find that Husserl makes a strong and persistent critique of contemporary society.²⁴ Central to Husserl's critique is a belief that ideal objects have come to be treated like physical objects by 'unthoughtful repetition' which has led to

the loss of the original insights and their phenomenological grounding. Husserl, particularly in his late work in the 1930s, speaks of a crisis of reason where science has lost contact with the pre-scientific world from which it emerged. Science makes progress through confining itself within its established logic and not questioning how it came to be what it is and what purposes it serves. Husserl traced the drift of modern science towards reductionism to Galileo's failure to relate scientific truths adequately to their sources in the life-world, the pre-scientific world in which we live. His stress on transcendence and ideality is thus in opposition to what he sees as a crisis caused by contemporary, scientific, trends to objectivation, formalization and abstraction and he disagrees with the scientific contention that universally valid positions can be reached simply by excluding all that is subjective. Again, there is an insistence on a return to intuition and a rejection of the passively accepted and uncritically repeated but now Husserl is questioning the practice of science and projecting a solution through an historical investigation. As Bernet notes, "Husserl attempts to overcome this crisis due to contemporary materialism by restoring to ideal objects their original – that is, their spiritual – meaning".²⁵ He sees contemporary science as an "activity in passivity" that has lost its relation to the lifeworld in which it originates: it throws "a garb of ideas" over objects encountered in the world.²⁶ Sciences act as if only those structures that can be mathematicized are a proper mode of understanding, thus privileging calculation. In one of his last works Derrida notes how

the Husserlian critique of transcendental evil of a proactively rationalist objectivism is inscribed, in May 1935, in the critique of a certain irrationalism, one whose popularity and air of political modernity in the German and European atmosphere of the 1930s it seemed necessary to denounce.²⁷

For Husserl, the perversion of science into an objectivism must be critiqued in order to also undermine that irrationalism that it has allowed to flourish through failing to attend to questions of meaning.

In projecting a return to the "origin of geometry" Husserl needs, in particular, to account for the transmission of idealities over time, to explain how an ideal object is constituted in the process of transmission, communalization and reproduction. His assertion is that an ideal object is first constituted in an "evident grasp of a state of affairs", while subsequently, as Bernet puts it,

retention keeps the intuition present even when it is gone, and memory actively reproduces and repeats the past intuition and thereby gives it a consistency and sameness within and despite the continuous perspectives from which it can be presently approached ... communication and writing allow such an insight to be shared with others and to become an object of historical tradition.²⁸

Each of these steps, Husserl sees as assuring and constituting the presence of the identical ideal object, a process which is ultimately guaranteed only by writing. What Derrida does is show that each of these steps is also a compounding with a constitutive absence. Husserl himself asserts that the problem, the crisis he wishes to combat, is that the ideal objects have become, in a sense, "too present" or improperly present in that something has been forgotten and repressed, i.e. their origin. Where Derrida departs from Husserl is in suggesting that in the process of historical transmission, forgetting, misunderstanding and concealment are essential and unavoidable elements of the process rather than mere empirical accidents. He concludes that all transmission is both preservation and loss and it is the nature and status of writing that is the key here, given that for Husserl, it is writing that maintains and makes possible ideality. As Derrida puts it, "the possibility of writing will ensure the absolute traditionalization of the object, its absolute ideal objectivity – i.e., the purity of its relation to a universal transcendental subjectivity".²⁹ Writing, for Husserl, frees the ideal object from possession by any particular subjectivity or community. He is effectively conceding here that writing founds the transcendental subject: as Derrida argues, "writing creates a kind of autonomous transcendental field from which every actual subject can be absent".³⁰ The structure of the argument Derrida finds in Husserl concerning writing, he will later term supplementary: writing is first used to 'supplement' a lack of presence but is then said to produce this presence, which would then, in fact, be constituted by absence. The inherent and inescapable instabilities, the constitutive absence, that Derrida exposes within the "transcendental field" means that he can push Husserl's argument to the ruinous and unintended conclusion that writing thus makes possible a radical loss of sense, of the original intention and of the world of the author.

Husserl tries to prevent such a move by conceiving of writing as a spiritual body (*Leib* rather than *Körper*), one that is self-expressing. By this strange sleight of hand – which can be understood on the basis of the account of language given in *Logical Investigations* that Derrida discusses

in *Speech and Phenomena* and which we will come to – ideal language is allegedly kept secure from the infirmities of “factual language”. Derrida points out a whole host of unwanted complications this has for Husserl: for example, contrary to the transcendental aims of his philosophy, subjective experience is thereby made “the sphere of absolute certainty and absolute existence”.³¹ We will return to the details of this matter later on, suffice to say here that Derrida criticises the idea that there can be any such thing as a purely spiritual or expressive language, a language that keeps ideality pure, safe and incorruptible. The sign is always material, with feet of clay: which means that meaning has no guarantor in writing. This is a point Derrida returns to many times in his work, for example, within the field of semiotics, Derrida rethinks the sign as gramme, “a movement no longer conceived on the basis of the opposition presence/absence”.³² Against Husserl, Derrida consequently asserts that ideality is far from safe, that the transcendental is irreducibly compromised by the material. Yet this is not a decision in favour of the empirical but rather a questioning of the possibility of rigidly demarcating the two and one which can be found to be support by elements of Husserl’s own text. It is certainly not critique of the transcendental from some supposed empirical standpoint. For Derrida, is clear that empiricism (if a pure empiricism were possible which Derrida would equally question) is a forgetting of the existence of the ideal, of language, of all that is outside the object and which we bring to the object before we can comprehend it.

By highlighting the effects of the materiality of language Derrida argues the impossibility of obtaining a pure presence but he also shows this by a completely different route. In opposing the narrow objectivism of an instrumentally orientated science, we have seen how Husserl declares that he will return to reactivate the origin of geometry, how he seeks to return to science, as what Derrida terms, “an infinite task as *theoria*”.³³ In attempting to return to an unconditioned science, it is thus no coincidence that Husserl chooses to return to the origin of the particular discipline of geometry. Geometry is a project that aims towards an infinite progress of knowledge, one orientated towards an Idea in the Kantian sense. The Idea in the Kantian sense can be said, in Husserlian terms, to be an intention without an object: “the Idea is the pole of a pure intention, empty of every determined object”.³⁴ As such, it’s essence can only ever be intelligible as rules for an process of knowledge which is not possible to complete, never as a finally constituted ideal object. Derrida stresses that the insight into the infinite goal of knowledge, the Idea in the Kantian sense, is also an insight

into its unattainability. Again, this undermines Husserl's stated project, for it thus might be said that "geometry is on the way toward its origin, instead of proceeding from it".³⁵ The origin to which we were supposed to return is not closed and complete and thus is never available for a final return. Derrida argues that this is not a matter local to the "Origin of Geometry", but rather suggests that Husserlian phenomenology, in declaring itself to be an unconditioned science, is inherently oriented towards such an infinity. Derrida argues that "the Idea is the basis on which a phenomenology is set up in order to achieve the final intention of philosophy".³⁶ Again we have presence haunted by absence, the constitutive absence of an infinite orientation. Derrida repeats this point a few years later in his first essay on Lévinas:

the Idea in the Kantian sense designates the infinite overflowing of a horizon which, by reason of an absolute and essential necessity which itself is absolutely principled and irreducible, *never* can become an object itself, or be completed, *equalled*, by the intuition of an object.³⁷

Although Husserlian phenomenology's stated goals are transcendental, Derrida argues that as it works itself out in practice, particularly in its insistence on intentionality as bounded within horizons that are never finally encompassable, phenomenology is inscribed by "an indefinite opening".³⁸ Indeed, Derrida argues that, given its infinite telos, rather than being simply methodological technique, the reduction marks the fact that consciousness can never be a living presence. Phenomenology thus discloses an inevitable deferral, one that must include a deferral of the self-consciousness that Husserl hoped phenomenology could bring about. Against Lévinas' harsh criticism of Husserl, which we will come back to, Derrida suggests: "is not intentionality respect [for the other] itself?".³⁹ While in Husserl the consequences of the infinite orientation of phenomenology are implicit and never fully elaborated, in Lévinas we will see what happens when they become explicit.

Having suggested that the project of 'The Origin' is undercut in two major ways, neither of them simply external to Husserl's thought, Derrida draws the necessary conclusion. His suggestion is that "perhaps we must try to think, on the contrary, something other than a crisis".⁴⁰ Husserl thinks that the dominance of objectivist and instrumental thought in the modern world is something that can be corrected by returning science to its "origin", the everyday world from which it has emerged. For him,

there is a “crisis”, one that has lasted several hundred years, to which we can in principle put an end. Derrida, on the contrary, sees instrumentalism as something which has and will always threaten without denying that there are many different ways we can respond to this situation. There is a similar problematic when Derrida displaces Heidegger on technology by reference to economy.

If Derrida would have us abandon the transcendental goals set by Husserl he continues to be inspired by the ethical impulse that motivates Husserl. Both are persistent in challenging the extent to which conceptuality obscures the thing itself. The question of presence will be the focus of my next section but we might proleptically say that while Derrida would also concern himself with a “crisis” of improper presence, his solution is not a return to an origin in order to recover a proper presence but rather to assert the co-implication of presence and absence. Derrida is indeed interested in a return to the things themselves but he reveals that the approach is inevitably compromised (we will see in conclusion how it can be described as quasi-transcendental). Husserl wishes to use the *Rückfrage*, the method used in ‘The Origin’ to attempt to return and reactive dead idealities, while Derrida concludes that the origin is never unequivocally accessible. His insistence would be that we cannot overcome the “crisis”, yet this does not mean he would abandon the rigorous scrutiny of idealities, and their limits. Indeed, throughout his work he stresses the need for, as Bennington puts it, “the active, critical memory or reception of an inheritance or tradition which will remember us if we do not remember it”.⁴¹ Derrida says, “I insist on inheritance”, while also arguing, in a manner quite different from the Husserl of ‘The Origin’, that “the most unpredictable future may be hidden in a past which has not yet been re-presented or made present or remembered”.⁴² What Derrida has discovered against the grain of Husserl’s text is that “every return to the origin [is] an audacious move toward the horizon”.⁴³ If it is not already apparent that this presents us with a task that is both ethical and political, we might turn to what Derrida says concerning Nelson Mandela’s relation to European parliamentary democracy:

one can recognize an authentic inheritor in he who conserves and reproduces, but also in he who respects the logic of the legacy to the point of turning it back on occasion against those who claim to be its holders, to the point of showing up against the usurpers the very thing that in the inheritance, has never yet been seen.⁴⁴

Where, as Bernet puts it, “forgetting is what Husserl fears most”, for Derrida a certain forgetting is an ethical imperative; what he speaks of as “a given and desired forgetting, not as negative experience therefore, like an amnesia and a loss of memory”.⁴⁵ In contrast, “memory has no other task for Husserl than to make the past present again with exactly the same characteristics it had when being present for the first time”.⁴⁶ Where Husserl seeks a transcendental subjectivity for which meaning is stable and secured, Derrida would argue that we are finite beings who inherit a language and culture which exceeds us but demands that we take responsibility for it. Indeed, for Derrida the very possibility of a future depends on an activity of inheritance:

only a finite being inherits, and his finitude *oblige*s him. It obliges him to receive what is larger and older and more powerful and more durable than he. But the same finitude obliges one to choose, to prefer, to sacrifice, to exclude, to let go and leave behind.⁴⁷

For Derrida then, the lack of an ‘origin’ is both a risk and a chance. It opens the possibility of “betraying the heritage in the name of the heritage”.⁴⁸

Expression: Of Presence

In *Speech and Phenomena* Derrida turns his focus to Husserl’s early examination of language, the account of signification given in the *Logical Investigations*. We have already seen that at a crucial stage in ‘The Origin of Geometry’ Husserl, who is asserting the necessity of writing for the preservation of ideality, attempts to ground ideality’s changelessness in a certain quality of self-expressing. This possibility of self-containment and self-production will be found to have its roots in *Logical Investigations*, where central to the operation of language for Husserl is a conception of the sign that sees it as consisting of two types: expression and indication. This distinction is outlined in the earliest published pages of phenomenology, right at the start of *Logical Investigations*, yet Derrida several times argues that it persists throughout Husserl’s work despite the ostensible shifts of emphasis we have seen in ‘The Origin of Geometry’.⁴⁹

With *Logical Investigations* Husserl sought to commence the pure science of essences he believed possible by starting with logical

classifications; the first of its six investigations is devoted to signs and signification. Husserl begins his logical analyses with an analysis of language which attempts to purge it of that element he sees to be the product of the mind. It is to this end that Husserl distinguishes indication and expression. Indication is an object or state of affairs which indicates the existence of another object or state of affairs, e.g. clouds indicate the arrival of rain, symptoms will indicate the presence of a disease and a particular geological formation, oil. By means of an indicative sign a thinking being passes, by thought, from one thing to something else. Such a passage can never be guaranteed, such meanings are never certain. Clouds may make us think of many things apart from rain, a phrase may make us think something other than what the author intended. The indicative sign thus falls short of what is needed to guarantee ideality. Expression, on the contrary – Husserl asserts – allows complete access to intention. Any communication with others can only be indication: in communicating with others we can merely indicate our intentions; expression here is contaminated with indication. For the construction of ideality Husserl needs a pure expression, a certain signification because ideality is based on the possibility of repetition, of an identical repetition. As such it is “the preservation or mastery of presence in repetition”.⁵⁰ Husserl grounds the possibility of such repetition in the internal voice of self-consciousness. In soliloquy speech is pure expression with no element of indication. The self is entirely self-contained in this moment, there is no reference to the outside; the soliloquy – Derrida argues – is a speech purged of what he thematizes as writing. Derrida notes the necessity at work here:

The ideal object is the most objective of objects; independent of the here-and-now acts and events of the empirical subjectivity which intends it, it can be repeated infinitely while remaining the same ... The ideality of the object ... can only be expressed in an element whose phenomenality does not have worldly form ... *the voice*.⁵¹

So unworldly is the voice that there are no words here, not even imagined words, Husserl says, merely – the weakest phenomenological flickering – “the imagination of the word”.⁵² Expression, like the ideality Husserl claims it enables, is nowhere in the world. Derrida notes that by stressing expression Husserl is privileging the voluntary and the conscious, sliding back into a classical metaphysics he claims to exceed. He is also excluding everything that is not animated by intention from meaning,

for example, facial expressions and gestures. Active consciousness thus defines the essence of language for Husserl (we will come back to Husserl on death in a later section).

Presence is what Husserl claims for expression: pure presence, the basis for a secure intuition. Derrida argues against this using resources Husserl himself provides: perception is shown to be not an original presentation but rather a re-presentation (*Vergegenwärtigung* rather than *Gegenwärtigung*). This argument lies at the heart of Derrida's work, not just on Husserl; it is one he will deploy time and again. It is the core of Derrida's attack on "logocentrism" in *Of Grammatology* and his insistence on the inescapability of writing, a challenge to philosophy's privileging of the logos which seeks to think a presence constituted by absence and which necessitates replacing a conventional conception of writing with that of arche-writing. What writing then "presents" us with then is not, or not simply, a present that has been lived by others but the trace or the supplement, a past that has never been present and never lived, a past that does not exist. In a late essay Derrida says: "I substituted the concept of trace for that of signifier".⁵³ That is, he thinks of the material presence of writing as inhabited by an absence that ruins its claims to mastery. With regard to Husserl, the conclusion brought forth is that "the presence of the present is derived from repetition and not the reverse".⁵⁴ Husserlian presence is a sham, only attainable on the basis of a denial of signification and by the false isolation of a place – the monologue – where there is, supposedly, no need of it. Returning to the theme of the relation of the transcendental and the empirical in 'The Origin', Derrida notes how the monologue is effectively "the sole case to escape the distinction between what is worldly and what is transcendental", but, 'by the same token, it makes that distinction possible'.⁵⁵ The relation between perception and presence in Husserl is further elaborated by Derrida through a consideration of his treatment of "temporal objects", objects like the melody which persists over a period of time that the former discusses at length in the *Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*. Husserl argues that through retention ("primary memory") that which is past can be maintained as a presence. This he distinguished from recollection ("secondary memory"), where there is a compounding of a present perception and a past added by the imagination (which is the position of his mentor Brentano and which he sees as giving us no grounds for distinguishing fiction and reality). In the case of a melody, the "now" of the passing moment would be characterized by primary memory while the

melody as a whole by secondary memory. I will discuss some of the issues this raises in the section on time below; here I will simply note that the sharp difference Husserl sought between perception and non-perception is radically disturbed and deconstructed. Retention and recollection are both a compounding of a present with a constitutive absence.

Derrida thus insists that Husserl cannot maintain a radical distinction between perception and non-perception, that language will not allow such a distinction: "the presence of the perceived present can appear as such only inasmuch as it is continuously compounded with a nonpresence and nonperception, with primary memory and expectation".⁵⁶ Derrida's conclusion – the central insight, we might say, of deconstruction – is that, as Stiegler puts it, "an absence constitutes the heart of the presence of the Living Present" and that "the constitution of presence by an absence is in fact always already a re-constitution".⁵⁷ The living is, we might suggest, compounded with the dead, a dead that has never and will never live. Paradoxically, Derrida can conclude elsewhere that this "death by writing also inaugurates life" for it is only through the risk of loss that writing carries that there can be conceptuality at all.⁵⁸ In Derrida's late work this thought will be met again in figures such as "the spectral" and "the messianic".

What Derrida shows is that it is Husserl himself who elsewhere makes this argument. I will again restate Derrida's argument in the *Introduction to the 'Origin of Geometry'* using terms that he only came to coin in *Speech and Phenomenon*. In the latter work he argues, as I have already hinted, that the structure of Husserl's arguments can be frequently said to follow a logic he calls that of the supplement. This is that situation where, as he puts it, "a possibility produces that which it is said to be added on".⁵⁹ We can argue that writing as Husserl considers it in 'The Origin' is supplementary for it is presented as being that which is necessary for the material preservation of an ideality but, as Derrida shows in the *Introduction*, it is what makes possible any ideality. In his early work, such as the "Linguistics and Grammatology" section of *Of Grammatology*, Derrida elaborates this structural writing as an arche-writing that needs to be distinguished from the empirical technology of writing, that inheres in any language. He says of this elsewhere, "arche-writing is not writing; it is the structure of elementary supplementarity".⁶⁰ One of the insights contained here is that writing, as the condition of passing from the retention of the individual to the transmission of a tradition, as the production of a common object, is a process that dispossesses the author (an author who might also be suggested never was in a position of mastery anyway). In

later work this is what Derrida calls the archive. In a text on Freud he elaborates how “the structure of the archive is spectral. It is spectral a priori: neither present nor absent”.⁶¹ The collective nature of language means we approach perception with the non-perceived at hand and in mind; and this compromises perception.

At the heart of the present, at the heart of perception, there is the non-perceived, all that is preserved and made available by writing. This supplementation of presence by non-presence is central to all that Derrida will have to say. Meaning can only be meaningful on the basis of being re-presentable; reproducible on another occasion. This iterability allows that an expression always be repeatable, reproducible and representable. And thus there can be no pure presence of self-consciousness, no speech uncontaminated by the effects of writing, no expression free from the uncertainty of indication. Thus Derrida’s devastating conclusion for Husserl is that “there never was any perception”.⁶² As he says elsewhere “as soon as there are words – and this can be said of the trace in general, and of the chance that it is – direct intuition no longer has any chance”.⁶³ The thought of the trace is the ruination of intuition by the demonstration that it is not pure presence but constituted by an absence that is not masterable. Husserl sought to rescue “the thing itself” from metaphysics through the intuition of its essence. Derrida would also insist on a philosophical respect for singularity but at the same time as conceding that “the thing itself always escapes”.⁶⁴ For Derrida, singularity can only be understood on the basis of that possibility of repetition that he calls iterability: “singularity is never present. It presents itself only in losing or undoubling itself in iterability”.⁶⁵ The generalizing nature of language thus always threatens “the thing itself” but it is also what enables any defence of it. We can only rescue singularity to the extent that we acknowledge an inevitable “escape”, what Derrida calls elsewhere the “unique disappearance of the unique”.⁶⁶ Language as a trace structure of presence and absence means that the thing always escapes, its essence always finally elusive. This leads Derrida to say in *Of Grammatology*: “the thing itself is a sign”.⁶⁷ Much later he will go so far as to suggest, we come to the “*phenomenon* as *phantasm*”.⁶⁸

As soon as one introduces non-perception as well as perception into language, as soon as one challenges a view of language centred on presence, one finds language to be not merely a medium but an origin. Derrida effects in his reading of Husserl a liberation of the signifier and a demonstration of its productivity: this is what he attempts underscore by coining of the term *arche-writing*. Husserl in his account of language

sees the signifier as useless, as a temporary medium. Language, for him, makes no contribution but it also poses no major problems while Derrida in his stress on the way language makes possible retention and how the non-present constitutes the present, asserts that signs are far from useless. They form the basis for the possibility of consciousness whether written down or not. And as Derrida points out this is Husserl's own argument in 'The Origin of Geometry'. Contrary to what Husserl would assert, they are not passive vehicles but actively transport. Hence Derrida's work on metaphor, which there is no space to touch on here, abounds with figures of movement and displacement.

Husserl would accept as speech any speech that was intuitable, including accepting outlandish statements which could only be fulfilled imaginatively or those which cannot be fulfilled because they are false or contradictory. But he rejects sentences which do not observe the rules of logic, for example, such phrases as "green is or" and "abracadabra". In contrast, Derrida defends such irregular sign making: although there is no space to discuss it we might refer here to his reading of the "he war" of *Finnegan's Wake* in "Two Words for Joyce".⁶⁹ For him, language does not necessarily depend on intuitability in order to create effects; "abracadabra" was used as an invocation and as such was an incantation believed to have the power of producing effects. However, he would have us go beyond even this to see it as, not merely an 'exotic performative' in the Austinian sense, but as Caputo puts it: "a way of signalling the productive power of signs as such. It is not so much a signifier as a way that the very act of sign-ing is itself signalled, signified".⁷⁰ It shows that signifiers retain their power in the absence of intuition.

I think it needs stressing that when Derrida turns to discuss questions in ethics or political philosophy he is not turning away from other more abstruse interests to address practical matters. Rather in his discussions of literature and literary uses of language, whether in readings of Celan,⁷¹ Genet,⁷² Joyce,⁷³ Mallarmé,⁷⁴ Ponge,⁷⁵ Sollers,⁷⁶ or Valéry⁷⁷, he is still exploring that problematic relation of universal and singular that is at the heart of his ethico-political concerns. Although even the most prosaic of Derrida's texts is highly literary by the standards of Husserl's very conventional works, he is again doing something quite Husserlian by forcing his readers to actively engage in the work of the text. Far from being simply an indulgence in the sheer pleasure of language (although who would want to deny that it is also that) Derrida's literary style is also a constant re-marking of that which through the effects of language escapes

conceptual determination, drawing our attention to the non-presence that haunts presence. Critchley suggests that in Derrida, “the name «literature» becomes the placeholder for the experience of a singularity that cannot be assimilated into any overarching explanatory conceptual schema, but what permanently disrupts the possible unity of such a schema”.⁷⁸ In texts that foreground certain literary qualities we experience language in a way in which a power that exceeds the everyday instrumental uses of language is foregrounded.

As Wood notes, in both Derrida’s more literary and in his more philosophical writings, there is an insistence on the need for “difficult styles ... as setting up initiatory thresholds to prevent any understanding below a certain level of active recognition and participation”.⁷⁹ At the same time what Derrida seeks to do with his challenging texts is also very unHusserlian. In the presentation given in defence of his *Doctorat d’Etat* he argued that

the reproductive force of authority can get along more comfortably with declarations or theses whose content presents itself as revolutionary, provided they respect the rules of legitimation, the rhetoric and the institutional symbolism which defuses and neutralises whatever comes from outside the system.⁸⁰

Where the manner of Husserl’s text is strictly conventional, Derrida realizes that a return to the thing might mean a break with academic norms. Ultimately, we might find that what is so often glibly rejected as Derridean obscurity and self-indulgence is a firm insistence on the need to undertake the hard work of responsibility.

When we understand that Derrida’s work proceeds by questioning the limits and boundaries of an order and what is excluded by it we begin to see why Derrida does not and never can offer a programmatic politics. Correcting the misinterpretations of certain early popularizations of his thought, Derrida insists “deconstruction is not a method for discovering that which resists the system”.⁸¹ As Critchley puts it, Derrida’s work concerns “not simply the unthought of the tradition, but rather that-which-cannot-be-thought”.⁸² It is what forever escapes thought and puts it into question that leads Derrida to challenge any settled political order; it is the call to the responsibility of justice that motivates Derrida in this pursuit. In *Spectres of Marx* Derrida speaks of what he calls “another concept of the political”.⁸³ This Derridean concept of the political would be one where

the political is constantly interrupted and forced to account for that which it has excluded; to return – we might say, somewhat provocatively – to the things themselves, if only to mark the political consequences of the concession that they always escape.

It should be clear by now that Derrida is very far from being the relativist he has all too often been accused of being. In *Limited Inc* Derrida remarks that “as Husserl has shown better than anyone else, relativism, like all its derivatives, remains a philosophical position in contradiction with itself”.⁸⁴ One always proceeds from a given, there are always standards, rules and constitutions. He insists “that there are and that there should be truth, reference, and stable contexts of interpretation”.⁸⁵ Thus, “from the point of view of semantics, but also of ethics and politics, «deconstruction» should never lead either to relativism or to any sort of indeterminism”.⁸⁶ Indeed, that it does not do so is due in part to the extent to which it remains aligned with Husserl’s philosophy: “the transcendental or ontological question ... is the only force that resists empiricism and relativism”.⁸⁷ To reject relativism, however, is not to assert that either semiotics or the state can lay claim to an unquestionable foundation. But if, as we have discovered in our analysis of Derrida’s critique of Husserl and the notion of “presence”, at the heart of perception is the non-perceived, if presence is inhabited or haunted by non-presence, then “the finiteness of a context is never secured or simple, there is an indefinite opening of every context, an essential nontotalization”.⁸⁸

In his seminal *Force of Law: The Mystical Foundation of Authority*, a paper given a number of years later at the end of the 1980s, Derrida engages in a reading of the foundation of law that similarly challenges any hypostatization of that institution. Via a reading of Benjamin’s essay *Critique of Violence*, Derrida deconstructs the distinction made there between the violence of the founding of the law and the violence of the maintaining of the law. His argument, which follows the logic of his reading of the American Declaration of Independence, is that in preservation the law is constantly being refounded and that in this moment of refounding, law returns to its origin, to that on which it is based but excludes: justice. Drawing on an expression of Montaigne “the mystical foundation of authority”, his suggestion is that the ultimate ground of the legal order is ungrounded. Again, this is not nihilism or relativism, Derrida is not saying that everything is permitted and he does not deny the existence, or the necessity of regulations, statutes, precedents, legal decisions, and rules. Rather what he questions is whether the law (*droit*) that is made

up of these elements can ever completely instantiate justice, whether it can comprehensively and finally render justice. He would say that law is constitutively violent because it can never fully do justice to singularity. Indeed, concerning the Rights of Man which might seem at first glance utterly unobjectionable he argues: "all the decisions made in the name of the rights of man are at the same time alibis for the continued inequality between singularities".⁸⁹ Derrida does not seek to question universals *per se* but rather to maintain norms and universals in the possibility of revision in the face of that which they exclude.

Time and the Ex-position of the Sovereign Self

Having established the productivity of writing and signification and the importance of recognizing their relation to perception, Derrida elaborates what this means for some of the key Husserlian philosophical themes. I would like here, in particular, to focus on 'time' and the 'self'. These are not just any topics, for Derrida says of them: "the constitution of the other and of time refer phenomenology to a zone in which its «principle of principles» (as we see it, its *metaphysical* principle: the *original self-evidence* and *presence* of the thing itself in person) is radically put into question".⁹⁰ Derrida's discussion of iterability, the repeatability of the sign, leads to a re-examination of traditional concepts of time. Temporality is not an explicit theme of *Logical Investigations* yet in *Speech and Phenomena* Derrida devotes a chapter to what Husserl's account of expression implies about thinking temporality. Bernet suggests that "it is a further service of Derrida's text to have shown that Husserl's later philosophy of historicity necessitates a revision of his earlier phenomenology of time".⁹¹ Derrida insists that the dominant conception of 'now' in Husserl is as an undivided unity capable of being present to itself without the aid of signs: "if the present of self-presence is not *simple* ... then the whole of Husserl's argumentation is threatened in its very principle".⁹² If we follow Derrida in dismissing the possibility of a completely self-present speaking subject, if we allow that meaning is never encapsulated in that moment of speaking but is achieved through language – which casts us out to who knows what other times – then the idea of a punctual now crumbles.

As much as *Introduction to 'The Origin of Geometry'* and *Speech and Phenomena* are at one in arguing that Husserl's account of signification has an underlying unity, despite different emphasises in writings from over the

course of his career, so Derrida argues that Husserl's account of temporality has a similar continuity. In rejecting a conception of the 'now' that is claimed to be Aristotle's, Husserl says, "it belongs to the essence of lived experiences that they must be extended ... that a punctual phase can never be for itself".⁹³ Yet Derrida argues that this "spread" is still thought "on the basis of the self-identity of the now as point".⁹⁴ For Husserl, "despite all the complexity of its structures, temporality has a nondisplaceable center, an eye or living core, the punctuality of the real now".⁹⁵ In particular, Derrida highlights Husserl's use of the metaphor of a comet's tail in describing the work of retention (primary memory): the implication is of a punctual now that is followed by a trail of retained nows. Also indicative of Husserl's orientation to a punctual and present now is his rejection of the Freudian conception of an unconscious (we will come back to the question of the self in a moment).

As with the other works on which he comments Derrida finds elements of *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness* which undermines the punctual conception of the 'now'. Husserl conceives of perception as depending on retention (primary memory) insisting that it is distinctive from reproduction (secondary memory); but Derrida points out that the difference between the two is not that of perception and nonperception. Retention, which Husserl would have to contain both perception and nonperception, is (as we have seen) the key to what Derrida argues is really going on in intuition. The inconsistency is not intellectual sloppiness on Husserl's part but a displacement of what is actually happens in intuition: *perception is constantly interacting with non-perception, the now with the non-now*. This is not an adding to or an accompanying but rather the two are essentially and indispensably involved. Repetition constitutes the present: presence is possible only because of a simultaneous non-presence. As noted above, the present is haunted by the past and by the future; there is no sure philosophical foundation on the basis of intuition. There can be no pure self-presence of the present; alterity is to use a very Derridean locution "always already" there. Now can never be in itself, it always points beyond itself and in this pointing, there occurs a spatialization: if the now is not only now but also some other time, it is also some other place. Derrida's critique of the punctual now implies that space and time are not to be thought of as two separate domains. "Space is «in» time".⁹⁶ The radicalism of what Derrida has to say can be seen in his conclusion to chapter five of *Speech and Phenomena*: "what we are calling time must be given a different name – for «time» has always designated a movement conceived in terms of the present, and can

mean nothing else".⁹⁷ Much as he sees Husserl's stress on a punctual now as problematic Derrida also notes the philosophical necessity of such a conception of the instant: it is "the very element of philosophical thought".⁹⁸ To criticize a conception of time as based on a punctual now is not to criticize just one among a myriad of other philosophical theses for without it such conceptions as evidence, truth and sense cannot function, nor can any of the central distinctions of philosophy such as that between form and matter. As Derrida puts it, "within philosophy there is no possible objection concerning the privilege of this present now; it defines the very element of philosophical thought".⁹⁹ Yet Derrida makes clear that in displacing presence he is not seeking a non-philosophy, rather that he seeks a meditation on the non-presence which is not the opposite of philosophy but which constantly contaminates and frustrates its attempts to achieve conceptual purity. Derrida's critique of Husserl's consideration of temporality is not just about time then but rather is the insistence on that excess that exceeds and defies naming (this is what Beardsworth calls "the aporia of time").

Not only does Derrida seek to break open the punctual now – the traditional conception of time – that Husserl assumes, but he also seeks to use similar arguments to suggest that the self is similarly exposed to a play of presence and absence rather than being the foundation Husserl desires it to be. He does this, firstly, by arguing that Husserl's assertion of the primacy of the present and hence the self-presence of the self is based on a "forgetting" of death. Phenomenology, Derrida asserts is a philosophy of life, seeking to root itself in what is. It fails to thematize death philosophically, relegating it to the status of an empirical accident: for Husserl, "the source of sense is always determined as the act of *living*, as the act of a living being".¹⁰⁰ Indication is therefore "the process of death at work in signs".¹⁰¹ The effacement of the sign is also, Derrida points out, the effacement of death, an assertion that "before my birth and after my death, *the present is*".¹⁰² Derrida would have us live the possibility of our own disappearance, noting that we signify things and ourselves precisely because everything dies for us: nothing escapes time, is purely present but is always a trace.

Derrida further challenges Husserl's presumption of a self-present self through reference to the latter's own work via his characteristic close reading of the text which, in revealing its inner workings, shows how it undermines itself. The question of the self and, in particular, its relation to other selves Husserl himself recognized as a difficult problem for phenomenology and he devoted the fifth of his *Cartesian Meditations* to it.¹⁰³ There Husserl tackles the problem of the relationship between the subject and the other: if, as

individuals, we transcendently create an understanding of the world, how are we to understand others, who are also, presumably, in the same position. With a table Husserl asserts that we can obtain a full comprehension of it by, if we are not fully presented with it, moving it around or walking behind it and thereby turning that which is appresented (Husserl's term for what is not initially available for presentation but could be inferred as existing) into a presentation. The alter ego offers no such possibility but is only ever available as an appresentation. Seeing another body I conclude that the thing there looks like me and behaves as I would if I were there at the place of the foreign body and by a transfer of meaning I conclude that another ego is appresented as acting within or presiding over the presented body-thing. Lévinas, translator of the *Cartesian Meditations* into French, suggests that Husserl's position fails to do the other justice and subordinates him/her to the ego, making him or her the ego's phenomenon. Lévinas in his persistent attempts pose the question of alterity to phenomenology breaks with intentionality, moving to a post-phenomenological position. Derrida is less quick to condemn Husserl and suggests that an insistence on the analogical appresentation of the other itself amounts to an acknowledgement of alterity rather than its subsumption under the ego.¹⁰⁴ Derrida notes that Husserl makes a fundamental recognition of the alterity of the other when he admits, "I cannot put myself in someone else's place for this is a concession that 'what is proper to the *alter ego* will never be accessible *as such*, to an originarily bestowing intuition, but only to an analogical appresentation".¹⁰⁵ It is a point on which he corrects Lévinas emphatically in *Violence and Metaphysics*, his first essay on him:

the necessary reference to analogical appresentation, far from signifying an analogical and assimilatory reduction of the other to the same, confirms and respects separation, the unsurpassable necessity of (nonobjective) mediation.¹⁰⁶

Indeed, it is a point Derrida often returns to in late interviews: "we can never have an intuition of what is going on the other side, only what he calls indirect «appresentations», analogous hypotheses or appresentations".¹⁰⁷ Thus, we might argue along with Caputo that "Husserl's notion of «*ap*-perception», far from compromising the *tout autre*, positively preserves the other ego from direct perception, sheltering the alterity of the other by putting the other off limits to intuition".¹⁰⁸ The entrance of the alter ego rather marks the appearance of an original non-presence, of an irreducible

non-phenomenality, the alter ego being, not an object in the world but rather, in a phrase Derrida uses frequently, “another origin of the world”.¹⁰⁹ As Morin points out one of the consequences of our inability to access the alter ego other than through appresentation is that “our social space always remains divided between points of view or singular accesses, and it is not possible to totalize or bring those points of view together, not even in an ideal or an idea in the Kantian sense”.¹¹⁰ This is what Derrida argued in the *Introduction to the ‘Origin of Geometry’* when he rejected the idea of a transhistorical ‘we’ that he found implied in Husserl’s suggestion that ideality can be repeated indefinitely without corruption.

It needs stressing that if Derrida finds in appresentation a promising respect for the Other, we have seen, he is not convinced by Husserl’s attempt to guarantee meaning through an argument concerning the self-presence of the monologue of a subject who communicates so perfectly with himself it cannot be termed communication. Husserl’s self is complete and immediate (in the sense of its communication not having to pass through any medium). Derrida, we have seen, argues against this self-present self in no need of representation and as Howells puts it, the “fissuring of the present moment fissures in its turn the self-identity of the inner self of the phenomenological reduction, and opens it up to the very alterity it was intended to exclude”.¹¹¹ Here Derrida departs from Husserl, for as Bernet contends, “self-awareness of the pulsating life of the constituting Ego remains the *fundamentum incocussum* of Husserl’s phenomenology”.¹¹² In showing that pure interiority cannot be clearly or cleanly demarcated from that which was believed to be exterior, Derrida opens the way for a profound reconception of the self. Here he could be said to depart from Husserl and turn to the work of his almost exact contemporary (and fellow Moravian Jew) Sigmund Freud, as the self becomes troubled by what we might term “an unconscious” that exceeds it and can never be brought fully to consciousness. When the opposition between perception and repetition, memory and imagination becomes unclear the mechanisms active in perception do not essentially differ from the mechanisms of remembering and of the dream: as Derrida said in a recent interview: “thanks to the impulse of the initial Freudian send-off [*coup d’envoi*], one can introduce the idea of a divided, differentiated «subject» who cannot be reduced to a conscious, egological intentionality”.¹¹³ We are no longer simply Husserlian ego’s but are revealed to be troubled by an unconscious which exceeds our conscious control: as Bernet puts it, a “no-man’s land between the borders of the unconscious and external reality”.¹¹⁴ Unfortunately, there is no space

in this paper to discuss Derrida's writings on psychoanalysis although, as is well known, he discusses extensively the writings of Freud, Lacan and Torok. There is much more that could be said about his conclusion that "I am not proprietor of my «I»".¹¹⁵

The Impossible Names of the Quasi-Transcendental

Derrida might be a sharp critic of Husserl but he is far from saying that we can put the latter to one side. Husserl aimed to establish philosophy as transcendental. In *Of Grammatology* Derrida insists: "a thought of the trace can no more break with a transcendental phenomenology than be reduced to it".¹¹⁶ Caputo suggests that "Derrida is a transcendental philosopher — almost".¹¹⁷ In this he concurs with Hobson who argues that Derrida's critique results in "a position which is rigorously non-transcendental without being not transcendental" and also with Bernet, who contends that "*Speech and Phenomena* attempts a new understanding of transcendental consciousness rather than its destruction".¹¹⁸ Writing, a certain nonpresence inherent in signification, has been revealed as the condition of Husserlian transcendental. Or rather, transcendental because of tertiary memory can never be other than a quasi-transcendental, "irreducibly empirico-worldly".¹¹⁹ But as Bernasconi insists, "to say «quasi-transcendental» rather than simply «transcendental» is not to make a point that it is not a transcendental, but rather to say that it is and is not a transcendental".¹²⁰ As François Dastur repeats, "the post-philosophical thinking of trace, if it cannot be reduced to transcendental phenomenology, cannot any more break with it".¹²¹ Derrida's deconstruction of the Husserlian attempt to found ideality shows the impossibility of an object that is unwavering, infinitely repeatable, eternal: the transcendental. Yet although Derrida confounds transcendental by drawing it back into the messy contingency of the real, stressing the materiality of the signifier, this is not a retreat to empiricism: time and again Derrida argues that language, as preceding the perception of the object, means empiricism is equally impossible. This can be seen if we return to what he says of the name and of naming, rejecting the possibility of a pure transcendental or pure empirical in insisting that it is "as if it was necessary to lose the name in order to save what bears the unique".¹²² What constantly contaminates the purity of the present with the non-present, the transcendent with the empirical is an ineffaceable

non-presence or alterity: "when a name comes, it immediately says more than the name: the other of the name and quite simply the other, whose irruption the name uncovers".¹²³ This is what leads Derrida to constant resort to the qualifications "a certain", "another", and "quasi".

I will follow Gasché in suggesting that Derrida's position is 'quasi-transcendental', that while he exposes the impossibility of Husserl's transcendental claims he continues the latter's project to the extent that he makes statements about the general conditions of possibility and impossibility.¹²⁴ Such statements, by the very contradictory nature of what they attempt to do involve Derrida in a complex strategy. As Derrida puts it himself, "one cannot attempt to deconstruct ... transcendence without descending across the inherited concepts toward the unnameable".¹²⁵ An appeal to transcendence is both a condition and an effect of language for Derrida. As Beardsworth argues,

these "quasi-transcendental" structures - "quasi" since they open up and collapse the transcendental difference in one and the same movement – are thus as much a way of formalizing the essential contamination of any principle of thought as of accounting for the history of a principle, norm or institution.¹²⁶

Derrida seeks to use a language committed to the idea of presence in order to speak of non-presence: thus the quasi-transcendental will never be a proposition or thesis but always a demonstration. He thus coins a vocabulary of quasi-transcendental concepts, words that denominate – or rather, attempt to denominate – the non-presence at the heart of presence. While Gasché first coined the term quasi-transcendentals to designate this series of Derridean namings, it is a usage widely taken up by later commentators and even Derrida himself.¹²⁷ But much as Derrida can never finally name what he seeks to name, and hence is continually forced forward to new coinages, so the quasi-transcendentals could equally be termed differently and so we find that Hent de Vries calls them "non-synonymous substitutions", Critchley "palaeonymic displacements", Naas "Derrideo-phemes" or "deconstructo-nyms" and Hobson "lexemes".¹²⁸

I want now to return to the question of relativism. It is worth underlining, given the frequency of such accusations, that those critics of Derrida who accuse him of "relativism" fail to understand and take note of his quasi-transcendental position. As he clarified in a late interview:

Relativism is a doctrine which has its own history in which there are only points of view with no absolute necessity, or no references to absolutes. That is the opposite of what I have to say. Relativism is, in classical philosophy, a way of referring to the absolute and denying it; it states that there are only cultures and that there is no pure science or truth. I have never said such a thing. Neither have I ever used the word relativism.¹²⁹

We need to stress the fact that although Derrida insists that something always exceeds naming this does not mean that he would suggest that we can avoid naming or positing concepts but rather that we must employ them with a provisionality appropriate to their quasi-transcendental status. As he argued in the late 1970s: “as Husserl has shown better than anyone else, relativism, like all its derivatives, remains a philosophical position in contradiction with itself”.¹³⁰ Husserl sought to proceed to transcendental consciousness through the mundane and much as Derrida sees him to fail, his own quasi-transcendental position does not abandon the rigorous scrutiny of conceptuality, the scrutiny of that generality without which language would be meaningless; as well as the desire for fidelity to the unique and irreplaceable fact that sets philosophy in motion but which can never be fully achieved.

In his works on Husserl, Derrida only turns to make his quasi-transcendental coinages in the concluding sections. Undoubtedly the most enduring neologism in Derrida’s work on Husserl is *différance*, marginal as is its occurrence to the main body of the work. Indeed, despite its use in relation to a number of other writers and philosophers, as I pointed out by way of introduction Derrida saw fit to use the occasion of *Speech and Phenomena*’s publication to reprint an essay *Différance* which revisits these other contexts. The intertextual reference confirms and emphasises the permeability of the boundary of the philosophical and nonphilosophical, but the context of republication also emphasises the philosophical questions at stake. *Différance* forces us back from speech to writing, the silent, “an irreducible reference to the mute intervention of a written sign”.¹³¹ *Différance* refers to deferring as delaying (Derrida remarks that this can be both active and passive) but it is also that which differentiates, which produces different things. Derrida elaborates this sense against the structuralist linguistics of Saussure, summarising this point in an early interview: “no element can function as a sign without referring to another element which itself is not simply present” (POS, 26). Derrida thus argues that “nothing, neither among the elements nor within

the system, is anywhere ever simply present or absent. There are only, everywhere, differences and traces of traces" (POS, 26). In examining the condition of possibility of language in Husserl's work he elaborated a structure similar to that of *différance*, which as Allison puts it, shows that "there can never be an absolutely signified content, an absolutely identical or univocal meaning in language".¹³² As Stiegler argues, it "is both the opening to the possibility of the singular and what always already condemns this singular to be composed with that which reduces it".¹³³ As Derrida himself insists: "'what announced itself thus as «*différance*» had this singular quality: that it simultaneously welcomed, but without dialectical finality, the same and the other".¹³⁴ *Différance* leads from the exposure of absence to the announcement of a constitutive alterity yet without radicalizing heterogeneity in the way that a lax usage of words such as 'other' and 'otherness' often risks doing. In referring to "deferring" and also to "differentiation" it points to the thinking of time we mentioned above, one which is not one of present punctual moments: in time there is always a "delay" as any moment refers us on to yet other moments ad infinitum. Contrary to the early popular presentation of Derrida's thought as an operation involving the reversal of binary oppositions or revelation of concealed premises, it is a thinking that is a rejection of any simple positivity. *Différance* is an invocation of alterity that disturbs all conventional thinking, whether radical or conservative. Derrida thus insists in one of his last works: "the thinking of the political has always been a thinking of *différance* and the thinking of *différance* always a thinking of the political".¹³⁵

Différance is perhaps one of the neologisms most famously associated with Derrida and it might seem odd that I have got so far without invoking it. Much as I hope what I have said indicates its excellence, I also want to point out the dangers of failing to follow Derrida's work beyond it. Critchley goes so far as to suggest that there has been a usage of *différance* as a ubiquitous explanation which amounts to obscurantism.¹³⁶ We must constantly beware the dangers involved in hypostatizing *différance*, or invoking it (or indeed any of the other quasi-transcendentals) in place of thinking through the specifics of each problem. Certainly Derrida himself has never been guilty of such a practice and each time he reads, he reads anew and, if we can detect a certain family resemblance in his vocabulary they are far from being completely interchangeable synonyms. In deploying the word *différance* as a substitute for engaging in such a process, instead of bringing us through a text or process of thought to a place of undecidability,

to simply refer in one word to all the arguments rehearsed here, is a most unDerridean way of working. The necessity is of following a problem through, not to solution, but to an exposure of its inherent difficulties. In recent writing Wood notes how “Derrida talks apparently freely about «an interminable experience», «the [impossible] experience of death», «the experience of the non-passage», «the experience of mourning», and even «the experience of what is called deconstruction»”.¹³⁷ He goes on to suggest that rather than simply popping Husserl’s idealist balloon, Derrida is engaged in a renewal of phenomenology. Indeed there are parallels between Derrida’s questioning of Husserl and that of many who are regarded as “followers” of Husserl – Ricoeur, Merleau-Ponty and Gadamer – all of whom rejected his transcendental claims. Wood argues persuasively that

if phenomenology could be thought to have as its focus not consciousness, not perception, but experience, we might come to see that all these features and factors that have been thought to breed a problematic “presence” can return as the wealth of experience.¹³⁸

Husserl wished us to not to rely on handed down theories, not to rest in the natural attitude, but to do justice to the things themselves. This is what motivates the subtleties of *epoché*, *Rückfrage* and the rest of Husserl’s methodological arsenal. Derrida may disagree profoundly as to the possibility of a successful transcendental conclusion to the enterprise as projected by Husserl, yet he also seeks to defend something akin to the things themselves, the singularity of the given. Despite their differences, both philosophers could be said to be impelled primarily by an ethical motivation: as Wood again suggests, “Derrida is taking responsibility for responsibility as Husserl originally laid it out, rethinking reactivation in terms of language rather than intuition”.¹³⁹ Derrida never moves beyond the central problem in Husserl, in that he sees the necessity both to describe essential structures and to be faithful to lived experience.

NOTES

- ¹ I will not include here, for reasons of space, consideration of Derrida's late essay on Husserl's phenomenology of touch which was published as part of *On Touching – Jean-Luc Nancy* (Stanford U.P., 2005). I simply note Durie's conclusion that it "demonstrates a profound continuity with earlier readings". See: Robin Durie, "At the same time: Continuities in Derrida's Readings of Husserl", *Continental Philosophy Review* 41 (2008), 73.
- ² Rodolphe Gasché, "On Re-presentation, or Zigzagging with Husserl and Derrida", *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 32 supplement (1994), 5.
- ³ Jacques Derrida, "Time of a Thesis: Punctuations", *Philosophy in France Today*, (ed.) Alan Montefiore (Cambridge U.P., 1983), 38. Jacques Derrida, "Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility: A Dialogue with Jacques Derrida", *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, (eds) Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley (Routledge, 1999), 81.
- ⁴ This masters' thesis was eventually published as *Le problème de la genèse dans la philosophie de Husserl* (Presses Universitaires de France, 1990).
- ⁵ In "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences", the first paper by Derrida to be available in English, Derrida champions "the play of signifiers", *Writing and Différance* (Routledge, 1978), 278-94. The dully literal way in which some critics took the word "play" to imply that there were no serious stakes involved seems to have led Derrida to drop the word in latter work although he has recently come back to it, albeit now making sure to remark the Heideggerian and other stakes also involved: *Given Time 1: Counterfeit Money* (Chicago U.P., 1993), 22; "On the University", *Southern Review* (1986) 19:1, 19-20.
- ⁶ I would, however, not go so far as Kates who, rather restrictively, would confine Derrida within the context of Husserlian philosophy at the expense of other far more obvious influences such as Heidegger and Lévinas. Joshua Kates, *Essential History: Jacques Derrida and the Development of Deconstruction* (Northwestern U.P., 2005). His presentation appears to be part of a strategy (far from undesirable) to interest philosophers from the analytic tradition in Derrida.
- ⁷ See Husserl's attack on Dilthey's relativism: "Philosophy as Rigorous Science", (trans.) Quentin Lauer, in *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy* (Harper & Row, 1965).
- ⁸ "Continental Philosophy and Emancipation: In Conversation with Simon Critchley", *New British Philosophy: The Interviews*, (ed.) Julian Baggini and Jeremy Stangroom (Routledge, 2002), 191.
- ⁹ In giving a brief introductory account of Husserl's thought I will attempt to sketch it as it is generally understood, or was understood at the time Derrida published his writings although the reception of Husserl has changed somewhat in the intervening forty years, partly as a result of the increasing

availability of a plethora of previously unpublished material (and perhaps even as a consequence of the readings of Derrida and others). Zahavi influentially claims that the late Husserl moved away from transcendental claims but an engagement with this debate is not the purpose of this essay: Dan Zahavi, *Husserl's Phenomenology* (Stanford U.P., 2003).

10 Jacques Derrida, *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction* (Bison Books, 1978), 27.

11 The terminology I use here is actually that of *Logical Investigations* from the next decade.

12 Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations* (Humanities Press, 1970), 252.

13 Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, (Kluwer, 1982), 35; Edmund Husserl, *The Paris Lectures*, (Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), 6. The latter citation is given in Antonio Q. Ziriñ, "The Call «Back to the Things Themselves» and the Notion of Phenomenology", *Husserl Studies* 22 (2006), 33. It is certainly interesting to note, as Ziriñ does, that Husserl uses the phrase so associated with his name in relatively few places in his published writings. I would not agree that this necessarily means we can discount it's importance for Husserl.

14 Luft, "Husserl's Theory", 204.

15 Rudolf Bernet, "Presence and Absence: Husserl and Derrida on the crisis of (the) present time", in Bernet, Brough & Casey (eds), *Phenomenology of Temporality: Time and Language* (Simon Silverman Phenomenology Center, 1987), 37.

16 Leonard Lawlor, *Derrida and Husserl: The Basic Problem of Phenomenology* (Indiana U.P., 2002), 18-9.

17 Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 6.

18 Derrida's initial, and contemporaneous, inroad into the philosophy of Hegel was also through an attack on his account of language and signification. See "The Pit and the Pyramid", *Margins of Philosophy*. However, this is not the place to follow Derrida's somewhat neglected work on Hegel.

19 Derrida, *Husserl's Origin of Geometry*.

20 Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena, and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs* (Northwestern U.P., 1973).

21 Derrida, *Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility*, 81.

22 Jacques Derrida, *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction* (Bison Books, 1978).

23 Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology*, 66. Cited Derrida, *Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 66.

24 Husserl's critique of contemporary society is clearest in his late work *The Crisis of the European Sciences of 1935*, to which the 'Origin of Geometry' was an appendix, although the critique is also implicit in earlier work. However, Husserl's direct political interventions were less than critical

and suggest that his interest in essence led him to stress superindividual imperatives in a conventional and, to twenty-first century sensibilities, extremely unpalatable way. In lectures on Fichte he gave during the First World War there are statements that echo Hegel. As Gornier notes, "he presents the war as an instrument of renewal of «all the ideal sources of strength» brought forth from the depths of the German soul by the struggle against Napoleon, as stripping away the conventional concealments of death and allowing it to regain its «sacred primordial right»". Paul Gornier, *Twentieth Century German Philosophy* (Oxford U.P., 2000), 19. Given his background and upbringing, as a Jew of Czech birth, these remarks are a little surprising and are perhaps testament to Husserl's desire to assimilate to the German society in which he lived and taught.

- 25 Bernet, 'Presence and Absence', 50.
- 26 Edmund Husserl, *Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (Northwestern U.P., 1970), 52.
- 27 Derrida, *Rogues*, 126.
- 28 Bernet, 'Presence and Absence', 44-5.
- 29 Derrida, *Husserl's Origin of Geometry*, 87.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 88.
- 31 Gasché, "Re-presentation", 9.
- 32 Jacques Derrida, *Positions* (Athlone Press, 1981), 27.
- 33 Jacques Derrida, *Rogues: Two Essays on Reason* (Stanford U.P., 2005), 125.
- 34 Derrida, *Husserl's 'Origin of Geometry'*, 139.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 131.
- 36 *Ibid.*, 141.
- 37 Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 120.
- 38 *Ibid.*
- 39 *Ibid.*, 121.
- 40 Derrida, *Rogues*, 124.
- 41 Geoffrey Bennington, *Interrupting Derrida* (Routledge, 2001), 22.
- 42 *Deconstruction Engaged: The Sydney Seminars* (Power Publications, 2000), 79.
- 43 Derrida, *Husserl's 'Origin of Geometry'*, 149.
- 44 Jacques Derrida, "The Laws of Reflection: Nelson Mandela, in Admiration", *For Nelson Mandela* (Seaver Books, 1987), 17.
- 45 Bernet, "Presence and Absence", 36. Derrida, *Given Time*, 35.
- 46 Bernet, *ibid.*, 38.
- 47 Jacques Derrida, *For What Tomorrow ... A Dialogue* (Stanford U.P., 2004), 5.
- 48 Derrida, *Rogues*, 89.

- 49 Derrida argues for the existence of a similar structure in the *Ideas* (from the
middle of Husserl's career) in an essay, "Form and Meaning", published as an
appendix to *Speech and Phenomena*.
- 50 Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 9-10.
- 51 *Ibid.*, 75-6.
- 52 *Ibid.*, 44.
- 53 Jacques Derrida, "And Say the Animal Responded?", *Zoontologies* (ed.) Cary
Wolfe (Chicago U.P.), 137.
- 54 Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 52.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 79.
- 56 Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 64.
- 57 Stiegler, Bernard, "Derrida and Technology: Fidelity at the Limits of
Deconstruction and the Prosthesis of Faith", *Jacques Derrida and the
Humanities: A Critical Reader* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), 243, 247.
- 58 Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (John Hopkins U.P., 1976), 143.
- 59 Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 89.
- 60 Jacques Derrida, *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles/Éperons: Les styles de Nietzsche*
(Chicago U.P., 1979), 253.
- 61 Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago U.P., 1995),
84.
- 62 Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 103.
- 63 Jacques Derrida, "Passions: An Oblique Offering", *Derrida: A Critical Reader*,
(ed.) David Wood (Blackwell, 1992), 30.
- 64 Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 104.
- 65 Jacques Derrida, *Negotiations: Interventions and Interviews, 1971-2001*
(Stanford U.P., 2002), 180.
- 66 Jacques Derrida, *The Work of Mourning* (Chicago U.P., 2001), 34.
- 67 Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 49.
- 68 Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other; or, The Prosthesis of Origin*
(Stanford U.P., 1998), 25.
- 69 Jacques Derrida, "Two Words for Joyce", *Post-structuralist Joyce*, (eds) Daniel
Ferrer and Derek Attridge (Cambridge U.P.), 148-58.
- 70 John D. Caputo, "The Economy of Signs in Husserl and Derrida: From
Uselessness to Full Employment", in John Sallis (ed.), *Deconstruction and
Philosophy: The Texts of Jacques Derrida* (University of Chicago Press,
1987), 106.
- 71 Jacques Derrida, "Schibboleth: For Paul Celan", *Word Traces* (ed.) Aris
Fioretis (John Hopkins U.P., 1992), 3-72.
- 72 Jacques Derrida, *Glas* (Nebraska U.P., 1986); Derrida, "Letter to Genet
(Fragments)", *Negotiations*, 41-5.
- 73 Derrida, "Two Words for Joyce"; Jacques Derrida, "A Number of Yes", *Qui
Parle* 2:2 (1988), 120-33.

- 74 Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination* (Chicago U.P., 1981).
- 75 Jacques Derrida, *Signéponge/Signsponge* (Columbia U.P., 1984); Jacques Derrida, "Psyche: Inventions of the Other", *Reading de Man Reading* (ed.) Wlad Godzich (Minnesota U.P., 1984), 25-65.
- 76 Derrida, *Dissemination*.
- 77 Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago U.P., 1981)
- 78 Simon Critchley, "Derrida: The Reader", *Cardozo Law Review* (2005-6), 554.
- 79 David Wood, *Philosophy at the Limit* (Unwin Hyman, 1990), 96-7.
- 80 Derrida, "Time of a Thesis", 44.
- 81 Jacques Derrida, *A Taste for the Secret* (Polity Press, 2001) , 4.
- 82 Simon Critchley, *Ethics of Deconstruction* (Verso, 1992), 29.
- 83 Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, The Work of Mourning and the New International* (Verso, 1994), 75.
- 84 Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc.* (Northwestern U.P., 1988), 137.
- 85 *Ibid.*, 150.
- 86 *Ibid.*, 148.
- 87 Derrida, *Negotiations*, 363.
- 88 Derrida, *Limited Inc.*, 137.
- 89 Derrida, *Negotiations*, 252.
- 90 Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 164.
- 91 Rudolf Bernet, "Derrida-Husserl-Freud: The Trace of Transference", in Leonard Lawlor (ed.), *Derrida's Interpretation of Husserl*, supplement, *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 32 (1994), 144.
- 92 Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 61.
- 93 Edmund Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness* (Indian U.P., 1964), 136-7.
- 94 Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 61.
- 95 *Ibid.*, 62.
- 96 *Ibid.*, 86.
- 97 *Ibid.*, 68.
- 98 *Ibid.*, 62.
- 99 *Ibid.*
- 100 *Ibid.*, 10.
- 101 *Ibid.*, 40.
- 102 *Ibid.*, 54.
- 103 Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology* (Springer, 1977), § 42-64.
- 104 Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death* (Chicago U.P., 1995), 78; Jacques Derrida, *Politics of Friendship* (Verso Books, 1997), 256.
- 105 Derrida, *A Taste for the Secret*, 73; Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship*, 54.
- 106 Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, 124.

- 107 Derrida, *Deconstruction Engaged*, 67.
- 108 John D. Caputo, *Prayers and Tears of Jacques Derrida* (Indiana U.P., 1997), 22.
- 109 Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Literature* (Routledge, 1992), 342; Jacques Derrida, *Counterpath: Travelling with Jacques Derrida* (Stanford U.P.), 206; Jacques Derrida, *Echographies of Television: Filmed Interviews* (Polity Press, 2002), 123; Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 47.
- 110 Marie-Eve Morin, "The Self, the Other, and the Many: Derrida on Testimony", *Mosaic* 40 (2007), 173-4.
- 111 Christina Howells, *Derrida: Deconstruction from Phenomenology to Ethics* (Polity, 1998), 22-3.
- 112 Bernet, "Presence and Absence", 37.
- 113 Derrida, *For What Tomorrow*, 176.
- 114 Bernet, "Derrida-Husserl-Freud", 155.
- 115 Derrida, *A Taste for the Secret*, 85..
- 116 Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, 62.
- 117 John D. Caputo, "On Not Circumventing the Quasi-Transcendental: The Case of Rorty and Derrida", in Gary Madison (ed.), *Working through Derrida* (Northwestern U.P., 1993), 157.
- 118 Marian Hobson, *Jacques Derrida: Opening Lines* (Routledge, 1998), 20; Bernet, "Derrida-Husserl-Freud", 148.
- 119 Stiegler, "Derrida and Technology", 247.
- 120 Robert Bernasconi, "Deconstruction and Scholarship", *Man and World* 21 (1988), 226.
- 121 Dastur, "Finitude and Repetition in Husserl and Derrida", in Leonard Lawlor (ed.), *Derrida's Interpretation of Husserl*, supplement, *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 32 (1994), 118.
- 122 Jacques Derrida, *On the Name* (Stanford U.P., 1995), 58.
- 123 *Ibid.*, 89.
- 124 Gasché argues that the quasi-transcendentals or "infrastructures", as he also calls them, amount to a continuation of the project of "pure logical grammar" established by Husserl in *Logical Investigations*. See Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Harvard U.P., 1986), 245-51.
- 125 Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 77.
- 126 Beardsworth, *Derrida and the Political*, 19.
- 127 Rodolphe Gasché, *Tain of the Mirror: Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Harvard U.P., 1986), 274, 316, 318.
- 128 Simon Critchley, "Forgetfulness Must: Politics and Filiation in Blanchot and Derrida", *Parallax* 12 (2006), 19; Michael Naas, "'One Nation ... Indivisible': Jacques Derrida and the Autoimmunity of Democracy and the Sovereignty

- of God' *Research in Phenomenology* 36 (2006), 29, 34; for de Vries see
conference paper cited in Critchley, *Ibid*; Marian Hobson, *Opening Lines*, 3.
129 Derrida, "Hospitality, Justice and Responsibility", 78.
130 Derrida, *Limited Inc.*, 137.
131 Derrida, *Positions*, 8.
132 David B. Allison, "Translator's Introduction", *Speech and Phenomena*
(Northwestern U.P., 1973), xxxviii.
133 Steigler, "Derrida and Technology", 250.
134 Derrida, *Negotiations*, 366.
135 Derrida, *Rogues*, 39.
136 Simon Critchley, *Continental Philosophy* (Oxford U.P., 2001), 118.
137 Wood, *The Step Back*, 135.
138 *Ibid.*, 136.
139 *Ibid.*



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HISTORY AFTER STATE SOCIALISM: POLISH SECRET SERVICE ARCHIVES AND ACCUSATIONS OF BETRAYAL¹

Abstract

This paper focuses on the Polish lustration process, which uses the former secret service files to verify the public employees' past links with the former secret service. Since the early 1990s, lustration has been an object of great political struggle between political groups, mainly between the secular liberals and conservative nationalists (including conservative-neoliberals). In this article, I investigate the strategies through which the conservative-nationalists seek to create popular support for lustration. Analyzing the exhumation of a well-known young oppositionist and the public life of a controversial "agent list", I highlight the popularity of the transparency discourse and explore what this reveals about the broader conditions of capitalist transformation and nation-state building after state socialism.

Keywords: Secret Service Archives, Lustration, Transparency, Anti-Communism, Eastern Europe.

It was, as though, I was destined to see the Krasiński square in Warsaw during my anthropological field research in Poland (2009-2011). Today the square vividly brings together the extent to which the symbolic landscape of the city has been reconstructed since 1989, the year commonly taken to mark the end of state socialism. It also gestures to and indeed, materializes the "postsocialist" reconfiguration of the relationship between law and history, and memory and nation building. On one side, there is the Field Cathedral of the Polish Army (*Katedra Polowa Wojska Polskiego*), which functions as the central church of the Polish Army since 1989, hosting major religious feasts for the army. The church registers the key moments of the national history: the Katyń massacre (1940) perpetrated by the Soviet

security forces; the tragic presidential plane crash in Smoleńsk (2010), which killed 96 people on board (including the Polish president); and the Polish clergy's various heroic and sacrificial involvement in past and recent military missions, including the "war on terror" led by the U.S. armed forces.

On the opposite side of the church, there is the newly built monument complex dedicated to the Warsaw Uprising against the Nazi occupation. The monument delineates the heroic figures that represent the Polish resistance waged by the Home Army fighters (which were called "bandits" or "criminals" by the communist authorities) in the company of the clergy. Behind this monument stands the new Supreme Court building, a modern L-shaped glass building surrounded by tall columns, on which are inscribed Latin texts on justice. On one end of this transparent building is seated the Lustration Office of the Warsaw branch of the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN), which has the task of checking public employees' past links with the former secret service. Next to the Lustration Office, the national library (the Książski Palace) is located. In front of this eloquent building stand the colorful pegasuses dedicated to the Tiananmen Square Massacre of 1989. With this arrangement of buildings and monuments, the Książski square well testifies to the layers of the imagined national time and space of "postsocialism". It highlights the grand national narrative by weaving together different tragic or catastrophic historical moments (often uprisings and wars) that have articulated the Polish nation to Roman Catholicism. The square also points to the prominence of law and justice, though a new transparent one, in the new architecture of the nation. It calls for the justice that would intricately link the future and the past.

My dissertation examines the "postsocialist" production and adjudication of knowledge and memory of the socialist past. It focuses on lustration (*lustracja*), a "transitional justice" procedure, which bans the "secret collaborators" of former secret services from occupying public office. It claims to facilitate the transition from past authoritarian rule to liberal democracy by coming to terms with the abuses of the former regime. As I will discuss later in this article, lustration has been an object of great political struggle and antagonism between different political groups, mainly between the secular liberals (including former Communist Party members and dissidents) and conservative nationalists (including conservative-neoliberals). As such, Polish lustration has come to be largely advocated by conservative groups that aspired to formulate it in more radical terms (e.g., "de-communization"). In this article, I will investigate

some of the strategies through which these groups in their struggle with the secular liberal elite seek to create popular support for more radical forms of lustration. I will concentrate on two events: the exhumation process of a well-known young oppositionist, who was murdered by the security forces in 1977; and the public life of an “agent list” of two hundred thousands of names “mysteriously” smuggled out of the former secret service archives, the list known as, “the Wildstein List”, named after the popular conservative-neoliberal journalist, Bronisław Wildstein. Through these two events, I will examine how the anti-communist conservative groups today claim to represent the nation and pursue justice in the name of the “victims of communism”. Specifically, I will highlight their employment of the language of transparency and investigate what this tells us about the broader conditions of capitalist transformation and nation-state building after state socialism.

Lustration and Secret Service Archives

The recent opening of the former secret service archives in Eastern Europe has ignited contentious questions concerning the secrets of the Second World War and the Cold War, of resistance and collaboration, as well as a radical interrogation of the loyalties, values, and practices acquired under socialism (Ash 1998; Deák et al. 2000; Gross 2001; Rév 2005; Rosenberg 1995; Verdery 1999). Where the “democratic transition” of Latin American countries from their U.S. backed military dictatorships typically has tackled with the problem of absence of any official documents of “disappearances” and state terror, the “transitioning” Eastern European countries had to confront another type of problem about documentation: what to do with the tens of miles long secret service archives that are inherited from the former regime, which have been remarkably destroyed during the regime change? What to make of the half-truths of these documents, which are notoriously known to be composite or fabricated like other records of the state socialist regime?

Many Eastern European countries in one way or another have ended up employing these documents to redraw and secure the boundaries of the new “democratic” state and political community. Lustration has turned out to be one of the major legal procedures adopted for this purpose (e.g., Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia). In this paper, I am concerned with the Polish lustration. Lustration (*lustracja*) in Polish means

“self-examination”, from the Latin *lustratio*, “purification by sacrifice”. It involves both an examination of the state personnel by the prosecutor and one’s examination of oneself through a declaration. In Poland, lustration requires hundreds of thousands of state employees – including MPs, high and mid-level administrative, judicial, and public media personnel, and candidates for these positions – to file declarations stating whether or not they cooperated with the former secret service (UB/SB). The person who is subject to lustration is not, as a rule, allowed access to the UB/SB archives; one is supposed to declare the truth without knowing what information may be in the archives. These declarations are then checked against the files for their “truthfulness” by a team of lustration prosecutors employed at the Institute of National Remembrance that manages UB/SB archives. Those whom they determine, via the files, to have “lied” about their past are summoned to court. A lustrated person can be prohibited from practicing his/her profession for ten years. As for those who confess to their collaboration, no formal punishment is prescribed, but their names are publicly disclosed (Czarnota 2007).

A form of “transitional justice”, lustration is commonly described as a legal means employed by post-authoritarian countries to deal with the human rights abuses of the former regime (Elster 2004; Mayer-Rieckh et al. 2007; Minow 1998). Unlike the truth commissions of Latin America and South Africa, or criminal justice procedures, lustration does not involve a public “truth-telling ritual” (Humphrey 2003) or prosecution of past crimes. It prompts, however, an expansive production of rumors and truth claims concerning one’s moral purity. Resting on the principle of administrative justice, lustration aims to purify the new democratic state of the corrupting elements of the past. With compromised public figures deposed, the new state, it is claimed, will establish national security, rejuvenate its moral authority, and legitimate its sovereign power (Voiculescu 2000; Walicki 1997; Welsh 1996; Szczerbiak 2002). Furthermore, lustration is often described as indispensable to meet the popular demands for justice and security (Appel 2005; Borneman 1997; Calhoun 2004; Cepl and Gillis 1996; Meierhenrich 2006). It is presented as a *natural* response to the calls for justice and whatever it does is considered to be “good” for the “victims of communism”, on behalf of whom the legal process exercises power. Yet, that research often assumes an abstract, hypothetical point of view of a presupposed “society” or “people” (e.g., “people want lustration”) and rarely investigates who these “people” are, how they come to desire

or want lustration, and what conflicting expectations of justice and truth are raised by different social groups.

My research critically engages with this research by focusing on how lustration works in practice. In this regard, I argue that lustration refers to a much broader field of accusatory and denunciatory practices of betrayal than its formal (legal) domain. As I will detail later, it is marked by a certain mode of truth and knowledge production of the recent past and reading of the former secret service files. Thus, research activities and media institutions are far from being marginal or auxiliary, and are indeed central to the operation of lustration. Taking this into account, I concentrate on the following questions: what are the political struggles in which lustration operates? By which strategies does lustration (or pro-lustration groups) seek to mobilize popular support? How do the broader political economic and legal conditions shape the field of lustration?

To examine these questions, I now turn to the peculiar afterlife of the dead body of the young oppositionist, Stanisław Pyjas, whose unresolved murder has been a powerful symbol invoked by the nationalist anti-communist advocacy for lustration. As has been widely noted by scholars, state burials, reburials, or other rituals for the dead are fundamental instances for imagining the nation, making a national time and space, and memorializing it (Trouillot 1995). The former East Bloc is no exception, having been a fertile soil for dead body trafficking across national borders and time (Rév 2005; Verdery 1999). Who belongs to whom, whose dead body belongs to the new public, Republic, and whose does not has been of strategic importance. While some people die before they actually die (e.g., those who are abandoned by capitalism to live in the cracks of cities, disposed as an un-exploitable waste), some others are not allowed to die; they can be summoned any time from their grave to testify for the nation. This is because the “secret truth” that is excavated in the dead body is not only of the past political regime, but the present relations of power. It is an effect of the ongoing political struggles.

The Fall of the Young Oppositionist

On 7 May, 1977 the Jagiellonian University student of Polish philology and a core member of the newly formed Workers’ Defense Committee (KOR), Stanisław Pyjas, was found dead by the entrance gate of an old building close to the main square of Krakow. From the very beginning his

dead body started breathing a political life. Over the last decades it has become a precious object of mourning and hope. It has illuminated as much as it has concealed. While the dead body has promised to materialize and expose the dirty secrets of the political regime that killed him, it has failed to provide a satisfactory clue (from the forensic point of view) as to the cause of its own death. This ambiguity has played a central role in the conjunctural politics of anti-communist nationalism. To gather support for their de-communization policies or political programs, the conservatives have often invoked the dead body to materialize the unhealed wounds of the nation.

