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# CONTENTS

## IDEAS–BOOKS–SOCIETY–READINGS
## ORIGINAL STUDIES

## MISCELLANEA

# IDEAS – BOOKS – SOCIETY – READINGS

# ORIGINAL STUDIES
# AND ARTICLES

# Using Greek Philosophy in Interpreting the Christian Teachings: The Case of Michael Psellos[*]

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**Keywords:** Christian teachings, Greek philosophy, revelation, Scriptures, Fathers of the Church, truth.

**Abstract**. The present article attempts to point out a common practice of Michael Psellos, yet rather unusual for his theological contemporaries, namely that of interpreting the Christian doctrines and teachings by using Greek philosophy, not only its terminology, but also its concepts, whenever they fit in with what the Christian Church and the Fathers of the Church elaborated, starting from the Scriptures. It is worth noting that Psellos does not inaugurate a new tradition of interpretation, when approaching the revealed text or the works of the Fathers prior to him in such a way. On the contrary, he continues a hermeneutical line which includes Clement of Alexandria, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Maximus the Confessor. The novelty brought by Psellos was that he used Greek philosophy at a scale never used before or after him. The reasons for doing this are to be found in the corpus of the article.

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In his book, *Hellenism in Byzantium. The Transformation of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition*, Anthony Kaldellis begins the chapter dedicated to Michael Psellos in an apparently discouraging way (although not entirely unjustified), with a question which reveals the difficulty when approaching the works of "the first Byzantine humanist":[1]

> "Where to start with Psellos? The word "unique" is often used lightly by historians, but in this case it is no idle epithet. Psellos' radical philosophical proposals, his manifold and innovative writings on all subjects, his prestigious and historically impactive career at the court, his importance as a source for the eleventh century, and his decisive influence on Byzantine intellectual life, make him the most amazing figure in Byzantine history. He cannot be "explained," at least not yet."[2]

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[1] Hans Wilhelm Haussig, *A History of Byzantine Civilization* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971), 323.

[2] Anthony Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium. The Transformation of Greek Identity and the Reception of the Classical Tradition* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 191.

So, where to start with Psellos? In the present paper, we will focus on the way he uses Greek philosophy in order to explain the teachings of Christian faith. By doing so, Psellos was rather convinced that Greek philosophers were forerunners of Christianity and, therefore, they had access to the truth (even if only partially), that they provided not only proper terminology, but also proper concepts in order to explain the revealed truth, as contained in the Holy Scriptures and interpreted by the Fathers of the Church. Due to this conviction, he can be placed among other great hermeneutic thinkers such as Clement of Alexandria, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Maximus the Confessor etc.

But let us begin with some biographical data. Michael Psellos was one of the greatest philosophical and theological minds of the eleventh century in Byzantium. The intellectual life in Byzantium in the eleventh century was marked by the foundation of the schools of Law and Philosophy,[3] the former led by Ioannes Xiphilinos, later John VII, Patriarch of Constantinople, and the latter led by Michael Psellos, who was appointed ὕπατος τῶν φιλοσόφων ("Consul of the Philosophers"). During the first decade of Konstantinos IX Monomachos' rule (1042–1055), his career was at its peak. At some point at the beginning of the 1050s, Psellos' circle lost power at the court. He himself was accused of teaching non-Christian beliefs, so he was required to produce a confession of orthodoxy. When Michael Keroularios became patriarch of Constantinople, Psellos left the city and became a monk in Bithynia (and that is when he took his monk name – Michael). We do not know exactly what the feelings of Psellos for monasticism were, but we do know for sure that a year later he left the monastery and came back to Constantinople, resuming his former activities. At some point during the 1070s, he died.

Apart from being a living encyclopaedia, the tremendous importance of Psellos for the Byzantine culture lies in his attempt to revive Hellenistic philosophy, to bring Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus and especially Proclus (as the last representative of Neoplatonism and the greatest interpreter of Plotinus) in the forefront and to give them almost the same importance as to the Christian doctrine. Although we can identify this practice of using Hellenistic philosophy for interpreting biblical texts in the writings of several Church Fathers, we note the fact that it had never been used at such a scale and by someone whose fidelity to the Christian doctrine was doubted to such a degree that, as mentioned before, he was asked to give a confession of faith.

Psellos' writings that have received the least attention and commentaries are the so-called "theological writings".[4] What is very surprising is the fact that many of these *opuscula* deal with what the Byzantines would call "Hellenic material". The starting point of all these *opuscula* is either a biblical text, or a passage from the works of the Cappadocian Fathers, John of Damascus, Cosmas the Melode, John Climacus,

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[3] Wanda Wolska-Conus says that these two schools were "often called, even if this is improper, "faculties" of the "University" of Constantinople". See Wanda Wolska-Conus, "Les Écoles de Psellos et de Xiphilin sous Constantin IX Monomaque" (The Schools of Psellos and Xiphilin under Constantine IX Monomachos), *Travaux et Mémoires* 6 (1976): 223.

[4] There are two volumes which have been published in the *Bibliotheca Teubneriana*: Paul Gautier, ed. *Michaelis Pselli Theologica I* (Leipzig: Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, 1989), and L. G. Westerink † and J. M. Duffy, eds. *Michaelis Pselli Theologica II* (München und Leipzig: K. G. Saur Verlag, 2002), but until now there is no translation of them in any modern language.

Maximus the Confessor. By far, the most important Father of the Church whose texts need, in Psellos' view, continuous interpretation in order to be properly understood, is Gregory of Nazianzus. According to his standpoint, Gregory provided a Christian model for the combination of philosophy, rhetoric and theology and was, of the Church Fathers, the most open to Greek *paideia*. Amazingly or not, all these Christian texts mentioned above, either biblical or patristic, are interpreted with the help of ancient philosophy.

John Duffy, in his study on "Hellenic Philosophy in Byzantium and the Lonely Mission of Michael Psellos" rightly wonders:

"What is it that Psellos had in mind when introducing at every conceivable opportunity the ideas of pagan philosophy and mysticism? The question would seem to be particularly appropriate when raised in conjunction with his teaching activity; obviously in Byzantium at almost any period it was at least a delicate matter to consort with the likes of Plato and Proclus, not to speak of the Chaldean Oracles and other occult writings – but in front of students and in the context of the sacred documents of Orthodox Christianity?"[5]

We leave the answer aside for the moment and we now turn our attention to two examples of Psellian interpretation of biblical and patristic texts.

The first example is taken, although not *tale quale*, from the study of John Duffy quoted above:[6] the text to be interpreted is from the Gospel according to Mark, where Jesus does not agree with the designation "good" (ἀγαθέ) which was granted to Him: τί με λέγεις ἀγαθόν; οὐδεὶς ἀγαθὸς εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός ("Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone"). If Psellos had interpreted this passage in a traditional Christian way, he would have said that Jesus' question is an indirect reference to his divine nature, to the fact that He Himself is God, the Son of God. Instead, Psellos refers to philosophical sources in his attempt to explain Jesus' question, namely to *On Providence* of Proclus, with the clear purpose to demonstrate, with the help of a Greek philosopher, that Jesus is God. It is in this treatise that Proclus states that "the Good" (τὸ ἀγαθόν) is equivalent to "the One" (τὸ ἕν):

"In addition to all the others, there is the philosopher Proclus too, both in his Platonic exegesis and in his work *On Providence*; it is in the third chapter in particular, I think, that he makes the statement 'the Good is identical with the One, as we have said numerous times' ".[7]

Can Jesus be equivalent to the Plotinian "One," in the way that He Himself is God? Is such a statement congruous with the traditional Christian discourse? If we turn to our second example, a text from the works of a patristic author who is interpreted by Psellos in the same manner, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, perhaps we can have an answer.

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[5] John Duffy, "Hellenic Philosophy in Byzantium and the Lonely Mission of Michael Psellos" in *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources,* ed. Katerina Ierodiakonou (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 148.

[6] Ibid., 147.

[7] *Theologica II*, op. 18, 98: ἐπὶ πᾶσι δὲ τοῖς εἰρημένοιςκαὶ ὁ φιλόσοφος Πρόκλος ἐν οἷς τεστοιχειοῖ τὸν φιλόσοφονκαὶ ἐν τοῖς Περὶ προνοίας αὐτοῦ λόγοις, ἐν τῷ τρίτῳ καὶ μάλιστακεφαλαίῳ, ὡς οἶμαι,῾ταὐτόν᾽ φησὶ῾ τἀγαθὸν τῷ ἑνί, τοῦτο δὴ τὸ μυριόλεκτον ᾽.The translation of the Greek text into English belongs to John Duffy.

The text to be analyzed can be found in *Oratio* 29, 2: "Unity having been moved/moving from the beginning to Duality, found its rest in Trinity".[8]

Needless to say, the terminology used here by Gregory is Plotinian.[9] Plotinus, in *Enneads* V, 1, discusses the issue of how the transition from unity (the One) to multiplicity (the Multiple) is possible. The fundamental distinction between Gregory and Plotinus is that, while Gregory speaks of the movement of the Unity (the One to Plotinus), Plotinus asserts that the One remains fixed and motionless. Moreover, in *Ennead* V, 1, 6, motion is explicitly denied in what concerns the One:

"origin from the Supreme (i.e. the One) must not be taken to imply any movement in it: that would make the Being resulting from the movement not a second principle, but a third: the Movement would be the second hypostasis".[10]

Instead of the movement mentioned by Gregory, Plotinus speaks of an "overflow of goodness" (goodness being equivalent to the One) in *Ennead* V, 2, 1:

"Seeking nothing, possessing nothing, lacking nothing, the One is perfect and, in our metaphor, has overflowed, and its exuberance has produced the new".[11]

To this idea, Gregory reacts promptly:

"For we shall not venture to speak of *an overflow of goodness*, as one of the Greek Philosophers dared to say, as if it were a bowl overflowing … Let us not ever look on this Generation as involuntary, like some natural overflow, hard to be retained, and by no means befitting our conception of Deity".[12]

What Gregory wants to do here is to deny in an explicit way the Plotinian emanation process: the Generation of the Son is not the result of the Father's overflow of goodness. This overflow of goodness has effects only *ad extra*, that is, outside divinity. We find this idea in Gregory's 38th Oration:

"But since the movement of self-contemplation alone could not satisfy Goodness, but Good must be poured out and go forth beyond Itself to multiply

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[8] Gregorius Theologus, *Oratio* 29, 2 (PG XXXVI, 76): μονὰς ἀπ'ἀρχῆς εἰς δυάδα κινηθεῖσα μέχρι τριάδος ἔστη. Another translation would be: "The Monad from the beginning having been moved into a Dyad stands at the Triad". See the article of Arnis Redovičs, "Gregory of Nazianzus (*Or.* 29.2) in Maximus the Confessor's *Ambigua*", in M. F. Wiles and E. J. Yarnold, eds., *Studia Patristica* XXXVII (2001): 250.

[9] See the whole discussion in Claudio Moreschini, *Istoria filosofiei patristice* (The History of Patristic Philosophy) (Iași: Polirom, 2009), 561–562.

[10] Plotinus, *The Six Enneads*, ebook, translated by Stephen MacKenna and B. S. Page (Adelaide: University of Adelaide Library, *s.a*). See this book at this website: https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/p/plotinus/p72e/ (accessed November 9, 2015). Plotin, *Eneade III-V* (Bucharest: Editura Iri, 2005), 492: Τὸ οὖν γινόμενον ἐκεῖθενοὺ κινηθέντος φατέον γίγνεσθαι. Εἰ γὰρ κινηθέντος αὐτοῦ τιγίγνοιτο, τρίτον ἀπ' ἐκείνου τὸ γιγνόμενον μετὰ τὴν κίνησιν ἂν γίγνοιτοκαὶ οὐ δεύτερον.

[11] Ibid. For the Greek text, Ibid., 508: Ὂν γὰρ τέλειοντῷ μηδὲν ζητεῖν μηδὲ ἔχειν, μηδὲ δεῖσθαι, οἷον ὑπερερρύη, καὶ τὸ ὑπερπλῆρες αὐτοῦ πεποίηκεν ἄλλο.

[12] Gregorius Theologus, *Oratio* 29, 2 (PG XXXVI, 76): Οὐ γὰρ δὴ ὑπέρχυσιν ἀγαθότητοςεἰπεῖν θαρρήσομεν ὃ τῶν παρ' Ἕλλησιφιλοσοφησάντωνεἰπεῖν τις ἐτόλμησεν, *Οἷον κρατήρ τις ὑπερρύη*… μήποτε ἀκούσιοντὴν γέννησινεἰσαγάγωμενκαὶ οἷον περίττωμά τιφυσικὸν καὶ δυσκάθεκτον, ἥκιστα ταῖς περὶ θεότητος ὑπονοίαις πρέπον.

the objects of Its beneficence (for this was essential to the highest Goodness), He first conceived the Heavenly and Angelic Powers…".[13]

Therefore, even if Gregory uses Plotinus to interpret the way the Son and the Holy Spirit were generated by the Father and the way Goodness is creating the "intelligible world," in fact he reinterprets Plotinus in a Christian way: while for the pagan philosopher, the One, due to his perfection and his exuberance of being, created the Intellect and the intelligible world, for Gregory, God created, due to his exuberance of being, not the Son and the Holy Spirit, but the Heavenly and Angelic Powers which are defined, too, as "intelligible world". As for the movement of the Monad to Dyad and its rest in Triad, Gregory uses this term – "movement" – to imply the Generation of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, through Birth and Procession.

How does Psellos interpret this assertion of Gregory from *Oratio* 29, 2? He starts by reaffirming what Plotinus said about the motionless of the One:

"If what is moved and generated is [so] because of a cause that moves it and generates it, it is obvious that everything which does not exist because of a cause is not generated and not moved. For it is not moved that which has no cause at all of its existence. And if it is something altogether without a cause and motionless, then God/ the Divine is motionless, because he has no cause of his existence and he is the cause of all that exists".[14]

Why, then – asks Psellos – is Gregory introducing the movement in God? If, as Psellos puts it, Gregory admits a motionless God "according to his *ousia* and *physis*," because He is "infinite, unconditioned and limitless,"[15] he nevertheless speaks of a moving God in the way that "He moves providentially all the beings according to the *logos* which moves naturally".[16] This, we presume, is a reference to the theology of St. Maximus the Confessor, who speaks of the *logoi* of all creatures. What are these *logoi*? They are, at the same time, their principle or reason of being, that is, the very thing that defines them fundamentally, but also their existential purpose, the purpose they were created for from the very beginning.[17]

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[13] Gregorius Theologus, *Oratio* 38, 9 (PG XXXVI, 320): Ἐπεὶ δὲ οὐκ ἤρκειτῇ ἀγαθότητιτοῦτο, τὸ κινεῖσθαιμόνον τῇ ἑαυτῆς θεωρίᾳ, ἀλλ᾽ ἔδειχεθῆναι τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ ὁδεῦσαι, ὡς πλείοναεῖναι τὰ εὐεργετούμενα(τοῦτο γὰρ τῆς ἄρκας ἦν ἀγαθότητος),πρῶτον μὲν ἐννοεῖ τὰς ἀγγελικὰς δυνάμειςκαὶ οὐρανίους.

[14] *Theologica II*, op. 27, 116: εἰ δὲ τὸ κινούμενονκαὶ γεννητὸν δι᾽ αἰτίαν ἔστιτεκαὶ κινεῖται καὶ γεγέννηται, πᾶν ὃ μὴ δι᾽ αἰτίαν ἐστὶν οὐδὲ ποιητόν ἐστινοὐδὲ κινητὸν δηλονότι. οὐ γὰρ κινεῖται τὸ παντάπασινμὴ ἔχον τοῦ εἶναιαἰτίαν. εἰ δὲ τὸ ἀναίτιον πάντωςκαὶ ἀκίνητον, ἀκίνητον ἄρα τὸ θεῖον ὡς τοῦ εἶναιμηδεμίαν ἔχον αἰτίαν καὶ πάντωντῶν ὄντων ὑπάρχοναἰτία. My translation.

[15] *Theologica II*, op. 27, 116: οὔτωκαὶ τὸ θεῖον, ἀκίνητον πάντη κατ᾽ οὐσίαν καὶ φύσιν ὑπάρχον, ὡς ἄπειρονκαὶ ἄσχετονκαὶ ἀόριστον.

[16] *Theologica II*, op. 27, 116: λέγεταικινεῖσθαιτῷ κινεῖν προνοητικῶς ἑκάστηντῶν ὄντωνκαθ᾽ ὅν κινεῖσθαιπέφυκε λόγον.

[17] For a thorough discussion of Maximus' *logoi* see Jean-Claude Larchet, *Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul. O introducere* (Saint Maximus the Confessor. An Introduction) (Iași: Doxologia, 2013), 186–188, 191–194, 197–199 and Lars Thunberg, *Antropologia teologică a Sfântului Maxim Mărturisitorul. Microcosmos și mediator* (Microcosm and Mediator. The Theological Anthropology of Maximus the Confessor) (Bucharest: Sophia, 2005), 89–97.

Relying on a patristic tradition which reinterprets some ideas of the Platonic and Neoplatonic philosophy, Psellos then refers to Pseudo-Dionysius:

"But why speak the Sacred Writers of God sometimes as Eros and Love, sometimes as the Object of these emotions? In the one case He is the Cause and Producer and Begetter of the thing signified, in the other He is the Thing signified Itself. Now the reason why He is Himself on the one hand moved by the quality signified, and on the other causes motion by it, is that He moves and leads onward Himself unto Himself. Therefore on the one hand they call Him the Object of Love and Eros as being Beautiful and Good, and on the other they call Him Eros and Love as being a Motive-Power leading all things to Himself, Who is the only ultimate Beautiful and Good".[18]

As Eros and Love, God moves Himself, and as the Object of Eros and Love, He moves all capable of Eros and Love toward Himself. The movement belongs to the created beings, it pertains to their natural condition.[19] Psellos concludes the Pseudo-Dionysius passage referred to in this way:

"[God] moves Himself in the way that He introduces a disposition of Eros and love in those who are capable of them, and He moves as He attracts naturallythe desire of those who move toward Him".[20]

So, if there is movement in God, it is rather from the standpoint of the rational beings (either angelic or human) who are taught that there is no division in God – the first cause, on one side, but that this first cause is not "unproductive" (ἄγονος), but gives birth to Logos and Wisdom, who are ὁμοουσίωντεκαὶ ἐνυποστάτων(*of the same essence* and *enhypostatic*). Furthermore, the movement in God must be understood as the progressive revelation of the Trinity:

"And it is said again that He moves Himself (i.e. God) because of the progressive revelation of a more and more perfect discourse about Himself as contained in the Holy Scripture, starting from the acknowledgement of the Father, continuing with the acknowledgement of the Son together with the Father and leading those who teach to the receiving and worshipping the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son, a perfect Trinity in perfect Unity, that is, one substance and divinity and power and energy in three hypostases".[21]

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[18] Dionysius the Areopagite, *On the Divine Names and the Mystical Theology*, translated by C. E. Rolt (Montana: Kessinger Publishing Company, 1920), 57.

[19] Following Platonic philosophy, Origen considered movement as a sign of the Fall. On the contrary, St. Maximus the Confessor considered movement as a providential gift of God, granted to the rational beings for their fulfillment, which is accomplished in God alone, according to each rational being's *logos*.

[20] *Theologica II*, op. 27, 117: κινεῖται μὲν ὡς σχέσιν ἐμποιοῦν ἔρωτοςκαὶ ἀγάπηςτοῖς τούτωνδεκτικοῖς, κινεῖ δὲ ὡς ἑλκτικὸν φύσειτῆς τῶν ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸ κινουμένων ἐφέσεως. My translation.

[21] Ibid., 117: λέγεται δὲ κινεῖσθαι πάλινκαὶ διὰ τὴν κατὰ μέρος φανέρωσιντοῦ περὶ αὐτῆς τελεωτέρου λόγου κατὰ τὴν ἁγίαν γραφήν, ἀπὸ τοῦ πατέρα ὁμολογεῖν ἀρχομένουκαὶ εἰς τὸν υἱὸν συνομολογεῖν πατρὶ προβαίνοντοςκαὶ πατρὶ καὶ υἱῳ συμπαραδέχεσθαιτὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιονκαὶ συμπροσκυνεῖν τοὺς διδασκάλους ἀνάγοντοςτριάδα τελείαν ἐν μονάδι τελείᾳ, ἤγουν μίαν οὐσίαν καὶ θεότητακαὶ δύναμινκαὶ ἐνέργειαν ἐν τρισὶν ὑποστάσεσιν. My translation.

We see, thus, that even though Psellos uses Hellenistic philosophy to explain theological texts, he does so without venturing beyond Christian Tradition; on the contrary, he continues a Tradition with a long history before Him, a tradition which uses philosophical language to explain the Christian faith and dogmas.[22] In doing so, he gives credit to those Hellenistic philosophers who sought the truth and who were rewarded by God with some illuminations, although incomplete and later mixed with certain errors. As Basile Tatakis puts it: "The human thinking is in a progression oriented, by the nature of the spirit, to perfection".[23] Therefore, not only Christians, but also ancient philosophers were on their way to the truth.

It is John Duffy who pointed out a text of Psellos in which the latter speaks of the usefulness of Hellenic philosophy for a better understanding of Christian theology:

"Having to explain whether 'being' (οὐσία) is self-subsistent and trying to do so by introducing an account of Being, One, and Soul in terms taken from Neoplatonism and Plato's *Timaeus*, he brings the discussion to a close with the following paragraph: 'I have enumerated all these things both to bring you to a state of broad learning and to make you familiar with Hellenic doctrines. Now I realize that our Christian teaching will clash with some of those doctrines, but it was not my intention to have you exchange the one for the other – that would be madness on my part; rather, I wanted you to become devoted to the former and merely take cognizance of the latter. And if they somehow stand a chance of helping you towards the truth, then make use of them'".[24]

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[22] A rather different opinion has Kaldellis, *Hellenism in Byzantium*, 201: "If Plato 'mystically reveals our theology' and Proklos can be quoted in the exegesis of Christian doctrine, Christian texts and symbols can conversely be 'translated' into a Platonic idiom. 'Sinai – that I may philosophize to you about this as well,' Psellos wrote to Xiphilinos, 'did not, like some physical mountain, lead Moses up and God down, but rather symbolizes the rise of the soul up from matter' (*Theologica I*, 78.108). With few exceptions, Psellos' theological lectures are a vast exercise of this sort. Not that this kind of exegesis was foreign to the Christian tradition, but here it is practiced on an unparalleled scale and in the absence of credible signs of the exegete's Christian piety. We need detailed studies of these lectures. Based on a preliminary reading, I suspect that the outcome will be startling. Psellos is not trying to 'buttress' Christian doctrine with philosophy or 'enrich' it with Greek eloquence. He is abolishing its autonomy by fusing it with Platonic thought and making the two interpenetrate each other. Despite programmatic statements that ascribe primacy to Christian doctrine, in practice Psellos treats both it and Greek myth as coded versions of the same Platonic doctrines. He is effectively trying to make it impossible for Christians – at least those Christians taught by him – to expound their beliefs without first talking about Proklos. This is subversion, not reconciliation, and it is very cleverly done at that".

[23] Basile Tatakis, *Filosofia bizantină* (The Byzantine Philosophy) (Bucharest: Nemira, 2010), 222.

[24] Duffy, "Hellenic Philosophy in Byzantium and the Lonely Mission of Michael Psellos", 149. The text of Psellos is taken from *Philosophica minora I*, op. 7, 26: Ταῦτα δὲ πάνταδιηριθμησάμην ὁμοῦ μὲν ὑμᾶς εἰς πολυμάθειαν ἄγων, ὁμοῦ δὲ καὶ ταῖς Ελληνικαῖς δόξαιςποιούμενος ἐντριβεῖς. Καὶ οἶδα ὡς ἐνίαιςγετούτων ἀντιπεσεῖται τὰ ἡμέτερα δόγματα. ἐγὼ γὰρ οὐχ ὥστετούτων ἐκεῖνα ἀνταλλάξασθαιδιεσπούδασα πρός ὑμᾶς ἑ μαινοίμηνγὰρ ἄν – ἀλλ᾽ ἵνατούτοις μὲν ἦτεπροσκείμενοι, ἐκείνων δὲ μόνον τὴν εἴδησιν ἔχητε. Εἰ δέ πη καὶ συνεργοῖεν ὑμῖν πρὸς τὸν ἀληθῆ λόγονδιακινδυνεύοντα, καὶ χρήσασθε.

The philosophical and theological short treatises written by Psellos are very numerous and they have been collected in critical editions only recently.[25] In a short treatise *On Intellect,*[26] Psellos indicates that he is summarizing the philosophical opinions of the Greeks and names his source, Proclus' *Elements of Theology.*[27] In another treatise of this kind, *On Soul,*[28] Psellos adds that some of these Greek doctrines agree with "our oracles" (i.e. Christian teachings), but there is more that is bitter in them than is sweet.[29] The bitter is identified in the second half of this treatise as the "most ridiculous things," nothing else than extracts from Proclus' propositions 196, 198-211 concerning soul's astral vehicle, cosmic soul, and the divine souls which accompany the gods. It is exactly this kind of things which must be avoided by a Christian theologian, in order to preserve a pure Christian doctrine. On the other side, what is acceptable from the philosophy of the Greeks is reused in a metaphysical system which, as Psellos claims, harmonizes with Christian theology and often facilitates a better understanding of it.[30]

Did Michael Psellos conceive Greek philosophy as being superior to Christian doctrines of faith? Did he conceive it only as an instrument for a better understanding of them? It is hard to identify Psellos' own beliefs in the hundreds of pages of commentaries and lectures that he devoted to philosophical and theological topics, since most of them are not translated yet. It is safer to conclude with a hypothesis launched by John Duffy:[31] according to Psellos, a good theologian must be πολυμαθής ("very learned," "knowing many things"), so he must be skilled in many languages that can be understood either by theologians or by philosophers.[32] It is not a betrayal of the Christian faith if a theologian uses a language that is, in some way, strange and unusual for many; it is rather a sign of wisdom to be able to transmit Christian dogmas and teachings in varied forms. And, as a teacher of philosophy, this was exactly what Psellos wanted for his students.

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[25] For *Theologica I* and *Theologica II* see note 4. There have been published two volumes of Psellos' philosophical short treatises as well: J. M. Duffy, ed., *Michaelis Pselli Philosophica minora I* (Leipzig: Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, 1992) and D. J. O'Meara, ed., *Michaelis Pselli Philosophica minora II* (Leipzig: Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, 1989).

[26] *Philosophica minora II*, 10 (Περὶ νοῦ).

[27] Ibid., 21: Ταῦτά ἐστι τὰ τῷ φιλοσόφῳ Πρόκλῳ πεφιλοσοφημέναπερὶ νοῦ ἐν τῇ θεολογικῇ αὐτοῦ στοιχειώσει ("These are those philosophized on intellect by the philosopher Proclus in his theological exposition"). My translation.

[28] *Philosophica minora II*, 11 (Περὶ ψυχῆς).

[29] Ibid., 22: Ἰδού σοικαὶ τὰ περὶ ψυχῆς παρατίθημι Ἑλληνικὰ δόγματα, ὧν ἔνιακαὶ τοῖς ἡμετέροιςλογίοιςσυνᾴδει, ἀλλὰ πλέον παρ' αὐτοῖς τοῦ ποτίμου τὸ ἁλμυρόν ("Look! I lay before you the Greek teachings on soul, some of which agree to our oracles, but to them that which is bitter is more than that which is sweet"). My translation.

[30] For a more comprehensive discussion see Dominic O'Meara, "Michael Psellos", in Stephen Gersh, ed., *Interpreting Proclus. From Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 168–174.

[31] Duffy, "Hellenic Philosophy in Byzantium and the Lonely Mission of Michael Psellos", 148–155.

[32] On a homily of Gregory of Nazianzus (*Theologica I*, 68), Psellos says about the wise man (the philosopher? the theologian?) that he must be a man of all sorts (δεῖ γὰρ τὸν σοφὸν παντοδαπὸν εἶναι). The Greek word παντοδαπός is a synonym for πολυμαθής.

# Aristotle's Treatment of φρόνησις in *Eudemian Ethics*, VIII, 1 (1246b.4-1246b.36)[*]

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**Keywords:** Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, practical wisdom, cleverness, virtue.

**Abstract:** In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, traditionally assumed to be the last of the three ethical writings attributed to Aristotle, practical wisdom (*phronesis*) is given two descriptions whose relationship is far from being completely elucidated. *Phronesis* is described as the capability of truly understanding the end of human life and also of discerning the appropriate means to attain this end. In their attempt to capture the way in which these two definitions are coordinated, scholars have proposed considerably different hypotheses. These would be enough reasons to justify a detailed analysis of the highly corrupted text dealing with the subject of *phronesis* in the *Eudemian Ethics*.

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### Aristotle's treatment of φρόνησις in "Eudemian Ethics," VIII, 1 (1246b.4-1246b.36)

From an exegetical point of view, *Eudemian Ethics*, VIII, 1 is one of the most important sources for establishing the chronological relationship between Aristotle's ethical treatises. The passage at 1246b.4-1246b.36, which is the only section of the *Eudemian Ethics* dedicated to the subject of wisdom (φρόνησις), was one of the mainstays of Jaeger's theory arguing for the strongly Platonic character of *Eudemian Ethics* and thus its early date.[1] Likewise, it is from the same passage that H. von Arnim in his critique of Jaeger's view draws new arguments against a "theonomic" reading of the conclusion of the *Eudemian Ethics*.[2] The difficulties encountered by any interpretation of the text are, however, proportionate to its importance. In the first place, the text of the chapter seems to be merely a fragment of a longer excursus.[3] Moreover, the highly corrupt state of the text that has come down to us makes it extremely difficult to reconstruct the sequence of theses, arguments and counterarguments and the precise relevance of the examples.

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[1] Werner Jaeger, *Aristoteles. Grundlegung einer Geschichte seiner Entwicklung* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1923), 249–250.

[2] Hans von Arnim, *Das Ethische in Aristoteles' Topik* (Vienna and Leipzig: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1927), 35–37.

[3] Paul Moraux, "Das Fragment VIII, 1. Text und Interpretation", in *Untersuchungen zur Eudemischen Ethik*: Akten des 5. Symposiums Aristotelicum, eds. P. Moraux and D. Harlfinger (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971), 254.

However, the difficulty of interpretation depends to the same extent on a less circumstantial aspect, namely the meaningful occurrence in this Aristotelian text of a series of elements that relate to the method of argument, such as the procedure of aporetical considerations. With regard to these, it proves difficult to establish when they imply a reference to another text, a specifically Aristotelian thesis, or a thesis characteristic of a certain stage in the evolution of his doctrine; and when they reflect a hypothesis that results from the presentation of the problem to be argued against or merely a given nuance. As we shall see, it is precisely the debates connected to this aspect that have inspired the multiplicity of interpretations and textual reconstructions, which sometimes propose significant modifications to the traditional text.[4] These are just some of the reasons that justify a re-evaluation of some of the most controversial passages in the text of *Eudemian Ethics*, VIII, 1. In the following, this re-evaluation will take as its starting point a discussion of the main interpretations that have been put forward, and, as a separate end, will shed light on Aristotle's use of dialectical reasoning.

At the core of the discussion in *Eudemian Ethics*, VIII, 1 stands once again the Socratic principle according to which each virtue is a form of knowledge (ἐπιστήμη), a thesis that Aristotle has already argued against in the first book of the treatise.[5] The strategy of argumentation adopted by Aristotle can be divided into three sections: (1) 1246a.26-35 lays out the problem of the dual use of knowledge, (2) 1246a.35-b.4 raises the question of the Socratic identification of virtue with knowledge, and (3) 1246b.4-36 applies the model to the previous section in the case of identification of practical wisdom (φρόνησις) with knowledge. The argument against the third thesis, contained in the longest and most elaborate section of the text, is achieved by two procedures: (a) an exposition of the consequences that would result from identifying φρόνησις with ἐπιστήμη, bearing in mind the possibility of the dual use of the second, and (b) an examination of the factors which might, in the case of φρόνησις, lead to a use that is distorted in relation to its natural purpose. The key moments in these two directions of attack are reflected in the three passages that are the most difficult to reconstruct and interpret, as well as being the most illustrative from the point of view of the method of argumentation. Thus, setting out from the question of whether the sentence at 1246b.4-5, "ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ φρόνησις ἐπιστήμη καὶ ἀληθές τι" is an Aristotelian thesis or a reference to the Socratic theory of virtue, exegesis has formulated, as we shall see, far reaching

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[4] Extended commentaries on the text of *Eudemian Ethics*, VIII, 1 can be found in Arnim, *Das Ethische*, 27–35, Franz Dirlmeier, *Aristoteles Eudemische Ethik* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1979), 470–478, Henry Jackson, "Eudemian Ethics, Θ i, ii (H xiii, xiv). 1246a26 – 1248b7", *Journal of Philosophy* 32 (1913): 201–208, Moraux, "Das Fragment VIII, 1". For the text, see mainly: Leonhard Spengel, *Ueber die unter dem Namen des Aristoteles erhaltenen ethischen Schriften* (München: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1843), 534–540 and *Aristotelische Studien*, II (München: Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1866), 620–621; Adolph Theodor Frietzsche in his commentary to his 1851 edition of the text and Franz Susemihl in his notes to his 1884 edition; Otto Apelt, "Zur Eudemischen Ethik", *Jahrbuch fuer classische Philologie*, 40 (ed. A. Fleckeisen, 1894): 745–748, Arnim, Ibid., 28–29, Jackson, ibid., 174–179, Moraux, ibid., 280–283.

[5] *Eudemian Ethics,* 1216b.2-10. See also *Magna Moralia*, 1189a.15-23, 1183b.8-11, 1198a.10-13, *Nicomachean Ethics,* 1144b.14-21, 28-30, 1246b.32-36.

hypotheses about the meaning of φρόνησις in *Eudemian Ethics*. But as this question is raised once more in the very next sentence, at 1246b.7-8, the interpretation of this difficult passage will prove to be a valuable clue in examining the hypotheses at stake. As far as the difficulties identified in 1246b.4-5 of the traditional text are concerned, these have formed the basis of a textual reconstruction and version of interpretation that aims to shed new light on the whole argument at 1246b.12-36.[6]

Let us begin with a succinct presentation of the three sections of the argument.

1) The opening lines of the text (1246a.26-31), which exposit a classification of the possible ways of using things in general, are particularly corrupt, and in places the lacunae might amount to entire lines. The different versions of textual reconstruction, which differ with regard to a number of details, seem to converge as far as the argument is concerned. According to the textual reconstruction, the types of use envisaged by Aristotle are: 1) the use of a thing "qua the thing itself" (ᾗ αὐτό) and "for its natural purpose" (ἐφ᾽ ᾧ πέφυκε) 2) use of the thing "qua the thing itself" (ᾗ αὐτό), but in an improper manner or for some different purpose (ἄλλως), and 3) use of the thing neither qua the thing itself nor for its natural purpose, but in an accidental way (κατὰ συμβεβηκός).[7] By applying this model to the case of knowledge (1246a.31-35), illustrated by a further example, that of intentionally incorrect writing,[8] knowledge might also be employed for its natural purpose or for an opposite one, and therefore the "knower" may act not only as a knower but also, intentionally, as an ignorant man. These observations are followed by the abrupt launch in its most concentrated form of the Socratic thesis according to which all virtues are forms of knowledge. The Socratic thesis is introduced as part of the argument against it: if virtue were knowledge, then a virtue such as justice (δικαιοσύνη) might be used as injustice so that it would be possible to act unjustly, performing unjust acts starting from justice (1246a.35-37). But if such consequences are inconceivable, then virtues are not forms of knowledge, and therefore the Socratic thesis is false (1246a.38-1246b1).

2) The next step in the demonstration commences the second section of the argument and consists of assessing the consequences that would ensue from indentifying φρόνησις with ἐπιστήμη, when we bear in mind the model of dual usage previously laid out. If φρόνησις were ἐπιστήμη, the consequences (the same as in the case of the previous supposition, δικαιοσύνη = ἐπιστήμη) would be both conducting oneself unwisely and committing the same acts as an unwise man (1246b.5-7).

3) The entire last section of the argument (1246b.8-32) takes another starting point. If we assume that φρόνησις might be employed in a distorted manner, we have to presuppose the existence of some element capable of causing such a corruption – either a superior knowledge, or moral virtue. In the first place, it is obvious that there is no such science acting upon φρόνησις inasmuch as it is πασῶν κυρία (1246b.10). For the same reason, nor can virtue in general lead to improper use of the φρόνησις. The

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[6] Referred to here is the reconstruction undertaken by Moraux in "Das Fragment VIII, 1", which we address at greater length later on.

[7] εφ᾽ ᾧ πέφυκε = "for its natural purpose" and ἄλλως = "otherwise than for its natural purpose" are the equivalents proposed by Jackson, *cf.* "Eudemian Ethics, Θ i, ii", 174. Likewise, Franz Dirlmeier translates: "[...] sowohl (1) zu seinem eigentlichen Zweck als auch (2) in uneigentlicher Weise" (*cf. Aristoteles Eudemische Ethik*, 96).

[8] For the example of intentionally incorrect writing, see Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, IV, 2, 20.

sole variant that remains to be investigated is the influence of the opposite element, namely vice, which is located in the irrational part. But the analysis of the different ways in which the reciprocal influence of the λογιστικόν and ἄλογον might be conceived, depending on whether their character is virtuous or wicked, likewise leads to an unacceptable consequence that is symmetrical with that of the demonstration *ad absurdum* at 1246b.4-7, namely that we cannot conduct ourselves wisely out of ignorance (1246b.25). It therefore results indirectly that the presence of φρόνησις is compatible only with a virtuous ἄλογον: ὥστε δῆλον ὅτι ἄμα φρόνιμοι καὶ ἀγαθαὶ κεῖνται αἱ ἄλλογοι ἕξεις (1246b.32-33).[9] And since the φρόνησις cannot be distorted, Socrates' thesis that "nothing is stronger than the φρόνησις" is true but, as has been demonstrated, his belief that it is ἐπιστήμη is false (1246b.34-36).

All these three sections raise considerable problems. Let us begin with the first highly controversial passage from section 2 mentioned above. The text (1246b.4-8) reads as follows:

> ἀλλ᾽ ἐπεὶ φρόνησις ἐπιστήμη καὶ ἀληθές τι, τὸ αὐτὸ ποιήσει κἀκείνη· ἐνδέχοιτο γὰρ ἂν ἀφρόνως ἀπὸ φρονήσεως, καὶ ἁμαρτάνειν ταὐτὰ ἅπερ ὁ ἄφρων. εἰ δὲ ἁπλῆ ἦν ἑκάστου χρεία ᾗ ἕκαστον, κἂν φρονίμως ἔπραττον οὕτω πράττοντες. [*But since wisdom is knowledge and a form of truth, wisdom also will produce the same effect as knowledge, that is, it would be possible from wisdom to act unwisely and to make the same mistakes as the unwise man does; but since the use o*f *anything qua itself is single, when so acting men would be acting wisely.*[10]]

The argument seems to proceed from the Socratic thesis, a hypothesis disproven by *reductio ad absurdum*. But the form in which the thesis of the identification of φρόνησις with ἐπιστήμη is articulated seems to indicate something other than a mere recapitulation of the Socratic hypothesis; "ἀλλ᾽ ἐπεὶ φρόνησις ἐπιστήμη καὶ ἀληθές τι" (1246b.4-5) seems to reproduce an accepted supposition, an established truth.

Setting out from Jaeger's interpretation – which holds that the signification of φρόνησις in *Eudemian Ethics*, VIII, 1 is one of the clearest proofs of the Platonism of early Aristotelian ethics, as the term points in a purely Platonic way to a theoretical type of knowledge of supra-sensible being – there is nothing contradictory in attributing the identification of φρόνησις and ἐπιστήμη to Aristotle himself (see also the *Protreptikos*, 41, 22 ff.).[11] But the fact that Jaeger's genetic interpretation has been discredited – with all that this implies for the Platonism of *Eudemian Ethics* and, in

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[9] The text of this version was established by Arnim (*Das Ethische*, 29).

[10] In H. Rackham's translation, slightly modified. As Jackson rightly observes, the apodosis κἂν φρονίμως ἔπραττον οὕτω πράττοντες has for its protasis οὕτω πράττοντες, i. q. εἰ οὕτως ἔπραττον. Hence, it is wrong to substitute ἦν for ἡ (see "Eudemian Ethics, Θ i, ii", 205).

[11] Jaeger, *Aristoteles*, 249 sq. According to Jaeger, the absurd consequences of identifying φρόνησις with ἐπιστήμη that Aristotle deduces later in the argument, arise only from the restrictive side of this identification, namely the classification of φρόνησις as part of the series of other types of knowledge. Φρόνησις as a virtue of the νοῦς is noetic knowledge, but it is also a superordinate knowledge that by its rank and the breadth of its sphere of action transcends scientific thought of the discursive type. According to its typically Eudemian meaning, φρόνησις is therefore ἐπιστήμη in the Platonic sense, but is distinct from the latter by the fact that it cannot be employed to both a positive and a negative end.

particular, the supposed Platonic meaning of φρόνησις during the Eudemian stage – has undermined this hypothesis, too.

Subsequent arguments have been adduced to show that the Eudemian meaning of φρόνησις is already that of practical wisdom, as found in Book VI of the *Nicomachean Ethics*;[12] and while it proved to be true that in *Eudemian Ethics* φρόνησις is repeatedly employed in the Platonic sense of contemplative wisdom, this usage, as it has been argued, is merely historical, as the occurrences in question are nothing more than references to Platonic doctrine. According to Arnim, the phrase at 1246b.4-5 (ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ φρόνησις ἐπιστήμη καὶ ἀληθές τι) should therefore be taken as a quotation, a reference to the Socratic-Platonic thesis that is about to be argued against in the spirit of the new distinctions existing in ethics. As such, τισιν δοκεῖ should be inserted between ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ and φρόνησις and the entire passage should read: "ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ < τισιν δοκεῖ > φρόνησις ἐπιστήμη, <ἢ> καὶ ἀληθές, <ὅ>τι τὸ αὐτὸ ποιήσει κἀκείνη."[13]

But there is a third possible interpretation which, without the disadvantages of Jaeger's suppositions, does not go as far as to alter the existing text and according to which 1246b.4-5 renders an Aristotelian thesis. Bearing in mind the range of examples (writing, dance, medicine) in which the discussion of φρόνησις is embedded, it clearly results, according to Dirlmeier, that the meaning of ἐπιστήμη is that of τέχνη, and the meaning of φρόνησις as ἐπιστήμη / τέχνη is the same as in the *Lysis*, 209c3–d1, i.e. "skill" in the broadest sense. And so φρόνησις is ἐπιστήμη, although not in the metaphysical, ontological/axiological sense it has in the *Charmides* and *Euthydemus*, but in the "architectonic" sense in which φρόνησις governs all the sciences (arts) of the state and the individual's irrational faculties.[14] It is in this sense that φρόνησις is defined in *Eudemian Ethics* at 1218b.9-14 and is nothing other than the practical wisdom denoted as "political" in *Nicomachean Ethics*, I,1 1094a.26-1094b.7.[15] Thus,

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[12] Arnim, *Das Ethische*, 23-35, Pierre Defourny, "L'activité de contemplation dans les morales d'Aristote", *Bulletin de l' Institut historique belge de Rome*, 18 (1937): 93–94, Mary Craig Needler, *The Relation of the Eudemian to the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle*, (Abstracts of Theses, Humanistic series, 5, Chicago, 1926), 389–395, Anna von Mentzingen, *Interpretationen der Eudemischen Ethik*, (PhD diss., Marburg, 1928), 10–20.

[13] *Das Ethische*, 34 (previously, on page 28, Arnim proposes ἀλλ' εἴπερ instead of ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ). Arnim's arguments (28-40) commence by providing evidence in support of the idea that the Platonic meaning of φρόνησις was indeed faithfully conserved in the early Aristotelian texts. In the *Topics*, for example, Aristotle regarded φρόνησις not only as virtue (ἀρετή) but also as knowledge (ἐπιστήμη); see especially *Topics* 121b.24-22a.2 where Aristotle's effort to classify φρόνησις as knowledge at any price is abundantly clear. The reason would be, in Arnim's view, the following. In the *Topics*, Plato's tripartite structure has not yet been abandoned: the soul consists of the three departments: λογιστικόν, θυμικόν, ἐπιθυμητικὸν, each with its own specific virtue. But the *Topics* does not mention and never makes use of the division of the λογιστικόν into ἐπιστημονικόν and βουλευτικόν, a division that belongs to the ethical treatises. Hence, the φρόνησις is, in the *Topics*, the virtue specific to the λογιστικόν as a whole, whose essence is thought and knowledge. Things will look completely different after the division of the λογιστικόν in the ethical treatises: σοφία becomes the virtue specific to the ἐπιστημονικόν, and φρόνησις the virtue specific to the βουλευτικόν.

[14] The architectonic nature implied by the sense Aristotle has in mind for the φρόνησις is also underlined by Arnim (*ibid.*, 33) who refers to *Eudemian Ethics* 1249b.9 and *Magna Moralia* 1198b.9.

[15] Dirlmeier, *Aristoteles Eudemische Ethik*, 474.

the argument at 1246b.4-8 proceeds from an Aristotelian thesis according to which φρόνησις is ἐπιστήμη in a certain sense.

However, this reading of the passage at 1246b.4-5 seems to be contradicted, or at least thrown into doubt, by the form of the argument that immediately follows (1246b.7-8): εἰ δὲ ἁπλῆ ἡ ἑκάστου χρεία ἧ ἕκαστον, κἂν φρονίμως ἔπραττον οὕτω πράττοντες, which Jackson translates: "and if the uses of a given thing are not distinguished 'according to whether the end sought is or is not the natural purpose' ".[16] Read in this way, the conditional seems intended to highlight more clearly the absurd nature of the consequences that would flow from the identification of wisdom with knowledge in the Socratic sense. It might of course be argued that this reconstruction of the argument is not directly incompatible with the hypothesis according to which 1246b.4-5 expresses an Aristotelian thesis; but if 1246b.7-8 is further proof *per impossibile* of the fact that φρόνησις is not knowledge, then it is much more plausible that the starting point of the entire *reductio ad absurdum* should be the very Socratic thesis that is about to be demolished.[17] The argument as a whole (1246b.4-8) would be as follows: "Inasmuch as φρόνησις is (according to the Socratic thesis) a form of knowledge and truth, then in the case of φρόνησις the same consequences would occur as in that of identifying justice with a form of knowledge: it would be possible to conduct ourselves unwisely out of wisdom and to make the same mistakes as the unwise man. But such a consequence is inadmissible. Moreover, if the use of a thing qua that thing were simple or undifferentiated as to its purpose, we would act wisely even when acting foolishly."

But what is the meaning of such a hypothesis within the framework of the argument? If the distinction between εφ' ᾧ πέφυκε and ἄλλως leads to absurd consequences in the case of φρόνησις (1246b.4-7), why is it necessary to repeat the procedure of *reductio ad absurdum* setting out from the opposite hypothesis, i.e. the non-distinction of these uses? Presumably, the controversial sentence at 1246b.7-8 is a reference to another thesis of unknown, probably Socratic source.[18] But even so, as long as the whole argument centres on the dual use of knowledge according to its proper or improper end, and since it is precisely from this hypothesis that the unacceptable consequences result, then the introduction of the contrary thesis, aimed, as far as it would seem, at potentiating the absurdity of the consequences, is strange. For, if the use of φρόνησις had not already been supposedly dual, then there would be no absurd consequences of the type ἀφρόνως ἀπὸ φρονήσεως, καὶ ἁμαρτάνειν ταὐτὰ ἅπερ ὁ ἄφρων – to which οὕτω πράττοντες refers in the next sentence – but only consequences of the type φρονίμως κρίνειν καὶ τὰ δέοντα (*cf*. 1246b.22).

The premise according to which the use of a thing *qua* that thing represents a simple use is obviously incompatible with the typology of the forms of usage laid out

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[16] Jackson, "Eudemian Ethics, Θ i, ii", 176. Bussemaker has proposed the emendation of ἡ to ἦν, a reading also adopted in Susemihl's edition. Thus: εἰ δὲ ἁπλῆ ἦν ἑκάστου χρεία ἧ ἕκαστον – ἦν *per impossibile* – a reading accepted by Arnim and followed in the translation by Dirlmeier, Décarie, and Woods. The sentence can be taken in this sense, without resorting to the emendation, as is evident in Jackson's version.

[17] Arnim, *Das Ethische*, 34: "Daß dies die Voraussetzung der ganzen Argumentation ist, muß in der verderbten Stelle 1246b.4 ursprünglich ausgedrückt gewesen sein."

[18] Moraux,"Das Fragment VIII, 1", 263.

at 1246a.26-31, according to which the use of a thing qua itself (ᾗ αὐτὸ) can aim either at its natural end (εφ’ ᾧ πέφυκε) or an improper end (ἄλλως), given that it is dual as such. The improper use of φρόνησις as knowledge leads to absurd consequences, “ἀφρόνως ἀπὸ φρονήσεως, καὶ ἁμαρτάνειν ταὐτὰ ἅπερ ὁ ἄφρων.” We may observe that this expression is constructed symmetrically with the one above, at 1246a.36-37, regarding justice: εἴη ἂν καὶ τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ ὡς ἀδικίᾳ χρῆσθαι, ἀδικήσει ἄρα ἀπὸ δικαιοσύνης τὰ ἄδικα πράττων. To be more precise, the use of virtue or wisdom to an improper end – by analogy with the case of knowledge – leads to two series of consequences, one with regard to the manner of the action (ἀδικήσει, ἀφρόνως), the other with regard to the action as such, the results of such a use (τὰ ἄδικα or ταὐτὰ ἅπερ ὁ ἄφρων). It is tacitly understood that the objection that might arise – according to which the man who employs knowledge for an improper purpose is not ignorant but merely carries out an action similar to one that springs from ignorance (1246b.1-3) – is that the same situation might also hold in the case of justice: through the improper use of justice, even if it were quite impossible to act in an unjust way (ἀδικεῖν), it would still be possible to commit actions that were unjust (τὰ ἄδικα πράττειν). The distinction between the manner of action and its results therefore demands the explicit rejection of the hypothesis according to which if we act out of justice it is possible for us to commit unjust actions. The hypothesis is rejected at 1246b.3-4 (οὔ τι ἀπὸ δικαιοσύνης γε ὡς ἀπὸ ἀδικίας πράξει) and as such, the rejection of the Socratic identification of virtue and knowledge is complete.[19] But the occurrence of this objection nonetheless betrays the fact that the application of the schema of the dual use whereby ἐπιστήμη may be employed ἀληθῶς καὶ ἁμαρτεῖν (1246a.32) does not automatically and unreservedly lead to the totality of the absurd conclusions that result from δικαιοσύνη = ἐπιστήμη.

Let us return to the classification of uses found in the first lines of the chapter (passage 1246a.26-31). The problem of the possibility of one thing having multiple uses is here raised for the second time in the *Eudemian Ethics*. The first Eudemian classification of uses can be found in Book III, at 1231b.38-1232a.4:

διχῶς δὲ τὰ χρήματα λέγομεν καὶ τὴν χρηματιστικήν. ἡ μὲν γὰρ καθ΄ αὑτὸ χρῆσις τοῦ κτήματος ἐστίν, οἷον ὑποδήματος ἢ ἱματίου, ἡ δὲ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς μέν, οὐ μέντοι οὕτως ὡς ἂν εἴ τις σταθμῷ χρήσαιτο τῷ ὑποδήματι, ἀλλ’ οἷον ἡ πώλησις καὶ ἡ μίσθωσις· χρῆται γὰρ ὑποδήματι. [*I take wealth and the art of wealth in two senses; the art in one sense being the proper use of one’s property (say of a shoe or a coat), in the other an accidental mode of using it – not the use of a shoe for a weight, but, say, the selling of it or letting it out for money; for here too the shoe is used.*[20]]

The subject is not discussed in any of the other two ethical treatises, but it does appear in *Politics* I, 1257a.6-13:

ἑκάστου γὰρ κτήματος διττὴ ἡ χρῆσίς ἐστιν, ἀμφότεραι δὲ καθ’ αὑτὸ μὲν ἀλλ’ οὐχ ὁμοίως καθ’ αὑτό, ἀλλ’ ἡ μὲν οἰκεία ἡ δ’ οὐκ οἰκεία τοῦ πράγματος, οἷον ὑποδήματος ἥ τε ὑπόδεσις καὶ ἡ μεταβλητική. ἀμφότεραι γὰρ ὑποδήματος χρήσεις· καὶ γὰρ ὁ ἀλλαττόμενος τῷ δεομένῳ ὑποδήματος ἀντὶ νομίσματος ἢ

[19] Jackson, “Eudemian Ethics, Θ i, ii”, 203.
[20] Translated by Joseph Solomon, *The Works of Aristotle translated into English*, vol. 9, ed. W.D. Ross (London: Oxford University Press, 1966).

