

New Europe College *Ștefan Odobleja* Program Yearbook 2017-2018



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New Europe College
Ștefan Odobleja Program
Yearbook 2017-2018

Editor: Irina Vainovski-Mihai

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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 700 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 *Executive Unit for Financing Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation*, 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.

- ***UEFISCDI Award Program (since October 2016)***

The outstanding scientific activity of the NEC was formally recognized in Romania in 2016, when the *Executive Unit for Financing Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation* organized a competition for institutions coordinating ERC projects. New Europe College applied and won two institutional prizes for coordinating, at that time, two ERC grants. A part of this prize was used to create the *UEFISCDI Award Program*, consisting of fellowships targeting young

international researchers, also meant to complement and enlarge the core fellowship program.

- ***The Pontica Magna Fellowship Program (since October 2015)***

This Fellowship Program, supported by the VolkswagenStiftung (Germany), invites young researchers, media professionals, writers and artists from the countries around the Black Sea, but also beyond it (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine), 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 this region. This program is therefore strongly linked to the former *Black Sea Link* Fellowships.

- ***The Pontica Magna Returning Fellows Program (since March 2016)***

In the framework of its *Pontica Magna* Program, New Europe College offers alumni of the *Black Sea Link* and *Pontica Magna* Fellowship Programs the opportunity to apply for a research stay of one or two months in Bucharest. The stay should enable successful applicants to refresh their research experience at NEC, to reconnect with former contacts, and to establish new connections with current Fellows. The *Pontica Magna Returning Fellows* Program targets young researchers, media professionals, writers and artists from the countries around the Black Sea: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

- ***The Gerda Henkel Fellowship Program (since March 2017)***

This Fellowship Program, developed with the support of Gerda Henkel Stiftung (Germany), invites young researchers and academics working in the fields of humanities and social sciences (in particular archaeology, art history, historical Islamic studies, history, history of law, history of science, prehistory and early history) from Afghanistan, Belarus, China (only Tibet and Xinjiang Autonomous Regions), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan, 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.

- ***How to Teach Europe Fellowship Program (since April 2017)***

This Program, supported by the Robert Bosch Foundation and a Private Foundation from Germany, introduces a new and innovative Fellowship module at the Centre for Advanced Study (CAS), Sofia, and the New Europe College (NEC), Bucharest. Beyond the promotion of outstanding individual researchers, the Program focuses on the intersection of fundamental research and higher education. The joint initiative seeks to identify and bring together bright and motivated young and established university professors from South-eastern Europe to dedicate themselves for a certain amount of time to research work oriented toward a specific goal: to lend the state-of-the-art theories and methodologies in the humanities and social sciences a pan-European and/or global dimension and to apply these findings in higher education and the transmission of knowledge to wider audiences.

The goal of the proposed program is to use this knowledge to improve the quality of higher education in the humanities and social sciences and to endorse its public relevance. A tangible output will be the conceptualization of a series of new courses or, ultimately and ideally, the development of innovative curricula for the universities of the participating scholars.

- ***The Spiru Haret Fellowship Program (since October 2017)***

The *Spiru Haret* Fellowship Program targets young Romanian researchers/academics in the humanities and social sciences whose projects address questions relating to migration, displacement, diaspora. Candidates are expected to focus on Romanian cases seen in a larger historical, geographical and political context, in thus broadening our understanding of contemporary developments. Such aspects as transnational mobility, the development of communication technologies and of digitization, public policies on migration, ways of employing transnational communities, migrant routes, the migrants' remittances and entrepreneurial capital could be taken into account. NEC also welcomes projects which look at cultural phenomena (in literature, visual arts, music etc.) related to migration and diaspora. The Program is financed through a grant from UEFISCDI (The Romanian Executive Unit for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding).

- ***Lapedatu Fellowships (since June 2018)***

Thanks to a generous financial contribution from the *Lapedatu* Foundation, NEC invites to Bucharest a foreign researcher specialized in the field of Romanian Studies, who is currently conducting research in one of the world's top universities. On this occasion, he will spend a month in Romania and work with a young Romanian researcher to organize an academic event hosted by the NEC. At this colloquy, the *Lapedatu* fellows and their guests will present scientific papers and initiate debates on a theme that covers important topics of the Romanian and Southeastern European history in both modern and contemporary epochs. The contribution of the *Lapedatu* family members to the development of Romania will particularly be taken into consideration.

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.

- ***The Black Sea Link Fellowships Program (2010 - 2015)***

This program, financed by the VolkswagenStiftung, supported 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 had the opportunity to work on projects of their choice. The program welcomed a wide variety of disciplines in the fields of humanities and social sciences. Besides hosting a number of Fellows, the College organized 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 Fellowship Program (2013 - 2017)***

This Program, supported by the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (Sweden), invites young researchers from European countries that are not yet members of the European Union, or which have a less consolidated position within it, 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.

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)
- ***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-financed 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. (October 2011 – July 2014)

Research programs developed with the financial support of the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research, through the *Executive Unit for Financing Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation – UEFISCDI*:

- ***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)** (August 2010 – July 2012)
- ***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 (March 2011 – September 2012)
- **TE-Project: *Critical Foundations of Contemporary Cosmopolitanism***, Team leader: Tamara CĂRĂUȘ, Members of the team: Áron Zsolt TELEGDI-CSETRI, Dan Dorin LAZEA, Camil PÂRVU (October 2011 – October 2014)
- **PD-Project: *Mircea Eliade between Indology and History of Religions. From Yoga to Shamanism and Archaic Religiosity*** (Livu 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***
Project Coordinator: Vlad ALEXANDRESCU
(1 Project Coordinator, 2 Researchers, 2 Research Assistants)
Timeframe: January 1, 2012 – December 31, 2016 (5 Years)
- **TE-Project: *Pluralization of the Public Sphere. Art Exhibitions in Romania in the Timeframe 1968-1989***
Project Coordinator: Cristian NAE
(1 Project Coordinator, 1 Researcher, 2 Research Assistants)
Timeframe: October 1, 2015 – September 30, 2016 (1 Year)

- **Bilateral Cooperation: *Corruption and Politics in France and Romania (contemporary times)***
Project Coordinator: Silvia MARTON
(1 Project Coordinator, 7 Researchers)
Timeframe: January 1, 2015 – December 31, 2016 (2 Years)
- **TE–Project: *Museums and Controversial Collections. Politics and Policies of Heritage Making in Post-colonial and Post-socialist Contexts***
Project Coordinator: Damiana OȚOIU
(1 Project Coordinator, 5 Researchers)
Timeframe: October 1, 2015 – November 30, 2017 (2 Years and 2 Months)
- **TE–Project: *Turning Global: Socialist Experts during the Cold War (1960s-1980s)***
Project Coordinator: Bogdan IACOB
(1 Project Coordinator, 2 Researchers, 2 Research Assistants)
Timeframe: October 1, 2015 – November 30, 2017 (2 Years and 2 Months)

ERC Starting Grant:

- **ERC Starting Grant**
(Grant transferred by the Principal Investigator to the University of Bucharest)
Record-keeping, fiscal reform, and the rise of institutional accountability in late medieval Savoy: a source-oriented approach – Castellany Accounts
Principal Investigator: Ionuț EPURESCU-PASCOVICI
Timeframe at the NEC: May 1, 2015 – March 31, 2017 (1 Year and 10 Months)
Timeframe of the Grant: May 1, 2015 – April 30, 2020 (5 Years)

Ongoing projects:

ERC Grants:

- **ERC Consolidator Grant**

- Luxury, fashion and social status in Early Modern South Eastern Europe***

- Principal Investigator: Constanța VINTILĂ-GHIȚULESCU

- (1 Principal Investigator, 8 Researchers)

- Timeframe: July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2020 (5 Years)

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

Focus Groups

- *Culture in Murky Times*
- Focus Group on Education and Research
- New World Disorder

The Focus Groups are financed by two grants of the *Executive Unit for Financing Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation* – UEFISCDI, within the *Prize for Excellence in Research* awarded to Romanian Host Institutions of research projects financed by European Research Council in 2014 – 2016.

Research Groups

- Reflections on the Political History of the 18th and 19th Century in Romania
- The Bible in Linguistic Context: Introduction to the Biblical Hebrew
- The Bible in Linguistic Context: Introduction to the Coptic Language

Present Financial Support

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Private Foundations, Germany

Fritz Thyssen Stiftung, Köln, Germany

VolkswagenStiftung, Hanover, Germany

Gerda Henkel Stiftung, Düsseldorf, Germany

Robert Bosch Stiftung, Stuttgart, Germany

European Research Council (ERC)

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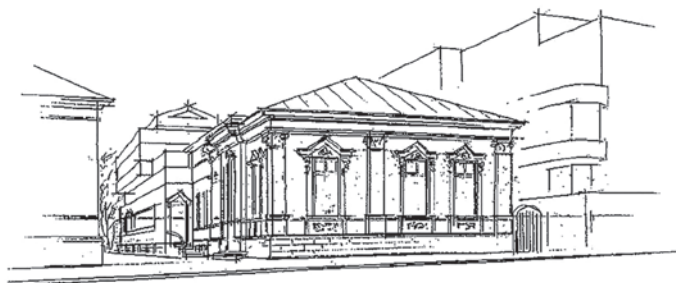
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Assistant Professor, Department of Cinema and Media, Babeş-Bolyai University,
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Project manager of the future European Center for Contemporary Arts (ECCA) in
Cluj-Napoca

Member of International Association of Art Critics (AICA), International Society
for Intermedial Studies (ISIS) and Union of Visual Artists, Romania (UAP)

Papers presented at international conferences in Sweden, USA, Canada,
France, Romania

Published essays, articles, and book chapters

Curated and organized several exhibitions both in Romania and abroad

ON THE THRESHOLD: CONFORMISM, DISSENT AND (DE)SYNCHRONIZATIONS IN ROMANIAN MEDIA ART IN THE 1960 AND 1970S

Abstract

My essay investigates the artistic practices made in Romania in the decades 1960-1970 which employ media and technology as principal means of production and presentation, while offering an insight into the cultural, social and political determinants underlying their production. By Media art I understand art forms produced by electronic means and which are mainly time-based: video, experimental film, sound, computer-based images, presented as single channel works or as installations. The focus of my study is equally on the means of expression (the (un)problematization of the medium, themes, narrative strategies, technologies, apparatus) and on the conditions of manifestation of these artistic productions (the cultural and political framework of the period in Romania and Eastern Europe, issues related to cultural and technological (de)synchronization, institutional and public reception, critical positioning and subversion, humor and irony as survival strategies, processes of signification and the regimes of memory associated with media art practices). Three representative artists and groups of the period will be discussed – kinema ikon, Sigma, and Ion Grigorescu. They are different in terms of approach, strategy and artistic values, but their common ground is equally represented by their significant interest in the moving image, and by their constant efforts to innovate the artistic language and the relationship with the context.

Key words: Media arts, Eastern Europe, Neo-Avant-garde, Cultural synchronization, Political context

Introduction

Media art is about multiplicity and variety, before anything else. It encompasses a wide range of artistic practices, conceptual models, and technological means. Any attempt to define media art in fixed terms

would stifle its diversity and vitality, and, consequently, any claim about its newness remains debatable. Perhaps a clarification is needed at this point given the great number of definitions proposed for media arts and the related notion of new media art.

First, we should note that, if we take the term “media art” literally, all art is media art, in the sense that all art forms need a medium to communicate their message, being it paint, canvas, stone, or video tape. However, the expression “media art” has a more specific use and it refers to

All forms of time-related art works which are created by recording sound or visual images. A time-related art work is a work that changes and ‘moves’, in contrast to older art forms that are static, which stand still, such as paintings, photographs and most sculptures. Time-related art works include works in the fields of sound, video and computer art, both installations and internet projects, and single channel works. Single channel works are video works that are shown by projection, or on a monitor screen.¹

Indeed, time plays a crucial – although not exclusive – role in defining media art. Sean Cubitt and Paul Thomas are right to observe that: “the temporal dimension of digital media and indeed of all moving images in the audio-visual media points them toward the future: not objects but projects.”² This projective nature of media art explains not only its commitment to future development, but also justifies the terminology based on the associated particle “new.” Sometimes used alternatively with “media art”, the phrase “new media art” puts the accent on the “newness” of the media. But how new is new media, after all? Can we describe, for example, a 50 years old medium such as video, a “new” medium? These are not simple questions to answer and they point to issues largely debated in both media studies field and contemporary art theory circles.

Media theorist Lev Manovich advances one of the most influential definitions, writing that:

New media represents a convergence of two separate historical trajectories: computing and media technologies. (...) The synthesis of these two histories? The translation of all existing media into numerical data accessible through computers. The result is new media – graphics, moving images, sounds, shapes, spaces, and texts that have become computable.³

The key consequences of this new status of media are what Manovich calls the principles of new media: numerical representation, modularity, automation, variability, and cultural transcoding,⁴ although, as Manovich specifies, “they should be considered not as absolute laws, but rather as general tendencies of a culture undergoing computerization.”⁵

Shifting the perspective, film and media scholar Ron Burnett underlines that, one of the central characteristics of new media is the change from “viewer” to “user”: while “old media are for passive viewing, (...) new media allow for, even encourage, interaction or use.”⁶ While this aspect is emblematic for media art it is, however, not its exclusive attribute. Other genres and artistic productions, such as performance or installation art might turn the “viewer” into a “user” as well, a solution with very profound implications for the outcome of the artwork.

Regardless the defining viewpoint, it is important to emphasize, together with art historian Domenico Quaranta, that

‘New Media Art’ does not identify an art genre or an art movement, and cannot be viewed – as it usually is – as a simple medium-based definition. On the contrary, a work of art – whether based on technology or not – is usually classed as New Media Art when it is produced, exhibited and discussed in a specific ‘art world,’ the world of New Media Art.⁷

Indeed, media art should be defined not in a determinist way, based on medium or technology. Nevertheless, given its distinct historical and aesthetic significance, its innovative character and social potential, media art should be seen as a particular field of artistic expression, although not quite a clearly delimited “world of New Media Art,” as Quaranta has proposed. This distinctiveness works equally in favour and against media art. On the one hand it helps define the field, its terminology and aesthetic principles, and on the other it functions as a segregating factor, especially with regard to historical understanding and curatorial practice – a situation largely criticized by scholars and artists active in the media art field.

In any case, we should still note that media art’s specific area of manifestation is very much defined by the evolving technology itself and by the social and cultural mechanisms that produce it, and which have radically changed during the last decades. Consequently, the terminology applied to these manifestations is not homogenous, nor the theories surrounding them. We can sometimes see the same artwork or application classified or described as – to name just a few generic terms – Media Art,

Multimedia Art, New Media Art, Digital Art, Computer Art, Electronic Art, Interactive Art, etc. Nonetheless, for the sake of discursive coherence and analytical clarity, I will use the term media art, referring to art forms produced by electronic means and which are mainly time-based: video, experimental film, sound, computer-based images, presented as single channel works or as installations.

Although a marginal preoccupation in the ensemble of artistic production in Eastern Europe, and especially in Romania, media art remains a constant and consistent preoccupation for artists in the last fifty years, and thus constitutes a significant indicator for the cultural dynamics in this part of the world. The relative lack of interest of the Romanian artists toward media and technology explains in part the relatively small number of artworks in this field. Other explanations are not strictly artistic and point to the social and political climate of the last decades: until 1989, censorship, technological isolation and the political control of the communist regime has taken a toll on the media art production as well. In the decade of the nineties, political censorship was replaced by economical difficulties, hence the still isolated cases, yet much more numerous and more complex than before, of media art productions and exhibitions. It was only in the decades after the year 2000 when more and more artists opted for media arts, a shift driven also by the increasing popularity and ease of access to technical equipments for producing and presenting media arts.

The focus of my study is equally on the means of expression (the (un)problematization of the medium, themes, narrative strategies, technologies, apparatus) and on the conditions of manifestation of these artistic productions (the cultural and political framework of the period in Romania and Eastern Europe, issues related to cultural and technological (de)synchronization, institutional and public reception, critical positioning and subversion, humor and irony as survival strategies, processes of signification and the regimes of memory associated with media art practices). I will discuss three representative artists and groups of the late 1960's and 1970's: Kinema Ikon, Sigma, and Ion Grigorescu. They are different in terms of approach, strategy and artistic values, but their common ground is equally represented by their significant interest in the moving image, and by their constant efforts to innovate the artistic language and the relationship with the context.

Thus, my research seeks to identify the particularities of Romanian media art manifestations within both the regional and global cultural,

artistic and socio-political context. Regional meaning the geo-political space defined by the dominance of communism roughly between 1945 and 1989. In other words, what art historian Piotr Piotrowski called the countries situated “in the shadow of Yalta.”⁸ Global context is defined here as the contemporary cultural frameworks in which media art has developed – especially Western European and North American – and which belongs to what is identified as the “main” art history. In this sense, the term “threshold” in the title should be understood both spatially and temporally, more exactly describing the relational connection or the liminal zone between East and West, between local and international, traditional and experimental, and at the same time indicating a way to problematize history, to engage with issues of time and synchronicity.

I will examine these issues along three axes, anchoring my arguments on the three cases presented above: first, the relationship between Eastern European art and the West as an equation between the center and the periphery, between the dominant model and the weak term (through the works of kinema ikon); second, the relationship between mainstream art and media arts, more exactly, between traditional forms of art such as painting and sculpture and technology-based art (focusing on the experiments of the Sigma group); third, the relationship between a non-conformist artist and his/her strategies of resistance against the communist political power and the “official art” (analyzing a number of specific works by Ion Grigorescu). More exactly, I will discuss to what extent artists of the epoch aimed at imitating the Western models and how much they acknowledged their “otherness” as Eastern Europeans in relationship with the dominant model. I will also critically discuss the common assumption which perceives Eastern European art in a manicheist way, with either conformist artists or dissidents. At the same time, I will evaluate what was the position of media arts in relationship with the official art and censorship in “exceptional” contexts such as that of the communist societies. I contend that these aspects are far more complicated than they are usually presented and still open to debate.

Playing Democracy. The Political and Cultural Context of the Epoch

In order to better understand the trajectory of media art development and the determinants behind its manifestations we should outline a

few details about the political framework of the epoch. After a period dominated by a Stalinist-inspired regime, with political prisoners and tough control imposed on the society by the secret police, a certain opening emerged when the new political leader of the Communist Party, Nicolae Ceaușescu, takes power in 1965. Ceaușescu was a political maverick of the Eastern bloc: his reputation in the West greatly increased when he condemned the Soviet and other communist countries' invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Regarding the internal politics, in contrast to the previous period, the first years under Ceaușescu's regime looked more "liberal," being characterized by a relative wellbeing, a slightly relaxed censorship, richer intellectual life and a certain degree of modernization of education. This policy was actually part of a typical socialist strategy of "freeze and thaw", as historian and political scientist Alain Besançon has shown, a necessary policy of the pressure valves meant to diminish the distance between "ideological reality" and the "real" reality.⁹

It should be emphasized, however, that this epoch was far from being "liberal" in the proper sense of the term. Political power was totally confiscated by the communist party-state. There were no such things as pluralism, civic activism, freedom of speech or free initiative. Nonetheless, it proved to be an acceptable period, especially compared with what followed. In 1971, inspired by his visits in China and North Korea, Ceaușescu started a "cultural revolution"¹⁰ which reoriented the country towards a national communist doctrine, while imposing the cult of personality, enforcing tighter political control, and by the end of the communist era, generating a profound and unbearable economical crisis.

From a socio-cultural perspective, Romania in this period was largely dominated by the efforts to get over the previous years' ideological control and to find new ways to function in the now slightly modernized society. This went hand in hand with a certain reconciliation with the idea that communism was there to stay, thus making some intellectuals to find solutions of coexistence with the historical evil. Part of this strategy meant for some intellectuals joining the Romanian Communist Party, a gesture driven equally by the belief in the permanence of communism, the admiration for Ceaușescu's daring stance against the Soviets during the invasion of Czechoslovakia and the belief that only by making the pact with the political power would they accede to leading positions and privileges. Other intellectuals remained firm believers in the total autonomy of the cultural work, thus finding various tactics to develop an artistic and public discourse, if not downright critical, then at least

entirely free of any political interference, while embracing a lifestyle that contradicted the political norms and forms.

Other elements, such as art publications, public policies, institutions, and exhibitions are relevant indicators for the context and the development of media arts in Romania in the years in discussion.

Arta journal, published by the Romanian Union of Artists, was for many decades the only periodical entirely dedicated to visual arts in Romania. Its content, but also its layout always reflected the epoch's political canons. During the mid sixties, *Arta* started to echo the changes in political establishment. One can observe certain openings and a relative synchronization with the Western art world. The obtuse political discourse of the previous years dedicated to socialist-realist art is replaced with a more relaxed political tone, while references to Modernism – both local and international started to become more numerous. Notably, we can identify articles dedicated to discussing cybernetics, kinetic art and computer art.¹¹ However, we can speak neither of a consistent trend in these directions in Romania, nor of an institutional attention in this regard; only a small number of artists embraced such preoccupations: Sigma group, Șerban Epure, Mihai Jalobeanu etc. Although well written and free of any political references, these articles were actually in line with the enthusiastic tone of the official socialist policies, focused on “progress” and the technological and scientific “revolution” (enthusiasm shared also by Western countries, albeit without any socialist undertones). Nonetheless, media art was absent in *Arta*, and the experimental films by kinema ikon, Sigma, or Ion Grigorescu were largely ignored.

Similarly, the main art institutions such as art museums and the galleries belonging to the Union of Romanian Artists – the state-owned structure dedicated to managing artistic production and promotion – pay no attention to media art. Nevertheless, a number of exhibitions were dedicated to the newest tendencies in art. Most of them were hosted by Atelier 35, a network of galleries belonging to the Union of Romanian Artists devoted to young artists under 35 years of age, opened in 1973 in several cities in Romania. Another important space focused on the newest tendencies was Galeria Nouă in Bucharest, opened also in 1973. Among the most remarkable exhibitions – often doubled by symposia – were: *Art and energy*, *Art and Actuality*, *Art and the City* (1974), *Thing-Image-Sign*, *Images of history* (1975), *Art in Industry*, *Art and Nature* (1976), all hosted by Galeria Nouă and the exhibition *Study 1*, at the Bastion Gallery in Timișoara (1978).¹² A number of international exhibitions

opened in Romania in various cities had a significant impact in the local art community. Among them, we should mention: an exhibition dedicated to the Paris School in 1968, the exhibition *The Disappearance and Reappearance of the Image: Painting in the United States after 1945* in 1969, Contemporary Italian Art (1968), New American Sculpture (1972), etc. Of great importance were also the international exhibitions where Romanian artists were invited to participate: in 1969, Sigma group and Mihai Rusu were invited to the Constructivist Biennale in Nürnberg in 1969; in 1970 begun the long-term collaboration between Richard Demarco Gallery in Edinburgh and a number of Romanian artists, most notable events being Edinburgh Festival in 1971 and, in the same year, the exhibition *Romanian Art Today* in Edinburgh; in 1971, at the Paris Youth Biennale Șerban Epure was included in the film section, while Paul Neagu and Horia Bernea were presented at the conceptualist section.

All these manifestations were the expression of an artistic effervescence, but they cannot be historicized in clear-cut tendencies or artistic currents. Innovations and experiments were diverse, focused equally on the conceptualization and new materialities, although preoccupations for the moving image or electronic media were rather scarce. Besides kinema ikon, Sigma, and Ion Grigorescu, other artists showed their interest in film: Geta Brătescu, Wanda Mihuleac, Mihai Olos, Florin Maxa, István Kancsura etc. Presented mostly as a one-channel projection, these films are, some of them, pure visual experiments, and most of them performance-based, body centered works. Considering the way in which they were conceived and produced, we can assert that these works reflected, despite isolation and censorship, the most important trends in experimental filmmaking and video in the sixties and seventies worldwide. Within a political context that started to emphasize, at the beginning of the '70s, the national values – giving birth to a bizarre form of national-communism – the synchronization with the Western world and the impulse to create “alternative cultures” were the main strategies for most artists interested in experiment, including those who occasionally opted for media art.

Europe: Dividing Lines, Connecting Zones

The most prevalent perspective when discussing the Eastern European art in relationship with the West is that which sees it as an equation between the center and the periphery, between the dominant model and

the weak term. While this interpretative pattern actually reflects a historic and cultural reality, it also excessively simplifies and generalizes the evaluation of a situation which is actually much more complex.

As a mosaic of nations, included under different empires in the past, modern countries in the Eastern Europe played, indeed, a somehow marginal role in the concert of continental common history. To this, we can add the quasi isolation produced by Orthodoxy in certain parts of the region, the total isolation imposed by the Soviet regimes, and more recently, the economical underdevelopment and political powerlessness. Eastern Europe was – and partly still is – considered a sort of second-class Europe (if it is to consider grand retailers' policies and some of EU's planned regulations). The various dividing lines somehow persist in art as well.

Art historian Hans Belting, in his book *Art History After Modernism*, considers that any reflection about Europe should be put in terms of East and West. In fact, believes Belting, the European art history is written in "two voices" that sometimes present "contradictory narratives", so the task for us in an extended Europe is to find the means of coexistence and harmony.¹³ These important differences are described by Belting in these terms:

Compared with the West, art in Eastern Europe in retrospect mostly appears retarded in the general development and at another stage of development which means that it was performing a different social role, two conditions that result from its historical lack of contact with Western modernism. Where it did not join the permanent crisis of modernism, art remained in the state of innocence, as it were, especially since it could easily justify itself by its resistance to official state art.¹⁴

The specificity of Eastern-European art, believes Belting, is, beside this state of innocence, the still persisting "conviction in the power of art, something that has vanished long before in the West."¹⁵ After all, we might add, this conviction was essential in building a strategy of survival in a totalitarian regime.

I consider that Belting affirms an important truth – that Eastern European artists still believed in the power of art – but his position regarding the retard between West and East should be seen more cautiously and surely more nuanced. If, indeed, Eastern European artists were struggling to keep up with what was happening beyond the Iron Curtain and to gather

information about the most recent trends in art, they were also developing – volens, nolens – an independent artistic discourse. This process was not always a conscious one. As Piotr Piotrowski pointed out,

The majority of critics and art historians from Eastern Europe saw as their main problem the issue of how to integrate the region's art practice into the universal art canon, or, more precisely, into Western art history. They were not interested in challenging the assumptions of those constructions or engaging in fashioning a perspective that would emphasize the 'otherness' of their part of the continent.¹⁶

Piotrowski does not explain what he exactly means with "otherness", but we can nevertheless acknowledge its manifestation. I would assert that what make Eastern European artists different from the Western peers are their acceptance of a certain state of exception or idiosyncrasy, a frequent appetite for humor, a way to construct a different set of norms, and, especially, a set of codes that worked sometimes in a subversive manner. Despite this, I cannot help but agree with Piotrowski to observe that most artists in Eastern Europe embraced the same credo: they never tried to see their uniqueness and specificity defined at a larger, regional scale. They always strived to keep up with what was happening beyond the Iron Curtain, with different degrees of success varying from one country or city to another. For example, Yugoslavia, although having a communist regime, was a "non-aligned" country, therefore much more opened to the Western world; at the opposite end was Albania, with a Stalinist-inspired, militaristic dictatorship which was completely and constantly opaque. Judging after their declarations, most artists in the Eastern Europe considered that Western art represented *the* art, the uncontested value worthy to follow. As Piotrowski rightly remarks: "Western modern forms and criteria were modern par excellence, and as such had universal value. What is more, this belief was shared in Eastern Europe, and that is how this issue is still largely understood here today."¹⁷ While this is correct, we should also remark that, in the recent years, critics, curators and artists started to have more confidence in the specificity of the Eastern European art and thus bringing a relativization of this dual perspective. It is not a coincidence perhaps that this reevaluation of the Eastern European art was simultaneous with an increased commercial attention for Romanian artists starting roughly at the end of 2000s.¹⁸

This is the case with the group kinema ikon, one of the most important neo-avant-garde collectives in the Romanian art: practically unknown during their first years of activity, they became widely recognized and esteemed especially after the year 2000, although an important moment in their international career was the screening of 22 experimental movies in two evenings of May 1995, at Cinéma du Musée of the Centre George Pompidou, Paris.

Kinema ikon was established in 1970 as an artistic group within, firstly, Art School and then the Arad cinematheque (Arad is 162.000 inhabitants city in the Western Transylvania). The group is still active today, within the Arad Art Museum. As the leader of the group, theorist George Săbău, explains, kinema ikon went through different phases: experimental film (1970-1989), mixed media (1990-1993), hypermedia works on CD-ROM and on the internet, as well as interactive installations (from 1994 to the years 2000+), while in the recent years opting for a multimedia, hybrid approach.¹⁹ Kinema ikon produced 62 experimental films between 1970 and 1989, both individually and in collaboration. The films were very diverse in terms of concept, approach and means of production: from abstract visual exercises, dream-like essays, special effects collages, interventions on the film strip, to ciné-verité and lyrical documentaries. Each film is signed by one of the group's members, although many times they were the product of a collaborative work. As George Săbău remarks (in his/group's specific humorous tone):

A great part of the kinema ikon members did not make individual movies, but played, nevertheless, an essential part in the act of instating an inciting, provocative, ludic, ironic, intellectual climate, also freed from cultural clichés, language stereotypes, "idola theatri"; they have permanently promoted an unconventional attitude, which induced the experiment atmosphere a continuous "facultas ludentes".²⁰

Among the films produced in the '70s, are the following: George Săbău, *Ipostaze simultane* (1970), Demian Șandru, *Open-flash* (1975), Romulus Budiu, *Singur cu zăpada* (1975), Florin Hornoiu, *Navetiștii* (1975), Ioan Plesh, *Poluare* (1977), Ioan T. Morar, *Autopsia uitării* (1977), Ioan Plesh, *Efecte de imprimăvărare* (1978), Emanuel Țeț, *Poem dinamic* (1978), Alexandru Pecican, *Exercițiu subliminal* (1979), Ioan Plesh, *Panta rhei* (1979).

Some of these films remind somehow of the historical avant-garde (Hans Richter, Man Ray, Fernand Léger, Maya Deren, Dziga Vertov, Walter Ruttmann). Some others, are rather close to the European and American avant-garde of the '60s and the '70s, such as Hollis Frampton; Jonas Mekas, Stan Brakhage. It is hard to say how much these artists influenced the members of the kinema ikon group. In a private discussion with the leader of the group, George Săbău declared that improvisation and freedom of expression was ruling over a clear aesthetic direction or established artistic references. Actually, Săbău was apparently the only one who, in those years, sought constantly the latest information and trends in the visual arts and integrated them within the kinema ikon work. We might affirm, then, that the motor behind the experimental film production of the group was not so much a program, a manifesto, or a set of rules, as the freedom of expression, a propensity for experimentation and interdisciplinarity, not unlike many of the established Western models.

Judging the phenomenon in a larger historical perspective we should note that, unlike Western European and North American cases, we cannot speak of an experimental film or media arts tradition in the Romanian cultural environment that could have influenced kinema ikon or other neo-avant-garde artists. This is due to the fact that Romanian historical avant-garde – quite radical in terms of expression, approach and claims, and with a good international opening – paid little or no attention to filmmaking. Among the very few examples we can mention the 1930, 8 min reportage entitled “Kiseleff Lido/ Ștrandul Kiseleff” with Marcel Iancu and Iuliu Iancu, as well as Constantin Brâncuși's pseudo-documentaries filmed from 1923 to 1939 in various locations. At the same time, Hungarian film industry at the beginning of the 20th century (plus Miklós Jancsó's later activity), although very influential in certain circles in Transylvania, played a marginal role in constructing a working philosophy for the filmmakers in Romania, in the sixties and seventies. To these, we should mention the lack of interest of the film industry for experiment and innovation. Film critic Alex Leo Șerban explains the quasi-absence of experimental film through three factors: the pressure of the political system, the frailty of the filmmakers and the institutional status of the film industry considered the Establishment.²¹ The rather rare experimental film productions were more often – somehow paradoxically – documentary films, since they allow a certain liberty of camera work and editing. Like the experiments produced by kinema ikon, these films, explain Șerban,

made on 16 mm, share a 'programmatic' urge to create within what the artists involved call 'aesthetic formalism' – a renouncement both of ideological compromise and of commercial facility. Here, technical experimentation (quite timid, since none of the artists is a 'professional'!) is the result of a radical conception of the Image, 'divorced' from its function of relay. Subjective, highly personal mythologies replace the public, impersonal ones – which have proved their limits through continuous manipulation. Subversive commentaries on Reality interconnect a subversive treatment of Form. The long-awaited questioning of the medium by the medium.²²

Indeed, when Western media artists and experimental filmmakers proposed the problematization of the medium, Eastern European artists opposed an "aesthetic formalism." To societal mythologies, they offered personal mythologies; instead of political action and institutional critique, they preferred subversion, resistance and humor. This is, again, what would define the "otherness" of Eastern European artists, their more or less assumed *difference*. Despite these obvious dissimilarities, however, there is a common aesthetic ground shared by both sides: As Bill Viola has argued, avant-garde film and video-artists were not concerned with making works that would be "about anything at all." Rather, he argued, "they actually *were* the thing."²³ Indeed, while different in what concerns its socio-political determinants, the art of kinema ikon (and of other comparable artists in the region) is perfectly aligned with its more renowned Western counterparts as they show the same preoccupation for radical re-evaluations of the technical image and the cinematic conventions, and the unrestricted explorations of non-narrative forms.

Falling between two domains – cinema and visual arts – kinema ikon was perceived as an atypical, non-conventional and underground group and thus, Săbău maintains, vulnerable when faced to the ideological pressure of the communist regime.²⁴ Indeed, during the seventies and the eighties, kinema ikon's experimental films were many times banned from large public projections, only to be seen in closed circles of interdisciplinary artists. Nevertheless, kinema ikon had their share of concessions in the epoch, in the sense of being allowed to work and exhibit in their own space, to have the technical means at hand and, in a few cases, to participate to large national and international manifestations dedicated to film.

Kinema ikon is still active today, although with a different lineup and a different artistic orientation, thus justifying their name – an expression

of the movement of images and the image of movement with experiment as both a method and a state of mind.

Tradition vs. Innovation: A Media Art Story

Another important perspective for evaluating the conditions and mechanisms underlying the media arts production in Romania in the sixties and seventies is translated in the relationship between mainstream art and media arts, that is, between traditional art forms – mainly painting and sculpture – and electronic media (especially experimental film) and, more generally, technology-based art.

Before commenting on this quite “classical” antithesis, we should take a necessary look at the epoch’s attitude regarding technology and research. The sixties and the early seventies were a moment of enthusiasm, renewal and utopianism, on both sides of the Iron Curtain. Technological progress was an essential part of this *zeitgeist* and it played a crucial role in the art production and the development of new aesthetic visions. Socialist states seized the moment and aligned their rhetoric to this general fervor, finding in it a justification for their political project. It is true, however, that, beyond pure propaganda, effective efforts were made towards technological development and use of innovation. On its part, Romania started to invest massively in industrialization, research and – within certain limits – import of knowhow and technology. However, it was the capitalist West that contributed the most to the progress of technology – if it is to mention only the improvement of computers and the introduction of video technology. Artists tried to live up to these developments by enthusiastically exploring new conceptual and functional territories in art making.

A few important moments of these advances in technology should be mentioned as to give an idea about what constituted the institutional background and what were the working tools of the media artists in the epoch. The launch of UNIVAC in 1951, the first computer capable of processing both numerical data and text, opened the path to experimenting with computers in the field of art. What is considered to be the first “Computer Art”, actually abstract images generated by algorithms and mathematical functions, was created by an electronic engineer, A. Michael Noll, in 1962. The Computer Arts Society (CAS) was founded in Britain in 1968, in association with British Computer Society, a platform “founded to encourage the creative use of computers and to allow the exchange

of information in this area” and the collaboration and “communication between artists in different fields (music, visual, performing arts, and so on).”²⁵ An important moment in this computer-driven technological opening was the organization of the exhibition *Cybernetic Serendipity* in 1968 curated by Jasia Reichardt at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London.²⁶ But perhaps the most prominent – and surely the most influential – moment of the encounter between electronic technology and the art in the epoch was *9 Evenings: Theatre and Engineering*. The event that took place in October 1966 was a series of multimedia performances featuring ten artists working with thirty engineers and scientists from Bell Labs at the initiative of electronic engineer Billy Klüver. Among participant artists were Robert Rauschenberg, John Cage, David Tudor, Yvonne Rainer, Robert Whitman and Öyvind Fahlström. Trying to perpetuate the success of the *9 Evenings* event and in order to make this collaboration more sustainable, Klüver and others established Experiments in Arts and Technology (E.A.T.) in 1969, a non-profit association that promoted collaborations between artists and engineers, and which was developed with the technical and financial support of the technology industry. By 1969 E.A.T. numbered 4,000 members and various chapters throughout the United States.²⁷

Another crucial moment in the history of media art was the introduction of the SONY Portapak in 1967, the first portable video recording system that radically changed the art making. It is important to note that the self-contained functionality of the device gave the user a larger autonomy with regard to the working strategies and visual possibilities and thus it assured independence from the mainstream film studios and their production facilities. Indeed, given Portapak’s versatility, video started to attract a lot of artists seeking to explore new visual expressions and technical possibilities. Nevertheless, given the economical, political and communicational gap existent in Eastern Europe, artists rarely – if any at all – had the possibility to work with the newly launched visual tool. In Romania, artists preoccupied by exploring the neo-avant-garde continue to use mainly 16 mm and Super 8 film formats (the latter introduced in 1965, which also permitted the magnetic sound recording). In both cases, however, the technical limitations of the medium, and, especially the practical constraints with regard to the availability of these means, made video art – and experimental film, by the same token – a rather marginal manifestation in Romania in these years. At the end of the sixties, there are very few examples, worth mentioning being the – probably – the first artist film in Romania: *Cutiile lui Neagu* (*Neagu’s Boxes*) from 1968, a performative film in which Neagu

manipulates his manufactured “boxes” in order to show their tactile potential and potential for recontextualizations.²⁸

In the art criticism published in Romania, the reflection of these technological and artistic changes was rather rare, although a few important articles were published in *Arta* journal. For example, *Arta* no. 7/1969 publishes an article by Pierre Restany entitled “Electronic Arts”. In number 11/1970 of *Arta* journal, Titus Mocanu publishes an essay entitled, significantly, “Science and Art” (illustrated also with computer graphic works by John Smith, Kerry Strand, but also Kinetic artwork by Nicolas Schöffer and Wen Ying Tsai), and in a later issue, he signed an article entitled “Art and Computer” (*Arta* 1/1975). On the same vein is Victor-Ernest Mașek’s essay entitled: “Art and Para-Art of the machine” (*Arta* 10-11-12/1971). Another interesting contribution to the same journal is Șerban Epure’s Glossary of recent terms, including cybernetics, structure, feed-back, information (in *Arta* 1, 2, 3, 4-5, 6/1971). Important to note is that no articles were dedicated specifically to video art or experimental films by artists. However, such contributions opened the local art world to new artistic and socio-cultural horizons and thus they stood in a sharp contrast with the content of the journal only a few years ago, when almost 100% was dedicated to socialist realism, political debates and various demonstrations of allegiance to the communist power.

One of the most representative and most innovative artistic collectives which innovated in the field of media arts and explored the encounter zones between science and art in Romania are the groups 111 and Sigma from Timișoara.

The group 111, established in 1966, was the first experimental group in Romania. It included: Roman Cotoșman, Constantin Flondor and Ștefan Bertalan. Its artistic strategy was focused on the study of the principles of constructivism, and the Bauhaus School model. After the Nürnberg Constructivist Biennale in 1969, where the group was invited to participate, Roman Cotoșman decided not to return in his home country, leading to the demise of the group. Bertalan and Flondor came back in Romania and continued their work, forming a new group called Sigma 1 (or, simply Sigma) active between 1969 and 1978. Beside Bertalan and Flondor, other members joined the group: Doru Tulcan, Ion Gaita, Elisei Rusu and Lucian Codreanu (a mathematician).

Sigma’s activity was characterized by multi-disciplinarity and intermediality, in the sense that their work was a combination between art and science (such as bionics, cybernetics, mathematics, psychology),

the desire for universal communication, the organization of an art-based educational program, and the aim to establish strong links between art and society. Extremely important for their strategy was the unlike choice of materials and expressive means: from glass, metal wire, and nylon, to film and video-installation.

Sigma's non-conformist attitude was manifested in two but actually convergent directions: one that embraced neo-constructivism, another that opted for the most recent trends in art at that moment: cybernetics, kinetic art and media art. Neo-constructivism responded very well to the group's ambitions focused on creation-research, the development of an algorithmic culture and working in nature as a way to investigate the possibilities of the materials and forms. The expression of these modernist-driven idea(l)s was epitomized in the frequent use of the grid. The latter was not only typical, formally speaking, for this artistic orientation, but it also represents a statement. As art historian Rosalind Krauss remarks, "the grid functions to declare the modernity of modern art."²⁹ But what interested Sigma artists was not so much the content of such undeclared statement as its critical function. That is to say, absolutizing the abstract form, the "purity" of the grid was meant to reject any form of realism, of socialist realism, more precisely. As the official art until mid sixties, socialist-realism doctrine condemned aggressively any type of formalism as being out of touch with the people, the place and the epoch. Therefore, embracing pure formalism was a way to universalize the discourse despite localized constraints.

Another strategic positioning against the official, mostly conservative art was the embracing of the most recent trends and artistic means. Cybernetics was the perfect expression of this search for innovation, since, as media art theorist Edward Shanken observes, it offered "a scientific model for constructing a system of visual signs and relationships, which they attempted to achieve by utilizing diagrammatic and interactive elements to create works that functioned as information systems."³⁰ Important for these artists was not the object and its composition, but rather their communication function. As Roman Cotoşman once mentioned, these were "open systems of communication."³¹ Relevant for this direction of thought is their project *Informational Tower* [*Turnul informațional*], conceived in 1970, a construction that combined architecture, sculpture and a spectacle of light and sound. The work, assumedly influenced by Nicolas Schöffer's *Cybernetic Light Tower* (1961) was a sort of statement for the group's vision and artistic direction.³²

Another fundamental work that synthesizes their artistic philosophy in the field of media arts is *Multivision 1*, the first video-installation in Romania, and, for sure, one of the first in (Eastern) Europe. Conceived in 1972, it was presented in 1978 at the exhibition "Study 1", in a high school gym in Timișoara. It was rebuilt in 2014 and presented within the same environment. The work consists of a spatial structure that supports a number of semi-transparent textile surfaces arranged in the form of a tetrahedron, onto which black and white and color films are projected from two intersected sources. Combining the physical space of the gallery, the mobile spectator and the video projections containing strange sequences of nature and close-ups with objects and liquids, the extremely spectacular work creates a powerful, yet subtle and poetic environment.

To the end of their activity as a group, in 1979, Constantin Flondor produced one of the most significant video works not only in his career as an artist, but for Romanian media arts history in general: *Me-You-Witness. Visual Consciousness* [*Eu-Tu-Martor. Conștiință vizuală*]. The video presents three images side by side with apparently incongruent content. The studio shots are actually self referential as they speak about the video image; the superimposed text brings an obvious conceptual component to the moving image; the geometrical shapes overlaid on the surface illustrate the principles of order and systematic interpretation, while the nature shots are micro-universes open to visual research and contemplation (the latter announce somehow Flondor's later preoccupation for painting vegetal elements)

Highly esteemed in Romania from the beginning of their existence as a group until today, Sigma group was instead quasi-unknown in other countries until recently, when, like other established artists in Romania, it started to be promoted and exhibited worldwide. Some members of the group enjoyed though some share of international attention during their participation within the formula of the 111 group to the Nürnberg Constructivist Biennale in 1969. However, the biennale and what Romanian artists proposed there were a confirmation for the Western culture of the Western model, and not a breakthrough of a different discourse coming from the East. As Piotr Piotrowski rightly remarks, "Western interest in Eastern Europe during this period focused on similarities rather than differences, at least in those phenomena that were translatable into the language of the Western artistic paradigm."³³ Indeed, no important exhibitions dedicated to the Eastern European art

were dedicated in the West until after the fall of the Iron Curtain a proof that the artistic production from this part of the world was largely ignored.

Sigma group represents an extremely important moment in the history of recent Romanian art in general, and in the field of media arts in particular. They had an important contribution regarding innovative thinking about art, collaborative work and finding ways to explore new visual expressions, but they weren't able to establish a strong model or to open a trend specifically dedicated to media arts in Romania. Not only that some members of the group abandoned filmmaking and installationism by the beginning of the 1980s (the case of Constantin Flondor is the most evident), but media arts in general seem to lose steam in the eighties in Romania. Media art remained a rather minor discourse, with a few dedicated artists and practically no institutional attention. Indeed, the main preoccupation of both critics and artists was focused on traditional media such as painting and sculpture. These artistic means were not only offering artist a more familiar ground to work on, but they were also easier to understand and, hence, easier to control by the authorities. Moreover, artistic education institutions maintained a commitment to tradition, with a special attention given to skills and technique over innovation and experiment. Worth noting is that this was a situation specific not only to the odd context of Eastern Europe. Media arts – being it video, or computer-based works – remained a marginal occurrence in the Western countries as well during the seventies and the eighties. Once qualified as perhaps the most incisive voice of neo-avant-garde, as the most innovative artistic expression, media art ended up as an underground phenomenon. As Domenico Quaranta very aptly puts it, “video entered a splendid isolation of its own that was to last until the early 1990s.”³⁴

Corporeality and Mediality: Strategies of Resistance

Another essential aspect in understanding the cultural and institutional context in which the first media art manifestations took place in Romania is the relationship between non-conformist artist and his/her strategies of resistance vis-à-vis communist political power together with its “official art”. Official means, in this specific context, art accepted and promoted by authorities, although it is worth noting that at the end of the sixties, communist power renounced at controlling *the content* of the art, preferring instead the control on *the behavior* of the artists.³⁵ It is also

important to underline that this opposition is not drawn along the same lines as those discussed in the section above, more exactly, between traditional means of artistic production and those defined by media arts. Paradoxically, official art – i.e. art that was politically commissioned – was not necessarily traditional in terms of medium and approaches. One can notice, beyond the myriad of paintings, sculptures and graphic works, examples of site-specific pieces or mixed media assemblages which carried a political message. At the same time, one would be surprised to find a number of paintings which, while subordinated to political command (in terms of subject matter, title, message etc.), were not at all traditional in terms of visuality, but they were rather neo-avantgarde explorations of the medium (the most illustrative case in point being Ion Bitzan). Moreover – and this is part of the same paradox – non-conformist attitudes were very often manifested in painting, sculpture or graphics, artists such as Horia Bernea, Paul Neagu, Horia Damian, Geta Brătescu, Ion Grigorescu, Mihai Olos, Diet Sayler, being relevant examples in this sense.

The complicated dynamics that characterized the (rather cautious) confrontation between the innovative artists and official art was also taking place on the exhibitional and institutional battlegrounds. The short thaw period between 1965 and 1972 offered some artists the possibility to participate in important international manifestation, as we have seen above. However, these participations were rare so we cannot talk about a continuous and consistent phenomenon. Although somehow tolerated, the neo-avant-garde discourse in general and media arts in particular were not encouraged or supported by the official organizations or individuals. With the exception of some positions expressed in the journal *Arta*, there were no consistent theoretical writings dedicated to the recent movements or artistic attitudes. Nor were curatorial initiatives in that sense. It is significant the fact that Ion Frunzetti, one of the leading figures in art criticism in those years, and the commissioner for Venice Biennale for many years (together with Dan Hăulică), had actually a very critical position against the existing trends in international art in those years, especially Pop-Art and New Realism.³⁶ This attitude reflected equally some degree of political prudence and the implicit artistic preferences oriented more to tradition than to innovation and change.³⁷

Among the artists that entertained a complicated relationship with the communist political power and the “official art” is Ion Grigorescu. He is a distinctive voice and a major figure in Romanian art since the late sixties up until now.

He is a painter, installation artist, photograph, filmmaker, performance artist, religious painter etc. Somehow surprising, Grigorescu opted, at the beginning of the seventies, for paintings that dealt with official subject matter such as agriculture, workers' strike, industry, with titles relevant for their political message: *Grivița Strike* [*Grevă la Grivița*], 1971 ; *Apartment block's interior* [*Interior de bloc*], 1971; *Folk Art kiosk* [*Chioșc de artizanat*], 1972; *Realising the Plan Is within the Power of the Collective* [*Realizarea planului stă în puterea colectivului*], 1972. These were not necessarily the expression of a political obedience; apparently, he was genuinely advocating the ruling ideology.³⁸ Perhaps equally interesting is to note that these works were not realized in a socialist realist manner. They are Pop-art-inspired, random sequences of reality, and in this sense they seem to be more objective, unmediated images of reality.

In the same period, Grigorescu turned to body art and filmmaking. This time, his themes were radical and subversive: corporeality, sexuality, politics. Mid seventies was also the period when he decided to retire (he was practically absent from major art manifestations until 1990). Choosing marginality, isolation and ultimately self-exclusion from the social/artistic system, he tacitly admitted one's incapacity to deal with the country's miserable reality, while nevertheless refusing to leave it.³⁹ In spite of his isolation and solitary work, the films produced in this period were – perhaps unconsciously – aligned with the contemporary explorations in video art, more precisely the body-centered video art of the epoch: Bruce Nauman, Vito Acconci, Lisa Steele, Joan Jonas, Chris Burden. Like his peers, Grigorescu worked with the film in a narcissistic manner, making the latter, as art theorist Rosalind Krauss has suggested, the very condition of the medium centered exclusively on the body and corporeality.⁴⁰

His films *Male and Female* [*Masculin, Feminin*], 1976, or *Boxing* [*Box*], 1977 are relevant equally for this narcissism, for his radical stance about the body, and his views about art and its critical power. In *Male and Female* the body is multiplied, fragmented, de-sexualized and after all annulled, while in the film *Boxing* he effectively enacts a fight with his own naked body superimposed on the same frame on the filmstrip: a metaphor not only for reduplication and impersonation, but also for political resistance and dissent. Indeed, these years of reclusion represent the period of Grigorescu's most radical art. His radicalism was somehow paradoxical as it was consumed in lonely performances delivered for the camera, never presented to the larger public (until the fall of communism). Scenes of self-mutilation, and simili-sexual acts filmed in a typical socialist

apartment, modest and “non-artistic”, stand in a sharp contrast with artist’s bold performances and thus function themselves as acts of confrontation: with himself, with the regime, with art and its mediums. Indeed, for Grigorescu, the medium of film – even if used along with other means – remains one of the most powerful instruments with which he expresses his body-centered poverist conceptualism, intellectual radicalism and anti-art statement.

Conclusion

The artists discussed here contributed in different manners and degrees to crystallizing the phenomenon of media art in Romania. Together with other artists – some of them mentioned here –, kinema ikon, Sigma and Ion Grigorescu established a sort of “canon” in media art production and, in general, in experimental art making in Romania. Their works are important for any historical discourse that tries to understand the media arts development not only in the decades in discussion here, but also in the 1990s and later, despite the fact that, given various contextual and personal reasons, media art remained a marginal preoccupation in Romania until 2000s.

As I argued here, these artists’ production is important especially because it demonstrates that the relationship between the cultural center represented by the Western world and the so called periphery embodied by the Eastern Europe is rather a complicated one. This is actually a multidirectional connection and it involves equally strategies of synchronicity and the identification of artistic specificities. Another aspect is represented by the equally complicated relationship between the media art forms proposed by those discussed here, situated rather in what we call underground, and the official and/or traditional artistic establishment. Proposing radical new discourses in a mainly traditional art context, these artists surely assumed some risks. But, while they embraced most of the times an attitude of dissent, they have also enjoyed – up to a certain point – the acceptance, if not quite the support of the artistic institutions. Nonetheless, all of them opted, at the end of the seventies and the beginning of the eighties, for various forms of resistance against societal discipline and artistic official formats – through persistence in a self-imposed marginality (this is mostly the case of kinema ikon), by breaking up the group, emigration and reclusion (Sigma), or through

withdrawal, isolation and change of artistic direction (Grigorescu). And what are these reciprocal cultural exchanges between East and West (regardless any forms of lagging or dissimilarities) and the various forms of escapism (internal and external) if not the expression of the ambivalent status of the artist situated on the “threshold”?

NOTES

- ¹ "What is Media Art?", Netherlands Media Art Institute (NIMK) / Education. Online at: <http://www.nimk.nl/eng/education/what-is-media-art> (accessed, July 2018).
- ² Sean Cubitt and Paul Thomas, *Relive: Media Art Histories*. Cambridge, Mass. And London, England: The MIT Press, 2013, 16.
- ³ Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media*. Cambridge, Mass. And London, England: The MIT Press, 2001, 20.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Ibid., 27.
- ⁶ Ron Burnett, "From Photography to Imography: New media as Metaphor" in *Fluid Screens, Expanded Cinema*, edited by Janine Marcessault and Susan Lord. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2007, 126.
- ⁷ Domenico Quaranta, "The Postmedia Perspective". Rhizome, Jan 12, 2011. <http://rhizome.org/editorial/2011/jan/12/the-postmedia-perspective/> (accessed June 2018)
- ⁸ Piotr Piotrowski, *In the Shadow of Yalta. Art and the Avant-garde in Eastern Europe, 1945-1989*. Translated by Anna Brzyski. London: Reaktion Books, 2009.
- ⁹ Alain Besançon, "Courte traité de soviétologie" in *Présent soviétique et passé russe*, Paris: Hachette, 1986, 199-202. See also: Magda Cârneci, *Artele plastice în România 1945-1989. Cu o addenda 1990-2010*. Iași: Polirom, 2013, 60-63.
- ¹⁰ His infamous *July Thesis* (Tezele din iulie), were a speech delivered by Nicolae Ceaușescu on July 6, 1971, before the Executive Committee of the Romanian Communist Party entitled "Proposed measures for the improvement of political-ideological activity, of the Marxist-Leninist education of Party members, of all working people".
- ¹¹ For details, see the section "Tradition vs. innovation: a media art story" of the present essay.
- ¹² See Magda Cârneci, *Artele Plastice în România*, 81 and Ramona Novicov Terdic, "Romanian Experiment between 1968-1973" in *Experiment in Romanian Art Since 1960*, Edited by Alexandra Titu, Magda Cârneci and Irina Cios. Bucharest: Soros Center for Contemporary Art, 1997, n. 10, 49. For an extended discussion of the exhibitions organized in Romania before and after communism, see Simona Dumitriu, "Expoziții oficiale și alternative în arta românească a deceniilor '70-'90. Un exercițiu de călătorie în timp." In *Arta în România între anii 1945-2000. O analiză din perspectiva prezentului*. Edited by: Călin Dan, Iosif Király, Anca Oroveanu, Magda Radu. Bucharest: Fundația Noua Europă/Colegiul Noua Eurtopă, UNArte, MNAC, 2016,

- 13 Hans Belting, *Art History after Modernism*. Translated by Caroline Saltzwedel and Mitch Cohen, with Keneth Northcott. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003, 61.
- 14 Ibid., 57-58.
- 15 Ibid., 58.
- 16 Piotr Piotrowski, *In the Shadow of Yalta*, 12.
- 17 Ibid., 26.
- 18 Significant in this sense is the commercial success of a number of Romanian artists of various generations and the acquisition of their works by prestigious institutions such as Museum of Modern Art, New York, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, or Tate Modern in London.
- 19 See George Săbău, "Contextual history of kinema ikon" in *kinema ikon retrospective*, exhibition catalogue. Bucharest and Arad: National Museum of Contemporary Art and Museum Arad, 2005, and *Mise à jour*, catalogue edited by kinema ikon, Arad, 2015.
- 20 George Săbău, "Contextual history of kinema ikon", 16. In 1989, when the experimental film period came to an end, the group numbered 30 authors and over 100 participant members. Ileana Selejan, „kinema ikon – experiment continuu”, *Idea. Art + Society*, no. 46/2014. <http://idea.ro> (accessed June 2018). For more details about the group members and their activity, see <http://kinema-ikon.net>.
- 21 Alex Leo Șerban, "Experimenting Within the Establishment. An Intercourse Seldom Consumed." In Titu, Cârnelci and Cios (eds.), *Experiment in Romanian Art*, 440.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Bill Viola, "Video as Art", *Journal of Film and Video*, 36, 1 (Winter 1984), 39, quoted in Michael Z. Newman, *Video Revolutions. On the History of a Medium*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014, 33.
- 24 George Săbău, "Contextual history of kinema ikon" Ibid., 8.
- 25 The Computer Arts Society, About/History. Online at: <http://computer-arts-society.com> (accessed June 2018).
- 26 As art historian Domenico Quaranta recounts, show was part of the work of the Independent Group and resulted from the 1965 encounter between Jasia Reichardt and Max Bense, the German philosopher, a key figure of the Stuttgart school, who studied the relationships between mathematics, language and art, and coined the term "information aesthetics". Domenico Quaranta, *Beyond New Media Art*. Translation and editing: Anna Rosemary Carruthers, Brescia: LINK Editions, 2013, 50.
- 27 Domenico Quaranta, *Beyond New Media Art*, 54.
- 28 Shot by Comis Laurian on 16 mm film, duration 10 minutes, black and white. The soundtrack features the compositions *Intégrales*, 1925 and *Density 21.5*, 1936 by Edgar Varèse. See: Tate: Art and Artists. "Paul Neagu,

- Neagu's Boxes, 1969". <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/neagu-neagus-boxes-t07892> (accessed June 2018).
- 29 Rosalind Krauss, "Grids", in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, Cambridge, Mass. and London, England: The MIT Press, 1985, 1.
- 30 Edward A. Shanken, "Cybernetics and Art: Cultural Convergence in the 1960s." In *From Energy to Information*, edited by Bruce Clarke and Linda Dalrymple Henderson. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2002, 155.
- 31 Ileana Pintilie, "Punctele cardinale ale mișcării artistice timișorene 1960-1996," in *Tradiție și Postmodernitate 200 de ani de artă plastică în Banat*. Edited by Andrei Medinski et al. Timișoara: Graphite Publishing House, 2012, 47.
- 32 A photo documentation of the *Informational Tower* was included in the catalogue of the exhibition *Romanian Art Today* from 1971, organized at Edinburgh. The work was presented in 1975 within the exhibition *Art and the City* at the Galeria Nouă, in Bucharest. Ileana Pintilie, "Punctele cardinale ale mișcării artistice timișorene 1960-1996" in *Tradiție și postmodernitate. 200 de ani de artă plastică în Banat*, volume edited by Andrei Medinski et al. Timișoara : Graphite, 2012, 48.
- 33 Piotr Piotrowski, *In the Shadow of Yalta*, 25.
- 34 Domenico Quaranta, *Beyond New Media Art*, 48.
- 35 Magda Cârneci, *Artele Plastice în România*, 85-86.
- 36 His critical essays were later gathered in a volume significantly entitled *In Search of Tradition* (În căutarea tradiției), Bucharest: Meridiane, 1998.
- 37 On this subject, see also Magda Radu, „O contextualizare a lucrărilor timpurii ale lui Paul Neagu,” in *Arta în România între anii 1945-2000*. Ibid., 97.
- 38 See his confessions about his communist allegiances in *Arta* no 12/1973.
- 39 Magda Radu, "Art and Politics: considering some of Ion Grigorescu's films and photographs." *2020/Resources*. <http://www.2020.ro/> (accessed June 2018).
- 40 Rosalind Krauss, "Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism," in *October*, Vol. 1. (Spring, 1976), 50-64.