Since the fall of communism, different scenarios have been constructed to shed light on the circumstances of Pyjas's death. The investigation conducted in 1977 by the socialist Poland's prosecutor concluded that it was an "unfortunate accident" that killed him that night. It was mainly his fault. Drunk, he fell from the stairs. This did not convince many of Pyjas's friends, who knew (at least, now they say they knew) that the secret service had been observing and intimidating him. It must be the UB/SB that murdered him. The investigation was politically important for the academic community and students' perception of the current Edward Gierek government. By opening the way for a truthful investigation, the Communist Party would have demonstrated its capacity to govern and rule over the security apparatuses. Instead, the results of the investigation paved the way for the founding of the "Student Committee of Solidarity" (SKS) and contributed to the erosion of the Party's authority in Krakow's higher education institutions.

In 1991, as one of the first constitutive acts of the new Republic, a new prosecutorial investigation was conducted. The investigation did not require the reexamination of Pyjas's dead body by the medical court experts. It relied on the material already gathered during the 1977 investigation. At the outset the prosecutor, Krzysztof Urbaniak, ruled out the possibility of a straight fall from the stairs or a hit on the staircase's barrier as the cause of Pyjas's death. The injuries on the dead body did not suggest any of the versions, Urbaniak explained in an interview in 2011. There was no spine or skull fracture that would suggest a fatal fall. Moreover, the photographs, taken right after the incident, highlighted that he had suspicious injuries on his face, which could not have been caused solely by the fall. Urbaniak asserted that Pyjas' dead body must have been brought from somewhere else to the location to give the guise of a fall as the cause of his death.² He must have been beaten to death, the court

established. However, the legal proceedings did not last long due to the lack of material evidence. It was not possible to identify any individual perpetrator responsible for the murder. Speculations and suspicions have abounded. Many suspected a certain (now dead) alcoholic ex-boxer, who was hired by the UB/SB to beat the student oppositionist.

In 2001, Bronisław Wildstein with other former SKS members denounced Lesław Maleszka as a secret informer in a letter published in the popular center-right daily, *Rzeczpospolita*. After an initial period of denial, Maleszka, who was close to Pyjas and Wildstein in the 1970s and was active in the opposition throughout the 1980s, admitted to having been an informer. In spite of the campaigns against him, Maleszka kept his job at *Gazeta Wyborcza* the popular liberal daily. For the anti-communist rightwing media, Maleszka has come to embody betrayal and moral perversion while Pyjas has become the ultimate figure of the innocent victim. Wildstein's public self-representation and conservative political views deeply reliant on the heroic fight between the good and the evil, have contributed to this depiction. He has fashioned himself as a witness, who cannot and will not let anyone forget the "communist crimes". On the one hand, there is the beautiful, youthful Pyjas with unfulfilled promises for the future, a saintly figure and on the other, Maleszka of absolute perversion and decadence: his cranky look in thick glasses, protruding teeth, and dirty mouth, recorded as stuttering and swearing in front of the hidden cameras. This is how Maleszka was contrasted with Pyjas and Wildstein in the award-winning documentary-fiction film *Three Buddies* (Trzech Kumpeli). Besides interviews with Maleszka, Wildstein, former UB/SB officers, and many other related people, the film employed an extensive use of fiction to visualize and reenact the relationship of the three buddies in the 1970s. At the heart of the film was the quasi-biblical scene involving the secret betrayal of Maleszka and Pyjas's death, followed by the revelation of Pyjas's facial injuries as the clue to the mysterious circumstances of his death. In the triangular relationship of the old buddies, it is Wildstein who appeared to bear the moral burden of witnessing the lost glory of anti-communist opposition and the deceit of the shameless, faceless enemies within, who had cooperated secretly with the security.

The production of *Three Buddies* corresponded to the IPN officials' growing interest in the circumstances of Pyjas's death. It was 2008, right after the end of the populist rightwing coalition government term, which tried to implement the firmest anti-communist policy since the foundation of the Third Republic and showed unwavering support for the

IPN and radical lustration policies. The film ventured the thesis that the cause of death may have been a gunshot or a beating, the trace of which may be found on the corpse. Maleszka was implicated in the murder by cooperating with the UB/SB. A few years later, in spring 2010, the IPN announced publicly that it was planning to exhume Pyjas's dead body. Information about the methods and aims of the exhumation were carefully kept in secret. The general public was not supposed to know anything more than the existence of an ongoing secret operation.

Pyjas's family was not provided with any more information, either. They actually heard about the exhumation from the media.³ The news quickly gained a high profile in the media, which followed closely the controversial decision. The public memory was already fresh with the recent "failed" exhumation of General Sikorski by the IPN.⁴ Besides, the new liberal government was at the time reviewing IPN's budget and its activities, which made the institution concerned about its status and expenditures. Under financial pressure, the IPN seemed to need publicity more than ever to prove that it was worth the money. In any case, a number of Pyjas's family members, including his mother, sister, and cousin of Pyjas objected to the exhumation, unconvinced by the scientific breakthrough the exhumation claimed to achieve three decades after his death. The mother consistently pointed out that she did not approve the operation, which meant uprooting their family graves, where Stanisław Pyjas had been lying with other family members. Pyjas's brother-in-law spoke skeptically:

Five years ago we buried the grandmother of Stasiek [the diminutive of Stanisław] in the same graveyard where he and others lie. We saw then that even the coffin of Stasiek was not totally there because of the terrible moisture in the grave.⁵

Stasiek's body was not only a political body, but one that followed the line of kinship, having a certain place in the family history. It belonged to the earth that devoured it slowly over the years. It was more than an anti-communist symbol of hidden communist crimes.

In a few days something seemed to have changed. While Pyjas's mother and some of his friends from the political opposition (Bogusław and Lilliana Sonik) continued to be skeptical, the sisters agreed to the exhumation. Later they said that they were at the time intrigued by the possibility of proving a gunshot as the cause of his death. Both of them were impressed

by the film, *Three Buddies* and the thesis it presented through consulting the newly found witnesses.⁶ The sisters proposed certain conditions, however. The exhumation was not going to turn into a media spectacle or be utilized politically. In the meantime, the IPN had become more ready to impart information about the operation. The former head of the IPN, Janusz Kurtyka, who died in 2010 in the Smoleńsk plane crash, told the conservative daily, *Dziennik Polski* that “it was not possible to know without conducting exhumation whether Stanislaw Pyjas was killed as a result of premeditated murder or his death was an unexpected result of a beating by the SB”. By using the new technology of electronic topography the exhumation, he hoped, would unearth the hidden truth and and ascribe criminal responsibility to everyone, who took part in the intimidation of Pyjas or lied in subsequent investigations until today.⁷

Wildstein had been ardently supporting the exhumation. Though not an “expert”, as he often said, he still believed that the operation was necessary. His was more than an abstract conviction. He considered himself the ultimate witness to the truth of Pyjas’ death. He saw the body of Pyjas right after his death. He saw the injuries with his own eyes. But there was more. He also touched his body, the touch that today provides him with the certainty he needed to believe in the necessity of the exhumation, the touch that flames his desire to fight a war against (former) communists and their secret agents. As he said in an interview, “he bribed the morgue worker to see the corpse of his friend. There, he conducted his examination with his own hands”.⁸

It took more than two years to hear the result of the exhumation which was conducted in full secrecy. It reiterated almost the identical conclusion arrived at by the 1977 investigation: Pyjas died or more precisely, “could have died”, as a result of the fall from the stairs. There was no material evidence to suggest that he had been shot or beaten to death. Nevertheless, uncertainty crept back in. Might someone have pushed him down the stairs? Or, could it be that he fell as a result of an unfortunate accident, such as stumbling on an uneven stair? The experts were not able to ascertain any of the versions.⁹

What I want to highlight here is not this unexpected and unsettling “result” of the operation. Nor is it the “failure” of “materially” proving the murder of Pyjas. What I want to highlight is the way the public “event” of the exhumation has been produced and the political forces involved in that production.¹⁰ It is no longer a public secret that Pyjas was murdered by the former secret service. The result of the exhumation, most probably, will not

change many people's view, and certainly, not the view of Pyjas's family. As I noted, the family members never seemed fully convinced by the light this secret police operation was going to throw, upsetting the family grave and awakening all those who have been lying with Pyjas. It was not the drama of Antigone. This time it was Pyjas (and his dead relatives), who had to wake up to testify before the state for the buried secret of the Polish nation represented by the IPN. It was his dead body that was summoned by the state authorities as *the* victim of communism, where the Polish nation was to be imagined, secured, and purified from the secret agents. However genuine the IPN's intentions may be in its "quest for truth" – and there is no reason to doubt this – what the institution has *also* ended up doing, among other things, was no less than producing a remarkable publicity for itself at a critical juncture for its survival, reasserting itself as a crucial public institution by displaying vigor and determination, and generating an atmosphere of fear and suspense by embarking publicly on a secret investigation.

In fact, such use of secrecy, rhetoric of victimhood, transparency, and security cloaked as the pursuit of justice has not been unique to this case. The invocation of the victimized Polish nation and the call for nationalist sacrificial acts for truth and justice has been common. In the following section, I examine this problem by focusing on the scandalous leakage of "agent names" from the IPN archives. This event bears a stamp on any public debate of what to do with the former secret service archives today in Poland and has left many people disarmed or frustrated by the hasty and chaotic revelations from the archives. As in the case of exhumation, it is the same transparency project that is at issue here, and is also about the politics of knowing and not being able to know. When it does expose the secret names of the past, it also claims to do it in the name of the "victims of communism".

The Wildstein List as a Transparency Project

In the film *Files* (Teczki) I remember vividly a scene about a man who signed a letter of obligation with the UB/SB in a moment of weakness and later, resigned without acting like an agent or injuring anyone. But the IPN still called him a secret collaborator. He was scared of showing his face in front of the cameras, because even though he never had been an “agent”, he feared ostracism.

Adam Leszczyński in conversation with Pawel Machcewicz,
Antoni Dudek, and Andrzej Friszke, “Transparency must hurt”¹¹

“Lines for the file”,¹² “The Institute of National Remembrance under siege”,¹³ and “Lustration Tsunami”,¹⁴ were some of the media headlines that referred to the popular uproar that followed the exposition of a list of 240,000 names leaked from the IPN archives in early 2005. Unlike its initial public perception, the list was not simply an “agent list”. It was much more ambiguous and sweeping in how it organized the names. The list lumped together indiscriminately in an alphabetical order (like a telephone book) the names of different categories of person registered by the secret service: the names of former UB/SB employees and officers, secret collaborators, and candidates of secret collaboration (including those who were objects of covert operations, some of whom were victimized by the UB/SB). Most of the names were not verified with the IPN archives before their public exposure. And some turned out to be not even verifiable, because the IPN had no documents concerning them. The hand that examined Pyjas’s dead body was the same hand that smuggled the list from the IPN archives. That notorious list is called “the Wildstein List” (*lista Wildsteina*).

All the names met each other on the flat screen of a few web-sites, where the list made its public debut before it descended into the blackmarket in dubious CDs for those who did not have internet access at home. There was no information about who was who, if the name Jan Kowalski belonged to *that* Jan Kowalski and not to another, or why one’s name was there. It was left to the concerned person to find out about these. In a few days after the publication of the list, the IPN received more than 1,000 applications, and in the following two weeks, 10,000 from those who wanted the archival institution to determine whether it was their names that were on the list. It was a scandal, or the scandalization of the public by a bombardment of names that demanded identification

and justification. Until proven innocent, anyone who had a name on the list was a suspect. However some of these anyones were dead, who neither had the possibility to speak for themselves nor could have their relatives check their names with the IPN. According to the law on the IPN (1998), the families of the accused of collaboration – just like the accused himself/herself – did not have access to the documents. When accused or suspected of collaboration, the dead, however, breathed a strange afterlife for many close associates, who had to come to terms with the list. Wildstein never bore any legal or moral responsibility for the injuries it caused or for walking out from the IPN archives with the list in his possession. He never expressed publicly any regret. Instead, he often argued that the victim of “communist crimes” has every right to know “who is who” today and democracy requires, first and foremost, “public transparency” and the moral cleansing of the nation from corrupt (ex-)communists and their collaborators.

What is the political-normative framework that justifies the production of the Wildstein List and its articulation into the scandal? What political strategies are involved in the production of uncertainty or ambiguity that marks the list and its afterlife? What do the public contentions around the list illuminate about the broader antagonisms regarding victimhood politics and management of the IPN archives, and the competing notions of the public and personal right to know, transparency, and privacy? To investigate these broad questions, I will first briefly consider Wildstein’s political biography and views on the state and economy in relation to his advocacy for a certain kind of “historical politics” (*polityka historyczna*) that calls for radical lustration or de-communization. This discussion will then prepare the ground for my analysis of the political environment in which the Wildstein List exploded.

Bronisław Wildstein’s political biography follows the line of many other dissidents, who came of age in the mid-1970s, when Poland “opened” its economy to the West by collecting loans from the IMF to build its “market socialism”. After involvement in oppositional student groups in an increasingly volatile and bankrupt Poland, he left the country for Paris in the 1980s during the martial law. In Paris, he strove to maintain contact with the dissidents back home and cooperated with the anti-communist *Radio Free Euope*. Wildstein did not occupy a leading position in the opposition. Nor was he interned, or imprisoned by the security forces like many others oppositionists, who today detest unambiguously the de-communization politics advocated by him and rightwing groups.

Wildstein returned to Poland right after the fall of state socialism. He was not in the position of influencing the course of the transformations. He was not a member of the oppositionists, who sat down to make the “round-table agreements” with the leadership of the Communist Party, the agreement which is accepted today as the “official end” of the former regime. By the late 1990s he was already drawn to the emergent conservative politics, critical of the liberal establishment that led the transformations. He denounced the round-table agreements as the betrayal of the nation and accused many well-known former dissidents of complicity with the ex-communists. In his numerous articles, he advocated for the following political and economic program: deregulation, decentralization and downsizing of the state, public budget cuts, and tax cuts. All of these measures align with a certain understanding of a “strong” and “efficient” state that is also fearsome with its elaborate policing and anti-corruption measures and national security policies. Once the iron fisted “law and justice” mechanisms are installed, once the heavy corrupt socialist state is destroyed and replaced by a *thin* low-cost one, once the civil servants are depoliticized and made subject to screening of their loyalties via lustration, once the degenerated old people are replaced by a new generation of civil servants, who have a “fresh” view on how to run the state and economy, the citizens, then, would be able to realize their *natural* resources and capacities. This was a call, as he wrote, to “walk in the footsteps of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher”.¹⁵

The Wildstein List exploded like a dynamite in the midst of calls for radical de-communization and moral condemnation of the (post-89) Third Republic by rightwing conservative nationalists. After the Rywin Affair that shook the liberal government by exposing the government’s illicit ties with private entrepreneurs (something not uncommon in the Eastern Europe of radical privatization led by foreign finance capital), the rightwing seized the opportunity to trumpet their criticism of the new Republic, which they identified with moral decay, postmodern moral relativism, weak state, and corruption. Many rightwing groups called for the historical politics of de-communization to initiate a clean break with the past and expiate the “demoralized public” from the “sins” of the Third Republic.¹⁶ For instance, the Catholic conservative party, “The League of Polish Families”, lobbied for the need to prepare urgently a list, which would expose publicly all the names of the employees, officers, and collaborators of the UB/SB. There were calls for a new clean, strong, Christian Fourth Republic.

The eve of the Wildstein List scandal was marked by this radicalization of the rightwing politics and heated public debates about the IPN's management of the UB/SB files, public accusations of collaboration with the UB/SB, and revelations of (sensational) information from the IPN archives. According to the law on the IPN, only those who were certified as victims by the IPN were allowed to access their personal files and ask for the decipherment of the names of the UB/SB officers and secret collaborators involved in their cases. It was left entirely to the victims to decide what they want to do with that information. However, the person, whom they would accuse of collaboration, did not have the right to access the IPN archives. Nor could the accused initiate a "self-lustration" (autolustracja) court proceeding to clear his/her name unless that he/she occupied a public office. Critiques of the law often pointed to the violation of the constitutional principle of the right to self-defense (of the accused) and to the absence of any public institution, which assumed responsibility for the injuries caused by false, speculative "private denunciations" of the certified victims.

A fervent supporter of conservative anti-communist politics, Bronisław Wildstein supported unwaveringly the existing IPN law to counteract the critics. He argued that knowing the names of those who reported one to the UB/SB and revealing those names publicly satisfied the basic feelings of justice.¹⁷ Moreover, this was a citizenship right: every citizen has the right to know not only one's own past, but also those who represent or govern them. This was necessary, he said, for the public transparency and accountability fundamental to democracy. It was only after the full exposition of "who is who" (kto jest kim) that people could *freely* decide and make their *own* private judgments whether they still wanted to be in touch with or vote for that person. In line with this view, Wildstein also argued for the *professionalization* of verification of archival material, turning the entire issue into one of technical expertise. According to him, the unreliable court system must be removed from the lustration of "who is who" and their public exposition. Unlike the professional archivists and historians of the IPN, the legal personnel (judges, lawyers) did not know how to read the SB documents or what to make of them. The archival institution without any outside interference should be able to compile a catalogue of names and then publish it on its web-site, so that the public could see and make their own judgments. If anyone wanted to object IPN's verification, he or she could then apply to the court.

The Aftermath of the Wildstein List and Legal Remedies

This has been the ideal model of historical justice advocated by Wildstein and many other conservative-neoliberals. How much of this model derives from or feeds upon their neoliberal economic and political views? How might we think of the relationship between the *naturalistic* assumptions underpinning his ideas about the right to know, public transparency, and private judgment of citizens (“natural feelings of justice” or “natural capacities for making judgments”) and his justification of neoliberal economy by recourse to *natural* resources and capacities of the private entrepreneurs and the self-regulating free market? I suspect a contingent but definitive relationship, an overlapping rationality between Wildstein’s historical politics and neoliberal ideas. However, the question of at what moment one fertilizes the other is an open one. At any rate, the long-standing consistency between his historical politics and neoliberal ideas seems to explain why he did not quite feel the need to express any regret when the list exploded in public. Quite the contrary, he was able to draw more political support from conservative groups for his alleged heroic, sacrificial act for the nation. Wildstein did not ever refrain from speaking in the name of the nation of victims and democracy: for him, “the nation has the right to know about itself” (naród ma prawo do prawdy o sobie).¹⁸ At another time he argued that “all of the IPN’s property belongs to the nation” (co jest własnością IPN należy do narodu) and thus, he did not commit a crime or violate journalistic ethics by smuggling out the IPN catalogue, which was at any rate not a secret. The list was there in the archive for public users (certified victims, journalists, historians). Later, he said that by giving that list to his colleagues in the media he wanted to help them out and speed up the process of identification of secret communist agents.¹⁹

Some IPN historians aimed to reassure the public that the list could not cause any harm to innocent people. The well-known historian, Antoni Dudek said in an interview: “if your name appears in the list. Why worry? There may be other people with the same name – so really, what makes you worry? Do you have anything to hide? An honest and sincere person would not be worried”.²⁰ Even worrying was a sign of guilt, according to the young historian, who was in his early 20s when the socialist regime came down. However, there were others, who appeared quite worried when their listed names drew suspicion. For instance, Jadwiga Staniszkis, a famous sociologist and a well-known supporter of conservative

de-communization politics, appeared notably distressed when her name on the list demanded her to give an account of her life. The IPN authorities familiar with her files, however, clarified rapidly that she was, in fact, a victim, not a secret informer. The signature number of her file, which suggested that she might have been a secret informer, was simply wrong. In a TV program, Staniszkis recounted her experience in the following way:

That was the most difficult time of my life. I am not a depressed person in general, but I really had something tragic in mind [upon learning about my name on the list]. That was shocking to me, but I am relieved now.... If that list was published somewhere and I had to face it, I would have been in a hopeless situation. That would have crossed out my entire life! In that list it is not clear who is who (kto jest kim), that is why what Mr. Kieres [the head of the IPN] said does not calm me: there are also victims of the UB/SB in the list. There is no way to clear oneself...The majority of the people in the list does not have a chance to verify their names (like I had) to see why their names are listed there.²¹

The Wildstein List was widely criticized for its sweeping ordering of names and its uncritical reproduction of the dubious registry catalogues prepared by the UB/SB. The kind of truth supposed to be revealed by the list was subjected to harsh criticisms by lawyers, journalists, and historians from all walks of life, including those affiliated with the IPN. Andrzej Rzepliński, the eminent judge, human rights activist, and one of the authors of the IPN law, considered the Wildstein List as the practical realization of the controversial plan of the conservative party, "League of Polish Families". It was nothing but the publication of the names of those linked with the UB/SB without any verification with the IPN archives. All the names must have been checked with the archives before their public disclosure. Furthermore, another central problem with the list was that it was impossible to distinguish the already recruited collaborators from the candidates of collaboration. To make that distinction, one needed to study carefully the concerned UB/SB files. As Andrzej Friszke, the renowned IPN historian suggested, this was indispensable for an accurate and ethical reconstruction of the particular condition and form of one's relationship with the UB/SB. Friszke studied many cases, where the candidate ended up refusing to cooperate, or was never actually recruited even though his/her file still appeared on the UB/SB's registration records.²² There also have been vocal cases, where the person (like Jadwiga Staniszkis) was

registered by the UB/SB as a secret collaborator or a candidate without his or her knowledge.

There were other reasons for being drawn into the Wildstein List. Bombarding the public with more than two hundred thousand names, the list produced a huge public interest for the secret service files. It forged a community of files, self-righteous detectives, accusers, and defendants, who invested or had to invest so much into sorting out the dreadful ambiguity of who was who in the list. Indeed, it is precisely this ambiguity that was capitalized on by conservative lustration politics to force the named people to search for files in order to prove their innocence. Now the entire society would have to lustrate itself by checking with the files. However, the great snowballing of applications to the IPN branches disrupted greatly the usual course of archival work and verification of documents. Now the archivists had to deal with only the “most relevant” documents to produce results for the applicant inquiries about the status of their names in a short period of time. It was a state of emergency. The government spared an extra-budget for the exceptional work required of the IPN employees. Overall, there were two major steps for the applicants. First, the applicant typically wanted to check with the IPN if his or her personal data matched with the name indicated on the list, in other words, if it was he or she who really was on the list. If the personal data matched with the name on the list, the next step was often to request to access the concerned documents. In practice, this meant an application to obtain “victim status” from the IPN in order to qualify for access their archival documents.

The IPN categorized all applicants into two broad groups, victims and non-victims. Victims were: 1) those who were objects of surveillance or security operation; 2) unrecruited candidates of secret collaboration (who were also objects of surveillance); 3) those who once performed as a secret collaborator but later broke up with the UB/SB and victimized by it because of involvement in subversive activity. The rest of the applicants who did not qualify victimhood were called non-victim: 1) the employees, functionaries, and collaborators of the UB/SB; 2) those who were first in the opposition (and even victimized for that), but later recruited by the UB/SB; 3) those about whom there was simply no information in the archive.²³ The category of non-victim made strange bedfellows out of a great variety of historical experience. In practice, being a “non-victim” drew much suspicion about one’s status. One is then always prone to the accusations of collaboration with the former regime.

How could one dispute the decisions made by the IPN? What were the legal means available for that purpose? Over the years, the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights in Warsaw (HFHR) have closely observed the legal problems and complaints that arose out of the Wildstein List and the IPN's dealing with the applications. One thing the human rights lawyers have kept underlining was the loosely constructed but very courteous letters, or more precisely, "certificates" (zaświadczenie) the IPN sent to the applicants about their decisions.²⁴ These certificates, the lawyers pointed out, did not carry explicit instructions about possible means of appeal. Nor could they be considered unambiguously as official administrative decisions made by a responsible public authority. It is only after the applicant disputed the IPN's decision in writing that the archival institution issued an "order" (postanowienie), which then could be reviewed by the administrative court. However, there was a remarkable limitation to what the administrative court did. The court reviewed only the legality of the IPN's actions. It was not to take active part in the production of "facts". It was not going to verify or evaluate the documents studied by the IPN employees. The administrative proceedings were not of investigative nature as in the case of the criminal law proceedings; it was only a matter of establishing if the IPN authorities had complied with the standards of evidence determined by the concerned legal judgments (including those of the Constitutional Court).

The appeal process to the IPN's decision was long and complex. Even when the Supreme Administrative Court gave a verdict in favor of the compliant (which it did in many cases), it was still hard to grasp the concrete effects it produced. The law on the IPN kept changing and with new amendments in 2007, the category of the victim was annulled. This created further complications for those who contested now the IPN's outmoded categories. Furthermore, the HFHR lawyer, Paweł Osik told me that one of the compliants to whom they offered legal counseling and eventually, carried it to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg (ECHR), passed away while waiting for the proceedings. It was not secret that many of the proceedings required so much waiting. It was very difficult to gain access to the archival documents once the application was rejected. The situation with the deceased people whose names appeared on the list was no less tantalizing. The existing IPN law did not recognize their close kins as an "interested party", who could exercise the right to apply to see the concerned documents. The names of the dead could not

be identified with any certainty in the world of the living. What they left behind was a hollow void carved out by the website that carried the list.

For the living too the legal remedies for the injury inflicted by the Wildstein List were not sufficient or effective. As the HFHR lawyers underlined, neither civil lawsuit nor lustration proceedings could be initiated in practice. While the list was generally perceived by the public as an “agent list” (at least in the beginning), it was not possible for the bearer of the listed name to bring a civil lawsuit for violation of personal rights, such as reputation or “good name” (*dobro imie*), or public slander regarding collaboration with the UB/SB. There were two fundamental legal problems. First, there was nothing to be personally offended for. The list was not considered legally a public slander or a criminal act, because it was not possible to identify any concrete living or dead person solely by looking at the names on the list. Besides, the very lumping together of all categories of people brought the ambiguity that absolved the list from any concrete accusations. There was no identifiable infliction of injury to any particular person on the list. Literally, the list did not imply anything to anyone. It did not judge anyone; it only exposed some 240,000 names and left the burden of proof to others who saw the list. Furthermore, the anonymity of the cyberspace secured impunity for the list. Published on the internet, the Wildstein List posed nobody as its responsible author. What other party could one possibly accuse? Was it the State Treasury represented by the President of the IPN? Was it the President of the IPN? Was it Bronisław Wildstein? Or was it the administrators of the internet servers on which the list was located? All these persons and institutions deny any individual responsibility, as the HFHR observed. The public prosecutor never managed to establish the circumstances in which the list was carried. It has remained unknown to this day. Wildstein never had to disclose how he took out the list from the archive, invoking his right to keep confidential his information sources as a journalist. Nor did the IPN ever have to bear any legal responsibility for reproducing a list of names on the basis of the former secret service registry lists without verifying it with the files and for making that list available for the users of the archive, one of which happened to be the journalist, Bronisław Wildstein.

Conclusion

Both the process of exhumation of the young oppositionist, Stanisław Pyjas and the scandalous public life of the Wildstein List highlight how the “secrets” of the socialist past are utilized in the political games for power. In this article, I have been mainly concerned with the conservative-neoliberal nationalists’ strategies regarding the IPN archives, but not so much the ones employed by the secular liberal or neoliberal groups. The latter group, mainly the so-called post-communists, typically advocates for drawing a “thick line” between the past and the present in order to salvage the “bright liberal future” from the “dark totalitarian past”, with which everyone in Polish society allegedly had been complicit. These groups either denounce the IPN archives (even their very existence) as dangerous or harmful, or trivialize the files’ content and scholarly value by calling them trash. The rightwing conservative position definitely has developed in reaction to this position. In order to create publicity and mobilize public support for a more thorough lustration or de-communization, the conservatives, as I have showed in this article, have created, deliberately or not, an environment of fear and suspicion. While promoting a clear cut victim-perpetrator framework, they also seek to forge or capitalize on moral and epistemological ambiguity concerning the secrets of the files, in which they intend to draw the general public (e.g., the Wildstein List). Their language has been one of moral decay and national security that is geared toward identifying and punishing the secret agents within the national body in order to ensure the building of a *real* capitalism freed of any corrupting elements of the past. In this respect, lustration or de-communization stands out as a major form of conservative moral and moralizing critique of the social inequalities and dispossession created by the capitalist transformations since the fall of communism.

What I want to highlight here is the common neoliberal language of transparency that is shared by both conservative advocates of lustration and their critiques, who invoke the “right to privacy”. Perhaps, this is hardly surprising, because the “postsocialist” hegemony mainly speaks the language of neoliberal democracy and capitalism, and any position that runs for political and economic power has to come to terms with this language. This, then, raises important questions about the social consequences of equating transparency with truth and justice. Among other things, the event of the Wildstein List has laid bare the social consequences of such equation. In one memorable interview, the historian

Paweł Machcewicz underlined that it was all a matter of privileging one of the following democratic rights over another: whether one chooses to privilege the right to start a new life (for those used to be affiliated with the UB/SB), or the transparency of the public life, that is, the right to know.²⁵ What is it exactly that one has the right to know, however? The Ombudsman, Andrzej Zoll, well articulated the fundamental problem with that discourse of transparency: it was not simply the right to know just about anything, but the right to know, first and foremost, “substantial information” (rzetelna informacja). The quality of knowledge produced was no less important than the abstractly conceived right to know. What is then the quality of the knowledge produced by the registry lists? Is that all one wants to know about the “public figure”, whether he/she *was or was not* a secret collaborator according to the documents gathered by the former secret service? Would that ensure the transparency of public life? Antoni Dudek said in an interview that “transparency must hurt”, because the truth is always bitter just as reality always bites. What is the kind of truth, or better, truth procedure needed for a truly democratic politics? This question requires thinking issues of historical justice with the current conditions of reproduction of social inequality and injustice. Without working toward producing the material and social conditions needed for the realization of one’s life potential or labor, there is no possibility of historical justice, either.

NOTES

- ¹ This article is based on my research supported by the Wenner-Gren Foundation and the U.S. National Science Foundation (Award no: 1022656) and the New Europe College Fellowship, 2012-13. All translations from Polish are mine unless otherwise noted.
- ² See at http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,9132947,Jak_umarl_student_Pyjas.html last accessed, 25/09/2012.
- ³ "Rodzina Stanisława Pyjasa jednak zgadza się na ekshumację", *Gazeta Krakowska*, 23 March 2010.
- ⁴ The exhumation ended up disproving all the guiding (rightwing) hypotheses about a possible Russian assassination of the Polish General during the Second World War. Instead, it confirmed the long held thesis of the historians that the General died in a plane crash. See for a discussion of recent Polish exhumations, Marcin Moskaiewicz, "Polityczne Rytuały Ekshumacji" at <http://publica.pl/teksty/polityczne-rytualy-ekshumacji>, last accessed 3/16/2013.
- ⁵ "Rodzina Stanisława Pyjasa jednak zgadza się na ekshumację", *Gazeta Krakowska*, 23 March 2010.
- ⁶ See at <http://www.rp.pl/artukul/921800-IPN--Pyjas-mogl-umrzec-w-wyniku-upadku-ze-schodow.html?p=2> last accessed 09/01/2012.
- ⁷ "Ekshumacja Stanisława Pyjasa postanowiona", *Dziennik Polski*, 23 March 2010.
- ⁸ "Rodzina Stanisława Pyjasa jednak zgadza się na ekshumację", *Gazeta Krakowska*, 23 March 2010.
- ⁹ See at http://wyborcza.pl/1,76842,12250823,Pyjas_zmarl_wskutek_upadku.html last accessed 09/01/2012 and endnote 5.
- ¹⁰ See the study of Cohen and Odhiambo (1992) of the burial of the Kenyan Lawyer S. M. Otieno.
- ¹¹ „Jawność musi boleć” (Transparency must hurt), *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 4-5 February 2005. *Jawność* can also be translated as „openness”, but transparency, in my view, better highlights the general emphasis on disclosure of secrets.
- ¹² "Kolejka po teczki", *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 4 February 2005.
- ¹³ "IPN w stanie obłożenia", *Rzeczpospolita*, 4 February 2005.
- ¹⁴ "Lustracyjne Tsunami", *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 7 February 2005.
- ¹⁵ See Wildstein, "Koniec III Rzeczypospolitej" (The End of the Third Republic), *Rzeczpospolita*, 15 May 2004.
- ¹⁶ See Wildstein, *ibid*.
- ¹⁷ See Wildstein, "'Ketman', 'Monika' i inni: Pamięć i jej Wrogowie" ("Ketman", "Monika" and others: Memory and its Enemies), *Rzeczpospolita*, 2 October 2004, and his, "Cały ten antylustracyjny zgiełk" (All this anti-lustration noise), *Rzeczpospolita*, 14 January 2005.

- 18 "Barbarzyństwo Wildsteina", (The Barbarity of Wildstein), *Gazeta Wyborcza*,
31 January 2005.
- 19 "Co wyciekło z IPN?", (What did leak from the IPN?), *Gazeta Wyborcza*,
31 January 2005.
- 20 "Jawność, czyli sprawiedliwy podział podejrzeń" (Transparency, or a Just
Distribution of Suspicion), *Rzeczpospolita*, 8 Feb 2005.
- 21 "Co wyciekło z IPN?" (What did leak from the IPN?), *Gazeta Wyborcza*,
31 January 2005. "In a short time after this TV appearance, however,
Staniszki felt the need to declare publicly her unchanged loyalty to the
de-communization project and even underscore that the publication of the
Wildstein List was entirely justified.
- 22 See "Wiele lat lustracji", (Several Years of Lustration), *Gazeta Wyborcza*,
12 January 2005.
- 23 See "Droga do teczki – krok po kroku" (The Way to the File – Step by Step),
Rzeczpospolita, 21 February 2005.
- 24 This part on the problems concerning the legal remedies is based on the
information I gathered from my interviews with the Helsinki Foundation for
Human Rights (Warsaw) lawyers between December 2009 and May 2011.
- 25 "Jawność musi boleć" (Transparency must hurt), *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 4-5
February 2005.

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REPRESENTATIONS OF MOSES GASTER (1856–1939) IN ANGLOPHONE AND ROMANIAN SCHOLARSHIP

Abstract

This article will analyze a selection of Anglophone and Romanian scholarship on Moses Gaster. Gaster (1856–1939) was an intellectual, bibliophile, rabbi, educator, and activist for Jewish emancipation and a national home in the geographical area of Palestine. The article is complemented by a thematically organized bibliography which brings together Anglophone and Romanian scholarship, and other material, such as newspaper articles. This work thus hopes to contribute to the closing of the gap between Anglophone and Romanian writing on Gaster. Whereas in Anglophone contexts Gaster is better remembered as an Anglo-Jewish leader and an outspoken advocate of Zionism than for his literary scholarship, in Romania it seems to be the other way around. Gaster has, until recently, been remembered especially as a Romanian philologist and folklorist. This overview of the state of research also aims to contextualize my contribution, which focusses on Gaster's scholarship and collection. I will argue that in order to evaluate Gaster's significance, it is important to consider not only his wide-ranging scholarly work and his political and communal involvements, but also his passion for collecting.

Keywords: Moses Gaster, collecting, history of scholarship, Romanian philology, folklore, history of Zionism, Anglo-Jewish history, history of Jews in Romania.

I. Introduction

This article is part of my larger research project, "Moses Gaster: eclectic collector".¹ The title was chosen to emphasize that Gaster (1856–1939) was a collector in more than one sense of the word. First of course in the literal sense: he was a bibliophile who assembled an enormous collection

of printed books, manuscripts, pamphlets and amulets. Progress in documenting and analyzing his collection, now distributed over various institutions, has been made especially during the academic year of 2011–2012. The focus then was on the Gaster Collection at the John Rylands Library in Manchester. The project as a whole is not only concerned with Gaster's collection, but especially with evaluating his place in the history of scholarship in the fields to which he contributed. It may be suggested that there could be a link between the two aspects. Taking seriously the fact that Gaster was a collector may help in understanding and contextualizing his scholarship. Secondly, as a scholar he was in a sense also a collector: several of his main publications are collections – collections of stories, which he brought together from different manuscripts, and from books published by various scholars. In existing research on Gaster, the significance of his collecting has received scant attention. This article will compare and contrast Anglophone and Romanian scholarship on Gaster. It seems that in the Anglophone contexts Gaster is better remembered as an Anglo-Jewish leader and as an outspoken advocate of Zionism than for his literary scholarship. In Romania it is the other way around, at least for approximately the first fifty years after his death, he has been remembered almost exclusively as a Romanian philologist and folklorist. Gaster as an actor in history, which will be referred to in this article as his "political" side, understood in the wide sense of the word, is a relatively recent rediscovery. The argument will be made that in order to evaluate Gaster's contribution, it is important to consider not only his wide-ranging scholarly work and his political and communal involvements, but also his passion for collecting.

Moses Gaster was an intellectual, bibliophile, rabbi, and activist for Jewish emancipation and the establishment of a national home in the geographic area of Palestine. He was born in Romania and studied in Germany. After his studies he returned to Bucharest where he became a lecturer at the university. He also officiated as an inspector of secondary schools (appointed in 1883) and an examiner of teachers (since 1884).² Besides this he was active in various Jewish Societies, such as the Jewish Colonization Society and the Council of the Society for the publication of Jewish school books. Due to his involvement on behalf of the Jewish population he was expelled from Romania in 1885, together with other vocal Jewish intellectuals. He spent the rest of his life in England, where he became the Haham, the leader (roughly the equivalent of chief rabbi), of the Sephardic Congregation (Jews from Spanish and Portuguese

backgrounds) of the British Empire. The relations between Gaster and the Sephardic establishment were problematic, and in 1918 he was made to resign.

As a scholar Gaster was engaged in diverse fields of study, including Romanian and Roma language and literature, folklore, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, magic and mysticism, and Samaritan studies. He also published on other religious groups such as Hasidim and Karaites. Many of his interests can thus be understood as “marginal”, outside of the established canon of mainstream scholarly interests. In spite of his deteriorating eyesight, Gaster continued to publish and give talks throughout his life. Many of his scholarly publications were editions and studies of texts, especially in the area of Jewish and Christian literature from antiquity to the Middle Ages, and folklore. Some examples include *Literatura Populară Română* (1883), *Ilchester Lectures on Greco-Slavonic Literature* (1887), *Chrestomatie Română* (1891), *Hebrew Visions of Hell and Paradise* (1893), *Two Unknown Hebrew Versions of the Tobit Legend* (1896), *Chronicles of Jerahmeel* (1899), *Exempla of the Rabbis* (1924), *Asatir, the Samaritan Book of the Secrets of Moses* (1927) and *Maaseh Book of Jewish Tales and Legends* (1934).³ He also was a sharp commentator on “current affairs” and contributed numerous articles to newspapers and magazines.

Besides the legacy of his written output, another of his major achievements shows him in yet a different role, that of bibliophile and collector. Gaster assembled an enormous library of printed books and manuscripts (scrolls, fragments and codices) reflecting his wide ranging interests. This collection has now been distributed over several different institutions. Two sales were made when Gaster was still alive: in 1925 the British Library in London bought circa 1000 manuscripts. Most of these are Hebrew manuscripts (that is, various languages in Hebrew script), but they also obtained some Samaritan manuscripts. The Romanian Academy Library in Bucharest acquired most of Gaster’s Romanian manuscripts in 1936.⁴ The remainder of Gaster’s library was sold and donated after his death, especially in the 1950s. The most important holdings are at the John Rylands Library in Manchester,⁵ at the School of Slavonic and East European Studies, London⁶ and the Special Collections of University College London.⁷ Smaller collections are at the Brotherton Library in Leeds, and the YIVO Institute in New York.⁸ Many of Gaster’s printed books in the area of Judaica were acquired by the University of California in Los

Angeles when they bought up the stock of the booksellers Bamberger & Wahrman.

It is not surprising that Gaster as an intellectual, rabbi, talented orator, and one who was passionate about politics and Jewish causes, was strongly committed to education, in the wider sense of the word. He continuously emphasized the importance of study and learning for the Jewish community. Before, during and after his time as Haham, he wrote several books for children. In Romania he had already produced a short account of biblical history, which was reprinted three times.⁹ Starting in 1928, he published a series of booklets on the Jewish festivals.¹⁰ He was also responsible for a new edition of the prayer book.¹¹ It was one of the major disappointments of his life that his dream of turning the Lady Judith Memorial College at Ramsgate into a leading European Rabbinic seminary failed.¹² The college was founded by Sir Moses Montefiore as a memorial for his wife in 1867. Twenty years later, at the time Gaster started his post as Haham, it was used as a kind of retirement home for learned Jewish gentlemen. Gaster concluded that this was not in accordance with the original intention of the founder. He presented his ideas for reorganizing the college in writing to the Sephardic leadership.¹³ He wanted to transform this memorial college into a Rabbinic seminary, obviously inspired by his own experience of having studied at Breslau. The leadership approved of his plan, and appointed him as principal in 1888. The college opened for Rabbinic students in 1890. In the second of his annual reports he proudly states: "The reputation of the College has now spread over the Continent, and its importance and scientific character have been recognized near and far".¹⁴ However, behind the scenes things were not as glorious as they appeared from Gaster's published reports. Around 1895 the relationships between Gaster and members of the Sephardic establishment, which were already tense, started to deteriorate. Deep interpersonal conflicts were at the core of this so-called 'Ramsgate affair', or 'Montefiore scandal'. Differences in opinion about the correct interpretation of the statutes of the founding of the College as drawn up by Sir Moses Montefiore also played a major role. The accusations that the two students whom Gaster had ordained had engaged in immoral conduct may have been made up, and were certainly secondary.¹⁵

Gaster was a fervent correspondent who kept in touch with a great number of people. His contemporaries knew him as a talented orator, a fact which is mentioned in most of the articles which were written around the time of his eightieth birthday, in obituaries and in memorial

addresses. Those writings also on the whole place equal emphasis on Gaster's significance as a scholar and as an actor in history. The Romanian chief-rabbi and Zionist, I. Niemirower, stated in an obituary that "Moses Gaster was not just a great scholar and writer, but also a man of action. Thanks to his talent as an orator in different languages, he was often invited to speak, most notably at the Zionist conferences".¹⁶ Another obituary by the same author was entirely dedicated to the topic of Gaster as an important Zionist. His conclusion was that "Moses Gaster cannot be forgotten as a figure in our history, or as a Zionist".¹⁷ However, this is exactly what happened. Gaster, with his interest in marginal literature, became himself marginalized, even in the history of Zionism to which he had dedicated so much of his energy. In her monograph *The Unknown Gaster*, Măriuca Stanciu refers to him as a "forgotten Zionist leader".¹⁸ This may be the case especially in Romania, but it is not completely different in the Anglophone contexts. Philip Alexander has explained that "Moses Gaster is in many ways a controversial figure whose place in contemporary Jewish history, though assured, is by no means well-defined".¹⁹ James Renton has persuasively argued that it was in the context of the development of a "Weizmann-centric" history of the Zionist movement that "Moses Gaster was transformed from a widely respected, influential and politically aware Zionist leader into a petty and peripheral individual".²⁰

II. Anglophone representations

A. Gaster's difficult personality and troubled relationships

Although this is somewhat of a simplification, it seems that in Anglophone scholarship Gaster is most often dealt with in the context of Anglo-Jewish history. His involvement in Jewish causes, particularly Zionism, is well known, although not always positively regarded. Cecil Roth predicted in his memorial address delivered a month after Gaster's death at a meeting of the Jewish Historical Society of England, that his shortcomings will soon be forgotten.²¹ It seems fair to state that his prediction did not come true. Eugene Black stated that Moses Gaster "complained about everything and quarreled with almost everyone. From an institutional perspective, he proved at best a nuisance and at worst a major hazard to those causes into which he flung himself with such

abandon. Yet Gaster was English Zionist leadership writ large: substantial talent, excessive ego, and a predilection for quarrelsomeness".²² This characterization may be at the extreme end in terms of unflattering portraits of Gaster. Nevertheless, drawing attention to his difficult personality is a frequent component of Anglophone writing on Gaster, as will be illustrated with several examples in this section.

First, the entry by Geoffrey Alderman in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* starts as one would expect with a brief biographical introduction. This is followed by a comparatively short section on Gaster's scholarly achievements. The emphasis of the article is on Gaster's personality and conflicts, especially in his position as Haham. Alderman stated: "If the Spanish and Portuguese leadership hoped that Gaster would put the Sephardim back on the map of Anglo-Jewry, they were certainly not disappointed. But Gaster fell out with this leadership, just as he fell out with most other people with whom he came into contact".²³ Gaster's Zionism was one of the major sources of conflict with the Anglo-Jewish establishment, which was on the whole anti-Zionist. They perceived Gaster's Zionist activities as "compromising, undermining, and perverting his ecclesiastical position – and also their status as British citizens". That they had elected him as a Haham in the first place, in spite of his political convictions, is best explained by the plight of the Sephardic community. They were struggling to maintain their independence from the Askenazi majority. In this context they elected Gaster, an eminent and learned figure, as Haham.²⁴ He thus became the counterpart of the Askenazi chief rabbis, father and son Nathan (1845–1890) and Herman (1891–1911) Adler. Alderman observed that Gaster "relished and exulted in the role of underdog, which might have been made for him, and used the majesty of his office (an image which in a sense he created) to make the voice of Sephardi distinctiveness heard in every corridor of power to which he could gain access. He had no hesitation in turning personal prejudices into religious principles, a task made easier by Hermann Adler's comparative ignorance of Talmudic matters".

Second, the recollections by two of his sons, Vivian and Theodor Gaster, also draw attention to Gaster's difficult personality. Theodor's well rounded portrait of his father dealt with most aspects of Gaster's life and career. He evaluated Gaster's contributions and pointed out weaknesses in his scholarship and in his attitudes to his social context.²⁵ Theodor Gaster stated that his father's

innate temperament took toll not only scholastically, but also psychologically. Usually ahead of his contemporaries, he was, alike in his work and in his life, always restless and frustrated. ... He was *difficile* in committees and team work, because he had almost invariably seen the wider ramifications and implications of an issue before his colleagues had got to them ... A constant impatience tended at times to beget intolerance and to foster a conviction of infallibility. I never heard my father admit that he was wrong... His Zionist colleagues found him obstinate and intractable. The fact is, however, that he usually turned out to be more far sighted than they.²⁶

The unpublished six page typescript on Moses Gaster by his eldest son Vivian Gaster can be found among the UCL Gaster papers. It is undated, but from after the Second World War, and it seems to have been written as a speech at a family reunion. About half of it relates to Gaster's strained relationships and conflicts. Vivian Gaster explained that

generally speaking his relations with the congregation, especially the richer ones ... were unhappy. Not that he did not have many close friends, but he did have enemies or at least men who were unfriendly, men who were, as he said, narrow in their conceptions ... and resentful of his broader ideas. He was a fine preacher, a powerful teacher of Judaism and a leader in any Jewish cause, but he was not a 'spiritual' leader. He had not the essential humility of spirit.²⁷

On the next three pages of the typescript he described various examples of conflicts. He characterized Gaster's attitude as unyieldingly combative, fighting for what he thought ought to be done. In his conclusion Vivian Gaster observed that his father's attitude

led to much unhappiness and many estrangements. It was in fact his inability to compromise and his unwillingness to tie himself down even to meet a not unreasonable request, that resulted in his resignation of the post of Haham in 1918.²⁸

This "resignation" has also been described as a dismissal.²⁹ Taylor opens his chapter on Gaster by stating that he was the only one of twenty-one chief rabbis and hahamim to get fired. He pointed out that although considered by some as "the most formidable figure" in the history

of leaders of the British Jewish communities, Gaster was also perceived as “a difficult egomaniac, an impossible colleague and a vicious opponent”.³⁰

B. Gaster and Folklore

Whereas in Romanian literature on Gaster he is most frequently discussed within the study of folklore, there are only a handful of articles in English which discuss him in this context. Compared with portrayals of Gaster within the context of Anglo-Jewish history, in English articles on Gaster in the context of folklore his difficult personality and problematic social relations do not feature prominently, or are not referred to at all. Four studies will be discussed in this section. The first is a short obituary by Allen Gomme in the journal of the Folklore Society, of which Gaster had been a member for over fifty years, serving as its president in 1908 and 1909. Gomme stressed that Gaster has always played an “active and leading part” in the development of the “science” of folklore, and in the “day to day business of the Society”.³¹ Gaster’s other activities, including his political side, have been mentioned towards the end of the obituary:

it is right to remind ourselves in these days that Dr. Gaster commenced his activities on behalf of persecuted Jews as early as 1880 and helped at that time to found the first refugee colonies in Palestine, and that it was his connection with that movement that led to his being exiled from his native land, though happily without finality or rancor on either side.³²

Although the accuracy of this presentation of history might be questioned, it is noteworthy that Gomme drew attention to the political context in a short study primarily dedicated to Gaster’s scholarly achievements, particularly in the area of folklore. This contrasts with most of the Romanian portraits of Gaster within folklore studies and Romanian philology, where Gaster’s political dimension received scant attention. Gomme concluded by stating that Gaster’s life “adds luster to the name of Romania as it has enriched the country of his adoption and the whole world”.³³ Not a word had been devoted to Gaster’s difficult personality or the less than successful aspects of his life.

Whereas it could be argued that it is part of the genre of the obituary to focus exclusively on the positive aspects of the life of the deceased, the same does not apply to a portrait such as that published by Venetia Newall in 1975, which is the second study to be discussed here.³⁴ That

article has been based especially on testimonies from people who knew him, some correspondence, and newspaper articles, and concluded with nothing but praise:

Moses Gaster possessed all the qualities of an outstanding folklorist: love of tradition, his people and his nation, boundless enthusiasm and gifted scholarship, his private library overflowing with richness of books and incunabula. But he was much more than all this: he was a truly noble spirit.³⁵

Unlike the studies within the context of Anglo-Jewish history where emphasis is placed on Gaster's difficult personality, Newell illustrated with several examples that "Gaster's relations with other folklorists were friendly and cordial."³⁶ She also stressed that Gaster "was always ready to encourage the work of younger scholars".³⁷ Like Gomme's obituary, she devoted considerable attention to Gaster's political side, in her presentation of him as "a great Jewish nationalist."³⁸ A large section at the beginning of the article has been dedicated to Gaster's dismantling of the "blood libel accusation", particularly in the form of letters to the editor of *The Times*. She thus illustrated Gaster's readiness "to tackle the superstition of anti-semitism in any shape or form".³⁹ In this portrait, one looks in vain for a critical assessment of Gaster's work. It seems to have been written to defend Gaster's reputation. In this light it is worth mentioning that Newell thanked several of Gaster's children for their support and assistance in the writing of the article.

The third study, a few pages devoted to Gaster in a monograph on the history of the study of folklore in Britain, did more to place Gaster's scholarship within context, although still without a critical evaluation of specific studies by Gaster. Dorson placed Gaster within his chapter "the Society Folklorists". Like Gomme and Newell he thus demonstrated the significance of the connection between Gaster and the Folklore Society. He grouped Gaster among "three newcomers" who "joined in a formidable assault on the prevalent theory of survivalism. Joseph Jacobs, the Judaic scholar from Australia, Francis Hinde Groome, the gypsy expert, and Moses Gaster, the Romanian rabbi, found in spite of their divergent backgrounds a common sympathy for the migration hypothesis."⁴⁰ Attention to Gaster's political involvements has been limited to a brief reference to his expulsion. According to Dorson, Gaster was "exiled from his native land for his part in helping settle Sephardic Jews in Palestine".⁴¹

Dorson's focused on how this "unpredictable figure... the learned Moses Gaster"⁴² developed his arguments in favor of the migration theory in several of his publications. He hinted at Gaster's personality without explicitly criticizing it by using phrases such as his "lumping together" of several theories he disagreed with, "immediately leaping into the battle front", and arguing his case with a "confidently challenging voice".⁴³ In conclusion he stressed Gaster's achievements:

This learned rabbi, writing with equal fluency in Romanian, English, German and Hebrew, serving as officer of the Royal Asiatic Society, the Jewish Historical Society, and the Folk-Lore Society, contributed a Balkan tang to the golden period of the English folklore movement.⁴⁴

The fourth and last study to be discussed in this section also deals with Jacobs and Gaster together. After sketching the context of the expanding field of English folklore studies, Rabinovitch explained: "that two Jewish newcomers to the country, Joseph Jacobs (1854–1916) and Moses Gaster (1856–1939), could gain acceptance in English society through contributions in this field is evidence that being a Victorian gentleman was not limited to Englishmen only." He observed that these two "elite Jews" via their "very different approaches to folklore and anthropology" strove to be both English and Jewish, and aimed to show the general public that Jews had made significant contributions to civilization throughout history.⁴⁵ The differences between them have been reflected in the headings of the two subsections: "Joseph Jacobs: an English folklorist in late-Victorian England" and "Moses Gaster: a Jewish folklorist in Edwardian England".⁴⁶ Rabinovitch, much more than earlier Anglophone writing on Gaster and folklore and in contrast with Romanian writing on the subject, explicitly connected Gaster's folklore scholarship with his communal and political involvements. This has been made clear for example in his statement that

Gaster's affectionate descriptions of the fantasy world of tales, and the equilibrium established in them between all inhabitants of the earth, human and non-human, are likely a reflection of his own struggles at the time for the Zionist cause as well as for the improvement of living conditions for the Jews in Romania and tsarist Russia... It is worth pointing out that Gaster's presidency of the English Folk-Lore society also coincided with the most intensive period of Zionist activism in his life.⁴⁷

Another aspect of Rabinovitch' article relates to the debate of nationalism versus universalism within the study of folklore. Whereas some present Gaster as a Jewish nationalist,⁴⁸ and others as a Romanian patriot,⁴⁹ Rabinovitch seems to have come to a more accurate understanding of Gaster's work as he points out that Gaster emphasized the "universal human quality of folklore".⁵⁰ But like the other contributions discussed in his section, he does not provide a thorough examination of Gaster's publications. He draws upon Gaster's work to obtain insights into his views, rather than to evaluate the quality of his scholarship. Although he did not analyze Gaster's scholarship, he stated that compared with Jacobs, Gaster's "studies were more scholarly".⁵¹ Such a positive approach to Gaster's work seems to be reserved in the English speaking world for studies which deal with Gaster as a folklorist. As the next section will show, his scholarship is generally not as positively regarded within Jewish studies.

C. Gaster's "sloppy scholarship"

In addition to drawing attention to Gaster's limited social skills, another common ingredient of Anglophone writing on Gaster is highlighting the flaws in his scholarship, especially, as Tova Rosen and Eli Yassif have put it, his "lamentable habit of dating the texts he discovered and published to impossibly early periods – perhaps in order to magnify the importance of his discoveries".⁵² Theodor Gaster also addressed this point:

As his critics were not slow to point out, he bedeviled much of his work by an obstinate proclivity towards predating by centuries (in one case by a millennium!) almost every text that he discovered, in the romantic belief that mere antiquity automatically enhances intrinsic value.⁵³

Another example of this has been provided by Renate Smithuis, who started her introduction to the Genizah Collection in the John Rylands Library with an epigraph. She selected the following statement by Gaster: "It is well known that the smaller the leaves are the older they are".⁵⁴ Drawing attention to such a problematic claim as the first thing the reader sees vividly illustrates the point that Gaster's paleographic skills might not be what one would wish for.

Philip Alexander has provided an insightful re-evaluation of one of Gaster's books, a collection of stories published in 1924 under the title *Exempla of the Rabbis*. Alexander expressed the opinion that the neglect

of Gaster's scholarship "is not wholly justified". He particularly praises Gaster's "pioneering spirit, which led him into many fields which were unfashionable in his day".⁵⁵ In his introduction he observed that Gaster's reputation and influence began to decline around 1920. He referred to Gaster's difficult personality and his lack of ability to adjust himself to his social context as the main reason for this decline: "Strong-minded, independent and combative, he seems to have had little time for the arts of diplomacy. He tended to alienate people, and he found himself in his later years increasingly marginalized and isolated". Alexander next observed that Gaster's scholarly reputation "also suffered something of an eclipse. The inadequacies of his scholarship – perceived already by discerning critics during his lifetime – became glaringly obvious after his death. His work is now generally seen as over-hasty, inexact and unreliable, and few today would pay it much regard". The body of the article has been dedicated to a careful analysis of Gaster's edition of a collection of Rabbinic stories which he called the *Exempla of the Rabbis*. Alexander's assessment of this work shows that he fully recognizes Gaster's shortcomings. He confirms many of the usual points of criticism: the Hebrew text contains many mistakes, Gaster's English summaries "frequently miss the point, and sometimes contain outright mistranslations."⁵⁶ The long list of cross-references provided by Gaster which link the stories he presents to other stories in Jewish and world folklore "testify to his formidable command of folk literature, but the references are often inaccurate or imprecise, and the parallelism is of very different kinds."⁵⁷ Alexander observed that, engaging with Gaster's text, "it is very difficult for the reader to decide ... just what lies before him". He contextualized Gaster's work, stating that Gaster produced his edition "as an old-fashioned folklorist ... primarily concerned with recording parallelism in content between individual folktales". Unlike scholars of texts and literature today, such as Alexander and Smithuis, Gaster "was uninterested in questions of literary form" and "paid scant attention to the literary integrity of the compilations which he used".⁵⁸ Alexander provided a useful list in which he has traced most of the sections of the text back to their source manuscripts, which still leaves him with a few sections of diverse or unidentified sources. It turned out that the most important manuscript is Gaster Cod. 82 from the Rylands Gaster collection. The remainder of the article has been dedicated to an evaluation of this manuscript. In conclusion Alexander stated that this manuscript "may have a more central role to play [in the history of the development of Hebrew

prose] than has commonly been supposed".⁵⁹ Gaster's work thus seems to be perceived as worthy of reassessment because of the importance of the texts and manuscripts which he brought to light, rather than for the quality of his scholarship.

III. Romanian representations

A. Gaster the "Great Scholar"

The common somewhat negative perception of Gaster's scholarship as pointed out by Alexander, seems to apply particularly to the Anglophone context. Gaster's scholarly reputation does not seem to have suffered the same "eclipse" in Romania. An entry on Gaster can be found in nearly every encyclopedia of Romanian literature, writers, folklorists, ethnographers and even the *Romanian Encyclopedia* and the *Encyclopedic Dictionary*. The heading of the entry in the *Dictionary of Romanian Literature* provides a typical illustration of how Gaster has been identified: "philologist, historian of literature and folklorist".⁶⁰ The brief entry in the *Encyclopaedic Dictionary* identifies Gaster as "Romanian philologist of Jewish origin".⁶¹ In addition, several well respected Romanian scholars wrote articles on Gaster's contribution to various areas of Romanian culture. Most of these scholars were experts in the areas of Romanian language, literature or folklore. The emphasis of these studies can be illustrated for example by the first sentence of Chițimia's study on Gaster's contribution to Romanian folklore:

M Gaster was active in different areas of scholarship, but made his significant contributions especially in the context of the study of folklore and ancient literature, closely connected, using with success and competence the comparative method.⁶²

The idea of "comparative" research can be perceived as a way to make sense of Gaster's interest in different fields of scholarship. Although this idea does not seem to feature in English writings on Gaster, it can be found throughout the Romanian literature. Virgiliu Florea explained that "Gaster developed his true vocation as a comparativist as far back as his Breslau studies ...".⁶³ That the phrase has been applied not only in writings on Gaster in the context of Romanian philology, but also, more recently, in

studies which dealt with Gaster within Jewish Studies, is illustrated by the title of one of Stanciu's articles: "The Comparative Approach – a Ticket to Integration: A New Perspective on Moses Gaster's Comparative Studies on Jewish Popular Literature".⁶⁴ In it she placed Gaster firmly within the context of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, the intellectual movement which established Jewish Studies as an academic discipline. She thus expressed a view which differs from that of Alexander, who has argued that Gaster, with his "unfashionable" and marginal areas of research, "marks the transition from the concerns of the nineteenth century *Wissenschaft des Judentums* to the broader and more general phenomenological approach to Judaism which prevails in our own days".⁶⁵ Alexander thus recognized, more than Stanciu, the "marginal" nature of many of Gaster's interests. A last example to be mentioned here of reference in Romanian scholarship to Gaster as a "comparativist" is the title *Studies in Comparative Folklore*. Petre Florea chose this title for a collection of articles by Gaster, which he brought together for reprint in order to "commemorate the activities of the great scholar".⁶⁶

The recognition of Gaster as a "great scholar" is another important ingredient of Romanian scholarship, particularly in the articles which approach him within the context of Romanian philology. Gaster's younger contemporary, folklorist Arthur Gorovei begins his article of 1945 with the statement: "On 11 March 1939 the great scholar who contributed prominently to the study of our folklore passed away, at the age of 83 years."⁶⁷ Gorovei continued by listing Gaster's achievements, drawing particular attention to his contributions to important Romanian journals. The last section of his article consists of twelve letters which Gaster had sent to him over a period of 44 years, between 16 November 1893 and 30 November 1937.

That a substantial portion of Gaster's correspondence, particularly with Romanian intellectuals, has been made available in published books is due to the efforts of Virgiliu Florea over the past 30 years. Florea is professor (emeritus) at the Folklore Institute at Cluj-Napoca and spent considerable time researching the UCL Gaster Papers, on which his publications are based. In his first book, *M. Gaster in Correspondence: Literary Documents*, he published the correspondence, both ways, of Gaster with N. Cartoian, L. Șăineanu, and Caterina and Nicolae Titulescu. Each of the three sections has been preceded by a short study on the relationship of Gaster and his correspondents, based mainly on information obtained from the correspondence. In the preface Florea

referred to Gaster as “the great scholar, originally from Romania, author of the valued *Literatură Populară Română* and *Chrestomatie Română*, his best known works”.⁶⁸ More than a decade later Florea published *Romanian Friends of M. Gaster*.⁶⁹ It consists of short studies, most of which are followed by an appendix with documents such as letters (not always between Gaster and the figure to whom the chapter is dedicated). This work dealt with Gaster’s relations with figures from the “Junimea” literary circle in Bucharest: Titu Maiorescu,⁷⁰ Iacob Negruzzi, Vasile Alecsandri, Mihai Eminescu, Ion Creangă, I.L. Caragiale, and Ion Slavici. It thus has a tighter focus than the later work in two volumes *Romanian Writers in the Gaster Archive in London*, which has been organized by location of the correspondent.⁷¹ The first volume and the first section of the second (with two correspondents) dealt with people from Bucharest: Al. Odobescu, B.P. Hasdeu, Petre Ispirescu, Constantin Esarcu, Carmen Sylva,⁷² Ioan Bianu, Take Ionescu, Moses Schwarzfeld, Nicolae Iorga and Octavian Goga. The second volume then continued with five correspondents from Basarabia (currently the Republic of Moldova) and Bucovina (P.A. Sîrcu, I.G. Sbiera, Artur Gorovei, Vasile Grecu and Leca Morariu), one correspondent from Cluj (Constantin I. Marinescu), two from the USA (Oakland and New York, Samuel Ghinsberg and Leon Feraru),⁷³ and a short section with one letter from Petre P. Carp.

Another work, which deserves to be better known in Anglophone contexts, is dedicated to the correspondence between Gaster and Agnes Murgoci (née Kelly), Australian-born folklorist of Romanian culture who lived in England and like Gaster was a member of the Folklore Society. The introductory study has been published both in Romanian and in English. The 111 documents which follow contain letters from Agnes Murgoci, Moses Gaster, Agnes’ daughter Helen Murgoci (all in English), and ten letters in Romanian by Agnes’ husband George Munteanu Murgoci. The work as a whole sheds light on folklore studies, on the collegial relations between these two folklorists (a reoccurring theme is Gaster giving Murgoci access to the resources in his library), but also on the historical and political contexts. Two examples are the visit to Romania which Gaster made along with other specially invited English participants in 1921, and attempts at improving the reputation of Romania in the English media. After introducing Agnes Murgoci, the “unknown Romanian folklorist”, Florea referred to Gaster as “the great Romanian-born scholar, whose renown speaks for itself”.⁷⁴

A similarly laudatory expression is “Moses Gaster: a great scholar”, as title of the first chapter in his monograph *Moses Gaster, the Person and his Work*.⁷⁵ In it, Florea praised Gaster’s *Literatura Populară Română* as “a fundamental work”.⁷⁶ *Chrestomatie Română* deserved credit as Gaster’s “most important work”.⁷⁷ Although this monograph has been structured by titles of Gaster’s publications,⁷⁸ Florea did not provide a thorough critical evaluation of their content. Instead his focus was on the contexts of these publications, based again on his research of the correspondence and other documents from among the UCL Gaster Papers.

One of Florea’s predecessors at the folklore archive in Cluj, Ion Muşlea, gave a paper on Gaster’s contribution to Romanian Folklore in 1959, which was published posthumously in a collection of essays.⁷⁹ It consists mainly of basic biographical information and an overview of selected publications in the area of Romanian literature. He thus placed Gaster’s scholarship in the context of his time. The overview starts with Gaster’s contribution to the journal *Columna lui Traian* in 1878.⁸⁰ Muşlea evaluated it as “a serious scholarly contribution of an erudite scholar who mastered the method of composing an article worthy of being published in any serious journal.”⁸¹ Dealing with *Literatura Populară Română*, the work to which he has devoted most attention, Muşlea credited Gaster with “having provided us with a beginning of the synthesis of our folklore”.⁸² Gaster’s productivity has also been underlined, as Muşlea pointed out that between 1877 and 1937 not a year passed without a contribution by Gaster to the study of universal folklore.⁸³ He observed that Gaster’s interest in Romanian folklore “did not decline with old age”, pointing particularly to Gaster’s re-edition of Anton Pann’s *Povestea Vorbiei*, written at the age of 78. He appreciated this work, particularly for Gaster’s “interesting and valuable” study of the development of proverbs. About Gaster’s biography of Pann, Muşlea observed that in spite of the fact that some information is missing (which Gaster would have been able to obtain only in Romania), it is still the “most complete and most interesting” biography until the appearance of the work of Ion Manole.⁸⁴ Having mentioned Gaster’s last publications, and the fact that he died on the way to a lecture he was going to give on Romanian folklore, Muşlea observed “during his entire life, until the moment of his death, folklore was his preferred pursuit ... Gaster loved folklore as very few scholars did”.⁸⁵ Muşlea did not seem to intend it as a point of criticism when he characterized Gaster as an armchair folklorist. What he meant is that Gaster was interested particularly in written popular literature. With a few exceptions, he did not go out

into villages collecting tales from “the people”, but instead drew upon collections of stories published by his fellow-scholars. Muşlea pointed out that in spite of this, Gaster still contributed to the collection of folk tales, because he supported the collecting activities others. In conclusion he characterized Gaster as passionate about folklore and considered his comparative studies and his editions of popular literature as his most important contributions.⁸⁶

Although Gaster is thus on the whole positively portrayed in Romanian scholarship, some points of criticism have been raised. Ovidiu Bârlea dedicated a short section to Gaster in his history of Romanian folklore studies. He started out by characterizing Gaster, “the learned Rabbi”, as “a sound connoisseur of ancient literature preserved in manuscripts”. He pointed out that Gaster approached folklore as an appendix to the “book” of popular written literature. Gaster was not alone in doing so; Bârlea perceived him as part of a movement which regarded written literature (whether Hebrew, Indian, Arabic or Persian) as the foundation of European folklore.⁸⁷ A large portion of the study consists of Bârlea’s evaluation of Gaster’s *Literatura Populară Română* (1883). He recognized Gaster’s “unmeasured generalizing” as one of the major shortcomings of the work.⁸⁸ He also criticized Gaster for arguing that fairytales are more recent than other scholars at the time thought, without presenting any evidence in support of his claims.⁸⁹

Whereas in Anglophone writing Gaster’s knowledge of languages has usually been praised as remarkable,⁹⁰ in some Romanian publications this aspect has been seen as underdeveloped. The short entry in the *Romanian Encyclopedia* of 1900, which identified Gaster as an “erudite person of Jewish origin”, states that Gaster’s works have been well received, but “regarding the language they are very imperfect, especially those written in Romanian”.⁹¹ The author of one of the reports evaluating unfavorably *Literatura Populară Română* for the Romanian Academy is of the opinion that “Gaster did not have sufficient knowledge of the language in which he wrote, the work is full of grammatical and linguistic errors.”⁹²

According to Ilie Bărbulescu, Gaster did not know any Slavonic language.⁹³ Bărbulescu was a member of the Romanian Academy and a Professor of Slavonic Studies at the University of Iaşi. He shared the nationalistic views of the intellectuals active there at the time. He wrote an article about Gaster’s “scholarly personality” on the occasion of Gaster’s 80th birthday, which was abundantly celebrated.⁹⁴ Bărbulescu responded to the “articles of praise” which had appeared in the Romanian press at

the time.⁹⁵ In his view the praise was “partly deserved”. He recognized Gaster as an important scholar, because he opened new roads in the study of Romanian folklore and philology. The professor from Iași appreciated the value of both *Literatura populară română* and *Chrestomatie română* as pioneering works. But he soon added that they are valuable only because of their novelty, only because that kind of work had not been done before. On a closer examination there are many shortcomings. He provided a long list of grammatical and orthographic mistakes. But more importantly he pointed to what he called “the narrow horizon” of the works as their major flaw. He considered it a serious problem that in his work on Romanian literature Gaster has not made thorough comparisons with Slavonic and Hungarian literature. That would have been required for a proper understanding of the Romanian literature.

After those scholarly points of criticism, Bărbulescu’s article suddenly takes a completely different turn. He claimed that Gaster won his good name not just because of his scholarly contributions, but because of the “noise” that was made by the “national and international socialist movement.”⁹⁶ He boldly stated that Gaster was expelled, because he was a socialist. It was also the socialist movement that made sure that he obtained the position of Chief Rabbi so soon after his arrival in London. Bărbulescu even went a step further, suggesting that Gaster was helped in his success, not only by being a part of the socialist movement, but also of Freemasonry. According to him this was the only explanation for the fact that the Romanian Academy, “among which there are many Freemasons”, decided in 1929 to make Gaster an honorary member, even though this honor was not bestowed on other scholars “whose work was by no means inferior to that of Gaster”.⁹⁷ It may be perceived as a confirmation of Gaster’s confrontational personality, so often commented upon in Anglophone scholarship, that he responded to these accusations. He sent Bărbulescu a letter, plus a bibliography of his work.⁹⁸ Gaster was not alone in defending himself. His close friend Moses Schwarzfeld responded in his paper *Egalitatea*. He corrected Bărbulescu’s statement that Gaster did not know any Slavonic languages, by asserting that Gaster “already in his youth knew old Slavonic and some of the Slavonic languages, such as Russian”. Furthermore, Schwarzfeld reduced to the realm of phantasy Bărbulescu’s views regarding the reasons for Gaster’s expulsion and for his honorary membership of the Romanian Academy (in other words, the membership of Freemasonry and of the Socialist Movement). Having pointed out out these and other mistakes, he urged Bărbulescu to publish a rectification

in his journal *Arhiva*.⁹⁹ Bărbulescu responded, not by rectifying anything, but by defending himself and restating his point of view in even stronger terms in a second article.¹⁰⁰

Those ideas of the professor (Bărbulescu), writing in the 1930s, can be compared and contrasted with the discourse, several decades later, of a professor (Macrea) who complied with the official communist ideology of that time. Both of these contributions show how the ideology of the time influenced the way Gaster has been presented, at least in some publications. Linguist Dimitrie Macrea has a chapter on Moses Gaster in his 1978 book on the history of Romanian linguists and philologists. He began it by observing that “the linguistic and philological activities of Moses Gaster, whose contribution is in general little known to the general public, was not correctly understood and appreciated, among us, in his time.”¹⁰¹ Although he recognized Gaster’s main fields of activity as “folklore, literary history and Semitics”, he was of the opinion that his work in the areas of linguistics and Romanian philology was of special importance, because it had formed his academic foundation (it was the main focus of his studies). Still on the first page of his study, he explained that Gaster’s philological studies “originated from his love, manifest on all occasions, for the Romanian language and our ancient literary and popular creations”. In sharp contrast to Bărbulescu, Macrea enthusiastically praised Gaster’s *Chrestomatie Română*. He regarded this “impressive”¹⁰² publication as “a work which has become classic”, establishing “Gaster’s name as a philologist and editor of ancient texts”.¹⁰³ It is noteworthy that Macrea does not refer to Gaster’s Jewishness. Instead, he leaves no opportunity unused to present Gaster as a passionate Romanian patriot. He even perceived Gaster’s “passionate love for Romania’s soil” to be a fundamental aspect of his scholarship.¹⁰⁴ Gaster’s expulsion has been attributed entirely to the fact that “the liberal politician Dimitrie Sturdza had the most hostile attitude towards Gaster”.¹⁰⁵ The situation between them had escalated when Gaster had ridiculed Sturdza’s explanations for the origin of two Romanian place names in a public lecture, offering “sound scholarly arguments” to support his view. According to Macrea, an embittered Sturdza responded by expelling Gaster from the country. This was possible, because “Gaster, although born and raised in Romania, did not have Romanian citizenship due to the laws of the time”.¹⁰⁶ His explanation completely fails to account for the other vocal Jewish intellectuals who were expelled. Surely not all of them had insulted Dimitrie Sturdza.