τροφῆς χρῆται τῷ ὑποδήματι ἢ ὑπόδημα, ἀλλ' οὐ τὴν οἰκείαν χρῆσιν· οὐ γὰρ ἀλλαγῆς ἕνεκεν γέγονε. [*Of everything which we possess there are two uses: both belong to the thing as such, but not in the same manner, for one is the proper, and the other the improper or secondary use of it. For example, a shoe is used for wear, and is used for exchange; both are uses of the shoe. He who gives a shoe in exchange for money or food to him who wants one, does indeed use the shoe as a shoe, but this is not its proper or primary purpose, for a shoe is not made to be an object of barter.[21]*]

As we can see, in *Politics* the criterion of the distinction between καθ' αὐτό οἰκεία and καθ' αὐτό οὐκ οἰκεία is ἕνεκεν γέγονε, which is, in fact, another way of saying εφ' ᾧ πέφυκε: "χρῆται τῷ ὑποδήματι ἢ ὑπόδημα, ἀλλ' οὐ τὴν οἰκείαν χρῆσιν· οὐ γὰρ ἀλλαγῆς ἕνεκεν γέγονε". And as οἰκεία is a use ἕνεκεν γέγονε and οὐκ οἰκεία is a use οὐκ ἕνεκεν γέγονε, it results that οἰκεία and οὐκ οἰκεία correspond to the uses ἐφ' ᾧ πέφυκε and ἄλλως in *Eudemian Ethics*, VIII.

In *Eudemian Ethics*, III the use is also διχῶς λέγομενα; this time the two categories are καθ' αὐτό and κατὰ συμβεβηκός. But as we can see, the classification in fact lays out three categories of use, inasmuch as there are two kinds of accidental use. According to the definition at 1232a.2-4, use καθ' αὐτό is not in opposition to the general category of accidental uses, but rather with the more limited category of those accidental uses which, in the pursuit of an improper end, nonetheless remain uses "of the thing".

It seems that, despite the variation in language, in both passages the categories of use are the same. We may establish the following relationships between the terms of the two schemata: the category of usage of the αὐτῷ type in *Eudemian Ethics*, III (deduced from χρῆται γὰρ ὑποδήματι) corresponds to the καθ' αὐτό in the *Politics* and the κατὰ συμβεβηκός (a) use in *Eudemian Ethics*, III corresponds within the schema of the *Politics* to use οὐκ οἰκεία[22]; as for use κατὰ συμβεβηκός (b), this is the element lacking from the *Politics* as an opposite to the καθ' αὐτό superordinate category.[23]



*EE* III  χρῆσις         *Pol.*  χρῆσις

αὐτῷ     οὐκ αὐτῷ     καθ΄ αὐτό

καθ' αὐτό  κατὰ συμβεβηκός (a)  κατὰ συμβεβηκός (b)     οἰκεία  οὐκ οἰκεία

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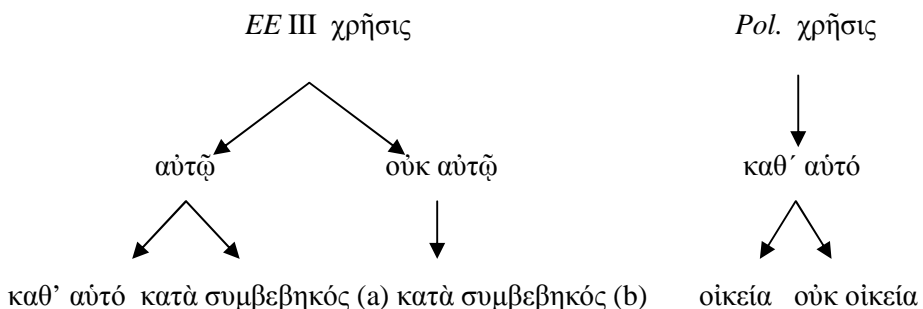
[21] Translated by Benjamin Jowett, *Aristotle's Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908).

[22] As is also proven by the following examples: πώλησις καὶ ἡ μίσθωσις in *Eudemian Ethics,* III and μεταβλητική or ἀλλαγή in *Politics*.

[23] Moraux, "Das Fragment VIII, 1", 257.

Let us now return to the classification in *Eudemian Ethics*, VIII. According to one possible reading of the text,[24] the classification of uses might be presented schematically as follows:

χρῆσθαι ἑκάστῳ

εφ' ᾧ πέφυκε
(and implicitly ᾗ αὐτό)
(*ὀφθαλμὸς : ἰδεῖν*)

ἄλλως

ᾗ αὐτό
(*παριδεῖν*)

κατὰ συμβεβηκός
(*ἀποδόσθαι ἢ φαγεῖν*)
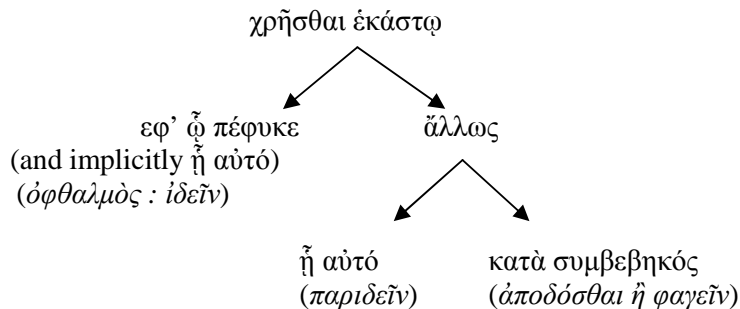
This schema is constructed on the basis of the interpretation which presupposes that the definition at 27-28, καὶ τοῦτο ᾗ αὐτό ἢ αὖ κατὰ συμβεβηκός, refers to the preceding term, ἄλλως. Thus, ᾗ αὐτὸ and κατὰ συμβεβηκός uses would not reproduce the opposition in the proper sense between the use of a thing "qua itself" and the use of a thing "as something else" from *Eudemian Ethics*, III, but would represent two possible *improper uses*: one in accordance with the thing "qua itself" but to a foreign purpose, and the other involving a foreign purpose of the thing "as something else." The examples ought to reflect these last two categories, but it is obvious that by οἷον ᾗ οφθαλμός ἰδεῖν ἢ καὶ ἄλλως παριδεῖν διαστρέψαντα what is illustrated is the first distinction, namely εφ' ᾧ πέφυκε καὶ ἄλλως. Both are then defined as usages relating to the eyes and opposed to use κατὰ συμβεβηκός in the sense of the accidental (b) in *Eudemian Ethics*, III.

However, a more natural sequence of ideas results if we relate καὶ τοῦτο not to ἄλλως but to εἰ ἔστιν ἑκάστῳ χρήσασθαι.[25] Thus, the first department of the uses would be ᾧ πέφυκε and ἄλλως and the second – depending on the other criterion, according to which a thing is either employed "qua itself" or not – ᾗ αὐτό and κατὰ συμβεβηκός. There follows the correlation of these categories of use via examples: if a thing is employed qua that thing, (οἷον ᾗ οφθαλμός) it can be employed to a proper end (ἰδεῖν) or an improper end (ἄλλως παριδεῖν διαστρέψαντα, ὥστε δύο τὸ ἓν φανῆναι). The fact that these two uses in accordance with the end are uses of the thing qua itself is reiterated: αὗται μὲν δὴ ἄμφω ὅτι μὲν ὀφταλμοῦ,[26] in order to set the category ᾗ αὐτό in opposition to the category κατὰ συμβεβηκός, i.e. the use that does not invoke the thing ᾗ αὐτό.[27] Thus, according to this reading of the text, use ᾗ αὐτό occurs as a self-contained element, defined by opposition to use κατὰ συμβεβηκός, which here has the meaning of κατὰ συμβεβηκός (b) in *Eudemian Ethics*, III.

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[24] Moraux, *ibid*., 255. See also Dirlmeier's translation.

[25] See Jackson's translation in "Eudemian Ethics, Θ i, ii", 174: "It is possible to use any given thing (i) for its natural purpose, (ii) otherwise than for its natural purpose, and also to use it (1) in its proper character, or again (2) incidentally."

[26] Lectio proposed by Dirlmeier; ὅτι μὲν ὀφταλμός ἐστιν, ἣν δ' ὀφταλμῷ Jackson; ὅτι [μὲν] <ἰδεῖν> ὀφταλμοῦ ἐστι Moraux; ὅτι μὲν ὀφταλμος ἐστιν ᾗ οφταλμός Walzer-Mingay.

[27] See Jackson, "Eudemian Ethics, Θ i, ii", 202.

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                        χρῆσθαι ἑκάστῳ


              ἧ αὐτὸ                      κατὰ συμβεβηκός


       εφ' ᾧ πέφυκε      ἄλλως
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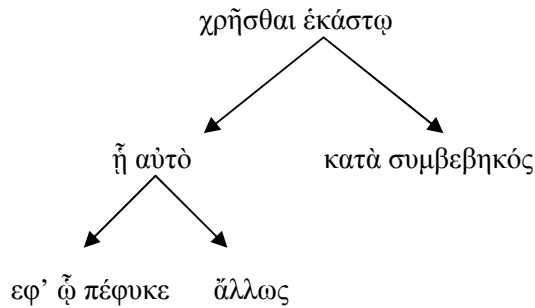
What emerges not only from the examples in *Eudemian Ethics*, VIII but also those laid out in the *Politics* and *Eudemian Ethics*, III is the fact that besides the criterion that underlies the dichotomy between εφ' ᾧ πέφυκε and ἄλλως, the classification of uses seems to be based on yet another criterion, one that is apparently independent, according to which a certain type of use is declared use "of the thing." The οἰκεία and οὐκ οἰκεία uses in the *Politics* are uses "of the shoe"; in *Eudemian Ethics*, III accidental uses of the πώλησις and μίσθωσις types are differentiated from accidental uses such as the employment of a shoe as a weight by the fact of this being one use of the shoe (χρῆται γὰρ ὑποδήματι) and, equally, uses 2) and 3) in *Eudemian Ethics*, VIII are subordinated to the same category of use that "is due to the eye" or "depends on the eye." Thus, prior to the opposition between ἐφ' ᾧ πέφυκε and ἄλλως, we must assume the existence of another, namely the opposition between the use of a thing as something else and the use of a thing *qua* that thing. Could it not be this last category of use the one referred to by Aristotle when he says that the use of each thing as itself is simple?

The highly corrupt state of the text prevents us to know precisely what Aristotle's intention was. But by examining more passages from the *Eudemian* and the *Nicomachean Ethics*, we may identify the problem hidden behind this brief allusion.

There is another place in the *Eudemian Ethics* where the notion of use of a thing forms the core of the argument. At the beginning of Book II of the treatise Aristotle deploys a set of arguments in order to prove that the good life, or happiness, is the activity of the virtue of the soul. First of all, the notions of virtue and function need to be defined. Virtue, Aristotle says, ἐστὶν ἡ βελτίστη διάθεσις ἢ ἕξις ἢ δύναμις ἑκάστων, ὅσων ἐστί τις χρῆσις ἢ ἔργον (1218b.37-1219a.1). Aristotle uses the term ἔργον with the technical meaning given to it for the first time by Plato, as the specific work or the "function" of a thing. More precisely the ἔργον of something, or its function, is that which it alone can do, or that which it does better than any other thing. We cannot see with anything other than eyes. Nothing can do the job of cutting better than the knife. As Aristotle claims, for everything that has a function its goodness resides in the function.[28] That is to say that for a thing to be good, it has to be able to perform its own function well. The power that renders a thing good and also makes it

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[28] *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1097b.26-27.

to perform its function well is its specific "excellence," or "virtue".[29] Between function and virtue there is a strong conceptual connection. When we say that something was designated to perform a definite function, we imply that it was designated to perform that function well, and not badly. As a matter of fact, when we say that the function of the eye is sight, we mean the good sight. In both versions of the function argument, the Eudemian and the Nicomachean one, Aristotle explicitly claims that the function of a thing is one and the same as the function of its virtue. This enables him to conclude that the function of the good man, that is the "active exercise of the soul's faculties in conformity with rational principle" (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1098a.7) is also the good of the man *qua* man.

Now it is obvious that when Plato and Aristotle speak about function, they sometimes mean making use of it, as in the case of knives we use to cut, or the eyes we use to see. Aristotle clearly states in the function argument that sometimes ἔργον is χρῆσις:

ἀλλὰ τὸ ἔργον λέγεται διχῶς. τῶν μὲν γάρ ἐστιν ἕτερόν τι τὸ ἔργον παρὰ τὴν χρῆσιν, οἷον οἰκοδομικῆς οἰκία [15] ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ οἰκοδόμησις καὶ ἰατρικῆς ὑγίεια ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ ὑγίανσις οὐδ᾽ ἰάτρευσις, τῶν δ᾽ ἡ χρῆσις ἔργον, οἷον ὄψεως ὅρασις καὶ μαθηματικῆς ἐπιστήμης θεωρία. [*But there are two different ways in which we speak of work. In some cases the work is a product distinct from the operation, as the work of the housebuilder craft is the house and not the building of it, and the work of medical skill is health rather than healing or curing. In other cases, the work is nothing other than the operation, as seeing is the work of sight, and understanding is the work of mathematics.*[30]]

When the function is the use of the thing, it has to be the thing's specific use, the use that corresponds to its nature or to the specific goal for which it was designated. And if the eye, the shoe, knowledge or anything else has but one proper function, as itself, or in its proper character, it means that there is just one use of a thing as itself, regardless of how it is in fact used.

If this is what Aristotle alludes to in his argument concerning the use of φρόνησις, it is a serious objection which derives from the very structure of the argument. Scholars have read the passage as a *reductio ad absurdum*. But the Eudemian analysis continues with the question "what could distort the use of φρόνησις," a question that shows that, even after this argument, it is not at all self-evident that φρόνησις couldn't be misused in the way ἐπιστήμη can. Secondly, is the suggestion that someone could be seen making use of φρόνησις when he intentionally commits the errors characteristic to the conduct of those who lack it really so absurd?

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VI, φρόνησις is defined as being a rational faculty whose function is "to do the actions that must in the nature of things be done in order to attain the end we have chosen" (1144a.21-23). But there is still another faculty of the same part of the soul that seems to have the same function, namely to choose those means that lead to the aim we have in mind. In the absence of this faculty, φρόνησις itself couldn't exist. Its name is "cleverness" (δεινότης); when its aim is a

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[29] *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1106a.15-19.
[30] *Eudemian Ethics*, II, 1219a.13-17, translated by Anthony Kenny, *The Eudemian Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

good one, it is a praiseworthy faculty, but its aim could also be base. Aristotle speaks about cleverness in order to clarify the essence of φρόνησις and some of his remarks let us suppose that the two could be easily confused. Φρόνησις has been defined as a faculty conducing to the proposed aim; when it is defined more exactly, as a rational capacity and a form of knowledge and truth in practical matters, its similarity to cleverness is more obvious. Sometimes, as Aristotle points out, we speak of the prudent man as being clever. So we can overlook the fact that the main characteristic of φρόνησις is to ensure the realisation of the *good* aim, of that particular aim that is set by virtue. The same as, in the absence of φρόνησις, virtues are just natural virtues, or simple traits of character, φρόνησις without virtue would be just a natural ability, a power that can be used either for good or for evil. In this case, its function would not be different when it pursues a good aim or when it pursues a base one. We do not name clever only the prudent man, but also, says Aristotle, the knave (πανοῦργος). He could be that person who will act for his base interests as someone who lacks φρόνησις; thus, such a person might humiliate himself or behave foolishly, in order to avoid, for instance, taking on a responsibility, or facing a danger that the courageous man would face for the sake of the virtue in itself. He might make use of a rational capacity that selects the adequate means for attaining his momentary, base goals; his means will be the right ones as reported to these goals. But the means of the prudent man will be always right *in themselves*, and that is because his rational capacity, φρόνησις, cannot be used in a distorted way.

If in our Eudemian passage Aristotle had in mind precisely this distinction between practical wisdom and simple cleverness, the controversial statement εἰ δὲ ἁπλῆ ἡ ἑκάστου χρεία ᾗ ἕκαστον might be designed to hint at a real difficulty in the arguments countering the idea that φρόνησις is a sort of knowledge. Thus, the hypothesis merely underlines an implicit feature of the correlations established between the categories of use: if we take into account the use of a thing only from the viewpoint of its nature, its specific function, then both the natural use and the improper use will reflect the proper nature of the thing employed, as both are merely instances of use according to function – examples of φρονίμως πράττειν in the case of φρόνησις. For, just as intentionally committed τὰ ἀγνοητικὰ ἀπὸ ἐπιστήμης (*cf. supra,* 1246a.32-33: οἷον ὅταν ἑκὼν μὴ ὀρθῶς γράψῃ) do not imply ἀγνοεῖν, but ἁμαρτάνειν μόνον and therefore when errors are knowingly committed it is by using the methods of knowledge (i.e. ἐπιστημονικῶς rather than ἀγνοούντως), it is obvious that if φρόνησις were knowledge, ταὐτὰ ἅπερ ὁ ἄφρων would be committed φρονίμως. But this is precisely the conclusion drawn by the conditional at 1246b7-8. The argument is thus symmetrical in every detail with the previous one regarding justice, even the objection already rejected at 1246b.1-3 being integrated in a new form at 1246b.7-8.

But if this interpretation is correct, it means that 1246b.7-8 is not the final step in a demonstration that might be regarded as concluding the rejection of the Socratic thesis. The fact that the identification φρόνησις = ἐπιστήμη remains the premise from which the third section of the text proceeds is an indication that the unacceptable consequences resulting from the premise ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ φρόνησις ἐπιστήμη καὶ ἀληθές τι are not considered a good enough basis for rejecting it completely. But this may mean that the premise itself is not considered to be wholly unacceptable, since, taken to a certain extent and with some appropriate specifications, it is a thesis to which Aristotle

himself subscribes. This is also suggested by the vague formulation of the idea (ἐπιστήμη καὶ ἀληθές τι), a formulation specific to the dialectical method and aimed at gradual clarification of the notions and arguments initially exposited in an imprecise form (*cf. Eudemian Ethics* I, 6, 1216b.32- 33: ἐκ γὰρ τῶν ἀληθῶς μὲν λεγομένων οὐ σαφῶς δέ, προϊοῦσιν ἔσται καὶ τὸ σαφῶς). Moreover, the formula καὶ ἀληθές τι may be connected to a series of references to φρόνησις in *Nichomachean Ethics* VI. Thus, also as part of the series of arguments intended to prove that one cannot possess practical wisdom without being virtuous (*cf. Nicomachean Ethics*, 1144a.36-1144b.1), the relationship between φρόνησις and truth is repeatedly reassessed.[31]

Now we come to the third section of the argument. What needs to be demonstrated is that the use ᾗ αὐτό of φρόνησις is not like that of knowledge, divisible into εφ' ᾧ πέφυκε and ἄλλως. The entire section 1246b.8-32 is intended to prove it, setting out from the question of what instance might corrupt wisdom, diverting it from its natural purpose.

The starting point of the argument as a whole, initially articulated at 1246b12-15 and taken up again at 1246b.19-21, is that vice existing in the ἄλογον (i.e. ἀκρασία here regarded as κακία τοῦ ἀλόγου τῆς ψυχῆς) might divert virtue from the λογιστικόν and lead it to practical conclusions opposed to those dictated by reason (1246b.12-14). Thus, if φρόνησις were knowledge, φρόνησις in the λογιστικόν might be diverted in such a way that λογιεῖται τἀναντία (1246b.15). But if the virtue in the λογιστικόν can be transformed into its opposite by the vice in the ἄλογον, it obviously results (δῆλον ὅτι) that vice, this time in the λογιστικόν, can divert the virtue in the ἄλογον (1246b.16-17). Hence the correspondingly paradoxical consequences: ὥστε ἔσται δικαιοσύνη τ'οὐ δικαίως χρῆσθαι καὶ κακῶς καὶ φρονήσει ἀφρόνως (1246b.17–19).[32] But if these uses were possible, namely the usage of justice in an unjust way and of wisdom foolishly, then we would have to allow the opposite possibilities, namely use of the vices in the ἄλογον and the λογιστικόν as virtues. In other words, the transformation from positive to negative implies the possibility of the transformation from negative to positive,[33] and thus it is possible from ignorance φρονίμως κρίνειν (1246b.21-22) and from intemperance σωφρόνως πράττειν (1246b.24). The following sentence, introduced by γάρ (1246b.19-24), is intended to explain how these consequences arise: if we accept that irrational vice distorts rational virtue, then it would be absurd not to accept that virtue, located in the irrational part, might in its turn distort rational vice (1246b.21-22) and that virtue located in the rational part might distort vice in the irrational part (1246b.23-25), with the last of these hypotheses constituting the very definition of self-control. But if we accept that virtue in the ἄλογον might transform vice in the λογιστικόν, then we should accept that it would be possible to act wisely out of this vice, i.e. out of ignorance. This is inconceivable,

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[31] *Cf. Nicomachean Ethics*, 1139b.15-17: ἔστω δὴ οἷς ἀληθεύει ἡ ψυχὴ τῷ καταφάναι ἢ ἀποφάναι, πέντε τὸν ἀριθμόν· ταῦτα δ΄ ἐστὶ τέχνη ἐπιστήμη φρόνησις σοφία νοῦς; 1140b.4-6: λείπεται ἄρα αὐτὴν [scil. φρόνησις] εἶναι ἕξιν ἀληθῆ μετὰ λόγου πρακτικὴν περὶ τὰ ἀνθρώπῳ ἀγαθὰ καὶ κακά; 1140b.20-21: ὥστ' ἀνάγκη τὴν φρόνησιν ἕξιν εἶναι μετὰ λόγου ἀληθῆ περὶ τὰ ἀνθρώπινα ἀγαθὰ πρακτικήν; 1141a.3-5: εἰ δὴ οἷς ἀληθεύομεν καὶ μηδέποτε διαψευδόμεθα περὶ τὰ μὴ ἐνδεχόμενα ἢ καὶ ἐνδεχόμενα ἄλλως ἔχειν, ἐπιστήμη καὶ φρόνησίς ἐστι καὶ σοφία καὶ νοῦς […].

[32] τ'οὐ Jackson, τὸ Mss.

[33] Moraux, "Das Fragment VIII, 1", 267.

however, inasmuch as vice in general does not possess the superiority of virtue, taken as a force or aptitude whereby it is possible to achieve both the natural and the improper end. It is only from virtue that we are able to do what we do from vice, not the other way around (1246b.28-32).

This is the main course of the argument exposed at 1246b.8-32. Given that the text is no less corrupt than that of the passages preceding it, a number of details remain controversial. On the one hand, this does not prevent us from reconstructing the existing text in the form of an argument that has a certain internal coherence. On the other hand we encounter the same difficulty in deciding whether the hypotheses exposed in the argument are mere working premises that depend on a purely logical approach or whether they are theses specific to or at the very least in agreement with Aristotelian doctrine. For instance, we may deduce from the example at 1246b.27–31 that as long as rational virtue is likened to the ἐπιστήμη, then Aristotle accepts the hypothesis at 1246b.12-15 as such; it will prove unacceptable in the case in which φρόνησις is regarded as ἐπιστήμη. Likewise, the hypothesis at 1246b.23-24 corresponds to the Aristotelian definition of ἐγκράτεια; the level at which it is valid seems to be that of Aristotle's doctrine proper. What then should we suppose with regard to the other two hypotheses? Are they merely transpositions of terms and as such merely logical possibilities? Or is it to be expected that their content is compatible with Aristotelian doctrine?

As the interpretation put forward by Paul Moraux proves, the question can be decisive not only in establishing the text but also in reconstructing the stages of the argument. A series of considerable emendations to the traditional text are considered to be indispensible precisely in order to make the claims of the Eudemian text agree with what we know to be specifically Aristotelian with regard to the relationship between the λογιστικόν and the ἄλογον. Thus, the first hypothesis (1246b.12-15) refers to the Aristotelian model of ἀκρασία,[34] and the second (1246b.16-17) likewise reflects an Aristotelian thesis: the superiority of the λογιστικόν over the ἄλογον when the latter possesses virtue. What acts contrary to the λογιστικόν is only the vice of the irrational part, never its virtue. The model of ἀκρασία, which can be described as the rebellion of the ἄλογον against the λογιστικόν, therefore claims that the irrational part is wicked. Thus, the third premise (1246b.21-22), according to which the virtue of the ἄλογον might transform the λογιστικόν (by transforming the vice it contains into its opposite), needs to be modified accordingly. It must therefore be presumed that there is a lacuna of a number of lines in the traditional text, which must have originally contained the hypothesis according to which irrational *vice* (and not virtue) transforms the vice in the

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[34] In fact, according to Aristotle's concept of ἀκρασία, the incontinent man (ὁ ἀκρατής) does not obey the dictates of reason and acts in contradiction to them, although his judgement is correct. But the hypothesis in the text presupposes that the λόγος itself is distorted (λογιεῖται τἀναντία), a thing that is specific to the wicked man, to the ἀκόλαστος, rather than the ἀκρατής (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1146b.19-24). However, Aristotle passes over this difference, treating ἀκρασία as κακία, as an element capable in effect of distorting the rational judgement. The purpose of this artifice is probably to refer to the Socratic thesis cited at the end of the argument in the form "nothing is stronger than φρόνησις", in particular ἐπιθυμία (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1145b.21-27; 31-34; 1147b.14-17, *Magna Moralia* 1200b.25-29; see also Th. Deman, *Le témoignage d'Aristote sur Socrate* (Paris: les Belles Lettres, 1942), 89–90.

λογιστικόν into its opposite, i.e. φρόνησις. An additional argument in favour of this reconstruction of the text seems to be supplied by the example at 1246b.27-31, which raises the question of whether rational vice (ἄγνοια) can be distorted by the vice in the irrational part, i.e. ἀκολασία.

Let us therefore suppose that lines 1246b.21-23 are corrupt and that all we know about the hypothesis they exposit is that it refers to the possibility of employing the ἄγνοια in a wise manner under the influence of the irrational part, but we do not know whether the irrational part is wicked or virtuous. The transformation of the vice in the λογιστικόν into virtue under the influence of the vicious ἄλογον is a Sophistic argument laid out in the *Nichomachean Ethics* (1146a.21). But the other possibility, namely that of virtuous action based on the influence wielded by the virtuous ἄλογον over the wicked λογιστικόν can be found in *Magna Moralia*, 1201a.17-27. Thus, both possibilities are attested as arguments employed by Aristotle to a dialectical end. But Moraux believes that the approach in *Magna Moralia* cannot be deduced from the Eudemian passage, given that in the second part of the process described it is a question of the influence wielded by the re-established φρόνησις over irrational vice (ἐν τῷ ἀλόγῳ ἀκολασίαν: 1246b.23-24), which "completely eliminates from discussion the virtuous character of the ἄλογον in the initial situation".[35] Moraux thus sees the hypothesis at 1246b.23-24 as an extension of the process begun in the hypothesis laid out at 1246b.21-22: the ἀκολασία transforms ἄγνοια into φρόνησις, and once the latter has been re-established, it transforms the ἀκολασία into σωφροσύνη in its turn.

But there is nothing to indicate the need for such a correlation between the two hypotheses. The explanatory conditional must justify the fact that ἔσται δικαιοσύνη τὸ δικαίως χρῆσθαι καὶ κακῶς καὶ φρονήσει ἀφρόνως implies καὶ τἀναντία, i.e. the transformation of vice, both rational and irrational, into virtue. What is the substance of this justification? The answer is the reiteration of the hypothesis at 1246b.12-15, the premise of the entire argument, which reveals the mechanism whereby virtue comes to be distorted, namely by the influence of vice and thus in accordance with the κακία → ἀρετή model. But what is the direct consequence of this model? Obviously, the one relating the same terms in the opposite sens. The fact that the distortion can take place through the influence of virtue on vice is proven by the process whereby self-control (ἐγκράτεια) is defined. Hence, if we assume a potential distortion of virtue under the influence of vice (κακία → ἀρετή), it would be absurd not to admit the possible distortion of vice under the influence of virtue (ἀρετή → κακία) a mechanism leading to consequences of the τἀναντία type with respect to the ones flowing from the first hypothesis: on the one hand, the use of rational vice (ἄγνοια) as wisdom, and on the other hand, the use of irrational vice (ἀκολασία) as temperance. Thus, the argument lists four models of distortion:

| λογιστικόν | | ἄλογον | |
|---|---|---|---|
| I. ἀρετή (i.e. φρόνησις) | ← | κακία (i.e. ἀκολασία) | 1246b.12-15 |
| II. κακία (i.e. ἄγνοια) | → | ἀρετή (i.e. δικαιοσύνη) | 1246b.16-17 |
| III. κακία (i.e. ἄγνοια) | ← | ἀρετή | 1246b.21-22 |
| IV. ἀρετή (i.e. φρόνησις) | → | κακία (i.e. ἀκολασία) | 1246b.23-24 |

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[35] Moraux, "Das Fragment VIII, 1", 269.

According to this schema, IV is not the reverse of the process described by III, and as such its terms (φρόνησις and ἀκολασία) should not be linked to the terms in III, since III and IV each illustrate the mechanism whereby vice can be distorted by virtue.[36] Therefore, *pace* Moraux, hypothesis III can be viewed as reflecting the approach of *Magna Moralia*, 1201a.17-27.

As we have deduced from the following lines, the absurdity of hypothesis III resides in the fact that vice is incapable of serving as the basis of a dual use. However, the contrary would mean that we were to make the same of vice as we do of virtue; but precisely the opposite is true: we make the same of virtue as we do of vice thanks to the "superiority" of virtue: it is δύναμις, whereas vice is ἀδυναμία. But above all, a phenomenon such as ἀπὸ ἀγνοίας χρῆσθαι φρονίμως does not occur in any circumstance: τοῦτο γὰρ ἐπὶ τῶν ἄλλων οὐδεμιᾶς ὁρῶμεν, ὥσπερ τὴν ἰατρικὴν ἢ γραμματικὴν στρέφει ἀκολασία, ἀλλ' οὖν οὐ τὴν ἄγνοιαν, ἐὰν ᾖ ἐναντία, διὰ τὸ μὴ ἐνεῖναι τὴν ὑπεροχὴν ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀρετήν ὅλως μᾶλλον εἶναι πρὸς τὴν κακίαν οὕτως ἔχουσαν (1246b.27-31).[37] We might ask ourselves why Aristotle does not make recourse to an example that would fit the structure of hypothesis III: while it is possible for *vice* (ἀκολασία) to divert the use of the rational virtue represented by knowledge, it is not possible for *virtue* in the ἄλογον to transform ignorance into knowledge. The reason is all too obvious: in fact, what Aristotle is aiming at here is to highlight the superiority (ὑπεροχή) of virtue in the sense of it being able to be employed in contrary ways.[38] The factor that might cause this distortion in the case of vice (i.e. ignorance) is less important here; whatever this factor might be, whether vice or virtue in the irrational part, ἄγνοια cannot be employed in contrary ways, because it does not possess the superiority of virtue.[39]

The fact that an old Sophistic argument – that virtue can be employed in a distorted way, thus enabling the virtuous man to do everything the vicious man does, except better[40] – is employed to combat another Sophistic argument of the same type as that of "the good incontinent man" in *Magna Moralia*, 1201a.17-27 (repeated here in hypothesis III) shows how far Aristotle is in this polemic from guiding his argument using elements of his own doctrine that are dogmatically taken for granted. Even accepted theses such as ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ φρόνησις ἐπιστήμη καὶ ἀληθές τι are employed here as mere working hypotheses. Even starting from the classification of usages, which formed the basis of the whole argument and would have provided the best solution for the construction of a *reductio ad absurdum* aimed at rejecting the Socratic thesis,

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[36] See also M. Woods' commentary *ad loc.*, in *Aristotle, Eudemian Ethics, Books I, II and VIII* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 161- 163.

[37] The reconstruction of the sentence in this form is Jackson's (*cf.* "Eudemian Ethics, Θ i, ii", 178). The science of grammar or medicine, therefore science in the Platonic sense of art, can be distorted precisely because in contrast to virtue and wisdom it pursues relative and subordinate ends (*cf.* Gauthier – Jolif, *L'Éthique à Nicomaque* (Louvain and Paris: Peeters, 2002), II, 2, 469.

[38] Dirlmeier, *Aristoteles Eudemische Ethik*, 477.

[39] In any case, the example is constructed as such merely with a view to this conclusion; the case in which ἀκολασία were opposed to ἄγνοια would only be a theoretical possibility (ἐὰν ᾖ ἐναντία).

[40] *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1137a.17-21, *Topics,* 126a.34-36; Plato, *Republic*, 334a.5-8, *Hippias minor*, 375e.9.

Aristotle identifies and highlights precisely that point which might have been employed to sustain the strongest objection to his whole project: namely, that someone might commit the same actions as an ignorant man while claiming to act from higher practical reasons and thus φρονίμως.

We may therefore conclude that what this text reflects as "specifically Aristotelian" to the highest degree is Aristotle's method of employing his own working hypotheses or those of other thinkers in a way that is sufficiently flexible and nuanced to allow him to neither accept nor unconditionally reject them. In this sense, the approach in VIII, 1 might be seen as a perfect illustration of the methodological principles laid out in *Eudemian Ethics*, I, 6, applied also in the critique of the Platonic theory of absolute good.[41] However, if the strategy employed within this polemic reverts to suggesting the possible lacunae of a theory based on principles that are true and accepted as such, but not in the sense and at the level of universality assumed by their author,[42] the text of *Eudemian Ethics*, VIII, 1 shows how this method can be extended. Thus, the impartial examination through "raising difficulties on both sides" (πρὸς ἀμφότερα διαπορῆσαι[43]), which is so characteristic of the Aristotelian dialectical method, meant for Aristotle not only to test the theses of the opponent as mere hypotheses, but also to test his own theses, in order to prove that they are true, but only in a certain form and up to a certain well-defined point.

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[41] *Eudemian Ethics* I, 8.

[42] D. J. Allan, "Quasi mathematical Method in the Eudemian Ethics" in *Aristote et les problemes de methode,* ed. Suzanne Mansion (Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain, 1961), 309.

[43] *Topics*, 101a.36.

# Questioning Beyond Subjectivity – Cassirer and Heidegger
## A Case Study: on the Davos Dispute[*]

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**Abstract:** As a significant event of the 20th century European thought, the debate of Cassirer and Heidegger at Davos has had a long-lasting impact on a number of disciplines and scholars. My investigations serve the aim of offering an access to various methodological layers of a famous debate and exploring whether this debate can contribute to re-think horizons beyond subjectivity. This problematics is inseparable from the recognition of a new reading of Kant, of human (in)finitude and of Cassirer's and Heidegger's two alternative approaches to hermeneutics. First, I offer some basic philological and historical considerations with regard to the development of a better understanding of this debate. Furthermore, I explore the Davos dispute itself as a hermeneutic-phenomenological event, concentrating on its own context and reconstructing the *human condition*, i. e. Cassirer's and Heidegger's return to the single, and main question "What is to be a human being?". Finally, I propose to assess what may be regarded as the main characteristic of these two eminent thinkers' dispute and a sense of this debate for philosophy and intellectual history.

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Conversations of Cassirer and Heidegger began with their meeting at the Hamburg section of the Kant Society in December 1923 and it continued in various forms (e. g. in the form of debates, reviews, footnotes and critical remarks) until Cassirer's death in 1945. The most famous moment of this connection may be regarded the Davos debate, which took place on March 26, 1929 at the second annual meeting of the International Davos Conference in Switzerland. The most accepted text-version of the debate is a collectively prepared protocol by Heidegger's disciple Otto Friedrich Bollnow, and Cassirer's disciple Joachim Ritter. Its authority – as Peter Gordon points out – was

almost verbatim reconfirmed with a further handwritten manuscript by Helene Weiss.[1] In the late 1920s Heidegger and Cassirer were two of the most prominent philosophers in all of Germany,[2] thus this conference with the participation of colleagues, friends and students attracted great interest across Europe. Emmanuel Lévinas, Eugen Fink, Otto Friedrich Bollnow, Joachim Ritter and Helene Weiss were present as students at the time; furthermore, Rudolf Carnap, Herbert Marcuse and Leo Strauss were among the audience as well. Later, the Davos-dispute was cited or commented by known thinkers like Ludwig Binswanger, Erich Przywara and Heinrich Hermann.[3] All this makes it clear that the Davos-encounter may serve as a prominent reference point in disputes over the past and future European philosophy.

I would like to emphasize that I make a distinction between the general concept of debate and the extreme cases such as, for example, "quarrel," "wrangling" or "hostility". The latter cases pass far beyond the function of debate. I consider the debate a more harmless event than the mentioned extremities, namely an event by which I primarily understand coming up for discussion of things. From a hermeneutical perspective, there is a fundamental moment of gradually evolving debates that – based on Gadamer's earlier analysis of Platonic dialogue – can be summarized by saying that a debate is essentially the space for possibilities and open proceedings whose dynamics give way to modify conditions. Representative debates eventually have happened in the history of philosophy where open questions still arise, which solutions cannot be visible sufficiently enough by one person. However, they may be described at decisive points from a wide variety of viewpoints, and in this sense, one needs to be involved in dialogues, or some kind of co-operation and joint efforts between the individuals and the community. It is not accidental that familiarity with debates plays a decisive role in cultural diplomacy. In the field of diplomacy, a debate is a substantive constituent of improving contact with others because it is able to contribute to the prevention of conflicts or, in the time of crisis, to become a possible mode of exploration and treatment of problems.[4]

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[1] Peter Eli Gordon, *Continental divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), 109.

[2] Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945), who began his early academic life as one of Hermann Cohen's and Paul Natorp's students, was already 55 years old at that time, professor in philosophy at the University of Hamburg and rector of the University from November (1929/1930), as well as a leading representative of the Marburg school of Neo-Kantianism, the chief editor of *Kant-Studien* (which was the most significant philosophy journal of the age) and editor of the new twentieth-century critical edition of Kant's collected writings (In more detail, see Hans-Urlich Lessing, "Cassirers 'Philosophie der symbolischen Formen' und das Problem der Geisteswissenschaften", *Existentia* vol. IX (1999): 97–108.) Heidegger (1889–1976) is a younger thinker than Cassirer, who had recently published the *Being and Time* (1927) and took over Husserl's chair of philosophy at the University of Freiburg (1928).

[3] For more details about participants, see Dominic Kaegi, "Davos und davor – Zur Auseinandersetzung zwischen Heidegger und Cassirer", in Dominic Kaegi and Enno Rudolph ed. *Cassirer – Heidegger 70 Jahre Davoser Disputation* (Cassirer-Forschungen; Bd. 9) (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2002) 67–105. here: 68. note 3., and see further Gordon, *Continental divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos*, 95.

[4] Let us think of the humanist scholar from the 16th century who often entered diplomatic service.

The motif appearing in Gadamer's writings is that we can promote understanding in the place of polemic.[5] According to the hermeneutics of Gadamer, the truth of both participants should be understood with goodwill – in the sense of doing full justice to the author's meaning – during the course of debate,[6] at the same time, it surely does not mean either self-surrender or objective neutrality. Rather the question arises on how we can face an event of debate itself in a philosophical way.[7]

In my paper, I attempt to sketch how it is possible to imagine the fields of philosophical debates and science diplomacy not only in opposition, but in prospect of congeniality and of interrelated options. Within this question, my contribution directs towards the hermeneutical perspective that may be called a possible sense of this philosophical debate and towards what we are to gain or lose through the mentioned debate.

**Historical remarks – Self-interpretation and the climate of the discussion**
During the Davos conference, organized from March 17, 1929 to April 6, 1929, the major issue was one of the four famous Kantian questions: "Was ist der Mensch?". While Cassirer held four lectures on philosophical anthropology, more closely on the problem of space, language and death, Heidegger gave a lecture three times on the critique of pure reason and the task of laying the foundation of metaphysics.[8] After their lectures, the emblematic Davos meeting followed. It is of historical importance to the scribing – secretarial – and editing-role of the disciples without whom a text-version of the dialogue living in memories would never have been retained, although the text is philologically problematic.

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[5] See István M. Fehér's analysis: "Szót érteni egymással. Jegyzetek a Gadamer-Derrida vitához" (Coming to an understanding. Notes on the Gadamer–Derrida Debate) in *"Szót érteni egymással": Hermeneutika, tudományok, dialógus"* (Coming to an Understanding. Hermeneutics, Sciences and Dialogue), eds. István M. Fehér, Zsuzsanna Mariann Lengyel, Miklós Nyírő and Csaba Olay (Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2013), 21–63.

[6] See for example Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd revised edition, revisons by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marsall (New York: Crossroad, 1989, reprinted London – New York: Continuum, 1999) (the citations refer to the 2006 reprint of the 2004 edition), 443 f, 571, 270–272.

[7] In this sense, our question is whether we can speak about mediation (a middle voice or medial reading) in a philosophical debate? Would any philosophical debate make it possible to provide more viewpoints or to increase our sensitivity to the problems, in this respect to promote openness to dialogue and to other cultures?

[8] Martin Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik* ed. F.-W. von Hermann (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1991) [hereafter: GA 3] XV. Translation: Idem, *Kant and the problem of Metaphysics* 5th enlarged ed. Trans. Richard Taft (Indiana University Press: Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1997) xviii. Bibliographical note: Heidegger's complete works are cited with the abbreviation GA (*Gesamtausgabe*, Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, from 1975 onwards) followed by volume number, comma and page numbers. Other works published outside of the *Gesamtausgabe* are cited with full bibliographical data at their first occurrence, then with abbreviations. All emphasis is original except in quotations otherwise specified. If there are references to both the original German text and the corresponding English translation, they are separated for example as follows [GA 3, XV. In English: xviii].

In this respect, it is not uninteresting to note Heinrich Rickert's contemporary exchange of letters with Heidegger. While Rickert expressed his dismay concerning Heidegger's understanding of Neo-Kantianism shortly after the debate, in his response, Heidegger referred with friendly intention to the fact that the protocol of the Davos debate had been formulated by others, and he had not received any text for proofreading.[9] One moral of this may be summed up as follows: there is the problem of authenticity in the case of every oral debate, and the task of the historian of philosophy includes evaluating not only what has been said but also the source itself insofar as he wishes to reconstruct the texts of the past. In his Kant-book, Heidegger reminds us that no written authorial manuscript was produced by Cassirer or Heidegger, moreover, in the protocol by Bollnow and Ritter there was no word for word transcription of a tape recording, but the record of a public session which was regarded as a reconstruction based on lecture notes of the two disciples.[10] All this may confirm that, in a philological respect, there is no authentic source of the debate. It also means that in the documentation of the Davos debate the two philosophers' thinking could not have been mirrored, but only the way how a philosophical debate was to be retained in the memories of the contemporaries. In the dialogue of *Unterwegs zur Sprache,* with regard to the Hegel-edition, Heidegger also formulated that "transcripts are, of course, uncertain sources".[11]

The centre of the debate between the two philosophers going on from 1923 to 1945 was the Davos dispute; however, the whole scope of debate passed far beyond that of what was to be central to it. The documents available related to their relationship are various. They met in person only three times (Hamburg, 1923; Davos, 1929; Freiburg, 1930), however, their debate proceeded not only in the form of living dialogue but further in their different writings. The very first meeting occurred at the Kant Society, where Heidegger held a lecture on "Tasks and Ways of Phenomenological Research" (1923).[12] This was followed by the Davos debate (1929)

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[9] Martin Heidegger and Heinrich Rickert, *Briefe, 1912 bis 1933, und andere Dokumente.* ed. Alfred Denker (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2002), 60–63. here: 61.: As Heidegger writes: "the 'Stenogram' was reproduced arbitrarily in a shortened form without me having a chance of proofreading the whole text despite my clearly expressed request to do so." ("Was das Manuskript der Davoser Diskussion betrifft, [Heidegger writes] so ist nach Ihrem Brief schon eingetreten, was ich kommen sah. Das 'Stenogramm' wurde in verkürzter Form Willkürlich vervielfältigt, ohne daß mir, trotz ausdrücklichen Verlangens, Gelegenheit gegeben wurde, das Ganze zu überprüfen. Rein durch Weglassungen, von anderem zu schweigen, sind Entstellungen entstanden.") The letter from Rickert is dated July 17, 1929, the response by Heidegger is dated 25 July 1929. Cited by Gordon, *Continental divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos,* 140.; cf. also ibid., 392, and the reference in note 4.
[10] Heidegger, GA 3, XV.
[11] Cited by István M. Fehér, "Primal Christian Life Experience and Eschatological Time. Martin Heidegger's Early Lectures on the Phenomenology of Religion", *Philobiblon* XVI 1 (2011): 203–229, 204. See Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1959), 91.: "Nachschriften sind freilich trübe Quellen".
[12] Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 17th ed. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1993) 51. and the reference in note 1. Translation: Idem, *Being and Time,* trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper &: Row, 1962).

and finally Cassirer, invited by Heidegger, held a lecture in Freiburg in 1930.[13] The Davos debate is only a shortened form of that which had already been elaborately discussed in Heidegger's review on the second volume of Cassirer's magnum opus in the *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* (1928) as well as in his Kant-book (1929), and in Cassirer's review of Heidegger's Kant book in the *Kant-Studien* (1931). As an addition, we can also read Heidegger's well-known footnote to Cassirer in § 11 of *Being and Time* (1927) and Cassirer's six footnotes to Heidegger in the third volume of *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (1929). Cassirer's unpublished critique of Heidegger was edited by John M. Krois (1983).[14] Based on the scholarly literature, we may say that the relationship between Cassirer and Heidegger was commented in several important respects, yet the topic has received new impulses in recent years – primarily due to the renaissance of text editions and Cassirer scholarships.[15]

Furthermore, in an interpretive respect, there is a philological difficulty (a missing link) which has no solution so far. As it is known, the manuscript of Heidegger's Davos lectures, which was organically connected to the Davos dispute, was not preserved. Only a short summary remained, that was composed by Heidegger for the *Davoser Revue*, while Cassirer's lecture series also remained unpublished at Yale University as Cassirer's Legacy.[16]

The two debate partners knew each other's previous works relatively well: Cassirer thoroughly studied Heidegger's *Being and Time* and *vice versa*, Heidegger also knew well the volume I-II of Cassirer's *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen* (PSF, I-II) on *Language* and *Mythical Thought*, though, they could not see each other as we have the opportunity to see them today (as two complete lifeworks). Unlike his debate partner – who was well-prepared in *Being and Time* –, Heidegger was a few steps behind, since he could not have known the core of Cassirer's philosophy. He

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[13] For more details, see Reinhard Margreiter, "Aspekte der Heidegger-Cassirer-Kontroverse", in Helmuth Vetter ed. *Siebzig Jahre Sein und Zeit. Wiener Tagungen zur Phänomenologie (1997)* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag, 1999), 109–134, especially: 110–113.

[14] Cassirer/Heidegger: "Davoser Disputation zwischen Ernst Cassirer und Martin Heidegger", in Martin Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik,* Gesamtausgabe Vol. 3, ed. Von F.-W. von Herrmann (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1991), 271–296; Martin Heidegger, "Ernst Cassirer: Philosophie der symbolischen Formen. 2. Teil: Das mythische Denken. Berlin 1925 (Rezension)", *Deutsche Literaturzeitung (Berlin),* Neue Folge 5/1928, Issue 21, 1000–1012 (reprinted Heidegger, GA 3, 255–270); Martin Heidegger, *Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik.* Gasamtausgabe Vol. 3, ed. F.-W. von Hermann (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1991); Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 51, in note 1; Ernst Cassirer, "Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik: Bemerkungen zu Martin Heideggers Kant-Interpretation (Rezension)", *Kant-Studien* XXXVI/1931: 1–26; Ernst Cassirer, *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen. Drittel Teil: Phänomenologie der Erkenntnis* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2010), 167, 184, 189, 196, and in note 215., 125; J. M. Krois, "Cassirer's Unpublished Critique of Heidegger", *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 3 (1983): 147–159.

[15] On the state of the Cassirer scholarship, see Hans-Ulrich Lessing, "Cassirers 'Philosophie der symbolischen Formen' und das Problem der Geisteswissenschaften", *Existentia* IX (1999): 97–108, here: 98.

[16] Martin Heidegger, "Davoser Vorträge: Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft und die Aufgabe einer Grundlegung der Metaphysik (Zusammenfassung)", *Davoser Revue* IV 7 (1929): 194–196, reprinted see: Heidegger, GA 3, 271–273.

based his arguments on the first two volumes of Cassirer's major work, which gave an incomplete image of his philosophy. The third volume, the *Phänomenologie der Erkenntnis*, which provided an essential exposition of Cassirer's thinking and a key to his philosophy, was published only a few months after the Davos dispute. In the light of this volume, a novel image unfolds about the Cassirerian philosophy, although it may eventually be one of the reasons why Heidegger never returned to Cassirer's thought after Davos. Originally, he intended to write a review of the third volume of Cassirer's *magnum opus*, however, it was never completed.[17] On the other hand, in his own way, Cassirer engaged in a more in-depth confrontation with Heidegger's thinking after Davos, including political reflections which discussed Heidegger's relation to National Socialism in the 1940s.[18] According to Kaegi's interpretation, however, Heidegger also proceeded a latent debate with Cassirer in a later volume on Kant, that is his 1935/36 winter semester course on *Die Frage nach dem Ding. Zu Kants Lehre von den transzendentalen Grundsätzen*.[19]

It is clearly visible that the Davos debate is one of those topical issues where the context may not be entirely ignored because neither a historical nor a philological reconstruction is superfluous in terms of understanding. Yet, I cannot undertake the task of presenting all the points of possible connection and divergence that are essential for the Davos meeting in Cassirer's and Heidegger's thinking.[20] It should be mentioned here that the volume composed of contributions at the representative Heidelberg symposium (1999) clearly signifies that achievement of philological research can transform our understanding of the Davos dispute.[21] Despite the difficulties, it is worth appealing to the debate from two aspects: firstly, its conceptual content is concerned with the major themes of the history of philosophy; and secondly, the Davos dispute is a good example of how debate manifested itself in philosophizing because it illustrates from a debate theoretical viewpoint how different perspectives ramify from each other.[22]

## Re-thinking the human being – Heidegger versus Cassirer

From the very beginning, Heidegger opposed the practice of philosophical conferences, nevertheless, he himself also regularly accepted conference invitations. The participants of the Davos dispute were also invited, so it is not to say that a debate broke out in a spontaneous way, but the event was organized in the frame of a conference.

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[17] Margreiter, "Aspekte der Heidegger-Cassirer-Kontroverse", 115.

[18] See: Gordon, *Continental divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos*, 257–322.

[19] Kaegi, "Davos und davor…", 72.

[20] On this issue, there are excellent monographies. See Gordon's already mentioned volume (of 2010) and Michael Friedman, *A Painting of the Ways. Carnap, Cassirer, and Heidegger* (Chicago: Open Court, 2000).

[21] Dominic Kaegi and Enno Rudolph ed., *Cassirer – Heidegger 70 Jahre Davoser Disputation*, Vol. 9 of Cassirer-Forschungen (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2002).

[22] Gordon analyzed this debate from both one and the other points of view, but for him the second viewpoint does not mean a debate-theoretical approach, but rather the approach of this philosophical debate in a historical context, how it can be reconstructed through the eyes of a historian. See Gordon, *Continental divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos,* 2 f.

The Davos dispute can be characterized from many perspectives, since several questions surface in it (e. g. the task of philosophy, freedom, (in)finitude, imagination, truth, humanism, the Enlightenment, etc.). At the same time, the initial point for each partner was to offer his own particular Kant-interpretation. The topic was not previously determined, but within the frame of the conference, almost in a natural way from the achievements of the former lectures, the question "what is man?" developed in the light of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Naturally, they differently approached Kant's critical period, therefore his "Copernican revolution" also became the guiding thread in two ways of interpretation. Generally speaking, the Davos dispute was about what the task of philosophy itself was, and the answer to it could not have been rendered independent from the participants' own philosophical positions (with Heidegger from the perspective in *Being and Time*, while with Cassirer from the worldview in *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*).