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THE *ROSARIUM* OF PELBARTUS OF THEMESWAR: NOTES ON ITS' SOURCES

Abstract

The present contribution interprets the results of the statistic of explicit sources employed in the first volume of Pelbartus of Themeswar's *Rosarium*. This author was a late 15th century Hungarian Observant Franciscan who wrote a number of texts that were real "bestsellers" in his time and in the century following his death. The *Rosarium* is his work of theoretic theology and the one closest to what might be called a medieval philosophical endeavor. By seeing who he quotes and in what way, we get to showcase his doctrinal preference for the Scotist school and, as a bonus, identify some of the works that the 15th century library of the "Saint John" Observant convent of Buda, where he worked during the last period of his life, owned.

Keywords: Pelbartus of Themeswar, *Rosarium*, Commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, encyclopedia, Scotism, Thomism, Library of the "Saint John" convent of Buda.

Judged following modern standards, a compilation, as are most medieval works (even some of those that have been deemed original by hasty scholars of the past), does not have much value. Modern culture has taught us to ask the following questions: "What's original in the thought of an author? What does he bring to the table in terms of novelty or innovation?". These are indeed interesting aspects to tackle, and in the eventuality that we do discover such a rare beast as "original thought" in the works that belong to medieval culture, that does constitute an interesting fact and the pretext for many scholarly articles. Still, the questions that best highlight the cultural value of a text pertaining to a medieval author are of the type: "What is repeated in his writings? Who did

he read? Who did he copy from and why?”. For those thinkers, originality was only a byproduct of the intentional quest to do justice to tradition.

From this perspective, the present contribution analyses how Pelbartus of Themeswar, a 15th century Observant Franciscan author, quotes his fellow theologians of the past in the first volume of the *Aureum sacrae theologiae rosarium*,¹ an alphabetically organized theological encyclopedia. Although such a study may not seem all that interesting at first glance, it achieves the great task of offering a glimpse into what higher education in 15th century Hungary looked like. We must keep in mind that this medieval kingdom did not have a university,² so the *studia*³ of different orders provided the highest level of learning that could have been achieved in that land. Thus, it is quite interesting to see what was taught during theology courses at the *studium* of the Franciscan convent of Buda, which authors were in vogue, how they were invoked, and whether their works were actually present in the library or their texts were known through intermediaries, *i.e.* citations found in books the library actually owned.

1. The intellectual context of the *Rosarium*

In the 15th century, during the reign of Mathias Corvinus (1459-1490), the Kingdom of Hungary was at its’ peak: humanist studies flourished at the court of the king,⁴ whilst in non-humanist milieus, such as the *studia* of various orders, scholastic theology was taught at a high level, comparable to other places in Europe. It is in this intellectual context that we must place Pelbartus of Themeswar. Having studied the arts at Cracow, where he was enrolled in 1458⁵ and finished the first part of the *curricula* in 1463,⁶ he went on to teach theology at the Franciscan *studium generale* that functioned by the “Saint John” convent of Buda. The fact that he taught theology without university theological instruction is not that unusual, since the *studia*, where he probably studied it, did offer a good level of higher theological education. The odd detail in his intellectual journey is that he studied the seven liberal arts at the university, but not theology, although he was a member of a mendicant order. The process was usually the other way around: members of mendicant orders would get initiated in the arts within the confines of their order’s educational system, and only the best endowed ones would go on to study theology at university.⁷ Not much is known about what he did in the period between 1463 and

1483,⁸ but it is certain that in 1483 he was teaching theology, following the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard in the afore mentioned *studium* of Buda, as is attested by the Chronicle of the Friars minor, attributed to Blasius of Zalka, which also registers his death, that occurred in 1504.⁹ These three primary sources are the only trustworthy elements that we can use in reconstructing the life of Pelbartus of Themeswar: any other assertion would only be mere conjecture.¹⁰

The *Rosarium* was most probably the result of his teachings. Two arguments can be brought in this respect. First, it was composed during the time that Pelbartus was a professor of theology in the Buda *studium*. Second, its structure and contents indicate that it was intended as a pedagogical tool: it begins with an *adhortatio studiorum* (encouragement towards studies), it focuses on brevity¹¹ and simplifies, at times even oversimplifies, complicated theological issues.¹²

The literary genre of this work is quite difficult to define, it is situated between a theological encyclopedia and a commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. On the one hand, it can be called an “encyclopedia”, because it respects several conditions required for this kind of writing: it reunites, in a structured fashion, all the relevant aspects pertaining to a domain of human knowledge¹³ (in our case theology); it uses the technique of compilation and invokes authorities, but it also goes beyond authoritative sources and makes use of authors that do not have that status (given its totalizing nature, to only appeal to authorities would have been impossible); it is culturally circumscribed and depends on a set epistemological context, given that it was written for Pelbartus’ students and within the Franciscan framework; it reorganizes and restructures knowledge, more precisely it rearranges all the information following the alphabetical criterion; and, finally, there is an explicit intention of the author to widely disseminate it.¹⁴

On the other hand, it could be included in the literary genre of commentaries on the *Sentences*.¹⁵ It is, after all, divided into four volumes that thematically follow the four books of the Lombard: the first one discusses trinitarian issues, the second creation, the third Christology and the fourth the sacraments. Furthermore, the bulk of its citations belongs to commentaries on the *Sentences* written by other Franciscans, and the *Sentences* are explicitly invoked in the long title of the *Rosarium* in all four editions, as follows:

Hagenau 1503	Venice 1586	Venice 1589	Brescia 1590
Aureum rosarium theologiae ad Sententiarum quattuor libros pariformiter quadripartitum, ex doctrina Doctoris Subtilis suorumque sequacium, sanctorum, etiam Thomae Aquinas Bonaventuraeque ac multorum solidorum doctorum, per religiosum devotumque patrem, fratrem Pelbartum de Themeswar, ordinis minorum de observantia, medullitus adipem exigentem accuratissime alphabetico compilatum ordine, qui et Pomerium sermonum salutiferorum nunc temporis ubilibet cantatissimum suis lucubrationibus in medium christianitati obtulit.	Aureum sacrae theologiae rosarium, iuxta quattuor Sententiarum libros quadripartitum, ex doctrina Doctoris Subtilis, Divi Thomae, Divi Bonaventurae aliorumque sacrorum doctorum, a Reverendo Patre Pelbarto de Themeswar, ordinis minorum de observantia. [The Golden Rosary of Theology, divided into four like the four Books of <i>Sentences</i> , <compiled> from the teachings of the Subtle Doctor, Divine Thomas, Divine Bonaventure and other sacred doctors, by the worthy of reverence father Pelbartus of Themeswar, belonging to the order of the Friars minor of observance.]	Aureum sacrae theologiae rosarium, iuxta quattuor Sententiarum libros quadripartitum, ex doctrina Doctoris Subtilis, Divi Thomae, Divi Bonaventurae aliorumque sacrorum doctorum, a Reverendo Patre Pelbarto de Themeswar, ordinis minorum de observantia. [The Golden Rosary of Theology, divided into four like the four Books of <i>Sentences</i> , <compiled> from the teachings of the Subtle Doctor, Divine Thomas, Divine Bonaventure and other sacred doctors, by the worthy of reverence father Pelbartus of Themeswar, belonging to the order of the Friars minor of observance.]	Aureum sacrae theologiae rosarium, iuxta quattuor Sententiarum libros quadripartitum, ex doctrina Doctoris Subtilis, Divi Thomae, Divi Bonaventurae aliorumque sacrorum doctorum, a Reverendo Patre Pelbarto de Themeswar, ordinis minorum de observantia. [The Golden Rosary of Theology, divided into four like the four Books of <i>Sentences</i> , <compiled> from the teachings of the Subtle Doctor, Divine Thomas, Divine Bonaventure and other sacred doctors, by the worthy of reverence father Pelbartus of Themeswar, belonging to the order of the

Haguenau 1503	Venice 1586	Venice 1589	Brescia 1590
<p>[The Golden Rosary of Theology, divided into four parts, in a parallel manner to the <i>Book of Sentences</i>, compiled in alphabetical order, by selecting that which is most valuable from the teachings of the Subtle Doctor and his followers, even from those of Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure and from those of many reliable doctors, by the father, brother Pelbartus of Themeswar, from the order of the Friars minor of observance, who also rendered available to all Christians his <i>Pomerium</i> of sermons, the most recited everywhere, accompanied by his explanations.]</p>			<p>Friars minor of observance.]</p>

However, the arguments against integrating it within the genre of *Sentences* commentaries are also very strong. First of all, although the title does mention Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, it only states that the *Rosarium* follows its divisions, not that it is an actual commentary. Secondly, such works were usually produced within faculties of theology, as part of the compulsory conditions for someone to accede to the title of doctor in theology, and Pelbartus never followed theology courses in a university context. True as this might be, the connection of this work with what we might more broadly call literature surrounding the *Sentences* is undeniable. For these reasons, it is best to define the *Rosarium* as a theological encyclopedia inspired by the genre of commentaries on the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, or, in other words, a guide to reading the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard.

Unlike most of Pelbartus' works, the *Rosarium* only knew four editions, being second in unpopularity only to his commentary on the Psalms. We do not dispose of exhaustive lists of the editions of his other two works, the *Stellarium* and the *Pomerium* (divided into three different collections of sermons, namely *De tempore*, *De sanctis* and *Quadragesimale*, that have been printed separately and have circulated independently of one another). Still, our findings up to this point allow for an approximation of the number of editions and state that they were published especially by German and Italian print houses, between 1483 and 1590.¹⁶ The great number of editions suggests that his works were bestsellers at the time, as the following table shows:

<i>Stellarium</i>	23 (Basel 1497, ¹⁷ Haguenau 1498, Haguenau-Augsburg 1501, Haguenau 1501, Haguenau-Augsburg 1502, Augsburg 1502, Haguenau-Augsburg 1504, Lyon 1505, Haguenau-Augsburg 1505, Strasbourg-Köln 1506, Haguenau-Augsburg 1508, Lyon-Nürnberg 1509, Haguenau 1509, Lyon 1509, Haguenau-Augsburg 1511, Lyon 1514, Lyon-Nürnberg 1514, Haguenau-Augsburg 1515, Paris 1517, Nürnberg 1518, Augsburg 1520, Paris 1521, Venice 1586)
<i>Pomerium quadragesimale</i>	23 (Haguenau 1499, Haguenau 1500, Haguenau-Augsburg 1501, Haguenau-Augsburg 1502, Augsburg 1502, Haguenau-Augsburg 1504, Haguenau-Augsburg 1505, Strasbourg-Köln 1505, Strasbourg-Köln 1506, Haguenau 1507, Haguenau-Augsburg 1507, Paris 1507, Haguenau-Augsburg 1509, Lyon 1509, Lyon-Nürnberg 1509, Haguenau-Augsburg 1511, Lyon 1514, Lyon-Nürnberg 1514, Haguenau-Augsburg 1515, Paris 1517, Nürnberg 1519, Haguenau-Augsburg 1520, Paris 1521)

<i>Pomerium de sanctis</i>	22 (Haguenau 1499, Haguenau 1500, Lyon 1500, Haguenau 1501, Haguenau-Augsburg 1501, Augsburg 1502, Haguenau-Augsburg 1502, Haguenau-Augsburg 1504, Haguenau-Augsburg 1505, Strasbourg-Köln 1505, Haguenau-Augsburg 1507, Haguenau-Augsburg 1509, Lyon 1509, Lyon-Nürnberg 1509, Haguenau-Augsburg 1511, Lyon 1514, Lyon-Nürnberg 1514, Haguenau-Augsburg 1515, Paris 1517, Nürnberg 1519, Haguenau-Augsburg 1520, Rouen 1521)
<i>Pomerium de tempore</i>	18 (Haguenau 1498, Haguenau 1500, Lyon 1500, Haguenau-Augsburg 1501, Haguenau-Augsburg 1502, Haguenau-Augsburg 1503, Haguenau-Augsburg 1504, Strasbourg-Köln 1505, Haguenau-Augsburg 1507, Lyon 1509, Lyon-Nürnberg 1509, Haguenau-Augsburg 1509, Haguenau-Augsburg 1511, Lyon 1514, Lyon-Nürnberg 1514, Paris 1517, Nürnberg 1519, Paris 1522)
<i>Rosarium</i>	4 (Haguenau 1503-1508, Venice 1586, Venice 1589, Brescia 1590)
<i>Expositio Psalmorum</i>	3 (Strasbourg 1487, Haguenau-Augsburg 1504, Haguenau-Augsburg 1513)

Many of the early editions of his writings were published in Haguenau, at the printing house of Henricus Gran, on the expenses of John Rymann¹⁸ – this *officina* was generally the go to place for Observant Franciscans who wanted to have their works published.¹⁹ It should also be noted that the *Rosarium* is one of the works that was mostly edited towards the end of the 16th century, whereas his other writings seem to have enjoyed more popularity at the end of the 15th, beginning of the 16th.

2. A Witness of Libraries of the Past: Explicit Quotations in the *Rosarium*

There are many ways to reconstruct a library, such as medieval catalogues or other witnesses contemporary to the library itself. These are certainly safer and better-informed ones than those based on the explicit citations from the works of just one author. Still, such an approach could represent at least a starting point in our endeavor to reconstruct the intellectual context of the past and the roads taken by dissemination of knowledge.²⁰ In the *Stellarium*, his very first writing, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, who had supposedly saved him from the plague,²¹ Pelbartus writes:

Sed et pluribus miraculis aliis omissis libeat, si tamen placet, hic describere quoddam de confirmatione festi purificationis miraculum, quod quidem repperi in Budensi libraria et habetur etiam in Speculo exemplorum, distinctione 8, capitulo 58, quod videlicet temporibus Bonifacii papae quoddam templum erat Romae, quod dicebatur Romulus, consecratum Dianae, hoc templum ipse papa impetravit a Foca imperatore, ut in honorem Sanctae Mariae virginis consecraretur.²²

[But, other miracles being omitted, it would be agreeable, if it were nevertheless pleasing, to describe a miracle regarding the confirmation of the Feast of Purification that I have found even in the library of Buda, and that can also be found in the *Speculum exemplorum*, distinction 8, chapter 58, namely that during the time of Pope there was a certain temple in Rome that was called 'Romulus', dedicated to Diana, and the Pope himself obtained from the emperor Foca that it would be dedicated to the Holy Virgin Mary.]

This is quite instructive, because it tells us where Pelbartus was studying: in the library of Buda. It is most probably the case that it actually

was the precise library of the *studium* of the “Saint John” convent, where he also taught. This means that, by establishing his sources and what books he had access to directly while writing the *Rosarium*, we can also tell what the contents of one of the most important scholastic institutions of higher learning that could be found in Buda held in its library, in terms of theoretical, and, in two specific cases, practical theology.²³ For now, we intend to only do this for the first volume of the *Rosarium*, showing what sources Pelbartus uses in this compilation, how many times he invokes them, and, in some cases, present the manner in which they are invoked. At the end of the article, we will be able to establish a list of the books it seems that he had direct access to and a separate one of the titles that he clearly only invokes indirectly.

Although the *Rosarium* follows the thematical division of the Book of *Sentences* into four volumes, each of which is dedicated to a certain aspect (I – Trinity; II – creation; III – Christology; IV – sacraments), it divagates by including much more than what could be easily ascribed to the general theme of the volume: the first one, for instance, has an entire chapter on what one should learn in order to be proficient in theology (the *Addiscere* chapter²⁴); the second treats “creation” in such a manner that it almost becomes an encyclopedia of nature, talking about fish,²⁵ minerals²⁶ and animals,²⁷ the third volume is dedicated to the history of Christ and our salvation; while the fourth one, already compiled by Pelbartus’ pupil, Oswaldus de Lasko,²⁸ talks about the sacraments of the church and some other juridical aspects. For this reason, I have considered that it would be most appropriate, in order to see what the library possessed and what the students and teachers of the *studium* of the Saint John convent were interested in, in terms of dogmatic theology, to establish a statistic of the sources for the first volume, by far the most philosophical and theoretical one. I will not present the entire statistic in this article, but rather the most representative instances grouped by types of authors.

(a) Aristotle and his commentators

Aristotle, whom Pelbartus sometimes names “The Philosopher” as was customary for medieval authors, is invoked 638 times, both with works that have actually been authored by him and with writings such as *De pomo*, which are pseudo epigraphs. This is not surprising, given that he was an authority and that all the authors that Pelbartus copied from also mentioned him. That being said, The Philosopher is not cited from his own

works, which Pelbartus probably never read (apart from some florilegia that circulated during the Middle Ages), but his name is always copied from the texts of other, rather more Franciscan, thinkers.

Averroes, The Commentator, is named 35 times, throughout this first volume, with his commentaries on Aristotle's *De anima*, *Physica*, *Metaphysica* and on the treatise *De substantia orbis*. He is also not directly quoted, but following Pelbartus' primary sources. Remaining in the realm of Arab commentators, he invokes Avicenna a total of 49 times. This is not surprising: our author's access to this literature was mediated especially thorough the works of Scotists and Avicenna was one of Duns Scotus' favorites. Albumasar (Abu Ma'Shar), with his *Introductorium super astrologiam*, is only named once and Alfarabi (*Alphorabius*, Al-Farabi) is invoked the same number of times, whereas Algazel (Al-Ghazali) is cited on eight different occasions.

Here are some tables summarizing the number of quotations from Aristotle and his Arab commentators:

Aristotle

Aristotle or The Philosopher, without any mention of a book	68
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<i>Metaphysica</i>	186
<i>Physica</i>	128
Logical works ²⁹	100
<i>Ethica</i>	63
<i>De anima</i>	52
<i>De caelo</i>	17
<i>De generatione</i>	7
<i>Liber Meteororum</i>	7
<i>De pomo</i>	2
<i>Rhetorica</i>	2
<i>Politica</i>	1
<i>De memoria et reminiscencia</i>	1
<i>De animalibus</i> (?)	1
<i>De sensu et sensato</i>	1
<i>De mundo</i>	1

<i>De somno et vigilia</i>	1
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Total number of mentions	638
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Averroes

Quoted as Averroes or The Commentator without any mention of a book	12
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<i>In Metaphysicam</i>	16
<i>In Physicam</i>	4
<i>In De anima</i>	2
<i>In De substantia orbis</i>	1

Total number of mentions	35
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Avicenna

Quoted as Avicenna, without the name of the book	15
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<i>Metaphysica</i>	33
<i>Liber naturalium</i>	1

Total number of mentions	49
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Albumasar (Abu Ma'shar)

<i>Introductorium super astrologiam</i>	1
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Alphorabius (Al-Farabi)

Quoted as Alphorabius, without the name of the book	1
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Algazel (Al-Ghazali)

Quoted as Algazel, without the name of the book	7
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<i>Metaphysica</i>	1
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Total	8
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It is worth emphasizing that probably none of these texts are quoted directly from the source, but are secondary influences, taken from the books that Pelbartus actually read. Still, he names them on purpose, given that there were no citation laws that he had to obey and that he could have very well copied from his primary sources without mentioning the authors that those sources were invoking. This type of situation is, in fact, not that rare: to give just one example, in his commentary on distinction three of book one of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, the 14th century Cistercian author, James of Eltville, copied from John of Mirecourt's (another Cistercian writer) commentary on the *Sentences*, while intentionally omitting most of the direct mentions of Aristotle.³⁰

(b) Theologians and saints from before the university era

The next set of important quotations consists in mentions of authors that had almost a canonical status, that is to say authors who had definitely gained the status of authority in the eyes of the Church. I have considered noteworthy only those mentioned more than five times, among which we can count: Augustine, quoted 650 times, both with books that actually belonged to him and with titles that have only been attributed to him; Anselm, in the same situation as Augustine, is named 74 times; Bernard of Clairvaux, obviously an important theological figure of the high Middle Ages is only named 38 times; Saint Jerome is quoted 25 times, Hugh of Saint Victor 16, and Gregory the Great 41 times. All these citations of important theologians are not really that illustrative: these are all names

that had to be invoked. Here are the tables of quotations, useful in order to have a general image of how these quotes worked.

Augustine of Hippo

Quoted as Augustine, without the name of the book	226
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<i>De Trinitate</i>	191
<i>De civitate</i>	34
<i>Liber 83 quaestionum</i>	29
<i>Super genesim ad litteram</i>	23
<i>De doctrina christiana</i>	15
<i>Liber confessionum</i>	13
<i>Contra Maximinum</i>	12
<i>Super Iohannes</i>	11
<i>Enchiridion</i>	11
<i>De libero arbitrio</i>	8
<i>Liber de fide ad Petrum</i>	7
<i>De videndo Deum</i>	5
<i>De praedestinatione sanctorum</i>	4
<i>Ad Horosium</i>	4
<i>De spiritu et anima</i>	4
<i>Liber retractationum</i>	4
<i>Glossa in Psalmos</i>	3
<i>De vera religione</i>	3
<i>Liber Soliloquiorum</i>	3
<i>De natura et gratia</i>	3
<i>Quaestiones novae et veteris legis</i>	3
<i>Sermo de imagine</i>	2
<i>Liber de triplici habitaculo</i>	2
<i>Liber de natura boni</i>	2
<i>Contra Manicheos</i>	2
<i>Epistola ad Nembridium (?)</i>	2

<i>Glossa ad Romanos</i>	2
<i>De verbo Dei</i>	2
<i>Ad Dardanum</i>	2
<i>De magistro</i>	1
<i>Contra Faustum</i>	1
<i>Epistolae ad Volusianum</i>	1
<i>Liber de sancta virginitate</i>	1
<i>Liber de decem chordis</i>	1
<i>De vocatione sanctorum</i>	1
<i>Epistola ad Fortunatum</i>	1
<i>De moribus Ecclesiae</i>	1
<i>Ad Marcellinum</i>	1
<i>De quantitate animae</i>	1
<i>Sermo de adventu</i>	1
<i>Contra Donatistas</i>	1
<i>De origine animae</i>	1
<i>Contra haereses</i>	1
<i>Super Corinthios</i>	1
<i>De vera innocentia</i>	1
<i>De bono perseverantiae</i>	1
<i>Canon</i>	1

Total number of citations	650
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Augustine is quoted only a few more times than Aristotle, which tells us that Pelbartus must not have been all that influenced by the 14th century tradition, where one can witness a reborn passion for Augustine. If he had used the texts of 14th century authors, the number of times Augustine was invoked would have surely surpassed the number of mentions of The Philosopher.

Anselm of Canterbury

Quoted as Anselmus, without the name of the book	22
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<i>Monologion</i>	29
<i>Liber de concordantia praescientiae et liberi arbitrii</i>	6
<i>Cur Deus homo</i>	4
<i>Liber orationum</i>	3
<i>Proslogion</i>	3
<i>De veritate</i>	2
<i>Liber contra insipientem</i>	1
<i>De lapsu mundi</i>	1
<i>De similitudinibus</i>	1
<i>De processione Spiritus Sancti</i>	1
<i>De casu diaboli</i>	1

Total	74
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Bernard of Clairvaux

Quoted as Bernardus, without the name of the book	25
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<i>Liber de amore Dei (= In Cantica Canticorum)</i>	6
<i>De consideratione</i>	3
<i>In Psalmos</i>	1
<i>Sermo ad fratres de monte Dei</i>	1
<i>Ad Evangelium</i>	1
<i>De dispensatione</i>	1

Total	38
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Jerome

Quoted as Hieronymus, without the name of the book	17
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<i>Ad Eustochium</i>	2
<i>Ad Paulam</i>	1
<i>Prologus Galeatus</i>	1
<i>Expositio catholicae fidei</i>	1
<i>Epistola 88</i>	1
<i>Super Abachuc</i>	1
<i>Ad Marcellam</i>	1

Total	25
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Gregory the Great

Quoted as Gregorius, without the name of the book	25
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<i>Homelia super lob (Moralia in lob)</i>	8
<i>Homelia super loh.</i>	3
<i>Dialogi</i>	2
<i>Homelia super Ezech.</i>	1
<i>Homelia super Cant.</i>	1
<i>Benedictio cerei pascali</i>	1

Total	41
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(c) The Bible

The next set of quotes that interest us are the biblical ones. These too are to be expected from a medieval theologian writing such a work. Pelbartus invokes both the New and Old Testament, giving more importance to

certain books in each of them, his favorites being The Book of Psalms for the Old Testament, and the Gospel of John for the New Testament. The Bible is often quoted by heart,³¹ given that it is such an important part of the liturgical ritual. The role that it plays in this ritual also explains why certain books are invoked a greater number of times than others (for instance, the Book of Psalms and Paul's epistles are real stars). For a clearer statistic of how they are distributed, we introduce the table of biblical citations. The titles of each book are abbreviated following the international standard for *Scripture*.

General quotations, without the name of a precise book	
Sacra scriptura	73
New Testament	3
Old Testament	8
Total	84

Books of the Old Testament	
Ps.	77
Isa.	25
Sap.	23
Gen.	22
Ecci.	16
Exod.	13
Prov.	13
Reg.	10
Ecces.	7
Deut.	6
Iob	6
Num.	5
Hier.	4
Iosua	2
Macab.	2
Malach.	2
Dan.	1

Zach.	1
Ion.	1
Ioel	1
Ezech.	1
Total	238

Books of the New Testament	
Ioh.	68
Mentions of Paul's writings (quoted as 'Apostolus') without a precise indication of the epistle	34
Matth.	32
Rom.	31
Cor.	25
Heb.	13
Gal.	11
Ephes.	8
Apoc.	7
Luc.	7
1 Tim.	6
2 Tim.	6
Act.	6
Marc.	5
Iaco.	4
Fil.	3
1 Ioh.	3
1 Petr.	2
Col.	2
2 Petr.	1
Thes.	1
Tit.	1
Total	276

Total biblical citations	598
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(d) Peter Lombard and commentaries on the *Sentences*

Given that we argue for the importance that the *Book of Sentences* plays in the composition of this theological encyclopedia, the references to Peter Lombard and to commentaries on his text are vital to our line of reasoning. The *Magister Sententiarum* is invoked a total of 252 times, only as author of this book. To be more precise, his name is explicitly mentioned 77 times, whereas the title of his famous work appears in 175 instances. It is normal to find such quotations, given that the majority of the other sources invoked by Pelbartus are commentaries on the *Sentences*. However, it would be wise to assume that they are not first-hand citations, but belong to the commentaries that Pelbartus is actually copying from:

Peter Lombard

Quoted as Peter Lombard (Petrus Lombardus), without the name of the book	77
<i>The Book of Sentences</i> (<i>Liber Sententiarum</i>)	175
Total	252

(d.1.) *The Scotist School*

Staying in the domain of the *Sentences* and the literature that they generated, the bulk of Pelbartus' sources consist in quotes from Scotist commentaries on the *Sentences*. He names: Duns Scotus, Guillaume of Vaurouillon, Peter of Aquila (Scotellus or Scotorellus) and Francis of Meyronnes. These are the authors that shape the *Rosarium* from a doctrinal point of view.

Guillaume of Vaurouillon

The main influence is the Scotist author Guillaume of Vaurouillon, who is named 950 times. He completed his commentary on the first three books of the *Sentences* in 1431, and on the fourth in 1448, at Paris,

becoming Master of Theology in April of 1448. Vaurouillon's text refers to the *Sentences* in their entirety and is a proof of the so called "return to the text of the master" that occurred in the 15th century. He is very faithful to the doctrine of the Doctor Subtilis, and it is not unusual that Pelbartus quotes him to such an extent. What is interesting to note is that the first edition of his work was published at Lyon, in 1489, as an incunabulum, so the book must have reached Buda quite fast, since the first volume of the *Rosarium* was written in 1500 and published in 1503.³²

Quoted as Guillaume of Vaurouillon, without the name of the book (Guillerimus)	513
The commentary on the <i>Book of Sentences</i>	437
Total	950

Francis of Meyronnes

Francis of Meyronnes, another Scotist author, is quoted 492 times. He lived at the beginning of the 14th century and read the *Sentences* in Paris, in the academic year 1320-1321, being named *magister theologiae* on the 24 of May in 1323.³³

Quoted as Francis of Meyronnes (Franciscus Maronis), without the name of the book	296
The commentary on the <i>Book of Sentences</i>	195
<i>De virtutibus</i> (?)	1
Total	492

Peter of Aquila

Peter of Aquila, named “Scotellus” (little Scotus) or, as Pelbartus calls him, “Scotorellus”, is quoted 359 times. The doctrine of this author was so close to Scotus, that medieval and modern theologians used to say “si vis intelligere Scotum, lege Scotellum” (if you want to understand Scotus, read Scotellus).³⁴

Quoted as Little Scotus (Scotorellus) or Peter of Aquila (Petrus de Aquila), without the name of the book	211
Commentary on the <i>Book of Sentences</i>	148
Total	359

William of Ware

Pelbartus only invokes this author a few times, never directly, usually following Peter of Aquila. William of Ware, also known as *Doctor Fundatus*, is not a Scotist doctor *per se*, but we have included him in this section, because he is quoted as if he were one by Pelbartus. Ware was a pupil of Alexander of Hales and a master of Duns Scotus in Paris,³⁵ so he peaked at the end of the 13th, beginning of the 14th century.

Quoted only as William of Ware (Varro), without the name of the book	6
The Commentary on the <i>Sentences (In libros Sententiarum)</i>	4
Total quotes	10

Duns Scotus

Duns Scotus, the Subtle Doctor himself, is cited 216 times, but there are reasons to suspect that he is mostly quoted after the compendia of his *sequaces* and not directly from his own works. This affirmation is based on the fact that I have not found any instances in which Duns Scotus is quoted without the explicit mention that his words can also be found in the commentaries of Peter of Aquila or Guillaume of Vaurouillon.

Quoted as Duns Scotus (Scotus) or as the Subtle Doctor (Doctor Subtilis), without the name of the book	143
Commentaries on the <i>Sentences</i> (<i>Lectura, Ordinatio, Reportatio Parisiensis</i>)	71
<i>Quodlibet</i>	2
Total	216

And finally, there are 72 general mentions of the *Scotistae, via Scoti*, etc., thus making the total number of Scotist citations 2039.

(d. 2.) The Thomist School

Thomas and certain Thomists are also mentioned by Pelbartus and they are invoked on quite a series of occasions. Thomas Aquinas is quoted 387 times, Raynerius Pisanus, the author of a compendium of Thomas's *Summa* is named 31 times, and the school 4 times. There is a total of 422 instances in which Thomism of some type is quoted explicitly. Even without any qualitative analysis, it is clear that Pelbartus was a follower of the Scotist school – the only schools mentioned are the two, and the Scotist one is named four times more often than the Thomist one. As a side note, it can once again be seen that our author was not a great fan of the 14th century, given that he completely ignores the Cistercian and Augustinian revolution that took place in that time span.

An analysis of the manner in which Thomists and Scotists are invoked only strengthens the thesis that Pelbartus was a Scotist: the line of thought of the Doctor Subtilis is followed and often introduced by phrases such as “it is better said by the Doctor Subtilis and the *Scotistae*”; “it would be better to follow the Scotist school in this” etc.; so, conclusions are given following this line. Thomas and the Thomists are only quoted to be contradicted or in cases in which a common opinion is stated and Scotist doctors and non-Scotist ones are named together, so as to show how widespread that point was. The following tables offer a synoptic view of this information:

Thomas Aquinas

Quoted as Thomas Aquinas (Thomas de Aquino), without the mention of the book	185
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Commentary on the <i>Sentences</i>	136
<i>Summa</i>	56
<i>Quodlibet</i>	2
<i>Super Dionysii De divinis nominibus</i>	2
<i>De ente et essentia</i>	3
<i>De veritate</i>	1
<i>Contra gentiles</i>	2

Total	387
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Thomists

Thomistae	4
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Raynerius Pisanus

Quoted as Raynerius Pisanus, without the name of the book	11
<i>Summa</i>	20
Total	31

(d. 3) Other important Franciscan theological writings

Besides the Scotist faction, Pelbartus invokes a series of other authors whose writings he considers to be consistent with his general approach. The most notable ones are Alexander of Hales and Bonaventure:

Alexander of Hales, quoted only by name, without any mention of a book title	27
<i>Summa</i>	12
Total	39

Bonaventure, quoted by name, without any mention of a book title	318
Commentary on the <i>Sentences</i>	275
Total	593

(e) Practical *Summae*

There are also 19 mentions of the *Summa* of Antoninus Florentinus, which wouldn't be a considerable amount if we were to not pay attention to the fact that they are all gathered under one entry of the *Rosarium*, the *Addiscere* chapter, in which Pelbartus explains what one should learn in order to become a better theologian.³⁶ This part of the text is also the one to gather the most citations from the texts of canon law, given that it prescribes what is adequate and what is not adequate for a student in theology. So, the *Addiscere* chapter basically explains that a good theologian should be well versed in the arts of the *trivium* (grammar, logic and rhetoric) and from the arts of the *quadrivium* only concern himself with music, not paying much attention to devilish endeavors such as astronomy and physics:

<...> tales scientiae quadriviales licite quidem leguntur et audiuntur ac addiscuntur, ut dictum est, tamen in eis non est sistendo nec omnino vacando illis intendendum, excepta musica scientia quae multum deservit divinis laudibus decantandis. Nam tales scientiae, licet in se contineant veritatem secundum Hieronymum, non tamen ducunt ad pietatem <...>.

Unde Ambrosius, distinctione 37, paragrapho 'hinc etiam' dicit: astronomia et astrologia et huiusmodi despecta sunt, quia nil valent ad salutem, sed mittunt in errorem, et qui his student, curam animae non habent.³⁷

[<...> somebody may read and listen to and learn these quadrivial sciences, as has been said above, still one must not stop at them or give up everything in order to understand them, with the exception of musical science which is very useful in chanting divine merits. Because such sciences, although they do have some truth in them, according to Jerome, they do not lead to piety <...>. That is why Ambrose, in distinction 37, paragraph 'hinc etiam' says: astronomy and astrology and similar sciences are worthy of contempt, because they have no value to salvation, and they lead people into error, and those who study them do not take care of their souls.]

This is a somewhat surprising attitude if we take into account the fact that Pelbartus studied the arts at the University of Cracow, which was well known for its "natural studies" program, only two generations or so before Copernicus.³⁸ Still, Jean Gerson, the Chancellor of the University of Paris at the end of the 14th century, held a similar stance: he argued in favor of the interpretative sciences and against the others.³⁹

The sources for this part of the text are *summae* that also deal with issues of canon law, such as that of the Florentine or that of Angelus of Clavasio (Angelo of Chivasso). The latter is also quoted 18 times in the first volume of the *Rosarium*, but only within this very specific chapter:

Antoninus Florentinus, without the name of the book	3
<i>Summa</i>	16
Total	19

Angelus de Clavasio, without the name of the book	9
<i>Summa</i>	9
Total	18

Conclusion

Although it is hard to state beyond a shadow of a doubt what Pelbartus of Themeswar actually had at hand in the library of Buda, we do have the means to make some educated guesses regarding what some of the books in the library were. Since out of a total of 7171⁴⁰ explicit quotes 950 invoke Guillaume of Vaurouillon, it would be safe to assume that his book was actually in the library and heavily studied. The same goes for Peter of Aquila and Francis of Meyronnes who are also quoted quite a few times. Still, we can't say for sure that the works of Duns Scotus, who was invoked 216 times, were present: Pelbartus uses the works of so many followers of Scotus that we can't tell whether these explicit mentions are due to what he read, studied and had in the library of Buda, or to the works of Scotists who mentioned their master.

The same goes for Aristotle and Augustine: did Pelbartus have their actual books in his hands or did he quote them following other authors? It is hard to say, although it is probable that he just copied those mentions from other works – everybody in the past had quoted the Philosopher and Augustine and there already existed numerous florilegia with their sayings: so, even if Pelbartus didn't base those quotes on other authors, closer to his times, that he had actually read, which is quite hard to believe, he still wouldn't have done the drastic thing of actually reading the works of Aristotle and Augustine instead of just reading some collections of their sayings. It is not clear whether he even had the Book of *Sentences*, given that all quotes of the Lombard's text come from the works of his commentators.

Another set of works that I suspect him to have actually read and found in the library of the convent, are the theological *summae* of Angelus of Clavasio and Antoninus Florentinus. My suspicion is not based, this time, on the number of quotes, but on the fact that many Franciscan convents did own a *Summa Angelica* and maybe even the Florentine's *Summa* due to their practicality: they explained the canons of the Church and were extremely useful for the brothers and the general organization of conventual life.

So, up to now, it is pretty clear that the Franciscan convent of Buda must have owned the texts of some followers of Scotus and the *summae* of Angelus of Clavasio and Antoninus Florentinus, besides the books that were useful in the liturgic practice.

NOTES

- ¹ This title suggests that the text belongs to a typology, if not exactly to a literary genre: it makes one think of the collections of predicable materials assembled throughout the Middle Ages by preachers of all doctrinal orientations, from good Catholics to protestants. There exists at least another work bearing this title, a *Rosarium* written sometime in the 14th century, that has as its point of departure a different work, which circulated under the title *Floretus*. This *Rosarium* has been translated into Middle English, but besides the alphabetical order and, maybe the titles of some entries, has little to do with the work of Pelbartus of Themeswar. On the Middle English translations of the *Rosarium*, see: Nolcken (von), C., *The Middle English Translation of the Rosarium Theologie*, Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, Heidelberg, 1979. Maybe the fact that is most interesting for our study is that two of the Latin originals of the *Rosarium*, both of which can be found in British libraries, have attributions, written in a later hand, to Pelbartus of Themeswar: the Leicester, Wyggeston Hospital, ms. 10 D 34/16, has a marginal notation in 17th century script at f. 167, that writes *scripsit Pelbartus Rosarium Theologie*. *An hoc sit adhuc ambigitur* [Pelbartus wrote the Rosary of theology. It is doubtful whether this is the case] and the Oxford, Bodleian library, ms. Bodley 803, writes, at f. 177r, in 17th century script, *quo auctore incertum est, cum de duobus legimus, Oswaldo et Pelberto* [sic!], *quorum uterque autor est libri inscripti Rosarium Theologie, sed an huius Rosarii siquidem nescio* [by which author it is unclear, since we read about two, Oswaldus and Pelbartus, each of which is the author of the book entitled The Rosary of Theology]. See Nolcken (von), C., *The Middle English Translation of the Rosarium Theologie*, Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, Heidelberg, 1979, p. 30.
- ² Despite three attempts to form a university in Hungary (in Pécs, Buda and Bratislava - back then Pozsony), this great medieval kingdom remained the only one of its stature to not have a university. This fact is remarked in passing by Pierre Riché and Jacques Verger in their *Maîtres et élèves au Moyen Âge*. See: Riché, P., Verger, J., *Maîtres et élèves au Moyen Âge*, Éditions Tallandier, Paris, 2006, p. 233.
- ³ On the subject of teaching in the *studia* of religious orders, see: Kent, E. Jr., Courtenay, W. J., Metzger, S. M., (eds.), *Philosophy and Theology in the 'Studia' of the Religious Orders and at Papal and Royal Courts. Acts of the XVth Annual Colloquium of the Société Internationale pour l'Étude de la Philosophie Médiévale, University of Notre Dame, 8-10 October 2008*, Brepols, Turnhout, 2012.
- ⁴ On the political stability brought about by the reign of this king, see Pál Engel, *The Realm of Saint Stephen: A History of Medieval Hungary*, I. B. Tauris, London-New York, 2001, pp. 298-322.

- 5 The list of enrolled students of the Faculty of arts registers him as follows: *Rectoratus magistri Iohannis de Dambrowka, sacrae theologiae et decretorum doctoris, custodis Kelcensis et canonici Sancti Floriani, vicecancellarii Studii Cracoviensis* <...> *Pelbartus Ladislai de Temeschwar, 4 gr., tt.* So it tells us that he registered during the rectorate of master John of Dambrowka. Other information that we can extract is that his father's name was "Ladislau" (thus the use of the genitive of filiation "Ladislai") and that he paid the total sum for his enrollment, 4 polish grosz. For the list of enrolled students, see: Gašiorowski, A. (ed.), *Metryka Uniwersytetu Krakowskiego z lat 1400-1508*, Towarzystwo naukowe Societas Vistulana, Kraków, 2004, p. 272.
- 6 The list of students who completed their studies (*Liber promotionum*) writes: *In decanatu Magistri Stanislai de Schladek, anno domini 1463, ad Quatuor tempora Lucie, infra scripti ad gradum baccalariatus in artibus promoti, sic ut sequuntur, sunt locati: Nicol. De Visnicze (comes), Petrus de Cibinio, Simon de Cibinio, Valentius de Cracovia, Palbertus de Themesvar (scriptor ecclesiasticus celebris)* <...>. From this we can extract the following: that Pelbartus was pretty high in the ranking of students, the order of students respecting the order of their grades in the promotion exam, and that his name was not all that common, since it is misspelled (Palbertus). The inscription *scriptor ecclesiasticus celebris* (a famous Church writer) was added in the margin, by a later hand. This seems reasonable, since in 1463, when the list was conceived, Pelbartus had not yet written anything. For the list of promotions, see: Gašiorowski, A. (ed.), *Liber promotionum Facultatis Artium in Universitate Cracoviensi saeculi decimi quinti*, Cracovia, Polska Akademia Umiejetnosci, 2000, p. 53.
- 7 For an analysis of the Franciscan study system throughout the Middle Ages, and especially for this information, see: Roest, B., *A History of Franciscan Education 1210-1517*, Brill, Leiden – Boston – Köln, 2000, pp. 105-115.
- 8 There is, however, much speculation regarding that period. To give just a few examples, Zoltán Kosztolnyik states that, most probably, during those 20 years Pelbartus was not in Hungary; the very same author says that Pelbartus might have been chased out of Hungary by an enraged Mathias Corvinus (See: Kosztolnyik, Z., "Pelbartus of Temesvár: A Franciscan Preacher and Writer of the Late Middle Ages in Hungary", in *Vivarium*, 5 (1967), pp. 100-110, at pp. 103-105). Alexander Krischan has put forward a theory according to which, after he obtained his bachelor's degree in arts and until 1480, Pelbartus stayed at the Ozora convent, where he also met his friend and student, Oswaldus of Lasko (See: Krischan, A., "Pelbartus de Timișoara", in Ruja, A. (ed.), *Dicționar al scriitorilor din Banat*, Editura Universității de Vest, Timișoara, 2005, pp. 579-581). Although Krischan's story is quite romantic, there are no documents to back it up.
- 9 *Item Vicarius iste <Franciscus de Bányas> dum fuisset multum acceptus patribus et fratribus, iterum est electus in Capitulo Budae celebrato anno*

domini 1483, quo tempore etiam bonae memoriae Pater Pelbartus solennis praedicator, et in theologia non mediocriter imbutus, in conventu Budensi legebat fratribus aptis super "Sententiis". <...> Item secundo idem electus fuit Budae Anno Domini 1503. Et tunc anno sequenti in festo sancti Vicentii Martyris magister S. Theologiae frater Pelbartus de Tömösvár Budae in convent S. Ioannis quasi subridens obdormivit in Domino. The first part of this citation tells us that Pelbartus was already teaching theology following the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard in 1483 and that he was a known preacher. The second part registers his death, which occurred in 1504. For the chronicle, see: Toldy, F. (ed.), "Blasii de Zalka et continuatorum eius cronica fratrum minorum de observantia provinciae Boznae et Hungariae", in *Annalecta monumentorum Hungariae historicorum literariorum maximum inedita*, Biblioteca Academiae Scientiarum, Buda, 1867, pp. 213-315, p. 250, p. 253.

¹⁰ Edina Ádám has criticized the biographies of Pelbartus that have circulated throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, underlining the key fact that the only things that we know for sure come from the three mentioned documents. See: Ádám, E., *Pelbárt of Temesvár and the use of images in preaching*, MA Thesis in Medieval Studies, CEU, Budapest, 2008, pp. 1-20.

¹¹ There are numerous mentions of *brevitas* throughout the first volume of the *Rosarium*, and its' first prologue, the *Ab auro* entry, even contains a short passage in which it praises the virtue of brevity in a text or a discourse, by quoting established sources for this type of attitude, such as Hippocrates and Cicero.

¹² Such a pedagogical instrument corresponded to 15th century tendencies, both in its' suitability for teaching and in its' tendency to make theology comprehensible; another similarity lies in the consistent struggle of the *Rosarium* to avoid heresy. There are other such examples, starting from the very beginning of the 15th century. To name only one, Henry of Gorkum's *Conclusiones*, an abbreviation of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, written at the very beginning of the century, was also composed as a pedagogical tool (See: Slotemaker, T. J., "Henry of Gorkum's *Conclusiones Super IV Libros Sententiarum*: Studying the Lombard in the First Decades of the Fifteenth Century", in Rosemann W. P. (ed.), *Medieval Commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, vol. 3, Brill, Leiden – Boston, 2015, pp. 145-173, at p. 159 and p. 160). One can also find similarities to Nicholas of Dinkelsbühl's *Lectura Mellicensis*, which is, just like the *Rosarium*, a lecture addressed especially to a monastic audience. See in this respect: Brînzei, M., Schabel D. C., "The Past, Present, and Future of Late Medieval Theology: The Commentary on the *Sentences* by Nicholas of Dinkelsbühl, Vienna, ca. 1400", in Rosemann, W. P., *Medieval Commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, Brill, Leiden - Boston, 2015, pp. 174-266, at pp. 250-262.

- 13 The very name of this literary genre makes it seem counter intuitive that there be “encyclopedias” which only treat one subject, but in fact this case is quite common. Different writings on only one subject can pertain to it, as long as they tend to exhaust the domain that they are dedicated to. See: Fowler, L. R., “Encyclopaedias: Definitions and Theoretical Problems”, in Binkley P. (ed.), *Pre-Modern Encyclopaedic Texts – Proceedings of the Second Comers Congress Groningen 1-4 July 1996*, Brill, Leiden – New York – Köln, 1997, pp. 3-30, at p. 8.
- 14 For the characteristics of encyclopedic writings, see: Draelants, I., “Le siècle de l’encyclopédisme: conditions et critères de définition d’un genre”, in Zucker, A. (ed.), *Encyclopédire. Formes de l’ambition encyclopédique dans l’Antiquité et au Moyen Age*, Brepols, Turnhout, 2013, pp. 81-106, at pp. 86-99.
- 15 Some scholars have simply qualified the *Rosarium* as such, without even taking into consideration its encyclopedic nature. See for instance: Zahnd, U., *Wirksame Zeichen? Sacramentenlehre und Semiotik in der Scholastik des ausgehenden Mittelalters*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, 2014, p. 410.
- 16 I am currently working on assembling a complete list of all the incunabula of Pelbartus of Themeswar’s works.
- 17 For the sake of brevity, the editions have been identified by place and year of print, without mention of the editor or the full title of the work in each of the editions. The list has been composed with the help of the Universal Short Title Catalogue (USTC), which can be accessed online at the following address: <https://www.ustc.ac.uk/>.
- 18 See in this respect Burg, A. M., “Catalogue des livres imprimés à Hagenau, de la Bibliothèque municipale de Hagenau”, in *Études Haguenviennes* 2/1956-1957, pp. 21-143, at pp. 21-22.
- 19 See: Niedermeier, H., “Johannes Rynmann (1460-1522) ein Verlag theologischen Literatur”, in *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 9 (1968), pp. 422-432.
- 20 Monica Brînzei and Christopher Schabel have applied a similar methodology in order to deduce what the library of the 14th century Cistercian Conrad of Ebrach looked like. See: Brînzei, M., Schabel, D. C., “Les cisterciens et l’université. Le cas du commentaire des *Sentences* de Conrad d’Ebrach († 1399)”, in Turcan-Verkerk, A-M., Stutzmann, D., Falmagne, T., Gandil, P. (eds.), *Les Cisterciens et la transmission des textes (XII^e-XVIII^e siècles)*, Brepols, Turnhout, 2018, pp. 453-486, especially between pp. 458-472.
- 21 See: Pelbartus de Themeswar, *Stellarium coronae gloriosissimae Virginis*, Venetiis apud Iohannem Antonium Bertanum, 1586, lib. I, pars 5, art. 1, c. 3, f. 27ra-27rb.
- 22 Pelbartus de Themeswar, *Stellarium coronae gloriosissimae Virginis*, Venetiis apud Iohannem Antonium Bertanum, 1586, lib. III, pars. 2, art. 2, c. 4, f. 65ra-rb.

- 23 There are only two practical *Summae* that we can place in the library starting from the quotes of the first volume of the *Rosarium*. They are both invoked when Pelbartus tries to establish what one should study in order to be better at theology, in the *Addiscere* chapter of the *Rosarium*.
- 24 Pelbartus de Themeswar, *Aureum sacrae theologiae rosarium*, Hagenau ex officina Henrici Gran, 1503, Addiscere I-V, a8rb-b2ra.
- 25 Pelbartus de Themeswar, *Aureum sacrae theologiae rosarium*, Hagenau ex officina Henrici Gran, 1504, Natatile I-III, z2vb-z5vb.
- 26 Pelbartus de Themeswar, *Aureum sacrae theologiae rosarium*, Hagenau ex officina Henrici Gran, 1504, Metalla et mineralia, y5vb.
- 27 Pelbartus de Themeswar, *Aureum sacrae theologiae rosarium*, Hagenau ex officina Henrici Gran, 1504, Bestia I-III, h6ra-i3rb.
- 28 The colophon of this fourth volume writes: *Rosarii theologiae sapientiae quartus liber pro elucidatione Sententiarum libri quarti, per fratrem Oswaldum de Lasko, divi ordinis sancti Francisci de observantia, tunc provinciae Hungariae vicarium, fratre Pelbarto defuncto, consumatus* [The fourth book of the *Rosarium* of theological wisdom, for the elucidation of the fourth book of the *Sentences*, has been completed by brother Oswaldus of Lasko, from the saint order of Saint Francis of observance, at the time vicar of the Hungarian province, because brother Pelbartus had died]. See: Oswaldus de Lasko, *Aureum sacrae theologiae rosarium*, Hagenau ex officina Henrici Gran, 1508, B7vb.
- 29 I have chosen to group all of Aristotle's logical works together, for the sake of brevity.
- 30 This aspect is very well presented in Luciana Cioca's article, "Knowing God's existence according to James of Eltville's *Sentences* Commentary I, q. 6", in Brînzei, M., Schabel, D. C. (eds.), *James of Eltville from Paris to Vienna. An Intellectual Journey at the End of the 14th Century*, Brepols, Turnhout, under print.
- 31 See in reference to this aspect: Laczkó, E., "The Liturgical Text as Authority in Pelbartus of Themeswar's Sermon for the Feast of Saint Francis", in *Philobiblion* 21 (2016), pp. 35-52.
- 32 On Guillaume of Vaurouillon, see: Zahnd, U., "Easy-Going Scholars Lecturing *secundum alium*? Notes on some Franciscan *Sentences* Commentaries in the 15th Century", in Rosemann, W. P. (ed.), *Mediaeval Commentaries on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, vol. 3, Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2015, pp. 267-314; Zahnd, U., *Wirksame Zeichen? Sakramentenlehre und Semiotik in der Scholastik des ausgehenden Mittelalters*, Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, 2014.
- 33 For a good presentation of Francis of Meyronnes, see: Duba, W., "Continental Franciscan *Quodlibeta* after Scotus", in Schabel, D. C. (ed.), *Theological Quodlibeta in the Middle Ages. The Fourteenth Century*, Brill, Leiden-Boston, 2007, pp. 609-621.

- 34 See: Duba, W., *The Forge of Doctrine. The Academic Year 1330-31 and the Rise of Scotism at the University of Paris*, Brepols, Turnhout, 2017, p. 23.
- 35 See: Little, G. A., *Grey Friars in Oxford*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1892, p. 213.
- 36 On this subject, see: Baneu, A., "*Quales scientiae sunt addiscendae pro theologia melius intelligenda?* Pelbartus of Themeswar on Education", in *Philobiblon* 21 (2016), pp. 53-64.
- 37 Pelbartus de Themeswar, *Aureum sacrae theologiae rosarium*, Hagenau ex officina Henrici Gran, 1503, Addiscere, b1rb.
- 38 On the University of Cracow and its' impressive arts curricula in the time of Copernicus and a few generations before, see: Goddu, A., *Copernicus and the Aristotelian Tradition – Education, Reading and Philosophy in Copernicus's Path to Heliocentrism*, Brill, Leiden – Boston, 2010.
- 39 See: Hobbins, B. D., "Gerson on Lay Devotion", in McGuire, P. B., *A Companion to Jean Gerson*, Brill, Leiden – Boston, 2006, pp. 41-78, at p. 74.
- 40 This number of explicit citations for just one volume of the work is quite impressive. Just as a comparison, the 14th century Cistercian, Conrad of Ebrach († 1399) has 2252 explicit citations throughout the four books of the *Senteneces* (See: Brînzei, M., Schabel, D. C., "Les cisterciens et l'université. Le cas du commentaire des *Sentences* de Conrad d'Ebrach († 1399)", in Turcan-Verkerk, A-M., Stutzmann, D., Falmagne, T., Gandil, P. (eds.), *Les Cisterciens et la transmission des textes (XII^e-XVIII^e siècles)*, Brepols, Turnhout, 2018, p. 459). The case of Peter Pirchenwart is quite interesting too: this author, who read the *Sentences* at Vienna, at the beginning of the 15th century, has approximately 2508 explicit citations in his commentary on the fourth book of the *Sentences*, so the difference is quite striking (I would like to thank Monica Brînzei for letting me consult her statistic of the explicit citations that can be found in Pirchenwart. On this author see the first part of the article Brînzei, M., Curuț, I., "From author to authority: the legacy of James of Eltville in Vienna", in *James of Eltville from Paris to Vienna. An intellectual Journey at the End of the 14th Century*, Brepols, Turnhout, under print).

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Thesis: *Politics and culture. Reconstructing Walter Benjamin's concept of the political*

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Hans Urs von Balthasar, Boris Groys, etc.)

THE SURVIVAL AND RE-BIRTH OF AN IDEA: PROLEGOMENA TO A THEORY AND HISTORY OF ‘MESSIANIC FEELINGS’ WITH CONSTANT REFERENCE TO THE GERMAN-JEWISH MODERN MESSIANISM OF THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

Abstract

The major issue in the study of German-Jewish modern messianism of the Weimar era is its survival and ‘rebirth’ in spite of its inner contradictions and the failure of the more obvert political forms it allegedly inform. The assessment of the main explanatory hypothesis, from the perspectives of the ‘history of the spirit’ and philosophical history of ideas (Taubes – Scholem, secularisation theorem), the history of ideas and intellectual history lead to the conclusion that neither one is capable of fully accounting for both the survival and reappearance of the cultural and political phenomena, and prompts to a new hypothesis that accommodates the irruptive character of modern messianism and its sensitivity to historical contingencies, the ‘quasi-transcendental’ character (Derrida) and the multiple attitudes circumscribed by its concrete, historic-intellectual shape as “ethos” (Rabinbach). The concept of “existential feeling” is then proposed as a better fit for the explanation of the modern-messianic methodological conundrum. The equation of (modern) messianism with a particular kind of existential feeling (Ratcliffe) could subsequently lead to progress in the research of the latter type of phenomena, a few issues being briefly discussed.

Keywords: modern messianism, political messianism, Weimar, existential feeling, intellectual history

Babel, time and again

In 1913, the young Walter Benjamin entered a long exchange with Ludwig Strauss that the former sees decisive for the layout of his attitude

towards the sudden revivals of Jewish consciousness and spirituality that sent shockwaves in a community that had strived, for generations, for assimilation. The options that were opposed to the assimilationist politics of enlightened, secular German Jewry by the 1914 generation seek to affirm the Jewish alterity either in a religious, spiritual form, like Buber in those years, or a decidedly political one – Zionism.¹ In search for an definitive argument in favour of his “intellectualist” rebuttal of both options, Benjamin stumbles upon an image instead - a recourse that would later become the trademark of his thought. He writes:

It's the building of the Tower of Babel reversed: The biblical peoples pile up quarry-stones but what they wanted to achieve spiritually – the Tower reaching up to the skies – came not into being. The Jews handle the Idea like stones, and the origin, the matter, was never reached. They build from above, never reaching the ground.²

But did they not in fact reach it – the ground, the origin, the *political* goal of Eretz Israel? And from the other direction, the “peoples” didn't they reach to the skies when they developed their political regimes in so many parts of the world as a form of *messianism*? Should we still uphold the conclusion of this new story of Babel, that political messianism is a practical impossibility?

Benjamin maintained for a long time this position, one that precludes any form of theocracy and any intervention with human means in the eschatological history (as famously in his “Theological-political fragment”), only to return again and again to the praxeological aporias of a messianic politics. His friend Gershom Scholem warned tirelessly against the conflation of messianism and politics³ that nevertheless did not seem to impede him from entertaining a certain messianic tone in cultural politics.⁴ And, in the midst of the '68 movements, Adorno too expressed a stern refusal to participate in something that he saw as more of a crash-landing of the ideas into the swamps of authoritarian, crypto-fascist rhetoric than a new form of “organization” of human relations, thus losing, in the eyes of many of his students, the vantage point of a redeemed humanity that lays at the core of his *Erkenntnistheorie*. It looks like the issue is not the persistence of an ontological difference, but rather its disappearance, the ways in which a certain idea (messianism) ‘touch the ground’ (or get off the ground) in the 19th and 20th century. What's at stake here, it seems,

is rather the hypostases of the ideas of the future, the historical-political molding of the hope for a better world.