Similar veiled language regarding Gaster's expulsion can also be found in some other articles. In the entry on Gaster in the *Dictionary of Romanian Literature* Berdan stated: "In 1885, following a chauvinistic campaign against him, Gaster was expelled from the country".¹⁰⁷ Datcu, in his *Dictionary of Romanian Ethnologists*, shared Macrea's view, explaining that Gaster was expelled, "following a political conflict with D.A. Sturdza".¹⁰⁸ A notable exception is the way in which already in 1968 Chițimia criticized the view that the expulsion was due to a conflict with Sturdza. He referred instead to Gaster's activities on behalf of the Jewish population, particularly his newspaper article which had exposed violence directed at Jews during a conflict in a rural community in Romanian Moldova.¹⁰⁹

B. Gaster as a political figure – recently rediscovered

In spite of the exception in Chițimia's contribution, the majority of Romanian publications prior to the 1990s dealt almost exclusively with Gaster as a Romanian philologist. In those articles Gaster's role as an actor in history, in other words his political side, has been overlooked.

Ambrus Miskolczy tried to remedy this situation in a Romanian-Hungarian work (with a summary in English) published in Budapest in 1993. In his preface he stated that Gaster is a figure who needs to be rediscovered in the history of scholarship.¹¹⁰ Miskolczy's contribution consists of a selection of Gaster's articles and correspondence, "previously unknown documents which shed light on his psychology and spirituality". He suggested that "the undercurrent of his creativity and attitudes was nonconformity".¹¹¹ His substantial introductory study is entitled "From the cultivation of traditions to modern nationalism: the rebellion (or revolt) of Moses Gaster."¹¹² Although he mentioned Gaster's published work, he does so in passing within a study which places Gaster in the political and social developments of his historical context. He stressed Gaster's conflicts with the Romanian antisemitic political elite. The study consists of four sections and combines a chronological with a thematic organization. The first section "The world of Gaster's Bucharest and Romanian antisemitism" dealt with Gaster's childhood and youth within the context of the situation of Jews at the time. Miskolczy made use of Gaster's personal reminiscences, but not in an uncritical fashion.¹¹³ An example is his view that Gaster may have exaggerated things in his section on his childhood memories, for example when claiming that the Transylvanians brought antisemitism to

Bucharest.¹¹⁴ A corrective to the widespread assumption in Anglophone scholarship that Gaster was an outsider to the Sephardic community is the information that Gaster was Sephardic from his father's side of the family and Ashkenazy from his mother's.¹¹⁵ The second section carries the title "Rebellion against his parents?" Miskolczy stated that besides his conflict with the antisemitism of the time, Gaster had two further confrontations as a student in Breslau: with himself, and with his father. The section focused particularly on Gaster's correspondence with his father from 1879. The next section, "rebellion against the powers", dealt with the political situation in Romania and Gaster's part in the struggle for Jewish emancipation after his return from Breslau. Miskolczy mentioned Gaster's failed attempt to obtain Romanian citizenship and provided probably the most detailed account of Gaster's expulsion and the various circumstances which led up to it.¹¹⁶ At the beginning of the section Miskolczy explained that by 1885 Gaster had

developed his activities in three related areas: he tried to renew Jewish religious life, he thoroughly researched the history of old Romanian literature and Romanian popular culture, and he had started the work of organizing the emancipation of Jews in Romania.¹¹⁷

This portrayal of Gaster's activities in Bucharest between his student days and his expulsion differs significantly from those in the studies discussed earlier. Here much more emphasis is placed on Gaster's communal and political involvement. Another point is that Miskolczy, like Newell mentioned earlier, stressed Gaster's modern outlook in relation to Jewish communal life and in his scholarship.¹¹⁸ The last section is dedicated to Gaster's identity as a Zionist, under the heading "the evolution of Moses Gaster from traditionalism to modern nationalism: Gaster's Zionism". Miskolczy correctly observed that Gaster occupied a somewhat unusual (he used the term "isolated") position within the Zionist moment. He does not express it in terms of locating Gaster within political and cultural Zionism, but argued that Gaster's originality consisted of the way in which he tried "to combine western enlightenment with eastern traditionalism".

Miskolczy's study is followed by a selection of Gaster's publications and some correspondence (including with his father, Romanian politicians, and Hungarian scholars). The publications by Gaster are a book review (in German) in which he challenged some of the then commonly held

views on Romanian history, a study on the Hungarian Jewish sect the Sabbatarians (in Romanian, and translated into Hungarian), an edition of some Székely tales, and an article "The Spread of Judaism through the Ages", in which Gaster stressed the role of the Hungarian Sabbatarians. This choice of material illustrates what Miskolczy stated in his English summary:

Gaster's activities are related to Hungarian history... Moses Gaster is a scholar who understood the secret of the development of multinational life in Transylvania: respect of otherness.¹¹⁹

That is certainly an idea worth exploring, whether Gaster's interest in the literature, history and language of marginal groups (besides Sabbatarians also Samaritans, Karaites and Roma) was the result of such convictions. In conclusion Miskolczy expressed the hope that his book "draws attention not only to the life and work of a great scholar and humanist, but it also makes one understand that his life must be examined as a totality because it has a profound message for our world".¹²⁰ This focus on Gaster's life as a whole, and the suggestion that it holds relevance for today, seems far removed from earlier Romanian publications and their more narrow focus on Gaster's contribution to Romanian language and literature.

It seems that Miskolczy's work has not received as much attention as might have been expected. Five years later, Eskenasy still mentioned that in Romania Gaster is much better known as a scholar than as an actor in modern history.¹²¹ He made that statement in his introduction to his edition of Gaster's memoirs, some correspondence and other documents that shed more light on Gaster's political involvements. What is called "memoirs" is better described as fragmentary and rather messy reminiscences, which Gaster dictated between 1930 and 1938 to "two secretaries who were both refugees from Nazi Germany, and whose command of English was not at that time as excellent as it afterwards became".¹²² Gaster himself was by that time completely blind and thus unable to check his facts when referring to events from half a century earlier. There is much repetition, and some inconsistency. Nevertheless, Eskenasy's Romanian translation of "Gaster's memoirs" is now frequently cited in Romanian scholarship, particularly within Jewish Studies.

Stanciu's 2006 monograph, to which reference has already been made, made frequent use of Eskenasy's edition of Gaster's personal reminiscences. As the title of the work indicates, she aimed to (re)discover

“the unknown Gaster”, namely his political side, his standing up for Jewish emancipation and for the right to a Jewish national home. The introductory chapter of the monograph presents an overview, particularly of Gaster’s early career in its context, under the title “landmarks on an intellectual journey”.¹²³ The second chapter focussed on Gaster’s scholarship in the area of Romanian philology and culture. This is followed by a chapter which stresses the significance of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* as Gaster’s foundation. The fourth chapter addresses Gaster’s publications in the field of Jewish Studies, and the fifth deals with his writings which show him as an actor in modern history. Publications by Gaster have been mentioned throughout the monograph, but there could have been more detailed analysis of Gaster’s work. The conclusion rightly stressed the polyvalent nature of Gaster’s contributions. The study is followed by nearly one hundred pages of reprints of work by Gaster in the areas under consideration in the monograph: Romanian culture, Jewish studies, and politically engaged articles from newspapers and magazines. It also contains some photograph, a feature which it has in common with the publications of Virgiliu Florea.

Conclusion: Gaster as “encyclopedist” and collector

In Romanian scholarship Gaster has been perceived, and on the whole admired, as a scholar in the areas of Romanian language, literature and folklore. Only in the last twenty years has his “political side” been rediscovered. The edition in Romanian translation of his personal reminiscences has played a central role in this rediscovery. It is not surprising that the focus on the flaws in Gaster’s character, especially his limited interpersonal skills, so prominent in Anglophone portraits, are virtually absent from Romanian representations, because they rely to a much larger extent on Gaster’s own words, and on how Gaster himself wished to be remembered.

Virgiliu Florea pointed out that “among specialists exists the opinion that Gaster’s work can only be studied in separate parts”.¹²⁴ I am inclined to suggest a different approach, namely to consider as much as possible the breadth of Gaster’s scholarly and communal activities when trying to assess his contribution and significance. Mircea Eliade was a historian of religion and one of the most well-known Romanian scholars and at

that time part of the extreme right establishment. He praised Gaster in an obituary as

one of the most learned people of this century. He was part of that class of intellectuals, today quite rare, who do not limit their curiosity to the development of only a few areas of scholarship. He was an encyclopedist in the true sense of the word ... Few scholars will be able to cover the wide range of subjects which Dr. Gaster fruitfully cultivated in 60 years of uninterrupted scholarly work.¹²⁵

Theodor Gaster also commented on the diversity of his father's achievements, and hinted at what in Romanian writings has often been referred to as the comparative method. He stated that Moses Gaster's

distinctive contribution to learning and letters lies, however, not so much in the propounding of particular theories about particular texts (many of which were, in fact, wrong) as in a unique gift for correlating and cross fertilizing areas of study previously kept apart. He was forever opening windows and revealing new and exciting vistas. Few have done so much to put so many old things in so many new perspectives.¹²⁶

It may be suggested that Gaster's nature as an "encyclopedist" relates to his passion for collecting. As a collector, Gaster brought together an enormously diverse range of manuscripts, printed books, amulets, and other items, in many languages, from different historical periods and geographical areas. As a scholar, in some of his works (such as *Romanian Bird and Beast Stories*, 1915) he brought together various stories, found by him in the printed works of his contemporaries and predecessors. In others, (such as *Chrestomatie Română*, 1891), he collected texts from many different manuscripts. In my current and future research I aim to analyze further the possible connection between Moses Gaster's scholarship and his collecting activities. It may be suggested that in order to attempt to understand his scholarship, one has to take notice of his activities and mindset as a collector.

NOTES

- ¹ This research will be continued from September 2013 until August 2017 as a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Manchester.
- ² Information gathered from a CV, written probably at the very end of the nineteenth century, UCL Gaster papers, item 1/E/3.
- ³ The bibliography compiled by his friend and assistant Bruno Schindler ("List of Publications of Dr. M. Gaster", in B. Schindler (ed), *Gaster Centenary Publication*, Lund, Humphries and Co., London, 1958, 23–40) contains 281 items but is not complete. It is particularly selective in book reviews, articles for newspapers and magazines and Gaster's earlier work published in Romania. Some of the missing publications can be found in the bibliography of Stanciu, M., *Necunoscutul Gaster: Publicistica Culturală, Ideologică și Politică*, Editura Universității, Bucharest, 2006, 231–35.
- ⁴ For an overview, see Simonescu, D., "Colecția de manuscrise M. Gaster din Biblioteca Academiei Române", in *Viața Românească* 32.5, 1940, 6–32. The manuscripts were accompanied by a typed handlist, *My Collection of Old Romanian Manuscripts* (reference number A2517) in which Gaster briefly describes the 206 manuscripts (most of which contain multiple compositions). They have also been described in the Romanian manuscript catalogue: Ștrempel, G., *Catalogul Manuscriselor Românești*, I, B.A.R. 1–1600, Bucharest, Editura științifică și enciclopedică, 1978, 213–61 and 296–98.
- ⁵ The Rylands Gaster collection is the most diverse in types of material and languages. It consists of manuscripts (divided over the Hebrew, Samaritan and Miscellaneous (nearly twenty languages) sequences), c. 15.000 manuscript fragments from the Cairo Genizah (recently digitised and catalogued, see <http://rylandsgenizah.org>, last accessed 14 October 2013), Gaster's own copies of his published work, and the Rylands Gaster archive. This archive consists of 1) correspondence between Gaster and members of the Samaritan community in Nablus (c. 500 letters), 2) Gaster's lists of his books ("Library Catalogues"), and 3) the Rylands Gaster Papers, which are working documents: notes, studies, drafts, proofs of Gaster's published work, unpublished articles and notes, and copies of original manuscripts. For a preliminary catalogue of the third section, see Haralambakis, M., *Box list of Moses Gaster's working papers at the John Rylands Library*, Manchester, Centre for Jewish Studies, 2012.
<http://www.manchesterjewishstudies.org/storage/Gaster%20boxlist.pdf> (last accessed 27 June 2013)
 For an overview of the Rylands Gaster collection as a whole, an inventory of the miscellaneous manuscript sequence and a catalogue of the German Manuscripts, see Haralambakis, M. "A Survey of the Gaster Collection in the

- John Rylands Library", in *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 89:2, 2013, 107–30.
- 6 This is a collection of printed books from Gaster's library, particularly in the areas (broadly defined) of Romanian and other European languages (including dictionaries and textbooks), literature, folklore, history and politics. An overview, which focusses especially on Romanian early printed books, has been provided by Deletant, D., "A Survey of the Gaster Books in the School of Slavonic and East European Studies Library", in *Solanus*, 10, 1975, 14–23.
 - 7 Known as the UCL Gaster Papers, it is the largest Gaster archival collection. It includes correspondence, notes, diaries, sermons, accounts, invitations, photo albums etc. At present the collection is temporarily housed at the National Archives, in Kew. It consists of more than 170,000 items, in 337 boxes (plus 22 volumes and 9 rolls). See Levi, T., *The Gaster Papers: A Collection of Letters, Documents, of the Late Haham Dr Moses Gaster (1856–1939)*, University College Library, London, 1976.
 - 8 This last mentioned collection is probably the smallest and most focussed, consisting of one archival box containing several hundreds of items such as postcards, wall-calendars, and letters of appeal which Gaster received from charitable institutions in Palestine between 1900 and the early 1920s. See Hill, B.S., "The YIVO Collection of 'Moses Gaster Papers'", in *YIVO News*, 2006, 16–17.
 - 9 Gaster, M., *Istoria Biblica: De la începutul lumii până la Maccabei. Impreună cu o geografie a Palestinei. Pentru usul școalelor Israelite*, Bucharest, 1881 (2nd ed. 1894; 3rd ed. 1897). Later he prepared an English version: *Stories from the Bible*, Raphael Tuck, London, 1925.
 - 10 Titles include *The Story of Chanukah* (1928), *The Story of Passover* (1929), *The Story of Purim* (1929), *The Story of Shevuot* (1930) and *The Story of the High Festivals and the Feast of Tabernacles* (1931). Typescript drafts of *The Story of Shabbat* and *The Story of the Fast Days* can be found in the Rylands Gaster Papers 11/6, see Haralambakis, *Box list*, 61.
 - 11 Gaster M. (ed.), *The Book of Prayer and Order of Service According to the Custom of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews*, 6 vols, Henry Frowde, London, 1901–1906. Earlier his Romanian translation of the prayer book had appeared as *Carte de rugăciuni pentru Israeliți*, Bucharest, 1883.
 - 12 Twenty-eight years later, after explaining why it took him so long to finish the publication of the *Exempla of the Rabbis*, of which he had already published a section in his last report of the Montefiore College in 1896, he stated: "I prefer not to dwell here on the events which followed and prevented the completion of the work at the time; the memory alone is sufficient to deepen the bitterness which has grown from year to year". Gaster, M. *The Exempla of the Rabbis, Being a Collection of Exempla, Apologues and Tales*

- culled from Hebrew Manuscripts and Rare Books*, The Asia Publishing Co., London-Leipzig 1924, x–xi.
- ¹³ Gaster, M., “Scheme for the Reorganization of the Judith College” (typescript, undated, but a Report by the Elders of the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation, dated 18 Nov 1887 responds to it; both documents are at UCL Gaster Papers 4/A/1(3)).
- ¹⁴ Gaster, M., *Report of the Lady Judith Montefiore College, Ramsgate, 1891–92* Wertheimer, Lea & Co, London, 1892, 3.
- ¹⁵ This interpretation is based on a study of the abundance of correspondence, reports, investigations, newspaper cuttings and other materials related to the Montefiore College at the UCL Gaster Papers 4/A/1–4/B/8.
- ¹⁶ Niemirower, I., “Dr. Moses Gaster”, in *Curierul Israelit*, 12 March 1939, 1. Throughout this article, English paraphrases from Romanian contributions have been made by the author.
- ¹⁷ Niemirower, I., “Moses Gaster ca mare Zionist”, in *Știri din Lumea Evrească*, 9 March 1939, 1–2. Schwarzfeld put it even stronger: “the future will realise more fully how much the Zionist movement owes to his [Gaster’s] untiring energy, his fiery speeches and to his unflagging hope at a time when others were given over to despondency”. Schwarzfeld, M., “Biographical Sketch of Dr. Gaster’s Early Days”, in B. Schindler and A. Marmorstein (eds.), *Occident and Orient, being Studies in Semitic Philology and Literature, Jewish History and Philosophy and Folklore in the widest sense ... Gaster Anniversary Volume*, London, 1936, 6.
- ¹⁸ “Un lider sionist uitat” is the title of one of the subsections in her chapter which deals with Gaster as an actor in history, based mainly on his publications which reveal his political involvement (particularly Jewish emancipation and Zionism) Stanciu, *Necunoscutul Gaster*, 105–20.
- ¹⁹ Alexander, P.S., “Gaster’s *Exempla of the Rabbis*: A Reappraisal”, in G. Sed-Rajna (ed), *Rashi 1040–1990: Hommage à Ephraïm E. Urbach*, Cerf, Paris, 1993, 793.
- ²⁰ Renton, J., “Reconsidering Chaim Weizmann and Moses Gaster in the Founding-Mythology of Zionism”, in M. Berkowitz (ed), *Nationalism, Zionism and Ethnic Mobilization of the Jews in 1900 and Beyond*, Brill, Leiden, 2004, 130, 150.
- ²¹ Roth, C., “Moses Gaster”, in *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England XIV*, 1940, 251.
- ²² Black, E.C., “A Typological Study of English Zionists”, in *Jewish Social Studies*, 9.3, 2003, 20.
- ²³ Alderman, G., “Gaster, Moses, Scholar and Rabbi”, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004. Online edition. In spite of the problematic relationship between Gaster and the Elders of the Congregation (the Yehidim), they did sent his widow their condolences, stressing Gaster’s serving attitude and positive contributions: “Dr. Gaster, who played a leading

part in all spheres of Jewish life and thought, was ever ready to place his knowledge and gift of oratory at the service of his People, and his outstanding personality has left its impress on contemporary Jewry." 12 March 1939, UCL Gaster Papers 1/N/2.

24 Taylor has described Gaster's election to the office of Haham as "a classic case of appoint in haste and repent at leisure". Taylor, D., *British Chief Rabbis 1664–2006*, Vallentine Mitchell, London, 2007, 291.

25 This portrait was originally published as "Prolegomenon" to the reprint of Moses Gaster's *Studies and Texts in Folklore, Magic, Mediaeval Romance, Hebrew Apocrypha, and Samaritan Archaeology*, Ktav, New York, 1971. Later, it was appended as "Theodor's Memoir: Moses Gaster 1856–1939" to Gaster, B. (ed), *Memoirs of Moses Gaster*, London, Privately Printed, 1990, 102–13.

26 Gaster, T., "Moses Gaster 1856–1939," 107.

27 Gaster, V., "Moses Gaster", Undated typescript, UCL Gaster Papers 1/P, 3.

28 Gaster, V., "Moses Gaster", 6.

29 E.g. by Alderman, "Gaster, Moses", online version (no page numbers). Primary source material, particularly newspaper cuttings, relating to the incident which provided the immediate cause of the dismissal can be found among the UCL Gaster Papers 3/B/3. The Elders of the Congregation had given him the choice to return to London or to resign. Gaster suffered ill health during the war and had left London (which was being raided by German Zeppelins) for Brighton. As mentioned earlier, the tensions between Gaster and the Elders of the Congregation had already escalated in the context of Gaster's time as principal of the Lady Judith Montefiore College, 1889–1896. After the decision was made to dismiss Gaster as principal and to close the college as a seminary for the training of Rabbis, a meeting of the Yehidim (non-elders) was called, on 14 June 1896, to vote whether Gaster could stay on as Haham. Gaster won the vote of confidence, which seems to have been largely due to the efforts of Joshua Levy. See UCL Gaster Papers 4/B/4(4).

30 Taylor, D., *British Chief Rabbis*, 288.

31 Gomme, A., "Dr. Moses Gaster", in *Folk-lore L*, 1939, 205.

32 Gomme, "Dr. Moses Gaster", 206.

33 Gomme, "Dr. Moses Gaster", 206.

34 Newall, V., "The English Folklore Society under the Presidency of Haham Dr. Moses Gaster", in *Folklore Research Centre Studies 5*, 1975, 197–225.

35 Newall, "English Folklore Society", 225.

36 Newall, "English Folklore Society", 210. An example, which further aimed to illustrate that "Gaster was in many ways surprisingly modern", is his suggestion of Charlotte Burne as his successor, thus initiating the election of the first female president of the Folk-Lore Society in 1908.

- ³⁷ Newall, "English Folklore Society", 207. Gaster's interest in and encouragement of young people has also been stressed by Herbert Loewe in a memorial address delivered to the Dr Moses Gaster Lodge of Benei Berith in Manchester, a couple of months after Gaster's death. Loewe described Gaster's initiative of giving lectures at synagogue on Sabbath afternoons, which deeply impressed him and other young people at the time, "we were stimulated week after week by his eloquence and learning. To those lectures many of us owe our deep and permanent interest in Jewish thought, many of us were by this means attracted to Jewish studies". Loewe then described the experience of benefiting from Gaster's encouragement, hospitality and library. "He could not only talk, but he could listen ... The most timid adolescent found that he could speak openly to Dr. Gaster.... You came to him with a crude idea for an essay, you left him encouraged and enlightened. He was ever ready to help. He drew attention to gaps, he suggested improvements and new lines of thought. He never failed to take an interest in proposals that were brought to him." Loewe, H., "Tribute to the Life of Dr. Moses Gaster," unpublished typescript, undated, accompanied by a short note to Mrs Gaster, dated 27.6.1939, UCL Gaster Papers 1/N/2, pp 3, 5, 6.
- ³⁸ Newall, "English Folklore Society", 206.
- ³⁹ Newall, "English Folklore Society", 204.
- ⁴⁰ Dorson, R. M., *The British Folklorists: A History*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1968, 266.
- ⁴¹ Dorson, *British Folklorists*, 273.
- ⁴² Dorson, *British Folklorists*, 273.
- ⁴³ Dorson, *British Folklorists*, 273 (the first two phrases), 276.
- ⁴⁴ Dorson, *British Folklorists*, 276.
- ⁴⁵ Rabinovitch, S., "Jews, Englishmen, and Folklorists: The Scholarship of Joseph Jacobs and Moses Gaster" in E. Bar-Yosef and N. Valman (eds), *'The Jew' in Late-Victorian and Edwardian Culture: Between the East End and East Africa*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2009, 113–14.
- ⁴⁶ It is not entirely clear why he makes this distinction in the subheadings, particularly as he in the concluding sentence described Gaster as "not only an English folklorist who was Jewish ... but also an English folklorist of the Jews". Rabinovitch, "Jews, Englishmen, and Folklorists", 126.
- ⁴⁷ Rabinovitch, "Jews, Englishmen, and Folklorists", 123.
- ⁴⁸ E.g., Newall, mentioned earlier in this section.
- ⁴⁹ Most explicitly D. Macrea, whose work will be mentioned later in this study.
- ⁵⁰ Rabinovitch, "Jews, Englishmen, and Folklorists", 122–23.
- ⁵¹ Rabinovitch, "Jews, Englishmen, and Folklorists", 126.
- ⁵² Rosen, T. and Yassif, E., "The Study of Hebrew Literature of the Middle Ages: Major Trends and Goals," in M. Goodman (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 274. See also Smithuis, R.,

- "Short Introduction to the Genizah Collection in the John Rylands Library", in Alexander, P.S. and Smithuis, R. (eds), 16–17 and the other examples mentioned there.
- 53 Gaster, T. "Moses Gaster 1856–1939," 103. It needs to be mentioned that Theodor continued by pointing out that "it is easy to snide about such weakness. The fact is, however, that Gaster's mistakes are such as can be readily corrected, whereas his merits are virtually unique. ... In range of knowledge, combinative imagination, and intuitive empathy with the climates and patterns of ancient thought and with what actually moves and informs the 'common folk', Gaster surely ranks among the giants of his time".
- 54 Smithuis, "Short Introduction to the Genizah Collection", 1.
- 55 Alexander, "Gaster's *Exempla of the Rabbis*", 793. Gaster's pioneering role has also been stressed by Yassif, E., "Moses Gaster: Pioneer in Folklore and Jewish Studies", in *Pe'amim* 100 (2003–2004), 113–24 [Hebrew].
- 56 Alexander, "Gaster's *Exempla of the Rabbis*", 795–96.
- 57 Alexander, "Gaster's *Exempla of the Rabbis*", 796.
- 58 Alexander, "Gaster's *Exempla of the Rabbis*", 797.
- 59 Alexander, "Gaster's *Exempla of the Rabbis*", 805.
- 60 Filolog, istoric literar și folklorist. Berdan, L., "Gaster, Moses", *Dicționarul Literaturii Române: De la origini până la 1900*, 2nd edition, Romanian Academy Press, Bucharest and Gunivas Press, Chisinau, 2002 (orig. 1979), 390.
- 61 Anon. "Gaster, Moses", in Popa, M.D. (ed), *Dicționar Enciclopedic*, Vol III, Editura Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 1996, 413.
- 62 Chițimia, I.C., "Contribuția lui M. Gaster în domeniul folclorului", in *idem*, *Folcloriști și folcloristică românească*, Editura Academiei, Bucharest, 1968, 273.
- 63 Florea, V., "Dr. M. Gaster: 'I am a bit of a Romanian Scholar'", in *idem*, *Din Trecutul folcloristicii românești*, Napoca Star, Cluj-Napoca, 2001, 34. [first published in *Studia Judaica* I, 1991]
- 64 Stanciu, M., "The Comparative Approach - a Ticket to Integration: A New Perspective on Moses Gaster's Comparative Studies on Jewish Popular Literature", in *Studia Hebraica* 3, 2003, 163–72.
- 65 Alexander, "Gaster's *Exempla of the Rabbis*," 793, 794.
- 66 Gaster, M., *Studii de folclor comparat*, ed. Petre Florea, Seaculum, Bucharest, 2004, 14.
- 67 Gorovei, A., "Gaster și folclorul românesc", in *Anuarul Arhivei de Folclor* VII, 1945, 1.
- 68 Florea, V., *M. Gaster în Corespondența: documente literare*, Editura Minerva, Bucharest, 1985, v.

- 69 Florea, V., *Prietenii români al lui M. Gaster*, Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 1997.
- 70 It seems fair to say that this is the most substantial chapter. It is accompanied by 24 letters exchanged between Gaster and Maiorescu between 1876 and 1892. They provide insight into Gaster's work and the political context. Most letters are in German, and one in French. Florea has provided Romanian translations.
- 71 Florea, V., *Scriitori români în arhiva M. Gaster de la Londra*, 2 vols, Editura Fundației pentru Studii Europene, Cluj-Napoca, 2007.
- 72 The pen name of Queen Elisabeth of Romania, to whom Gaster had sent a copy of his 1915 publication *Romanian Bird and Beast Stories*. Florea presented the German letter (signed "Elizabeth" and dated Bucharest, 28 January 1916) and a Romanian translation.
- 73 These letters are in English, accompanied by Romanian translations.
- 74 Florea, V., *M. Gaster & Agnes Murgoci: avocați în Marea Britanie ai culturii populare românești: cu 120 de documente originale // Advocates in Great Britain of Romanian Popular Culture*, Editura Fundației pentru Studii Europene, Cluj-Napoca, 2003, 38, 40.
- 75 Florea, V., "Un mare învățat: Dr. M. Gaster (1856-1939)", in *idem*, *Dr. M. Gaster: Reconstituiri biobibliografice: Omul și Opera*, Editura Fundației pentru Studii Europene, Cluj-Napoca, 2008, 7–28.
- 76 Florea, *Omul și Opera*, 29.
- 77 Florea, *Omul și Opera*, 99. In the title of the monograph which traced the history of this work, a term is used which can be translated as magnum opus and as masterpiece. The bulk of that monograph consists of 118 letters from the publisher, F.A. Brockhaus, to Gaster (German letters accompanied by Romanian translations). Florea, V. and Cernea, E., *Din Istoria unei capodopere, Chrestomatie Română de M. Gaster, cu 132 de documente inedite*, Editura Fundației pentru Studii Europene, Cluj-Napoca, 2010.
- 78 Besides the two works already mentioned, Florea also dealt with the *Ilchester Lectures on Greco-Slavonic Literature* (1887), *Romanian Bird and Beast Stories* (1915), *Children's Stories from Romanian Legends and Fairy Tales* (1922), Gaster's work on the Gospel of Radu from Mănăstirea de 1574 (published mistakenly as *Tetra Evanghelul Dianocului Coresi din 1561*; 1929), and Gaster's re-edition of Anton Pann's *Povestea Vorbiei* (1936).
- 79 Mușlea, I., "Dr. M. Gaster folklorist", in *Cercetări etnografice și folclor*, vol I, Editura Minerva, Bucharest, 1971, 201–13. The paper, commemorating the century since Gaster's birth (in 1856), was presented at a session of the Romanian Academy in Cluj on 1 February 1957.
- 80 *Columna lui Traian VIII*, 1878, 447–49, a response to an article by Petre Ispirescu on Romanian and French fairy tales.
- 81 Mușlea, "Dr. M. Gaster folklorist", 202.
- 82 Mușlea, "Dr. M. Gaster folklorist", 203.

- 83 Muşlea, "Dr. M. Gaster folklorist", 208.
- 84 Muşlea, "Dr. M. Gaster folklorist", 210. Muşlea did not provide the full reference, but it is Manole, I., *Anton Pann*, Editura de Stat pentru literatura şi arta, Bucharest, 1954.
- 85 Muşlea, "Dr. M. Gaster folklorist", 210.
- 86 Muşlea, "Dr. M. Gaster folklorist", 212.
- 87 Bârlea, O., *Istoria folcloristicii româneşti*, Editura Enciclopedică, Bucharest, 1974, 260
- 88 Bârlea, *Istoria folcloristicii*, 262.
- 89 Bârlea, *Istoria folcloristicii*, 263.
- 90 To give just one example, Bensusan stated in his portrait of Gaster in the volume published on the occasion of Gaster's 80th birthday: "His capacity for assimilating foreign languages is extraordinary, the number in which he can converse runs into double figures." S.L. Bensusan, "Moses Gaster", in *Occident and Orient: Gaster Anniversary Volume*, 9.
- 91 Anon, "Gaster, Moses", in C. Diaconovich (ed), *Enciclopedia Română*, vol II, Editura şi tiparul lui W. Kraft, Sibiu, 1900, 510.
- 92 The reviewer was bishop Melchisedec. His report has been published as "Raportul P.S.S. Episcopul Melchisedec asupra operei D-lui Gaster", in *Analele Academiei Române*, Seria II, Tomul V, Şedinţele ordinare din 1882-83 şi sesiunea generală a anului 1883. Secţiunea I. Partea administrativă şi dezbaterile, Tipografia Academiei Române, Bucureşti, 1884, 163–70. The citation is from a short summary of the bishop's report in the general report of the process of reviewing the works which had been submitted to the academy to be considered for recognition as the best publication of the year: Ştefănescu, G., "Premierea de opere. Raportul general," 149 (in the same volume of the annals of the Romanian academy). Bishop Melchisedec states in his report that "the work has its merits, because it is the first work of Romanian literature produced by a son of Israel working in Romania, and it provides evidence of Romanian sentiments", 168–69. However, that statement is followed by a long list of examples of mistakes in Gaster's use of the Romanian language.
- 93 Bărbulescu, I., "Sărbătorirea şi personalitatea ştiinţifică a domnului Moses Gaster", in *Arhiva: Organul Societăţii Istorico-Filologice din Iaşi* XLIII, 1936, 256.
- 94 An example which illustrates the extent of the celebrations is the large anonymous article (four columns) "Sărbătorirea Dr. M. Gaster", in *Egalitatea*, 26 November 1936, 96, which described different celebratory activities which took place in London and in Bucharest. See also the different contributions, brought together as "Sărbătorirea Dr. M. Gaster: Mesajul întrunirii de serbătorire către Dr. M. Gaster", in *Egalitatea* 10 December 1936, 100–101. It included contributions of Iacob Bacalu, D. Wertenstein, and a short summary (unsigned) of the English press on this occasion.

- 95 He explicitly mentioned the article by Barbu Lăzăreanu in *Adevărul* of 27 August 1936.
- 96 Bărbulescu, I., "Sărbătorirea și personalitatea științifică," 258.
- 97 Bărbulescu, I., "Sărbătorirea și personalitatea științifică," 259.
- 98 The first version of the bibliography compiled by his friend and assistant Bruno Schindler, which had then just been published, in Schindler, B. and A. Marmorstein (eds), *Occident and Orient, being Studies in Semitic Philology and Literature, Jewish History and Philosophy and Folklore in the widest sense ... Gaster Anniversary Volume*, London, 1936. The bibliography as referred to earlier in this article is an improved version which was published in 1958.
- 99 Schwarzfeld, M., "Rătăcirii în rătăcirii: sau cum se deformează fapte din istoria contemporană", in *Egalitatea*, 7 January 1937, 1–2.
- 100 Bărbulescu, I., "Iarăși despre d. Moses Gaster în Știința românească", in *Arhiva: Organul Societății Istorico-Filologice din Iași* XLIV, 1937, 85–95.
- 101 Macrea, D., *Contribuții la istoria lingvisticii și filologiei românești*, Editura științifică și enciclopedică, Bucharest, 1978, 199.
- 102 Macrea, *Contribuții la istoria lingvisticii*, 205.
- 103 Macrea, *Contribuții la istoria lingvisticii*, 204.
- 104 Macrea, *Contribuții la istoria lingvisticii*, 207.
- 105 Macrea, *Contribuții la istoria lingvisticii*, 207.
- 106 Macrea, *Contribuții la istoria lingvisticii*, 208. He did not mention that this law applied to Gaster, because he was Jewish. It is possible that he took it for granted that his readership would know this, although it comes across as trying to refrain deliberately from referring to Gaster's Jewishness.
- 107 Berdan, L., 'Gaster, Moses', in *Dicționarul Literaturii Române: De la Origini până la 1900*, 2nd edition, Editura Academiei Române, Bucharest and Editura Gunivas, Chisinau, 2002 (orig. 1979), 390.
- 108 Datcu, I., "Gaster, Moses", in *idem, Dicționarul Etnologilor Români*, 3rd rev ed, Editura Saeculum, Bucharest, 2006, 408.
- 109 Chițimia, "Contribuția lui M. Gaster", 276.
- 110 Miskolczy, A., (ed). *Moses Gaster, Judaica & Hungarica*, Eötvös Lorand University, Budapest, 1993, 7.
- 111 Miskolczy, *Moses Gaster*, 244.
- 112 The following is based on the Romanian version of the study, Miskolczy, *Moses Gaster*, 50–95 and the English summary, with the title "The Revolt of Moses Gaster: From Traditionalism to Modern Nationalism", Miskolczy, *Moses Gaster*, 244–51.
- 113 Rather messy typescripts of Gaster's recollections, dictated to his assistants in the 1930s. See the next section for more details.
- 114 Miskolczy, *Moses Gaster*, 53.
- 115 Miskolczy, *Moses Gaster*, 52.

- ¹¹⁶ Miskolczy, *Moses Gaster*, 71–81. In the English summary he included a discussion of the article by Eskenazy (“Some notes on Gaster’s relations with Romania”), which he received after writing his introductory study. Eskenazy presented the expulsion simply as direct the result of Gaster’s investigation into and newspaper article about the incident in Brusturoasa, Moldova (also mentioned by Chițimia). Miskolczy responded that “the story is much more complicated” (p 247). He thus confirmed what was already clear from his introductory study, that there were various incidents and circumstances that contributed to the expulsion of Gaster and other Jewish intellectuals in 1885.
- ¹¹⁷ Miskolczy, *Moses Gaster*, 64. He mentioned that Gaster was the first to preach in Romanian in his grandfather’s synagogue, which may be an illustration of how he envisioned these different areas to be connected.
- ¹¹⁸ E.g. “he used the notion of popular culture in the way it is used today”, Miskolczy, *Moses Gaster*, 68.
- ¹¹⁹ Miskolczy, *Moses Gaster*, 250.
- ¹²⁰ Miskolczy, *Moses Gaster*, 251.
- ¹²¹ Eskenasy V. (trans and ed), *Moses Gaster: Memorii [Fragmente], Corresponență*, Hasefer, Bucharest, 1998, XIII.
- ¹²² As Bertha Gaster observed in her preface to *Moses Gaster’s Memoirs*, v.
- ¹²³ Reference has already been made to the English version of this chapter which has been published as “Moses Gaster: Landmarks of an Intellectual Itinerary.”
- ¹²⁴ Florea, V., “Dr. M. Gaster: ‘I am a bit of a Romanian Scholar’”, 33.
- ¹²⁵ Eliade, M. “Moartea Doctorului Gaster”, in *Revista Fundațiilor Regale*, 6.5, 5 May 1939, 395.
- ¹²⁶ Gaster, T. “Moses Gaster 1856–1939,” 102.

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POWER-WINNING CONTEXTS AND STRATEGIES OF CHARLES I AND WENCESLAS III. A COMPARISON OF THEIR QUEST FOR THE HUNGARIAN THRONE

Introduction

In this paper I intend to investigate the methods and strategies Charles I and Wenceslas III used to win and secure the Hungarian throne for themselves through comparison. In 1301, Andrew III of the Árpád Dynasty died, leaving no immediate male heir. The Hungarian lords searched for a new king; some of them invited Wenceslas III, a son of Wenceslas II, king of Bohemia; others elected Charles I, a grandson of the Anjou Charles II, king of Naples.

The course of events in this royal competition has been well described in the scholarship. However, the prevailing approach has chiefly been to provide a chain of logically linked facts. Therefore, I will not focus on “what happened”, but rather delve into medieval political culture and the mechanisms of “international” politics by examining in what way, and by what means, both candidates to the throne worked to achieve their goal.

I begin with providing the context for this struggle for power with discussion of the gradual emergence of powerful lords in the Kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary (with a brief look at the Polish lands). I point to the “expansion of lordship” as a driving force in the medieval “international” politics of this period in Central Europe, revealing correspondences between the “inter-state” and “intra-state” levels of conflicts. It seems the medieval “international” political system was populated with many actors possessing various degrees of power, who formed a multi-polar system, both within and outside kingdoms. This system could only function through meeting the sustained need to (re)negotiate the will to cooperate between the involved actors, and required from major players

considerable capabilities to convince. Consequently, there is an argument to be made against the traditional historiographical accounts based on the notion of a centrality-anarchy dichotomy, suggesting that multi-polarity is a concept that would more accurately describe the medieval political system in this region.

In the second part, a comparative analysis of the methods used by Charles I and Wenceslas III as they tried to promote their individual cases are introduced. Beginning with a short overview of the course of events to establish the historical background for further inquiry, I continue with reflections on the concept of multi-polarity and its applications. Comparison of the power-winning strategies employed by Charles I and Wenceslas III respectively displays striking similarities in terms of type and use. These parallels lead – in the final section of the paper – to the discussion about “moral authority” as a “power resource”, and its significance with regard to this particular struggle as well as with regard to a more general understanding of how medieval “international” politics functioned at this time and in this place.

At the beginning of the fourteenth century virtually nobody in Central Europe could foresee the abrupt and violent events coming to the regional political stage. The approaching storm represents a fairly unique period in European history when turbulent times – themselves a sign of impending changes – developed almost simultaneously in three adjacent areas: the lands of Bohemia, Hungary and Poland. The turmoil was connected to the unexpected emptying of royal thrones in the region.

On January 14, 1301, while only in his mid-thirties, Andrew III, king of Hungary died. In Hungarian scholarship his death has been traditionally considered a turning point in the history of the country. The standard understanding has been that Andrew’s III death signified a period of abrupt dynastic change, when the indigenous House of the Árpáds died out and a period of dynastic diversity followed.¹ It is generally accepted, however, that this period of transition generated a lot of distress and conclusively shattered the foundations of the Hungarian realm.

Nevertheless, such a political blow could not have happened overnight. Pál Engel observed that since 1270 political events had led to a rapid decline in central power in the Kingdom of Hungary and brought about an anarchic situation that culminated in 1301,² pushing Hungary into a “critical situation”,³ which then continued for another decade. Engel’s opinion is best summarized in two statements: “central power practically ceased to exist”, and “that the kingdom might fragment into

several independent provinces became a real possibility".⁴ Also, the idea prevailed in recent Hungarian scholarship that central power was significantly weakened at the turn of the fourteenth century⁵ and/or for a time could not be organized.⁶

The practical destruction of the political unity of the Kingdom of Hungary was not, however, solely related to the extinction of the Árpáds (or, to be more precise, to the dying out of its male branch). The fact that Andrew III was the last representative of the glorious male line of descendants of Saint King Steven was indeed noted by contemporaries. However, from the extant source material it is difficult to judge how much it really mattered. There is only a one short passage available touching upon this issue. In a charter issued by palatine Steven *de genere* Ákos, a former supporter of the deceased king, dated to February 26, 1303, the issuer speaks about Andrew III as the "last golden branch that broke off"⁷ from the paternal line of St. Steven, and about a great mourning after the king's death among all the prelates and barons. However, the desolation they felt – as the charter reads – because of the lack of their *dominus naturalis*, did not leave them without hope of finding a new monarch marked by the blood of St. Steven, that is, with a claim of belonging to Steven's kindred.⁸

In my view, it may be questioned whether there was anything special – in terms of political consequences – to Palatine Steven's contemporaries about the sudden death of Andrew III, although he was perceived as the last of the male Árpád line. Judging from what happened after the assassination of Ladislas IV in July 1290, when Andrew III took the throne and yet was immediately confronted with rebellious nobles; and judging from what followed his death in 1301, when two powerful candidates to the Hungarian throne appeared, I would hesitate to overestimate the meaning of the extinction of male line for Hungarian elites.

Thus, the argument could be made that in the late thirteenth century the Kingdom of Hungary suffered a certain level of disintegration because the powerful lords of the kingdom lost their previous interest in cooperating with the king. The political and social developments of the second half of the thirteenth century opened up new opportunities to look for their interests in showing antagonism to royal power. The circumstances and, in my view, the dominant concept of political power allowed them to pursue their goals of creating lordships and expanding their domination. What follows aims at elucidating the context and logic of practices that in my opinion helped create an environment in which the quarrel between Charles I and Wenceslas III could develop.

Establishing the contexts – Lordship-seeking practices in Central Europe in the second half of the thirteenth century

The notion of the lordship and domination applied here was recently explained by Thomas N. Bisson. Although in his study Bisson focused on the coming to maturity of the concept of the lordship,⁹ his findings offered relevant insight into attitudes that can be identified among the Central European elites in the later period.

‘Lordship’ refers diversely to personal commands over dependent people who might be peasants in quasi-servile status or knights or vassals having or seeking an elite standing; the word also denotes the value or extent of such dependencies (patrimony, *dominium*). The lordship held by nobles accounted for much of the exercise of licit power around 1100. It is tempting to include in this category the temporal dominations of prelates: bishops, abbots, priors, and the like. These were often the brothers or nephews of the old elite, nobles themselves; and even those of lesser blood, ever more numerous in time, must have been influenced by models of clerical office.¹⁰

In a longer perspective, it could be argued that problems in the Kingdom of Hungary, eventually leading to a certain paralysis of royal power,¹¹ began in the 1240s, although they could be implicitly traced to the land-giving politics of Andrew II,¹² and – since they were unsuccessfully resolved – gradually intensified over the next decades. Although my task here is not to provide an account of the Hungarian political history of the second half of the thirteenth century, it is still useful to investigate some general patterns of power-relations which over time emerged in social and political life with widespread effects over the whole region. These patterns cannot be considered exclusively Hungarian.

It can be argued that what was happening in the Kingdom of Hungary, that is, a constant and escalating struggle for lordship and domination within the Hungarian power elite, was simultaneously occurring in the Kingdom of Bohemia and in the Polish principalities. What was particular to specific realms was the scale of these phenomena, yet the general trend was universal and similar in nature to events taking place elsewhere, for instance, in the German empire.

The Mongol onslaught on Central Europe in 1240-1241 serves as a convenient point of departure for a bird’s eye view analysis of the political developments in Central Europe in the second half of the thirteenth

century. Discussion of these issues permits meaningful contextualization of the power-winning strategies that contestants for the Central European vacant thrones employed for their own success. Beginning with a brief overview of the situation in the Polish principalities, this analysis will mostly concentrate on the kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary because they formed the background for the future competition between Charles I and Wenceslas III for the vacant Árpáadian throne.

The Polish Principalities

In the thirteenth century, there were two contradictory, co-existing political trends in the Polish territories. From the first half of the twelfth century, the former Kingdom of Poland was gradually divided into smaller principalities governed by members of a single house – the Piast Dynasty. The number of divisions grew because the prevailing tradition of dynastic inheritance put a great deal of emphasis on providing each princely son with a lordship. As a result, a dominant and practically inevitable trend developed to continue such divisions well established in the so-called “ancient customs”. This trend was particularly marked in the former duchy of Silesia. This dynastic practice could not be long maintained. New duchies were smaller and smaller, and consequently, they could not sustain princely needs. Their minimal sizes were incompatible with the needs and ambitions of dukes who therefore, easily became embroiled in conflicts over pieces of land or strongholds. The growing number of political players on the simultaneously narrowing stage of what should be called the Piast legacy gave way to an escalation in predatory politics.

In fairly flexible inter-lordly constellations of short-term alliances, dukes developed their interests in expanding their lordships, usually at the expense of other players. This attitude, focused on building one’s own domination over lands, automatically generated favorable conditions for the so-called “unification process”, which was later identified and described in modern historiography. This process cannot be reduced merely to a dynastic perspective, yet it cannot be ignored that the dukes, who had entered the political arena in the second half of the thirteenth century, surely recognized that the fundamental strategy for providing a means of existence for their sons was first to inherit a lordship, and then strive for its expansion by both peaceful and violent means.

Logic of Lordship in Hungary and Bohemia after the Mongol onslaught

Undoubtedly the Mongol invasion devastated the Kingdom of Hungary. There is, however, some dispute about the degree of destruction. In the older scholarship it was claimed that almost 50% the country was depopulated by the killings and later by disease and starvation, which occurred because large parts of land was not being tilled due to the marauding Mongols. More recent studies suggest a lower proportion of 20% for the percentage of the population that was killed.¹³ To reinforce their arguments these scholars point to later events that show that after the Mongols retreated to the steppes, the Kingdom resumed its military activities fairly quickly.¹⁴ It is beyond any question, however, that the Mongolian onslaught left Hungary changed in many respects. Apparently, the fear of the soon-to-come next invasion instilled in people's hearts¹⁵ – apart from all the other damages and losses they had already suffered – significantly influenced and shaped the policies adopted by King Béla IV, who has sometimes been called the second “state-founder”.¹⁶

One of his responses to this pending Mongolian threat was to authorize nobles who could afford it to construct stone-castles. A big building campaign was primarily designed to strengthen the defense potential of the Kingdom, because – as the last example of the Mongolian attack revealed – there were significantly higher chances of survival if the invaders encountered a walled location. This construction boom was very efficient and by Béla's IV death in 1270, it produced a hundred new castles owned by the royal family, wealthy nobles, and bishops.¹⁷ The rapid rise of fortified places in the Kingdom certainly expanded its defense potential, yet – by diversification of their ownership – it deprived the king of an important advantage in times of confrontation with rebellious nobility (the number of stone-castles reached three-hundred by the end of the thirteenth century,¹⁸ and at least two-thirds of them were in private hands¹⁹). Giving away property and lands to the elite in order to financially enable them to erect their own castles reinforced the Kingdom in absolute terms but, at the same time, created a favorable foundation to reduce its political coherence as in practice, it undermined the will for cooperation on the part of the elite. A result, more powerful subjects could dictate higher ‘prices’ for their compliance.

The Kingdom of Bohemia – in contrast to Hungary – was not much affected by the Mongol invasion. Although the Mongol troops devastated

Little Poland and massacred the Christian army at Legnica, in Silesia, subsequently marched through Moravia, putting it to fire, their final destination was Hungary. Wenceslas I, King of Bohemia, gathered his army and awaited confrontation with Mongols but ultimately he did not have to engage in battle.²⁰ The Kingdom of Bohemia was spared from the external threat but was not free from internal turbulences. In 1248, King Wenceslas I faced a rebellion initiated by a group of influential barons. They wanted Přemysl Otakar, the king's son, who had recently come of age, to be their king. This struggle within the Bohemian royal family, although ultimately won by Wenceslas I, had a similar effect on the distribution of power as the aftermath of the Mongol invasion in Hungary.

In Bohemia the conflict between Wenceslas I and Přemysl Otakar was settled at the cost of strengthening the position of the local noble families, who meanwhile managed to increase their wealth (through royal grants or by illegal acquisitions of either ecclesiastical or royal properties) and, thus, gathered enough means to initiate building stone castles themselves.²¹ In its own fashion, but for other reasons, Bohemia had stepped onto the same path as Hungary.

There are further analogies between the situations in the kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary. Přemysl Otakar reconciled with his father but the matter of lordship remained essential and unresolved. However, a new option emerged. The lords of Austria, the Babenbergs, died out in the male line, and the empty throne naturally drew the attention of the neighboring lords: Béla IV and Wenceslas I. Acquiring these new lands for themselves would boost their wealth, prestige and, all in all, their power. The Babenbergs' lands were attractively located on the Alpine routes between northern parts of the German Empire and Italy.²² Moreover, such acquisitions could act as a way to temporarily suspend internal tensions by finding means to satisfy ambitions nourished by royal sons. In the early 1250s, Wenceslas I attempted to make Přemysl Otakar the lord of Austria. Béla IV fought back.

In the meantime, in 1250, Emperor Frederic II died; his immediate successor, Conrad IV, followed four years later. The empty German throne was subsequently claimed by two candidates, Richard of Cornwall, a brother of King Henry III of England, and King Alfonso X of Castile. As a result, the former lands of Babenbergs, which had lain under imperial jurisdiction, were momentarily no longer backed by the authority of the German king because the German lords were preoccupied with resolving their own disputes. The absence of a third influential player in the 1250s

and 1260s left more room for arrangements made by kings of Bohemia and Hungary.

In 1253, when Wenceslas I died, the conflict over Austria entered a new phase. On the Bohemian side there was no longer a young royal son needing to be satisfied with separate lordship because Přemysl Otakar II inherited the throne after his father died. From then on his agenda changed since at the outset of his personal reign he had to secure the cooperative good will among his subjects. Béla IV, however, still had to secure Steven's needs. Again, from the perspective of Hungarian political practice, bestowing a lordship on a royal son was nothing extraordinary. Since the late twelfth century the custom prevailed that the Árpáadian princes governed Slovenia and Croatia as *duces totius Sclavonie*.²³ There are other instances of similar practices: in 1226, Béla IV, at the age of twenty, was named by his father, Andrew II, duke of Transylvania.²⁴ Four years later, after Přemysl Otakar II and Béla IV had agreed to divide the Babenbergs' lands between themselves in 1254, Steven was conferred the title of duke of Styria.²⁵ A year earlier, he received Transylvania, whereas in 1260, his younger brother Béla was authorized to oversee Slovenia.²⁶

This state of affairs did not last long. Přemysl Otakar II took advantage of the prolonged disputes in the German empire and sought to maintain good relations with both concurrent German kings. As a result, King Richard of Cornwall entrusted him with the task of defending "the property of the [imperial] Crown to the right of the Rhine" and did not interfere with Přemysl Otakar's II actions in Austria and its surroundings.²⁷ In the 1260s, the lordship of the Bohemian king extended through Austria, Styria, and Carinthia, and reached the Adriatic Sea. Meanwhile, Béla IV, had not been able to reconquer the former lands of the Babenbergs which he had lost to the King of Bohemia, came into conflict with Steven over the scope of Steven's authority in Transylvania and beyond (and, as the extant sources reveal, over the succession rights too).²⁸ This conflict subsequently transformed into a regular internal war.

Béla IV died in 1270. After domestic wars of the 1260s, the kingdom was not fully pacified. The divisions that had arisen in past years fuelled the flame of ambition and conflict in the minds of elite power brokers and at any time could trigger further conflict. In a sense, the former supporters of Béla IV found themselves in an awkward position in serving Steven V, whom they had fiercely fought while standing in the ranks of his father's army. This is presumably why a double election took place, because some of Steven's opponents invited Přemysl Otakar II to sit on the Hungarian

throne. Přemysl's claim was reinforced by the fact that from 1261 he had been married to Kunigunda, a granddaughter of Béla IV. Kunigunda was a daughter of Anna, a sister of Steven V. Přemysl Otakar II, however, was not strongly motivated to initiate a prolonged conflict with Steven V and after he had been allowed to grab Béla's IV treasury, he retreated from the competition.²⁹ Nevertheless, these events proved a precedent to the events of 1301, and the Hungarian elite must have taken note that, practically speaking, in choosing their new king they were no longer confined to the direct male descendants of St. Steven's kindred.

Towards 1301 – The decline of the Árpáds and the rise of the Přemyslids

During the 1270s, the vast lordship built-up by Přemysl Otakar II was vehemently challenged. A heretofore non-existing player, the German king, reemerged on the scene after Rudolf I Habsburg was elected to the office in 1273. Five years later, Přemysl Otakar II died on the battlefield and the Kingdom of Bohemia shrank to its former, original size, whereas the successful Habsburg Rudolf I, exercising the legal authority and prestige of the king of the Romans, could more firmly establish his family's domain in Austria.

The ultimate decline of the Kingdom of Bohemia in the late 1270s corresponded with a rising number of quarrels in the Kingdom of Hungary. Steven V ruled only two turbulent years. First, he had to struggle for the throne with the Bohemian king. Second, he grappled with the rebellion of Joachim Gutkeled, the ban of Slavonia, who captured Ladislav, an infant royal son. The king did not manage to liberate him, and Engel suspected that frustration deriving from a sense of powerlessness may have resulted in Steven's premature death.³⁰ Whatever the reasons for his death, what happened was a clear sign that in the early 1270s the effective power of the king could be successfully challenged by other lords in the kingdom.³¹

Ladislav IV was ten years-old when he inherited the Kingdom of Hungary after his father. His clear inability to efficiently assume the office encouraged the Hungarian barons to take advantage of the lack of royal authority. Apparently, there was no systemic solution available to efficiently replace the person of a monarch as the source of order and justice in the kingdom.

On the other hand, it would be legitimate to ask to what degree the royal presence was really longed for and required by other powerful lords, whose chief strategy was to establish their standing and wealth at the expense of royal resources (fighting each other was seemingly less productive although still practiced)? There is no plausible answer to this question because between 1270 and 1310, the nature of relations between the royal office and the Hungarian barons remains opaque. Namely, it seems they never imagined not having a king at all, since the barons understood clearly that all their acquisitions, both in terms of properties and jurisdiction, required – sooner or later – clear confirmation from a king. Otherwise, depending how powerful they were at any given point, their prosperity might prove, more or less, temporary and short-term. Practical usurpations would simply be short-lived because only confirmation by a higher (royal) authority diminished social and political tensions, and thus, relieved the usurper from the higher costs (of all sorts) of upholding his illegal gains.

It could be argued, however, that similar mechanisms can be also observed on the “international” stage. Before he initiated any military campaign in the lands of the Bohemian king, Rudolf I Habsburg, elected German king in 1273, refused to confirm Přemysl Otakar’s II possessions in the Empire.³² Thus, he made a public statement which declared Přemysl’s lordship in Austria illegitimate and – by exercising his royal authority – he also had means to effectively threaten Přemysl Otakar’s II domination outside Bohemia. In short, Rudolf I was in a position to claim back the lands that customarily belonged to the sphere of jurisdiction of a German king and, if he was industrious enough, he could hope to find other lords who would support any re-taking actions against the Bohemian ruler.

Přemysl Otakar II was probably well aware of how these mechanisms functioned. Precisely for this reason he previously strove to maintain favorable relations with Richard of Cornwall, who earlier – as the German king – had given him license to build up his lordship within the imperial lands, a license which was later retracted by Rudolf I, another German king. By analogy, the Hungarian lords must have been experienced enough to recognize that all they needed in the Kingdom of Hungary was either a friendly king or a king, whose will, if necessary, they had the means to resist.

Moreover, growing tensions, disputes, skirmishes and quarrels at the level of a single kingdom very much resembled conflicts in Germany during the so-called Great Interregnum, and were similar in their logic (although not in their scope) to the Béla IV-Wenceslas I conflict over the

Babenbergs' inheritance. There was no difference in quality, because in both cases the actors aimed at expanding their lordships, that is, their control over people, land and resources, and thus, improve their prestige, wealth and social standing. There was, however, a quantitative dissimilarity since the goals of the Hungarian lords, confined to the boundaries of the Kingdom of Hungary, could not be compared with the range of activities performed at the royal level.³³

In the 1270s, the Kingdom of Hungary had to grapple with an infant king directly resulting in the rise of baronial lordships. The king was expected to dominate his lords but where he was not able to fulfill this task (because of his age, absence, illness, etc.), his lords easily turned into usurpers, who recognizing opportune conditions took advantage of them.

At the end of the decade, Přemysl Otakar's II death in a battle brought the Kingdom of Bohemia into a comparable situation. Wenceslas II, an heir to the Bohemian throne, was only seven and was placed under guardianship of Otto V of Brandenburg, his maternal uncle. Wenceslas II returned to Bohemia in 1283, nevertheless only after long negotiations resulting in the payment of 20,000 silver marks to Otto V.³⁴ In the meantime, however, the Kingdom of Bohemia was virtually transformed into a "cake" which many lords would gladly take a piece of. The barons attempted to put a hold on royal or ecclesiastical properties.³⁵ Habsburg Rudolf I, as the German king and formal overseer of the Kingdom of Bohemia, successfully took control of Moravia. Otto V acquired the appointment as the guardian of Wenceslas II. Henry IV Probus of Wrocław, engaged in militarily action to take his chances at winning the Bohemian throne for himself or, at least, to become a regent.³⁶ Rudolf I managed to arranged a marriage contract between Wenceslas II and his daughter, Jutta of Habsburg;³⁷ an act which gave him a new argument to justify his interference in the future of Bohemian matters.

Consequently, in the 1280s, Wenceslas' II role in the domestic politics of the Kingdom of Bohemia was largely diminished by prolonged conflict between powerful lords: Zavis of Falkenstein and Tobias, Bishop of Prague. Zavis displayed a perfect lord-to-be logic: he attempted to acquire the duchy of Opava; he married Kunigunda of the Árpád dynasty, who had been left a widow after Přemysl Otakar's II death making him the stepfather of Wenceslas II; in the late 1280s, he married Elisabeth of the Árpád dynasty, a sister of Ladislas IV, King of Hungary. Thus, Zavis efficiently expanded his properties (which gave him wealth and manpower) and entered into the strata of the highest elite by marrying into the Árpád

House. Anyway, he was decapitated in 1290 with the tacit consent of Wenceslas II who was only able to fully assume his royal office afterwards.

Interestingly, Zavis – still as a minor lord compared to royal families – accomplished more than his Hungarian counterparts, who were never offered (or accepted, since I cannot exclude that they made applications for marriage) a marriage into either the House of Árpád or the Přemysls. The Hungarian lords were, nonetheless, successful in entering into marriage contracts with other prominent ruling houses of Austria, Bavaria, or Serbia.³⁸

After assuming the throne, Wenceslas II decided not to go to war with the lords of Bohemia to recover properties which they had seized during the previous turbulent period.³⁹ According to Kateřina Charvátová,⁴⁰ who herself followed the *Chronicon Aule Regie* (which, by the way, depicted the king in very favorable terms)⁴¹, Wenceslas II did undertake diligent actions to “revoke what was split up, gather what was dispersed” and “ruled that what an unfriendly hand had taken away should be reintegrated”.⁴² However, this short and rather general account was actually followed by a more detailed description of how, in fact, Wenceslas II distributed castles, towns and offices, and that through his generosity, the kingdom was stabilized.⁴³

On the other hand, he did not give up the lordship-seeking logic and, by other means managed to gather resources to pursue his goals in his dealings with dukes of the south-eastern Polish principalities; it was a highly successful endeavour, which in 1300 eventually allowed him to become the king of Poland. It is particularly revealing that – judging from the course of events – it was easier for Wenceslas II to step outside his kingdom and seek to expand his sphere of control and domination by overpowering or, less violently, by coming to terms with the neighboring lords, than to launch a retributive campaign aimed at restoring order and justice (and thus, his authority and lordship, since a king was a legitimate source of peace and tranquility) within the borders of the Kingdom of Bohemia.

At that particular moment, Wenceslas II was in a far more convenient position than the kings of Hungary, because he had just begun to exploit the silver mines of Kutna Hora. The mines turned out to be exceptionally rich in silver and their output soon outdistanced older sites at Jihlava among others.⁴⁴ Abundance of silver, which poured into royal coffers, provided Wenceslas II with money, a resource that made him a wealthy stand-out in the region. However, he apparently linked the satisfaction of his lords with opulent gifts and new opportunities, which would emerge from expanding his domination over new lands, and he preferred to invest his

significant incomes in projects of expansion, rather than to use his assets against his lords. It could be argued therefore for Wenceslas II, like other contemporary lords, lordship primarily had to be expanded in a mutual cooperative effort (according to an unwritten rule: 'the more powerful overlord, the more powerful his faithful lords'). Lordship, therefore, did not have to expand using an alternative model, more characteristic of modern states, which seek to disarm their citizens and monopolize access to coercive power and its resources, following the precept that 'the overlord builds up his power at the expense of his lords-subjects'.

In the 1290s, the Kingdom of Bohemia was back on an ascending track, that is, the cooperation between the king and his barons was resumed and thus, Wenceslas II could effectively engage in spreading his influence and authority in the region. In Hungary, however, this lack of will to cooperate, which had powerfully emerged ca. 1290, continued until Andrew's III death in 1301 (and beyond, up to ca. 1330).⁴⁵ His predecessor, Ladislas IV, did not come up with a solution that permanently tied the Hungarian barons to him; a failure which, in practice, left him powerless. He did not own silver mines with an output comparable to Kutna Hora, and thus, he could not cherish hope of a privileged position, which seems to have greatly contributed to Wenceslas' II success in restoring the will to cooperate among his barons.

According to Gyula Kristó, from the 1290s, the Kingdom of Hungary witnessed an explosion in lordship-building which emerged from Ladislas' IV legacy of disorder. The Hungarian lords seized royal and ecclesiastical properties and established their overlordship over considerable pieces of land. They fiercely fought each other and by both request and threat they attracted the lesser nobility to their ranks. By regionally seizing royal authority and jurisdiction they shattered the integrity of the kingdom, and actually created the "state-in-state" system.⁴⁶ Kristó calculated that by the turn of the fourteenth century there were eleven "oligarchs", who controlled the better part of the realm with the most powerful of these overlords having resources comparable to regional dukes.⁴⁷

Power-winning strategies

The course of events in the Kingdom of Hungary after Andrew's III death has been demonstrated fairly exhaustively on various occasions and in a number of publications.⁴⁸ The intention here, therefore, is not to

describe them since it would be hard to add anything in terms of new yet meaningful events. Therefore, after having set out the more general context of the throne competition, which took place in the Hungarian lands in the first decade of the fourteenth century, the focus shifts now toward the main puzzle of my article, that is, what possible strategies were employed to seize control of a throne in the region? This analysis, however, could not have been carried out adequately, without at least presenting some fundamental data to provide the immediate background for investigation of 'who did what' to accomplish his goals.

The empty throne in Hungary – an overview of events

On July 10, 1290, Ladislas IV was assassinated. However, already on July 23, 1290, Lodomer, Archbishop of Esztergom, crowned Andrew III as the successor of Ladislas IV. A year later, the Heder family, whose members were bans of Slavonia and who virtually owned Vas County in southwestern Hungary,⁴⁹ invited Charles Martel, the first-born son of Charles II, King of Naples, to seize the Hungarian crown. Charles Martel was a grandson of Steven V of Hungary and through his mother, Mary, could easily claim share in the Árpáadian House, since the deceased Ladislas IV was his uncle (a third degree of kinship). From the perspective of blood relations, the status of Andrew III was less prominent, because as an alleged descendant of King Andrew II, he was related to Steven V merely in the fourth degree and to Ladislas IV in the fifth degree.

On April 12, 1292, Charles Martel issued his first charter as King of Hungary.⁵⁰ However, he never managed to reach his new kingdom and died in 1295. His son, Charles I, was instantly named his successor and in 1298 a papal legate crowned him while he was still in the Kingdom of Naples.⁵¹ In February 1300, he left for Hungary and by October 1300 was already in Zagreb.⁵² Andrew III died on January 14, 1301.

In May 1301, Pope Boniface VIII appointed Nicholas Boccasini, Bishop of Ostia, his legate and commissioned him to make the necessary arrangements to restore order in the Kingdom of Hungary.⁵³ In the same month, Charles I was crowned King of Hungary by Gregory, Archbishop-elect of Esztergom. In the summer 1301, nevertheless, some of the Hungarian lords invited Wenceslas, a son of Wenceslas II, to be their king. Like Charles I, young Wenceslas could claim blood-membership in the Árpáadian kindred: his great-grandmother was a sister of Steven V;

thus, Wenceslas was related to Steven V in the fourth degree. On August 27, 1301, he was crowned a King of Hungary by John, Archbishop of Kalocsa, in Szekesfehervar. The double-election was now a fact.

The following year Boniface VIII called both involved parties, that is, Wenceslas II and his son, and Charles I with Mary, his mother and the Queen of Naples, to appear before him and hear his judgment about who should legitimately receive the Kingdom of Hungary.⁵⁴ In the autumn of 1302, Charles I and his followers attacked, with no effect, the town of Buda which was held by the supporters of Wenceslas III.⁵⁵ In May 1303, Boniface VIII ruled that Charles I and his mother held the legitimate rights to the Kingdom of Hungary. In June 1303, the pope sent out letters, informing Albrecht of Habsburg, the German king, about his decision regarding the Hungarian throne⁵⁶ and instructed the Hungarian prelates – under threat of excommunication – to abandon the Přemyslids.⁵⁷ Over the summer, both Hungarian archbishops, Gregory of Esztergom and Steven of Kalocsa, engaged to spread the news about the papal edict across Hungary, including Transylvania. Everybody was to obey the papal decision or suffer ecclesiastical penalties.⁵⁸ In September 1303, Albrecht of Habsburg joined the conflict on the Angevin side, and officially wrote to Wenceslas II, demanding, among other things, that he leave the Kingdom of Hungary.

Since the Přemyslids did not recognize the papal ruling concerning the Hungarian throne, Albrecht of Habsburg began preparations for a military campaign. He urged the Hungarian bishops and barons to join efforts in driving the Bohemian king away.⁵⁹ In August 1304, Charles I concluded an alliance with Rudolf Habsburg of Austria, a son of Albrecht, and gave an oath before Michael, Archbishop of Esztergom, and Steven, Archbishop of Kalocsa, promising support for Rudolf.⁶⁰ Earlier that year, however, it was Wenceslas II who marched with his troops into Hungary, hoping to secure by sheer force the throne for Wenceslas III, and devastated regions around Esztergom, and – having achieved little politically – returned with his son back to Bohemia.⁶¹ In response, Albrecht Habsburg and Rudolf and Charles I invaded Bohemia and Moravia⁶² also with limited effect.⁶³ However, Wenceslas III never returned to Hungary. In June 1305, Wenceslas II died and in August Wenceslas III, already king of Bohemia, concluded a peace treaty with Albrecht Habsburg.⁶⁴

For a time, Charles I was the only standing pretender to the throne of Hungary. Nevertheless, in October of 1305 Wenceslas III revoked all his claims to the Kingdom of Hungary and voluntarily transferred them to Otto III of Wittelsbach.⁶⁵ Otto, the duke of Bavaria, had very close

blood ties with the Árpáds because his mother, Elisabeth, was the sister of Steven V. He could, therefore, stake equally powerful dynastic claims as the Angevins since Queen Mary of Naples was the sister of Ladislas IV. Thus, both Elisabeth and Mary were royal daughters and sisters, only separated by a single generation. Starting in November 1305, Wenceslas III ceased to use the title of Hungarian king.⁶⁶ On December 6, 1305, Otto III was crowned in Szekesfehervar by Benedict, Bishop of Veszprem and Anthony, Bishop of Csanád.⁶⁷

As a result, a new candidate for the Hungarian throne beside Charles I emerged. Otto III – as indicated in the *Kronika Pulkavova* – was elected by the Hungarians to be their king⁶⁸ although he must have been most popular in Northern and Eastern Hungary, chiefly in Transylvania.⁶⁹

In the spring of 1306, Charles I organized a military expedition to the northern regions of the Hungarian kingdom and captured several strongholds there. In May 1307, Thomas, Archbishop of Esztergom, summoned a council in Udvard [Dvory nad Žitavou]. The council participants declared that – respecting fully the papal ruling – should anyone reject Charles I as the rightful king of Hungary, he would be excommunicated and his possessions placed under interdict.⁷⁰ On June 1, 1307, the town of Buda eventually fell into hands of Charles I's followers.

Since Pope Clement V still considered the Kingdom of Hungary to be in critical condition, he dispatched Cardinal Gentilis de Monteflorum as his legate to administer all necessary reforms and ensure peace and tranquility in the kingdom.⁷¹ Two days later, on August 10, 1307, the pope issued letters in which he confirmed the ruling of Boniface VIII regarding the fate of the Hungarian throne (that it should belong to Charles I of Anjou through his grandmother Mary of the House of Árpád), and urged both Hungarian archbishops, Thomas of Esztergom and Vincent of Kalocsa, to proclaim his decision across the Hungarian lands. He also demanded that Bishop Anthony of Csanád be disciplined and impelled Otto III to give up his title and royal dignity.⁷² Subsequently, Ladislas, Voivode of Transylvania, captured Otto III and took the coronation regalia from him, ultimately expelling him from the kingdom.⁷³ Charles I for the second time remained the only candidate for the royal office. It was not, however, the end of his prolonged quest for power.