Cassirer's opening remarks started with the serious critique of Heidegger's previously held three lectures on Kant, highlighting that his debate partner misunderstood Neo-Kantianism, especially Herman Cohen's legacy. Connected to this, John M. Krois draws attention to the fact that the situation of the participants can be better understood if we reconstruct the meta-philosophical background of the dispute.[23]

For Cassirer's situation, it is essential to know that Bruno Bauch, a professor of philosophy from Jena, backbit Cassirer's master in the journal *Das Panther* of 1916 saying that "Cohen, being a Jew, cannot understand the German philosopher, Kant."[24] Cassirer's written response to it has not been published by *Kant-Studien*, since Bauch – a co-editor at the journal – resigned from the editorial staff. This earlier incident in itself – notes Krois – would not have had significance if a similar event had not happened on February 25, 1929, before the Davos conference. On that day, a report was published in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* which declared that Otmar Spann, a professor from Vienna, had called in a Munich lecture two Neo-Kantians (Cohen and Cassirer) "strangers" [*Fremde*] who misinterpret Kant. This intellectual climate could have an influence on Cassirer's *habitus* as a thinker in Davos. "The public attack – writes Krois – presumably created such an atmosphere which must have made it very difficult, if not impossible for Cassirer to have a differentiated and relaxed discourse on Neo-Kantianism. In the situation where Heidegger [...] criticized Neo-Kantianism, Cassirer could only express his solidarity with Cohen."[25] The tension of this situation is further increased by the fact that Cassirer's thoughts, still philosophically keeping with Cohen, are directed exactly to the sharpest contextual counter-point with Heidegger – namely to Heidegger's idea of finitude and "thrownness" [*Geworfenheit*].

For Heidegger, however, it has special importance to note that – as Gordon also emphasizes referring to a 1929 letter of Heidegger to Rickert (on July 25) – at the time many colleagues indeed attacked Heidegger for his remarks, although: "he

[23] John M. Krois, "Warum fand keine Davoser Debatte zwischen Cassirer und Heidegger statt?" in *Cassirer – Heidegger 70 Jahre Davoser Disputation*, ed. Dominic Kaegi and Enno Rudolph, Vol. 9 of Cassirer-Forschungen (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2002), 234–242, here: 242.

[24] Bruno Bauch, "Leserbrief", *Der Panther. Deutsche Monatsschrift für Politik und Volkstum* 4, (1916/6): 148–154. See also: Gordon, *Continental divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos,* 55 f.

[25] Krois, "Warum fand keine Davoser Debatte zwischen Cassirer und Heidegger statt?", 240; also see: 238 f.; 241.

himself has never used the term of 'Neo-Kantianism', what is more, marked explicitly during the oral dispute that he has solely intended to expose the way Neo-Kantians understand the introductory part of the *Critique of Pure Reason* as 'epistemology', especially Transcendental Aesthetic and Analytic." Heidegger then added as follows: 'no one had doubt about this'."[26]

Both Cassirer and Heidegger lead the critique of the Neo-Kantian conception gradually to two basic different directions. It was with the help of the strategy of destruction that Heidegger pointed out what kind of unspoken and prevailing tendencies had motivated the emergence of the Neo-Kantian understanding. In the case of Cohen, Windelband and Rickert, their return to Kant was initiated by an epistemological perspective, more precisely it was revived by the question where philosophy has a place (and whether there is still a place for it) among the sciences. Thereby the true task of philosophy would be a theoretical science, in other words, it would be restricted to research and verification of the conditions of scientific knowledge. Neo-Kantians only saw a critique of metaphysics in Kant's critique of reason and considered German idealism's movement beyond Kant as a decline. Heidegger expressed his dissatisfaction with this view because the Neo-Kantians neglected the real core of Kant's metaphysics and its positive problem.

Cassirer found that the novelty of Neo-Kantianism lay in reactualizing the original insights of Kant's philosophy to a special direction so that the dimensions of history and culture can be embedded in Kantian worldview. The world of ethical act was extended to hitherto unknown dimensions for the Enlightenment, and the outstanding representatives of Neo-Kantian movement dealt with defence of autonomy of these historic-cultural dimensions against the natural sciences. This does not mean that Cassirer would have identified himself with Neo-Kantians. Rather he differed from its certain tendencies, too.[27] Neo-Kantianism appeared as a decisive paradigm for Cassirer, but it was not the wholeness of the problem insofar as Cassirer connected with Kant's striving to represent the transcendence by means of practical philosophy. He saw the philosophy of ethical entrance into infinity in Kant's philosophy,[28] therefore he attempted to reconcile Kant's critique of reason with the critique of culture. In his thought he already mobilized his worldview in three volumes of his major work. (I–III; 1923, 1925, 1929). Cassirer was already aware of the common deficiencies in both Neo-Kantianism and phenomenology. Before 1929 he had elaborated a new philosophy which was able to unify both Neo-Kantianism and phenomenology. Cassirer expressed, there is "absolutely no essential difference"

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[26] For the citation from Heidegger, see Gordon, *Continental divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos*, 140; cf. 392, in note 4. Martin Heidegger, *Briefe, 1912 bis 1933, und andere Dokumente*, ed. Alfred Denker (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2002), 60–63. The date of Rickert's letter is July 17, 1929. The date of Heidegger's reply is July 25, 1929.

[27] Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 275. (In English: 194.): "this can only serve as a paradigm, and not as the whole of the problem", says Cassirer.

[28] As he writes, "the restrictedness to a determinate sphere suddenly falls away. The ethical [das Sittliche] as such leads beyond the world of appearances. Yet this is so decisively metaphysical that a breakthrough now follows. It is a matter of the transition to the *mundus intelligibilis*." (Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 276. [In English: 194]).

between the two great contemporary traditions.[29] Although he probably did not conceive this as a criticism of Heidegger, rather as a hidden reference to his own philosophical system, it must have been irritating for the debate partner. For Cassirer, Neo-Kantianism was not perceivable in a "dogmatic system" but in the direction of questioning, which Gordon calls "a special kind of philosophical creativity".[30] On Cassirer's view, the common direction with phenomenology lay in the fact that they were directed towards exploring a priori structures by questioning beyond the facts, therefore he heartily welcomed Heidegger's transcendental-philosophical attitude.[31]

It is important to see, however, that Cassirer mobilized his own worldview in such a form that it was left completely unspoken in the course of debate. Based on the writings available at the time, Heidegger could not even have seen the plausibility of Cassirerian thought, therefore he regarded him with good reason a follower of the Marburg school of Neo-Kantians who, being unable to react to the crisis points of modern philosophy, moved within the frames of the late 19th century philosophy. By all means, the primary target of Heidegger's critique was centred on Neo-Kantian view and not on Cassirer's, even so Cassirer felt that it was necessary to express his distance from Cohen as well: "Naturally, in the course of my work, much else has emerged".[32]

By the way of turning against the Neo-Kantian epistemological approach, Heidegger endeavours to structure his own ontological understanding of Kant. He sees the very core of Kant's ontological sight in the chapter on Schematism. Based on this, Heidegger asserts that Kant never gave up on metaphysics but interpreted "the task of …*Critique of Pure Reason* as laying the ground for metaphysics".[33] He thinks that by means of the operation of schematism Kant described the *world-forming* character of our finite human being, which is nothing other than exploring transcendence. The traditional meaning of transcendence was, of course, transformed in his philosophy; it did not imply a movement beyond the world of appearance, but primarily referred to the idea that *Dasein* is characterized by being-in-the-world, who is always already beyond itself. In his *a priori* relation to the world, "Dasein" who understands being is equal to transcendence itself. The notion of transcendence here describes the occurrence of the meaning of being emerging through life experience. Heidegger does not follow Kant on the way of Transcendental Deduction where the operation of schematism utterly falls outside the centre of Kant's critical philosophy, and where the concepts of understanding become productive powers. In Kant's view, it became emphatic that categories (the pure concepts of understanding) are *notio*s (i.e. with their help we think of concepts [such as God, immortality and freedom] which extend over all our occurring experiences). The reason why Kant's *notio*s were problematic to him was because they did not imply schemes of time, concrete relations of time that were concerned with the knower. The chasm between the world of appearance and "being-in-itself" is in fact unbridgeable.

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[29] Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 274. (In English: 193.)
[30] Gordon, *Continental divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos*, 137.
[31] Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 274. (In English: 193.): Cassirer says "as I had not expected to find it in him, I must confess that I have found a neo-Kantian here in Heidegger."
[32] Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 275. (In English: 194.)
[33] Heidegger GA 3, 1. (In English: 1.) Cf. Heidegger GA 25, 10. especially § 3.

For Heidegger the solution means that categories are inherently schematized, they include concepts of time as well, and we can dissociate from these only through abstraction. The task of Schematism is to describe how knowledge of being is generated by the interplay of two complementary faculties of understanding and sensibility (*Verstand, Sinnlichkeit*) or concept and intuition/perception (*Begriff, Anschauung*). While the synthesis of knowledge clearly traces back to the activity of understanding in the chapter on Deduction, in Heidegger's view, synthesis emerges from the operation of schematism by dissolving the intuition and thinking in a "common root". It is the imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) that is responsible for this schematism operating in experience. Imagination appears not as an accidental activity but as a fundamental form of our relation to being, and as such it proves more decisive for life than rationality. By means of imagination operating in schematism, Kant described the *worldforming* character of our finite human being, which was nothing else than uncovering transcendence. For Heidegger, the operating of imagination was not just another name for human subjectivity but a way of avoiding the concept of subjectivity itself. Schematism is "an art hidden in the depths of the human soul,"[34] it does not mean, however, that subjectivity stands in focus. On the contrary: it rather means that schematism cannot be founded on the self-activity of a human being, but its purpose is something beyond subjective as it directly reveals itself.[35] In Heidegger's view, the event of ontological understanding may be considered only if we come to understand how time and change build into our schemes, and how schemes of our thinking are able to crack open or modify by temporality. This is an event which cannot be evoked by the subject from a Heideggerian perspective. Accordingly, Heidegger naturally did not eliminate the notion of truth, but preserved its validity. Truth exists, but he was more interested in *its relation to reality* than *its concept formation*. Instead of absolute (indisputable, transcendent) truths, he was interested in the truth of finite human existence and how transcendence (emergence of the meaning of being) can be involved in human being. Heidegger explored how far Kant reached in the field of metaphysics in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and in this respect, the humanness of reason, i. e., the finitude lying within the human became essential. For Heidegger, it is primarily intuition (*intuitio*) that carries this finite experiential knowledge.[36]

This is where I would like to touch upon the precursor of the Davos debate which belongs to the problematization of *intuition*: the concept of "viewing" *(Anschauung)*. As a matter of fact, the Cassirer–Heidegger debate was not an isolated event; in retrospect, they continued Paul Natorp's and Edmund Husserl's controversy which had burst out at the turn of the century after the publication of the first edition of the *Logical Investigation*, and had arisen together with the question of intuition being possible or not. Natorp and the Neo-Kantians have rejected the possibility of intuition, and, by contrast, intuition appears as a source of knowledge at the root of Husserl's

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[34] Heidegger SZ, 23. and in note 1 (In English: 20. and in note 1 above); also see Kant: *Critique of Pure Reason*, 273. (A 141 / B 181)
[35] Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, p. 280; (In English: 197.)
[36] "Knowledge is primarily intuition." Heidegger GA 3, 27. Cf. also ibid. 21. (In English: 19., cf. also ibid. 15.)

investigations. Husserl distinguished between the two kinds of intuition: (1) *categorial intuition* involves seeing the essence *(Wesenschau)*, (2) *sensuous intuition* belongs to the perceiving of external things. While in seeing the essence, the mode of givenness of conscious experience is whole and given to consciousness in its completeness; the perceiving of external things is only fragmental. For Husserl, the fact that the things' perception is unable to provide a whole, unmediated and intuitive knowledge of things shifts the focus to the limits of phenomenality. Thus at this point, on the limits of phenomenality, Kant assumed the difference between divine and human. He proposed that besides finite human intuition (*intuitus derivativus*) there is the possibility of another mode of consciousness called *intuitus originarius* that differs from the human's, and that is inaccessible for us.

Basically, Heidegger has got an insight by Husserl's legacy that intuition does not play an essential role in the Neo-Kantian view of reality, but rather, concepts turn into productive forces by which objective reality is organized.

Cassirer expressed his appreciation concerning Heidegger's interpretation both in the Davos debate and in his review.[37] He even asserted that the whole problem of metaphysics with Kant does not merely comprise the problem of schematism (which is solely central to the chapter on Transcendental Analytic, while having no role in Ethics), so Heidegger simply overinterprets Kant towards Schematism. If we investigate Kant's entire philosophy from a Cassirerian viewpoint, the problem of freedom comes to a central point: *to be human* means *to create freely* worlds of meaning. While in Cassirer's view, the task of philosophy is to free man from anxiety, in Heidegger's view the task of it is to throw man back into facticity and the hardness of his fate *(in die Härte seines Schicksals)*.[38] Instead of the Cassirerian self-liberation *(Selbstbefreiung),* for Heidegger, freedom means "becoming free for the finitude of Dasein" (*frei zu werden für die Endlichkeit des Daseins*), coming into the thrownness *(Geworfenheit)* of our Being.[39] The common point is, however, that the critical philosophy is not limited to epistemology for Cassirer and Heidegger, and accordingly, both of them emphasize the metaphysical feature of Kant's philosophy, at the same time what they mean by metaphysics is very different: it means ontology to Heidegger as it can be the metaphysics of Dasein, while it means transcendence of finitude to Cassirer. According to Wolfgang Röd, it seems that Heidegger followed Kant, while Cassirer rather followed Spinoza, because Kant never regarded philosophy as a sphere

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[37] As Cassirer writes: "The value of Heidegger's book should in no way be denied or diminished. Like all the writings of Heidegger, his book on Kant carries the stamp of a genuinely philosophical attitude and genuinely philosophical work. He proceeds to his work with true inner enthusiasm. He does not stop anywhere with the interpretation of words and sentences but places us everywhere in the vital center of the problems and grasps these problems in their real power and genuine originality. And one will be able to say nothing better in praise of Heidegger's book than that it shows itself quite equal to the problem that it develops before us. It remains at the apex of the task it sets itself." (Cassirer, "Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik: Bemerkungen zu Martin Heideggers Kant-Interpretation" (Rezension), 25. Translation: Idem, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, in *Kant Disputed Questions,* ed. and trans. Moltke S. Gram (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1967), 156.

[38] Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 287., 291. (In English: 201, 204.)

[39] Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 289. (In English: 203.)

that can open access to *mundus intelligibilis,* to a reality beyond our possible experience, but he only suggested that we should assume the existence of such an intelligible world and act in doing this. So, it does not play any essential role in domains of our knowledge, but it serves as a regulative function for our morality.[40] Referred to István M. Fehér's article, we may note that both Heidegger' and Kant's philosophy are in full harmony with each other in the sense that both of them are far from the *Schwärmerei* defined as a form of romantic fantasies (*enthusiasm*), and that in this respect, Cassirer's perspective is not devoid of wishful thinking, which is dangerous and against which Kant turned since his earliest years.[41] In Heidegger's view, Cassirer may be criticized for missing a fundament for metaphysics, and in this way it remains only the field of daydreams: "For Cassirer, the *terminus a quo* [the starting point] is utterly problematical."[42] It is the operation of schematism that lays the foundation of finite human being.

Cassirer accused Heidegger of missing a transcendental dimension, and he argued that Heidegger's weakness was the *terminus ad quem* (finishing point). Without this dimension, Heidegger was unable to explore the objective aspects of human being.

Similarly to Husserl, Cassirer thought that Heidegger provided a merely anthropological description.[43] Heidegger's notion of human *Dasein* from Cassirer's perspective could have been nothing else than passivity and a human disposition which is incapable of independent act, free being and responsibility involved in it. This is why Cassirer did not see any philosophical meaning in the formations of human finitude (more closely death, anxiety and fate). In his review of Heidegger's Kant book (1931) he affirms that Heidegger neglected the difference between *phenomena* and *noumena* (the crucial point of Kant's philosophy). The elimination of the Kantian dualism is not open to the infinite, and stays close to finitude itself. In his view, Kant wants to lay the

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[40] For this, see: Wolfgang Röd, "Transzendentalphilsophie oder Ontologie. Überlegung zu Grundfragen der Davoser Disputation", in Dominic Kaegi and Enno Rudolph, ed., *Cassirer – Heidegger 70 Jahre Davoser Disputation*. Vol. 9 of Cassirer-Forschungen (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2002), 16.

[41] I have borrowed the *Schwärmerei*-thought from István M. Fehér concerning the Cassirer-Heidegger debate. In this respect, I owe a lot to his thorough and deep analyses, a part of which was presented in his *Hermeneutics, Democracy, Pluralism, Community* lecture in December 2010 at the "Hermeneutics and Democracy" conference organized by Miklós Nyírő in honour of István M. Fehér. Another part of that was published, in more detail see István M. Fehér, "Metafizika és észkritika" (Metaphysics and Critique of Reason). *Világosság* 10-11-12 (2004): 51.

[42] Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 288. (In English: 202.): With Cassirer the problem of foundation does not arise here yet, later however it will take shape in the question how transcendence can be integrated into finite human being. Cassirer planned to elaborate the answer to this question in volume 4 of *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms,* which was published only after his death, and in which Cassirer elaborated the concept of "basis-phenomenon"; and its earlier version can already be read in volume 3 of his major work. For this, see: Margreiter, "Aspekte der Heidegger-Cassirer-Kontroverse", 113, 128 f.

[43] On this issue, see Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 278. (In English: 195 f.): "Now my question is the following: Does Heidegger want to renounce this entire Objectivity, this form of absoluteness which Kant advocated in the ethical and the theoretical, as well as in the *Critique of Judgment?* Does he want to withdraw completely to the finite creature or, if not, where for him is the breakthrough to this sphere?"

grounds of human finitude in Transcendental Analytic not only to get knowledge of this finitude, but to find the place of transition (*metabasis*) to the topic of infiniteness. According to Cassirer, Kant's original intention is to explore the possibility of human freedom within the frames of practical philosophy, and thereby to go beyond the finitude of temporal existence.

Heidegger emphasized that Cassirer did not take into account Kant's insight according to which there is a basic distinction between the two modes of intuition: human and divine. It was Heidegger's major argument that the neo-Kantians neglected the human finitude and gave preference to intellectual construction over intuition, making man into a sort of God, as if our concepts were creating the world. In this way, Cassirer could not find a foundation for the existence; consequently, he had no access to being that he described, which is why Cassirer was unable to discover the transcendence within the frames of human existence.

We may say: in the field of sciences, a debate can be the place where varying perspectives and results are presented, and the aim of debates (in dynamics of verification and falsification) is to test these through a process of justification so that it can turn out whether a thesis is reliable and scientifically acceptable knowledge or not. However, philosophical debates are not just about presenting pro and con arguments. It may also be regarded as an event where the logic of discovery is in progress, and the participants can leave with the impression that they are gifted with something in the course of debate. While the former works in the form of algorithmic logic, for the latter, heuristic (discovering) is indispensible. Every debate can be described as gaining experience but it does matter what its centre is. The Davos debate raised questions rather than gave answers. In the debate, Kant seemed to be only seemingly a common root from where both thinkers were guided by the connecting points. They in fact confronted only limits of each other. The essential characteristic of the Cassirer-Heidegger debate did not lie in the justification (affirmation or opposition) but in the fact that from the sharply different (Kant)-interpretations, the discussion reached the ultimate questions of philosophy.

**A debate-theoretical outlook**

The Davos debate has already been characterized by various terms: in English the expressions *"debate," "encounter," "confrontation"* and *"controversy"* mostly appear in the terminology of literature; the same subject is coupled with the concepts of *"Debatte," "Auseinandersetzung," "Streitgespräch," "Kontroverse"* in German commentaries. However, if we go back to the original source text, we find that the term *Disputation* is used in the title of the German record.[44] Besides, Margreiter and Gordon devoted attention to the fact that the work between Cassirer and Heidegger proceeded as the final event of the conference, originally within the frames of an "Arbeitsgemeinschaft," *working seminar* (or *workshop*, *work team*), "which was later designated as a 'Davos dispute'" in reports and memoirs.[45] While according to Safranski, "the participants could have felt themselves as if they had been in a

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[44] Cassirer/Heidegger, "Davoser Disputation…", in GA 3, 271–296.
[45] Margreiter, "Aspekte der Heidegger-Cassirer-Kontroverse", 110; also see: Gordon, *Continental Divide. Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos,* 136, 92.

legendary medieval dispute,"[46] Gordon clearly distinguishes the Davos *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* from the type of dispute, which he traces back to the martial arts (public joust of clericals) as a scholastic form of debate. In opposition to the former, *working seminar* is regarded as a relatively new form of German academic life, which made it possible to develop a relatively non-structured, dialogical style – compared to the classic tradition of the monologue structure of a conference, inaugural or academic lecture. By its nature it offers the possibility of self-examination and revision, as well as polarized and polemic forms.[47]

We might wonder why the debate of Cassirer and Heidegger is still called a *disputation*. If we take a closer look at it, this name seems to be relevant because first, aspects apart from philosophy (e.g., later added political overtones or other strategies such as manipulation or negotiation) did not play a role in Davos. The encounter seemed to be a pure philosophical debate according to eye witnesses where the essential issue was the thing itself;[48] second, it informs us what kind of philosophical debate it could have been, since the dispute itself is not a medieval memory, but a still living form of philosophical debate with the characteristic of movement within limits.

As an activity – in Jacques Le Goff's approach – disputes had two kinds of functions at medieval universities: on the one hand, as a preferred part of teaching and examinations within the university and beyond, as it was directed towards the inner personal development of scientific and philosophical thinking. On the other hand, it appeared how the community of scholars and students enacted their academic life.[49] The task of elevating and legitimizing the debate adequate to the scientific and philosophical thinking is completely connected with the community of universities, which contributed in the beginning to institutionalize the disputes. Seeing from a dramaturgic perspective, it was not about debates among persons, but among (personalized) concepts on some philosophical topics. The search for good *arguments for each side* had special importance – since these processes enabled training in culturally different ways of viewing and experiencing, in case of juridical and religious debates, too. This process eliminated dogmatic attitudes on account of which a position became inaccessible for any kind of discussion. To sum up, disputes encouraged critical thinking – with the help of appropriate thinking strategies –, including familiar with research and exercise of developing, formulating and testing our innermost personal viewing. The performance of disputes became widespread mostly among scholars in the world of law and theology, but more importantly participants were introduced into knowledge how to discuss special philosophical issues. As Le Goff

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[46] Rüdiger Safranski, *Egy némethoni mester. Heidegger és kora* (A Master from Germany. Heidegger and His Times), trans. Péter Rácz, Gábor Schein and Sándor Tatár (Budapest: Európa, 2000), 269.

[47] Gordon, *Continental Divide: Heidegger, Cassierer, Davos,* 92 ff.

[48] Peter Gordon, Wolfgang Röd are also of this opinion. Wolfgang Röd writes that "die Auseinandersetzung hatte rein philosophischen Form". See Wolfgang Röd, "Transzendentalphilosophie oder Ontologie? Überlegungen zu Grundfragen der Davoser Disputation", in Dominic Kaegi and Enno Rudolph, ed., *Cassierer – Heidegger 70 Jahre Davoser Disputation,* Vol. 9 of Cassirer-Forschungen (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2002), 2.

[49] See Jacques Le Goff, *Az értelmiség a középkorban* (Intellectuals in the Middle Ages) (Budapest: Osiris, 2000), 114–122.

writes, the origin of disputes is interpretation. Originally, the free exchange of views sprung from interpretation of texts, but the participant of debates, "the university master is not an exegete any more but a thinker. He experiments with independent solutions, and creates something new."[50] The structure of ordinary (governed by strict rules and highly formalized) disputes is similar to dissertation defences today. Participants became involved in a dispute on the grounds of specific topics proclaimed in advance through a well-known logic of questions and answers. Moreover, there was another prominent medieval form, the *quodlibet dispute* as well, which proved to be a more dangerous situation for the academic master who was responding. In this case, a session of debate passed without any pre-announced direction in which any question could be posed, so for this reason the outcome of the debate was completely settled when the disputant was able to maintain his composure with an almost universal competency. Naturally, these kinds of disputes were also framed by structures. The master (*defendants*) presented the truth of his thesis, which the opponent (*obiiciens*) had to attack, but debate meant freely disputing the questions, and someone had to win. Following the event, the *determinatio*-records taken by attendees summarized the result of the dispute, the whole of what was called Disputed Questions *(quaestiones disputatae).* The final text was not a literal transcription of the oral dispute, but a conclusive *exposé* composed by listeners. The case of the Cassirer-Heidegger debate can also be compared with the *quodlibet-dispute*, not completely unfounded.

The Davos debate was described several times in painting as an arena, but if – as Margreiter writes – the majority of literature emphasized that "Heidegger came out of this dispute as winner, and Cassirer as loser, then they rely on the adjustments of the admirers of Heidegger who were present". It is also important to realize that "in a sense of history of philosophy, the Davos debate was transmitted in memory of Heidegger's school and became a part of the tradition," while Cassirer's school does not exist.[51] In the interpretations the question has been argued even nowadays whether only one party, namely Cassirer's attitude can be characterized as being completely adequate for a hermeneutic (understanding and mediation seeking) perspective (Enno Rudolph),[52] or it would be more appropriate to speak about the confrontation of two different hermeneutic approaches (Rudolf Bernet).[53] However, from a debate-theoretical-perspective, John M. Krois's proposal is the most differentiated, since in his essay he says "there was really not a Davos debate; instead, two ships were floating away from each other in the darkness".[54] Expectations were not fulfilled according to the Davos participant (Ernst Howard), who also felt compelled to mention afterwards: "Instead of

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[50] Le Goff, *Az értelmiség a középkorban* (Intellectuals in the Middle Ages), 118.

[51] Margreiter, "Aspekte der Heidegger-Cassirer-Kontroverse", 127.

[52] Rudolph, Enno: "Freiheit oder Schicksal? Cassierer und Heidegger in Davos", in Dominic Kaegi and Enno Rudolph, ed., *Cassirer – Heidegger 70 Jahre Davoser Disputation,* Vol. 9 of Cassirer-Forschungen (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2002), 37.

[53] Rudolf Bernet, "The Hermeneutics of Perception in Cassirer, Heidegger, and Husserl", in *Neo-Kantianism in Contemporary Philosophy*, ed. Rudolf A. Makkreel and Sebastian Luft (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press 2010), 41–58, here: 42. Through a new reading of Kant – said Bernet – the hermeneutics of subjective experience was elaborated by Heidegger, while the hermeneutics of work of objective spirit by Cassirer.

[54] Krois, "Warum fand keine Davoser Debatte …statt?", 234.

having seen two parallel worlds beside one another, one might have enjoyed the stage effect how a very kind man performed his monologue, while a very temperamental man did it so too, who also tried to be kind with all his efforts."[55] No supplementary annotation of Cassirer has been bequeathed to us, however, Heidegger's account also confirms the sense of lack: "From a factual, philosophical perspective, I didn't gain anything," "in the course of discussion (...) Cassirer was extremely polite and almost too obliging. Thus I encountered very little resistance, which prevented the problems from being articulated in the necessarily clear form,"[56] as he wrote to Elisabeth Blochmann. Considering, however, the influences of this debate, they might have been productive in a sense that the Kant book is said to be directly grounded on Heidegger's preparatory notes for his Davos dispute; and the debate was also the main motivation for Cassirer, who himself planned that an in-depth confrontation with Heideggerian phenomenology should be written as the closing chapter of his major work (PsF III, 1929), and finally, only a first draft and notes were completed.[57]

If we formally investigate the transcript of the Davos dispute, prepared from notes by Bollnow and Ritter, we may say that both Cassirer and Heidegger claimed meta-statements concerning the nature of their philosophical debate. The different language use, the "debate theoretical" self-interpretations signify that in the course of debate both disputants had an insight into their own debate styles.

Both Cassirer and Heidegger went beyond the Neo-Kantian perspective, yet offered radically different Kant-interpretations. For Heidegger, the *terminus a quo* as the starting point of his own paradigm was the problem of finitude (*Endlichkeit*), however, Cassirer's philosophy was directed towards the finishing point of his own conception (*terminus ad quem*) in the sense of philosophy of culture. While with Cassirer the finishing point became visible and the starting point remained completely blurred. Heidegger conceived of his own philosophy as such in which the starting point is the central problem, the dispute moves in domains of the *terminus a quo*, and the *terminus ad quem* is what it stands in a latent correlation with.[58]

It is relevant to mention a Dutch philosopher, Hendrik J. Pos's intervention, whose words sounded in the protocol as follows: "Philological remark: both men speak a completely different language".[59] Even if the moderator did not claim that the possibility of debate is missing there, it still had, by all means, its limits and dangers. Originally, there were expectations attached to the conference that the ideas of

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[55] Cited from Dominic Kaegi, "Davos und Davor – Zur Auseinandersetzung zwischen Heidegger und Cassirer", 67; also see: Ernst Howard, "Betrachtungen zu den Davoser Hochschulkursen", *Neue Zurcher Zeitung* 10. 4. 1929.

[56] Martin Heidegger and Elisabeth Blochmann, *Briefwechsel 1918–1969*. Ed. by J. W. Storck, (Marbach am Neckar: Deutsches Literatur Archiv, 1989), in note. 29 above.

[57] Ernst Cassirer, *Zur Metapysik der symbolischen Formen. Nachgelassene Manuskripte und Texte. Vol. 1*, ed. by John M. Krois in collaboration with Anne Appelbaum, Rainer A. Bast, Klaus Christian Köhnke and Oswald Schwemmer. (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1995), XIII.

[58] In Heidegger's argumentation, this logical contrast is supported with theological arguments as well. For the relation of finite and infinite and that of divine and human intuition, see e.g. Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 280. (In English: 197.) Cf. Gordon, *Continental divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos.* 165.

[59] Cassirer/Heidegger, "Davoser Disputation…", in GA 3, 287. (In English: 202.)

debating partners would allow for translation into the other language, or if not, at least differences would come out in a sharp contrast. "For us, it is a matter of extracting something common from these two languages. An attempt at translation was already made by Cassirer (...) We must hear the acknowledgement of this translation from Heidegger (...) Should it be found that there is no translation for these terms from both sides, then these would be the terms to differentiate the spirit of Cassirer's philosophy from Heidegger's."[60]

In Heidegger's works several reflections may be found in reference to the concept of translation. Even in the Natorp-essay of 1922 the thought arises that translation is an interpretative activity,[61] a possible way of accessing tradition and "reality". Nevertheless he does not believe that it would be feasible any more here.

This debate was described as *Auseinandersetzung* by Heidegger's language use,[62] which means the term *"confrontatio"* in Latin, the expression *"polemos"* in Greek and the words of *confrontation* and *debate* or *discussion* in English, while in his review of Heidegger's Kant book in 1931 Cassirer regards the Davos debate as a *conversation* with Heidegger (*Gespräch mit Heidegger*).[63] The main reason of this discrepancy may actually be that for Heidegger, *"polemic"* is about the fact that philosophical debates should be kept to the point, i. e. the essential issue is *the things themselves* and the devotion to *the things themselves* is what is more substantial rather than personality. What is more, personal aspects should be away from the debate: "do not occupy yourselves with Cassirer and Heidegger. Rather the point is that you have come far enough to have felt that we are on the way toward once again getting down to our work on the central question of metaphysics".[64] From Cassirer's language use, it turns out that the debate must be regarded as a conversation *with someone* the purpose of which is to "see not only himself but the other as well" while remaining with his own viewpoint,[65] to "learn to *see* the oppositions correctly, …[seeking] to *understand* each other just in this opposition."[66]

So Cassirer and Heidegger conceived philosophical debates completely differently. This is probably due to the fact that Cassirer takes part in the debate as an interpreter (Cohen's, Kant's, Cassirer's and Heidegger's interpreter), while Heidegger puts forward his own philosophical system of views, and appears as an independent thinker. In terms of methodology, Cassirer is committed to the research (which can be philologically justified) and the text interpretation, in opposition to this, Heidegger is

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[60] Cassirer/Heidegger, "Davoser Disputation…", in GA 3, 287. (in English: 201 ff.)

[61] Martin Heidegger, "Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle: Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation)", *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy* ed. by Theodore Kisiel and Thomas Sheehan. IX (2009): 144–182, here 168.: Heidegger points out concerning Aristotle that: "The translation of the interpreted texts, and above all the translation of their crucial basic concepts, have developed from the concrete interpretations […]".

[62] Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 296.

[63] Cassirer, "Kant und das problem der Metaphysik", 26. (In English: 157.)

[64] Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 296. (In English: 204.)

[65] Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 292. (In English: 349.)

[66] Cassirer, "Kant und das problem der Metaphysik", 26; [italics in original] (In English: 157. [English translation modified.])

guided by the methodology of destruction, what means the appropriation of tradition through critique and seeking motivation.

Cassirer's power is rooted in his historical erudition as well as in his mastery of annotation, what are especially present as he applies (actual or possible) Kantian arguments, since he knows exactly where Heidegger and the Neo-Kantians deviated from Kant and how Kant would argue. In contrast to Heidegger, his investigation is not directed towards attacking the Kantian thinking at the weak points much rather considering them in the strongest forms possible. Beyond this, Cassirer's hermeneutic situation seems extremely complex: 1. While representing himself, his purpose was to reconcile Neo-Kantianism with the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger. By a novel account of philosophy he thought this to be possible in a way that differences of opinion could get transformed into a consent; 2. However, not sharing Heidegger's view at certain points where he (Cassirer) was linked to Neo-Kantianism (e. g. the ethical conception of culture); 3. And *vice versa*, regarding certain questions where he had already detached from the Neo-Kantian perspective before the Davos debate, it would have been possible for him to agree with Heidegger. Cassirer endeavoured to do justice to all opposing parties, but it seems as if his interpretive approach pulled him out of the debate rather than facilitated him integrating into the centre of it. Namely, he–did not conceive the situation of the interpreter in the sense of Gadamerian hermeneutics but in a Kantian sense. Cassirer thereby insisted that he himself should avoid of taking part in the process of debate as one of the parties, but rather wanted to assist Heidegger's debates with Cohen, Kant, and others, as if in cases he were in the position of a judge (hearing a witness) in the justice process.[67] Heidegger's mentality had a solid idea: at times he wanted to step into the background, considering Cassirer's viewpoint. However, as he started speaking, he represented himself in his Kant-interpretation, so his viewpoint in the debate coincided with his own philosophical system of views. Heidegger's powers lay in his consistency, more precisely in the fact that his philosophical system and philosophical attitude were in accordance with each other.

Both disputants tried to represent the other's viewpoint. They took turns at disregarding sometimes their own perspectives by reconstructing the other's, then going on the stage by mobilizing their own views. In doing so, approaches of Cassirer and Heidegger were significantly separated, even though this disparity did not constitute a form of opposition. Their perspectives would have been oppositional if one of them had denied the same concepts while the other affirmed them. But that is not what happened. Both of them accepted the productive power of imagination, freedom, (in)finitude and truth, but conceived all these in the light of utterly different paradigms. It should be noted that both participants agreed that the Davos dispute could not be

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[67] Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 274. (In English: 193.): "I have found a neo-Kantian here in Heidegger."; Ibid. 275; (In English: 194.): "One only understands Cohen correctly if"; Ibid. 275; (In English: 194.): "On one point we agree"; Ibid. 276; (In English: 195.): "this ties in with Heidegger's arguments"; Ibid. 278; (In English: 195 f.): "Now my question is the following: Does Heidegger want to renounce […] Does he want to withdraw completely to […] or, if not, where for him is the breakthrough to this sphere? I ask this question because I really do not yet know. *The fixing of the point of transit, then, lies first with Heidegger. I believe, however, that Heidegger cannot be capable of abiding by it, nor can he want to. He must first pose these questions himself, and then, I believe, whole new problems emerge.* (italics added)

reduced to the sphere of logics and arguments but it was rather about *a paradigm debate*.[68] One of Heidegger's sentences refers to this: "Mere mediating will never amount to anything productive,"[69] instead of interpretation, emphasized the need for polemic, at one point he spoke of a "radical bursting-open" (*radikale Sprengung*) of the Kantian starting point.[70] Cassirer claimed: "We maintain a position where little is to be accomplished through arguments which are merely logical." Nobody can be compelled to take up a current position through logics or cold reasoning.[71] Their statements recommended that another requirement should be involved in paradigm debates than logical debates. The question is whether we can speak about hermeneutics in this case, and if so, on whose part? How is a hermeneutical perspective possible at all?

We can understand Heidegger's attitude this way: in the course of argumentations or interpretations it is advisable to (ex)change viewpoints or perspectives, for it is necessary that we should study the things from several various sides (by justification and falsification), in the case of paradigm debates, a change in viewpoints however is problematic. To shift perspectives within a paradigm means: to complete our aspect-seeing in multiple ways; although this also refers to a way of shift, but the emergence and understanding of a new paradigm requires more than the former: a radical and complete change of our worldview. Paradigms only exist until they cannot be translated into one another. Being global, it is a part of paradigm shifts that they should be replaced by each other. If a paradigm could be somehow translated, then it would lose its validity. In other words, the essence of a paradigm always lies in what cannot be seen from the other paradigm, or at least not in the same way. The relation of paradigms to each other can be described from the angle of dimensional shifts rather than through translation and searching for a common centre. Newtonian and Einsteinian physics moves within very different paradigms. If the Davos dispute was really a paradigm debate, then Heidegger's viewpoint – according to which the changes in viewpoints (the skips from viewpoint to viewpoint) here would equal to the decline of a philosophical debate – seems realistic.[72] On the one hand, Heidegger emphasized the difference of positions that is for him, "the differentiation of standpoints is the root of the philosophical endeavor".[73] On the other hand, Cassirer's purpose is to find consent between two different ways of thinking (in Gordon's words, this is "unity in diversity"): "I believe that where the disagreement lies has already become clearer. It is not fruitful, however, to highlight this disagreement again and again. […] We must search again for the common center, precisely in the

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[68] Rudolph has also spoken about "philosophical paradigm debate (*philosophischer Paradigmenstreit).* Rudolph, "Freiheit oder Schicksal? Cassirer und Heidegger in Davos", 27.
[69] Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 295. (In English: 207.): "Das bloße Vermittlung wird nie produktiv weiterbringen."
[70] Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 288. (In English: 202.)
[71] Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 292. (In English: 204 f.)
[72] Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 284. (In English: 200.): "Is a determined world-view not taken as a basis for metaphysics? I would misunderstand myself if I said that I gave a philosophy free of points of view. And here a problem is expressed: that of the relationship between philosophy and world-view. Philosophy does not have the task of giving world-view, although, again, world-view is the presupposition of philosophizing."
[73] Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 296. (In English: 207.)

disagreement."[74] He actually asks for what is impossible. In Cassirer's consideration, it is to be inspiring that he must have recognized that it was about a paradigm debate, even so there was something reason for his attempt to apply the rules of rational-logical debates. We may say that in Heidegger's view this would mean the following: 1) the disputant is not aware of the fact that he is taking part in a paradigm debate, 2) he really knows that he is taking part in a paradigm debate but knows nothing of the highest principles and laws governing such a debate, 3) he hopes for a consent while being aware of both points 1 and 2. In a debate like this, however, no consensus exists in a way that both paradigms remain valid; both of them will be operative only while – without a common centre or translation – the disparateness will be sustained. If consent occurs, and one paradigm can be translated into another, it means that in fact only one paradigm exists (the other collapses). In the case of disparateness encouraged by Heidegger, every paradigm has just the same right to exist, while the process of the Cassirerian consensus would inevitably result in victory and defeat. Whatever happens, Cassirer's endeavour invalidates one of the two confronting paradigms: he either sacrifices himself, or defeats the other. Seen from this perspective, Cassirer's consensus-seeking was not motivated so much by understanding the other but rather by arguing against a case for relativism, which is more an epistemological way of conceiving than a hermeneutic one.

This is why Heidegger advocates that translation between the two viewpoints at essential points is not possible; instead he emphasized the ontological significance of *polemos* (Πόλεμος) in the Davos dispute. In his later work *The Origin of the Work of Art*, it also becomes emphatic that the happening of truth can be interpreted as a "debate"-process.[75] Both Heidegger and Cassirer reflected upon the concept of polemic, but did not speak about the same thing. Cassirer identified polemic with the deficient mode of debate, therefore a debate like this made no sense for him. In his 1931 critical review of Heidegger's Kant book, he later discussed this debate theoretical question in more detail again. Any form of philosophical debate is possible for him in the case of a critique that is based on interpretations – if it is able to arrive at understanding a standpoint expressed by the other – while he dismissed all polemic debates, since he conceived it as a play-off of "mere opposition of 'standpoints'," as a continuous talking at cross purpose, which is not productive.[76] Cassirer expressed a rather negative opinion on the way of reading and discussing what is suitable for characterizing his debate partner: he speaks about Heideggerian violence wresting from Kant, where Heidegger no longer appears as a commentator, but as an usurper (*usurper*) who "invades the Kantian system by force of arms in order to subjugate it

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[74] See Gordon, *Continental divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos*, 197; Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 290. (In English: 204 f.)

[75] Martin Heidegger, *A műalkotás eredete (The Origin of the Work of Art)*, trans. Béla Bacsó (Budapest: Európa 1988), 98–99. Translation: Idem, "The Origin of the Work of Art (1935–36)", in *Off the Beaten Track,* trans. Julien Young and Kenneth Haynes, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1–85. here: 27., 36. ff., 42. f.: The German words *Auseinandersetzung* and *die Bestreitung des Streites* can be translated into the English as "setting apart" and "striving of the strife"/ "flighting of the flight".

[76] Cassirer, "Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik…" (Rezension), 5.: "Das bloße Gegeneinanderausspeielen der 'Standpunkts'…" (In English: 136.)

and force it to serve his own set of problematics".[77] He points out the negative aspects of Heidegger's destruction, especially the dangers of over-interpretation. Cassirer faced with this usurpation of rights against which he demanded *restitution*.

In contrast, the idea of *polemos* is absolutely positive for Heidegger, since it gains completely other meaning at Davos and in his major lectures of 1940s as well: it is understood as *Auseinandersetzung (con-fronting* or *struggle)*, that is, as a linguistic event where it becomes possible to make a difference. In other words, it first brings to separation what has to be separated and this is what enables something to come to presence. This con-fronting is more the field of simply separating, not at all war like in Greek mythology. We only reach the concept of things in a way that each one gets isolated from all the others. Everything in the world becomes that what it is only in this separating. In *polemos* – as Heidegger writes in *Introduction to Metaphysics* of 1935 concerning his favorite Heraclitus's fragment 53: distances and perspectives open themselves up – "boundary" as such (*horos*) comes into being, which at the same time defines the name "concept" in the Greek sense. We cannot think of the boundaries without thinking of what is beyond them. *Polemos* thereby does not block off, much less destroys something, but that is what builds a world and gathers together. The meaning "boundary" consists of both: "Πόλεμος and λόγος are the same," writes Heidegger.[78] For Heidegger, dialogue does not spring from the restriction of debate, just on the contrary: from the encounter with the difference or unknown. While Cassirer is distrustful of debates, Heidegger places the debate back into the process of thinking and knowing. Consensus makes no sense for him in a paradigm debate, because it would be a corruption with self surrender and having no viewpoints involved in it.

Although Cassirer's concepts, e.g. "common center," "seeing the other as well," "bridge," are not too auspicious in a paradigm debate,[79] I think that the Cassirerian perspective goes far beyond itself, it is more than mere consensus-seeking.[80] This is also marked by sentences in which Cassirer asks questions going beyond differences and identities. There is something in which both the common and the difference can be made visible – this is language for Cassirer. There is a common

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[77] Cassirer, "Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik…" (Rezension), 17. (In English: 149. [translation modified]). Also see Ibid. 21. (In English: 152.): According to Cassirer "Heidegger did, to be sure, enter his analysis […] as something which is similar to an hypothesis. And hypotheses are, as Kant remarks, strictly speaking forbidden merchandise in the area of transcendental philosophy… [However] they are […] admissible 'not in dogmatic but rather in polemical employment'; they are 'permitted in the field of pure reason only as a weapon, not so that a right can be grounded on them but only for the defense of that field.' (Kant: *Critique of Pure Reason*, B 804 f.) Should Heidegger's hypothesis not also be such a weapon? Do we not perhaps stand with it, instead of on the foundation of the analysis of Kantian ideas, in the middle of the polemic against these ideas?"

[78] Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000), 65.

[79] Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 292. (In English: 205.)

[80] Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 292. (In English: 204.): "I do not want to make the attempt — says Cassirer — to break Heidegger from his position, to force him into another direction of seeing. Instead, I want only to make his position understandable to me."

*linguistic medium.*[81] This presumption of Cassirer goes beyond the aspirations for consensus and assimilation, and for a moment, a field of view flashes. Cassirer's view did not proclaim, but therein lies that a central question is the quest for mediation in a paradigm debate, and is also what we mean by mediation hermeneutically. Difference also can be mediated. The point is that language is not the vehicle of consensus (*contrary to* polemic) but that of mediation. It seems that Cassirer well refers to this as he asserts that "we tread on a common ground. We assert this first of all as a postulate. And in spite of all deceptions, we will not become confused about this claim."[82] This assumption is confirmed by the fact that according to Cassirer's review of 1931, a philosophical debate is not merely the terrain for defending and attacking standpoints but it is a participation in the general case of human reason, where we search for what pertains to the whole.[83] Cassirer thereby formulates something based on Kant that could be regarded as *medial ethics* in a paradigm debate.

Some of Heidegger's works also deal with the problem of mediation, and based on these we could say that his philosophical perspective is pervaded with the approach springing from the idea of mediation. His conception about mediation is expressed in the above cited sentence of his summer lecture course of 1935 related to fragment 53 by Heraclitus, which goes as follows: "Πόλεμος and λόγος are the same".[84] Language is *polemos*, and *polemos* is language, an event in which the differentiation of things occurs, however, while clefts open themselves up, a world comes to be. On Heidegger's view, *polemos* may be interpreted as being in service of birth of the language itself between the confronting paradigms, without which the other's world would not be visible.

**Conclusion**

Maybe it is not exaggerating to say that Cassirer and Heidegger moved towards the field of mediation, both being ambassadors, mediators of differing paradigms. In the medial participation all that makes the debate hermeneutic can first appear: understanding, connecting, etc. This is opposed neither to Heidegger's *polemos*, nor to Cassirer's view on conversation. The reason why, in the audience, a sense of lack increasingly remains at the end of the Davos debate is that the parties weakened one another. The discussion did not become completed either in directions encouraged by Cassirer or by Heidegger. Nonetheless, it seems that to some extent, Heidegger might have well met the requirements of a paradigm debate. During the debate, Cassirer's consensus-seeking attitude was weakening the chances of a paradigm debate since it

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[81] Cf. Gordon, *Continental divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos*, 204.

[82] Cassirer/Heidegger GA 3, 293. (In English: 205.)

[83] "'In judging the writings of others one must choose the method of participation in the general cause of human reason and search out that which pertains to the whole from the attempt. If one finds it worthy of examination, one should offer the author, or rather his best representative a helping hand and treat the errors as secondary.' …under this maxim. I should not like to have it understood as a defense of or an attack on any kind of philosophical 'standpoint' but would rather ask that the reader consider and judge it in the spirit of the ' method of participation in the general cause of human reason'" (Cassirer, "Kant und das Problem der Metaphysik…" (Rezension), 5. (In English: 136.)

[84] Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 65.

was a failed attempt to achieve the form of mediation, while Heidegger's *polemos* reinforced these chances insofar as the mediation of differences between paradigms was at least accomplished.

As Pos noted, Cassirer offered his hand to his partner at the end of the debate, however, Heidegger refused to shake hands with Cassirer in a demonstrative way.[85] According to Tony Cassirer's memoires, thereby Heidegger's goal was "to annihilate [Cassirer's philosophy] if possible,"[86] but in a philosophical sense it only meant that both Cassirer and Heidegger also experienced the closing as part of the debate, and their acting was an attitude perfectly adequate to their own very different philosophical thoughts. Their activities were strongly related to the way how they understood the task of philosophy, or how they imaged the hermeneutical sense of a debate and how each of them conceived their own philosophical identity. This end is thus to be considered as a sign of thinking of both sides' maintained self-consistency by this way of participating in the debate. The debate failed to reach a consensus, at the same time nobody concluded the debate with victory or defeat at Davos either. Finally, in this way everyone has just the same right to exist.

The political background to the debate among partners often distorted the philosophical disputes in history, because it was conducted as a war, however a philosophical debate is not merely the terrain of war and the presentation of pro and counter arguments, but we attempt to think of a debate in another way, in terms of the middle voice. The focus is not on the two poles but on the space of the balance between the two poles. The emphasis lies on the locality of the subject, it points to a topography. The Davos debate invited a new way of thinking where a philosophical discussion is similar to a strategic debate in diplomacy. The middle voice exists, although it is not only mediation, but what I call "mediality". The core of mediality is a subtle balance between the event of understanding (which happens to the subject) and the subjects, and it can be described for example with Gadamer's notion of play. It is noteworthy that the humanist scholar who often entered diplomatic service from the 16th century did nothing other than trained the art of interpretation (*ars interpretandi*). It means his task was an exploratory reading of the world and ourselves, and in addition to this, in the majority of cases the mission of revealing the truth as well.

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[85] See Kaegi, "Davos und Davor", 69, and in note 10 above. See further Hendrik J. Pos, "Recollections of Ernst Cassirer", in *The Philosophy of Ernst Cassirer*, ed. by Paul Arthur Schilpp (Evantson, Ilionis: The Library of Living Philosophers, Inc. 1949), 63–72, here: 69.: "The conclusion was not without human symbolism; the magnanimus man offered his hand to his opponent: but it was not accepted."

[86] Kaegi, "Davos und Davor", 69., and in note 10 above.

# Interiority and Exteriority: Searching for the Self

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**Keywords:** self, anthropology of the self, philosophy of the self, existence, ethics, sphere of interiority, social matrix, containment of individuality, group inclusion, philosophical lifestyle

**Abstract:** This paper analyzes an anthropological and philosophical point of view concerning the creation and evolution of every individual; in that respect the moment of birth is of a capital importance. It comes to put an end to a way of life (the intrauterine one) and to open the perspectives of human life as we generally understand it. But the ontogenesis as a process can be viewed from a broad perspective, at least as a part of philogenesis. Ontogenesis also presents, besides its manifest aspects (physiological and psychological), the possibility of some cognitive studies, anthropologically oriented, which may enlarge, and give nuance to, the comprehension of this circumstance, generally discussed in the anatomy, physiology and psychology textbooks (mainly developmental psychology). Ontogenesis, as a cast out of the intrauterine sphere, sees itself framed, contained and absorbed through the integration in the family system, which is formative and, obvious, necessary, but, at the same time, limited and restrictive to the cultural *topos* of a micro-group. On the one hand, we have the modernist tendency towards humanisation and adequate social enrolling, and, on the other hand, we may explore the necessary methodology for giving back the individual to himself, through trying the ways of autarchic re-finding and redefining. Even if it looks segregationist, the discussed approach allows the possibility of (re)gaining personal autonomy and interiority by re-discovering the personal fundamentals. What we want to underline in this paper is oriented to the re-analysis of the subjective interiority, delineated and re-gained out of the multiple aspects of the exteriority or exteriorities that contain us, include us and oblige us. Comprising and engaging the subject in exteriority may lead to a loss of specific substance, to a dissolution into the omnipresent objective given. We are worried because of the predominant valorisation of the extravert tendency to rapidly and suddenly entrain into the social, and neglecting the values of an introvert character, centred on the subject and settled in self, in the personal sphere. We shall present some aspects of the casting in exteriority, some pernicious effects of this unilateral tendency that is so trendy, being focused on a (re)calibration of the balance, more exactly on the ethical recovery of the subject.