In fact, there are other elements of the biblical story of Babel that needs to concern us here. Let us take, for instance, the confusion of languages of salvation. The similarities between radical politics and the religious messianism seem to be so blatant that for a long time nobody even bothered to go beyond mentioning them elliptically, like some sort of self-evident truth. In 1850, Engels, for his purposes, simply puts them on the same level, stating that “the chiliastic dream-visions of early Christianity offered a very convenient starting point”⁵ for the radical critique of any form of political-ideological domination; more than a century later, J. L. Talmon,⁶ while offering a compelling history of the modern forms of political messianism and an incredibly influential conceptual vocabulary in the political theory (and commentary), does little to explain how did the (secular) religions of time communicate, substantially or otherwise, with the Judeo-Christian body of eschatological beliefs. When Ernst Bloch took upon the task to consider them as one in a sweeping metapolitics of hope in his *Geist der Utopie*, the readers responded to his prolix argumentation with a wild array of reactions, reaching from enthusiastic approval, through mistrust, up to outcries of obscurantism and intellectual (and religious) charlatanism.⁷

The two centuries long history of modern messianism is drowned in confusion, controversy, mistrust, and a bewildering number of programmatic and hermeneutical attempts that leave almost entirely aside the simplest question of them all: how do the people build this tower? And, above all: *why do they return, time and again, to its ruins with an inexhaustible passion to bring about a different world?*

Providing the reader with answers to all these questions in the space of an article is a tall order.⁸ We intend to concern ourselves here instead only with a particular phenomenon of modern messianism, the one embodied in the German-Jewish intelligentsia of the Weimar Republic. We contend, firstly, that the modern messianism must always be analysed as a trait of human communities or groupings, that is with the means of intellectual history, rather than the explanations of the history of ideas (a couple of shortcomings of the latter approach would hopefully make clear why). Secondly, we react to the fact that in the ‘messianic’ German-Jewish ‘generation 1914’ there are far too many different subgroups to handle properly, and, although the general characterization ‘messianic’ does seem appropriate to many, it obscures the differences and threatens

to lose the most important questions behind a label. Thirdly, we intend to reconstruct their Babel from the ground up, that is to see their messianism not as a characteristic of their thought, imported from the religious realm and repurposed in the realm of the profane, but as the driving force beneath their thought and beliefs, as a concrete, shared, “existential feeling”. The specific methodological problem of this insight is the relationship between the existential feeling and the conceptual thought, and we shall try to at least contribute to a discussion that is still far from reaching its conclusion.⁹

The revenant ...

... and the dialectics of eschatological hope (Taubes against Scholem)

There is a problem with modern messianisms, be it religious or profane: they should simply not exist at all. The hope principle, the trust put in a Messiah intervening on the scene of history has always been confronted with the reality principle that shows, time and again, that the Messiahs failed to deliver. The interpretation of the seemingly endless history of false Messiahs is the key point of the ‘debate’ between Gershom Scholem and his disgraced¹⁰ pupil Jacob Taubes. Scholem, on the one hand, maintained a firm separation of the Judaic strand of messianism from the Christian one on the ground of the envisioned ‘nature’ of the messianic event (external, real, public, versus internal, spiritual) and stated that the indissolubility of Jewish messianism is inherent to the idea itself, that intervenes in the life of the community as a “changing form of the changeless hope”, as Rosenzweig famously put it, and leads, consequently, one disappointment after the other, to a ‘life in deferment’ and absence from the stage of history of the Jewish people,¹¹ Taubes, on the other hand, sees interiorisation as the true career of the messianic idea, since without the relocation in the spiritual of the event, the whole construct is practical “nonsense”:

For consider the dialectics in the Messianic experience of a group at the moment when prophecy of redemption fails. The “world” does not disintegrate, but the hope of redemption crumbles. If, however, the Messianic community, because of its inward certainty, does not falter, the Messianic experience is bound to turn inward, redemption is bound to be conceived as an event in the spiritual realm, reflected in the human soul. Interiorization is not a dividing line between “Judaism” and “Christianity”;

it signifies a crisis within Jewish eschatology itself (...). How else can redemption be defined after the Messiah has failed to redeem the external world except by turning inward?¹²

So the historical career of the messianic idea is, for Taubes, the complete dialecticisation of the messianic experience. With a theoretical ambition that matches Hegel's, Taubes posits his own *Western Eschatology* as the history of the Spirit that leaves little room for the reappearance of older, 'primitive' forms. Once the historical Messiah has been 'historicized' in the Dialectics of the Spirit, any form of historical messianism should be dismissed as nonsensical, dangerous¹³ historical farce:

Interiorization, or opening the inward realm, belongs essentially to the career of that "idea", if such an idea should have a career at all in an unredeemed world and not lead 'in each of its manifestations ad absurdum'.¹⁴

So, from Taubes' perspective, If the simple idea of a messianic intervention in reality has been already sent in the appendix of history, by way of consequence the political messianism, given its dependence on the image of an abrupt, cataclysmic disruption of history, could only be qualified as a *contradictio in adjecto* and a farcical revenant of a resolute form that could only lead to tragic consequences. Thus, modern messianism should simply not exist.

But, alas, it does. So let us turn the reality principle against Taubes' dialectics and ask: How come that something that has passed away returns to life? How are we supposed to explain the survival of a rest of a negativity that was supposed to be consummated in the dialectical process? And, closer to our more modest concerns: how should one explain the modern, profane resurgence of messianism in the German-Jewish milieu of the Weimar Republic?

Since the old-fashioned, Hegelian dialectics doesn't seem to help much here, we are in need of another explanatory mechanism. Fortunately, the older or more recent scholarship does provide with several of them. Let us go through some of the most relevant.

... and the shortcomings of the secularization hypothesis (siding with Blumenberg)

The first we must take into account is the powerful secularization theorem. When Carl Schmitt formulated his famous version of the secularization theorem, he was merely employing (and expanding the reach) of an all-encompassing explanatory mechanism of historical processes, that saw in every 'new', 'modern' social form or political idea "an aggregate of specifiable and transitively qualitative transformations in which in each case the later phase is possible and intelligible only in relation to the earlier phase assigned to it." Everything modern was thus a "product of secularization".¹⁵ If "all significant concepts of the modern theory of the state are secularized theological concepts", so Schmitt, this pertains not only to their historical development in which "they were transferred from theology to the theory of the state", but also their "systematic structure", that expands by means of analogy the secularization to the entire conceptual edifice.¹⁶ Following this logic, Karl Löwith could then unproblematically describe communism, the goal of the Marxist "transparent historical messianism" as a "Kingdom of God, without God and on earth"¹⁷

Now this has huge implications for our question. If we are to accept the secularization theorem – and it seems we have to, since the whole presentation of modern, political messianism that we attempted here seems to presuppose it at every level, from the ontological difference right through the *termini* themselves, and, moreover, there is enough evidence that the representatives of the generation were quite aware of the secularization theories and explanations and make use of the term and the meaning almost routinely – so, if we are to accept the secularization theorem, then their modern Jewish messianism is the secularization of the Jewish messianic idea of their own making. The reappearance of this religious *Gedankengut* has nothing mysterious and is in no way 'special' either. The mystery lies in the process of secularisation itself that speaks for the same ontological difference between the sacred and the worldly realm that cannot possibly be bridged, while the modern effort to do so only confirms the dependence of the mundane order to the sacred.

The specific evaluation of secularization as simultaneously a degradation of the substance of the historical process (i.e. the religious, theological content) and a reassertion of its force seems to apply here as well. Indeed, "only where the category of substance dominates the

understanding of history are there repetitions, superimpositions and dissociations – and also, for that matter, disguises and unmaskings.”¹⁸ Are we then compelled to unmask this modern messianism as being not only morphologically analogous but also substantially identical to the religious one and to see, in all of its theoretical expressions, mere superimpositions to or dissociations from other, perhaps less convincing political programs of salvation (as the idea of progress towards an enlightened humanity, or the classical Marxism, for instance)?

While there are solid reasons to see the modern Jewish messianism in the context of the other modern political projects,¹⁹ it appears that the explanation of the intellectual phenomenon is dependent upon a description of the concrete ways in which a religious content (here Judeo-Christian messianism) made its way into the thinking of for the most part secular Jewish intellectuals, in a completely different worldview. After all, it is not like these ideas simply fell into their heads from the transcendence. In the sober term of Hans Blumenberg, the adept of the secularization explanation bears the “burden of proof”: it has to *show how secularization takes place*.²⁰ Otherwise, the result of secularization would be rendered illegitimate by the fact that “the result is not allowed to secularize the process itself from which it resulted.”²¹ This kind of effort, though, seems to be typical for another explanatory mechanism, the theory of cultural and historical influences.

... as dialectical secularization of the sacred and the profane (Goldstein)

Responding to both the linear historical dialectics of redemption in the great Hegelian tradition and, on the same time, to the secularization theorem is the so-called “dialectical theory of secularization”. One of the representatives of this approach, Warren S. Goldstein, deems “unilinear theories of secularization inadequate explanations” of the historical phenomena of modern messianism, and also refutes the role of synthesis as the motor of history and renders it effective only horizontally, as some form of amalgamation as it were. Consequently, the question of the survival of messianism in a secular world turns into a discussion about the compatibility between the messianic speculations and the modern political theories (Goldstein concerns itself here with classical Marxism, since the importance of German-Jewish messianism is at least

in part associated with its critique and rework of the Marxist theory, in what became, thanks to the efforts of the Frankfurt School, Western Marxism). Many of the commentators that investigated the inner logic of the theoretical systems of modern political messianism seem to agree that Jewish messianism and Marxism (or historical materialism) are incompatible and irreconcilable, while some still maintained that, their relative incompatibility notwithstanding, they are complementary.²² Trying to respond to a variant of our own main question - how can one justify the existence of an impossible idea? – Goldstein seemingly takes a page from Eliade and explains it as a form of the dialectic between the sacred and the profane. The theoretical constructs of modern messianism “express a constant tension between the profane and the sacred realm (...) One is the secularization of the other: they are dependent on each other but opposed to each other”, or, to be more precise, the secularization of religious content comes together with the opposite process of sacralisation of profane elements. That is to say: one should read Zizek’s *The Puppet and the Dwarf*²³ with Benjamin’s original story from the “Theses” in order get a complete although contradictory idea.

Goldstein concludes that the mixture of religious content and political theory entails a critique of the unilateral model of the secularization process that is present in the thinking of (at least) Benjamin and Bloch: Marxism is not simply the secularization of Judeo-Christian messianism, as per the classical secularization theorem, but its “*dialectical* secularization”, where the functional repurposing goes both ways, always maintaining the tension between the poles, and forcing the thinkers to “alternate back and forth between logically contradictory meaning systems”:²⁴

The dialectical theory of secularization hopes in a resolution of this dialectical conflict. However, the dialectic remains unresolved and therefore the contradictions need to be expressed (...) Benjamin and Bloch were not fusing Messianism and Marxism, but expressing this contradictory relationship.²⁵

... and the excesses and limitations of the theory of cultural influences

Less ambitious theoretically, maybe, but a more productive descriptive tool, the theory of historical and cultural influences sometimes gets the menial task to substantiate the claims made by the secularization theorem. In our particular case there is a plethora of attempts to trace the lineage of the modern messianic idea. Enough of them are good, solid scholarly work, with the only problem that they do not seem to concur. In some cases, however, the genetic defect of the method comes to the fore: once it starts to make connections, it cannot stop. Just one striking example here, out of the many. Michael Weingrad does a lot of good criticizing the excesses of J. Mehlman genealogy of poststructuralism. In the latter's description,

the transgressive spirit of Sabbatianism was transmitted by Scholem to his close friend, Walter Benjamin, [who] then imparted the Sabbatian mindset to the French thinker Georges Bataille, who knew Benjamin in Paris, in the 1930s. And since Bataille was a central influence on the whole pantheon of French postmodernism [...], the subversive spirit of French theory can be seen as the late manifestation of this heretical, Jewish messianism.²⁶

Weingrad takes the time to show why this genealogy is untenable. But there is a twist: he then embarks into a journey of his own to get to the roots of an elusive Parisian messianism²⁷ that he later admitted had little to do with the German-Jewish emigrées.²⁸

A description of the complex network of influences in the German intellectual circles of the interwar period is an impossible task; but even a fair knowledge of the literature would enable one to confidently conclude that the modern messianism, as an idea, has too much to do with its religious antecessor and, as a concrete product, fewer direct links to it to justify the secularization hypothesis without a good measure of pure belief in the miraculous impact of a dozen scattered sources.²⁹

Let us point to a common weakness of all this explanatory strategies for the survival of messianism in the modern age. They tend to consider these revenants as part of a *career of the messianic idea*, and concern themselves with inner logic of messianism and less with what we called the *life* of the idea. They are in this respect ideo-logical, and tend to ignore the people involved, reducing them to mere receptacles or carriers of

the ideas. This history of honey has little concern for the rationale and feelings of the bees.

... as reinvention or quasi-transcendental structure (Bensussan, Derrida)

G rard Bensussan's insights³⁰ are, in this regard, extremely interesting. He drops any history of influences and all vertical dialectics of eschatology and posits instead a "reinvention" of messianism that he opposes to a different kind of appropriation of messianism, that of secularization. This looks astonishing at first, but the French philosopher projects a lot of confidence by remaining very consistent in all his assumptions. Taking his reflections on the history of messianism as a whole to its last consequences, he declares the messianism "entirely modern", moreover, decrees that "all modernity is, for good or bad, in a way or another messianic"³¹ - thus acknowledging that there is no direct substantial connection between the ancient messianism and its modern forms, and setting the bar really high for his interpretation of the secularization process. He backs his proposition up with a distinction between three uses of the term messianism, one for each conception, or experience of time.³² The religious Jewish messianism corresponds to the eschatological temporal register, the modern philosophies of history describe the secularization of the former in the teleological temporality, and the "*temps interruptif*" is the reinvention, at the level of lived temporality, of the teleological. With this move, he turns "from the rational, generic and universal community of the subjects in relation towards the inter-human ties".³³ The open assumption of his phenomenological project is that human temporality is essentially messianic, an insight that is not far from that of Derrida's messianicity without messianism.³⁴ There is not enough room here to go into the philosophical consequences of Derrida's hypothesis. Suffice to say that his essential contribution to our discussion is the definition of messianicity as a "quasi-transcendental" of the political. Sure enough, one can only deplore the fact that Derrida does not provide us with at least a 'quasi-deduction' of this category; but, at the end of the day, this two attempts to relocate the origin of messianism in the structures of human experience rather than in the *outopos* of ideas should prove to be worthwhile in spite of their shortcomings. Maybe the one that both share is the disparity between the general human availability of this structures

that are, so to say, always at our disposal, and the discontinuous manner of the historical occurrences of modern messianism.

Perhaps this disparity could be justified by the intervention of other factors, like the historical context and the group dynamics – a good occasion for us here to move from the rather general and nonspecific descriptions of modern messianism closer to the intellectual histories of the German-Jewish Weimar messianism.

The intellectual history of the German-Jewish modern messianism of the Weimar era (Löwy and Rabinbach)

Two scholars have done more for the knowledge of this subject matter than all the others: Michael Löwy's decades of work dedicated to the intellectual history of cultural and political messianisms in the Central Europe before the Second World War (he started even earlier, actually, with his doctoral thesis³⁵) established him as an authority in these field. One could argue that he (together with Rabinbach) created this field of research. Anson Rabinbach influential book³⁶ comes as a somewhat late fruition of his no less impressive research, the main insights that were previously published were however a mandatory reading for more than a decade already.³⁷

Löwy's efforts from the 1980s until 2017³⁸ could be well summarized by the titles of the first and (hopefully not the) last article: „Jewish Messianism and Libertarian Utopia“, and „Jewish Messianism and Revolutionary Utopias“ respectively. Throughout his work he demonstrates a great level of consistency in the main assumptions and insights, that were laid down in the 1980s. Taking Scholem work on the messianic idea and Mannheim's description of the new socio-cultural function of utopianism as his starting points, Löwy reduces all messianisms to a few necessary elements that articulate a tense and contradictory 'political' ideal. The „restorative tendency oriented toward the reestablishment of a former ideal state of a lost golden age, and a utopian tendency, aspiring to a radically new future“ form the first pair of opposites that skew the world as it is. The third characteristic is the already mentioned „public“ visibility of the messianic advent on the stage of history, and the fourth is the anarchic quality, directed against the fabric of reality, the order of things. Early 20th century anarchist and revolutionary groups and theories

seem to demonstrate the same characteristics, that leads Löwy to conclude that there is a

remarkable *structural homology*, an undeniable *spiritual isomorphism* between these two cultural universes situated in these apparently completely distinct spheres, the Jewish messianic tradition and the notably libertarian modern revolutionary utopias.³⁹

He is dissatisfied with the traditional explanations of this “spiritual isomorphism” and proposes its own: between them there is an “elective affinity”.⁴⁰ The term, borrowed from Weber, would become a trademark of his scholarship. What he means with it is much in line with our early methodological reflection on the burden of proof. Instead of putting this homology over the centuries on a dozen of feeble influences or a conscious borrowing, he looks for a more adequate explanation in the historical situation itself:

It seems more useful to take as a point of departure a wider socio-cultural context, which serves as a general framework common to the two mentioned tendencies [the restaurative and the utopian], and which grows organically, so to speak, out of the central European societies in crisis. The new developments of romanticism from the end of the 19th century until the beginning of the 1930s does not designate here a literary or artistic style, but a much vaster and more profound phenomenon: the nostalgic countercurrent of pre-capitalist cultures and the current of cultural criticism of industrial/bourgeois society, a current that is manifested in the realm of art and literature as well as in economic, sociological and political thought.⁴¹

It is the “anti-capitalist romanticism”, then, that appealed to a good part of the younger German-Jewish intellectuals, who, in search of options in a tough world that kept them on its fringes, would be able to discern, from this *Weltanschauung*, the necessary opposition to the established order and the two main options: the return to the roots (spiritual – not political - Zionism) and the revolution, that was also imbued with more precise messianic elements, putting in motion the homology:

During the years 1900-1930, among a certain number of Jewish intellectuals of German culture, this homology became *dynamic* and took a form of

veritable elective affinity. In the *Weltanschauung* of these intellectuals, it evolved into a process of “cultural symbiosis” of stimulation and reciprocal nourishment, and even, in certain cases, of articulation, combination or *fusion* of these two currents of thought.⁴²

While Löwy puts a lot of energy in further refining and expanding the reach of his explanatory hypothesis and in taxonomies of even the most obscure intellectual groupings, Anson Rabinbach is more interested in a more nuanced description of the “new Jewish sensibility” and in clarifying the personal, intellectual and political options created within what he typically calls the “ethos”⁴³ of the modern German Jewish messianism. (By the way, Rabinbach must also be credited with the latter determinative, ostensibly superior to both “secular” and “profane” messianism.⁴⁴) Starting from the same premises as Löwy (Scholem’s description of the messianic idea and the importance of the political and cultural reflections of the historical situation) he turns to the German-Jewish realities of the epoch with socio-cultural tools to describe a new type, the messianic type of sensibility, on the backdrop of the mainstream convictions and hopes of the educated German Jewry. The generation of 1914” (Robert Wohl’s term⁴⁵)

emerges as the negative image of the assimilated German Jews”, “a product of the post-assimilatory Renaissance, [...] radical, uncompromising, and comprised of an esoteric intellectualism that is as uncomfortable with the Enlightenment as it is enamored of apocalyptic visions – whether revolutionary or purely redemptive in the spiritual sense.”⁴⁶

The definitive and indeducible characteristic of the generation, however, is the messianic *habitus*. Its intensional description (a pure form, as it were) would allow Rabinbach to minimize the importance of Löwy’s integration of romantic anti-capitalism and messianism and to broaden the extensional sphere of modern messianic political-cultural phenomena⁴⁷ while maintaining an unmistakable specificity of the phenomenon. He sees the messianic impulse appearing in different Jewish frameworks, so that “whether one chooses theology, philosophy, or aesthetics as a starting point, the Messianic tradition” – a specific configuration of its central elements - is always at work.

The modern messianism is, for Rabinbach, above all a *Haltung*, and comes, in this respect, before the political, theoretical or aesthetical concerns and decisions. It is “apocalyptic, catastrophic, utopian and

pessimistic”(in various degrees), a “pre-political vision of the world made whole”.⁴⁸ Its typical stances include the “anti-Jewish Jewishness” that rejects the Krausian abjuration, the rational Judaism of Cohen, and the personalistic, Buberian renewal of Jewish religiosity as so many forms of false Jewish consciousness, the refusal of the politics of the day in favour of a speculative intellectual attitude and a radicalism “which aims at nothing less than total transformation of the individual and society, whether coupled with activism or wholly without any concrete political touchstone”. And, one should add, a profound mistrust in the radical politics as well.

Indeed, in discussing the messianic ethos, one must consider not only the urge to jump into every revolutionary bandwagon, but also the opposed attitude of “having no spiritual investment in the world as it is”, as Taubes put it,⁴⁹ of “never willing to participate”.⁵⁰ In fact these two reactions are the poles of the modern messianic ethos as a whole, the two key “motor-fantastical dispositions” as Bloch calls them. Mendes-Flohr discovered a beautiful page from Rosenzweig that explains it:

The false Messiah is as old as the hope for the true Messiah. He is the changing form of the changeless hope. He separates every Jewish generation into those whose faith is strong enough to give themselves up to an illusion, and those whose hope is so strong they do not allow themselves to be deluded. The former are the better, the latter the stronger.⁵¹

The “stronger Jews”, it seems, are no less messianic than the “better” ones. Is it still possible then to conceive an “ethos” capable of generating, all this attitudes – the complete repudiation of the world, the hope put in a new order based on the destruction of the old, and the conviction that a “true” new world will never come to pass – expressed, to give just one example, in the Adornian “negative theology” where not only that “the progress has not taken place yet”, but after the fulfilment of the promise of progress in the form of the complete delusion produced by the administered world, it has become utterly unredeemable?⁵² Moreover, there are enough examples in which the “better” Jews found strength in themselves to resist the illusion they participated in before wholeheartedly, not to mention the numerous shifts in position, group splits, adjurations and regroupings.

Let's take a moment to admire this fine mess. The central question of our research is how was it possible for the messianic idea to re-appear when everything speaks against both its internal consistency and practical efficacy? How could one explain that it survived in a 'dormant' state between its brief moments of blooming (in the utopian French tradition of the early 19th century, and the German-Jewish 1914 generation)?

We rejected the grand narrative of the dialectical evolution of Western eschatology proposed by Taubes for being too idealistic in the handling of its own "reality principle". We discarded the secularisation hypothesis for its inability to bear the burden of proof, although perhaps Blumenberg himself would have been hard pressed to accommodate this phenomenon in his own positive reconstruction of the modern age. Leaving aside the history of ideas and the theory of influences as inconclusive, we moved then to explanations that sought for an answer in the phenomenology of human experience and in the 'quasi-transcendental' structures of human political praxis, only to return into the calmer waters of intellectual history in search of more context and content, where the modern messianism is in both its appearance and specific form dependent upon a broader negative evaluation and rejection of the world, and ambivalent stances toward the possibility of a new one. But the best description of the messianic ethos makes it hard to count anybody as being 'out', and seems to be way too contradictory to respond to a more precise definition of the term ethos.

The historical contingencies prove to be decisive for the reappearances of the messianic, to the extent that they could be viewed as an epiphenomenon of any serious crisis,⁵³ and something must be said about the importance of the philosophical and ideological metanarratives available or nascent in that particular period as well, since they do function as a catalyst. But they cannot explain the survival in between these irruptions. Could it be, then, that beyond the historical-intellectual occurrences of a messianic "ethos" lays a more profound, perhaps universal ground that bears this possibility?

The survival of the messianic and the existential feelings

In order to respond to this question, we attempt here to link the messianic with the concept of existential feelings that has been developed by Matthew Ratcliffe.⁵⁴

Ratcliffe's term is technical, pertaining to the research field of affective phenomena, but it draws on philosophical work, especially from the phenomenological tradition. It starts from the observation that whenever "I have an emotional experience of *p*, perceive *q*, or think about *r*, I already *find myself in a world*." So, in short, these feelings "constitute a sense of *how one finds oneself in the world as a whole*", "a felt sense of reality and belonging"⁵⁵ that bears a resemblance to Heidegger's *Befindlichkeit*, but Ratcliffe's analysis moves towards a description of them as pertaining to the ways in which "things matter".⁵⁶ He sees them more in terms of an openness to "types of possibility" woven in the structure of experience itself, that can be described further in terms of

whether they involve encountering something as certain, possible, likely or doubtful; whether something appears significant to *me*, to *us*, or to *them*; and whether they concern something to be brought about through one's actions, the actions of others, or by other means. There is also a broad distinction to be drawn between a sense of being able to do something and a sense of its mattering. [...].⁵⁷

Ratcliffe also refers to certain *kinds* of existential feelings, a thing that is of particular interest here. Depending on the intrinsic 'readiness', or rather proneness to incur changes, he isolates rigid existential feelings, like for instance in the cases of depression, and easily changeable up to the point of being disorganized feelings, that typify schizophrenic disorders. Other kinds are metonymies of the general openness to possibilities (excessive – diminished, excessive – constraint) and are subject to evolution in time.⁵⁸

In spite of their background role in our experience, the existential feelings present a degree of sophistication that puts them closer to 'higher', cognitive processes, and links them directly with the philosophical inquiry. Ratcliffe admits that the existential feelings can in fact entail evaluations and even normative elements, and dedicates attention to their relation with philosophical positions and religious beliefs.⁵⁹ Leaving aside the situation, described elsewhere, in which an existential feeling "crystalizes into a thought", the otherwise non-problematic fact that philosophical and religious doctrines "can seldomly be reduces to a series of propositions and not even that would completely exclude the intervention of existential feelings in their general outline", his proposition is that "some existential feelings amount to broad philosophical dispositions, which motivate the explicit positions that philosophers defend".⁶⁰

What is missing however from his work is a concrete example that could support this claim. We think that modern messianism can do even more than that. The modern messianic “ethos” pre-articulates not only the background of one philosophical doctrine, but, we would argue, it fuels different but related philosophical stances, part of a family of ontological, epistemic and political “policies”.⁶¹

Conversely, the existential feeling would not only solve the mystery of the survival of the messianic idea, but could also function as a more solid explanation of the “messianic pathologies” as Ernst Bloch named them. The intellectual history is teeming with anecdotes and textual examples that pertain to a messianic symptomatology, virtually every name can be associated with at least one of them. There is Landauer’s decree during the brief Munich Republic banning the study of history in public schools, Lukacs’ “great new philosophy” described in the journal of one of his friends in which the homogenous world is seen as the goal of salvation,⁶² Löwenthal’s stern refusal to commit we mentioned earlier, Benjamin’s idyll with suicide, Ernst Bloch’s seemingly obnoxious demeanor in the eyes of respected men of scientific authority, Adorno’s abhorrence of “marching behind some flag” that exasperated his students and peers, Rosenzweig’s and Benjamin’s fulgurations (two of them being showcased in this paper), Kracauer’s go-for-broke game against the linear history of the world in his work of photography and film,⁶³ and the list goes on.

Our working hypothesis is that the (modern) messianism is essentially a kind of existential feeling before being a cultural, political, or intellectual-historical denomination.

There could be little doubt that the philosophical – and also the religious – expressions of messianism refer to the world as a whole, thus confirming that they are linked with an existential feeling. What is characteristic for the messianic existential feeling is that the acknowledgement that this world here lacks in existential possibilities does not lead to existential despair, but takes the form of a condemnation of the world: the only enticing possibility it still has it’s that of its disappearance. I believe this is acceptable in the phenomenological account of the existential feeling, since having it as an elaboration of a passive having-to-be-here would not make much sense. Even Heidegger’s *Befindlichkeit* as a “having to take it from here” does it fact include the possibility of taking it against the world.⁶⁴ There is something to be said about this reactive element in the messianic feeling. In a way, it looks more like a meta-emotion,⁶⁵ and if a more precise analysis would lead to this conclusion, it would

be possible to explain the role of existential feelings on the development and pre-arrangement of philosophical and political ontologies by way of this mechanism.

With the sense of belonging in the world shaped in this manner, “the world does not belong here”, “the world matters only in as much it contains the possibility of its own destruction”, rather than “I feel distanced from it”, or the modern feeling of depeisation, the structures of anticipation come in place, with this catastrophe being felt as either imminent, certain, uncertain, doubtful or even impossible, depending on the historical contingencies, and the participative dimension adds more content. Besides the image of the “collective Messiah” representing the revolutionary forces, one could encounter for example, the stance of the “theologian of the revolution”, prophet of the new messianic age (an image cultivated by Bloch), which is not at all uncommon in the Weimar era of barefooted prophets,⁶⁶ but also the stance of the sad, last observer, that was so dear to Benjamin, who even when thinking about escaping to America, could only see himself, with “messianic irony”, as an odd exhibit piece in a sideshow – “the last European”. The utopian dimension of the messianic, with its deeper broad openness to new forms of belonging to a community and the world, would then be coupled with a much constrained, critical attitude, and it is not rare to see shifts from the one to the other.

The four dimensions of the messianic idea imported from Scholem’s description could aptly be translated into types of possibility in a shared existential feeling, where the proneness to changes and shifts are accentuated by the concrete historical circumstances. But its consistence as a feeling seems to be maintained across the whole family of particular stances it informed. We think this consistency is clearly present for instance in the paradoxical turns of the phrase so typical for Adorno’s and Bloch’s philosophical styles, for example.

Thus we replace Rabinbach’s messianic ethos with a more accurate term, capable of sustaining not only the description of the concrete phenomena, but also the history of messianism. The same definition allows us to recuperate potential precious insights offered by Derrida and Bensussan. In the case of the former, the quasi-transcendental character is sufficiently uphold by an existential feeling, since it consists of, well, types of possibility; in the latter case there is work to be done to see how much can his phenomenological analysis of the messianic temporality contribute to the understanding of existential feelings as a whole.

Conclusion and ways ahead

In main aim of this article was to pile up the arguments that ask for a more apt description of the modern messianism and better explanations for its re-birth in the German-Jewish generation of 1914. Comparatively, the proposal to conceive messianism as an existential feeling might have arguably received little more than a half-backed justification, with enough elements of this equation still in contention.

Ratcliffe insights, while accepting a certain degree of mutual influence between conceptual thought and existential feeling, and the former's intervention in the shaping of the philosophical perspectives do not refer to this matters sufficiently, so more work is necessary here as to how these existential feeling intervene not only in conceptual thought, but also in the structuring of the onto-political horizon of possibilities. Our hypothesis that this could be investigated as a form of meta-emotion still needs proofing, beyond the scope of our research here.

Secondly, in order for the messianism to maintain historical stability, Ratcliffe's existential feeling must be seen as a historical category, and – another aspect that was, alas, left out in this brief paper – as sensitive to human relations, to the point that this existential feeling could be seen as “shared”, or “contested”.

Besides these tweakings that seem more interested in the history of messianic movements, there are some modest proposals for the study of existential feelings themselves. Ratcliffe considers the phenomenological approach to be the best tool for this task. The existential feeling have little complexity, however, if the examples are taken predominantly from the medical and psychiatric cases, as compared with the messianic ‘pathologies’ we mentioned. If the soul does not contain more than what one could express, the research of existential feelings would benefit from interpreting more complex bodies of work.

NOTES

- ¹ Anson Rabinbach, 'Between Enlightenment and Apocalypse: Benjamin, Bloch and Modern German Jewish Messianism', *New German Critique*, no. 34 (Winter 1985): chap. 3.
- ² „Es ist der umgekehrte Turmbau zu Babel: Die Völker der Bibel häufen Quader auf Quader und das Geistig Gewollte: der himmelragende Turm entsteht nicht. Die Juden handhaben die Idee wie Quader, und nie wird der Ursprung, die Materie erreicht. Sie bauen von oben, ohne die Boden zu erreichen.“ Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Briefe*, ed. Christoph Göttsche and Henri Lonitz (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995), I, 84 (Hereafter GB I).
- ³ Joseph Dan, 'Scholem's View of Jewish Messianism', *Modern Judaism*, 1992, 117–128.
- ⁴ Moshe Idel, 'Messianic Scholars: On Early Israeli Scholarship, Politics and Messianism', *Modern Judaism - A Journal of Jewish Ideas and Experience* 32, no. 1 (1 February 2012): 22–53; Lars Fischer, 'Zur Beziehung zwischen Gershom Scholem und Theodor W. Adorno', *sans phrase. Zeitschrift für Ideologiekritik* 10 (Spring 2017): 85–92.
- ⁵ Cited by John Roberts, 'The "Returns to Religion": Messianism, Christianity and the Revolutionary Tradition. Part I: "Wakefulness to the Future"', *Historical Materialism* 16, no. 2 (1 June 2008): 61.
- ⁶ Jacob Leib Talmon, *Political Messianism: The Romantic Phase* (Praeger, 1961).
- ⁷ Rabinbach, 'Between Enlightenment and Apocalypse', 113–15.
- ⁸ For a good try to at least explain the philosophical mechanisms behind the connections between the messianic and the revolutionary tradition, see the twin articles Roberts, 'The Returns to Religion I'; 'The "Returns to Religion": Messianism, Christianity and the Revolutionary Tradition. Part II: The Pauline Tradition', *Historical Materialism* 16, no. 2 (1 June 2008): 77–103.
- ⁹ Matthew Ratcliffe, 'Existential Feelings (Forthcoming)', in *Routledge Handbook of Phenomenology of Emotions*, ed. Thomas Szanto and Hilge Landweer (Routledge, 2019).
- ¹⁰ B. Babich, 'Ad Jacob Taubes', *New Nietzsche Studies: Nietzsche and the Jews* 7, no. 3–4 (2007): v–x.
- ¹¹ Gershom Scholem, 'Zum Verständnis der messianischen Idee im Judentum', vol. *Judaica I, Judaica* (Eranos-Tagung, Suhrkamp, 1963), 7–74.
- ¹² J. Taubes, 'Scholem's Theses on Messianism Reconsidered', *Social Science Information* 21 (1 July 1982): 669–70, <https://doi.org/10.1177/053901882021004010>.
- ¹³ Taubes, 669.
- ¹⁴ Taubes, 670.
- ¹⁵ Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age* (MIT Press, 1985), 5.

- 16 Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty* (University of Chicago Press, 2005).
- 17 Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History: The Theological Implications of the Philosophy of History* (University of Chicago Press, 1957), 42 sqq; Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, 14–15.
- 18 Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, 9.
- 19 See further Anson Rabinbach, *In the Shadow of Catastrophe: German Intellectuals Between Apocalypse and Enlightenment* (University of California Press, 1997).
- 20 Richard Wolin's 'Reflections on Jewish Secular Messianism', in *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, vol. VII (New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 188 start from the key question.
- 21 Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, 18.
- 22 Warren S. Goldstein, 'Messianism and Marxism: Walter Benjamin and Ernst Bloch's Dialectical Theories of Secularization', *Critical Sociology* 27, no. 2 (2001): 246–47.
- 23 Slavoj Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity* (Cambridge - London: MIT Press, 2003).
- 24 Peter Berger, cited by Goldstein, 'Messianism and Marxism', 271.
- 25 Goldstein, 249.
- 26 Michael Weingrad, 'Parisian Messianism: Catholicism, Decadence, and the Transgressions of Georges Bataille', *History & Memory* 13, no. Number 2 (Fall/Winter 2001): 113.
- 27 Michael Weingrad, 'The College of Sociology and the Institute for Social Research', *New German Critique*, no. 40 (2001): 120–61.
- 28 In his response to my e-mail inquiry from 7 October 2007.
- 29 Cf. Michael Löwy, 'Jewish Messianism and Libertarian Utopia in Central Europe (1900-1933)', trans. Renee B. Larrier, *New German Critique*, no. 20 (1980): 109.
- 30 *Le temps messianique: temps historique et temps vécu* (Paris: Vrin, 2001).
- 31 Bensussan, 15.
- 32 Bensussan, 12.
- 33 Bensussan, 94.
- 34 See, apart from the Specters of Marx, *Marx & Sons* (Presses universitaires de France, 2002).
- 35 Löwy, Michael, 'L'évolution politique de Lukacs, 1909-1929: Contribution à une sociologie de l'intelligentsia révolutionnaire' (Université Lille III, 1975).
- 36 Rabinbach, *In the Shadow of Catastrophe*.
- 37 Rabinbach, 'Between Enlightenment and Apocalypse'.
- 38 See, for instance Löwy, 'Jewish Messianism and Libertarian Utopia'; 'Messianism in the Early Work of Gershom Scholem', *New German Critique*, no. 83 (2001): 177–191; 'Capitalism as Religion: Walter Benjamin and Max

- Weber', *Historical Materialism* 17, no. 1 (1 March 2009): 60–73, <https://doi.org/10.1163/156920609X399218>; 'Utopia and Revolution: The Romantic Socialism of Gustav Landauer and Martin Buber', *Value Inquiry Book Series* 274 (June 2014): 49–64; 'Jewish Messianism and Revolutionary Utopias in Central Europe: Erich Fromm's Early Writings (1922-1930)', *European Judaism* 50, no. 1 (Spring 2017): 21–31.
- 39 Löwy, 'Jewish Messianism and Libertarian Utopia', 108.
40 Löwy, 109.
41 Löwy, 109–10.
42 Löwy, 108–9.
43 Rabinbach, 'Between Enlightenment and Apocalypse', 78.
44 Rabinbach, 82.
45 See Robert Wohl, *The Generation of 1914*, First edition (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1979).
46 Rabinbach, 'Between Enlightenment and Apocalypse', 79–80.
47 Rabinbach, 82–84 To be fair, as already said, Löwy too expands well beyond the initial 'focus on the anarchist-expressionist libertarians of the Munich circle'.
48 Rabinbach, 81.
49 Jacob Taubes, *Die politische Theologie des Paulus: Vorträge, gehalten an der Forschungsstätte der evangelischen Studiengemeinschaft in Heidelberg, 23.-27. Februar 1987*, ed. Horst Folkers, Wolf-Daniel Hartwich, and Christoph Schulte (München: Fink, 1993).
50 Helmut Dubiel and Leo Lowenthal, *Mitmachen wollte ich nie: ein autobiographisches Gespräch mit Helmut Dubiel*, Erstausg, Edition Suhrkamp, n. F., Bd. 14 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980).
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52 Wolin, 'Reflections on Jewish Secular Messianism', 194.
53 One scholar goes as far as to call Benjamin's thought a work on hyperinflation: N. Lambrianou, "'A Philosophy and Theology of Hyperinflation:" Walter Benjamin, Weimar and the New Thinking', *Journal for Cultural and Religious Theory* 5, no. 2 (2004): 78–97.
54 *Feelings of Being: Phenomenology, Psychiatry and the Sense of Reality*, International Perspectives in Philosophy and Psychiatry (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); 'The Phenomenology of Existential Feeling', in *Feelings of Being Alive / Gefühle Des Lebendigseins*, ed. Joerg Fingerhut and Sabine Marienberg (De Gruyter, 2012), 23–54; 'Existential Feelings (Forthcoming)'.
55 Ratcliffe, 'Existential Feelings (Forthcoming)', 2–3.
56 Ratcliffe, 'The Phenomenology of Existential Feeling', 33.

- 57 Ratcliffe, 'Existential Feelings (Forthcoming)', 4.
58 Ratcliffe, *Feelings of Being*, 211–16.
59 Ratcliffe, chap. 9 and 10.
60 Ratcliffe, 241.
61 Cf. the discussion of stances and 'epistemic policies' Ratcliffe, 249.
62 Discovered by Rabinbach 'Between Enlightenment and Apocalypse', 81.
63 Miriam Hansen, 'Decentric Perspectives: Kracaurs Early Writings on Film and Mass Culture', *New German Critique*, no. 54, Special Issue on Siegfried Kracauer (n.d.): 47–76; See also Lorin Ghiman, 'The Kracauer Connection: The Conflation of Art and the Messianic-Political in the Works of Kracauer, Benjamin, and Adorno (in Print)', *Annals of the University of Bucharest - Philosophy Series* 67, no. 1 (n.d.).
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65 Christoph Jäger and Anne Bartsch, 'Prolegomena Zu Einer Philosophischen Theorie Der Meta-Emotionen', in *Leben Mit Gefühlen*, ed. Barbara Merker (mentis, 2009), 113–137.
66 Ulrich Linse, *Barfüßige Propheten: Erlöser der zwanziger Jahre* (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1983).

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BEYOND CONSCIOUSNESS: PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE IN THE EARLY WORK OF MIRCEA ELIADE (1925-1932)

Abstract

This paper offers an overview of the way in which Mircea Eliade used psychological language in his early work on religion, and places this early contribution in the context of the history of the psychology of religion. The first two sections comment on Eliade's earliest mentions of psychological concepts, while the following two go into a more in-depth analysis of the history of the concept of higher consciousness in psychology and into the history of the psychology of yoga in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Building on these two sections, I analyse the uses of psychology in an unpublished manuscript from 1929 and in Eliade's Ph.D. thesis.

Keywords: Mircea Eliade, super-consciousness, the sub-conscious, psychology of religion, yoga, metapsychics

1. Introduction

The cover blurb on the 1991 edition of Mircea Eliade's *Images and Symbols* does not hesitate to call the Romanian scholar "one of the most renowned expositors of the psychology of religion, mythology, and magic".¹ Had he still been alive, Eliade would have, no doubt, recoiled at the description. At first glance, the notion of Eliade the psychologist seems like a joke. For, after a lifetime of work emphasising the need to study religion on its own terms, without reducing it to psychological, sociological, or economic factors, to be called a psychologist would amount to no less than a radical misunderstanding of his work. Nevertheless, this quote poses several important questions: what was Eliade's relationship with psychology? Did psychological concepts play any part in his theorisation? And if so, how would an understanding of his uses of psychology affect

the understanding of Eliade's project and his hermeneutics? The answer to these questions in the secondary literature has often taken the form of a "Jungian or not Jungian" equation, often with reference to Eliade's use of the concept of "archetype".² At the same time, Eliade's use of psychologically-sounding concepts, such as "transconscious" and "metapsychoanalysis" has puzzled interpreters, but there has been little attempt to try to understand these terms historically.³ Finally, in a more recent piece on Eliade's early writings, Liviu Bordaș has claimed that Eliade titled his Ph.D. thesis *The Psychology of Indian Meditation* not because he was in fact offering a psychological interpretation of yoga, but because of administrative reasons, having to do with the academic specialization of Constantin Rădulescu-Motru, the psychologist who was heading his examination committee.⁴ That this is clearly not the whole picture can be seen from what follows.

In this paper, I will take a different line. In the first and second sections, I will show that Eliade was familiar with psychological concepts since his youth, and that he also drew on texts belonging to the psychology of religion in order to outline his own conception of mysticism. In the following two sections, I will examine in more detail two strands of the psychology of religion that came to play an important part in Eliade's understanding of yoga, as well as in his later, mature understanding of religious experience. In effect, I will argue that in his Ph.D. thesis Eliade also offered a psychological interpretation of yoga, an interpretation that is not entirely intelligible without the full context of the development of the idea of higher consciousness, and without understanding the ways in which the practice of yoga was interpreted in psychological terms by scholars and practitioners who came before Eliade.

This article is the first part of a larger work aimed at explicating more fully Eliade's uses of psychology in his writings on religion. In a future paper, I will use the development outlined in these pages to try to tease out the way in which Eliade's psychology changed in the period after the Second World War. The 1940s and 50s were a period when Eliade became more versed in psychology, both through his reading, as well as through meetings with various psychologists and psychotherapists (C.G. Jung, René Laforgue, Medard Boss, James Hillman, and others). At the same time, during this same period Eliade changed his general hermeneutics, developing new concepts ("transconscious" "metapsychoanalysis") and what we might call the rudiments of a "metaphysical psychotherapy". The story that I tell here constitutes a prelude to that later theorization.

2. The Young Eliade: Psychology of Religion and Metapsychics

Eliade's interest in psychology can be discerned in several publications that date back as early as 1925. Though his main interest appears to have been in the field of metapsychics or psychical research (i.e. the study of mediumship, telepathy, and other seemingly preternatural capabilities), Eliade was also interested in developments in general psychology, and especially in the psychology of religion. It is quite possible that he became interested in the latter through his reading in the former discipline, as psychical research and psychology were closely linked in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In fact, many early psychologists (William James, Théodore Flournoy, Pierre Janet, Frederic Myers to name just a few) were also practitioners of psychical research. As recent research into the origins of academic psychology has shown, it was only through a process of active rejection by some psychologists (often motivated by less than "scientific" reasons, such as strong Christian beliefs) that psychical research was pushed out of the mainstream psychological agenda.⁵

As it is evident from an article published in 1925 in his high school magazine, Eliade was an impassionate advocate for psychical research. The title of the piece was "Occultism and Science", or, as Eliade would have it, a brief demonstration of the existence of hidden psychic faculties, as well as a refutation of positivistic sceptics like his colleague Israilovici, against whom the polemic was directed.⁶ In this paper, Eliade provides a brief genealogy of "occultist" practices (from ancient Egypt to Rudolf Steiner and contemporary mediums), as well as a sequence of contemporary accounts of various "unknown psychic forces", drawn from psychical researchers committed to a scientific elucidation of mediumistic phenomena: William Crookes, Camille Flammarion, Richard Hodgson, Frederic Myers, W.F. Barrett and William James. Eliade claims that there are two planes of reality: the formal one, accessible with the ordinary means of "rationalist" and sense-based cognition, and the "noumenal" one, which can be tapped by means of faculties that are undeveloped in modern man (e.g. clairvoyance, telepathy).⁷ Clearly enamoured with Steiner's works, Eliade recommends them to the reader who is keen to develop such faculties.⁸

By 1926, Eliade was writing to Raffaele Petazzoni to inform him of the project for a "Romanian University Association for the Study of Religions," which would publish a journal dedicated to the "history and psychology of religions"⁹. And while this project, like many others of the young scholar,

did not come to pass, it nevertheless shows the direction in which he was going with his investigations.¹⁰

In 1927, Eliade's interest in the psychology of religion crops up again in the *Spiritual Itinerary* and in a new paper discussing the relationship between contemporary mediumship and ancient lore.¹¹ This latter piece is, in a sense, an extension of the earlier argument. In the earlier article, Eliade had claimed that occult authors had known truths that only subsequently become discovered by science. In this sketch, he puts forward the notion that developments in psychical research are re-discoveries of ancient truths, for example those of magic. What James Frazer and others like him had described as "contagious magic" (i.e. the notion that an occult relationship obtains between two things that had once come into contact) can be found again in the notion of psychometry, whereby a person can be known by an object that had once come in contact with them.

For Eliade, the verification of the truths of magic in contemporary psychometry is proof that magic is not the product of "prelogical minds", but of minds attuned to generalizing on the basis of repeated observations—in other words, of minds capable of obtaining "an objective scientific truth". This brief article also gives him an opportunity to note down a definition of religion as "a series of effervescences of the psyche, and of moments in which consciousness goes beyond the boundaries of normality".¹²

But going beyond the limits of normality does not mean entering into the field of pathology. In this respect, Eliade commends William James' analysis in the *Varieties of Religious Experience* for having dealt with the issue in a "just" way. However, he takes a different route than the American philosopher by pointing out that "religious experience cannot be a form of hysteria, because such a view mistakes the *content* of the psyche with its material *expression*".¹³ The question, then, for Eliade, is to be resolved by an analysis of this content, which, in his view, "only psychology and metapsychics will be able to elucidate, even before philology and sociology".¹⁴

3. Mysticism and the Spiritual Itinerary

In the summer of 1927, Eliade travelled to Geneva on a two-month scholarship given by the U.N. As one would expect of Eliade, he spent a good deal of his time there reading in the University Library.¹⁵ In August,

he began sending to *Cuvîntul* a series of articles that bore the collective title *Spiritual Itinerary*, and which were meant to give a spiritual x-ray of his generation, discussing themes such as culture, literary and scientific creation, experience, dilettantism and religion.¹⁶

As part of his broader apology for “experience” in the *Itinerary*, Eliade takes up arms for “mystical experience” in the eighth article of his series. As he puts it there, “mysticism for us, the young ones, is already a reality—more confused or more lucid, more undifferentiated from vitalism and aestheticism, or more purified”.¹⁷ The “more purified”, for him, is the religious kind, but one can also find mysticism everywhere, in the multiple and verified irruptions of the irrational in everyday life, such as clairvoyance, miraculous healings or psychometry. In a roundabout way, by inference, all of these facts point in the direction of a higher plane. However, to work only with such traces, to try *to think* one’s way into the reality of mysticism (whether through logic, metaphysics or metapsychics) is to labour with methods that are alien to religion, and cannot discover its essence. Mysticism, Eliade argues, is an affective experience and also “a transcendence of consciousness into a plane, mental of course (not to be confused with a crystallization of hallucinations, we will show why; we write “mental” because it is inaccessible to the senses)”.¹⁸ It is a breaking through to the *other side*. What is on the other side? That cannot be said, because, Eliade claims, he is not doing theology.¹⁹ At any rate, mystical experience cannot be translated into words and “causal chains”. It is impervious to such an analysis, and most of all to the analysis of psychologists who try to explain it by pointing out its fundamentally pathological nature.

As Eliade is no doubt aware, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, psychology had established itself as a main contender in the race for a scientific description of religious and mystical experiences.²⁰ The psychology of religion arose in the U.S. in the final decades of the 19th century, primarily around William James (1842-1910) at Harvard and G. Stanley Hall (1846-1924) at Clark University. These two were joined by their students James Henry Leuba (1868-1946), E.D. Starbuck (1866-1947), as well as by other colleagues in Europe and America. The list of notables included Théodore Flournoy (1854-1920) in Geneva, and Pierre Janet (1859-1947) and Henri Delacroix (1873-1937) in Paris. The psychology of religion sought a complete overhaul of the science of religion, as it had been practiced in the 19th century by luminaries such as Max Müller, Albert Réville and others.

As opposed to these authors, whose practice often relied on a philological and comparative investigation of historical religious texts, the religious psychologists argued instead that the essence of religion lay in an affective religious experience that could be examined also through contemporary accounts. As William James wrote in the *Varieties of Religious Experience*, “feeling is the deeper source of religion [...] and philosophic and theological formulas are secondary products, like translations of a text into another tongue.”²¹ James was the uncontested leader of the sub-discipline, and his *Varieties of Religious Experience* became an instant classic, as well as, according to Eliade himself in 1937, “the best introduction to the understanding of religious phenomenon that a lay person could read up to 1917”.²² The turn toward religious experience, which psychologists of religion like James advocated, could only appeal to Eliade, since it fitted in well with his own (and one might add Nae Ionescu’s) advocacy of lived experience.²³

As I have already hinted in the previous section, Eliade had read the *Varieties* as early as June 1927, and had deemed that James had “treated mystical-religious phenomenology from a just angle”.²⁴ In the *Varieties of Religious Experience*, James had argued that mysticism comprised four qualities: ineffability, noetic quality, passivity, and transience.²⁵ Eliade accepted at least two of those four qualities in his own understanding of the concept. But James’ “angle” had also encompassed a trademark attempt to defuse the issue of whether mystics were victims of mental pathology or not. James’ solution to this problem had been to apply his pragmatic criterion. He argued that it did not matter whether a mystic was deranged or not, as the test of a mystic’s experience was not its organic origin, but whether his or her experience was valuable for life. As James put it:

*Immediate luminousness, in short, philosophical reasonableness, and moral helpfulness are the only available criteria. Saint Theresa might have had the nervous system of the placidest cow, and it would not now save her theology, if the trial of the theology by these other tests should show it to be contemptible.*²⁶

Even though Eliade likely appreciated James’ attack on medical materialism, he did not adopt James’s solution, arguing instead that the “fruits” of mysticism were evidence that the mystics were actually healthy and not deranged.²⁷ In the article on mysticism, he nevertheless counterposed James and Henri Delacroix to the pathological arguments

proffered by psychologists such as Ribot, Leuba and Janet.²⁸ But it was Henri Delacroix who provided Eliade with the thrust of his argument.

Henri Delacroix (1873-1937) grew up in Paris in a Catholic family and taught philosophy and psychology at the Sorbonne.²⁹ In his 1908 book *Studies in the History and Psychology of Mysticism*, Delacroix (1873-1937) makes the claim that in order to understand mysticism one needs to engage in an extensive perusal of the lives of great mystics.³⁰ Psychology of mysticism, for him, was by necessity a historical endeavour. This was because contemporary great mystics were hard to find, and also because, in order to comprehend the psychological law of mysticism, one had to find mystics (like St. Theresa of Avila or Henry Suso) that had left behind a sufficient number of documents (letters, autobiographies) that permitted a reconstruction of their whole lives.³¹

The psychological law of mysticism was, for Delacroix, one of an oscillation between extremes (contemplation and action, ecstasy and sadness, presence as well as absence of God), which proceeded progressively until a state of psychological balance was reached. Delacroix calls this balance "theopathic", and he describes it as a state wherein the "I" of the mystic is completely replaced by what the mystic calls "God", and what the psychologist calls the "subconscious".³²

Fundamental to Delacroix's understanding of mysticism is the notion that though pathology explains a lot of the mystic's adventure, it cannot explain everything. Pathology is powerless when it comes to explain "the specific mental state" (*état mental particulier*) that underscores mystical experiences. And it is this specific mental state that constitutes the essence of mysticism: if no such states existed, then there would be no artistic or religious genius.³³

In the *Spiritual Itinerary*, Eliade uses this description as evidence that mysticism lies beyond the pale of psychopathological analysis. As for the notion that it is the subconscious that is responsible for mystical visions, for the feelings of presence and for other peculiarities of the mystical life, Eliade claims that it cannot be so, because the mystics themselves know about the subconscious and can differentiate between it and the action of divinity.³⁴ In other words, it is not a question of refuting psychology *tout court*. The subconscious, for Eliade, is a reality even in the mind of a sixteenth century saint. The saint, however, had learned to circumvent it.

4. Enter the Superconscious

The distinction between the content of religious experience and its exterior expression that Eliade articulated in 1927 would become fundamental for the way in which he later approached the question of the relationship between pathology and religion. More broadly, one can also consider this distinction as basic for understanding Eliade's later rejection of reductionism. It was because religious experience was the result of a specific mental state that it could not be understood without a specific hermeneutic that took that state into consideration. Any other kind of analysis was bound to deal only with the surface, as if one tried to explain *Madame Bovary* "by a list of social, economic and political facts; however true, they do not affect it as a work of literature".³⁵ Starting with his 1932 doctoral thesis, the specific mental state was called by Eliade the "super-conscious" (applied at first only to *sāmadhi*) and from 1948 onwards "the transconscious".³⁶ However, before I outline the context in which Eliade first used this notion, I would like to first outline a brief history of the "superconscious" in late 19th and early 20th century psychology, which will help to better situate Eliade's concept.

The "superconscious" can be found appearing for the first time in the 1880s, in a couple of papers published by Frederic W. H. Myers (1843-1901). As a founding member of the *Society for Psychical Research*, Myers was deeply involved in the study of mediumship and unusual psychic faculties, defining a whole new vocabulary in which to discuss these: telepathy, hypermnesia, panmnnesia, telaesthesia, etc.³⁷ He argued that such faculties were the work of a subliminal Self that could not fully manifest itself in an organism evolved for life on this planet. At the same time, he claimed that such mental operations upended the distinction between unconscious and consciousness. As he wrote in an essay in *Phantasms of the Living* (1886):

Well, besides these sub-conscious and unconscious operations, I believe that *super-conscious* operations are also going on within us; operations, that is to say, which transcend the limitations of ordinary faculties of cognition, and which yet remain—not *below the threshold*—but rather *above the upper horizon* of consciousness, and illumine our normal experience only in transient and clouded gleams.³⁸

Some fifteen years afterwards, another author, a Canadian psychiatrist named Richard Bucke (1837-1902) sought to give a similar account of an evolutionary higher form of consciousness. Bucke's book was called *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind*, and it was made famous by William James, who quoted from it in his *Varieties*.³⁹ Eliade also quoted from this volume in his 1957 Eranos lecture.⁴⁰ The topic of Bucke's book was summarised in the title: it was a study of "cosmic consciousness" as the next step in the evolution of the human mind. Bucke had had an experience of "Brahmic bliss" in 1872, which he used as the basis for theorizing about the nature of consciousness and the conditions for attaining the "supra conceptual mind".⁴¹ Most of his account was given over to the description of cases of cases of cosmic consciousness, which ran the gamut from the Buddha, Christ, Paul, and Mohammed, to Socrates, Dante, Balzac, Pushkin, Walt Whitman and a host of anonymous contemporaries.

According to Bucke, there were three types of consciousness in the living universe, each developing out of the one preceding it, and each offering a qualitatively different understanding of the world. The lowest rung of this consciousness ladder was occupied by simple consciousness, which the higher animals also possessed, followed by self-consciousness, which was a prerogative of (most) humans. The third step belonged to cosmic consciousness, which only a few men (and even fewer women) had ever attained.⁴²

In addition to these two, almost "classical" descriptions of higher forms of consciousness, one can also find similar discussions in a number of texts, most of them written in the wake of Myers's account, but also drawing on different psychological theories.

A case in point is the work of one Jean Henri Probst-Biraben (1875-1957), a Freemason, occultist and Sufi, who worked as a school teacher in France and Algeria. Drawing on his knowledge of Sufi milieus in the north of Africa, as well as from the study of authors such as Al-Ghazali and Ibn Arabi, Probst-Biraben put forward an argument in favour of the existence of "hyper-consciousness", managing to get his argument published in the pages of the *Revue philosophique*, the main organ of experimental psychology in France, edited by Théodule Ribot.⁴³ While Probst-Biraben started from Ribot's own musings on the psychology of ecstasy, he ended up with radically different conclusions. Starting in 1883, Ribot had argued that ecstasy was an almost complete abolition of consciousness.⁴⁴ The ecstatic experienced a restriction of the

area of consciousness to one image-idea, or to a nucleus built up around it. What the ecstasies lost in extension of consciousness, they more than made up for in intension.⁴⁵ For Ribot, thus, ecstasy amounted to a state of heightened consciousness, but with one important corollary: the nature of consciousness implied continuous change, a flow of representations, and since the mystic's procedures made these grind to halt, such intensified consciousness resulted in an abolition of consciousness. It was like overloading a jet-engine and making it flame out. Probst-Biraben heeded Ribot's claim that ecstasy was "an infraction of the laws of the normal mechanism of consciousness", but argued that whatever happened at those supersonic mental speeds belonged to a different kind of psychological physics.⁴⁶ Hyper-consciousness meant delivery into a different ontological regime, into a state that was different both from unconsciousness, and from Myers' subliminal consciousness.