On October 10, 1307, an assembly of Hungarian prelates and nobles, held on the plains of Rákos near Pest, declared Charles I king of Hungary.⁷⁴ A year later, in November 1308, another assembly in Pest, gathered to restore peace and order in the Kingdom of Hungary, once again accepted

Charles I as king,⁷⁵ and on June 15, 1309, he was crowned in the presence of the majority of the Hungarian prelates and powerful barons.⁷⁶ On April 8, 1310, Ladislas, Voivode of Transylvania, submitted to Charles I and recognized him as his *dominus naturalis*; on August 27, 1310, Charles I was again crowned,⁷⁷ yet this time according to the rules which had been put forward by Legate Gentilis and accepted by the Hungarian episcopate.⁷⁸ Apparently, from this moment onwards, Charles I became the one and only king of Hungary and finally gained widespread recognition among his subjects.⁷⁹ This statement, however, is only partially true because Charles I's quest for power lasted almost two decades. Having defeated other candidates and ceremonially received the crown – he had to confront the political reality which had prevailed in the Kingdom of Hungary since the death of Steven V in 1272. Namely, he was compelled to face the same challenges his predecessors Ladislas IV and Andrew III had had to grapple with, that is, with the extensive lordships of some Hungarian noble families. This part of the political story, although important, will not receive more attention here.

Multi-polarity instead of the anarchy-centrality dichotomy

Once the framework of facts and events has been presented, I will turn to the analysis of how – after the death of Andrew III in 1301 – two candidates, Charles I and Wenceslas III,⁸⁰ struggled to win royal recognition in the Kingdom of Hungary. Generally speaking, this competition for royal power has largely been perceived in scholarship as a conflict between Charles I and Wenceslas III. The efforts of Otto III tend to be overlooked with the statement that, apart from being crowned with the Holy Crown in the town of Szekesfehervar, he did not accomplish much else;⁸¹ consequently, scholars did not treat him as a real opponent to Charles I but rather as an adventurer,⁸² about whose political agenda there was little left to deliberate.⁸³

In the first part of this article I set out to overview some developments in social and political matters in the kingdoms of Bohemia and Hungary from the 1240s that are essential for a meaningful investigation of the power-winning strategies employed by the pretenders to the Hungarian throne in the early fourteenth century. The driving force in political life in the region⁸⁴ was the will to expand individual – and sometimes, as a consequence – also familial domination and lordship over new lands

and people. This will to expand equally characterized royal and noble attitudes with the only difference being one of scale.

Interestingly, the conflict of the Babenbergs inheritance between Béla IV and Wenceslas I (and its later episodes with Přemysl Otakar's II as King of Bohemia) is, for instance, regarded in the scholarship as a typical regional rivalry between states for material power and hegemony; the states therefore formed alliances and coalitions to counterbalance the superiority of their opponent and naturally sought to restore the regional balance of power by not allowing one state to significantly overpower the other or to grow too much at the other's expense.⁸⁵ Accordingly, in the 1290s, the efficient policies of Wenceslas II towards non-Bohemian lands and lords would gain him, in contemporary scholarship, a name for being a "politician of an European scale"⁸⁶; moreover, as Robert Antonin suggested in his assessment of the endeavors of Wenceslas II in the Polish principalities,

one should regard the Polish royal coronation of Wenceslas II in 1300 as a logical result of Czech diplomacy that strove to strengthen its position in southern Poland as well as in relation to other Polish regions throughout the 1290s. The acquisition of Kraków and Sandomierz duchies became one of the first and most essential steps on the way to a personal union between the Czech and Polish Kingdom, which was accomplished in 1300.⁸⁷

This way of presenting royal politics remains in striking contrast with how the analogous politics of lesser lords is traditionally depicted. For example, Pál Engel's observations, already mentioned above, clearly indicated that from 1270, the Kingdom of Hungary had increasingly fallen prey to anarchy in the absence of a firm and centralized royal power. His view is standard, not an exception.⁸⁸ Furthermore, while discussing the turbulent times in the Kingdom of Bohemia after Přemysl Otakar II fell in battle in 1278, Josef Žemlička would talk about "catastrophic consequences", when "the nobility, exploiting the king's death, began to appropriate crown properties" and "the internal integrity of the state declined".⁸⁹

In my view, the same political phenomenon, which could be called a "striving for lordship", would receive two different labels in the scholarship, depending on who was the political agent. As long as it was a legitimate incumbent on a throne, who would labor to expand his domains at the expense of external lords this action could be interpreted

in terms of valid and justified “foreign” or even “international” politics. However, if an analogous enterprise was attempted by a local nobleman, his activities would be rather viewed by scholars as egoistical actions that destabilized the state and brought disorder and anarchy, thus, demolishing the integrity and unity of the state.

These “double-standards” applied to king versus nobles seem false to me, because they reflect modern thinking about the state which was simply transferred to the medieval political reality. This approach reveals assumptions about statehood (its sovereignty, exclusive use of coercive power, centralized and bureaucratic frameworks, the existence of the reason of state, etc.) which did not necessarily belong to the political vocabulary of fourteenth century elites in Central Europe.

Thus, instead of juxtaposing centralization and anarchy it seems better to view the political stage in the medieval Kingdom of Hungary, in terms of a multi-polar environment,⁹⁰ in which power is so diffused that various actors could pursue their goals of lordship as long as they complied with specific rules derived from the dominant political culture. There was no qualitative difference between conflicts at the level of emperors, kings and dukes, and other feuds, which occurred at level of barons, bishops and noblemen. Arguably, the same principles were applied in both types of power-willing antagonisms.

Consequently, the research question presented here of ‘how to win a throne in Central Europe at the beginning of the fourteenth century?’ applies to a multi-actor milieu. This political arena demanded skills, ideas and strategies from a candidate to attract the attention of other actors, win their approval and support, and subsequently, through group effort and a cooperation move towards the ultimate goal of securing royal power.

It is worth pointing out that – judging from the course of events – the political culture, which broadly understood here to mean the essential source of principles that define politically-related interests and means to accomplish them, rested upon a deeply rooted concept of hierarchy (social, political and religious) and on tradition.⁹¹ Thus, local power bases could not operated where a ruler was missing, if previously there had been one. It was, however, an open question who should be the new ruler and what rules would apply in each particular case. Nevertheless, there was no doubt that there always had to be a king.

Identifying Political Interests – Splendor of the Kingdom of Hungary

The power and wealth of the Kingdom of Hungary was acknowledged by foreign witnesses. As noted by Pal Engel, an Angevin envoy travelling there in 1269 reported that

The king of Hungary has incredibly great power and such a military force that there is no one in the east and in the north who would dare to move if the glorious king mobilized his enormous army.⁹²

Three decades later, similar arguments were used by the Bohemian royal councilors who sought to convince Wenceslas II to enter the competition for the Hungarian throne. They spoke about how vast were the lands of this kingdom and its power hard to measure. The advisors also believed that in the past the Hungarian kings had efficiently overpowered and dominated almost all the German lands.⁹³ According to an anonymous French Dominican, who in 1308 produced a description of Eastern Europe (*Descriptio Europae Orientalis*) and whom Csukovits quoted, the Kingdom of Hungary was in size one of the largest kingdoms in the world, because it stretched for forty days of travel in longitude and latitude.⁹⁴ These accounts represent a common recognition at the turn of the fourteenth century that the Kingdom of Hungary was an attractive entity worth fighting for. It is notable that none of these reports referred to anything but 'material' power, measured in terms of the size of lands or military might.

This is, however, only part of the picture. The Bohemian royal councilors, who assisted Wenceslas II in making the best out of the proposal proffered by a number of the Hungarian lords, pointed out – in order to convince the king to accept the offer – that assuming another crown (his third, since Wenceslas II was already king of Bohemia and Poland) or even giving it to his son, Wenceslas III, would exalt and expand the royal dignity, secure better order in Bohemia, and bring about hope for peaceful tranquility. Thus accepting the offer of the throne would be worth doing for the sake of the common good.⁹⁵

This part of the argumentation focused on more abstract principles which included boosting *honor regalis*, reassuring the *dignitas inviolabilis securitatis*, and guaranteeing peace in the region. From this perspective, the Kingdom of Hungary was attractive as a special acquisition for the king of Bohemia, which would add extra splendor to his name and, since

it would be ruled either by the king himself, or by his only son and heir, there would be decreased threat of regional conflicts. Thus, the king would be equipped with additional resources to effectively control the region and spread his authority there.

In short, the Kingdom of Hungary was powerful in terms of land and military might; moreover, its royal title was prestigious, and – as a general rule – the multiplication of prominent titles had a positive effect on a king's subjects, that is, although the lesser lords always tried to strengthen themselves at the king's expense, they would be equally (or perhaps more) interested in expanding their lordships through cooperation with the ruler, who himself would then enlarge his domination and authority.

The power-winning strategies of Charles I

Charles I's quest for power is best accessible in the extant source material. There is less available data for Wenceslas III and Otto III. The primary reason is that he was the ultimate winner, and thus, there were greater chances that his charters – as generally the only valid ones and, consequently, the most precious – would survive. Moreover, his case was the most widely backed by multiple authorities (the pope, the king of the Romans, the king of Naples, the highest officials of the Hungarian Church), and so supposedly the amount of evidence produced was also exceptional. Furthermore, Charles I's quest for power lasted for a decade, Wenceslas III attempts to gain the throne lasted for four years and Otto III's only for a little more than two years. The disparity in the lengths of the main actors' respective struggles likely also resulted in disproportions in the amounts of available data.

There are three charters issued by Charles I with royal grants for his faithful followers, in which he explained in more detail the reasons why each recipient deserved his special grace. The motivations in each charter represent Charles I's self-reflection on his path to the Hungarian throne. Therefore, they will be analyzed in greater detail here.

On May 22, 1304 Charles I granted a property for services rendered to a certain Benedict. In this charter, Charles I first pointed out the serious perils and difficulties he had found himself in where Benedict had never abandoned him. Next, he explained that Benedict three times came to the Kingdom of Naples as an envoy and brought him news that as soon as possible he should travel to the Kingdom of Hungary (which was his,

due to the election of the prelates and the barons and because of his right of birth), and assisted him along the dangerous way to Hungary. Subsequently, Charles I explained that the Kingdom of Hungary was in great distress, and while attempting to administer and govern the realm, he had diligently searched for an advantageous remedy. Thus, having consulted with the prelates and the barons, he dispatched Benedict to the pope and the cardinals to ask them to help the king reform and restore the Kingdom of Hungary, then suffering from internal devastation. Benedict was successful in his mission and, with the help of God, he returned to Charles I with the papal license to rule over the Kingdom of Hungary. Next, however, some unfaithful and rebellious people attempted to disrupt the rule of Charles I and worked hard to overthrow him; therefore, he – with the consent of the prelates and the barons – turned to Albrecht of Habsburg, the king of the Romans, for support against them.⁹⁶

On March 20, 1310, Charles I rewarded Steven for his faithful services reaching back to the very beginnings of Charles I's presence in the Kingdom of Hungary. Charles I pointed out that when he had arrived in the realm, Steven acknowledged him as king and presented a royal castle to him. Later, he successfully fought battles and accompanied Charles I in his expedition against Wenceslas II. Finally, he assisted the king in establishing friendly relations with Steven Dragutin who ruled in northern Serbia.⁹⁷

On September 4, 1310, Charles I issued a grant to Alexander *de genere* Aba for his faithful services in the period from Charles I's arrival in the Kingdom of Hungary until his coronation. As the king explained, Alexander was always at his side, against all and particularly against Wenceslas III, who was crowned a king by certain Hungarian barons who had rejected Charles I's authority. Subsequently, Wenceslas II personally arrived in Pest with his powerful army – as it was widely known – and took his son back to his own domains. Next, Charles I, together with his faithful barons and noblemen, invaded the Kingdom of Bohemia, and devastated it, burning down strongholds and castles. Alexander served bravely during this expedition and also remained faithful to Charles I against Otto III Wittelsbach.⁹⁸

Apart from these three grants, there are many more which were more specific in enumerating the deeds worth rewarding. For instance, there were grants for injuries in battle,⁹⁹ for travelling overseas to persuade Queen Mary, Charles I's grandmother,¹⁰⁰ in Scepusia to abandon Wenceslas III's cause,¹⁰¹ grants for help in capturing castles in northern Hungary,¹⁰² for seizing the town of Buda,¹⁰³ for participation in the expedition against

Wenceslas II and for capturing Buda,¹⁰⁴ for recapturing Esztergom,¹⁰⁵ for assistance in achieving power, etc.¹⁰⁶ Putting all these stories together, and particularly the first three presented above, sheds light on what Charles I considered the turning point in his quest for power in the Kingdom of Hungary. I will summarize them now.

Charles I, who could claim blood ties with the House of Árpád, had been elected king by the prelates and the barons of the realm who, afterwards, repeatedly dispatched envoys to bring him to his new kingdom. It was important to have him on Hungarian soil as soon as possible, because probably his prolonged absence was detrimental to his case. He found the realm in serious distress because some of the barons had elected Wenceslas III to be their king and had had him crowned. Since Charles I's attempts to govern the kingdom seemed futile, he turned for assistance to the pope and the cardinals who ultimately ruled that he should be the one to wield power in the realm. This judgment was supposed to bring relief to the kingdom and guarantee its restoration. However, the papal decision did not prevent some barons from conspiring and plotting against Charles I. They sought to overthrow him, forcing him to apply for help from Albrecht Habsburg, the king of the Romans and his uncle. Meanwhile, Wenceslas II invaded the Kingdom of Hungary getting as far as Pest and taking his son, Wenceslas III, back to his realm. In response, Charles I organized an expedition to Bohemia and led his faithful barons and noblemen against Wenceslas II where he inflicted serious casualties. Later, he had to face Otto III of Wittelsbach. Notably, Charles I made many of his significant decisions with the counsel or assistance of the prelates and the barons.

From this perspective, the power-winning strategy which Charles I adopted was to cooperate closely with the Hungarian elite, which offered him its support, and exploit his good connections with the supreme moral and legal authority in the Christian West (the pope). He also took advantage of his affinity with the king of the Romans, who could efficiently act as a powerful ally in terms of material (military) power and who was still able to claim his royal jurisdiction over the lands of Charles I's opponent, the king of Bohemia.

The primary goal, however, for Charles I was to secure favor among the Hungarian lords who were in the convenient position of being able to choose between two candidates. It seems Charles I clearly understood his situation since I managed to identify more than twenty-five grants given for faithful service between 1302 and the end of 1310. The secondary goal (because it chiefly resulted from accomplishing the first goal) was

to defeat the enemy. The defeat, however, had to happen not solely on a military level. In fact, there was no pitched battle between the rival armies. Instead, there were some fights between the protagonists of each candidate, basically aimed at capturing strongholds, and thus, at gaining control over certain regions and people.

Charles I's power-winning strategy was multifaceted. Before he arrived in the Kingdom of Hungary, he assumed before the pope, individual religious obligations to recite daily some prayers until he was crowned. These obligations were strengthened by oaths which, after the coronation had taken place, had to be officially alleviated.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, Charles I turned to the pope for legal and moral support. He allied with Albrecht Habsburg to defeat the Přemyslids by force. He gave numerous grants to his faithful followers (the earliest of them dating back to sometime in 1302).¹⁰⁸ He intended to marry his sister Clemencia to someone in the Kingdom of Hungary to stabilize his foothold there.¹⁰⁹ He was crowned three times in the realm. He led military expeditions to the Kingdom of Bohemia and to northern Hungary; he fought back possession of towns and castles. Eventually he was victorious.

It remains an open question, however, how much of this success was the result of Charles I's outstanding ability to convince the Hungarian lords to accept him as a king. He was, more likely, an able player in a game of cooperation. Only the joint effort by various powerful lords favoring Charles I resulted in him being successfully crowned king of Hungary. The course of events showed that inasmuch as the problem was that there were other candidates for the throne, their final disappearance from the political scene by the end of 1307 did not automatically mean the common reception of Charles I. It was the Hungarian lords that needed to be ultimately convinced or compelled to submission. However, with disappearance of rival candidates to the throne, the Hungarian lords lost a good excuse to work against the Angevin candidate.

The nature of the multi-polar system in Hungary

The multi-polar inter-lordly system of the Kingdom of Hungary was extremely flexible and adaptable. The logic of this system could not accept neutrality, that is, once the candidates emerged on the scene – invited to the throne by separate groups of lords (both secular and ecclesiastical) – they superimposed another level of interaction by creating a bipolar

situation that itself demanded from the lords that they orient themselves towards one of the existing poles. As noted before, the logic of the system did not recognize an empty throne as an acceptable state of affairs, and thus, actors were either able to come up with their own candidate or they had to accept the one put forward by others. Multipolarity was not, therefore, the desired final stage of political organization of the Kingdom of Hungary, because it was unstable, contrary to the old customs and traditions, and would in fact deprive the actors of their learnt and customary ways of expanding their lordships. For instance, since the 1270s the Hungarian lords had gained their lordships by supporting or resisting the royal office; they never acted in a power vacuum but rather claimed, received or usurped resources controlled by the king; there was no other way for them to do it.

Thus, a meta-unit, a king, was required, although in this hierarchical system he did not act as a hegemon (a uni-polarity), who controlled and clearly dominated the remainder of the hierarchy, but rather – with the *auxilium et consilium* of the lords – was viewed as a distributor of legitimate lordship. The idea was, therefore, not to abolish the practical multipolarity and install a royal monopoly of lordship, but to establish – by general consensus – a hierarchically superior power that would be empowered (by material and spiritual means) to organize and supervise the social and political life of the lords, that is, to dominate over lesser lords but chiefly in order to coordinate their own quests for domination. ‘Dominate and let others dominate too’ – this would be the maxim of this multi-polar system.

This is why defeating the opponent militarily, although required, was not sufficient. On the meta-level, bipolarity was only a temporary solution because the system, in order to function naturally needed a single distributor of legitimate lordship. Otherwise, no one could claim sufficient authority to provide a sense of security to lesser lords who strove to secure their status through official recognition and confirmation by a legitimate ruler. Consequently, defeating the opponent by force had to be followed by further victories in other fields, particularly legal and moral. In short, the Hungarian lords, the people who could finally decide whether to submit or not to submit to a given candidate, could be convinced to give their support in various ways: by sheer force, by generosity, by legal reasoning, and/or by moral and religious argumentation.

In the multi-polar system, by definition, there is no one power capable of sustaining stability and peace with his own resources alone. Sustaining

the power status quo could be only achieved through various kinds of negotiation which ideally lead to cooperation. Any changes in the political order required the consent of a group which would be powerful (influential) enough to perform its actions even if other actors resisted.

By analogy, in 1301, the pending change in Central European politics, the introduction of a new king to the Kingdom of Hungary, began a dispute between two groups of lords. Each corporate group hoped to overwhelm the resistance of the other. Ptolemy of Lucca, a contemporary chronicler at the papal court explained in an account that in 1301 a conflict flared up over the Hungarian throne. He identified these competing groups with two competing monarchs, Wenceslas II of Bohemia and Charles II of Naples.¹¹⁰ To Giovanni Villani, a contemporary Florentine chronicler, the pope was the creator of Charles I's kingship, because he sent his legate Cardinal Gentilis to the Kingdom of Hungary, tasking him to make sure that Charles I conquered the entire realm and ruled in peace.¹¹¹

At the beginning of this competition, however, the favors of Pope Boniface VIII and Charles II did not necessarily assure bright prospects for Charles I's future. On September 13, 1301, Mario Mariglon wrote to James II of Aragon about the situation in the Kingdom of Hungary, saying that Wenceslas III had better chances than Charles I.¹¹² Three months later, on December 9, 1301, a certain Abbot Ganfridus informed James II that Wenceslas III controlled most of Hungary and that Charles I could only rely on the Cumans, that is, the recently baptized 'pastoralist' people, who in the previous decades had been allowed to settle in the Kingdom of Hungary.¹¹³

According to *Chronici Hungarici Compositio*, Wenceslas III and Charles I became kings in very similar circumstances. They were both elected by the powerful Hungarian lords¹¹⁴ and yet they were not given any real authority, that is, no control over castles and no power.¹¹⁵ This course of events reinforces my argument that, although the multi-polar system required a meta-unit (a distributor and a coordinator of power in the kingdom), this unit was not meant nor designed to control or supervise the lords (and, thus, establish a uni-polar system) but chiefly to coordinate and encourage cooperation by "injecting" into the system royal legitimacy and authority, factors that validated the system *per se*.

The power-winning strategies of Wenceslas III

To gain the upper hand in the dispute, Wenceslas III applied similar power-winning strategies to defeat his opponent. The number of instruments each could command was limited but they were at least accessible to both candidates. He therefore, like Charles I, awarded grants to his supporters. Moreover, he had already initiated this practice in 1301, within a month after his coronation and earlier than his rival.¹¹⁶

Although he left no charters containing elaborate interpretations of his quest for power, as in the case of Charles I, perhaps because his battle for the Hungarian throne did not last long, he still managed to reward some Hungarian lords for their help in defending the town of Buda¹¹⁷ or for assistance in getting him crowned.¹¹⁸ He also made large concessions to one of the most powerful Hungarian lords, Máté Csák, lavishing him with authority over the whole of counties Nitra¹¹⁹ and Trencsén¹²⁰ (thus, much more than control over a group of villages or a castle which would have been a more customary way of rewarding faithful lords) for supporting his bid to become king of Hungary. There was a grant for a Saxon leader in Scepusia for Saxon support¹²¹. Wenceslas III continued to distribute wealth and properties from 1303¹²² until July 1304,¹²³ when he most probably joined his father, Wenceslas II, on his way back to the Kingdom of Bohemia.

As mentioned earlier, in the period between 1302 and 1310, comparatively speaking, Charles I awarded not many more than twenty-five grants for faithful service, whereas Wenceslas awarded approximately ten grants between 1301 and 1304. By the summer of 1304, however, Charles I had issued only seven such charters in comparison to ten grants presented by Wenceslas III. This would suggest, according to the extant source material, that both candidates were more-or-less equally busy rewarding their followers and that both clearly understood the effectiveness of and need for such practices.

Charles I, as he himself emphasized, sought external help from the pope and the German king. The former provided him with the legal and moral justification of his claims and the latter mainly with military support. Wenceslas III relied chiefly on his father's assistance, which would have been considerable since Wenceslas II was – as king of Bohemia and Poland – the closest and most powerful neighbor to the north of the Hungarian Kingdom. Judging from the military expeditions of Charles I, generally directed to the northern regions, the lords of these lands were particularly interested in benefiting from Přemyslids' domination in Central Europe.

In spring of 1304, Wenceslas II was capable of bringing a considerable army up to the town of Buda and, meanwhile, reinforce his son's followers in their hold of strategic castles in the north, which fell to Charles I only two years later.

Like Charles I, Wenceslas III followed the logic of a multi-polar system which required his enterprise to mobilize widespread support from many lords, since only an extensive network of allies could secure political change favorable to his cause. Therefore, in 1303, both Přemyslids concluded an alliance with Philip IV of France which was supposed to outweigh Albrecht Habsburg's and Boniface VIII's commitment to Charles' case. Both parties agreed that in the case of war, each of the allies would rise a mercenary army for 100,000 silver marks and provide help.¹²⁴ It was a formidable promise which was never realized.

In *Regesta Slovaciae* there is a summary of the letter which in July 1304 Wenceslas III apparently sent to his father discussing the state of affairs in the Kingdom of Hungary.¹²⁵ It is an interesting piece of critical self-reflection and self-evaluation. Wenceslas III explained there that his protagonists had become dull and idle; that prominent barons were leaving his side because Charles I was closer to the inheritance following Andrew III (closer either in terms of the family relationship, which is doubtful, or in time, which would fit to what is otherwise known from the sources); that, in particular, Charles I's innate talents and charm attracted the Hungarians to him, whereas Wenceslas' idleness, pride and other manifestations of bad manners had caused people to hate him and thus, provoked his alienation from key players. For this reason, he argued, the lords of towns and castles were gradually abandoning him and submitting to Charles I by making secret agreements. In his opinion, this might cut the domestic fights short and interrupt the internal dispute. The Hungarian barons, however – Wenceslas III continued – who were not faithful to either side, seemed more interested in nourishing these divisions than willing to extinguish them in order to get hold of royal castles and incomes and escape punishment.¹²⁶

I will not concentrate on the accuracy of Wenceslas' ruling capabilities in comparison to Charles'. In 1304, Charles I was sixteen and Wenceslas III was fifteen. They were both young and comparably inexperienced, although they had already spent a couple of years in the Kingdom of Hungary and must have learnt a great deal about political mechanisms at work there. Moreover, the *Chronicon Aulae Regie* has left us with quite the opposite description of Wenceslas III's skills and abilities, depicting

him as an agile, attractive and talented ruler,¹²⁷ although with inclinations to promiscuous behavior because of his age.¹²⁸

Leaving this issue aside, it is worth observing two things here. First, Wenceslas III noted how much the personal features of a candidate could enhance his chances for success. Inborn talents combined with outer attractiveness and exemplary manners did matter, since skills in 'making friends' were particularly desirable in enterprises which depended upon smooth cooperation from the lords that was built chiefly on loyalty and reciprocity.

Second, that in the multi-polar system, the weakest lords (individual noblemen, towns or particular castles) sought to side with the most plausibly victorious candidate, hoping to benefit from so-called band-wagoning (they could either submit to a more powerful lord and seek his protection or side with the king whose protection did not have to be immediate but, on the other hand, represented greater authority in legal and moral terms, and eventually could be more profitable).

More powerful players tended to take advantage of the candidates' rivalry to boost their lordships. The multi-polar system did not possess a hegemonic power to curtail their activities; on the contrary, since political change required that groups of lords engage in cooperative efforts, their status guaranteed them profitable participation in the rivalry. On the other hand, the rivalry itself was necessary and on the basis of Wenceslas III's observations, I would again argue that sustaining the royal office was indispensable for the internal logic of the political system. This was because for the lords, only appropriating royal properties or privileges and subsequently, acquiring legal and moral confirmation for these acquisitions (from a legitimate ruler) was the ultimate (that is, there was no alternative) way of establishing and enlarging their lordships.

Money Matters

Another essential element in the quest for power was money. As pointed out earlier, Charles I and Wenceslas III resorted extensively to their royal right to reward actors deemed loyal to them. In a sense, it was the most customary way of showing magnanimity and assure a profit for the supporters who in majority of cases had to first invest their own wealth in the service of their lord, hoping subsequently for remuneration which

would exceed their expenses. Apart from grants, both rivals could rely on external financial support.

Charles I's sponsors, known from the source material, were his grandparents Charles II of Naples and his wife, Queen Mary. In 1301, Charles II agreed to transport thirty-three horses (including three war-horses) to Dalmatia (a region tied to the Kingdom of Hungary);¹²⁹ in 1301 and 1302, he assigned altogether 200 ounces of gold to Paul Subic, Ban of Slavonia and a powerful supporter of Charles I.¹³⁰ In 1303, he agreed that instead of 100 ounces of gold, Paul Subic would receive 1000 packloads (*salme*)¹³¹ of wheat.¹³² In December 1301, Charles II ordered his seneschals in two districts to collect taxes to build up an army for Charles I.¹³³ In 1305, Queen Mary pledged her jewelry and crown to the Florentine merchants in exchange for 300 ounces of gold.¹³⁴ Two years later, Charles II agreed that Mary could pledge her incomes from 1307 for the sake of Hungarian affairs.¹³⁵ Ultimately, in his last will dated March 1308, Charles II donated 2000 ounces of gold to Charles I.¹³⁶

Although it is difficult to estimate the overall of financial aid provided to Charles I by his grandparents to achieve victory, it seems quite clear that almost every year money poured to his pocket constantly. Moreover, the extant source material indicates that until 1303 Charles II extensively supported his grandson. Nevertheless, from 1305, when the Přemyslids eventually left the Kingdom of Hungary and ceased to threaten Charles I, Queen Mary contributed to further efforts, whereas Charles II limited himself to approving his wife's actions. His final donation on his deathbed was only partially connected to Charles I's enterprise in Hungary, and was primarily related to sorting out the question of succession in the Kingdom of Naples.

Wenceslas III was sponsored by his father. There is, however, less data available about direct financial support. One hint may be the formidable sum of 100,000 marks of silver that the Přemyslids agreed to spend to recruit an army against Albrecht Habsburg, a promise which was a part of an alliance with Philip IV of France. There is no evidence that this huge amount of money was ever used although it reveals the degree of contribution approved at least officially by the Přemyslids. Another, and far more modest, indication would be a charter issued on May 31, 1305 by Wenceslas II in which he promised to a canon of Aquileia that Wenceslas III would return by December 25, the tithes of 580 marks of silver which had been collected for the sake of the Holy Land in the Olomouc region but requisitioned by Wenceslas III for "times of need".¹³⁷

Non-material Dimensions of Power

So far, the comparative analysis of the power-winning strategies employed by Charles I and Wenceslas III revealed that they generally match each other. They started their quest for the Hungarian throne under almost identical conditions, having been elected by different groups of the Hungarian lords and were nearly the same age. They employed similar methods to gain the hearts and minds of their prospective subjects, sought widespread support from external powers and relied on generous sponsors who could provide considerable financial aid. Both were in the fourth degree of affinity with the deceased Andrew III, with a slight advantage towards Wenceslas, who in the late 1290s, was formally engaged to Andrew III's daughter and might have become his son-in-law. Therefore, if the legal terminology used in 1304 by Wenceslas II in his dispute with Albrecht Habsburg is followed, it appears each party could equally claim rights to the Hungarian throne *iure legitime successionis* (by the legitimate law of succession) and *vocationis titulo* (by election).¹³⁸

However, despite all these similarities, only Charles I was eventually successful. It is worth asking what made the difference? Was it sheer disparity in material power or Wenceslas III's questionable charm that caused the same power-winning strategies to work better for Charles I? The extant source material suggests that between 1301 and 1306 there was a gradual shift in the ranks of the Hungarian lords who shifted from the Bohemian prince's side to that of Charles I changing an anticipated triumph into a defeat. What did Wenceslas III lack that mattered so much in the quest for power in the early fourteenth century?

The answer to this question lies in the non-material dimensions of power, and to moral authority in particular. It can be argued that what made a considerable difference between the positions of Charles I and Wenceslas III was precisely the support of the pope and the German king.¹³⁹ Yet, this assistance was not important in its material aspects but rather in its persuasive, soft-power type of capabilities. The firm moral and legal protection from the pope, when effectively used, triggered the Hungarian Church to place its moral and religious authority on Charles I's side.

In 1301, after the death of Andrew III, the prelates were not unanimous in their decision who should replace him. They split into two groups. According to the papal legate's report, most of them adhered to John, Archbishop of Kalocsa, and refused to acknowledge the authority of Gregory, a new Archbishop of Esztergom (and the formal head of the

Church in the Kingdom of Hungary).¹⁴⁰ John crowned Wenceslas III, whereas Gregory crowned Charles I.

Boniface VIII followed the politics of his predecessors and favored the Angevin claims. A few months after Andrew III's death, he appointed his legate, Nicholas, Bishop of Ostia.¹⁴¹ Already in October 1301, the legate summoned the Hungarian prelates in search of a way to settle the conflict between Wenceslas III and Charles I, and – as I presume – to end the divisions in the Hungarian Church.¹⁴² On November 6, 1301, Boniface VIII issued a number of letters which requested Wenceslas II to cooperate with the legate,¹⁴³ urged the bishops of Hungary, Dalmatia, Slavonia and Poland to assist the legate in restoring peace in the Kingdom of Hungary,¹⁴⁴ and empowered the legate to punish these prelates who obstructed his efforts to reform the realm.¹⁴⁵ On November 17, 1301, Boniface VIII sent out further letters. The first was addressed to Archbishop of Kalocsa and reprimanded him for siding with Wenceslas III, declaring that the coronation of Wenceslas III was illegitimate, reminding him that ultimately St. Steven himself had received the royal crown from the pope (hence, the pope's will should be obeyed), and demanding that the archbishop correct his behavior and show loyalty to the pope in the spirit of obedience.¹⁴⁶ The second letter was for the legate mandating him to discipline the archbishop of Kalocsa and informing him that only the archbishop of Esztergom could legitimately crown a king of Hungary.¹⁴⁷

In May 1302, the papal legate levied an interdict on the town of Buda which had sided with Wenceslas III and whose clergy had refused to submit to the papal decrees.¹⁴⁸ Meanwhile, Boniface VIII continued his policy to act as the ultimate overseer of Central European "international" relations. On June 10, 1302, he deprived Wenceslas II of his self-appointed title of the king of Poland¹⁴⁹ and summoned the Přemyslids and the Angevins before himself to adjudicate their dispute for the Hungarian throne.¹⁵⁰ The pope made his ruling in favor of the Angevins on May 31, 1303. He recognized Charles I's hereditary rights deriving from his grandmother, Queen Mary, and granted validity to his election. Furthermore, the pope stated that Wenceslas II did not send well-prepared advocates to represent the Přemyslids at his court (he rather expected them to come personally). Moreover, Boniface VIII demanded that everyone – under threat of excommunication – support Mary and Charles in their efforts to repossess the Hungarian realm. All laity and clergymen were absolved from allegiance to the Přemyslids, and the latter were to provide within four months evidence for their rights to Hungary; otherwise, the pope

decided to introduce the rule of *perpetuum silentium*, that is, to impose on the Přemyslids “eternal silence”, meaning they did not have the right to resume the trial in the future.¹⁵¹ In addition, the pope informed Albrecht Habsburg the German king, his son Rudolf, Duke of Austria, and all *praelatis, principibus et nobilibus* in Hungary and beyond, about his ruling, and urged them to support Charles I with *consilium et auxilium et favor*.¹⁵² Subsequently, the prelates of the Hungarian Church received a clear command to abandon the Přemyslids and side with the Angevins.¹⁵³

In the following months, the Hungarian bishops engaged in spreading the news about the papal decision across the whole kingdom.¹⁵⁴ They were fairly determined to uphold it. For instance, on July 31, 1305 a certain John and Henry were excommunicated and their lands put under an interdict as punishment for their support of Wenceslas III (*consilium et auxilium*), for ignoring the papal orders, for helping the Přemyslids to carry away the Hungarian Holy Crown, and for inflicting damage on the town and castle of Esztergom.¹⁵⁵ However, complete unity within the Hungarian Church had still not been attained. On December 6, 1305, Otto III of Wittelsbach was crowned by Benedict, Bishop of Veszprem, and Antonius, Bishop of Csanád.¹⁵⁶ A half a year later, the former was rewarded for this act by Otto.¹⁵⁷

The emergence of Otto III of Wittelsbach as a new candidate for the Hungarian throne mobilized the Church anew. In May 1307, Thomas, Archbishop of Esztergom presided over a local council, which reiterated that anyone opposing Charles I would be excommunicated based on a papal ruling.¹⁵⁸ In August 1307, Clement V dispatched Gentilis de Monteflorum OFM as a legate to a “distressed” Hungary,¹⁵⁹ reconfirmed Boniface VIII’s ruling concerning Angevin rights to the Árpáadian legacy,¹⁶⁰ and required Thomas, Archbishop of Esztergom and Vincent, Archbishop of Kalocsa, to promulgate his decision in the Hungarian realm and to discipline Bishop Antonius for his support of Otto.¹⁶¹

When, at the end of 1307, Charles I was the last standing candidate for the Hungarian throne, the legate and the archbishops continued in their efforts to facilitate his final recognition in the kingdom.¹⁶² Their contribution was, first and foremost, non-material and rooted in the moral authority they wielded that equipped them with “pacifying powers”. Although their success was not complete (since Charles I needed another two decades to eliminate lordships that contested his authority), they managed to generate conditions favorable for the new king. He was widely recognized across the kingdom and the will to cooperate with him among the lords was restored

to a level that allowed them to think positively about returning the realm to peace, order, and tranquility. Therefore, the papal judgment in favor of Charles I did not fully settle the dispute over the empty throne in Hungary but it definitely created a new context for its continuation. The Hungarian Church, which in the last decades had been active in restoring peace and tranquility in the kingdom, gained additional validation and justification for her efforts. However, it was not merely papal moral authority that made the difference, for at nearly the same time Boniface VIII was losing his conflict with Philip IV of France, precisely because his stance did not resonate with the majority of the French bishops. Joseph Canning has mentioned an eloquent anecdote which neatly expressed the fragility of papal moral power. According to this anecdote, current in England at the time of the quarrel between the pope and the king of France, Philip's chancellor and ambassador to the pope, Pierre Flotte, said to Boniface: "Your power is verbal, ours however, is real."¹⁶³

While comparing the power-winning strategies that drove Charles I and Wenceslas III in their quest to win the Árpáadian legacy, it appears evident that the Angevins were able to exploit an additional power resource (to wit, moral authority), which was – at least from August 1303 – significantly less available to the Přemyslids. Making this claim does not mean that Wenceslas III was defeated solely because of a 'shortage' of this type of power resource. The Angevin-Přemyslid struggle was waged on many fronts, using military, financial, and even hereditary assets. The very fact that in late 1305 Otto III Wittelsbach replaced Wenceslas III in this succession conflict reveals that, despite the papal ruling and the sustained offensive of the Hungarian Church, options were still open and things could go in a variety of directions.

My point is, therefore, to show that this more detailed analysis of the way Charles I and Wenceslas III acted in order to gain control of the Hungarian throne, permits a firmer grip on the non-material aspects, which played important roles in medieval "international" politics. The Přemyslids did not lose Hungary in a battle and their protagonists survived in northern Hungary for next two years. Rather, the Přemyslids withdrew from the dispute, as previously Přemysl Otakar II had done in 1271, concentrating on reaffirming their hold of the kingdoms of Bohemia and Poland. One could therefore argue that the military campaigns of late 1304, and Władysław Łokietek's emergence in Little Poland, forced the Přemyslids to give up their ambitions in Hungary and to shift their attention to domains they already possessed.

However, it could be argued that it was very telling that in the summer of 1304, Wenceslas II led a strong military force to the Kingdom of Hungary although the final outcome of this enterprise was to extricate his son from Buda back to Bohemia since Wenceslas III was no longer a welcome candidate for the throne there either. This circumstance had much to do, it seems, with the efficiency of papal moral authority, which clearly took the side of Charles I. Moreover, there is always the question of how much the emergence of the anti-Přemyslid coalition was prompted by admonitions coming from the pope, and to what extent his attitude promoted cooperation between members of this alliance (it included Rudolf of Habsburg, Charles I, both Hungarian archbishops, four other Hungarian bishops, a number of powerful Hungarian lords,¹⁶⁴ and – presumably – Władysław Łokietek¹⁶⁵).

In 1997, Rodney Bruce Hall developed the concept of moral authority as a power resource. Since his approach was constructivist, he assumed a methodological suggestion that in order to identify what, in any given context, the power resource actually is, one first needs to understand “a situationally specific or historically contingent structure of co-constituted identities and interests”.¹⁶⁶ In short, his idea was that moral authority could function as a power resource if, in a given context, the political actors were impelled by their socially constructed identities and political interests to recognize it as a power resource, i.e. as a resource that has utility and value.¹⁶⁷ He believed that “institutionalizing social practices into conventions lends utility to the subject of the convention as a power resource”.¹⁶⁸ Hall argued that such a convention regarding moral authority existed in the Middle Ages, and hence, he claimed that “feudal ecclesial and politico-military actors competed for the moral authority”.¹⁶⁹

The quarrel between Charles I and Wenceslas III over the empty throne in the Kingdom of Hungary reflects Hall’s intuitions about special “conventions” which governed medieval “international” politics by influencing the concepts of kingship and crafting particular types of political interests. This analysis showed that in the multi-polar political environment, which had emerged in Central Europe since the 1240s, and in which efficient rulership could only be attained by promoting the will to cooperate between the lords (because there was no hegemonic actor towering over the remainder), the lord’s ability to attract, persuade and convince both other lords and his dependants appeared as an important factor in successful politics in the “international” realm. In a political system comprised of comparably powerful units (be it on the level

of dukes, kings, emperors or on the more modest level of counts and individual lords), the prevailing multi-polarity combined with the limited effectiveness of military force together with the fragility of the financial system and its confined assets (as in the Middle Ages) lead to an increase in the prominence of non-material power resources, themselves deeply imbedded in the traditional political culture of the time.

One can think of many reasons why Charles I was successful in his quest for power in the Kingdom of Hungary. In terms of strategies, he did not come up with ideas that were qualitatively different than his most serious opponent, Wenceslas III. Their points of departure were rather similar and at the outset of the competition their chances of success were fairly even. Over time, however, it turned out that Charles I managed to nearly monopolize access to a single power resource of moral authority, which consequently, projected him in a favorable light and boosted his abilities to convince and manipulate. This striking disparity, which arose after Boniface VIII's ruling concerning Angevin succession rights and continued until Charles I's third coronation in 1310, presumably knocked his rivals (Wenceslas III, Otto III and the rebellious Hungarian lords) off balance and deprived them of the power of arguments they could use to draw the others' will to cooperate to their side.

The course of events between 1307 and 1310 revealed how consistently the pope, the legate and the Hungarian Church worked on advancing their power of argument within the "convention" (as Hall called it) of their moral authority on behalf of Charles I. The repeated general assemblies which officially acknowledged Charles I's authority, agreements with the powerful lords, and the elaboration of the coronation rite under the legate's *aegis* were all reflections of the same procedure, namely, to monopolize the discourse of legitimacy and authority in favor of one candidate. Wenceslas III, himself well equipped with strong legal and dynastic arguments, still could not manage to balance this pressure, which willy-nilly made him lose the battle on the moral discourse front.

I argue that it was an influential power-winning strategy in the society which was fundamentally organized according to the concepts of rank and order, and which was susceptible to moral argumentation (based on the Christian doctrine) in the political realm.

NOTES

- ¹ Pál Engel, Gyula Kristó, and András Kubinyi, *Magyarország története, 1301-1526* [History of Hungary, 1301-1526] (Budapest: Osiris, 2002), 11. Pál Engel, *Realm of St Stephen: a History of Medieval Hungary, 895-1526* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), 124. Iván Bertényi and László Szende, *Anjou-királyaink és Zsigmond kora* [The Period of Angevin kings and of Sigismund] (Budapest: Officina, 2011), 51.
- ² Engel, *Realm of St Stephen*, 101.
- ³ *Ibid.*, 111.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 124.
- ⁵ Enikő Csukovits, *Az Anjouk Magyarországon I.: I. Károly és uralkodása* [The Angevins in Hungary. Charles I and His Rule] (Budapest: MTA Bölcsészettudományi Kutatóközpont Történettudományi Intézet, 2012), 41.
- ⁶ Iván Bertényi and László Szende, *Anjou-királyaink és Zsigmond kora*, 51.
- ⁷ Translation after: Engel, *Realm of St Stephen*, 124.
- ⁸ Imre Nagy and Gyula Nagy, *Codex Diplomaticus Hungaricus Andegavensis. Anjoukori Okmánytár*, vol. 1 (Budapest: A Magyar tudományos akadémia, 1878), 51–53: *Demum eciam domino Andree Illustri Regi Hungarie diuina vocante clemencia rebus humanis exempto vltimo aureo ramusculo a progenie stirpe ac sanguine sancti Regis Stephani primi Regis Hungarorum per paternam lineam descendenti extinco, cum vniuersi ecclesiarum prelati amministrationem habentes et Barones proceres ac vniuersi nobiles et cuiusuis status homines Regni Hungarie cum se vero ac naturali domino desolato sentirent scirent et intelligerent de morte eiusdem more Rachelis deplorantes et immensum conturbati et admodum solliciti qualiter et quemadmodum sibi diuina desuper disponente clemencia futurum dominum de sanguine sancti Regis polulatum possent et valerent inuenire.*
- ⁹ Thomas N. Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century: Power, Lordship, and the Origins of European Government* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009), IX.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3–4.
- ¹¹ I intentionally avoid the term “central power”, because to some degree using it automatically invokes anachronistic thoughts about medieval political entities in terms of modern states, which I consider misleading, impoverishing the “otherness” of medieval power relations.
- ¹² Gyula Kristó, “Die Macht der Territorialherren in Ungarn am Anfang des 14. Jahrhunderts,” in *Etudes Historiques Hongroises 1985*, vol. 1 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1985), 598.
- ¹³ Recently about the supposed decimation of the population cf. Attila Zsoldos, *Nagy uralkodók és kiskirályok a 13. században* [Great Rulers and Small Kings in the Thirteenth Century] (Budapest: Kossuth/Metropol, 2009), 54.

- 14 László Szende, "Magyarország külpolitikája 1242-1246 között," [The Foreign Politics of Hungary between 1242 and 1246] *Első Század* 2 (2000): 307–311; Engel, *Realm of St Stephen*, 101–102.
- 15 Zsoldos, *Nagy Uralkodók*, 54.
- 16 Cf. Iván Bertényi and Gábor Gyapay, *Magyarország rövid története* [Short History of Hungary] (Budapest: Maecenas, 1992), 90–91.
- 17 Engel, *Realm of St Stephen*, 104.
- 18 Zsoldos, *Nagy uralkodók*, 55.
- 19 Kristó, "Die Macht," 605.
- 20 Jaroslav Pánek and Oldřich Tůma, *A History of the Czech Lands* (Prague: Karolinum Press, 2009), 107.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 107–108.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 107.
- 23 Attila Zsoldos, "Az ifjabb király országa," [The Realm of the 'Junior' King] *Századok* 139 (2005): 235.
- 24 Engel, *Realm of St Stephen*, 95.
- 25 Zsoldos, "Az ifjabb király országa," 235.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 260.
- 27 Pánek and Tůma, *A History of the Czech Lands*, 110.
- 28 Zsoldos, "Az ifjabb király országa," 233–234.
- 29 Engel, *Realm of St Stephen*, 107.
- 30 *Ibid.*
- 31 János M. Bak, *Königtum und Stände in Ungarn im 14.-16. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1973), 12.
- 32 Pánek and Tůma, *A History of the Czech Lands*, 110.
- 33 Cf. the description of political activities carried out by the Hungarian lords: Kristó, "Die Macht," 603–604.
- 34 Jörg K. Hoensch, *Geschichte Böhmens: Von der slavischen Landnahme bis ins 20. Jahrhundert*, 2., aktualisierte u. ergänzte Auflage (München: C.H. Beck, 1992), 279.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 280.
- 36 Tomasz Jurek, Stanisław Szczur, and Krzysztof Ożóg, *Piastowie: Leksykon Biograficzny* [The Piasts: Biographical Lexicon] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1999), 428.
- 37 Kateřina Charvátová, *Václav II: Král Český a Polský* [Wenceslas II: the Czech and Polish King] (Praha: Vyšehrad, 2007), 48–51.
- 38 Kristó, "Die Macht," 604.
- 39 Hoensch, *Geschichte Böhmens*, 280.
- 40 Charvátová, *Václav II*, 116.
- 41 Cf. Robert Antonín, *Zahraniční Politika Krále Václava II. v letech 1283-1300* [King Wenceslas' II Foreign Policy between 1283 and 1300] (Brno: Matice moravská, 2009), 20–63.

- 42 Chronicon Aulae Regie, 38: *Wenceslaus rex [...] sicque dispersa revocat, dissipata congregat, ea quoque, que aliena manus distraxerat, cum summa diligencia reintegrando gubernat.*
- 43 *Ibid.*, 38.
- 44 Charvátová, *Václav II*, 180–181.
- 45 Kristó, “Die Macht,” 598.
- 46 *Ibid.*, 600.
- 47 *Ibid.*, 601–602.
- 48 Gyula Kristó and Ferenc Makk, *Károly Róbert emlékezete* [The Legacy of Charles Robert] (Budapest: Európa Könyvkiadó, 1988), 7–21. Blanka Brezovakova, “Politický Zapas Anjouovcov o Uhorsku Korunu,” [The Angevin Struggle for the Hungarian Crown] *Historicky Casopis* 39, no. 6 (1991): 569–587. Stanisław A. Sroka, “Methods of Constructing Angevin Rule in Hungary in the Light of Most Recent Research,” *Quaestiones Medii Aevi Novae* 1 (1996): 77–90. Csukovits, *Az Anjouk Magyarországon I.*, 41–69. Iván Bertényi, *Magyarország az Anjouk korában* [Hungary in the Angevin Period] (Budapest: Gondolat, 1987), 27–47.
- 49 Engel, *Realm of St Stephen*, 125.
- 50 Brezovakova, “Politický Zapas,” 572.
- 51 Bak, *Königtum*, 13.
- 52 Brezovakova, “Politický Zapas,” 575.
- 53 Irena Sułkowska-Kurasiowa and Stanisław Kuraś, *Bullarium Poloniae*, vol. 1 (Romae: Ecole française de Rome, 1982), n. 951.
- 54 Josef Emler, ed., *Regesta Diplomatica Nec Non Epistolaria Bohemiae et Moraviae*, vol. 2 (Pragae: Haase, 1855) [hereafter: RDEBM], 827–829.
- 55 Brezovakova, “Politický Zapas,” 580.
- 56 Emler, *RDEBM*, 2:843–846.
- 57 *Ibid.*, 2:847–849.
- 58 *Anjou-kori Oklevéltár: Documenta Res Hungaricas Tempore Regum Andegavensium Illustrantia*, vol. 1 (Szeged: Szegedi Középkorász Műhely, 1990), n. 417.
- 59 Emler, *RDEBM*, 2:870.
- 60 *AOkI.*, 1990, vol. 1, n. 643.
- 61 Csukovits, *Az Anjouk Magyarországon I.*, 65.
- 62 Emler, *RDEBM*, 2:871.
- 63 As the comment favorable to Wenceslas II goes in the *Chronica Oliviensis: Item istius regis nobilis tempore* [Wenceslas II] *Albertus monoculus rex Romanorum cum valido exercitu Bohemiam intravit et ad tempus in ea stetit, sed nichil proficiens, protegente Deo pium regem, confusus recessit non sine multo exercitus sui detrimento. Monumenta Poloniae Historica*, vol. 6 (Kraków: Akademia Umiejętności, 1893), 317.
- 64 Emler, *RDEBM*, 2:886–887.

- 65 *Chronicon Aulae Regie* explained that Wenceslas III “voluntarie resignabat” his royal rights: František Palacký, *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum*, vol. 4 (Prague: Nákl. N. F. Palackého, 1884), 107. See also: Kristó and Makk, *Károly Róbert emlékezete*, 16.
- 66 He still used it in a charter of October 10, 1305 although the title had vanished from charters starting from November 3, 1305: cf. Ignacy Zakrzewski, ed., *Kodeks Dyplomatyczny Wielkopolski*, vol. 2 (Poznań: Nakł. Bibl. Kórnickiej, 1878), n. 894., and Emler, *RDEBM*, 2:888.
- 67 Brezovakova, “Politický Zapas,” 585.
- 68 Kronika Pulkavova: *Sed et Otto, Bavarie dux*, [tamquam heres vicinior - version B] *in regem Ungarie per Ungaros est electus*: František Palacký, *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum*, vol. 5 (Prague: Nákl. N. F. Palackého, 1884), 187.
- 69 Cf. *Anjou-kori Oklevéltár: Documenta Res Hungaricas Tempore Regum Andegavensium Illustrantia*, vol. 2 (Szeged: Szegedi Középkorász Műhely, 1992), n. 656 and 683. Cf. Kristó and Makk, *Károly Róbert emlékezete*, 17.
- 70 Brezovakova, “Politický Zapas,” 585. Cf. *AOkI.*, 1992, vol. 2, n. 172.
- 71 *AOkI.*, 1992, vol. 2, n. 201.
- 72 *Ibid.*, vol. 2, n. 221–222.
- 73 Csukovits, *Az Anjouk Magyarországon I.*, 65–66.
- 74 *AOkI.*, 1992, vol. 2, n. 243.
- 75 *Ibid.*, vol. 2, n. 494.
- 76 *Ibid.*, vol. 2, n. 668.
- 77 *Chronici Hungarici*, Imre Szentpétery, ed., *Scriptores Rerum Hungaricarum Tempore Ducum Regumque Stirpis Arpadinae Gestarum*, vol. 1 (Budapest, 1937), 486.
- 78 *AOkI.*, 1992, vol. 2, n. 674. Cf. Csukovits, *Az Anjouk Magyarországon I.*, 68.
- 79 As Kristó asserted, by 1310, the Church, the lesser nobility, towns, merchants, and peasants realized that “for their own interest” they had to staunchly support the new king in order to overpower the “oligarchs”, cf. Kristó, “Die Macht,” 609.
- 80 I omit the case of Otto III principally due to space limitations. Moreover, the competition between Charles I and Wenceslas III is better documented (than in the case of Otto III), permitting a more profound analysis.
- 81 Csukovits, *Az Anjouk Magyarországon I.*, 65.
- 82 *Ibid.* She referred there to a study by Ludwig Holzfurtner that shortly reported on the “adventures” of Otto III.
- 83 Kristó in his account of the action of Otto III in the kingdom of Hungary focused mainly on reporting about the content of the source material. However, he did not attempt to provide a coherent picture of Otto’s expedition to Hungary, cf. Kristó and Makk, *Károly Róbert emlékezete*, 16–17.

- 84 For the sake of brevity I had to omit the Polish principalities. Without going into detail, I would argue that such analogical tendencies, mechanisms and attitudes worked there too. They certainly reflected some local peculiarities which were partially connected to the non-royal status of power in the Polish lands but, nevertheless, the similarities are remarkable.
- 85 One recent example would be Josef Žemlička who explained: *The Hungarian king, Béla IV, was unhappy with these disturbances in the balance of power in Central Europe* [which derived from Wenceslas' I successes in Austria – wk]. *War came: Pánek and Tůma, A History of the Czech Lands*, 108.
- 86 Charvátová, *Václav II*, 114.
- 87 Antonín, *Zahraniční*, 278.
- 88 Cf. Csukovits, *Az Anjouk Magyarországon I.*, 39.; Kristó and Makk, *Károly Róbert emlékezete*, 8–9.; Engel, Kristó, and Kubinyi, *Magyarország története*, 27–29; Kristó, “Die Macht,” 606–609.
- 89 Pánek and Tůma, *A History of the Czech Lands*, 111.
- 90 I follow here concepts that already exist in the IR scholarship. Andrew Heywood recently explained the concept of “multipolarity”: *Multipolarity refers to an international system in which there are three or more power centres. However, this may encompass arrangements ranging from tripolar systems [...] to effectively nonpolar systems [...], in which power is so diffuse that no actor can any longer be portrayed as a ‘pole’.* Neorealists argue that multipolarity creates a bias in favour of fluidity and uncertainty, which can lead only to instability and an increased likelihood of war (‘anarchical’ multipolarity). Liberals nevertheless argue that multipolar systems are characterized by a tendency towards multilateralism, as a more even division of global power promotes peace, cooperation and integration (‘interdependent’ multipolarity); Andrew Heywood, *Global Politics* (Houndmills, Basingstoke Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 230.
- 91 Andrzej Feliks Grabski, *Dzieje historiografii* [History of Historiography] (Poznań: Wydaw. Poznańskie, 2003). Krzysztof Pomian, *Przeszłość Jako Przedmiot Wiary; Historia i Filozofia w Myśli Średniowiecza*. [Past as the Subject of Faith. History and Philosophy in the Medieval Thought] (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawn. Naukowe, 1968).
- 92 Engel, *Realm of St Stephen*, 108.
- 93 *Chronicon Aulae Regie: Non te latet domine rex, inquiunt, et nos ipsi cognoscimus et patres nostri narraverunt nobis, quia lata est Ungarie terra ac ipsius potentia minime mensurata. Reges enim Ungarie, qui ante nos fuerunt, per totam fere Germaniam tyrannidem exercentes longe dominati sunt*; Palacký, *FRB*, 1884, 4:83.
- 94 Csukovits, *Az Anjouk Magyarországon I.*, 11. *Regnum vngarie est de maioribus regnis mundi, quantum ad terre spacium; dicitur enim comuniter, quod in longitudine habebat XL diebus et totidem in latitudine:*

- Olgierd Górka, ed., *Anonymi Descriptio Europae Orientalis "Imperium Constantinopolitanum, Albania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Ruthenia, Ungaria, Polonia, Bohemia" Anno MCCCVIII Exarata* (Cracow: Gebethner: sumptibus Academiae Litterarum, 1916), 46.
- 95 *Chronicon Aulae Regie*, Palacký, *FRB*, 1884, 4:83–84.
- 96 Nagy and Nagy, *AO*, 1:80–81.
- 97 *AOkl.*, 1992, vol. 2, n. 855.
- 98 Nagy and Nagy, *AO*, 1:210.
- 99 *AOkl.*, 1990, vol. 1, n. 451.
- 100 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, n. 675.
- 101 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, n. 668.
- 102 *AOkl.*, 1992, vol. 2, n. 44.
- 103 *Ibid.*, vol. 2, n. 173.
- 104 *Ibid.*, vol. 2, n. 232.
- 105 *Ibid.*, vol. 2, n. 436.
- 106 *Ibid.*, vol. 2, n. 684.
- 107 *Ibid.*, vol. 2, n. 825–826.
- 108 *AOkl.*, 1990, vol. 1, n. 278, 316–317.
- 109 *AOkl.*, 1992, vol. 2, n. 821–823.
- 110 *Eodem anno [1301] controversia exorta est in Ungaria de regno inter regem Boemie, qui filium suum cum favore aliquorum principum coronari ordinavit in Buda, et inter regem Karolum, qui filium Karoli martelli nati de Ungaria in Ungariam miserat pro corona habens similiter in suum auxilium et favorem aliquos principes regionis et Cumanos ac multitudinem Tartarorum*: Ottavio Clavuot, ed., *Tholomaeus von Lucca, Historia Ecclesiastica Nova*, vol. 39, Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptores, 2009, 647. Almost identical account Ptolemy inserted into his *Annales*: Bernhard Schmeidler, ed., *Tholomei Lucensis Annales*, vol. 8, Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum, Nova Series, 1930, 238.
- 111 *Ugyane pápa Gentile de Montefiore baboros urat küldte követül Magyarországba. Károly Róbertnek, Martell Károly fiának, Róbert király unokaöccsének Magyarország királyává való koronázására s hogy az egyház segélyében s támogatásában részesítset. S úgy is történt s a nevezett baboros huzamosabb időt töltött Magyarországbán, a míg az említett Károly király szinte az egész országot meg nem hódította s őt békességben meg nem koronázta*: Giovanni Villani, *A Három Villani Krónikája* [The Chronicle of Three Villanis] (Budapest: Athenaeum, 1909), 113.
- 112 *AOkl.*, 1990, vol. 1, n. 69.
- 113 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, n. 130.
- 114 *Chronici Hungarici*, *SRH*, 1:479–480.
- 115 *Chronici Hungarici*, *ibid.*, 1:481.
- 116 *AOkl.*, 1990, vol. 1, n. 76.

- 117 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, n. 315.
- 118 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, n. 212, 315.
- 119 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, n. 184.
- 120 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, n. 186.
- 121 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, n. 268.
- 122 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, n. 505, 507, 508.
- 123 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, n. 634.
- 124 Emler, *RDEBM*, 2:856–857.
- 125 Brezovakova, “Politicky Zapas,” 583.
- 126 *Ladislau, rex Hungariae, Wenceslao, regi Bohemiae et Poloniae, patri suo, litteras de statu regni mittit, in quibus continebatur, quod pars sua sensim languidior hebetiorque esse coepit. Desciscentibus praecipuis baronibus ab eo et in partem Caroli regis facientibus secessionem, quod et Carolus ad succedendum regi Andreae erat propinquior, singularique ingenio et indole atque venustate morum praeclarus Hungarorum mentes in sui venerationem et culturam instexerat, et Wenceslaus desidia et superbia ceterisque corruptis moribus et flagitiis odium in se et alienationem animorum provocabat. Quo effectum est, ut castra municipiaque, obedientiam Wenceslai regis professam, regi Carolo dederentur et in personae suae clamdestini celebrarentur tractatus, quo facilius civile bellum intercipi posset, expulsionem vel discrimen. Barones insuper Hungariae, nulli partium fidi, nutrire magis divisionem, quam extinguere visi sunt, ut castrorum et introituum regalium impunis illis esset detentio*: Vincent Sedlák, *Regesta Diplomatica Nec Non Epistolaria Slovaciae*, vol. 1 (Bratislavae: Sumptibus Academiae Scientiarum Slovacae, 1980), 156.
- 127 *Chronicon Aulae Regie*, *FRB*, 1884, 4:106.
- 128 *Chronicon Aulae Regie*, *ibid.*, 4:107.
- 129 *AOKl.*, 1990, vol. 1, n. 46.
- 130 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, n. 55, 249.
- 131 Philip B. Baldwin recently explained: “A *salma*, derived from *sagma*, a pack-saddle, is the load that can be carried on the back of pack-horse or other beast of burden. ... One hundred pack-loads of wheat on the English example might therefore be equated, in general terms, with the bread provision for 55 people for one year; but there are many variables.”: cf. Philip B. Baldwin, “Charles of Anjou, Pope Gregory X and the Crown of Jerusalem,” *Journal of Medieval History* 38, no. 4 (2012): 428. Following his calculations, Paul Subic was granted the annual bread provision for approx. 550 people.
- 132 *AOKl.*, 1990, vol. 1, n. 429.
- 133 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, n. 128.
- 134 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, n. 744.
- 135 *AOKl.*, 1992, vol. 2, n. 262.
- 136 *Ibid.*, vol. 2, n. 323.

- 137 Emler, *RDEBM*, 2:880–881.
 138 Chronicon Aulae Regie, *FRB*, 1884, 4:88.
 139 For this analysis it is less important to elucidate the reasons which made the
 pope and the German king work against the Přemyslids.
 140 Emler, *RDEBM*, 2:188.
 141 Sułkowska-Kurasiowa and Kuraś, *Bullarium Poloniae*, vol. 1, n. 951.
 142 *AOkl.*, 1990, vol. 1, n. 96.
 143 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, n. 107.
 144 Emler, *RDEBM*, 2:820.
 145 *Ibid.*, 2:819–820.
 146 *AOkl.*, 1990, vol. 1, n. 88.
 147 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, n. 89.
 148 Brezovakova, “Politicky Zapas,” 579.
 149 Zakrzewski, *KDW*, vol. 2, n. 853.
 150 Sedlák, *Regesta Slovaciae*, 1:827–829.
 151 *Ibid.*, 1:843–846.
 152 *Ibid.*, 1:846.
 153 *Ibid.*, 1:848–849.
 154 *AOkl.*, 1990, vol. 1, n. 417, 426, 432–434.
 155 *Ibid.*, vol. 1, n. 756.
 156 Brezovakova, “Politicky Zapas,” 585.
 157 *AOkl.*, 1992, vol. 2, n. 55.
 158 *Ibid.*, vol. 2, n. 172; cf. Brezovakova, “Politicky Zapas,” 585.
 159 *AOkl.*, 1992, vol. 2, n. 201.
 160 *Ibid.*, vol. 2, n. 221.
 161 *Ibid.*, vol. 2, n. 222.
 162 Csukovits, *Az Anjouk Magyarországon I.*, 66–69.
 163 Joseph Canning, *Ideas of Power in the Late Middle Ages, 1296-1417* (New
 York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 12.
 164 *AOkl.*, 1990, vol. 1, n. 643–644.
 165 Edmund Długopolski, *Władysław Łokietek Na Tle Swoich Czasów*
 [Władysław Łokietek and His Times] (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Zakładu
 Narodowego im. Ossolińskich, 1951), 55; cf. Adam Kłodziński, “Łokietek
 a Habsburgowie (1300-1332),” [Łokietek and the Habsburgs (1300-1332)]
RAU. Wydział Hist.-filoz. 59 (1916): 259.
 166 Rodney Bruce Hall, “Moral Authority as a Power Resource,” *International*
Organization 51, no. 4 (1997): 594.
 167 *Ibid.*
 168 *Ibid.*, 596.
 169 *Ibid.*, 591.



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A CRITICISM OF ARENDT'S CONCEPT OF IDEOLOGY

Abstract

Hannah Arendt provides what could be called a *narrow* account of ideology: in it, ideology is mainly a feature of totalitarian or proto-totalitarian regimes and as such opposed to politics as Arendt understands it. After a brief discussion of Arendt's understanding of ideology and the benefits of such an understanding of the concept, I will introduce a concept of ideology that establishes ideologies to be a part of political life. Implicitly, this will highlight some aspects of political reality that are ignored by Arendt's political theory. In the end, I will suggest how Arendt's theory could be amended accordingly.

Keywords: Arendt, Gramsci, Ideology, Politics, Political Theory, Political Philosophy, Republicanism

1. Arendt's Understanding of Ideology

Hannah Arendt has an entirely negative understanding of ideologies as misguided and deceptive perspectives. Instead of understanding ideology in the context of group perspectives or otherwise socially established epistemic frameworks, as it is common in now-contemporary literature,¹ Arendt's emphasis is on individual perspectivalism that however acknowledges context as guiding perception.

In contrast, more inclusive accounts assigning ideology great epistemic relevance. I will discuss this conceptual difference to Arendt using the example of Gramsci, an Italian Marxist who provided a detailed treatment of ideology.

I will use Gramsci's account to show the short-comings of Arendt and will suggest an account of Arendtian perspectivalism that is embedded in an understanding of ideology that enables us to capture both the individual

perspective but also understand how this perspective is strictly bounded by group processes in an epistemic process that is essentially societal. Before I turn to a criticism of Arendt, I will now try to situate her narrow concept of ideology in her overall political theory.

1.1. Freedom and Politics

Arendt's political theory is probably best understood from the vantage point of a *political* conception of freedom. To Arendt, freedom means freedom "from the necessities of life and from compulsion by others" in order to engage in politics.² Politics is thus the fulfillment of this freedom, and neither a necessary evil nor a tool to arrive at some trans-political way of life.

Arendt's concept of politics is thus diametrically opposed to understandings of politics that reduce it to production of a desirable societal outcome and accordingly show a strong preference for a well-ordered and privatized citizenry, in order to control the chaos of politics.³

Following Arendt's train of thought, such a reduction of politics to administration⁴ has disastrous results as it means undermining freedom as such: freedom is undermined if not linked with public action. In this sense, both labor⁵ and fabrication are not activities to which "freedom" is applicable:

The *raison d'être* of politics is freedom, and its field of experience is action. This freedom which we take for granted in all political theory and which even those who praise tyranny must still take into account is the very opposite of "inner freedom", the inward space into which men may escape from external coercion and feel free. This inner feeling remains without outer manifestations and hence is by definition politically irrelevant. [...] The experiences of inner freedom are derivative in that they always presuppose a retreat from the world, where freedom was denied, into an inwardness to which no other has access.⁶

Moving freedom into the private realm would thus render it politically irrelevant, or even non-existent from a political perspective. Arendt thus emphasizes the "[t]he differentiation between the private household and the public political realm, [...] between activities which should be hidden in privacy and those which [...] [are] worth being seen, heard, and remembered".⁷

Freedom outside of the public space can thus only be possible in the more limited liberal but not the *political* (Arendtian) understanding: if freedom is restricted to private affairs, the free and equal dialogical exchange (*ισηγορία*) between citizens is impossible. This means that re-defining freedom as a private condition (instead of a characteristic of public-political life) undermines politics itself.

1.2. Plurality as Condition of the World

Arendt understands the world as a plural space in which citizens can appear before others in speech and deed. This means that anyone who decides to act politically, has a chance of being heard by their fellow citizens, or even initiate political action that is then carried out in conjunction with others. The *human condition* is thus characterized by life among others, in a world that exists only because it is constantly recreated by the plurality of humans. Accordingly, Arendt sees plurality as both a central dimension of the human condition as well as a value of the political community.⁸ As a result, politics is intrinsically linked to the world: Arendt suggests accordingly that caring (“Sorge”) for the world is at the center of politics.⁹

The world as Arendt understands it shows distinctive characteristics. It is (a) constituted through acting; (b) it is further a space of appearance in which (c) all citizens have the equal right to address the assembly (*ισηγορία*), (d) that is physically delimited and (e) separate from necessity (localized in the household, or *οἶκος*).

(a) The world is constituted through the actions and speech of the citizens as a system of human relations. Arendt thus relates to the world as talking and talked-about history (“redende und beredete Geschichte”).¹⁰ This further links politics to the world because acting and speaking – according to Arendt – are the genuinely political activities. They are *political* because they are situated outside the necessary and useful.¹¹ Arendt thus emphasizes the pluralism of voices in the assembly – opinions (or, *δόξαι*) – as constitutive of politics.

In this sense, freedom lies in action and thus, can only exist in relation to the political:¹² politics is therefore not a means to freedom. Rather, “to live in the polis” and “to be free” is identical.¹³ Freedom is thus constituted by a space in which every citizen can move among and interact with equals.¹⁴ Arendt accordingly understands equality as the equal right to

political action, which includes freedom of speech in the sense of equal right to address the assembly of citizens (*ισηγορία*).¹⁵

In Arendt's understanding, freedom is thus neither freedom from the worldly affairs, nor from the political. It is not refraining from action but rather to be understood in the sense of *ἀρχεν* (to begin, to rule, to be free) and *agere* (to begin something). These activities equally constitute citizenship for all citizens.

(b) Against colloquial perceptions of 'politics' in which acting is reserved for a select group of people, Arendt understands politics as a *space* in which citizens *appear* as *actors* and that can provide human affairs with the property of permanence.¹⁶ This permanence of the *polis* can also enable the individual citizen to gain immortality in song or story if one distinguishes oneself through word or deed.

(c) The political space is thus not marked by equalizing ("Gleichmacherei") but by distinguishing oneself from the masses. At the same time, the political space provides each citizen equally with the opportunity to stand out from the masses.¹⁷ It is thus a life amongst equals in which no one rules and no one is ruled over but in which everyone is engaged in a competitive (not to say *agonistic*) environment, attempting to prove that they have qualities above the average.¹⁸

(d) Here, "political *space*" is not only used metaphorically: instead, politics is understood to be delimited by the *walls of the polis*.¹⁹ Only within the space of the polis, a commonly shared world exists. This means that a community establishes a narrative context and makes action possible and meaningful.²⁰ This delimitation is necessary, as Jones points out:

[...] political action in the *polis* depends on face-to-face interaction in speech, so that its numbers must remain small.²¹

Like Rousseau before her, Arendt is thus convinced to have a truly participatory polity, it may not be allowed to grow too large. This however also means that the understandings reached between the citizens are always contingent on the political space in which they were reached. Universal notions may not be reached through politics. This is a point that will become important in my later discussion of ideology.

(e) Furthermore, politics, because it is distinguished from necessity is based on the distinction between the public and free *polis* of equal citizens and the *οἶκος* that provides for the necessities of life and in which relations are hierarchical.

The political space is to be distinguished from the *oikos* because *freedom* as an essential property of the 'political' can only exist in a realm beyond necessity. The *oikos* on the other hand is primarily concerned with providing the necessities of life.²² What is more, the polis can only consist of citizens that are equal in the sense of *ισηγορία*, while the *oikos* is based on a hierarchical relationship between the head of the household (who is a citizen in the polis) and *his* wife, *his* children and *his* slaves. The *oikos* is thus based on a fundamental inequality. To speak of freedom here, would not only be wrong, it would constitute a category-mistake: in the *oikos* there is no freedom (for noone – not even for the head of the household)²³ because freedom can only exist in a space where there are only equals engaged in a public discussion. Still, by providing the necessities of life and thus removing necessity as such from public life, the *oikos* provides the foundation for the freedom of the polis.²⁴

In this way, Arendt brings the question of socio-economic conditions back in through the back door as enabling conditions for genuine politics. Still, politics itself has to be independent of economic and, ideally, politics is not to concern itself with social questions. Arendt maintains in *On Revolution* that it was the emphasis on the social question that undermined the *political* in the French revolution.