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## Thematic delineation

The intention of the contemporary German philosopher, Peter Sloterdijk, in his trilogy of spheres, is to show that: "(…) to-be-in-spheres is the fundamental situation for the human being."[1] The idea engraved in this is that this situation is set in the context in which we don't have an inner world or, as the author shows, we have "an interior-non-world" that has to deal with constant pressures and exterior challenges, as: "Only in such immunitary structures, creators of inner spaces, can human beings prolong their generation processes and make the individuation to progress."[2] Yet, in our thesis, we can shift the author's emphasis in order to understand by "interior spaces" an internalized, containing realm for the individual. By different approaches and conceptualizations of an anthropological character, the individual can be recuperated in his authentic individuality. This is more and more necessary as: "The occidental civilisation neglected the interiority for turning to the exteriority," as Edgar Morin remarked in his *Ethics*.[3] This is the reason why the opposite action that leads from the exterior to the interior should be emphasised, therefore "(…) the psychical culture is, at the same time, an anthropologic exigency and an historic exigency of our time."[4]

The appearance, formation and coagulation of this un-dividable individual (if we were to follow the Latin etymology; and referring to the Greek one we can talk about *a-tomos*, the one that cannot be divided anymore), represents, at least from an etymologic perspective, an *entelechy*, namely an accomplished act. This coagulation/completion and the resulting whole are obviously opposed on all levels to the absorbing and dispersing entropy of the surrounding world. The fact that the division cannot be performed any more (without the risk of losing the unity of the being) means that in-formation – meaning to put a form in – is completed and, thus, it reached its final purpose – *entelechy* –, that in-itself has been reached. At the same time, we notice that a continuous transformation of each individual takes place, starting already with the intrauterine stage and continuing all life long. Despite the fact that he is always the same (he has the same name, and the same identity), the individual is the subject of life pressure, of the bios- and of the socio- that uninterruptedly contain and modify him (physically as much as psychically). We have, therefore, identity and change, constancy and modification, oneness of the being and yet plurality of its aspects, as attributes of the individual unavoidably defined as oxymoronic. This had been presented, with its characteristic share of comic, in "Our Relations" film, starring Oliver Hardy and Stanley Laurel. Meeting, at an adult age, his twin brother – Alf (who noticed how much Stanley changed), Stanley replies: "You've altered too, but you haven't changed a bit." We are and we are not the same, we keep changing but we keep our identity despite the more or less elective tropisms. In the end, the concept of the individual affords only one theme, a paradoxical one: the same and always different, recognizable despite the ceaseless transformation.

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[1] Peter Sloterdijk, *Bulles, Sphères I*, trans. Olivier Mannoni (Paris: Librairie Anthème Fayard, Hachette Littératures, 2002), 51.

[2] Sloterdijk, *Bulles, Sphères I*, 51.

[3] Edgar Morin, *La méthode 6 Ethique* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2004), 111.

[4] Ibid., 111.

The birth is, besides the huge incumbent trauma – studied with special precision by Stanislav Grof in his *Transpersonal Psychology* –, a large opening towards a world (in the clearest sense of the word). Leaving the primordial egg, or the sphere as Sloterdijk underlines, can also be comprehended as a grand liberation, an unchaining of the foetus for getting out in a brand new world, filled with challenges. But, in the end, everything goes down to a passing, a passage from one world to another. The move or the shift that takes place does not represent an ontological leap, but rather an existential translation. Because, as soon as the amniotic environment has been left behind, the being (the baby) finds himself surrounded by the mother's body and arms. Over the psychological and emotional expectations we notice that the leaving of the interior (mother's body) is only apparently made for an exterior. Very soon the freshly conquered exteriority transforms into the physiological, affective, psychic and group interiority of the family. In other words, an enclosing is left behind only for entering a new one, a familial one this time. The new apparent exteriority proves to be an entering into the interiority of the familial micro-group. This new "house" may be seen as a reiteration of the egg, of the maternal sphere or matrix but on another level of existence, the familial one this time. If in the first existential phase – from the conception to the birth – the being was biologically, anatomically and physiologically (pre)formed, beginning with the entrance in the world, this being will need, besides all these, emotional, psychological and social assistance, in order to inscribe in the family first, and then in the society. In this perspective, birth becomes just a premise for all the successive "births" that are to come in life, as Edward T. Hall also specified: "From birth to death, life is punctuated by separations, many from them painful. Paradoxically, each separation forms a foundation for new stages of integration, identity, and psychic growth."[5]

From a systemic point of view (we are referring here to the Family Systemic Theory, with theoretic and therapeutic emphases of a cybernetic origin) the being cannot perceive itself otherwise but integrated in a group, part of it, contained in a very complex relational network subsistent and defining for every group member. In *Dictionnaire des thérapies familiales*, we find the following definition: "From a clinical and immediate point of view, the family system is an assembly of individuals having common characteristics that are linked through specific interactions."[6] The community and the connections that are specific to the individuals, give, no doubt, a cell or a sphere of containment for each member of the system. The interiority of the family also allows and encourages a humanizing enrolment of the young being, an entering into the social of the micro-group, and an integration into a first existential exteriority. Compared to the embryologic and familial unity, the detachments, the differentiations or separations from the first ones, materialized through achievement of new dimensions, may also be regarded as reiterated estrangement from the initial monad. But, at the same time, the detachments/differentiations as accession to meta-positioning to the familial system, they allow the possibility of regaining a personal

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[5] Edward T. Hall, *Beyond Culture* (New York: Anchor Books, A Division of Random House, Inc., 1989), 223.

[6] Jacques Miermont, sous la direction de, *Dictionnaire des thérapies familiales* (Paris: Editions Payot, 2001), 648.

substance, a search for the personal core of the being, coming back or at least a circumambulation of the genuine monad of Self. The loss, given by the detachment/separation from the rules of the containment system (of the family), is compensated by the attempts to connect to self, to the auto-referentiality that is immanent to the human being.

There is no doubt that the family "builds" us, moulding our personality and our *persona* (persona is, by Carl G. Jung, our social face); which clearly is a necessary process. From an existential perspective, yet, this is necessary and very important, but not sufficient. Only based on this personal "construction," by self differentiation of the young being, the individual can be given back to his own self, to his inner voice that is calling him towards the authentic and personal, towards that *auto*, *autos* (gr. itself/himself, alone) or, clearer maybe, towards the un-turbid, un-distorted, un-deformed mirroring between I and Self, toward the acknowledgment and inner peace, the *ataraxia* to which the School of Epicurus was referring. Detailing the interiority concept, we can even discern two layers of it, respectively the level of I – as a protection interiority, placed at the surface, conceived as an interface between the exterior world and the intimate one (with the preconscious and unconscious levels, already defined by S. Freud) – and deepness of Self, understood as a being's genuine interiority, as a central reference point, irradiation centre of the structures and defining archetypes, source of psychic energies. Certainly, toward this depth of a structural interiority of Self, the I represents an exteriority that becomes instrumental in the relation with the world, in managing the inner states (drives, needs, instincts etc.), in setting the agreement between a pleasure principle (coming from the unconscious) and a reality principle (imposed by the exterior).

## Existential interiority and exteriority

The initial fusion of conception of the new being takes place in the maternal body and passes, by the act of birth, in the fission between the embryo and the carrying body/maternal womb. Thus, the inexorable end of intrauterine life may be seen as a fissional process or scission of a whole. The two "parts" – the mother and the newborn –, although split, they remake, on another level this time, the initial connection and intimacy. This time, however, the enrolling is not in the mother's body but in the body of an "extended mother" that is represented by the family. That circumscribes the baby, establishing a protective cell, nurturing and shielding, so necessary to the development, growth and evolution of every new being. We notice, yet, that a human being's growth and development process is animated by two forces of antagonistic orientation. To the above mentioned centripetal and fusion forces oppose, with a high degree of acuteness (around the age of two, at the same time with the formation of I and often in a paroxysmal way during puberty and adolescence) some centrifugal, fissional tendencies that try, sometimes shyly exploring, sometimes violently bursting, to prepare the detaching circumstances out of the family matrix of the young adult. But, as soon as this detaching is accomplished, it wants itself affiliated to a group, by founding a personal family or by social-professional insertion. However, all these successive separations are not necessarily self-differentiations that imply the genuine maturation of the individual. The separation that is at the base is only the condition for a fusion at another level: the young adult leaves home in order to build a new home – a

personal nest – where his own children are to be born. So, we can speak about fusion cycles that are syncopated by fissional entrainments, short term and of reduced progression separations. Considering the systemic theory we can foresee a possible balance of the two antagonist tendencies, a middle point in the drama of fusion-fission pair, respective centripetal-centrifugal, in the report between interiority and exteriority, that we have in observation.

Dismissed or detached (by the case) from the successive matrixes of human existence (mother's body, origin family etc.) the individual has the risk, but also the chance, that the alienation may offer. He estranges, one after the other, from the womb, the mother, the family, the education (as school system) and, at the same time, each time he is once again bewildered. The successive "expels" are followed by, or they open a chance for re-registering, a possibility for a better re-settling in Self, to build an individual matrix, a personal bubble or sphere, having the centre everywhere and the margins nowhere. Only the exteriority extended to the extreme, or even to the paroxysm, can create the conditions for a possible construction, with personal means, of personality, because as Tzvetan Todorov stated in his book *The common life*: "The common life does not ever guarantee anything else, maybe with the exception of a fragile happiness."[7] In consequence self edification has to be freed by the influence of matrixes (foreign or borrowed) that are usually so defining. In the end, only the exteriority (as a casting away from the deep-rooted matrixes) extended to the extreme furnishes the necessary conditions and bases for genuine interiority. Detached from everything that brought him up, nurtured him, educated and formed him, the individual can, openly and honestly, focus on himself in order to accurately establish where, what and who he (or she) is. Thus he can meet himself, without any interpose screens, without any filters or interfaces, rules and norms that used to come from outside, from the alterity. Then, in a second step, after the evaluation of this existential situation there may follow the re-evaluation of the borrowed markers, the *habitus* (to use one of Pierre Bourdieu's concepts) that were included/incorporated, received from the world, life, the others, under the social pressure of the instructive-educative process. This process needs an acute and accurate judgement of a system of moral and deontological values inscribed in the "operational manual" of the contemporary human being.

After the instructions have been read they can be left aside, laid in a drawer and, ignoring the prescriptions, the tool can be used freely, namely the personality undressed of any borrowed exteriorities. From here comes the chance of a self-definition by re-writing the life script, by re-defining the guidelines that are truly individual. We can see here an eidetic decoupage, an *epoche* applied to the given familial, educative, moral, social, economical, and political aspects, for underlining the genuine interiority of a transcendent I. The foundation in view is one of emphasizing the centre of the being, of the solid I (clearly differentiated from the superficial pseudo-I with which we are, *nolens volens*, gifted and presented). This allows the setting of the interiority into itself. Continuous, reiterated re-analyzing of the subject, done by him (her) self, is the base of the genuine individualization (if not quite of the individuation, as Jung underlined). In that case the individual becomes whole, he is no longer

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[7] Tzvetan Todorov, *Viaţa comună, Eseu de antropologie generală* (Common life. An essay on general anthropology), trans. Geanina Tivdă (Bucharest: Editura Humanitas, 2009), 197.

dividable and scattered, caught and contained by the exteriority's landmarks. We may say that, in this way, we have the premises to realize a solipsism (lat. *solo+ipse*), unpolluted by the alterity, healing, emptied of the implicit or explicit influences, obvious or subliminal. We talk, in this case, about an "anthropoiesis" (gr. *poiesis* = action, creation, and from here, confectioning, construction meanings that later became "composition" and "poetry"), a creation of man made by himself, from and towards his interiority.

From the point of view of social psychology we can agree with Sloterdijk's idea that: "What we call being adult is only a tiring passage between the small subjectivisms and the bigger shapes of the world."[8] But, from an analytic psychology perspective (of Jungian school), we rather stress the transformation into adulthood that takes notice of its "small subjectivisms," analyzes them in order to integrate them in the bigger structure of personality. As the contemporary German philosopher advocates, we haven't got only a permanent confrontation of a narrow subjectivism against world's challenges, but, on the contrary, a stationing in those subjectivisms, an operating, a tuning of them (not only in a figurative way), their framing (as small as they are) in the subjectivism per se. The role of this effort of (re)turning of the view and comprehension to subjectivism, is to transform it in a space or a dwelling sphere, an inner world having its own values and references, a *domus* for the psyche having semantic, axiological and epistemological benchmarks, all obvious and clear. We can apply a "constructivist semiotic" to this inner world, in order to clear the described signs and significances, decrypted and integrated in an adequate and personal way. As the human personality deserves it can also be built from inside by amalgamating individual components into an alloy, purified of the dross that comes from the mass psychology.

Man was thrown in exteriority because "Since the beginning of modern time, the human world had to acknowledge every century, every decade, every year, and every day, to accept and to integrate new truths of an exterior which does not relate to the human being."[9] Columbus, Copernicus, Kant, Darwin or Freud have expanded and extended the area of conceptual coverage of the human, projecting the man outside the familiar known, and habitual space. The Europe-centrism, geocentricism, rationalism and empiricism, the anthropocentricism or the unilateral fixation on the conscious were settlings in confortable spheres that offered safe and protecting limits. The same de-centering process took place and still takes place not only for humanity in general, but also for man as a particular being. Returning to this we can determine several matrices or spheres along the individual's life:

- the intrauterine period; the uterus representing the first matrix (gr. *histero* = uterus, and from here *histere/histera* = matrix);
- the period of childhood within the protective matrix of the family;
- the schooling as an inclusion in the formative-educational-instructive environment;
- the great friendships of adolescence, the enrollment in the peer group;
- the employment and professional involvement;
- the foundation of one's own family.

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[8] Sloterdijk, *Bulles, Sphères I*, 63.
[9] Sloterdijk, *Bulles, Sphères I,* 24.

Of course, this presentation outlines only some important aspects of individual evolution emphasizing the entries in spheres/matrices that are comprehensive and defining for every personality. Each of these periods has a beginning, followed inevitably by an end that can be understood as entering a new phase. We can see here a series of entries and detachments, heaves into exteriorities which become, after a longer or shorter period of time, interiorities or spheres that contain and include the individual. Each detachment, throwing out, expulsion etc., is not only a loss but at the same time a heave into something, an enrollment in something, offering the possibility of reintegration into a new field, into a new matrix. So, for example, after early childhood, the education (as matrix) follows, and then profession or the foundation of one's own family. But at the same time, through the detachment of the first matrices the process of individualization takes place, the individual is formed, the Ego is realized. This process moves towards the *in*-dividual's delimitation and existential fixation with all his characteristics of independence and autonomy.

All expulsions are alienating of course, but they give the chance (they contain it at an optional level) of self-realization. The release from various protective and formative matrices facilitates the "onto" creation, or the autopoiesis, the self-centering, the fixation on personal values and landmarks, on the setting of essentially genuine milestones. Hence this intense search and overcoming of limits and limitations both at the level of humanity (at least of the Western humanity) and at an individual level. There is here a search of the subject that keeps detaching from the object, from the objective, from otherness. But precisely this distinction, that is continuously reiterated, opens the opportunity of realizing and deepening the ipseity through and beyond all external limitations.

"Man keeps learning as long as he lives" is a truism that we all hear. The huge accumulation of knowledge achieved during a life time has many roles: in addition to the educational-formative role, of registration and cultural affiliation we can also determine a protective one. Knowledge can form a protective sphere or bubble in front of the unknown, a matrix or an envelope that surrounds us and protects us from the abysses of the – unknown and unknowable – noumenal world. At a psychological level we are caught in a continuous discourse which makes and remakes the world by our image and understanding. We are in a cognitive sphere, matrix of our mind through which we define and position ourselves: "I am so and so". This verbal-discursive envelope, formed of words, images, ideas and concepts, contains our Ego, a sort of exoskeleton that protects the soft and fragile internal parts. Thus, The illusion of some pavement in front of the unknown and the new is created, in front of the nothingness that it is not, or cannot be, known. We have the feeling that our cognitive sphere protects us, defends us and it is in our help and perhaps therefore we reiterate it in an obsessive way. But it might be appropriate to admit that this matricial envelope consists of words or images, and these are only pseudo-bubbles that can give no more than pseudo-protections. The role of these pseudo-defenses, true intellectual *limes,* is also to provide a feeling of interiority (at least cognitive), of the peaceful and protective coverage given by intellectual frontiers. But, no matter how fragile or false they are, we cannot give them up so easily. The consequence of the giving up would be opening to the unknown; to the unlimited anxiogenic to which we no longer see any possibility of coverage. But man hardly (or not at all) bears contact with the *apeiron*

stated already by Anaximander, with the absolute potentiality of the existent (of beings and objects).

Although the base or starting point, but also the back point of everything that exists, the *apeiron* is incumbent with an anxiogenic quality that puts it away, leaves it outside our usual cognitive spheres, beyond the carefully traced borders of the intellect. But, at the same time, the unlimited is also a challenge for the human intellect, as Ernst Bloch commented regarding the concept introduced by Anaximander: "So the world is extraneous and precisely this extraneousness gives the impulse of thinking to lean again and again on it."[10] Our knowledge is a continuous operation of cutting from this vast potential, a delimitation of our own domain, a circumscription necessary for our mind and for our spiritual comfort because, as Elias Canetti highlighted in his "Masse und Macht" (translated "The masses and the power") "What man fears most is the contact with the unknown. We want to see what is there wanting to catch us; we want to know it or at least to catalogue it. Man constantly avoids the contact with the foreign."[11] Of course, the easiest alternative is the immersion in the crowd, heaving into the exteriority given by the group which also has the particular quality of a certain comprehensive and protecting interiority.

**The failed dialectic of the groups, interiorities and inclusion**
We can follow the aspects of the dynamics of exteriority and interiority in a very handy example represented by the grouping in the so similar matrices of the peer group, the supporters of football teams or of corporatism. In each of these human groups a strong tendency of identification with the group and with the norms and values stated by it is manifested. The indisputable gregariousness which is incumbent to these human assemblies is what makes them so strong in attractiveness. In such a group a very special interiority is created, heated by each member of the crowd, but also by the outer and defining limit of "we". The individuals see themselves surrounded by a comprehensive bubble that provides protection, the opportunity of identification, the accession to a special status (we are "different," "other," "special"), in other words a matrix through which we are separated from the larger otherness of the "others" without the same laws of internal organization. In all these cases we can observe a phenomenon characterized by running from oneself as well as from the interiority of the familial matrix considered obsolete, insufficient and wrongheaded. In these gatherings: "The singular man feels that he overcomes the borders of his own person in mass. He feels relieved because all distances that bewildered and closed him in himself are suspended."[12] Hence, the huge need for these masses that swallow and gulp the individual down, along with his characteristics. The immense appeal of these human groups is given by the dehumanization that fueled, encouraged and implemented it.

The peer group designates a group of teenagers who, away from their parents, gather together and feel good because they share the same ideas and ideals. Unable to talk openly with their parents anymore and having many questions and an acute lack of answers, the young people need role models and ideals in order to calk their own

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[10] Ernst Bloch, *Das Prinzip Hoffnung* (Frankfurt am Main: zweiter Band, Suhrkamp Verlag, 1979), 1026.

[11] Elias Canetti, *Masse und Macht* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1996), 13.

[12] Canetti, *Masse und Macht,* 19.

development. The group of supporters does the games gallery, they manufacture banners, they forge and repeat slogans, they are equipped with tools that make noise and go everywhere with their team which they encourage irrespective of weather, season or adversity. The corporatist individuals are those who wear a suit, a tie and a diplomat, they display at least three cell-phones when they sit at a table, plus the keys of the car (the company's car); they are identified with the company and its ideology and they operate in an automatic mode, being always in search of customers or new business opportunities. All these three ways of gregariousness can be considered ways of life, being a great refuge from loneliness, solitude and isolation, but also from the familial nest (of the nuclear or original family as appropriate) that can no longer satisfy. Nihilisms of the Ego and of the psychic depths, the groups in question each represent a closed universe, a crowd equipped with defining and mandatory laws of internal composition. The individual is thrown into the group, projected in the collective and impersonal, absorbed in exteriority. The advanced group identification represents a cancellation of singularity, of the subject and of the Ego to which the gregariousness does not give too many chances.

The group inclusion can be understood as a form of democracy interpreted, diverted and up side down. We have, it's true, a power of the many, a popular force (gr. *demos + kratos*) in the above presented groups. But, the impact force of these "democracies" is so great that the individuality simply does not matter, it is wiped in front of the collective roller. Within these amalgamations, the individual characteristics disappear, being merged in the final and stable mélange of the group. Here, it is not about autarky and much less about autocracy because the person becomes *persona* and the face is covered by the mask. The fusion deletes any trace of subjectivity and of personality just to forge into the strong and tough alloy of the group. The immersed man can no longer be his only ruler – gr. *autokrates* –, but he will become no more than an insignificant/harmless element of the group. As Roger Scruton specified: "The youth's culture is proud of being embedding. That is, it removes all barriers to the participation in the community – all obstacles in the form of learning, improving, allusion, doctrine or moral discipline."[13] But such an individual, as necessary as he/she is to the group is just as un-sufficient to himself/herself. And maybe precisely those young people, who merge so easily with the ideals of their group, are those who have turned away from their family of origin. The more you run from a thing or from a context, the faster you get to a similar one. So, to get rid of the familial "trap" means only to embrace the one of the group. The road seems to pass from one inclusion to another, from an otherness to the next one, without foreseeing a facile way out of this concatenation. This is even sadder as the group has anthropophagic properties, devouring and swallowing the persons it catches in its nets. It all happens in the context in which winning the autocracy and autarky seem to be a purely idealistic, impossible utopia.

Another concept introduced by Sloterdijk in the third volume of the "Spheres" is the one of foam – clusters of micro-spheres that are in fullest proximity. This concept can very well describe and illustrate what we mean to say about the group agglutination. The foams enable some *sui generis* relationships between individuals

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[13] Roger Scruton, *Cultura modernă, pe înţelesul oamenilor inteligenţi* (Modern culture for the understanding of intelligent people) (Bucharest: Editura Humanitas, 2011), 150.

who are in the fullest possible amalgamation and sharing the same defined and uniform space. The individual micro-monads, although separated by walls (extremely thin and transparent, almost non-existent or only formal), are nevertheless in the most intimate contact. The fact that separating walls still exist, allows only one type of neighborhood; reduced to the limitrophe it will settle for what is given from the immediate vicinity; the farthest bubbles are becoming less and less visible, but still very present. Therefore, the relationships and the communication in such a social foam are located on the same plan, each bubble (of the foam) has relations with all the others because they are co-substantial and co-resonant. Thus, what can be said about the bubbles is that "Their similarities allow the conclusion that they are in active and widely open communication with each other; in fact, mostly, they are similar only because they are born in waves of common imitation and because they have a similar media equipment.". [14]

The foam appears and functions as a unitary body, having the same laws of internal functioning for all. The borders of the monads are given by a common and shared substance, transparent and ephemeral, that allows a continual transitivity of the ensemble. Every individual is surrounded by his envelope, but this is, at the same time, the envelope of the other. The individual bubbles are fused into a superior unity, contiguity of paradoxical and ambiguous nature. The interiority, the individuality or the subjectivity are at the same time intimacy and interiority of the group: "The foam is therefore a paradoxical interior in which most surrounding co-bubbles are at the same time neighboring and impossible to reach, connected and removed from the point they occupy." [15] The paradox is also highlighted in the co-isolationist grouping of the bubbles that form an interactive alliance or coalition (as appropriate) which is full of outward projections. The psychological imbrications of the group foam create an internal resonance phenomenon that reverberate on the entire mass. Each bubble or monad vibrates at the slightest touch, thus spreading onto the foam mass, so one's psychology becomes everybody's. It is as if everything functions on the holographic principle – the whole is in all its particles – in an ensemble that is at the same time everybody's and nobody's in particular. Eminently of a collective nature, the social foam has a symbiotic function. It represents a way of being within the world, a form of existence whose synergy is necessary, as well as conservative, affirmative and imperative.

From a psychological point of view, such social space is also defined in a paradoxical manner: the introversion borders on or merges with the extroversion, which also quickly becomes the introversion of a group. The capacity of the individual to orientate on its own reference points (which Jung names introversion) is questioned when all the inter-human borders are transparent and practically suspended. The marks of the individual cannot be only his, since he exists and defines himself through the group, and all the reference points that he makes and has are filtered by the bigger foam mass of which he is part. That is why the introversion and its possibility are erased *ab initio*. They (the individuals) have to conform to the ampler psychological process of the group. What encourages all this is the extroversion – the reference points are placed outside, thus the communication and the distribution is unlimited. Actually,

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[14] Sloterdijk, *Ecumes, Sphères III*, trans. Olivier Mannoni (Paris: Maren Sell Editeurs, 2005), 52.

[15] Sloterdijk, *Ecumes, Sphères III,* 49.

it is a fact that the introverted individual will not easily rally into groups, (precisely because of that introversion) he cannot mingle easily with anybody. Preferring the solidarity and the afferent activities, the introvert represents something indigestible for the devouring appetite of the social foams.

In addition to these psychological aspects, I should add that the resonance capacity of the foam imprints and records all movements at a collective level. What can be personal in such a context? When the background is all-embracing and all-piercing, any personal matter also concerns the group, and vice-versa, any group matter becomes a personal one. Unreserved intimacy of the foam creates a (foamy) culture specific to the group which simultaneously concerns all members of the group. All for one and one for all is the motto of the horde successfully transplanted and grafted on a foamy psychology of the crowds and groups that surround us. Such psychological contextualization with its simultaneous and non-differentiated intro- and extroversions can feed and deepen the rift between generations. In this perspective, introvert and extrovert can be comprehended as interiority and exteriority, in a common and exclusive dialectic of the thesis and antithesis. The only possible synthesis (limited to the crowd foam) is that of the "natural" fusion into the collective mass. Obviously, such amalgamation cannot represent the leap of an *Aufhebung*, of a transcendence of a mentality, of exceeding the collective given, imprinted by co-substantiality.

**Suspended dialectics of generations, current reports**

The issue of generation dialogue is not new at all: already in ancient Babylon clay tablets were found, where someone was complaining that "today's youth ... do not worship gods, they no longer bring offerings etc." Our generation witnesses an unprecedented technological explosion that involves the whole world. If a generation or two ago the future had a foreseeable outcome, nowadays things are going so fast that no one knows what tomorrow brings. The more advanced and faster the technological progress, the more our elders (parents, grandparents) realize that they cannot keep up with it. They just cannot catch a train that is now too fast for them. "The elders" arrived at the point where they cannot understand the world they live in. The only thing they can do is to be content with cognitive pills (obviously outdated), lacking connection to the surrounding reality but full of bold, unilateral and one-sided strengths.

On the contrary, young people are those who heave themselves into the new, into the latest model, the latest discovery and, from this position, they clearly see the incompetence (technical one, at least) of those who raised them (the elders). The consequence is the "technical" disqualification of the latter, unable or unqualified to handle or use the latest gadgets on the market, even if "Being in a technological age, we have a better understanding of the means to achieve our goals and increasingly a worse one of the reasons why we should pursue them."[16] And because the youth does not yet have the possibility of nuanced, carefully weighted perspectives, and because they very easily get fixed on a point of view (unique one whose record is conspicuous), the disqualification of the elders tends to be total: they know nothing, they are not good for anything, so I have nothing to discuss with them.

But we still need landmarks, we need to be surrounded, to be included in a broader sphere. What remains for this trend is as much as the peer group, our peers, those

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[16] Scruton, *Cultura modernă, pe înţelesul oamenilor inteligenţi,* 48–49.

who are like us, those we identify with. But after all what do we learn from the peers? By learning, we understand the meaning of elevation of expression that is something about the meaning of life, its wisdom, the moderation of acts and decisions, of the existential perspective. Thus we find an abandonment of diachronical and true ortho-pedia (the original meaning of the expression: right doctrine). Traditional values are, in the eyes of the young generation, automatically obsolete and outdated, unnecessary and useless. Everything goes in favour of an education of a synchronous character given by the peer group, with no call to the opportunity of a diachronic one that used to be passed from the old to the young, from the experience to exuberance, from the connoisseur and forerunner to the uninitiated and novice. Synchronous dipping into the zone of "we are all equal" and on the same level, reduces the possibility of fertile exchanges, so the infusions of wisdom are virtually impossible. Since nothing comes from the maturity or old age anymore (as experience and wisdom of life), it means that there is only room for sparkles of the intellectual or of the emotional (fascinating, true), but ephemeral and superficial, without any consistency. Today there is no long apprenticeship to a "master" anymore (as tradition dictated in the Antiquity or Renaissance), where one would learn, besides the "trade," respect for some values, modesty to the superior (both the individual and in general). Nowadays, everything goes faster; two (or three) faculties are done at once, along with at least one master's programme, and these as a necessary step for the imminent doctorate. We find that the young adult (of a "cultural" orientation) is involved in a dizzying race for concerns and activities, a carousel of faculties (or diplomas) and formations, bizarrely coupled with fun and wasting time for clubbing/pubbing. Therefore it comes to the ruthless horizontality of the plan, the flattening options, ideals and aspirations, in a culture of diplomas and gadgets so strongly presented by media advertising and group meetings.

In the past, culture was essentially vertical (the term "culture" itself comes from growing plants and living organisms). It was passed from the mature or old to the young, from the superior to the inferior. Now instead they started to trade on an equal footing, without depth, seriousness and respect given by the diachronic, forerunner, the one with experience who knows because he/she went through or experienced it and thus had the chance to learn something from it. Moreover, even our elders have been absorbed into the horizontal and into the "cultural information" platitude of the ephemeral news and comments. These have become the only topics of discussion, the only concerns which undertake intellectual activities and activate taking position (unilateral and combative, but lacking any depth). The culture of our elders is given by the "political analyst" and the "capitalist journalist" that appears on TV every evening, moderated and/or incited by various young moderators (increasingly younger) with idiomatic and grammatical difficulties. But, beyond these critical highlights, media iterates irrepressible opinions, landmarks and values that become unique criteria of everyday existence, expressions of the undeniable power of the collective set up in the "normality" of our lives. Hence the pertinent remark, made by Luigi Giussani regarding the power intentions that: "(...) approves and plans them all. It plans not only the external behaviour, but even penetrates and approves the souls".[17]

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[17] Luigi Giussani, *Eul, puterea şi operele* (The self, the power and the works), trans. Andrei Niculescu (Bucharest: Editura Nemira & Co, 2005), 33.

Given these findings it does not surprise us that someone said that we actually do not have wise elders anymore. Where are those "wise elders" of which we know from childhood? – someone asked. Where (if not only in stories, fairy tales or an atavistic collective imaginary) is the elder, with gray hair and beard, that you could seek when you have exhausted all your cognitive possibilities and have not found a way out, no solution to a serious matter of life? Why don't we have guiding lights anymore, wisdom points to milestone our way through the complicated thicket of our too modern lives?

We find that the casting of young adults is in immanence, in the here and now of achieving their momentary desires, their dreams and aspirations. Their world is devoid of traditional transcendence given by higher marks that were to be respected if not revered. They were alive in a traditional report on diachronic pathway representing the contact with the forerunner generations, with the world of venerable ancestors. The psychological and spiritual or religious transcendence being no longer possible, we are projected in the remaining one: the transcendence given by our desires and material needs: we want more, better, faster, always chasing after the latest model on the market. The transcending of the being is perceived only through the material angle of the recurrent and sudden surrounding of the ego with consumer goods. But, being of mass consumption (i.e. of collective and impersonal nature), they do not at all address my own and genuine Ego. Millions of other people (a country or even a continent) use the same goods, the same objects that should bring satisfaction, joy, fulfilment or why not, happiness (if possible *hic et nunc*). And all this huge mass of people is thirsting for overcoming each other by what they are buying and what they have, to feel included and, why not, to display. Thus, we have transcendence through consumerism, an insatiable and endless mercantile race; secure guarantee of structuring the time and human obnubilation.

The sphere – the matrix – which contains us is therefore made up by the media, the advertising industry and supermarkets offers, telling and inducing us our needs that feed our impulses and desires. From these areas we find what we need to live like everyone else, to be like "the others". Only then can we be enrolled in a social and economic norm as the only possible, normal and universal option. Everything is justified in a numeric and quantity manner through the force and pressure imprinted and encouraged by the majority. The only quality still possible in such conditions is the one within the quantitative. For example: everyone should have a cell-phone (you cannot live without it) is the quantitative level – it has to do with sales and purchases, requests and offers – and the qualitative has to do with the price of the cell phone, the novelty of the model and its performance. Leaving aside these mercantile calculations, we still notice the tendency to be involved in something, in a widely accepted social sphere or bubble. This consumerist trend and requirement frantically seeks fulfilment in a hectic permanent chase after new and innovative items. Cast away from ourselves, in the world of our products, we go back "to ourselves," each time with a new gadget that piles up on the other purchases. All these, no doubt, form a sphere that contains us, in which we are registered and to which we adhere, one after the other, to the group (human mass) that we want to belong to. Thus, the material exteriority (the consumerism sphere) creates the terms of the possibilities and opportunities of the interiority of the group or social affiliation. The individual is enrolled in the peer group

and so, the material alienation of consumerism pays off in the crowd psychology. With a trendy gadget I can join a group where I can also show the "membership certificate" or "ticket".

In this generous materialistic framework, there are two ways to be included:

- recorded in the consumerist whirlwind of mass consumption products (I own a cell-phone or cell-phones);

- within this crowd (of those with cell-phones) I have a very expensive and latest technology cell phone that puts me in the elitist position of those that can afford the same thing; plus that whenever I exhibit it I can cause envy in all those who have no such model. So, I belong to a subset that is detached from the larger group.

Anyway, I am included in a group (larger or smaller) and so I am affiliated (lat. *affiliare* adopted as one's son), I identify with a broader sphere than myself. By that I appropriate the "transcendence," I feel inscribed and circumscribed by it and hence the tranquilization (until the appearance of the new model of cell ...). On the other hand, the speed with which technology moves may indefinitely create the illusion of transcendence. Better and better models that widely open the future gates of possibilities and options will continuously occur. Whether the thing or gadget is not definitive, they permanently send to transcendence (through the technical possibilities of improvement in industry and economic level, and through the personal or of the group need to have or posses them). Thereby the illusion of personal transcendence is given by the more and more sophisticated gadgets: a thrown out self, tireless race of life, endless longing, redundant and refuelled by subliminal advertisings and special offers.

## Conclusions

We see that no matter how far we go into exteriority, be it material or objectual, the individual seeks, through this exteriority, an interiority, a sphere to pertain to, a bubble to include him, a matrix to define him and to point out his existence to the true value benchmarks. Everything such a person is left with is his capture into amorphous foam, essentially of collective nature, dissolved of any individuality. On the other hand and on a different level of humanity, there is a need for autarky, a self-definition to a psychological and existential level. For man in its essence is preceded by existence, therefore, as a being, he is willing to find his substance. Being in a constant search-find process, of leaving and returning to self, man is drawn to finding and defining his own essence. This difficult and laborious process is part of the continuous externalizing and internalizing orbit that repeats in spiral from and toward the centre of being.

Certainly the issues presented and discussed are only part of what could be said about the anthropological and psychological situation. Sloterdijk's work is a good informational and intellectual support for exploring at least some features and ideas on registration, location and development of the individual anchored in the social. From the perspective of humanistic psychology (promoted by Abraham Maslow) what is left is to emphasize the tendency towards self-realisation as peak of the human needs pyramid. This latter level can be achieved only after all other levels have been met. To overcome them is an inexorable move through satisfying them in an upward motion, from interiority to exteriority, from one stage to the next. The need for food, shelter, social acceptance and integration, as cognitive or aesthetic necessities are conditions *sine qua non* of the integrator progress of being. From this point of view the human

being remains in a constant self-search, in a permanent path to improvement. Interiority, however comfortable it may be, must be overcome and assimilated to a wider exteriority. These successive emancipations and liberations require, in the next phase, an assimilation and integration of the new territory. This cannot be done only by extending psychic structures, by their accommodation to the reality of new perspectives. In this respect the extension, the growth and the mental deepening means overcoming the given interiority to a new and unknown exteriority. Only by conquering new territory and by its detailed mapping can it be converted into a new interiority that includes and involves the being. Looking at this process from the outside, we see that it is of a continuous character, requiring repeated completion, growing and self-improvement of the obsolete idiosyncrasy, fallacious and easy. Thus it underlined a soteriological path that includes deeper and more abstract levels of human being, to elevate them into the pyramid of existential needs.

It should be said here that although we advocate in our work for interiority or at least to assume the conscious and its existential aspect, we cannot ignore its associated dangers or risks. As the extrovert exaggerations may be equivalent to hysteria and the maximum opening to the world actually represents the spreading of a person, his/her dispelling in the anonymity of the crowd, in the same way, but of an opposite direction, happens with the introverted folding. Unilaterally bending inside, with total disregard of everything related to exterior and otherness, is actually the autistic closing or the schizophrenic, world-detached, but self-sufficient delirium. Both, actually indexed as severe psychiatric diagnoses are obviously undesirable. By far, such interiority does not reflect a philosophical lifestyle, primarily because it is not self-assumed and secondly because the counteroffer (to the exteriority) is unbalanced and debilitating. Hence we recommend the careful weighing, towards what is beneficial in both directions (exteriority-interiority, extroversion-introversion, centrifugal-centripetal) yet without ignoring the incumbent pernicious aspects. In other words, we stick to a centralist idea of a careful balance, conducted in the most conscious possible way, between the two major directions of attention and human intentionality. And when we refer to equilibrium we understand a dynamic one, with carefully chosen trips and adapted to the internal or external situations encountered in our lifetime. It all consists of avoiding the extremism given by any strictly dual approach of reality. The philosophical lifestyle may elevate to the level of transcending the black and white offer of a unilateral and self-sufficient vision, through a continuous re-adaptation and re-judging of concepts, in order to allow a resetting of epistemological, ethical and existential wisdom.

# Emergence, Synchronization and Synchronicity
## Re-approaching the Concept of Complex System from a Critical Philosophical Perspective[*]

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**Keywords:** natural science and humanities, history of scientific concepts, history of ideas, time and space, causality, emergence, synchronization, synchronicity, critique of the 'complex system' theory, multidisciplinarity, humanities and scientificity, functional definitions

**Abstract:** The present study aims at re-approaching, in a critical manner, three interrelated terms differently (and independently) used or conceptualized in mono- and multi-disciplinary research today, in natural sciences and humanities: 'emergence', 'synchronization', 'synchronicity'. The comparative perspective meant to bring different contextual meanings and usages together will shed a 'renewed' light upon the general significance of the concept of 'complex system', by re-evaluating the contribution that fields like philosophy or religious studies might add in order to nuance and re-define the various understandings of the formula when used in different frameworks. The bringing together of the three terms within the framework opened by different visions and understandings of the time-space continuum highlights, in a critical manner, important aspects and features to be taken into consideration for clarifying the significance of the three concepts in their interconnectedness, for re-evaluating the conventional existing definitions, and conceptualizations of 'complex systems', for configuring more complex research methodologies, and fostering a renewed concept of 'scientificity', enriched and reshaped through dimensions which are essential for its application within the area of Humanities.

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**Preliminary remarks and precautions**
The present study aims at re-approaching, in a critical philosophical manner, three interrelated terms differently (and independently) used or conceptualized in mono- and multi-disciplinary research today, in natural sciences and humanities: 'emergence', 'synchronization', 'synchronicity'. The comparative perspective meant to bring different contextual meanings and usages together will shed a 'renewed' light upon the general significance of the concept of 'complex system', by re-evaluating the contribution that fields like philosophy or religious studies might add in order to nuance and re-define the various understandings of the formula when used in different frameworks.

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The need to adapt the meaning, the content and the limits of any concept to a particular context, research area, and, consequently, to a specialized language, might contradict the general assumption that, by using the same terms 'we know', a general definition, applicable in any framework, is implied.

The present approach will highlight the common features linking the three different terms under analysis ('emergence', 'synchronization', 'synchronicity'), as well as the common attributes of the different occurrences of the formula 'complex system', at the same time underlining the uniqueness and the irreducibility of every term and occurrence. Communication is thus made possible by a map of continuities and discontinuities at the level of meaning and usage, their conventional amplitude being put forward through a necessary critical and auto-reflexive gesture (as long as we use language as a means of communication).

The length of this work does not allow me to trace a general conceptual history of the terms to be approached. It will rather concentrate upon their 'functional' definitions in their common and specialized usages, instantiating, in a phenomenological manner, a variety of significances re-linked through dialogical contexts or by means of correspondences, wherever this exercise is allowed or entailed.

The three terms are investigated within the exploratory context of complex systems' behaviour. They apply to describing different states, processes or instants characterizing stochastic and/or non-stochastic 'behavioural attitudes' of complex systems.

The paper does not offer a general overview regarding the dynamics of complex systems analyzed from the perspective of the correlations existing among the three terms, but it focuses on a 'trans-particular' issue, without generalizing: the fluctuation of the 'space-time parameter' in its implicit connection with transformational processes and the need to recalibrate our discourse referring to 'parts', 'whole', 'unit'/'substance'/'subsistence', 'network'.

The study will underline the different contributions the field of Humanities might bring into discussion, by indicating towards more complex frameworks for understanding and defining science.

**Emergence**

The concept of 'emergence' was first introduced, in its philosophical explanatory usage, by George Henry Lewes:

> "The emergent is unlike its components insofar as these are incommensurable, and it cannot be reduced to their sum or their difference."[1]

Analyzing the meaning of emergence in relation to the 'Newtonian' space-time paradigm pushes forward the brutal and common distinction between 'parts' and 'whole', thus laying emphasis on a particular, reductive and relative, understanding of interconnectedness, from within the implicit non-critical philosophical assumption which states the existence of space and time as absolute 'substances', by virtue of their measurable attributes (visibility, extension, becoming, sequentiality, subsistence). The discussion about the 'parts' and the 'whole' when referring to a 'complex system'

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[1] George Henry Lewes, *Problems of Life and Mind* (Boston: Osgood, 1875), 412.

remains tributary to the Newtonian paradigm, instantiating the 'body' or the 'matter' of space-time concatenation as a referential matrix for investigation. The direct consequence is the postulation of the *existence* of the 'complex system' in the likeness of the primary, axiomatic ground of the time-space *existence* envisaged under the absolute guide of a *substance* exhibiting measurable properties.

In this light and within the boundaries of this contextual matrix, the distinction between 'weak' and 'strong' emergence was operated,[2] their theoretic delineation still remaining imprecise and diffuse, despite numerous efforts to provide clear and accurate definitions.

> "Again, it is helpful to distinguish between weak and strong versions. Weak reductionism recognizes that in practice the only way that the behaviour of many complex systems may be determined is by direct inspection or by simulation. In other words, one may not deduce merely from the principles that govern a class of systems how a specific individual system will in fact behave. Human behaviour, and even the behaviour of a simple organism such as a bacterium, probably falls into this category.
>
> Strong emergence is a far more contentious position, in which it is asserted that the micro-level principles are quite simply inadequate to account for the system's behaviour as a whole. Strong emergence cannot succeed in systems that are causally closed at the microscopic level, because there is no room for additional principles to operate that are not already implicit in the lower-level rules."[3]

The concept was differently reconfigured and re(de)fined when applied in particular scientific contexts, deploying novel properties or dimensions, in accordance with a specific research subject matter or methodology.[4]

Nonetheless, the concept of 'emergence' is not yet clearly and distinctly circumscribed or explained, its applicability being confined to various limited, alternative or even contradictory, scientific means of interpretation. The theorizing of 'emergence' as a process, an attribute or a mechanism remains problematic, its 'horizon' being open to further investigation:

> "The problem, as we understand it, is that terms such as 'emergence' and 'emergent property' have recently achieved a widespread currency in some

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2 See, for example, the relevant and synthesizing works of Philip Clayton and Paul Davies, *The Re-Emergence of Emergence: The Emergentist Hypothesis from Science to Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), Robert Laughlin, *A Different Universe: Reinventing Physics from the Bottom Down* (Basic Books, 2005) or Peter Corning, "The Re-Emergence of 'Emergence': A Venerable Concept in Search of a Theory", *Complexity* 7 (6) (2002): 18–30.

3 Clayton and Davies, *The Re-Emergence of Emergence: The Emergentist Hypothesis from Science to Religion*, xii.

4 See in this respect the innovatory approaches of P.W. Anderson, "More is Different: Broken Symmetry and the Nature of the Hierarchical Structure of Science", *Science* 177 (1972): 393–396, Arthur Koestler, *Beyond Reductionism: New Perspectives in the Life Sciences*, ed. A. Koestler and J. R. Smythies (London: Hutchinson, 1969), Jeffrey Goldstein, "Emergence as a Construct: History and Issues", *Emergence: Complexity and Organization* 1 (1999): 49–72, Corning, "The Re-Emergence of "Emergence": A Venerable Concept in Search of a Theory", 18–30.

scientific journals, while few of the authors who employ this vocabulary offer any kind of definition of what they take emergence to be, or explain why it should be important to the modern scientist. Where definitions are provided they are sometimes lacking in clarity, and sometimes conceptually inadequate."[5]

Since 'emergence' does not have a particular circumscribed correlative in the visible measurable realm, under scientific scrutiny 'in the lab', and does not name a specific well-delineated 'entity' or 'substance' (confined in terms of space and time), its generality and intrinsic lack of clarity often made scientists reluctant to applying it and to exploiting its fertile 'fluidity'.

De-fining a term, in our scientific world, still recalls the prerequisite of fixing the exact, 'finite', boundaries of the object, body, property or mechanism described by that term. This request, important whenever science claims its superiority in providing rigorous and measurable knowledge, does not apply to the 'open concept' of emergence. De-fining is 'confined', in scientific discourse, to de-limiting, in order to further investigate the 'whole' rigorously delineated and separated from other 'external' factors and influences.

This delimitation is not functional when we turn toward the concept of 'emergence', due to the particular feature of the term to highlight a non-measurable, spontaneous, non-predictable 'transition'. Emergence underlines a discontinuity in continuity, focusing on the 'gap' and its diffuse 'margins'. It refers to the 'non-visible', discontinuous line which makes any unexpected transformation possible. The 'ultimate' explanation of emergence would be equivalent to solving and understanding each and every process in terms of being able to measure and reproduce it at will. This utopian scientific approach would assume that there might be a process without discontinuity. The discontinuous aspect is void of content; it must, by definition and by necessity, express a possibility of existence (of a measurable content), in the form of an empty 'tension' or 'inclination' *toward*.

The fertility of such a concept is huge for our understanding of the world, by its revolutionary potential: the term applies and functions in various contexts refusing a scientific jailing. It denotes an epistemological 'advancement' in uncovering the critical limits of our knowledge, at the same time indicating toward the necessary step of reconfiguring the concept of 'scientificity' which reduces science to measurable and predictable phenomena by artificially imposing the limits of 'reality' to the circumscribed domain of 'scientific' investigation.

The discussion about emergence is by far more nuanced in the field of Physics, where the paradigm shift from Newtonian understanding of space-time 'existence' to more relative, to co-relative or to non-linear apprehension of the space-time parameter brings along novel methodological frameworks. Space and time are no longer envisaged as 'substances', existing or subsisting as an absolute all-comprising matrix

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[5] Angela Matthies, Andrew Stephenson and Nick Tasker, *The Concept of Emergence in Systems Biology. A Project Report*, 2, http://www.stats.ox.ac.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0018/            3906/Concept_of_Emergence.pdf (accessed December 28, 2012)

or receptacle. The Newtonian vision proved to be limited to particular segments in the spectrum of our understanding of 'reality'.

Still, the meaning of emergence was not yet correlated to the novel modes of envisaging the space-time parameter.

In the area of Humanities, the concept of emergence was borrowed accidentally, although the problematic has an outstanding tradition: the particular type of relation ambiguously supposed by the term 'emergence' was alluded or thoroughly examined in the philosophical and religious/theological discourses belonging to different geographic and linguistic areas. These theories need to be brought in correspondence with the recent theorizations of the concept of emergence: disciplines from the area of Humanities may contribute to uncovering alternative or complementary significances, methods and/or instruments meant to reshape and enrich the constellation of 'scientificity' and the apprehension of 'reality' in more complex modalities.

Emergence implies a non-linear passage, ontologically (if we credit the concept of 'strong' emergence) or epistemologically (if we favour the concept of 'weak' emergence), objectifiable in a two-step instantiations, radically (if we credit the concept of 'strong' emergence) or logically different (if we favour the concept of 'weak' emergence).

The 'weak' emergence posits the 'still unknown' continuum under the cover of the 'ignorant' discontinuity: it is a matter of time and technology until science will uncover the hidden continuum which makes us mistakenly believe in miraculous a-causal changes, temporarily labelled as 'emergent'.

The 'strong' emergence hypothesis assumes discontinuity as such, i.e., as ultimate referential level in terms of explanatory triggers. The second 'step' is not continuously derived from, contained in and presupposed by the previous step. The unpredictable shift from one step to the other is made possible by 'the gap'.

In philosophical and religious traditions of thought, the 'gap' is assumed as difference, and it cannot be reduced to a 'compact continuum'. The 'intermediaries' meant to bridge the gap do not cancel the discontinuities. This would equal to the disappearance of individuals, objects or entities, since any particular existence is defined through specific difference (as a 'part' separated from other similar or dissimilar 'parts').

The 'complete' continuum is expressed in religion as final unity or communion: there is no shape to be delineated anymore, whilst, simultaneously, all shapes *emerge* with their particular forms and faces. Emergence is thus correlated to the tight continuity-discontinuity play, in a sequential concatenation – for the ignorant, partial view of reality, and in a simultaneous move – for the ultimate view of the one having attained perfection.


**Synchronization**
The concept of emergence implies a specific interplay between different and nonetheless intimately correlated instantiations of the time-space parameter: a sequence in the system undergoes an unpredictable, though visible and measurable, transformational process being re-instantiated in a different 'shape', on a different 'moment' of the system. The previous 'shape' disappears, while the immediate

338

following 'shape' appears, in an unpredictable mode, objectified as a different space-time *instant*. Are these instants behaving as particles or rather as a continuous wave? The wave-particle paradox underlies, as a framework-question, the endeavour to offer a definition for emergence.

Changes are never singular. They produce, consequently, or are correlated, simultaneously, to 'neighbouring' transformational processes.

Synchronization would indicate, in this context, toward processes occurring at the same time or simultaneously, implying, in the specific case of emergent synchronization, the non-predictable, a-causal or co-dependent simultaneous origination. Synchronization brings forth the ability of the system to produce simultaneous (correlated) changes. The two moves 'unite' themselves or resonate at terms of time sequence, expressing similar shapes or movements, in the same rhythm, but distinguished through their different space parameter. In other words, both processes 'observe' the same temporal cadence or rhythm, while still preserving their own separate spatial *locus*. Metaphorically, the two synchronized processes *co*habit the same temporal *locus*, but *in*habit different spatial *loci*, whence the multiplicity of the same action, performed in two different 'embodiments' or spatial expressions.

In the particular case of mechanical synchronization the two actions are not only correlated through their common temporal *locus*, but rather 'coordinated', through the direct, external (and intrusive) intervention of man (if we have in mind an experiment, for example).

Synchronization which occurs naturally and spontaneously, without a constraining intentional guidance, is called 'emergent synchronization'.[6]

Temporal coordination of two or more actions, through their synchronization, unites the two or more separate temporal *loci* in one 'extended' framework-*locus*, individualized as temporal *communion*, illustrated in physics (and music) by the phenomenon and concept of *resonance*. The *harmony* of the two performed actions derives from their *synchronization* expressing the (temporal) unity in (spatial) multiplicity.

In religious traditions, the 'mechanical' or 'emergent' communion re-instates the sense of community, through the co-habitation of the 'sacred time', i.e., the simultaneous observing of the holidays which delineate a common temporal *locus*, and 'sacred place', i.e., the act of pilgrimage or circumambulation which delineates a common spatial *locus* (referred to as the *center* or *axis mundi*).[7] The liturgical fulfilment is represented for every orthodox practitioner by the privileged act of celebrating the 'sacred time' (i.e., the holidays) in the 'sacred space' (i.e., temple) consecrated by tradition. The conjunction of the simultaneous temporal and spatial harmonies represents the climax of a communal liturgical act.

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[6] For a general comprehensive overview regarding spontaneous synchronization, see Szabolcs Horvát and Zoltán Néda, "The complex parameter space of a two-mode oscillator model", *Physica D* 256-257 (2013): 43–50, 43–44,47.

[7] See Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. W.R. Trask (New York: Harvest/HBJ Publishers, 1957).

**Synchronicity**

The concept of synchronicity exceeds the phenomenon of synchronization, in intensity and amplitude.