Concepts such as Probst-Biraben's were brought into more mainstream psychology of religion in 1915, when Théodore Flournoy discussed the nature of ecstatic consciousness in a contribution in which he analysed the experiences of a contemporary mystic, whom he pseudonymously named Cécile Vé.⁴⁷ Flournoy claimed to take no stance on the ontology of such a state, whether it was a superior evolutionary state as Bucke or Myers had argued, or an entry into an earlier form of consciousness as other investigators had claimed. He did, however, note that such an ecstatic consciousness seemed to fit the facts as he knew them: ecstatic consciousness was not just an abolition of consciousness, as Ribot and Leuba had stated.⁴⁸

In addition to such guarded statements from an official psychologist like Flournoy, higher consciousness also had a career in theosophical and occultist milieus.⁴⁹ The notion of 'super-consciousness' appeared, for example, in Annie Besant's *Theosophy and the New Psychology* (1904) and *A Study in Consciousness* (1904).⁵⁰ Besant was explicit in her drawing on Myers in her account of what she called either "Super-Consciousness", "higher consciousness" or "Super-physical Consciousness". As much as Myers and Bucke, she argued that such higher consciousness was a prerogative of the future: "for the sub-consciousness belongs the Past, as the waking-consciousness to the Present, as the super-consciousness to the Future".⁵¹ Dreams could be considered as manifestations of super-consciousness, as well as a whole host of premonitions, inspirations, "intuitive grasps of truths", "flashes of genius, visions of artistic beauty, etc., etc."⁵² In order to obtain a glimpse of super-consciousness one had

to enter into trance, which is “but the sleep-state, artificially or abnormally induced”.⁵³ Eastern masters, as one might expect, were deemed to possess the best means for manifesting super-consciousness, either through Hatha-Yoga, which led to hypnotic trance, or through Rāja-Yoga, whereby “the consciousness is withdrawn from the body by intense concentration, [and which] leads the student to continuity of consciousness on the successive planes, and he remembers his super-physical experiences on his return to the waking state”.⁵⁴ As I will show in the next sections, Besant’s description bore some similarity both to Vivekananda’s account of yoga and to Eliade’s (with some notable differences).

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), Eliade’s preferred “occultist” in his youth, also wrote of mental states that he described either as “higher consciousness” (*höhere Bewußtsein*), or super-sensible consciousness (*übersinnliche Bewußtsein*).⁵⁵ In one of the books that the young Eliade was familiar with, Steiner argued that such a state was obtained by developing consciousness during deep sleep:

We achieve knowledge of higher worlds by acquiring a third state in addition to sleeping and waking. When we are awake, our souls are devoted to sensory impressions and the mental images they stimulate. When we sleep, these sensory impressions are silenced, but our souls also lose consciousness; the experiences of the day sink down into a sea of unconsciousness. Now let’s imagine that the sleeping soul is capable of becoming conscious in spite of the fact that all sensory perceptions are excluded, as is otherwise the case in deep sleep, and that not even a memory of the day’s experiences is present.⁵⁶

This line of thought no doubt fascinated Eliade, who will later look for and find confirmation for Steiner’s ideas in his studies on yoga. One of the particularities of yoga that caught Eliade’s attention was precisely the fact that the yogin was able to enter consciously into all states of consciousness, as well as to control the subconscious.⁵⁷ These were faculties that Steiner’s anthroposophical system promised to develop as well, and Eliade had noted as early as 1926 that what he appreciated about Steiner’s work was

the reform of mysticism through logic, the introduction of normal faculties of knowledge into the re-awakening of super-sensible ones, *the control of consciousness over the unconscious*, and the capital concern of not despising the living and palpable reality in favour of the deceitful imagination.⁵⁸

5. The Psychology of Yoga

In 1928, Eliade set off for India to work on his doctoral thesis, supported in part by a stipend offered by the maharajah of Kasimbazar, to whom he had written a few months before, disclosing his intention to learn Sanskrit and study Indian philosophy. The scholarly work on yoga that he did in this period resulted in several articles and a Ph.D. thesis (*The Psychology of Indian Meditation*) submitted to the University of Bucharest in 1932 and later re-worked as *Yoga. Essay on the Origins of Indian Mysticism* (1936).⁵⁹ Eliade continued to refer back to this material throughout subsequent decades, using it as a basis for all his books on the topic. My interest here is in the psychological aspects of this work, and in the international context that made this use of psychology possible and even recommended.⁶⁰

Understanding Eliade's use of psychological categories in his thesis and its subsequent avatars requires that one understands something of the international study of yoga in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as of Eliade's own shifting relationship to psychology in this period. For the purposes of this paper, I will leave aside the question of how yoga developed in India, as well as most of the nineteenth and early twentieth century Orientalist discourse around it.⁶¹ Instead, I want to focus briefly on the way in which certain aspects of the practice of yoga were re-configured using psychological language. The reason is that it is precisely to such psychological interpretations that Eliade responded when composing his own study of yoga.⁶²

The story of the Western psychological interpretation of yoga begins in 1843, when Manchester surgeon James Braid (1795-1860) was the first to claim that the feats of Indian fakirs were the result of self-hypnosis.⁶³ The hypnotic state, he argued, was achieved by "over-exerting the attention, by keeping it riveted to one subject or idea which is not of itself of an exciting nature, and over-exercising one set of muscles, and the state of strained eyes, with the suppressed respiration, and general repose, which attend such experiments".⁶⁴ Several years later Braid returned to the topic, quoting the case of a fakir who had been buried alive for six weeks in Lahore and had survived. He argued that such feats resulted from the fakirs' ability to place themselves in a state of "temporary hybernation, or trance".⁶⁵

Braid's ideas became a template for how aspects of yogic practice were understood in the second part of the nineteenth century. Starting in the 1880s, Braid's hypnotic state began to be explained through suggestion, which was popularized by the Nancy school physicians Hyppolite

Bernheim and Ambroise Liébeault. Bernheim defined suggestion as “the act by which an idea is introduced into and accepted by the sensorium”.⁶⁶ Suggestion worked best when the higher reasoning powers were kept in abeyance. Sleep was a natural way of putting to rest reason’s inhibiting power, but so was religious faith, or faith in medicinal practices of one sort or another. Hypnosis was only another name for a state of artificial sleep, which could be induced by suggestion, and which itself increased suggestibility. Bernheim recommended eliminating the term “hypnotism” altogether, and replacing it with “condition of suggestion”.⁶⁷

Bernheim’s work was applied to yoga in 1894 by Swiss ethnologist Otto Stoll (1849-1922), who taught ethnology and geography in Zürich. As many other early interpreters of yoga, Stoll was taken with the description of the supernatural powers that the yogis were thought to acquire through their practice.⁶⁸ He claimed that though the stories of such powers may strike the uninitiated European reader as absurd, they were nevertheless perfectly intelligible through the action of suggestion. The same was the case for the use of mantras, whose repetition could lead all the way to ecstasy (a word he used as virtually synonymous with the hypnotic state). Stoll thought that though the use of suggestion in such fashion was by no means peculiar to the Indians, no one else had pushed it as far or developed its practice as methodically.

Nor was Stoll the only author to take the line that suggestion was the key to understanding yoga. In 1896, the chemist, industrialist and occultist Carl Kellner (1851-1905) attended the 3rd International Congress for Experimental Psychology in Munich, accompanied by an Indian yogi (Bheema Sena Pratapa), who made public demonstrations of “yogic sleep” (placing himself in a state of deep concentration from which he could not be aroused without using a pre-arranged signal). Kellner also used his attendance as an opportunity to distribute a pamphlet he authored called *Yoga. A Sketch of the Psycho-physiological Side of the Old Indian Yoga Teaching*.⁶⁹ Kellner argued that “From a ‘European’ point of view, we can say: yoga is the ability to produce all of the phenomena of somnambulism arbitrarily, through steady practice and a suitable way of life.” The goal of yogic practice, *Samādhi*, was thus little more than the somnambulant state.

The psychological reading of yogic practices was not, however, restricted to professional and amateur psychologists. Indologists such as Richard Garbe, Max Müller, or Jakob Wilhelm Hauer all indicated that the psychology of suggestion and hypnotism could throw some light on the seemingly miraculous feats of Indian yogis.⁷⁰ Writing in 1896, Garbe

claimed that certain Hatha Yoga methods were quite clearly hypnotic.⁷¹ Through their use, the yogis thought they could hear sounds in certain parts of their body (in the heart, the throat, etc.). The goal of such yogic practices was to reach a state of “yogic sleep”, which was a complete loss of consciousness. His position on the topic had hardly changed over 25 years later, when he declared that “that this Yoga-sleep, which naturally among Indians is regarded as a supremely marvellous phenomenon, is none other than the hypnotic sleep scarcely needs formal demonstration.”⁷² He did agree, however, that for the Indians themselves, the yogic exercises were aimed at obtaining “higher states of consciousness” and not merely unconsciousness. Garbe’s position on what the goal of yoga was seemed to be close to that espoused by James Henry Leuba, who also argued that yogic discipline (as well as drugs) worked to reduce mental activity to the point of complete unconsciousness.⁷³

By the 1920s however, more complex psychological understandings had been tried out, which were sometimes critical of the older psychology of suggestion and hypnotism. Such was the case, for example, with William James, who claimed in 1907 that the explanations based on self-suggestion were hardly explanatory. All such “explanations” merely stated the obvious, which was that some people could be influenced by some ideas, and that others could not. Instead, James proposed that yogic practices functioned as “dynamogenic agents, or stimuli for unlocking what would otherwise be unused reservoirs of individual power.”⁷⁴

Other interpreters brought in the unconscious and used it to explain the complexities of Yoga-psychology. By 1915, the psychology of the unconscious had begun replacing the hypnotic paradigm in accounting for yoga. The key to this interpretation, which would be further developed by C.G. Jung in the 1930s, was that yoga was taken to be a sinking into the unconscious, or, to use Jung’s own term, an “introversion”.⁷⁵ An English writer named F. I. Winter had put forward such an interpretation in 1915, in the pages of *Quest*, a journal edited by G.R.S. Mead.⁷⁶ Winter sought to compare psychoanalysis and yoga, drawing on Jung’s *Transformations and Symbols of the Libido* and on Vivekananda’s translation of the Yoga Sūtras. He had pondered the notion that whereas psychoanalysis tried to bring up material from the unconscious, yoga tried to suppress it, but argued that in practice that amounted to the same thing—an introversion.

In parallel with this process whereby Western scholars attempted to translate aspects of yogic theory and practice into psychology, in a way that often belittled yogic achievement, a counter-movement arose in the

later years of the nineteenth century. Eliade's work on yoga can be seen as part of this counter-current. One of its first representatives was Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902), a native of Calcutta, whose work Eliade had encountered in India.⁷⁷

Vivekananda grew up in a milieu pervaded by both Neo-Vedāntic ideas and Western culture and esotericism, and he achieved world-wide fame after his participation in the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893.⁷⁸ He spent three years lecturing in the U.S. (until 1896). His reason for going there was quite explicit: "I give them spirituality and they give me money".⁷⁹

Vivekananda was a proponent of rāja-yoga, which he construed as a thoroughgoing psychological discipline. He noted:

Yet we know we must observe in order to have a real science. Without proper analysis any science will be hopeless, mere theorizing; and that is why the psychologists have been quarrelling among themselves since the beginning of time, except those who found out the means of observation. The science of rāja-yoga proposes, in the first place, to give us such a means for observing the inner states, and the instrument is the mind itself.⁸⁰

In an essay entitled "The Importance of Psychology", he made clear that he regarded psychology as "the science of sciences". This was because "we are all slaves to our senses, slave to our minds, conscious and subconscious". Psychology was a salvific and supreme science, inasmuch as it helped one end this slavery, by reigning in "the wild gyrations of the mind".⁸¹

To accomplish this, the yogi had to "go deep down into the subconscious mind, classify and arrange all the different impressions, thoughts, etc., stored up there".⁸² Vivekananda did not go into details about the "subconscious", but did note that he regarded it as containing memories of past thoughts and actions, not just of this life, "but of all the other lives we have lived".⁸³ At the same time, he used the term "unconscious" to refer to "a sort of thought, which we call instinct... the lowest plane of action".⁸⁴ Above this basement of the mind (where reflex-action reigned supreme), there lay the mezzanine of consciousness and reason, and beyond that, the upper floor of *Samādhi*, defined as "perfect concentration [and] super-consciousness". The latter was the goal of yogic practice.⁸⁵

This practice was underscored by a cosmic evolutionary schema that took each microscopic speck along a set path, turning it into plant, animal, human and eventually God. Usually, this process took eons, but by learning to focus and manipulate the vital force of *prāṇa*, the yogi could speed it up and become God in several months or a year.⁸⁶ Vivekananda's vitalistic understanding of *prāṇa* was no doubt influenced by his contact with the mind-healing literature that was popular in America at the time. As it was, this conception provided him not only with an intelligible language, but also with a way of re-framing the work of "mind- healers, faith-healers, spiritualists, Christian Scientists, hypnotists, and so on".⁸⁷ He ascribed their success to the unknowing, and "unconscious" use of *prāṇa*. For him, these too were yogis, after a fashion.⁸⁸

In addition to Vivekananda, Eliade's future teacher, Surendranath Dasgupta, also attempted to offer a psychological translation of yoga, which took into account the subconscious. Dasgupta published his views in 1921, in a brief essay entitled "Yoga Psychology".⁸⁹ He started by making a point that was often missed in discussions of the psychology of yoga: that this psychology was inextricably linked with a particular metaphysics and could not be understood without reference to that metaphysical system. Dasgupta argued that the root idea of yogic psychology was the "existence of the mental states in potential forms in the sub-conscious".⁹⁰ Some of the mental states that existed in the sub-conscious could continue to exist through several births. These "semi-effaced" mental states continued to determine present behaviour, and they were of two kinds: those that resulted from the actions of past lives and those that were the result of repeated experiences in this life.⁹¹ Dasgupta claimed that though the sub-conscious attempted to determine our present actions, yoga admitted that there was a power inherent in the mind (*śakti*) which allowed for its overcoming. The only way in which one could master sub-conscious tendencies was by striving to think the opposite in one's conscious life. He enunciated this as a law: "the law that the repetition of any mental state will strengthen the corresponding impression of it in the sub-conscious".⁹² Though this process was not at all easy, it was not impossible: even if the workings of the sub-conscious were unknown to us, we could nevertheless determine their action through conscious striving. This, however, was only a preliminary of the process of liberation: for ultimately, the point of yoga was not to become merely moral, but to completely halt the movement of the mind. At that point, one acquired a direct knowledge of the object, incomparable to any other human knowledge (*prajñā*-knowledge). He

ended his account by writing that: “this *prajña*-knowledge has nothing to do with telepathy, dual or multiple personality or the like, which are all but varieties of phenomenal knowledge”.⁹³

6. Eliade’s Use of Psychology in his Ph.D. Thesis

In 1929, in Calcutta, Eliade set to work on a manuscript aimed at demolishing the pretensions of the psychology of religion.⁹⁴ The discussion was a continuation of what he had laid out in the *Spiritual Itinerary*. Eliade began by arguing that madness was intelligible, because madness was an irrational state that existed in attenuated form in anyone. It was possible, thus, to draw on the non-harmful, and brief moments of ordinary irrationality (available through dreams, hypnosis or drugs) in order to understand what it was like to be mad. In the case of religious experiences, however, it was their content that mattered, and not their mental manifestations. The same kind of analogical procedure could not be applied in the case of religious experience, since, ordinarily, one did not have anything to compare it with in everyday experience. Religious experience dealt with “a transcendent object, known through grace, and hence outside of psychological analysis”.⁹⁵ According to his outline, the study was to progress through seven steps:

- 1) The problem [and?] is it the same case as for normal psychology? Is the critique the same?
- 2) What does religious exp[erience] mean for religion? The feeling of presence. Differences with religion in general. What attitudes can one have towards this feeling?
 - a) it is due to an illusion
 - b) it is real
- 3) How could one prove the former? Not, in any case, through an a priori postulation of the non-existence of the religious object, for then we would not progress. But, maybe, through psychological proofs, showing the pathological state with sufficient explanations. The three refutations:
 - 1) there is no strict interdependence between pathology and religious exp[erience]
 - 2) refuting double personality
 - 3) refuting psychoanalysis
- 4) Comparison with insanity. Comparison with the absence of a specifying organ. [Conclusions?]: the case is more difficult, as one is dealing not only

with a specific state, but also with an illumination, and hence with an intellectual manifestation.

5) The critique of the objections against the religious method (prayer, repentance, etc.). Grace. The simplification of the understanding through the problem of the infinite. How is it possible to reach the infinite?

6) Comparison with value judgements.

7) Sceptical conclusions. It has no use, not even as material. The only [possibility?] for understanding: documents, or, in the case of experience, a spiritual master.

4') The evolution of relig[ious] senti[ment].⁹⁶

As this sketch shows, in 1929 Eliade was not only opposed to the psychology of religion as a method for understanding religious experience, but claimed that “it had no use, not even as material”. In his view, there was a radical break between religious experience and any other kind of experience. As opposed to the majority of religious psychologists—and to his own position in 1927—, who argued that religious experience was a more intense form of what people normally felt in their everyday life (sudden inspirations, intoxication, moments of insight), Eliade argued that this was not the case. The analogy with one’s moments of average irrationality worked only for an understanding of madness, but not religion. The psyche, in his view, was only a vessel where a transcendent object came to rest. The form of the vessel, or whether it was cracked, made no difference whatsoever. What mattered was the content, and its intellectual illumination—which Eliade, with a nod to James, also acknowledged.

One can also make two further observations: 1) the question that Eliade asked about religious feeling (is it real or not?) was a question that, in theory at least, fell outside of the purview of religious psychology. Such a question took the discussion into the realm of metaphysics, and metaphysics was something that the psychologists had programmatically tried to stay away from (Eliade had also claimed in his notes to abstain from any “a priori dogmatical-theological help”, but the question he asked appeared to take the discussion into the field of theology);⁹⁷ 2) by refusing to acknowledge the possibility of comparison between “religious experience” and other experiences, Eliade was effectively undercutting the very foundations of psychology, to the extent that psychology was founded on the assumption that human experience was unitary and not discontinuous. As William James had written in the *Varieties*: “Religious melancholy, whatever peculiarities it may have qua religious, is at any

rate melancholy. Religious happiness is happiness."⁹⁸ Eliade, however, maintained the opposite.

Despite this radical stance with respect to psychology, in his doctoral thesis, and in his work on yoga more broadly, Eliade nevertheless continued to make use of psychological concepts. Eliade's thesis went in a number of different directions: outlining the origin of Yoga in an "interiorization" of Hindu ritual, the historical development of contemplative techniques, the relationship between yoga and Brahmin orthodoxy, the relationship between Buddhist ascetic practices and yoga, the meaning of yoga in the Mahābhārata, the philosophical underpinnings of yoga in *Samkhya*, and the psychology of yoga.

He began his thesis by making a distinction between two types of approaches in the methodology of the history of religions: an "extrospective" one, which sought to deal with the "objective" and "rigid" aspects of religion: philology, ethnographic hypotheses, intellectual filiations of various texts and doctrines; an "introspective" one, which would, on the contrary, speculate on the "intimate, evanescent, and untranslatable value" of the yoga practices and metaphysics.⁹⁹ As this distinction shows, Eliade was already, to some extent, familiar with Jungian concepts, though probably not at first hand, since he later remembered reading his first Jungian work in 1940.¹⁰⁰

Eliade argued that yoga was a common term in India, whose meaning tended to vary, but which originally had meant "*a mystical practice of harmonizing or union between the individual spirit (purusha; atman more generally) and the supreme consciousness (Ishvara; more generally Brahman)*."¹⁰¹ He also allowed that this union was often an "illusory trance caused by a thinning of normal consciousness", but this fact only showed that there was a lot of original variation in the non-Arian practice of yoga, as well as subsequent degeneration. The premise of yogic philosophy and practice was the general one of all Indian thinking: a deep pessimism about human life (and life in general), which was trapped in an endless cycle of rebirth by the inexorable law of karma. The goal of yoga was to attain deliverance of the soul from the "cycle of phenomena and to fix it, by way of a purifying contemplative elevation, in a plane of absolute and eternal values."¹⁰²

In addition to its philosophical underpinnings, yoga was thus a series of techniques aimed at reaching *samādhi*, which Eliade described as "a transcendent state, nude, unaltered, pure autoconsciousness."¹⁰³ In a different passage, he also referred to it as "the state of super-consciousness".¹⁰⁴ As

Eliade makes clear, yogic liberation is not achieved through gnosis, or revelation, “but through an actual destruction of the psychic organism”.¹⁰⁵ The greatest obstacle for liberation is not the physical body, but the subconscious, “vast receptacle of racial experiences, deep roots, [which are] themselves formal frameworks for present experiences.”¹⁰⁶ As Eliade argues, “the role of the subconscious (*samkaras*, *vāsanās*) in yoga psychology has a paramount importance, conditioning the whole of experience.”¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, Eliade considers that yoga has a “psychoanalytic vision” that is “surprisingly just”, and devoid of Freudian exaggerations. He outlines two main differences between yoga and psychoanalysis: 1) whereas in psychoanalysis the subconscious has an exclusively sexual origin, in yoga it is born out of any selfish action; 2) as opposed to psychoanalysis, yoga believes that the subconscious can be mastered through moral discipline and contemplative practice.¹⁰⁸ Ultimately, subconscious elements can not only be mastered, but also completely uprooted, or “burned”¹⁰⁹ By uprooting the subconscious, the yogi is delivered into the *samādhi* state. As I have already mentioned, Eliade refers to *samādhi* as a state of “super-consciousness” or “autoconsciousness”. The nature of these terms is hard to specify. On the one hand, Eliade would seem to agree that his description is psychological—in fact he even uses the expression “religious psychology” when he refers to the analysis of the different stages of *samprajñātasamādhi*.¹¹⁰ On the other hand, *samādhi* lies beyond the boundaries of psychology—it’s a “transcendence of experience” altogether.¹¹¹

This raises the question: in what sense is Eliade using the word “psychology” in his description? I would argue that Eliade uses “psychology” with at least two different meanings in his thesis: 1) the first meaning is that of a “science of psychic facts”, where the word science is used much in the same way as the German *Wissenschaft*—a system of knowledge about the psyche, or what Eliade refers to as “general-human experience, constituted by the totality of experiences realized in the natural order.”¹¹² It is with this sense in mind that Eliade refers to “yoga psychology”, “general psychology” (i.e. Western psychology), “Buddhist psychology”, or “Samkhya psychology”; 2) the second meaning refers to an effort to provide a phenomenological account of the different states of consciousness that are present in religious experience. In the second meaning, psychology is concerned with describing, as accurately as possible, “psychic experiences”, which Eliade places in inverted commas precisely because they sometimes transcend ordinary, natural

experience.¹¹³ In the second meaning, psychology thus also contains an implicit attempt at cross-cultural psychology—which also amounts to a kind of cross-cultural metaphysics. As such, Eliade not only provides a critique of the psychoanalytical subconscious based on the elements of Yoga-psychology, but also reflects on the translation of certain key terms: *samādhi*, he writes, is only provisionally translated as “trance”.¹¹⁴ In other parts of the thesis, Eliade argues that *samādhi* is not a hypnotic trance, repeating the point several times, and backing it up with quotations that are meant to show hypnosis was known in India since the time of the Mahābhārata.¹¹⁵ Finally, Eliade also attempts to compare Buddhist *dhyāna* with yogic *samādhi*, arguing that the former is a “state of lucid concentration [...] a kind of apparent reverie, but without the distraction and the incoherence of a reverie”. In *dhyāna*, there is still consciousness, whereas in *samādhi*, “normal consciousness” is suppressed.¹¹⁶ Despite this difference, he also notes that Buddhism “never became simply an automatic and hypnotic technique”.¹¹⁷

In conclusion, the Ph.D. thesis provided Eliade with an opportunity to perform his own brand of psychology of religion, drawing not just on documents, but on his own familiarity (elementary though it may have been) with yogic practices. This familiarity seems to have played a part in his rejection of the hypnosis hypothesis, which, as we have seen, was widespread among Western interpreters of yoga.¹¹⁸ Eliade, it should be said, never rejected his early psychological interpretation of yoga, though he developed it, by adding concepts such as “enstasis” and “the transconscious”.

7. Conclusion

The aim of this paper has been to offer a wider contextualization of Eliade’s early scholarly work, by drawing on a tradition of thought that has been largely omitted from the secondary literature on Eliade: the psychology of religion. As I have shown, Eliade showed a marked interest in this discipline in his youth, as it is evident from his desire to start a journal for the history and psychology of religion in 1926, as well as from the 1927 statement to the effect that psychology and metapsychics would be the first disciplines capable of elucidating religious experience.

As I have also tried to suggest, there was nothing extraordinary about Eliade’s embrace of the psychology of religion in the late 1920s, since

during that period the psychology of religion still had a certain cachet among scholars of religion—a cachet which it gradually lost during the subsequent decade. In Eliade's case, the prestige of the psychology of religion was also amplified by his reading of "occultist" works, in which the "new psychology" more broadly, and the psychology of higher states of consciousness in particular, were *au courant* topics. The same could be said about Eliade's reading of the scholarly literature on religion, in which, once again, psychological concepts were used together with philological or historical methods in a "multi-disciplinary" way that Eliade also adopted in his doctoral thesis.

However, as I have shown, Eliade was rather ambivalent toward the discipline of psychology, both critical of its explanatory pretensions, but also continuing to use its concepts, and referring to parts of his analysis as "psychological".¹¹⁹ No wonder then that he wrote to C.G. Jung in 1955: "if I had read your work ten or fifteen years earlier [than I had], I would have certainly become a psychologist of religions, and not a historian..."¹²⁰ Even if one allows for some hyperbole, the record bears out at least some of Eliade's statement.

Eliade clearly saw some value in the works of William James and Henri Delacroix, and borrowed elements of their description of mystical experience. The most important of these was the notion of the "particular mental state" that underlay mysticism in Delacroix's conception. Such a notion allowed Eliade to declare that whatever evidence the pathologists of mysticism might adduce, mysticism would always remain inexpugnable. At the same time, Eliade continued to make free use of psychological categories in his doctoral thesis: "subconscious", "consciousness", "super-conscious", "hypnosis", "sublimation", "introversion", "trance". He never seems to have doubted the ontological reality of these terms or their applicability to the Indian context.

As I have also tried to show, Eliade's use of psychological categories in his doctoral thesis was born out of a particular engagement with the texts and practices of yoga and was framed, in part at least, as a response to the questions he had been asking himself about the psychology of religion and to the psychological interpretations of yoga that were apparent in previous works on the subject. To recapitulate, I have suggested that Eliade combined two traditions of interpretation: on the one hand, the psychology of higher consciousness, which he would have found in one (or more) of a number of texts authored by Myers, Bucke, Annie Besant, Rudolf Steiner and others; on the other hand, the psychology of yoga,

which could be found in a host of psychological or scholarly works that mostly tended to assume that the goal of yoga was entrance into a hypnotic state or (later on) a sinking into the unconscious. Eliade, however, claimed that *samādhi* was a qualitatively different kind of consciousness, which had nothing to do with hypnosis, following thus in the footsteps of authors like Swami Vivekananda. In effect, one might say, Eliade had become a kind of Vivekananda, just as Swami Shivananda had predicted for him in Swarg Ashram, only not in the sense the swami gave to that statement.¹²¹

NOTES

- ¹ Mircea Eliade, *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism*. Trans. Philip Mairet (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991)
- ² See for example Natale Spineto, "The Notion of Archetype in Eliade's Writings", *Religion* 38, 4 (2008): 366-374.
- ³ The best article on Eliade's relationship with psychology is still Mac Linscott Ricketts, "The Nature and Extent of Eliade's 'Jungianism'", *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, vol. XXV, No. 2 (1970): 211-234. See also Mac Linscott Ricketts, "In Defence of Eliade", *Religion* 3, 1 (1973): 13-34.
- ⁴ Liviu Bordaș, "Yoga între magic și mistic. Reflecție hermeneutică și experiență religioasă la primul Eliade", *Studii de istorie a filosofiei românești*, vol. XII, *Teorii și categorii ale cunoașterii*, ed. Alexandru Surdu et al. (București: Editura Academiei Române, 2016), 218. This is a curious statement, inasmuch as, in his Ph.D. thesis, Bordaș's claims are more consistent with the argument presented here: "Bringing together Macchioro's research on the mysteries and his own earlier interest for the occult, Eliade arrives at the psychology of religion, also cultivated from afar by professor C-tin Rădulescu Motru. For this reason he selected him to coordinate his doctoral thesis on yoga". See Liviu Bordaș, „Eliade Secret: India și „metapsihica” în construcția filosofiei religiei lui Mircea Eliade” (Ph.D. diss, University of Bucharest, 2010), 138. The classic monograph for Eliade's early work is Mac Linscott Ricketts, *Rădăcinile românești ale lui Mircea Eliade*. Two volumes. Translated by Virginia Stănescu et al. (București: Criterion Publishing, 2004).
- ⁵ Andreas Sommer, "Crossing the boundaries of mind and body: Psychical Research and the Origins of Modern Psychology" (Ph.D. diss., UCL, 2013).
- ⁶ Mircea Eliade, "Știință și occultism", in Mircea Eliade, *Cum am descoperit piatra filozofală. Scrieri de tinerețe, 1921-1925*. Edited by Mircea Handoca (București: Humanitas, 1996), 243-254. For an outline of the debate with Israilovici see See Bordaș, "Eliade Secret", 77-82.
- ⁷ Mircea Eliade, "Știință și occultism", 245. On the question of "planes" in Eliade's early work see Linscott Ricketts, *Rădăcinile Românești*, vol. 1, 169-170.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 244.
- ⁹ See Mircea Eliade to Raffaele Petazzoni (Summer of 1926), in Mircea Eliade and Raffaele Petazzoni, *L'histoire des religions a-t-elle un sens? Correspondence 1926-1959*. Ed. Natale Spineto (Paris: CERF, 1994), 100.
- ¹⁰ A list of psychology titles compiled in his youth shows which books he was likely familiar with. The books in this bibliography are an assortment of animal psychology, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, general psychology, and psychology of religion: R. Allier, *La psychologie de la conversion chez les peuples non- civilisés* ; Dr. Buytendijk, *Psychologie des animaux*; Dr. Ernest Dupré, *Pathologie de l'imagination et de l'érédicté*; G. Dwelshauvers,

- Traité de psychologie*; A. Hesnard et R. Laforgue, *L' Evolution Psychiatrique*; Dr. Laforgue et Dr. Allendy, *La psychanalyse et les névroses*. See Mircea Eliade, *Diverse note, texte culese dupa 1926. Completări*, Manuscript, BCU, București.
- 11 Mircea Eliade, "Magie și metapsihică", in Mircea Eliade, *Itinerariu Spiritual: Scrieri de Tinerețe, 1927* (București: Humanitas, 2003), 205-209. Eliade will take up this argument again in 1937. See Mircea Eliade, „Folclorul ca instrument de cunoaștere”, in Mircea Eliade, *Drumul spre centru*. Ed. Gabriel Liiceanu and Andrei Pleșu (București: Univers, 1991), 163-84.
- 12 "Magie și metapsihică", 207.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 207.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 207.
- 15 Mircea Eliade, *Memorii (1907-1960)* (București: Humanitas, 1997), 135.
- 16 Mircea Eliade, "Itinerariu spiritual", in Mircea Eliade, *Itinerariu Spiritual: Scrieri de tinerețe*, 263-75, 284-92, 304-12, 327-31, 342-46, 349-52, 357-62.
- 17 Eliade, "Itinerariu spiritual. Misticismul", *op.cit.*, 342.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 344.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 345.
- 20 Matei Iagher, "Theorizing Experience: The Psychological Search for a Science of Religion (1896-1937)" (Ph.D.. Dissertation, UCL, 2016).
- 21 William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*. Centenary edition. (London: Routledge, 2002[1902]), 333.
- 22 Mircea Eliade, "La moartea lui Rudolf Otto", *Revista Fundațiilor Regale* 4 (1937): 676-79, reprinted in Mircea Eliade, *Drumul spre centru*, 307. The „up to 1917” in the sentence refers to the year when Rudolf Otto’s book *Das Heilige* was first published.
- 23 For an outline of Ionescu’s metaphysics see Ricketts, *op.cit.* vol. 1, 93-102.
- 24 Eliade, "Magie și metapsihică", 207.
- 25 James, *Varieties*, 295.
- 26 James, *Varieties*, 19.
- 27 See Eliade, "Itinerariu spiritual. Misticismul", 345.
- 28 For Ribot, see *infra*. Regarding Leuba and Janet, Eliade was probably referring to: James H. Leuba, *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1925) and Pierre Janet "Une extatique: conférence faite à L'Institut Psychologique International le 25 mai 1901." *Bulletin de l'Institut Psychologique* 5 (1901): 209-240.
- 29 See Noemí Pizzaroso, "Henri Delacroix’s Psychology of Religion in Context: Between Secular Religious Sciences, William James’ psychology and Marcel Mauss’ sociology", *Piper: International Psychology, Practice and Research* 5 (2014): 13-19.

- 30 Henri Delacroix, *Études d'histoire et de psychologie du mysticisme. Les*
grands mystiques chrétiens (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1908).
- 31 Henri Delacroix, *Études*, ii-iii.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 62.
- 33 *Ibid.*, 342.
- 34 Eliade, "Itinerariu spiritual. Misticismul", 345.
- 35 Mircea Eliade, *Patterns in Comparative Religion*. Trans. Rosemary Sheed
(London: Sheed&Ward, 1958), xi.
- 36 Mircea Eliade, *Tehnici Yoga*. Traducere de Mihaela Cosma (București:
Univers Enciclopedic, [1948] 2000), 93.
- 37 Frederic W.H. Myers, *Human Personality And Its Survival of Bodily Death*,
vol. 1 (Longmans, Green, and Co., 1903), xiii-xxii.
- 38 Frederic W.H. Myers, "Note on a Suggested Mode of Psychical Interaction",
in Edmund Gurney, Frederic W.H. Myers, Frank Podmore, *Phantasms of*
the living, vol. II (London: Trübner & Co., 1886), 285. He had also used
the term two years earlier: F. W.H. Myers, "On a Telepathic Explanation
of Some So-Called Spiritualistic Phenomena" *Proceedings of the Society for*
Psychical Research 2 (1884): 219
- 39 Richard Maurice Bucke, *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of*
the Human Mind (Philadelphia: Innes & Sons, 1905[1901]). William James,
Varieties, 70, 308-309.
- 40 Mircea Eliade, "Experiențe ale luminii mistice", *Mefistofel și androginul*
(București: Humanitas, 1995), 11-12.
- 41 Bucke, *Cosmic Consciousness*, 13.
- 42 *Ibid.*, 17-18.
- 43 Probst-Biraben, "Contribution du soufisme a l'étude du mysticisme
universel", *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger*, 61 (1906):520-
525. Probst-Biraben, "L'extase dans le mysticisme musulman. Les étapes du
soufi", *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger*, 62 (1906):490-98.
Probst-Biraben, "Le mysticisme dans l'esthétique musulmane: l'arabesque,
ascèse esthétique", *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger*, 64
(1907):65-72.
- 44 See Th. Ribot, *The Diseases of the Will*, translated by Merwin-Marie Snell
(Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Company, 1915), 94-111.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 96.
- 46 Ribot, *The Diseases of the Will*, 101. Probst-Biraben, "L'extase", 497.
- 47 Théodore Flournoy, "Une Mystique moderne (Documents pour la
psychologie religieuse)", *Archives de psychologie* 15 (Genève: Librairie
Kündig, 1915).
- 48 *Ibid.*, 179-81.
- 49 René Guénon used it as well, criticising official psychologists for not
distinguishing clearly between the "superconscious" and the "subconscious".

See René Guénon, *Man and His Becoming According to the Vedānta*. Translated by Richard Nicholson (Hillsdale, NY: Sophia Perennis, 2004[1925]), 120. Eliade was familiar with this book. See Natale Spineto, *Mircea Eliade: istoric al religiilor*. Traducere de Șerban Stati și Magdalena Ionescu (București: Curtea Veche, 2009), 143. Julius Evola, whose work Eliade read and appreciated, began using the “superconscious” as early as 1927. See EA [Julius Evola], “Esoterismo, Inconscio, Psicoanalisi,” in *Introduzione alla magia*, 3 vols., vol. 3, 383-408. I am grateful to Tommaso Priviero for this reference.

50 Annie Besant, *Theosophy and the New Psychology: A Course of Six Lectures* (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1904). Annie Besant, *A Study in Consciousness: A Contribution to the Study of Psychology* (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1904).

Besant, *A Study in Consciousness*, 213.

51 *Ibid.*, 224.

52 *Ibid.*, 225.

53 *Ibid.*, 232.

54 Rudolf Steiner, *Wie erlangt man Erkenntnisse höhere Welten?*(Dornach: Rudolf Steiner Verlag, 1992), 163. Rudolf Steiner, *Die Geheimwissenschaft in Umriss* (Dornach: Rudolf Steiner Verlag, 1989), 93.

55 Rudolf Steiner, *An Outline of Esoteric Science* [Translation of *Geheimwissenschaft in Umriss*]. Translated by Catherine E. Creeger (Hudson, NY: Antroposophic Press, 1997), 281.

56 See Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*. Translated by Willard R. Trask (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), 99.

57 Mircea Eliade, „Rudolf Steiner”, in Mircea Eliade, *Misterele și Inițierea Orientală. Scrieri de tinerețe, 1926* (București: Humanitas, 1998), 141. The italics in the quote are mine (M.I.)

58 See Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: eseu asupra originilor misticii indiene*. Edited and translated by Eugen Ciurtin (București: Institutul de Istorie a Religiilor, 2016).

59 For a wider look at the Indian years see See Florin Țurcanu, *Mircea Eliade: prizonierul istoriei*. trans. Monica Anghel and Dragoș Dodu (București: Humanitas, 2007), 170-226. Ricketts, *op.cit.*, vol.1, 300-477.

60 For a useful introduction to these issues see David Gordon White, *The Yoga-Sutra: A Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014). On the construction of modern yoga see Elizabeth de Michelis, *A History of Modern Yoga: Patañjali and Western Esotericism* (New York: Continuum, 2008). Much useful material on the psychological interpretation of yoga can also be found in Karl Baier, *Yoga auf dem Weg Westen: Beiträge zur Rezeptionsgeschichte* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1998), 161-255. For the history of yoga in France see Silvia Ceccomori, *Cent ans de yoga en France* (Paris: Edidit, 2001).

- 62 This is of course not to say that these are the only questions that Eliade was responding to—only that they played an important part in his interpretation. My interpretation of the history of yoga psychology is indebted to Sonu Shamdasani, “Preliminary Sketch of a Study of the Early Reception of Yoga in Psychology and Psychotherapy in Europe and the United States” [unpublished paper], 1-29.
- 63 James Braid, *Neurypnology Or The Rationale of Nervous Sleep Considered in Relation to Animal Magnetism or Mesmerism and Illustrated By Numerous Cases of Its Successful Application in the Relief and Cure of Disease* (London: George Redway, 1899 [1843]), 103.
- 64 *Ibid.*, 126.
- 65 James Braid, *Observations on Trance, Or, Human Hybernation* (London: John Churchill, 1850), 26.
- 66 Hyppolite Bernheim, “Suggestion and Hypnotism”, in Daniel Hack Tuke (ed.), *A Dictionary of Psychological Medicine: Giving the Definition, Etymology and Synonyms of the Terms Used in Medical Psychology*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: P. Blakiston, Son & Co., 1892), 1213.
- 67 *Ibid.*, 1214.
- 68 Otto Stoll, *Suggestion und Hypnotismus in der Völkerpsychologie*. 2nd edition (Leipzig: Verlag von Veit & Co., 1904), 64-65.
- 69 Carl Kellner, *Yoga. Eine Skizze über den psycho-physiologischen Teil der alten indischen Yogalehre* (München: Druck von Kastner & Lossen, 1896). Available online at <http://www.parareligion.ch/sunrise/yoga.htm>
- 70 J. W. Hauer, *Die Anfänge der Yogapraxis im alten Indien: Eine Untersuchung über die Wurzeln der indischen Mystik nach Rgveda und Atharvaveda* (Stuttgart: Druck von W. Kohlhammer, 1921), 87-88; 160-61. Hauer also allowed for “superconscious experiences” that came through in ecstasy, but he did not explain how he reconciled these with the notion of the unconscious. See Hauer, *op.cit.*, iii, 5. F. Max Müller, *The Six Systems of Indian Philosophy* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1899), 458, 465.
- 71 Richard Garbe, “Sāmkhya und Yoga”, in Georg Bühler (ed.), *Grundriss der Indo- Arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde* (Strassburg: Verlag von Karl J. Trübner, 1896), 45-46.
- 72 Richard Garbe, “Yoga”, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. 12, ed. James Hastings (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1922), 832.
- 73 James H. Leuba, “The Yoga System of Mental Concentration and Religious Mysticism”, *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, 16, 8 (1919): 197-206. See also Richard Garbe, “Sāmkhya und Yoga”, 33. Writing of the psychological interpretation of Samādhi as either unconsciousness (*apud* Leuba) or pathological introversion in a 1921 essay, Paul Masson-Oursel argued that such interpretations were based on a *petitio principii*. For him, Indian piety had to feature in a general theory of mysticism, but in order to bring it into one, it was necessary to forego

simplistic comparisons (as between drug intoxication and yogic meditation) and the temptation to bring in philosophical ideas or facts that were foreign to the realm of religious phenomena. See Paul Masson-Oursel, "Doctrines et méthodes psychologiques de L'Inde", *Journal de psychologie* 18 (1921): 545.

74 William James, *The Energies of Men* (New York: Moffat, Yard and Co, 1914[1907]), 29.

75 Jung had introduced the concept of "introversion" as early as 1909. See Sonu Shamdasani, *Jung and the Making of Modern Psychology*, 62. The classical description of introversion and extraversion is in *Psychological Types* (1921). See C.G. Jung, *Psychological Types or The Psychology of Individuation*. trans. H.G. Baynes. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., [1921] 1946). On Jung's interpretation of yoga see Sonu Shamdasani, "Introduction: Jung's Journey to the East", in C. G. Jung, *The Psychology of Kundalini Yoga: Notes of the Seminar Given in 1932 by C.G. Jung*. Edited by Sonu Shamdasani (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), xvii-xlvi.

76 See F.I. Winter, "The Yoga System and Psychoanalysis", *The Quest* 10 (1918-19):182-196, 315-335.

77 Mircea Eliade, *Jurnal*, vol. 1 1941-1969. Edited by Mircea Handoca (București: Humanitas, 1993), 401.

78 de Michelis, *op.cit.*, 91-100.

79 Vivekananda, quoted in de Michelis, *op.cit.*, 109.

80 Swami Vivekananda, *Rāja- Yoga, Being Lectures of the Swami Vivekananda with Patanjali's Aphorisms, Commentaries and a Glossary of Terms* (New York: Brentano's, 1920[1896]), 6.

81 Swami Vivekananda, *The Complete Works of Vivekananda*, vol. 6, (Calcutta: Advaita Ashram, 1972), 25-26.

82 *Ibid.*, 28.

83 *Ibid.*, 29.

84 Vivekananda, *Rāja- Yoga*, 33.

85 *Ibid.*, 34.

86 *Ibid.*, 42.

87 *Ibid.*, 33.

88 *Ibid.*, 63.

89 Surendranath Das Gupta, "Yoga Psychology", *The Quest* 13, 1 (Oct. 1921): 1-19.

90 *Ibid.*, 8.

91 *Ibid.*, 12.

92 *Ibid.*, 15.

93 *Ibid.*, 19.

94 Mircea Eliade, *Note pentru rădăcinile magiei și psihologia religioasă*, Calcutta, 1929. Manuscript, BCU, București.

- 95 *Ibid.*, 5.
- 96 *Ibid.*, 7. The “three refutations” are listed on p. 5.
- 97 In 1902, Théodore Flournoy had outlined the two fundamental principles of the psychology of religion: 1) the exclusion of transcendence; 2) the biological interpretation of religious experiences. See Théodore Flournoy, *Les Principes de la psychologie religieuse* (London: Williams and Norgate, [1902] 1903), 6.
- 98 William James, *Varieties*, 24.
- 99 Mircea Eliade, *Psihologia meditației indiene. Studii despre Yoga*. Edited by Constantin Popescu-Cadem (București: Jurnalul Literar, 1992), 16-18.
- 100 See Mircea Eliade and Gene F. Nameche, “Interview with Prof. Mircea Eliade, Chicago, IL, 24 December 1970”, Mircea Eliade Papers, University of Chicago, Box 52, Folder 2.
- 101 Eliade, *Psihologia meditației indiene*, 23. See also p. 41 for his use of the concept of “introversion”
- 102 *Ibid.*, 25.
- 103 *Ibid.*, 25.
- 104 *Ibid.*, 84.
- 105 *Ibid.*, 138.
- 106 *Ibid.*, 136.
- 107 *Ibid.*, 143.
- 108 *Ibid.*, 144.
- 109 *Ibid.*, 141.
- 110 *Ibid.*, 164.
- 111 *Ibid.*, 144.
- 112 *Ibid.*, 134
- 113 *Ibid.*, 132.
- 114 *Ibid.*, 135.
- 115 *Ibid.*, 84, 158.
- 116 *Ibid.*, 63.
- 117 *Ibid.*, 66.
- 118 In his 1954 yoga book, Eliade criticised one of the proponents of the hypnosis thesis (Sigurd Lindquist) by saying that a minimum of familiarity with yogic practice would have convinced him otherwise. See Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, 79.
- 119 In 1929, for example, he was writing to Hauer that “I would like to attempt an analysis [of tantrism] from the point of view of psychological and mystical experience—and not just history like Tucci.” See Mircea Eliade to J. W. Hauer, 29 January 1929, quoted in Bordaș, “Eliade Secret”, 324.
- 120 Mircea Eliade to C.G. Jung, 22 January 1955, in “Correspondance M.Eliade-C.G.Jung, 1950-1960”, 26.
- 121 See Eliade, *Memorii*, 195.



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FAIRE L'HISTOIRE DE LA « LITTÉRATURE FRANÇAISE » COMME DISCIPLINE ACADÉMIQUE DANS LA ROUMANIE MODERNE (1864-1948). CONSIDÉRATIONS THÉORIQUES ET MÉTHODOLOGIQUES

Résumé

Étudier la littérature française en Roumanie du point de vue de l'histoire des disciplines suppose d'abord de faire la distinction entre la recherche et enseignement. Cet article propose quelques orientations méthodologiques qui pourraient guider une telle approche : l'histoire des idées sur la littérature française, l'histoire des trajectoires professionnelles et intellectuelles des représentants de la discipline, l'analyse des pratiques de recherche et d'enseignement qui caractérisent l'évolution de la discipline dans le cadre plus large des sciences humaines, l'analyse des controverses intellectuelles et la restitution des dimensions politiques de la littérature française dans la Roumanie moderne.

Mots-clés : littérature française, méthodes, discipline, pratiques, postures, trajectoires, controverses.

La littérature française est représentée en même temps par les œuvres des écrivains (poètes, romanciers, etc.) et par le commentaire de ces œuvres, fait par une autre catégorie de professionnels, les critiques littéraires et les historiens de la littérature. La différence entre ces deux catégories de commentateurs est que les critiques évaluent la production littéraire selon différents critères et les historiens étudient les œuvres à l'aide de différentes méthodes. Le monde moderne a vu l'institutionnalisation de cette seconde activité dans des universités et des centres de recherches, ce qui lui donne le caractère de discipline. Selon le sociologue Jean-Louis Fabiani, une discipline pourrait se définir de la façon suivante : « un corps de connaissances inscrit dans des textes, des

exemples paradigmatiques et des formes d'instrumentation, qui fait l'objet d'une transmission pédagogique, ce qui nécessite une mise en forme, ou confirmation du savoir à des fins d'inculcation, une gradation des traductions pédagogiques du corpus et un programme d'enseignement »¹. Cette définition rappelle la « tension essentielle » qui, selon Thomas Kuhn, caractériserait toute science, partagée entre répétition (dans ce cas, la transmission pédagogique) et découverte (dans ce cas, la recherche de connaissances nouvelles).

En transposant cette distinction sur le terrain de la littérature française en Roumanie, il apparaît que la discipline est née au milieu du XIX^e siècle, avec la création des Universités de Iași et de Bucarest, chacune avec leur chaire de langue et littérature françaises. Jusqu'au début du XX^e siècle, les titulaires des chaires se consacrent surtout à l'enseignement de la littérature, mais, après les réformes de Spiru Haret, la recherche commence à être vue comme une partie intégrante, parfois essentielle, de l'activité d'enseignant et les candidats commencent à faire des doctorats, d'abord à l'étranger (en France), ensuite, pendant l'entre-deux-guerres, aussi en Roumanie. L'organisation institutionnelle de la discipline est modifiée seulement avec l'instauration du régime communiste qui, par la loi de 1948, transforme les chaires en départements. Jusqu'à ce moment-là, l'histoire de la discipline se confond, essentiellement, avec l'histoire des individus ayant été les titulaires des chaires.

Dans une culture très francophile, où les élites emploient le français dans leur correspondance ou dans l'éducation des enfants, l'histoire des professeurs des universités, et de la discipline qu'ils représentaient, n'est qu'un domaine restreint et, pour la majorité des chercheurs, oublié. Lorsqu'on pense à la réception de la littérature française en Roumanie dans l'entre-deux-guerres, on peut trouver des cas plus connus comme la lecture de Proust par des écrivains comme Camil Petrescu et Anton Holban, ou les relations entre les écrivains des avant-gardes, plutôt que l'enseignement ou les études sur la littérature française. L'enseignement, même universitaire, fait partie de cette « science normale » (Th. Kuhn²), conservatrice des valeurs sûres et sans intérêt pour les nouveautés de l'actualité, contre laquelle il est de bon ton de se révolter. D'autre part, les études sur la littérature française faites au début du siècle ont perdu leur pertinence à cause des évolutions ultérieures de la discipline. Personne ne prend plus au sérieux de nos jours les « découvertes » des chercheurs d'influences de l'entre-deux-guerres qui sont devenus parfois l'objet de la critique de leurs successeurs³. Mais, en dépit de cette situation plutôt défavorable ou peut-être justement à

cause de cette situation, cette étude peut apporter une contribution utile à la connaissance de la culture roumaine dans son rapport avec le modèle français, le modèle occidental par excellence. Ainsi, étudier la littérature française en tant que discipline d'enseignement et de recherche permet de compléter un tableau fait, jusqu'à ce moment, de médiateurs individuels ou même exceptionnels, pour restituer ce que Michel Espagne appelle « une vie quotidienne de la pensée »⁴.

Les pages qui suivent proposent non pas une histoire de la discipline, mais quelques réflexions théoriques et méthodologiques sur la façon (les façons) de faire cette histoire. L'enjeu sera donc de présenter quelques questionnements, inspirés par la confrontation avec plusieurs traditions de recherche, pour délimiter ainsi un objet, la discipline « littérature française », situé à l'intersection de plusieurs facteurs agissant simultanément. Les cinq perspectives qui suivent sont plutôt le résultat d'une répartition artificielle, la réalité n'étant jamais si ordonnée. Les questions qui vont être discutées surgiront de la rencontre entre des perspectives méthodologiques et des cas empiriques qui seront évoqués seulement pour leur richesse heuristique, sans prétendre à un épuisement de leur analyse.

L'idée de littérature française

Un premier questionnement concerne ce qu'on pourrait appeler par un terme très général les *idées* sur la littérature française véhiculées par la discipline. Cela signifie en même temps une série d'œuvres et d'écrivains considérés comme dignes d'appartenir à la littérature française (en d'autres mots, le canon littéraire⁵), un ensemble de valeurs que cette littérature représente et, en dernière instance, une certaine définition de la littérature française en tant que telle. Si on accepte la distinction proposée au début, entre la recherche et l'enseignement, le questionnement peut être décliné en fonction de ces deux composantes.

En ce qui concerne l'enseignement de la littérature française, la recherche des idées se traduit d'abord par un intérêt pour le contenu de cet enseignement, c'est-à-dire ce qu'on entendait par littérature française dans les cours et les autres activités des titulaires des chaires et de leurs assistants. Plusieurs pistes sont intéressantes pour cette perspective : la signification du mot « littérature », la division de la littérature et l'articulation entre ces sous-divisions (œuvres, auteurs, genres, mais aussi

la périodisation⁶) et le rapport du texte « littéraire » ainsi défini au contexte de sa production (culturel, social, politique).

La signification du mot « littérature » est importante dans ce cas parce qu'une telle approche suppose de ne pas projeter la définition contemporaine sur des époques passées et de ne pas considérer des définitions du passé comme erronées parce qu'elles ne correspondent plus à notre perspective actuelle. Comme le sens du mot a souffert une importante restriction avec les siècles⁷, ce n'est pas une surprise si, à la fin du XIX^e siècle, des textes appartenant, pour le lecteur de nos jours, au domaine religieux, historique ou politique de la France sont présentés comme littéraires et sont discutés dans des cours de littérature française. La restriction du sens a suivi à la fois l'évolution de la production littéraire en tant que telle (le romantisme) et le développement d'autres disciplines académiques (comme l'histoire) qui se sont appropriés les textes ne correspondant plus à la définition « moderne » de la littérature. Le cas roumain suit ici la tendance générale, la littérature française enseignée au début de la période, dans les années 1860, comprenait des textes et des auteurs très divers et, avec le passage du temps et la restriction de la définition, les écrivains appartenant à d'autres domaines ont été abandonnés au profit des auteurs de textes de fiction. Si les manuels du début de la période comprenaient des chapitres comme le genre oratoire, l'Éloquence militaire ou l'Éloquence du Barreau, les cours de l'entre-deux-guerres étaient consacrés à la poésie lyrique du Moyen Âge ou au roman français à l'époque du Réalisme et du Naturalisme⁸.

Le rapport de ces textes au contexte social de leur production-réception, tel qu'il est présenté par la discipline, devient un autre point d'intérêt. Les textes sont l'œuvre d'écrivains qui ont vécu dans certains contextes historiques et la question est, sans doute, en quoi leurs textes sont le résultat de leur génie individuel ou ils portent l'empreinte de leur époque. Dans la mesure où la discussion de leurs œuvres vise une fin pédagogique, est-ce que des écrivains du passé sont adéquats pour l'époque contemporaine ou pour l'avenir ? C'est la question que s'est posée au tournant du siècle en France, Gustave Lanson, le réformateur des études littéraires, quand il signalait que l'enseignement de la Troisième République était fondé sur la transmission d'une littérature « absolutiste et monarchique »⁹. Le cas roumain ajoute une autre variable à ce niveau, parce qu'il s'agit de la même littérature française, mais enseignée dans un autre État que la France.

Tout cela renvoie, en dernière instance, au questionnement des objectifs pédagogiques de l'enseignement de la littérature française et, plus généralement, des valeurs que cet enseignement est censé transmettre aux étudiants. Si, pendant le XIX^e siècle, la perspective prédominante dans l'enseignement était celle de la rhétorique, les textes et les auteurs étant sélectionnés selon leur double capacité à transmettre un art d'écrire (un savoir-faire) et à représenter des modèles de morale, le tournant du siècle apporte un changement radical : la perspective rhétorique est remplacée par une perspective historique et la littérature est discutée maintenant dans des histoires de la littérature organisées selon des époques, « les siècles littéraires »¹⁰. Les écrivains deviennent ainsi des incarnations des esprits des peuples, selon la vision romantique allemande, et la littérature française est porteuse de la civilisation française. Cela est très évident à l'époque des deux guerres mondiales, quand son enseignement est un signe de lutte et de résistance de la Civilisation contre la barbarie nazie.

Du côté de la recherche, la question la plus évidente vise les thèmes et les sujets étudiés par les représentants de la discipline, mais il en est une autre, plus importante, qui porte sur la professionnalisation de la recherche. Le période visée (la seconde moitié du XIX^e siècle et la première moitié du XX^e siècle) est marquée par le début d'une distinction entre ce qu'on pourrait appeler une critique littéraire (et plus largement culturelle) qui se développe dans la presse périodique (les journaux et les revues littéraires) et, d'autre part, un discours sur la littérature qui se veut plus neutre, plus objectif, en un mot, plus scientifique. Avec la parution des revues spécialisées, des associations internationales et d'un milieu de la recherche avec ses propres règles et ses propres critères, la recherche sur la littérature (française) devient plus professionnalisée et contribue à consolider une identité de la discipline.

C'est dans ce contexte que l'analyse des sujets traités par les professionnels d'une « littérature française » en train de se faire devient pertinente. Vue d'aujourd'hui, l'évolution se fait en direction d'une spécialisation croissante. Si, au début de la période, le professeur de littérature française s'exprime sur un nombre très grand de sujets (il peut écrire des relations de voyage, des chroniques de la haute société ou même une histoire de l'armée), sans qu'une différence entre critique et recherche soit très évidente, petit à petit on voit des distinctions apparaître. Il suffit de comparer deux thèses de doctorat élaborées à 15 années de distance. Celle de Pompiliu Eliade, professeur de littérature française à l'Université de Bucarest entre 1900 et 1914, est consacrée à l'influence

française sur l'esprit public en Roumanie au XVIII^e siècle et porte sur l'ensemble de la société, dont la littérature n'est qu'une petite partie. Celle de son successeur, Charles Drouhet, porte sur François Maynard, un poète français du début du XVII^e siècle et la description de la société française n'est présente que dans la mesure où cela est important pour comprendre la biographie de Maynard.

Une autre dimension, tout aussi importante, est celle du rapport entre les deux cultures, française et roumaine, tel qu'il apparaît dans les écrits de ces professeurs. Comme on vient de le voir, l'intérêt pour les sujets "proprement" littéraires est doublé d'une tendance à la spécialisation vers les sujets exclusivement français. Il y a bien sûr beaucoup de cas intermédiaires, comme celui déjà-cité de Charles Drouhet qui, dans son doctorat, étudie un écrivain français sans aucun rapport à la culture roumaine, mais consacre ses recherches ultérieures aux relations littéraires franco-roumaines (plus précisément aux influences des romantiques français sur les poètes roumains du XIX^e siècle). C'est ici que l'observation de Michel Espagne, dans *Le paradigme de l'étranger*¹¹, trouve toute sa pertinence. L'étude d'une littérature étrangère au XIX^e siècle (mais aussi dans la première moitié du XX^e) est une manière indirecte de réfléchir sur, et même de définir, la littérature nationale. C'est dans ce sens que l'analyse des influences (un terme à connotation presque magique) caractérise l'activité des professionnels de la littérature française. À une instrumentalisation de la culture française pour définir la culture roumaine s'ajoute une perception géopolitique des cultures étrangères, la littérature étant une voie d'accès privilégié à la vie sociale et intellectuelle de ces pays. Lorsque, pendant l'entre-deux-guerres, l'intérêt pour des sujets exclusivement français semble devenir de plus en plus évident, le cadre roumain n'est pas oublié, comme dans le cas de Basil Munteanu, qui présente dans la *Revue de littérature comparée* des recherches sur les influences occidentales et orientales faites par ses collègues de Roumanie.