However, Habermas correctly criticizes Arendt:

Wir können die Bedingungen politischer Freiheit sinnvoll nur im Zusammenhang einer Emanzipation von Herrschaft diskutieren. Diese Kategorie der Herrschaft darf politische Gewalt und soziale Macht nicht trennen, sondern muss sie als das zeigen, was beide sind: als Repression. Unter Bedingungen sozialer Abhängigkeit bleibt das Recht auf politische Freiheit Ideologie.²⁵

By assuming that the socio-economic conditions *should be* as such that they enable genuine politics, Arendt provides a powerful counter-image to contemporary politics. Yet, by assuming these socio-economic conditions as given (in the ideal world of genuine politics) and thus, by excluding the socio-economic conditions from actual *political* consideration, Arendt at the same time deprives herself of the opportunity to understand the complete picture of domination.

1.3. Imagination

In order to understand Arendt's concept of politics, it is important to consider her concept of *imagination*. Due to the fact that each human has a unique view on the world and the resulting plurality of possible perspectives, it is important to be able to consider (or, imagine) other points of view. In her book *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Arendt criticizes Eichmann for his inability to think: he could sit in front of victims of the *shoah* and discuss at length details of organizing deportation with a certain pride in his organizational skills. While Arendt uses "thinking" in different ways,²⁶ this "*inability to think*" refers to Eichmann's lack of *imagination*.²⁷ 'Imagination' is understood as the ability to see something from the perspective of somebody else.²⁸ It is this ability of imagination, which reconciles the different individual perspectives, provided by the *δόξα* of the citizenry but does not resolve them. It enables them to discuss and argue and eventually evaluate opinions. Still imagination is based both on multiple perspectives perceived in political dialogue. It then tries to retrace these perspectives before the shared background of the community. In this regard, imagination is based on a shared perception. As such, it enables further political speech and action.

However, imagination does neither sort out the one true statement from the opinions nor does it unify them into a *volonté generale*. Arendt sees this as a distinctive quality of the *polis* and for this reason, she rejects all attempts to subdue politics under a universalist notion. One specific type of these universalist notions would be ideologies, on which I will focus in the following pages.

1.4. Universalisms

Arendt criticizes universalist thought.²⁹ She believes that understanding the world from a universalist perspective would prioritize uniformity and necessity over contingency.³⁰ Conceptualizing the world through a universalist framework would moreover lead to an understanding of politics as a means to produce pre-determined goals.

Arendt interprets reliance on such foundations as the attempt to free thought from uncertainty, and therefore to establish a predictable end of politics and a reduction of action to production.³¹ One way to do so is through ideology.

In contrast, the plural world of Arendt's understanding of politics appears as a lunatic asylum from the perspective of understanding politics as a type of producing the results dictated by a universal notion.

Yet, from an Arendtian perspective, such attempts to control the fluid space "between past and future" through the introduction of universalisms that allow to construct laws of movement (or at least a trajectory of historic development) have a devastating effect of politics and public life.

According to Arendt, critical and free thinking can neither rely on history, nor on logic or ideology.³²

Instead, Arendt emphasizes the importance of a plurality of phenomena to politics. She thus rejects any universalist position because she believes universalism to reduce the phenomenal to a derivative of something that does not appear itself. This assumption of a unitary *Seiendes* would do away with the pluralism of phenomena. In contrast, to Arendt, a phenomenon only stands for itself.³³

Arendt therefore rejects what she calls metaphysical thought, which is (α) the assumption that there is something behind the world that appears in the world (e.g. human nature or the telos of history) and (β) that which is behind appearance also causes it ("Seiendes" causes phenomenon), thus establishing a unidirectional relationship of foundation.

Accordingly, Arendt writes that

[t]he elementary logical fallacy of all theories that rely on the dichotomy of Being and Appearance is obvious and was early discovered and summed up by the sophist Gorgias in a fragment from his lost treatise *On Non-Being* or *On Nature* supposedly a refutation of Eleatic philosophy: "Being is not manifest since it does not appear [to men: *dokein*]; appearing [to men] is weak since it does not succeed in being."³⁴

In sum, the Platonic-Heideggerian *ontic-ontological difference* between essence and appearance, eternal and fugitive is rejected by Arendt: asking about the metaphysical prevents assessing that which is genuinely political because there is no essence independent of human behavior, no unitary being behind political appearance, no independent point to assess the world.³⁵ Rejecting all universals, Arendt instead focuses on the particular.

1.5. Ideology in Arendt's Political Theory

To Arendt, ideology is a specific type of subsuming interhuman reality under a universal claim: Arendt writes that (a) ideologies too, aim to produce a reality according to an idea, (b) in absolute disregard of phenomenal experience or existing reality. Instead, they (c) rely on the logicity of the process, with devastating results.

(a) In Arendt's understanding, ideological thinking orders facts into a procedure of absolute logic, which starts from axiomatically accepted premises, deducing everything from them. In other words, ideological thought claims to be able to explain everything and every actual occurrence by reducing it to conclusions drawn from a single set of premises.

Ideology thus proceeds with a consistency that exists nowhere in reality. In this sense, ideological argumentation is a kind of logical deduction. For example, Arendt suggests that Hitler and Stalin proceeded to drive ideological implications into extremes of logical consistency. In this sense, ideology is the logic of an idea applied to history.³⁶

Ideologies start from an abstract idea and then proceed deductively. They promise a desirable outcome similar to utopias but in contrast to them, they suggest a process that is to unfold from the present point in time into the future *with necessity*. Ideologies thus claim to understand the logic of the process through past, present and future. History is not to be *interpreted* through the schema of an idea but rather to be *calculated* by it.³⁷ Ideology thus does not enable one to make statements about historical facts. Instead, it suggests the ability to predict a process that is the logical unfolding of *the idea*.³⁸ As such, it is not subject to change through human action; in an ideological system, freedom in the Arendtian sense does not exist.

(b) Rather than to adjust thinking to the realities of the world, in ideological thought, the attempt is made to change reality according to ideology – in trying to stay ahead of developments that are to happen with *necessity* or to accelerate a *necessary* process. Thus, ideology gives primacy to thought and ideas over the shared human reality.³⁹

Because ideological claims are reduced from ideas that are external to reality (because they are *yet* to be realized), they are independent of all experience. This marks the emancipation of thought from experience and reality. As a consequence, ideological thinking ruins all relationships with reality, making us unable to experience or imagine other perspectives. The result is the isolation of humans that in turn prevents forming a web

of relationships and undermines the continued recreation of the shared world.⁴⁰

(c) In the end, the logicity of the process becomes more important than the idea itself, Arendt claims. This has potentially murderous consequences:

You can't say A without saying B and C and so on, down to the end of the murderous alphabet.⁴¹

If one accepts the ideological procedure of starting with a premise and then deducing conclusions with necessity, these conclusions can again become premises for further logical deductions. Humans thus only play a role in making history adequate to automatons: they play a pre-defined part with a fixed outcome and are thus absolved of all judgment and also all responsibility: if history is like a force of nature, no one can stop it or change its course. What is more, this conception of history would not only escape all judgment but also leave no room for freedom in the Arendtian sense.

This way of looking at the world thus not only negates all human freedom but also proves to be inhuman as it leaves no room for humanitarian considerations. If ideology dictates it, any mass-murder is beyond even the need for legitimation (as if such legitimation was actually possible) because it is just another *necessary* conclusion from the ideological premise-set.

Since Arendt's critique of logic is important to her critique of ideology, I will now discuss it in greater detail.

1.6. Logic

Arendt thus further criticizes logic, not only as a characteristic of ideology but also in-itself. She claims a (a) coercive quality for logic that (b) makes it anti-plural and (c) worldless and, as a consequence, (d) moves it close to totalitarianism.

(a) According to Arendt, the appeal of logicity is based on our fear of contradicting ourselves. Arendt calls this the "coercive force of logicity" which results in the submission of the mind to logic as a never-ending process.⁴²

In contrast to the “coercive force of logicity”, free thought is free of such coercion but marked by the desire to be coerced by no one and wanting to coerce no one “either by force or by proofs”.⁴³ This belief in coercive necessity has disastrous results because it undermines the ability to act. With it, it threatens the phenomena themselves as well as their composition into an “actual story” with an internal meaning.⁴⁴

(b) The coercion of logicity relies on the isolation of humans⁴⁵ or their unification into a cohesive whole with similar thought patterns. Only under these circumstances, logic could even operate, since multiple perspectives would undermine any given premise set. Therefore, the “negative coercion of logic” entails the “prohibition of contradictions”⁴⁶ and thus an end to pluralism. The result again is solitude:

Luther says: “A lonely man, a man in complete solitude, always deduces one thing from the other and always arrives at the worst conclusion.” Logicity, that is mere reasoning without regard for facts and experience, is the true vice of solitude.⁴⁷

(c) Like ideology, logic ignores facts just as well as appearances. As a result, logic turns out to be entirely *worldless*. It cannot replace the connection with reality because it is not capable to capture the world and distinctness of the “new” as it enters the world. Meaning to logic is then not a result of a human web of relations but derived from a presupposed structure that serves as premise.⁴⁸

In this sense, logic is not bound to a community.⁴⁹ Paradoxically, by departing from a premise that ultimately cannot be based in anything and by loosing connection with the world, the entire process turns out to be arbitrary. No moral claims can be secured because beginning from arbitrary premises, depending on the premises, any conclusion is possible.

(d) This has dramatic political consequences, as the coercion through logic is highly dangerous to the political space itself.⁵⁰ Canovan asserts that here that Arendt suggests logical deduction to be a possible link between philosophy and totalitarianism.⁵¹ This should not be overstated: Obviously, the fact that all totalitarian regimes proceed logically, does not make logic totalitarian. However, the arbitrariness that results from world-detachment and the necessity with which it draws its conclusions always carry the possibility of turning totalitarian, given a wrong premise.

In the following section, I will now turn to the connection of logicity to totalitarianism.

1.7. Totalitarianism

Arendt suggests that the understanding of politics from an ideological standpoint carries within it the risk of turning into a totalitarian system. Instead of thinking of freedom and politics as co-constitutive, as suggested by Arendt, ideology reduces politics to the sphere of necessity. Citizens in this conception would not be free actors but rather controlled by circumstances external to them.⁵²

Further, the replacement of plural action by a singular, unitary will that is produced by ideology and directed at the idea that is to be realized is at the core of ideological thinking.⁵³ Insofar as “singular, unitary will” is a characteristic of totalitarianism, ideology appears structurally similar to totalitarianism.⁵⁴

As we have seen, while the capacity to logic is common to us all, it does not rely on the common world but rather undermines it.⁵⁵ Young-Bruehl explains that

[Arendt] had noted the ingredient or element of totalitarianism [...]: contempt for the factuality of the world. In their drive to change the world, the Nazi totalitarians came to worship logicity, reasoning deductively from a premise to a logical conclusion, with complete disregard for how things are, with concern only for how they were inevitably going to be when Nature had worked its way to the triumph of the Aryan race. In her understanding, totalitarians were liars not in the usual or mundane sense that they set out intentionally to mislead or deceive with untruths [...] but in the sense that they set out to override reality, to lead people to detach themselves from reality [...] [It] was a specialty of their “philosopher-kings”, Hitler [*sic!*] and Stalin, both of whom wrote in praise of logicity or ideological consistency [...].⁵⁶

While it is of key importance to note that Arendt acknowledged that totalitarianism constituted an entirely new phenomenon, it is also significant that there are elements of continuity with logic: first, there is the shared disregard of the pluralistically established world in favor of some deductive view of history. Instead of building and securing the *political space*, the shared world between different people, both logic – as applied by ideologists – and totalitarianism seek to deny the citizens access to the public realm. Accordingly, Arendt writes that “Logicity, that is mere reasoning without regard for facts and experience is the true vice of solitude.”⁵⁷

This means that logic works to detach humans from the world in a two-fold mechanism: first, there is a direct personal effect, the “slide from solitude into loneliness”.⁵⁸ In contrast to solitude, loneliness is a condition of isolation that Arendt identifies as a precondition for totalitarian rule.⁵⁹ As a result, one who subjects oneself to logic is always in danger of becoming atomized. If this atomization happens on a larger scale this could provide fertile ground for totalitarian rule.⁶⁰

Second, as Arendt writes, logicity ignores facts just like appearances. Therefore, logical thought is disconnected from the shared world. Based on any arbitrary premise set (which is exchangeable), any arbitrary conclusion could follow. On this basis, no moral judgment can be possible. This mechanism is similar – if not identical – to the one Arendt later identifies in the Eichmann trial: detachment from a shared world is what only makes Eichmann’s behavior possible. On the one hand, his *inability* to see anything from another’s perspective⁶¹ has its foundation in this detachment; on the other hand, Eichmann was part of the (German) collective that created its own logically consistent reality that differed from that of the non-criminal world and that enabled them to commit industrialized mass-murder on a previously unknown scale.⁶²

This deep intrinsic compatibility of logic with totalitarian thought allows that logic becomes a means to totalitarian thought.

1.8. Arendt’s Concept of Ideology

This now leads us to the question of ideology. Arendt primarily understands ideology as a feature of the totalitarian states – the Stalinist USSR and the so-called “Third Reich” as well as the pseudo-political movements that preceded them. Ideology is clearly anti-political and thus works to undermine any political community.

Ideology is further dangerous because – combined with logicity – it enables one to demand anything that can be deduced from its premise-set; seemingly legitimizing *shoah* and *gulag*.

Arendt here presents what from a contemporary perspective might be called a *narrow definition* of ‘ideology’. Other writers have used ideology much more broadly to signify somewhat closed belief-systems in general, as a general feature of politics.

Naturally, it is impossible to imagine Arendt’s narrow concept of ideology as a feature of her understanding of politics because it is by definition antithetical to it. Arendt’s political actors cannot be conceived

as *actors* if they are entangled in ideology (in the narrow, Arendtian sense of the word). However, this would not rule out that ideology more broadly understood (and maybe called by a different name) could be incorporated into Arendt's political theory.

However, this broader conception is also ruled out by another aspect of Arendt's political theory. As we have seen before, Arendt's entire conception of political life relies on what could be called perspectivalism: the insight that everything can be seen and actually is seen from different perspectives, that further every citizen has a unique perspective and that no one has legitimate claim to possessing a superior perspective. However, through discussion and imagination we can attempt to gain access to other perspectives. Arendt further accounts for a limited amount of coherence by every citizen's desire to become part of the city's narrative and thus situate themselves in it. In so far, one would understand the world from the vantage point provided by the political community. This could be called an ideological limitation (if ideology is understood more broadly than Arendt does). Yet, for Arendt's theory to work (and not to break down into relativism), this limitation of perspective can only be minor.

Moreover, Arendt rejects the dichotomy of essence and appearance; instead, to Arendt, all there is, is appearance. Yet, a broader understanding of ideology would presuppose that there was an *real* world from which ideological thought diverges. To be sure, given that Arendt embraces her narrow version of ideology still suggests that invalid perspectives on the world could be identified: what would make a perspective invalid would be its incapability to be exposed to political debate. In fact, invalid perspectives would undermine or preclude debate.

What is more, if perspectivalism was significantly limited by such ideology, politics in the Arendtian sense (that relies on true plurality) would cease to exist. Arendt's normative account of politics therefore prevents it from being a framework for the critique of ideology in the broader sense.

Arendt's understanding of politics clearly has its merits: it enables her to understand the political space as composed of free citizens that all enter discussion with their unique perspective. Yet, it appears to be blind to an understanding of political thinking as delimited by axiomatically and communally accepted assumptions about the world – something we might call ideology in the broader sense: ideology in this broader sense – as a semi-closed belief system shared by all or at least most citizens that is a feature of all political systems as opposed to something that is to be overcome – is incompatible with perspectivalism.

2. Gramsci

I will now turn to Gramsci's account of ideologies to further emphasize what aspects of politics are potentially missed by Arendt's political theory.

According to the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, every society is based on a consensus. This consensus is produced by ideology; ideology is thus to be understood as a specific perspective on the world that generates according behavior. It stabilizes society by reducing plurality and thus creating social coherence through a centripetal momentum. This obviously works counter to Arendt's notion of genuine politics as this latter concept is based on plurality. At the same time ideology also serves to stabilize those socio-economic relations that are beneficial to few and detrimental to most. As such, ideologies are an instrument of indirect rule and of major importance for the functioning of modern industrial society.

By including socio-economic relations, Gramsci here puts a central focus of his political theory on what Arendt had excluded as private. Gramsci identifies three sets of structural elements of ideologies, which to him are intertwined with everyday knowledge: (1) the language as a set of knowledge and concepts, (2) everyday knowledge and bon sens, as well as (3) popular religion.⁶³ Any ideology delimits discourse by establishing some claims as true. It materializes by forming institutions and producing subjects. Through this, ideologies produce certain behavioral norms and by this undermine or preclude the plurality of Arendt's genuine politics. Ideologies thus guarantee coherence of history, philosophy and politics with the established social order and thus produce behavioral norms, a shared history, popular beliefs and the framework of political life. This makes it prerequisite for the exercise of political power.⁶⁴ In this sense, ideologies in Gramsci's broader conception produce ideology in Arendt's narrower understanding of ideologies.

The ideology that serves as a foundation of the *superstructure* is initially based on the consciousness of the dominant social group ("ruling class"). This self-consciousness is not a new creation but rather an evolution of preceding world-views. It is modified to fit everyday knowledge and amended by aspects of other classes' self-consciousness.⁶⁵ This process of amending is necessary for a class to become hegemonic: to create a hegemonic ideology, a social class has to include national-popular ideological elements in the hegemonic principle and thus accommodate the other social groups so they can identify with the ideology. Consequently, a social class can be called dominant, if it succeeds in

gathering support from a sufficiently large portion of the population for an ideology that accords to the dominant group's interests at least in key aspects. In order to accomplish this, it however has to recognize interests of other social groups as well.⁶⁶ Thus, ideologies are never the product of one single social group but rather the product of relations between rival hegemonic forces. They undergo a perpetual process of transformation.⁶⁷

A class is hegemonic when it is able to create and maintain its dominant role in a unified and coherent ideological discourse.⁶⁸ Thus, ideology is far from being monolithic and yet, in the last instance, it guarantees hegemony of the ruling class over the *subaltern* classes.

In order to achieve this goal, culture is a means to manufacture social unity⁶⁹ through the distribution of ideas that are accepted as true. In other words, culture to Gramsci is a means to distribute the dominant ideology.⁷⁰ Culture is thus understood as a type of thinking that has become manifest in morals, customs, philosophy and religion. Through this it serves to reproduce ideology but also to provide an ideational structure to secure societal order.

Also, ideologies manifest themselves in producing a material structure. This includes elements that constitute the cultural environment and thus human consciousness: schools, churches, clubs, mass media, theaters, libraries, museums, architecture, even streets and their names. These structural expressions of ideology are influential because they are very enduring and cannot be changed in the short term.⁷¹

Still, culture is not deliberately produced by those who rule; it is therefore much more than the Marxian "opium". Yet, a functioning culture produces the prevailing opinion that the given order is the best possible order, or at least without any real alternative.

Because of this, to Gramsci, ideologies are instruments of rule.⁷² As such, they not only hide the specific coercive character of rule of humans over humans but masquerade themselves in order not to appear as ideologies. This means that ideologies appear as the natural structure of the human world while in fact they provide a structure to the world that is not naturally there.⁷³

Any culture needs such an ideological structure to function in the world. In other words, since categorization is necessary to understand reality and since categorization does not happen in a vacuum but rather along societally accepted lines, cognition has to be ideological. Reality does not exist as a transcendental instance that exists 'an und für sich' but is rather a set of phenomena that is functionally categorized. In this

way, through categorization the perspective on the world is (to a certain degree) pre-determined.

To Gramsci, ideologies thus constitute human-social reality.⁷⁴ They construct mental patterns that performatively influence our view of the world.⁷⁵ The perceived reality is therefore just a mere construction based on the phenomena and their societal interpretation.

Yet, it is important to emphasize that these structures – ideologies – provide a specific perspective on the world that reproduces the status quo and thus benefits the dominant social groups.

3. Conclusions

Admittedly, Gramsci's account of ideology relies heavily on Marxist underpinnings. After all, it is a variation on Lenin's theory of imperialism combined with a revision of the Marxist structure-superstructure model. However, as has become clear in our brief elaboration on Gramsci's concept of ideology, Gramsci's model of politics is critical and flexible (and realistic) enough to provide an amendment (or even alternative) to Arendt's concept of ideology.

Gramsci presents us with an intriguing suggestion: for any political system to work, it requires a certain amount of coherence within which the plural perspectives are situated. This coherence can hardly be spontaneous, specifically not in large-scale modern, industrialized societies. It also cannot be forced – to Gramsci, the application of force is always a sign of a failed consensus, an eroding ideology and as a result, of a state that is on the brink of failing. This however is not to say that violent suppression of minorities is always an option for the state as long as the minority is small enough to be excluded from the consensus and their violent submission can be explained to the majority as something they brought upon themselves.

This opens up a critical dimension that is not present in Arendt. In fact, a comparison with Gramsci's account of ideology shows a gap in Arendt's political theory that makes it somewhat idealist. From a Gramscian point of view, all those different perspectives in political debate would always be delimited by the ideological consensus. Thinking outside the consensus would be "unthinkable" for most and those who resist ideology would most likely be ridiculed or considered politically radical. From the Gramscian

perspective, political debate can function because of these pre-discursive exclusions.

This reminds one somewhat of Arendt's concept of narrativity, as the narrative of the *polis*, too, provides the context that only makes debate and action possible. Yet while to Arendt narrativity is positive because it enables political action, to Gramsci, (who calls it ideology) it is how rather negative as it can at least potentially be used to secure domination. Yet, Gramsci would agree that even non-dominating socio-economic relations would require a narrative or ideological superstructure (in the broader sense), to ensure the stability of the republic and its citizenry. It is thus important to note that ideology in the broader sense can be both, it can enable politics, as Arendt suggests but it can also undermine it, as Gramsci maintains. In our current situation, it tends to be the latter.

Gramsci's perspective therefore points to an important amendment to Arendt's political theory. A republican understanding of politics would always have to consider both: an understanding of ideology in the Arendtian sense – a proto-totalitarian factor that necessarily undermines the very possibility of politics, and an understanding of ideology in the Gramscian sense – as a necessary socio-ideational force that delimits discourse but does not *necessarily* prevent it; in fact, it can both enable and undermine it. Understanding the Gramscian concept of ideology and incorporating it into a republican theory is thus necessary to understand the boundaries of discourse that *de facto* exist in society. It is further necessary to use Gramsci's political theory to incorporate a focus on socio-economic domination (that is – at least – less developed in Arendt's theory).

A republican conception of the state – if it wants to be critical of the state – thus has to acknowledge that societal cohesion is brought about by identifiable ideational structures. This however, is not to mean that it should not emphasize perspectival plurality as a key feature of ideal political debate. In fact, by acknowledging discourse's limitations in ideology, republican theory can actually contribute to widen the discursive boundaries, instead of further narrowing discourse and thus slowly slipping into what could be described as *Arendtian* ideology.

In this way, using Arendt's political theory as a counter-image to the current *real existing politics* provides a perspective on what politics should (and could) be. Striving for an Arendtian ideal genuine political discourse would be a start to deal with the socio-economic domination described by Gramsci.

NOTES

- ¹ See for example the works of Michael Freeden.
- ² *Ibid.*, 14.
- ³ Parekh, *Hannah Arendt and the Search for a New Political Philosophy*, 16.
- ⁴ I have described Arendt's critique of the reduction of politics to administration in detail in: Kuchler, *Republikanismus im Spannungsfeld zwischen Politik und Verrechtlichung*.
- ⁵ cf. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 12.
- ⁶ Arendt, "What Is Freedom," 145.
- ⁷ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 85.
- ⁸ This suggests an important political distinction between Arendtian pluralism and liberal pluralism because the former is inherently connected with human interaction and political participation while the latter lacks the characteristics. See Klockars, "Plurality as a Value," 64.
- ⁹ Arendt, *Was Ist Politik?*, 24–26.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 89f.
- ¹¹ Arendt, *Vita Activa Oder Vom Tätigen Leben*, 35; Arendt generally attributes competence to act politically to the people. See Arendt, "What Remains? The Language Remains': A Conversation with Günther Gaus," 22.
- ¹² Arendt, *Was Ist Politik?*, 34f.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 38.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 39.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 40.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 14f. Hull points out that appearance has both ontological and political significance. On the ontological level, it means that all things have the same property of appearing. Politically speaking, appearance signifies the distinction of private and public. To be political, things have to appear. See Hull, *The Hidden Philosophy of Hannah Arendt*, 60–61; as well as Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, 1: Thinking:19.
- ¹⁷ Arendt, *Macht Und Gewalt*, 69.
- ¹⁸ Arendt, *Vita Activa Oder Vom Tätigen Leben*, 52f.
- ¹⁹ Arendt, *Was Ist Politik?*, 40f.
- ²⁰ Arendt, *Vita Activa Oder Vom Tätigen Leben*, 33f.
- ²¹ Jones, "Heidegger the Fox: Hannah Arendt's Hidden Dialogue," 186.
- ²² Arendt, *Was Ist Politik?*, 41.
- ²³ Arendt, *Vita Activa Oder Vom Tätigen Leben*, 42.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 40f.
- ²⁵ Habermas, "Die Geschichte von den zwei Revolutionen", 227.
- ²⁶ In my forthcoming dissertation thesis on Arendt's and Habermas' conception of Republican Theory, I distinguish between at least three different concepts that Arendt denotes by the term "thinking".

- 27 There indeed is a tension between *Thinking and Moral Considerations* and *Eichmann in Jerusalem*. In the former, Arendt suggests that “inability to think” is the result of avoiding intercourse with ourselves (Cf. Arendt, “Thinking and Moral Considerations,” 445). while in *Eichmann* it is used as the inability to see the other perspective.
- 28 Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 124–126.
- 29 However, it might be argued that her assumption of humans as ζῷον πολιτικόν constitutes such a universalism.
- 30 Parekh, *Hannah Arendt and the Search for a New Political Philosophy*, 6–7.
- 31 Vollrath, “Politik Und Metaphysik,” 37.
- 32 Arendt, “On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts About Lessing,” 8.
- 33 Schmitz calls this *phenomenalist radicalism*. See Schmitz, “Die Perspektivische Konstitution Des Politischen. Überlegungen Zu Hannah Arendts Wirklichkeitsbegriff,” 22–24.
- 34 Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, 1: Thinking; 25.
- 35 Breier, “Hannah Arendts Politische Wissenschaft,” 51, 52.
- 36 Arendt, “Ideology and Terror,” 468–471.
- 37 Arendt, “Ideology and Terror,” 469, 470.
- 38 *Ibid.*, 469.
- 39 *Ibid.*, 470–471.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 470–471, 474.
- 41 *Ibid.*, 472.
- 42 *Ibid.*, 472–473; Arendt, “Hermann Broch: 1886-1951,” 134.
- 43 Arendt, “On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts About Lessing,” 8; See Heuer, “Zwischenmenschlichkeit,” 121.
- 44 Vollrath, “Methode Des Politischen Denkens,” 69.
- 45 Heuer, *Citizen*, 106.
- 46 Arendt, “Ideology and Terror,” 469–470.
- 47 Arendt, “On the Nature of Totalitarianism,” 16–17 (Second Manuscript).
- 48 See Vollrath, “Methode Des Politischen Denkens,” 75.
- 49 *Ibid.*, 79.
- 50 Arendt, “On Humanity in Dark Times: Thoughts About Lessing,” 8.
- 51 Canovan, *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation*, 261.
- 52 Arendt, *Vita Activa Oder Vom Tätigen Leben*, 229.
- 53 See also Vollrath, “Politik Und Metaphysik,” 32.
- 54 Canovan, *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation*, 261.
- 55 For example, cf. Arendt, “Understanding and Politics (The Difficulties of Understanding),” 317.
- 56 Young-Bruehl and Kohn, “Truth, Lies, and Politics: A Conversation,” 1051f.
- 57 Arendt, “On the Nature of Totalitarianism,” n.d., Second Manuscript, 17. Nye is further correct to suggest – as I will discuss later – that Arendt’s rejection

of philosophy is linked to her choice of essayism and story-telling as form of her writings.

58 Canovan, *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation*, 262; In "Socrates or
Heidegger?," 146–147 Canovan also comments on the relationship between
solitude and preference for strong government and distaste for plurality.

59 Arendt, "On the Nature of Totalitarianism," n.d., Second Manuscript, 14.

60 It is important to note that – of course – atomism-through-logic is neither
a sufficient nor necessary condition for totalitarian rule. Isolation can be
brought about in different ways, and isolation alone does not automatically
lead to totalitarianism.

61 Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 124–126.

62 *Ibid.*, 129.

63 Gramsci, *Gefängnishefte. Kritische Gesamtausgabe.*, n. N.11 §12 (Vol.6
pp.1375ff.).

64 *Ibid.*, n. N.10.2 §2 (Vol.6 p.1255); N.10.2 §17 (Vol.6 pp.1268f.); N.11 §37
(Vol.6 p.1447)).

65 Kramer, "Gramscis Interpretation Des Marxismus. Die Bestimmung Von
Basis Und Überbau Als "historischer Block," 173ff.

66 Kramer, "Gramscis Interpretation Des Marxismus. Die Bestimmung Von
Basis Und Überbau Als "historischer Block," 173ff.; Mouffe, "Hegemony
and Ideology in Gramsci," 194f.

67 Mouffe, "Hegemony and Ideology in Gramsci," 194.

68 *Ibid.*, 195.

69 Gramsci, *Gefängnishefte. Kritische Gesamtausgabe.*, n. N.11 §12 (Vol.6
pp.1377f.).

70 *Ibid.*, n. N.11 §12 (Vol.6 p.1377).

71 Kramer, "Gramscis Interpretation Des Marxismus. Die Bestimmung Von
Basis Und Überbau Als "historischer Block," 174.

72 *Ibid.*, N.10.2 §41 (Vol.6 pp.1324f.)

73 Accordingly, to Gramsci objectivity does not necessarily mean the
congruence of consciousness with reality but only the universal acceptance
of an idea. The idea is not true 'an sich' but only for a community.

74 *Ibid.*, N.11 §30 (Vol.6 pp.1436f.)

75 *Ibid.*, N.10.2 §42 (Vol.6 pp.1333)

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FUNERAL MONUMENTS FROM THE TRANSYLVANIAN PRINCIPALITY IN THE FACE OF THE REFORMATION

Abstract

After the Ottoman conquest of the medieval Hungarian Kingdom in the mid-16th century, when Transylvania became an independent political entity, religious ideas were also transformed: Protestant Reformation reached Transylvania, and different denominations were embraced by various layers of the society. Reformation brought significant changes all over Europe in how the function of funeral monuments was seen, which impacted their appearance too. The aim of this paper is to analyze how religious ideas changing with the Protestant Reformation in 16th-17th century Transylvania influenced the commemoration of the dead as it is reflected by the production of funeral monuments.

Keywords: Transylvania, funeral monuments, 16th-17th century, Reformation

The reformation of death, funerary ritual, and the burial site

Ideas about commemoration depend on and reflect the concepts of a society about death and the relation between the dead and the living, that is, the social experience of death. Scholarship on medieval and early modern burial ritual analyzed the social history of death drawing on anthropological perspectives.¹ According to this anthropological definition, commemorative rituals were determined by and reflect the contemporary concepts about the relation of body and soul, of individual and community and of the community of the living with the community of the dead. As it has been argued on the basis of evidence from all over the Protestant Europe, Reformation brought a significant change in these concepts.² In the Middle Ages the living and the dead were all members of the same Christian community. The living could turn to the saintly

departed for intercession. They themselves could intercede for the souls of the dead suffering in the transitional state of the Purgatory too: with prayers and mass, later also through indulgences; they could shorten the time spent there. Reformers, however, eliminated this chance as a consequence of the doctrine about the salvation by the faith in God's grace alone. There was neither need nor possibility for intercession any more, as the dead were only in the hand of God. The living could not influence their fate, neither by prayer nor by any kind of act; they were separated by the event of death. The Purgatory – a doctrine that had existed since the 12th century – was abolished too.

The influence of the Reformation on death rituals has been studied extensively concerning various parts of Europe.³ Before the Reformation, Christian commemoration was centered on intercession, so as to evoke prayers for the dead with the aim of assisting their souls. With the loss of this possibility, the logical conclusion would have been to eliminate the entire funeral ritual too. Still, different views emerged concerning its necessity, and only the most radicals abandoned it, e.g. the Calvinist community in Geneva and the Anabaptists. Burial rituals were preserved in most of the Protestant denominations, as besides the intercessory function, they had an important social significance as well even during the Middle Ages. With the Reformation, this social element gained a primary role and the commemoration was directed exclusively towards the living. One of its main functions was to console and guide them by affirming their faith in the resurrection. Commemorative rituals and the related material culture served also to help them to prepare for their own good death – since the firm faith in the last minutes was essential concerning the fate of the soul. Death that caught the individual unprepared was considered as bad. The didactic potential of the virtuous life of the dead was exploited in this respect.⁴ The third main field of emphasis has been identified based on the anthropological theories of Arnold Van Gennep and his followers: to display the honor of the dead, thus to emphasize and reinforce social norms and social order.⁵ These were certainly not entirely new aspects, as they can be detected in the medieval forms of commemoration as well.

Studies from all over the Protestant Europe analyzing the actual practice based on written, visual and archaeological sources have pointed out that even if the ideas about death, ritual, church space and images were clearly formulated by theologians, the practice did not always go through similarly radical changes. There were significant regional differences, the whole image showed both continuities and discontinuities with the medieval

traditions, and the changes were gradual, influenced by several factors not related directly to religious ideologies.⁶ For example, concerning the funeral ceremony, several traditional elements were kept but equipped with a new meaning. Motifs such as the participation of the poor or tolling the bells did not have to do any more with accumulating merits or evoking prayers, but were explained within the framework of a set of social rationale, such as with paying the proper honor to the deceased required by his or her social status. Though the funeral sermon became the most important element, several parts of the medieval ritual were preserved too, just gained a new meaning in accordance with the new concepts. These general tendencies characterizing the funerary ritual in Protestant Europe can be traced in Hungary and Transylvania as well.⁷

This paper investigates these processes with respect to funeral monuments in Transylvania: whether the trends characterizing the Protestant lands of Europe can be recognized concerning the overall appearance and content of the stone memorials. The analysis is based on a database that contains 311 funeral monuments erected between 1541 and 1700.⁸ The survey covered the entire territory of the sometime Principality: the major centers and a significant part of the net of small villages too. The results show more or less the actual density of the surviving material and can be considered as representative, even if some further memorials might turn up later.⁹ This, however, will not change significantly the level of representativeness, especially if considering that the surviving ensemble is presumably only a fragment of the amount of memorials that was once installed.

The Reformation in Transylvania

Ideas of the religious reform initiated by Martin Luther reached Hungary already prior to the Ottoman conquest of the country and its division into three parts in the mid-16th century. The influences of the reform appeared first in the royal court and among the German townspeople in Western Hungary and Transylvania. Following the fall of Buda in 1541, the latter was turned into a separate vassal state of the Porte. However, due to the intense connections of the Transylvanian Saxon merchants with the German areas of the Holy Roman Empire, Lutheran teaching spread quickly in both of the two – Hermannstadt and the Burzenland – chapters of the Saxon, which, as a special privilege, were exempt from the authority

of the Gyulafehérvár Bishopric of Transylvania. The Lutheran teaching was embraced by several members of the town elite in Sibiu and Braşov as early as in the 1530s, and the Lutheran service and Church order was accepted in both cities in the early 1540s. In 1544 the decision of the Saxon general assembly expanded it to the entire the Saxon territory.

The population of the town of Cluj, which was originally also mostly German but by the mid-15th century displayed a significant Hungarian presence, embraced the Lutheran Reformation officially in 1551, and in 1557 a second, separate Hungarian superintendence was created. In 1550 the Diet settled the legal status of the Lutherans with a decree that granted the freedom of choice between the Lutheran and Catholic religion to the estates.¹⁰

In the meanwhile, the ideas of the Swiss reform reached the eastern counties of the Hungarian Kingdom, and a Hungarian Calvinist Church came into existence in Transylvania as well. As the two, Hungarian and Saxon (though ethnically not exclusive) churches could not find a resolution for their doctrinal conflict, in 1564 the Diet had to accept the existence of the two, Reformed (Calvinist) and Lutheran religions in Transylvania, with equal rights.¹¹ By that time, even more radical Antitrinitarian doctrines appeared within the borders, enjoying the support of the that time ruler, John Sigismund. In 1567 the Hungarian superintendence adopted an Antitrinitarian creed, followed by a part of the nobility and a number of towns, most significantly Cluj.¹²

The subsequent decisions of the Diet complied with the actual religious landscape: in 1568 they adopted a decree that granted the pastors the freedom of preaching according to their views, while the congregations received the right to reject any preacher. This basically meant the free practice of the four accepted – Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist and Antitrinitarian – religions.¹³ From that time on these principles remained valid all during the existence of the Principality, though the actual, first Catholic, later Protestant princes tried to intervene according to their own religious preferences.¹⁴

Concerning the different confessional environments, this paper aims to answer the question if it is possible to find – even subtle – differences in the way religious reform influenced the monuments erected in those. The question is deliberately not formulated with a reference to the religious views of the individual. Often there is no information on the confession of the person commemorated by a particular tomb or on that of the patron. For example, in the dominantly Antitrinitarian urban context of Cluj

in the late 16th century – where even the town administration adhered officially to the Antitrinitarian doctrines – Calvinism, and with the stay of the Jesuits, Catholicism was present as well. In the 17th century, with the official recognition of Calvinism in the city, it is more and more difficult to find out the confession of the particular individuals.¹⁵ It is the traditions of tomb-making within the local community that can be analyzed and contrasted for example with the essentially – and again, officially – Lutheran environment of the Saxon towns.¹⁶ On the other hand, this was a period when changes in the religious views and affiliation were not infrequent even in the life of a single person. From around the mid-16th century many from among the ranks of the nobility and intellectuals, starting from Catholicism, adhered gradually to more and more radical Protestant doctrines.¹⁷ Later, from the last two decades of the century, the re-Catholicizing efforts of the court resulted in an opposite trend, while in the 17th century Calvinism proved to be the most successful among the nobility. As far as scholarship can follow the personal religious views of the social and intellectual elite, it seems that in many cases these did not correspond to any of the established religions. Local and personal theologies, philosophies were formed building on the theologians of the officially accepted and unorthodox doctrines the representatives of which found refuge in the relatively liberal Transylvania.¹⁸ Thus, in the context of the nobility one cannot speak about one or another characteristic confessional environment and search for the imprint of those on their tombs. In this case, the investigation addresses indeed the traces of the individual motivations in the context of religion: whether it is possible to find the signs of their deliberate visual (or textual) expression, and if yes, how. A third group of memorials commemorates members of the clergy of various denominations; in these cases one would expect an exact doctrinal expression of confessional belonging. Here the question is whether this was indeed the case and if yes, what were the visual means to achieve it.

Post-Reformation funeral monuments in Transylvania

The problem of funeral monuments after the religious reform

As the main ideologists of various trends of the Reformation were not concerned specifically with the applicability, form and general appearance of the funeral monuments, these were mostly subject to local approaches

based on the broader principles related to commemoration, the church space and the applicability of certain images and texts. In this context, the main problem with the medieval tombs concerned their function: they called for prayer for the deceased as it is often explicitly expressed by the “*ora pro me*”, “pray for me” inscriptions as well as by visual motifs. This held true both for the grave markers and any kind of commemorative objects the purpose of which was to remind of the dead. The appearance of medieval tombs was determined by their function concerning this salvific dimension.¹⁹ Reformed authorities recognized the danger of misinterpreting any funeral monument in this sense. As an example, the 1525 statute of the Zürich council ordered to remove all the gravestones from the city within a month (though it is a question whether it happened in reality).²⁰ During the 16th century tomb destruction in England in many cases, even if the tomb itself was kept, those elements – images and texts – were removed that could be interpreted as aiming to provoke an intercessory prayer.²¹ However, in general, similarly to the funeral ritual, neither were funeral monuments eliminated, as they constituted an essential part of the social practice of commemoration. The function of the monuments had to be re-interpreted in accordance with the new functions of the commemoration: as consoling the survivors, instructing them on how to prepare for their own death by reminding them of mortality and by setting the deceased as moral examples, and displaying the honor of the dead, thus re-confirming the social order.²² Another main line of criticism concerned funeral monuments as image bearing objects within the church space.²³ As funeral monuments belonged to the furnishing of the church interior, views about their acceptable form was largely determined by the position of different Protestant theologies on the applicability of images, especially in church context.

Though Luther rejected the idea of endowing images and sculptures to acquire merit by God and earn salvation, and also the adoration of images, he did not forbid possessing them as such. For Luther, certain types of images were acceptable for their teaching value in the propagation of the Gospel, as opposed to the views of Zwingli, Bullinger and Calvin, who disapproved any images in church sphere. According to the concerns of the latter, images can provide an opportunity for idolatry, so they called for their removal.²⁴ The cleansing of the churches from images inherited from medieval piety was sometimes smooth, but sometimes it was manifest in an outburst of violent iconoclasm.²⁵

In Transylvania the early Protestant synods regulated the practice of demolishing the altarpieces in the 1550s, warning that it belonged to the competence of the secular authorities and not of the church officials.²⁶ The Saxon synod held in Sibiu distanced themselves already in 1557 from those teachings that differed from Luther's ones in this respect, and prescribed the removal only of the "imaginary" representations (from the legends of the saints), but the "historical" ones (from the Bible) were allowed to keep.²⁷ After the Sacramentarian branch broke up with the Lutheran church, they formulated their position based on the principles set up by Calvin in the documents of the Reformed synod held in 1567. All the altarpieces, pictures, sculpted images had to be removed from the churches by the secular authorities and the priests, and sculpture was not allowed to install even outside the church.²⁸

Written accounts tell about cases also in Transylvania when images were destroyed by Protestants so as to purify church buildings, starting from the 1540s.²⁹ In the Lutheran Saxon context the approach was much more tolerant as it is attested by the large number of surviving medieval altarpieces and frescoes as well.³⁰

In certain parts of Europe funeral monuments too fell victim to iconoclasm if they were considered as calling upon intercessory prayer, and thus, dangerous.³¹ Elsewhere, however, the restricted attitude towards images, thus church furnishing in general, contributed indirectly to the flourishing of the genre of sepulchral monuments.³² This was the period when the amount, size and richness of funeral monuments increased in Europe to an extent never seen before. Independent from the denominational affiliation, spectacular sepulchral monuments were erected in the church naves and choirs, and there was an increasing tendency to create large, complex, lavishly ornamented structures.

From Transylvania there are no data that would suggest that Protestant iconoclasm effected sepulchral monuments from the Middle Ages or those of other denominations. What is more, a source suggests the exact opposite attitude during the first wave of iconoclasm. According to the account of Giovanandrea Gromo, the Italian officer of the Guards of Prince John Sigismund, when the Protestants destroyed the entire furnishing of the medieval cathedral in Alba Iulia in 1565 only four marble monuments were spared: that of János Hunyadi, another one determined probably erroneously as that of John Sigismund's father, the memorial of Cardinal György Martinuzzi, and the tomb of Queen Isabelle.³³

The type and form of funeral monuments

The views elaborated by Calvin on the suspicious character of art replicating nature evoked a generally reserved attitude towards figural images among his followers, which was manifest in various areas of Europe in a cautious treatment of images on tombs as well, or often their complete abandonment.³⁴ The application of images on sepulchral monuments seems to have expressed and have been determined by denominational boundaries.³⁵

In Transylvania the official church forums were not interested in the applicability of funeral monuments and in their form, and Calvinist synods said nothing about the topic either. A certain level of general criticism is manifest, however, in the description of the wall monument imported from Poland for Gábor Bethlen and his first wife, Zsuzsanna Károlyi (1632-34), provided by Ferenc Nagy Szabó in his "Chronicle". The *civis* of the Calvinist Târgu Mureş put the rhetoric question: why are the prince and his wife more worthy for being present in the church with their alabaster images than the saints?³⁶ The difference between the perception of portraits of the dead and portraits of biblical personalities in a church interior is well attested by the story of the pulpit that was installed in the same building for the personal will of Prince Gábor Bethlen. The Calvinist prince was attracted by a pulpit he saw in a Lutheran town of Upper Hungary, and he decided to order for his court church a similar one decorated with the gilded figures of the apostles and angels. The pulpit was finished by 1630, but he was not able to persuade the Calvinist priests to use it. According to the contemporary narrations, the figures were removed for the urge of the Calvinist estates after the death of the prince and were even publicly burnt or buried.³⁷

The quantitative analysis of the surviving memorials shows a clear difference in the attitude towards the figural tombs between the Lutherans and the Calvinists. 62 of the 311 memorials bear a portrait of the deceased, and from among these 39 (62%) were installed in a Lutheran context. From among the rest, four can be related to Catholic subjects, including the ledger of János Statileo (+1542) in Alba Iulia continuing and at the same time closing down a series of medieval bishops' figural monuments.³⁸ Eleven subjects were Calvinist or Antitrinitarian, and I have no information about the confessional context of eight tombs. Notably, from among the portrait tombs that were not erected in a Lutheran context,

only three survived from an urban environment, and 18 from the sphere of the nobility.

In the first decades after the acceptance of the religious reform, relatively few tombs displayed portraits of the deceased even among the Lutheran. One of the earliest examples was the memorial of Albert Cerasinus or Kirschner, who was the priest of Bistrița from 1549 (+1567).³⁹ The inscription of his tomb representing a full figure informs that the Reformation of the town was completed during his activity. Kirschner was among those who favored a more radical attitude towards the liturgy, its visual elements and the furnishing of the church space, closer to the Calvinist or Antitrinitarian ideas as compared to the more conservative direction characterizing Sibiu.⁴⁰ Still, apparently portraiture on funeral monuments did not cause any worries even in this formation period of the local Reform. A contemporary figural memorial in a Lutheran context was installed in Sibiu, for Margaretha Budai (+1566).⁴¹ The representation of the deceased with her children in a kneeling position in front of the Crucifix can possibly be attributed directly to the contacts of the family with the western Protestant territories. The first relatively large group of portrait gravestones of Lutheran dead was produced in the 1590s: a series of mostly priests' tombs displaying a half-figure portrait under a niche carved in the form of a shell.⁴² Based on the execution of these tombs, more than one master or workshop started to offer a very similar design approximately at the same time. As the position of the Protestant denominations concerning the images was clarified by that time, and figural gravestones were apparently not seen as problematic at all for the Lutherans, the market was opened for such memorials, and from that time on they were almost continuously produced first by a group of stonecutters active in the early 17th century in the town, then in Elias Nicolai's and Jacob Srawo's workshops, and later by Sigismund Möss.⁴³

It is even more telling to check the memorials of priests: from among the 50 tombs of Lutheran priests 23 are portrait monuments, while none among the Calvinist and Antitrinitarian ones. Portrait gravestones of the Lutheran clergy characteristic all over the Protestant parts of Europe originated from medieval priests' tombs and another type that appeared prior to the Reform: that of the Humanist scholar. When it was adapted to commemorate Lutheran pastors in the German areas of the Empire, it significantly changed concerning the gestures and clothing, reflecting – as probably in Transylvania too – dress codes for ministers and their wives.⁴⁴ Lutheran pastors and preachers were always depicted in their characteristic

ornate without signaling their rank; their bishops were represented the same way as the village priests. Notably, however, six of the eight surviving memorials of Lutheran bishops were ledgers displaying their life-size portrait, covering the period between 1600 and 1686. The attribute of Lutheran pastors was most frequently a book – as all over Europe⁴⁵ –, then a chalice and a chalice cloth. A number of portrait memorials installed in the Transylvanian Lutheran churches were painted in vivid colors that made the figure even livelier. This phenomenon indicates conspicuously that they were not afraid at all from similitude to reality.

As opposed to the Saxon Lutheran clergy, no portrait gravestones of Calvinist and Antitrinitarian pastors were produced. Altogether they are much less represented in the surviving ensemble than the Lutheran priests, only with a 16th-century heraldic ledger,⁴⁶ and five 17th-century gravestones: two coffin shaped and three coped stones.⁴⁷ Their form is not characteristic for the local urban elite in contrast with the Lutheran clergy, which might have marked a difference in their financial status as well. The tomb of the Calvinist bishop Péter Kovásznai displays a heraldic image, the rest, however, only a very simple symbol: a Bible, the same but held by a lamb or in a hand with three flowers.

The Bible and its scholarly interpretations were the most important weapons of the Calvinist priests according to their statutes.⁴⁸ The visual image of a hand holding a Bible corresponds to this formulation, as it can be associated with the motif of a hand holding a sword that was popular in the real heraldic devices of the nobility. Calvinist pastors were obliged to possess a copy of the Holy Scripture: the more learned individuals a Latin Bible, the less educated priests a Hungarian version. The Bible was an important element of the Lutheran priests' monuments too, as mentioned above, referring to the scriptural bases of their confession: 32 from among the 51 stone memorials of Lutheran priests display the Book.

In contrast with the Bible, the presence or absence of the chalice was a clear distinction between the Lutheran and Calvinist subjects. The chalice was a popular visual element of the tombs commemorating members of the clergy even in the Middle Ages and also within the broader geographical region. The earliest example from the territory of medieval Hungary was found in Dúbravka Devín (now in Slovakia), and dated to the second half of the 13th - beginning of the 14th century. In the neighboring Austrian and South Bavarian areas it was widespread to depict chalices on the gravestones of the lower clergy. A series of similar gravestones with a chalice sometimes combined with a book or a heraldic shield and

surrounded by border inscription dated from the 15th-16th centuries, and were produced in workshops in the area of Salzburg and Vienna.⁴⁹

The chalice depicted on 17 monuments of Transylvanian Lutheran priests – in several cases together with the host – can be attributed a special significance in its context. It put an emphasis on the motif of the Eucharist, which marked an important difference between the Lutheran and Calvinist theological position, and served as the starting point of a series of debates in Transylvania too. Maria Crăciun, when analyzing the Eucharistic iconography on altarpieces, argued that during the process of shaping the confessional identity of the Saxon church, the definition of the meaning of the Eucharist was a corner stone. Lutheran theologians used this sacrament to distance themselves both from Catholics and Calvinists.⁵⁰

Consequently, in theory it can be excluded that the visual representation of the Eucharist appears on a Transylvanian tomb in a Calvinist context. (In East England for example, tombs commemorating priests with representations of the host and chalice were even destroyed.⁵¹) However, there is at least one example that contradicts to this hypothesis: on the tomb chest of György Apafi the allegorical figure of Faith is represented with a chalice and the host.⁵² The three-dimensional female figure is placed on the corner of the tomb chest together with the allegorical representation of three other virtues; consequently it is not a main element of the representation, though it was very well visible for the spectator. This might signal that the patrons of the tomb of the Calvinist nobleman were not specifically preoccupied whether the visual representation corresponded to the “right” religious dogmas, and neither did the tomb-maker, Elias Nicolai, who otherwise worked in a Lutheran environment.⁵³ Other tombs related to his workshop but commemorating Lutheran subjects often displayed the chalice and host too.⁵⁴

The lack of figural representations did not characterize only the funeral monuments of the Calvinist and Antitrinitarian clergy, but the portrait was almost absent in the Calvinist or Antitrinitarian urban context in general. Three memorials from the Házsongárd or Central Cemetery in Cluj display human figures that can be understood as representations of the deceased, but in a very small size and in a schematic manner, all dating from the first half of the 17th century.⁵⁵ In contrast, 15 tombs commemorating members of the Lutheran Saxon urban elite display their portraits. Even tombs without figures are much more modest in the Antitrinitarian and Calvinist environment of Cluj and Târgu Mureş than in the Saxon churches. The few ledgers from the churches in Cluj are simpler than the

contemporary examples from Sibiu, displaying only a basic heraldic motif and a brief inscription.⁵⁶ The more modest forms and decoration of the entire ensemble of funeral monuments from Cluj and Târgu Mureş is also related to the place of the burials: as most of the surviving stones were installed in the extramural graveyards of these towns, they necessarily displayed forms different from those inserted into the pavement of the churches. They were exposed to the weather conditions, which made it useless to create meticulously ornamented surfaces.

Certainly the skills of the tomb-makers determined the complexity of the available tomb designs as well. Based on the survey of the surviving pieces it seems that the possibilities were broader in Sibiu in this respect. This is indicated by the funeral monuments produced by stonecutters from Cluj for members of the nobility, displaying portraits and other figures. The quality of craftsmanship is far from the average level in Sibiu even in the case of the best pieces produced by masters from Cluj.⁵⁷ On the other hand, these memorials prove that also the latter would have been able to create figural tombs for townspeople too if there had been a demand for that. Apparently the tomb market in Sibiu could continuously provide a demand for at least one workshop at least partly specialized in relatively richly ornamented funeral monuments, among those figural ones. This was also due to the position of the confession officially adhered by the town concerning the applicability of images – though there are for sure no monocausal explanations.

Considering the funeral monuments of the nobility, no such difference can be perceived. Though there were Catholic, Calvinist and Antitrinitarian among those represented in the sample of memorials analyzed, the religious affiliation is not manifest in any kind of difference in the tomb type. The medieval type of tomb chest with a representation of the full figure of the deceased on the top was preserved regardless the denominational context (e.g. the tombs of the Calvinist György Apafi, +1635, the Antitrinitarian György Sükösd, 1632, and the Catholic Kelemen Béli, +1627⁵⁸). Heraldic tombs were also characteristic for people of all confessional status.

The host was not the only element on the Apafi tomb chest that connected it to the Lutheran memorials and distinguished it from the Calvinist doctrines. On one of the short side panels the three sons of Apafi are represented who died as infants, notably two of them in a prayer, in a kneeling position, which was defined as erroneous by the early Calvinist synods in Eastern Hungary already in the 1560s.⁵⁹ Patrons, donators had been depicted in such a pose since the first half of the 14th century

in codices, altarpieces, wall paintings, and the kneeling, praying figure became a general element of painted epitaphs and gravestones from the mid-14th century first in the German areas, later all over Europe.⁶⁰ It was the most popular way of representing the deceased also on Lutheran epitaphs, and it was not infrequent on funeral monuments either in a Lutheran context. Epitaphs displaying the subject kneeling in a prayer in front of the Crucifix seem to have been wide-spread in the second half of the 16th century in Upper Hungary too, and the same scene appears on the top of the tomb chest of Tamás Nádasdy – a Hungarian aristocrat interested in the Lutheran teachings – located in Lockenhaus (today Austria).⁶¹ Among the Transylvanian tombs the kneeling position is represented only by a few examples even from a Lutheran context (Margaretha Budai and her children, +1566; Georg Heltner with his family, +1640; the children on the tomb of Barbara Theilesius, +1620s⁶²). The first one had no analogies in the 16th century Transylvania and probably reflects the intense Western European relations of the Haller family. The second and third, however, together with the Apafi tomb chest, can be related to the activity of Elias Nicolai, so it was the visual panels applied by the tomb-maker in this case too that determined the choice of the forms. The possible presence of a three dimensional kneeling figure in Transylvania has been raised related to the wall monuments of the princes in Alba Iulia: based on the analogies from the workshop of their sculptors it has been suggested that they were equipped with kneeling figures, probably under the Crucifix.⁶³ This may have not meant any conceptual problem in the case of the Catholic Kristóf Báthory. However, concerning the Calvinist Gábor Bethlen, and especially the memorials of György Rákóczi I and his sons commissioned by his devotedly Puritan wife, Zsuzsanna Lorántffy, it is a question whether they could have overlooked such a detail in a context where it was much more visible than on the Apafi tomb chest.⁶⁴ In this case it remains an open question – unless new sources are discovered – whether the solutions offered by the tomb-maker were evaluated by the patron with a special attention to the exact theological implications of the visual elements or not.

The traditions characterizing the commemorative practices of the nobility were definitely more influential than theological considerations when making the choices about funeral monuments. This is attested by an element in the last will of the Calvinist Zsigmond Kékedi, *magister curiae* of the prince, written in 1638: he expressed his wish about a modest funeral ceremony reasoning that God prohibits any luxury. At the same time, he

asked his brother to have a red marble figural monument (*statua*) made in his memory – a material that implies an expensive imported work and a form that probably would have displayed his portrait.⁶⁵ Apparently the fear from ostentation did not even occur in this respect.

Images and iconography

Details of the tombs, their images and iconography may have offered a field to manifest religious positions. As the discussion of a few details – the Bible, the chalice – has already shown, there were indeed some elements that were amenable to signal religious affiliation and distinction from other denominations, though their use was not always determined by conscious theological considerations. Sometimes they seem to have appeared only as an element of visual conventions characteristic for the commissioners' environment or the tomb-maker's toolkit.

The most characteristic difference between the attitude of Protestant denominations towards images concerns the applicability of scenes from the Bible. While Lutherans accepted the "historical" images that is episodes from the Old Testament and the life of Christ, and rejected only the stories of the saints considered to be fictional,⁶⁶ the Swiss direction of the Reform found it unacceptable to represent anything that was worshipped by the Catholics. The more liberal attitude of Luther and his followers towards the images lead to a flourishing of new genres and representational types in their art, including specifically religious art developed to present even complicated theological issues visually through figural allegories.⁶⁷ One of the most important fields where these new iconographic types appeared was that of commemoration: the Lutheran painted epitaph,⁶⁸ but also funeral monuments were equipped with a particular set of religious scenes.⁶⁹ Funeral monuments from Transylvania display a relatively narrow set of these iconographic themes that elsewhere covered mostly the scenes of the Passion, the last Judgment and also Old Testament stories.⁷⁰

Even the scene that was the most popular on Lutheran epitaphs and tombs in Europe, the Crucifixion of Christ is represented by no more than one example, the aforementioned epitaph of Margaretha Budai (+1566). The cross itself appeared above the head of Barbara Theilesius (+1620s),⁷¹ and even more than once on the ledger produced probably also in Sibiu, but placed in the church of the Orthodox monastery in Prislop. This commemorated the patron of the church, Zamfira, the daughter of the Viovide of Walachia (+1580).⁷² It is only the cross that refers to the

Orthodox Christianity of the deceased on the memorials created by Elias Nicolai for Walachian patrons: a double cross on the second tomb of Voivode Matie Basarab and a small and simple one on that of his wife, Princess Elena.⁷³

The Holy Dove floats above the head of the deceased on several funeral monuments installed in a Lutheran context.⁷⁴ In contrast, the Calvinist synod of 1567, listed the representation of God the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit among the prohibited themes of images.⁷⁵ The Son was represented through a symbol, a lamb on the tomb of the Antitrinitarian priest Sámuel Járai, but holding a Bible and not a cross.⁷⁶ Despite the explicit prohibition of the Calvinist statutes, however, the Holy Dove papers above the head of the Calvinist György Apafi. This can be understood as another element mechanically applied by Elias Nicolai without considering the specific confessional context, but also as a conscious choice of demonstrating the belief of the deceased and the patron, his wife in the Holy Trinity. The patron, Borbála Petki was Calvinist by that time, but she was raised as Antitrinitarian, and her brother, Ferenc Petki had some serious conflicts with the prince with regard to his Antitrinitarian views as well. The councilor Apafi was favored by the Prince, and he tried to intervene for his brother-in-law. Still, the family was standing on a slippery soil with their disgraced relatives especially from about 1638.⁷⁷ Their donations to the various Calvinist congregations, the erection of a Calvinist chapel and probably also a church related to their manor house, however, suggests that they put a strong emphasis on appearing as devout Calvinists.⁷⁸

The representation of biblical scenes is exceptional on Transylvanian memorials. The story of the Good Samaritan was carved on the side panel of the tomb chest of Queen Isabelle as a moral instruction for the spectator but also referring to the virtues of the queen.⁷⁹ The Resurrection, a popular theme on tombs in a Western European Lutheran context, is displayed by two, almost identical ledgers from Sibiu from the 1650s.⁸⁰ The dove was applied in another context as well: as a reference to Noah's Ark, holding a branch in its beak. It appears as a heraldic motif on a shield on a series of portrait gravestones from the 1590s.⁸¹ On the tomb of Petrus Rihelius by the workshop of Elias Nicolai (+1648) even the ark is depicted, an ancient reference to the journey to the afterlife, but the dove with the oil branch appears as a symbol of the hope of Resurrection.⁸² The shield is held by St. Peter Martyr and St. John the Evangelist. The representation of saints was exceptional on funeral monuments. On the ledger of Blasius

Rhau a strange mixture of the iconography of St. Onophrius and Blasius, the patron of the profession and name of the deceased appears as the crest, so also included into a heraldic image.⁸³ Angel figures are the most frequent as shield holders on the memorials, but they can be interpreted in an eschatological context as well, taking the soul of deceased represented by the heraldic device, to the heaven.

Hearts, lions, and other small motifs on the Lutheran tombs refer to the virtues of the dead and their unshakeable faith, and religious allegories such as the image of the pelican feeding its nestlings and bunches of grapes were multiplied around the figures and heraldic shields. The anchor as the symbol of the firm faith was placed on the portrait monument of bishop Christian Barth in Biertan (1649) and the largely provincial ledger of the priest Georg Clockner in Sibiu (+1670).⁸⁴ The tomb of Christian Barth was produced by the workshop of Elias Nicolai. His effigy was represented holding a huge anchor that, as an emblem, bears an inscription referring to his faith in salvation by God's grace; the rest of the texts refer to his role as the firm column of his homeland. Christian Barth was elected as a Lutheran bishop in 1647, and that time his position was shaking in a certain extent as he was accused with crypto-Calvinism.⁸⁵ His tomb monument was commissioned by himself in 1649 as it is stated in the inscription, and it transmits a powerful visual message of him being steadily anchored into the Lutheran church, especially having been set into the context of an already existing series of monuments of Lutheran bishops in the fortified church of Biertan.

The allegorical figures of virtues were represented only on two of the known memorials of noblemen: on the tomb chests of György Apafi and György Sükösd, on the corners of the former as three-dimensional figures and in a flat relief on the long side panel on the latter. One or two of the four cardinal and three theological virtues can be detected on the ledgers of Saxon Lutheran townspeople as well: *Fides* with book and chalice and *Spes* with an anchor as the most important virtues in the context of Protestant eschatology.⁸⁶

This is not the only similarity between the iconography of the two – the Apafi and Sükösd – tomb chests produced in the 1630s in Sibiu and in Cluj respectively, which might be the sign of the sometime existence of a common model lost by now. They are connected by elements belonging to the *memento mori* iconography as well, referring to the vanity and perishability of worldly things, youth and life, widespread on funeral monuments in the 16th and 17th centuries all over Europe.

Representations and texts referring to decay were broadly applied on tombs even in the Middle Ages, reminding the observer of his or her own death and inviting for contemplation on the sins closely associated with decay within the spiritual framework of Christianity. Macabre themes and an interest shown in portrayals of physical decomposition were manifest from the 14th century in manuscripts and church murals, and also in a funerary context mostly in Germany and France.⁸⁷ The images of bodily decay were closely related to medieval conceptions of memory as well, applying emotionally shocking effects for a deeper impression of the message.⁸⁸ From the late 16th century the theme was “vulgarized” (using a term by Philippe Ariès): skeletons and bones appeared on a broad range of tombstones all over Europe.⁸⁹ Representations reminding of the brevity of human life and the necessity of preparing for death, combined with sentences from the Bible or religious literature were widely popularized by printed graphic arts.

On the top of the Apafi tomb chest the figure of the dead is surrounded by symbolic images from this iconographic sphere. On the left side of the figure there is a human skeleton with a scythe in the bones of the left hand, and raising a sand-clock with the right hand. The blade of the scythe threatens to cut down the grapevine, the heraldic device of the family. A similar “active skeleton” is found on a side panel of the tombstone of György Sükösd. Matthew 25:13 was written on a scroll above the skeleton: “VIGILATE QUIA NESCIT[...] QVA HORA [...]NSVENIET MAT”.

On the other side of the figure on the Apafi tomb an infant sits on a human skull barefooted, wearing a long shirt. The image of an infant with the death's head derives from the genre of emblems.⁹⁰ The depiction, which became highly popular from the 15th-16th centuries, is a creation of the Renaissance, the golden age of allegories, symbols and emblems. It was invented by the Venetian Giovanni Boldú in 1458. Boldú, a follower of Pisanello, created bronze medals, and on one of these he combined for the first time the figure of a putto – a hybrid of an *all'antica* genius and the angel who carries the souls to the heaven – and a skull. This composition became extremely popular all over Europe due to the striking contrast between the skull and the young, childlike figure of the putto. North from Italy the putto was associated with hedonism, and warned as a threatening example to fight the sins vigilantly. The putto is often depicted dying among all kinds of vanities, or playing carelessly near a skeleton that holds a scythe, with a text in Latin or German: “*Hodie mihi cras tibi*”.⁹¹ The “putto with the death's head” was introduced in a new

context in the Netherlands by Cornelis Floris in the second half of the 16th century. He combined the iconography with the antique representations of Thanatos, and placed winged putto figures leaning on a torch on epitaphs and tombs.⁹² The motif appeared on tombstones at the end of the 16th century, and during the 17th century spread all over Europe. German art, however, preserved the putto with a sand-clock without wings and torch, leaning on a skull, and transmitted that to funeral context – this is the type that can be detected in Transylvania as well.

Most of such images in Transylvania originate from Saxon urban context.⁹³ The largest series of this image are displayed by those tombs that have been connected to the workshop of Elias Nicolai.⁹⁴ These represent different versions of the motif often combined with the text "*Hodie mihi cras tibi*". This short proverb is a paraphrase of Sirach 38:22, "Remember my judgment: for thine also shall be so: yesterday for me, and today for thee."⁹⁵ There are other motifs from the same iconographic environment, such as a skull with a snake woven between the jaw-bones on the tomb of Daniel Klein (+1628) and Zsuzsanna Kamuthy (+1631).⁹⁶ A skull with crossed bones can be seen on two monuments already mentioned above, on that of Barbara Theilesius and Georg Glockner.

As all these examples show, the moral didactic potential of *memento mori* images was rarely utilized outside the Lutheran context, and even in these cases almost exclusively on those tombs that were made in the workshops in Sibiu for patrons from the ranks of the Calvinist nobility. As in the case of the other religiously meaningful motifs, here too the tomb-maker probably applied his established panels regardless the context. The only exception is the tomb chest of the Antitrinitarian György Sükösd produced in Cluj by Péter Diószegi – Cluj tomb-makers did not apply *memento mori* images in any other case among the tombs that survived. In Sibiu the use of both religious symbols and *memento mori* allegories was especially characteristic from the 1620s. As compared to the previous practice of applying one single item of such elements, in these decades the tombs were crowded with various small images of religious and moral significance. It seems that the application of such images on tombs was not related to the level of religiosity at all, but was determined by the toolkit of the tomb-makers ultimately based on graphic models circulating all over Europe. These images have to be interpreted rather within the broad trends of European visual culture of the period than in a local theological or intellectual context.

Texts

Calvinist and Lutheran views overlapped in their positive attitude towards the application of biblical inscriptions in church environment. Lutheran images could fulfill more efficiently their educational task due to the text, and they contributed to excluding any doctrinal misunderstanding of the images too, while according to the more radical Reformed ideas, inscriptions were the only form of acceptable decoration in a church sphere.⁹⁷ As it has been observed in the German-speaking areas of the Holy Roman Empire, neither the style nor the content of the funerary inscriptions differed much in the Reformed and the Lutheran religious context.⁹⁸ A similar image unfolds when overviewing these texts from the Transylvanian Principality.

Inscriptions on funeral monuments appeared relatively late in Transylvania, in the 15th century, and formulae calling for intercession – “*ora pro me*”, “*miserere me*” – which caused the most serious upheaval in the Protestant Western Europe,⁹⁹ were applied as well, though these were not very widespread.¹⁰⁰ From the mid-16th century, the content of the texts was focused on topics complying with the eschatological views of the Protestant theology. In general the longest and most complex inscriptions were applied in the Lutheran Saxon environment, and the detailed examination of particular case studies can sometimes reveal even nuances in the contemporary intellectual and religious life.¹⁰¹ Members of the Saxon intellectual elite wrote pieces belonging to the popular genre of epitaphs, a number of which were not inscribed in stone but published in literary collections.¹⁰²

A considerable number of inscriptions from Transylvanian funeral monuments have been collected and analyzed by experts in epigraphy focusing on the development of formulae and script types.¹⁰³ Here I will only point at a few tendencies partly observed by previous scholarship in epigraphy and partly concluded on the basis of the inventory behind this paper, a considerable part of which have not been included yet to the epigraphic research.

As stated above, the general content of grave inscriptions did not show any difference in the Lutheran and Reformed environment. The same can be concluded about the texts written on the – not too many, a total of 18 – verifiably Catholic subjects as well: no specifically Catholic textual references can be detected. The religious content of funerary inscriptions all over Transylvania was focused on displaying the firm faith of the

deceased, his or her hope in the resurrection, and on re-confirming that of the spectator too. The security in the salvation and the resurrection were the most important elements in the epitaphs both written in Latin and in Hungarian.¹⁰⁴ This hope was expressed through biblical quotes as well, such as with Psalm 25, 2 ("O my God, I trust in thee"¹⁰⁵), and the Hungarian text on a series of tombs produced in Cluj in the 17th century is closed by the same formula referring to the resurrection ("*adjon az úr feltámadást az utolsó napon*"¹⁰⁶).

An important motif in a Protestant context was that of the "good death": with the doctrine of the justification by faith alone the only thing that mattered to achieve salvation for the dying was to remain firm in their faith.¹⁰⁷ Tomb inscriptions stating that the subject died the proper way were to confirm the faith of the living in the resurrection, similarly to the quote "*beati mortui qui in domino moriuntur*" (Rev. 14,13) on the ledger of Georg Peltz in Richiş. The Hungarian text on the gravestone of Mátyás Hyncz warned everybody to focus on the returning of Christ and the eternal happiness when on their deathbed.¹⁰⁸ A life closed down by a good death is referred to by the application of 2 Timothy 4,7: "*bonum certamen certavi cursum consummavi fidem servavi*".¹⁰⁹

Texts reminded of the brevity of life so as to warn to prepare for a good death, in a piece of poetry or in the form of brief sayings widespread all over Europe: "*memento mori*", "*hodie mihi cras tibi*", "*quod ego sum tu eris*", "*sic transit gloria mundi*". Various forms of texts were interwoven with the contrasting of the fate of the body and the soul, death and life, a theme already popular in the Middle Ages.¹¹⁰ Texts emphasizing that the grave or tomb hides only the bones and ashes of the deceased are related to these ideas too.¹¹¹

The brief paraphrases, mottos were generally operating together with a corresponding visual representation, most often with the "putto and a skull", or inserted into the image so as to utilize the interplay of text and visual representation in emphasizing the content. The two sentences – "*Christus ißt mein Leben*", "*Sterben ißt mein gewin*" – were contrasted even visually written on the two pilasters flanking the portrait of Barbara Theilesius. The motto incised on the huge anchor held by Bishop Christian Barth also referred to the image: "*Anchora meae salutis gratia Patris per Christum acqvisita*" and the two operated together almost as a Protestant religious and also personal device. The emblem of Petrus Rihelius bearing Philippians 1,21 as a motto, "*vita mihi Christas, mors mihi lucrum*", and held by Petrus Martyr, is in a triple interplay with the epitaph built on the

meaning of the name Petrus.¹¹² The pelican feeding its nestlings with her own blood, a symbol of the salvation by Christ, was the chosen heraldic symbol of the Saxon Roth family, and the motif of salvation appears in the epitaph as well.¹¹³

In the rhymed epitaphs all these contents are often formulated in the language of Humanistic poetry.¹¹⁴ These tell about the virtues of the deceased, and express the faith that their soul is now in the heaven and their body will resurrect in the future. The use of ancient formulae of addressing the spectator (e.g. “*viator*”) emphasizes the didactic role of the tombs.¹¹⁵

The praise of the deceased was a general characteristic in the Humanistic genre of epitaphs,¹¹⁶ and it was certainly present also in Transylvania.¹¹⁷ In a Protestant environment the emphasis was on the virtuous life both in the civic and in the religious sphere, the dead were set as models for the audience. The application of extensive biographical texts was also rooted in the Humanist commemorative traditions, and corresponded to the emergence of lengthy biographical sermons in the second half of the 16th century all over Europe.¹¹⁸ On Transylvanian funeral monuments these became especially popular from the 17th century, and the most ostentatious example was created already in the 18th century, on the monument of Simon Albelius and Marcus Fronius in Braşov.