Synchronicity allows two different usages:

**1.** a conceptualized usage meant to emphasize and synthesize the main general features of synchronization processes; in this case, the term may be applied as a general attribute for describing, indicating and conceptualizing the defining aspects of any synchronization phenomenon;

**2.** a particular, non-generalized, but functional usage meant to refer to higher levels of emergent synchronization; this usage was first introduced and theorized by Carl Gustav Jung,[8] intensely supported by Wolfgang Pauli,[9] and thoroughly developed by Arthur Koestler[10]; it aims to offer an adequate description for multi-emergent processes synchronized by virtue of non-objectifiable, unpredictable causes:

> "Synchronicity is not a philosophical view but an empirical concept which postulates an intellectually necessary principle. This cannot be called either materialism or metaphysics. No serious investigator would assert that the nature of what is observed to exist, and of that which observes, namely the psyche, are known and recognized quantities. […] The result, in that case, would be a unity of being which would have to be expressed in terms of a new conceptual language – a "neutral language," as W. Pauli once called it. Space, time, and causality, the triad of classical physics, would then be supplemented by the synchronicity factor and become a tetrad, a quaternion which makes a whole judgment possible:
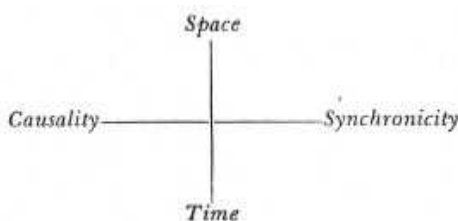


> […] Just as the introduction of time as the fourth dimension in modern physics postulates an irrepresentable space-time continuum, so the idea of synchronicity with its inherent quality of meaning produces a picture of the world so irrepresentable as to be completely baffling."[11]

Synchronicity does not only refer to particular processes of emergent synchronization, but it also depicts the privileged *state* of a complex system whose parts harmoniously synchronize in their act(ion) and expression, the level of synchronicity being indicative of and correlated with the a-causal unity, harmony, and

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[8] Carl Gustav Jung, *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle* (Bollingen, Switzerland: Bollingen Foundation, 1993 [1952]).

[9] See Wolfgang Pauli and Carl Gustav Jung, *Atom and archetype: The Pauli/Jung letters, 1932–1958*, ed. C. A. Meier and D. Roscoe (New York: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[10] Arthur Koestler, *The Roots of Coincidence* (New York: Vintage, 1973).

[11] Jung, *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle*, 106–107.

perfection of any (complex) system. Higher levels of synchronicity indicates a propensity towards higher levels of space-time synchronization culminating, in the religious discourse, with the 'extinction" or 're-absorption' or 'transmutation' of matter, and the abolition of the space-time continuum in the form of multiple fragments perceived as parts in sequential order.

The absorption of the space-time dimension, i.e. the world as we perceive it through our bodily senses, is made possible by the meta-synchronization of the temporal and spatial synchronization: the temporal communion is simultaneously complemented by the spatial communion (i.e., cancellation of any individuation mark or limit), at the same time preserving the space-time sequentiality (i.e., the multiplicity of forms in their temporal deployment). The state is eluded in religious texts through terms describing unitive (mystical) experiences. The ultimate referential point for meta-synchronization is represented by the ultimate principle or the divine, envisaged under different names according to each and every tradition. The principle is not an entity, nor is it 'located' somewhere or 'somewhere in time," but enacts and is enacted within each and every manifestation, without being fragmented or limited to any form of existence.

If the temporal *locus* represents the reference point for temporal synchronization, and the spatial *locus* represents the reference point for spatial synchronization, the meta-conjunction of the temporal and spatial *loci* is performed by virtue of the ultimate principle, deprived of the duality of space-time concatenation, freed from any limitative distinction, without form, but making all forms possible. Emergence is re-configured in the religious discourse as privileged process of simultaneously giving birth to all forms, which thus continuously (from the space-time perspective) and discontinuously (from the perspective of apprehending the *radically different* ground of the ultimate principle) *emerge*.

**Re-approaching the concept of 'complex system'**
When examining the formula of 'complex system' in relation with the concept of emergence or synchronization, the main question to be raised refers to causality.

**I.** In the ***Newtonian paradigm*** of understanding space and time, the definition of a complex system ultimately brings into discussion the existence of such a 'system' as a 'body' or 'entity' in tight relation with the concept of 'locality' metaphorically (and conventionally) transposed, for the sake of communication, in the (graphic) image of a 'network', a 'surface', a multidimensional 'body' etc. The terms used to designate complex systems vary according to the most pregnant feature or aspect the researcher intends to favour in order to convey a particular understanding regarding the (cor)relations within the system, the attributes, the internal mechanisms etc.

The formula *complex system* iterates the idea of 'unity in multiplicity':
1. *Complexity* supposes multiplicity: more (points, dimensions, aspects, bodies, entities objects etc.) are (inter)related thus creating a 'context' imagined and transmitted by means of terms designed to suggest the idea of a dynamic 'configuration', i.e. a space-time 'entity' endowed with its own 'behaviour'. This scientific explanatory 'vision' separates a 'part' or a 'fragment' from what we call 'world' or 'reality' in order to thoroughly

investigate its functioning as an independent 'body' or 'mechanism'. The attitude of the nowadays researcher follow the same 'traditional' explanatory traps: the scientific vision will use animistic images, in its endeavour to create the impression that a complex system behaves a 'living entity', anthropomorphic images, in the endeavour to 'personalize' the 'embodied' system, by creating a particular profile in connection with ideas such as organicity, free will, intention etc., or mechanical images, in the endeavour to offer a mathematical, perfectly measurable and predictable description of a system functioning, more or less, in the likeness of a machine;

2. The second term, *system*, represents the 'unifying principle' of the interconnected multiplicity introduced by the term *complex*. It suggests the image of unity and completeness, integrity, wholeness. It also creates the false impression that *this* complex system under examination does exist as a separate or separable entity. The relevance of any scientific endeavour of this kind cannot be but 'local', 'circumstantial', according to the artificially and mechanically 'cut' fragment or part of 'reality' withdrawn from its 'context' and conceptualized in the form of an 'object', i.e. the *complex system* under analysis. This is why the more traditional philosophical and religious lines of thought critically reject the possibility to ever find or offer the ultimate explanation, given the fact that such a conceptualized answer would be the key to understand only the abstract configuration of a 'complex system' as the fade simulacrum of a fragment or part detached from the fluidity of life in order to investigate it in our epistemological labs – as if, by using a perfectly 'animistic' metaphor, one could cut a leaf or take a picture of it and then examine it in the lab in order to provide knowledge about how the leaf or even the whole tree with its surroundings are functioning.

Scientific experiments may offer circumstantial results, relative to the *locus* 'detached' in order to be examined. Once detached and brought under scrutiny the objectified 'complex system' may be relevant for similar circumstantial cases, but may never offer the absolute key for an ultimate knowledge of a part or the whole of what we call 'reality'. The attitude of contemporary researchers is efficient and productive, but idolatrous in its way of approaching reality through 'hand made' objects and projections cut in the fabricated form of 'complex systems'.

**II.** In the ***post-Newtonian paradigm*** of understanding physical reality at macro- and microscopic levels, the perception regarding space and time significantly changed. There still remains a gap to be bridged and its margins are at the interface between objectivity (i.e., the objective and objectifiable realm of perception through bodily senses or technological devices) and subjectivity (i.e., the transcendental structures of human knowledge, in Kantian terms, the soul, the mind and/or the intellect, in philosophical and religious terms, the consciousness in recent scientific approaches developed by cognitive sciences, neuroscience, contemplative and consciousness studies etc.). The contribution of Humanities in this respect could be significant if

researchers turned their attention from particular (con)textual research issues (usually approached in a mono- and overspecialized manner, relevant exclusively for the limited subject area of 'specialization') toward joining their efforts and knowledge, in a common effort, with scientists from natural sciences or newly born interface studies, in order to refocus their attention on understanding man (structures of knowing and perception, generation mechanisms of the mind, mind and body interaction, etc.) and reality (structure and mechanisms of the universe, object-subject relationship, levels of perception, apprehension and interpretation, etc.).

In this light, a renewed discourse with regard to 'complex systems' should be expected.

Weak emergence, successfully applicable in the Newtonian paradigm, concentrated on objectified, measurable and predictable 'reference points', manifested as 'intermediaries' meant to chain together, in a localizable continuum, the 'visible' or 'experimented' margins of the 'mergent' and 'emergent' poles.

The post-Newtonian paradigm makes more and more room for the strong concept of emergence, by emphasizing the *non-locality* aspect, and by concentrating on transition processes, without neglecting the subjective factor or the relativity of any contextual approach.

The cause-effect causality experimented and overestimated in the Newtonian paradigm privileging the investigation of space-time 'fragments' cut as 'objects' and constituting the 'objective' world favours the vision of complex systems imagined as existing configurations developed around a space-time axis which implies a particular inter-relational mechanism embedded in a sequential generation structure. Emergence is used in this context in order to label the unexpected, non-predictable phenomena and concatenations supervening within the 'system'. How the system itself *emerges* or is generated remains a secondary question which might set the stage for further scientific development.

Religious type of discourse addresses the topic of causality in both aspects: the cause-effect causality stressing the spatial and temporal sequence and concatenation, and the emergent 'a-causal causality', laying emphasis on instantaneity, momentariness, spontaneity, non-locality. Strong emergence refers, in this last case, to the coming into *being* of a-causal multiplicity understood as synchronization of multiple 'units' or 'individuals', in terms of their essence: they *emerge* together, sharing simultaneously, in different shapes and forms, the verb 'to be', which becomes the privileged *locus* and *source* of resonance. This type of emergence conceptualized as dynamic of 'unity in multiplicity' or continuous nascence/ creation/ renewal of the world represents the highest expression of synchronicity, i.e., the perfect interconnectedness resonating by virtue of the ultimate unifying principle.

In many different religious and/or theological texts the ideas of synchronization and synchronicity are emblematic for high practitioners or spiritually accomplished leaders.

**Magic and science**

I have shown in the previous section that scientific approach, as we envisage and practice it today is, in many of its aspects, *idolatrous*. This is the 'implicit' mistake of any theoretical configuration which is not auto-reflexive and critical enough as to

evaluate, in each and every moment, its intention, its applicability and goal, and, the most important thing: its inherent limits and relativity.

Science needs, by definition, particular contextual approaches to fulfil its *desiderata* knowledge. This type of knowledge, obtained through experiments claiming their rigor and legitimacy by virtue of their repeatability and measurable aspects, remains tributary to a specific, circumstantial framework exploited in its cause-effect layer. I would call this intrinsic dimension of nowadays science, touching to the displacement of a fragment, part or context in order to investigate it and by means of 'similarity' to apply it in different correspondent frameworks, the *magic* dimension of science.

Magic is built on efficient or productive interventions for the sake of particular or individual(istic) goals. It acts on the basis of similarity or contagion,[12] exchanging the natural spontaneous experience with the experiment as 'mechanical' influence meant to turn away the natural expected course of events in order to impose a different 'will' and to give rise to contrived artificial developments.

Following this line of thought, emergence, through its unpredictable appearance, escapes the *magical* mechanisms and experiments of science. The same could be said about synchronicity, whereas synchronization can be experimented and produced mechanically.

It is difficult for a scientist to approach naturally emergent phenomena because of their usually unrepeatable character. The cause-effect law cannot be invoked, and any experiment in this respect is consequently hard or even impossible to manage.

New experimental methodologies need to be configured using more complex and diverse instruments able to adequately integrate the subjective, experiential parameter amply theorized and approached within the research area of Humanities.

**Conclusion**

The phenomena of emergence, synchronization and synchronicity reveal significant features and dimensions when analyzed in the light of recent scientific developments regarding space-time relationship as reflected in our perception and theorization of the physical world in conjunction with the investigation of our subjective structures of knowledge and perception.

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[12] See, in this respect, the classical work of Sir James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough. A Study in Magic and Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 37: "Thus far we have been considering chiefly that branch of sympathetic magic which may be called homoeopathic or imitative. Its leading principle, as we have seen, is that like produces like, or, in other words, that an effect resembles its cause. The other great branch of sympathetic magic, which I have called Contagious Magic, proceeds upon the notion that things which have once been conjoined must remain ever afterwards, even when quite dissevered from each other, in such a sympathetic relation that whatever is done to the one must similarly affect the other. Thus the logical basis of Contagious Magic, like that of Homoeopathic Magic, is a mistaken association of ideas; its physical basis, if we may speak of such a thing, like the physical basis of Homoeopathic Magic, is a material medium of some sort which, like the ether of modern physics, is assumed to unite distant objects and to convey impressions from one to the other."

The *critical* gesture to always indicate the limits of our experiments, theories and knowledge is requisite.

The general description of complex systems is to be re-appraised and refined according to novel integrative methodologies, combining instruments belonging to various disciplines, including the area of Humanities.

'Scientificity' needs to be re-formulated through integrating the critical methods and the different perspectives (regarding concepts such as time, space, causality, life, matter, subject-object relation, etc.) encountered in the disciplines pertaining to the field of Humanities.

# The Construction of Knowledge in Medical Research Articles

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**Abstract.** This article presents a theoretical analysis of the various aspects involved in the construction of knowledge in the medical research article, currently a highly demanding but also rewarding genre in the international academic environment. The analysis takes into consideration the most prevalent features of present-day written academic discourse, with focus on the writing conventions and rhetorical strategies primarily used for successful scientific communication in medicine. The paper offers a multidisciplinary approach by adopting a pragmatic view of linguistics applied to written medical discourse in order to create a comprehensive picture of the current requirements of medical research reporting.

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As a member of the teaching staff of a Romanian medical university, I have gradually become aware of the requirements of the highly competitive national and international academic environment of our times. In this context, universities place tremendous focus on the activities most likely to increase the visibility of the institution and thus generate larger numbers of students and extensive funding. These activities primarily include the publication of English-written scientific articles or books in influential international journals or publishing houses, participation in medical international events where English is usually the official language, but also winning research projects in national and international competitions following the submission of application proposals in Romanian and/or English that are evaluated by national and international specialists. Out of these, English-language publications in international journals and fund-generating research projects seem to be the most highly valued and rewarded activities that can be conducted within higher education institutions worldwide, Romania included. Therefore, it has become common knowledge that, at least in the academic world, "we are what we write,"[1] and that publishing scientific research articles is crucial not only for the advancement of science, but also for personal and institutional recognition and prestige.

This reality also indicates that the undeniable expansion of English in academic circles, which has practically turned it into a basic academic skill that scholars around the world must possess for adequate academic performance and

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[1] Ken Hyland, "Writing in the University: Education, Knowledge and Reputation", *Language Teaching* 1 (2011): 53–70, 53.

desired results, has also been registered in the Romanian environment, especially in the fast moving world of medical sciences, where the latest breakthroughs are exclusively presented in English-language publications. This current context of academic globalization blurs the boundaries between national and international communication for scientific and academic purposes,[2] at the same time requiring native and non-native speakers of English to produce similarly outstanding results despite inherent differences between these two categories of language users. Thus, besides solid research skills and English-language proficiency, knowledge of rhetorical strategies and writing conventions in a second language has become essential prerequisites for successful international publication and recognition.

In view of these facts, the current paper aims to provide an accurate account of how knowledge is constructed in medical research articles by taking into account the realities of the present-day international academic environment, as well as the particularities of medical research reporting. Such an analysis could enable academics worldwide, especially non-native speakers of English, to gain an understanding of the requirements needed for functioning successfully in their specialty fields. To this end, the specific manner in which knowledge is constructed in medical research articles, the factors involved in this process as well as its consequences shall be discussed in connection with the most important features of present-day written academic discourse. These features can be summarized as follows: an inability to exist in the absence of genuine scientific research activities, a stringent need to present research results in English, a clear distinction between facts and interpretation, an 'institutional-individual' duality reflecting two types of goals that academics must achieve simultaneously, disciplinary differences between the hard and soft sciences leading to different rhetorical strategies, writing styles and author identities, as well as a persuasive and interactive dimension which allows authors to negotiate their claims, and readers to be active participants in the creation of scientific knowledge through the acceptance or denial of claims, in this way also establishing academic hierarchies.

The first characteristic of written academic discourse is the fact that it cannot exist in the absence of genuine scientific research, regardless of the field of activity. Once scientific findings are obtained as a result of researchers' skilful use of appropriate tools and resources, these must be communicated via appropriate linguistic and rhetorical devices in order to become acknowledged as such by the relevant discourse community and thus turn into new scientific knowledge.

This communication process mainly takes place in English, which has unquestionably become the international language of written and oral scientific communication and therefore the language of medicine. As a result, the 20th century witnessed an unprecedented increase in the number of English language publications over other languages in order to spread newly produced information and knowledge. Thus, according to a study published in 2008, "in the last 130 years, the percentage of English language journals in the American journal catalogue Index Medicus (now called Medline – Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System Online) has increased from 35% to 89%" while that of German-language journals dropped from

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[2] Rainer Enrique Hamel, "The Dominance of English in the International Scientific Periodical Literature and the Future of Language Use in Science", *AILA Review* 1 (2007): 53–71.

25% to 1.9%.[3] Also, according to the same source, while in 1879, there were 284 journals in English and 201 in German in Index Medicus, in 2007, Medline, the online journal database derived from Index Medicus listed 4609 journals in English and only 98 in German, which means that nine out of ten new Medline-indexed journals are in English.[4]

As far as the most recent publication trends are concerned, a brief internet search conducted in October 2013 revealed that only one out of ten medical journals that feature the word "international" in their title accepts manuscripts written in languages other than English. Thus, articles in French, German, Italian, Spanish or Portuguese can be submitted for publication in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, provided that they are accompanied by an abstract in English. Conversely, according to the submission requirements of journals such as the *International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Medicine*, the *International Journal of Medical Sciences*, the *International Journal of Obesity*, or the *International Journal of Surgery* all manuscripts must be written in English. Therefore, although medicine was one of the fields that massively opened its Anglophone journals to international contributors whose first language was not English,[5] the internationalization of journals has come to refer to the scientists' nationality and country of origin rather than to the language of publication.

However, being accepted for publication in a medical journal is not the only aim researchers must focus on. The impact factor of the journal as well as the number of citations of a given paper or author have become increasingly important especially in recent years, following the development of widely accessible online publications and internet-based databases. English-language publications also seem to be cited more often as "English makes up over 95 per cent of all publications in the Science Citation Index".[6]

Nowadays English is not only used extensively throughout the world in an unprecedented growth, with a quarter of the world's population speaking it at the end of the 20th century,[7] but it also seems to become a language of second-language speakers, dropping to the fourth position in the world as far as the number of native speakers are concerned, while the number of non-native speakers is on a continuous increase.[8] Therefore, even if English has become a *lingua franca* in the scientific and medical environment, specialized knowledge does not solely originate in English-speaking countries since non-native speakers of English are also solid contributors to specialized journals. Non-native scientists who wish to be published in prestigious

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[3] Christopher Baethge, "The Languages of Medicine", *Deutsches Arzteblatt International* 105, no. 3 (2008): 37–40, 37.

[4] Ibid.

[5] John M Swales, *Research Genres. Explorations and Applications* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 42.

[6] Ken Hyland, *English for Academic Purposes. An advanced resource book* (London: Routledge, 2006), 26.

[7] David Crystal, *English as a Global Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[8] Humphrey Tonkin, "Language and the Ingenuity Gap in Science", *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies* 8, no.1 (2011): 105–116.

international medical journals must not only be proficient English language users but also possess familiarity with the layout, formatting and rhetorical standards demanded by editors and reviewers. Failure to meet international publication criteria may result in article rejection, subsequent resubmissions or the need to resort to costly proofreading services prior to article acceptance.

Another characteristic of academic writing is the clear distinction between facts, which can be presented with straightforward confidence, and interpretation, which must be introduced cautiously, as it is only inferred or assumed.[9] The reporting function has always been a major feature of research articles ever since their first publication in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*. By distributing the results of increasingly complex and specialized experiments, articles have contributed to the creation and spread of knowledge alongside books, at times even surpassing their importance as science development tools. For instance, during the late 17th century major scientific discoveries such as the microscopic investigations conducted by Anton Leeuwenhoek's and Robert Boyle's vacuum experiments appeared in the *Philosophical Transactions* and not in books, although the latter continued to be considered major research contributions throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.[10]

On the one hand, it is generally agreed that information included in books and textbooks has already gained the approval of the target discourse community and now constitutes proven scientific knowledge. On the other hand, "freshly" obtained results are usually firstly reported in journal articles, which have become "the major vehicle for knowledge in academic cultures, central to the legitimation of a discipline and the reputation of its practitioners".[11] In this context, instead of pursuing the scientific truth only, research has become a search for collective agreement through the rhetorical strategies adopted by research article writers in order to convince the audience of the validity and relevance of their results. This is how the scientific knowledge claim has become "the heart of academic argument"[12] while the construction of academic texts relies on a model centred on claims and denials of claims.[13]

Historically speaking, a clear distinction between observed facts and interpretation was recommended by Boyle since the beginning of scientific writing, alongside a modest attitude reflected in the cautious expression of opinions. To this end, linguistic devices aimed at reducing the author's commitment to the truth of propositions and opinions, such as *perhaps*, *it seems*, *it is not improbable*, which are currently acknowledged as hedges and used extensively in scientific reporting in order

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[9] Ken Hyland, "English for Professional Academic Purposes: Writing for Scholarly Publication", in *Teaching Language Purposefully: English for Specific Purposes in Theory and Practice*, ed. Diane D. Belcher (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 83–105.

[10] Charles Bazerman, *Shaping Written Knowledge, The Genre and Activity of the Experimental Article in Science* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

[11] Ken Hyland, "Talking to the Academy: Forms of Hedging in Science Research Articles", *Written Communication* 13 no.2 (1996): 251–281, 252.

[12] Ken Hyland, "Scientific Claims and Community Values: Articulating an Academic Culture", *Language and Communication* 17 no. 1 (1997): 19–32, 21.

[13] Greg Myers, "The Pragmatics of Politeness in Scientific Articles", *Applied Linguistics* 10 no. 1 (1989): 1–35.

to show deference, decrease writer commitment or encourage reader participation were recorded as early as Boyle's time.[14] This fact suggests that, despite different historical contexts of occurrence, some rhetorical strategies employed by scientific writers have maintained their usefulness throughout the evolution of scientific reporting.

According to the available literature, academic writing also seems to be characterized by the following duality. First of all, writing cannot take place outside research institutes or higher education establishments, which possess the necessary resources for carrying out scientific research. The research activities and the writing process associated with them must therefore conform to the norms and conventions of the institution in which they take place. Generally, the main goal of this resulting academic output is to increase national and international value and prestige, which is usually reflected in positive evaluations and high academic rankings.

However, academic institutions, although often regarded as sole entities, function through the endeavour and cooperation of individual members. Universities for instance can only reach top rankings if their staff members obtain internationally acknowledged research results. Consequently, a professional has to juggle several identities simultaneously in the same piece of discourse: a professional identity within the respective discourse community, an organizational identity within an institution or organization, a social identity as part of one or several social groups, plus an individual identity that reflects his or her self-expression.[15] The goal of successful academics is to effortlessly negotiate all these aspects and thus achieve multiple goals.

This 'institutional-individual' duality renders academic writing an essential link within the academic cycle of publication, credibility, recognition and reward put forward by Latour and Woolgar.[16] Valuable academic writing published in prestigious journals or publishing houses brings credibility, recognition and reward, but also further funding and support to both individual scholars and the institutions they are affiliated to. Powerful institutions will then attract new and valuable professionals who can contribute to the achievement of institutionalized goals, at the same time gaining personal credit and reward.

However, authorial intentions and the means employed to express them in writing vary according to discipline, the expectations of the disciplinary community, disciplinary culture and possibly national culture or mentality. As far as the disciplinary field is concerned, writing in the soft or hard sciences involves not only the use of subject-specific terminology but also diverse rhetorical devices. The differences between writing in the humanities field and writing in the sciences field are related to the ways in which knowledge is created and presented in these two distinct environments. Unlike science data, which are able to speak for themselves in a text, careful interpretation and arguing are required in the humanities, where language itself,

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[14] Dwight Atkinson, *Scientific Discourse in Sociohistorical Context: the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London, 1675-1975* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1999).

[15] Vijay K. Bhatia, *Worlds of Written Discourse: A genre-based view* (London: Continuum, 2004).

[16] Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *Laboratory Life. The construction of Scientific Facts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

the rhetorical choices of the authors and their position in relation with the audience represent domain-specific writing tools and can thus be regarded as data.[17]

Also, new information is not typically discovered in the humanities, but rather deduced, interpreted, evaluated or re-evaluated, which makes it less quantifiable or palpable. At the same time, the lower risk of replicating research results and refuting findings in subsequent studies allows writers in the soft sciences to increase their degree of commitment through the use of the first person pronoun *we*, while the possessive adjective *our* (*our data, our results, our findings*) is preferred in the hard sciences for its reduced degree of commitment.[18] The fundamentally different ways of creating knowledge in the hard and soft sciences also influence the style and tone of academic discourse as writers in the hard sciences usually assume a less personal style by downplaying their role in the research in favour of the issue or phenomenon studied, thus leading to the impression of objectivity.[19] Conversely, writers in the humanities and social sciences seem to be more explicitly involved and to assume more personal positions signalled by the use of interactional markers and overhedging compared to those in the science and engineering fields, who prefer fewer hedges, weaker claims and directives as the most frequently occurring interactive features.[20]

Such rhetorical choices may also be connected with the individual character of soft science research, which is usually carried out by individual scholars who assume sole responsibility for their written statements. They also use more self-references and self-citations than hard science authors, which represents another disciplinary difference.[21] On the other hand, medical research projects frequently involve teamwork, multiple authors and thus a possibly lesser degree of commitment to the truth of a proposition or to newly introduced information. However, by assuming an appropriate degree of authorial presence, successful academic writers signal their membership to the target discourse community thus gaining identity, credibility and authority in their field.[22] Therefore, although academic writing has been regarded as impersonal and objective, recent research shows that several rhetorical strategies such as the use of personal pronouns, citations, self-references, boosters (*definitely*, *it is clear that*) or hedges (*might*, *perhaps*, *possible*) are employed by writers in order to successfully support their claims and convince readers of the validity, relevance and usefulness of their findings, especially within the current academic, social and

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[17] Claus Gnutzmann and Frank Rabe, "'Theoretical Subtleties' or 'Text Modules'? German Researchers' Language Demands and Attitude Across Disciplinary Cultures", *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 13 (2014): 31–40.

[18] Enrique Lafuente Millán, "'Extending this claim, we propose...' The Writer's Presence in Research Articles from Different Disciplines", *Ibérica* 20 (2010): 35–56.

[19] Ken Hyland, "Options of Identity in Academic Writing", *ELT Journal* 56 no. 4 (2002): 351–358.

[20] Ken Hyland, "Stance and Engagement: A Model of Interaction in Academic Discourse", *Discourse Studies* 2 (2005): 173–192.

[21] Ken Hyland, "Self-Citation and Self-Reference: Credibility and Promotion in Academic Publication", *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 3 (2003): 251–259.

[22] Millán, "'Extending this claim, we propose...' The Writer's Presence in Research Articles from Different Disciplines", 35–56.

economical context which stresses the importance of publishing in high-ranking international journals. Thus, the format and structure of academic texts such as research articles suggest that knowledge and facts are presented objectively for the sake of the advancement of knowledge and the pursuit of truth, while pragmatic text analyses usually reveal different purposes and a possible "guided objectivity" when linguistic and rhetorical resources are skilfully exploited by experienced professionals.

Furthermore, knowledge claims are usually accepted by a certain discourse community following appropriate interaction between academic writers and their target audience, as members of the respective community. Myers pointed out that "it is important for discourse analysis and for the teaching of writing to show that, while writing does not involve face to face contact, it is a form of interaction".[23] This observation was made within an analysis of hedging as a politeness strategy in scientific articles and was based on the assumption that "the form of the statement reflects a relation between the writer and the readers, not the degree of probability of the statement".[24]

Although the very definition of scientific papers as laboratory reports accounts for their persuasive credibility, the constant interaction between writers, editors, and target readers, which is often negotiated via appropriate rhetorical strategies renders the published paper "a multilayered hybrid co-produced by the authors and by members of the audience to which it is directed".[25] This social constructivist view according to which knowledge is constructed through the interaction of networks and communities (also shared by Latour and Woolgar[26]) regards the scientific article as an interactive product and highlights the importance of publishing-related activities such as peer-review, pre-publication negotiations with editors and reviewers, and paper acceptance or rejection, which enable scientists to become renowned members of their discourse communities.[27]

Especially in the hard sciences, medicine included, teams of writers, each with clearly assigned research responsibilities, first go through the process of drafting and redrafting their work into the final version to be submitted to a journal for publication. Next, editors and peer-reviewers evaluate it and recommend alterations, improvements or clarifications, which lead to further editing and writing. The review and revision process, which often involves the reworking of the main rhetorical goals, has turned peer-reviewing into a "control mechanism for transforming beliefs into knowledge".[28] The interactive process continues after the moment of publication. Now, upon reading the paper and considering the arguments presented, fellow scientists accept newly introduced claims by further citing them in their own papers, thus introducing the

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[23] Greg Myers, "The Pragmatics of Politeness in Scientific Articles", 30.

[24] Ibid., 15

[25] Karin Knorr-Cetina, *The Manufacture of Knowledge* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1981), 106.

[26] Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *Laboratory Life. The construction of Scientific Facts*.

[27] John Flowerdew, "English for Research Publication Purposes" in *The Handbook of English for Specific Purposes*, ed. Brian Paltridge and Sue Starfield (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 301–321.

[28] Ken Hyland, *Academic Discourse: English in a Global Context* (London: Continuum, 2009), 68.

respective claims in the circle of scientific facts, or reject them by expressing negative comments in their own work or by simply ignoring.

This interactive process has become even more important in today's highly competitive academic context in which publication equals recognition and reward. The now heavily spread practice of self-citation, which is rather the opposite of modesty and deference traditionally characteristic of academic discourse is regarded as a rhetorical consequence of this increased competitiveness.[29] On the other hand, the immense number of papers published in journals throughout the world has led scientists to doubt that scientific papers are in fact written for the sole purpose of disseminating information. On the contrary, publication mainly for achieving personal reward and recognition was often regarded as the main goal of scientific papers by members of the international medical community such as Michael O'Donnell.[30] He mentioned a failed experimental proposal submitted to the *Lancet* in 1976 through which Dr. J B Healy suggested that authors' name and affiliation be removed upon publication in order to prove that the dissemination of information is the only purpose of research articles. O'Donnell also quoted Richard Smith, former editor of the *British Medical Journal*, who stated that only 5% of the journal material met minimum scientific standards and had clinical relevance.

However, regardless of any quality-related issues, knowledge claims expressed in scientific articles remain central tools in scientific discourse as the acceptance of claims opens the gates towards individual and institutional recognition and validation. The main features of appropriate knowledge claims were summarized as statements that: meet the expectation of the target discourse community and present positions likely to be accepted by the respective community, contribute to scientific development, present accurate results obtained using correct methods, recognize previous work in the field, demonstrate an objective attitude, show modesty and willingness to negotiate with fellow researchers.[31]

Claims are one step away from turning into scientific knowledge. However, since they are still regarded as opinions before gaining the ratification of the discourse community, caution instead of a direct approach is needed when introducing them. Hedging (the use of hedges) represents one valuable rhetorical strategy that allows authors to cautiously introduce knowledge claims without imposing on the readers. In brief, hedges are linguistic devices such as *relatively*, *approximately*, *may*, *it is assumed*, *it is believed*, *to our knowledge*, *from our point of view*. They may occur under numerous linguistic forms including epistemic lexical verbs, adverbs, adjectives, modal verbs and nouns, but also phrases or sentences referring to limited knowledge, limitations of model, theory or method, or to experimental limitations.[32]

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[29] Ken Hyland, "Self-Citation and Self-Reference: Credibility and Promotion in Academic Publication".

[30] Michael O'Donnell, "Why doctors don't read research papers", *BMJ* 330 (2005)
http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.330.7485.256-a

[31] Ken Hyland, *Hedging in Scientific Research Articles* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1998), 252–253.

[32] Ken Hyland, *Hedging in Scientific Research Articles*.

According to authors such as Hyland,[33] Fraser[34] and Alonso Alonso *et al,*[35] hedges have poly-pragmatic and often overlapping functions. They are mainly used by research article authors in order to present propositional content as accurately and reliably as possible, avoid taking direct personal responsibility for the content presented or express knowledge claims as personal opinions and thus avoid denial and encourage reader participation.[36] Since they generally decrease author commitment and promote writer-reader interaction, they are currently regarded as safe rhetorical means of introducing new knowledge claims, especially in *Discussion* sections where they occur extensively, until such claims are approved by the international medical discourse community.

Therefore, the initial reporting function of research articles with the purpose of creating scientific knowledge coexists now with more individual-oriented goals expressed through the writers' (often hedged) claims. This dual characteristic of claims matches the 'institutional-individual' duality that characterizes written academic discourse, as well as the double function of publication: to create scientific knowledge but also to distribute rewards and establish hierarchies within specific discourse communities.[37]

In this context, the research article is the most appropriate tool for achieving both institutional and individual goals, especially through its *Discussion* section, whose main function is to interpret the results in context and thus invest them with value and relevance. It is this very speculative and discursive aspect that generated much criticism to the point of regarding *Discussion* sections as a marketing strategy aimed at selling the paper. Excessive speculation, use of passives and hedging were often criticized in analyses of scientific discourse by authors such as Adams Smith,[38] Roland[39] and Langdon-Neuner.[40] Conversely, opposing views praise the discursive nature of this mainly rhetorical section by arguing that subjectivity is essential as the function of the *Discussion* is to actually discuss, i.e. speculate beyond the evidence in order to generate future hypotheses and reach conclusions, thus providing a context for the reader and developing science beyond mere lists of numbers.[41]

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[33] Ibid.

[34] Bruce Fraser, "Pragmatic Competence: the Case of Hedging", in *New Approaches to Hedging,* ed. Gunther Kaltenböck, Wiltrud Mihatasch and Stefan Schneider (Bingley: Emerald, 2010), 15–34.

[35] Rosa Alonso Alonso, María Alonso Alonso and Laura Torrado Mariñas, "Hedging: An Exploratory Study of Pragmatic Transfer in Non-Native English Readers' Rhetorical Preferences", *Ibérica* 23 (2012): 47–64.

[36] Ken Hyland, *Hedging in Scientific Research Articles.*

[37] Ken Hyland, "Writing in the University: Education, Knowledge and Reputation".

[38] Diana Adams Smith, "Style in Medical Journals", *British Medical Journal* 287 (1983): 1122–1124.

[39] Marie-Claude Roland, "Publish and Perish. Hedging and Fraud in Scientific Discourse", *EMBO Reports* 5 (2007): 424–428.

[40] Elise Langdon-Neuner, "Scientific' Writing", *The Write Stuff* 18 no.2 (2009): 69–72.

[41] John Skelton and Sarah Edwards, "The Function of the Discussion Section in Academic Medical Writing", *BMJ* 320 (2000): 1269–1270.

To conclude, this paper attempted to present the process of knowledge construction in medical research articles by discussing it against the most important characteristics of present-day written academic discourse in order to reveal the basic requirements of successful medical reporting. The analysis also highlighted the importance of expressing knowledge claims in medical research articles through appropriate writing conventions and rhetorical strategies for the purpose of turning research results into scientific knowledge and of thus simultaneously achieving individual and institutional goals. The following pre-publication checklist could be useful especially for non-native speakers of English: carry out innovative scientific research; present it in English, making sure claims are expressed through appropriate rhetorical strategies according to the norms and conventions of the reporting genre and of the target discourse community; adopt a persuasive style by encouraging reader involvement in order for newly introduced claims to become scientific knowledge.

# Theorising Between Space and Place
## A Case Study on Perceptive Architecture – Serpentine Gallery Pavilions

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**Keywords**: space, place, architecture, Serpentine Gallery, pavilion, theory of architecture

**Abstract**: The paper focuses on an example of the fragile balance between theory and practice within the space-place debate. Thus, the introduction outlines several theoretical constructs, which offer a broad view of the complex phenomenon of the space-place study. The article then concentrates on the experiment proposed by the Serpentine Gallery, in London, which is unique in this context. Consequently, this part of Kensington Gardens has transformed itself, little by little, into a genuine architectural laboratory, which analyses and exhibits the attitude towards the space-place relationship, as it is understood by the different starchitects who have built here.

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## Theorising between space and place

Space is one of those concepts we use per se. In the everyday use, even the difference between space and place seems irrelevant. However, from the point of view of the creator of space and place, one has to study the everyday events, meanings and experiences. Moreover, because "man is by nature a social animal,"[1] the creation of place has to be a social manifestation, as well.

Each "social being," using Henri Lefebvre's[2] words, aspires to produce their own space. The production of space is essential to the human kind, especially from a social point of view. A failure of this process would produce a very strange entity, doomed to a purely ideological, abstract existence which "would fall to the level of folklore and sooner or later disappear altogether, thereby immediately losing its identity, its denomination and its feeble degree of reality".[3]

Thus, Lefebvre, establishes a generating relationship between space and the moving body – a theory resumed slightly different by Yi-Fu Tuan[4] and, later on, even

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[1] Aristotel, *The Politics*, trans. L. Carnes (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 1169 b.

[2] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, Cambridge MA: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1991), 53.

[3] Ibid., 53.

[4] Cf. Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia – A study Of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, And Values* (Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1974); Yi-Fu Tuan, *Place and Space – The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1977); Yi-Fu Tuan *Landscapes of Fear* (New York NY: Pantheon Books, 1979).

by Michel de Certeau.[5] It is such a relationship, which eventually reaches a point where it turns into dependency: the body – which is already space in itself – produces, generates space through its every movement; while a space, lacking in movement, ceases to exist. Space becomes for Lefebvre subjective, precisely because such a dependency relationship exists.

This subjective space – objective space couple, which characterises the general concept of space, in Lefebvre's view, has been converted by Tuan[6] into a new couple, namely the one of place-space. Even from the start, Tuan draws up a distinction between the two, which resembles very closely Lefebvre's theory, stating that space is intimately linked to movement, while place is to repose, to stop along the way.

However, Tuan's formulation has a far more phenomenological connotation, much closer to the writings of Christian Norberg-Schulz or Martin Heidegger – as in their work, place is intimately linked to and it even derives from the act of dwelling. The place, for Tuan, remains closely linked to the action of dwelling, as a manifestation of the everyday, but, at the same time, it remains a personal experience. In Tuan's interpretation, place equals security and stability, namely putting down roots and identifying one's self with the (new) place – quintessentially a concretion of value.[7]

Human geography, standing out as a theoretical field, especially during the 1970s 1980s, has been incredibly effervescent in theorising the concept of place, thus establishing the foundations of a new field of studies and producing reference texts – as already pointed out in Tuan's case. However, postmodern literature has decomposed the concept,[8] looking at it critically, as it was influenced by the effects of the global upon the local, integrating it in broader, interdisciplinary discussions, relating space to the social,[9] political[10] contexts, or, why not, simply to the everyday,[11] including racial or gender issues.[12] Such attempts generated ample studies, which made the field more permissive, anchoring it much more realistically in the immediate reality, in the everyday.

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[5] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley CA, Los Angeles CA, London: University of California Press, 1984).

[6] Cf. Tuan, *Topophilia*, Tuan, *Place and Space*, Tuan, *Landscapes of Fear.*

[7] Tuan, *Place and Space*, 12.

[8] Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place – A Philosophical History* (Berkeley CA, Los Angeles CA, London: University of California Press, 1998), 286.

[9] Cf. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago IL: University of Chicago Press, 1958); Frederick B. Walter, *Modern Systems Research for the Behavioral Scientist* (New York NY: Aldine Publishing Company, 1968).

[10] Cf. Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Creation of the World or Globalization*, trans. François Raffoul and David Pettigrew (Albany NY: SUNY Press, 2007); Lefebvre, *The Production of Space.*

[11] Cf. Michel Foucault, "Different Spaces", in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley et al., vol. 2 in *Essential Works of Foucault* 1954–1984, ed. Paul Rabinow, 175–185 (New York NY: The New Press, 1998); Edward Soja, "Thirdspace: Expanding the Scope of the Geographical Imagination", in *Human Geography Today*, ed. Doreen Massey, John Allen and Phill Sarre (Cambridge MA: Polity Press, 1999); Edward C. Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976), 260–278.

[12] Cf. Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, trans. Carolyn Burke and Gillian C. Gill (London, New York NY: Continuum, 2005), second edition.

One of the most interesting contributions brought to this concept belongs to Edward Soja.[13] Soja – just as Lefebvre – considers that this duality of imagined space and real space, or practiced space and represented space, produce a reductionistic point of view. Although this path is part of a long row of dichotomies, considered to be references of modern thought – for example abstract–concrete, real–imagined, local–global, micro–macro, natural–cultural, centre–periphery, man–woman, bourgeois–proletarian, capitalism–socialism[14] – Soja, alongside Lefebvre, considers that this path is lacking precisely the complexity of truly experimenting lived space. The main argument being the fact that there will always be a third possibility, an-Other term or *Il y a toujours l'Autre*, which will not belong to any of the two trenchant categories of "either–or". Thus, Soja proposes a third category – inspired by Lefebvre's theory, *une dialectique triplicité*, and maybe even by Michel Foucault's heterotopia[15] – a much more flexible category, a category of inclusion of "both-and-also": the Thirdspace. It is an inclusive theory, postmodern in character, which one might discover in Robert Venturi's[16] writings, as well, formulated as "both–and". This layering and inclusion of as many meanings as possible, inclining to include all meanings, implies a greater acceptance and tolerance of "other spaces," of heterotopias.

As a concept, Thirdspace becomes a radically inclusive notion. If so far defining space, and especially place, was an act of exclusion, which identifies, selects and delimits a space with qualities; the postmodern moment becomes increasingly lax and permissive. Consequently, Soja's theoretical construct reaches a climax, which includes everything; it is a third type of space, a layer of the other.

In this context, the concept of place, the feeling of connection is felt differently among different social groups and even among different individuals. The difference can be noted in the ability of movement possessed by each individual. Thus, Doreen Massey's[17] construct starts out from the difference Tuan notices between space and place, nonetheless Massey goes one step further stating that, actually, the concept of place itself is influenced by one's ability of movement in space. Moreover, the concept of place is influenced by one's pressure exercised upon the flow of movement.

Thus, extending this chain of thoughts, based on the hypothesis that people can possess multiple identities, Massey extrapolates the concept to the concept of place, arguing that it can also possess multiple identities. The issue raised, in this case, is if this fact will be considered a source of conflict, or a resource, or even both! Massey insists on the fact that it is wrong to identify the concept of place with that of community. From a perspective as inclusive as Soja's, the author manages to look at the concept of place in a totally different light, seeing it as being non-static; the place ceases to be a noun – as it was for Norberg-Schulz. So, communities can survive without being in the same physical place, as networks – the family, the group of friends, the congregation, etc. On the other hand, there are few cases in which a place hosts a single community – seen as a

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[13] Soja, "Thirdspace", 260–278.

[14] Ibid., 268.

[15] Foucault, "Different Spaces", 175–185.

[16] Robert Venturi, *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* (New York NY: The Museum of Modern Art, 1966, 1977), 23–33.

[17] Cf. Doreen Massey, "A Global Sense of Place", in eadem, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Minneapolis MN: University of Minnesota Press), 1994.

homogenous social group – this situation resulting, most of the time, artificially, materialising itself as reservations.

One has to remark that, in the postmodern context, defining the concept of place as being "open and hybrid – a product of interconnecting flows – of routes rather than roots" (sic!)[18] is related more to the everyday. Consequently, the place seen as a process becomes a concept with a tremendous capacity of inclusion and flexibility, so that it can identify itself with real situations, which become increasingly complex.

The definition issued by Massey remains, with no doubt, one of the most important contemporary theories related to place, especially because it managed to critically counterbalance the notion of erosion of the concept of place. This notion of erosion sets in a negative light precisely these (contemporary) features of space which Massey attributed to the place seen as a process: mass communication, facilitating the mobility of individuals, and practically anything which could be linked to the consumerist society.

However, the erosion of the concept of place speaks precisely about the depersonalisation of space – meaning the return from place to space in Heideggerian terms –, about spaces which look, smell and are felt like being the same anywhere. Although Edward Relph identifies ways in which one unrestrainedly experiences space – namely pragmatic space, perceptual space or existential space – or ways which prove to be rather cerebral, conceptual – cognitive space or abstract space –, the author still considers that in our contemporary context one can still discuss the phenomenon of place eradication. This process manifests itself through the production of standardised landscapes, as a result of the amplification of insensitivity towards the meaning of place.[19] This path is central to Relph's work.[20] The author considers that today one is surrounded by a placelessness which is dissipated through the inability of the contemporary man to authentically relate to a place.

The most obvious manifestation of placelessness is experienced as a result of tourism, because it encourages the disneyfication, museification and futurisation of place.[21] Relph says that even the highway itself facilitates the destruction of place because, instead of linking places together, it actually isolates them, passing by the most important places out of practical reasons.

Marc Augé[22] proposes, as well, a theory of the erosion of the concept of place. Thus, when Relph opposes the idea of place to the one of placelessness – which has a profoundly negative connotation –, Augé, on the other hand, speaks about the non-place. For the author, the non-place does not necessarily have a negative connotation, instead he simply adjoins this concept to the one of place – the non-place is the space

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[18] Tim Cresswell, *Place – A Short Introduction* (Malden MA, Oxford, Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 53.

[19] David Seamon and Jacob Sowers, "Place and Placelessness, Edward Relph", in *Key Texts in Human Geography*, ed. P. Hubbard, R. Kitchen and G. Vallentine, 43–510 (London: Sage, 2008), 44.

[20] Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 82; *apud* Cresswell, *Place*, 44.

[21] Cf. Dana Pop, "Aspects of Identity in Contemporary Architectural Space", *Philobiblon* XVIII/2 (2013): 415–426.

[22] Marc Augé, *Non-places – An Introduction to Supermodernity*, trans. John Howe (London, New York NY: Verso, 2008), 46–47.

which has opposite qualities from the ones of the place, however it exists as a physical space in the everyday.[23]

The space of the non-place does not encourage the manifestation of the self, nor does it encourage the establishment of relationships with others, it only encourages solitude and similarity. Augé goes on saying that it is the opposite of a utopia, as well: it exists in the everyday – unlike utopias – and it does not contain any type of relationship which might be labelled as social.[24]

An important issue which needs to be emphasised is the fact that, although Massey and Augé reach different conclusions, both of them base their theories on casual observations of the everyday. They both start out form the immediate reality, from situations which everyone encounters on a daily basis. Massey, for example, describes what she notices while simply walking through her neighbourhood. With Augé one can remark, by the way he structures his speech, that his observations are based on hours on end spent in airports, waiting lounges, railway stations or hotel lobbies – all constructed on the same pattern of transit space, the archetype of nomadic spatiality, actually of the non-place.

This contextualisation of the place in the everyday is extremely important because, as Tim Cresswell remarks, places are most often the product of everyday activities.[25] This mirroring of the everyday as the perception of the concept of place is very present in Michel de Certeau's texts.[26] For Certeau, place is "an instantaneous configuration of positions,"[27] namely a freeze at a certain moment of the interrelationships established between the elements which coexist simultaneously in a given space. Place is for Certeau a malleable entity, re-definable at any moment. However, Certeau's space maintains a certain ambiguity, being rather the result of different tensions.[28] This space is lacking a particular quality or feature of selfness, which can be found in the case of a place – space is fluid, malleable and uncertain. What is interesting is the fact that, for Certeau, space and place are both capable of coexisting, being connected with ties which go both ways.

For David Harvey[29] – who is basing his theories on the manner in which Certeau treats place as being the result of daily activities and movements, and also revising the generating relationship between space and the movement of the body, formulated by Lefebvre – place becomes malleable, flexible and transformable, according to the everyday needs, reproducing and redefining itself daily, according to each type of activity.

The three studies of an inclusive approach – Soja's "Thirdspace," the place seen as a process by Massey and the place as the experience of the everyday by Harvey – manage to place the concept of place in an entirely new and very different light from Norberg-Schulz's static and well-anchored concept. Genius loci, in its postmodern

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[23] Augé, *Non-places*, 43.

[24] Ibid., 90.

[25] Cresswell, *Place*, 82.

[26] de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*.

[27] Ibid., 171.

[28] Ibid., 173.

[29] David Harvey, "Individual spaces and times in social life", in idem, *The Condition of Postmodernity – An enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, 211-225 (Cambridge MA, Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

form, becomes a process, a flux, a space which is lived through experimentation, ceasing to be used as a shelter that provides security and stability.

Places can be – and actually are – produced, however they are not final products, ready-made products, but rather they initiate a space which behaves more as a process – if one were to borrow Massey's term. In this context, Certeau, by relating place to the everyday experience, practically links the activity of micro-cultures, their daily manifestations with the place they identify themselves with and thus determine it.

The issue raised now – form the point of view of the different interpretations of the concept of place – is when and how architecture produces places. Put in the simplest of terms, architecture is capable of delimiting, of organising space by splitting it into two with a wall, thus distinguishing between interior and exterior. However, the pure enclosure of a space does not automatically transform it into a place. Space – architectural space in this context – becomes a place only when one's perception upon it is transformed. Practically, one identifies a built space as a place when its image – the mental representation one builds – begins to have a meaning; it is somehow representative. Namely these are the architectural spaces which have the ability of becoming landmarks, of leaving a trace in the collective consciousness. Or they can be a temporary intervention which, for a limited period of time, manages to introduce order into an otherwise homogenous space, manages to organise, orient it and make it visible to the passer-by – in other words to change the perception upon it – such is the case of the Serpentine Gallery Pavilions.

**Perceptive architecture – Serpentine Gallery Pavilions**
In the year 2000, Julia Peyton-Jones, the Co-Director of Serpentine Gallery, initiated an experimental architecture programme, which has been held annually ever since. The aim of this project is designing and placing a temporary structure for three months on the Gallery's lawn. Thus, for over a decade, some of the most world famous architects have been exhibiting their work here. The only criterion which is imposed is that the architect or firm should not have designed anything in the UK previous to receiving the invitation.[30]

The proposed experiment is, in a way, unique. Although temporary architecture, mobile architecture, "soft," "disposable" or "throw away" architecture – as Augustin Ioan[31] named it – is lately gaining more exposure, the rather controlled conditions – always the same lawn – offered by the Gallery transform this project into an architectural laboratory where one can analyse and test the attitude showed by different (st)architects towards the space-place relationship. Even though this inflatable, foldable and dismantled architecture is not connected to a specific site, contextually and structurally speaking – as is the case of permanent architecture – still, precisely through its ephemerality, temporary architecture becomes the ideal means to experiment the definition and meaning of the place – from an architectural point of view.

The proposals designed during the last 14 years[32] show a matching number of attitudes towards the designing process itself, towards the motivation that backs the

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[30] Serpentine Gallery, "Architecture", *Serpentine Gallery*, accessed June 14, 2013, http://www.serpentinegallery.org/architecture.html.
[31] Augustin Ioan, *Khora* (Bucharest: Editura Paideia, 1999), 19.
[32] There have been built 13 pavilions, the 2004 Pavilion designed by MVRDV, was not build because of its costs – that is why this particular pavilion is not part of the current analysis. In

idea of producing architecture and also towards depicting how theoretical constructs regarding the space-place relationship can physically manifest themselves. An overall and quick analysis divides the pavilions into two major categories.

The first one comprises pavilions conceived more as a visitable sculpture, as a human scale object and not as a place. There are several pavilions which behave as a gadget – an object with an extraordinary design, maybe even a structural experiment, but which does not tackle the issue of space – the space it occupies and cuts out. The majority of these pavilions are impressive as structural innovations, but they do not raise the issue of space, of architectural spatiality. They remain architectures that fail to become places, they remain simple objects.

The second category includes pavilions with a clear attitude towards the meanings of space, place, the transformation of space into place or the establishment of relationships between different spaces – for example interior-exterior, old-new, natural-manmade, etc. Although, from a formal point of view, the pavilions included in this category vary from a place simply delimited by a horizontal plan, raised above the ground – as is the case of the 2009 Pavilion designed by Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa of SANAA – to a totally clustered place – the 2011 proposal, hortus conclusus, signed by Peter Zumhtor – one can still distinguish a common feature, namely the focus on the quality of space.