S'agissant d'une activité scientifique et pédagogique qui vise explicitement une autre culture que celle d'origine, la question des rapports ne se pose pas uniquement en termes d'objets d'étude ou de recherche, mais aussi en terme de grandes paradigmes qui orientent cette activité. En quoi la discipline, telle qu'elle est pratiquée en Roumanie, reflète-t-elle l'évolution de la discipline en France ? Comme on a pu le voir, il s'agit en grandes lignes de la même évolution : l'orientation rhétorique est abandonnée au profit d'une vision historique sur la littérature, vision qui est considérée plus convenable aux réformes de la

Troisième République. Durant l'entre-deux-guerres, la vision historique est doublée d'une perspective comparatiste, avec d'une part, la recherche des influences littéraires et d'autre part, l'histoire des idées et de leur circulation. À l'intérieur de cette évolution très générale, deux questions semblent importantes : d'une part, celle qui prend en compte la place d'une troisième culture, la culture allemande, qui donne au XIX^e siècle à la discipline des études littéraires son orientation philologique ; d'autre part, celle des cas individuels, qui articulent d'une manière toujours particulière leurs positionnements par rapport aux grands paradigmes.

De l'individualité à la posture disciplinaire

La seconde interrogation concerne les individus qui ont pratiqué la discipline « littérature française » en Roumanie. Investiguer leurs vies peut révéler des informations importantes à même d'expliquer les choix qu'ils ont faits quand ils parlaient des écrivains français ou de leurs ouvrages. Mais étudier la biographie de ces personnes n'est pas sans pièges. Un long débat dans les études littéraires¹², de Sainte-Beuve à Proust et de Barthes à Bourdieu, a montré que la vie et l'œuvre entretiennent une relation problématique. L'existence individuelle n'explique pas entièrement l'œuvre pendant que l'œuvre continue son existence même quand les conditions de sa création n'existent plus. Si on transpose ces débats sur le territoire de l'histoire des sciences, ou des disciplines, la discussion des biographies renvoie à la question de la dépendance ou de l'indépendance de la science par rapport au contexte de sa production. Une des idées les plus répandues sur la science moderne est qu'elle « n'a aucune nationalité », en d'autres mots elle serait autonome par rapport au contexte social, culturel, politique, etc. L'investigation des biographies des individus qui l'ont pratiquée, pour étudier la trajectoire de leurs vies et le développement de leurs œuvres contredit cette hypothèse de l'autonomie, aux moments même où leurs discours étaient en train de l'affirmer. Le questionnement vise donc les conditions de possibilité de cette activité intellectuelle entre, d'une part, le poids de la capacité d'agir de l'individu et, d'autre part, le cadre imposé par la profession et les règles de la discipline.

Le premier volet de l'analyse concerne la biographie professionnelle. La majorité des représentants de la discipline obtiennent un doctorat en France, ce qui contribue à la création d'un stéréotype selon lequel seuls

les contacts directs avec le système éducationnel français offrent les mérites pour pratiquer la discipline en Roumanie. Ce contact avec l'espace académique français continue aussi après la thèse, par des articles et des ouvrages publiés dans des revues françaises. Ce sont les publications les plus valorisées et les individus mettent à profit toutes leurs relations, y compris leurs anciens étudiants, pour parvenir à se voir publiés dans les lieux de consécration. Mais ces lieux évoluent avec le temps: si, pour Pompiliu Eliade, la publication la plus prestigieuse est la *Revue des Deux Mondes*, où il réussit avec l'aide de son ancien professeur Ferdinand Brunetière à publier un article en 1904 sur l'influence des romantiques français sur Grégoire Alexandrescu¹³, pour son successeur, Charles Drouhet, la revue la plus prestigieuse est la *Revue de littérature comparée* et il n'hésite pas à solliciter pour cela son ancien élève Basil Munteanu¹⁴.

Mais le doctorat en France n'est pas l'unique condition, parce qu'il y a davantage de titulaires que de chaires disponibles. La nomination des professeurs de littérature française dans les universités roumaines confirme les hypothèses des sociologues comme Michèle Lamont¹⁵, selon lesquels la sélection pour l'entrée dans la carrière académique se fait selon des procédures complexes où ce ne sont pas uniquement les raisons objectifs de la science qui comptent, mais aussi le contexte de l'évaluation, les relations personnelles et beaucoup des jugements sont relationnels et conjoncturels (tout en étant présentés sous la forme de critères formels et universels). Deux cas peuvent illustrer la diversité de facteurs qui interviennent dans ces situations.

La nomination de Pompiliu Eliade était, d'une certaine façon, décidée à l'avance par Titu Maiorescu, son premier maître et un des plus importants intellectuels de l'époque, qui l'avait envoyé à Paris, pour continuer ses études à l'École Normale Supérieure. C'était en fait la stratégie que Maiorescu employait avec tous ses élèves doués qui étaient censés rentrer après au pays pour développer de la science nationale, avec en même temps, le développement du réseau d'influence du Maître. Il invitait ses élèves qui étudiaient à l'étranger à l'informer sur leurs nouvelles découvertes pour qu'il sache créer à l'Université de Bucarest les chaires qu'ils allaient occuper à leur retour¹⁶. Les lettres que Pompiliu Eliade lui envoie depuis Paris montrent les plans d'enseignement que le jeune doctorant avait pour la rentrée en Roumanie¹⁷. Même si le parcours intellectuel va l'éloigner des options politiques et culturelles de son Maître, ce dernier va le soutenir lorsqu'il s'agira d'occuper le poste de professeur de littérature française.

Un autre cas est celui de Basil Munteanu qui, pendant son séjour à Paris dans les années 1930, a des échanges épistolaires très fréquents avec son professeur de Bucarest, Charles Drouhet, à propos d'une éventuelle nomination comme titulaire d'une chaire de littérature comparée, celle de littérature française étant bien sûr occupée par Drouhet. Selon ce dernier, deux problèmes rendaient difficile le souhait de Munteanu : d'abord la crise financière qui faisait assez difficile la création d'une nouvelle chaire et, d'autre part, le fait que Munteanu n'arrivait pas à finir sa thèse, condition indispensable pour occuper une chaire à l'université. Le souhait va se réaliser seulement en 1940, quand Munteanu va obtenir la chaire de littérature française après la mort de Drouhet. L'histoire de sa nomination est elle-aussi très compliquée, à cause d'un concurrent, le professeur de Iași, Nicolae Șerban. Ce dernier avait un dossier de publications plus riche, mais dans ce cas, le réseau de Bucarest fonctionna en faveur de Munteanu qui est nommé par un Décret du Roi en 1940 et confirmé à l'unanimité par le vote des professeurs en 1942¹⁸. L'accès au poste est ainsi un moment révélateur des facteurs qui interviennent dans les carrières académiques et qui peuvent expliquer les choix ultérieurs des sujets de recherches et des postures académiques de ces individus.

Un autre volet est celui plus traditionnel, de la biographie intellectuelle. Tous les individus ont été influencés par leurs maîtres et l'investigation de ces relations entre maître et disciples permettent non seulement d'expliquer les perspectives qu'ils ont adoptées dans leurs travaux, mais aussi de retracer, d'une manière indirecte, la succession des paradigmes dominants dans le discours académiques sur la littérature française. Ils ont tous travaillé avec les personnalités françaises du domaine : Pompiliu Eliade a toujours apprécié son professeur Ferdinand Brunetière, une figure importante à l'époque de ses études à l'École Normale Supérieure. Mais, au tournant du siècle, la perspective de Brunetière est contestée par Gustave Lanson, reconnu comme le fondateur de l'histoire littéraire moderne, qui est aussi le maître de Charles Drouhet, le successeur d'Eliade. Durant l'entre-deux-guerres, quand, sous l'autorité de Lanson, sa méthode ("le lansonisme") s'implantait dans l'enseignement secondaire, deux autres figures apparaissent et contribuent à la consolidation d'une nouvelle discipline, la littérature comparée. Ces deux chercheurs, Paul Hazard et Fernand Baldensperger, sont les maîtres de Basil Munteanu, à l'époque de ses études à Paris. Dans les années 1930, Munteanu est proche de Paul Hazard, travaillant à la *Revue de littérature comparée*, et il développe une perspective personnelle sur la littérature comme terrain des idées,

fortement influencé par le fameux ouvrage de son professeur sur la *Crise de la conscience européenne*.

Le rapprochement avec les maîtres français explique dans une certaine mesure les perspectives méthodologiques et conceptuelles des professeurs roumains et cela est très visible, par exemple dans le cas de Charles Drouhet, qui dans ses cours emploie la méthode de Lanson (« l'explication de texte »), mais dans ses articles suit les démarches des comparatistes comme Baldensperger pour révéler des influences françaises sur les écrivains roumains. La méthode de la biographie intellectuelle reste donc une approche très fructueuse pour suivre la circulation des idées, méthodes et concepts entre les espaces nationaux, en montrant comment les praticiens de la discipline deviennent des intermédiaires par lesquels les concepts et les méthodes traversent les frontières culturelles et politiques.

Mais suivre les biographies individuelles peut conduire aussi à un autre niveau, celui du soi scientifique (*scientific persona*). Défini par les historiens des sciences comme « une identité culturelle qui forme le corps et l'esprit de l'individu et qui crée un collectif avec une physionomie partagée et reconnaissable »¹⁹, la recherche du soi scientifique suppose de chercher « des manières collectives de penser, sentir, juger, percevoir, travailler, plutôt que les particularités des biographies individuelles »²⁰. Dans le cas de cette étude, il s'agirait de faire apparaître le soi scientifique du professeur roumain de littérature française, un idéaltype créé par les individus qui ont détenu ces chaires pendant le XIX^e et le XX^e siècle et qui ont transmis une certaine image sur leur vie et leur œuvre. Il y a évidemment des différences entre les individus particuliers, mais la recherche des caractéristiques communes peut faire apparaître une certaine posture spécifique de la position. Par exemple, dans le cas de Charles Drouhet, tel qu'il est célébré par Basil Munteanu :

Ambiția lui era mai modestă, dar mai serioasă. Era o ambiție de bun lucrător, de tehnician care, pus în fața obiectului, înțelegea să facă abstracție de propria-i personalitate, redusă astfel la facultățile ei cele mai general omenești – atenție încordată, observație ascuțită, lentă asimilare sau discriminare a faptelor învecinate, în sfârșit – rezultat al acestei analize – o prudentă operație de conglomerare a notelor convergente în formațiuni din ce în ce mai vaste. Niciodată însă acest asociaționism inductiv nu mergea până la formulare de principii. Profesorul Drouhet a rămas până la capăt credincios metodei strict și obiectiv descriptive, care se impunea încă din tinerețea lui, istoriei generale cu Langlois și Seignobos, iar cu Gustave Lanson, istoriei literare.

[Son ambition était plus modeste, mais plus sérieuse. C'était une ambition de travailleur, de technicien qui, devant l'objet, entendait faire abstraction de sa propre personnalité, réduite ainsi à ses facultés générales, humaines – attention, observation, assimilation lente ou discrimination des faits voisins, finalement – le résultat de cette analyse – une prudente opération de réunion des notes convergentes dans des formations de plus en plus vastes. Mais jamais cet associationnisme inductif n'allait jusqu'à formuler des principes. Le professeur Drouhet est resté jusqu'au bout fidèle à la méthode strictement et objectivement descriptive, qui s'imposait dès sa jeunesse, à l'histoire générale avec Langlois et Seignobos, et avec Gustave Lanson, à l'histoire littéraire.]²¹

Cette caractérisation de Charles Drouhet peut tracer des pistes pour une définition du soi scientifique du professeur de littérature française. Il est composé de vertus comme l'attention, l'observation, la précaution, toutes réunies pour former l'objectivité, la plus importante vertu épistémique. Dans le cas de Pompiliu Eliade, la situation est légèrement différente. D'une part, il fait preuve de vertus similaires, dans une autobiographie écrite pour son dossier de candidature au poste de professeur :

Publicațiunile mele sunt până astăzi puțin numeroase. Aceasta din pricina multiplelor îndatoriri școlare, dar și din pricina unui simțământ exagerat dar voit al formei, care ne face să revenim de o mulțime de ori asupra aceleiași producțiuni și să ezităm mult înainte de a o da la lumină. O lucrare tipărită e un act social ce poate avea consecințele lui, de care suntem responsabili, și care deci cere multă chibzuință și multă răbdare.

[Mes publications sont peu nombreuses jusqu'à ce jour. Cela à cause des multiples charges scolaires, mais aussi à cause d'un souci exagéré, mais voulu, pour la forme, qui nous fait revenir plusieurs fois sur la même production et nous fait hésiter longtemps avant de la publier. Un travail imprimé est un acte social qui peut avoir des conséquences, dont nous sommes responsables, et demande donc beaucoup de réflexion et de beaucoup de patience.]²²

Mais, d'autre part, les souvenirs de ses anciens étudiants le montrent comme un professeur très passionné et avec un talent d'orateur, qui emploie tout l'arsenal des figures rhétoriques et qui n'hésite pas d'utiliser les critiques *ad personam*, sans observer les règles générales²³. Ces remarques sont importantes parce qu'elles contribuent à définir ce qu'on pourrait appeler un *ethos* de la discipline. Bien évidemment, aucun individu spécifique ne

peut incorporer complètement ce soi scientifique, mais ce soi fait de règles, attitudes et postures peut exercer une pression sur l'individu.

Comment ce sujet scientifique prend-t-il forme ? Selon Daston et Galison, dans leur ouvrage *Objectivité*²⁴, les vertus qui définissent le soi se traduisent dans des pratiques, vues à la manière de Foucault, comme des techniques de soi. C'est en pratiquant la discipline que le savant se forme. Ce genre de pratiques, comme tenir un journal de laboratoire ou dessiner des spécimens, ne sont pas tout simplement l'expression du soi ; elles forment le soi scientifique comme un type et contribuent à la définition d'un idéal régulateur. La section suivante s'intéressera aux pratiques spécifiques de la discipline.

Pratiques d'enseignement et pratiques de la recherche

Investiguer les pratiques suppose suivre les individus dans leur travail quotidien pour découvrir les activités spécifiques par lesquelles ils s'affirment et se définissent comme représentants de la discipline. Cette perspective, complémentaire aux perspectives antérieures, a le mérite de projeter un regard vers ce que Françoise Waquet appelle la « dimension non idéelle »²⁵, en d'autres mots les techniques intellectuelles concrètes qui caractérisent l'activité des scientifiques. Dépourvues jusque récemment de la « noblesse » des idées (et donc sans intérêt pour les chercheurs), ces pratiques longtemps invisibles sont étudiées de nos jours par les historiens des sciences pour leur historicité et pour leur capacité à ordonner et à orienter la formation des disciplines. Les types de pratiques que nous avons retenus caractérisent bien sûr la majorité des sciences humaines, mais les variations contextuelles sont aussi importantes pour voir la littérature française en train de se faire.

Pour ce qui est de pratiques d'enseignement, le cours et le séminaire sont les plus importantes. Le cours magistral est entré dans l'attention des historiens à une époque relativement récente²⁶ : son statut est double, il est en même temps un lieu d'élaboration du savoir, ainsi que le lieu de sa transmission. Dans les années 1850, une polémique opposa à l'Université d'Oxford les partisans du cours et les adeptes de l'enseignement par la lecture des livres. Le livre, pensait-on, ne pouvait jamais remplacer la force et l'énergie de la parole vivante, le cours « donnait, plus que des faits, une méthode et une formation ; il constituait une discipline, un exercice actif de toutes les fonctions intellectuelles »²⁷. De plus, le fait que le cours

est une pratique commune à l'enseignement de plusieurs disciplines est un facteur qui compte dans une perspective comme celle de Rens Bod²⁸, qui propose une histoire des *humanities* à partir des pratiques qu'elles partagent et non pas en suivant les éléments qui les différencient.

Dans la discipline qui nous intéresse, le cours a été la pratique pédagogique centrale. Tous les enseignants que nous analysons ont donné des cours (et des conférences), pour leurs étudiants dans l'amphithéâtre, ainsi que pour un public plus large, comme celui de l'Athénée. L'histoire de la discipline peut être ainsi vue comme une histoire des cours sur la littérature française. Cela s'explique non seulement par la longue histoire des universités (depuis le Moyen Âge), mais aussi par les règles de cette « façon de parler ». Selon Erving Goffman, dans une telle situation « conférencier et auditoire s'unissent pour affirmer que la conférence peut refléter, exprimer, esquisser, dépeindre le monde réel, et que, au fond des choses, il existe quelque part un monde réel, structuré, plus ou moins unitaire, qu'il est possible de comprendre. »²⁹ En tant que « fonctionnaire du pouvoir cognitif » (Goffman), l'enseignant donne une représentation cohérente de la littérature française, une représentation qui, dans la plupart des cas, efface les contradictions et la compétition des visions concurrentes sur cette littérature.

Il y a aussi un public différé pour ces cours, qui a accès à leur forme publiée. La plupart des professeurs ont publié les textes de leurs cours dans des ouvrages qui retiennent parfois le caractère oral de l'exposé. La publication des cours est devenue comme une activité indispensable pour le professeur de littérature française, pendant le XX^e siècle et même au XXI^e siècle, le côté pédagogique de la discipline devenant ainsi plus évident. Cette prolifération des cours publiés a provoqué aussi une relance des critiques envers le caractère fermé et statique de ce genre d'ouvrages.

Une forme particulière de cours est la leçon inaugurale. Pratique obligée et cérémoniale de tous les professeurs venant d'être nommés comme titulaires des chaires, la leçon inaugurale est le moment où on célèbre ses précurseurs et on expose ses propres vues sur la discipline. L'importance de ce rituel est très grande dans le monde académique parce que, comme Pierre Bourdieu l'a montré (dans sa leçon inaugurale au Collège de France), « son efficacité proprement magique repose sur l'échange silencieux et invisible entre le nouvel entrant, qui offre publiquement sa parole, et les savants réunis qui attestent par leur présence en corps que cette parole, d'être ainsi reçue par les maîtres les plus éminents, devient universellement recevable, c'est-à-dire au sens fort magistrale »³⁰. Les leçons inaugurales de Pompiliu

Eliade, Charles Drouhet, Basil Munteanu sont autant de prises de position dans l'espace de la discipline par lesquelles les auteurs expriment leurs points de vues méthodologiques et se situent par rapport aux précurseurs et aux tendances de la discipline.

Une pratique qui se situe à l'intersection de l'enseignement et de la recherche est cette fois spécifique de la littérature française et porte le nom d'« explication de texte ». Employé dans les séminaires, cet exercice, dont les règles ont été définies par Gustave Lanson³¹, est introduit de manière systématique par Charles Drouhet, qui publie à côté de ses cours, les commentaires de textes qu'il donne aux étudiants sous le titre *Curs de comentarii*. L'exercice était censé enseigner d'abord une lecture grammaticale, ensuite une lecture littéraire qui puisse « mettre en lumière l'intérêt ou psychologique, ou philosophique, ou historique (principalement pour l'histoire des idées, du goût, de la civilisation) du texte choisi, et d'en faire sentir la valeur esthétique, la beauté. »³² Poussée à l'extrême par les disciples de Lanson, l'explication de texte va être par la suite critiquée pour son caractère « mécanique », mais elle reste l'exercice représentatif pour l'étude de littérature française pendant la plupart du XX^e siècle (un équivalent pour la littérature anglaise ou américaine serait le *close reading*).

L'autre catégorie de pratiques est faite de celles par lesquelles l'individu, cette fois en s'affirmant comme chercheur, produit des connaissances nouvelles et participe aux discussions du champ. Elaborer une thèse de doctorat et en publier les résultats sous la forme du livre, produire des articles scientifiques dans les revues représentatives du champ, publier des recensions de livres sont les signes qui indiquent que l'individu est reconnu comme chercheur par ses pairs.

L'histoire des thèses de doctorat peut retracer ainsi l'évolution de la discipline. Si, au milieu du XIX^e siècle, les professeurs qui enseignaient la littérature française ne faisaient pas de thèse, à partir du tournant du siècle et des réformes de l'enseignement promues par Spiru Haret, l'activité de recherche devient importante et les titulaires des chaires doivent avoir le doctorat. Obtenu d'abord en France (ce sont, par exemple, les cas de Pompiliu Eliade et Charles Drouhet), le doctorat est accordé pendant l'entre-deux-guerres aussi dans les universités roumaines. La thèse devient l'épreuve par laquelle on peut aspirer à un poste d'enseignant et les deux cas évoqués ci-dessus sont particulièrement intéressants. La thèse de Pompiliu Eliade (dont le sujet – l'influence française sur l'esprit public en Roumanie – a apporté à son auteur la reconnaissance de ses pairs, mais aussi les foudres des nationalistes) a été soutenue à l'Université de Paris en 1899. Mais son

accueil par les professeurs français a été mitigé, parce qu'Eliade avait fait œuvre d'historien « romantique », et non positiviste, sans tenir compte de l'évolution de l'historiographie française de son temps. En Roumanie, sa thèse a été jugée inadéquate pour une chaire de littérature et le candidat a dû passer par une période intermédiaire, durant laquelle il a dû écrire et publier des articles portant sur la littérature entendue dans un sens plus restreint. L'élaboration des thèses et leur réception peuvent ainsi révéler d'une part les méthodes, les principes et les critères que les auteurs utilisent pour s'affirmer dans le domaine choisi et, d'autre part, la manière dont ces méthodes, principes et critères s'accordent avec ceux qui sont appliqués en France³³. Il ne s'agit pas de normes prescriptives, mais d'une norme-étalon que le candidat peut assimiler par sa participation au monde de la discipline.

Une autre publication importante est la recension (le compte rendu). Développé, pour ce qui est de cette discipline, à la fin du XIX^e siècle, le compte rendu met l'auteur en position de l'expert qui peut, en critiquant un ouvrage, imposer sa définition légitime des règles du jeu scientifique³⁴. Les recensions de Basil Munteanu dans la *Revue de littérature comparée* sont autant de prises de position qui indiquent, en critiquant ou en célébrant leur objet, la manière « correcte » de faire les études littéraires selon la perspective des comparatistes français de l'entre-deux-guerres. Suivre les recensions d'un auteur peut également révéler les réseaux scientifiques auxquels il participe qui, à leur tour, peuvent avoir une influence sur les choix conceptuels et méthodologiques de l'auteur en question.

Le pouvoir révélateur des controverses

Inspirée par les historiens des sciences³⁵, l'étude des controverses peut se révéler d'une utilité particulière pour l'histoire des disciplines. Et, dans le cas de la littérature française en Roumanie, une controverse qu'on pourrait appeler fondatrice a vu s'affronter, dans les premières années du XX^e siècle, Pompiliu Eliade, au plus brillant historien de sa génération, Nicolae Iorga³⁶. La nomination d'Eliade à la chaire de littérature française de l'Université de Bucarest a rencontré la vive opposition de Nicolae Iorga qui a critiqué à l'intérieur de l'institution et dans la presse les travaux d'Eliade sur la littérature (notamment sa leçon inaugurale « Qu'est-ce que la littérature ? ») à cause de son supposé manque de compétence philologique. Eliade a répondu et cela a déterminé Iorga à lui donner une réplique encore plus violente.

Comment peut-on étudier une controverse ? La première façon serait de chercher de quel côté se trouve la réponse correcte, en comparant les arguments des deux parties. Mais la comparaison des arguments sans les situer dans leur contexte historique expose la recherche à des résultats biaisés, parce qu'un simple changement de perspective peut contredire la réponse initiale. Proposer une représentation vraie sur la littérature est toujours le but implicite de toute étude littéraire. Croire d'avoir trouvé la vérité signifie, selon Pierre Bourdieu, croire à une des possibles versions qui sont en concurrence. Au lieu de la première méthode, la sociologie de Bourdieu nous invite à étudier non pas la définition « vraie » de la littérature, mais la lutte pour cette définition. La controverse serait ainsi une représentation des tensions caractérisant le champ littéraire, un indicateur qui relèverait les camps qui s'affrontent et leurs forces. Dans le cas de la controverse Eliade-Iorga, on aurait le camp des écrivains nationalistes et leurs rivaux francophiles. Mais la logique de cette approche déterministe verrait les deux individus comme représentatifs pour les deux camps, ils cesseraient d'être des « acteurs » pour devenir des « agents ». Une troisième façon d'étudier les controverses est celle qui est proposée par la sociologie pragmatique française. En décrivant les interactions qui forment la controverse et en situant ces interactions dans les contextes significatifs pour les acteurs, on peut prendre au sérieux les deux camps et ne pas tomber dans le piège de l'anachronisme. La controverse est importante parce qu'elle permet d'étudier le degré d'autonomie d'une discipline. En investiguant le rôle que joue le public pour les deux camps qui s'affrontent, on peut voir si c'est une controverse qui se réduit au monde de la science ou elle acquiert une dimension politique. Dès le début, Iorga ouvre la controverse pour un public plus large en écrivant dans le journal nationaliste *Sămănătorul*. Eliade répond d'une manière qui laisse entendre qu'il vise le même public : il publie sa réponse dans une brochure au même format et au titre presque identique, *Sămănătorului*. Les deux adversaires s'échangent non seulement des accusations violentes de manque de méthode et de compétence dans le champ des études littéraires, mais aussi deux visions différentes sur les orientations profondes de la discipline. Déçu par les attaques de Iorga, Eliade écrit à un ami : « Un professeur de littérature n'est pas un professeur d'histoire, ni un professeur de philologie. Ne s'agissant pas d'érudition, on ne lui demande pas de faire de la science proprement dite. Surtout lorsque ce professeur enseigne une littérature étrangère, donc il est loin des manuscrits des auteurs, on ne peut pas lui demander de

faire des découvertes importantes dans son domaine »³⁷. La controverse Eliade-Iorga, qui reproduit les disputes parisiennes de l'époque, annonce la transformation de la littérature française d'une discipline définie par une approche rhétorique, en une discipline historique, intéressée par l'explication des textes et de leurs auteurs par rapport à leur contexte. La controverse montre également les relations de pouvoir entre les disciplines à un certain moment de l'évolution du champ académique. Dans ce cas, on peut voir l'histoire, représentée par Iorga et son « école critique », en train de devenir la discipline dominante et à imposer ses méthodes sur les autres disciplines, plus « faibles ».

Selon les historiens des sciences, l'analyse des controverses nous permet de suivre de manière symétrique et impartiale les acteurs dans leurs processus de fabrication et de légitimation de leurs arguments et la prise au sérieux des deux camps suppose de revenir au moment de leur affrontement, sans tenir compte du gagnant qui, sans doute, aura écrit l'histoire ultérieure. Dans l'histoire des études littéraires, l'analyse des controverses peut rendre plus claires des évolutions qui, pour des besoins d'harmonie ou d'efficacité managériale, ont été cachées aux étudiants et au public, comme le montre Gerald Graff, dans son ouvrage *Professing literature*³⁸. L'évolution des départements d'études littéraires aux États-Unis est marquée par des confrontations successives entre *critics* et *scholars*, mais, curieusement, les étudiants ne devaient être exposés qu'aux résultats de ces controverses. Ainsi, des questions fondamentales sur le pourquoi de la discipline, de ses méthodes et de ses principes, restaient dans l'implicite.

La politique de la littérature française

Le dernier questionnement vise la dimension politique que la littérature française a eue en tant que discipline académique, dans la seconde moitié du XIX^e siècle et la première partie du XX^e siècle. Le discours intellectuel a célébré le modèle français comme une influence particulièrement efficace sur la modernisation du pays. Le livre de Pompiliu Eliade (*De l'influence française sur l'esprit public en Roumanie*³⁹) a beaucoup contribué à créer cette impression. Mais si on regarde plus attentivement, il semble que presque toutes les références au modèle français ont provoqué aussi des critiques et des résistances. Le professeur italien des années 1870, Gian-Luigi Frollo, titulaire de la chaire de littératures néo-latines à Bucarest, critiquait l'usage exagéré du français par les élites du

pays et dans l'enseignement secondaire. Dans sa thèse, Eliade célèbre l'influence française contre les opinions de son maître, Titu Maiorescu, qui critiquait les emprunts étrangers (surtout français) comme des « formes sans fond ». Eliade, à son tour, est critiqué par Iorga dans le contexte de la critique nationaliste de la « gallomanie », une critique qui atteint son comble quelques années plus tard, avec les démonstrations des étudiants contre les pièces françaises jouées sur la scène du Théâtre National. Dans ce contexte, la littérature française à l'Université était en même temps le produit d'une grande civilisation, peut-être La civilisation, et « l'autre » de la littérature nationale, la littérature « étrangère » par excellence, contre laquelle la littérature nationale devait s'affirmer. En ces conditions, pratiquer la discipline littérature française signifiait, d'une manière ou d'une autre, se situer par rapport à la littérature nationale et les débats nationaux de l'époque. Pendant l'entre-deux-guerres, l'activité scientifique de Charles Drouhet, qui avait fait sa thèse à Paris sur un écrivain français, est consacrée aux influences françaises du XIX^e siècle sur les poètes roumains (V. Alecsandri, Al. Macedonski). En 1938, Basil Munteanu identifie deux directions qui définissent la culture roumaine⁴⁰ : l'une qui est influencée par la culture française, faite de raison, science et démocratie, et l'autre, influencée par les cultures allemandes et slavo-byzantines, faite d'irrationnel, religion et autoritarisme. Si on essaie de voir l'évolution de la discipline dans les termes de Bourdieu, de l'hétéronomie vers l'autonomie, on pourrait dire que, à cause des conditions politiques, la discipline n'a jamais atteint l'autonomie par rapport au pouvoir politique. La Roumanie était passée par une guerre d'Indépendance, une guerre balkanique et deux guerres mondiales et, dans ces conditions, les études littéraires ne pouvaient pas s'autonomiser. Pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale, Basil Munteanu, titulaire de la chaire de littérature française à Bucarest, faisait partie des cercles de la Résistance gaulliste et, lorsqu'il enseignait à l'université le classicisme français et *l'honnête homme*, il voyait cela comme une contribution à la lutte de la civilisation contre la barbarie nazie.

La discipline est présente en Roumanie aussi par les conférences données à l'Institut Français des Hautes Études de Bucarest. Créé au début des années 1920 avec la participation de l'Université de Paris⁴¹, l'institut n'était pas directement connecté à la chaire de littérature française de l'Université de Bucarest (le professeur Drouhet était un chercheur solitaire), mais son directeur, Alphonse Drupont, avait su gagner l'appréciation de l'élite francophile du pays. Ainsi, la politique du « rayonnement »

français se faisait sentir à Bucarest par des conférences données par des professeurs invités qui attiraient un public étudiant très important. Pendant la Seconde Guerre Mondiale, l'institut avait organisé un programme de cours publics ayant pour sujet la théorie et l'histoire des formes littéraires, la poésie contemporaine française, la peinture et la musique françaises, mais aussi des explications de textes de Montaigne et Flaubert. Toutes ces activités avaient évidemment pour but de symboliser le besoin de résistance contre l'ennemi nazi, une résistance qui se faisait aussi par les cours de littérature de l'Université. L'activité de l'institut était bien plus riche (Dupront avait contribué à l'organisation d'une semaine du livre français en 1938⁴², à une tournée de la Comédie française, etc.) et la discussion de la littérature française doit être vue dans ce contexte plus ample de propagande culturelle faite par la France qui était, à cette époque, en concurrence avec la Grande-Bretagne, l'Italie et l'Allemagne. Mais la dimension politique de la littérature française devient plus évidente à partir du moment où en Roumanie s'instaure le régime communiste et tous les domaines de la science doivent se soumettre à la domination idéologique. À partir des années 1950, l'enseignement et la recherche ont dû s'accommoder au nouveau contexte politique et l'étude de cette période ne peut pas éviter de prendre en compte les déterminations idéologiques qui ont pesé sur ces activités.

En guise de conclusion faire l'histoire de la discipline « littérature française » dans la Roumanie moderne, de la création des universités en Roumanie, au milieu du XIX^e siècle, à l'instauration du régime communiste, au milieu du XX^e siècle, suppose l'objectivation d'une évolution historique qui a continué aussi après la période étudiée et dont les transformations peuvent cacher les origines. Ainsi, le moment structuraliste des études littéraires, qui a eu une grande influence en Roumanie dans les années 1960-1970, peut mettre en ombre l'histoire des études antérieures qui ont été faites selon d'autres règles et par des personnages différents. Par exemple, l'évolution ultérieure de la discipline a caché le fait que, pendant longtemps, parler de la littérature française signifiait parler, d'une manière ou d'une autre, de la littérature nationale, roumaine. De nos jours, la discipline a tendance à oublier cette histoire, comme, en général, les études des littératures étrangères en Roumanie objectivent rarement leur inscription dans le champ académique national. Assumer et devenir conscient de cette inscription est une condition pour une recherche pertinente dans le champ des études sur la littérature française.

NOTES

- ¹ Jean-Louis Fabiani, « À quoi sert la notion de discipline ? » dans Jean Boutier, Jean-Claude Passeron, Jacques Revel, *Qu'est-ce qu'une discipline ?*, Paris, Ed. de l'EHESS, 2006, p, 19.
- ² Thomas Kuhn, *La structure des révolutions scientifiques*, trad. de l'anglais par Laure Meyer, Paris, Flammarion, 2008 (première édition, en anglais, en 1962).
- ³ Voir la critique de Charles Drouhet par N. Manolescu dans « Comparatism », *Steaua*, nr. 5, mai 1977, repris dans *Teme*, București, Cartea Românească, 2016.
- ⁴ Michel Espagne, *Le Paradigme de l'étranger. Les chaires de littérature étrangère au XIX^e siècle*, Paris, Cerf, 1993, p. 12.
- ⁵ Dans une ample bibliographie consacrée à la question du canon littéraire, un ouvrage important pour notre perspective est celui de Martine Jey, *La littérature au lycée : invention d'une discipline, 1880-1925*, Metz-Paris, Klincksieck, 1998.
- ⁶ Pour une discussion des usages de la périodisation dans les études littéraires anglo-saxonnes, voir Ted Underwood, *Why Literary Periods Mattered. Historical Contrast and the Prestige of English Studies*, Stanford, Stanford UP, 2013.
- ⁷ Pour un exemple de compétition des définitions au XVII^e siècle, voir Alain Viala, *Naissance de l'écrivain. Sociologie de la littérature à l'âge classique*, Paris, Minuit, 1985, p. 280.
- ⁸ Voir les cours publiés par Charles Drouhet, le titulaire de la chaire de langue et littérature française à l'Université de Bucarest.
- ⁹ Le livre d'Antoine Compagnon, *La Troisième République des Lettres, de Flaubert à Proust*, Paris, Seuil, 1983, est consacré à la naissance de l'histoire littéraire moderne de Gustave Lanson, dans le contexte des réformes de la Troisième République.
- ¹⁰ Pour le concept de « siècle littéraire », je me permets de renvoyer à mon ouvrage *La canonisation littéraire et l'avènement de la culture de masse. La collection « Les Grands Écrivains Français » (1887-1913)*, Frankfurt, Peter Lang, 2016.
- ¹¹ Op. cit., p. 16.
- ¹² Voir, pour cette problématique, José-Luis Diaz, *L'homme et l'œuvre*, Paris, PUF, 2011.
- ¹³ Pompiliu Eliade, « Un poète roumain. Grégoire Alexandrescu et ses maîtres français » dans *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 24, 15 décembre 1904.
- ¹⁴ Voir les lettres de Charles Drouhet dans Basil Munteanu, *Correspondențe*, Evry, I. Cusa, 1979.
- ¹⁵ Michèle Lamont, *How Professors Think. Inside the Curious World of Academic Judgement*, Cambridge, Harvard UP, 2009.

- 16 Sur les trajectoires professionnelles des universitaires roumains de la période étudiée, voir Lucian Nastasă-Kovacs, « *Suveranii* » *universităților românești. Mecanisme de selecție și promovare a elitei intelectuale*, Cluj, Ed. Limes, 2007.
- 17 Ces lettres ont été publiées par Z. Ornea dans *Titu Maiorescu și prima generație de maioresceni. Corespondența*, București, Ed. Minerva, 1978.
- 18 Mircea Anghelescu, « Un critic uitat : Bazil Munteanu », dans *Analele Universității București. Limba și literatura română*, XXX, 1981, p. 55-64.
- 19 Lorraine Daston, H. Otto Sibum, « Introduction: Scientific Personae and Their Histories », dans *Science in Context*, 16 (1/2), March 2003, p. 2.
- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Basil Munteanu, *De la metodă la cunoaștere literară*, București, Fundația Regală pentru Literatură și Artă, 1941 (notre traduction).
- 22 *Curriculum vitae* de Pompiliu Eliade, Archives Municipales Bucarest, Fond Université de Bucarest, Rectorat, 1441 /3/1900/77 (notre traduction).
- 23 Eugeniu Speranția, *Figuri universitare*, București, Ed. Tineretului, 1967, p. 45-46.
- 24 Lorraine Daston, Peter Galison, *Objectivité*, traduit de l'anglais par Sophie Renaut et Hélène Quiniou, Paris, Presses du Réel, 2012.
- 25 Françoise Waquet, *Parler comme un livre. L'oralité et le savoir (XVI^e-XX^e siècle)*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2003. Voir aussi, du même auteur, *Respublica academica. Rituels universitaires et genres du savoir (XVII^e-XX^e siècle)*, Paris, PUPS, 2010, et *Les enfants de Socrate. Filiation intellectuelle et transmission du savoir, (XVII^e-XX^e siècle)*, Paris, Albin Michel, 2015.
- 26 Annie Bruter, « Le cours magistral comme objet d'histoire » dans *Histoire de l'éducation*, 120, 2008, p. 5-32.
- 27 Françoise Waquet, op. cit., p. 271.
- 28 Rens Bod, *A New History of the Humanities. The Search for Principles and Patterns from Antiquity to the Present*, Oxford, Oxford UP, 2013.
- 29 Erving Goffman, *Façons de parler*, traduit de l'anglais par Alain Kihm, Paris, Minuit, 1987, p. 203.
- 30 Pierre Bourdieu, *Leçon sur la leçon*, Paris, Minuit, 1982, p. 6.
- 31 Gustave Lanson, « Quelques mots sur l'explication de texte » dans *Études françaises*, Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1^{er} janvier 1925.
- 32 Gustave Lanson, op. cit., p. 46.
- 33 Charles Drouhet a obtenu le prix Bordin de l'Académie française en 1910 pour sa thèse sur François Maynard.
- 34 Voir Ian Watt, « L'institution du compte rendu » dans *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 1985, 59, p. 85-86.
- 35 Voir Dominique Pestre, *Introduction aux Science Studies*, Paris, La Découverte, 2006. Sur l'étude des controverses, voir aussi Cyril Lemieux, « À quoi sert l'analyse des controverses ? », dans *Mil Neuf Cent. Revue d'histoire intellectuelle*, 25, 2006, p. 200.

- ³⁶ Voir aussi D. Jipa, « Pompiliu Eliade vs Nicolae Iorga ou comment on parlait de la littérature (française) en 1903. Sociohistoire d'une controverse » dans Lidia Cotea (sous la dir. de), *La Francophonie roumaine: passé, présent, avenir*, București, EUB, 2015.
- ³⁷ Lettre de Pompiliu Eliade à Ovid Densusianu, novembre ou décembre 1903, *Scrisori către Ovid Densusianu*, ed. Liviu Onu, tome 2, București, Ed. Minerva, 1981.
- ³⁸ Gerald Graff, *Professing Literature. An Institutional History*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2007 (première édition en 1987).
- ³⁹ Paris, Ernest Leroux, 1898.
- ⁴⁰ Basil Munteanu, *Panorama de la littérature roumaine contemporaine*, Paris, Le Sagittaire, 1938.
- ⁴¹ Pour l'histoire de la création de l'institut, voir André Godin, *Une passion roumaine. Histoire de l'Institut Français de Hautes Études en Roumanie (1924-1948)*, Paris, l'Harmattan, 1998, chap. 1.
- ⁴² Annie Guénard-Maget, *Une diplomatie culturelle dans les tensions internationales : la France en Europe centrale et orientale, 1936-1940/1944-1951*, Bruxelles, Peter Lang, 2014.

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THE PERPETRATORS' TESTIMONIES: THE CASE OF ALEXANDRU DRĂGHICI AND HIS ASSOCIATES

Abstract

At the Plenum session of the CC of the RCP of April 1968, Alexandru Drăghici, minister of Internal Affairs and head of Securitate between 1952-1965 was identified as the main responsible for the crimes and abuses that took place in the Gheorghiu-Dej era. With this occasion, he and his associates have produced an important corpus of documents regarding the political violence in Romania. This study analyzes those narratives with the purpose of identifying the main justifications given by Drăghici and others officers of Securitate for what they had done.

Keywords: Alexandru Drăghici, narratives of political violence, Securitate, communist repression, justifications.

On 19th of March 1965, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, the ruler of Romania from 1945, dies. Shortly, the Political Bureau chose Nicolae Ceaușescu, the youngest of its members, as prime-secretary of the communist party. This choice would lead to internal fights for power within the Romanian Communist Party. Due to this conflict, whose main protagonists were Nicolae Ceaușescu and Alexandru Drăghici, minister of Internal Affairs and head of Securitate between 1952–1965, an important corpus of documents was produced by Alexandru Drăghici and his collaborators. According to Lynn Viola, those documents represented an “open window onto the world of perpetrators”.¹ Fathoming through this window in the world of the Romanian officers of Securitate, my intention is to analyze the narratives produced by them in 1968, in order to identify and examine their main justifications and motifs for what they have done.

At the same time, I will show that producing these testimonies about the communist repression also had a practical purpose, which was the comb-out of Alexandru Drăghici and his collaborators from the Securitate.

This would have also meant that Nicolae Ceaușescu would gain total control over the secret police. When he was chosen as the party's prime-secretary, he didn't meet one of the three essential conditions identified by Mary Ellen Fischer in order to be the indisputable leader of a communist regime: control over the political police.² Without it, there would have been the risk that a stronger opponent would take over his position. That would have been possible if someone else would have had control over the communist repressive apparatus.

The Securitate officers have produced in certain moments of their careers different narrations about their activity in the main repressive institution of the communist regime. Nonetheless, these documents weren't used by the Romanian historians in their papers concerning the communist repression published after 1989. The majority of the contributions regarding this subject are based on two categories of sources: the memoirs of the victims and the official versions of the institutions involved in the repression, such as the Romanian Communist Party/the Romanian Workers' Party. That is why, something important is missing from the analysis of the political violence, that being the narratives produced by the ones that were responsible for it in communist Romania. Examining them allows us to see their motivations and justifications for what they have done, and also the atmosphere from the Securitate. By looking at these documents, this article is aiming a redirection of the scientific interest from "impersonal institutions and abstract structures to the actors, the men and women who actually carried out the atrocities".³

Such a historical analysis, like all the historical reconstitution, also requires a certain amount of empathy with the subject. But taking into consideration that the main subjects of this study are officers of Securitate, who have tortured and killed innocent people, empathizing with them would seem rather humanly wrong. This is way I will try to see their actions through their eyes using the so called "cold empathy" that was introduced by Robert Gerwarth in his paper *Hitler's Hangman. The Life of Heydrich*. He defined it as:

an attempt to reconstruct Heydrich's life with critical distance but without succumbing to the danger of confusing the role of the historian with that of a state prosecutor at a war criminal's trial. Because historians ought to be primarily in the business of explanation and contextualization, not condemnation, they should try to avoid the sensationalism and judgmental tone that tended to characterize early accounts of Nazi perpetrators.⁴

The sources of this article are the testimonies produced by Alexandru Drăghici and his collaborators in the context of the fight for power within the Romanian Communist Party between the years 1965 and 1968 that are kept at the CNSAS (Consiliul Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității/ The National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives) and at the National Archive of Romania. The subjects of this paper initially stated their justifications orally during the party meetings. Subsequent, they had to write down the memories about their activity in the Securitate. Within these documents, they indicated “the facts that they were proud of”, but also the justifications for the crimes for which they were being criticized in 1968. At the same time, they also described some of the most barbaric violent practices from the first period of the communist regime, such as “the atrocities from Salcia”, the reeducation from Pitești. They even mentioned the work methods of the Securitate from that time frame, as well as the atmosphere in which they worked and lived for two decades. Most of the cases described by them are in a way or another connected to Alexandru Drăghici, the one considered to be the sole culprit for the crimes committed during the first period of the communist regime in Romania.

Of course, not every testimony of the Securitate officers is about the political violence. Depending on its author, some of them present information about the corruption within the Securitate, the relations between them, the networks of human trafficking (especially those about the emigration of the Jews at the beginning of the 50’s), the sexual violence against the female employees of the Securitate, and even against the wives of the political prisoners. Regardless of the information contained by these documents, the ones that are important for this article are those concerning the violence and the politically motivated repression.

Alexandru Drăghici – a short biography

Alexandru Drăghici, nicknamed Romania’s Lavrentii Beria⁵ by the Romanian historians, was born on 27th of September, 1913 in Tisău, the county of Buzău, into a family of poor peasants, as he called it in an autobiography written in February 1945.⁶ After he graduated from elementary school at 13 years old, he left his native village and moved to Buzău. Here he worked for a year as a shop boy and in 1928 he became the student of a professional school within the CFR Buzău depot. After three years, the school was closed and the students were allocated

to the CFR Grivița Workshops from Bucharest. In 1932, he received his mechanic fitter certificate.⁷

In the next year, Alexandru Drăghici became a member of the Romanian Communist Party, which was an underground organization then. This decision would influence his entire subsequent biographical direction. Only two years after joining the communist movement, he was arrested while he was participating to a Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Youth Union in Bucharest. After he and others were investigated, the trial of the "19 antifascists", as it was called by the press that was favorable to them, took place in Craiova. Drăghici was the only Romanian from the 19 investigated members or sympathizers of the communist party.⁸ The star of the trial was Ana Pauker, member of the CPfR Secretariat (Secretariatul Partidului Comunist din România). Other communists that will make a career after 23rd of August 1944 were arrested along her side, such as Liuba Chișinevski or Alexandru Moghioroș. For his activity within the communist movement, he was sentenced to 9 years and 6 months of prison, which he would spend in different prisons from Romania, among which was also Doftana, one of the main penitentiaries where Romanian communist were locked up in the interwar period.

In his confinement years, he would get close to Gheorghiu-Dej, and he would become his close collaborator, seconding his with fidelity and devotement in the struggle for power after the party was no longer illegal after 23rd of August 1944. At that time, Drăghici would get to be one of the leaders of the party, even if he was less known when he was arrested in 1935. After 1944, he would hold different leading positions in the communist state, such as public accuser at the People's Courthouse (Tribunalul Poporului) from Bucharest, member of the Party Control Commission, prime-secretary of the RCP Bucharest organization.⁹ The position for which he was chosen as a subject of this historical reconstitution and which put him in the situation of explaining the committed crimes is the one of minister of Internal Affairs and head of the Securitate between 1952 and 1965.

Alexandru Drăghici's encounter with the political violence

Alexandru Drăghici has known detention as a political prisoner for nine years, when he atoned his sentence in the penitentiaries of Văcărești, Jilava, Doftana, Târgu Ocna, Caransebeș and the political prisoners'

camp from Târgu Jiu. Did this interwar concentration experience have any consequence for the way in which Alexandru Drăghici acted after he became the minister of Internal Affairs and head of the Securitate? Did this experience represent a self-justification for people like Alexandru Drăghici? We can find an answer for these questions only if we look over their memories from that time.

From the analysis of the documents that I have studied, results that Alexandru Drăghici first met the political violence from the other side of the law in 1935, at the Jilava prison, when he was investigated for his activity in the communist movement. During his trial from 1936 that took place in Craiova, he claimed that he was beaten by the guards in front of the Jilava prison's commander¹⁰ In the communist period, these beatings would become something regular. The commanders of different communist penitentiaries would assist or even participate to such "disciplinary measures", as they were euphemistically called by them in their internal reports.¹¹

At the same time, Emanoil Kaufman, one of the 19 codefendant, was mentioning in his memoirs written in the 50's that "many bad things have been done", such as taking away the main rights that the prisoners had (walking on the prison yard, getting food packages, the right to speak).¹² These practices would become just a few of the constants of the detention regime from the communist period.¹³

Starting from one of Primo Levi's statement that "an oppressed can become an oppressor. And often he becomes one",¹⁴ Tzvetan Todorov mentions in his paper "The memory of evil" that those persons like Alexandru Drăghici use their past to justify their present acts. According to him, "the victims of wrongdoings" easily get to the conclusion that their past as victims "authorizes, even imposes an aggressive attitude in the present" or that "the wrong that was done to him" would "legitimate the evil" that he would "provoke" to others.¹⁵ At the same time, the French philosopher mentions that if "the former victim has become an aggressor; the new victim has nothing to do with the former aggressor".¹⁶ That being said, the violence that was seeded in them by a certain aggressor would be used against a third party, not as revenge, but as legitimation. Otherwise, during the meetings with his subordinates from the time in which he led the Securitate, Alexandru Drăghici would tell them what being a prisoner in the bourgeois prisons meant, the guardians' tactics of demoralizing the communists. That way he would encourage his subalterns to learn from their methods.¹⁷

An experience which Alexandru Drăghici talked about during the Plenum of April 1968 was the Congress of the Albanian Communist Party from 1948. In that year, he was sent by the leadership of the RCP to represent the Romanian communists at that meeting. In 1968, twenty years after that event, he would rememorize what he has seen and especially the feelings that he had at that encounter with the communist political violence. Reflecting at this episode from his past, during the Plenum of April 1968, Alexandru Drăghici said that the scenes that he witnessed disgusted him, generating inside of him a feeling of disgust for what he has seen. At the same time, he understood that the faith of an enemy of the people in a communist regime, regardless if he was a member of the communist elite, and that in the world that he was living, a person could be condemned by a simple hand raise. In such a world, which he would shortly lead among others' side, the penal investigation done by the Securitate represented simple formalities that had the sole purpose of proving what would be established in the party sessions only by a hand raise:

What has been done then in the congress left me the impression that a judging council is no longer needed, because they all raised their hand at the same time as Enver Hodja. Sure, after that there were other formalities and those people had been condemned to death. I don't know if the investigators checked it up any longer, because the hand raisings in the congress meant their condemnation. [...] This is where I wanted to come back to the damned example of the Albanians. At that moment I saw such aspects that made me nauseated.¹⁸

According to his declaration from 1968, after he returned to Romania, he shared this experience to Gheorghiu-Dej and Alexandru Moghioroș, proposing them to "intervene in these problems". He mentions about himself that he was "a naïve back then, I didn't have experience in these problems". At the same time, Dej "appeased" him by saying that "this thing can't be done".¹⁹ Starting from this event that he rememorized, we can conclude that this episode marked him, leaving deep traces on his personality. At the same time, it also shows us what his first reaction to such practices was. At the beginning, he was disgusted by them, but afterward, he accepted such experience as something completely normal in a communist country. The repulsion that he initially felt was gone as he was initiated in these rituals of political violence. "Learning by

participation”²⁰ and the support of Gheorghiu-Dej helped him to outclass this psychical discomfort that he felt. That also helped him identify and accept the system that he lived in.²¹

After he came back to Romania, Alexandru Drăghici’s career was on an ascendant path. After he filled the position of prime-secretary of the Bucharest RCP/RWP organization (1948-1950), he was sent to the Soviet Union in order to specialize and learn from their experience. When he came back to his country, he was appointed head of the Administrative Section with the mission of organizing it according to the similar structure from the mother-land.²² In December 1950, he was appointed deputy minister of Internal Affairs and director of the General Political Direction of MIA,²³ position in which he was responsible with the indoctrination of the Securitate officers. In the same year, he coordinated the deportation of the so-called “titoists” from Romania’s western border from 17th/18th of June 1951.²⁴ In May 1950, after the Ana Pauker – Vasile Luca- Teohari Georgescu group was culled, Drăghici was appointed minister of Internal Affairs, position that he held until 1965.²⁵ In this period, he also held position in the party apparatus. Among them, the most important were member of RCP/RWP (1948-1968), member of the Politic Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP (1955-1965).²⁶

The political context in which the testimonies were produced

In the moment of his death, March 1965, Gheorghiu-Dej hadn’t officially designated a successor. However, the rumors peddled in the memoirs of the former party members indicate that his apparent successor would have been Gheorghe Apostol. Although Dej saw him as a “not too bright” individual, he trusted him just because he knew he “would do absolutely everything he says”.²⁷ Apostol also held the position of prime secretary between 1953-1954, in the context following the death of Stalin. Yet, he was only the puppet of Gheorghiu-Dej, a means for him to have a better control over the party. Him being appointed as a successor is indicated even by Apostol in his unpublished memoirs that are kept today in the former archive of the Securitate. He mentions that right before Gheorghiu-Dej died, Ion Gheorghe Maurer, one of Dej close collaborators communicated the last wish of the dying leader. His last wish was that Apostol would be the next prime-secretary of the RCP. Even if what Apostol said was true, it didn’t make any difference. At 22nd of

March 1965, the Political Bureau has chosen the youngest of its members as prime-secretary. After this event, Apostol mentions that he accepted the choice of the Political Bureau, because any opposition from him “would have meant the beginning of internal fights for power in the Political Bureau, then in the Central Committee and then in the whole party”.²⁸

Regardless of Apostol’s decision, a fight for power was imminent and it would start in the following years. The protagonists of it were Nicolae Ceaușescu and Alexandru Drăghici. The beginning of this conflict is also mentioned in the surveillance documents of the Securitate. For example, an informant said in an informative note from 1965 that Ady Ladislau, former deputy of the Minister of Internal Affairs from the 50’s and his collaborators were talking about the fact that “there were dissensions between Ceaușescu N. and Al. Drăghici within the Political Bureau”.²⁹ The informative note shows that “in a not too far future, we will talk about the mistakes made by comrade Gh. Gheorghiu-Dej – meaning about the Danube-Black Sea Canal.”³⁰

After the plenum of April 1968 was over, I. Petrov, secretary III at the Embassy of the Soviet Union from Romania told to the Romanian communists that the rehabilitation of Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu and “the dismissal of Alexandru Drăghici from the positions that he held was to be expected”.³¹ Probably, his expectations were based on the way that Lavrentii Beria and his people were eliminated by Khrushchev after Stalin’s death. But in 1968, Romania’s political context was different and Drăghici and his collaborators didn’t have the same faith as their Soviet homologous.

At the same time, in the year that Ceaușescu was appointed as prime-secretary, according to Mary Ellen Fischer, he was “a relatively unknown figure inside and outside Romania”.³² Plus, as she observed, he “had formidable rivals for the top position”.³³ She mentions three conditions that would make a member of the communist elite eligible for the supreme position: 1. revolutionary prestige, 2. coercion or even terror, meaning control over the secret police and 3. foreign support.³⁴ Among the members of the Political Bureau, Alexandru Drăghici was the powerful adversary, because he had two of the three requirements. His revolutionary prestige was at least as big as Nicolae Ceaușescu’s, or even bigger. Plus, he had 13 years to make the Securitate apparatus loyal to him, by naming in leading positions people that were totally devoted to him. There is no doubt that he controlled the Securitate and that he could have used it in a fight over power.

The restricted space doesn't allow us to analyze the way in which this fight took place among the members of the communist elite. That is why we will limit to only present and examine the measures taken by Nicolae Ceaușescu in order to eliminate Alexandru Drăghici.³⁵

The fear that the head of a secret police inspires to the communist elite in a communist state is best illustrated in the case of Lavrentii Beria who, although after Stalin's death was one of the members of the collective leadership, was eliminated due to certain plans that were secretly organized by Stalin's other close collaborators.³⁶ Beria's elimination was an underground work, so this would also be the pattern for Alexandru Drăghici. Also, another common point of these two conflicts for power was the control over the secret police, as Mary Ellen Fischer mentions that it was an essential condition for a communist leader.

Therefore, in the next years, Nicolae Ceaușescu's primarily preoccupation was to eliminate his main contestants from the party and to win complete power, so that nobody could contest his authority. But before putting his plans into application, Ceaușescu made Alexandru Drăghici choose between his position on the state or party line. This was due to a decision adopted at the 9th Congress of the Communist Party, which stated that a party member could only hold position on party line or state line.³⁷ So, theoretically, this would exclude the accumulation of positions.

Drăghici gave up his position of minister of Internal Affairs, where he was replaced by Cornel Onescu, a close collaborator of Nicolae Ceaușescu, who owed his career to the client relation that he had with the new prime-secretary of the RCP. By keeping his positions in the party, he seemed to be consolidating his role. According to Pierre du Bois, at the 9th Congress from July, there were two members of the communist elite that held position in the main party structures. Those two were Nicolae Ceaușescu and Alexandru Drăghici, who were members of the Executive Committee of the Central Committee of the RCP, members of the Permanent Presidium of the CC of the RCP and secretaries of the CC of the RCP.

The French historian mentions that those positions that Drăghici held would indicate that he was the second in the party.³⁸ Also, from his position as a member of the Secretary, he still kept his control over the Securitate. Pierre du Bois identifies three stages of the fight for power between the two of them that ultimately led to the isolation and elimination of Drăghici. The first one took place in April 1966, when Drăghici received a new task as

member of the Secretariat, meaning coordinating the administrative reform, and the control over the Securitate activity was given to Vasile Patilineț. Drăghici's transfer from the Secretariat to the position of vice-president of the Government is indicated by Pierre Du Bois as the second stage. He describes this transfer as a sign that Drăghici's power was shaking. The Plenum of April 1968 is indicated as the last stage, when the almighty minister of Internal Affairs from the 50's lost all of his power and the position that he held and ended up being shortly excluded from the party.³⁹

Between these three stages that were identified by Pierre du Bois, Ceaușescu took a series of measures that had the ultimate goal of undermining Drăghici's main power resources, meaning the control over the Securitate. Therefore, in 1965 he created a secret commission that received the task of investigating the activity of the Securitate in the 50's. This task was given to Vasile Patilineț, deputy of the head of the Organizing Direction of the CC of the RCP between 1956 and 1965.⁴⁰ Also, he started his activity in November 1965 by studying Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu's penal file.⁴¹ In the next year, Grigorie Răduică, head of the Section of Work Control in the MAF/MIA and Justice of the CC of the RCP (Secția CC al PCR pentru controlul muncii în MFA/MAI și Justiție), would be appointed member of this commission. He mentions a few aspects of this commission's activity in his memoirs, which he published after 1989. He underlines that only Nicolae Ceaușescu, Vasile Patilineț and Cornel Onescu knew of its existence. According to Răduică, this commission worked in secret for two years, so that Alexandru Drăghici and others Securitate officers wouldn't find out about it. The task that they received from Ceaușescu was to document everything that was special in the archives of the communist regime.⁴² So, Ceaușescu has periodically been informed for two years by Patilineț about the activity of the commission and especially about what was hidden in the archives.