Latin was widespread and not specific for any denomination. At the same time, the increasing use of vernacular languages characterized the application of texts on funeral monuments too. Similarly to the imperial German territories, texts in vernacular were not an exclusive characteristic of Protestant environment in Transylvania either.¹¹⁹ The first examples can be detected in the 1560-70s both concerning the German and Hungarian monuments in Transylvania. The first Hungarian text appeared on the plaques walled into the city wall of Cluj, from the 1570s¹²⁰ – taking aside one plaque bearing the suspiciously early date of 1554 – and the first German inscription was preserved from 1567 (on the tomb of Salome Ursula Hedvig).¹²¹

Comparison of funeral monuments created for different religious (and social) strata reveal that the same old testament verses on death, salvation and resurrection appear on the monuments of Calvinist, Lutheran, Catholic and also on Orthodox subjects produced in Transylvanian workshops. Some of these popular textual “panels” (e.g. from the Book of Job, Sirach, and the prophecy of Ezekiel) moved around combined with moralizing images, in the form of *memento mori* emblems mentioned above. These

most popular quotes did not differ from those preferred in a funerary context all over Europe. Job 14,1-2 ("Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.") was also quoted by the Catholic Zsigmond Haller in his last will in 1626 justifying why he was composing the testament.¹²² The most popular biblical quote was Job 19,25-27: "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." It can often be encountered in Latin, Hungarian, and German as well. Zsigmond Lónyai, who put in writing in his testament his wish to have a tombstone installed on his grave so as he can wait for the resurrection without any disturbance, supplemented this with the quote of Job 19,25-27.¹²³ These biblical parts belonged to the general verbal toolkit of both the patrons and the tomb-makers of all confessions to express their ideas about their own death and death in general. The aforementioned quotes and a number of others (e.g. Ezekiel 37,12; Sirach 14:18) were equally placed on tombs of Calvinist noblemen, Lutheran Saxon patricians and priests and the Orthodox family members of the voivode of Walachia. The expression of grief over the loss is generally far overshadowed by a display of faith in the salvation of the soul and in the resurrection. The presentation of the virtues of the deceased, though it was also a display of what had been lost for the bereaved, was more related to this context.

The siting of the funeral monuments

Though theologians of the religious reform did not give any direct instructions on the appearance of the funeral monuments, they were definitely concerned of another aspect of the burial: that of the location. In the Middle Ages the dead were placed to rest in the church and the churchyard, within the settlement and among the living, who could constantly support their souls with prayers. After the Reformation, this sacred topography did not bear meaning any more, on the contrary, offered a temptation for misinterpretation and inappropriate use.¹²⁴ Luther himself argued for the removal of the burial from the center of the settlement to outside the city walls. He suggested the use of extramural cemeteries also for health reasons.¹²⁵ The period was indeed characterized

by a general trend of removing the cemeteries from the center of the towns and the area of the church to outside the settlements, though the exact role played by the Reformation within the process is debated by scholarship.¹²⁶ Concerning Transylvania, sources attest that the first steps to remove the place of burial from the church and the town to extramural communal graveyards were taken after the acceptance of Reformation and by town magistrates officially adhering to the new doctrines.¹²⁷ On the other hand, this does not mean that church interiors were not used for burials any more. Churches remained a favored burial site of the urban elite, especially in the Lutheran Saxon towns as testified by the large series of surviving funeral monuments from Sibiu, Braşov, Sighişoara, Mediaş and Biertan. The surviving funeral monuments, as well as the last wills suggest that also members of the nobility kept on using churches as their burial place no matter which denomination they belonged to. What is more, the actual practice seems to have influenced the official position of the local Reformed Church as well. The documents of its early synods express a strict position in this question: churches have to be kept free from burials.¹²⁸ In 1646, however, they formulated that patrons who had the ancient right to be interred in the churches and chapels were exempt from this rule.¹²⁹

An indirect influence of religious views on the appearance of the tombs can be detected here: urban extramural cemeteries emerged as a new spatial destination of the tombs, and as a result, new forms came into existence (coped headstones and coffin-shaped stones). These were essentially different from those in the church interior, and the fact that they were exposed directly to the weather conditions might have influenced the complexity of the decoration as well. Forms known already in the Middle Ages that counted as traditional in the church interior (such as ledger stones and tomb chests) were, however, also produced, and even a few examples of early modern wall monuments widespread in Europe were imported.

Conclusions

Protestant theologians did not elaborate specifically on the applicability and form of funeral monuments, but based on their views on the use of images in a church environment, various local positions emerged all throughout Europe, sometimes only omitting complex tombs but

sometimes ending up in a violent iconoclasm in this field too. The Lutheran and Calvinist viewpoint in this respect clearly differed in Transylvania as well. Lutherans did not see any problems with those images that offered no reason for worshipping, and they accepted the representations of biblical scenes referring to their didactic function. In contrast, Calvinist synods formulated a radically negative attitude towards the figural images. This cannot be overlooked when interpreting the phenomenon that no real portrait monuments survived from a Calvinist urban context, while the late 16th century brought a boom in such tombs in the Lutheran towns, and especially among their priests. Decisions made in this respect by members of the nobility, however, do not show any influence of religious considerations: all four religions followed the medieval traditions when choosing the types of their tombs. Neither does the iconography of these tombs reflect specifically the religious views of their subjects. This is attested by those cases where a tomb-maker coming from a Lutheran environment prepared the memorial of a Calvinist noble and applied the same elements as on the tombs of the Lutheran townspeople, even if their theological implications might have been problematic in a Reformed context. Considering the texts carved on stone memorials all over Transylvania, the picture seems to be even more uniform concerning the eschatological content. In most cases the inscriptions do not give any clue to the denominational belonging of the subject. Religious motifs in general were covered by the same broadly accepted and applied formulae. Humanist epitaphs incised on memorials belonged to a genre pursued by the intellectual elite also in the Principality, and these too were built on the same main eschatological ideas in the case of all denominations. The authors of these often took the opportunity to elaborate on some elements of the individual's life as well.

The overall image resulting from this analysis suggests that tombs were not specifically instrumentalized to display confessional difference in the Transylvanian Principality, which is an especially interesting phenomenon considering the denominational diversity of the society. In urban communities, where the town leadership officially accepted one or another confession, its imprint can be identified in the burial and commemorative practice, but in general traditions seem to have been related more to the social status. Among the nobility the strong emphasis on the representation of the "social self" might have contributed to the phenomenon that tombs were not utilized to display religious affiliation even in a confessionally largely fragmented society and even in cases

of contested religious identities. Traditional rights of the patrons to be buried inside the church even overwrote the official position of the local Reformed Church.

As, however, other sources testify, nobles were definitely concerned about the proper religious setting of the burial, manifest for example in the funerary ritual. Though it seems that the ceremonies of the Protestant denominations and the Catholics were linked by several elements, contemporaries clearly perceived the difference. As denominational differences were not infrequent between the immediate family members, it was unavoidable to participate at ceremonies organized according to various confessional principles. People problematized the participation in practices they considered as pagan or superstitious based on their own confessional standing. This was manifest in the concern expressed by the Lutheran Saxon when they were obliged to appear at the funeral ceremony of the Antitrinitarian Prince John Sigismund, or by the Protestant nobles who, due to their obligation based on social status, took part at the funeral of the Catholic Kelemen Mikes.¹³⁰ Funeral monuments seem to reflect religious identities in a very limited and far not uniform manner concerning various social layers. Other factors that contributed to the overall setting, such as the context of space and of ritual and social acts need to be taken into consideration as well so as to understand more deeply the impact of religious changes on the ideas and concepts related to death and commemoration within the Transylvanian Principality.

NOTES

- ¹ Mostly on theories of HERTZ, R., *Death and the Right Hand*, Cohen & West, Glencoe (Ill), 1960; GENNEP, A. V., *The Rites of Passage*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1960; TURNER, V., *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1969; BLOCH, M. and PARRY, J. P., *Death and the Regeneration of Life*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1982; HUNTINGTON, R. and METCALF, P., *Celebrations of Death: The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991.
- ² KOSLOFSKY, C. M., *The Reformation of the Dead. Death and Ritual in Early Modern Germany, 1450-1700*, Palgrave, New York, 2000, 22-39; REINIS, A., *Reforming the Art of Dying: The Ars Moriendi in the German Reformation (1519-1528)*, Ashgate, Aldershot, 2007, 2-5.
- ³ See e.g. GITTINGS, C., *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, Croom Helm, London, 1984; CRESSY, D., "Death and the Social Order: The Funerary Preferences of Elizabethan Gentlemen", in *Continuity and Change*, 5. 1989; MUIR, E., *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1997; KARANT-NUNN, S. C., *The Reformation of the Ritual. An Interpretation of Early Modern Germany*, Routledge, London, 1997; KOSLOFSKY, C. M., *The Reformation of the Dead. Death and Ritual in Early Modern Germany, 1450-1700*, Palgrave, New York, 2000; MARSHALL, P., *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2002; HARDING, V., "Choices and Changes: Death, Burial and the English Reformation", in Gilchrist and Gaimster (eds.), *The Archaeology of the Reformation 1480-1580*. Maney, Leeds, 2003, 386-398. The following summary is based mostly on these works.
- ⁴ LLEWELLYN, N., *The Art of Death. Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual c. 1500 - c. 1800*, Reaktion Books, London, 1991, 28.
- ⁵ LLEWELLYN, N., *Funeral Monuments in Post-Reformation England*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, 42-49; KOSLOFSKY, C. M., *The Reformation of the Dead. Death and Ritual in Early Modern Germany, 1450-1700*, Palgrave, New York, 2000, 93-94, 104-106.
- ⁶ GAIMSTER, D. and GILCHRIST, R., "History From Below: The Archaeology of the English Reformation 1480-1580", in Gaimster and Gilchrist (eds.), *The Archaeology of Reformation 1480-1580*. Maney, Leeds, 2003, 1-8; HAMM, B., "How innovative was the Reformation?", in Jäggi and Staecker (eds.), *Archäologie der Reformation: Studien zu den Auswirkungen des Konfessionswechsels auf die materielle Kultur*. Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, 2007, 26-43; SCHOLKMANN, B., "Forschungsfragestellungen, Möglichkeiten und Grenzen einer Archäologie der Reformation in Mitteleuropa", in Jäggi and Staecker (eds.), *Archäologie der Reformation: Studien zu den Auswirkungen des Konfessionswechsels auf die materielle Kultur*. Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, 2007, 3-25.

- 7 Graham Murdock has discussed the question based on the study of Calvinist church visitations and funeral sermons. MURDOCK, G., "Death, prophecy and judgement in Transylvania", in Gordon and Marshall (eds.), *The Place of the Dead. Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, 206-223.
- 8 The inventorying of the funeral monuments was carried out between 2010 and 2013 with the financial support of the CEU Research Support Grant and the Isabel and Alfred Bader Research Grant of the Research Centre for the Humanities of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.
- 9 The two exceptions are the present Sălaj and Bihor counties where I could not cover the entire area yet.
- 10 For a history of the religious reform in Transylvania, see ROTH, E., *Die Reformation in Siebenbürgen. Von Honterus zur Augustana*, Böhlau, Köln, 1964; KEUL, I., *Early Modern Religious Communities in East-Central Europe: Ethnic Diversity, Denominational Plurality, and Corporative Politics in the Principality of Transylvania (1526-1691)*, Brill, Leiden, 2009.
- 11 MURDOCK, G., *Calvinism on the Frontier, 1600-1660: International Calvinism and the Reformed Church in Hungary and Transylvania*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2000, 1-12.
- 12 FLOREA, C., "Shaping Transylvanian anti-Trinitarian identity in an urban context", in Crăciun, Ghitta and Murdock (eds.), *Confessional Identity in East-Central Europe*. Ashgate, Aldershot, 2002, 64-80.
- 13 KEUL, I., *Early Modern Religious Communities in East-Central Europe: Ethnic Diversity, Denominational Plurality, and Corporative Politics in the Principality of Transylvania (1526-1691)*, Brill, Leiden, 2009, 245-246.
- 14 About the Catholic preference, see DAUGSCH, W., "Gegenreformation und protestantische Konfessionsbildung in Siebenbürgen zur Zeit Stephan Báthorys (1571-1584)", in Weber and Weber (eds.), *Luther und Siebenbürgen. Ausstrahlungen von Reformation und Humanismus nach Südosteuropa*. Böhlau, Cologne, 1985, 215-228.
- 15 See SIPOS, G., "A kolozsvári református egyházközség a XVII. században", in Dáné, Egyed, Sipos and Wolf (eds.), *Kolozsvár 1000 éve. A 2000. október 13-14-én rendezett konferencia előadásai*. Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület - Magyar Közművelődési Egyesület, Kolozsvár, 2001, 90-99.
- 16 KNÖLL, S., *Creating Academic Communities: Funeral Monuments to Professors at Oxford, Leiden and Tübingen 1580-1700*, Equilibris, Haren, 2003, 10 argued about a similar approach concerning the three cities characterized by different confessional environments.
- 17 See HORN, I., "Der ungarische Adel als Träger der Reformation in Siebenbürgen", in Leppin and Wien (eds.), *Konfessionsbildung und Konfessionskultur in Siebenbürgen in der Frühen Neuzeit*. Steiner, Stuttgart, 2005, 165-178; HORN, I., *Hit és hatalom. Az erdélyi unitárius nemesség 16.századi története*, Balassi, Budapest, 2009.

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POSTHUMANISM: IS THERE A THEOPHANY IN THE COMPUTER? KURZWEIL AND THE ETERNAL RETURN OF THE SACRED

Abstract

Posthumanism, a broad trend between biology and technology, aims at redefining what human beings will become in a not so distant future. It therefore raises multiple, and still rarely investigated questions for philosophers and social scientists.

My paper, following the general methodology of Max Weber in his study on capitalism and Protestant ethic, is devoted to several potential links between religious philosophical legacies and contemporary research in computer sciences related to posthumanism. Contrary to existing similar publications, I did not choose “Eastern” spiritual movements or small Western sects, but one of the major monotheist faiths. In posthumanism, I mainly focus on one specific figure, namely Ray Kurzweil.

The study involves a comparison between several components of Jewish philosophy and their counterparts in posthuman literature, especially as regards immortality, history, philosophy of history, and the prophetic figure. I also try to show how not only the elements, but their subtle and complex layout, may help to explain the tremendous success of Ray Kurzweil.

This could also prove that posthumanism might be indeed considered, not an overcoming of human nature, but a contemporary, computer-based, quest for what has been since the beginning of time basic questions of humanity.

Keywords: Posthumanism, Kurzweil, philosophy of history, computer, Judaism

Mircea Eliade became famous outside of Romania thanks to his theory of the Eternal Return, defined as a “revolt against concrete, historical time, [the] nostalgia for a return to the mythical time of the beginning of things,

to the Great Time".¹ Yet, as one might expect, Eliade does not oppose frontally "primitive societies" and the "historical man" (modern human beings). The cyclical time "nevertheless (...) made its way into Christian philosophy",² and thus in Western modernity. More archaic schemes of existence "survived besides" modern ones in the theories of Brahe, Kepler, etc. Marxism defined the final golden age as a victory of "archaic eschatologies".³ Many people in Europe and the rest of the world still live by the light of the anti-historistic, archaic, viewpoint. Major writers are nostalgic for it.

In *Mythes, rêves et mystères*, rendered in English by the even more explicit title *Myths, dreams and mysteries: the encounter between contemporary faiths and archaic realities*, he concludes the first chapter on myths in the modern world by saying that the modern world did not abolish "mythical behavior: it inverted its domain: myths are not dominant in essential sectors of life, they were pushed back either into obscure zones of the psyche, or in secondary, irrelevant social activities".⁴ Claude Levi-Strauss famously made a similar statement: what he calls "savage mind" (usual English translation for "pensée sauvage", or "savage thought") did not disappear due to the might of modernity: it merely withdrew to specific, more discreet parts of life. Many other authors could also be quoted, with comparable assertions. Some disciplines even rely upon such a methodological basis, e.g. psychoanalysis, which aims at replacing the individual within a primitive or original framework of his early times or family.

Critics easily dismissed Eliade's statements as politically motivated, and, moreover, linked to an outdated both conception and period of history. My point is not about proving or refuting such a hypothesis by an accumulation of quotations; I would rather discuss the validity of the "withdrawal" thesis, according to which, even the staunchest proponents of the survival of myths in the modern world somehow concede that "modernity" won. Some parts of the human soul or of the universe might resist, some activities such as reading (the example given by Eliade) might still help us escape ordinary, stressful time, but on the whole little can be done, especially in the most dynamic aspects of contemporary growth, such as science and technology. One of Heidegger's best-known and frequently misused quotations, "only a god can save us", by its gloomy side, could to some extent apply to the "withdrawal" hypothesis. Even if it is probably not a fully losing battle, a positive trend, that means favorable to "ancient" components, cannot be considered obvious; and the fate of myth is even less relevant for the majority of tech-savvy citizens and intellectuals.

Another dominant pattern in myth and technology related studies is what I would call the shadow of Heidegger. Heidegger basically focused on the origins of technology (or of the essence of technology), and attempted, albeit less explicitly, to show how one, a high-level intellectual, can mentally control its disruptive influence to some extent. Heidegger, just as many other critical thinkers of technology (Jacques Ellul, etc) focused on an ontology of technology, its supra-human basis. Long story short, technology was seen as a divine or satanic entity that traps human beings. One point was mostly missing from this argument: how humans are the authors of technology, and what it means for them to contribute to such a project. Jean Beaufret, the most influential French disciple of Heidegger for several decades, created a scholarly theory of history, in which he explained that in every historical era one dominant intellectual figure could change the state of affairs: e.g. Galileo, by stating that the universe is written in a mathematical language, did launch the deadly road of technology. Anyway, influence upon technology and science remained off-limits for a majority of ordinary mortals, and the mere expansion of technology a mysterious, deeply threatening process.

The argument of this paper could start from the opposite presupposition: technology will be considered a result of human deeds, not as the result of supra-human entities. "Man is the measure of all things" is a quotation frequently attributed to Protagoras. I cannot reopen now such a broad and ancient debate, but, as in ancient Greece, this statement can help distinguish two major approaches, which by the way are strikingly similar to the philosophical options available more than two thousand years ago: those who, like Heidegger, maintain that technology, in its essence, is outside of human influence (with the exception of an almost Quietist possibility to preserve a tiny part of the internal world unaffected by technological storms and disasters), and those who believe it is a human product, that is to say created by human beings and, unlike Heidegger's *Gestell*, subject to direct human leadership. The dispute, obviously impossible to settle, can at least lead us to what I would call the anthropological origin of technology: technology not only was man-made at some point in history, but it still shares with him numerous deep characteristics. They will be re-used for the sake of the demonstration in the second part of this paper.

In this paper, I will also try to defend a stronger case than Eliade did: ancient religious thought, "myth" for Eliade, "savage mind" for

Levi-Strauss, may do more than simply disappear or retreat to minor parts of modernity; it could well be found behind the very central process of technology, that is to say the least expected place.

The topic of the paper needs now at least two major clarifications or restrictions on the scope of the investigated issues and the nature of what could be called “religious”. First, I will restrict myself to what is today called “posthumanism”, a term probably coined by Vernor Vinge. This might not be enough: posthumanism, as Pepperell states at the beginning of his *Posthuman Condition*, is “employed to describe a number of things at once”: it can mark the end of humanism, the current transformations of what we mean by human, and what Pepperell calls the “general convergence of biology and technology”. The third point could precisely summarize the global perspective of this paper: posthumanism as the gray area between biology and technology, not necessarily how technology influences or will modify biology, but rather the opposite.

Posthuman publications are quite numerous. I therefore will focus on one particular author, namely Ray Kurzweil. This choice may be partly arbitrary; it may also be explained through the tremendous success Kurzweil enjoys, as a writer of best-sellers, as well as a renowned scientist. I will argue that Kurzweil might be considered one of the most sophisticated examples of prominent leaders in posthumanism, technology and religion at the same time. This should not lead to a hasty rejection of other trends in posthumanism; Kurzweil quotes them (see for instance his praise of *The World is Flat*), is their follower (see N. Wiener), and sometimes shares many common points with even rather minor or anecdotal activists. The manifold versions and branches of posthumanism are still interconnected.

The second restriction I would like to enunciate could deal with the other side of the research, that is to say what is understood as “religion”. Although everyone has some understanding of its meaning, being more specific about religion is much more difficult. Definitions of religion are as numerous as authors are, and therefore discussions about the religious nature of something in general are rarely conclusive. Contrary to what existing pamphlets on the religious nature of Kurzweil say, I will not stay with a form of “archaic” religion, some sort of shamanic activity. Religious studies usually oppose what Eliade called “historians of religion”, i.e. scientists dealing with religions in general, chiefly with archaic, “cosmic” or otherwise “oriental-primitive” religions, but at the same time extremely cautious as regards major monotheist faiths: typically, authors such as Eliade, Dumézil, etc, wrote very little on what is commonly understood as

religion in the West. On the other hand, theologians are experts in some major religion, but rarely venture out of its internal themes. I will mostly compare Kurzweil to some aspects of Judaism. It does not mean that this approach is more relevant than, for instance, Jean-Michel Besnier's comparison of posthumanism and some "Eastern" traditions, nor attempts at unearthing the general religious substrate of posthumanism. Reasons and results of my choice will, of course, be given in the argument itself.

Part 1: Religious elements behind the "lush vegetation" of rationality

At the beginning of the *Elementary forms of the Religious life*, Durkheim sets to himself as an objective to "uncover the common ground of religious life under the lush vegetation that covers it".⁵ Durkheim's metaphor certainly alludes to the exotic natural environment of the Australian "primitive" religions that he investigated, but could also be used in a technological context.

Technology is usually perceived as a specific field, fundamentally distinct from any other academic discipline, at times even as an activity unworthy of intellectual thought. Heidegger, in another famous statement, said that science does not think. And technology could also be, not only a zone without thought, but the chief enemy of thought as well. For contemporary social scientists, even those who do not share Heidegger's views, technology is at best a tool, a neutral element on their desk, which can help them in their daily activities, but does not really interfere with their content. Technology is said to be created by unknown, distant non-scientists, or perhaps at best, its theoretic components, by researchers at the opposite end of the spectrum of academic disciplines. An intellectual vacuum is the result of this attitude, and leads to, as usual in similar situations, to less thought out attempts to tackle the issue.

In this first part of my argument, I will try to make an overview of several elements behind the lush vegetation. Such an overview cannot be exhaustive, and I do not intend to create a list of religious trends related to technology. I will straight away exclude the most radical components, such as New Age groups or tech-savvy religious groups as Scientology. My aim is not to describe some colorful entities on the fringes of technology, religion and more or less lawful activities, but to show underlying mechanisms in the very historical and genetic code of technology.

A) Anthropomorphism and technology: is man the measure of all computers?

First, one can notice that relevant vocabulary in the field of technology and science is fundamentally related to human activities. The word “science” comes from the Latin verb *scio*, and its original meaning was to cut or to decide (see the Indo-European root **skei*), later to know. “Technology” is the English form of the Greek *tekhnê*, art or handiwork. “Cybernetics” is related to *kubernêtikê*, the rudder. Many other terms of that lexical field have to do with daily items or tasks, some obvious (mouse, email), some more exotic (robot, from a Czech word meaning hard labor, algorithm, from the name of the mathematician al-Khwarizmi, or “native of Khwarazm”, a province in central Asia). In the non-European world, especially in Arabic and Hebrew, the involved terms have a more abstract, less secular origin. They have less to do with daily life. In Arabic, *science* is often translated by *‘ilm*; but *‘ilm* is a broader term than just the secular or profane sciences. Another frequent translation is *hikma*, with approximately the same remark. Technology could be translated by *fann*, which also encompasses art. Contemporary dictionaries give the Arabic transposition of the English word: *tiknulujya*. Other terms are also used. In Hebrew, the most frequent translation of *science* is *mada’*, from the root *yada’*, which means to know in an even broader sense than the Arabic *‘ilm*.⁶ Technology is translated by *tekhniyya*, similarly to Arabic. I cannot speculate here on whether a Western “go-between” was required to give more anthropomorphism to science and thus start the whole process.

But there is more than simply etymology. Norbert Wiener, considered the founding father of cybernetics, extensively dealt with what he called “the impingement of this circle of ideas [cybernetic circle of ideas] on society, ethics, and religion” and the “social consequences of cybernetics”.⁷ The “impingement” occurs on multiple levels. The technological growth is based upon human desires, “human hunger” and “human thirst”,⁸ as Wiener once put it:

human beings as physiological structures, unlike society as a whole, have changed very little since the Stone Age, and the life of an individual contains many years over which the physiological conditions change slowly and predictably, all in all.⁹

Products of technology are deeply human, too: the best example would probably be the Golem: “the machine (...) is the modern counterpart of the Golem of the Rabbi of Prague”.¹⁰ Countless publications did later show to what extent research, even in hard sciences, is the result of human interactions and values; Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar’s *Laboratory Life* (1979) became a seminal work.

An aspect of the early decades of technology related to computers is frequently forgotten: it was considered, not an independent field, but as part of the art of prosthesis. Norbert Wiener himself came from that field of research, and one of Kurzweil’s first inventions was the reading machine for blind people (later a voice recognition system). “Prosthesis” may of course be understood as anything helping people overcome their weaknesses, and this creates for instance the link with the Golem, as a mighty guardian of Jewish communities.

Last, some features of advanced cybernetics *per se* has to do with religion: Wiener distinguishes three points: “one of these concerns machines which learn; one concerns machines which reproduce themselves; and one, the coordination of machine and man”.¹¹

B) Posthumanism – an overview

Posthumanism is not a single set of beliefs. Some consider it to be a joke, especially in Europe: this detail may seem anecdotal, but in my opinion it is not, for it is quite telling about underlying cultural components, not equally present throughout the Western world: posthumanism is a predominantly American phenomenon. A parallel may also be drawn between concepts such as postmodernity, which was a leitmotiv among social scientists approximately at the time when posthumanism first gained some momentum. Some social scientists discussed the role of the subject, Foucault became famous among others due to his thesis on the disappearance of the human being as such. Last but not least, posthumanism clearly has some roots in popular culture, science-fiction, as well as a distant, far more ancient religious or purely literary legacy in it. Can posthumanism among hard scientists be seen as a shadowy equivalent, much less elaborate, yet laden with much more computational and scientific power, to similar concepts in social sciences? Due to the lack of systematic studies, I can only speculate; such a research could after all be impossible to conduct: the topics are too broad, and involve

two universes that do not speak the same language and are not used to communicating with the outside world.

Anyway, the extensive realm of posthumanism spans over almost all parts of what made the second half of the 20th century: among posthumanists, some are technicians and inventors, some are feminists, some are religious scholars (G. Scholem played a significant role in early stages of computer sciences), some politicians, some uncategorisable theorists and some terrorists (such as the Unabomber). Some researchers investigated posthumanism as any other field of research; the most prominent among them is probably Fukuyama, with *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution*. Interestingly, it may be difficult to distinguish in posthuman literature what is exactly considered mere analysis or description of somebody else's thought, what is a firm belief of the author himself, and what could be his dreams or even entertainment. Besides Fukuyama himself, Raymond Ruyer, author of the *Gnosis of Princeton (La Gnose de Princeton)* could be an excellent example, for it remains unclear to what extent his book described an actual Gnostic group, Ruyer's wishes, or was just a piece of fiction.

Authors influence each another, but in a much less traceable way than in social sciences: due to the fact that hard scientists seldom publish their theories and talk about their general philosophy, ideas circulate during private meetings, and remain more or less elaborate. At times, the example given or the pattern of thought involved in such moments of free expression are veiled references to some physical or mathematical theorem, which can be understood only by a handful of chosen ones – I am of course not part of them, which has an impact upon my own investigations.

Briefly said, posthumanism, however complex, detached from reality, it may seem, in my view always reflects deep underlying hopes and questions of human beings. This general statement might not be as philosophical as it sounds. One brief case-study, which by the way will indirectly be discussed in the paragraph on philosophy of history, could be the issue of death. Posthumanism, just as almost any other literary genre in human history, rises the issue. Many approaches are used, oftentimes combined, with more or less explicit influences among authors: this also shows the experimental, less institutionalized nature of posthumanism. One major trend of posthumanism deals with death: Robert Ettinger published in 1962 his *Prospect of Immortality*, in which he advocated cryonics, in other words freezing of bodies before their future resuscitation; Ettinger was much laughed at, his book was compared to pure fiction (which, by

the way, is neither wrong nor negative, as Ettinger himself acknowledges his link to literature and classics), yet cryonics is today a growing sector of the American economy. Furthermore, the issue of immortality came again and again, through various means, in the limelight: Kurzweil is a customer of a cryonics company, but also promoted immortality through healthy lifestyle and increase in life expectancy (the idea was that the increase of life expectancy would exceed aging, thus the title of one of his early books *Fantastic Voyage: Live Long Enough to Live Forever*). Then Kurzweil argued immortality could be reached through replacement of the “normal” body by enhanced cyber-bodies, through the not that distant Singularity (this term will be explained later), or even by a radical transformation of what being alive and human means (in the first pages of his *Singularity*, he outlines the “pattern” theory: being myself is merely a pattern, which could therefore be transposed to a plurality of supports). All those approaches are not mutually exclusive; they are at the same time fictional and deeply scientific (Kurzweil’s publications are filled with formulas and he is considered one of the greatest scientists of all times). They involve the research and the researcher as a person. This is why posthumanism should, in my opinion, be understood as a human phenomenon, part of social sciences. If individuals chose this or that part of posthumanism due to personal needs or preferences, on a collective level, posthumanism reflects collective choices and values. One can attack them, depict them as childish. A recently published book, *The Immortalization Commission*, by John Gray, has an easy fight against Kurzweil and other posthuman scientists; however, in death-related issues, there are no easy answers, and they could tell more about ourselves by just not being dismissed as irrelevant. And contrary to Fukuyama, I will not argue that posthumanism will change human nature or human society; I would reverse the causal link. This is where my research begins.

C) The hypothesis of Judaism

Jean-Michel Besnier, among the very few French researchers interested in posthumanism asks the following question: “The fact that the most ancient wisdom takes aim at this spiritualisation of the human being (...), and the fact that they do it today with the immaterial technologies, should question us.”¹² Besnier, as many others, even among posthumanists themselves, gives the priority to “Eastern” traditions and creeds, such as Buddhism.

Some epistemologists argued, especially several decades ago, that science was a specifically Christian phenomenon (Ernest Renan and many others therefore maintained that Semites were unable to think in a scientific way). Those theories are long forgotten. Moreover, I do not think that posthumanism can be explained through Christianity. A partly posthuman author that in my view could be related to a Christian-American worldview is Friedman, *The World is flat*. The title itself might hint to a famous religious debate involving the Church, and to one of the most famous quotations of the Bible (Luke 3:4 quoting Isaiah: "Make ready the way of the Lord, make his roads straight"). Friedman promotes a Gospel of wealth, available to anyone ready for hard work, the USA being a blessed country at the world's vanguard. Albeit Friedman is part of Kurzweil's bibliography, he can hardly be considered a "full" posthuman. Too many elements are missing, and I do not think they are to be found in mainstream American Christianity.

Max Weber famously compared in his seminal work the Protestant ethic and what he called the "spirit of capitalism". Perhaps ethics of different religions, or other components thereof, could help explain posthumanism, probably not in its complex dynamics and other subtleties, but as regards the general pattern of rather distinctive components. In my view, even if Buddhism and Christianity can explain many aspects of posthumanism, I would argue that more of its elements are to be found in Judaism, such as complex philosophies of history (non-linear and with distinctive laws of history, which are at the same time absolute and yet require human activity – see for instance Andre Neher, *Le Puits de l'Exil*, 1966, and his comparative study of the laws of history among European Rabbis), a particularly acute presence of the idea of the end of the world (attractive and scaring), the role of prophets (as seers and as protectors of the community), the link between the Golem and early phases of computer science (see G. Scholem), recently the issue of security as a semi-religious activity, etc.

More importantly, those elements are not only present, but assembled in a coherent way, with specific "doses" of every ingredient. As we will see, I think that this partly makes the overall success or superiority of Kurzweil over, for instance, the Unabomber.

Last but not least, and this is no secret for anyone even if it is not clearly said or dismissed as irrelevant, many authors involved in posthumanism are Jewish, sometimes with a strong Jewish background, and obtain their greatest successes in America and Israel.

Part 2: Putting pieces of a religious heritage together

Ernst Troeltsch, but many other authors could be also quoted, described the church as a combination of a social structure with a belief, and how the former interfered throughout the church's history with the latter.¹³ There certainly are, and by the way one of the main aims of Troeltsch was to show the Roman-Catholic church was not the only option for Christians, many models and different "dosages" of those ingredients in structured modern religions: the fact that for instance Judaism does not have a Catholic-like church does not make an exception of it.

What probably makes R. Kurzweil unique or at least remarkable, is not so much the fact that he deals with more or less religious beliefs, as his opponents argue. It is his subtle combination of both legs of the ideal-type of Troeltsch. The Unabomber, on the contrary, proposes a much more conventional, even frustrating "code of ethics", if I may say so: he criticizes the "fulfillment" promised by modern society,¹⁴ and extols individualistic, traditional values, which virtually forbids him any concrete role as a social leader.¹⁵ In my view, his theory of history is awkward because of at least three mistakes, which Kurzweil avoids: he admits that the validity of his system is not obvious, and has conditions; that among those conditions is the possibility of a U-turn in progress and growth; and therefore he has to draw a distinction between two kinds of technology, one which can only grow, and one who can shrink.¹⁶ Kurzweil's system is much more attractive and homogeneous.

A) Prophecy

Calling, or comparing Kurzweil to a "prophet" may certainly cast doubt on the speaker's objectivity, for the term has many religious overtones. In this part, by "prophet", I simply mean someone's ability to foresee the future. And in that respect, Kurzweil is second to no one.

To start with, Kurzweil describes himself as such. Books by Kurzweil, and *The Singularity is near* is an excellent example, usually start with a long list of his personal and scientific successes, which put a major emphasis on the accuracy of his predictions for more than twenty years. His Wikipedia site (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ray_Kurzweil) also stresses his unparalleled capabilities as a futurologist; even more remarkably, Kurzweil has a specific Wikipedia page for his predictions,¹⁷ on which Internet users discuss his, mostly successful, prophetic gifts. Titles and

themes of Kurzweil's books almost always underline aspects related to time, be it time as what separates us from death (*Fantastic Voyage: Live Long Enough to Live Forever* and *Transcend: Nine Steps to Living Well Forever*), or specific ages in history (*The Age of Intelligent Machines; The Age of Spiritual Machines; The Singularity is Near*).

At the Singularity University, he held until recently the central chair of "Future Studies & Forecasting" (currently held by Paul Saffo due to Kurzweil's new appointment at Google): contrary to all other chairs, which deal with for instance biotechnology, energy or medicine, Kurzweil's chair was the only one to really address time and give to the research of the University a historical perspective. In speeches made by other lecturer of the University, at least those which I have listened to, Kurzweil is always quoted when it comes to predictions. His lectures, especially on the regularly-held events of the University, give updated versions of previously shown PowerPoint slides: the new data always match the diachronic lines, and thus further strengthen Kurzweil's laws of history.

But here is more. Ray Kurzweil's presentations make use of subtle techniques in order to create implicit links between himself and history. One of his favorite examples, given in almost any lecture, of what he calls "exponential growth" is his cellphone (he shows it while talking) and his former computer, the one he used when he was a student. Kurzweil not only comprehended laws of history: he witnessed them, benefits from them, perhaps even, as an inventor, created history: he embodies it. Nearly every lecture given by Kurzweil begins with a retrospective: it may show that Kurzweil witnessed some event or era others in the room did not and could not due to their age, or that he was himself from the very beginning (when he was five, he knew he would become an inventor¹⁸), or that he has corresponded with Noam Chomsky for fifty years¹⁹ and thus has a special link to him. Recognition of Kurzweil's seniority is part of learning his theories.

The personal link of Kurzweil to history can be shown even in most unlikely cases: he uses the example of what a "kid" living next to him did (the "kid" is never named, only defined by his proximity to Kurzweil) from what students of Kurzweil's generation had by creating the Internet company Facebook.²⁰ Kurzweil's prophetic gift also applies to political issues: in his first book he wrote about the fact that "the Soviet Union would be swept away by decentralized communication (...). I said this would destroy the centralized information authorities relied on (...). That's exactly what happened".

Long story short, Kurzweil and history of technology are one: he embodies its advances and shares what was once called the spirit of history. This might be reminiscent of a similar issue of prophets in the olden days: the necessity to prove that they are not false prophets. The Bible draws the distinction between them according to the origin of their knowledge:

Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD (Jeremiah 23:16).

Any prophetic figure therefore has to prove his or her solid, personal rooting in history and facts. Kurzweil himself described, during his 2012 Google talk, the main difference between himself and the others: they make “linear extrapolations”, but he takes into account the exponential nature of history.²¹

B) Content of the doctrine: the exponential growth and the tipping point

Summarizing the actual content of Kurzweil’s theory of history would be off-limits to this paper, and many publications are already devoted to the topic. What I would like to show is how Kurzweil’s laws of history fit into an ancient pattern, and how they contribute to his overall success.

In comparison of his rivals in the field of posthumanism, Kurzweil offers without any doubt a much more stimulating “package”. As a general rule, in order to have an impact, preaching a linear history does not fit the purpose; a more complex theory of history is required, as Reinhard Koselleck has shown. An almost naive theory of progress, such as expressed in Thomas Friedman’s *The World is Flat*, may boost one’s optimism, but does little to attract young enthusiasts. On the other hand, the opposite theory of history, a constant decline, such as enunciated at the very beginning of the *Manifesto* of the Unabomber (“The Industrial Revolution and its consequences have been a disaster for the human race [...]. The continued development of technology will worsen the situation”), greatly restricts the sheer number of potential followers and does not give much hope. Truly postmodern theories of history, such as outlined by Foucault or, in contemporary America by so-called neo-luddites and critics of technology such as John Zerzan, are by definition much more

fragmentary, void of a general historical perspective and thus may lack the associated power on the minds of young promising individuals.

The short list of the key components of Kurzweil's philosophy of history should begin with his concept of "exponential growth". As previously said, according to his own analysis, exponentiality is the main difference between Kurzweil and other futurists. Entering Kurzweil's research circle means chiefly getting a deep understanding of what exponential growth means, or, with Kurzweil's terms, how "pervasive it is".²² But here is more:

Let me start by underscoring that key point which is the exponential growth of information technology, which may seem obvious, but it is remarkable how unobvious it is. One of the reasons for that is our intuition is not exponential – it is linear.²³

I cannot enter into details here about the numerous examples of exponential growth Kurzweil gives in his speeches and lectures. I simply would like to underline three more or less hidden ramifications. First, Kurzweil has specific arguments to prove that exponential growth is truly his theory: already known similar thesis, such as Moore's law, are at best "one example",²⁴ based upon ancient technological paradigms. Selected examples and anecdotes prove that Kurzweil created or at least witnessed both the theory and concrete applications behind it. Exponential growth is as specific to Kurzweil as $E=mc^2$ is linked to Einstein. Next, the law of exponential growth is stronger than material limits: when the technological paradigm is no longer valid, for instance when vacuum tubes reached their minimal possible size and therefore should have stopped progress, a new paradigm come from nowhere. This point could, but it is my personal speculation, be put in perspective: the term "paradigm" and shifts from one paradigm to another are concepts that everyone associates to Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific revolutions*. Yet, in Kuhn's approach, somewhere between outright postmodernism and Heidegger, paradigms are created and disappear randomly, in a kind of uncertain struggle or war. Kurzweil gives to this worldview a missing backbone, or, in philosophical jargon, re-ontologizes what was until now unruly evolution. The law of exponential growth is also more powerful than what Marxists called the superstructure: for instance, the economy and its fluctuations such as the Great Depression and the recent end of the ".com" bubble have no impact on it. "Nothing affects it".²⁵ Last, the theory of exponential growth is compatible with many other conceptions of

history, which contributed to Kurzweil's success beyond traditional limits of the Silicon Valley. Among them is what I would call the "oriental" way: in several publications, such as the last approximately hundred pages of the *Singularity is near*, Kurzweil shows how close his ideas are to various spiritual trends: "some Buddhist philosophies insist on the fact that there are no real boundaries between us. It seems that they are talking about the Singularity".²⁶ As such this is nothing new for posthumanism: Robert Pepperell's *Towards a theory of conscious art* contains chapters called "Zen and Tao" or "Nen and reflection". Kurzweil's overall vocabulary is also telling: depicting history of the universe as a succession of epochs of "increasing self-awareness", his own history as a "progressive awakening" when he became conscious of the Singularity.²⁷

Another key component of Kurzweil's theory of history is the Singularity itself. The Singularity might be compared to the coming of communism for Marxism: technically, one can determine when it should happen (the law of history is rather precise and mathematical), but very little descriptions of the concrete process and the result are available. The few poetic sentences Kurzweil has devoted to this issue are usually quoted as an answer ("wake up of the universe", etc). Again, the aim of this paper is not to summarize them nor to refute them: I am simply trying to underline several consequences. The Singularity became, even more than exponential growth, an exoteric symbol for the group. It is contained in the name of the Singularity University, in its logo. It also defines a general psychological attitude as regards time, for the Singularity will most probably occur during our lifetime: Kurzweil's group therefore shares with early Christianity and several smaller religious groups a strong messianic feeling. The author of the www.facingthesingularity.com website, now intelligenceexplosion.com, puts it in dramatic and Biblical terms: "The clock is ticking. AI is coming. And we are not ready."²⁸ Or: "we find ourselves at a crucial moment in Earth's history. Like a boulder perched upon a mountain's peak, we stand at an unstable point. We cannot say where we are". There also is a distinct psychological attitude as regards hierarchy, for the one (Kurzweil) who became aware of Singularity will probably make it arrive before his death (and thus never die).

In a nutshell, Kurzweil's theory of history is embedded within popular conceptions or beliefs: it most probably helped to have it accepted by many. Kurzweil, in one of his lectures, says: "pretty amazing how well it [facts and his predictions] comes together"; one could wonder about the same things as regards the puzzle of his own doctrine.

C) The rescuer: security and protection, empowerment for all

In addition to his knowledge of the future, Kurzweil is an active actor of it. This does not contradict the model of Biblical prophecy, since ancient Jewish prophets were usually involved in political or social activities, which by the way cost them dear. In the following part, I will illustrate two domains of Kurzweil's action: he protects from danger and bestows power upon all.

The idea that prophets protect their people is nothing new. Several places in the Bible underscore this topic, such as: "and by a prophet the LORD brought Israel up out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved" (Hosea 12:13). The idea that technology is ambivalent, an opportunity and a threat, is nothing new. It appears as such at the beginning of the *Posthuman Condition*:

rather, I wish to examine a distinct kind of self-awareness of the human condition that owes something to our anxiety about, and our enthusiasm for technological change, but is not entirely determined by it.²⁹

What I would call pre-posthumanistic literature contains many occurrences of such anxiety and enthusiasm: a common pattern of stories across cultures is the theme of the mighty sorcerer or king, someone endowed with superior powers, ultimately misusing them. An even more dramatic variant is when the mighty person creates a human-like entity, which then runs out of control, such as in *Frankenstein, or the modern Prometheus* (to note that the title itself of the novel sounds somehow posthumanistic), the Golem, etc.

Once again, Kurzweil, albeit he basically works with the same themes and items, is much smarter than the Unabomber. The Unabomber sees the same progress of computers and technology as Kurzweil, and just as him feels the need to help, to avoid a major catastrophe for humanity. But his logic is much simpler: since the disaster cannot be avoided, one has to hasten it, so as to make it smaller:

If the system breaks down the consequences will still be very painful. But the bigger the system grows the more disastrous the results of its breakdown will be, so if it is to break down it had best break down sooner rather than later.³⁰

As a result, the only remaining role for the Unabomber is a disruptive one: "revolutionaries, by hastening the onset of the breakdown will be reducing the extent of the disaster".³¹ A heroic death might be the ultimate result: "it may be better to die fighting for survival, or for a cause, than to live a long but empty and purposeless life".³² Such a conception of the role of the chief of the messianic group cannot yield major results, for it only attracts a tiny margin of researchers and leads to negative consequences for the author.

Kurzweil's attitude is, when one take every item separately, only slightly different from the Unabomber's, but the elements are so well assembled that the global picture is radically different. Kurzweil, just as the Unabomber, does not hide the dangers of technology; they do not use the same examples (generally speaking, the Unabomber uses older technology, such as cars, to illustrate his theories, whereas Kurzweil mentions rather recent software, computers, etc), but by and large the global picture seems threatening in both cases. Kurzweil could be even worse than the Unabomber: while the latter threatens with loss of freedom and destruction of the environment, the former depicts woes such as destructive nanobots, able to destroy the whole biomass within hours.³³ Kurzweil uses the term "GNR" (genetics, nanotechnology and robotics) and claims it could lead to even worse outcomes than NBC weapons.³⁴ If the Singularity fails, the universe could end as "gray goo".³⁵

But unlike the Unabomber, Kurzweil uses this horrific descriptions as a proof that he has understood the dangers, and that he can lead us to a "constructive Singularity".³⁶ Kurzweil at times introduces himself as a security expert, be it in his major works or in his shorter essays.³⁷ Speaking in front of the Israeli President and Prime Minister only strengthens that role. His posthumanism thus has another dimension, which Pepperell, Fukuyama and Friedman do not posses: the requirement of an active involvement. For them, the laws of history are already clear, and one can simply wait until the posthuman age fully arrives. Yet they are, for obvious reasons, much less attractive and inspiring than Kurzweil.

I will not enter here into the broader issue of danger and religions, or of the role of anxiety in human life (Heidegger would use the term *Sorge*). Nevertheless two subtle facts may be pointed out: in Kurzweil's case such as in religions with what Otto called *tremendum*, the one who protects is also to some point the master of the ultimate danger, the "*hagadol ve-hanora*", the great and the dreadful, two main attributes of God in Judaism. Next, the protection in such a system requires a certain level of

faith. Of course, this is not as obvious as in small, demonstrative religious groups. However, some elements point into that direction. For instance, one of the speakers introducing Kurzweil, after a long list of compliments, concludes as follows:

Have you heard of Plato, Aristotle, Socrates – philosophers. And Ray is a philosopher too. But more importantly and foremost he is an engineer. And when it comes to these tough questions of creating a mind, philosophers are useful, but I would put my money on the engineers.³⁸

His disciples are sometimes even more explicit: the website of Luke Muehlhauser, executive director of the Machine Intelligence Research Institute, may be referred to again. In September 2012, the address of the website was entirely Kurzweilian: www.facingthesingularity.com Today, in July 2013, the website moved to the address <http://intelligenceexplosion.com>. The main picture remained the same: an edited version of the *“Wanderer above the Sea of Fog”*. The text mainly deals with the internal dilemmas as regards faith and religion in the age of nearing Singularity.

Kurzweil introduces another feature in his posthumanism: a concrete role for almost everyone. The website of the Singularity University asks: “What program is right for you?”. And Kurzweil himself states loud and clear: “everyone has the ability to solve problems”.³⁹ Two factors related to inclusiveness represent a non-negligible hindrance for the spread of posthumanism: the “future does not need us” syndrome, and an excessive elitism. The Unabomber fights against the first, but promotes the second: his “small core of deeply committed people”.⁴⁰ “Who are intelligent, thoughtful and rational”⁴¹ exclude almost everyone. Many of his statements do not promote research among his (nonexistent) students:

Science and technology provide the most important examples of surrogate activities. Some scientists claim that they are motivated by “curiosity”, that notion is simply absurd. Most scientists work on highly specialized problem that are not the object of any normal curiosity.⁴²

All this under the subtitle: “The ‘bad’ parts of technology cannot be separated from the ‘good’ parts”.

Other proponents of posthumanism are struggling with the issue of their own utility: once again, laws of history too clearly stated lead to the dilemmas expressed in the pivotal essay by Bill Joy, “Why the future

doesn't need us" (2000): such a "passive" posthumanism cannot be a rallying theme. Kurzweil should have fallen into both traps, due to his general philosophical options. Yet, in my view, he avoids both of them.

The Singularity University is highly selective, and Kurzweil frequently boasts with the number of applicants versus the available positions. However, the selection is based on criteria which let it, at least symbolically, open to anyone, in line with the American dream: relevant, at least in theory, is not money, nor intelligence; are admitted "those who can change the world, and those who already have changed it somehow".⁴³ Research activities at the University spread in many directions, so that almost anyone can join. According to Kurzweil, "the core" of the curriculum at the University are projects of the students. They choose a problem in the world, and use the concepts coined by Kurzweil (mainly the exponential growth) to "solve that problem". Another aspect of the University is its global reach: some of its projects have to do with the Third World and its needs (such as water supply), and Kurzweil frequently underscores that the benefits of Singularity are slowly coming to Asia and Africa too.

Another central theme, becoming entrepreneurial and creative, not only places the University in mainstream American culture, but also represents a remedy for passivity. Students are encouraged to contribute to the next stages of exponential growth, to the arrival of the Singularity, exactly as Kurzweil did and does. He promotes the belief in "the power of human ideas, that sort of religion I was schooled in (...) that human ideas can change the world".⁴⁴ He adds: "what I have learned in my life is from my projects. I have a vision and a passion", which students should share too. Kurzweil, who above all defines himself as "inventor and futurist", frequently shifts from the second to the first role. And so rescues his own legacy.

Conclusion

History is sometimes full of irony. Technology, the greatest fear of Heidegger, could after all strengthen myth and beliefs, bring them from their Eliadian *illo tempore* into modern days. In my research, I focused on mainly one figure of the posthuman movement, namely Ray Kurzweil. I have argued that the key components of his system, especially as regards the law of history, are more than reminiscent of analog elements in Judaism.

Moreover, Kurzweil managed to combine them in a distinctive way. The future is determined, but we have to create it. It is full of dangers, but it is full of hope. We (or he) are a highly selected elite, but anyone can join us and every corner of the world will soon benefit from the Singularity. We are the most rational of Westerners, but are close to our favorite Oriental spirituality. This highly successful synthesis, more than anything else, can show the deeply human and humane basis of theories behind what is called posthumanism. And what, obviously, could be called an eternal return of the sacred. After all, Kurzweil created the “law of accelerating returns” (with the plural form). Eliade was probably not that wrong.

There is one last aspect I did not discuss. The paper is built on the hypothesis that some components of Judaism helped to build some successful philosophical and technological systems in the posthuman realm. However, the opposite might also be true: the role of extreme high-tech, in fact or at least in the collective psyche, in the future of Judaism. But this is another story.

NOTES

- ¹ ELIADE, Mircea, "Mythes, Reves et Mysteres", *NRF*, 1957, p. xi.
- ² ELIADE, Mircea, *Cosmos and History, the Myth of Eternal Return*, Torchbooks, 1959, p. 143.
- ³ *Ibid.*, p. 149.
- ⁴ ELIADE, "Mythes," p. 38.
- ⁵ DURKHEIM, Emile, *Les Formes elementaires de la vie religieuse*, PUF, 2003, p. 7.
- ⁶ In Biblical Hebrew the verb is also used for sexual intercourse ("vayeda' qayin et ishto vatahar va teled...", Gn 4:17, "And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare...") or for the ability to distinguish ("lada'at tov vara", Gn 3:22, "to know good and evil").
- ⁷ WIENER, *God*, p. viii.
- ⁸ WIENER, *Invention*, p. 3.
- ⁹ WIENER, *God*, p. 92.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 95.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- ¹² BESNIER, *Demain les Posthumains – Le futur a-t-il encore besoin de nous ?*, p. 67.
- ¹³ TROELTSCH, Ernst, *Schriften zur Bedeutung des Protestantismus für die moderne Welt*, De Gruyter, 2001.
- ¹⁴ UNABOMBER, §64.
- ¹⁵ "Today people live more by virtue of what the system does FOR them or TO them than by virtue of what they do for themselves", *ibid.*, §66.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, §208.
- ¹⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Predictions_made_by_Ray_Kurzweil
- ¹⁸ Example given at the Authors at Google presents, Ray Kurzweil, *How to create a mind*, November 16, 2012.
- ¹⁹ First sentences of his talk *The Web Within Us: When Minds and Machines Become One*, 2011.
- ²⁰ *The Web Within Us: When Minds and Machines Become One*, 2011.
- ²¹ Authors at Google presents, Ray Kurzweil, *How to create a mind*, November 16, 2012.
- ²² *The Web Within Us: When Minds and Machines Become One*, 2011.
- ²³ Keynote speech, Singularity University Executive Program, November 2009.
- ²⁴ Title of the first show slide at the *The Web Within Us: When Minds and Machines Become One*, 2011.
- ²⁵ *The Web Within Us: When Minds and Machines Become One*, 2011.
- ²⁶ KURZWEIL, *Singularity*, p. 414.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.
- ²⁸ <http://intelligenceexplosion.com/2012/value-is-complex-and-fragile>

- 29 PEPPERELL, *Condition*, p. 1.
30 UNABOMBER, §3.
31 *Ibid.*, §167.
32 *Ibid.*, §168.
33 UNABOMBER, *Singularity*, p. 427.
34 *Ibid.*, p. 437.
35 This expression was seemingly coined by Eric Drexler, *Engines of Creation*,
1986.
36 KURZWEIL, *Singularity*, p. 433.
37 See for example “Nanotechnology, Dangers and Defenses”, www.kurzweilai.net
38 Authors at Google presents, Ray Kurzweil, *How to create a mind*, November
16, 2012.
39 *The Web Within Us: When Minds and Machines Become One*, 2011.
40 UNABOMBER, *Manifesto* §189.
41 *Ibid.*, §187.
42 *Ibid.*, §87.
43 *The Web Within Us: When Minds and Machines Become One*, 2011.
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Thèse : *La politique de la disparition et la photographie : pour une théorie du milieu*

Titulaire de différentes bourses internationales (France, Allemagne), y compris un séjour à la FMSH (Paris) en qualité de directeur de recherche associé en septembre 2012

LA PHOTOGRAPHIE ET LA QUESTION DE LA COMMUNAUTÉ POLITIQUE. L'ARCHÉOLOGIE DE L'EFFACEMENT DES TRACES

Cet article analyse, dans la perspective politique et esthétique, le phénomène de la destruction des visages des « ennemis du peuple » sur les photographies de groupe dans la Russie stalinienne. Il a pour base empirique les photographies découvertes par l'auteur au cours des recherches aux archives de plusieurs villes russes, ces photographies portant différentes traces, telles que les biffages ou les notes manuscrites laissées par les policiers staliniens. L'analyse de ces traces ouvre plusieurs pistes de réflexion, en rendant possible une interrogation conjointe sur la nature de la terreur et la signification politique de la photographie.

Mots clés : photographie – aspects politiques – URSS, photographie – 20^e siècle, iconoclasme – URSS, totalitarisme et l'art

Dans mon texte, je vais essayer d'analyser un phénomène qui se situe au croisement de deux sphères, esthétique et politique : le phénomène de la destruction des visages des « ennemis du peuple » sur les photos de groupe dans l'URSS des années trente. Lors des purges staliniennes, certains visages furent noircis à l'encre, rayés, grattés ou découpés avec des ciseaux. Le plus souvent, les photographies étaient biffées par les proches de la victime, les membres de sa famille, ses amis ou ses collègues.

Cette interrogation conjointe doit permettre d'analyser sous un nouvel angle la question du rapport entre l'image et la politique. Si la recherche soulève la question du rapport entre ces deux sphères, ce n'est pas pour parler, une nouvelle fois, du contenu politique de l'image, de son implication dans une stratégie politique. Ce n'est pas la *compatibilité* d'une image avec un message politique qui nous intéresse ici. La recherche

procède *a contrario*, s'intéressant davantage à leur *incompatibilité*, prenant pour point de départ l'interdit de l'image, une intolérance à son égard. Cette intolérance, cette violence qui s'exerce contre les images semble témoigner le mieux de leur caractère intrinsèquement politique. Si un régime totalitaire interdit une image, c'est qu'elle détient un pouvoir politique qui est incompatible avec celui du régime. Quelle est la nature de ce pouvoir des images ? Pourquoi, précisément, ces images ont-elles été condamnées ou, mieux encore, qu'y a-t-il dans ces images qui les rend insupportables ?

Répondre à cette question serait répondre à deux questions à la fois. D'un côté, ce serait déjà apporter bien des éclaircissements sur la nature du régime politique qui sanctionne ces images, ici, sur la nature du régime stalinien et sa Terreur. De l'autre côté, ce serait en dire beaucoup sur le pouvoir politique de la photographie, son essence et sa destination sociale. Notre analyse va donc se déployer selon deux axes, esthétique et politique.

Les formes de la suppression de l'« ennemi » des photographies

Si la façon dont on faisait disparaître la représentation de l'« ennemi » était toujours différente, on peut néanmoins isoler quelques formes les plus fréquentes de ce qu'on peut nommer l'« exécution en images ».

Souvent, celui qui s'attaquait à une photographie en noircissait, avec de l'encre, des zones entières, comme on l'observe sur ce collage dans l'esprit d'un constructivisme tardif (1), ou sur une autre photo qui représente les « travailleurs d'honneur » d'un important chantier, autrement dit un groupe de hauts fonctionnaires, membres du conseil de tutelle de ce chantier (2). Le nom du disparu était également supprimé.



1. A. Ivanov. *Allocutions de J. Kaganovitch et E. Pramnek au premier congrès des constructeurs de route. Portraits de travailleurs de choc.*
le 22 mai 1934. Archives audiovisuelles de Nijni-Novgorod // Album n° 12, « Construction routière dans la Région de Gorky (« Kraïdortrans »).



2. Anonyme. *Le portrait de groupe des travailleurs d'honneur du chantier* : A. Jdanov, J. Kaganovitch, A. Gratchev, M. Doubnov.
29/IV1933. Archives audiovisuelles de Nijni-Novgorod / Album n° 7,
« Le pont Nikolas Pachomov traversant l'Oka à Gorky. 1930-1933 ». Photo DTK, Gorky.

Ou bien l'attaque iconoclaste avait un caractère ponctuel, en se focalisant sur le visage de l'ennemi du peuple (3).



3. Photographie du dossier de Zoubarev, programme « ALGIR-2 », Archives de *Mémorial*, Moscou.

Rayer en croix les visages des ennemis du peuple était, à l'époque stalinienne, l'autre forme – moins radicale que le caviardage – de leur exécution symbolique. C'est ce que nous voyons sur la photo suivante (4).



4. Anonyme. *Les délégués de Nijni-Novgorod au Xe congrès des Conseils près de l'entrée du Théâtre Bolchoï : Machotine, I. Tchugurine, N. Uglanov, Kaganovitch, A. Taganov. Le 23 décembre 1930. Archives du Comité régional du Parti Communiste de Nijni-Novgorod / Fonds 7853, dossier 418, inventaire 1.*

Plus tard, dans les années 60 (au moment de la réhabilitation) les deux traits en croix sur les visages de deux personnes au centre ont été gommés. On l'observe très bien en agrandissant la partie centrale (5).



5. Anonyme. *Les délégués de Nijni-Novgorod au Xe congrès des Conseils près de l'entrée du Théâtre Bolchoï : Machotine, I. Tchugurine, N. Uglanov, Kaganovitch, A. Taganov. Le 23 décembre 1930.* Archives du Comité régional du Parti Communiste de Nijni-Novgorod / Fonds 7853, dossier 418, inventaire 1. (Fragment)

Parfois, la représentation de l'ennemi était découpée ou grattée (photographies 6 et 7).



6. Photographie du dossier de Karmanov, Archives de *Mémorial*, Moscou.



7. Photographie du dossier de Bérézine, programme « Photoscans », Archives de *Mémorial*.

Puis, il y a des photographies, comme celle-ci (8), qui, après être noirci dans un premier temps, ont reçu un coup de ciseaux par la suite. On y voit encore à gauche et à droite des traces d'encre noire.



8. Anonyme. La présidence du Conseil municipal de Nijni-Novgorod : Durassov, Amosov, Chibaev. Nijni-Novgorod, 1926. Archives du Comité régional du Parti Communiste de Nijni-Novgorod / Fonds 7853, dossier 387, inventaire 1.

Puisque la différence des formes de l'élimination de l'ennemi a elle aussi de l'importance, je reviendrai là-dessus un peu plus tard.

Les « doctrines de l'inimitié »

Il paraît que la conjoncture historique et politique de la première moitié du XXe siècle ait ceci de particulier qu'elle serait difficile à décrire sans faire appel à la notion de « guerre ». L'historien Enzo Traverso semble avoir raison lorsqu'il décrit la période de 1914 à 1945 en Europe comme une période de guerre ininterrompue, en établissant une analogie entre ce laps de temps et la fameuse guerre de 30 ans¹. Quand il se met en place dans l'URSS stalinienne, le dispositif de la terreur puise sa légitimité dans la notion de guerre : la terreur se présente toujours comme une guerre que l'Etat mène contre un ennemi intérieur. La notion d'ennemi du peuple prend elle aussi tout son sens seulement dans le contexte d'une guerre permanente où se trouvent engagés l'Etat soviétique et ses citoyens.

Il faut donc prendre au sérieux les paroles de Carl Schmitt, le penseur qui a poussé le plus loin la réflexion sur la guerre et l'hostilité comme fondement de la vie politique, selon lequel, l'esprit de Hegel, éminent philosophe de la guerre, s'est déplacé de Berlin à Moscou, ce qui donne à Schmitt l'occasion de déplorer cette situation. Du même coup, Schmitt trace une généalogie de son propre discours et d'un discours « ennemi », laquelle est d'autant plus curieuse qu'elle remonte au-delà de l'opposition idéologique qui s'est dessinée au XXe siècle, pour faire voir leur parenté plus profonde. A l'en croire, l'Etat prussien préféra emprunter sa philosophie conservatrice à Friedrich Julius Stahl, alors que Hegel, selon l'expression de Schmitt, « rejoignait Lénine via Karl Marx et émigrerait à Moscou »². Schmitt estime que les théoriciens marxistes, avec leur notion d'« ennemi de classe », avancent plus loin que les autres dans la réflexion sur la guerre et l'inimitié. Pour confirmer cette thèse, Schmitt cite un nom, celui de Georg Lukács. C'est sans doute de Lukács³ que Schmitt tient son appréciation de l'activité politique de Lénine, à qui il rend hommage dans *La théorie du partisan*.

La guerre et l'ennemi de classe selon Georg Lukács

Schmitt a tout à fait raison de citer Lukács comme grand théoricien de l'hostilité. Malgré toutes ses divergences avec le stalinisme officiel et la

critique de la part des partisans du marxisme vulgaire, Lukács a le mieux compris et formulé la dialectique de l'ami et de l'ennemi qui, au temps de Staline, imprègne le système des valeurs du citoyen soviétique, en définissant ses prises de position, ses sympathies et ses haines.

Le marxisme de Lukács, tel qu'on le trouve dans son célèbre essai *La conscience de classe*, est un marxisme qui se situe aussi loin que possible de tout académisme, de tout marxisme comme critique des inégalités sociales ou théorie de l'art, à l'instar du marxisme esthétisant et élitiste d'Adorno. La question qui se pose dans *La conscience de classe*, texte qui s'interroge sur les mécanismes de la lutte politique, est loin d'être abstraite. Il s'agit de la question pratique « comment vaincre ? » Lukács part du présupposé qu'une classe, à condition qu'elle veuille arriver au pouvoir, doit être consciente de ses intérêts, car c'est cette conscience qui permet à un groupe de réunir ses efforts. Plus une classe est consciente de ses intérêts, plus elle a la chance de se consolider comme classe et de vaincre. Pour atteindre ses buts, une classe doit voir clairement les problèmes qui se posent devant elle, doit savoir distinguer ses intérêts et ses ennemis.

Mais il y a un facteur extrêmement important qui intervient ici : une classe ne prend conscience de ses intérêts que dans la guerre. Qu'une classe soit historiquement appelée à la domination ne signifie pas automatiquement qu'elle pourra réunir ses efforts et arriver au pouvoir. Il faut que la classe naissante s'engage dans une guerre, qui est l'autre condition de sa constitution définitive. La classe n'est pas une classe jusqu'à ce qu'il y ait de la communauté entre ceux qui doivent y appartenir. Mais cette communauté n'apparaît qu'en réaction contre un ennemi extérieur ; la classe se constitue, « s'individue » au cours de la confrontation, face à un ennemi extérieur.

On voit que ce constat inverse l'opinion courante selon laquelle les acteurs du conflit préexistent au conflit. Selon Lukács, la guerre ne résulte pas de la confrontation des classes déjà constituées, au contraire, l'identité des intérêts de classe se dessine au moment de la confrontation. C'est ainsi que la violence qui a accompagné l'accumulation primitive du capital a créé les conditions pour la constitution de la bourgeoisie en tant que classe. L'identité d'un groupe politique ne serait que son reflet que lui retourne le miroir du groupe adverse : la conscience de classe est nécessairement changeante, car elle est « toujours une forme d'emprunt. »⁴ L'identité d'un groupe se définit et se redéfinit en fonction de l'ennemi qui s'y oppose.

Pour Lukács, la violence ne serait pas seulement un effet, ne serait pas, pour ainsi dire, un « mal inévitable » qui accompagnerait la lutte des

classes. On découvre l'hostilité à *l'origine des classes elles-mêmes*, ce qui revient à dire à l'origine de la société. La guerre serait à l'origine de la vie sociale, elle serait son fondement, sa condition. Elle fonde *le* politique. La société bourgeoise désire effacer le fait de la lutte des classes de la conscience sociale, refouler le conflit qui déchire la société, l'enfouir sous les faux-semblants de la paix. Pour Lukács, au contraire, il s'agit de faire voir la véritable origine de la société. De ce point de vue, la paix ne serait qu'une apparence, une fiction, une illusion. Par contre, la recherche de l'ennemi, si tant est que la vie sociale se fonde sur l'hostilité, serait une force motrice de toute société, y compris la société sans classes qu'est la société communiste. C'est pourquoi, après avoir triomphé sur ses ennemis de classe, le prolétariat devra rechercher un nouvel ennemi, cette fois en son propre sein⁵.

On voit jusqu'à quel point ce raisonnement de Lukács fait écho aux thèses de son lecteur, son adversaire politique et son ennemi de classe Carl Schmitt. Les différends idéologiques étant écartés, on retrouve au fond des deux théories une seule et même logique. Toutes les deux renversent la perspective traditionnelle : la guerre est déclarée être non seulement une façon de faire de la politique (point de vue de Clausewitz qui la considérerait comme la prolongation de la politique par des moyens qui ne sont pas par eux-mêmes politiques), mais la condition de toute politique et même l'essence de toute politique. Indubitablement, Schmitt se montre plus radical et conséquent que son adversaire, l'auteur de la *Conscience de classe*. L'hostilité apparaît chez lui dépouillée de tout ce qui la cachait encore chez Lukács, où elle voisinait paradoxalement avec l'idéal marxiste d'une fraternité universelle.

Mais avant d'être un affrontement armé, la guerre est une optique déformante, une façon de percevoir où l'hostilité s'impose comme antérieure à l'amitié ; dans cette optique, la paix apparaît comme improbable, étant tout au plus un armistice qui vient entrecouper l'état de guerre. Comme le remarque Levinas, l'état de guerre n'est pas une simple épreuve pour la morale. La « lucidité » qui met la guerre au cœur du politique a pour effet la suspension, ou bien la révocation de la morale qui apparaît comme dérisoire. Cette vision qui se veut réaliste anticipe la morale, la présentant comme fruit d'une utopie idéaliste. La théorie de l'inimitié dénonce la paix comme illusion au profit de l'immédiateté d'un conflit originaire. Pourtant, ce rapport prétendument immédiat se révèle déjà médiatisé par une totalité, une finalité extérieure. Le rapport

à l'autre dont parle Schmitt n'est jamais *a priori*, n'est jamais un rapport « tout court ». Il est déjà contaminé de totalité.

Certes, l'analyse de la dimension biopolitique de la doctrine schmittienne que propose Agamben est très importante. Agamben montre comment se creuse un vide juridique autour du *homo sacer*, un vide qui finalement rendra possible son extermination. Pourtant, on ne peut pas mésestimer l'importance de l'analyse des conséquences éthiques de cette doctrine, de l'analyse portant sur la suspension des impératifs moraux à l'égard de l'« ennemi ».

La perte de l'ennemi et la « guerre moderne »

Schmitt, on le sait, se prononce pour une guerre ouverte, déclarée, où l'adversaire est facile à localiser parce que les parties belligérantes sont séparées par une ligne de front. Pourtant, dans les conditions de la guerre moderne, la distinction entre ami et ennemi paraît problématique : la ligne de front tend à s'effacer et les antinomies classiques qui structuraient la guerre auparavant (régulier/irrégulier, légal/illégal, terre/ciel...) sont jugées inadéquates pour caractériser l'état de belligérance moderne : les différences entre elles s'effaceraient pour dessiner un nouveau profil de la guerre comme conflit latent et permanent.

Les théoriciens de la guerre moderne (le général Erich Ludendorff en Allemagne, le colonel Roger Trinquier en France) sont unanimes à mettre en relief l'importance qu'a le rétablissement de la ligne de front entre « amis » et « ennemis ». Pour vaincre, il est indispensable de situer l'adversaire. Une fois identifié, l'adversaire est facile à « neutraliser », car la guerre redevient ce qu'elle doit être. Comme le dit Trinquier, la neutralisation de l'adversaire n'est qu'un problème « technique ».

L'identification de l'ennemi

Dire que, dans les conditions de la guerre moderne, la ligne de front demeure invisible, impalpable, immatérielle, revient à postuler qu'elle est **idéologique**. C'est l'idéologie qui constitue la ligne de partage dans la guerre moderne. D'où le fait que les adversaires peuvent appartenir à la même nation, habiter le même village, être amis et voire membres de la même famille. Désormais, la ligne de front peut passer au sein d'une

communauté d'amis ou d'une famille. L'ennemi dans la guerre moderne – et la société soviétique a toujours été, à toutes les périodes de son histoire, en état de guerre – est par excellence un ennemi *intérieur*.

Il s'ensuit que l'identification de l'adversaire cesse d'être une opération purement militaire pour devenir une opération idéologique. Le suspect doit prouver son innocence, sa loyauté en prenant une position politique claire, en se rangeant du « bon » côté du front politique.

C'est ici que surgit le recours aux photographies. Dès son apparition, la photographie a contribué à l'affirmation d'une nouvelle forme de la communauté « transindividuelle ».