**The object pavilion**

The pavilion designed by Zaha Hadid[33] in 2000, being the one that started this programme, clearly belongs to the first category. The project actually states, on a conceptual level, that its structure: "radically reinvented the accepted idea of a tent or a marquee".[34] From a perceptual point of view, the Pavilion does not raise many issues. Obviously, there is a certain sensibility in the way it opens itself towards the natural environment surrounding it, but it does that without trying to resonate with it in a certain manner. The idea its concept emphasises is to impress through the structure which is able to cover under a single surface the entire area of 600 square meters.

Oscar Niemeyer,[35] invited in 2003, wanted to make a statement through his pavilion, as well. His proposal is, in essence, a gesture. It does not aim to resonate with its context or the nature surrounding it, nor does it want to establish a dialog with the existing building. On the contrary, the composition can be seen as a white volume

2007, before Olafur Elíasson and Kjetil Thorsen's Pavilion was inaugurated, Zaha Hadid and Patrik Schumacher created a temporary installation – July 12-21, 2007 – for a fundraising gala this object was excluded as well, because of its reduced size – not being actually a pavilion; Serpentine Gallery, "Architecture".

[33] Serpentine Gallery, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2000 by Zaha Hadid", *Serpentine Gallery*, accessed June 14, 2013, http://www.serpentinegallery.org/2000/06/serpentine_gallery _pavilion_20_5.html; "Miscellaneous – Pavilions, installations and exhibitions", *El Croquis* 103 (2000): 224-35, 225.

[34] Serpentine Gallery, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2000 by Zaha Hadid".

[35] Serpentine Gallery, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2003 by Oscar Niemeyer", *Serpentine Gallery*, accessed June 14, 2013, http://www.serpentinegallery.org/2003/06/serpentine _gallery_pavilion_20_2.html.

lifted off the lawn and intersected by a red diagonal – the ramp that clearly delimits itself against the green background of the grass.

The Pavilion conformed to Niemeyer's principle that every project must be capable of summary in a simple 'sketch' and that once the support structure is finished the architecture should be more or less complete.[36]

Indeed, the Pavilion does match Niemeyer's tendencies for simple lines and shapes, and, even though it succeeds in being a well-proportioned object and complete, from a compositional point of view, the 2003 Pavilion does not speak about space, it does not propose a place, but just an image.

In 2006, Rem Koolhaas[37] – together with Cecil Balmond of Arup – had a spectacular proposal, from a structural point of view. The main attraction of the project is an inflatable and translucent canopy shaped like an egg which floats above a vertical cylinder, translucent as well. This inflatable volume is mobile and it can be raised or lowered in order to shelter the amphitheatre underneath, when the meteorological conditions require it. When speaking about the Pavilion, Cecil Balmond says:

"These Pavilions have evolved with various structural typologies and materials, provoking a debate on architecture; this year the exploration continues not only with typology and material but with the very definition of Pavilion."[38]

Thus, the main issue concerning the designers was experimenting on a structural level, playing with materials and – on a conceptual level – experimenting with the building type itself. When analysing it, the discourse lacks any reference to issues regarding space. The Pavilion is an object that landed on the lawn, without any reference to its context – it does not even deny it. It is simply indifferent to the space it is placed in.

The case of the 2005 Pavilion, designed by Alvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura[39] – once more in collaboration with Cecil Balmond of Arup –, is in some way different. As a discourse, the architects stated that their intention was to establish a dialog of spatial nature with the main building, and with the landscape as well:

"The result was a structure that mirrored the domestic scale of the Serpentine and articulated the landscape between the two buildings. The Pavilion was based on a simple rectangular form. It comprised interlocking timber beams, a material that accentuated the relationship between the Pavilion and surrounding Park."[40]

This two dimensional grid wears a clear mark – a mark made by a move of detachment, which lifts the grid off the horizontal plane. The final shape of the grid shows the effects left behind by a suction force created by the initial void which existed between the grid and the horizontal plane. In a way, one can still read this

[36] Serpentine Gallery, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2003 by Oscar Niemeyer".

[37] Serpentine Gallery, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2006 by Rem Koolhaas and Cecil Balmond, with Arup", *Serpentine Gallery*, accessed June 14, 2013, http://www.serpentinegallery.org/2006/07/serpentine_gallery_pavilion_20_1.html.

[38] Serpentine Gallery, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2006 by Rem Koolhaas and Cecil Balmond, with Arup".

[39] Serpentine Gallery, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2005 by Alvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura with Cecil Balmind -Arup", *Serpentine Gallery,* accessed June 14, 2013, http://www.serpentinegallery.org/2005/06/serpentine_gallery_pavilion_20.html.

[40] Serpentine Gallery, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2005 by Alvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura with Cecil Balmind -Arup".

frozen movement in the pavilion's design, and, if we were to superimpose this image with Michel de Certeau and David Harvey's interpretation of place – according to whom the place is the result of daily activities and movements – we could state that the idea of place can be found in this type of architecture. Even so, at a closer glance, what Siza and Souto de Moura accomplished is not in fact a space, but a shape – their pavilion still remains an object and does not reach the state of being a space. The three dimensional grid the authors talk about, is merely a shell, an enclosure which covers a space – failing to become itself a space.

However, from a perceptual point of view, the 2005 Pavilion takes one step forward than the previous examples, because its authors planned to create a place – even if it was only a theoretical achievement. If one were to read their discourse between the lines, one could identify references to certain qualities attributed to space – the distorted grid, the dynamically shaped curve, the relationship between the Pavilion and the park. Thus, a space which possesses qualities – even if one were to solely consider Heidegger's definition – becomes a place. However, in this case, the place remains only a theoretical construct.

**The place pavilion**

Moving on to the second category of pavilions and taking into account the 13 years of experience, one can consider discussing a large number of places designed, built and dwelled on the lawn in front of the Serpentine Gallery. Borrowing Michel Foucault's term, one could even characterise the lawn as being a heterotopia which accumulates layer upon layer, place upon place, grids of spatial relationships, cuttings and transformed perspectives – summing up to different perceptual experiences. The uniqueness of this exercise consists in identifying the objects which can be considered to be places and relating them to one (or more) possible theoretical definitions of the concept.

Thus, proceeding chronologically, one engages in analysing the different spatial expressions and experiments which took place on the Serpentine lawn. Put differently, the possible physical definitions given to the space-place couple by architects will be analysed, as well as the practical methods of transgression, of cutting out space, of contextualising it, its degrees of permeability, degrees of delimitation, transparency and, finally, the manifestations of the place – in an architectural sense.

### Daniel Libeskind • 2001 Pavilion

The 2001 Pavilion, designed by Daniel Libeskind,[41] presents a volume inspired by origami figures – which also suggested the name of the Pavilion, Eighteen Turns. Although the inspiration is such a small and fragile object, Libeskind manages to transform his pavilion from an object into a spatial experience. The Pavilion's space is cut out and wrapped by a steel ribbon, however, without being completely separated from the exterior space. Thus, an interesting relationship is born between exterior and interior: although the boundaries are not explicit, being more suggestive than material, the visitor can still very clearly distinguish where the interior ends and the exterior

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[41] Serpentine Gallery, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2001 by Daniel Libeskind with Arup", *Serpentine Gallery*, accessed June 15, 2013, http://www.serpentinegallery.org/ 2001/06/serpentine_gallery_pavilion_20_4.html.

begins. In addition, on one hand, the smooth surface of the aluminium panels cut the space just like a razor blade, and, on the other, they reflect the texture of the vegetation hosting the Pavilion. On the outside, the broken folds and sharp angles make the Pavilion seem cold and distant, while on the inside the wooden surface is warm and surprises offering astonishing perspectives "highlighting the beauty of the Gardens and their connection to the Gallery".[42]

Although it is not an innovative proposal from a structural point of view, Libeskind's Pavilion timidly manages to become a *place*: it cuts out an accidental volume of space and it endows it with *quality*. "*Eighteen Turns* was a special place of discovery, intimacy and gathering"[43] (italics added).

Libeskind is a place creator; he has a certain flair for creating through architecture something more than just enclosures, limits or folds of space. As an architect, he manages to play with the visitor's mind or to surprise them with unexpected situations and transpose them into another perceptual world. He accomplished this in the case of complex building types, of permanent architecture, as well.

For Libeskind, space, in itself, becomes the actual building material, replacing the conventional building materials. He has the ability of provoking very intense emotions, which can be, at times, contradictory.

### Toyo Ito • 2002 Pavilion

Toyo Ito has a Japanese cultural background, thus being part of a culture where space and spatiality have different meanings than in the European frame of reference. On the one hand, the Japanese context has a certain type of playfulness, a ludic quality which is more frequently met than in the European one. On the other hand, space, in itself – including traditional architecture – has more permissive boundaries. The difference between interior and exterior is not as clear as it is in the European culture – the limits are more diffuse and are somehow more metaphorical than physical. The limit, the boundary of the space is achieved in a much more sophisticated and subtle manner. Koji Taki[44] states that Ito has managed to conceive new meanings for the term of "light" architecture, a particular architecture which is felt as being "ephemeral". The quality of the space – especially its fluidity – has been a constant preoccupation of Ito's:

> "Ten years ago I was going to produce fluid space through an expression which is different from pure geometry […]. However, the method of structural analysis, which is not separate from the method of articulation by means of conventional geometry, prevented me from producing the fluid space. I could not get the new spaces. They became a heavy expression. They were confined to the range of Euclidean geometry.
> I think that the present day city space is still unable to escape from the modernist grid. It is a fundamentally modern artificial environment. People are discussing environmental problems now. However, the space has not changed at all. The space that contains the fluid of nature is necessary for us. Although

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[42] Serpentine Gallery, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2001 by Daniel Libeskind with Arup".
[43] Ibid.
[44] Koji Taki, "A Conversation with Toyo Ito", *El Croquis* 123 (2004): 6–15, 6.

Sendai [Mediatheque] was isolated, what I wanted to achieve there was to produce a free space that was similar to nature."[45]

Starting with the Sendai Mediatheque project – which represented a turning point in Ito's career – we can spot several clear characteristics which were to define his style:

"lightness and simplicity, the negotiation of formality, flexibility and spatial fluidity, architecture as thin, transparent wrapper, as an unstable, transitory phenomenon, as a whirlpool and filter of natural and artificial floes, as the mark and landscape of human actions, as a crossing and passage point of activities, as a permeable membrane between interior and exterior."[46]

The commission for the 2002 Pavilion[47] came at a moment when Ito – in his search for a fluid space – was interested in non-linear design. These interests were a perfect match with Cecil Balmond's appetite for studying "unstable things"[48] – expressing, for example, frozen movements in different phases. Thus emerged the idea of an algorithm – a rule which determines an apparently random composition. In the case of the Serpentine Pavilion, the starting point was a cube articulated through the algorithm of a square which is rotated and expanded, at the same time. Finally, a cube emerges, which is then cut by a network of random lines which define transparent or translucent triangles and trapezoids. These manage to induce a feeling of perpetual movement upon the space – "as if it were a structure in constant rotation".[49] From a perceptual point of view, the composition displaces a certain volume of space, which is then fragmented, reconstructed and twirled. The perspective is thus cut by all these transparent panels, restructuring it into a kaleidoscopic image. Thus, the perception of the reality gains a ludic dimension – so typical for the Japanese space – and, at the same time, a dynamic one, as well: from each point of the pavilion the surrounding reality is recomposed differently in an opaque-translucent-transparent game.

"The design begins with an incomplete, de-centred square that is swivelled off the building plan, making the order imperceptible in the end result. There is an underlying formal structure, although it does not exist consciously (perhaps it does so subconsciously), projecting a dynamic feeling."[50]

Besides the structural ingenuity of combining the structural elements with the enveloping ones, the Serpentine Pavilion succeeds in reorganising and restructuring space, transforming it into a place.

The place proposed by Ito has a peculiar quality: it is not the ordinary space used by architecture – enclosed, capsulated, clearly labelled as interiority – it is rather a

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[45] Taki, "A Conversation with Toyo Ito", 13.

[46] Juan Antonio Cortés, "Beyond Modernism, Beyond Sendai – Toyo Ito's search for a new organic architecture", *El Croquis* 123 (2004): 17–43, 19.

[47] Cf. Toyo Ito, "Structural Expression – Direct from Materials – The Pavilions of Bruges and London", *The Japan Architect* 47 (2002): 4–7; Thomas Madlener, "Temporary Pavilion in London", *Detail* 9 (2002): 1028–1029; Serpentine Gallery, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2002 by Toyo Ito and Cecil Balmond with Arup", *Serpentine Gallery*, accessed June 16, 2013, http://www.serpentinegallery.org/2002/06/serpentine_gallery_pavilion_20_3.html.

[48] Taki, "A Conversation with Toyo Ito", 12.

[49] Cortés, "Beyond Modernism, Beyond Sendai", 31.

[50] Ibid., 31.

space which is trying to escape, to remain exterior, although it is interior, which is playful and that recomposes its own kaleidoscopic reality and where the only thing that matters is light. Ito's architecture is an experimental space, a diffuse place, having the imprecise quality of being "blurring architecture".[51]

### *Ólafur Elíasson and Kjetil Thorsen • 2007 Pavilion*

Experimenting with space has become a profession for Ólafur Elíasson. Since 1995, when he moved to Berlin, Elíasson, together with his team – which has reached approximately 70 people – produces installations, art projects, text and concepts about space. One of the most interesting experiments is the meeting he organises almost yearly since 2006, entitled "Life is space".[52] This event, invariably lasting for only one day, is an informal meeting between scientists, artists, savants, dancers, theoreticians and experts of movement, who discuss, share and present their opinions and experiments related to space, extent and space practise.

In this context, the 2007 Serpentine Pavilion project followed somehow naturally. Elíasson collaborated for this project with Kjetil Thorsen, of Snøhetta. The idea of the project emerged from a discussion about shape. Elíasson says that a shape without content is meaningless and, taking it one step further, he argues that:

> "content is only content when it's real, and reality is only real when there's temporality. So we've tried to amplify the idea of content by giving the pavilion a shape that stretches temporality. 'Stretching' here means that it almost translates your presence into a temporal matter. […] we have focused on a ramp and the movement around the centre of the pavilion. It's almost like a centrifugal force. The dynamics involved in the pavilion's shape are closely related to how you experience it as you move through it. This, of course, suggests that the best way of seeing this pavilion is to involve yourself with it. And this is where the content is produced. Content is not just programmatic – it's also when people go from a state of indifference to a state of difference, it's creating difference. And if the shape of the pavilion can transport people from indifference to difference, whether they like it or not, we have already created something. This is why the sails, the floor, and the roof are a kind of animation. Every aspect of the design has been laid out to suggest that if you move, the pavilion will immediately look slightly different. And, of course, it's based on the quite simple idea that if you lift people off the ground, you challenge both their horizontal and vertical orientation."[53]

Elíasson's discourse is full of references attesting his openness towards other disciplines. This way of experiencing space through movement – actually defining place through movement – and seeing space as an evolving process, are the outcome of the

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[51] Dana Vais, *Global și local în arhitectura contemporană (Global and Local in Contemporary Architecture)* (Cluj-Napoca: U. T. Press, 2011), 113.

[52] Olafur Elíasson Studio, "Life is Space", *Olafur Elíasson Studio*, accessed June 18, 2013, www.olafureliasson.net/studio.html.

[53] Obrist, Hans U., "VII – The vessel interview, part I: NetJets flight from Berlin to Dubrovnik, 2007", in *Olafur Elíasson & Hans Ulrich Obrist: The Conversation Series* vol. 13, ed. Matthew Gaskins, 143-161, Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König, 2008, 148.

conversations he had with Doreen Massey.[54] Elíasson's main focus is renegotiating the contact between space and the individual. Elíasson's place oscillates between the opaque enclosure of the central volume – a centred, introverted space which communicates with the exterior only through an ellipsoidal oculus – and the almost immaterial limit traced by the space of the ramp through its sunshades made out of twisted ropes. The dynamic ramp surrounding the central volume is exacerbated by the image of the sunshades – which generate an optical illusion of movement, emphasised when the visitor is also on the move. The 2007 Pavilion truly succeeds in experimenting with the space-place couple in all of the three dimensions, altering the perception on space, while reshaping its own space, as well.

Elíasson's research eventually led to an academic teaching experiment. In 2009 he founded Institut für Raumexperimente [the Institute for Spatial Experiment], a project enrolled with the Department of Visual Arts of the Arts University in Berlin. This project understands teaching as a process, as well as encouraging a multi-layered and multidirectional development.[55] When talking about the school, Elíasson says:

> "I hope the school participants – 'teachers' and 'students' alike – will enter the cacophony of voices that constitute its core. Giving and taking is equally distributed. Inspiration is for all. What we will produce in this encounter is reality. It will be a laboratory for experience, but probably nobody will see this experiment as being essentially a model until tomorrow."[56]

Above all, Elíasson's installations, experiments and school become a very concrete manner of applying, studying, observing and experimenting on all contemporary theories on space and place.

### Frank Gehry • 2008 Pavilion

Frank Gehry's architecture can be probably best placed somewhere in between Baroque and postmodernism, being spiced up with a little deconstructivism. Gehry[57] is aware that, upon a closer look, his buildings may provoke anxiety states because they are very different from the conventional meaning and concept of a building. The space of Gehry's buildings is, usually, caught between two folds; it is a wrapped space, with soft edges, which surprises and captures the visitors somewhere between discomfort and excitement.

Gehry's architecture – if we were to be objective – does not necessarily create places, it rather creates an architecture in search for new formal expressions – a play of shapes, materials and light. Gehry's buildings are oversized sculptures, which host different functions. As the architect himself states, he spiritually feels closer to the artistic world than he does to architecture. His buildings truly show the fact that Gehry

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[54] Olafur Elíasson Studio, "Life is Space".

[55] Institut für Raumexperimente, "Nothing is Ever the Same", *Institut für Raumexperimente,* accessed June 18, 2013, www.raumexperimente.net/meta/nothing-is-ever-the-same/.

[56] Institut für Raumexperimente, "Nothing is Ever the Same".

[57] Esther M. Sternberg, *Healing Places: The Science of Place and Well-Being* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 126–128.

is an artist of textures and light.[58] (Pollack, 2006) The space is moulded by Gehry, just like a piece of clay. In the case of his buildings, space is not the background of a social activity, it is not designed to be lived in; it is rather a space that becomes an entity in itself, wanting to be gazed upon. It is a space which enchants the eye, but which possesses in itself such a powerful character that it cannot be embedded with the personality and character of its inhabitants. Gehry's space cannot be dwelled in a phenomenological sense.

However, in the case of the 2008 Pavilion, Gehry seems to have turned back in time designing an image which cites his own house in Santa Monica, California. Although he refuses to be labelled as a deconstructivist, in the case of the Serpentine Pavilion, Gehry decides to play with the boundaries of space and its quality of being interior or exterior – he composes, de-composes and re-composes parts of the building, generating a new spatiality. Space is no longer a unique and uniform volume, each of the canopies seem to have attached to it a slice of interiority, alternating with the remaining interspaces – or exteriorities.

As in the case of the Gehry residence, the Serpentine Pavilion seems to be unfinished, as well – it looks like a construction site frozen up at a random and indecisive moment. Its inspiration sources are multiple, oscillating between the catapult designed by Leonardo da Vinci and the ruins of abandoned beach booths.[59] The structure of the composition is rather simple: the central area is composed of four robust pillars tight together by beams of similar dimensions – a promenade linking the park with the gallery – and a network of glass canopies – the ludic element – which is bordered on both sides by steps and five elevated platforms, which mark the end of the promenade.[60] Although the composition is based on the trilithon structural principle, it ends up by recomposing the enveloping elements in an explosive movement, frozen up in a manner in which the space becomes multidimensional, generating a layering of places – the place for promenade, the place for discussions, the place for observations, the place for playing, the place for relaxation, the place for reflection.

> "From a distance, the pavilion – with its massive, steel-reinforced Douglas fir columns and beams and its roof of angled, suspended glass planes – looks like an explosion in an architecture factory. Up close, of course, it's a different story.
> The structure's expansive interior is classic Gehry: muscular but friendly. […] The hulking timbers were inspired by bridge designs from the ancient Romans and Leonardo da Vinci and illustrate Gehry's obsession with 'big wood'. The 'street' frames a view of the gallery, a diminutive neo-Classical-style building that none of the previous architects ever really addressed. […] Compared with

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[58] *Sketches of Frank Gehry*, director: Sydney Pollack, production: Ultan Guilfoyle, Sony Pictures Classics, 2006.

[59] Serpentine Gallery, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2008 by Frank Gehry", *Serpentine Gallery*, accessed June 18, 2013, http://www.serpentinegallery.org/2008/03/frank_gehry_pavilion_2008.html.

[60] Cf. Steve Rose, "A jangling mass on the Serpentine horizon", *the Guardian,* March 26, 2008, accessed June 20, 2013, http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/artblog/2008/mar/26/asnakingcoilontheserpenti?INTCMP=SRCH; Maev Kennedy, "A rainy first look at Gehry's summer pavilion", *the Guardian*, July 9, 2008, accessed June 20, 2013, http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2008/jul/09/art.architecture2.

its predecessors, this pavilion looks almost primitive. Gehry calls it a reaction to the computer-designed buildings that are so prevalent today."[61]

Gehry has a genuinely refined contextual sensitivity, which is obvious in the manner in which he integrates most of his buildings, and this quality transpires here, as well. The Pavilion he proposes is the materialisation of a playful transition between the permanent gallery and the park's organic vegetation. From a compositional point of view, this "street" which he creates becomes the space, the place of movement between the gallery and nature, integrating both, emphasising them, by composing them as main perspective points. With this small Serpentine Pavilion, Gehry succeeds in superimposing several places, several ways in which the Pavilion can be experienced, dwelled and viewed. However, at the same time, Gehry also succeeded in tracing a link between the built and the natural – a contextualist link which highlights both ends of the promenade.

Gehry is very much in command of his abilities to work with and create space, thus achieving to elevate architecture to a state of ludic experiment, a state of enjoying the architectural promenade, of experimenting with the limits of the concept of space – with spatiality seen as an artistic concept.

"It's not new that architecture can profoundly affect a place, sometimes transform it. Architecture and any art can transform a person, even save someone. It can for children – for anyone. It still does for me."[62]


### *Kazuyo Sejima și Ryue Nishizawa • 2009 Pavilion*

The architecture of the SANAA partners – Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa – is not part of the Japanese mainstream architecture. Their architecture – of a profound Japanese character – establishes a feeling of reciprocity between the interior and the exterior: the exterior is perpetually trying to cross over into the interior and to leave its mark, while the interior is permanently trying to open itself to the exterior. The space – caught in between interiority and exteriority – thus becomes a means of communication.[63] The architecture produced by SANAA has been labelled as "a new innocence"[64] – an architecture which has a ludic dimension, without actually being childish –, pure architecture – but lacking any purist or modernist connotations: it is a playful architecture which makes one feel playful, as well. It is a game of architecture which creates new, very sensible spaces of a human scale, but which, at the same time, propose surprising spatial combinations and compositions.

The architecture of SANAA is an extra light architecture – a quality due to the materials being used and, even more, due to the fact that the architecture is being

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[61] Pilar Vildas, "Butterfly Fracture", *The New York Times*, August 15, 2008, accessed July 20, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/17/magazine/17Style-t.html?_r=0.
[62] Craven, Jackie, "Frank Gehry Talks Frankly", *About.com*, accessed June 20, 2013, http://architecture.about.com/od/20thcenturytrends/a/Frank-Gehry-Interview.htm.
[63] Cf. Mohsen Mostafavi, "A Conversation with Kazuyo Sejima & Ryue Nishizawa", *El Croquis* 155 (2011): 6–16, 11; Mohsen Mostafavi, "Inorganic Architecture", *El Croquis* 155 (2011): 245–251.
[64] Mostafavi, "A Conversation with Kazuyo Sejima & Ryue Nishizawa", 11.

treated as being rather something temporary, modifiable, and not being characterised by the solidity of European buildings.

> "Architecture in Tokyo is really light. Because of the climate, we appreciate inside/outside in a kind of even way. Then we also have earthquakes, so our buildings must be very light to withstand them. There are many reasons why architecture is not that heavy in our case."[65]

Besides the technical motivation, the architects of SANAA are trying to look for a new approach in dealing with space, which probably has more in common with art than architecture. Nishizawa seems to be fascinated by the way in which artists understand and approach space. He sees their technique as being more primitive, a more direct manner of working with space – an approach very close to his personal purism. Although SANAA creates a similar space, theirs has a more profound architectural meaning because, besides being perceptual, space has to be, first of all, functional. Their connection to the world of art becomes obvious in the fact that artists seem to understand better the motivations behind the spaces created by SANAA, even more than architects do.[66]

When reading between the lines of the architecture produced by SANAA, one can observe that their 2009 Pavilion[67] is part of their natural conceptual path. When talking about the boundaries of space, this Pavilion is probably the most minimalistic proposal yet. Practically, the difference between the space of the Pavilion and the surrounding space limits itself to a horizontal plane which is covered by a diffuse canopy. Even so, the Pavilion succeeds in drawing a very clear contour in the landscape of the park.

> "The Pavilion is floating aluminium, drifting freely between the trees like smoke. The reflective canopy undulates across the site, expanding the park and sky. Its appearance changes according to the weather, allowing it to melt into the surroundings. It works as a field of activity with no walls, allowing uninterrupted view across the park and encouraging access from all sides. It is a sheltered extension of the park where people can read, relax and enjoy lovely summer days."[68]

The Pavilion designed by SANAA is the best choice in exemplifying the phenomenological concept of place. With a minimum effort, through the way in which it is lived – or even dwelled – the Pavilion becomes a place. The Pavilion's organic canopy seems to be the outcome of enclosing the interspaces between the trees. The Pavilion is thus organically linked to its natural context, however, at the same time, it

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[65] Ibid., 11.

[66] Ibid., 16.

[67] Cf. Serpentine Gallery, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2009 by Kazuyo Sejima & Ryue Nishizawa of SANAA", *Serpentine Gallery*, accessed June 21, 2013, http://www.serpentinegallery.org/2009/02/SANAA_serpentine_gallery_pavilion_2009.html; David Basulto, "The 2009 Serpentine Gallery Pavilion by SANAA", *ArchDaily,* July 11, 2009, accessed June 21, 2013, http://www.archdaily.com/28672/the-2009-serpentine-gallery-pavilion-sanaa/; Sebastiano Jordana, "SANAA's Serpentine Pavilion Design First Image", *ArchDaily,* April 1, 2009, accessed June 21, 2013, http://www.archdaily.com/18429/sanaas-serpentine-pavillion-design-first-image/.

[68] Serpentine Gallery, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2009 by Kazuyo Sejima & Ryue Nishizawa of SANAA".

remains in essence a building. Its shape, the use of aluminium as a reflecting surface and the incredibly minuscule dimension of its structural elements, transform the Pavilion into a chameleon-like object, hiding and camouflaging itself in nature. The Pavilion seems to have a life of its own, to breath, to become brighter or darker, keeping up with the rhythm of nature.

Unlike Frank Gehry's Pavilion, which is trying to establish a link between the permanent building of the Gallery and the park, the 2009 Pavilion is practically in a symbiotic relationship with the park, while totally ignoring the building of the Gallery. The space, the place SANAA created is dedicated to living in and for nature. The Pavilion seems to be an almost unstable instance, on one hand leaning towards the park, towards the earth, and, on the other, rising towards the sky. This varying height has an amazing effect upon the quality of space – which varies between the intimacy of a den and the open space, a space to meet in, a space for all.[69]

> "Sejima and Nishizawa have created a stunning Pavilion that resembles a reflective cloud or a floating pool of water, sitting atop a series of delicate columns. The metal roof structure varies in height, wrapping itself around the trees in the park, reaching up towards the sky and sweeping down almost to the ground in various places. Open and ephemeral in structure, its reflective materials make it sit seamlessly within the natural environment, reflecting both the park and sky around it."[70]

The space flows steadily, with no right angles. The space is inspired by the movement of the body – by its organic and not linear nature. Consequently, the interactions among its visitors can be more diverse than a simple intersection – as is the case of linear compositions – proof that architecture can in fact influence behaviour.[71]

### *Jean Nouvel • 2010 Pavilion*

> "I'm no magician, but I try to create a space that isn't legible, a space that works as the mental extension of sight. This seductive space, this virtual space of illusion, is based on very precise strategies, strategies that are often diversionary. I frequently use what I find around me […]. So when I say that I play with depth of field, it's because I'm trying to foreground a series of filters that could lead anywhere – a kind of metanarrative – but from that point on, the intellect goes into action."[72]

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[69] Jonathan Glacey, "Sanaa unveils enchanting Serpentine pavilion", *The Guardian,* April 2, 2009, accessed June 21, 2013, http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2009/apr/01/architecture-design-serpentine-pavilion; David Basulto, "Opening day at the Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2009", *ArchDaily,* July 12, 2009, accessed June 21, 2013, http://www.archdaily.com/28711/opening-day-at-the-serpentine-gallery-pavilion-2009/.

[70] Serpentine Gallery, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2009 by Kazuyo Sejima & Ryue Nishizawa of SANAA".

[71] David Basulto, "Rolex Learning Center / SANAA", *ArchDaily,* February 18, 2010, accessed June 21, 2013, http://www.archdaily.com/50235/rolex-learning-center-sanaa/.

[72] Jean Baudrillard and Jean Nouvel, *The Singular objects for architecture*, trans. Robert Bononno (Minneapolis MN, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 6.

In the dialogue he had with Jean Baudrillard, Jean Nouvel speaks about space, about his space, a diffuse space, lacking clear limits, a space caught between the numerous layers of the envelope. Nouvel's space has an almost kinetic quality. His experiments are rather cerebral, calculated and in a perpetual search for a manner of diluting and re-interpreting space. Space is permanently trying to become a place, it attempts to sneak itself between the different layers which produce innumerable optical illusions, to dissimulate, to escape and produce the illusion of being interiority – of becoming architecture, Jean Nouvel's architecture.

> "With respect to what architecture has borrowed from cinema, the concept of sequence is very important, as Paul Virilio reminds us. In other words, concepts such as displacement, speed, memory seen in terms of an imposed trajectory, or a known trajectory, enable us to compose an architectural space based not only on what we see but on what we have memorized as a succession of sequences that are perceived to follow one another. From this point on, there are contrasts between what is created and what was originally present in our perception of space."[73]

Nouvel's space is a game, a game of reality and perception, between a physical dimension and a mental representation – the reconstruction of space in a virtual, personalised manner. Nouvel's architecture is, indeed, kinetic, joggling between spatial creation and spatial representation. His buildings define space, they enclose it; however, at the same time, they multiply it, reflect, distort and compress it. It is an architecture between real and virtual, an architecture which plays with the senses and with the boundaries of space. The architecture Nouvel creates is an architecture which truly tests the perceptual mechanism and the individual's ability of succeeding to map a diffuse and uncertain spatiality.

Baudrillard, even states that Nouvel conceives space "in such a way that architecture simultaneously creates both place and nonplace […] and thus creates a kind of apparition."[74] The 2010 Pavilion[75] exemplifies indeed this idea. If we were to characterise it with a single word, this would have to be dramatic. From a distance, the Pavilion seems to be an entanglement of shapes and materials, which vary from transparent and fuzzy to metallic shine and glass vibrations: a multitude of textures and densities, all in a single, invariable shade of scarlet red. For Nouvel, it is very important that the manner in which this building is perceived should be based less on the sense of sight and more on exploring the other senses. The 2010 Pavilion is probably the most sensorial one yet – a building which seeks to be smelled, touched

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[73] Baudrillard and Nouvel, *The Singular objects for architecture*, 6.

[74] Ibid., 9.

[75] Cf. Serpentine Gallery, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2010 by Jean Nouvel", *Serpentine Gallery*, accessed June 24, 2013, http://www.serpentinegallery.org/2010/03/jean_nouvel_serpentine _gallery_pavilion_2010.html; David Basulto, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2010: Jean Nouvel", *ArchDaily,* March 23, 2010, accessed June 24, 2013, http://www.archdaily.com/53661/serpentine-gallery-pavilion-2010-jean-nouvel/; Karen Cilento, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2010 / Jean Nouvel", *ArchDaily,* July 6, 2010, accessed June 24, 2013, http://www.archdaily.com/67566/serpentine-gallery-pavilion-2010-jean-nouvel-2/; Karen Cilento, "Update: Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2010 / Jean Nouvel", *ArchDaily,* July 16, 2010, accessed June 24, 2013, http://www.archdaily.com/69185/update-serpentine-gallery-pavilion-jean-nouvel/.

and which will be re-composed each time into a different mental representation. The use of the colour red next to its complementary pair – the green of the vegetation – produces the most powerful chromatic contrast there is. This red wraps the interior space, modifying it in an instant. The difference between the interior and the exterior is realised, in this case, not through the traditional manner of a plane – the wall, the screen or the panel – but through red light, through colouring the enclosed volume of space. The space of the Pavilion – the place that is created – is established through the vertical accent of the metallic panel, through the reflexion of the red glass, through the fluttering of the textile material, through the bumped texture of the polycarbonate and through its red shadows.[76]

> "In one way, the pavilion is a sun machine, a way of directing sunlight. In another, it is a fragile flower that rises in the park in the summer sun, wilts in the autumn, and then vanishes. Of course, red is also the colour of London in some ways – the buses, the pillar boxes, the soldiers of the Queen – but mostly red is about the sun."[77]

The 2010 Pavilion is truly a perceptual experiment. Interacting with it literally transforms: when one enters its space, one turns red – the light one sees is red, the air one breaths is red, the chair one sits on is red, the cup one drinks out of is red, the clothes one wears are red, one probably even ends up thinking red! It is a building, an architecture, which manages to redefine the interaction with space.

Nouvel is in a continuous search for a metaphysical definition of space. From this point of view, the Serpentine Pavilion is not by far the first of its kind. On the contrary, it is part of a vast experience of searching for a method to filter, reflect and compress space.

Jean Nouvel's space is empathetic, a space that resonates with those whom it shelters. The spaces created by Nouvel are experimental spaces, spaces which are attempting to test the perceptual limits, and precisely because of that, they are selfish, introverted, hermetical – metaphysical – spaces.

### Peter Zumthor • 2011 Pavilion

Peter Zumthor claims that architecture is not a language, it is meant to be lived – one cannot dwell a language.[78] Zumthor rather relates architecture to the relationships one establishes with the place, with its memory, feeling or atmosphere.[79] Architecture, in Zumthor's vision, succeeds when it reflects the manner in which space is lived. Architecture, in general, has to be able to accumulate the traces of dwelling – all the scratches, splinters, cracks, bumps produced by the act of dwelling. For Zumthor, architecture becomes place when it is exposed to daily activities.

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[76] Cilento, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2010 / Jean Nouvel".

[77] Cilento, "Update: Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2010 / Jean Nouvel".

[78] Nico Saieh, "Multiplicity and Memory: Talking About Architecture with Peter Zumthor", *ArchDaily,* November 2, 2010, accessed June 25, 2013, http://www.archdaily.com/ 85656/multiplicity-and-memory-talking-about-architecture-with-peter-zumthor/.

[79] Jay Merrick, "Peter Zumthor's experiments in space", *The Independent,* June 6, 2011, accessed June 25, 2013, http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/architecture/peter-zumthors-experiments-in-space-2293428.html.

"In architecture, there are two basic possibilities of spatial composition: the closed architectural body which isolates space within itself, and the open body which embraces an area of space that is connected with the endless continuum.[…]

I do not claim to know what space really is. The longer I think about it, the more mysterious it becomes. About one thing, however, I am sure: when we, as architects, are concerned with space, we are concerned with but a tiny part of the infinity that surrounds the earth, and yet each and every building marks a unique place in this infinity. […]

Buildings that have a strong impact always convey an intense feeling of their spatial quality. They embrace the mysterious void called space in a special way and make it vibrate."[80]

Zumthor's space is basic. It is a space of exclusion, a selfish space which has no room for action, being instead dedicated to contemplation – an architecture which was not meant to be seen, but was meant to be felt, to be lived. Zumthor's architecture works with definite cuts. His space is not ambiguous, fluid or bivalent; on the contrary, it is hermetical. It is not only determined, it is isolated, as well – cut out of its context, separated from the everyday, constructing its own, private universe.

*Hortus conclusus* – Zumthor's proposal for the 2011 Pavilion – is an example of this particular kind of contemplative space, which cuts out a surface of the greenery, practically proposing a garden inside a garden. Still, the two spaces are amazingly different. Thus, the park remains a public space, a space for activities, an extroverted space, while the Pavilion is a metaphor of a primordial nature, of a conceptual nature, achieving a cultural level. The garden is a tamed nature, which becomes a sanctuary, a magical place to which one relates to on the intimate level of fragility – a contemplation place, which is alive.

"A garden is the most intimate landscape ensemble I know of. It is close to us. There we cultivate the plants we need. A garden requires care and protection. And so we encircle it, we defend it and fend for it. We give it shelter. The garden turns into a *place*."[81] (italics added)

The Pavilion is a black box, an enclosed space which is charged by the emotional intensities emanated by its visitors – a collection of daily pensive fragments. The Pavilion is also literally a black box, cutting out its own space, which is clearly thrown into relief by the colourful, organic lines of the vegetation. Even the transitional space between interior and exterior – the width of the volume surrounding the garden – becomes the darkness of shadows which forewarns, which prepares the visitor for something else – for a place. The only compromise the Pavilion accepts, in relation to its context, is the fact that the access is not restricted to a single entrance, it actually offers several perforations at the end of various footpaths winding among the trees – the only curves the building has to offer.

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[80] Peter Zumthor, *Thinking Architecture,* trans. Maureen Oberli-Turner (Basel, Boston MA, Berlin: Birkhäuser, 1999), 21.

[81] Serpentine Gallery, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2011 by Peter Zumthor", *Serpentine Gallery*, accessed June 25, 2013, http://www.serpentinegallery.org/2011/04/serpentine_gallery _pavillion_2011_zumthor.html.

"I'm looking for architecture space, and architecture space, as we know, is a void. It's a mysterious void, and we can only influence it. We can shape this void, and we can influence it through its materiality. It's like membranes that you can stretch and pull. So that's what I want – I want to control it … that's not the right word … I want to design something that doesn't exist. It doesn't exist, so I have to do it."[82]

Zumthor's architecture, consisting mainly of isolated objects, which are self-centred, introverted and unrelated to their context, creates a space unclearly situated between architecture and land art. It is a space which produces a sensorial architectural experience. It is an architectural cloister, which works with light, shadows and textures – a place which is able to live in itself and through itself, being self-sufficient from a perceptual point of view.

"To me, buildings can have a beautiful silence that I associate with attributes such as composure, self-evidence, durability, presence, and integrity, and with warmth and sensuousness as well; a building that is being itself, being a building, not representing anything, just being."[83]

Zumthor gives birth to architecture in a purely intuitively manner, a result of the places he carries in his mind as feelings, experiences, space fragments, qualities, bits of artworks, films, literature and even someone else's architecture.

### Herzog & de Meuron and Ai Weiwei • 2012 Pavilion

The 2012 Pavilion[84] was probably the most controversial project. The critics were more or less acid, characterising it with different epithets raging from installation to anti-architecture. However, if one were to follow the discussions which took place during over a decade of collaboration between Jacques Herzog, Pierre de Meuron and Ai Weiwei, one could sense the germs of the idea behind this pavilion in several ways, including in some of Weiwei's previous projects – as Herzog remarks.[85]

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[82] Serpentine Gallery, "Peter Zumthor in Conversation with Hans Ulrich Obrist and Julia Peyton-Jones", *Serpentine Gallery*, accessed June 25, 2013, http://www.serpentinegallery.org/ Final%20PZ%20interview%2015%20Feb%202012.pdf.

[83] Zumthor, *Thinking Architecture,* 32.

[84] Cf. Steve Rose, "Herzog & de Meuron: and now for our next trick…", *The Guardian,* May 23 2012, accessed June 28, 2013, http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2012/may/23/ herzog-de-meuron-next-trick; Jay Merrick, "Memories of the far pavilions: A sneak preview of this year's offbeat addition to Hyde Park", *The Independent,* May 26, 2012, accessed June 28, 2013, http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/features/memories-of-the-far-pavilions-a-sneak-preview-of-this-years-offbeat-addition-to-hyde-park-7785735.html; Elias Redstone, "London Underground / Digging the Serpentine Pavilion", *T Magazine,* May 31, 2012, accessed June 28, 2013, http://tmagazine.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/05/31/london-underground-digging-the-serpentine-pavilion/?_r=0; Jonathan Glancey, "Herzog & de Meuron and Ai Weiwei's Serpentine Pavilion review", *The Telegraph,* May 31, 2012, accessed June 28, 2013, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/architecture/9303222/Herzog-and-de-Meuron-and-Ai-Weiweis-Serpentine-Pavilion-review.html.

[85] Ai Weiwei, Jacques Herzog, Pierre de Meuron, Hans U. Obrist, Julia Peyton-Jones, and Joseph Rykwert, "A conversation – Jacques Herzog, Pierre de Meuron and Ai Weiwei with Julia Peyton-Jones and Hans Ulrich Obrist" in *Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2012*, ed. Sophie

Herzog and de Meuron state that their architecture is permanently trying to experiment, no matter what the building type might be – stadium or pavilion – it is always searching to rethink the building type, its significance. Probably this is the main feature of their architecture: re-composing, asking radical questions, opposing repetition. Following this reasoning, the 2012 Pavilion, instead of proposing a new object, chose rather to focus on what has been instead of what might be. Thus, the idea of archaeology emerged, of designing a palimpsest of all previous pavilions.

From a spatial point of view, this approach raises a series of issues. First, there is a new type of relationship established in the linear history of the pavilion, a relationship established between real space and recalled space. From a perceptual point of view, there is a superposition between real and virtual. Practically, the physical space is cut out by a memory or a chain of memories belonging to that particular place. Past spaces are revived, re-born through their (mental) traces. Of course that this entire process is an imagined or imaginary archaeology – if one were to overlook the volume of relocated earth filling up the voids left behind by the foundations of the previous pavilions – a rather conceptual archaeology, which is able, however, to give birth to a totally original space, a layered space, a heterotopia, even.

> "This idea about the archaeology of past Serpentine Pavilions comes down to the fact that architecture is a total effort, as a history and as a human structure. We tried to make something very essential, very visceral; we wanted to put ourselves in a position where we could have a conversation with other people's efforts and to make a very clean and understandable gesture out of this."[86]

The space of the Pavilion does not go back in time only from a conceptual point of view. The Pavilion is physically placed underneath the Serpentine lawn, precisely because it wants to establish a relationship on a sensorial level with the previous pavilions. This relationship is emphasised by the fact that all surfaces are covered in cork. The use of cork facilitates the establishment of a tactile and olfactory dialogue with the visitors, by simulating the texture of dug out earth. Thus, the Pavilion produces probably the most sensorial space so far. From a perceptual point of view, not only does the 2012 proposal explore a conceptual space – the presence of a past state, which is now rather more absent than present –, but it explores a profoundly sensorial one, as well – visual, tactile, olfactory.

> "All of these traces of former Pavilions will now be revealed and reconstructed. The former foundations and footprints form a jumble of convoluted lines, like a sewing pattern. A distinctive landscape emerges that is unlike anything we could have invented; its form and shape is actually a serendipitous gift. The plastic reality of this landscape is astonishing and it is also the perfect place to sit, stand, lie down or just look and be awed. In other words, it is the ideal environment for continuing to do what visitors have been doing in the

O'Brien, Melissa Larner, Claire Feeley, London: Koenig Books and Serpentine Gallery, 2012 [page missing]; *apud* Herzog & de Meuron, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2012 - Conversation" *Herzog & de Meuron*, accessed June 28, 2013, http://www.herzogdemeuron.com/index/projects/complete-works/376-400/400-serpentine-gallery-pavilion/FOCUS/conversation.html.
[86] Weiwei, Herzog, de Meuron, Obrist, Peyton-Jones, and Rykwert, "A conversation"; *apud* Herzog & de Meuron, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2012 – Conversation".

Serpentine Gallery Pavilions over the past eleven years. The pavilion's interior is clad in cork – a natural material with great haptic and olfactory qualities and the versatility to be carved, cut, shaped and formed.

On the foundations of each single Pavilion, we extrude a new structure (supports, walls, slices) as load-bearing elements for the roof of our Pavilion – eleven supports all told, plus our own column, which we place at will, like a wild card. The roof resembles that of an archaeological site. It floats a few feet above the grass of the park, so that everyone visiting can see the water on its surface reflecting the infinitely varied, atmospheric skies of London."[87]

Thus, space becomes a dug out time capsule, opened to the public, proposing an approach which simply refuses to be part of the past twelve years' clearly drawn trajectory. Although many have been disappointed by Herzog, de Meuron and Weiwei's design, the Pavilion still fulfils its purpose, namely setting the pavilion, as a building type, in a new conceptual perspective – thus truly becoming a Thirdspace, putting it in Soja's terms.

### Sou Fujimoto • 2013 Pavilion

For Sou Fujimoto space has no historical connotation. His architecture has no historical link and has no intention of becoming part of history. Fujimoto's references are much more abstract, elementary. For him space is either a nest, or a cave.[88] Both are primary architectural forms, but, for Fujimoto, they are antithetical. On the one hand, the nest – or the created space – is in essence an organised, functional environment, dedicated, adjusted to the needs of the user – either human or animal in nature. The cave, on the other hand, has an autonomous existence; it does not depend on a necessity. As Fujimoto remarks, the cave is the result of a natural process, independent of convenience, independent of its inhabitants. In the case of the cave, the dweller is the one who has to assimilate the space, to assume it by adapting it. The dweller is the one who has to decide in what manner each surface or each area may be used. Fujimoto concludes that a cave is not functional, however it is heuristic – this type of space is precisely the one in which Fujimoto believes in, the one he considers to be the future of architecture.

Fujimoto's space is an adaptation and an update of a profound Japanese way of living. Japanese space is rather contemplative, it can adapt to nature, it can pulsate beside it, and it can be diffuse, developed gradually between interior and exterior. In this sense, the epithet of being primitive, suits Fujimoto rather well. The architect's point of view manages to include all these qualities in an almost mathematically contracted formula. Fujimoto's space is reduced to a maximum, to the most primitive and elementary dimensions and relationships which can be established with a space.

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[87] Serpentine Gallery, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2012 designed by Herzog & de Meuron and Ai Weiwei", *Serpentine Gallery,* accessed June 28, 2013, http://www.serpentinegallery.org/pavilion2012/pavilion/.
[88] Sou Fujimoto, "Primitive Future", *El Croquis* 151 (2012): 198–213.

"I have a sense that we need to really push the boundary and go one step further so that the process ceases to be a mere stacking of house forms. By doing that, I think a different and novel reality can emerge. Even as far as transcending the symbolic. At the same time, by stacking 'forcefully', I have a feeling that our conventions can be erased and enabled interact with spaces and conditions in a child-like manner. So I do not think that the ultimate goal is to just stack the house forms, but to generate architectural discoveries at various levels."[89]

Fujimoto's spatial experience oscillates between an intimate link with nature – a link he established growing up in an area of sparse population in Hokkaido – and a gradual link between private and public space – the urban space of Tokyo where the transition from his six tatami room to the public space was gradual, through a succession of spaces: the stairwell, the blind alley on which the house was situated, the alley, the street, the boulevard. The space of Tokyo has been reduced, in Fujimoto's opinion, to a range of intensities which vary between room, house and city.[90]

Fujimoto's architecture can be described as being a gradual space transposed in a technological era. His architecture possesses, on the one hand, an almost mathematical rigidity, given by its three-dimensional grid, which he uses so often, and, on the other, it grows organically, almost chaotically, pulsating in wider or narrower spaces – spaces which are to be assigned to different postures, different necessities, different functions. Practically Fujimoto creates anthropogenic caves.

The 2013 Serpentine Pavilion is precisely such a combination of a three-dimensional grid – the "hard," abstract, mathematical core – and the final soft, organic shape – the cloud. Although from a distance it seems to be rather a sculpture, up close, the pavilion proves itself to be conceived precisely as a cave. It is a volume made of a network of metallic bars – impenetrable, but at the same time transparent – thus being dissimulated in the landscape. It is a man-made type of geometrical rigidity, which is trying to interpret the natural process of generating shapes – shapes which are soft, organic, and playful.

The volume becomes almost immaterial, being difficult to comprehend where the interior ends and where the exterior begins. The created space has the quality of being over or under, to the left or to the right, narrow or wide, while being interior or exterior proves to be less important. The space created by Fujimoto raises no questions regarding the issues of interiority or exteriority; it rather experiments with the laws of gravity and with the subtle perception of the limit. Visiting the pavilion, climbing up to different niches, at different levels, stepping on transparent glass surfaces, one ends up floating somewhere among the vegetation in the fine and diffuse network of a white cloud.

"For the 2013 Pavilion I propose an architectural landscape: a transparent terrain that encourages people to interact with and explore the site in diverse ways. Within the pastoral context of Kensington Gardens, I envisage the vivid greenery of the surrounding plant life woven together with a constructed geometry. A new form of environment will be created, where the natural and the man-made merge; not solely architectural, nor solely natural, but a unique meeting of the two. […]

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[89] Ryue Nishizawa, "Conversation between Ryue Nishizawa and Sou Fujimoto", *El Croquis* 115 (2010): 5–19, 9.
[90] Nishizawa, "Conversation between Ryue Nishizawa and Sou Fujimoto", 10.

The delicate quality of the structure, enhanced by its semi-transparency, will create a geometric, cloud-like form, as if it were mist rising from the undulations of the park. From certain vantage points, the Pavilion will appear to merge with the classical structure of the Serpentine Gallery, with visitors suspended in space."[91]

Fujimoto's assumed goal is not to design buildings, but to create spaces, thus taking a journey back to the origins, as he puts it, to the essence of the relationship between space and man – "an architectural garden" which lacks walls, flat surfaces, even colours![92] Fujimoto is trying to create spaces which can become a different kind of background, a background which allows people to behave differently from the everyday.[93]

The Serpentine Pavilion is actually part of a long series of spatial experiments – experiments which joggle shapes, materials and playfulness. From a perceptual point of view, Fujimoto's space is probably the most interesting one yet, because it succeeded in identifying and cultivating a type of spatial relationship which precedes architecture, it even precedes building altogether. His experiments produce different perceptions, a different way of structuring space, somehow more elementary, but which succeeds in producing places of an incredible sensibility.

His space is the result of technology; however it manages to remain primitive, elementary. It is a manmade, geometrical, rigours space, a grid-like space, which functions, however, according to organic and, in the end, natural principles, gradually linking the interior with the exterior, making its limits, level of intimacy and functions adaptable.

**Experimenting between space and place**

The Serpentine experiment proves itself to be not just an experiment of artistic expression, a manifestation of the architectural will, but also a crucible of spatial tests. The ephemeral condition which defines pavilion architecture allows a much more permissive conceptual process. The pavilion can be seen as a 1:1 scale model of the theories regarding the space-place relationship. In addition, based on the last 14 years' experience of Serpentine Pavilions, space can be cut out, enclosed, compressed or diluted in various ways. However, the most important conclusion which can be drawn is related to the quality of the space.

From a perceptual point of view, the space enclosed by the successive pavilions designed on Serpentine Gallery's lawn, cannot be categorised by a single definition. Even though at the beginning two major categories were identified – the ones focusing on an image and the ones that experiment with space itself, not only with its envelope –

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[91] Serpentine Gallery, "Serpentine Gallery Pavilion 2013 designed by Sou Fujimoto", Serpentine Gallery, accessed June 30, 2013, http://www.serpentinegallery.org/2013/02/sou_fujimoto_to_design_serpentine_gallery_pavilion_2013.html.
[92] Rowan Moore, "Sou Fujimoto and building with nature", *The Guardian*, May 25, 2013, accessed June 30, 2013, http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2013/may/25/sou-fujimoto-serpentine-pavilion-interview.
[93] Oliver Wainwright, "Serpentine Gallery becomes Serpen-Torn with radical new pavilion", *The Guardian*, June 4, 2013, accessed June 30, 2013, http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2013/jun/04/serpentine-gallery-pavilion-sou-fujimoto.

at the end of this journey throughout 14 years of pavilions, the conclusions seem to require a far more refined categorisation. Although there are many examples in which the pavilions succeed in creating a place out of the space they cut out, the places themselves are quite varied. Thus, the place oscillates between the perfectly opaque enclosure proposed by Zumthor through his hortus conclusus and the airy proposals by Fujimoto or SANAA. The place is centrifugal in the case of Libeskind or Gehry, and centripetal in the case of Herzog & de Meuron, Elíasson or Ito. Zumthor, Fujimoto or SANAA's is a place of contemplation, while Nouvel, Elíasson or Herzog & de Meuron's is one of action – a place seen as a process, as Massey states.