In 1967, the activity of the Minister of Internal Affairs was critiqued during the Plenum of June. But his critique was only a pretext of the reorganization of the Minister of Internal Affairs. After the Plenum, the Minister of Internal Affairs was reorganized and a Department of State Security, as a structure subordinate to MIA, was set up. This department was led by a Council of State Security, directly subordinated to the government and to the party.⁴³ Ion Stănescu, who was close with Ceaușescu, was appointed as its leader. Until that moment, he had filled the position of prime-secretary of the Oltenia regional party Committee (1964-1967).⁴⁴ In the same year, a party commission has officially been

set up. It received the task of researching certain cases, especially those in which the victims were members of the Communist Party. At its leadership was appointed the same Vasile Patilineț, and among its members were Gheorghe Stoica, Vasile Patilinet, Ion Popescu-Puturi, Nicolae Guina, and Ion Stănescu.⁴⁵ The reorganization of the Securitate would also continue in the next year. The new structure of the main repressive institution of the communist regime was finalized a few months before the Plenum of April 1968. Therefore, at 3rd of April 1968, the Securitate was out of the MIA's suborder and a new organism was created: the Council of State Security, which would be a "central organ of the state administration, separate from MIA".⁴⁶

The justifications of Alexandru Drăghici

In mid-April 1968, Vasile Patilineț, the president of the Party Commission handed to Nicolae Ceaușescu the written report. At Nicolae Ceaușescu's proposal, it was initially discussed during the Permanent Presidium of the Executive committee of the RCP that took place between 17th and 18th of April 1968.⁴⁷ After that, the report was brought into discussion again at the CC of the RCP plenum of 23rd-25th April 1968. With this occasion, were brought up the cases of Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu and Ștefan Foriș, former communist leaders that were murdered as a result of the fights for power from the first decade of the communist regime. It was the perfect opportunity to present Alexandru Drăghici as the main responsible for the abuses committed by the Securitate.

When all of this happened, the communist elite expected that Alexandru Drăghici would make his *samokritica*, as others who had been in his position did during the communist period. According to Arch Getty, *smokritica* was an instrument used by the party in order "to eliminate the people and to weaken the power of some regional satraps".⁴⁸ Such a ritual took place before the close doors of the party meetings and this goal was the comb-out of the undesirable ones, as well as finding a scapegoat for the "mistakes" of the past.⁴⁹ Besides that, such rituals were made "to pronounce a lesson to other below not to make the same mistake and to recognize the status and rights of the party receiving the apology (the leadership) to set the rules".⁵⁰

For his position as the head of the Securitate for 13 years, Alexandru Drăghici was the perfect candidate for the scapegoat role. At the same

time, the events from those days represented for him an occasion to reflect on his own past and to think about his acts.

After the reading of the report by Gheorghe Stoica in the Permanent Presidium meeting, Ceaușescu invited the guests to speak. Drăghici was the one to take the floor so that he could answer to the accusations brought to him. With this occasion, he presented his own justifications.

From the beginning of his pleading, he mentioned that this party meeting was a reckoning.⁵¹ He was convinced that the members of the Commission were instructed on how they should speak. He thought that all of it was made just to provoke him. After an exchange of lines with Nicolae Ceaușescu, he said that he will tell since when this reckoning against him started. At the same time, he summoned the guests to answer his questions and to tell where the people from the Pătrășcanu lot had been beaten.⁵² Through his questions, he was trying to show that the acts of which he was blamed took place before he was appointed as minister of Internal Affairs. He also mentioned that, as a politician, he has the right to defend himself. He made a comparison between his situation and the one of those on the death row, highlighting that even they had this right.⁵³

Regarding the crimes that were mentioned in the Commission's report, he indicated a few explanations. He said he knew that "mistakes" had been committed in that period. He asked the guests to answer his question: "but can we really do other politics different than others when we have the Soviet army here?"⁵⁴ He also reminded them that in that period none of them was against the slogan "the class fight sharpens day by day".⁵⁵ He advised them to think about what had been said during the party meetings, meaning that "the enemy is everywhere, that the enemy can appear under many forms, anytime and anywhere", how these indications were processed within the Securitate, "where people are put in direct fight with the enemy".

Comrades, I think a very grave thing is being done, when the base report is not put in the context of that time. Let's remember that every one of us not only say, but we processed that the class fight sharpens, that the enemy is everywhere, that the enemy can appear under different forms, anytime and anywhere. Imagine if that would have been processed within the party, how they used to do it within the Securitate, where people were put in direct fight with the enemy.⁵⁶

Some of Drăghici's explanations for the facts that he was accused of were connected to the circumstances and the conditions from the past. Another explanation given by him was about the threats to the stability of communist regime. This way, he tried to go against the accusations of his party colleagues, reminding them that the most important of his actions had been vital for the survival of the communist regime. He described himself as a savior of the regime. Among his most successful actions he indicated the liquidation of "the bands from the mountains", meaning the clandestine organizations that fought against the communists. According to his statements, there were thousands of them in the mountains of Romania. That is why he thought that the results of his activity as minister of Internal Affairs and head of the Securitate were good because he managed to "liquidate the last remains of the ruling class".

In general, we needed a few years of tight work from the MIA bodies, as well as from the Militia and the Securitate troupes to liquidate these bands. There were thousands of clandestine organizations within the country territory. Within this, mistakes and exaggerations had been made. The comrade Gheorghe Stoica was talking about the peasants, but all of this things were done according to the existing laws, and even though there were certain overreactions concerning the operative power, the results were good, because the last remains of the exploiting class have been liquidated. Sure, there were misdemeanors too, others were beaten too.⁵⁷

There were a series of mistakes, as he called beating the political prisoners, which were a heritage of the period in which the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Securitate were led by his predecessor, Teohari Georgescu. Alexandru Drăghici highlighted that in those years the officers of Securitate found it normal to use the beatings in order to obtain confessions from those that were investigated. He asked those that were present if "anyone was arrested at the police without getting beaten". At the same time, he denied the accusation brought to him in the report of the commission which stated he was just a tool (un instrument) of Gheorghiu-Dej. He also stated that he wasn't a milksop (papa lapte) and that he stroke the enemy as many time as it was needed.

It has been told here about my instrument role. I wasn't much of an instrument. It is true, it was a new job, which I did not know, I had never in my life been a minister of Interior Affairs, I was making efforts to learn the specific of the work, but I didn't comply either in the role of

instrument of milksop. [...] Mistakes were made, but because of the lack of growth of the apparatus, of the tardy conditions of our apparatus, from lack of qualification of the apparatus, which was used from the old time to work with beating.⁵⁸ [...] I have inherited an unfortunate situation: you couldn't get anything done back then, except with beatings. I ask, was it really someone arrested by the police without getting beaten? When the conditions themselves were of such nature that the enemy had to be hit, we hit the enemy.⁵⁹

By refusing to make his *samokritica*, Alexandru Drăghici defied and provoked Nicolae Ceaușescu, trying at the same time to send the message that all of the accusations against him were fabricated by him and his team. Also, Drăghici kept his defying attitude towards the general secretary after the Party Plenum from April 1968 was over. After this was done with, the former minister had to appear in front of the same party commission in order to response to the accusations that were brought to him during the Plenum.

In a note that was probably written by Vasile Patilineț, this behavior is described. The document called "Drăghici's attitude towards the abuses that he has done", he presents his main reactions:

Defying attitude towards the commission members, refusal to answer certain questions, trying to intimidate by showing his so called merits: 'I have liquidated the legionary resistance', 'I have liquidated the counter-revolutionary groups', 'I have defeated the open opposition of the reaction', trying to minimize the gravity of his abuses and the illegal things that he has done.⁶⁰

Also, he reiterated his position from the Plenum that lies have been told during those party meetings and that "those who have taken the floor had scraps of paper prepared for them, being asked to read them".⁶¹ Not least, he told the members that if they want to talk about murders, then they should talk about Focșani and about the killing of the peasants from this locality by Nicolae Ceaușescu during the collectivization.⁶² As it was to be expected, the commission refused to engage with Drăghici in such a dialogue. Its members limited themselves to discussing only those cases that had a connection, in a way or another, to Alexandru Drăghici.

The assassination of Ibrahim Sefit aka The Turk

During the CC of the RCP Plenum of April 1968 and during the ulterior party meetings, several cases of murders committed in the 50's were discussed. Among them, the one that stands out is the assassination of Ibrahim Serafit, which was investigated with scrupulosity by the members of the party commission. The case is eloquent for highlighting such a common practice in those days, but also for the way in which Alexandru Drăghici was thinking. At the same time, it also shows us how the orders of the minister were perceived by his subordinates and why they were so kin to fulfill them. Unlike the party meetings of April and May 1968, not only was Alexandru Drăghici been interviewed about this assassination, but he has also been confronted with the former executants of his orders.

Ibrahim Sefit was a common law prisoner in the interwar period and was locked-up in the same penitentiaries where the communists were. But his relation with the communist wasn't connected only by the environment that they were in. It goes beyond that. He used to do certain services for them, which got him closer to the members of this movement.⁶³ After 23rd of August 1944, he moved to Sibiu and he took advantage of the connection that he had with some communist leaders. The documents suggest that he also held a leading position on the County Seat from Sibiu. In December 1954, Alexandru Drăghici was in this town.⁶⁴ While he was at the center of the party district committee, someone entered the room. It was "a citizen and his wife, who made a big scene about hearing that someone from the leadership came and he wanted to talk to him, to confront him". Ibrahim was a big guy, as the minister of Internal Affairs describes him, so it was easy for him to get past Drăghici's bodyguards. Apparently, the local heads of the party complaint to him by the troubles started by Ibrahim. After asking for more information, the officers of Securitate from Sibiu told Drăghici that there is nothing that they can do about Ibrahim. They informed him that every time that they would arrest him, he would be set free. According to Drăghici's statement, he ordered to Briceag to "finish with that trash over there". Afterwards, when they told him that Ibrahim "was liquidated", his answer was "very well".⁶⁵

Ghergheli Francisc, head of the Inspectorate Sibiu in 1968, has presented a story that is partially different from the one that Alexandru Drăghici has told. According to him, that year, Ibrahim Sefit came to the party main office to talk to the minister. But the minister refused to see him, so Ibrahim "made some offensive allusions about him", which only

made Alexandru Drăghici very angry. After this episode, the minister summoned the head of the Securitate Sibiu and ordered him to liquidate the Turk.⁶⁶ Gergheli Francisc also mentioned that after they received the order to liquidate him or to “get rid of that disgrace”, a team formed by five officers of Securitate Sibiu led by Nicolae Briceag actioned like this:

They hogtied Ibrahim, got him into a car at 10 o'clock at night, they took him to the forest between Șura Mare and Slimnic, got him off the car and executed him with automates and pistols. 32 shots were shot at him [...].⁶⁷

Nicolae Briceag mentioned in the declaration given in front of the same commission that while they were transporting him, one of the “guys” came up with the next idea, that it seemed a good one to him: “he would escape from under the escort on the road and he would be executed”.⁶⁸ After they committed the crime, the colonel Gheorghe Crăciun, deputy director of the Securitate Sibiu, went to the place of the assassination. Out there, he asked the executants to agree on their statements. He also says that he received the order from his direct superior, Aurel Moiş that the documents must say that Ibrahim Sefit “was shot while he was trying to run from under the escort”. At the same time “the name of the comrade Drăghici should not appear in the documents”.⁶⁹

In order to understand why Drăghici's order was interpreted as a “license to kill”, it is necessary to present a short biography of Nicolae Briceag and one of the repressive practices for that period. Nicolae Briceag was no stranger to such methods, and the way in which they “got rid” of Ibrahim Sefit was quite frequently used in the époque.

Born on 12th of November 1916 in the Negreni village, Argeș county, Nicolae Briceag was an orphan of both parents and he was raised in an orphanage from Dej. Here, he graduated 4 elementary classes and 4 theoretical profile high school classes. In 1931, he abandoned his studies and got a job as an apprentice at a tailor shop, becoming himself a tailor. He worked in this domain until 1944. In the interwar period he had contact with the communist movement, participating to the meetings of the “Red Help” (Ajutorul Rosu) organization. In 1944, while he was concentrated in the Someș County, he was arrested for communist propaganda. He was shortly liberated as a result of the intervention of the Soviet Commandment. In April 1945, he started his career of policeman as head of the Securitate Dej.⁷⁰

At the beginning of the 50's, in the Securitate region Cluj, where he used to work, more peasants had been assassinated as a result of the orders given by Colonel Mihai Patriciu. Because of the orders that they received, Nicolae Briceag and others officers of Securitate arrested more "chiaburi", who were taught to be opposed to the collectivization or who were described in the documents as opponents of this political decision and so they executed them. The method that they used was the next one: the peasants were forced to get in one of the Securitate cars, they were taken at the border of the village and executed. The motive given was that they escaped from under the escort. The executants were instructed to declare in their reports that the peasants were murdered because they tried to escape or even tried to attack the officers:

You get him in the car, you take him nearby their birth village, you hit them to the ground and you report [that] they tried to escape and that they jumped our organs when we wanted to go with him to show us where he hold his arms [...].⁷¹

The same happened in Sibiu in 1954. The case of Ibrahim Sefit shows that the act of killing had become a routine for the officers of Securitate, and murder was, as Alexander Hinton would argue, part of their job.⁷² At the same time, the routinization is indicated by different researchers as one of the conditions that facilitated the crimes that were politically motivated, alongside the authorization and the dehumanizing of the victim.⁷³

In May 1968, the officers of Securitate that assassinated Ibrahim Sefit the Turk were interrogated. Being asked by the members of the Commission why did he execute an illegal order, Nicolae Briceag told them that the regulations of the Securitate stipulated that "the order of the minister is law for the subordinates".⁷⁴ This way, he felt authorized to commit such a crime. At the same time, during his interrogation, Drăghici was surprised why the members of the commission gave such an importance to a thing that was "nothing", as he labeled the murder of Ibrahim Sefit by his people.⁷⁵

Most probably on a regular basis, nobody would have cared about it. But now, their interest was determined by the possibility of sending the minister to trial not for his "merits", that being murdering the ideological enemies, but for an act that was no different than any other killing which the party would see as necessary for its wellbeing. The fact is that the party actually saw the murders of those who were considered "enemies"

as part of his “merits”. But they chose something that was unauthorized by the party as a means to an end.

Sending Drăghici to trial was discussed during the Permanent Presidium meeting from 19th of September 1968 and it was backed up by Gheorghe Stoica. But not everyone agreed with this decision. Maurer was against the option, seeing that in this case, they have to let the prescription intervene. In his opinion, “the best solution was to let things go towards the prescription from a juristic point of view, to not take a decision, to say that he will not be sent to trial and to take political actions against the man. There are just a few months until the regulation”.⁷⁶

At the same time, he highlighted that sending Drăghici to trial would reveal “a series of bad things” from which the RCP would have nothing to gain. He also said that such a trial would only take place in a secret manner, like Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu’s trial did. And a new similar trial, after they would remove Drăghici, which would have the citizens convinced that they were doing the same thing.⁷⁷

The political perpetrators’ collective testimonies

After the Plenum of April 1968 finished, the measure that had been taken was discussed in all the party organizations. In general, a member nominated by the party leadership read the resolution, which was followed up by discussions. During these discussions, the participants would express their indignation towards the crimes that had been committed and the abuses mentioned in the document, and also their “total agreement” with the resolution and their support for Nicolae Ceaușescu. From all of these meetings, the most relevant for this study are those that took place within the Securitate. The participants, officers of Securitate, had produced then an important corpus of documents that allow us today to analyze their representations of their pasts and of what they have done. At the same time, they uncovered their own crimes or the ones of their colleagues.

Hereinafter, I will examine the meeting that took place at the main office of the Securitate between 3rd and 6th of May 1968. But the participants were not just simple officers. They were the leaders of the Securitate. The party meeting was open by General Grigorie Răduică, member of the party commission. In 1968 he was appointed as deputy president of the State Security Council.⁷⁸ He mentioned that the object of that meeting was to discuss the party documents so that “such abuses,

illegal things and crimes would never be possible in the future, as it happened in the past”.⁷⁹

Their testimonies emphasize a few leitmotifs for their actions. One which has been repeated by most of them was identifying Alexandru Drăghici as “the scapegoat” for the abuses that were incriminated by the party. Through this portrayal, the officers of Securitate were trying to diminish their own responsibility for the crimes that they had committed. This way, they would put all of their blame on Drăghici’s shoulders. At the same time, most of them admitted that they have made “some mistakes” or even abuses. For example, Colonel Gergheli Francisc, head inspector of Securitate Sibiu in 1968, declared that

We are old officers. Every one of us has done some abuses. We weren’t perfect. But when the party demands us to be sincere, we have to be sincere and reestablish the truth.⁸⁰

Constantin Ioana, head of Securitate Cluj mentioned that in the 50’s it was common to imagine and create an internal enemy. He also showed that he and the others officers felt encouraged and learned to create enemies, believing that every person could potentially be one.⁸¹ As he declared, in that period, their activity was evaluated by the number of arrests and so that is the reason that he reiterates for arresting innocent people so easily “in the basis of some information that would lack reason”.⁸² The existence of such contests among the officers of Securitate was also mentioned by others participants. For example, Victor Burlacu, head of Securitate Constanța, declared:

The perpetration of such abuses was made possible by the fact that in the given period the results of our work were appreciated by the number of arrests, and not by their quality, and also by the fact that the arrest was easily approved by a single person.⁸³

Colonel Dumitru Borsan, director of 1st Division of the Securitate also spoke of these contests. But he mentioned that at the origin of them was the fear of not being labeled as class enemies. The officer suggests that their eventual refusal to fulfill his orders would have led to their arrest. Also, this fear also represented for them a stimulant to do illegal things. This impetus was so strong, that not only were they racing each other in doing them, but also they would try and show who could treat the

class enemies in the most brutal way. Borsan concluded that this was the atmosphere within the Securitate.

If someone would have dared then to say that what you're doing isn't right, he would have been simply catalogued that he makes a covenant with the class enemy. I am reporting that there is a certain competition in committing illegal things, in kidnapping as much as possible from the street, in acting brutal towards them, in showing through this the spirit of class enemy. This is the atmosphere from the Securitate.⁸⁴

General Neagu Cosma admitted that he and his colleagues have done a few abuses. He highlighted that for him, as an officer of Securitate, it's painful to confess this. He also said: "but no matter how painful and sad it is, we have to do it with all of our strength".⁸⁵ According to Neagu Cosma, these crimes and abuses were possible because they let themselves be dragged by people with bad intentions. The confession of a murder, and not the crime itself, was seen by the general as a shameful act:

In which measure we let ourselves be trained into making illegal things and abuses, and with regret, I have to report here, that even I personally and the unit I am a part of and our whole body let itself be dragged by people, who weren't irresponsible, but had bad intentions, people who weren't supposed to be in charge of this body. We let ourselves be dragged into following such orders, which contravened the general interests of our state. We simply embarrassed ourselves. We are ashamed not only to confess, because it is very hurtful to confess that you have done such abuses, but we're almost ashamed to confess that we are a part of the Securitate.⁸⁶

Neagu Cosma also offered another motive for why those crimes have been committed. According to him, there was no party or even civil control over the Securitate organs. This lack of civil control can be interpreted starting from the concept called "the power of the bystanders". According to Ervin Staub, „active opposition by bystanders can reactivate the perpetrators' moral values and also cause them to be concerned about retaliation”.⁸⁷ But at that time, there wasn't an active opposition against the practices of the Securitate.

Two of Alexandru Drăghici's main collaborators, Colonel Gheorghe Crăciun and General Alexandru Demeter, had participated to this meeting. Alexandru Demeter was head of the Cadre Direction. The former collaborator of Drăghici was in a special situation. He was involved in the

main murder incriminated at the Plenum of the CC of April 1968. During the trial of Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu, he was one of the assessors who voted for his death sentence. Demeter insisted in his interventions from the party meeting that he was tricked.

I gave too much credit to the arranged evidences administrated in this trial. I will never forgive myself for the situation in which I was put. Trust me comrades that I was deceived, my good faith was deceived that I am serving a right cause.⁸⁸

Also, he indicated as possible justifications for his acts the pressure that everybody felt because of the presence of the Soviet councilors. This situation was characteristic to all the other communist countries during the times of the so called show trials.⁸⁹ During his interventions, he described a few repressive practices that were very common in that period, such as the teaspoon order, which meant that a person could have been arrested if the evidences against them could metaphorically fit on the edge of a teaspoon.

It was the counter-revolution from Hungary in 1956. It also had certain influences in our country. Some hostile elements rose their heads, we were taken care of in time. The workers, the honest people, our bodies did their jobs and took care of them. After this work, no justification can be found. After a years or so came an order from Draghici, which was delivered by Pintilie, which remained in everybody's conscience «the teaspoon order», meaning that if you have just a little bit of material on an element, he must be immediately arrested, investigated and sent to justice. Hundreds of people were sent to justice.⁹⁰

Demeter also showed how the arrested ones were convinced by the officers of Securitate through persuasive methods, euphemism for torture, to accept the role of enemies of the regime. In fact, he highlighted that they created enemies “artificially”. Just like the others officers, he made a distinction between the enemies that were created artificially and the real ones, who were shot as soon as they raised their heads. He describes the ones that were unrightfully “repressed” as persons that unenlightened by the communist ideology. In this case, the term of “repressed” was just another euphemism for the political violence used by the officers of Securitate. It was part of the way in which they expressed themselves.

Who were most of them? Workers who were unhappy with certain life conditions from the enterprise, unhappy peasants who would manifest in one way or another their opinions concerning the foundation of the APCs (Cooperativă Agricolă de Producție). And what is extremely grave, is that part of our officers, some of them have done some penal investigations that they have influenced even the people that thought they have done nothing wrong against the state, to eventually think that they have done bad. I was at the prison in Galati. There were a big number of peasants. How are you doing, old man, why are you here, what have they put you in here for? «For talking». Another one asks, still «for talking». When I ask one of them, peasant too, he says: «For counter-revolutionary activity held against the state security», formula that was stereotypical to the inquirer. How's that, old man, who told you that, what is that? That's what mister officer of Securitate taught me to say because he knows better, he is literate, he says. That is what is painful, that they created enemies artificially. We presented unenlightened people as enemies.⁹¹

Gheorghe Crăciun was the director of more directions of Securitate in the 50's, such as head of the Carpatin operative group (Grupul Operativ Carpatin). The main mission of this group was the liquidation of the anticommunist resistance group led by Ioan Gavrilă Ogoranu. At the same time, at the end of the 50's and the beginning of the 60's, under Alexandru Drăghici's order, he organized the reeducation of the prisoners from the Aiud penitentiary.

During this meeting, the colonel of Securitate presented more justifications for the crimes that he and his colleagues have committed. One of those was their incapability of saying "no" to the orders of Alexandru Drăghici. He described himself as weak, incapable to say "I'm not doing that. It's not right, no". Crăciun also mentioned that he hid the crimes committed by Drăghici because he wanted to be liked by his boss. So he did whatever his boss told him, because, as an officer, he had to follow his orders. Those orders were given by the minister, his boss, a member of the Political Bureau.

If it is being told to me, like the comrades from the leadership and the comrades from here told to General Demeter, about subservience, about cowardness, about that, I agree. They suit me. I didn't know how to be a man or a party member, dignified officer and say: «I won't do that. It is not right, no.» I thought, I stupidly thought, but that's how I thought that I have in front of me an Internal Affairs minister, member of the Political Bureau

and the positions that he held. And I follow his orders and I defended him in the dirty case of which was talked today.⁹²

This was also one of the reasons that determined them to commit “such crimes”. Likewise, wishing to be liked by their superiors was one of the characteristics of the perpetrators.⁹³ The need of being liked by their bosses represented most probably a stimulant for the crimes that they had committed. Even if he use some justifications that are similar to the one used by the perpetrators of the Holocaust, they are used differently. For example, Christopher Browning mentioned that some of the policemen that refused to kill Jews during World War II declared during their trials that they couldn’t do it just because they were too weak.⁹⁴ In the case of the Romanian communism, Crăciun said that he was too weak to refuse committing the crimes.

His testimony also shows why the officers of Securitate couldn’t find the strength to go against an illegal order. Crăciun also mentioned that they couldn’t even speak in front of Drăghici. It was like they would freeze as soon as he entered the room. Even more, he was jealous if the minister would not invite him to dinner or if he wouldn’t honor him through a response to the cards that he would sent to the minister.

We knew him when he stepped among us here. The way we looked at him and the way we moved and the way we could not talk in front of him. I was wrong to see in him something that he was not. There are comrades, maybe still here, some of which are not any longer, who had very close relations with him. I was jealous that he didn’t invite me to dinner, that he didn’t honor me to a card I gave him.⁹⁵

Therefore, their accept to execute the orders that they had received without any hesitation or remorse can be seen as an attempt to gain his respect, or showing that they deserved to be honored by their boss. Also, Alexander Hinton mentions that one of the reasons Khmer Rouge cadres were willing to «destroy» their enemies was to gain face and honor”.⁹⁶ Would such an affirmation also stand in the case of the Romanian officers of Securitate?

The authority of the minister was overwhelming. That is why none of the officers was capable of standing up to him and to refuse an order to kill from him. As Zimbardo mentions, “human beings are capable of totally abandoning their humanity for a mindless ideology, to follow and

then exceed the orders of charismatic authorities to destroy everyone they label as «the Enemy»”.⁹⁷

Even if the officers talked about those “mistakes” and their “abuses” during the party meetings, Ceaușescu and his team didn’t have even for a second the intention of encouraging real debate over the crimes from the Gheorghiu-Dej era. They only wanted to remove Drăghici’s collaborators from the Securitate and to humiliate them. At a certain point, even Drăghici’s accusers thought that maybe they went too far with the allegations. They were probably afraid that the employees of the Securitate would no longer fulfill the tasks given by the party.

At a meeting with the officers from Galați that took place on 31st of May 1968, Vasile Patilineț told them that the “great trials that took place in the period when the power was taken over and of the fight over power” were not illegal. He labeled those trials as “just”, saying that none of them would be “revised”.⁹⁸ He sent the message that the hopes of the former counterrevolutionary prisoners were not realistic and that some of them didn’t understand the significance of condemning the abuses committed by the Securitate. At the meeting from Galați, Patilineț said that he didn’t consider the officers responsible for what happened in the past and that the whole activity of the Securitate could not be confused with a few people. At the same time, he also mentioned that the activity of the Securitate would continue as long as there will still be imperialism, and that the number of “abused” person was very low. There were about “30 something cases”, as he highlighted.⁹⁹

Conclusions

The analysis of the testimonies produced by the officers of Securitate in 1968 opens a window toward a world where their activity was evaluated by the number of arrests, even though they would be without reason. It didn’t matter if they were guilty or not. The justifications of the officers for the crimes that they have committed highlight two main aspects. The main justifications of Alexandru Drăghici are circumstances and conditions from the past, such as the presence of the Soviet councilors and the internal threats for the communist regime. That is why he perceives his actions not as criminal, but as good ones. The motive was that through his actions, he eliminated the last remains of the exploiting classes. That is why he

portrays himself as a savior of the regime by not taking any responsibility for the committed crimes.

The only thing that he would admit to was that mistakes have been made. But he didn't see himself as guilty. He would only blame his predecessor for the inherited situation and mostly for the fact that the employees of the Securitate were accustomed to use terror in order to obtain confessions. He was the one that introduced legality, as he sees himself. At the same time, killing a person, as was the case of Ibrahim Sefit aka the Turk, was "nothing". He wouldn't understand why this case was used by the commission, especially because he had defied him.

On the other hand, his associates and different officers of Securitate admitted in April that they have made "a few mistakes". They would relativize their crimes by using euphemisms for describing them. That way, killing a person wasn't seen as a crime, but as a mistake that made because they've let themselves be dragged by a person with bad intentions, who has betrayed their trust. At the same time, they portrayed themselves as innocent by blaming it all on Alexandru Drăghici. By analyzing their confessions, he can also tell the main characteristics of the political crimes: authorizing or encouraging them to kill, routinizing and describing the victims as enemies of the regime.

NOTES

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85 *Ibidem*, ff. 14-15.
86 *Ibidem*, f. 14.
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FILM AND THEORIES OF INTERPERSONAL UNDERSTANDING

Abstract

The paper discusses the issue of interpersonal understanding by comparing ordinary and cinematographic experience. Recent theories of interpersonal understanding turn out to be either inconclusive or insufficient to account for the heterogeneous ways in which we get mental and emotional states of other persons. The paper advances a view of the film medium by drawing on Stanley Cavell, which is reinforced by Wittgenstein's and Merleau-Ponty's convergent accounts of cinematographic perception. Against this background, interpersonal understanding turns out to be permeated by the expressivity of human appearance – something easily overlooked by the mentioned theories, which is yet brought forward most perspicuously by cinema.

Keywords: interpersonal understanding, human appearance, expressivity, cinematographic experience, Cavell, Wittgenstein, Merleau-Ponty

The notion of interpersonal understanding has been central in the recent development of theories of cognition. The notion is meant to cover the ways in which one gets other persons' mental or emotional states (from intentions to beliefs, from feelings to desires). The mainstream theories of cognition address the issue of interpersonal understanding mostly in the case of ordinary experience. Their question is thus how one understands the mental or emotional states of one's fellows in concrete situations: how I get that the person with whom I am sharing the dinner intends to reach for a glass of wine; how I get that another person is joyous or angry. Theorists of cognition often invoke the works of Wittgenstein and Merleau-Ponty as valuable resources in the development of their approaches.¹

The present paper aims at broadening the investigatory field of interpersonal understanding by addressing a comparative case study: cinematographic experience. In cinema, the question persists: How does a spectator get the fear of a film protagonist? How do I empathise or sympathise with the protagonist? Both Wittgenstein and Merleau-Ponty

address this question in the case of cinematographic experience as well. But their insights thereof are virtually unknown to theorists of cognition, and little explored even by scholars of the two philosophers.²

Addressing the issue of interpersonal understanding in both the ordinary and the cinematographic case will turn out to be illuminating in at least two ways. On the one hand, this approach can test some underlying assumptions of theories of cognition. On the other hand, it can shed light on the medium of cinema, and specifically on the ways in which a film spectator engages with a film protagonist. Overall, this paper explores the ways in which cinema can be informative and reformatory for accounts of interpersonal understanding more generally.

The itinerary will be as follows. The *first section* will unveil some epistemological assumptions of some theories of cognition that address interpersonal understanding. At the same time, those assumptions will be put into an incipient dialogue with cinema, particularly to its genres. This will enable the view that those theories of cognition rather respond to specific cases of interpersonal understanding, and that they fall short from doing justice to other cases. But one may regard the present approach as an attempt to challenge – by way of fiction – models of interpersonal understanding in the real world. So the *second section* will resort to an account of cinema by focusing on its medium, by drawing on Stanley Cavell's insistence that film is not merely like reality, but is made with bits and pieces of reality, including real people. Thus conceived of, film brings forward certain aspects of the human appearance which theories of cognition may easily underestimate or overlook when addressing the issue of interpersonal understanding. The *third section* will suggest that Wittgenstein and Merleau-Ponty anticipate and reinforce a Cavellian conception of the cinematographic medium. Against that background, it will turn out that among the crucial aspects of interpersonal understanding are the expressivity of the voice and of the face (drawing on Wittgenstein) and the style of human conduct (drawing on Merleau-Ponty).³

1. Theories of Cognition and Genres of Film

Two recent, influential, and mutually competing theories of cognition are the so-called “theory-theory” and “simulation theory”. Each of them is informed by diverse experimental work. Here, however, I do not aim at discussing their empirical support, but rather their epistemological

assumptions when it comes to their addressing the issue of interpersonal understanding. A further recent and equally influential paradigm, meant to challenge the aforementioned theories, is the so-called “4E-cognition”: cognition as embodied, embedded, enactive and extended. A closer focus on these models is in order.

The focus I propose is somewhat unusual. The debate on interpersonal understanding has been long carried out in the field of ordinary experience. Whereas I want to look at these theories through the lens of cinema, that is, by first appealing to genres of film. Such an approach presents those theories in a new light, namely, as responding to specific instances of interpersonal understanding. In doing so, theorists turn out to easily overlook the specificity of the instances informing their models. And thus, they may easily take, as it were, the exception for the rule. In their turn, film genres can also be understood as addressing specific instances of interpersonal understanding and misunderstanding. However, by contrast to theories, film genres acknowledge the specificity of those instances. Indeed, they give significance to exceptionality.

Theory-theory and the cinema of suspicion

The model of theory-theory approaches the issue of interpersonal understanding as a primarily intellectual or rational relation between persons. The model is equally informed by cognitive and developmental psychology, thus aiming at explaining also the ways in which children evolve in getting the mental and emotional states of the grownups around them. This is not merely a scientific model, but further, one which addresses interpersonal relations in ordinary experience *as if* they were scientific practices. Indeed, proponents of theory-theory regard not only grownups but already children as a sort of scientists who develop various paradigms regarding the minds of others. Thus, children and grownups would revise those paradigms throughout their lives pretty much in the way in which scientific revolutions refine or replace older insights with new ones. The basic assumption is that each of us entertains a sort of theory about the mental and emotional states of other persons. A theory informed by previous interactions with others, a theory which can be revised in light of novel interactions.⁴

Now, theory-theory seems to mould interpersonal understanding in the shape of the instance of interpersonal suspicion. That is the instance of my scrutinizing the other and bargaining with myself regarding, for

example, the clues of fear given by his or her behaviour. As if the last word regarding others' mental and emotional states does not really belong to them, but to me. So theory-theory at work would render us not that much as everyday scientists, but detectives in restless action. This manner of relating to one another is consecrated by the masters of suspicion in the cinema. Alfred Hitchcock may immediately come to one's mind, with his crime and detective stories emblematic for the English tradition. Or his French rival, Henri-Georges Clouzot, who explores suspicion not only as the stance of the professional investigator, but also as permeating relations of friendship and marriage.⁵

One lesson to be drawn regarding suspicion from its masters in the cinema is that it feeds not so much interpersonal understanding, as interpersonal suspense. Against this background, if theory-theory indeed accounted for our basic relation to others, it would mean we rarely really understand one another. I could merely suspect that my friend is angry or afraid, but would rarely be quite sure of it. The others could merely give me clues of their feelings and intentions, and I would constantly take those clues as potentially misleading. I would charge the others with the endless possibilities open by my own inferences. So I would end up – in the final analysis of theory-theory – not with understanding the other, but with understanding too much. Perhaps understanding too much of myself, if I further inquired into why I think what I think about the other.

Simulation theory and romantic drama

The competing model of theory-theory is the one of simulation theory. The latter is supposed to counteract the former's alleged over-estimation of intellect and reasoning in interpersonal understanding. Simulation theory is thus meant to accommodate more adequately our understanding of mental states (such as beliefs), and also of emotional states (such as desires). The underlying assumption of this model is that interpersonal understanding involves a form of mutual attunement. That is, in order for me to get my fellow's fear, I need to some extent to feel it as well. I need not think or reason that I need to feel so, but rather my feeling is supposed to be induced by my simply perceiving the other feeling thus and so. The term "simulation" is thus somewhat misleading insofar as it suggests some active work on my part, some attempt to put myself in the shoes of the other. At the same time, the terms also gives in an assumption that some

kind of affective harmony is miraculously established between persons, insofar as they get one another's mental and emotional states.⁶

The stumbling block of simulation theory, I suggest, is the instance of acknowledged, and yet unshared, love. This instance is brought forward most perspicuously by the film genre of romantic drama. From the earliest Hollywood variations on the theme, to the most intricate ones in the cinema of Ingmar Bergman: the dramatic dimension of the romantic drama is precisely that one can well enough get the love of the other without sharing it. A lesson to be drawn from this genre may be the following: if there is something miraculous about feeling love or in love, one's understanding that someone feels so need not wait for the miracle of one's feeling the same.

Perhaps a further, valuable insight that simulation theory could draw from the film genre of romantic drama is that emotional attunement between persons is neither a given, nor an easily achieved, state. And that we need not be emotional mirrors of one another in order to understand emotional states of other persons.

The analogy argument and films with children

The common conceptual root of theory-theory and simulation theory is the so-called "argument from analogy". It was famously articulated by John Stuart Mill and revived in the 20th century by Bertrand Russell.⁷ In its initial form, the argument is purely conceptual or logical, thus not a theory informed by empirical investigation. The crux of this line of thought is the possibility that a symmetry be established between the one entertaining a mental or emotional state and the one understanding it. Accordingly, I understand the other's mental state (e.g. anger), by drawing on my own mental state in similar situations. I perceive the other frowning, or even smashing things to pieces. I appeal to such reactions I may have had in the past and to the circumstances in which I had them. I identify a mental or emotional state which accompanied those reactions. And I ascribe that state to the other on the basis of his or her reactions I now witness. The underlying assumption of the argument – which is inherited by both theory-theory and simulation theory – is the robust commensurability of experiences entertained by different persons. Indeed, both that argument and those theories rely on the thought that each and every individual goes, sooner or later, through a series of archetypal circumstances. And that it is in virtue of each of us having responded similarly (mentally and

emotionally) to similar circumstances that we come to understand those states in the first place.

What this underlying assumption does not easily accommodate is precisely the eventuality that our past experiences may be not only dissimilar, but even incompatible. In that respect one challenge for the argument from analogy is intergenerational communication. This instance and its difficulties are emblematically addressed by film makers who employ children as actors. That can be seen most clearly in Andrei Tarkovsky's early films (e.g. *The Steamroller and the Violin* from 1961 or *Ivan's Childhood* from 1962). Such movies give significance to the asymmetry of experience between children and grownups. Indeed, Tarkovsky himself often invokes a trigger of his film making to be the difficulty of passing experience from one generation to another. The difficulty is addressed also by a large part of the filmography of Abbas Kiarostami (esp. his early educational films and his later *Where is the Friend's Home* from 1990). One source of the power of these films is that they recognize and elaborate upon the obstacles towards interpersonal understanding presented by experiential asymmetries between individuals. Our difficulty in getting the children's anger at a world in war. Or their difficulties in getting the anger of grownups, the anger exhibited in situations when children seem to be most well-intended.

4E cognition and cinematographic perception

Like the analogy argument they inherit, theory-theory and simulation theory thus account for interpersonal understanding in a peculiar way. These models turn out to be informed by particular instances of our getting other persons' mental or emotional states and to fall short from doing justice to other instances. Through its genres, cinema in its turn addresses such instances. But it shows *why* and it explores *how* these instances so often present us with difficulties in getting the other's intentions and beliefs, or feelings and desires.

The recent paradigm of 4E cognition emerged as an alternative to the previous models of interpersonal understanding. By contrast to those models, the new paradigm is meant to be holistic, insofar as it invokes a series of factors taken to be equally relevant to our understanding of each other in ordinary life. One is *embodiment*: not just the fact that we all have a body, but that bodily processes accompany and sustain cognitive processes. The second is *embeddedness*: the fact that instances

of interpersonal understanding are situated in the environments and situations we share. The third is *enaction*: among others, the fact that humans understand each other's mental states by engaging in collective actions, be they more obviously active (like protesting) or less so (like sharing a dinner). The fourth is *extension*: facts such as the one that those actions have a more or less sedimented history, being practices we have learned from one another.⁸

It was recently suggested that the 4E paradigm can aptly be applied to cinema, in an attempt to account not for its genres, but already for cinematographic perception. That is, to account for the ways in which a film spectator gets mental and emotional states of film protagonists.⁹ However, there are some challenges for such an attempt.

Prima facie, the factors for interpersonal understanding invoked by 4E cognition seem to either not hold, or at least to call for revision and refinement, in the study case of film. Take environmental embeddedness, for instance. On the one hand, the film spectator and the film protagonist cannot be said to share the same environment. At least not in the sense in which members of the audience can be said to share the environment of the cinema house or any other situation where a screening takes place. On the other hand, that the film spectator does get, for instance, the anger or the joy of the protagonist is the very fact established and reinforced by virtually each and every screening.

Or take the factor of collective action. Let us focus on the case of a dangerous situation presented in the cinema. The film protagonist may entertain fear in facing the dangerous situation and take action, for instance by fleeing or fighting back. Now, the film spectator can well get the fear of the protagonist, and even feel it to a greater or lesser extent. But fleeing or fighting back is something that film spectators seldom do. That may be an exceptional case encountered with an audience unfamiliar with movies. Or the exceptional case of some horror films. Generally, however, film spectators get the mental or emotional states of film protagonists without engaging in the latter's actions.

It seems that, in order to get a better grip on our ways of understanding film protagonists, a closer and more fine-grained look at cinema is in order. That is, a focus not merely on the narratives and genres of film, but rather on their medium or media. To this purpose, some valuable insights are made available by Stanley Cavell, an author who shares an equal interest in modalities of interpersonal understanding and in the manners in which cinema may be informative in this respect.

2. The cinematographic medium and the ordinary world

Cavell's book *The World Viewed: Reflections on Ontology of Film*, published first in 1971 and then with an extended addendum in 1979, is a landmark in the philosophy of film. On the one hand, Cavell reconsiders influential accounts of the medium of cinema available to that date. On the other hand, he opens new avenues for investigation, which since then have been developed by various philosophers and theorists of film.

His conception of the medium of film draws on two major resources. According to the art historian Erwin Panofski, "[t]he medium of the movies is physical reality as such."¹⁰ The appeal to reality is at its highest in the film theory of André Bazin: "Cinema is committed to communicate only by way of what is real".¹¹

This emphasis on reality seems apt, or rather a move in the right direction. But one may then wonder: How are we to account for the obvious fact that, after all, one cannot, for instance, shake hands with film protagonists? That irrespective of one's reactions to them, they do not react to one's reactions? In light of such facts, the previous inquiries have to be reconsidered. If the medium of movies is reality and if cinema communicates by way of what is real, then the question remains: What happens to reality when projected and screened?

The medium as photographic and its mortal actors

To the above question, Cavell suggests an answer by accounting for the film medium as photographic. That may be understood in at least two ways.

A first way, which I suggest to be misleading, is inspired by the notion of frame-rate in cinema. Traditionally: to each second of film, there correspond 24 frames. On this account, one may say that film has always been made with photographs, even in the case of early movies (some of which had a smaller frame rate, like 16), or the more recent ones (some of which have a higher frame rate, like 60). But this understanding of the medium does not lead very far, for it merely says something about the technology of cinema, or about its mechanics. It is not much informative of the specificity of a medium, since it is reminiscent of the somewhat tautological observations that painting is made with paint, music with sound, literature with words and so on.

A better way to understand the film medium as photographic following Cavell, I suggest, is to give significance to the fact that movies are generally

made with real people. A significant fact about real people is that they are mortal and that they age.¹² Now, a film captures an actor at what may be said to be an absolute age. And the films we see may get old, but irrespective of how many times we see them, it is a fact that the actors in them do not get older; indeed, they do not change at all. But it is also a fact that one cannot make endless films with an actor at the same age. Then one way to understand the medium of film as photographic is to account for it as a view into the ages of actors parading on the screen. Simply put, we may witness, for instance, Max von Sydow getting old through the films in which he appears (and may compare, for example, *The Seventh's Seal* directed by Bergman in 1957 with *Private Confessions* directed by Ullmann in 1996).

The automatism of film

The above conception of the medium of film as photographic suggests a more general sense in which film does not overshadow the world, but is rather of the world, it is made with bits and pieces of the world. It is the sense in which, once the camera is faced either with people or objects, it cannot but shoot. That the camera cannot do otherwise is another way of saying, with Cavell, that the camera “tells no lies [...] not because it is perfectly honest but because it is perfectly dumb”.¹³

Of course, there is a long tradition accounting for this aspect of the camera. Perhaps the most well-known and discussed account is the one of Walter Benjamin in terms of “mechanical reproduction”.¹⁴ And there is an equally long tradition counteracting this aspect, by emphasizing what may be called the subjectivity or the creativity of the ones involved in the production of still and moving pictures. In this respect, we may just think of the whole choreography of choosing the environment, setting up the camera, framing, composing, not to speak – especially in fiction cinema – of script-writing, stage setting, costumes, make-up and so on.

However, I take Cavell to suggest that the idea of the automatism of film does not dismiss the above dimensions of subjectivity or creativity. The idea rather captures what we may call a “mechanical residue” in film making. That no matter which and how many choices are made, there remains the sense in which the camera makes no choice. It is, as it were, put face to face with the real, irrespective of whether the real is raw reality or staged reality. The camera simply ingests the world.¹⁵

And then, whatever the camera ingests, that is automatically projected on the screen. Which again, does not dismiss the fact of montage. In montage, fragments of reality may be reorganized and transformed. This is one way in which film achieves its own temporality, or sequence of events, which may not go parallel to that of ordinary events. That is the case not only in historical films, but in any film insofar as the time of its narrative does not collapse in the time of the cinema house, or the time that can be checked on the watch by each member of the audience.

In the final analysis, that which remains, after the intervention of the human hand in all these ways, are bits and pieces of reality – people and objects projected on the screen. We may call this a “residual reality”.

Senses of the notion of “frame”

A further point I wish to articulate in the attempt to substantiate the view that film does not overshadow the world, but is rather *of* the world, concerns the notion of “frame”. I already mentioned the frame as the technological basis of film, the image in a sequence projected (either analogically or digitally). This is obviously distinct from the frame of the screen, namely, the boundaries of the surface upon which film is projected (again, either analogically or digitally). A third sense of the notion at issue, unveiled by Cavell, is that of the “phenomenological frame”.¹⁶ That concerns the boundaries of view allowed into the happenings of film, and it is best understood by contrast with painting.

The phenomenological frame of painting is coextensive with its physical frame. It does not make much sense to ask: What goes on beyond the boundaries of the content we are presented by way of painting.¹⁷ In film, however, it does make sense to ask what is left out by the present shot on the screen, or what goes on beyond and besides it. Simply put, it is not for nothing that we sometimes have the tendency to change viewpoints, as if to see better what the shot seems to leave out. Or that we remain aware of the development of the narrative in the off-screen. In this sense, film spans beyond the boundaries of the screen.

And this gives further weight to the conception of film as an ingestion of reality. By doing so, film functions by way of what it does show, and also by way of what it does not. By way of what it leaves out from a particular shot.

3. The Expressivity of Human Appearance

The above account of the medium of film provides a suitable framework for addressing cinema as a study case of interpersonal understanding. According to a naïve conception of the cinematographic medium, movies belong rather with fiction than with ordinary perception. Accordingly, one may say that they construct a fictional reality whose experience bears very little on the way in which we get mental and emotional states of people in everyday life. A closer attendance to the medium of film, however, unveils a robust kinship between cinematographic experience and ordinary perception. The medium understood as photographic – in terms of automatism, as providing views into the aging of actors, and as having a phenomenological frame which may wax and wane – informs a conception of cinema as a sort of laboratory for studying interpersonal understanding.

In short, cinematographic experience turns out to be more like everyday experience than one may think at first sight. In this light, the challenges for the 4E model of interpersonal understanding, which the first section above started to articulate, are all the more pressing. If the model is understood as putting forward necessary and sufficient conditions for getting the mental and emotional states of other persons, then it is hard to see how it can accommodate the study case of cinematographic experience. Indeed, if sharing an environment is a necessary factor for my getting the anger or the joy of the other, then how come I can well get the anger or the joy of a film protagonist, given that I am not – strictly speaking – situated in the environment of the film narrative? And further, if collective action is another necessary factor for my getting the fear of the other, then how come I can well enough get the fear entertained by a film protagonist without engaging in his or her actions?

Perhaps the difficulty of 4E cognition, just as that of the models it counteracts (theory-theory and simulation-theory) in doing justice to interpersonal understanding is co-dependant with the conception of these models as general theories. That is, theories meant to be applicable in each and every case, without exception. And perhaps, once the field of investigation of interpersonal understanding is extended so as to encompass the study case of cinematographic experience, a more flexible approach is in order.

This section proposes such an approach by drawing on Wittgenstein's and Merleau-Ponty's accounts of cinema. Wittgenstein is known for his

appeal to ordinary life in order to dissolve philosophical problems that often arise due to over-theorizing. In his turn, Merleau-Ponty is known for his appeal to concrete situations in an attempt to radicalize the existential orientation of philosophy, so as to be able to do justice to the most common instances of everyday life. It is little known, however, that they share an interest in cinematographic experience. And further – which is a further point that the present section advances – that their accounts of cinematographic experience are significantly convergent.¹⁸

On the one hand, Wittgenstein and Merleau-Ponty reinforce Cavell's notion of the kinship between film and world. On the other hand, they highlight some aspects of interpersonal understanding which 4E cognition may easily underestimate. That is, aspects which cinema brings forward most perspicuously, one may argue. These aspects point out the meaningfulness of the human appearance and of its manifestations. In this respect, Wittgenstein highlights the expressivity of the face and of the voice, and Merleau-Ponty underlies what he calls the style of human conduct.

Wittgenstein on the face and the voice

How does Wittgenstein fit into the picture? He was an enthusiast of cinema. Yet, perhaps unexpectedly for a philosopher, the movies he praised most were American westerns and Fred Astaire musicals. According to his friends, he disliked English and Continental films on reason that in them, the "actors looked dressed-up, unnatural, unconvincing, obviously play-acting"; and the maker "was always intruding himself as if to say 'Look how clever I am'".¹⁹ But Wittgenstein himself suggests in a manuscript from 1947 that these dislikes are not pure matters of taste. That they were rather motivated by a recognition of some films lacking a certain potential. He writes: "The American dumb and naive film can in all its dumbness and *through* it instruct. The idiotic, not naive, affected English film cannot instruct. I have often drawn a lesson from a dumb American film."²⁰

The suggestion is, I take it, that straightforward film can teach something about the cinematographic medium and also about interpersonal understanding in the ordinary world. In fact, there are numerous remarks in Wittgenstein's manuscripts between early 1930s and late 1950s where he appeals to photography and cinema, in an attempt to make more palpable various aspects of the expressivity of the human appearance.

Many of these remarks are still unpublished and little known. I will thus introduce and discuss some of them.²¹

One lesson to be drawn from film, and particularly from its genre of tragedy (or what we may call “drama”) is the following:

When I am gripped by a tragedy (in cinema e.g.), then I always say to myself: no, I would not do it! or: no, it should not be like that. I want to *console* [*trösten*] the protagonist & all the others.²²

This remark is elucidatory at least in three ways. Firstly, it acts as a reminder that interpersonal understanding is not only about instances like getting the other’s joy. Whereas the theories of cognition discussed above seem to pay attention mostly to cases when all is supposed to be well among us.²³ But instances of getting other people’s sorrow or sadness need to be equally accommodated. In this respect, cinema may be found to be closer than theories to actual life. Films indeed explore the ups and downs and the vicissitudes of everyday experience without giving overall precedence to some cases over others. And when they indeed to it, they acknowledge the exceptionality of the cases they explore by admitting that the point of view is emblematic for a specific film genre.

Secondly, Wittgenstein’s remark brings again into focus the factor of collective action invoked by 4E cognition in the attempt to explain interpersonal understanding. If theorists are prone to focus primarily on happy cases of interpersonal understanding, that sheds some light on their tendency to take one’s readiness to act as the other does as crucial in one’s understanding the other’s mental or emotional states. However, the appeal to cinematographic tragedy is particularly apt in showing that a readiness to engage in the other’s actions need not always be the case. Indeed, Wittgenstein suggests that one need not even inhibit a readiness to act as the other person does. On the contrary, my understanding of the other’s sorrow may go hand in hand with my acknowledgment that the other should not act as he or she does. That the action already took a wrong track. This is an acknowledgment that things should be or should have been otherwise.

Thirdly, in light of Wittgenstein’s remark, this asymmetry – between getting the other’s sorrow, while not endorsing the actions which led to it – turns out to be even more far-reaching. It is that which leaves room for my readiness to console the other, to empathise or to sympathise. But

also to possibly regard the other as responsible to a certain extent for his or her mental or emotional state.

The fact that empathy or sympathy need not involve collective action is shown even more clearly by the way we respond to subjects of photography. There we would not be so much inclined to think that we understand their mental or emotional states only insofar as we endorsed or took part in their actions. The case of photography is indeed significant, as it switches the focus from action to the expression of the human appearance. In this respect, Wittgenstein points out that

one has no difficulty to see in the grey and white of the photograph the human face. – And what does this mean? Now, we watch e.g. a film and follow all the happenings with concern [*Anteilnahme*]; as if we had real people in front of us.²⁴

This remark adds a further specification to the photographic medium of film. The medium can be said to be transparent not only in that it allows the ordinary world to be viewed by way of projection. It also brings forward what is perhaps most human about humans, namely, the face. By bracketing action, or freezing it at a certain moment in its unfolding, photography gives significance to the ways in which our response to the face is really a response to its expressions. It is not only that getting the state of mind of the other mostly revolves around attending to the face. It is also that our way of inquiring into that state of mind is by paying particular attention to some key elements of the face, such as the eyes:

I see a photograph in front of me, the attendants of a dinner. I see thus a square of white, black, grey flecks. I observe it, however, in a very peculiar way, in that I let my gaze ramble from a face to another & not e.g. from a *shoulder* to another. I look the faces mostly in the eyes & not primarily at the chin or the ears.²⁵

Wittgenstein alludes here to two ways in which one can approach a photograph, particularly a black and white, or so-called greyscale photograph. One way is to focus primarily on its material basis, to the physical properties of the print itself. On this account, the photograph is nothing but a square surface containing flecks of various degrees of grey. The other way to approach the photograph – which is arguably the most common one in ordinary life – is by attending to its subject matter. The

two approaches can also be exemplified in the case of written language. The first one would correspond to starring at strings of signs on a surface, while the second one would correspond to attending to the meaning or the sense of those signs, to the very subject matter of discourse.

Now, these two modalities of approaching a sample of photography or of written language, inform two modalities of approaching the human appearance in ordinary life. One modality would be a piecemeal and somewhat theoretical focus on various elements of the human body, such as the shoulders, the chin, the ears. Such a focus would be more like a scrutiny of the human body in the attempt to identify whether and to what extent various elements of it can convey something of the so-called inner life of a person. The other modality – which is arguably the most common in ordinary life – is the attendance to the human body as an expressive whole, despite its having some more expressive regions (such as the eyes) and some less expressive ones (such as the ears).

The latter modality is clearly the common one not only in responding to persons in photographs. In ordinary life, it would be somewhat inadequate if one tried to understand the other while starring primarily at their shoulders or perhaps the knees. In fact, we do not have to search for what is most expressive in each and every person, but attention turns spontaneously to particular aspects. And we do that not merely by way of sight, but also by way of listening. Which brings us back to cinema. Wittgenstein writes at one point:

In cinema the sound of speech seems to come from the mouth of the figure on the screen.

What does this experience consist in? For instance, in that we (involuntarily [*unwillkürlich*]) rivet our glance to a determined place – the apparent source of the sound – when we hear a sound. And nobody glances in cinema there where the microphone is mounted.²⁶

It is worth noting that sound film is not merely a silent film to which speech, and music, and even noise is added. Image and sound do not merely accompany each other. They rather transform one another in interaction – which is something explored for long by both film makers and film theorists.

What is equally noteworthy is that vision and hearing in their turn inform each other spontaneously. The moment we hear the voice, we ascribe it to the mouth, the face, or the protagonist we see. And the moment

we see a mouth or the protagonist uttering something, we spontaneously perceive it as the source of the speech we hear.

The question raised by this double point – about image and sound, mouth and voice – is how come one can relate to particular visual and aural signs as meaningful expressions of an actual human being. It is as if one reconstructs an interlocutor on the basis of scarce traces of an inner life of the latter. As if a whole of an inner life can be manifested in individual parts visually and aurally perceived.

This parallel, between the face and the voice on the one hand, and between image and sound on the other hand, is developed further by Merleau-Ponty. Like Wittgenstein, he too confronts cinematographic experience and ordinary practices in an attempt to shed light on both of them.

Merleau-Ponty on styles of persons

Merleau-Ponty articulates a philosophical interest in film in mid 1940s. The text at issue has 4 versions, two of which – short and very similar to each other – were published in 1945 under the title “Cinéma et psychologie”, once in *l'Écran français* and once in *Pages françaises*. The other two versions – very similar to each other as well, but expanded from the previous ones – were published under the title “Le cinéma et la nouvelle psychologie”, once in 1947 in *Les Temps Modernes* and once in 1948 in Merleau-Ponty's volume *Sens et non-sens*.²⁷

One constant idea in all versions is that cinema is a privileged medium (something like a laboratory) in studying the expressivity of the human appearance. Merleau-Ponty underlines some points of convergence between approaches in cinema around the time of his article, the existential orientation of philosophy – of which he is an advocate – and what he calls the new psychology, or the Gestalt tradition which he finds to reinforce that orientation.

More exactly, cinema would agree with other forms of discourse insofar as they all undergo a turn, which Merleau-Ponty regards as emblematically modern. That turn is a move away from the introspective approach, namely, the attempt to account for our ways of being in the world from the vantage point of a so-called “inner life”. In Gestalt psychology, which is one of Merleau-Ponty's main resources, he observes that one had ceased

to describe anger and jealousy as states of the soul [*états d'âme*] [...]. The psychologists of today consider emotion as a conduct [*conduite*], whereof it is about finding the sense or the *raison d'être*.²⁸

Now, the novelist from anytime can choose to account for anger or jealousy, as it were, "from within", by *saying* what protagonists feel or how they approach the world. In their turn, film makers tried to *show* that but, maintains Merleau-Ponty, with less success.

Accordingly, in *Premier de cordée* (dir. Louis Daquin, 1943), we would feel much more vividly the vertigo when we were shown the protagonist hanging from the rock and entertaining confused gestures, and not so much when we were shown the view ascribed to him: a landscape that topples and gets blurred. That is, the impression would be stronger when film presented the protagonist as he or she would present themselves to us in the ordinary world, and less so when film tried to put us in the shoes of the other. In *L'Espoir* (co-dir. André Malraux, 1939), we would perceive most obviously that the aviator sees badly when he were shown clumsy and fallible once he took off the plane, but not so much when we were shown, as if from his view point, a veiled landscape. Again, as if film could approximate the view of the aviator, and allow us to glance through his eyes. In *Falbalas* (dir. Jacques Becker, 1944), the delirium of Clarence would be more moving when it appeared on gazes and gestures, but not so much when we were shown that Clarence would see a mannequin that became a woman.