La transindividualité et sa nature symbolique selon Gilbert Simondon

La notion qui semble le mieux caractériser la communauté qui s'instaure entre ceux qui co-apparaissent sur une photographie, c'est la notion de transindividualité qu'on trouve chez Gilbert Simondon. La conception simondonienne du milieu transindividuel a l'avantage de rompre avec les théories substantialistes de la subjectivité. Simondon met en question le caractère individuel de la spiritualité humaine, en écartant les doctrines substantialistes au profit d'une spiritualité relationnelle. Simondon, en quelque sorte, situe le propre de l'individu hors de lui, à la croisée de l'individuel et du collectif. La notion qui sert à Simondon à décrire les processus de subjectivation, c'est celle d'individuation. L'individuation est une concrétisation d'un objet ou d'un organisme au sein d'un système. D'une part, l'homme s'individue au sein d'un collectif, sans lequel l'individuation serait impossible ; d'autre part, la collectivité évolue, « s'individue » de par chacun de ses membres. Pour Simondon, l'individuation a pour force motrice l'émotion que partagent les membres de la communauté. C'est plutôt l'émotion que la proximité intellectuelle qui constitue la clé de voûte du collectif, de la communauté transindividuelle.

Ainsi la communauté transindividuelle est-elle une sorte de réseau qui réunit les individus. Mais ce réseau n'est pas fait de ponts jetés d'une personne à l'autre, car il *constitue* les individus. Il ne s'agit en aucun cas d'un rapport « social », qui est toujours complémentaire et qui vient, pour ainsi dire, s'ajouter à l'individu de l'extérieur. Le rapport transindividuel est à distinguer du rapport social, interindividuel. C'est un rapport qu'on ne

peut pas séparer de l'individu sans le détruire. Simondon fait la distinction entre symbole et signe : si le signe est complémentaire par rapport à l'objet, le symbole, lui, le constitue. S'il faut donner un exemple d'une communauté transindividuelle, ce sera une famille ou un groupe d'amis. Les rapports symboliques sont des rapports de réciprocité, comme ceux qui existent (peuvent exister) entre père et fils, mari et femme, etc. Le père n'est père que par rapport à son fils, qui, à son tour, est toujours le fils *de* son père, par rapport à son père⁶.

« L'individu de groupe ». Les valeurs communes.

Selon Simondon, le groupe n'est pas fait d'individus réunis en groupe par certains liens. Sans exister isolément, les individus sont toujours individus *de groupe*, tandis que le groupe est toujours un groupe d'individus.⁷ La polyvalence de la notion simondonienne d'« individu de groupe » rend très bien compte de l'indistinction entre l'individu et le groupe qu'implique la théorie du transindividuel. Somme toute, la communauté transindividuelle est un individu, un être ou un « organisme » collectif qui vit et agit comme un tout uni. Cela veut dire que la communauté transindividuelle a ceci de particulier que tous ses membres sont sensés partager les mêmes valeurs. Suivant la définition qu'en donne Simondon, elle n'est rien d'autre que « la coïncidence mentale d'une pluralité d'hommes ».

Dans la mesure où l'autonomie de l'individu est mise en doute, on peut affirmer que l'avenir de l'individu est inséparable de l'avenir du collectif. D'un côté, l'individu ne meurt définitivement qu'avec la mort du collectif auquel il appartenait, en survivant en quelque sorte à sa propre mort physique. De l'autre côté, cette affirmation est nécessairement réversible : si le collectif meurt, l'individu ne peut pas rester sauf, il *doit* mourir avec lui.

La communauté photographique est une communauté transindividuelle

Dans la mesure où elle résulte d'une émotion partagée, la communauté qui s'instaure entre ceux qui co-apparaissent sur une photo est une communauté transindividuelle. Se faire photographier en présence de quelqu'un revient à reconnaître le fait d'avoir quelque chose en commun

avec lui ; en se prêtant simultanément à un acte photographique, les photographiés certifient le fait d'appartenir à la même communauté, ils signent, de leur propre volonté, un pacte d'amitié et d'égalité. Co-apparaître sur une photo, c'est apparaître en tant que représentant d'une communauté, d'un groupe familial, politique ou d'un groupe d'amis.

Pierre Bourdieu a tort de déprécier la photographie d'amateur, de n'y voir qu'un « art moyen », de la réduire à une simple expression du mauvais goût du photographe, de sa position sociale. Selon Bourdieu, l'esthétique photographique fonctionne d'une façon inverse à l'esthétique kantienne : loin de combler l'abîme qui sépare les riches et les pauvres, elle accentue les différences sociales, en interdisant toute communauté, toute égalité entre les élites et les classes populaires. Mais la vision sociologique de la photographie est une vision foncièrement appauvrissante, qui passe sous silence son potentiel émotif⁸. Contrairement à l'affirmation de Bourdieu, la photo peut faire surgir de la communauté. Si, selon Barthes, chaque photographie est nécessairement un certificat de présence, on peut dire au même titre de chaque photographie de groupe qu'elle est un « certificat d'amitié ». Une fois qu'il est apparu sur une photo de groupe - une fois qu'il est agrégé, une fois que *le seuil est traversé* – l'individu est condamné à faire partie du collectif. Dès ce moment, il lui est impossible de se séparer du collectif, impossible de retourner sur ses pas, de refaire à l'envers le chemin parcouru ; désormais, la vie individuelle s'associe à la vie et au destin du collectif.

Le noircissement des photos

Si la communauté photographique est transindividuelle et que les individus qui y appartiennent partagent les mêmes valeurs, la photographie sur laquelle le suspect apparaît en présence d'un ennemi du peuple ne peut que témoigner de l'implication du suspect dans les affaires de l'ennemi. Le fait de co-apparaître sur une photographie avec un ennemi du peuple est une raison suffisante pour entamer les poursuites à l'encontre du suspect.

Le suspect fait partie d'une communauté où le « crime » de l'un est le crime de tous. Si les frontières de ma subjectivité coïncident avec celles du collectif auquel j'appartiens, je suis condamné à partager les crimes des autres, je ne peux pas rester « propre ». C'est pourquoi la communauté photographique, le fait d'être l'ami de l'ennemi, suffit à l'accusation.

C'est à partir de la photographie et plus largement de l'image que se construit la ligne de partage symbolique entre les fidèles et les subversifs. La photographie de groupe – lieu stratégique de l'affrontement politique – peut servir à tester le suspect, car celui-ci a toujours la possibilité de changer de camp, de se démarquer de l'ennemi du peuple, de rompre le pacte d'amitié passé avec lui. La guerre moderne a besoin de cette extériorisation sans laquelle tout dépistage de l'adversaire se révélerait impossible. Le « suspect » est mis devant le choix qui laisse peu de place aux manœuvres : ou bien il se démarque de l'ennemi du peuple, le renie, ou bien il partage son sort. En détruisant la représentation de l'ennemi, le suspect l'exclut de la communauté, il fait de façon que les crimes de l'ennemi du peuple ne soient pas les siens.



9. Photographie du dossier de Zoubarev, programme « ALGIR-2 », Archives de *Mémorial*, Moscou.

Ce reniement va de pair avec une « initiation ». À détruire la représentation de son ancien ami, l'individu partage les crimes de ses persécuteurs, devient l'un des oppresseurs, entre, contre son gré, dans leur communauté. Si les cas dont il s'agit sont une mesure d'intimidation, ils sont, pour les bourreaux, une façon de rendre co-responsable, de partager les crimes et la responsabilité. Cette situation renvoie directement à la théorie arendtienne du crime partagé et de la culpabilité collective. Le « suspect » ne se démarque du groupe auquel il appartenait auparavant qu'au prix d'en intégrer un autre, de devenir l'ennemi de son ami renié. La pratique qui s'apparente de plus près à l'élimination des représentations des ennemis, c'est celle des condamnations collectives, qui avaient généralement lieu au travail. Chaque collectif était obligé d'exprimer publiquement son attitude envers un ennemi du peuple, prendre une position face aux actes d'un « espion » ou d'un « saboteur ».



10. Dzerjinski entouré de ses collaborateurs. Photographie du dossier de Bérézine, programme « Photoscans », Archives de *Mémorial*.

Aloïs Riegl : le portrait de groupe est un « singulier pluriel ». La fraternité.

De toute évidence, la photographie de groupe comme appareil ne surgit pas du vide, étant précédée par le portrait de groupe pictural dont la tradition remonte à l'art hollandais du XVe siècle. Les premiers portraits de groupe représentaient des individus qui se réunissaient en corporation en poursuivant un but commun. Ces individus formaient – surtout à l'âge d'or du portrait de groupe – une communauté essentiellement spirituelle, car les individus partageaient les mêmes valeurs religieuses ou politiques.

Selon l'historien de l'art viennois Aloïs Riegl, les portraits de groupe réunissent dans un espace pictural des individus parfaitement autonomes. Cependant, un portrait de groupe n'est en aucun cas une « somme » de portraits individuels, obtenue par leur simple juxtaposition. Ici, l'individualité du portraituré n'est pas celle d'un portrait simple, qui contribua largement à l'autonomisation de l'individu pendant la Renaissance. L'individualité de chacun est appareillée par un procédé pictural. Celui-ci fait obéir la singularité d'une apparition unique à un tout, fait surgir de la communauté au sein d'une réunion disparate et fait évoluer le préindividuel de chacun en direction d'un « milieu associé » (Simondon). La fonction du portrait de groupe est celle du déplacement et de la fusion symboliques, de façon que les individus représentés forment un tout spirituel. Selon Riegl, le portrait ouvre une nouvelle dimension, en dépassant « un dualisme entre objectivisme et subjectivisme. »⁹ Le portrait de groupe affirme une « individualité collective », transforme un groupe d'individus en « individu de groupe ».

Le portrait de groupe met en œuvre l'idée de la fraternité et de l'égalité de ceux qui y co-apparaissent. Chacun est représenté entre ses pairs et les rapports entre les personnages sont ceux de « coordination ». Il s'agit de rapports purement horizontaux d'où est absente toute trace de subordination. Cette façon d'apparaître suspend les hiérarchies et les rapports de pouvoirs. C'est pourquoi la communauté dont il est question a une signification politique. Ce n'est pas un hasard si le portrait de groupe évite la scénographie, qui est toujours une hiérarchisation, une distribution de rôles sociaux. Le portrait de groupe ne se confond pas avec un tableau d'histoire ni avec une scène de genre, ayant un autre fondement ontologique. La mise en scène reste un procédé extérieur au portrait de groupe en tant que philosophie et en tant que genre. La scénographie ne doit pas embrouiller son pluralisme intrinsèque, ne doit pas introduire de

la hiérarchie dans son espace égalitaire. Les individus doivent apparaître tels qu'ils sont, et non pas déguisés, non pas en acteurs. Cette description vaut également pour une photo de groupe. Sauf à cesser d'être ce qu'elle est, la photographie de groupe ne doit pas transformer les personnages en acteurs. Ils ne doivent pas jouer des rôles qui ne sont pas les leurs, ne doivent pas adopter des postures et des identités d'emprunt.

Politiquement parlant, le portrait de groupe affirme l'ontologie d'un « singulier pluriel », nous fait retourner à la question de l'essence de la politique, la question **du** politique. Ici, nous sommes très proches de la tradition aristotélicienne, dont H.Arendt et J-L Nancy se sont inspirés plus récemment pour penser le politique comme ce qui se trouve entre les individus. Le politique dans sa pureté apparaît là où se trouvent suspendus les rapports de pouvoir, les hiérarchies.

Les aspects psychologiques et éthiques du noircissement des photos. Le reniement.

Il serait faux de voir dans le reniement un « simple effet » qui accompagne la terreur. Loin d'être un phénomène qui *suit* les purges, le reniement occupe la place centrale dans la structure de la terreur. Le reniement, en tant que destruction complète des rapports transindividuels, constitue le but ultime des disparitions politiques.

On connaît la thèse de Hanna Arendt selon laquelle la terreur avait pour objectif la destruction des classes politiques, en premier lieu du prolétariat. La réalité soviétique n'aurait rien à voir avec l'esprit communautaire dont se réclame la société dite « communiste ». Le citoyen soviétique est plongé dans une existence purement individuelle, coupé de ses liaisons, réduit à une isolation presque complète ; la société soviétique est faite d'atomes humains privés de toute initiative. Le système totalitaire correspondrait à la destruction absolue des classes, c'est-à-dire des rapports qui se basent sur la communauté des intérêts de ceux qui y appartiennent. Pourtant, Arendt va plus loin : le totalitarisme brise non seulement les classes mais plus largement les rapports sociaux et même familiaux. Mais la défaite des rapports familiaux correspondrait au débordement par la terreur de ses cadres sociologiques, à un déchaînement, une crise de folie où la terreur perd de sa logique sociale. En réalité, cette « folie » de la terreur, cette tache aveugle dont parle Arendt peut signaler que l'épicentre de la terreur se trouve ailleurs que dans la vie sociale, quoique celle-ci en

soit gravement atteinte. Arendt voit dans la destruction de la famille l'un des effets de la terreur, son débordement et sa « pathologie » (la maladie de la maladie) tandis qu'il faudrait inverser l'hypothèse pour y voir la manifestation la plus conséquente de la terreur. La terreur fait dissoudre les rapports transindividuels, ceux qui s'opposent aux rapports interindividuels (rapports sociaux qui obéissent à la loi du profit et qui sont foncièrement hiérarchiques). Les rapports transindividuels sont ceux d'affection, ils se détachent du social et vont à l'encontre du social. Ils reposent sur l'idée du désintéressement, sont incompatibles avec aucun profit, se construisent comme la négation du profit.

C'est donc dans la famille que la logique de la terreur se met à nu. Comme les rapports transindividuels culminent dans la famille, la famille se trouve dans l'épicentre de la terreur et demeure son enjeu stratégique. La famille est le dernier refuge de l'éthique, de ce qui résiste encore à la politisation, à la totalité de la guerre, à l'ubiquité de l'opposition politique ami/ennemi. La sphère privée ne doit pas rester hors de la sphère politique : si j'aime mon proche, fût-ce « en privé », il me sera difficile de le haïr en tant que mon ennemi politique (*hostis publicus*). Comme en témoigne l'expérience soviétique, la distinction faite par Schmitt qui veut séparer le privé et le public comme espaces respectifs d'amour et de haine est hautement artificielle. Contrairement à ce que prétend Schmitt, il est impossible d'aimer un ennemi en privé et le détester politiquement. Au besoin, l'homme soviétique doit laisser entrer la guerre sous son toit, tracer la ligne de front au sein de sa famille. Un bon citoyen doit veiller à son prochain qui qu'il soit, il doit savoir distinguer en lui des signes inquiétants et, au besoin, déceler en lui un ennemi caché. S'il le faut, les enfants seront les premiers à renier leurs parents, à leur déclarer la guerre. La ligne de front peut passer entre les parents et les enfants.

Rapports entre parents et enfants

La fameuse déclaration de Staline « le fils n'a pas à répondre pour son père »¹⁰, reprise par la presse soviétique et transformée en slogan, est à interpréter comme incitation au reniement, car elle impose comme naturelle l'absence de rapports symboliques entre le père et le fils. La dette filiale envers le père apparaît alors comme inexistante. *Grosso modo*, le fils qui n'a pas à répondre pour son père, cesse d'être le fils de son père, cesse d'être son « héritier » (Derrida). On ne peut se libérer de la

responsabilité qu'à ce prix. Ne pas avoir à répondre pour son père, c'est reconnaître la culpabilité de son père, c'est renier sa communauté avec lui, se démarquer de lui, l'abandonner.

Si le caviardage des photographies est une forme de l'abandon, la lettre de reniement en est une autre, officialisée par le régime et sans doute la plus répandue. L'une et l'autre ont ceci en commun que l'enfant condamne son père ou sa mère pour se ranger du « bon » côté. Il s'agit d'une prise de position publique : l'enfant trace une ligne de front entre lui et son père, le déclare son ennemi et se range du côté de ses persécuteurs.

Il y a des lettres de reniement qui sont très bien écrites. À les lire, on a l'impression que la rupture se produit avec facilité. Mais cette facilité est toujours apparente. Dans la plupart des cas, ce sont des lettres de reniement « officielles », écrites sous la dictée. La douleur causée par la rupture du rapport transindividuel est extrêmement aiguë – non seulement pour celui qui est renié, mais aussi pour celui qui le renie : si les frontières de ma subjectivité s'étendent vers celles du collectif auquel j'appartiens, tout reniement est nécessairement autodestructif. Je renie une partie de moi-même, je deviens mon propre ennemi. Mis devant un choix impossible, la majorité des enfants vivent un véritable clivage au sein de leur « moi », ils sont désorientés et écrasés.

Il y avait des cas où un enfant écrivait à ses parents arrêtés afin de savoir s'ils étaient vraiment coupables, s'ils avaient effectivement commis les crimes dont on les accusait. Alors, c'étaient les parents qui étaient mis devant un choix douloureux, car ils savaient que leur enfant ne pouvait pas vivre dans la société soviétique sans renier son proche ennemi du peuple, qu'il serait persécuté.

Rapports mari/femme

Les rapports conjugaux peuvent être des rapports à forte réciprocité et, de ce fait, devenir rapports symboliques. Dans la mesure où les rapports mari/femme sortent du cadre sociologique – cessent d'être des rapports d'échange, se libèrent des marques de pouvoir et de dépendance – ils acquièrent un caractère transindividuel. Loin d'être la preuve de l'incompétence politique des femmes, ou bien de leur indifférence à l'égard de la politique, le fait qu'une femme a rarement des convictions politiques différentes de celles de son mari témoigne de l'étroitesse du rapport transindividuel entre les conjoints. Contrairement

à ce que prétend Schmitt, il est impossible d'aimer un ennemi en privé et le détester politiquement. Comme en témoigne une série de mesures répressives dirigées contre les épouses des ennemis du régime, les pouvoirs soviétiques et personnellement Staline étaient pleinement conscients de cette impossibilité et de l'étroitesse « politique » des rapports entre les époux. Ces mesures avaient le même objectif de faire renier leurs conjoints aux femmes.

D'un côté, c'étaient des mesures d'intimidation et d'oppression. L'un des articles du Code pénal, ajouté à l'initiative personnelle de Staline, prévoyait l'arrestation des conjointes des ennemis du peuple. Si elles n'étaient pas privées de liberté, elles étaient « chassées de chez elles, renvoyées de leur travail, privées de leur ration ou de leurs droits civiques »¹¹. On pratiquait également des retenues sur salaire, on gelait les épargnes, on augmentait le loyer. De l'autre côté, des mesures d'encouragement ne manquaient pas non plus : ayant droit de prendre l'initiative unilatérale du divorce, les femmes des ennemis du peuple y étaient encouragées par le coût réduit de la procédure, qui fut ramené de 500 roubles à 3 roubles quand on divorçait d'un « ennemi »¹². Tombée de Charybde en Scylla, la femme de l'ennemi du peuple *doit* renier son conjoint. Si le reniement constitue *la règle* et *le but ultime* de la terreur, les cas où le reniement n'a pas eu lieu doivent être tenus pour exceptionnels.

La problématique du visage

Deux photos de famille ci-dessous présentent un grand intérêt. La première est celle d'un couple familial (11) où la représentation du mari a été découpée. Nous possédons des renseignements assez précis sur cette famille, sachant leur nom et la date de l'arrestation du mari (1937).



11. Un couple familial. La représentation découpée est celle du conjoint arrêté en 1937. Archives de *Mémorial*, Moscou.

Par contre, nous ne savons rien de l'autre photographie (12), qui se trouve à *Mémorial* parmi les photos anonymes, qui ne sont pas classées dans les albums de famille.



12. Portrait de famille avec un jeune officier au visage « caviardé ». Photographie qui se trouve parmi les photos anonymes n'ayant pas d'assignation aux albums familiaux. Archives de *Mémorial*, Moscou.

C'est peut-être pourquoi cette photographie est une des plus intéressantes parmi celles qui se trouvent à ma disposition. On voit bien que c'est une photo de famille, que ce sont des parents proches. Les questions qui se posent sont les suivantes : de quelle parenté, exactement, s'agit-il ? Qui a attaqué la photographie ? À regarder cette photo attentivement, on voit que l'homme au visage gribouillé est jeune. Mais il est peu probable que la jeune fille qui se trouve derrière lui soit sa femme, ce serait plutôt sa sœur : la photographie familiale est fortement codifiée, les époux apparaissent toujours l'un à côté de l'autre, suivant la tradition des portraits picturaux des époux.

Ce qui est assez étonnant, c'est la façon dont on attaque la représentation de l'ennemi, à savoir, la violence de cette attaque.

L'effort fait pour éviter le reniement

Comme j'ai dit tout à l'heure, la forme de l'attaque iconoclaste peut varier. Selon les circonstances, la punition symbolique infligée à la représentation de l'ennemi peut être plus ou moins dure.

Il y avait des cas où l'individu qui se savait menacé et se trouvait en présence d'un cas de conscience douloureux, voulait trouver un compromis entre sa sécurité et sa bonne foi. Dans ces conditions, l'acte iconoclaste est à peine perceptible, étant plutôt effectué pour la forme.

C'est ce qu'on voit sur la photo suivante représentant des délégués communistes en compagnie de Staline, où huit visages sur trente sont rayés en croix avec un crayon (13, 14).



13. Anonyme. *La délégation de Nijni-Novgorod avec les membres du gouvernement. Le XVe congrès du VKP(b). Moscou, le 15 mars 1927.* Archives du Comité régional du Parti Communiste de Nijni-Novgorod / Fonds 7853, dossier 394, inventaire 1.



14. Anonyme. *La délégation de Nijni-Novgorod avec les membres du gouvernement.* Fragment agrandi.

Il est toutefois douteux que ce compromis soit efficace. Celui-ci s'inscrit contre le système des disparitions politiques, dont l'objectif est justement d'exclure tout compromis, toute neutralité, d'étouffer dans l'œuf toute tentative de résistance passive. En effet, la guerre moderne met en cause la notion même de neutralité. Si le conflit perd son caractère local pour se répandre sur l'ensemble de la population, la neutralité doit être dénoncée en tant que déguisement, simulation dont profite l'ennemi pour éviter la répression. À la différence de la guerre classique, la guerre moderne qui se veut absolue se montre hostile à l'absence d'hostilité.

Ici, le « suspect » cherche à contourner l'épreuve, à l'escamoter, comme s'il ne comprenait pas ce que lui voulait le pouvoir. Mais l'insuffisance de la punition infligée à l'image de l'ennemi se retourne contre le punisseur : s'arrêter à mi-chemin et ne pas noircir le visage de l'ennemi du peuple revient à être présent sur une photo à côté de celui-ci, à se reconnaître comme appartenant à la même communauté que lui et,

de ce fait, à partager ses « crimes ». Toute manœuvre entreprise en vue d'éluder le reniement est destinée à l'échec.

Parfois, les proches d'un ennemi du régime essayaient de garder sa photographie – ce qui veut dire garder les rapports affectivo-émotifs avec lui – et, en même temps, d'éviter le danger qu'ils couraient du fait de la garder. C'est ce qu'on voit en comparant deux photographies suivantes (15, 16).



15. Photographie du dossier de Makchéev. Programme *Le dernier témoin*, Archives de *Mémorial*, Moscou.



16. Le général F. Makchëev. Photographie du dossier de Makchëev.
Programme *Le dernier témoin*, Archives de *Mémorial*, Moscou.

En fait, c'est la même photographie, mais les parents de la personne qui y est représentée ont supprimé, en le noircissant, l'uniforme du général de l'armée impériale.

Si l'on retourne à la photo que j'ai commentée tout à l'heure, on voit que celui qui a commis l'attentat iconoclaste ne cherchait pas de compromis, bien que la personne qui l'a fait dû appartenir à la même famille et, probablement, soit présente sur la photographie (bien sûr, il était dangereux de garder toute photographie de l'ennemi du peuple, parce que ça témoignait de l'affection qu'on avait pour lui, mais il était surtout dangereux d'apparaître à côté de lui sur la même photographie).

La signification du visage

Dans le contexte qui est le nôtre, on ne saurait pas passer sous silence la problématique du visage. La question est de savoir si c'est bien le visage qui sert d'intermédiaire au rapport transindividuel. On sait que, selon Emmanuel Levinas, la loi éthique qui transcende le monde des phénomènes se révèle dans l'épiphanie du visage humain. Le visage serait un non-phénomène par excellence, il s'offrirait à mon moi sans condition. Ce point de vue a été critiqué par Jacques Derrida. Si Derrida fait sienne la logique de la trace, il émet néanmoins des doutes sur le visage en tant que support de cette logique, sur l'« efficacité » de son épiphanie comme « moyen de transmission » de la relation éthique. Selon Derrida, avec sa philosophie du visage, Levinas tombe dans le panneau d'une « urgence empirique », de la métaphysique de la présence. Le visage, en raison de sa phénoménalité, ne peut pas être la trace d'autrui.

Gilles Deleuze lui aussi met en question la singularité et l'immédiateté du visage. Selon lui, le visage est social avant d'être individuel, en neutralisant tout ce qu'il y a d'individuel, de singulier, de rebelle. Dans son visage, autrui s'absente complètement. Deleuze récuse le visage comme universel pour le considérer comme sous-produit du christianisme ; le face-à-face est une structure qui naît d'une configuration de pouvoir dans les sociétés chrétiennes.

Marie-José Mondzain, qui entreprend une étude sur l'imaginaire du visage et de la frontalité, arrive aux mêmes conclusions que Derrida et Deleuze. La frontalité comme mode privilégié du rapport à autrui ne s'instaure qu'avec le christianisme. À leur tour, ceux qui sont exclus de la communauté sont censés ne pas avoir de visage. Le cas des Juifs est le plus exemplaire. Privés de visage, les Juifs sont vus toujours « de profil ».

Ce deuxième point de vue me paraît justifié. Le visage n'est pas universel et les rapports qu'il véhicule sont plutôt des rapports sociaux. Dans la majorité des cas, le reniement ne s'accompagnait pas de privation de visage. Ce n'est donc pas le visage qui se trouve à l'épicentre des coups iconoclastes, mais un autre objet, un « objet » non phénoménal qui véhicule le rapport émotivo-affectif que le visage, paradoxalement, ne véhicule pas. Celui qui s'attaque à la représentation cherche à détruire la communauté photographie entre lui et l'ennemi du peuple, - la communauté photographique qui est en même temps une communauté politique. Tout porte à conclure que le rôle que Levinas attribue au visage peut être confié à la photographie en tant que trace de l'autre, ou plus précisément, à l'essence de la photographie, *le* photographique qui ne se constitue ni comme présence pure ni comme absence pure et qui crée et véhicule le rapport transindividuel. C'est pourquoi la privation de visage n'était jamais un but en soi. Elle a lieu seulement dans le cas où la personne va jusqu'au bout, fait de l'autre son ennemi personnel. C'est une façon très radicale de refuser la communauté.

Les autoreniements

Dans la mesure où l'on renonce au substantialisme, en affirmant, avec Simondon, que la subjectivité n'a pas de limites bien précises et évolue dans un milieu transindividuel, il faut aller plus loin et dire que la ligne de front qui sépare l'ennemi et l'ami peut passer à l'intérieur de l'individu. D'où le fait que la suspicion du citoyen peut porter sur une partie de lui-même : il doit rester vigilant, en garde contre lui-même tout en distinguant des idées subversives dans sa conscience de classe. Un bon citoyen communiste doit savoir se méfier de lui-même, veiller à ce que des idées subversives ne s'emparent pas de lui à son insu. Tout comme il renie son prochain, il doit constamment se renier lui-même, distinguer et couper à la racine des éléments de droite ou trotskistes au fond de sa conscience politique. Le communiste lutte contre la subversion qui l'attaque de l'intérieur avec les armes de l'introspection et de l'autocritique.

L'autocritique est à considérer comme un acte d'autoreniement, et c'est ici qu'il faut chercher la clé à cette importance qu'a la confession publique sous Staline. Contrairement à ce qu'il peut paraître, le stalinisme encourage l'écriture de soi, les différentes formes de l'aveu et de l'autocritique.

Chaque repentant est sensé faire ses confidences oralement, en présence du public, et par écrit, soit dans son journal intime (ce qui ne

signifie d'ailleurs pas « en privé ») soit sous forme d'autoreprésentation critique qu'il soumettait au Comité du Parti.

Bien entendu, tout comme le biffage des photographies, l'autocritique fonctionne à l'époque de la Terreur comme stratégie d'escamotage et de prévention, car elle permet – si faible que soit cet espoir – de se prémunir contre des accusations éventuelles et de se garantir contre la terreur.

La brutalité des purges ne doit pas empêcher de voir la complexité des mécanismes éthiques qui se cachaient au fond de la distinction dite « politique » entre les amis et les ennemis. En dénonçant les éléments subversifs au fond de lui et en reniant ces éléments, l'individu se purifie politiquement et se range du « bon » côté du front politique. Il ne s'agissait pas, bien entendu, de voir dans cette autocritique la manifestation de quelque sincérité, mais la manifestation de la loyauté. De toute évidence, il s'agissait d'une prise de position forcée, d'un acte de violence à l'encontre de l'individu qui lui faisait se trahir lui-même. L'individu ne survivait qu'à condition de cesser d'être lui-même, de se dénoncer, se trahir, se ranger contre lui-même du côté de ses propres oppresseurs. L'individu qui a cédé à la pression et a manifesté de la peur se signalait par là comme bon citoyen : celui qui peut se trahir soi-même trahira les autres. Toujours est-il que les responsables de la Terreur savaient que la volonté éthique ne va jamais sans volonté politique. L'individu qui permet qu'on lui ôte la volonté éthique est aussi apolitique que possible.

Les photographies portant des inscriptions

À côté des photographies biffées, j'ai 3 photographies extrêmement intéressantes, qui me sont tombées entre les mains par hasard, aux archives où je travaillais. L'intérêt de ces photos consiste dans le fait de porter des commentaires manuscrits, les traces du « travail » des enquêteurs du NKVD (la police secrète stalinienne).

La première photographie (17) représente un groupe de riches marchands, tous régents d'un orphelinat à Nijni-Novgorod (c'est un portrait de groupe classique qui fait penser aux portraits de régents par Hals). On peut y voir les flèches ainsi que les inscriptions qui nous renseignent sur les personnages (leur nom, leur condition sous l'ancien régime...).



17. *L'archevêque Nazaire et le groupe des bienfaiteurs de l'orphelinat Kutaïsov. 1913. Archives audiovisuelles de Nijni-Novgorod / Inventaire 1.1/8, 66-3060.*

Deux autres photos (18, 19) sont prises peu avant la Révolution (en 1913) et représentent les policiers. Nous apprenons, des commentaires manuscrits laissés par les NKVD, si le personnage est mort ou bien en vie ; dans le cas où il n'est pas mort, son lieu de résidence, son poste dans la police d'avant la Révolution ainsi que les actes contre-révolutionnaires qu'il a commis (par exemple, une des inscriptions dit que le commissaire Pétrov a pris part à l'écrasement de l'insurrection de Sormovo en 1905).



18. Anonyme. *Un groupe de policiers de Nijni-Novgorod avec le chef de police A. Znamenski.* Archives audiovisuelles de Nijni-Novgorod / Inventaire 726.



19. Anonyme. *Police. Deux groupes.* Archives audiovisuelles de Nijni-Novgorod / Inventaire 300.

Il est évident que les photographies qui portent des inscriptions constituent un groupe à part, car les traces qu'elles gardent appartiennent à une autre catégorie et apparaissent dans un autre contexte (elles ne sont pas laissées par les victimes, mais par les persécuteurs). En même temps, elles semblent témoigner du même pouvoir de l'image photographique.

Qu'est-ce qui, exactement, intéressait les enquêteurs ? S'agissait-il pour eux de reconnaître ceux qui figuraient sur la photographie ? L'explication selon laquelle ces photos ont été utilisées pour reconnaître les ennemis du régime semble aller de soi. Pourtant, l'examen plus approfondi du cas montre que l'objectif de la reconnaissance ne se trouvait pas au cœur de cette « utilisation » des photographies.

En effet, la reconnaissance n'est possible qu'à condition de *connaître au préalable* celui qu'on re-connaît. Il est impossible de reconnaître sans connaître, et la reconnaissance ne va jamais sans connaissance, sous-entendant logiquement une reprise, une réitération, une coïncidence d'un savoir préliminaire avec une donnée sensible. La reconnaissance et l'identification policière reposent entièrement sur cette pré-connaissance¹³. C'est pourquoi l'usage policier de la photographie reste, à peu d'exceptions près, un usage de prévention dirigé contre une « récidive », ce qui fait que la photographie judiciaire a un champ d'application très étroit. Comme le montre Christian Phéline, l'entreprise de Bertillon fut un échec¹⁴. Bertillon était un grand enthousiaste de son affaire, mais ses espoirs se sont effondrés justement en raison de l'efficacité fort limitée de la photo pour les objectifs de reconnaissance.

La photographie signalétique

La question qui préoccupe Alphonse Bertillon est d'identifier le criminel. Il cherche à faire travailler le potentiel documentaire de la photographie, libérer la photographie de tout ce qu'elle a de conventionnel et d'artistique. Si l'acte photographique est purifié de tout ce qui peut le « contrarier », la reconnaissance peut regagner en efficacité. L'objectif de Bertillon comme photographe est contraire à celui de son contemporain Nadar et, plus généralement, à l'effort de l'artiste, qui transforme le réel, qui fait un travail de symbolisation.

Il y a des gens naïfs qui s'étonnent et s'indignent en voyant jusqu'à quel point les enlaidit la photo d'identité dans leur passeport. Mais la photo dans le passeport, est justement une photo signalétique qui a pour

objectif de dépouiller l'individu de tout ce qui le rend beau et empêche de le reconnaître.

On voit que, tout pratique qu'il est, l'usage judiciaire de la photographie n'est pas sans fondement théorique. Il repose sur le présupposé que la photographie est une empreinte. Somme toute, Bertillon met l'accent sur la capacité de la photographie de fixer le singulier, l'unique, l'individuel, tout comme le font, au XX^e siècle, les partisans de la théorie dite « indicielle » de la photo, les esthéticiens comme R.Krauss, Ph.Dubois, H.Vanlier. De tous les théoriciens de la photo comme empreinte, indice ou *punctum*, c'est Alphonse Bertillon qui va jusqu'au bout de la logique. La photographie judiciaire est purement informationnelle, dépouillée de son pouvoir de généraliser, qui empêche l'identification. Identifier, reconnaître une personne, c'est toujours l'individualiser, particulariser, isoler, séparer des autres représentants de l'espèce.

L'usage de la photographie par le NKVD n'était pas un usage signalétique

Or l'usage de la photographie par le NKVD n'avait rien à voir avec l'identification comme l'avait conçue Bertillon. Les policiers staliniens ont utilisé la photographie autrement que ne l'avait fait Bertillon, n'ayant pas pour but de reconnaître qui que ce soit. Ce qui les intéressait et ce dont ils étaient pleinement conscients, c'était le pouvoir, propre à la photographie de groupe, de construire des rapports affectivo-émotifs entre les individus photographiés, de créer un « individu de groupe ».

Si la méthode exacte du travail sur ces photographies nous reste inconnue, on peut néanmoins faire une hypothèse relative à la façon dont elles étaient utilisées. Saisies au moment de l'arrestation d'un « coupable », elles lui auraient été présentées par la suite lors des interrogatoires. Le coupable aurait été interrogé sur l'identité de ceux qui l'entouraient sur telle ou telle photo de groupe. Dans les conditions de la guerre que l'État menait contre ses ennemis intérieurs, leur co-apparaître sur la photographie, le fait d'avoir partagé le même lieu et le même temps avec le coupable était suffisant pour garantir leur culpabilité. Pour le dire en termes qui sont ceux de Simondon, l'identité qui intéressait les enquêteurs n'était pas individuelle, mais une « identité de groupe ».

Cet usage des photographies par les gens du NKVD n'a rien de signalétique ni d'anthropométrique. Bien qu'il puisse ressembler à l'usage

« policier », il ne se confond pas avec lui. La question d'identité et des moyens qui permettent de l'établir (la forme des oreilles...) ne se pose pas. L'accusation « fait travailler » un lien entre ceux qui étaient présents sur la photo en question. Les photographies étaient utilisées pour élargir le cercle des coupables, pour y inclure de nouveaux « subversifs » et procéder à de nouvelles arrestations. Il va de soi que, compte tenu de cette « méthode », le cercle des coupables peut s'élargir à l'infini. De toute façon, il ne s'agit pas d'identifier un criminel dont on connaît le crime et ainsi mettre fin à l'enquête, mais d'inculper les sujets photographiés parce qu'ils apparaissent sur la photographie à côté du présumé coupable.

L'acte photographique comme émotion partagée

Sous beaucoup de rapports, l'« écriture photographique » est constitutive pour le groupe qui passe devant la caméra aussi bien que pour les individus qui en font partie. L'appareil photo est un objet technique qui permet à un individu ou à un groupe d'individus d'apparaître politiquement et socialement, d'apparaître comme collectif.

Le collectif se construit par le biais de l'émotion qui se partage. Il serait faux d'estimer que la source de l'émotion se situe dans l'individu, de voir en elle l'émanation de son intériorité. La place de l'émotion est entre l'intériorité et l'extériorité. Le propre de l'émotion est d'être partagée, en reliant des individus dans un réseau émotionnel. Avec l'affectivité, l'émotion constitue le moteur de l'individuation, elle fait évoluer le préindividuel en direction du transindividuel :

Si, en fait, l'émotion pose à la psychologie des problèmes si difficiles à résoudre, c'est parce qu'elle ne peut être expliquée en fonction de l'être considéré comme totalement individué. Elle manifeste dans l'être individué la rémanence du préindividuel ; elle est ce potentiel réel qui, au sein de l'indéterminé naturel, suscite dans le sujet la relation au sein du collectif qui s'institue ; il y a collectif dans la mesure où une émotion se structure ... l'émotion est du préindividuel manifesté au sein du sujet, et pouvant être interprété comme intériorité ou extériorité ; l'émotion renvoie à l'extériorité et à l'intériorité, parce que l'émotion n'est pas de l'individué ; elle est l'échange, au sein du sujet, entre la charge de nature et les structures stables de l'être individué ; échange entre le préindividuel et l'individué, elle préfigure la découverte du collectif. Elle est une mise en question de l'être en tant qu'individué, parce qu'elle est pouvoir de susciter une individuation du collectif qui recouvrira et attachera l'être individué¹⁵.

NOTES

- ¹ TRAVERSO E. *À feu et à sang. De la guerre civile européenne, 1914-1945*, Éditions Stock, Paris, 2007.
- ² SCHMITT C. *La notion de politique. Théorie du partisan*. Traduit de l'allemand par Marie-Louise Steinhauser. Calmann-Levy, Paris, 1989. - 329 p. (Liberté de l'esprit), p.109.
- ³ Voir Lukács G. *La Pensée de Lénine*. Trad. de l'allemand par J. M. Brohm et B. Fraenkel. Denoël-Gonthier, Paris, 1972. - 159 p. (Médiations)
- ⁴ Lukács G. *Histoire et conscience de classe. Essai de dialectique marxiste*. Traduit de l'Allemand par Kostas Axelos et Jacqueline Bois. Éditions de Minuit, Paris, 1960, p.70.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p.87.
- ⁶ SIMONDON G. *L'Individuation à la lumière des notions de forme et d'information*. Editions Jérôme Millon, Grenoble, 2005. - 571 p. (Collection Krisis)
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 298.
- ⁸ BOURDIEU P., BOLTANSKI L., CASTEL R., et al. *Un art moyen : Essai sur les usages sociaux de la photographie*. Minuit, Paris, 1965. - 368 p.
- ⁹ RIEGL A. *Le portrait de groupe hollandais*. Traduit de l'allemand par Aurélie Duthoo et Etienne Jollet ; préface d'Etienne Jollet. Hazan, Paris, 2008, p. 132.
- ¹⁰ Lors d'une rencontre avec Staline, un jeune ouvrier avoua que, bien qu'il fût le fils d'un koulak, il participait avec enthousiasme à la construction socialiste et partageait les valeurs de sa génération. Staline lui répondit par la formule en question.
- ¹¹ FIGES O. *Les chuchoteurs. Vivre et survivre sous Staline*. Traduit de l'anglais par Pierre-Emmanuel Dauzat; préface d'Emmanuel Carrère. Denoël, Paris, 2009, p. 361.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 361.
- ¹³ BERTILLON A. *La photographie judiciaire, avec un appendice sur la classification et l'identification anthropométriques*. Gouthier-Villars et fils, Paris, 1890. - 115 p. (Bibliothèque photographique)
- ¹⁴ PHÉLINE C. *L'image accusatrice*. Association de critique contemporaine en photographie, Brax, 1985. - 169 p. (Les cahiers de la Photographie)
- ¹⁵ SIMONDON G. *L'Individuation à la lumière des notions de forme et d'information*. Editions Jérôme Millon, Grenoble, 2005. - 571 p. (Collection Krisis), p. 314.



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IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NATION, ON THE MARGINS OF THE ACADEMIA: HISTORIOGRAPHY IN BANAT IN THE LONG 19th CENTURY

Abstract

This paper analyzes local historiography in the 19th century Banat. By that time, Banat was a multicultural periphery of the Kingdom of Hungary, at the same time battlefield of Magyar, Romanian, Serbian and German nation-buildings. Local historiographic production emerged from the mid-19th century. As Banat had no university, this historiography found itself on the margin of academic community, its members being mostly self-trained amateurs. Unlike similar amateur local historians in Germany, in Banat the amateur scholarship was constructed in order to meet the demands of the nation-building elites.

Keywords: historiography, regionalism, national identity, Banat.

“If professional history was the visible tip of the iceberg in our period [the 19th century], the subject of this chapter is the larger and less visible part, since many people received their impressions of the past from the work of amateur historians. [...] This was true for other periods too but it was especially true in this so-called age of historicism”, claims historian Peter Burke.¹ However, despite its obvious importance for the creation and popularization of the repository of national knowledge, the works of amateur historians have received little attention from scholars of historiography. “Ignored hitherto by historians of science”, argues Borbála Zsuzsanna Török, “*Landeskunde* was immensely popular throughout the 19th century in the German-speaking realms of Europe, and was a rich field for identity construction on various scales, from the local to the European”.²

Following these statements, this paper examines local historiography in 19th and early 20th century in the context of competing nationalisms and identity constructions in Banat, a multicultural periphery of Hungary.

I. National and Local Scholarship in Hungary in the 19th Century

“Hungarian historiography during the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was of European rank, as, except for the national romantics, it followed the institutions and streams elaborated in Western Europe, particularly in Germany”, claims historian Vilmos Erős.³ This statement is definitely true: by the end of the 19th century, the University of Budapest, the Hungarian National Archives, the Historical Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (established in 1854) and its various source publications, the Hungarian Historical Association (established in 1867) and its journal *Századok* (Centuries, established in the same year), all followed the mainstream European historical scholarship.⁴ The institutional boom and the subsequent professionalization put Hungary on the map of European historical scholarship.⁵ Hungarian historians, though rarely being genuinely interested in theoritizing history, followed the European trends of historical scholarship with a relatively small delay: they wrote history in national romantic manner in the mid-19th century like Julius Michelet,⁶ employed the Rankean model of historicism in the second half of the century, and became influenced by social and economic history by the early 1900s.⁷

However, the progressive character of Hungarian historical scholarship is less convincing if one examines historiography produced outside the great academic centers (Budapest, Vienna, Kolozsvár/Cluj). Like elsewhere in Europe, the interest in the past provoked authors and institutions without a proper academic profile to write about their own history. In most cases, this “own history” meant local and regional history. The quality of local and regional historiography did not meet the standards set on the national level: “Our local historiography completely fails to provide basis [for macro-historiography]. It does not satisfy even the most primitive demands”, observed Elemér Mályusz, the innovative and prolific social historian in 1931.⁸

While the professional academic community clearly followed the German model of historiography in terms of institutions, methods and ideology, local amateurs did so only to a certain extent. The most important

forum of local research, the learned society appeared in Hungary as well, covering the territory of a county in most cases. Provincial museums appeared, too. These associations and museums published their research results in their own periodicals; furthermore, some cities and counties commissioned local intellectuals to publish their history in monographs. In particular, the last years of the 19th century were a fruitful period, as the festivities in 1896 commemorating the 1000th anniversary of the Magyar conquest of the Carpathian basin indicated the production of representative volumes discussing local history.⁹ However, these institutions resembled their German contemporaries only superficially. In Germany not only were far more learned societies and publications than in Hungary but the whole system functioned in a definitely more professionalized way. By the early 1900s, major German universities established specialized departments for regional history (*Landesgeschichte*).¹⁰ Scholars of the field held regular conferences and prestigious periodicals were published to discuss the results of local history beyond their immediate region, too, the most eminent being the *Korrespondenzblatt des Gesamtvereins der deutschen Geschichts- und Altertumsvereine*, established in 1852.¹¹

Beyond the gap in professionalization, the difference of the offered vision of the past is even more remarkable. In Germany, local and regional historians utilized their own past to demonstrate different emphasis, sometimes even values contradicting the Prussia-dominated *Kaiserreich*. Historian Gabriele B. Clemens asked if

the intellectuals engaged in historical societies participated in the process of nation-building and whether they formed part of that elite which, through communication, forged an imagined community or contributed to that as a scientific community. The answer is negative, as the overwhelming majority of the historians in the associations forged regional identities.¹²

Georg Kunz also argued for the regionalist agenda of the learned societies in Germany, though in his claim the associations' program oscillated between regional and national identities.¹³ Learned societies in Germany, except for the Prussia-based ones, had a complicated relation to the German nation-state, claim both Clemens and Kunz. By elaborating regional history, these associations stressed their objections to the centralization of Berlin.

In spite of the fact that a detailed analysis of the agenda of Hungarian learned societies and, in more general, regional historiography has not

been carried out yet, it can be presumed that they did forge national identity and did contribute to national scholarship, in contradiction to their German counterparts. In Transylvania, for instance, three learned societies emerged: the Association for Transylvanian Studies (*Verein für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde*) associated with Lutheran Saxons, the Transylvanian Museum Association (*Erdélyi Múzeum Egyesület*), an institution to organize Magyar scholarship, and the Transylvanian Association for Romanian Literature and the Culture of the Romanian People (abbreviated as ASTRA), which represented Romanian nationalist goals already in its name.¹⁴ Below these associations encompassing the macro-region of Transylvania, in Alsó-Fehér/Alba de Jos County a Historical, Archeological and Natural Scientific Association (*Alsófehérmegyei Történelmi, Régészeti és Természettudományi Társulat*) was founded.¹⁵ Despite the fact that all these learned societies had a regional focus, in fact they oriented themselves far more to forge national scholarship. Analyzing the latter society, historian Péter Erdős claims that

its authors aimed less at forging sub-national history and identity of a region (county), it was rather the great history, that of Rome, the Hungarian Middle Ages, and the Transylvanian Principality, which offered them an evident framework, in which they had to locate themselves.¹⁶

It can be postulated that the pattern of Transylvania may be transmitted to other part of Hungary as well and to claim that regional historiography in Dualist Hungary was definitely more nation (and in the Magyar case, also state) oriented than in Germany, despite their superficial structural similarities.

Scholarship discussing the evolution of Hungarian historiography did not address the background of this difference yet. A mono-causal reasoning has been delivered by Mályusz:

Our county boundaries did not separate our homeland [Hungary] into politically sovereign, independent parts, therefore a flourishing local historiography, similar to that of Germany, could not develop.¹⁷

However, Hungary was not always a country governed directly from the capital but several territories experienced administrative autonomies. Mályusz claims that in these lands, in particular in Transylvania, Croatia, Slavonia and in Southern Hungary the impetus for a regional

historiographic tradition based on the heritage of administrative structures could have been present. To test the thesis of Mályusz, this paper will analyze the 19th century historiography of Banat, a province of roughly 28,000 km² between the rivers Danube, Maros/Mureş, Tisza and the Western parts of the Carpathians. Since it had been conquered by the Habsburg Empire from the Ottomans in 1716, Banat experienced various administrative positions, ranging from a military frontier to an individual crown land of the Empire. It was completely integrated into Hungary as late in 1884. Therefore, the obstacle, Mályusz thought to prevent the development of a regionalist understanding of history, was definitely absent in Banat. However, as this paper will argue, local historiography was as much nation (and also state, in the Magyar case) oriented, as the Transylvanian examples. A *Heimat*-vision skeptical to the national center à la Germany, did not emerge neither in Banat.

II. Banat: A short Overview

Between 105 and 271 Banat was under Roman rule. Following the Roman withdrawal in 271, various barbaric peoples lived in the area, including Huns, Avars, and Slavs. In the 10th century, it became the frontier of the First Bulgarian Empire, to be replaced by Hungarian rule of St Stephen (997-1038) in the early 11th century. As a frontier now of the Kingdom of Hungary, several banates were organized along the Southern border of the country; the modern name Banat comes from these. Hungarian rule was destroyed by Ottoman expansion in 1552, which lasted until 1716.

When the Habsburg army conquered Banat in 1716, it found a devastated and unpopulated land due to the long lasting wars. An intensive colonization took place, which attracted large number of Germans, Serbs, Romanians, and Magyars, and also smaller groups of Bulgarians, Greeks, Albanians, Frenchmen, Spaniards and Jews. As a result, Banat became one of the most heterogeneous territories on the European continent. Banat was under military government until 1779, when its Northern and central parts were integrated into Hungary, while the Southern territory remained a special Military Frontier until 1884. Between 1849 and 1860, the region formed part of the Serbian Vojvodina and Banat of Temesvár/Timişoara, a province designed to satisfy the demands of Serbian national protagonists of the Southern provinces of the Habsburg Empire. In 1860, the Serbian

Vojvodina was dissolved, as an Austro-Hungarian reconciliation process started, and Banat was re-integrated into Hungary. Finally, in 1884, the Military Frontier was also dissolved and the complete Banat became part of the Kingdom of Hungary within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

Hungarian authorities divided Banat into three counties: Torontál County (seat Nagybecskerek/Zrenjanin), Temes County (seat Temesvár/Timișoara) and Krassó-Szörény County (seat Lugos/Lugoj). In 1900 the region was inhabited by ca. 1.5 million people, split along religious and linguistic cleavages, as Table 1 demonstrates:

Table 1. Population of Banat according to language in 1900.

County	Total population	Ratio of (%)							
		Romanians	Germans	Serbs	Magyars	Slovaks	Croats	Others	Total
Torontál	609362	14,4	30,2	31,5	18,8	2,5	0,7	1,9	100
Temes	476242	35,2	35,9	13,6	12,2	0,6	0,1	2,4	100
Krassó-Szörény	443001	74,1	12,5	3,0	4,8	0,9	0,1	4,7	100
Total	1528605	38,2	17,7	26,8	12,7	1,4	0,3	2,8	100

Source: *A magyar szent korona országainak 1910. évi népszámlálása: Első rész. A népesség főbb adatai községek és népesebb puszták, telepek szerint*, Magyar Kir. Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, Budapest, 1912.

Table 2. Population of Banat according to religion in 1900.

County	Total population	Ratio of (%)							
		Roman Catholics	Greek Catholics	Orthodox	Lutherans	Calvinists	Jews	Others	Total
Torontál	609362	46,7	0,6	45,5	3,7	2,0	1,1	0,3	100
Temes	476242	44,0	2,6	46,9	2,5	1,8	2,0	0,1	100
Krassó-Szörény	443001	19,1	4,1	73,5	0,5	1,8	1,0	0,0	100
Total	1528605	37,9	2,2	54,1	2,4	1,9	1,4	0,2	100

Source: *Ibid.*

As the province was inhabited by various peoples, it experienced the competition of several nationalist projects throughout the 19th century. Banat became the playground of Magyar, Romanian and Serbian nation-buildings, to be followed by German nationalism appearing in early 1900s and intensifying in the interwar period. As early as in 1790, a Serbian National Congress was held in Temesvár/Timișoara, which demanded the secession from Hungary and the formation of a separate Serbian crown land from the Southern provinces of the Empire. Serbian-Romanian controversy characterized the Orthodox Church, which led to the formation of national churches in the 1860s. From the Austro-Hungarian Compromise, the Hungarian government increasingly promoted a Magyar nationalist agenda, in particular in schooling and cultural policy and in administrative matters.

Nonetheless, Banat remained a rather peripheral area of national competition. No major national institutions emerged in the region: Serbian national activity centered on Karlóca/Karlovci (the seat of the Orthodox archbishop) and Újvidék/Novi Sad (seat of the cultural association Matica srpska and the only Serbian secondary school in Hungary); Romanian national institutions concentrated rather in Transylvania (Nagyszeben/Sibiu and Brassó/Brașov). The Hungarian government, promoting ethnic

Magyar nationalism, focused also on the territories where nationalist competition was more significant.¹⁸

III. Integrating Banat into National Histories

After Banat had been conquered by the Habsburgs in 1716, it was directly governed by the Viennese authorities. Satisfying the demands of the Hungarian estates in 1779-1780, Empress Maria Theresa dissolved the direct Viennese government and integrated the province into the Kingdom of Hungary (with the exception of its Southern part, which remained a Military Frontier, controlled by the Habsburg military administration). Banat thus arrived to Hungary exactly in the period when Herderian national ideas started to penetrate in the country.¹⁹

The emergence of national ideas included the construction of national historiography, too, which at the same time underwent dramatic change in methodology and institutional framework. History became an academic discipline by the revolution of the German historicist school, whose influence was significant East of the German-speaking lands, too. The revolution in historical scholarship was not limited to methodology but largely influenced its social consequences. History became a key discipline for new social concepts, liberalism, nationalism and democracy.²⁰

Being part of this European trend, Magyar, Romanian and Serbian historians elaborated narratives aiming at conceptualizing national identity, creating national past and space. They created a "glorious history, which was *ancient, continuous, unified and unique*".²¹ As unity was a major objective, the first wave of historiography preferred to ignore provincial history and focused rather on the national level. Therefore, Banat appeared in the romantic historiography of the mid-19th century rarely.

1. Eternal Romanity

Romanian national historiography emerged as a multi-centered enterprise in Moldova, Wallachia and Transylvania.²² Romanian authors elaborated the vision of the unity of Romanian people, albeit living under the sovereignty of different countries. This unity was provided by their language and psyche, which was directly derived from the Romans of Dacia.²³ This historiography concentrated thus on the antiquity and

found its heroes among Wallachian and Moldovan princes, in particular in Michael the Brave, who, for a short time, ruled both provinces and Transylvania, too. Being the demonstration of unity their most important goal, the two most important Romanian historians of the mid-19th century, Mihail Kogălniceanu and Nicolae Bălcescu ignored the Banat. Both of them referred to the region as part of the Roman-Romanian space as an appendix of Transylvania but not on its own right.²⁴

At the same time, Wallachia-based intellectuals originating from Transylvania and Banat elaborated a modern history of Banat. In 1848, August Treboniu Laurian (1810-1881) published the first Romanian history of Banat under the title *Temisiana or a short history of the Banat of Timiș*. Being born in Transylvania, Laurian studied in Cluj, Vienna and Göttingen, moved to Wallachia to become a professor at St Sava College in Bucharest, then at the University there. He was also a founding member and for some six years chairman of the Romanian Academy. Laurian was a devoted Latinist, claiming that the Romanian language and people derived from Latin and the Romans only, therefore Romanians were true heirs of Roman civilization. Hence, for Laurian, the importance of Banat was the fact that it was the first part of the province Dacia occupied by Romans. He also claimed that Banat was Dacia's most Romanized part, thus it preserved the pure Latin-Romanian language most. Further importance was ascribed to the region for its medieval history. Relying on *Gesta Hungarorum*, a 12th century Hungarian chronicle, Laurian claimed the existence of a Christian Romanian state in Banat under Bulgarian suzerainty. This state became part of Hungary in the 11th century but maintained a special form of government. Laurian finished his narrative in 1718, the date which terminated "Turkish despotism" and put Banat under a Christian power. Indeed, as in 1711 Moldova and Wallachia lost their right to choose their own rulers and the High Porte directly appointed their princes (the so-called phanariots), Banat and Transylvania remained the only territories to maintain Christian Romanian civilization. In his later works, Laurian extensively dealt with Romanian history and placed Banat in the Romanian national history.²⁵

A similar approach was elaborated by Vasile Maniu (1824-1901), a Lugos/Lugoj-born historian and politician and émigré in Wallachia. His *Historical-critical and literary dissertation about the origins of Romanians in Traianian Dacia*, published in 1857, was based on the Transylvanian School to argue for Latin-Romanian continuity and primacy. However, Maniu added two important dimensions to the emerging Romanian

narrative. First, he claimed that the medieval “Wallachian districts”, which functioned as a military frontier in Southeast Banat, maintained Romanian autonomy. Second, he claimed the decay of Banat Romanians after Serbian immigration of the 17th century, which led to the formation of the shared Serbian-Romanian Orthodox Church.²⁶

These arguments became the core of the Romanian national reading of Banat history in the following decades. Alexandru Dimitrie Xenopol (1847-1920), the doyen of Romanian historiography of the late 19th century, thus narrated Banat in the framework of Romanian unity. For Xenopol, Banat’s contribution to the Romanian nation was the maintenance of its Romanian population since the antiquity, its statehood in the 9th century and its Medieval autonomy.²⁷ He also claimed the direct geographical connection between Banat and Transylvania on the one hand, and Banat and Wallachia on the other.²⁸ This claim was reinforced by the influential linguist, Bogdan Hasdeu:

From all regions inhabited today by Romanian North of the Danube, Banat and Oltenia, with their extension to the communes of Hațeg region, are the only ones which represent an uninterrupted geographic-historical continuation of the Romanian people, a nest from where Romanization gradually extended to the lands of the West, North and East.²⁹

2. Banat into Hungary

Magyar Romantic-national historiography boomed from the early 19th century. The most important authors, Mihály Horváth and László Szalay, argued for the unity of Hungary and Transylvania and stressed the liberal constitutional tradition of the country.³⁰ Particular regions did not receive special attention; Magyar historians rather focused on a comprehensive history of the country in order to justify the liberal and national demands of home rule within the Habsburg Empire. The only region receiving particular attention was Transylvania.³¹

For the doyen of romantic Magyar historiography, Mihály Horváth, Banat was interesting only when discussing the questions of sovereignty. Horváth thus praised the 9th century Magyars to conquer to province and condemned the Habsburg rulers and Serbs for the violating Hungarian national interest and law by separating Banat.³²

Banat remained a forgotten piece of Magyar national historiography until the 1860s. The first author to discuss Banat in Magyar national

narrative was Frigyes Pesty (1823-1899), a native of Temesvár/Timișoara. Despite lacking any formal university studies, Pesty became member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1859 and soon emerged as a leading expert on medieval Hungarian history. His work was largely concentrated around the history of Banat and Southern Hungary.³³

Pesty's main aim was at proving the unitary and Magyar character of Banat in the Middle Ages. He claimed that the 'Wallachian districts' were not autonomous bodies but were proper parts of the Hungarian royal administration. Furthermore, he questioned their Romanian character: according to Pesty, these districts were rarely called Wallachian, their nobility spoke exclusively Magyar and their 'ordinary' Romanian population also knew Magyar.³⁴ Pesty also discussed Banat of Severin, a medieval administrative unit around modern Turnu-Severin. Pesty entered into polemics with Romanian authors, particularly with Hasdeu, claiming Hungarian suzerainty over Severin. For Pesty, the Severin *kenez* was just a clerk in the Hungarian royal administration; therefore, he regarded the claims of Romanian historiography about the Romanian statehood and autonomy absurd.³⁵

Pesty also criticized the very geographical concept of Banat. As early as in 1868, he argued for the invalidity of the term 'Banat' or 'Bánság'. During the Middle Ages, there had been several *bani* governing particular territories along the Southern border of Hungary, claimed Pesty, yet a *banus* of Temes never appeared in the sources. Therefore, the 'ignorant' and 'malevolent' Austrian administration of the 17th and 18th centuries coined the term Banat without any historical background, in order to justify the secession of the region from Hungary proper. Furthermore, the narrative of Romanian authors to put Banat into the united Romanian space disregarding political borders, was also vehemently attacked by Pesty, who insisted on the importance of state borders. The political motivation of Pesty was clear: he regarded Banat an ancient Hungarian territory, therefore its separate administration and the Military Frontier were unhistorical and immoral to him. As a historian, Pesty firmly believed that historical arguments played a significant role in political decisions, therefore he did not hesitate to make historiography serving politics. It is noteworthy that Pesty entered into polemics in a similar way with Croatian historiography over the validity of the term Slavonia (the Eastern part of Croatia around Osijek). He claimed that the incorrect usage of Slavonia enabled Croatia to secede this region from Hungary proper and justified instead Croatian rule.³⁶

From the 1870s the controversy of Magyar and Romanian historiography entered into a new phase. In 1871, Austrian linguist Robert Rösler published a book about medieval Romanian history claiming that the Romanian language had come into being on the Balkans and Romanians immigrated North of the Danube in the second millennium only, making Magyars older inhabitants of Transylvania than Romanians. Magyar scholars immediately subscribed for this theory. At the same time, positivist source criticism claimed the unreliability of *Gesta Hungarorum*, including the very existence of any polity in Banat by the 10th century. The outcome was that Magyar historians now rejected any Romanian presence in Banat until the High Middle Ages. Therefore, both the origins, and, based on Pesty, the subsequent medieval history of Banat could be seen as predominantly Magyar.

3. Reading Serbian Banat

The emerging Serbian master narrative discussed the history of Banat in even less details. The most important topic of the Serbian historiography was the medieval Serbian state, its failure at the battle of Kosovo and its modern resurrection. Regarding the history of Serbians in Hungary, the privileges of Emperor Leopold I and Orthodox Church history were discussed in detail. The main goals of this historiography were the demonstration of unity the Serbian people living in four different states (Serbia, Montenegro, Habsburg Empire, Ottoman Empire) and their just demands for sovereignty. Banat never received a considerable attention in this narrative: during the Middle Ages, it did not belong to Serbia, and the privileges did not differentiate between regions of Hungary, therefore a separate discussion of Banat was not needed.³⁷

IV. Writing Provincial History *in loco*

1. Enlightened Forerunners

At the time of its conquest, Vienna had very limited knowledge about the Banat. To support the colonization of the province, several civil servants drafted descriptions of the region, which routinely included a basic historical introduction.³⁸ The best study was written in 1774 by Johann Jakob Ehrler, a financial clerk in Temesvár/Timișoara. Written to

support the cameralist policy of the Austrian administration, the history of the province received only minor attention in Ehrler's work. He had to cope with a practical challenge: during the Ottoman period and the Habsburg-Ottoman wars actually all local archives were destroyed. Neither did Ehrler use contemporary secondary literature (the works of Hungarian historians Gyögy Pray or Mathias Bél). The study opens with a short historical overview which justifies the Habsburg rule over Banat. Relying on classical authors, Ehrler depicted the ancient glory of the province, which was followed by barbarism and started to flourish again only by the Habsburg acquisition.³⁹ Ehrler's work remained unpublished; despite it was used by Habsburg authorities, it did not make any impact on Banat historiography.

Instead of Ehrler, it was Francesco Grisellini (1717-1787), a Venice-born Austrian scholar and clerk, who emerged as the founding father of Banat studies.⁴⁰ As a freelancer scholar, Grisellini spent three years between 1774 and 1777 in Banat, and in 1780 published his *Attempt of a political and natural history of the Banat of Temesvár*. Grisellini justified his book by a typical enlightened reasoning: only few lands in Europe were as unknown as Banat, despite it deserved attention by its booming civilization standards, diverse population and the remains of the Roman times. During the years Grisellini lived in Banat, he travelled most of the region and compiled all available information of the past of Banat, ranging from ancient authors to the most up-to-date historians. He particularly praised the Habsburg administration to terminate the Ottoman barbarism and tyranny and to civilize the province.⁴¹

2. The Dawn of National Historiography

By the mid-19th century, it was still Grisellini the only author, who discussed the history of Banat at the length of a book. However, neither Grisellini's old-fashioned method (use of few original sources), nor its ideological background (supra-national, Austrian enlightenment) satisfied the emerging Banat intelligentsia, which increasingly found itself influenced by national master narratives. Despite of the Banat origin of several authors, these narratives were produced in the national centers of knowledge in institutions whose main task was to elaborate national sciences. National academies of sciences, universities in the national capitals and in the Serbian case the Matica srpska and the Orthodox Church provided the institutional framework of the production of these

narratives. As a peripheral and multicultural borderland, Banat rarely received significant consideration in these narratives. Therefore, these visions did not meet the demand of local intellectuals who aimed at writing a more precise history of the region. "Even though recently admirable works have been published about the history of Hungary, not each Banater can be expected to form a clear picture of the past of his *Heimat* out of the mass [of the literature]. Yet, this knowledge is a must for any cultivated person", claimed for instance Johann Heinrich Schwicker, author of an early Banat-monograph.⁴²

Yet, after the publication of Grisellini's *Attempt*, almost a century passed without significant results. In the *Vormärz* two authors appeared, though the quality of their works definitely lagged behind that of Grisellini. In 1826-27, the Orthodox priest and civil servant in the Habsburg and Orthodox Church administrations, Nicolae Stoica de Hațeg (1751-1833), wrote a *Chronicle of Banat*. Being born to a clerical family in Southwest Banat, Stoica attended different schools of the region but never studied at university. His *Chronicle* was an outdated combination of medieval world chronicles, *annales* and the enlightened scientific approach. Similar to medieval chroniclers, Stoica started his work by the Biblical story of creation of the world and guided his readers through ancient history, to be followed by an inconsistent, *annales*-style history of the Byzantine Empire, Hungary, Transylvania and the two Romanian principalities. In fact, the history of Banat is discussed in detail only from the 18th century, partly as a compilation of Grisellini and some contemporaries, partly as his own memoirs. Compared to Grisellini and Stoica's Transylvanian Romanian contemporaries, such as Petru Maior, Samuil Micu-Klein and Gheorghe Șincai, The *Chronicle* was a clearly primitive attempt. As it remained unpublished, it could not function as the starting point of any modern narrative on Banat.⁴³

The other author of the period was Ágoston Bárány (1798-1849), lawyer and clerk in the Torontál County administration. Bárány was born in Miskolc, a town in central Hungary; after leaving his hometown for Torontál, he became an advocate of Hungarian patriotism in the Southern counties.⁴⁴ His *Dawn of Torontál County* (1845) and *Memory of Temes County* (1848) were the first works to discuss the history of the region in Hungarian. Despite Bárány was member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, his works remained marginal and forgotten pieces. Bárány's method was anachronistic and naive: he merely extracted the evidence concerning the history of Banat found at some older authors

of Hungarian history and completed them by some data of Grisellini. Bárány's compilation was without any critical stance whatsoever. Yet, Bárány's primitive methodology offered an important novelty: he put the region in the framework of Hungarian national history by claiming Magyar demographic domination throughout the Middle Ages.⁴⁵

3. Transition to modern historiography

The massive production of local historical works started in the 1850s and 1860s. These decades brought fundamental changes in the political environment of Banat. The 1848 revolution brought first liberal reforms but it soon turned into a bloody civil war, which hit particularly the cities Temesvár/Timișoara and Fehértemplom/Bela Crkva. After the failure of the Hungarian war of independence, the neo-absolutist Austrian government seceded Banat from Hungary and together with some other territories in its West turned it into a crown land under the name Serbian Voivodeship and Banat of Temeschwar. This crown land did not last long, as it was abolished in 1860 and reintegrated into Hungary. In the same year, a centralized, restricted liberal constitution was inaugurated, slightly modified in the following year, turning the Habsburg Monarchy into a federal state. This structure was abolished in 1867, when the Hungarian political elite was able to ensure Hungary an almost complete home-rule within the Monarchy. The other important event in Banat was the breakup of the Orthodox Church. For Romanian national leaders the Serbian domination in their common Orthodox Church was the most painful grievance. In 1864, a Romanian Orthodox Church with the seat of Nagyszeben/Sibiu was established, to be sanctioned by the Hungarian Parliament in 1868.⁴⁶

The first historiographic result of the period was the *Monograph of the Royal Free City of Temesvár*, written by the city's mayor Johann Nepomuk Preyer (1805-1888).⁴⁷ Preyer, a prolific author and politician, promoted modest liberal reforms before the revolution, found easily compromise with post-1849 absolutism, and became a civil servant in liberal post-1867 Hungary. His *Monograph* oscillated between Habsburg *Kaisertreue* and Hungarian *Landespatriotismus*. His methodology was unoriginal, accidental compilation of already existing literature. In order to comply with censorship, Preyer simply did not mention some politically hot events, mostly those related to the 1848 civil war.⁴⁸

Similar strategy and oscillation can be observed at those two works, which discussed the history of Banat, first time since Grisellini. Both of them

were published in 1861 (which means that they were written in the 1850s) by young authors as their academic debut; both authors were of German origin, born in Banat. The first one was Leonhard Böhm (1833-1924), a native of Fehértemplom/Bela Crkva, a town in the Military Frontier. Böhm came from a family of artisans, attended the Piarist gymnasium in Szeged but the 1848 revolution and civil war prevented him from finishing secondary education. He never attended university; instead, worked as a smith in Vienna and several other towns of Austria. After returning to his hometown, Böhm started his literary career.⁴⁹ His first piece, *History of the Banat of Temes*, was published in 1861.⁵⁰ The other work, published in the same year, was the *History of the Temeser Banat* by Johann Heinrich Schwicker (1839-1902), an elementary school teacher in Nagybecskerek/Zrenjanin.⁵¹ Schwicker came from a family of rural intelligentsia. His poor financial conditions prevented him from higher studies, thus he became school teacher and by self-training gymnasium teacher.⁵²

The employed methods of Böhm and Schwicker were relatively similar. None of them relied on original sources; instead, they extensively used Grisellini and filled the gaps of medieval and early modern Banat by evidence of Hungarian history in general. Schwicker terminated his narrative in the year 1780, the incorporation of Banat into Hungary, in order to avoid judgments of politically hot issues, but Böhm was daring enough to write until his very days. These methods earned them the severe criticism of Frigyes Pesty. Pesty criticized the title of both works, as for him only the term South Hungary was acceptable. He also remarked the low quality of both works, demonstrated their several factual errors and the lack of original sources. Neither Böhm, nor Schwicker “stood on the level of our contemporary scholarship”, summarized Pesty.⁵³

While Pesty’s academic criticism contained plenty of fair points, he went further to accuse Böhm of political bias as advocate of a centralized Austrian identity (*Gross-Österreich*).⁵⁴ Despite being published in 1861, Böhm’s 700 pages long work was finished in August 1860, i.e. during Austrian neo-absolutism, when freedom of speech was severely restricted. Böhm’s *History* contains several points demonstrating his Habsburg loyalty: he highly praised Habsburg rulers for liberating the province from the Ottomans and bringing population and civilization. Moreover, discussing the 1848 revolution Böhm accused Lajos Kossuth of dictatorship and terror; yet, any other narrative in the late 1850s was just impossible in neo-absolutist Austria. On the other hand, Böhm clearly welcomed the 1779 integration of Banat into the Hungarian “fatherland”,

praised “the noble Hungarian nation” but criticized the still existing Military Frontier for its anachronism and urged its demilitarization (which practically meant integration into Hungary and Croatia, respectively, and was a major demand of the Magyar political elite).⁵⁵ Therefore, rather being a blind supporter of Austria, Böhm oscillated between Hungarian *Landespatriotismus* and Habsburg loyalty. The same can be said regarding Schwicker, though in his *History* the Hungarian loyalty was less dominant.