Even when analysed from the point of view of spatial representation, some of the pavilions are effective in proposing an innovative, experimental manner of approaching spatial relationships, relationships with space and of understanding space. Thus, new ways of defragmenting spatial compositions emerge, only to recompose it into mental structures. The pavilion created by Herzog & de Meuron, for example, is a space of successive superpositions of a physical place upon a series of remembered spaces in an incredible inclusive manner – just like Soja's theory. Zumthor's Pavilion, on the other hand, proposes a transcendental space, which can rather be found inside oneself than in physical space, probably being remembered as a sensation and not necessarily as a series of images. Zumthor materialises a place according to an incredibly phenomenological interpretation of the concept. Elíasson's Pavilion, just as Fujimoto's or Ito's succeed in integrating dynamism, movement into their architecture, namely the ability of giving the illusion that space transforms itself at the same pace at which the point of observation moves – in fact embodiments of Lefebvre's thesis, according to which space is generated through the movement of the body. Such a space cannot be transposed into a single structure; it probably can be rendered only as a network of relative relationships established among different parts of the building.

The Serpentine phenomenon, because it uses the same site each year, can be compared almost to the conditions of a laboratory of spatial experiments. From a perceptual point of view this factor is especially important because, using basically the same starting point, 13 different results emerged, managing not to have anything in common, each of them proposing a unique way of understanding, composing and creating space, and, in many cases, even a place.

Last but not least, one has to appreciate the last years' tendency of not offering just an image, an architecture designed just for the sake of its envelope, but also for the wish to create a space, and moreover, to create a spatial experience. The main quality of these experiments is the fact that they succeed in assimilating, interpreting – and even in diversifying – almost all theoretical constructs of the concept of place. Architecture – in the context of the Serpentine lawn – proves to be the ideal tool to materialise and translate several incredibly diversified discussions, which sprung around the space-place relationship.

# From the Will to Memory to the Right to Be Forgotten
## A Paradigm Shift in the Culture of Remembering[*]

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**Keywords**: anthropology of memory, social memory, cultural studies, memory studies, media studies, digital humanities, history of culture, digital remembering and forgetting, technologies of memory

**Abstract**: The paper grapples with the cultural implications brought about by the "right to be forgotten" ruled by the European Court of Justice in May 2014. The main argument developed at length in this paper is that we are witnessing a momentous shift in the order of social memory, from an old-age paradigm of anamnesis characterized by a will to memory against the background set by a default of forgetting towards a paradigm of public amnesia characterized by a quest for privacy against an ever-expanding digital memory.

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## The struggle for memory as a principle of the human condition

*Pace* Marx, the history of all hitherto existing society can be cast as the history of human struggle against oblivion. This mnemonic principle – the individual as well as collective struggle against oblivion – has been, until recently, the thrusting force behind people's strive for remembrance. It is our argument that we are witnessing the advent of a prospective swift change in the traditional order of remembrance, from the age-old "will to memory" towards an amnesic regime founded upon the "right to be forgotten." Sapping the old-age mnemonic principle (the immemorial will to memory along with the battle for posterity against oblivion) are the newly devised laws protecting the privacy rights of individuals against being swallowed, against their will, by the ever increasing all-encompassing digital archive. The upcoming momentous shift from a paradigm of anamnesis towards a culture of structural amnesia was already set in motion by the recently established "right to be forgotten" legislation in the European Union. In 2010, a Spanish citizen by the name of Mario Costeja González lodged to the national Data Protection Agency a complaint against the Spanish newspaper *La Vanguardia*, which in 1998 published in its printed edition an announcement regarding the forced sale of a property he owned arising from social security debts. Because a copy of the newspaper's printed edition was in the meantime digitalized, querying his name in the Google search engine listed the link associating his name to the announcement, although the forced sale

had already been concluded years before, making the information entirely irrelevant. Costeja requested the newspaper to remove his personal data from the archive. The same request was made of Google. The Spanish Court referred the case to the Court of Justice of the European Union, which eventually, in its ruling of May 13, 2014 stipulated "the right to be forgotten," according to which individuals are entitled to request search engines to remove links containing personal information about them, if the information is inaccurate, inadequate, irrelevant, or excessive.[1] Although the European Court specified that the right to be forgotten is not absolute, depending on a case-to-case assessment, it nonetheless tipped the scale in favour of individual privacy. As of April 6, 2015, Google has received 236,214 requests and has evaluated for removal a total number of 856,378 URLs, out of which 41.4 % (300,765) were removed while 58.6 % (424,964) were not.[2] The numbers reveal that the movement grounded in the right to be forgotten is gaining traction, as the phenomenon is reaching critical mass. Based on these demographics, it is the premise of this study that this ruling has far wider consequences that exceed the juridical realm, heralding a swift change in the culture of memory.

A *caveat lector* should be in place. The study should not be taken as providing a prophetic insight into the mysterious workings of the future, as the author of these lines does not claim any oracular prowess for his part. With Karl Popper and Konrad Lorenz, and again *contra* Marx, we do believe that the future is open. Although predictable within a margin of error with the help of scientific analysis, the future is by no chance completely foreseeable. Science in general and social sciences in particular are in no way divinatory cognitive devices that can unravel the conundrum of the future. After the demise of the great teleological social philosophies of the last couple of centuries (Marxism, with its historical inevitability of Communism, being an emphatic example of the intellectual bankruptcy of historical prophecies), social sciences cannot afford to remain under the spell of prophetic divination. This being said, we should hastily add that our study does not fall under the rubric of theoretical foresight. We are only trying to make sense of the impact on the order of memory, made by the new legislation ruling the right to be forgotten and how it changes the consecrated workings of public remembering. If we dare step into the future with our analysis, it is by mapping the tendencies that occur and transform the established patterns, not by venturing prophecies of Tomorrow.

This study does not grapple with the legal entanglement created in the aftermath of the European Court of Justice's rule of the right to be forgotten. There is already a growing plethora of journal pieces tackling the juridical conundrum posed by the collision between the right to be forgotten and the right to personal privacy on the one hand, and public interests and public memory on the other.[3] Deliberately eluding

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[1] Court of Justice of the European Union, "Press Release No 70/14," Luxembourg, 13 May 2014, Judgment in Case C-131/12, Google Spain SL, Google Inc. v Agencia Española de Protección de Datos, Mario Costeja González, http://curia.europa.eu/jcms/upload/ docs/application/pdf/2014-05/cp140070en.pdf (accessed March 24, 2015).

[2] Google Inc., *Transparency Report*, European Privacy Requests for Search Removals, April 6, 2015, http://www.google.com/transparencyreport/removals/europeprivacy/?hl=en (accessed April 6, 2015).

[3] Jeffrey Rosen, "The Right to Be Forgotten," *Stanford Law Review online* 64 (2012), 88; Omer Tene and Jules Polonetsky, "Privacy in the Age of Big Data: A Time for Big Decisions,"

the legal imbroglio, the study deals with the cultural implications brought about in the order of memory by the ruling of the right to be forgotten.

**The paradigm of cultural anamnesis – the will to memory**

Although it probably haunted human mind from its first glimmerings of consciousness, the fear of death found one of its first explicit expressions in Aristotle's statement that death is "the most fearful of all things".[4] But the universal fear of death – what we shall call as the *thanatic principle of human existence* – was the dreadful discovery of the 20th century. It was Sigmund Freud who posited that human life is played between the two basic instincts, *Eros* – the instinct of life, and *Thanatos* – the instinct of death. Another Viennese thinker, following Husserl's phenomenological tradition rather than Freud's psychoanalysis to set the groundwork for a *Phenomenology of the Social World*,[5] considered the fear of death as the fundamental anxiety of human existence. "I know that I shall die and I fear to die." This basic experience Alfred Schütz called the *fundamental anxiety* – the primordial springhead of which all other experiences originate. "From the fundamental anxiety spring the many interrelated systems of hopes and fears, of wants and satisfactions, of chances and risks which incite man within the natural attitude to attempt the mastery of the world, to overcome obstacles, to draft projects, and to realize them."[6] Following Schütz, we can argue that the master project humans draft and strive to realize is none other than the immortality project. While the psychoanalytic anthropologist Ernest Becker restated the thanatic principle in an emphatic fashion, by arguing that "the idea of death, the fear of it, haunts the human animal like nothing else; it is the mainspring of human activity – activity designed largely to avoid the fatality of death, to overcome it by denying in some way that it is the final destiny for man."[7] But the most audacious step in this direction – indeed, bordering on recklessness – has been taken by Zygmunt Bauman, who makes the knowledge of death (along with its subsequent fear and terror) the prime and only fountain head of human culture. "There would probably be no culture," says Bauman, "were human unaware of their mortality."[8] Sprang from the terror of death, "culture is an elaborate counter-mnemotechnic device to forget what they [i.e., humans] are aware of [i.e., the inevitability of their own mortality]."[9]

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*Stanford Law Review online* 64 (2012), 63; Rolf H. Weber, "The Right to Be Forgotten: More than a Pandora's Box?," *Journal of Intellectual Property, Information Technology and E-Commerce Law* 2 (2011): 120–130; Jeff Ausloos, "The 'Right to be Forgotten'–Worth Remembering?," *Computer Law & Security Review* 28 (2012): 143–152.

[4] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), III.6, 1115a, 49.

[5] Alfred Schütz, *The Phenomenology of the Social World* (Durham, NC: Northwestern University Press, 1967).

[6] Alfred Schütz, "On Multiple Realities," in *Collected Papers: The Problem of Social Reality. Volume I* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962): 207–259, 228.

[7] Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: The Free Press, 1973), xi.

[8] Zygmunt Bauman, *Mortality, Immortality and Other Life Strategies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 31.

[9] Ibid.

Just like there is a universal fear of death – invariant in its terrorizing capacity – but a plethora of cultural responses,[10] we posit a similarly universal dread of oblivion. To the *thanatic principle* we counterpose a corresponding *mnemonic principle*. As much as people find it difficult, if not plainly impossible, to accept that biological death is the final destination of life, they equally cannot accept departing from this world without leaving a trace on the basis of which they would be remembered by their survivors. It is not an exaggeration to claim, as an axiom of anthropological philosophy, that humans are beings in need of remembering and being remembered. It is part of the human condition that people are both *agents of remembering* (i.e., beings endowed with the faculty of remembering things and people from the past) and strive towards becoming *subjects of remembrance* (i.e., beings endowed with the longing of being remembered by others in the future). Seen in this light, it does not appear as a far-fetched metaphorical rendition to say that in the aftermath of physical death, sinking into social oblivion comes as a second, memorial, death. These are the anthropological premises out of which we are drawing the sociological conclusion that human communities have been anamnestic cultures, i.e., communities of memory engaged in a relentless struggle to save their precious past from oblivion. Some of these anamnestic communities become so obsessed with memory that they turn into "memorial cultures," or even, with a funeral twist, "mausoleum cultures," such as ancient Egypt or imperial China of the Qing Dynasty. The Pharaohs' pyramids and the Eastern Qing tombs stand as monumental material proofs and dazzling memorial sites of these mausoleum cultures. Until it was recently challenged by the right to be forgotten, the mnemonic principle of human existence stood at the heart of what we shall call the *anamnestic paradigm* of cultural existence. Its main drive was the "will to memory," the quest for being remembered as a way of cheating physical death.

Extending the analogy, just as there is a variety of cultural ways of managing the terror of death (more precisely, the terror of the awareness of the inevitability of death), spanning from reactions as simple as fleeing from the sites of death, to intricate elaborations of (mostly religious) cognitive systems for dealing with the phenomenon of death and dying, there are also at least two main strategies of striving against forgetfulness. Both human beings and human societies expressed their perpetual struggle against oblivion along with their ceaseless quest for perfect mastery of their memory in two general ways: the practical and the symbolic modes, which, along with their internal ramifications, will become the focus of our attention.

**1.** The *practical mode* consisted in strivings for improving the blessed but fickle and unreliable faculty of remembering, individual as well as collective. Either individually or collectively, people have always aspired to perfect their mnemonic capacities and to gain mastery over memory.

1.1. At the *individual level*, the practical mode of saving time from oblivion aimed at perfecting the specious human faculty to remember by various "arts of memory." It

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[10] Calvin Conzelus Moore and John B. Williamson, "The Universal Fear of Death and the Cultural Response," in *Handbook of Death and Dying*, ed. Clifton D. Bryant (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2003), 3–13.

was the Greeks who came up with a promise to fulfil humankind's perennial dream for a perfect memory with the invention, by the poet Simonides of Ceos, in the 5th century B.C., of an ingenious system of remembering. Simonides's mnemotechnics originated in the need of oral societies, foreign to writing and literacy, to enhance memory in the lack of other mnemonic technologies such as writing so as to rescue knowledge from the grasp of oblivion. It worked by anchoring knowledge in familiar or imagined spaces, such as houses or palaces, in whose chambers the memory was to be carefully organized and tagged with symbolic reminders. Respecting the principles of mnemotechnics would allow one to use his memory as a vast but highly structured depository of knowledge to be readily available to him as he was visiting, with the eye of his mind, the treasure house of memory, the palace of his remembrances.[11] From a mnemotechnical device used in oral cultures to enhance remembering without any external crutches for memory (such as writing), Simonides's invention was taken over by the Roman world, where it was further developed, its principles were codified in authoritative textbooks such as the anonymous tract on memory *Rhetorica ad Herennium*[12] (written around 82 B.C.), and transformed by respectable rhetors such as Cicero and Quintilian into a revered *ars memoriae*. From the Roman world, itself the inheritor of the Greek legacy, the art of memory transited, through the work of Augustine, to the theological culture of mediaeval scholasticism. It continued to grasp the imagination of Western thinkers, mesmerized as they were by its promise to master the faltering faculty of memory, until the advent of print in the 16th century, which brought about a new technological regime of remembering based on printed books as celluloid sites of memory, rendered the venerable art of memory practically obsolete. It is suggestive to note down that, with the shift from a predominantly oral culture towards a culture of (hand)writing – from an auricular culture of oral communication to a chirographic culture of hand-written exchanges – a parallel shift has occurred from the *ars memoriae* to *ars dictaminis*, the art of writing letters. The old oral Ciceronian rhetoric of which the classical art of memory has been an integral part has given way to the Bolognese hand-written *Rhetorica Novissima*.[13] But until its demise in the 17th century, *ars memorandi* will be further developed by Giulio Camillo and Giordano

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[11] Using a gender neutral language in discussions about the ancient Greek world – as it should be the case if we were discussing about contemporary topics and phenomena – turns out to be inappropriate. The reason for this is historical accuracy. It would be highly anachronistic to use gender neutrality for an androcentric culture such as that of ancient Greek city-states, where women were not receiving public education as they were excluded from the public affairs of politics and relegated to the private space of the household. It is safe to assume that in this manly dominated civilization, women were not practitioners of the art of memory.

[12] *Ad C. Herennium de Ratione Dicendi (Rhetorica ad Herennium)* with an English translation by Harry Caplan (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1964). The book's highly authoritative status lay in its being for a long time wrongly attributed to Cicero. Including Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas – who incorporated the ancient art of memory in the theological tradition by emphasizing the crucial role of *memoria*, along "understanding" and "foresight," in the cardinal virtue of *Prudence* – wrote of *Ad Herennium* as Tullius's *Second Rhetoric* – the first being Cicero's *De Inventione*.

[13] Frances Yates, *Selected Works. Volume III. The Art of Memory* (1966, New York and London: Routledge, 1999), 57.

Bruno. Camillo's famous "theatre of memory" was a wooden construction built according to the blueprint of the Vitruvian model of the classical theatre. Instead of a public, the seats were given to images, underneath there were filing cabinets containing written texts, by looking at which the rhetor would be able to articulate skilful discourses on whatever topic. It made such a stir in the times that one contemporary reported in disbelief to Erasmus that Camillo's theatre of memory was designed with the purpose of enabling "whoever is admitted as spectator […] to discourse on any subject no less fluently than Cicero."[14] The tradition was enriched by Giordano Bruno, its most occult practitioner, in whose person the art of memory intertwined with the Hermetic tradition. "If Simonides was the inventor of the art of memory, and 'Tullius' [Cicero] its teacher, Thomas Aquinas became something like its patron saint," sounds the conclusion of Frances Yates.[15] To extend the analogy, it can be said that Giulio Camillo with his "theatre of memory" was its ingenious architect, while Giordano Bruno with his mystical treatises was the hermetic "Magus of Memory."[16] It seems that the art of memory entered the flames of history along with its hermetic master, only to be reborn from its own ashes, in the works of Gottfried Leibniz. The two millennia old tradition of the art of memory finally succumbed under the growing tide of the scientific method.

1.2. At the *collective level*, the practical mode of rescuing the past from the perils of oblivion found its expression in the quest for improving the social memory's storing capacity, by increasing the community's powers of preserving the past. This was done in two different ways.

1.2.1. First, it was driven by the development of "technologies of memory" – such as writing, printing, mass mediated communication, and finally, the World Wide Web – which freed thought and memory from its imprisonment in the cerebral technology of the brain, whose storing capacity was overstrained soon after the invention of writing. The invention of writing was not only a major cognitive revolution, triggering a radical restructuring of the consciousness,[17] but it also unleashed a cultural revolution described by Georg Simmel in the terms of a "tragedy of culture," by which the German thinker described the radical asymmetry created in the relationship between the human subject and its objectivized culture.[18] The former, although the creator of the latter, cannot cope with the fast-pace development of objective culture, whose extraordinary rhythm of proliferation, speeded-up by innovative technologies of memory, makes it impossible for the human mind to reabsorb it within her own subjective culture. With the invention of writing, objective (i.e., externalized) culture greatly outgrows the cognitive power of the human mind. Simmel calls it the "tragedy of culture," but it is more a tragedy of the human memory, which, biologically limited as it is, cannot keep pace with the exponentially growing volume of objective culture. Already Plato, noticing the steady accumulation of the objectivized, material culture

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[14] Ibid., 131–132.

[15] Ibid., 82.

[16] Ibid., 307.

[17] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy. The Technologizing of the Word*, 2nd edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 77.

[18] Georg Simmel, "On the Concept and the Tragedy of Culture," in *The Conflict in Modern Culture and Other Essays* (1911, New York: Teachers' College Press, 1968), 27–46, 43.

set in motion by the introduction of writing, viciously condemned the new cultural technology of writing for its damaging effects on the powers of human memory. In his dialogue with *Phaedrus*,[19] Plato's Socrates blasted writing as an inhuman, alien technology that, although presented as a "potion for memory and for wisdom," it would in fact "introduce forgetfulness into the soul of those who learn it". It is not "a potion for remembering, but for reminding". Externalizing the mind into artificial memory, writing is actually weakening the power of remembrance. Despite Plato's lamentations over the harmful effect of writing on the human faculty of remembering, the new technology has had tremendous effects on enlarging collective memory of human societies, now able to keep textual records of their past.

About the history and power of writing, Henri-Jean Martin wrote a book praised by the *Annalist* Pierre Chaunu as "one of the greatest history books ever written."[20] The encomiastic appraisal is not just the outcome of collegial courtesy. Martin takes the reader through the fascinating (hi)story of writing, tracing not only its appearance and evolution, but also highlighting how writing – as an "orthotic device for the brain"[21] – has shaped human mind and profoundly changed human society. It was the pragmatic need to remember that prompted in the direction that eventually leads to the invention of writing as a new technology of memory. In societies such as the Sumerian and Akkadian ones, writing developed "above all in response to the new needs of an essentially economic sort and in an epoch in which increased wealth, the concentration of wealth, and accelerated exchanges made it necessary to keep accounts."[22] But this practical, economic incentive was not enough. What was needed was a coherent societal matrix, a proper form of collective life conducive to the appearance of writing. Scholars, including Martin, have long been arguing that there are some social, economic, cultural, and political pre-requisites for the technology of writing to make its way into collective life. Based on historical case studies of cultures and societies located predominantly in the Near East, scholars have been able to link writing to a series of other structural elements (such as fixed residence, agrarianism, political centralization, central administration, etc.). Thanks to the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample (SCCS) database, it is now possible to test this theoretical model against empirical reality at a cross-cultural level. SCCS comprises codified data (variables) for a collection of 186 pre-industrial cultures from around the world, compiled from the works of the anthropologists and ethnographers who have painstakingly described different parts of these societies' cultural systems and social organization. In an effort to measure the cultural complexity of different – indeed, idiographic – cultures, George P. Murdock and Caterina Provost have compiled for this purpose ten scales of five points each. These are: *Scale 1. Writing and Records*, ranging from 0 to 4, where 0 signifies that "writing, records, and mnemonic devices in any form are lacking or unreported," while 4 means that "the society has an indigenous

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[19] Plato, "Phaedrus," in *Complete works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1997), Stephanus numbers 274–278.
[20] Pierre Chaunu, "Foreword," in Henri-Jean Martin, *The History and Power of Writing* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), xiv.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Henri-Jean Martin, *The History and Power of Writing* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 13.

system of true writing and possesses records of at least modest significance."[23] *Scale 2. Fixity of Residence*, ranging from fully nomadic life (0) to a pattern of permanent and sedentary settlements (4). *Scale 3. Agriculture*, by which societies were coded with values ranging from 0, where agriculture is not practiced, to 4, in those cases where agriculture is the main contributor to the society's food supply and it is employed with intensive techniques (irrigation, ploughing, artificial fertilization). *Scale 4. Urbanization*, measured by the average population of local communities, ranging from 0 where it is less than 100 people to 4 where it is more than 1.000. *Scale 5. Technological Specialization*, in terms of which the value 0 was designated to societies in which the complexity and specialization of technological crafts were minimal (such as those where metalworking, loom weaving, and pottery making were absent), while with 4 were scored societies which possessed all of these technologies and crafts, along with an advanced division of labour among specialists. *Scale 6. Land Transport*, ranging from societies in which goods and materials are transported on land exclusively by human carriers (0), to societies which possess motorized land transport (4). *Scale 7. Money*, according to which societies where classified along a continuum ranging from 0, in cases of societies practicing barter economy without any recognized medium of exchange, to 4, in cases of societies using paper money economies. *Scale 8. Density of Population*, ranging from scarcely populated societies with less than one person per square mile (0) to densely populated societies with more than 100 persons per square mile. *Scale 9. Level of Political Integration*, ranging from stateless, politically de-centralized societies (0) to highly structured state societies with centralized administration and multiple administrative layers (4). Finally, *Scale 10. Social Stratification*, ranging from essentially egalitarian, classless societies (0) to societies presenting complex patterns of social stratification with three or more distinct strata. The correlation matrix reveals the high degree of interdependence of all these ten different, but highly entangled, phenomena. "Writing and Records" is highly correlated with all the other variables, suggesting that in order for the cultural technology of writing to appear in a social community, that community needs to be socially, politically, and economically "fit" for receiving it. To be sure, correlation does not allow for making causal inferences, but the tight correlations between these phenomena allow us to conclude that writing and recordkeeping appear in a specific societal nexus, i.e., in an urbanized agrarian society practicing intense forms of land use, which has an articulated land transportation system supporting business transactions within a money economy, within a politically integrated society, whose dense population is nonetheless highly stratified in terms of social status and economic wealth.

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[23] George P. Murdock and Caterina Provost, "Measurement of Cultural Complexity," *Ethnology* 12 (1973): 379–392, 379.

Table 1. The correlation matrix between the ten scales in 186 societies

| | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) Writing and Records | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| (2) Fixity of Residence | .247[*] | 1 | | | | | | | |
| (3) Agriculture | .343[*] | .782[*] | 1 | | | | | | |
| (4) Urbanization | .422[*] | .450[*] | .509[*] | 1 | | | | | |
| (5)Technological Specialization | .490[*] | .406[*] | .548[*] | .435[*] | 1 | | | | |
| (6) Land Transport | .627[*] | .076 | .233[*] | .397[*] | .469[*] | 1 | | | |
| (7) Money | .530[*] | .412[*] | .356[*] | .375[*] | .417[*] | .409[*] | 1 | | |
| (8) Density of Population | .362[*] | .707[*] | .638[*] | .560[*] | .468[*] | .211[*] | .557[*] | 1 | |
| (9) Political Integration | .575[*] | .415[*] | .512[*] | .481[*] | .568[*] | .421[*] | .527[*] | .570[*] | 1 |
| (10) Social Stratification | .621[*] | .437[*] | .433[*] | .489[*] | .579[*] | .475[*] | .470[*] | .500[*] | .719[*] |

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: personal calculations based on Standard Cross-Cultural Sample database

As it is explicit in the variable's name, "Writing and Records," a technology of memory – writing – goes hand in hand with a systematic practice of memory – recordkeeping – and with a full-blown institution of memory – the archive. This is revealed by data drawn from the same SCCS database, which shows that once a culture has adopted writing, it tends to keep written records that will add to that society's stockpile of mnemonic devices and non-written records.

Table 2. Writing and recordkeeping in 186 societies

| Type of mnemonic technology | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Oral tradition | 73 | 39.2 |
| Mnemonic devices | 49 | 26.3 |
| Non-written records | 21 | 11.3 |
| True writing but no written records | 12 | 6.5 |
| True writing with written records | 31 | 16.7 |
| Total | 186 | 100 |

Source: Standard Cross-Cultural Sample database

The results show that out of the 186 societies indexed by the SCCS database, 143 (76.9%) are either non-literate or proto-literate, meaning that they do not possess "true writing," i.e., a phonetic system of writing. Foreign to the cultural technology of writing, these societies resort to oral, artefactual, or pictorial means to preserve their knowledge. The rest of 43 cultures are literate societies, out of which 12 possess writing but have not accumulated significant written records. This would have been a counter-evidence to our already defended idea that recordkeeping tends to follow writing, had it not been for the other 31 societies that have developed archives so as to store their knowledge in written records. And thus we arrive at the second way of the practical mode societies use to conserve their memories – the institutions of memory.
1.2.2. The invention of technologies of memories sets the ground for developing "institutions of memory," such as the archive, the library, the museum, and other

cultural institutions whose purpose is to save and conserve the past from being effaced from the public consciousness either materially or the knowledge of it. Societies can never become "Funesian communities" – the collective personification of Jorge Luis Borges's Funes the Memorious, the man whose prodigious memory was like "a garbage heap," retaining everything without an effort, without applying any filter of selection – but they have always tried to remember their past. Their urge to memorize is explainable by the practical, indeed survival, value of culture – culture being understood here from a pragmatic angle, not only as "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols […] by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life,"[24] but also as system of distinctive means by which human communities manage to successfully adapt to their environment (natural and social alike). The patterns of meaning and symbols making up the cultural systems are nonetheless tools used for regulating the society's relationship with the natural environment, its relationship with Otherness (other human societies), and also its internal structure of relations (self-regulation). Cultures are thus *adaptive mechanisms* that have a group survival value, while collective remembering is instrumental in accomplishing its goal. An invariant feature – indeed, an anthropological constant – that has characterized human societies across cultural lines, geographical boundaries, and historical times, says Adrian Cunningham, has been "an instinct for collective cultural self-preservation."[25] Since time immemorial, people fought to somehow save their cultural heritage from obliteration. While this instinct took many forms, ranging from passing knowledge from one generation to the other by storytelling, rituals, dance, music, and art – all of them performative institutions of memory –, it has found its most efficient institutional embodiment in the archive. In 1963, the Italian archaeologist Paolo Matthiae accomplished the feat of dating the "time immemorial". He has discovered the ancient Syrian city of Ebla, and with it, the now famous Ebla archive – more than 20.000 clay tablets written in Sumerian cuneiform – dating back 4.500 years. Mistaken by many specialists as "the world's oldest library,"[26] the Eblaite clay tablets are in fact the world's oldest archive, since its informational content was made up of four classes of data, concerning i) the state's internal and external affairs (administration of the city, organization of the state, diplomatic relationships with other city-states), ii) agricultural business, iii) trade records, and, only a feeble part concerned iv) written materials on education and science, and still fewer literary texts.[27] Given the four and a half millennia of certified existence, it should come as no surprise that archivists praise

[24] Clifford Geertz, "Religion as a Cultural System," in *The Interpretation of Culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 87–125, 89.
[25] Adrian Cunningham, "Archival institutions," in *Archives. Recorkeeping in Society*, eds. Sue McKemmish, Michael Piggott, Barbara Reed and Frank Upward (Wagga Wagga, New South Wales: Centre for Information Studies, 1995), 21–50, 21.
[26] Hans H. Wellisch, "Ebla: The World's Oldest Library," *The Journal of Library History (1974-1987)*, 16 (1981), 488–500.
[27] Tomas Lidman, *Libraries and Archives. A Comparative Study* (Oxford Cambridge New Delhi: Chandos Publishing, 2012), 8–9.

themselves as being "the second oldest" profession in human history.[28] And the first respectable one, we should hastily add.

Since this first known archival institutionalization of memory, which gave an enduring institutional form to human societies' instinct for collective cultural self-preservation, or, to put it differently, to their "impulse to save" their cultural legacies,[29] the archive has become a permanent solution to the problem of forgetfulness. From the presumably first Eblaite archive four and a half millennia ago until present day, archival records have never ceased to accumulate. An unbroken tradition of archiving the present to form the collective memory of the future connects the *archival inaugural* of Ebla to the present digital archives. The media and formats used to store data in the archive have passed through successive material revolutions – from the Eblaite and Babylonian clay tablets, to the Egyptian papyri and the Greek and Roman wood blocks and parchments, to paper, punch cards, and computer servers – but the archival solution to the problem of oblivion remained essentially the same.[30] Archives have been kept by all human civilizations throughout history, but not only as heritage institutions, as they have also functioned as institutions of political power. It should not be forgotten, as Jacques Derrida is so keen to remind us, that the institution of the archive is a political power house. Power is engrained not only in its social functioning, as we shall shortly detail, but is written deep into its etymology. *Arkheion* – the Greek word for the storehouse where the official records of the state are being kept – does not yet explicitly reveal its power substance. But if we dig deeper, if we uncover its basic etymological strata, we come across *arkhē*, meaning power, authority, itself rooted in *arkhō* – to command, to rule. "There is no political power without control of the archive, if not of memory," says Derrida.[31] This is not the only reckless claim coming from the French master of deconstruction, in whose repertoire of controversial assertions the notoriously celebrated and simultaneously contested assertion that "there is nothing outside text" (*il n'y a pas de hors-texte*) ranks supreme. In comparison to the *il n'y a pas de hors-texte* sentence, the claim that there is no political power without the archive, although an extravagant claim itself, seems to be closer to reality. All the more so as the first archive, discovered at Ebla by the Italian archaeologist Paolo Matthiae, has been identified as dating from 2.500 B.C., thus being more than 4.500 years old. Even with this venerable age of the archival institution as an appendix of political power, it is still a very plausible hypothesis that political power predates the archive. Derrida's statement, although forcefully revealing the power-connection between political domination and the archive, must be taken with sceptical reservations, as it is historically inaccurate. Political power is possible without the archive – as it is clearly the case in oral societies – so that the archive is not the institutional fountainhead of political power. It is just the other way around. To consolidate their power, political elites founded archives as tools of domination through knowledge. The archive is therefore the paradigmatic power/knowledge institution of memory. The power stakes

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[28] Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory," *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 1–19, 2.

[29] James M. O'Toole, *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1990), 13.

[30] Ibid., 28.

[31] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 4, s.n. 1.

embedded in the archive from its very institutional inception millennia ago were all the more revealed with the advent of the modern state. Archives existed, of course, before the 16<sup>th</sup> century, but they were rudimentary and scattered collections of royal records. It was not until the Renaissance, with its process of state centralization, that the archive was re-established as a modern institution of power/knowledge. The forces that led to this outcome were derived from the centralizing states' need to form a central structure of administrating the population, in order to better raise taxes and control their subjects. The first central state archive was established in 1543 by the orders of Charles of Spain. Other European monarchies followed suit. France established its national archives by royal decree in 1569, Sweden in 1618, and Denmark in 1665.[32] The construction of central state archives that started in the 16<sup>th</sup> century can be perceived as an integral part of the new politics of "governmentality," by which Western European states perfected the administrative art of governing population. One lasting effect of the French Revolution was to turn central state archives into National Archives. In the Age of Nationalism, whose overture was the French Revolution of 1789, further amplified by the Romantic movement, it has become a national imperative to preserve the nation's past. While the old scattered records of the *Ancient regime* documenting the old privileges, properties, and social relations were destroyed in the midst of the revolutionary thrust to break away from the monarchic past, the new Republican power founded its own National Archive as soon as 1794 to form the basis of a new republican order of memory. Like in so many other aspects, the French Revolution undeniably marked a milestone in the entangled relationship between political power, civil society, and the institution of the archive. Its effects were threefold: first, it introduced the notion of centralized national archives, epitomized in the project of the *Archives nationales*. Created in the midst of the revolutionary turmoil (August 7, 1790), it was definitively established as the central unified state-archives by the Law of 7 Messidor Year II (June 25, 1794) – according to the new revolutionary calendar and chronology, which set its chronogenetic year I in 1789. Until this unification act, pre-revolutionary archives were characterized by a high degree of decentralization, as they were scattered in multiple depository places. For instance, in 1770 only in Paris there were 405 archival repositories. Besides the capital, in the whole of France there were about 5.700 archives (out of which 1.780 were seigneurial archives, while 1.700 were monastic repositories). The census that gathered these data may have omitted many other private and religious archives, which makes it probable, according to the 19<sup>th</sup> century historian Jean-Marie-Joseph-Arthur Giry, that "without exaggeration, [we can] place at over 10.000 the number of archives in France at the end of the Ancient Régime."[33] The establishment of the national archives as the unified recordkeeping institution was only one of the great feats of the Revolution regarding the archives. The second came as a change of heart, as the now republican state realized and fully assumed the responsibility for taking care and preserving for present use and posterity

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[32] Lidman, *Libraries and Archives*, 22–26.

[33] Judith M. Panitch, "Liberty, Equality, Posterity?: Some Archival Lessons from the Case of the French Revolution," in *American Archival Studies: Readings in Theory and Practice*, ed. Randall C. Jimerson (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2000), 101–122, 110, s.n. 32.

the documentary heritage of the past.[34] But this sensibility towards the past along with its accompanying sense of responsibility for conserving built up slowly in the revolutionary consciousness. It first erupted by unleashing a furious will to destroy the legacy of the old French monarchy. The destructive frenzy reached its peak by 1793, until when the infuriated masses, along with more systematically organized state actions, stormed into the records and tore them apart as legal remnants of the hated feudal social organization. Bonfires were lit across the country, confining to the flames the records bearing "the stamp of servitude."[35] But after this archival purge symbolically purified and set the republican present free from the hated old regime of monarchic servitude, the conservative instinct of cultural preservation kicked in. The destructive rage of revolutionary vandalism that originally prevailed eventually exhausted its thrust, and gave way to a conservative stance towards the past. As the historian Michel Delon has aptly said, "The Revolution is contained entirely in this alternation between brutal elimination of the past and its sublimation as testament."[36] If this is a just synthetic appraisal of the French Revolution in its entirety, it is all the more correct when applying specifically to its relationship to the past mediated by the institution of the archives. This radical transition from brutal elimination of the past to its sublimation as testament was facilitated by a similarly radical *semantic shift* in the public understanding of the archive. The pre-revolutionary understanding of the archive can be grasped by reading the entry on "archives" in Diderot and d'Alembert's famous *Encyclopédie* (1751–72), the pinnacle of enlightened thought: "Archives is the term used for those old titles or charters which contain the rights, pretensions, privileges, and prerogatives of a house, a town, or a kingdom."[37] It was based on this legalistic definition of the archives as the depository of aristocratic privileges that a public hatred erupted during the first years of the Revolution as an expression of the revolutionary vandalism wanting to break free from the past. The semantic shift involved the transition from the understanding of archives as the "statutes of tyrants" and as documentary monuments of people's servitude, to understanding the archives of the nation as documenting the civil rights and preserving the memory of the Revolution. The third major consequential effect the French Revolution has had on the archival institution was its opening up to the public. The principle of public access to the national archive was ruled by Article 37 of the Messidor decree (Law of 7 Messidor, year II), which stipulated that "Every citizen may demand in all the depositories, on the established days and times, communication of the pieces that they contain," free of charge but with the appropriate surveillance precautions.[38] For the first time in archival history, archives were opened to the public. Citizens of the

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[34] Ernst Posner, "Some Aspects of Archival Development since the French Revolution," *The American Archivist* 3 (1940): 159–172, 161.

[35] Panitch, "Liberty, Equality, Posterity?," 113.

[36] C.f. Ibid., 102–103.

[37] Ibid., 104.

[38] Krzysztof Pomian, "The Archives: From the *Trésor des Chartes* to the CARAN," in *Rethinking France: Les Lieux de Mémoire*, Volume 4: *Histories and Memories*, eds. Pierre Nora and David P. Jordan (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010), 27–100, 48. A much more lapidary translation is provided by Posner, "Some aspects of archival development," 162.

republic could now have access to the records three days a week, 9 hours per day – from 9 A.M. to 2 P.M., and from 5 P.M. to 9 P.M. respectively.[39]

The tides of nationalism that later overflowed with the coming of Romanticism were first raised by the Napoleonic conquest of Europe in which a significant role was played by the Napoleonic sack of European state archives. Huge quantities of records (along with art collections) were taken from all over Europe to the newly constructed archives building in Paris, in order to give material concreteness to the utopian dream of centralizing not all the records of the country (a task already underway since the Revolution) but all the records of the continent. This sack of state archives contributed to the formation of the nationalist reaction throughout Europe, greatly fuelled by Romanticism which thought of the archives as treasure houses of collective memory of nations. They needed to be protected from acts of vandalism similar to the Napoleonic sack since, as sources of historical memory, archives are the fountainhead of national identity. The glorification of a monumental national past that started with the romantic historiography could not have been achieved without the textual bricks deposited in the archival masonry. The monumental past of the nation could not have been written without the documentary monuments of the archives. It was against this political and cultural background – Napoleonic conquest of Europe, rising tides of nationalism, new romantic sensibilities – that more and more public records suddenly "acquired the dignity of national monuments."[40] The French model of the National Archives was soon adopted throughout Europe, as other states started to establish their own similar institutions of memory. Realizing the identity potential of the archives, European states founded similar institutions, directly inspired by the French blueprint: Finland in 1816, Norway one year later in 1817, Belgium, England and the Netherlands during the 1830s. Since then, the archive has become a crucial and all-important institution of national memory, as it is now inconceivable to imagine a successful political project of nation-state building without being rooted in the institutional backbone of the archive.

With the rise of totalitarian regimes, the twentieth century has shown once again the intrinsic link connecting political power and the archive. One of the main institutional pillars and efficient means of social and political domination was the Secret Police, which compiled vast quantities of records as an output of their surveillance of the population. The huge materials forming the archives of the former Secret Police inherited by the post-totalitarian states in the aftermath of the 1989 revolutions are still posing a great challenge to the political power-holders of today, who are reluctant, as in the case of Romania, to open up the secret archives of the *Securitate*.

The mnemonic infrastructure made up of heritage institutions set up to preserve the memory of the past came into being once the library, and, much later, the museum joined the archive, which has always been the central institution of memory. The library, as an institution of preserving knowledge, came into being not earlier than 1.000 B.C., when the great "scribalization of wisdom" occurred as oral traditions that have survived from time immemorial by being transmitted from generation to

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[39] Panitch, 111.
[40] Posner, 166.

generation by word of mouth started to be written down.[41] The establishment of the library is part and parcel of this process of textualizing oral traditions that was made possible by what Merlin Donald has called the "exographic revolution" unleashed by the invention of writing.[42] Just like its twin-institution of memory – the archive – the library has continually existed throughout human history, but only after the print revolution and the religious Reform of the 15th and 16th centuries did it start to pose a thorny problem for political authority. Until these momentous events, given the feeble percent of the literate population and the consequent small amount of written texts, libraries could be easily controlled by the authorities of the day. But with the bibliographical explosion brought about by Gutenberg's invention, combined with the Reform's struggle to literate people so as to read the Bible themselves, books became a dangerous thing. It is against this background that state powers introduced the institution of "legal deposit," a measure that set the foundation for the future establishment of national libraries. The first legal deposit law was issued in France, in 1537, when Francis I ruled that one copy of every book published throughout the kingdom should be submitted to the Royal Library in order to receive legal authorization. Although the memory function was not absent – the law justifies its introduction by its intention to preserve for posterity the written memory of the nation – it has to be conceded that the *ratio prima* for its ruling was nonetheless the state's efforts to control the flow of ideas.[43] The legal deposit law was soon copied by states throughout Europe, with the Habsburg monarchy first introducing it tentatively in 1579, only to definitively issue it in 1624. England (1662), Spain (1712), Poland (1747), Portugal (1796) and the Netherlands (1798) followed suit, establishing their national libraries upon the basis of the legal deposit law. It was in these newly established national libraries that the entire written memory of the nations would be stored and protected from the damages of time. Seen in this light as a form of censorship, legal deposit sheds light on the way in which political power made its way in the heart of the institution of the library, just as it did with the archive. But unlike the archive, which has only recently become the subject of democratic reform, as the archive was called upon to transform itself from a state-apparatus devised to perpetuate the power of the rulers into an accountable institution of democratic government, the library's link to power was contested as early as the age of enlightenment. So libraries have an ambiguous relationship with power, as they have a dual nature: at the same time when states were tightening their control over knowledge by ruling the legal deposit law, the ideology of Enlightenment gave public libraries unprecedented importance in its project of human emancipation. Within the enlightenment's philosophy of salvation through knowledge – an opposite of the religious soteriology of salvation through belief – libraries were seen as cognitive temples and were placed, accordingly, in the centrepiece of the emancipatory endeavours. It was during the age

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[41] Karel van der Toorn, "Why Wisdom Became a Secret: On Wisdom as a Written Genre," in *Wisdom Literature in Mesopotamia and Israel*, ed. Richard J. Clifford (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 21–29, 26; Lidman, *Libraries and Archives*, 7, 18.

[42] Merlin Donald, "The Exographic Revolution: Neuropsychological Sequelae," in *Cognitive Life of Things: Recasting the Boundaries of the Mind*, eds. Colin Renfrew and Lambros Malafouris (Cambridge: McDonald Institute Monographs, 2010), 71–79.

[43] Lidman, *Libraries and Archives*, 26–27.

of enlightenment that *les philosophes* imagined the library as a perfect cognitive *heterotopia*, as an institution containing the entire knowledge of humanity. Heterotopias, as Michel Foucault defined them, are spaces in which fragments that can be found within the outside culture are brought together, where they are simultaneously displayed, but just as they are jointly represented, they "are at one and the same time […] challenged and overturned."[44]

The museum, the third and latest addition to form the institutional triptych of modernity's mnemonic infrastructure, shares many of its features with the archive and the library. Including, to be sure, their intrinsic links to political power. In the museum's case, etymology leads our enquiry on a wrong track, as it is semantically misleading, since it can wrongly suggest that the museum is an ancient institution of memory. The Greek *mouseion* means the "seat of the Muses" and it designated the place of contemplation where scholars where gathering together to conduct their intellectual businesses under the protection of the Muses. It is in this sense, as an institution of contemplation, that the Mouseion at Alexandria – which contained the notorious Library of Alexandria – has functioned from the 3rd century B.C. until its final destruction sometime during the 4th century A.D. Another heterotopical project, just like the archive and the library, the public museum appeared in the late 18th century out of the "cabinets of curiosities" of the previous ages. The first to open its doors to the public – to a narrowly defined notion of public, we should mention, limited to the upper classes – was the Ashmolean Museum set up in Oxford (1683) to house the cabinet of curiosities the University recently received from Elias Ashmole. In 1743, Vatican authorities opened its art and archaeological collections to the public by setting up the Capitoline Museums. Soon to follow were the British Museum (1753) and, shortly after the French Revolution, the *Musée du Louvre* (1792). The sparks that would ignite the still ongoing "museum revolution" were produced in the 18th century,[45] when private collections turned into public exhibitions. With the spread of the European model based on these *museal inaugurals* all across the world, 19th century was the century of the museum. It was during the long nineteenth century that the world experienced "the first museum boom," as the museum building has been integrated as a crucial part of the process of state-building and national identity formation.[46] Along with the archive and the library, the public museum was the expression of what could be called, according to Foucault, as modernity's *heterotopian* cognitive ambition, that is to say, "the idea of accumulating everything, […] of creating a sort of universal archive, the desire to enclose all times, all eras, forms and styles within a single place, the concept of making all times into one place, and yet a place that is outside time, inaccessible to the wear and tear of the years, according to a plan of almost perpetual and unlimited accumulation within an irremovable place."[47]

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[44] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias," in *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory*, ed. Neil Leach (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 330–336, 332.

[45] Simon J. Knell, Suzanne MacLeod, and Sheila Watson, eds., *Museum Revolutions. How Museums Change and Are Changed* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

[46] Geoffrey Lewis, *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "history of museums", http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/398827/history-of-museums (accessed March 24, 2015).

[47] Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 334–335.

What particularizes the museum from its institutional counterparts with whom it shares the memory function of conserving the past is its *exhibiting function*, that of publicly displaying the past. It is in this context that we can speak of the politics of museological display, as history museums have always been, until the coming of postmodern times, the showcase of the nation-state's glorious past.

Taking a preliminary stock of our argument up to this point, we have advanced the idea that just as the terror of death is a – if not *the* – fundamental anxiety of human condition, we can plead the case for the existence of a terror of oblivion ingrained both in the human psyche and in the collective culture. Human existence through history – which we read as being a history of individual and collective struggle against oblivion – expresses a continual craving for remembering and being remembered. We have detailed how this ardent "will for memory" manifested itself in (1) the *practical mode* of taming oblivion and gaining mastery over memory as occurring both at (1.1.) the *individual level* through the means of the classical art of memory, and at (1.2.) the *collective level*, either through the development of (1.2.1.) *technologies of memory* such as writing, print, and the internet, or through establishing (1.2.2.) *institutions of memory* such as the archive, the library, and the museum. It is now the right time to move on to the second mode of the human quest of surviving oblivion, (2) the *symbolic* one.

**2.** The ***symbolic mode*** of struggling against oblivion takes the form of the quest for memorial eternity guaranteed by the achievement of *symbolic immortality*. Robert Jay Lifton, to which the credits for coining the term must be given, insightfully perceived "the human aspiration to live forever" as a fundamental longing of humankind.[48] Along with fellow Eric Olson, Lifton has distinguished between five modes by which people have denied the finality of death and could thus gain a sense of symbolic immortality. First, death can be transcended through *biological immortality*, simply by procreating and continue to live through one's offsprings. As Lifton and Olson rightly point out, this bid for immortality through children is never purely biological, this being the reason why it should be better named as "biosocial immortality," as in most societies paternity is often a social affair, where social fatherhood can be more important than the biological one. The second way in which people can achieve a sense of symbolic eternity is the *creative mode*. By crafting works of art, devising scientific theories, writing books and other creative activities of this sort, their authors can survive death through (and in) their creations. The third mode of symbolic eternity is the *theological immortality*, the religiously promised afterlife as a reward of living a good life. An anthropological survey of cultures revealed that 98% of the cultures indexed by the Standard Cross-Cultural Sample (SCCS) have a conception of afterlife.[49] SCCS contains anthropological data on a sample of 186 cultures from all across the world, organized on coded variables that allow for statistical analysis. Only in 2% of the cultures for which there is available data, there is no notion of afterlife. The other 98

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[48] Robert Jay Lifton and Eric Olson, "Symbolic Immortality," in *Death, Mourning, and Burial: A Cross-Cultural Reader*, ed. Antonius C.G.M. Robben (Oxford: Blackwell): 32–39, 32.

[49] Brooks B. Hull and Frederik Bold, "Hell, Religion and Cultural Change," *Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics* (*JITE*), 150 (1994): 447–464. The subsequent percentages are taken from Hull and Bold's paper.

percent of them vary in terms of the complexity of the afterlife. 18% of the cultures have what could be called as an *egalitarian static post-mortem monist* conception of the afterlife, as they believe afterlife to be simple, tantamount to sleep, and the same for everyone. 30% of them have a more sensuous variant of the previous one, since they believe that afterlife comes in a single form, either as pleasant or an unpleasant one, the same for everyone. It could be named as the *egalitarian sensual monist* conception of afterlife. 29% of the cultures forming the sample could be described as expressing a *symmetrical egalitarian post-mortem dualism*, as they imagine the afterlife to have two alternatives – such as heaven and hell – or perhaps even conceive of a trialistic model of the afterlife – heaven and hell buffered by the interstitial space of the purgatory. The remaining 21% have a rather complex idea of the afterlife, with more than two final destinations to be reached by passing through multiple stages. Their high degree of conceptual complexity makes them worthy of bearing the name of *inegalitarian* or *stratified post-mortem pluralism*, as people are getting personalized rewards or punishments in their afterlife so as to correspond to their worldly behaviours. What can be concluded from this data is not only that the belief in the afterlife is a cultural (quasi)universal but also that in fifty percent (50%) of the cultures included in the SCCS a somewhat elaborate degree of conceptual refinement can be observed. Our own inquiry in the Human Area Files database revealed that out of the 290 pre-industrial cultures from all over the world, 270 (93%) have eschatological doctrines, i.e., conceptions of the survival (and possible career) of the soul after death; notions about ghosts, spectres, apparitions, and phantoms; duration of afterlife; belief in immortality; ideas of transmigration and reincarnation; conception of the survival of the body (e.g., resurrection).[50] If we narrow the scope of our analysis, but give it more methodological rigor, by using the Probability Sample Files (PSF), 58 cultures out of 60 (97%) have some sorts of eschatological beliefs.[51] These results are fully consistent with Hull and Bold's findings. The fourth mode of transcending death is achieved through continuity with *nature*. If theological immortality conquers death by spiritual survival, *natural immortality* promises material survival, but accomplished by the disintegration of the flesh in the eternally enduring nature. It is captured in the biblical saying, "for dust you are and to dust you will return" (Genesis, 3, 19). Lifton and Olson mention a fifth mode of symbolic immortality which they call as *experiential transcendence*. In contrast to all the previous modes, this one is a lived subjective experience of transcending time. While all other modes are promising immortality as a future outcome (through children, in the afterlife, through reuniting with nature), this mode is achieving symbolic immortality in the present – *hic et nunc* – by arresting the passing of time. Its archetypical expression is the ecstatic experience facilitated by a range of catalysts such as dance and music, war and sport, artistic creation or intellectual contemplation, orgiastic love or even childbirth, drugs and alcohol.[52]

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[50] *Human Area Files*, eHRAF World Cultures online database, Eschatology, Subject description, OCM code 775.

[51] Probability Sample Files is a representative stratified random sample of 60 cultures selected from the universe of 290 cases indexed by the Human Files Area database.

[52] Lifton and Olson, "Symbolic Immortality," 37.

Although there are many modes of achieving a sense of symbolic immortality, not all of them guarantee what we will call *memorial eternity*. Biological immortality through passing your genes to your children can ensure memorial eternity only if it is accompanied by a cult of ancestors, and only in those societies where biological mother– and fatherhood are coterminal with socially designated parenthood. Theological immortality with its transcendence of death in the afterlife ensures memorial eternity only to the saints and martyrs who sacrificed their lives for Christ. For "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church,"[53] and it is only they that the mnemonic community of faith and practice which is the Church will remember in its liturgical commemorations. As for the fourth and fifth modes – "return to the dust" to reunite with nature and the illusion of present immortality obtained through the means of experiential transcendence – they provide no guarantee what so ever for achieving memorial eternity. It is only the *creative mode* of symbolic immortality that is directly and intrinsically connected to memory, as the authors of the valued creations (artistic, literary, scientific, etc.) survived not only through their artefacts, but also in the collective memory. We propose, as a more inclusive category containing Lifton and Olson's creative mode, the *heroic road to symbolic immortality*. We posit heroism – of which the creative type is only a subspecies – to be the memorial mode of symbolic immortality. What we are thus proposing is the outlines of a theory of heroism as the gateway to eternal immortality in the collective memory, be it either the national memory in the case of military and political heroes, the cultural memory in the case of artistic and intellectual heroes, or the religious memory in the case of martyred heroes.