One could object that these statements are mere value judgments, or matters of taste. But Merleau-Ponty concludes the first two versions of his text by emphasizing:

This totally 'objective' method furthermore goes back to a tradition. There are the grand classical works which approach man from the exterior as do at once cinema, modern psychology and the American novel. [...] If cinema, psychology and literature agree in expressing man from the exterior [*l'homme de l'extérieur*], it is not a caprice of fashion there, it is an exigency of the human condition which classical art itself does not ignore.²⁹

In the revised two versions of his text, Merleau-Ponty maintains his point about the adequacy of this externalist approach. He further finds it the ground of the agreement of cinema – this time not with classical art – but with the philosophical approach he himself is an advocate of:

If therefore philosophy and cinema agree, if reflection and technical work [*la réflexion et le travail technique*] lead to the same sense, it is because the philosopher and the film maker have in common a certain manner / of taking position / [being], a certain view / in face / of the world, which is that / of our / [of a] generation.³⁰

After having been found to inherit and develop an older tradition, cinema is now found to agree with, and be expressive of, the manner of being in the world and of viewing the world pertaining to a new generation. The generation at issue is one that finds resources for an existentialist philosophy in the Gestalt psychology contemporary with it and which is qualified as modern.³¹

The account so far makes more palpable one of the central points of Merleau-Ponty, which is:

The 'inner' life is rendered the more strongly, the more resolutely it is treated as a conduct and the more it appears in the world itself to which, from close or from far, it always relates.³²

The common denominator of all versions of Merleau-Ponty's text is that we understand less of anger and joy and so on if we assume they are private states of mind, which are hidden from the other. Variations of this assumption are indeed embraced by theory-theory and simulation theory. Because theory-theory conceives of mental states as somewhat private, it faces the difficulty of accounting for the ways in which that which is hidden is somewhat recognized and acknowledged between persons. Indeed, theory-theory tries to show how one can get the private mental states of the other, while unveiling it by of theoretical knowledge. But simulation theory also shares the assumption of the hidden. It only tries to articulate an account of how that which is hidden may still be communicated by way of an interpersonal attunement.

The opposition of 4E cognition to both theory-theory and simulation theory parallels the opposition of Merleau-Ponty to the introspective approach in classical psychology. In other words, it is now clearer why Merleau-Ponty is often invoked by 4E theorists as an anticipator of their approach. Unlike 4E theorists, however, Merleau-Ponty does not resort to a series of explanatory factors of interpersonal understanding. His approach is in this respect more flexible in that it aims at articulating how, in particular situations, particular aspects of human appearance may

sustain interpersonal understanding, even if some alleged explanatory factors are not satisfied.

Again, Merleau-Ponty emphasises that cinema and philosophy agree insofar as they approach consciousness, not as hidden, but as ejected into the world. That is to say, anger, joy, jealousy approached not as private mental states, but already on the face, in the voice, in the manner of conduct of the other. Above we saw Wittgenstein highlighting the unity of these modalities of expression in the cinema: namely, the unity between the face or mouth on the screen and the voice from the speaker. Merleau-Ponty goes further in accounting for this unity as not being specific to the film experience. It is rather in virtue of it that we get the other's intentions and feelings in the ordinary world.

In order to clarify this, Merleau-Ponty draws on the following experiment with multiple media: subjects are given randomly ordered photographs of faces, samples of handwriting, and recordings of various voices. It turns out that in the majority of cases, the subjects are able to correctly attribute a face, a silhouette, a type of handwriting, and a voice – to the right person.³³

This means that without attending to the so-called inner life of a particular person, one recognizes in him or her certain manners of manifesting that life. Merleau-Ponty conceives of the unity of these manners in terms of the “style of a person”. Now, this has little to do with fashion, with the way someone dresses up or arranges his or her hair. The style of a person rather consists in the ways in which someone inhabits the so-called external world, and the ways in which he or she articulates the so-called inner world.

The above experiment presents style as *person-specific*. That is, a face, a voice, a silhouette and so on, make up a significant whole which can be ascribed to someone, precisely because they are recognizable as belonging to a particular person. Simply put, these aspects amount to what we ordinarily call someone's own way of being, of talking, of walking. But the above experiment also presents style as *interpersonally-commensurable*. The subjects of the experiment reconstruct the puzzle with multiple media rightly in most cases, precisely because they perceive each sample as meaningful. Meaningful, namely, as already revealing something of the other person.

Moreover, it is highly significant that the experiment also presents the style of a person as rightly recognized and ascribed by others without them being given any further clue of the action that the person may be

performing. Or any clue of the environment in which the visual, audio, or textual samples may have been taken.

So just like Wittgenstein's call to attend to the expression of the face and of the voice, Merleau-Ponty's notion of the style of a person is meant to exhibit human appearance as already meaningful, as already revealing intentions and feelings. Neither of them would deny that further factors – such as particular actions or the particular environment in which those actions are unfolded – may further specify those intentions and feelings. But both of them would account for such further factors as already meaningful in their turn. Which is why the presence of some of them can make up for the absence of some others in interpersonal understanding.

The flexibility of Wittgenstein's and Merleau-Ponty's approaches to interpersonal understanding is thus meant to do justice not only to the heterogeneity of its various cases. Their approaches can also accommodate the diversity of the very relations between persons. It is indeed a common place that one can understand better or more easily the expression of intentions and feelings entertained by a friend as compared to a stranger. Spending more time with someone provides finer-grained insight into his or her manners of expressing themselves. Thus in some cases, glancing at the eyes of the other may be more than enough in order to get an insight into the other's emotional state. While in other cases, one may indeed need to attend to further manifestations of the other.

The curious fact about cinema, however, is how much, how easily, or how well one may already understand the "inner life" of a protagonist, while spending with him or her barely two hours or so. Is it because film responds so adequately to our expectations, or because we respond so adequately to its mechanisms? Or because film, in a sense, does not after all teach us something radically new, but mostly builds on our ordinary skills to relate to one another? The latter is what Merleau-Ponty seems to suggest towards the end of the two extended versions of his text:

This is why the expression of the human can be so palpable in cinema: cinema does not give us, as the novel has done for so long, the *thoughts* of the human, it rather gives us its conduct or its behaviour, it offers us directly that special manner of being in the world, of treating the things and the others, which is for us visible in the gestures, the gaze, the mimic [*les gestes, le regard, la mimique*], and which evidently defines each person we know.³⁴

Conclusions

The difficulty of theories of interpersonal understanding is to provide a generic framework that could do justice to every instance of one's getting the mental or emotional states of other persons. To this purpose, different theories invoke different factors as decisive for the issue. Thus, theory-theory approaches interpersonal understanding as a primarily intellectual or rational relation. On this view, my getting another's person fear, for instance, is a process closely resembling a scientist's approach to an object of investigation. The above discussion of this model against the background of cinema, however, suggested that the model is too much shaped by the instance of interpersonal suspicion. The competing model of simulation theory is meant to counteract that overemphasis on reason and intellect. This model moulds interpersonal understanding in the shape of an emotional or affective attunement. Yet, by doing so, the expectation of this model is that each instance of my getting the other's joy, for example, is accompanied by my affective mirroring of that state. The stumbling block of the model, as its above discussion in light of the film genre of romantic drama suggested, is precisely the instance of acknowledged, and yet unshared love. Both theory-theory and simulation theory inherit the traditional argument from analogy, whose gist is the assumption that interpersonal understanding involves the establishment of a symmetry between my experience and that of the other. This assumption was questioned against the background of the difficulties of intergenerational communication, by appealing to films that employ children as actors.

Further, 4E cognition, the model which opposes the above two ones, embraces holism in an attempt to do more justice to the variety of available instances of interpersonal communication. However, invoking embodiment, environmental embeddedness, collective actions, and their extension through practices as explanatory factors in this respect is prone to amount to a more generous, yet rigid model. If those factors are meant as necessary and sufficient conditions, it is difficult to see how they can do justice to the heterogeneity of instances of interpersonal communication already in ordinary life, let alone to those presented by the study case of cinematographic experience.

As a preparatory step to expanding the investigatory field of interpersonal understanding to cinematographic experience, an account of the medium of film was introduced by drawing on Stanley Cavell's contributions in this respect. Instead of being meant as an exhaustive

specification of the medium, that account rather paves the way towards an understanding of the kinship between our ways of getting mental and emotional states of persons in the ordinary world and of protagonists of film respectively.

Wittgenstein and Merleau-Ponty reinforce such an understanding of film, and indeed both resort to cinema in the attempt to make modalities of interpersonal understanding more palpable. Significantly, they also share the point – which is easily underestimated by the theories of interpersonal communication at issue – that the human appearance and its manifestations are laden with meaning. Indeed, Wittgenstein's attendance to the face and the voice, and Merleau-Ponty's notion of style, are meant to open a way beyond the rigid opposition of "inner life" *versus* "outer life". That is, an opposition between the assumption that all is hidden, or that nothing is hidden, regarding intentions and feelings of other people. Furthermore, they both contend that film reveals most perspicuously the human appearance as already meaningful, and not as split between an allegedly inexpressive surface (behaviour) and allegedly private on-goings (mental states).

NOTES

- ¹ E.g. cf. D. Hutto, "Enactivism, From A Wittgensteinian Point of View", in *American Philosophical Quarterly* vol. 50, no. 3, 2013, pp. 281-302; V. Loughlin, "Radical Enactivism, Wittgenstein and the Cognitive Gap", in *Adaptive Behavior* vol. 22, iss. 5, 2014, pp. 350-359.
- ² Given that Wittgenstein's accounts of cinematographic experience have long been only accessible in manuscript version, a few scholars have merely applied to cinema rather his philosophy of language: cf. E. Branigan, *Projecting a Camera: Language-games in Film Theory*, Routledge, New York, 2006; B. Szabados and C. Stojanova, *Wittgenstein at the Movies: Cinematic Investigations*, Rowman & Littlefield, New York, 2011.
- ³ The last section of this paper thus explores Wittgenstein's and Merleau-Ponty's convergent accounts of *expressive corporeality*. I have addressed the convergence of their accounts of *affective corporeality* in M. Ometiță, "Pain and Space: the Middle Wittgenstein, the early Merleau-Ponty", in *Wittgenstein and Phenomenology*, ed. O. Kuusela, M. Ometiță and T. Uçan, Routledge, New York, 2018.
- ⁴ An overview of variations in theory-theory is available in P. Carruthers and P. K. Smith, *Theories of Theories of Mind*, Cambridge UP, Cambridge, 1996.
- ⁵ Particularly the male protagonist of Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958) and the male protagonist of Clouzot's *L'Infer* (started in 1964 and left unfinished) is each more attached to a theory than to a woman he thinks he loves. One is absorbed by the vertigo of confirming his theory that a past woman is not really past, the other succumbs to the inferno of confirming his theory that a present woman is not really present.
- ⁶ For an account generally regarded as emblematic for simulation theory, cf. A. I. Goldman, *Simulating Minds: The Philosophy, Psychology, and Neuroscience of Mindreading*, Oxford UP, Oxford, 2006.
- ⁷ Cf. B. Russell, "Analogy", in idem, *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1948.
- ⁸ For a prominent account of 4E cognition, cf. S. Gallagher and D. Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind: An Introduction to Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science*, Routledge, London, 2008.
- ⁹ Cf. J. Fingerhut and K. Heimann, "Movies and the Mind: On Our Filmic Body", in *Embodiment, Enaction, and Culture: Investigating the Constitution of the Shared World*, ed. C. Durt, T. Fuchs, and C. Tewes, MIT Press, Cambridge MA, 2017.
- ¹⁰ E. Panofski, "Style and Medium in the Moving Pictures", in *Film*, ed. D. Talbot, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1959, p. 31.
- ¹¹ A. Bazin, *What is Cinema?*, tr. H. Gray, Univ. of California Press, Berkeley, 1967, p. 110.

- 12 Cf. S. Cavell, *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film (Enlarged Edition)*, Harvard UP, Cambridge MA, 1979, ch. "The World as Mortal: Absolute Age and Youth".
- 13 S. Cavell, *supra*, p. 185.
- 14 Cf. W. Benjamin, "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit", in *idem, Schriften: Band 1*, ed. T. W. Adorno, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, [1935] 1955.
- 15 For more on the notion of the camera "ingesting the world", cf. S. Cavell, *supra*, p. 73.
- 16 Cf. S. Cavell, *supra*, p. 25.
- 17 Except, perhaps, in some modernist painting, which questions the very traditional idea of a finite presentation in painting.
- 18 To my knowledge, this is the first attempt to discuss together Wittgenstein's and Merleau-Ponty's accounts of cinematographic experience.
- 19 J. King, "Recollections of Wittgenstein", in *Recollections of Wittgenstein*, ed. R. Rhees, Oxford UP, Oxford, 1984, p. 71; M. O'C. Drury, "Conversations with Wittgenstein", in *Recollections of Wittgenstein*, ed. R. Rhees, Oxford UP, Oxford, 1984, p. 120.
- 20 Wittgenstein MS 134, p. 89 [1947].
- 21 Translations from the German original of Wittgenstein's manuscripts are mine.
- 22 Wittgenstein MS 183, pp. 88 [1931].
- 23 In fact, cognitive theories of interpersonal understanding tend to focus primarily on two extreme cases: *either* interpersonal understanding is supposed to be straightforward, successful, complete; *or* interpersonal understanding as obstructed by pathological conditions. Thus a whole range of phenomena ranging between these extreme cases tends to be overlooked.
- 24 Wittgenstein MS 136, p. 60a [1948].
- 25 Wittgenstein MS 120, pp. 70v-71r [1938].
- 26 Wittgenstein MS 119, p. 100 [1937].
- 27 The 4 versions are collected in F. Albera, "Maurice Merleau-Ponty et le cinéma", in *1895. Mille huit cent quatre-vingt-quinze*, no. 70, 2013, pp. 120-153. The pagination of this source is used here by all references to Merleau-Ponty's article.
- 28 Merleau-Ponty, vers. 1-2 = "Cinéma et psychologie", p. 131.
- 29 Merleau-Ponty, vers. 1-2 = "Cinéma et psychologie", p. 137.
- 30 Merleau-Ponty, vers. 3-4 = "Le cinéma et la nouvelle psychologie", p. 153. The variants between slashes (/3/) belong to the 3rd version, while the ones between square brackets ([4]) belong to the 4th version of the text.
- 31 For an alternative view that Merleau-Ponty would reserve phenomenology to the study of ordinary experience and Gestalt psychology to the study of cinematographic experience, cf. C. Zernik, "'Un film ne se pense pas,

il se perçoit': Merleau-Ponty et la perception cinématographique", in *Rue Descartes*, no. 3 (53), 2006, 102-109.

³² Merleau-Ponty, vers. 1-2 = "Cinéma et psychologie", p. 137.

³³ Merleau-Ponty, vers. 3-4 = "Le cinéma et la nouvelle psychologie", p. 132.

³⁴ Merleau-Ponty, vers. 3-4 = "Le cinéma et la nouvelle psychologie", p. 150.

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BUILDING A PROFESSION: AN INSIGHT ON THE PROFESSIONALIZATION OF ENGINEERS IN ROMANIA 1919-1940

Abstract

In the last three decades, Romanian historiography privileged the intellectual, cultural and political reevaluations of Romanian modernity. However, there is still little interest regarding the rise and formation of liberal and/or intellectual professions in modern Romania and the role these professions played in (re) shaping the social, economic and politic visions for a modern(izing) state. The aim of this study is to sketch the provisions for such a broader demarche, while taking engineers as a study case. From a theoretical point of view, the study relies on the “system of professions” theory of Andrew Abbott.

Keywords: professionalization, engineer, Greater Romania, Polytechnic School, technocracy

Introduction: The Instable Relationship between Intellectual Professionals and Politics

A report of the Romanian Intelligence Service (*Siguranța*) from January 1937 regarding the mood of the population revealed a fragile socio-economic landscape that could destabilize the state. From the economic point of view, the report signaled a general feeling of dissatisfaction due to the cost of living in the urban area. Among the most affected by the lack of necessary incomes one could find public servants or intellectual professionals. The social consequence of this precarious economic situation was a “somewhat alarming” situation across the country, “especially in cities”. Because of this, “the measures against the right and the left movements have no effect”, the author of the report warned. And, as a result, the economic dissatisfaction transposed also in the political field. That was the reason why “the vast majority of the population, which

is not yet registered in the organized political parties, is heading to the right. This current is not up to the people who propagate and patronize this movement; the orientation of public opinion to the right is provoked by the material shortcomings. If the law for the protection of national labor is honestly applied, then the Romanian intellectual and worker youth would find placement; therefore the movement in this direction would be very low",¹ the report concluded.

The aspect I would like to emphasize in this paper is the fate of the intellectual professionals in Greater Romania. Almost two decades earlier, in the aftermath of the 1st World War, an appeal of sociologist Dimitrie Gusti called for the instauration of a new system of leading and organizing society that was supposed to rely on professionals. In fact, his appeal was not a singular one. Many intellectual professionals, gathered into associations, expressed this need for a rebuilding of the Romanian society. However, to a certain degree these calls were neglected and Romania entered this new chapter of its history with the same old habits. And by this it seemed that Romania missed a chance of developing a social and economic system that could put things into motion.

Of course, one cannot ignore the fact that the entire Europe was trying to recover after a military conflict that took the entire continent to the edge of bankruptcy. Eric Hobsbawm called interwar period the "economic abyss", that brought to the fore the problem of unemployment.² To this respect, the fact that many young university graduates and liberal professionals were joining radical political movements because of their economic problems should not be a surprise at all. On the other hand, depressions and unemployment were basically something natural in the economic system of capitalism.³ But when following a period of great expectations, unemployment was felt as degradation. "The despair brought by unemployment comes not only from the threat of destitution, but from the sudden view of a vast nothingness ahead. The unemployed are more likely to follow the peddlers of hope than the handers-out of relief".⁴

The question that arises is the following: were there any "handout" projects that could have transformed societies into more equitable ones? And, if so, what was the common ground for such a new social contract? And, in the case of Romania, was there any solution in order to escape this spiral of underdevelopment?

Although legitimate, these questions can constitute the premises for a counterfactual history. But this is not what I intend to do. My aim is to scrutinize the impact of the Western pattern in terms of developing

higher education system, a development creating the incentives that led to an increasing phenomenon of professionalization. Once in motion, professionalization developed into a system of reshaping reality – from educational, social, economic and political points of view – that was supposed to acknowledge and promote the power of expertise. In order to “historicize” this phenomenon, I chose to capture the way in which the profession of engineer was built; and I am doing so for several reasons.

In the first place, my study is about the impact of capitalism in the agrarian peripheries of Eastern Europe in the aftermath of the 1st World War. From a comparative point of view, it is quite striking to see that all successor states in Central and Eastern Europe – no matter that they were defeated or victorious in the 1st World War – followed sooner or later the same social, economic and political path. In fact, as Mária M. Kovács noticed for the Hungarian case, it was quite paradoxically that the group of liberal professionals “played a most controversial role in the rise and fall of liberalism in Central and Eastern Europe. In the 19th century, professional people – doctors, lawyers, and engineers – were exponents of cultural and political liberalism. But by the first half of the 20th century, they exhibited a pattern of growing illiberalism”.⁵

Another aspect I will try to highlight is the (not just) symbolic power the intellectual professionals began to gain, making them capable of influencing the economics or politics. From such a stance, the approach represents an “archeology” of Romania’s shift from the stage of annuitant’s society towards a professional one. It should be pointed out that the pace of such a shift was quite slow because of the agrarian character of the Romanian economy, and of the lack of well-defined projects of social change for Romania. It was only in the 1930’s that the state realized the impact education can play in the transfer of technology and of know-how. There’s no coincidence that starting from here, the state got massively involved in redesigning the higher education system, or in adopting laws for protecting intellectual professions. The pressure came as well from the professional associations calling for the so-called “Romanianization” of the intellectual labor market and for building new social solidarities around professions. Politically, this phenomenon meant the abandonment of democratic play in favor of state interventionism.

Consequently, in the end I will sketch out some of the Romanian engineers’ visions regarding the future development of the country. Convinced that science and technology can improve human condition and thus achieve progress, the engineers proposed an extreme technocratic

way of rebuilding society, as it was the corporatist system designed by Mihail Manoilescu. This new vision came along with an increased sense for planning education, economics or reshaping the way in which villages or cities should be framed. Therefore, engineers seemed to have succeeded in filling a strong social need for expertise. Or, maybe, was this just part of a strategy for increasing their social status and justifying their economic requests?

Theoretical Framework: Professionalization as Claim for “Jurisdiction” (Andrew Abbott)

In order to capture the growing importance of social expertise in governing the Western countries beginning with the late 19th century, the German historian Lutz Raphael coined the concept of “scientization of the social”. The phrase encompassed the entire problematic of the new “governmentality” (Michel Foucault), interested in knowing and appropriating social reality. This is the way social sciences were called to identify, investigate, evaluate and propose remedies for the new revealed social realities. And this is what Lutz called the “embedding of human and social sciences” in the Western countries.⁶ “Scientization of the social” means the professionalization of the social expert, by acquiring a field of authority.

In other words, building a profession is about (re)defining its social and economic place, the evolution in the logic of inclusiveness/exclusiveness and gaining momentum for imposing its economic, social and even political aspirations. Functionalist sociologists (like Emile Durkheim or Talcott Parsons) preferred a positivist narrative on the evolution of professions. In doing so, they used the perspective of the subjects. Probably this is why the interpretation they reached was biased by the zeitgeist of those times. In the first decades of the 20th century, professionalization was envisaged as a natural stage in the development of capitalist system, therefore it was rather interpreted from a teleological perspective. Unavoidably, the only conclusion they could reach was that the phenomenon of professionalization (along with bureaucratization) was nothing else than the proof of a rationalizing capitalism. Despite the economic depression of 1929-1933, professionalization was envisaged as a glorious phenomenon, proving the flexible character of the entire

capitalist system. In brief, functionalism did nothing more than to spread this glowing image the professionals built about themselves.

Instead, the interactionist approach supposed that these bodies of professionals are not as homogeneous as they would like to be seen by others. Interactionists focused more on the interplay between market economy and the emerging professions. In other words, they were asking: is the market capable of regulating professions? Is there any way of minimizing the possibility of being cheated? This is the point where Magali Sarfatti Larson tackles the power of the professional associations and the pressure they created in order to make the state define and recognize the professions. To this respect, “modern reform movements [were] organized in response to *both* the expansion of market opportunities and the inability of the traditional warrants of moral probity to govern excessive competition”.⁷

Andrew Abbott goes one step further, by stressing the importance of “inter-professional competition” for controlling “knowledge and its application”. The result of such a competition will be “dominating outsiders who attack that control. Study of organizational forms can indeed show how certain occupations control their knowledge and its application”. And, because of this, it follows a “jurisdictional conflict” for defining, enlarging and controlling an expertise field. “Thus an effective historical sociology of professions must begin with case studies of jurisdictions and jurisdiction disputes”,⁸ followed by placing these disputes in a larger context, in order to understand the influence of other “exogenous” factors like the social, political or economic ones.

There is another aspect showing why the theory of Andrew Abbott is helpful when tackling the subject of intellectual professionals, because “system of professions” he tried to define was supposed to acknowledge the supremacy of intellectual work: “Only a knowledge system governed by abstractions can redefine its problems and tasks, defend them from interlopers, and seize new problems [...] Abstraction enables survival in the competitive system of professions”.⁹ It was this capacity of adapting and trying to face the challenges of a changing society that eventually separated professions from occupations. Moreover, it was this ability of continuous abstracting that empowered the professional actors to define, to delineate and to conquer jurisdiction.¹⁰

Last but not least, Andrew Abbott supposes that social processes are or should be organized as a story, in order to make it comprehensible. In other words, is quite important to have an intrigue, climax and outcome. But

the fundamental prerequisite is that no idea was supposed to be a winning one from the beginning. In fact, we should take a look at a cumulative series of factors and actions that can lead to the success of one of the options. This is the way by which the history of professionalization should not be conceived as a “story of the winners”, but rather as a conquest for monopoly of “the activity territory”. Let’s start our story by exhibiting the general framework.

A “Specter Haunting Europe”: Technocracy

The end of the 1st World War brought for the first time to the fore the social side of Europe. As a matter of fact, the 13th chapter of the Peace Treaty of Versailles (1919) stated that in order to build a new Europe, its social organization should seek to develop ways of achieving social justice. That’s why the entire chapter was dedicated to organization of labor, and the ground for such a decision was that universal peace cannot be established unless it is based upon social justice.

Nevertheless, Europe seemed more preoccupied with the national issues, haunted by a spirit of revenge. This was the reason why John Maynard Keynes, as a British economic delegate to the Peace Conference held in Paris was astonished by the blindness of the European leaders in building a peaceful climax. From his point of view, the Great War was the expression of an economic crisis of a too rapid and powerful growth. The rise of the new national states in Europe posed new and destructive challenges to the political elite. One of these challenges was the new national boundaries that crumbled the economic space that was previously shared by three continental powers. “An inefficient, unemployed, disorganized Europe faces us, torn by internal strife and international hate, fighting, starving, pillaging, and lying. What warrant is there for a picture of less somber colors?”¹¹ For Keynes it was quite obvious that the problems the defeated countries had to face in the aftermath of the Great War will – sooner or later – affect all European countries. His call that politics should rely on professional expertise was shared by many others. It was the case of the French artist Fernand Léger, who anticipated in 1916 the rise of a society ruled by professionals, capable of resolving the problems of the society: “The war will soon come to an end. The destroyed regions and countries will have to be rebuilt. I think the politicians will

be kicked out, they have gone bankrupt. In their place will be seated engineers, technicians and maybe workers too".¹²

The question that arises is if this kind of caesura influenced the "rise of the knowledge society". Was the 1st World War a cause or just an opportunity for the intellectual experts to define themselves as legitimate actors in the political field? Despite the answer, the new expert felt obliged to take a stance on the public issues, because they "were far more than just the products of professionalization. They were part and parcel of the process [...] of new forms of political control facilitated by technological progress".¹³ This is what historian Charles S. Maier called to be "territoriality", as a concept defining the entire set of changes that occurred since the middle of the 19th century until late 20th century. In his opinion, the geographical sense of this notion began to decrease in favor of a new approach, by which "territoriality" "is a product of what is happening within the borders. The area within will no longer be constructed as a passive enclosure to be policed and kept orderly; it will be a source of resources, livelihood, output, and energy".¹⁴

Professional intellectuals, as carriers of this new sense of "territoriality", found a good opportunity to renew their claims for reshaping societies. Analyzing the way social sciences embedded in the social life and in decisions of the policy makers, Raphael Lutz noted that the 1st World War was "a catalyst for the spread of human sciences capable of implementation", calling interwar period the time of "social engineering".¹⁵

The engineers sought to gain the same social status in the 1920's, transforming technocratic temptation into a debate subject. Emphasizing the role of knowledge, technology and production the ideal of technocracy meant an alternative to the zero-sum paradigm of capitalism. Mostly inspired by the American scientific management of work, technocracy proposed making workers – manual or intellectual – fight for the same purpose: the welfare of the society. In USA, engineers stated that "There is no legitimate power but the power to deliver goods", therefore "The era of force must give way to the era of knowledge".¹⁶ The technocratic conceptions spread all over Europe, even in the successor states. For instance, "Hungarian or Polish engineers claimed to be able to offer a neutral force around which effective government could be centred"¹⁷ for the benefit of the nation. Therefore, an increased attention for the technical education was required.

Romania and the Quest for a “Democracy of Competence”

The technocratic spirit did not bypass Romania. In fact, in April 1918, when Romania was basically a defeated country, sociologist Dimitrie Gusti launched an appeal addressed to all intellectuals and professionals for reestablishing the foundation of the state. Acknowledging that “the capricious approximation and the chaotic improvisation of the so far politics must cease for all”, Dimitrie Gusti called for a new “systematic division of labor, so that everyone can do what they are capable of”.¹⁸ One year later, he came with further explanations regarding his plan of embedding science as the background of any political decision. Romania needed urgent reforms, but Gusti’s fear was that the old politicians would sacrifice this plan for the sake of winning the electoral competitions. In the era of the universal male vote, demagoguery and populism were the main enemies of the professionals. And, in a time when Romania needed laws emerging from the knowledge of social reality, Gusti expected for the worst. This is how one should interpret his quest for co-opting the specialists as part of the legislative work; otherwise political parties would monopolize the entire public power. “In order not to degenerate into demagoguery, social democracy needs this powerful corrective, i.e. jurisdictional competence. From a democratic point of view, there is nothing more important than jurisdictional competence of a nation to be at the base of its political organization”.¹⁹ And, in order to reach that, men of science were required, those endowed with a “disinterested competence, [...] who are only considering the permanent and general interest of the nation”. In fact, it is this “disinterested competence” that makes the man of science a truly professional, and therefore is the only one capable of conducting social reforms. By doing so, the professional really deserves the top spot in the new social hierarchy. This was the way Romanian engineers sought to follow.

What would be the Future for Technical Professions in an Agrarian Society?

A history of the intellectual professions should objectively begin with 1881, when the Romanian kingdom was proclaimed. Preoccupied with building an administrative system that should meet the needs of a modern state and inoculating a powerful sense of national identity, the Romanian

state privileged the formation of law specialists and funded writings of a patriotic historiography. The role played by other sciences or that of technical education was almost inexistent.

What followed was a bureaucratization phenomenon that created a quite vast “urban pseudo-bourgeoisie”,²⁰ with the most activities run under the state control whilst the only requirement being the educational credentials. To some degree, this was a pattern shared by all countries that faced these national emancipation movements, with social and economic finalities. For instance, in the case of Hungary after 1867, the state began building an entire network of law higher education institutions, with the explicit purpose of creating an administrative body of civil servants, well-trained and loyal to the new political hierarchy. The legal career represented during the Austro-Hungarian dualist regime (1867-1918) a “rare form of public activity compatible with an elitist social status”. As a consequence, legal studies represented a mechanism for the formation of legislative and administrative competences in state leadership, transforming the graduate into a true member of a “noble corporation”.²¹

Along with the social uses of higher education in preserving the social status, there is also a complementary explanation for seeking a job in the service of the state. According to such an approach, the first contacts with the capitalistic economy caused a large phenomenon of pauperization, especially of the middle-class nobility and of some layers of the urban population. Because of that, the economic elite of the Romanian Principalities began to consider itself a sort of *declassée* in comparison with their western homologues, and starting from that they began looking for a new protector to reshape and to regain their social status. These representatives of the *proletariat of the penholder* (Mihai Eminescu) preferred to turn into a new intelligentsia, i.e. a state intelligentsia due to their educational capital they acquired. “Thus while the history of the modern Western state may well be described as one of the rising middle classes in quest of larger national markets, the history of the peripheral states is one of declining middle classes trying to escape the vagaries of the market and hoping to find safe haven in political, rather than economic, entrepreneurship”.²² For them, to serve the State was a financial necessity, while trying to westernize the society was an economic, cultural and political duty. So, the State was the only modernizing agent, but in the benefit of a small part of the entire society, while the largest part of the society – the peasantry – remained outside of this game, although it was the main social and economic class of the Romanian state.

But this kind of development could not continue indefinitely. Although there were voices condemning this disproportionate orientation of the youth toward the law studies, it seemed that a more practical career wasn't prestigious enough from a social point of view. It was simply because in this part of Europe, where the societies had a strong medieval social structure, technical expertise was associated with "the nongentlemanly, lesser social orders".²³ This was the main reason why the technical specialists came basically from the Western countries, where a technical career became a mechanism of social promotion. But when the bureaucratization reached its limits and technical education began to make a distinctive place among the higher education institutions, things began to change.

The Foundation of Engineer Studies in the Old Kingdom 1864-1918

A technical education institution was functioning in Bucharest since 1864. The School of Bridges, Roads, Mining and Architecture was called to prepare specialists for the technical functions in the bureaucratic apparatus of the Romanian state. Because of the financial shortages of the state, lack of know-how and a small number of students, the institution will have an irregular activity and an ambiguous status. For these reasons, starting with 1869 it was labeled as the School of Bridges and Roads, having the role of preparing *conductori* (head of public works) for the Minister of Public Works. Engineers who performed in Romania continued to be basically trained abroad, especially in France or in Germany.

Around 1881, there were about 130 engineers in the Old Kingdom, mostly foreigners. Yet, the development of the transportation system (railways and public roads) increased the necessity of a school entitled to deliver engineers, an outcome reached after gaining independence. Thus, the school is reformed in 1886, with the explicit mission of preparing engineers for the Minister of Public Works. Until 1890, the graduates of this school were enrolled in the Technical Body of the State as trainee engineers, while the graduates of the polytechnic schools from abroad were automatically enrolled as engineers. This situation terminated in 1890, when School of Bridges and Roads secured a key position in teaching and professional training of engineers, since the system was recognized by the state as one comparable with the ones of the schools from abroad.²⁴ However, the economic crisis that irrupted at the turn of

the 19th and 20th centuries affected the evolution of this branch of studies. The fact that the state began to dismiss engineers from its own services led to a decrease in enrollments. As a matter of fact, since 1878 and until 1900, only 231 engineers graduated this school, an average of 10 graduates per year. The insecurity of finding jobs as engineers reduced drastically the number of graduates: between 1906 and 1909 there were only 21 graduates. Until 1920, the total number of engineers prepared by the School of Bridges and Roads was of 575. The number was quite low for a country with a population of around 8 million inhabitants, while the need for specialists and specialized training was increasing. The time for reform had come.

Delimiting Educational Jurisdiction: The Polytechnic Schools of Greater Romania

Doubling its territory and population, Greater Romania had to face much greater challenges in the aftermath of the 1st World War. The most important one was the increasing surplus of agrarian population, with about 80% of the 18 million inhabitants living in the countryside, mostly occupied in rudimentary agricultural activities. Nevertheless, the traces of the 1907 peasant uprising were still visible, while the 1st World War caused a state of general discontent across Europe. Immediately after the war, an agrarian reform was implemented in order to pacify the villages. In the long run, however, the solution was rather a palliative. According to Leo Pavlovsky, an American analyst of the East and Central Europe during interwar period, there were two solutions for such a problem. The first one was emigration, especially in the USA. Since the Immigration Act of 1924 set quotas for immigrants coming from some parts of the world, including Eastern Europe, another solution had to be found. The second one was that of industrialization, but this solution was hard to implement, since the new successor states had budgetary shortages and promoted nationalistic economic policies. In the case of Romania, the per capita budget expenses decreased from 14.4 dollars in 1914/1915 to 9.5 dollars in 1925.²⁵ These problems were shared by the all 5 Danubian countries analyzed by Pavlovsky, who envisaged the danger of autarchy and growing nationalism as causal elements of a future conflict.

Turning back to the solution of industrialization, the first required step was a large body of professionals capable of conducting such a process.

At a time when economic activity was viewed as an element of a nation's power, professionals were called upon to ensure this social function of prestige and security.

The creation of Greater Romania had the appearance of a symbolic victory for the engineers' guild. On 24 October 1918, Anghel Saligny, the most famous Romanian engineer of that time, was named Minister of Public Works in Constantin Coandă's Government. He succeeded to retain this portfolio in the liberal cabinet led by Ion I.C. Brătianu. Eventually, his mandate was a short one, leaving the government on 14th of February 1919. A significant detail, however: during the period of its ministry, the *Asociația Generală a Inginerilor din România* [General Association of Engineers in Romania, hereafter AGIR] was founded, an association which was supposed to contribute to the "economic and social reconstruction work and to the establishment of the general activity of the country on scientific and national basis". As any professional association, active membership was granted to any engineer, regardless of his specialty, but who "possessed a title issued from a superior technical school in the country or abroad, a recognized institution in Romania".²⁶

The "educational jurisdiction" was challenged by the universities, seeking to enlarge their academic offer. Already during the war, in 1917, a French-Romanian Commission was set up to study and propose solutions for the organization of technical higher education at the Romanian universities. On behalf of Romania, the members of this commission were Ermil Pangrati, Dragomir Hurmuzescu, D. Pompeiu, E. Neculcea, Traian Lalescu and Nicolae Dănăilă, university professors at the faculties of science in Bucharest and Iași. In his report, published in a prestigious French magazine, Dragomir Hurmuzescu mentioned that the Romanian university must represent the interests of the nation, and besides the propagation of science and truth, another role to be assumed is the prosperity of the country: "L'Université doit former l'élite pensante et travailleuse qui dirigera toute l'activité du pays".²⁷ Mentioning that Romania already had a National School of Bridges and Roads, which mainly prepared engineers for the Romanian company of railways and for various positions in the administrative apparatus, Hurmuzescu considered that the new technical higher education, organized according to the French model, should assume the role of training industrial engineers. By doing so, technical education was called to stimulate the development of local economies, whilst replacing the foreign specialists in the Romanian

economy, as long as most of them were Germans or Austrians, former enemies in the 1st World War.

Polytechnic engineers had another point of view. One of them was Constantin D. Bușilă, a supporter of polytechnic institutions. He graduated as an engineer from Bucharest in 1900, and then he became a close collaborator of Anghel Saligny, joining him at the works for modernizing Constanța harbor. Later on, Bușilă held the position of Secretary General in the Ministry of Public Works in 1918-1919, while Anghel Saligny held this portfolio. During this period, a project was formulated by which the National School of Bridges and Roads was to be transformed into a Polytechnic School. Within a broader commission called to propose solutions for reforming the education system, a subcommittee for technical higher education functioned, which included among others Constantin Bușilă (president), I. Atanasiu (rector of University of Bucharest), E. Balaban (director of National School of Bridges and Roads), Anghel Saligny or mathematician Grigore Țițeica. The challenge for this subcommittee was to decide whether the technical education should be embedded in the university, or was it desirable to develop autonomously, according to Romania's "tomorrow's economic needs". In the final meeting from 10th of May 1919, the subcommittee agreed on the second option, considering that universities still retain the ability to "do some general, applied science courses". Nevertheless, "it was stated that the faculties of the Universities do not have as a mission the training of specialists for the different branches of technical activity, since for such training a special technical knowledge was required".

The subcommittee succeeded to formulate the educational concept of polytechnics, implemented by the similar institutions across Europe. It was quite a new approach on education and training since that was supposed to rely mostly on the principle of practice courses. Therefore, the result should have been the split of higher education system into one of "pure sciences" (theoretical) and one of "applied sciences", characteristic for technical higher education. Such a separation was legitimate, the latter requiring the development of facilities necessary for practical works, different from laboratory experiments specific to the study of the sciences.²⁸ In 1920, this proposal turned into the law on the establishment of polytechnic schools, "similar to universities", with the explicit purpose of training engineers.²⁹ Thus Romania had two polytechnic schools, in Bucharest and in Timișoara, organized by Traian Lalescu, who used to be professor at the Faculty of Sciences in Bucharest.

Although the law stated that polytechnics were “similar to universities”, still there were some details that reflected the inferior position in the higher education system. First of all, the person in charge of such an institution was called “director” (not rector, as in the case of universities), while the students were called, in fact, “pupils”. On the other hand, the admission criteria were very selective and inversely in comparison with the admission requirements from universities. There was an annual quota which was set according to schooling capacities (laboratories, conference room etc.). Then, the candidate was supposed to be a graduate of secondary education (*baccalauréats*), exceptionally being accepted graduates from professional or vocation schools. After the secondary school reform of 1928, when the duration of these studies was reduced to 7 years, the polytechnics implemented the system of preparatory year in order to provide the future pupils enough knowledge inherent to engineering studies. The admission exam consisted of three evaluations on arithmetic, plane and space geometry, and trigonometry and algebra. This emphasis on mathematic sciences proved the French influence³⁰ on organizing polytechnic studies. The appeal to these sciences was supposed to develop the transition from theory to practice and to stimulate individual work and initiatives. The main assumption was that engineer studies were supposed to be a quest for innovation and experimentation.

Another French influence was the military training of the pupils. Starting with 1925, the pupils of the Polytechnics were making the military training in these schools, thus having the possibility of becoming second lieutenant in reserve. This kind of training was supposed to develop an *esprits du corps* sense and it also proved the strategic and security uses of engineers in case of a military conflict.

Coming back to the dissimilarities with universities, in the Romanian polytechnics the study branches were organized into sections. In 1920, there were 4 such sections in Bucharest, preparing pupils to become engineers in the following fields: public construction, electronic mechanics, mining and industry, while in Timișoara only the firsts two were functioning. Beginning with 1923, the Superior School of Forestry was merged into the Polytechnic School of Bucharest.

But the conflict for the “educational jurisdiction” between universities and polytechnics was just about to start. In September 1923, as a result of some changes to the Statute of the Faculty of Sciences in Bucharest, the Technical Institutes of the Universities were granted the right to award engineer and doctoral degrees in engineering recognized by the Ministry

of Public Instruction. The problem for the graduates of these schools was that, in order to become an engineer in the service of the state, the diploma was supposed to be recognized by the Minister of Public Works. Conversely, The Law of the Technical Body of the Ministry of Public Works stipulated that only graduates of polytechnic schools from the country or abroad may be employed in public positions. Because of this situation, the graduates of these Technical Institutes formulated numerous protests in order to achieve the right to become state employees. In 1929, there were several memorandum and protests sent to Nicolae Iorga, rector of University of Bucharest, who was asked to intervene in the favor of these students. Otherwise, considered the leaders of this protest, such a situation will contribute to the erosion of university prestige.³¹

On the other side, the students of polytechnics defined the specificity of this educational concept, totally opposed to the “bohemian” spirit of the universities. Unlike the university students running in struggle for obtaining a diploma, “the engineer is not just the outcome of passed exams”. In fact, he was the result of a continuous and harsh work for years, and so he could take this spirit of order and discipline into his professional activity. Finally, although Polytechnic Schools were not entitled to provide doctoral studies, this was not enough to be hierarchically subordinated to universities.³²

An indirect response offered by Nicolae Vasilescu-Karpen to the frustrations of the university students was the conference he held on 29 November 1929, entitled Polytechnic School. For Vasilescu-Karpen, the progress of European civilization in the 19th and early 20th centuries owes a great deal to engineering technique. On the contrary, the flowering periods of the arts and humanities have failed to improve the condition of the individual. Therefore, “the use of the mechanical forces, which nature gives us, increased the human powers, while suppressing the useless slavery. The characteristic of today’s civilization over the past ones is the safety and dignity of human life, in all social classes, along with the individual freedom that is no more limited but to the needs of the community”. Although it sounded as an anti-humanities speech, the conclusion reached by Vasilescu-Karpen was the opposite. In his opinion the only chance for a new flourishing age for humanities and arts was through an increasing public wealth, inconceivable outside of the progresses of science and technology. The faith in progress and technocracy shared by Vasilescu-Karpen meant also a promising non-zero-sum economic pattern of development. Technology was no more about taking the wealth from the masses for the benefit of small and

selfish elite. The power of technology was that it could provide anybody with what it needed.³³ For such a goal, a continuing development of the technic higher education system was required. In addition, the engineer must be prepared to assume leadership roles in economic life and must be aware of the major changes at the international level. This is why the Polytechnic students also attended economic and administrative courses, plus foreign language courses, without which the success of a career was almost impossible.³⁴

The university law of 1932 came to complicate the things. Regarding “applied sciences”,³⁵ article 70 of this law stipulated that “faculties of sciences that have organized applied sciences also grant diplomas of university engineer and doctor-university engineer”. The one who signaled this strange situation was Constantin D. Bușilă, as a deputy in the Romanian parliament, who strongly opposed the introduction of the “applied education” to the University, since it was neither more, nor less, than “unfair” competition to the polytechnic schools. “It is not rational to have two similar institutions in the same city”, Bușilă stated. “We need to train just in one place the engineers the public and private economic life of the country really needs”. Instead, such a decision was supposed to contribute to the lowering of the educational requirements from both institutions, for the single purpose of attracting more and more students.³⁶

The only achievement of Constantin D. Bușilă was passing an amendment by which the technical institutes pending of universities were supposed to be merged into the polytechnics by a future law for concentrating engineers training. Only that in the Senate, the influence exercised by the *de jure* senators of the universities led to the passing of a new “amendment”. Article 96 stipulated that the provisions of article 85 were to be applied “only after the decisions of the Faculty Council, taken by the majority of the total number of titular professors and ratified by University Senate”. Later on, Bușilă noted that the principle of university autonomy (as understood and practiced by the University) went beyond the interpretation given by the state to this notion, since article 96 “subordinated a state law to a so-called academic autonomy”.³⁷ It was a proof of legal asymmetry since a law issued by the state could not produce effects without the prior ratification of the universities. Again, the fact that the polytechnic schools were inferior to the universities was more than obvious. While each university had a *de jure* senator in the Parliament, their power to influence political decisions into their own interest was considerable.³⁸

Starting with 1935 the professional associations of engineers began to fight for concentration and rationalization of technical higher education. AGIR (headed by Mihail Manoilescu starting with 1935) and Societatea Politehnică din România [Polytechnic Society of Romania] (led by Constantin D. Bușilă) tried to come into notice and then get the support of public opinion in this regard. Considering that public support is essential in order to achieve the goal, these associations will exploit any public event or dissatisfaction to turn them into an argument for concentrating technical higher education and establish a meritorious place for the engineer in the hierarchy of intellectual professionals.

Such a demarche was framed also as a financial issue. From the budgetary point of view, the financing of the university technical institutes represented a waste of the public money: in 1935/36, the total expenses with the institutes in Bucharest amounted to 19 million lei, while the two polytechnic schools spent 34 million. In terms of labor market insertion, the university technical institutes contributed to an increasing unemployment among engineers: out of the 240 engineers of the Polytechnic School in Bucharest in 1934 and 1935, "only 20 % were placed in good conditions. Others have been placed, but I know cases when some of these graduates have just become teachers at a craft school in the countryside. As a matter of fact, many of them were hired and paid as workers because they could not be put into the budget. There is indeed great intellectual unemployment".³⁹

Despite the public pressure for such a law, things seemed to be delayed on purpose. Although the student associations from the Polytechnic School and from Technical Institute of the Universities joined their forces, it seemed that the legislative procedure was obstructed by some professors who were senators.⁴⁰

Sometimes a strong public emotion is required, so things can speed up. Such a pretext was the disaster at the feast of the restoration of June 8, 1936, when one of the tribunes arranged for the public at Cotroceni stadium (Bucharest) collapsed under the gaze of King Carol II. Media widely reported this unfortunate incident, which provoked a lot of casualties. A bizarre detail was also that the works were carried out with no professional advice. Although engineers tried to frame this incident as a reinforcement of their claims, the things were moving too slowly.

It was not until 19 February 1937 that the draft law on the concentration of technical higher education came into the debate of the Parliament. Mihail Manoilescu's arguments in the favor of such a law seemed

irrefutable. First of all, the university technical institutes would have functioned illegally, simply by the fact that they were empowered to grant the title of engineer by an internal statute, and not by an organic law. Then, although the 1932 university law revealed this abnormality, the decision taken by the Parliament was to simply perpetuate this state of affair. A decision of the Legislative Council of 1934, however, considered these institutes “virtually abolished” since “their origin was illegal”. The law seemed simply incapable of replacing old habits. “The positive solution is to have a great totalitarian polytechnic for the whole country or a large technical university”⁴¹ that was supposed to encompass all technical faculties in Romania. The difference between university and Polytechnic would rely on the degrees granted: universities were entitled for academic degrees (except for human medicine), while the latter granted professional titles.

On March 20, 1937, the law for the concentration of the training of engineers in the Polytechnic Schools was published in the Official Monitor, stipulating the settle down of a third polytechnic school in Iași, the capital city of Moldova. One year later, in November 1938, in order to “rationalize” higher education, the first law in the history of Romanian education was adopted which regulated the situation of all higher education institutions. Thus, the agronomic academies of Cluj and Bucharest were to be included in the Polytechnics of Timișoara and Bucharest; the technical institutes from Bucharest along with the Academy of Architecture were to be incorporated in the Polytechnics of Bucharest; finally, the Agronomic Faculty of Chișinău will become part of the newly established Polytechnic in Iași. The reasons behind the promulgation of this law were “a better recruitment of the teaching staff” and “a more serious training of the students”. In the latter aspect, the law would set “a brake on endless inflation that did not serve either the proper development of science or the good training of students”.⁴²

The Fight for the Professional Jurisdiction

After 1918, Greater Romania enlarged considerably its body of professionals, if we take into consideration the specialists coming from the new provinces: Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transylvania. In fact, these provinces were totally different from social and economic point of view. Here came into action the professional associations who were

called to develop power strategies for dominating and monopolizing the labor market. In such a volatile medium in the aftermath of the 1st World War, it was almost naturally that, as it was the case in Germany, “many professional associations, when faced with higher competition and lowered incomes, actively sought to surrender some of their autonomy in return for state protection”.⁴³ This pattern developed in many European countries, and many professional associations considered that only an international approach on such a problem would provide effective solutions.

In 1924, the International Labor Office (ILO) implemented an enquiry into the conditions of work of industrial workers possessing higher education qualifications, i.e. chemists and engineers. Almost all Central and Eastern European countries responded to this investigation, whose main purpose was to find out if there are special institutions that grant the titles mentioned above, if the professions were legally protected and if there were any signs of unemployment in these professions. From the Romanian side, the answer was provided by Ioan Protopopescu, professor at the Polytechnic School in Timișoara. If the engineer’s title was an attribute of polytechnic schools only, the title of “licensed in chemistry” was awarded by all four universities of Romania, he noted in his answer. However, there was no law protecting the two academic titles, even though AGIR had put forward such a legislative proposal. Even so, unemployment among the two professions did not exist, due to the fact that many German and Austrian specialists who used to work in Romania preferred to emigrate. On the contrary, because of the industry’s surge, the two polytechnic schools did not have the capacity to train a sufficient number of specialists. On the other hand, in terms of engineer payment, inflation contributed to a steep decline in purchasing power. Engineers in the state service earned between 4 and 9,000 lei, while in the private industry wages were three times higher.⁴⁴

The situation began to change in the late 20’s, according to Vasilescu-Karpen. Although the Polytechnic Schools imposed an annual quota of students in order to avoid an overcrowding in the profession, the effects of the economic depression played an important role, though. In April 1930, Vasilescu-Karpen initiated an inquiry in order to estimate if a future regulation of the flow the graduates of the two polytechnic schools was needed. The public and private institutions he addressed warned that “the number of positions in the various engineering specialties is very low and there was no estimate of vacancies in the near future”. In addition, there was a large share of engineers trained abroad. The engineer body of the

Romanian Railway Company consisted of 612 engineers, of which 300 graduated abroad. According to Vasilescu-Karpen's estimates, the body of engineers of all specialties in the country could be rated at a "maximum of about 4000". "Admitting an average of 25 years in service, it would result that our country needs a flow of about 160 engineers per year; as not all graduates of engineering schools practice this profession, we can admit a maximum flow of 200 engineers per year. This is actually the flow of engineers of the two Polytechnics in the country, which can thus cope with the current needs of the country".⁴⁵ His statement can be considered as one of the first incentives for converting a liberal profession into a statefully-protected profession.

In 1931, another inquiry conducted by BIT revealed that in many European countries there was an important "endemic unemployment" because of an overcrowding in this profession. As for Romania, the report revealed that neither engineer nor architects (as academic title and as professions) were not protected by any law. The only positive aspect was that in the service of the state there were employed only holders of the academic titles of engineer or architect, granted by a polytechnic school from Romania or abroad. The report concluded that there was an "intellectual unemployment" among engineers, caused especially by the economic depression. In addition, the austerity policies adopted by the government led to salary cuts between 25% and 40% starting with January 1931.⁴⁶

AGIR also tackled the problem of engineers' unemployment, proposing two distinct solutions. The first proposal was a nationalistic one, asking for the limitation of foreign specialists to work in Romania. It should be noted that Romania had already adopted two such measures: the Migration Law (1925) and the Indigenous Labor Protection Act (1930), which aimed at limiting the presence of foreign specialists on the intellectual professions market in Romania.

Four years later, through the law on the use of Romanian personnel in enterprises, the tendency towards Romanianizing the market of intellectual professions turns into state politics. Eugen Titeanu, rapporteur of the law in the Chamber of Deputies, explained the need for such a law through the amplitude of intellectual unemployment among young graduates: "The new generations of intellectuals coming from universities and renowned schools must find their place in the economic life of this state, so they won't become the trigger of social neurosis".⁴⁷ *De facto*, the law had a deep autarchic and nationalist character, since all economic, industrial,

and commercial enterprises (no matter if public or private) were obliged to have 80% Romanian citizens, with the exception of boards of directors where an equal ratio was still allowed. As for foreign employees, the law mentioned that those “who at the date of the promulgation of the law were married to Romanians and having children will preferably be hold in their positions”.⁴⁸

The law failed to calm the spirits, both in parliament and in public life. The nationalist derail asked for concrete measures of “national justice” for all Romanians, with the ethnic argument prevailing over the citizenship rights. The nationalization of economic life has become a widespread opinion in society.

The pressure exerted by professional associations played a great role to this respect. Since 1933, the most important intellectual professional associations from Romania decided to establish a national confederation. The new body, called *Confederația Asociațiilor de Profesioniști Intelectuali din România* [Confederation of Intellectual Professionals Associations of Romania, CAPIR], was one of the harsh promoters of a “nationalized” labor market. In May 16, 1937, CAPIR General Congress adopted the resolution called “Romanianization of Intellectual Professions”, which aimed at promoting the “national ethnic element” in all professions, along with the Romanianization of the capital, and the revision of citizenships granted after 1918. In addition, the resolution asked for a severe revision of all diplomas of study obtained abroad and nostrified by the state after 1918. A last point was the creation of an intellectual work office with role in professional guidance and training. The extreme right press welcomed this initiative supposed to be just a materialization of the times’ spirit. An article praised this “Resurrection of the Intellectuals”, stating that “the members of this confederation will be victorious not as intellectuals, but as active patriots and soldiers for a sacred cause. The last question: can our intellectual professionals turn into such an army? Are they ready to fight; that is to say, are they full of abnegation and willing to totally give up the bourgeois prejudices and commodities?”⁴⁹

Towards an “Enlightened Minority’s Dictatorship”

The royal dictatorship regime installed by King Carol II had all the ingredients of an intellectual professionals’ victory. In 1936, in a statement in Parliament, Mihail Manoilescu pointed out the necessity

of an “enlightened minority’s dictatorship”, i.e. a dictatorship in which intellectual professionals were supposed to be in charge of everything. The idea of a corporatist organization of the state was in strong relation with the idea of a planned economy,⁵⁰ considered to be the only system capable of a truly development of the state. Economic underdevelopment, stated Manoiilescu, was caused by the free-trade system, which disadvantaged the agrarian economies, unable to produce added value due to the low labor efficiency. The solution was industrialization at the expense of investment in agriculture, and a protectionist system for the entire economy, including the intellectual professionals. Economic nationalism “first means the external struggle of the entire internal economy against the economic interests of foreigners and, secondly, the internal struggle to conquer the decisive economic positions on the part of the Romanians”.⁵¹

In 1938, Mihail Manoiilescu proposed a scheme for the organization and representation of intellectual professions in Parliament, as well as in the new society. The aim was therefore a corporate organization of intellectual professionals, “a massive grouping of intellectuals as intellectuals, according to their specialty and competence, a group that has in its various sectors a right to intervene legally in all matters of the State”.⁵² The first step was an organization in distinct colleges of intellectual professionals according to their specialties, while enrollment was supposed to be mandatory in order to practice any profession.

The result was the Law on exercising the profession of engineer and the establishment of the Engineers College, published in the Official Monitor on the 10th of August, 1938. Thus, the exercise of the engineer profession became the exclusive attribute of the Engineers’ College members, open only to Romanian citizens who enjoyed all civil and political rights and who were holders of a diploma issued by higher technical schools in Romania or abroad (in the latter case an equivalence was required). AGIR proposed that all members of this association automatically be recognized by the state as members of the College of Engineers and thus to be the only experts that public authorities should call for jobs. In the AGIR Yearbook of 1938-1939, a list of experts comprising 3172 engineers was published. The distribution by specialties was as follows: 738 were construction engineers, 896 mechanical and electromechanical engineers, 342 mining and metallurgy engineers, 295 engineers for the chemical industry, 461 forest engineers, and 420 agronomic engineers (for 20 engineers there was no specialty mentioned). In terms of work, over 60% were in state service (2039 engineers), almost 20% were working in the private sector

(629), 136 were entrepreneurs and 368 were freelancers. The vast majority of this body was active in the Muntenia-Bucharest area (1900), and the area with the lowest number of AGIR members was Oradea, with only 20 engineers.

Political Authoritarianism as a Culmination of Professionalization? (Conclusions)

GrigoreTrancu-Iași wrote on 1 December 1916 that “This country was a great victim of loquacity: loquacity from the Parliament tribune and loquacity in the papers. We have chosen the ruling people not according to their skill, but after the perception of their discourse. Who has made more swirling phrases has come closer to the ministerial portfolio”. And under this mask of erudite peroration, room was made to incompetence, corruption and servility: “When you look like an obedient servant and you succeed to become a minister, well, then there’s no wonder that in such a government the prime minister has the entire power, and the others do not dare to oppose. Therefore, the country gets to the point it reached today”,⁵³ referring to the disaster of the military campaign of the autumn of 1916, resulting in the refugee in Moldova.

The new state, Greater Romania, was supposed to trigger a new system of reshaping society, with professionalization as the core phenomenon in building a modern labor market and a new bureaucracy, since it relied on a meritocratic system of promotion. Instead, bureaucracy became a politicized area, while professionalization was hardly penetrating economic and social structure. And, as I presented above, these professions were supposed to manage into a free-market system with no legal protection. This was the reason why the political parties system meant for many professionals a high degree of uncertainty and precariousness. Since political parties were the exponents of a democratic electoral regime, these shortcomings have turned into a fierce criticism of the idea of democracy itself, increasingly manifested among intellectual professionals in the 1930s. That was why the discourse of professionalism supported the need for state interventionism in society and in the economy, with the risk of canceling democracy. In fact, democratic practice had not even managed to legally protect their professions.

The regime of royal dictatorship of King Carol II intended to reshape the state system in favor of professionals. The administrative reform initiated by

Radu Portocală aimed to reduce the number of civil servants, amounting to 408.619 in 1940, i.e. 2.15% of the total population of the country, well above the state's financial capacities. His aim was to create a slim and modern bureaucratic apparatus. According to the new law, by specialist it was understood a "graduated from a specialized school, directly related to the position he wants to fulfill and who also has academic titles or activities in the same specialty". Radu Portocală hoped that his approach will be the first step in the "intellectualization of cadres", and the entrance exam among civil servants will be able to become a selection of the most valuable university graduates, in order to establish a new "administrative nobility, a second magistracy": "To this new connection of social and national life we call the titrated youth. For him and for a higher state, we have created this new social value, the cultured public function".⁵⁴

Finally, I would like to emphasize the necessity of a historical sociology of labor and, in particular, of intellectual professions in modern Romania. Although historiography has highlighted the successes of the higher education system in the training of professionals, few studies have focused on the fate of the graduates in the labor market. Another issue less approached is the shift from an occupational agrarian society towards one of employed people. In 1930, Romania had an "active population" of 10 million, a rather fake statistic, considering that over 8 million were peasants exploiting their own farms. In fact, the paid work represented only 13.9% of the active population, with the state as the largest employer. The underdevelopment of the Romanian society can be envisaged as the incapacity of creating, protecting and promoting a more complex socio-economic structure. To this respect, the case of engineers is illustrative. Born as an intellectual profession in order to serve the interests of the state, it developed an entire social, economic and political system in order to make the state support the interests of this profession.