Reacting on the changing political situation and the negative responses, Böhm re-formulated his work in 1864 and published its second edition in 1868.⁵⁶ The second edition is remarkably different from the first one. Its academic quality was definitely higher: he corrected several factual mistakes to which Pesty referred to, the references became clearer and the chapters discussing the history after 1718 were abandoned to avoid hot issues. More important is that its commitment to Hungary became even clearer. Böhm stressed liberal-democratic values more, changed the language from German to Hungarian and choose a new title: *Particular History of South Hungary or the So-Called Banat*, in order to conform Pesty’s demand. Yet, this turned out partly: now it was Kálmán Thaly, secretary of the Hungarian Historical Association, who criticized Böhm’s title to equal Banat with South Hungary. Nonetheless, another reviewer praised it as a true patriotic work.⁵⁷

Böhm’s Hungarian commitment was also shown by his later activities. He became an active member of the Southern Hungarian Association for History and Archeology, published the monographs about Fehértemplom/Bela Crkva and Pancsova/Pančevo. These works were more accurate, as Böhm utilized plenty of local original sources; their evaluation was therefore also much more positive. He also entered the local political arena and was elected twice mayor of Fehértemplom/Bela Crkva with the support of the governing Liberal Party.⁵⁸ Schwicker chose a different career: he moved to Budapest, became professor of German at the Technical University and a parliamentary representative of the Transylvanian Saxon commune Kereszténysziget/Grossau/Cristian. He intensively published about Southern Hungarian history, the German and Serbian minorities in Hungary. In his agenda, he combined liberal values with national equality.⁵⁹

In the 1860s, when Banat was again part of Hungary, a modestly liberal constitution was inaugurated but ethnic nationalism was not on the agenda yet, the position Böhm and Schwicker offered, seemed the most appropriate for German-speaking Banat intellectuals. Though Böhm’s

commitment to Hungary and Hungarian liberal politics was clearly stronger than that of Schwicker, both of them can be labeled *Hungari*, as explained by Horst Haselsteiner:

The [*Hungarus*] concept was born of the term for fatherland, *patria*. This *patria* formed the basis for a multifaceted one-state patriotism in the Kingdom of Hungary. [...] They wanted to maintain the difference between new nationalism, the inflated form of which they rejected, and their healthy patriotism, clearly preserved and established as a civic goal for Hungary, one worth striving for.⁶⁰

While Böhm and Schwicker elaborated a narrative to support liberal and *Hungarus* Hungary, Nicolae Tincu-Veila (1814-1867), an Orthodox priest and professor at the Seminary of Versec/Vršac drafted the history of the province to promote the foundation of an independent Romanian Orthodox Church. His work, the *Little Church History, Political and National* relied on the Latinist school to claim the historical primacy and demographic domination of Romanians in Banat.⁶¹ However, in contrary to the centralist views of Laurian and Maniu, Tincu-Veila was the first Romanian author to argue for a separate “Banatism”, different not only from the Danubian principalities but also from Transylvania. In Tincu-Veila’s view, this difference was the result of administrative autonomy Banat uninterruptedly experienced since the Middle Ages until the very days of the author. First, Hungarian king St Stephen ensured Banat autonomy within Hungary. Andrew II even provided the same rank to Banat as to Transylvania. Later, Wallachian military districts formed the administrative means of Banat’s autonomy. After the failure of medieval Hungary and Transylvanian rule over Eastern Banat, these districts were not incorporated into Transylvania proper but were governed by the *banus* of Lugoj and Caransebes. The Habsburg government followed up the autonomy of Banat as a separate district and Military Frontier. The autonomous position of Banat enabled the numerical majority of Romanian population and its flourishing culture, reflected in the numerous Romanian Orthodox monasteries, about which Tincu-Veila provides a detailed description. These arguments were used by Tincu-Veila to prove that the Romanians were independent from Serbian Church hierarchy throughout the Middle Ages until the very immigration of Serbian in the late 17th century. Even after that, the Serbian Church had not obtained any right to dominate the

Romanian Church, therefore the shared Orthodox Church was seen by Tincu-Veila as illegal and immoral.⁶²

4. Local History in Magyar National Frames

The year 1867 terminated the one and half decades long experiment of centralized Austria. Hungary became almost completely independent from Austria regarding her inner policy. This home rule was used for liberal reforms (among them the regulation of the Orthodox Churches and the abolition of the anachronistic Military Frontier) and at an increasing pace for national homogenization under the umbrella of ethnic Magyar nationalism. The political landscape of Banat was ruled by the Liberal Party, which governed Hungary throughout the period with the exception of a few years in the 1900s.⁶³ The Liberals promoted the Compromise and the maintenance of the Dualist Monarchy, liberal values and Magyar nationalism. The growing power of ethnic nationalist visions dismantled the *Hungarus* concept. The Serbian-Romanian controversy disappeared, to be replaced by government-based Magyar nationalism, which became the most important “enemy” of Romanian, Serbian and German nationalist politicians. Nonetheless, unlike in Transylvania, the intertwining of liberalism, the vision of progress and Magyar nationalism was appealing for several members of the German, Serbian and Romanian middle-classes. National tensions divided the society of Banat definitely at a lower scale than in other parts of the Hungary and Austria.

Beside the political conditions, the other factor significantly influencing Banat historiography was its ambiguous professionalization. Banat did not have any lay institution for higher education and the diocesan seminaries obviously did not aim at historical research. As Pesty's attack of Böhm and Schwicker demonstrated, the lag of professionalization seriously limited amateur scholarly endeavors. To overcome this difficulty, in 1872 a Southern Hungarian Association for History and Archeology (*Délmagyarországi Történelmi és Régészeti Társulat*, hereafter DTRT) was established. The initiative came from Zsigmond Ormós, lord lieutenant of Temes/Timiș County, himself an amateur art historian and member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Members of the DTRT were local landholders, members of free professions, civil servants and clerics.⁶⁴

From 1875, the association published the journal *Történelmi és régészeti értesítő* (Historical and archeological bulletin). In 1891 the Southern Hungarian Museum for History and Archeology was opened,

whose collection significantly increased in the following decades.⁶⁵ In the context of the Kingdom of Hungary, all these achievements were remarkable: the DTRT was one of the first and largest of local historical societies in the country, the museum was definitely the first outside the capital Budapest to receive an own building and the journal emerged as a solid forum of local historiography. In the following decades, the DTRT functioned as the only institution organizing local scholarship, therefore it dominated the scholarly community of Banat.⁶⁶

Despite its membership included representatives of all major ethnic and religious groups of Banat, the DTRT clearly subscribed for the dominant state ideology, the so-called *magyar állameszme* ("Magyar state idea"). This concept centered on liberal values, progress and the united political body of all citizens of the country but at the same time promoted ethnic Magyar nationalism and supported the Magyar primacy in political life. Zsigmond Ormós, founder and chairman of the DTRT, was for nearly two decades the lord lieutenant of Temes County; in this function he obviously believed in the *magyar állameszme*. As representatives of the middle-classes, so did most members of the DTRT, too. The very name of the association and the museum confirmed this concept well: it read Southern Hungarian, i.e. a mere geographic part of Hungary; the term Banat, indicating potential autonomy, was never used.

The *Történelmi és régészeti értesítő* was published for more than four decades; its detailed analysis of the discourse thus definitely exceeds the limits of this paper. Instead, the DTRT's most important author, Jenő Szentkláray (1843-1924) will be introduced here. Szentkláray was a Catholic priest, teacher and journalist, member of the Hungarian and the Serbian Academy of Sciences, founding member and secretary of the DTRT. Szentkláray came from a Bunjevac family in West Banat; he Magyarized his original name Nedits in 1867.⁶⁷

As a summary of his views, in 1912 he authored a *History of Temes County* for a comprehensive monograph of the county. In this work, Szentkláray applied the Magyar master narrative on Temes County. The Roman period appears here only briefly; instead, the high culture of the Huns and Avars, two peoples Szentkláray believed to be related to the Magyars, is praised in details. For Szentkláray, Banat actually entered the Western world by the foundation of the Christian Kingdom of Hungary. Until the Ottoman conquest, Banat remained a solid part of Hungary; needless to say that Szentkláray did not know about any Romanian privileged territory in the region. Despite he acknowledged the merits of the

post-1716 Habsburg administration to introduce schooling and developing infrastructure, he severely criticized Habsburg rulers for seceding Banat from Hungary. Szentkláray treated the Serbians as 14th, the Romanians as 13th century immigrants to the county; both peoples were characterized as rather barbaric, without major cultural contribution to the county. He furthermore harshly criticized the Serbian national movement, its demand for autonomy in 1790 and the civil war in 1848-1849.⁶⁸

Discussing the ancient and medieval history of Krassó County, he elaborated the same narrative about the culturally and morally advanced Huns and Avars and the uninterrupted sovereignty of the Kingdom of Hungary. Here, the Romanian population of the county was accused lack of culture and morals, indeed, of undermining the Hungarian state structure.⁶⁹

In spite of his affiliation to the *magyar állameszme*, Szentkláray was not a chauvinist in the modern sense of the word. Rather he believed in the state as the only valid frame of morals, civilization and progress. Similar to many of his contemporaries, he was convinced that only Magyars were able to manage statehood in the region due to their cultural supremacy. He judged multiculturalism by this token: the held Serbian and Romanian demands of autonomy illegitimate and backward.⁷⁰ This, however, did not mean that he disdained their culture. Indeed, Szentkláray was a pioneer in Hungary to research into Serbian history. Based on his research in the archives of the Patriarchate of Karlovci, he published the *Historical Memories of the Serbian Monasteries in Southern Hungary*.⁷¹ He justified his research by referring to the ancient Christian heritage of the Orthodoxy and the role these monasteries played in the formation of morals among the Serbians of Hungary. For this work, Szentkláray was elected honorary member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and the Matica srpska.⁷²

Loyalty to the state was definitely the default idea among members of the DTRT. Their commitment to ethnic Magyar nationalism varies more: several authors became advocates of an ethnic Magyar viewpoint, while some others showed respect for all ethnic and religious groups. Among this latter group the most important person was Felix Milleker, teacher and founder of the local museum in Versec/Vršac and author of more 300 works discussing local history, who shared a strong loyalty both to the state and to the Banat Germans, esteeming Serbian history, too.⁷³

5. Competing Visions

The narrative based on the *magyar állameszme* dominated the landscape of Banat historiography. Its rule was, however, not complete. Romanian, Serbian and German intellectuals authored some works to challenge the Magyar discourse. The lack of any competent academic institution outside of the DTRT, however, prevented an effective challenge.

The most active was the Romanian side. Patriciu Drăgălina (1849-1917), a geographer and professor at the Orthodox Teacher Training College in Karánsebes/Caransebeș, authored a book *From the History of the Banat of Severin*. His book was dedicated to the memory of the Romanian military frontier regiment, on whose territory he had been born. Despite he claimed that modern historiography was hostile to the Romanians of Banat, he did not make any original research. Instead, he summed up the already existing literature and combined it with the Romanian master narrative to claim comprehensive autonomy of the medieval Wallachian districts and the Banat of Severin.⁷⁴

A similar method, though at a more precise level, was used by Gheorghe Popovici (1862-1927), whose *History of the Romanians of Banat* was the zenith of regional Romanian historiography in the prewar period. Having studied theology in Czernowitz/Chernivtsi and Vienna, Popovici became professor at the Karánsebes/Caransebeș Theological Seminary, to be followed by appointment as protopope of Lugos/Lugoj. As a representative of the Romanian National Party, he was elected to the Hungarian Parliament in 1905 and 1906. Popovici's *History* is a solid work based on the latest Romanian and Hungarian literature. In the foreword, the author made clear that his goal was to provide Banat Romanians with their national history, to replace the foreign and malevolent publications. Hence, he accepted the backbone of Romanian historiography: the Roman continuity thesis and the uninterrupted Romanian population since then. However, he did not claim an uninterrupted autonomy of the Banat Romanians. Two years later, the Romanian Academy of Sciences honored him by corresponding membership.⁷⁵

Romanian nationalism was definitely present in Dualist Banat, but due to its weak infrastructure it could not elaborate an efficient narrative. Neither came into being an effective Serbian narrative. Studies on Banat in the period are extremely rare; the few publications discussed the history of the Orthodox Church.⁷⁶

The chances of a German national narrative were even worse. Despite a German national appeared in South Hungary by the end of the 19th century, it could not consolidate until the 1920s.⁷⁷ In fact, an activist of this movement, Franz Wettel (1854-1938) was the only author to narrate the history of Banat in German nationalist terms. Wettel was a bookseller, editor and landholder without any formal higher education.⁷⁸ His *Biographic Sketches*, a collection of short biographies of important people of the Banat based on already existing literature. It aimed at “renewing the memory of memorable men who contributed to the Banat, [...] and by that awakening and maintaining the love of *Heimat*”.⁷⁹ Yet, the book consists of biographies of Germans only (with the exception of the Habsburg-Italian Grisellini and Radoslav Edler von Radić, a Serbian cleric loyal to the Habsburg state). The novelty Wettel offered was the narrative: he introduced the history of the Banat as a German enterprise, where civilization and culture was brought by Germans only. Contemporary Magyar historians, among them Jenő Szentkláray, thus accused Wettel of unpatriotism, pan-German nationalism and held the book worthless.⁸⁰

V. Conclusion

This study opens with the presumption that German historiography had a definite influence on historians in Banat. The fact that none of the analyzed historians studied in Germany, does not undermine this concept. Important features of Banat historiography, such as source publications, source criticism and the obsession with the state were all the methods German historiography elaborated during the 19th century. These methods arrived to Banat not directly from Germany but through the transmission of Hungarian universities and academic literature. The DTTR clearly followed the German patterns, referring to the flourishing regional learned societies in Germany as a positive model.⁸¹

Yet, while the methods arrived, the content did so only partially. The examination of the Banat historiography, similar to its Transylvanian counterpart, showed that local historians did use the national framework and did aim at contributing to national scholarship. The fact, that the level of this contribution varied, does not mean question the demand of participating in national scholarship.

Comparing the national and local narratives, one can observe both similar and different features. The whole narration, the topics, the potential

political consequences are strikingly similar. Magyar authors, both in Budapest and in Temesvár/Timișoara, claimed Magyar cultural and political supremacy and questioned the cultural impact of the Habsburg period. They denied the continuity of other ethnic groups, postulated an almost pure Magyar population in the Middle Ages, and underestimated Banat's medieval administrative structures. In contrast to this narrative, Romanian authors, both in Romania and in Banat, argued for the Romanians' uninterrupted continuity since the Roman times and most of them claimed the administrative autonomy of Romanians in various periods of the Middle Ages. They also postulated the unity of the Romanian people on both sides of the Carpathian Mountains. Serbian authors rather focused on church history and the history of Serbian privileges, in order to demonstrate a valid argument for autonomy. The only German nationalist author argued for the German cultural supremacy in the region.

The way Banat authors narrated the place of the region, was thus clearly influenced by their political commitment. Banat was seen as an elusive "non-region" by Magyar historians, who claimed that the particular features of Banat were the results of the Ottoman decay and the artificial Habsburg period. They did not even use the very term Banat but insisted on South Hungary, an expression suggesting a mere geographic delineation in united Hungary. In contrast to this, Serbian and Romanian authors offered a picture which clearly differentiated Banat from the default history of Hungary, yet, this narrative was used again as a tool for purposes of national politics. German-speaking historians of the 1860s, whose Banat histories demonstrated a narrative of multiple loyalties, were replaced by an author using the region again for national agitation. To put it short: whether regional differences to the national centers were claimed or not, all these were determined by national goals. This is a clear difference to Germany, where such an intensive overlap between region and nation existed only in the very center of the *Kaiserreich*, Prussia.

The claim delivered by Mályusz about the central administration of Hungary is definitely an important reason to explain this difference. First, political actors in provincial Hungary were far less powerful could articulate their interests in a definitely less nuanced way than their counterparts in Germany. Second, associations related to the courts of the provinces and the dense network of universities (as a legacy of the territorial fragmentation) were also unknown in Hungary.

Beyond these, the obvious weakness of Hungarian *Bildungsbürgertum* compared to contemporary Germany was also a major obstacle to

articulate regional identity. Hungarian middle-class was definitely more dependent on the state than the German one, hence the stronger reliance on state resources and ideology.

The ultimate reason for the virtually non-existence of a regional understanding of history in pre-World War I Banat was, however, multiculturalism. Due to this diversity, four competing nationalisms appeared in Banat, using historical scholarship for their particular purposes. Only a few historians were able to take a nationally indifferent position (the most prominent being Felix Milleker, who in foremost was a Banater); all others offered their services to construct memory of larger entities, i.e. nations. The mutually irreconcilable visions of the national elites thus prevented an understanding of the past of Banat in regional terms.

NOTES

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UNE FORME QUI VIENT À L'ESPRIT. COMPOSITION ET IMPROVISATION DANS LA MUSIQUE DU *PERIYA MĒḶAM* (INDE DU SUD)*

Cet article explore la notion de forme musicale dans la musique des hautboïstes et percussionnistes du *periya mēḶam* – musique classique (karnatique) jouée en Inde du Sud dans les temples hindous de hautes castes.¹ Nous tenterons de montrer combien les notions de composition et d'improvisation fonctionnent ici de paire et répondent à des exigences techniques et pratiques à la fois distinctes et complémentaires. À travers des analyses concrètes, issues de données de terrain recueillies au Tamil Nadu, nous tenterons de mettre en avant l'ensemble des mécanismes qui, du stade d'élève à celui de maître, permettent aux musiciens d'incorporer progressivement toute la subtilité des formes envisagées.

Mots clés: forme musicale, composition, improvisation, musique karnatique, Inde du Sud

À l'examen des premiers enregistrements de *periya mēḶam*² que j'ai effectué, en particulier dans un contexte rituel, une première question ne manquait d'émerger : à quel moment débutait ou finissait telle pièce et quel était le découpage réalisé par les musiciens. Bien qu'une certaine proximité avec la musique karnatique me permettait de repérer les changements de mode (*rāga*) ou de cycle métrique (*tāla*), ces repères, pourtant considérés comme pertinents par les sonneurs-batteurs, ne m'étaient pas toujours suffisants : des pièces distinctes mais utilisant le même mode ou le même cycle s'enchaînaient parfois ; une même pièce pouvait se développer sur plusieurs cycles ou plusieurs modes ; enfin, aucune pièce ne semblait stable d'une performance à l'autre : des éléments, voire des parties

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entières, pouvaient en effet être ajoutés, retirés ou modifiés en fonction du contexte ou de choix individuels. L'indétermination que j'éprouvais alors me montrait d'emblée combien une pièce pouvait à la fois être reconnue et précisément nommée sans pour autant être insérée de façon prédéterminée au sein d'une succession type ou totalement fixée d'un point de vue structurel.

On trouve là, en filigrane, cette conception toute indienne de la forme (*rūpa*³) qui, par analogie à ce que la nature nous montre, se décline autant de façon unique que plurielle : l'eau qui dans la rivière s'écoule, identique et toujours renouvelée ; l'arbre, ces ramifications et leurs métamorphoses cycliques etc. On pense bien sûr, dans le cadre du temple śivaïte, à l'étonnante multiplicité des formes divines : forme (*mūrti*) du saint des saints, déjà diversement représentée (anthropomorphique, phallique, géométrique) ; manifestations de cette forme au sein du temple en la présence de *liṅga* (représentation phallique du dieu Śiva) ; formes mobiles et processionnelles des divinités. Appliquée au domaine musical, cette démultiplication des formes renvoie davantage que pour d'autres domaines à des interrogations touchant à l'architectonique, à la construction, aux combinatoires : qu'est-ce qui est fixe ou au contraire ne l'est pas ? Comment les musiciens varient-ils une forme donnée ? Selon quels procédés techniques, quels outils conceptuels, quel cheminement cognitif ? C'est à ces quelques questions, qui touchent directement au rapport composition/improvisation, que nous tenterons de répondre dans cet article. Nous laisserons toutefois de côté, afin de rester dans des limites raisonnables, le contexte rituel et socioreligieux à distance.

Le rôle de l'apprentissage⁴

Dès ses premières leçons, l'élève, l'apprenti, le petit joueur de *nāgasvaram*, via la solmisation, la battue de cycles métriques et le maniement de son instrument, intègre des habitus et des réflexes d'ordre formels : repère de contours mélodico-rythmiques, mémorisation de combinaisons et de gestes types, reconnaissance de microstructures etc. L'enseignement, pour une grande part, semble en effet élaboré et conçu dans une logique d'expansion formelle : c'est en avançant que les formes, à l'horizon, commencent à prendre corps⁵.

Le système sargam : solmisation et notation

Le terme *sargam* (des abréviations du nom complet des quatre premières notes de la gamme : *sa ri ga ma*) renvoie autant à la solmisation (où les syllabes *sa ri ga ma pa da ni* correspondent à des hauteurs de son) qu'à la notation musicale qui en découle. Il permet à l'élève, dès les toutes premières leçons, de relier concrètement des noms à des degrés chantés (puis écrits) ce qui lui facilite grandement le passage à l'instrument : le souffle et l'articulation linguale remplacent alors la voix et les doigts les syllabes. Il naît ainsi, par imprégnation, mimétisme et mémorisation, une forme d'interaction ou d'interrelation entre le nom d'une note, sa hauteur (relative) et un doigté. On trouve ainsi des correspondances du type (figure 2) : *sa* ↔ tonique (à l'oreille) ↔ doigté 1 (deux premiers trous de jeu bouchés) ↔ noté « S » ; *pa* ↔ quinte juste (à l'oreille) ↔ doigté 5 (cinq premiers trous de jeu bouchés) ↔ noté « P » etc. L'adéquation est d'autant plus parfaite entre solmisation et technique digitale que ni l'une ni l'autre ne distinguent entre les deux valeurs d'une note (lorsque celle-ci est bémolisée ou diésée) puisque la différence est ici respectivement réalisée dans le placement de la voix et la nuance du souffle, contrairement aux instruments à cordes (*vīṇā*, violon etc.) où le doigté, visualisé ou non par une frette, sera par nature distinct. On aura donc dans tous les cas : *ri* ↔ seconde (majeure ou mineure à l'oreille) ↔ doigté 2 (premier trou de jeu bouché) ↔ noté « R ».

Cette chaîne permanente et immuable d'équivalences entre le nom des notes, les sons et les gestes génère inévitablement des associations entre langage, audition et savoir-faire – une forme de conceptualisation qui ne fonctionne pas seulement comme représentation cognitive des intervalles mais qui permet aussi de délimiter des espaces, de repérer des séries, de compter, de scinder, de découper etc. Ce que ne manque nullement de faire le dispositif traditionnel de transmission grâce à une collection d'exercices types qui non seulement reposent sur des combinaisons logiques mais sont circonscrits à des successions métriques définies - par cycles complets généralement. Leur notation, qui suit toujours une même présentation, ajoute encore à l'appréhension d'une forme (dessins, contours, contenu). Le *sargam*, et les renvois qu'il suscite chez l'instrumentiste, sert donc ici, plus que nulle part ailleurs, de " modèle opérationnel " ⁶ à la base de tous les développements à venir.

Exercices et pièces didactiques comme exemples de combinaisons mélodiques

Les exercices⁷, appris par cœur à l'aide de la solmisation, permettent une première approche des intervalles musicaux dans un cadre temporel défini et matérialisé par une battue (voir *infra*). Ils permettent aussi, même si l'élève n'en a pas encore conscience, de repérer des combinaisons de notes qui lui serviront ensuite dans le cadre de l'improvisation - libre ou mesurée. On remarquera ainsi, toujours amenés de manière progressive, quelques traits caractéristiques de construction ; j'en relèverai trois essentiellement :

– la symétrie ou l'inversion des séquences⁸ ; ce qui peut être chanté ou joué dans un sens doit pouvoir l'être dans l'autre :

svarāvaḥi 1 (1) : s r g m p d n ś ll ś n d p m g r s

svarāvaḥi 1 (9) : s r g m p m d p = ś n d p m p m g
 s r g m p d n ś ll ś n d p m g r s

alaṃkāra (2) : s r g r s r s r g m = ś n d n ś n ś n d p
 r g m g r g r g m p = n d p d n d n d p m
 g m p m g m g m p d = d p m p d p d p m g
 m p d p m p m p d n = p m g m p m p m g r
 p d n d p d p d n ś = m g r g m g m g r s

– l'expansion par ajout systématique et progressif de séquences ; par exemple :

svarāvaḥi 2 (1) : s r g m p d n ś 1
 ś , , , ś , , , 2
 d n ś ś ś n d p 3
 ↓
 ś n d p m g r s 4

svarāvaḥi 2 (2) : s r g m p d n ś 1
 ś , , , ś , , , 2
 d n ś ṛ ś ś ṛ ś 5
 ś ṛ ś n d p m p 6
 d n ś ṛ ś n d p 3
 ś n d p m g r s 4

svarāvaḥi 2 (3) : s r g m p d n ś 1
 ś , , , ś , , , 2
 d n ś ṛ ḡ ṛ ś ṛ 7
 ś ṛ ś n d p m p 6
 d n ś ṛ ś ś ṛ ś 5
 ś ṛ ś n d p m p 6
 d n ś ṛ ś n d p 3
 ś n d p m g r s 4

– la présentation par paliers successifs - d’un exercice à l’autre – des différents degrés de l’échelle. Par exemple *ri ga ma pa da ni* en prenant la première ligne des *svarāvaḥi* 1 à 7 :

svarāvaḥi 1 (2) : s r s r s r g m
svarāvaḥi 1 (3) : s r g s r g s r
svarāvaḥi 1 (4) : s r g m s r g m
svarāvaḥi 1 (5) s r g m p , s r
svarāvaḥi 1 (6) s r g m p d s r
svarāvaḥi 1 (7) s r g m p d n ,

Une première transformation : le principe du trikāla

Tous les exercices (*svarāvaḥi* 1, 2 et 3, *janta*, *alaṃkāra*) sont systématiquement exécutés selon un principe de diminution et

d'augmentation rythmique⁹ appelé *trikāla* (skt. *tri* « trois », *kāla* « vitesse »). Il s'agit ici de jouer un exercice sans rupture aucune en doublant (2) puis quadruplant (3) sa vitesse initiale (1) tout en conservant le même nombre de cycles : en vitesse 2 l'exercice sera joué deux fois, en vitesse 3 quatre fois¹⁰. L'enchaînement est presque toujours le suivant : **1 2 3** et retour en **1**.

Svarāvalī 1 (11) en *trikāla*

Ādi tāla → | 4 O O | 4 O O

Dans l'enseignement du *nāgasvaram*, le *trikāla* peut aussi être appliqué au *vaṃam*, plus rarement au *gītām* (voir *infra*). Il sera dans tous les cas omniprésent au cours de l'apprentissage et le maître, quelle que soit sa tradition, mettra tout en œuvre pour que cette technique soit au mieux maîtrisée, le but étant qu'elle devienne un automatisme et puisse être réalisée en temps réel.

Il s'agit là d'un point crucial puisqu'une partie du répertoire, en particulier celui des grandes processions, intègre le *trikāla* de façon plus ou moins systématique. On pense au *pallavi* où un thème préalablement composé sert de base à une suite de transformations et de développements types : exposition, *niraval*, *trikāla*, *tisra gati* et *kalpana svara* sur le *rāga* de départ puis en *rāgamālikā* (en changeant de mode mais pas de ton)¹¹. On pense aussi au *mallāri*, forme exclusive au *periya mēḷam* qui repose entièrement sur l'utilisation de ce procédé, tout au moins dans sa partie composée, mesurée et cyclique¹². On notera dans l'exemple suivant que l'ordre de succession est toujours préétabli, condition nécessaire au jeu d'ensemble : **2 3 1 2 3 [2 (2x) 3 (4x) 1 (2x) 2 (2x) 3 (4x)]**.

Mallāri, thème en *trikāla*

Mīśra jāti tripuṣa tāla (11 temps, 7+2+2)

17

2

1

3

Un dernier point mérite d'être mentionné : le *trikāla* permet non seulement le jeu successif et continu d'une mélodie sur différents *tempi* mais d'aborder celle-ci de manières distinctes. Alors qu'un *tempo* lent, voire moyen, permet de jouer les ornements (*gamaka*) avec clarté et précision, un tempo rapide oblige en revanche les musiciens à en réduire le nombre et la qualité et n'en retenir qu'une trame¹³. La fonction du

trikāla n'est de fait pas restreinte à un aspect strictement formel : c'est aussi un moyen rationnel de maîtriser une mélodie sur un tempo rapide en offrant l'illusion d'une fluidité et d'une souplesse propre à un tempo lent (pratiqué au préalable), un moyen, s'il en est, d'appréhender l'agogique dans la vitesse.

Mallāri, thème en vitesse 1 avec *gamaka*

Mīśra jāti tripuṭa tāla (11 temps, 7+2+2)

17

Formes closes : gītam et varṇam

Gītam et *varṇam* sont les seules formes musicales que l'on peut considérer comme fixes ou closes, c'est-à-dire sans modification temporelle, restructuration ou développement de la partition originale lorsque celle-ci est exécutée en temps réel. Elles appartiennent au répertoire didactique et ne sont en principe pas jouées dans le cadre du temple¹⁴.

Les *gītam* (« chanson », « chant »), premières compositions que l'élève apprend, sont des chants de louange dédiés à une divinité du panthéon hindou¹⁵. Ils ne comptent qu'une partie, de *tempo* lent ou modéré, et chaque syllabe du texte renvoie à un degré de l'échelle et à ses éventuels *gamaka*, lesquels n'apparaissent pas sur la partition. Les mélismes,

contrairement à ce qui est généralement admis, n'en sont donc pas tout à fait absents ; ils relèvent simplement de l'enseignement oral (voir annexe : *gītām* 1 et 2, notations et traductions de niveau 1 et 2).

Les *vaṁam*, ou *tāna-vaṁam*, présentent quant à eux de façon complète et condensée les différentes caractéristiques d'un *rāga* : degrés, ornements, formules mélodiques etc. Ils sont ainsi considérés comme de véritables modèles descriptifs offrant aux élèves un savoir technique et mélodique extrêmement fiable. Au-delà, les *vaṁam* sont aussi les premières compositions structurées de manière relativement complexe. Ainsi, pour l'exemple que nous donnons (Tallotte 2007 : 402-403 ; *vaṁam*, traduction et notation de niveau 1), cinq parties [*pallavi* (A), *anupallavi* (B), *ciṭṭa svara* (C), *caraṇam* (D), *ettugaḍa svara* (E)], peuvent être distribuées de la manière suivante : A B C A (1^{ère} ligne) puis D E D A (1^{ère} ligne : quatre premiers temps identiques, *do* en ronde pour les suivants), ce même enchaînement pouvant être repris en doublant, voire en quadruplant la vitesse. Si cette structure, définie par le maître, peut varier d'un enseignement à l'autre, elle ne sera en revanche jamais remise en cause par l'élève : une fois assimilée, aucune liberté, sinon dans l'ornementation, ne sera acceptée lors de l'exécution.

La composition comme forme ouverte

La distinction effectuée dans nombres d'ouvrages¹⁶ entre musique composée et musique improvisée se révèle peu efficace pour l'étude de la musique du *periya mēlam*, et plus généralement de la musique karnatique. Aucune composition du répertoire n'est en effet strictement fixée et les décalages entre versions notées et jouées touchent autant l'ornementation (voir *supra*) que l'organisation formelle. Je relèverai en ce sens deux possibilités : la reconstruction par modification de l'ordonnancement des séquences initiales d'une pièce (particulièrement dans le « petit répertoire rituel ») ainsi que la transformation progressive d'un thème par variation (le principe des *saṅgati* : voir *infra*).

Un jeu de construction : l'exemple du mālai māṛru pāṭṭu

Le « petit répertoire rituel » (Tallotte 2007 : 136-141) compte une majorité de pièces qui se résument à quelques séquences mélodiques que les musiciens envisagent volontiers comme les éléments d'une même

partie – partie qu’ils nomment le plus souvent *pallavi*¹⁷. Ces pièces, hormis les *utsava sampradāya kīrtana* et les *padam*¹⁸, sont dans le meilleur des cas préservées en notation *sargam* par les joueurs de *nāgasvaram* : elles n’ont jamais fait l’objet d’éditions et la stricte circulation orale reste donc le cas le plus fréquent, leur matériel mélodico-rythmique étant plutôt simple, les musiciens ne craignent nullement l’oubli et ne ressentent donc pas le besoin de les noter.

Quoi qu’il en soit, on remarquera d’emblée que la partie dont il est ici question (nommée *pallavi* faute de mieux) n’a rien de statique et peut aisément être subdivisée en séquences distinctes, pour ne pas dire autonomes. Je prendrai ici l’exemple du *mālai māṛru pāṭṭu*, pièce instrumentale (sans texte) jouée par le hautboïste Achalpuram S. Chinnatambi Pillai lors d’une fête viṣṇuite au temple Naṭarāja de Chidambaram. Une fois la pièce enregistrée, et avant d’en effectuer une transcription, je demandai au musicien une version en notation *sargam*. Il ne l’avait jamais notée, ou ne se rappelait pas l’avoir fait, et me la donna séance tenante :

Notation *sargam* et traduction de niveau 1 du *mālai māṛru pāṭṭu*

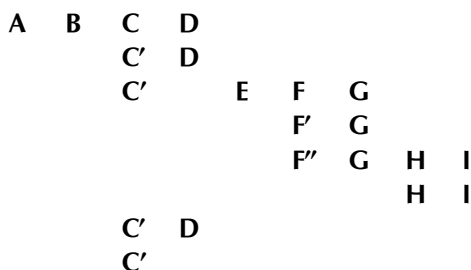
***Mēḷakarttū* n°14, mode non défini ; *rūpaka tāla* (version à 3 temps, 1+1+1)**

The musical notation is presented on four staves. Each staff contains a sequence of notes represented by letters (S, M, P, D, N, R) and rests. The sequences are labeled A through J. The notation is in a simplified form, likely representing the sargam notation. The time signature is 3/4, and the mode is non défini. The piece is titled Mēḷakarttū n°14, mode non défini ; rūpaka tāla (version à 3 temps, 1+1+1).

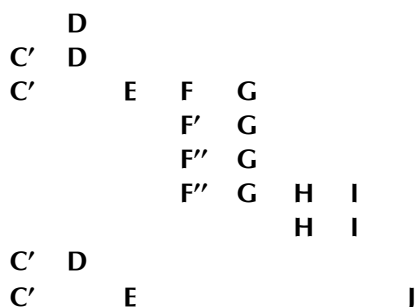
En effectuant un découpage par cycle, soit par séquences de trois temps, on obtient onze séquences distinctes (de A à J), soit la succession suivante : A B C D C E F G H I J. On pourrait alors imaginer que cet enchaînement - proposé par le musicien comme un tout – puisse être exécuté tel quel puis éventuellement répété. Or la transcription de la pièce jouée en contexte présente un enchaînement plus complexe, étendu si l’on peut dire, où

certaines séquences sont davantage répétées et variées que d'autres - ce que montre la présentation analytique suivante en mélangeant deux types de séquenciation : la mesure et le paradigme¹⁹ :

Partie 1 →



Partie 2 ou 1 bis →



Comment et pourquoi le musicien effectue-t-il lors de la notation un découpage et un tri conscients des différentes séquences²⁰ ? Pour quelle raison réalise-t-il une telle réduction de ce qu'il joue en temps réel ? Au point, notamment, d'omettre la succession finale : C B J.

Une première remarque : si S. Chinnatambi est capable de réaliser un tel découpage c'est qu'il est également en mesure de faire le chemin inverse. On peut de fait penser que l'enchaînement initial - celui de la partition - est à chaque fois reconstruit en temps réel, à l'image d'un jeu de construction dont on manipulerait à souhait les pièces pour obtenir au final un résultat voisin du précédent mais néanmoins renouvelé sur un plan strictement formel. Si l'idée semble tenir, elle n'est cependant pas, au moins sous cette forme, tout à fait viable en pratique : les deux hautboïstes, en effet, sont censés jouer en homophonie – du moins celle-ci est-elle recherchée. Or si le deuxième hautboïste n'a pas connaissance des enchaînements, il peut difficilement remplir cette condition : tout au plus

pourra-t-il prétendre à l'hétérophonie. L'enchaînement, d'une manière ou d'une autre, est donc prédéterminé. Ce qu'explique S. Chinnatambi de la façon suivante :

Je ne joue jamais d'un seul trait le *mālai māṛru pāṭṭu* [tel que noté]. La pièce serait beaucoup trop courte. Ni les fidèles, ni les dieux n'auraient le temps de l'entendre [sous-entendu l'apprécier]. Je dois donc la développer. Les procédés sont ici nombreux : en général, pour un temps au moins, je suis le même enchaînement. Ainsi, T. Ramanathan [second hautboïste et disciple de S. Chinnatambi] sait à quoi s'en tenir. Si je décide de le changer, alors je le préviens ; on le jouera ensemble, d'abord à la maison, ensuite au temple. La logique toutefois est toujours la même. C'est un peu comme une maison : personne ne construit le toit avant les soubassements. Là, c'est la même chose. Ramanathan devra pourtant être attentif lorsque nous jouons la pièce car tout ceci n'est pas complètement fixé à l'avance.²¹

On note ainsi, à l'examen de la pièce, deux parties fort semblables et construites de A vers J selon un enchaînement croissant. Dès le début de la pièce, on rencontre, avec quelques variantes (notamment au début de la deuxième partie et en fin de parties), la progression suivante :

1	2	3	4				
		3	4				
		3	4	5	6		
				5	6		
				5	6	7	8

Pour T. Ramanathan, il s'agit là de la seule indication fournie par S. Chinnatambi. Il doit donc être extrêmement vigilant en début de pièce afin de saisir aussitôt la logique des enchaînements, celle-ci sera en principe suivie tout au long du morceau. Cette reconnaissance, toutefois, lui paraît somme toute secondaire :

Je ne sais pas toujours à l'avance quelle pièce Chinnatambi va jouer. Je ne sais pas non plus toujours comment il la développera. Pour les *mālai māṛru pāṭṭu*, il y a certes une succession spécifique, habituelle. Néanmoins, elle peut varier. Quoi qu'il en soit, je préfère me repérer à l'oreille, à la mélodie : je peux, en entendant le début d'une phrase, jouer immédiatement la suite. Et cette phrase, en général, annonce déjà la suivante ; il y a rarement de

surprises ; on passe peu à peu d'une étape à l'autre. De toutes les façons, je ne suis pas obligé de doubler parfaitement S. Chinnatambi. Je peux aussi simplement jouer le sa [tonique en bourdon]. Et puis, si je me sens vraiment en difficulté, j'observe ses doigts et reproduis alors ces gestes.²²

Le deuxième hautboïste s'en remet donc d'abord à son instinct de musicien en suivant le simple déroulement mélodique. Il sait par ailleurs que son oreille, le cas échéant, peut être secondée par sa vue. Aussi, quel que soit le mode de reconstruction de la pièce, il possédera toujours des outils d'analyse plus proches des sens que la stricte mémorisation préalable des structures (et leur reconnaissance en-temps réel) pour pouvoir suivre sans trop de difficultés le premier hautboïste.

Si le *mālai māru pāṭu* présente un cas type de flexibilité formelle par variation (C C' ou F F' F'') et surtout réorganisation des séquences initiales, on voit aussi, à travers sa réalisation, qu'il ne s'agit nullement d'un assemblage déterminé de manière aléatoire. Il est, pour cela, bien trop attaché à une certaine fluidité mélodique et temporelle.

Le principe des saṅgati : un cas de variations progressives

Les *saṅgati* sont le plus souvent présentées comme les variations d'un thème – prenant pour base un texte, exposées par le compositeur lui-même. Elles seraient donc le fruit de l'écrit et le résultat d'un développement introduit à la fin du XVIII^e siècle par les compositeurs de la *Trimūrti* karnatique, Śyāmā Śāstri, Tyāgarāja, Muttusvāmi Dīkṣitar²³. On passerait ainsi de la forme *kīrtana*, essentiellement tournée vers la mise en valeur d'un texte, à la forme *kṛti*, musicalement plus élaborée. S'il y a dans cette appréciation une part indéniable de vérité, deux points méritent néanmoins d'être soulignés : *primo*, la variation d'un thème ou d'une séquence, en particulier par ajout, est sans doute l'un des procédés les plus répandus de la musique karnatique et se rencontre, à différents niveaux, dans quasiment toutes les formes musicales²⁴ ; *secundo*, la notation et, qui plus est, l'édition d'une version écrite pour une composition donnée est un phénomène récent en Inde du Sud²⁵ : les partitions, de fait, ne sont pas de la main de leur signataire (sauf pour les contemporains) mais de simples versions, parmi d'autres, notées par un disciple, le plus souvent indirect. Il serait donc plus prudent d'envisager les *saṅgati* comme l'éventuelle systématisation d'un principe strictement oral encouragé à certaines périodes de l'histoire musicale, d'autant que

l'idée de reproduire une variation notée est sans contexte plus proche de l'esprit des concerts actuels, en partie figés dans des stéréotypes, que de l'approche empreinte d'ouverture et de mysticisme des saints-poètes et musiciens karnatiques des siècles derniers.

Les musiciens du *periya mēlam*, plus éloignés des contingences de la musicologie karnatique, nomment *saṅgati* toute variation systématique d'un thème dans les formes *kīrttaṇai* (*kīrtana* et *ḳṛti*) et *padam*, soit l'ensemble des formes structurées autour du modèle classique *pallavi anupallavi* et *caraṇam*. En pratique, ils ne semblent pas l'appréhender comme un aspect fixe de la composition :

Les *saṅgati* sont notés afin de donner un exemple aux interprètes et non pour être fidèlement reproduits. Personnellement, au temple ou lors d'un concert, je vais développer un thème selon ce principe en fonction de mon envie et du temps dont je dispose. Un même thème peut ainsi être varié, d'une occasion à l'autre, deux fois ou dix fois. A chaque reprise, je tente d'ajouter quelques éléments supplémentaires : une note, un ornement, un phrasé différent. Mais jamais je ne me base sur les notations.²⁶

Dans l'exemple suivant, représentatif de cette technique, le thème est joué sur un cycle métrique complet puis repris plusieurs fois en suivant, par ajout successif de notes et d'ornements, un degré croissant de complexité mélodique et rythmique. On remarquera aussi, et c'est une constante des *saṅgati*, le développement progressif de la mélodie dans l'aigu, sur la première partie du cycle (*ādi tāla* : 8 temps, 4+2+2).

Thème (*pallavi*) et variations (*saṅgati*) dans la forme *kīrttaṇai*





L'exemple des *saṅgati* confirme avec force que la composition n'est jamais considérée - au-delà de l'enseignement au moins, comme fixe et immuable. Elle est au contraire sans cesse réactivée grâce au génie de l'interprète. Extrêmement codifiée, elle n'en demeure pas moins ouverte. On notera en ce sens, dans les compositions bipartites ou tripartites, de brèves transitions qui, tout en suggérant des éléments thématiques de la composition, sont non seulement improvisées mais jouées, un peu à la manière des *ālāpana*, dans un rythme relativement libre.

L'improvisation : quelques principes de développements formels

Les sonneurs-batteurs du *periya mēḷam*, et de façon plus restrictive les joueurs de *nāgasvaram*, envisagent avant tout l'improvisation comme le développement d'un mode (*rāga*). Ce développement peut être strictement mélodique et réalisé, de fait, sur un temps libre, non mesuré (cas de l'*ālāpana*). Il peut aussi s'appuyer sur un cycle métrique défini (cas du *rakti mēḷam*, du *pallavi* ou des *kalpana svara*²⁷) et intégrer, pour le coup, diverses techniques d'improvisation. Dans ce dernier cas, le développement pourra prendre comme base un thème préalablement composé (cas du *rakti mēḷam* et du *pallavi*).

Notre but ici est seulement de relever, exemples à l'appui, quelques principes clés de l'improvisation.

L'improvisation et la forme ālāpana

L'*ālāpana* est un prélude non mesuré où le mode mélodique est présenté. Bien que profondément attaché à une certaine liberté expressive et créatrice, il emploie des techniques de développement impliquant logique et rigueur. Et si les modèles sont quasi mathématiques (expansion, symétrie, permutation etc.), leur application ne vise nullement l'exactitude : ils servent seulement de point de départ à un cheminement où la maîtrise côtoie volontiers l'imprévu.

Expansion scalaire et schéma directionnel

Un *ālāpana* complet suit généralement un parcours type où les degrés des différents tétracordes (et pentacordes pour les modes avec quarte augmentée) sont successivement développés²⁸ :

1 2 1 2 1 [1 → 1 → 1] 2 1 → 1 2 [fin sur la tonique *sa*]

Ce schéma directionnel peut être varié à souhait et notamment en fonction de la durée de l'*ālāpana* : le passage virtuose (*birugā*) couvrant les trois octaves (passage entre crochets) pourra par exemple être omis en deçà de deux ou trois minutes ; de la même façon, le développement mélodique dans les registres graves sera négligeable à moins d'une dizaine de minutes²⁹. Quoi qu'il en soit, ajouts, omissions ou extensions ne changeront jamais la trame de ce canevas qui, chez les joueurs de

nāgasvaram au moins, semble fonctionner comme un modèle implicite de développement³⁰.

Mais parallèlement à ce modèle, et suivant une logique analogue, on notera l'introduction des différents degrés de l'échelle par paliers successifs – progression qui, outre sa fonction structurale, permet aussi de retarder à souhait le jeu d'une note et de créer chez l'auditeur attente et tension. L'exemple suivant, pour la phase ascendante de l'*ālāpana* (1 2 1), présente chronologiquement les séquences ou extraits de séquences³¹ dans lesquelles une nouvelle note apparaît : du *ga*1 de l'octave médium (*mib*3), présenté en début de pièce, jusqu'au *ga*1 de l'octave supérieure (*mib*4)³², note la plus aiguë du morceau. On voit là, et selon une logique quasi implacable, l'échelle s'étendre peu à peu.

Ce procédé d'expansion scalaire, appliqué ici avec liberté, senti et souplesse, n'a rien d'une construction individuelle. On le retrouve en effet à l'œuvre, certes à l'état embryonnaire, dès les premiers exercices que l'élève mémorise : *svarāvali* 1 (1-7), tel que nous l'avons montré, mais également *svarāvali* 2 (en montant) et 3 (en descendant), *janta* (2-8 et 10) et *alamkāra* (1-7). On notera aussi sa présence, mais de manière moins systématique, dans les compositions (*kīrtana*, *kṛti* et *padam* pour l'essentiel) qui incluent *pallavi* et *anupallavi*. Le *pallavi* (le thème) reste généralement confiné au tétracorde inférieur, avec pour limite la quinte de l'octave médium. Ses variations en étirent graduellement certains segments vers l'aigu, une règle implicite en limite cependant l'extension à la tonique (*sa*) de l'octave supérieure. L'*anupallavi* (« subordonné au *pallavi* ») poursuit cette course vers les sommets et ses variations, sur un modèle identique, permettant au joueur de *nāgasvaram* d'exploiter le registre aigu de son instrument (jusqu'à la quarte ou la quinte de l'octave supérieure).

Développements internes : gammes et formules types

Il y a donc, comme nous venons de le voir, un schéma général, admis, respecté, et en un sens fixé, qui permet au musicien de suivre, parmi une multitude de possibles, un chemin et ses voies annexes, raccourcis, ravines, voies parallèles etc. S'il en connaît le début (jeu des principaux *prayoga*, ou formules mélodiques types), la fin (tenue jusqu'à extinction de la tonique *sa*) et les étapes successives (schéma directionnel par tétracorde, groupes de notes et au-delà note à note), il lui reste cependant l'essentiel à

accomplir : jouer et développer d'un repère vers l'autre tout en captivant son auditoire, hommes ou dieux.

Afin de parcourir ces interstices, les musiciens exploitent, en corrélation avec les caractéristiques d'un mode : échelle, ornements, formules types, notes pivots etc., diverses techniques, dont le développement et/ou la variation de gammes et de formules types. Le premier procédé peut relever d'un jeu de symétrie, qui frappe l'œil au simple survol de la partition, entre pentes ascendante et descendante de l'échelle. Cette symétrie est exploitée de façon strictement conjointe ou en modifiant l'échelle, le plus souvent par soustraction d'un ou deux degrés³³ :

Développement interne et symétrie scalaire 1



Développement interne et symétrie scalaire 2



Ce principe peut également être employé plus librement en variant la seconde pente, tel l'exemple suivant où la descente est non seulement jouée plus rapidement, mais en doublant chaque note :

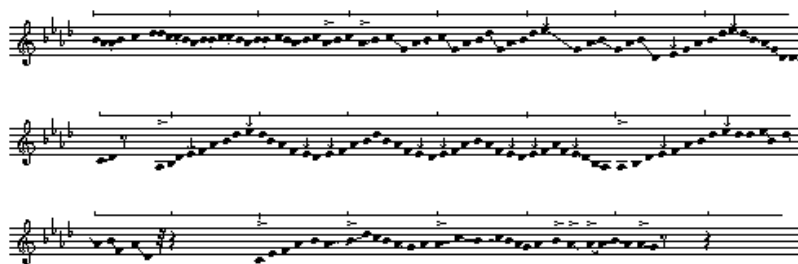
Développement interne et symétrie scalaire 3



On notera l'utilité de cette méthode dans les séquences où l'expansion progressive du registre (ou inversement) est recherchée. L'exemple suivant, significatif de cette démarche, n'est d'ailleurs pas sans rappeler

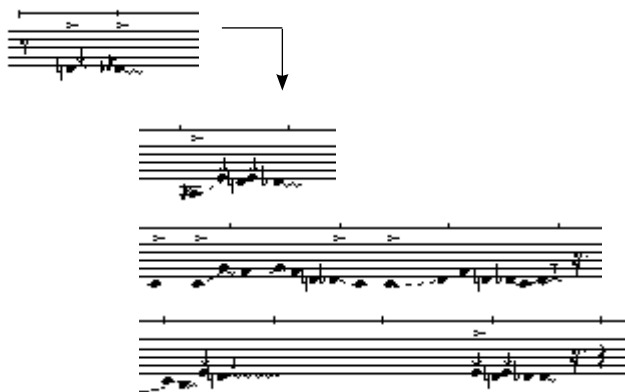
en condensé le principe d'expansion scalaire mis en place sur l'ensemble de l'*ālāpana*.

Développement interne, symétrie scalaire et expansion du registre



Le second procédé consiste en un jeu de variations où les formules caractéristiques du mode (*rāga*) sont sensiblement modifiées et, le plus souvent, étendues - une forme, s'il en est, d'improvisation motivique. Le *prayoga* suivant trouvera ainsi, lors d'une même exécution ou non, une multitude de déclinaisons, par exemple :

Développement d'une formule mélodique type (*prayoga*)



Ces deux procédés de développement interne, exemples parmi bien d'autres possibilités, tendent à montrer que deux niveaux d'organisation sont en jeu dans la construction de l'*ālāpana* : un premier niveau, directionnel et global, qui suppose la conscience en temps d'un déroulement type

reposant sur un principe d'expansion scalaire (voir *supra*) ; un second niveau, fonctionnel, qui regroupe l'ensemble des procédés musicaux (dont les deux présentés) nécessaires à l'élaboration de la pièce. Ces deux niveaux, bien sûr, sont largement perméables, pour ne pas dire interdépendants : le premier influe autant sur l'organisation générale et que sur les mécanismes internes du développement, séquence par séquence ; le second, tributaire des caractéristiques du *rāga*, peut éventuellement modifier un parcours, en déplacer quelques jalons, dans le cas par exemple d'un mode dont l'étendue serait par convention restreinte³⁴.

L'improvisation en temps mesuré et cyclique

Les procédés employés dans le développement de l'*ālāpana* ne se retrouvent pas systématiquement, ou du moins pas sous une même configuration, dans les formes improvisées soumises à une battue, un cycle métrique (*tāla*) et, au-delà, un thème (cas du *pallavi* et du *rakti mēlam*). Le premier niveau défini pour l'*ālāpana* se voit relégué au second plan : l'expansion scalaire, même si l'on en retrouve des traces, n'est plus, en effet, un principe fondamental de développement. Le second niveau, avec quelques disparités cependant, est dans l'ensemble bien conservé : les variations à partir d'une formule mélodique type semblent diminuer ou se coaguler dans un cadre rythmique et métrique ; en revanche, les combinaisons scalaires basées sur un principe mathématique semblent prendre plus d'importance.

Le thème : cadre et support d'un développement

Le thème, généralement composé par le premier joueur de *nāgasvaram*, est à la base de deux formes musicales : le *pallavi*, forme partagée avec les musiciens karnatiques, et le *rakti mēlam*, forme spécifique aux sonneurs-batteurs. Nous nous limiterons ici au *rakti mēlam* – de loin le moins connu des deux.

Le thème du *rakti*, qui ne doit être composé que dans le *tāla mīśra cāpu* (7 temps, 3+2+2), est soumis à quelques règles d'ordre métrique. Une formule rythmique de base (***din taka ta din tai***) doit, par convention, être distribuée de manière définie. Le cas le plus fréquent, étant³⁵ :

Ce thème, tout en revenant à la manière d'un leitmotiv, permet un premier développement (voir *infra*). Il est ensuite rythmiquement modifié en changeant d'une part le cycle, désormais de trois temps (1+1+1), d'autre part la division du temps, non plus binaire (*caturaśra gati*) mais ternaire (*tisra gati*)³⁸. Ce nouveau thème sert alors de prétexte, sur un modèle similaire, à un second développement.

Rakti mēlam : thème en *tisra gati*

Eka tāla → 13 13 13 13 13 13 13



La troisième et dernière partie du *rakti*, beaucoup plus courte, est exécutée dans le même *tāla*, toujours en ternaire, mais sur un tempo plus rapide. Afin qu'il n'y ait pas de surprises, le changement est réalisé comme suit : lors des tous derniers temps de la deuxième partie, les musiciens, et en particulier le joueur de *tālam*, repasse mentalement à une division en quatre du temps en conservant le même tempo (a)³⁹ puis en regroupant à nouveau les temps par trois (b), ce qui permet d'augmenter la vitesse d'un tiers environ :

1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1

a → 1234 1234 1234 1

b → 123 123 123 123 1

Le thème, à nouveau transformé, est cette fois joué une octave au-dessus. Il viendra clore la pièce⁴⁰.

Rakti mēlam : thème final à l'octave supérieure



Entre les thèmes : le principe des *kalpana svara*

Les sonneurs-batteurs exécutent les *kalpana svara* dans trois situations principalement : à la fin, cas optionnel, d'une pièce composée (*kīrttaṇai*, *padam*, *maṅgalam* etc.) ; à la fin de la forme *pallavi* (avant l'improvisation aux percussions lorsque celle-ci est présente) ; enfin, comme développement principal de la forme *rakti mēlam*. Très schématiquement, les *kalpana svara* consistent à improviser une succession de lignes mélodiques de longueur et de complexité croissante en conservant plus ou moins une portion de thème (initiale ou finale) et en respectant le déroulement métrique.

Dans le cadre du *rakti mēlam*, cadre que nous conservons pour cette présentation, le thème complet est joué après chaque nouveau développement. Ainsi, de l'exposition jusqu'à l'entrée du deuxième joueur de *nāgasvaram*, le thème est-il exécuté onze fois et selon les intervalles de durée suivants, chaque intervalle, compté ici en nombre de cycles, correspond au moment de l'improvisation :

Thème	Nombre de cycles qui le suivent	Etendue parcourue
1 ^{ère} fois →	4 cycles	do3 à la3
2 ^{ème} fois →	5 cycles	do3 à la3
3 ^{ème} fois →	6 cycles	do3 à ré4
4 ^{ème} fois →	15 cycles	do3 à mi4
5 ^{ème} fois →	2 cycles	do3 à la3
6 ^{ème} fois →	5 cycles	do3 à ré4
7 ^{ème} fois →	11 cycles	si2 à mi4
8 ^{ème} fois →	25 cycles	sol2 à ré4
9 ^{ème} fois →	15 cycles	do3 à mi4
10 ^{ème} fois →	5 cycles	do3 à mi4
11 ^{ème} fois →	entrée du second joueur de <i>nāgasvaram</i>	

À l'examen de ces données, on remarque que le lien entre longueur des développements et étendue parcourue n'est pas forcément avéré. On remarque aussi que l'expansion scalaire est assez peu exploitée et ne peut être envisagée, à l'inverse de l'*ālāpana*, comme un principe clé du développement. On peut de fait supposer que les procédés internes de développement, désormais libérés d'une progression mélodique par paliers, sont moins tributaires, et du déroulement général, et des

obligations modales qui en découlent. Ce point n'est pas sans conséquence et expliquerait l'insistance des musiciens sur l'aspect quasi mathématique des *kalpana svara*, en particulier dans le *rakti mēlam* où le thème, envisagé à la manière d'un refrain, n'intervient pas ou peu comme modèle motivique lors des séquences improvisées⁴¹. La contrainte, outre bien sûr le respect du mode, serait donc essentiellement d'ordre rythmique et métrique. On le voit notamment lors des *kuraippu* (« bruit »), sections finales où l'alternance entre le premier et le deuxième hautboïste suit une progression régulière et décroissante jusqu'au climax final, moment où les deux sonneurs se rejoignent. Par exemple, en fin de première partie : séquence sur 3 cycles (21 temps) deux fois, sur 2 cycles (14 temps) six fois, sur 1 cycle (7 temps) huit fois, sur 1/2 cycle (3,5 temps) onze fois.

Kuraippu : séquences sur 1 cycle et 1/2 cycle et retour du jeu en homophonie

The musical score is written for two staves. The top staff is for the melodic part (N1) and the bottom staff is for the rhythmic part (N2). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The score is divided into five systems, each with a specific sequence of N1 and N2 parts. The first system has a box around the first N1 part. The second system has a box around the first N2 part. The third system has a box around the first N1 part. The fourth system has a box around the first N1 part. The fifth system has a box around the first N1 part. The score ends with a final N1 and N2 part.

S'il s'agit ici de compter, la difficulté réside aussi - et avant tout peut être - dans le fait de combiner mélodie et cycle métrique (*tālā*) : il est en effet nécessaire de penser chaque ligne mélodique en terme de durée (par exemple : sept temps, un cycle) mais également en terme de repères (par exemple : départ au troisième temps du cycle, à contretemps). Afin de répondre à ces contraintes, en particulier dans l'alternance de séquences relativement courtes, les musiciens possèdent un stock de procédés permettant de créer en temps réel de nouveaux motifs - c'est en ce sens, surtout, qu'ils parlent de logique et de calculs.

Ces procédés, qui s'inspirent en grande partie des *svarāvalī*, des *janta* et des *alaṃkāra*, ne doivent pas, cependant, être appliqués de façon trop systématique, sous peine de ressembler à de simples exercices, ce que souligne volontiers Achalpuram S. Chinnatambi Pillai⁴². Les motifs seront donc de préférence courts, variés et combinés le plus possible les uns aux autres. On notera à nouveau les jeux d'inversion et de symétrie, selon un axe vertical, plus rarement horizontal ; la répétition de courts motifs dont le nombre de temps n'est pas celui de la mesure, par exemple : un motif sur deux temps pour une mesure à trois temps ; les progressions, conjointes ou non, en escalier etc. Dans les exemples qui suivent, pour souci de clarté, les chiffres (1 2 3 4 5 6 7) correspondent aux noms des notes (*do ré mi fa sol la si*).

Kalpana svara et improvisation mélodique : inversion et symétrie (1)

The image displays two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp). The first staff contains a single melodic line with a box highlighting a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3. Below this box is the corresponding scale: 7 6 7 1 2 1 1 2 1 7 6 7. The second staff contains a more complex improvisation with four distinct boxes highlighting specific motifs. The first box contains G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, with the scale 7 1 2 1 2 1 7 below it. The second box contains F#4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, with the scale 5 4 3 2 1 2 1 2 3 4 5 below it. The third box contains G4, A4, B4, A4, G4, with the scale 6 5 4 5 6 below it. The fourth box contains F#4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, with the scale 1 7 6 5 6 7 1 below it.

Kalpana svara et improvisation mélodique : inversion et symétrie (2)



Kalpana svara et improvisation mélodique : motif de 2 temps et mesure à 3 temps



Kalpana svara et improvisation mélodique : gammes et motifs en escaliers



Une dernière remarque : ces procédés, bien que les musiciens parlent de calculs, sont d'abord le fruit d'un apprentissage, d'une pratique, d'un savoir-faire. Et, si l'on est en présence de cellules à transformer et combiner de manière inédite et selon le temps imparti, on ne peut cependant guère parler de modèles rigoureux. On serait plutôt en présence de calculs implicites intégrés au fil des années - une forme, s'il en est, de bricolage

musical, un puzzle à entrées multiples. On notera à cet égard l'absence des permutations complexes (*svara-prastāra*) présentées par Śāraṅgadeva (XIII^e siècle) que Nazir A. Jairazbhoy⁴³, a tort semble-t-il⁴⁴, supposa effectives dans la tradition hindoustanie ; par exemple⁴⁵ :

1	→	2	3	4
2		1	3	4
1		3	2	4
3		1	2	4
2		3	1	4
3		2	1	4

Conclusion

La forme (*rūpa*) et l'agencement des formes, le maniement des structures, la transformation des contenus, le jeu des combinaisons, semblent au cœur de toutes les préoccupations. Bien jouer, pour les musiciens, c'est aussi savoir jouer différemment : proposer une version chaque fois renouvelée d'un modèle, une version de l'instant. Bien jouer, c'est aussi savoir construire de façon personnelle, unique, insécable. Comme si le jeu sur la forme était à coup sûr le meilleur moyen d'en appréhender le contenu ; l'*ālāpana* - également nommé *rāgam* - est en ce sens significatif : ce n'est autre que la perfectibilité de ses contours - de sa forme - qui révèlent au mieux le caractère et la saveur du mode (*rāga*). Cette remarque, touchant ici le domaine musical, n'a rien d'un acte isolé. Elle rejoint au contraire ce que nombre d'indianistes ont pu repérer dans le domaine rituel ou linguistique, notamment Frits Staal⁴⁶.

On comprendra alors, devant la subtilité et la complexité du domaine, à peine effleuré ici, que le novice, moi en l'occurrence, ait pu ressentir une certaine difficulté à saisir, dans la continuité de l'action, ce qui était perçu comme forme par les sonneurs-batteurs. Rien de surprenant toutefois lorsque l'on sait qu'une forme peut en contenir d'autres. Un exemple : tout musicien nommera *kīrttaṇai* la pièce tripartite qui y renvoie (*pallavi*, *anupallavi*, *caraṇam*), une partie seulement de cette pièce (*pallavi* par exemple), cette pièce et ses développements internes, que ceux-ci soient verbalisés (*saṅgati*) ou non (transitions), ou encore l'une de ces trois possibilités précédée d'un *ālāpana* ou suivie de *kalpana svara*, voire les deux.

NOTES

- ¹ Les pages suivantes sont issues du chapitre VI de ma thèse de doctorat (Tallotte 2007). Le lecteur y retrouvera notamment les transcriptions musicales complètes des notations ici proposées ainsi que les exemples audios qui les accompagnent.
- ² Le *periya mēlam* (« grand orchestre ») est un ensemble de sonneurs-batteurs (hautbois *nāgasvaram*, tambours *tavil*, cymbales *tālam* et bourdon) spécialisé dans le domaine musical savant (karnatique) et traditionnellement attaché aux temples hindous de hautes castes.
- ³ Le mot sanskrit le plus important correspondant à « forme » est sans doute *rūpa* : « apparence », « couleur », « forme », « figure ». S'il est employé dans bien des domaines et bien des sens, les sonneurs-batteurs l'emploient (sous sa déclinaison tamoule « *rūpam* ») pour désigner le caractère unique d'un *rāga* plutôt que la structure formelle d'une pièce, sa propre dénomination (*mallāri*, *rakti mēlam* etc.) la contenant déjà.
- ⁴ Les informations touchant à l'enseignement du *nāgasvaram* sont essentiellement extraites de séances menées avec le hautboïste Injikkudi M. Subramaniam.
- ⁵ Nous ne reviendrons pas ici sur l'enseignement de la musique indienne en général et, qui plus est, sur la relation, largement connue et débattue, de maître (*guru*) à élève (*śiṣya*). Soulignons seulement que dans le cadre du *periya mēlam* ce système, malgré la présence d'écoles de musique publiques, reste le seul à former des musiciens de haut niveau. Concernant ces questions, on pourra se reporter à Jean-Paul Auboux 1994 : 132-139, ou encore Ludwig Pesch 1999 : 28-34.
- ⁶ Selon la formule de John Baily 2005 : 922-924.
- ⁷ Les principaux exercices, donnés en notation *sargam* en annexe, sont les mêmes pour l'apprentissage du chant et des instruments karnatiques – y compris le *nāgasvaram*. S'ils sont d'abord et surtout joués dans le *rāga māyāmālavagauḷa* (avec seconde et sixte bémolisées), n'importe quel mode comptant une échelle heptatonique peut ensuite le remplacer ; les *tāla* en revanche (*ādi* pour tous les exercices sauf pour les *alaṃkāra*) sont fixes. Dans tous les cas, ces exercices ne sont qu'une base à partir de laquelle un maître en imagine d'autres afin de développer telle faculté musicale chez l'élève ou travailler dans le détail une technique instrumentale particulière : contrôle du souffle dans l'aigu ou le grave, souplesse digitale etc.
- ⁸ Inversion selon un axe de symétrie vertical (indiqué I) ou horizontal (indiqué II). Les exemples sont présentés en deux colonnes, lesquelles doivent être lues successivement.
- ⁹ La diminution consiste à augmenter la vitesse d'une séquence en conservant les rapports de durée entre les notes. L'augmentation correspond au processus inverse. Dans les deux cas, la transformation est proportionnelle.

- 10 On notera ainsi pour l'exemple suivant la succession de quatre cycles de huit temps pour chaque vitesse : 1, 2 et 3.
- 11 Sur l'usage du *trikāla* dans la forme *pallavi*, voir notamment M.B. Vedavalli, 1995 : 140-141, et Richard Widdess 1978 : 62-64.
- 12 Je donne là cette précision dans la mesure où cette partie est toujours précédée d'un prélude rythmique (*alārippu*) et d'un *ālāpana* et peut éventuellement être suivie d'une improvisation du type *kalpana svara* (voir *infra*).
- 13 Pour une problématique similaire ainsi qu'un exemple, voir Richard Widdess, 1978 : 64.
- 14 Sauf initiative individuelle. Hors du temple, le *vaṇam* est souvent joué en début de concert ou de programme (radio, télévision etc.). Les sonneurs-batteurs suivent là un format standard qui s'est peu à peu imposé sur les scènes karnatiques (salles de concert, festivals etc.).
- 15 Le premier *gītā* est en règle générale dédié à Gaṇapati, le dieu des commencements ; le second pourra être dédié à la figure du *guru* qui, sans être un dieu, en a en quelque sorte l'importance.
- 16 À la suite semble-t-il de P. Sambamurthy, vol. 2 : 12/1994: 29-33.
- 17 En référence à la première partie des compositions de type *kīrttaṇai*, *padam* et *vaṇam*.
- 18 Si le *padam*, en partie hérité du répertoire des *devadāsī*, est plutôt intégré au « petit répertoire rituel », sa structure se rapproche toutefois de celle du *kīrttaṇai*, même si le *caraṇam* précède quelquefois l'*anupallavi*.
- 19 La mise en paradigme consiste à isoler des séquences mélodico-rythmiques (ou autres) selon leur degré de ressemblance : tandis que l'on suit horizontalement (de haut en bas et de gauche à droite) le déroulement musical, les colonnes (l'axe vertical) mettent en évidence les séquences parentes. Sur ce type de représentation et ses implications en musicologie, voir Nicolas Ruwet 1972 : 100-134.
- 20 Il est bien entendu ici que le découpage effectué par le musicien (soit le rapport entre la notation *sargam* et la transcription de la pièce jouée en contexte) est à la base de notre propre segmentation.
- 21 Achalpuram S. Chinnatambi Pillai, Achalpuram, le 26 août 2006.
- 22 T. Ramanathan, Achalpuram, le 26 août 2001.
- 23 Sur ces trois compositeurs voir par exemple Emmie te Nijenhuis 2011 : 6-60.
- 24 De manière tout à fait secondaire, par exemple dans le *mālai māṇṇu pāṭṭu* (passage de F' à F'').
- 25 Sur les questions touchant à l'édition des compositions karnatiques anciennes, voir N. Ramanathan 1998 : 59-98.
- 26 Injikkudi M. Subramaniam, Tiruvarur, février 2008.
- 27 Les *kalpana svara* (« notes imaginées »), ne pouvant être joués indépendamment, ne sont pas considérés comme une forme à part entière.

En pratique, ils sont soit intégrés aux formes *rakti mēlam* et *pallavi*, soit joués à la suite d'une composition dans le même mode que celle-ci.

28 Les codes suivants sont ici utilisés : 1 = tétracorde inférieur ; 2 = tétracorde supérieur ; 1 à l'octave inférieure, 1 à l'octave supérieure ; → étapes intermédiaires incluses.

29 On remarquera à cet égard, hormis pour le *rāga kalyāṇi*, une exploitation minimum de l'octave inférieure dans les exemples d'*ālāpana* donnés par T. Viswanathan 1977 : 21-26. Si les raisons peuvent bien sûr être multiples (étendue vocale, spécificité modale etc.), la durée des exemples (2 à 5 minutes pour la plupart) y est sans doute pour beaucoup.

30 « Implicite » dans la mesure où la dénomination de parties pour la forme *ālāpana* n'est pas d'usage, sauf exception, chez les sonneurs-batteurs.

31 Dans le cadre de l'*ālāpana*, nous avons défini comme séquence toute succession mélodique continue entre deux zones de silence, quelles que soient les durées respectives.

32 Rappelons que *do3* équivaut ici, pour un *nāgasvaram* de *kaṭṭai* 2½, à *ré#3* (pour diapason avec *la* = 440 Hz).

33 On notera que ce principe de symétrie ou d'inversion, également pratiqué sous forme d'exercices vocaux et instrumentaux, était déjà connu à la fin du premier millénaire. Mataṅga, dans son *Bṛhaddeśī*, en donne quelques exemples sous le nom d'*alamkāra*. Sur ce point, voir Richard Widdess, 1995 : 127-129 ; on pourra aussi se reporter à Mataṅga-muni : *Bṛhaddeśī*, Prem Lata Sharma éd. : 1992 : 90-97.

34 Je pense notamment au *rāga nādanāmakriya* qui se limite habituellement dans l'aigu au *ni* (*ni* diésé) de l'octave moyenne, ce qui le distingue de *māyāmālavagauḷa*.

35 D'après S.R.D. Vaidyanathan Pillai, joueur de *nāgasvaram* (Chidambaram, février 2008), et R.C. Nallakumar Pillai, joueur de *tavil* (Chidambaram, le 28 mars 2008).

36 Nous l'avons considéré, en accord avec S. Chinnatambi, comme ébauche du thème à venir, laquelle serait toujours présente lorsque le thème principal dérive de ce modèle initial.

37 D'après R.C. Nallakumar, Chidambaram, le 28 mars 2008.

38 Procédé similaire à celui que l'on rencontre dans le *pallavi* ; voir notamment M.B. Vedavalli, 1995 : 141-142.

39 On notera à cet égard, au changement de tempo, quelques frappes en binaire (deux croches) au tambour et aux cymbales alors que le joueur de *nāgasvaram*, plus expérimenté, est déjà passé à la vitesse supérieure.

40 La pièce, ce qui est assez rare, se termine donc sur la tonique aiguë.

41 Ce qui n'est pas le cas lorsque les *kalpana svara* sont joués à la suite d'une pièce composée. Le thème à proprement parler disparaît au profit d'une inscription régulière de motifs extraits de la composition au sein de chaque séquence.

- ⁴² Chidambaram, le 26 août 2010.
⁴³ N.A. Jairazbhoy 1961 : 307-325.
⁴⁴ Voir la démonstration de Richard Widdess, 1981 : 148-159.
⁴⁵ Śāṅgadeva : *Saṅgīta-ratnākara*, R.K. Shringy et Prem Lata Sharma éd. 1991 : 207.
⁴⁶ Voir Staal 1990: 10.

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