NOTES

- * The author would like to thank Petru Negură (NEC alumnus) for his helpful comments and feedback.
- ¹ ANIC, *Fund Direcția Generală a Poliției 1903-1936*, folder no. 1/1926, ff. 201, 213, 218.
- ² The British Leftist historian will conclude that the interwar period was nothing more than an interstitial between the time of laissez-faire capitalism and the birth of the welfare state after 1945. An excerpt from the Times January 23rd, 1943, was illustrative: "Next to [first world] war, unemployment has been the most widespread, the most insidious, and the most corroding malady of our generation; it is the specific social disease of Western civilization in our time". Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes. The Short 20th Century 1914-1991*, London, Abacus, 1995, p. 85.
- ³ For Europe, it was not the first time it had to face problems like intellectual proletariat or intellectual unemployment. As Lenore O'Boyle put it, an "excess of educated men" was faced by France, Germany or England in the first half of the 19th century. Soon after that, along with the spread of the Industrial revolution and the economic system it created – the capitalist one – this phenomenon was faced by many other countries, especially during the interwar years. "In the 20th century this kind of intellectual proletariat was important in the growth of Fascism and Right Radicalism, and has been crucial in the history of underdeveloped countries". Lenore O'Boyle, "The Problem of an Excess of Educated Men in Western Europe 1800-1850", in *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 42, no. 4, December 1970, p. 494.
- ⁴ Eric Hoffer, *The True Believer. Thoughts on the Nature of Mass Movements*, New York, Harper&Row, 1951, p. 15.
- ⁵ Mária M. Kovács, *Liberal Professions and Illiberal Politics. Hungary from the Habsburgs to the Holocaust*, Washington DC, Woodrow Wilson Center Press, p. xvii.
- ⁶ Lutz Raphael, "Embedding the Human and Social Sciences in Western Societies, 1880-1980: Reflections on Trends and Methods of Current Research", in Kerstin Brückweh, Dirk Schumann, Richard F. Wetzell, Benjamin Ziemann (eds.), *Engineering Society. The Role of the Human and Social Sciences in Modern Societies 1880-1980*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, p. 41-56.
- ⁷ Magali Sarfatti Larson, *The Rise of Professionalism. Monopolies of Competence and Sheltered Markets*, 2nd edition, New Brunswick, New Jersey, Transaction Publishers, 2013, p. xxiv.
- ⁸ Andrew Abbott, *The System of Professions. An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor*, Chicago&London, The University of Chicago Press, 1988, p. 2.
- ⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

- 10 "The central phenomenon of professional life is the link between a profession and its work, a link I shall call jurisdiction". *Ibidem*, p. 20.
- 11 John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920, p. 249.
- 12 Cited in Maria M. Kovács, *Liberal Professions and Illiberal Politics*, p. 38.
- 13 Martin Kohlrausch, *The Hour of the Experts? Reflections on the Rise of Experts in Interbellum Europe*, in Joris Vandendriessche, Evert Peeters and Kaat Wils (eds.), *Scientists' Expertise as Performance: between State and Society 1860-1960*, London&New York, Routledge, 2015, p. 70.
- 14 Charles S. Maier, "Consigning the 20th Century to History. Alternative Narrative for the Modern Era", in *The American Historical Review*, vol. 105, no. 3, June 2000, p. 818.
- 15 Lutz Raphael, "Embedding the Human and Social Sciences in Western Societies, 1880-1980", p. 51.
- 16 Charles Ferguson and Henry Gantt cited in Charles S. Maier, "Between Taylorism and Technocracy. European ideologies and the vision of industrial productivity in the 1920's", in *Journal of Contemporary History*, volume 5, issue 2, april 1970, p. 33.
- 17 Martin Kohlrausch, *The Hour of the Experts?*, p. 73.
- 18 Dimitrie Gusti, "Apel cu prilejul întemeierii Asociației pentru studiul și reforma socială", in *Arhiva pentru Știință și Reformă Socială*, year I, no. 1, April 1919, p. 91.
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- 20 Historian Ioan C. Filitti envisaged *pseudoburghezia orășenească* as the original error from the inception of the Romanian state. In fact, this strategy turned to be a way of preserving its own privileges in the new regime, while the state of the peasantry lagged behind. Citing a phrase of Take Ionescu as a deputy in the Parliament of Romania in 1887, it seemed that "the boyars were gone, so the *cumulards* can come!". See Ioan C. Filitti, *Rătăcirile unei pseudo-burghezii (și reforme ce nu se fac)*, București, Institutul de Arte Grafice Torouțiu, [1935], p. 6.
- 21 Viktor Karády, "Une *nation de juristes*. Des usages sociaux de la formation juridique dans la Hongrie d'Ancien Régime", in *Acte de la recherche en sciences sociales*, vol. 86-87: *Education et société*, mars 1991, p. 109.
- 22 Andrew C. Janos, *East Central Europe in the Modern World. The Politics of the Borderlands from pre- to Postcommunism*, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2000, p. 66.
- 23 Maria M. Kovács, *Liberal Professions and Illiberal Politics*, p. 12.
- 24 Ion Ionescu, *Istoricul învățământului ingineriei în România*, in *Aniversarea a 75 de ani de învățământ tehnic în România*, București, Cartea românească Publishing House, 1930, p. 183-191.

- 25 Leo Pavlosky, *Economic Nationalism of the Danubian States*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1928, p. 401.
- 26 See *Monitorul Oficial al României* no. 223 from 30th of December 1918, articles 4 and 7.
- 27 D. Hurmuzesco, "L'Organisation de l'Enseignement Technique Supérieur auprès des Universités de Roumanie", in *Revue générale des Sciences pures et appliquées*, year 29, no. 21, 15th of November 1918, p. 615.
- 28 Constantin D. Bușilă, *Învățământul tehnic superior*, București [f.e.] 1939, p. 17.
- 29 *Monitorul Oficial al României* no. 61 from 10th of June 1920.
- 30 On the origins and evolution of the Ecole Polytechniques in Paris, see Ulrich Pfammatter, *The Making of the Modern Architect and Engineer. The Origins and Developments of a Scientific and Industrially Oriented Education*, Basel-Boston-Berlin, Birkhäuser, 2000, p. 17-99.
- 31 ANIC, Fund Direcția Generală a Poliției 1906-1936, folder no. 42/1929, f. 3-4.
- 32 ANIC, Fund Direcția Generală a Poliției 1906-1936, folder no. 28/1928, f. 7-8.
- 33 Nicolae Vasilescu-Karpen, *Școala politehnică. Conferință susținută în data de 29 noiembrie 1929, în Școala Politehnică din București. Anuarul pentru anul 1927-1928*, București, Cartea Românească Publishing House, [1930], p. IV.
- 34 *Ibidem*, p. VIII.
- 35 Nicolae Iorga noted in his memoirs that during the discussions on the university education law, he had to face the adversity of the polytechnic students, a "disrespectful demonstration because the law did not respect the monopoly of engineers". The note is dated March 16, 1932, when Iorga also visited King Carol II, who had a similar point to the representatives of the Romanian polytechnics: "He [King Carol 2nd] believes politechnicians are right. The university should only grant the title of graduates in applied science". Nicolae Iorga, *Memorii. Încercarea guvernării peste partide 1931-1932*, vol. VI, București, [f.e.], 1939, p. 349.
- 36 See the meeting of the Deputies Assembly from 28th of March 1932, in *Monitorul Oficial al României. Partea a treia: Dezbateri parlamentare. Adunarea Deputaților*, no. 71 of 15th of April 1932.
- 37 Constantin D. Bușilă, *Învățământul tehnic superior*, p. 54.
- 38 The Deputy Chambers after the elections of December 1933 had a total of 384 positions, and was by far dominated by lawyers (174 deputies listed this profession); 21 came from the university milieu and 14 listed engineer as their professional identity. See *Listă nominală cu arătarea grupării politice, profesiei, stării civile și domiciliului domnilor deputați aleși în alegerile din 20 decembrie 1933* ACNSAS, Fund Documentar, file no. 10809, f. 2-22.

- 39 Ștefan Mihăescu, "Organizarea rațională a învățământului tehnic superior", în *Buletinul AGIR*, year XVIII, no. 5, May 1936, p. 164.
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- 41 Mihail Manoilescu, "Problema concentrării învățământului tehnic superior (interpelare în ședința Senatului din 19 februarie 1937)", în *Buletinul AGIR*, year XIX, no. 2, February 1937, pp. 34-45.
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- 46 ILOA, Series N, folder no. N/207.
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- 49 ANIC, Fond DGP 1937-1948, folder 175/1937, f. 23-29.
- 50 For a detailed analysis of the parliamentary debates on "planned economy" and the Superior Economic Council, see Hans-Christian Manner, *Parlamentarismul în România 1930-1940*, p. 276-288.
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THE MUSICAL ARSENAL IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR. “DIE WACHT AM RHEIN“ IN TRANSYLVANIAN SAXONS’ REPERTOIRE

Abstract

This article investigates the political and social role of the song *Die Wacht am Rhein* in the context of the Great War and focuses on its presence in the Transylvanian Saxons’ repertoire. I examine the social and political connotations of its performance before and during the Great War. I demonstrate how the song was instrumentalized to serve the processes of mobilization and how it was able to keep up the morale of both combatants sent to fight and of the ones on the home front. I insist on the capacity of the song to be integrated in a polyphony of national repertoires and even to transgress ethnic borders. I also show the migrating power of the metaphor of “border watch” and its capacity to overlap various other geographical and political realities from the Eastern front.

Keywords: music, *Die Wacht am Rhein*, Transylvanian Saxons, The Great War, Pan-Germanism.

It seems to be in human nature to go to war. Like doing to war, singing is also a significant part of every human culture and going to war singing is a primordial condition of human being. Hence, wars can produce a mass of musical repertoire that may have a stronger or softer impact on the singers. In various ways music is part of the war from the incipit until afterward in processes of remembering. During the war, old repertoire of various use in peace time or new compositions created and/or performed for different reasons are usually preordained to help the active and/or passive participants to cheer up or to help forgetting, to attenuate and to console, to celebrate or to commemorate, etc. These generic assertions about the relation between war and music(king) understood as a dynamic social act, as something that people do and get involve in and with,¹ emphasize the functional feature of music regardless of the conflict one may refer to.

With all the precarities the Great War brought with it, music(king) never ceased. It was by music that crowds reacted when they learnt about the declarations of war and music joined the recruits during the mobilization and their departures from train stations. Music was performed in the trenches and it consoled the wounded in hospitals as much as it entertained the relatives left at home. Finally, music(king) provided with a sense of dignity when the dead bodies were brought home or interned on the spot nearby the battlefield. The war context reshaped the music(king) which had to keep on entertaining, to bolt out fear, to sacralize the human losses by means of national commemoration practices, etc. All these functions continued to be fulfilled during the 20th and the 21 centuries and the memory of the war left consistent traces decades later in the popular music.²

For obvious reasons, in this paper, I will only refer to Max Schneckenburger's *Die Wacht am Rhein* which even the Transylvanian Saxon belligerents in the Great War, serving into Austria-Hungary army, truly enjoyed singing. There are various reasons standing behind my choice. First, the singing of *Die Wacht am Rhein* testifies for the cultural transfers between the motherland (The German Reich) and an Eastern European German speaking enclave living, for century, in a peripheral province of the Austria-Hungary. Second, it reveals how multiple loyalties towards the motherland and the fatherland (Danube dualist Empire) of the Transylvanian Saxon subjects could be expressed by different musical repertoires without generating much frictions. Third, it helps to examine how a highly targeted, nationalist popular song dedicated to a political affair in the West, that had nothing to do with the immediate circumstances in which Transylvanian Saxons lived, turned out to find such a wide audience in the East and to become a central piece of the musical repertory they played when they fought in the Great War.

The birth and the dissemination of a patriotic song

Die Wacht am Rhein's career proves to be the expression of German nationalism and to document the birth of the European nationalism which is credited to have been born on the Rhine.³ Its highest momentum of celebrity was reached in the 1870-1871 French Prussian War.⁴ From that point on the song was interpreted constantly until the end of the Second World War when the cumulative sense of guilt had to be assumed and

the song was expelled from the national repertoire. From the perspective of the ethnomusicologist, it represents a typical example of a nationalist music imposed from up to the bottom⁵ with a certain amount of success. Through different channels of dissemination, it succeeded to “inject pan-German nationalism into the lower and middle classes.”⁶

The song was part of what has been called the *Rheinliedbewegung*⁷ which emerged in the 1840s in the context of the Rhine crises. As a matter of fact, there was a wide production of songs and in her meticulous study Cecelia Hopkins Porter counted approximately 400, more or less elaborated or kitsch tunes dedicated to a river discursively turned into a metaphor. The metaphors associated to the river were immediately understood and used as political weapons which proved in the long run very influential within the cultural nationalism.⁸ To put it straightly, the songs in this collection were a reaction to the French politics of conquest east of the Rhine, therefore, they carry in themselves the seed of quarrel between French “civilization” and German *Kultur*. The cultural Germanisation of the Rhine was an answer back to the French political agenda in which the Rhine was regarded as a *natural frontier*.⁹ The area east of the Rhine underwent a process of mythologization, and resultingly it turned into a cradle of the nation.¹⁰ The process imposed a selection, hence, only some of the poems in the *Rheinliedbewegung* succeeding to resist over time. The highest level of popularity was reached by those that had been set to music and were performed in various milieus and temporal historical contexts. *Die Wacht am Rhein* enjoyed such a fortunate fate.

Before the Great War the song was available to the public in various formats from sheet music, booklets (Commersbücher),¹¹ being also engraved on the pedestal monuments,¹² or even got associated with various iconographic productions like it was the case of the postcards.¹³ As recently demonstrated, the last mentioned mediatic items were used as propaganda in the Great War because they supported the idea of a war carried for a noble cause: the defense of the pan-national idea of Germanness. Schools and collegiate music groups helped a great deal to the transfer and adoption of the song in routine musical repertoire.¹⁴

This institutional infrastructure that assured the success of the song was replicated beyond the borders of the Reich, the German model being imitated in institutionalizing musical life in Eastern Europe. Even in the musically advanced Habsburg Monarchy one can identify the effect of cultural transfers from the German lands and later German Reich. Within this process, not only the forms of institutional musical life but also the

German repertoire was exported and adapted to serve local needs and political agendas. Obviously, here, *Die Wacht am Rhein* was performed especially in the German speaking communities and was intended to emphasize the group's *Volkstumlichkeit*.¹⁵ No wonder to see that the song was instrumentalized as a weapon when national tensions between cultures in the Austrian-Hungarian Monarchy began to sharpen. However, a close reading in the temporal, political and regional context(s) would demonstrate that the understanding of *Die Wacht am Rhein* performance could vary enormously in various German enclaves.

During the process of the national building, the Transylvanian multicultural environment could not remain indifferent to the tunes of the others. In case of the German citizens of the Dualist Monarchy, who began to openly show double loyalty towards the Habsburg dynasty but also to the German Reich it was prerequisite to let them sing pan-nationalist repertoire. *Die Wacht am Rhein* was a central piece in this program. As it was noticed, along with the national anthem, the "*Prinz Eugen der Edle Ritter*" song, *Die Wacht am Rhein* was steadily inserted in what was called the "official" military culture" of the Francisco-Josephine times.¹⁶

The political alliance between the two states only encouraged these developments. Progressively, in the realm of music even specialized musical journals like *Musik für Alle* encouraged the practice of a mixed repertoire that would support the cultural and military alliance between The German Reich and Austria-Hungary.¹⁷

The song was inserted in a variety of low - brow or high - brow events, in formally organized or improvised musicking. Even when it found no place in the announced program of different high - brow musical performances, *Die Wacht am Rhein* could be spontaneously performed by the musicians and/or by the audience.¹⁸ Unquestionably, the *Die Wacht am Rhein* was a central piece in the entertainment culture during the Great War.

Yet, variables in place and time did occur. In this respect, one shall admit that there was not always a total consensus in the songs representativity. With all the public euphoric manifestations in the streets of the major towns, even in the German Reich, in the context of the outburst of the Great War, the singing of *Die Wacht am Rhein* on the streets was responded by Social Democrats with *Arbeitermarseillaise*.¹⁹ Occasionally, this polyphony was tolerated, some other times it was taken as a sign of insubordination of a category of citizens and the police arbitrated the affair with its own means of bringing things, by force, under control.²⁰

On the other hand, in smaller towns the reaction to the threat represented by the inevitable confrontation with Russia convinced even the Social Democrats, who generally opposed war, to sing *Die Wacht am Rhein*.²¹

Undeniably, the song's initial social function was to instil a sense of male camaraderie²² which reconfirms the functional dimension of communal singing.²³ This power of music in building masculine solidarities was very soon recognised and instrumentalized in the Great War by the officers in the Central Powers' armies.²⁴ Like everywhere in Europe, popular songs like *Die Wacht am Rhein* contributed to the voluntary participation of citizens in the war effort on both battlefield and the home front²⁵ because it exploited the concept of devotion/loyalty (*Treue*).²⁶ During the war, *Die Wacht am Rhein* was expected to work as a psychological emotional enhancer and civil religious and military authorities collaborated, doing their best that the song would be present in every soldier's knapsack.²⁷ The Transylvanian Saxons' case documents not only the same preoccupation of the authorities but also the omnipresence of the tune in the repertoire they sang during the Great War.

The steady contacts Transylvanian Saxons established over the centuries with the German lands facilitated the cultural transfers. They are accountable both in form and content. The musical life, be it religious or profane, closely followed a German pattern and, consequently, musical life has been interpreted as an expression of preserving Germanness.²⁸

In what follows I will highlight the tune's role in motivating soldiers and their relatives at home to (re-)create an emotional bond²⁹ by reiteration of the idea of pan-national brotherhood. By commonly singing *Die Wacht am Rhein* in different venues and on the battlefields across Europe, the imaginary community of singers – fighters could share the belief that the war they fought in was a matter of duty to defend their collective pan-national identity. Therefore, I examine the narratives published in the religious, educational and daily Transylvanian Saxon press abounding in news in which *Die Wacht am Rhein* was mentioned. My intention is to distinguish the social and political functions and the meanings with which the song was attributed in different theatres of war, by the variety of participants partaking in the conflict.

The Transylvanian Saxons were fairly familiarized with the patriotic repertoire from the German lands. Indisputably, *Die Wacht am Rhein* may be regarded as exponential in the process of asserting a local belongingness to Germanness by adoption of a nationalist German musical repertoire.

When the Great War commenced the Saxon Evangelical Church with the support of land credit institution (*Bodenkreditanstalt*) got involved in providing the parishioners recruited with a booklet, in pocket-size format, which was published in two editions in 1914 and 1915 and was widely distributed among them. It included a long list of religious and patriotic songs. *Die Wacht am Rhein* was among them,³⁰ and, as I will soon demonstrate it was popular being very often sang in various contexts.

Two articles published one after the other in the Transylvanian main daily journals from Sibiu (Hermannstadt), respectively, from Brașov (Kronstadt) in September 1915 demonstrate how omnipresent was the song in asserting Transylvanian Saxons' affiliation to the German cause. As a matter of fact, the very minute essays inform about the birth of the song and the fate of the original manuscript. I will only insist on those remarks which can explain the relevance of the song in the recent context of the war. In *Siebenbürgisch - Deutsche Tageblatt* was recognized that: "Next to the respectable "Gott erhalte" in the present, every single day, sounds in our ears the proud defend and defy song "Wacht am Rhein" which for 44 years lifts the hearts of the Germans."³¹ If the title of this first attempt to map the birth and the saga of this patriotic song makes use of a line from it, the article from the *Kronstädter Zeitung* proves more straight forward when it comes to explain the significance of the song for the present time' consciousness of the readers and performers. Entitled *The Commemoration day of Die Wacht am Rhein*, it specifically wants to be a "contemporary recollection" (zeitgemäße Erinnerung) of the vast essay published some days earlier in the Sibiu newspaper by Dr. Eugen Meller from Bern. The article opens in a quite similar tone but also introduces new repertoire with which the song had to compete, or better to harmonize with, in the present context. "Next to our marvelous heart reaching popular hymn and the solemn melody of the "Heil dir im Siegerkranz", one hears daily, wherever a band wants to give expression to their high spirits, the magnificent defend and defy song of the Germans, the 45 years old "Die Wacht am Rhein""³². The author of the article acknowledges that, at that moment, the town Bern was in possession of the original manuscript and calls it "an expensive national treasure" (kostbaren Nationalschatzes). Like in the first article published in Sibiu, the anonymous journalist from Brașov went on explaining the context in which the song emerged, how its adaptation to music turned the song into a recitative in singing festivals and how in the context of the French Prussian war, from 1870-1871, the song reached its highest celebrity. Finally, he ended by stressing that it

is Karl Wilhelm, the composer of the music, that deserves most praises because he had the inspiration to set the text on music.³³ In any case, from content to the intent, both authors provided various arguments why the song had been, and continued to be, a clear and firm codification of the idea of defense of the German *Kultur*.

The meanings and the functions of *Die Wacht am Rhein* in the narrative context

Thanks to a very active and rich press, the readers in Braşov, the most remote major German town in the Dualist Empire's province of Transylvania, were well informed about the way in which the inhabitants from Berlin reacted to the declaration of war in the summer of 1914. They learned that on July 26, thousands of people went out on the famous boulevard Unter den Linden and sang the Austrian folk hymn and the *Die Wacht am Rhine*. In front of the French and Russian embassies the crowd shouted loud "*Down with Serbia*" and moved afterwards to the Italian and Austrian embassies to show their solidarity. Similar manifestation of contesting the enemy and its international protector, respectively, of solidarity with the Austrian and Italians were recorded all around the empire, more precisely in cities like Frankfurt am Main and Hamburg.³⁴

While the war was still in its diplomatic phase, it was joined by the big towns' residents who made use of the cultural means already available. Hence, the crowds joined together and rallied in order to demonstrate the existence of a sense of solidarity between allies by commonly singing very popular folk hymns among the Reich German urban residents. Scenarios staging solidarity among the allies were recorded also in the Double Monarchy's capitals Vienna and Budapest. The telegrams received at the redaction of the Transylvanian daily newspaper were completed by some supplementary information that was considered worth to be widely shared among the Transylvanian Saxon readership. Probably the main reason was to show that the war was not only an issue concerning the monarchs but also to demonstrate the adhesion to the cause of war as manifested by common people in the capital cities. That this was the intent becomes evident if one considers the details provided about the participants in a procession. A report insisted on the fact that when the crowd began to move "*one could notice next to simply dressed workers also elegant women and men of higher society.*" In front of the Serbian legation and

the Russian embassy they shouted, "*Down with Russia!*" while in front of the German embassy the same crowd stopped and sang *Die Wacht am Rhein*. Soon the participants hailed in stormy cheering the German Reich and Kaiser Wilhelm. The rest of the procession lead the socially heterogenous crowd in front of the city hall where, under the unfolded of the black yellow flag, they went on singing the folk hymn.³⁵ Of course, this could be judged as an auspicious circumstantial situation occasioned by out of the ordinary events which made the harmonious performance of national repertoires desirable. But such reports were not at all singular.

A Budapest rally from August 15, gathered 15000 participants singing *Die Wacht am Rhein* in front of the Turkish and Bulgarian consulates.³⁶ Four days later news from demonstrations in other major cities of the empire arrived in Transylvania. They informed that recent interethnic internal tensions could be surmounted by the immediacy deriving from the new circumstances. The author of the columns published in August 19, 1914 in *Kronstädter Zeitung* started with a reference to the biblical text in which the prophecy of the lamb and the wolf's cohabitation seem to materialize in those decisive days. This biblical reference suggests a growth in the people's piety that left traces in the discourses and the interpretation of the (re-)actions concerning the state of war.³⁷ Further, the article emphasized the fraternization of the Germans and the Czechs in the city of Prague as demonstrated by the singing of the *Volkshymn* in German and Czech language on the streets of the town. Even the mayor of the town showed himself willing to get involved. In front of the crowds he declared the fraternity of arms and the unity of Germany and Austria - Hungary. To strengthen a sense of welcomed astonishment it was noted, that also in Budapest the war against Serbia stirred the crowds to sing *Die Wacht am Rhein* on the streets and, surprisingly, that the words of the tune were translated in Czech language.³⁸ Obviously, these pieces of news were meant to be spread as examples to be followed elsewhere in the Double Monarchy and may be regarded to have propagandistic intents. They conveyed the idea that if the internal rivalries between Panslavism and Pangermanism could be solved, as the singing together proved it, eventual discord at provincial level could have the same fortunate fate.

Gradually, the press reports become increasingly concerned with the state of mind at the regional and local level. They try to illustrate a prowar readiness, visible at least in the urban milieu. The idea is supported by the repeated performance in the Café Transylvania from Brașov of a concert given by the military band of the local regiment. The military

band performed "*Gott erhalte*", "*Heil dir im Siegerkranz*" "*Hymnus*" und "*Szózat*", "*Siebenbürgen, Land des Segens*", "*Die Wacht am Rhein*", and "*Prinz Eugen*". All songs were received with "*outstanding applause*" and repeated to satisfy the "*stormy enthusiastic rally*."³⁹ It seemed a perfect context in which the military authorities could get involved to manipulate a disposition for the war among the local audience by playing a previous politically antithetic repertoire. As recorded, the answer of the ethnically mixed audience was very enthusiastic, and the requirement for the repetition of the performance only confirms it. This situation made the tensions between monarchic, national, local or imported pan-national repertoire be forgotten. Different antithetic issues seem to find a solution by satisfying the musical tastes of everybody. Moreover, having a regiment army band involved in performing such a mixed repertoire, the intention became clear, to show that it was in everybody's interest to use a heterogenous music selection to make citizens in ethnically mixed environment find ways to cooperate in the common patriotic effort of serving the country.

It was not only the military authorities interested to achieve solidarity by means of propaganda for the war which made music(king) an essential part in the process of preparing for the military confrontation. Occurrences from August 1914 in Braşov reveal that it was possible that third parties could contribute to a positive and prowar attitude. Furthermore, it could be independent of any kind of official propaganda intervention of any state institution. Thus, spontaneous readiness to take part in the war was illustrated in a note published in *Kronstädter Zeitung*. It referred to an out of the ordinary happening in the town. The journalist described a daily process of repatriation of the Reich Germans, who in their way home from Romania and other Balkan countries had to travel through Braşov. Nothing special about this route(s) taken by the Germans, except that, a night before, two trains arrived in Braşov train station. They were not only decorated with flowers and flags but also stopped for a longer while. This gave the chance for 27 of the male aboard to get organize and march through the streets of Braşov where they chose to sing enthusiastically the *Die Wacht am Rhein* in an attempt to deliberately display their manhood bravery. When their group met a part of the local infantry regiment, they immediately ceased singing *Die Wacht am Rhein* and started singing "*Ich hatt einen Kameraden*."⁴⁰ The piece of information implied that the Reich Germans were ready to display a martial attitude, to promote on their way home in the Saxon towns the idea of a just war they were

about to take part in. They did it by singing *Die Wacht am Rhein* which became an unofficial anthem of the Germans everywhere. But as the happenings, showed it, they were also aware that for the state authorities this repertoire could have been offending since the Austrian - Hungarian army was multiethnic. Hence, in order to avoid any disagreements when they met the local regiment they switched to a song which could confirm and strengthen a feeling of camaraderie of arms. One can, thus, recognize the effect of informal cultural diplomacy.

The frequent presence of the foreign allies in Brașov involved a mobilisation from the part of the local elites to make everybody feel welcomed. When an Ottoman Muslim regiment arrived in town, the musical diplomacy was once again a welcomed tool. Contemporary readers could learn how kindly local elites treated the new commers with several organ concerts. And the story went on. Another "*nice people from the Balkan Peninsula*" visiting the town and treated as an ally "*were the students attending (presumably German) universities*". On their way to Bulgaria, to answer the recruitment order, they took a short break to Brașov. "*They spent time with the young local men in the coffee-shop Krone and the popular enthusiasm reached its climax and found expression into singing of the Bulgarian hymn, of the Hymnus and of Die Wacht am Rhein*". Nothing special up to this point, just a typical display of solidarity between citizens of some allied states achieved by interpretation of a repertoire that each found nationally representative. However, the comment that follows clarifies the relevance of *Die Wacht am Rhein* in the recent context of the war. "*The fact that the German battle song which was for the first time rang out publicly 45 years ago, can be heard at the moment not only on the German lips, is pleasant and demonstrates that Germany has also gained new sympathies through its leading of the war*"⁴¹. Although the journalist shares the idea that these feelings might be changing in time, the above-mentioned statement testifies for the capacity of an already emblematic German hymn to have a central part in the diplomatic relations among the Triple Alliance states.

The same song could bind not only Germans but also allies having to share the same experiences in the Eastern front. Reports about the Eastern theatre of war, where the Transylvanian Saxons had to fight, sanction the omnipresence of *Die Wacht am Rhein* in the soldiers' repertoire. The article entitled "*Shoulder by shoulder*", which is a taking – up of an article from *Pester Lloyd*, reproduced a letter of a Reich German writing about the relation between Germans, Austrians and Hungarians. The reader of

the Transylvanian Braşov daily newspaper could be very interested since the story referred to the Romanians from Bistriţa, the Saxons from Braşov and the Hungarians who had to spend time together cooking, sharing food and drinking. The story went on with the comrades – an appellative constantly repeated in the context of this specific narrative – being engaged in a harmonious relation where any offending words were avoided, and generous exchanges was the rule. It also emphasized that: “*Often, during the evening, we sang our German songs, then it was Hungarians’ turn and they sang in their melancholic way. I have found out that three comrades were Hungarians (Stockungar), who could hardly understand German; however we all know Die Wacht am Rhein and we sang it along.*”⁴² In the context, that may be suspected to be a report in which the propaganda apparatus fully interfered, with the intent of delivering home the image of a harmonious relation shared by soldiers of various ethnic background, one acknowledges that *Die Wacht am Rhein* was epitomized as the supreme byword of comradeship. Singing it along by all the soldiers having little knowledge of German, it confirms its power to go over cultural differences and work beyond the eventual particularism that could undermine the alliance. *Die Wacht am Rhein* appeared to be a transferred and widely circulated cultural artifact that was attributed with the feature of building unity in the Triple Alliance and provide everybody with a sense of confidence in the final victory.

Another episode recorded in the Transylvanian Saxons press reaffirmed *Die Wacht am Rhein*’s martial role in the context of allied armies joining together and simultaneously provides explanations for the preference for the song in German culture. A note dating in the autumn of 1915 informed that the music of the infantry regiment celebrated the unification of Austrian - Hungarian troops with the “*brave Bulgarian alliance comrades*” (wackeren bulgarischen Bundesgenossen). After the highly enthusiastic intonation of the official filo-monarchic “Gott erhalte” and of the Hungarian *Hymnus* it was played something that by its rhythm and melody reminded of the Prussian *Heil Dir im Siegerkranz* but which by “*weak and affected adaptation*” (schwache und gekünstelte Umschreibung) did not make any impression at all. Soon after, the Saxon journalist elucidated about the situation of the musical arsenal at hand.

As much as we know, up to now, the official Prussian hymn is not abolished yet, under all circumstances, however, is *Die Wacht am Rhein*, the battle and war song of our alliance comrades which in such occasions has no

competition. We are very much obliged for the admission of this war song in the program of the victory celebration and if we are allowed to give voice to the entire German population from our town, it would be like that: henceforth *Die Wacht am Rhein* with its memorable warlike swing may be accepted again in their program by the regiment music such as it happened earlier.⁴³

In the context *Die Wacht am Rhein* was regarded as a convenient solution to a recognized shortage or partial unfulfillment of the musical arsenal representative for the Reich Germans. The closing comment suggests that the local Saxons population considered for a long while *Die Wacht am Rhein* as an affirmative voice of the stronger German brothers. The lobby made for *Die Wacht am Rhein's* constant presence in a repertoire played at official events by the Austrian-Hungary army bands only answered a necessity that was already an unofficial common practice. Officializing the song was a step forward to accommodate an ideal to the reality in the field. In other words, it was expected that the song would be treated as a semi-official anthem of the Reich and not simply as a *Volkslied*.

The home front immediately reacted to the war. In this process, *Die Wacht am Rhein* became part of the pupils' education. Although the function varied, and the meaning proved fluctuant, several episodes accounted for this tendency in the Transylvanian Saxon and even in the Hungarian schools. The song was recognized as favorite among "the always tauter appearance of the youth army". Their parades from November, 26 and December, 3rd revealed that it became "self - understood" for them to sing "with predilection *Die Wacht am Rhein*, if one takes into consideration that this war song turned into the new hymn for the entire Germanness". Again, its performance among the Hungarian youth revealed the "undreamt-of popularity of the song" which was also intoned in the context of the commemoration ceremony of the Queen Elisabeth in a girl boardinghouse in the same apparently German friendly Debresin.⁴⁴ Sharing a common musical repertoire was regarded as a constructive approach enabling to build bridges between formerly rival cultures. An occurrence which, given the present circumstances, could only be cherished.

The same *Die Wacht am Rhein* had the property to tighten the bonds between a group of school children from Sibiu and another one arriving from Vienna, in July 1917. The local newspaper reported, that after a long

journey, the Vienna children were received by their peers at the train station by singing *Siebenbürgen Land des Segens*, the song regarded as the Saxon anthem. They organised a parade and took their way to the Huet square where the school boys from the Realschule had been waiting for them. In front of the local gymnasium they sang “first of all *Die Wacht am Rhein*”. After that, the seminar choir sang several native songs, which were received by the Vienna guest with “lively calls of wellbeing” (Heilrufen). It was obvious that the meeting of two groups of foreign teenagers was recorded as a meeting between two parts of informal armies supporting each other. This time, the province had the role of provider with security for the pauperized children from the metropolis. The idea of unity is obviously enhanced by appealing to a common Pan-German repertoire, therefore *Die Wacht am Rhein* receiving priority. The entire welcoming ceremony was arranged to look like a celebration of common pan-national convention in which the language was replaced by music(ing) staged according to a mutually recognizable ritual.

In the pages of the central school journal, some authors underlined the idea that the Great War had an “agreeable effect” with respect to the relation between the nationalities in Transylvania. The sincere fraternity of the comrades was also illustrated by accounting for the repertoire they sang. It was recognized that, besides “*Kossuthlied*”, “*Gott erhalte*”, pieces which could satisfy and cultivate domestic loyalties, “*Heil dir im Siegerkranz*” representative for the German Reich could be widely acclaimed among Transylvanian Saxons. Last but not least, the same author emphasized that Honved officers showed themselves eager to learn from the Saxon students “*Die Wacht am Rhein*”. To be more effective in creating a durable bond and become strongly inclusive in terms of a multi-ethnic appeal, *Die Wacht am Rhein* could be rephrased to include lyrics like: “*The entire Hungarian People united and strong, shield the holy Landesmark.*”⁴⁵ Readers were in front of an idealistic narrative suggesting readiness to share the song by two formerly rival national cultures. The common war effort required an internal harmony that could be reached by singing. Building an imaginary “*spiritual community*” was prerequisite in those “*hours of danger*”, wrote the Saxon journalist. Besides “*Rackoczymarsch*” or Transylvanian Saxon songs, *Die Wacht am Rhein*, “*brought from the German universities on the Transylvanian valleys and turned into a national and student Lied without political flavour and which became indigenous*”, shall not be regarded anymore as a harm to the Hungarian citizenship.⁴⁶ The war becomes a perfect setting in which these musical

expressions of belongingness to a “*national community*” (Volksgemeinschaft) could be adopted or performed without fear of stirring negative spirits. On the contrary, it could facilitate a sense of bond and could create an atmosphere of authentic mutual toleration and collaboration. It was generally agreed that singing a mixed repertoire would be a path to reach a common supra-national understanding. The success depended on the local willingness to make exogenous songs transferred from the German Reich inclusive enough to be accepted by rewriting of some of their lyrics. Although it had been adopted as a supplementary sonic identity marker by the Saxons, *Die Wacht am Rhein* proved a terrain of flexible adaption and, hence, recognized as lucrative for the reeducation of the provincial inhabitants in the authentic spirit of tolerance. The narrative changes, hence, the focus from the nationalist value to a supra - national connotation of a formerly imported student song.

The nationalist repertoire among which *Die Wacht am Rhein* had a privileged position was usually associated with the bourgeois culture within which the singing associations actually came into being.⁴⁷ In March 1915, the association of men singers from Sibiu marked its 55 years of existence and despite of the war shortages and restrictions, the members felt that the moment had to be celebrated. The scrupulosity of the organizer comes out from the very beginning when they discussed about the ethical aspects of organizing a celebration in a context like “*these grave times*”. They finally did it and motivated that they were trying to “*raise the head and the hearth*” and to elevate “*the consciousness of belongingness and of the common fight for the sacred good of the humanity*”. They organized a “*silent evening*” in Unikum venue. The reviewer wrote that, although incomplete, 30 of its members being in the battlefield, the choir did not lose “*in beautiful sounding*” and “*precision*”. After the opening speech, the choir sang *Die Wacht am Rhein* on four voices, the moment being followed by the Schumann’s “*Sie sollen ihn nicht haben, den freien deutschen Rhein*”, the “*Volkshymn*” and “*Deutsche Matrosenlied*”, “*Reiterlied*”, “*Steh ich in finsterer Mitternacht*”, “*Deutschen Flottenliedes*”, finally, the Prussian “*Heil dir im Siegerkranz*”⁴⁸ completing the performance whose main goal was to show willingness to support the war effort and rehearse the idea of Pan - Germanism. The overwhelming repertoire was manifestly of German origins and the obsession with the symbolical role of the Rhine as a natural frontier of the German Reich even German *Kultur* was epitomized by the singing in the opening part of two songs specifically dedicated to this topic.

In such strain conditions even, social groups which presumably shared another ideological believes did not find it improper to sing a German nationalist repertoire. The moral constraints deriving from the state of war and from the sense of solidarity with those sent to battlefield, required that every gathering from the home front should be very discreet. This was the premise of which the working men association from Sibiu was aware of when they organized a concert in the same *Unikum* venue. The gathering was described as a “*simple entertainment evening*”. Its income had to be donated to the recruited members of the association (71 out of 140) and to their families. The memory of the already fallen ones was acknowledged by a *Heill!*, which was followed by the enthusiast joining of the participants into singing *Die Wacht am Rhein*. The rest of the repertoire was “*Gott erhalte*”, “*Siebenbürgen*”, “*Reiters Morgenlied*” “*Vineta*” and “*Im Feld des Morgens Fruh*”.⁴⁹ It cannot go unnoticed that besides the local anthems, very much like in the case of bourgeoisie associations, the predominant German musical repertoire was militaristic. The selection was meant to express the solidarity of the members of the working men singing association with their members in the field. If they went, first and foremostly, for the singing of the song *Die Wacht am Rhein* it means that there was no other mobilising martial song more efficient at hand and that they understood that the present war effort required all the energies of the nation to get united beyond any doctrinarian preference. Singing a nationalistic repertoire confirms their inevitable contacts with the bourgeois musical culture and the choice could be evaluated as a double win compromise. It secured them from any harassment of the authorities and set them at bay from any public accusation of unpatriotic attitude or lack of solidarity with their peers as well as with the rest of the citizens from the province.

Naturally, the news from different battlefield kept the first page of daily journals, but Transylvanian Saxon press continued to constantly inform about the occurrences in the home front. The interest was not at all restricted to the town milieu. Now and then, news from the rural milieu showed how peasant engaged with the war effort on the home front. Following the example of the urban bourgeoisie society the “*local society of the friends of music organized a concert and the profit was given to the helping fond*”. In the context of war, the program was “*simpler than the usual*” nevertheless made it up with “*a lot of good taste*” although the orchestra was significantly diminished. The technical and aesthetic shortages caused by the war seem similar with those already mentioned

in the case of bourgeois and working men singing groups. What makes the similarity even striking to what was reported from the urban milieu is the repertoire. "*Rakoczymarsch*", waltzes like "*Schlittschuläufer*" and "*Estudiantina*", potpourri of "*Die Fledermaus*" operetta, compositions of Chopin and Mureșanu and so on. Besides these "*the 'Hymn' and 'Die Wacht am Rhein' aroused special applause (and) were sung along with enthusiasm by the listeners*". A final detail, that the "*considering the current difficult conditions, the concert was well attended*"⁵⁰ allows to state that the Saxons rural population was a big music lover. As seen, they were familiar with *Die Wacht am Rhein*, too. Short and succinct as it was, this information confirms the influence of the bourgeois culture in structuring the musical life even in the rural setting. More specifically the report shows that regardless of the milieu, the musical events got involved with the war effort directing the gains to the philanthropic activities. The enthusiastic reaction to the singing of *Die Wacht am Rhein* along with the official anthem demonstrate that, at least, the peasant elites from Miercurea Sibiului (Reussmarkt), where these news came from, were aware of the political function of music and that they also shared the ideas specific to Pan-Germanism. These political views could coexist, and various loyalties could be displayed by means of music.

Women gatherings and associations proved ready to wholeheartedly engage in the war effort in which their brothers, fathers, husbands or children had to fight. At certain events organized by these groups, musical performances were specifically selected to correspond to the state of war. The Saxon press in Sibiu wrote about an event from December 1914: "*The yesterday convivial evening corresponded exactly to the present deeply grave time. Händel's 'Largo' and Bathory's 'Pax Vobiscum' and 'Der Tod und das Mädchen' by Schubert were played*". The figure of the field marshal Blücher (the Prussian supreme commander in the anti-Napoleonic wars) was illustrated in a presentation. This reference was useful to highlight the similarity between "*the national mood in the past with the one from the present*", because the marshal provided with a good example of what it means to share the "*right strength of mind and confidence in the victory*". Notably, "*From the bottom of the heart, at the end of the presentation those present (among them, happily, many schoolgirls) joined in singing the beautiful war song Die Wacht am Rhein*". Readers were informed that donations, consisting in products, followed immediately after the concert ended.⁵¹ By their charitable activity these women associations not only proved ready to symbolically fight by

performing a usually male martial repertoire, but also had to propagate the idea that the war fought by the entire society and with all the means available, will finally be won.

Associational life displayed a deep involvement with the practice of philanthropy.⁵² Keeping up with traditions, the celebration of the winter holydays was a proper occasion to practice philanthropy and women had been generally entrusted with this task. In the war context it was not only the children in need that were the beneficiaries of these charitable activities but as the conditions dictated, also, the wounded adults. A report from January 1915, published in *Kronstädter Zeitung*, related how went on the celebration of the Christmas in Zărnești (Zernest). Organized by the local Red Cross the event was dedicated to the wounded soldiers. The journalist described a scene with the sufferings gathered around the decorated Christmas tree in the local communal hotel where they were offered gifts consisting in food, cigarettes and clothing. The symbolic gift they received was also the musical representation delivered by 10 young girls who besides the traditional "*Stille Nacht*" and "*after a Hungarian declamation, the public replied by singing the Hungarian hymn. At the end, [the article adds], was recited the beautiful German poem "Die Mutter" and Die Wacht am Rhein was sang.*"⁵³ The narrative suggests the existence of an ethnically mixed population of injured. The young female performers proved ready to fulfil the expectancies and tastes of an audience that could be comforted by hearing the repertoire that was assumed as culturally representative. One learnt that the Hungarian declamation was followed by the patriotic Hungarian "*Hymn*" while *Die Wacht am Rhein* came immediately after the German poem. The occurrence confirms a long 19th century praxis of music getting involved in charity activities when the circumstances required.⁵⁴ More specifically, the narrative informed that all genders and ethnicities showed willingness to transcend eventual rivalries and based on reciprocal respect listened to what was selected to be staged as a national repertoire that was supposed to symbolically heal the psychological wounds of the soldiers.

A report from autumn of 1915 could reconfirm the intersection between the female musical education, multiethnicity and the rural background of the subjects. Once again, it brings evidence for the dissemination and impact of *Die Wacht am Rhein* in Transylvania. The wide familiarization of the rural population in Saxon villages with *Die Wacht am Rhein* is demonstrated by a report taken over from Pester Lloyd. It focused on the invitation made by the Hungarian Reformed church community from

Cristuru Secuiesc (Szekelzkerestur) to the 12 Saxon girls from the nearby village Archita (Erked). The girls were invited to take part in the evening entertainment program dedicated to support the blinded soldiers. One learned that

They came in their local girl costume and were saluted by the mostly Hungarian participants in a heartedly way. They sang the Hungarian Hymn which was listened standing by the entire public and received with frenetic applause. They still sang German national songs (Volkslieder) and to close the representation, to the general requirement, they sang *Die Wacht am Rhein*, which likewise was listened standing and enthusiastically acclaimed.

The representation was continued with some occasional musical lyrics celebrating the personality of count Tisza composed by the daughter of the Archita Lutheran priest Regine Ziegler.⁵⁵ She was known as a song and poetry writer being very productive in the Saxon press where, during the wartime, she repeatedly published encouraging texts. The large dissemination among rural population and the resemantization of the message of *Die Wacht am Rhein* explains why it became a central piece in the repertoire of the women choirs transgressing bourgeois milieu.

Along with other German songs, the *Wacht am Rhein* was on the lips of the German population from Brașov in the autumn of 1916 when the town was liberated from the invading Romanian troops, the Entente ally, therefore the enemy, which were cast out of the town. The symbolical removal of the foreign forces flags, and the victorious armies were received with ovations. *"Especially happy boiled the blood of the Saxon and the German spectators at the splendid march of the German helper passing by and singing Die Wacht am Rhein or Deutschland über alles."*⁵⁶ Without much doubt, the choice to single out these two titles was meant to provide with a sense of reconnection with the Germanness, respectively, to assure about the alliance's vitality and superiority. Ulrich Wien suitably described the attitude of Transylvanian Saxons in these circumstances as an "overexcited religious nationalistic reflex" that was to be recognized in Sliminic (Stolzenburg), a Saxon village not far away from Sibiu, where it was orchestrated by the local priest.⁵⁷ In exactly the same circumstances, the welcoming reaction of the population in Sibiu was repaid by the liberators Reich German soldiers with *"Deutschland über alles"*, *"Deutschlands hoch in Ehren"*, *"Wir treten zum Beten"*,

"Morgenrot".⁵⁸ By such a selection of songs, so familiar to the Saxon population which chose not to take refuge in other parts of the empire, the Reich Germans found a way to affirm and reassure the local German speaking population by the military superiority of Germany and its watching over protective mission.

The continuation of the military operations of the Triple Alliance beyond the Carpathians and the final defeat of the aggressors whose capital, Bucharest, finally, got into the hands of the Germans was saluted in the Braşov daily newspaper. Curiously, instead of providing with evidence from the town or from Bucharest, a vast report described the response to the victory as it came from the university of Würzburg. The celebration of the victory against Romania, in the big hall at Luisengarten, was attended by *"more than 200 persons, professors, docents, teaching assistants, students, most of the them in uniforms, the women students being represented also in an impressive number"*. After speeches about the significance of the victory in the context of the war, the participants sang *"Deutschland, Deutschland uber alles"*, or the song *"Der Gott, der Bismark"* [...] *Like a renewed vow of patriotic faithfulness rang out the fresh song "Burchen heraus!"*. Prof Dr. K. B. Lehmann *"raised a vivid interest and proposed an enthusiastic toast on the faithful Carpathian border guarding"* (treue Karpathengrenzwacht) secured by *"the pioneers of the German culture in Transylvania whose threat represented by the Romanian neighbour now, probably, for all the times was turned away."* After another song, the *"too early closing"* traditional academic feast of student fraternity (Kommerses), ended with *"the powerful sounds of Die Wacht am Rhein."*⁵⁹ The vast note highlights the Pan-German feelings manifested in the circumstances of victories against the enemies from the eastern front which found echo within the academic milieu in Germany. Similarly, reproducing this information in the Saxon press it was suggested that this achievement on the Eastern Front was a foreseen success of Germanness. The mixed repertoire of old and new musical productions confirms the long term political relevance of the academic communal singing. Indisputably, the speeches held found inspiration in the verses of the *Die Wacht am Rhein* when the interpretation of the military retaliation was put in terms of the *"watch at the Carpathians"*. The closing of the event with the *Die Wacht am Rhein* was an apotheosis of the idea that the defense of the Germanness could go beyond the borders of the German Reich or the Austrian - Hungarian Monarchy.

The metaphor of Rhein as a border of *Kultur* which had to be defended by the Germans, turned out to be very influential in the eastern part of the continent. In a scrutiny over the present state of the war, a Saxon journalist wrote at the beginning of August 1915: *"If one mentions that Germany can constantly throw, to the West as well as to the East, new, good-trained troops"*, one must agree with the writer of *Die Wacht am Rhein*, who, *"in the fourth, earlier not intoned lyrics of the song"*, wrote: *"As abundant with water is your flood, / So is Germany in heroes' blood"* and one can consider how firm the alliance between our state and the German Reich became, so can one look confident in the future...."⁶⁰ The reference to the lyrics of the song can be regarded as a narrative strategy to strengthen the conviction that the Germans from the East, although subjects of the Austria – Hungary, could rely on the readiness to sacrifice and on the solidary intervention of the German Reich's troops.

It is almost certain that such a view was widely shared among the Transylvanian Saxons. Indicative in this respect may be the intertextual reading of the migrating leitmotif of "watching a border" delimited by any geographical element. It was employed in the lyrics of the song and, by transfer and adaptation, it could signify the same attitude of duty anywhere else in the German East. In the war context, occasional and/or ephemeral texts were created to reinforce the idea of a defensive war carried on by the Germans. The same watch on the Carpathian Mountains was thematized in an autochthonous drama entitled *"Karpathenwacht"*. The *"a consecration play"* was staged in Cincu (Groß-Schenk) with vocal by Malvine Abtoni and instrumental music by Rudolf Lassel. The reviewer wrote that in its five tableaux, *"the author follows the destiny of a human being, who on a far, lonelier watch, freezes to death [...]"* How deep the play penetrated the hearth of the listeners, it is shown by the fact that many days later the discussion was on nothing else but about this performance."⁶¹ Basically, the representation could be inspired by the *Die Wacht am Rhein*. What is, however, striking is the significant change in tone. After 4 years of war the population in the back front and the soldiers were already suffering of war exhaustion⁶² and the level of endurance was lower than ever. One can suspect that this performance could express a similar state of mind from the part of the Transylvanian Saxons. No trace of heroism could be convincingly associated with the idea of "watch" in 1918, and, probably, even the sense of duty had decreased considerably among the combatants.

Yet, in general, the singing of *Die Wacht am Rhein* was, at least, during the first part of the war, a vivid presence in the repertoire. It properly served

to establish a connection between German population in Transylvania and the Reich German troops transiting the area in their way to the Eastern front. In February 1915, a Braşov journalist covered an event which is informative about the mood of both the combatants and the local civilians:

At evening hours, at the train station one can notice long trains with German wagons, which go through the station with secret content, and one day we received the notification that a train with Reich German "workers" will go straight through here. The women in Codlea (Zeiden) got all refreshments and cigarettes together, and it was a short beautiful festivity that we celebrated with our German brothers at our train station. With the song *Die Wacht am Rhein* they carried on, while they promised "We will come again!"⁶³

If the beginning of the article described a foot-dragging mood, not at all rare during Great War⁶⁴ among the locals, things rapidly changed with the arrival of the Reich Germans who provided with a sense of confidence also enhanced by the singing of *Die Wacht am Rhein*. Their rejuvenating presence and the choice of melody was credited to have the effect of changing the mood by providing a sense of brotherhood and a feeling that the stronger brother would also watch the back of the eastern siblings on both fronts. In the context of the narrative the secrecy of their mission is counterbalanced by the openly displayed weapon as represented by intoning the song.

In the context in which the military authorities representing the Reich Germans had to back out from Transylvanian towns they did it also by performing *Die Wacht am Rhein*. In July 15, 1918 *Kronstädter Zeitung* wrote:

The last company of field - grey uniform wearer (Feldgrauer) left Braşov on June 10, at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. In their march off they sang *Die Wacht am Rhein* and "Mus I den zum Städtle hinaus", played by a small Landsturm band of just 13 musicians of the 18th infantry regiment Saarbrücken which so often had pleased us, with recognized excitement, by place and promenade music.⁶⁵

In this account, the Transylvanian journalist described a dignified farewell not only of the entertainers but also of the protection providers in very difficult times. The association between a farewell march and *Die*

Wacht am Rhein, usually implying a proactive military conduct, sent an ambivalent message. By no means was German Reich's military departure interpreted as a defeat, but only described in nostalgic overtones.

The demise in war also raised the matter of dignity. Narratives about the loss of the beloved ones were impossible to dodge. However, the loss could be tamed by rhetorical means that could provide with some comfort. The stylistic option was to imagine a scenario in which it could be given a sense of dignity and a promise of resilience. To achieve this effect, the author of the essay the "War casualty" (*Der Kriegstod*) chose to briefly and concisely envisage a scene with a beloved one being delivered home in a coffin. The narrative is progressive, but it covers every aspect of what a dignified death had to look like. "*The postman comes and brings a black framed letter. A fatality! Who could be? Who's turn was it?... A music band blows. What God did, it is well done; right shall be His will; [...]* In between a small six years old child cries out: Firm stands, and true, the Watch, *Die Wacht am Rhein!*"⁶⁶ The entire text may be regarded as an idealized staging of the bereavement which is supposed to display the attributes deriving from *Kultur*: discipline, bravery, manly resilience and sense of duty. In such circumstances, singing *Die Wacht am Rhein* could express patriotism, a sense of duty and noble sacrifice that would overshadow feelings of grief. It also had to cultivate the consciousness that the fallen one would remain in the national pantheon of the generations to come. Thus, it is attributed a hybrid role to console the families and to commemorate the fallen ones as they were promised to be epitomized as national heroes.

Conclusions

Die Wacht am Rhein was born in the conflicts between French and Germans in the 1840s. It is an example of musical creation deeply involved with cultural nationalism which lead to being treated as a semi-official hymn of the Germans around the world. The various historical events turned the song into a functional martial piece of music, performed in various occasions when the topic of nationhood was at stake. Although the title suggests a defensive agenda, the lyrics cultivate bellicose ideals. Transylvanian Saxons adopted it in their repertoire immediately after the song reached its celebrity during French - German War in 1870-1871. Even though not involved in the conflict, through this recitative mean,

Saxons could demonstrate their loyalty to the German *Kultur*. The song stimulated cultural Pan - Germanist agenda and in this respect, it fulfilled its mission in Transylvania, as well. When the Great War began the song was widely sang in Transylvanian Saxon communities along with representative indigenous songs of their own and of other ethnic groups and with the repertoire expressing loyalty towards the Habsburg House. This polyphony was supposed to tighten the cooperation of the provincial citizens and the alliance between the members of the Central Powers. On different fronts, *Die Wacht am Rhein* proved essential to raise spirits high, to keep a good morale at departure and on the front, to express the superiority of the German Reich, to establish a code of communication between Transylvanian Saxons and the German soldiers, to make oneself recognisable as belonging to the same cultural pan-nation engaged in a war that was generally interpreted as holy and defensive.

Even if, I avoided a chronological exposition of the documentary materials, finding more relevant to emphasize the social dynamics in which the song was performed and how the metaphor of "border watching" was transferred in the East, I must underscore that the first two years of the war abounded in information which confirms the recurrence of *Die Wacht am Rhein* in Transylvanian Saxons' repertoire. During the next years, the song appeared less frequently which may suggest that the enthusiasm for the war, carried to defend the idea of German *Kultur*, progressively decreased. However, the spontaneous and repeated performance of the song shows that it was very influential in expressing and endorsing a feeling of duty. Most probably, Transylvanian Saxons could imagine that by the singing *Die Wacht am Rhein* was also helpful to build a necessary sense of camaraderie with the defending/protective German brothers from the Reich. Although sang by members of various social groups and even by non - Germans, thus, suggesting a hegemonic process of acculturation, the song found a great echo among different gender and age categories. This finding confirms that it was part of a symbolic arsenal not only for those sent to fight in the frontline but also for those who remained at home and got engaged in their own way in the first total war that humanity had to go through.

NOTES

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- ³ Joep Leerssen, "The Never-ending Stream: Cultural Mobilization over the Rhine", in Manfred Beller, Joep Leerssen (eds.), *The Rhine: National Tensions, Romantic Visions*, (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 224.
- ⁴ Gertrude Cepl-Kaufmann, Antje Johanning, *Mythos Rhein. Kulturgeschichte eines Stroms*, (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 2003), 261.
- ⁵ Philip V. Bohlman, *Focus: Music, Nationalism, and the Making of the New Europe*, Second Edition, (London and New York, Routledge, 2011), 84.
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- ⁷ *Ibid*, 10.
- ⁸ Cecelia Hopkins Porter, *The Rhine as Musical Metaphor: Cultural Identity in German Romantic Music*, (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1996), 13-37.
- ⁹ Herfried Münkler, *Die Deutsche und ihren Mythen*, (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2009), 395; Dirk Suckow, „Der Rhein als politischer Mythos in Deutschland und Frankreich“, in Karl Schlögel and Beata Halicka (eds.), *Oder-Odra. Blicke auf einen europäischen Strom*, (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag, 2007), 203, 205.
- ¹⁰ Ruth Buttner, Judith Peltz, (eds.), *Mythical Landscapes Then and Now. The Mystification of Landscapes in Search for National Identity*, (Yerevan: Antares Publ. House, 2006).
- ¹¹ Cepl-Kaufmann, Johanning, *Mythos Rhein*, 213; Leerssen, "The Never-ending Stream", 231.
- ¹² Münkler, *Die Deutsche und ihren Mythen*, 403-404; Cepl-Kaufmann, Johanning, *Mythos Rhein*, 228, 234; Leerssen, "The Never-ending Stream", 240; Horst Johannes Tümmers, *Der Rhein: ein europäischer Fluß und seine Geschichte*, (München, Verlag C. H: Beck, 1999), 225, 228.
- ¹³ Leerssen, "The Never-ending Stream", 254; Sabine Giesbrecht, „Deutsche Liedpostkarten als Propagandamedium im Ersten Weltkrieg“, in *Lied und populäre Kultur/Song and Popular Culture*, 50./51. Jahrg. (2005/2006): 55-97.
- ¹⁴ Dietrich Helms, „«Das war der Herr von Hindenburg». Mythenbildung und informelle Propaganda in der deutschen Musikproduktion des Ersten Weltkriegs, in Stefan Hanheide, Dietrich Helms, Claudia Glunz, Thomas F Schneider, (eds.) »Musik bezieht Stellung«. Funktionalisierungen der Musik im Ersten Weltkrieg, (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2013), 67.
- ¹⁵ Hopkins Porter, *The Rhine as Musical Metaphor*, 124-221; Hartmut Braun, „Volkslied und Nationalbewußtsein“, in Friedheim Brusniak, Dietmar

- Klenke (eds.) „*Heil deutschem Wort und Sang!*“ *Nationalidentität und Gesangskultur in der deutschen Geschichte - Tagungsbericht Feuchtwangen* 1994, (Augsburg: Wißner 1995), 113-114.
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