Ernest Becker's reflection on death and humans' reactions to overcome death set out the framework on which the "terror management theory" (TMT) has been erected. The central theoretical premise of TMT is that the awareness of death and the fear that comes along with the consciousness of its inevitability are fundamental to human existence. "This awareness of the inevitability of death in an animal instinctively programmed for self-preservation and continued existence created the potential for paralyzing terror, a problem that needed to be resolved if our species was to remain a viable contender for survival on a planet fraught with danger," say TMT's advocates.[54] Humans solved this dreadful problem posed by the terror of death by creating culture, i.e., a world of meaning whose crucial role was to assuage the fundamental anxiety deep-seated in the human psyche by the inevitability of mortality. Cultural worldviews are thus "anxiety buffers" devised to alleviate the terror of death by creating a world of meaning imbued with standards of value whose observance promises the transcendence of death – either by conferring literal immortality through afterlife, or by providing symbolic immortality achieved through the survival of the self in larger-than-the-self-entities such as the tribe or the nation or in their collective memory. Becker himself has argued compellingly that societies provide "cultural hero systems" that promote within their members ideals of heroic feats (which, *in extremis*,

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[53] Quintus Septimus Florens Tertullian, *Apologeticum*, Chapter L.13, http://www.tertullian.org/ works/apologeticum.htm (accessed March 24, 2015).

[54] Jeff Greenberg, Sheldon Solomon, and Tom Pyszczynski, "Terror Management Theory of Self-Esteem and Cultural Worldviews: Empirical Assessments and Conceptual Refinement," *Advances in Social Psychology* 29 (1997): 61–139, 64.

can take the form of heroic martyrdom) as a strategy that allows them, individually as well as a collective entity, to conquer death and to achieve symbolic immortality. Individually, the heroic life (and death) is also a path to redemption, enabling the hero to secure his or her memorial eternity in the group's collective memory. Each society, irrespective of its particularity, is structurally "a symbolic system of action, a structure of statuses and roles, customs and rules for behaviour, designed to serve as a vehicle for earthly heroism," argues Becker.[55] Every society is thus a cultural hero-system disseminating a culture of earthly heroism for its members as ways of overcoming not only the terror of the meaninglessness of life, but also the terror of the meaninglessness of death and, supremely important for our argument, of gaining a sense of symbolic immortality by inscribing their selves, through heroic feats, in the collective memory. The problem with this heroic route for memorial salvation is that the recognition of the heroic status is an extremely selective affair. Every member of society is urged to be a hero, but only an extreme minority can ever receive heroic recognition along with memorial eternity. As we shall point out in the succeeding section, heroic memory is a hieratic form of remembering. Only a handful of heroes can be remembered in the historical memory, making heroism a highly inefficient strategy for achieving memorial eternity.

**Hieratic and demotic forms of remembering – the canon and the archive**
Heroic action propels its subject into one of the three types of canonical memory: religious, national (political and/or military memory of the ethnic group), or cultural. Religious, national, and cultural memories can be conceived of as forming *the triptych of canonical memory*. Either as a martyr of the Church, as a soldier dying on the altar of the country, or as an artist or intellectual dedicating his/her entire life to a cultural cause – the subject of heroic action gains his/her symbolic afterlife and memorial eternity in the canonical memory of his/her survivors. Despite the differences that particularize religious memory from national and cultural memories, they share nonetheless a fundamental common denominator. They are all *canonical memory systems*, whose most characteristic features are their supremely elitist nature along with their extremely exclusivist and selective criteria of inclusion. These features determine the class of objects deemed worthy of remembering (be them prophets and saints, military heroes and political visionaries, or artistic masters and intellectual prodigies) to be strictly limited. It lies within the nature of the heroic act – i.e., its exceptional character when judged against the ordinary or average norms of everyday life – that all symbolic afterlives achieved by way of heroism belong to the canonical type of collective memory. Not only religious memory but national and cultural memories as well are hieratic memories *par excellence*, surrounded by an aura of sacredness that keeps them apart from the rest of the mundane objects that go unremembered. Their selectivity and exclusivity are built-in features of canonical memories. When canonical memory, regularly restricted to heroic elites, happens to relax its criteria of inclusion and open its doors to the masses, it includes them but deprives them of their personal and nominal identities. Such is the case with the Cult of the Unknown Soldier – a demotic element inserted in the hieratic memory of the elected few to be remembered.

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[55] Becker, *The Denial of Death*, 4.

Since time immemorial, political (and starting with the 19<sup>th</sup> century national) memory has been largely synonymous with dynastic memory – a Carlylesque memory of the Great Men of History, in whose selective company access was granted only to a handful of ordinary people (without aristocratic pedigree and blue blood running through their veins) who conquered their spot in the political memory with their extraordinarily heroic feats of arms (e.g., The Maid of Orléans – Joan of Arc). Demotic national memory – as epitomized in the Cult of the Unknown Soldier – is by definition anonymous memory. The narrowness of the canonical memory can be explained by pointing out both the extraordinary nature of the heroic act, which by this very feature limits the candidates to be included into the canonical memory, and the inherent limits of human capacities of ritual remembering.

The "canonicity" of the canonical memory explains its fundamentally dual nature: on the one hand, it is precisely the secret behind its success, but on the other hand, it is precisely its extremely elitist criteria of inclusion that fail to do general justice to humans' universal fear of being forgotten. Remembering a canon of martyrs (be them for Christ, the Homeland, or for Knowledge) through rituals of commemoration such as the cult of saints in the Catholic Church ensures the cultural persistence and generational transmission of those few memory-objects through time, but it also leaves aside great many other non-canonized persons. The archive, by contrast, is a demotic, all-inclusive institution of memory. In sharp contradistinction to the canonical types of memory, the archive is indiscriminately welcoming. Despite this all-inclusiveness and openness, the archive is nonetheless paradoxically "forgetful". With a metaphorical license, archives can be seen, in a necropolis light, as the graveyards of memory, the burial sites of textualized remembrances. Resurrection is possible, but it will need a miracle to happen. Most often, the miracle embodies the flesh of a historian. Working as an archive gravedigger, the historian can bring people to life from the burial of the past. We have here the "Lazarus effect" of the historical research, symbolically rising from the dead long forgotten people. Paradigmatic in this regard is the case of Menocchio, the 16<sup>th</sup> century miller trialled, imprisoned, and eventually burned at the stake by the Inquisition for his heretical beliefs, who was the hero of Carlo Ginzburg's masterful book, *The Cheese and the Worms*.[56] Physically blasted by the flames of the Church, he was nonetheless symbolically placed in the textual coffin of the Inquisition's records, as his beliefs – however distorted by the inquisitorial procedures of interrogation – were saved from oblivion in the shelter of the archive. People live in memory, but they do not live in archives. Living memory – the canon – is kept alive precisely by continual remembering practices, be they pragmatic usage such as it happens in cases of *argumentum ab auctoritate*, or pious reverence as it is the case with the worship of the classics. Whereas the archive is the locus of dead memory, still memory, virtually saveable from the irreclaimable effect of oblivion, but *mummified memory*, pending for a miraculous rising to post-corporal life. But we should add hastily to polish this funeral metaphor that by "mummified memory" with which we are describing archival memory we are referring to the plaster bodies of Pompeii (mummified by accident), rather than to the deliberately embalmed

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[56] Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms. The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

bodies of the Pharaohs of Egypt – mummified by design. The latter belongs to the canon rather than to the archive, as "true mummification," i.e., the complete treatment of eviscerating and embalming the body, which could be afforded only by the upper classes. Conversely, mummification by accident, as it happened in Pompeii, is a democratic process, resembling to the modus operandi of the archive. The contrast between the archive and the canon can be further sharpened by falling back upon yet another necropolis metaphor. Taking a step further on this metaphorical path, it could be argued that the canon is the site of *reliquiae*, revered with awe by a community of worshipers, while the archive is the graveyard. The archive is therefore "in-betwixt" memory and oblivion, frozen as it is between resisting to putrefaction into oblivion and awaiting to be revered as halidom by the still living. Set against this metaphorical background, it should not come as a surprise that in his most cryptic novel, *All the Names*, José Saramago describes the Central Registry and the General Cemetery as twin institutions, as the former can be thought of as a confluent of the latter, at the same time as the latter is but an appendix of the former.[57] The repository not of bones and rotten flash, but of people made out of paper and ink, the archive is the celluloid catacombs of humankind. "Paper cadavers," as Kirsten Weld names the people catalogued in the state's archives.[58]

With the digitalization of memory, and especially with the advent of the ever-expanding virtual archive of the internet, a decisive technological shift has occurred in human endeavours to store its experiences. There are, of course, lines of continuity with the classical celluloid archive. Digital archives are, without a doubt, expanding to a level never before reached by the storing capacity of archival institutions. Eliminating the physical document by converting it in virtual file – or even recording it directly as such –, the spatial limitation of classical archives is thus overcome. But digital archives also bring ruptures. Among the most significant of these is the fact that people, while continuing to be registered and their actions recorded in digital and/or classical archival institutions by state agencies, can now make their own way into memory. Since the internet archive with its digital memory is an open-ended project continuously shaped not by officially sanctioned procedures of the classical archive (record creation, use, cataloguing, disposition, appraisal, etc.) but by a quasi-anarchic process as a result of unregulated interactions between users, ordinary individuals can now inscribe themselves into the digital memory through their online actions.

**A paradigmatic shift in the culture of memory – the default of remembering and the right to be forgotten**

We have argued so far that the will to memory and the struggle against oblivion is part and parcel of human condition. Building on this basic anthropological premise, we have detailed the means by which humans have tried to gain mastery over memory, be them practical modes (such as devising arts of memory and developing technologies and institutions of memory) or symbolic modes of ensuring an afterlife and thus memorial eternity in the community's collective memory. We have shown that

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[57] José Saramago, *All the Names* (London: Harvill, 1999).
[58] Kirsten Weld, *Paper Cadavers. The Archives of Dictatorship in Guatemala* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014).

although the canonical types of memory are the best ways of achieving this sense of symbolic immortality in the successors' remembrances, the entrance in these hieratic memory systems is conditioned by the mnemonic policy of heroic acts, which makes them highly selective. Therefore, canonical memory fails to redeem humanity from oblivion, but only the chosen few. The archive, a demotic institution of memory, promises to save from oblivion not only the heroes, but also the masses. While partially delivering this promise, we have shown that archives can also be seen as graveyards of memory. Digital memory, instead, can fulfil humankind's old dream of gaining perfect mastery over memory. Before the digital age of memory brought about by the internet revolution, humans have always struggled against the notorious shortage of space available to their remembrances (individual as well as collective). Storing everything in the mind or in the external memory-systems devised for capturing human experiences was a utopian aspiration. But with the coming of the digital age, it is now technologically possible. But here comes *the great paradox*: with the right to be forgotten ruled by the European Court of Justice, digital memory is being humanized. What we are witnessing is the *anthropomorphisation of digital memory*. The paradoxical nature of this process lies in the fact that digital memory – which is now technologically capable of storing virtually everything, of recording practically all human experiences, and of being a flawless and complete archive – is shaped by judicial policies to model the imperfect, fallible workings of human memory. Oblivion, which is a structural feature of the imperfect human memory, is introduced into the virtually perfect remembering system of the digital memory.

Once ruled by the European Court of Justice, the right to be forgotten has been established as the formal judicial framework for a new paradigm of public remembering in the digital age of memory. But this formal aspect is accompanied and was preceded by informal communication practices that are already exercising, in private exchanges, the right to be forgotten. Starting with 2011, a new class of communication apps and software made its way into the digital scene. Cries for reintroducing forgetting in the digital realm of quasi-perfect memory by ingraining an "expiration date" into digital information were already made by 2009, in books such as Viktor Mayer-Schönberger's *Delete* praising the vanishing virtue of forgetting in the advent of digital age.[59] Responding to calls to reset the balance between forgetting and remembering starkly disturbed in favour of the latter and simultaneously with users' increased needs to privacy and informational protection, the *ephemeral messaging movement* was launched by applications such as Snapchat, which introduced the notion of self-destructive messages – a very radical solution to Mayer-Schönberger's proposal of setting an expiration date to digital information. Users can send texts, photos, and video recordings which are programmed to be deleted by default seconds after they were viewed by their recipients. The "life expectancy"[60] set by the expiration date imprinted in the meta-information of the digital data is no longer than 1 to 10 seconds, making digital exchanges virtually as ephemeral as oral communication. Supremely important is that messages will be deleted not only from the users' storages, but also

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[59] Viktor Mayer-Schönberger, *Delete. The Virtue of Forgetting in the Digital Age* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009), 171.
[60] Ibid., 174.

from the company's servers. In the summer of 2014, Snapchat was said to have more than 100 million monthly active users, only to double its users half a year later, nearing 200 million snappers by January, 2015.[61] Its usage numbers also grew exponentially. If in February 2013 60 million ephemeral messages were sent each day, by May 2014 the number reached 700 million.[62] In parallel to the aforementioned anthropomorphisation of memory, what we are witnessing is also a *digital recreation of oral culture*, as ephemerality is reinstalled as the principle of digitally mediated oral communication. Writing – the great technological divider between orality and literacy – is not eliminated from interpersonal communication. But what gets removed is the fundamental characteristic of writing, that is to say, its objective, externalized, durability. The Horacean dictum of "Verba volant," the principle of ephemerality so characteristic of oral cultures, echoes the new principle of ephemerality of orally simulated digitalized cultures, which is not anymore "Scripta manent," but *Scripta volant*. Self-effacing texts, deleted by default – these are the new principles of textual communication starting to govern postmodern digitized society.

How can we make sense of these momentous shifts in the culture of memory? The legal "right to be forgotten," along with the informal communication praxis of ephemeral messaging, signal the coming of a paradigmatic shift in the order of memory. It can be described as the transition from the will to public memory to the *private quest for public oblivion*. The driving force behind this swift shift is the ever-increasing societal capacity to remember which threatens to abolish any right to privacy that individuals might claim for themselves in the face of the rising tide of technological power to store ever more information on their preferences, actions, and identities. As shown compellingly by Mayer-Schönberger, one major consequence of the digital revolution consisted in toppling the venerable balance between memory and oblivion, between remembering and forgetting. For millennia, as we have shown in the first part of this paper, humans were at pains to secure their memories from oblivion, supporting extreme psychological, societal, and financial costs for this purpose. In the classical age of memory, remembering was an expensive and tedious effort, therefore people were obliged to resort to extremely selective criteria in choosing what to confine to the vaults of their memory. In this classical age of memory, forgetting was the norm while remembering was something exceptional, founding pre-digital societies on a "default of forgetting."[63] This is no longer the case, as digital technology has changed the default of forgetting into a default of remembering. For the first time in human history, remembering is cheaper than forgetting, in both financial and

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[61] Douglas Macmillan and Evelyn M. Rusli, "Snapchat Is Said to Have More Than 100 Million Monthly Active Users," *The Wall Street Journal*, Aug 26, 2014, http://blogs.wsj.com/digits/2014/08/26/snapchat-said-to-have-more-than-100-million-monthly-active-users (accessed March 24, 2015); Alyson Shontell, "Snapchat Is A Lot Bigger Than People Realize And It Could Be Nearing 200 Million Active Users," *Business Insider*, Jan 3, 2015, http://www.businessinsider.com/snapchats-monthly-active-users-may-be-nearing-200-million-2014-12 (accessed March 24, 2015).

[62] Alyson Shontell, "5 Months After Turning Down Billions, Snapchat's Growth Is Still Exploding With 700 Million Photos Shared Per Day," *Business Insider*, May 2, 2014, http://www.businessinsider.com/snapchat-growth-2014-5?IR=T (accessed March 24, 2015).

[63] Mayer-Schönberger, *Delete*, 13.

psychological terms. The technological cause and prerequisite of this dramatic turnabout was the force of *digitization*, which made *cheap storage*, *easy retrieval*, and *global reach* possible.[64] The outcome of this process was the making of a "transparent society"[65] endowed with a never-before power of remembering and saving public and private data in its digital memory stored in "server farms." In parabolic terms, the transparent society brought about by the digital memory revolution is a Zamyatinesque transparency, as in his dystopian city of glass in which every movement and action is under permanent surveillance by the watchful eye of the authority.[66] Changing the terminology, but keeping the dystopian theme, it can be argued that the quasi-perfect and permanent digital memory transforms society into a *mnemonic chronotopial cyber panopticon*. By "mnemonic panopticism" – the first component of the term we are advancing – we refer to a society in which the societal capacity to remember through digital memory makes its subject behave as if everything they have ever done can be publicly remembered. Mnemonic panopticism is, without a doubt, a disciplinary mechanism, encouraging people to self-censorship and to think twice before taking action in the digital realm.[67] The term "chronotopial panopticon" is meant to express the fact that the all-encompassing digital memory is not only making information easily accessible to a global audience abolishing thus geographical constraints (i.e., spatial panopticon), but it also denies the temporal dimension by making information timely, however old and outdated. This mnemonic chronotopial panopticon is simultaneously and necessarily a "cyber panopticon," since this degree of mnemonic surveillance spread across space and time could not have been possible without the technology of digital remembering. Needless to say, privacy has been swept away under the tidal wave of digitalization. Cries for limiting the invasion of individual privacy have been made since the late 19th century. Prompted by the increasing audacity of the mass media in invading "the sacred precincts of private and domestic life," Boston lawyers Samuel D. Warren and Louis D. Brandeis published in 1890 a highly influential paper in *Harvard Law Review*, claiming "the right to privacy."[68] Lamenting over the immorality of the newspapers and journalists, accused of elevating trivial backyard gossip to "the dignity of print" and transforming gossip from "the resource of the idle and of the vicious" to a fully-fledged trade "pursued with industry as well as effrontery,"[69] Warren and Brandeis reacted by claiming legal informational protection of the individual against her potential privacy invaders. Each individual

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[64] Ibid., 52.

[65] David Brin, *The Transparent Society. Will Technology Force Us to Choose Between Privacy and Freedom?* (New York: Basic Books, 1998).

[66] Yevgeny Zamyatin, *We* (New York: Penguin Books, 1993).

[67] Mayer-Schönberger, *Delete*, 3-4 relates the case of Andrew Feldmar, a psychotherapist in his late sixties living in Vancouver, Canada, who in 2006 was barred the right to enter into the United States after a zealous border guard queried his name in a search engine and found an article published in 2001 in which Feldmar mentioned that he had taken LSD in the 1960s. Feldmar's case is an eloquent expression of the "temporal panopticon" made possible by digital remembering.

[68] Samuel D. Warren and Louis D. Brandeis, "The Right to Privacy," *Harvard Law Review* 4 (1890): 193–220.

[69] Ibid., 196.

should have the right to choose what parts of his/her "private life, habits, acts, and relations" are to be shared or not with others.[70] The real fright was not so much the age-old gossip, be it even given the dignity of print, so as the new technology allowing journalists to take "instantaneous photographs" and newspapers to circulate without authorization portraits of private persons. Eight decades later, it was not the impropriety of the newspapers but the governmental and corporative eagerness to gather personal data on its citizens and customers, made possible by newly available computer technology, that impelled Arthur R. Miller in 1971 to denounce "the assault on privacy."[71] Written at the dawn of the computer age, Miller's book raised the alarm on the perils of state and private agencies stocking personal information in comprehensive databases to be used in administration and/or marketing. The legal scholar repeatedly warns against the danger posed by the "hypnotic attraction to electronic record-keeping" to which both public institutions and corporations have fallen prey, in the Western democratic tradition of individual autonomy.[72] Today, yet another (cluster of) technological advancement(s) is prompting other struggles to prevent the continuous assault on privacy. The right to be forgotten must be situated in the genealogy of these reactions to technological advances threatening individual privacy (first by instant photographs, later by computers, and now by the technological nexus made up of the World Wide Web, the internet, social networking, search engines, and web crawlers).

In the classical age of memory, after passing through this world, the great majority of ordinary people left behind, besides genes (if they had children), properties (if they possessed any), and artefacts (if they made any), only their bones and excrements. Their names, if ever recorded at birth (or baptized), marriage, and death, survived their death only to remain buried in ecclesiastic and/or public archives. All these considerations highlight *the tragedy of human ontological precariousness sub specie aeternitatis*, along with its similarly tragic condition of *posteritous fragility* in the societal memory. But with the coming of the digital age of memory, almost everyone leaves a digital footprint. Not being part of the network society and not contributing to the digital memoryscape requires a highly demanding eremitic philosophy of life – a life of loneliness, social isolation, and quietism. It has become almost impossible in this digital network society to withdraw from the all-encompassing public memory sphere in the now already established digital age of memory. The will to memory continued to struggle against oblivion while society's technological basis was running on a default of forgetting. Things are dramatically changing in the digital network society, where the ever-expanding public sphere of digital memory prompts individuals to withdraw from the public memory and retreat in their private spheres by invoking the right to be forgotten.

We have stated, in the opening statement of this paper, that the will to memory along with the struggle against oblivion is an anthropological principle of human condition. By the end of our analysis, we arrived at the conclusion that, in

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[70] Ibid., 216.

[71] Arthur R. Miller, *The Assault on Privacy: Computers, Data Banks, and Dossiers* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1971).

[72] Ibid., 4.

contemporary postmodern societies, a paradoxical cultural matrix is coming into being in the guise of an orally-simulated digitally-mediated culture of communication. Against the background of an ever-expanding public sphere of memory with its irrepressible quest of archiving everything, individuals counteract by taking refuge in the private sphere and by claiming the right to be forgotten. Our conclusion seems to collide with our initial premises, since we have just asserted the contemporary quest of privacy and will to oblivion. This inconsistency allows us to revisit the question of human condition. It should be made clear from the very outset that we are far from claiming to give a solution to the *aporia of human condition*. What we are striving to do is a hermeneutic struggle to make sense of the nature of human condition in the light of our considerations regarding memory and forgetfulness. In a previous paper, we have argued for the technological conditioning of memory, proposing a soft and sober technological conditionalism – not determinism – of human memory, individual as well as collective.[73] Faithful to this initial theoretical commitment, we extend our argument so as to cover not only human memory, but human condition. Resting our argument on the theoretical framework set out in books such as Braden R. Allenby and Daniel Sarewitz's *The Techno-Human Condition* and Andy Clark's *Natural-Born Cyborgs*,[74] we advance a soft and sober technological conditionalism of the human spirit. Challenging the "post-human" hypothesis, i.e., the theory that the unprecedented development of technology that we are witnessing in our times is at odds with human nature throwing the individuals that are trapped within this technological nexus into a post-human condition, Clark argues compellingly that human nature is evolutionarily shaped so as to couple with material and cultural external environment in forming "human-technological symbionts."[75] Human mind's proclivity of coupling to external systems (symbolic, social, cultural, technological etc.) along with its natural propensity to form distributed cognitive networks means nothing else but that humans have always been cyborgs. Since human nature itself (i.e., the biological makeup of human species, along with the neurological wiring of the brain and with the internal wiring of the mind) is technologically embedded, what follows is that human condition cannot be anything but technological. In this line of reasoning, the "post-human" condition cannot be reached by further tightening the symbiotic relationship between humanity and technology, but, paradoxically, by removing humans from their technological embedment. Against this background, it is now easy to understand why Allenby and Sarewitz claimed that human condition is "techno-human condition" to begin with. Both as a species and as individuals – so both phylogenetically and ontogenetically –, we are "part of a techno-induced evolutionary program that has been going on more or less since the origins of humankind – a program of continuing expansion of the human desire to understand, modify, and control its surroundings, its prospects, and its self,

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[73] Mihai Stelian Rusu, "The Media-History of Memory. Mapping the Technological Regimes of Memory," *Philobiblon. Transylvanian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Humanities* 2 (2014): 291–326, 298.

[74] Braden R. Allenby and Daniel Sarewitz, *The Techno-Human Condition* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 2011); Andy Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs. Minds, Technologies, and the Future of Human Intelligence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[75] Clark, *Natural-Born Cyborgs*, 3.

and to couple to the technologies that surround us even more intimately."[76] Marx's notion of *homo faber* captures this intrinsic link between humans and technology. In fact, human history (both the anthropological history of human species and the social, political, cultural history of human societies) makes sense only by reading it in terms of technological developments. "The history of our species is a history of redesigning ourselves, of fuzzing the boundaries of our inner and outer worlds," say Allenby and Sarewitz.[77] We can concur with them that the history of humankind has been the history of redesigning human condition, socio-culturally and technologically, by enhancing, among others, humans' memory-systems in their historical struggle against oblivion. With the coming of the age of digital memory, characterized by the never-before possibility of storing virtually everything, we are witnessing yet another redesigning of human condition. Digital technology of memory has made humans victorious in their immemorial struggle against oblivion. It is precisely this technological feat that is responsible for the current uprising against comprehensive digital memory systems expressed by the quest for individual privacy and the right to be forgotten. What we have called "the mnemonic principle of human existence" – the striving for remembering the past along with the quest for memorial posterity in the survivors collective memory – was a hallmark of human condition until technological difficulties were overcome by the digital revolution which made quasi-perfect remembering virtually possible. The reaction against the total societal remembering now technologically possible reveals the technological nature of the human condition. To put it bluntly, the strive for public forgetfulness in the age of digital remembering shows that human condition (as expressed in human aspirations, values, and needs) is more or less a function of technological possibilities.

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[76] Allenby and Sarewitz, *The Techno-Human Condition*, 2.
[77] Ibid., 17.

# The Deportation of Germans from Romania in Herta Müller's Poetic Conception: On the Long-term Tragedy of History

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**Keywords**: Deportation of ethnic Germans from Romania, genre theory, poetic language, poetic drama, Herta Müller

**Abstract**: This study is a narratological analysis of the manner in which a historical fact (the deportation of ethnic Germans from Romania) gains its equally epic and poetic value in Herta Müller's novel *Atemschaukel*, constituting a *unique geometric place* where the three genres, the lyric, epic and dramatic, converge. This intersection of genres, as well as the ability to maintain a stable balance between them, means for Herta Müller the real success in a poetic, artistic conversion of a dramatic event in the history of ethnic Germans in Romania. The paper describes the pattern of this specific type of writing, the meeting place of a lyric subject (the confession of the protagonist, Leo Auberg), an epic subject matter of the narration (deportation), and the tension of a metaphysical conflict, albeit desacralized, between destiny and freedom. This paper proposes a reading of Herta Müller's text starting from historical contextualization, it analyzes the nature and function of history in a community and in individual destiny, in order to finally arrive at a poetic decontextualization.

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On 6 January 1945, when the Allied Control Commission forwarded Order 031 to the Romanian Government requesting the mobilization of Romania's ethnic Germans for forced labour in the Soviet Union (men between 17 and 45, and women between 18 and 30 years of age),[1] Herta Müller had not been born yet. The ethnic German writer from Romania, Herta Müller, was born in the village of Niţchidorf on 17 August 1953, right after the survivors of the deportations returned home. The writer's mother was deported as well, and returned to the village after five years of forced labour in the Soviet Union. Herta Müller is therefore member of the first generation of German children whose parents returned after their deportation, most of them at a young age, and who, on their return to Romania, a country completely changed since they left, had to take on their lives and adapt to the new life conditions.

In the *Nachwort* of the novel *Atemschaukel,* published in 2009, the writer admits that the subject of deportation was a taboo among Germans in communist Romania, they only talked about deportation allusively, in the family or with other people who were deported and understood their equivocal language without much

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[1] Lavinia Betea, Cristina Diac, Florin-Răzvan Mihai and Ilarion Ţiu, *Lungul drum spre nicăieri. Germanii din România deportaţi în URSS*, (The long road to nowhere. The Germans from Romania deported to USSR) (Târgovişte: Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2012), 12.

further explanation: "Weil es an die faschistische Vergangenheit Rumäniens erinnerte, war das Thema Deportaion tabu. Nur in der Familie und mit engen Vertrauten, die selbst deportiert waren, wurde über die Lagerjahre gesprochen. Und auch dann nur in Andeutungen. Diese verstohlenen Gespräche haben meine KIndheit begleitet. Ihre Inhalte habe ich nicht verstanden, die Angst aber gespürt".[2] As she explains in the *Nachwort*, the idea to write a book about the deportation of Germans to the Soviet Union came in 2001, when she began jotting down her discussions with former deportees of Nițchidorf village, her birthplace. She shared this intention with Oskar Pastior (1927–2006), a poet who, turning 17 at the time of the Order, was himself deported, and agreed to share his memories of the Soviet labour camp with Herta Müller. The two writers met on a regular basis and worked together on this project until 2006, Oskar Pastior's death. By that year, Herta Müller had already gathered *four notebooks full of hand notes and wrote drafts for some chapters* : "Als Oskar Pastior 2006 so plötzlich starb, hatte ich vier Hefte voller handschritlicher Notizen, dazu Textentwürfe für einige Kapitel".[3] The shock of the poet's death halted for a year her work on the novel, originally conceived as a piece for four hands. She took up her work some months later, and published it after one year (in 2009) as we know it today. At the end of that year, the Swedish Academy awarded her the Nobel Prize for literature.

After Pastior's death, some indications were found in his apartment that he might have been an informer of the Romanian secret police, the *Securitate*, between 1961–1968, before he left Romania. He had been "convinced" to cooperate because of the *guilt* of having written seven "anti-Soviet" poems, which, so the *Securitate* claimed, described his experiences in the forced labour camp – reason more than enough, in those years, for someone to be arrested and sentenced. The secret police blackmailed Pastior through these poems, making him believe that a friend and colleague, to whom he entrusted these poems, was arrested because of them.[4]

In an interview in the 18 September 2010 issue of the daily newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, when she was asked about her first reaction to this news, Herta Müller, who had also been watched by the *Securitate* before leaving Romania,[5] answered without hesitation: "I judge the informer Oskar Pastior by the same criteria as the other informers in my file. Only that I reach to a different conclusion. If Pastior lived, any time I visited him, I'd insist that he read his file and write about it himself. But each time I'd do it while holding him in my arms."[6]

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[2] *Nachwort* in Herta Müller, *Atemschaukel* (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2009), 299.

[3] Ibid., 300.

[4] On Oskar Pastior's *Securitate* files, see: Ernest Wichner, "Oskar Pastior şi tribulaţiile informatorului 'Otto Stein'" (Oskar Pastior and the informant "Otto Stein"'s tribulations), *Observator cultural* 285 (23-29 September 2010), 15.

[5] Cristina Petrescu, "Eine Zeugin gegen die Securitate. Herta Müller versus Akte 'Cristina'", in eds. Joachim von Puttkamer, Stefan Sienarth, Ulrich A. Wien, *Die Securitate in Siebenbürgen* (Cologne, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2014), 342–373.

[6] Herta Müller, "Sînt sigură că Pastior şi-a dus absolut singur toată povara" ("I am sure that Pastior carried his burden alone"), translation by Alexandru Al. Şahighian, interview in the daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (18 September 2010), republished in *Observator cultural* 285 (23–29 September 2010), 7.

One of the most difficult problems that Herta Müller had to face when continuing her novel after Pastior's death was to find her own style of writing and implicitly the identity of a voice, a narrator who imprints the stories on deportation – a subject of historical reality – with literary, artistic coherence and poetic strength. Although Herta Müller never directly experienced deportation, her option for a narrator incorporated into the narration as opposed to an external narrator was partly imposed by the subject matter. It is not uncommon in literary history for an author to directly describe through a character in the text the experiences he or she has never had or witnessed. In case of traumatizing experiences of history, especially those of the totalitarian regimes (Nazism and communism), this narrator's role is usually assumed by a direct witness of the events. This increases the confessional, and implicitly dramatic value of the text. The equally famous case of another Nobel Prize-winner (2002) is that of Imre Kertész, in whose writings the experience of Nazi labour camps, directly witnessed by the author, is a dominant subject. In his novel, *Fatelessness*, the narrator-protagonist, of an age close to that of Herta Müller's character in *Atemschaukel*, describes with a teenager's innocence his deportation, together with other young Jews, and the traumatic experience of the forced labour camps until his release, at the end of the war.

Herta Müller has not had thus a direct experience of the camps, only through the stories of intermediaries. As she confesses herself, first she got in touch, as a child, with the feeling of *fear* she perceived when the adults around her *allusively* talked about the camp. Much later, after the fall of communism, in conversations with former deportees from her village she heard about their experiences and their life in the camp, gathering information and confronting the data. The meetings with Oskar Pastior made her detach from his memories precisely that poetic, subjective, authentic substance that, related to the others' life stories, gave coherence and stylistic unity to the ensemble.

And still, despite the narratological difficulties of this option, Herta Müller made the choice to speak in a first person singular voice, identifying with the protagonist, Leopold Auberg, the 17 years old teenager from Sibiu, who was taken by the patrol on the night of 15 January 1945 with other Germans from his town (aged as the Order stipulated) to a forced labour camp in the Soviet Union. Except for a short prelude of the preparation for deportation, and some episodes after the return home, the novel *Atemschaukel* narrates in the first person this teenager's experience of the labour camp, *accused* by the Soviet authorities of being *guilty* of the crimes of the Nazi regime together with other Germans deported from Romania. Those who are familiar with Herta Müller's prose know that her texts are not what literary theory calls, after French theoretician Gerard Genette, *hetero-diegetic narration*, where the narrator's unseen, yet omniscient presence is well defined in the text. Herta Müller's language, as one of her interpreters observed, is at the borderline of poetry and prose, as "it is not conventional, but objectual, in the sense of perfect concordance of connotation and denotation."[7] Her prose is closer to the poetic language and applies *homo-diegetic* narration, in which the narrator is a character in the text, who acts and talks. From this

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[7] Cosmin Dragoste, *Herta Müller – metamorfozele terorii (Herta Müller – the Methamorphoses of terror)* (Craiova: Aius Print, 2007), 70.

point of view, the choice of the first person narrative, in accordance with the literature of the self which only speaks for itself, might seem natural and quite within reach for the author. The only difference is that the world Herta Müller describes in her other novels is a world seen with her own eyes, directly experienced, the world of Romania during the Ceaușescu regime, a concentration camp extended to the territory of an entire country. Even when Herta Müller changes the perspective, like in a kaleidoscope, and gives the impression of a life lived under the lens (characters living under the gaze of informers and secret police officers), the relation of the self with objects does not fall apart, only reverses the direction of the gaze. Therefore, although Herta Müller most often writes in the first person singular, the confession does not fall into the *sin* of subjectivity; on the contrary, the impression of objectification is even stronger because of the poetic force of suggestion and due to the reversed gaze from the object to the subject. As regards the narrative perspective, the choice of the first person singular in *Atemschaukel* receives a much more profound meaning and a wilfully symbolic nature.

Her identification as a narrator with Leopold Auberg is a choice that Herta Müller fully assumes. The first person singular justifies the narrative instance which intentionally creates an impression of authenticity starting from the real experience of the deportation, and grants the confession a kind of poetic objectivity, although deprived of its apparent witness-character. The nature of the subject itself (deportation) and Herta Müller's success in maintaining the tragic tone of the action all throughout the text, demonstrating how the drama of man in front of destiny is universal, invite the reader to a *poetic* reading of the text instead of a *confessional*, *historical* one. While not going into details regarding the hermeneutic problem of intention, discussed, among others, by Michel Foucault in his famed *What is an Author?*, where *intention* and *intentionality* play a major, distinctive role in interpretation,[8] I think that the more profitable question to ask about the analysis of Herta Müller's *Atemschaukel* (keeping the convened framework of interpretation) would not be what words she uses to express an intention, but what the *author* means by using those specific words.

The commitment to realism and *poesis* are harmoniously combined in Herta Müller's work, in such a way that the presentation of a historical fact (deportation), which conventionally can only be done with the help of the means of epic (counting on the effect of the subject), gets transferred into a different register, one situated not so much at the frontier between poetry and prose, but rather in a *unique geometric point*, the convergence area of the lyric, epic and dramatic genres. This intersection of genres, as well as the ability to maintain a stable balance between them, means for Herta Müller the real success in a poetic, artistic conversion of a dramatic event in the history of ethnic Germans in Romania. This privileged geometric spot is thus the meeting point of a lyric subject (the confession of the protagonist, Leo Auberg), an epic subject matter of the narration (the deportation), and the tension of a metaphysical conflict, albeit desacralized, between destiny and freedom. The intersection of these three classical genres in this *geometric point* is achieved by reversal, by the *partial abolition* of the poetic requirements of each of these genres. The requirements of the epic genre

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[8] Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 101–120.

are fulfilled in that it presents a verisimilar subject in development, but some of its norms are abolished, and the epic means of expression are dissolved thus in a world predominated by the lyricism of Leo's voice. What remains of *the plot*, once its epic character has been suspended, fits perfectly to Aristotle's definition that the purpose of tragedy is to represent an action where an innocent hero falls into a great misfortune (XIII, 1453a 5),[9] an action that must trigger fear and produce the effect of *catharsis* in the audience. Taken *ad litteram*, Aristotle's definition would cover the plan and scope of action in *Atemschaukel* if the means to achieve the tragic were those of tragedy as such. Consistent with herself, Herta Müller mixes the trivial with the exceptional, life with poetry, as two oppositional and distinct tones of the text, but also follows a superior perspective in which this circumstantial opposition might find its unifying principle. Counting on the encounter between the poetic and the historical, when the history of a collective event (deportation) is projected onto a secondary, timeless, unchanging plan (that of the meditation on history), Herta Müller manages to temper the tragic subject with poetic expression, to bestow metaphysical value on the conflict and to ingrain the particular (the event) with a sense of universalism. History indubitably has the means to analyze the *collective tragedy of deportation* of the Germans from Transylvania. Literature can also undertake this role, but surely not by restricting it to borrowing the subject and measuring the effect by the cause, as long as a tragic subject, by definition, should also meet some strict, poetical requirements of composition. Consequently, one of the distinctive elements of history and poetry is that, in Aristotle's words, "Poetry, therefore, is a more philosophical and a higher thing than history: for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular." (IX, 1451b 5).[10]

In addition to a personal view on history interpreted in a poetic note, *Atemschaukel*, like any great work of art, also proposes a universal view. However, the means of expression that lend epic substance to the subject (deportation) find themselves distanced from the epic because of how Herta Müller conceives *poesis*, as the transgression of reality to poetry and implicitly, the touch of the universal. The difficulty regarding the relation between history (historical event), memory (subject) and story (narration) lies in impregnating the plot (the story) with this universality, and, for the literary text, to convey the sense and character of *poesis* and implicitly universal tragedy to a collective tragic event recorded by history. With the instruments of epic alone this would be almost impossible. And still, Herta Müller brilliantly succeeds in doing that, using means other than those usually applied in epic literature, employing the force of poetic eloquence in order to keep alive the tragic suggestiveness of the text. This way the lyric force conveyed by poetry inserted in the text does not weaken the epic value of the narration; on the contrary, adding up elements of the dramatic, such as the metaphysical conflict and the collective guilt (of being German) increase the poetic resistance of the text and lend it exquisite suppleness. By this seemingly circumstantial junction of genres and the partial abolition of the poetic norms of each, Herta Müller creates a unique kind of writing, with a set of essential features (merging the poetic elements of epic, lyric and drama) that I shall illustrate in what follows.

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[9] Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Samuel Henry Butcher (London: Macmillan, 1922), 45.
[10] Ibid., 35.

In a perfect orchestration of the plot, the text contains three acts, unequal in length, but well balanced as to the events of the middle and longest section of the composition. The first chapter functioning as a prologue starts directly, without any previous introduction to the action, with Leo's packing and leaving home, and his eagerness to leave from home, far from the world that he perceives as limiting his ambitions, offering the image of a journey of infinite possibilities. The preparations of the 17 years old young boy, presented in the first chapter, suggest that Leo, at an insufficiently mature age, accepts his fate willingly and even quite serenely. But beyond the apparent calmness of the hero, Herta Müller succeeds in expressing with just a few stylistic means the more profound idea that in front of history's major changes, man is never ready enough, counting also on the informed reader's implicit cooperation, who, unlike Leo, *knows* what awaits him in his *journey* and later in the camp. This scene of preparing the luggage for the *journey*, which in an epic register could have gained a symbolic meaning, in reference to the *role of the journey* in mythological epic poetry, converts into a scene of tragic worth and tone. For Leo and the other deportees, taken by force by the authorities, the political order of deportation or the *law* (in its absolute sense) is similar, by its relentless nature, with the relation of *divine will* (blind, irrational) and *human will* in classical tragedy, a relation which always inclined towards the former. The poetic effect of this scene is even greater as the hero behaves in a way that is completely different from that of an epic hero or the superior hero of a tragedy. On the contrary, Leo accepts his *lack of exceptional qualities* with the same serenity as he accepts his fate. The lack of qualities as an established image in modern literature is also suggested by the hero's self-definition not by who he *is* (*to be*) but what he *has* (*to have*), by a sum of objects received as gifts from others, whose value and significance establish the role and determines the social presence of the community in front of the individual:

> "Alles, was ich habe, trage ich bei mir.
> Oder: Alles Meinige trage ich mit mir.
> Getragen habe ich alles, was ich hatte. Das Meinige war es nicht. Es war entweder zweckentfremdet oder von jemand anderem. Der Schweinslederkoffer war ein Grammophon-kistchen. Der Staubmantel war vom Vater. Der städtische Mantel mit dem Samtbündchen am Hals vom Großvater. Die Pumphose von meinem Onkel Edwin. Die ledernen Wickelgamaschen vom Nachbarn, dem Herrn Carp. Die grünen Wollhandschuhe von meiner Fini-Tante. Nur der weinrote Seidenschal und das Necessaire waren das Meinige, Geschenke von den letzten Weihnachten." [11]

This quotation is taken from the very beginning of the novel, and it constructs the identity of the narrator through accumulation, through collecting the goods of other people, as he receives certain objects from his family and a neighbour (Mr Carp), which he takes with himself in the labour camp. This way, through an affective but equally poetic transfer, Leo assimilates them to his own self, taking with himself in deportation *something* of the identity of the others excepted from the order, but who are equally *guilty* due to their community of language and culture. By this affective, cumulative transfer that first person singular personal pronoun *I*, meaning Leopold

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[11] Herta Müller, *Atemschaukel* (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2009), 7.

Auberg, changes into *we*, the father whose overcoat he wears, the grandfather who gave him his winter coat, uncle Edwin from whom he gets his breeches, the neighbour, Mr Carp (a Romanian man) with his leather gaiters, and aunt Fini who gives him the green woollen gloves. The gramophone box is offered by Leo's mother, and the words *I know you'll be back*, of an overwhelming suggestive power for the 17-year-old boy, are the farewell words of his grandmother, which he takes with himself as a talisman or a symbol of believing in his return. None of the people who contributed to Leo's few assets in the camp were deported, but Herta Müller's ability to blend a whole community's (ethnic Germans in Romania) life experience into one single character is one of the fundamental elements of her poetic vision, expressed in the contrast between the almost trivial tone of the epic level and the elevated, serious tone of man's tragic frailty in front of historical destiny, suggested by *silence*.

The text's lines of force, represented on the one hand by the metaphysical impulse that emphasizes the relationship between destiny and freedom, and on the other hand by the constraints of historical reality where the focus changes from the religious to the political, converge in a point as the centre around which the whole revolves. The words Leo's grandmother said when they parted (*I know you'll be back*) accompanied Leo during the whole time he spent in the camp, and cemented this wholeness, apparently fragmented in short chapters with veritable prose poems among them, with a symbolic, premonitory value, which is expressed in ancient tragedies by the choir, with the force of repetitive incantation formulas.

Paradoxically, Herta Müller's text emphasizes that, even in the 20th century, in front of the reversal of historical situations man proves to be just as helpless in case of a decision that comes from a level *superior* than his own status, resignedly accepting his destiny, just like the heroes of ancient tragedies. But while tragic heroes are examples because of their behaviour, proving to be exceptional heroes under all circumstances, in Herta Müller's modern text, despite the poetic conversion of the dreadful reality, spiritually speaking, survival is not a virtue of superiority but of inferiority, of the one who possesses a stronger self-preservation instinct. The camp produces no heroes with exceptional qualities acting in exceptional circumstances, so, because of the dominating will of survival, the only *heroes* standing out are those who manage to stay alive. The deviation from a superhero to an *anti-hero* concerned only about survival at all costs subdues the supremacy of the spirit over the elementary values of life, becoming also a reaction to the blind faith in militarism and raw force during the war. The assertion of the human being's freedom of action within a totalitarian society becomes thus the subject of sceptical and, implicitly, modernist meditations.

Furthermore, rightfully opposing the traditional manner of treating time (chronology) and space, the structure of Herta Müller's text has no respect for the norms or rigours of the epic genre, but suspends them. She manages to instil a vague feeling of temporal and spatial indeterminacy by the subtle avoidance of any determination and the art of emphasizing only the phenomena (of time and space) important for the action, leaving the rest unexpressed; instead, reversing the perspective, she plays down any reference to time and space, counting also on the reader's familiarity with the time and space of the action. Time seems to be abolished in the camp, temporal references are vague and mostly refer to the seasons because of

the possibility and need to procure edible food from the fields. Space seems to be no more fixed, not because Herta Müller did not know the place where Oskar Pastior was deported, but because, for the same poetic reasons, she preferred to count on the suspension and indeterminacy of space, maintaining a lengthy effect of the tragic atmosphere:

> "Der einzige Anhaltspunkt, den wir bei der Ankunft im Lager hatten, war NOWO-GORLOWKA. Das konnte ein Name für das Lager sein oder für eine Stadt, auch für die ganze Umgebung. Der Name der Fabrik konnte es nicht sein, denn die hieß KOKSOCHIM-SAWOD. Und im Lagerhof neben dem Wasserhahn lag ein gusseiserner Kanaldeckel mit kyrillischen Buchstaben. Mit meinem Schulgriechisch reimte ich mir DNJEPROPETROVSK zusammen, und das konnte eine nahe Stadt oder bloß eine Gießerei am anderen Ende Russland sein. Wenn man aus dem Lager herauskam, sah man statt Buchstaben die weite Steppe und bewohnte Orte in der Steppe".[12]

This way, even if Leo is in the foreground of the narration and can be observed by the reader in all of his actions, whether at work, stealing potatoes in the field, or bartering with the few objects he still possessed, Herta Müller's protagonist is profound and not completely absorbed by the present. On the contrary, the background of the story (the history of deportation), known both by the readers and Leo, who recounts his experience after almost 60 years, seems to tone down, although it plays a decisive role in the plot, supporting the dramatic conflict and tension of the entire work. The effect of overlapping spatial and temporal planes (chronology is random, and the space – referred to at the beginning as "on the edge of nowhere, at the Russians" – is vague, taking on at most a shapeless form of landscape, the steppe), and overlapping the conflicting strata of conscience conveys the poetic nature of the text and the objectification of the subject expressing itself in an almost lyrical way.

There are real poetry pages in *Atemschaukel*, chapters written as poems: *Weßier Hase, Vom Lagerglück,* etc. Thus, precisely because of this poetry-like, rather than epic nature, Herta Müller successfully maintains the active, lively, tragic thrill of the text, suspending the spatial and temporal determination by poetic means, a compulsory norm of every action. Due to this poetic power of suggestion, almost every chapter becomes the draft of a miniature tragedy, a drama with profound implications and consequences for human existence through epic depth and the suggestion of the latent conflict.

Over and above the formulation of a tragic subject such as the collective tragedy of deportations to the Soviet Union, as a condition for its rebirth, the tragedy as a poetic genre should rediscover the beliefs of the ancient Greeks, or, like the modern theatre, to turn towards the absurd with metaphysical implications, with irrationality pushed to the extremes. But, as George Steiner remarked in his famed book, *The Death of Tragedy*, not even the work of authors like Samuel Beckett or other playwrights like Claudel, Cocteau, Gide or Brecht can change the conclusion that tragic theatre as an artform is dead: "But tragedy is that form of art which requires the intolerable burden of God's presence. It is now dead because His shadow no longer falls upon us as it fell

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[12] Ibid., 59.

on Agamemmnon or Macbeth or Athalie."[13] Although the definition of tragedy has not seen major changes in time, it has undergone some major variations in form compared to the ancient tradition, and has suffered some changes in adaptation to the audience's taste. Conclusive examples in this respect are Shakespeare's theatre or later, in French classicism, the theatre of Racine and Corneille. The use of the term *tragedy,* when speaking about the collective deportation to the Soviet Union, is perfectly legitimate and beyond any semantic doubt. Tragedy is part of life. Based on the available sources, historical literature has described in various ways the *tragedy* of the innocent victims of deportation, entire communities whose fate was sealed by totalitarian regimes in the name of absurd, inhuman ideologies.

The inhumanity of the tragedy is also emphasized by George Steiner in his definition of the genre, underlining the *irrational character* of the will of the gods, and also the inability to recover of the one who received the terrible blow of destiny:

> "Tragic drama tells us that the spheres of reason, order, and justice are terribly limited and that no progress in our science or technical resources will enlarge their relevance. Outside and within man is *l'autre*, the *otherness* of the world. Call it what you will: a hidden or malevolent God, blind fate, the solicitations of hell, or the brute fury of our animal blood. It waits for us in ambush at the crossroads. It mocks us and destroys us. In certain rare instances, it leads us after destruction to some incomprehensible response."[14]

The dramatic conflict implies thus a divine will, the change in the individual's destiny close to destruction. But, as Aram Frenkian claims, another important element in defining tragedy in a world of misery and suffering is the metaphysical balance of the relationship between heroes and gods, as well as between faith and reason (divine justice/human justice).[15]

Herta Müller's text does not abound in religious references. Words like *God*, *faith*, *prayer* or others in this semantic field are extremely rare, so rare even that their absence is more meaningful than their too explicit presence would have been. The feast of Christmas is mentioned, but mostly by reference to the symbol of the Christmas tree rather than the mystery of the Saviour's birth. Undoubtedly, the world of the camp is a godless world. The stronger survives. The lawyer Gaist survives because he eats the cabbage soup of his wife, Heidrun (with her consent), while she eventually starves to death. There is also an internal order or justice of the camp when certain limits or conduct codes are broken. Karli Halmen, for instance, staying alone in the barrack for a day, eats Albert Gion's bread. When the others return and see the theft, they all punish him, putting the thief in the sick ward for three days. This kind of justice acts on the spot, led by people, no one expects any divine justice, which comes either too late or never (like in Euripides's tragedies). Nevertheless, instead of the traditional, absent God, there are other, more concrete divinities, who seem to have replaced God and who, through their often terrifying presence, hold the place of destiny as well as gods.

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[13] George Steiner, *The Death of Tragedy* (London: Faber and Faber, 1974), 353.

[14] Ibid., 9.

[15] Aram Frenkian, *Înţelesul suferinţei umane la Eschil, Sofocle şi Euripide* (The meaning of human suffering in Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides) (Bucharest: Editura pentru literatură universală, 1969), 251.

Such a god is Fenia (in the chapter *Der Kriminalfall mit dem Brot*) by whose ugliness Leo, as he himself confesses, feels almost subdued:

> "Fenjas Gerechtigkeit machte mich regelrecht hörig, diese Paarung von Schiefmäuligkeit und Präzision auf der Waage. Das Abstoßende an Fenja war eine Perfektion. Fenja war weder gut noch böse, sie war keine Person, sondern ein Gesetz in Häkeljacken. Es wäre mir nie in den Sinn gekommen, Fenja mit anderen Frauen zu vergleichen, weil keine andere so gequält diszipliniert und makellos hässlich war. Sie war wie das begehrte, schrecklich nasse, klebrige, schandbar nahrhafte, rationierte Kastenbrot"[16]

This goddess of bread of a *cold sanctity*, as Leo calls her, is an inverted divinity, impartial and ruthless, ugly and fair, cold and terrible, but sacred by the holy horror she causes, having a direct and sacrosanct connection with *the daily bread*, like the Father in Heaven in the Lord's prayer. Moreover, her presence is also reassuring, because the inmates know she would never be absent from the daily duty of dividing the bread, on which their survival depends. Still, despite her importance, Fenia is reduced to this single role of weighing and portioning the bread based on the physical effort and work done by each inmate, obeying an almost mathematical equation: *one shovel = one gram of bread*. This is the only territory where Fenia, the symbol of a just but blind justice lacking any understanding, is omnipotent.

Another god with an increasingly strengthening influence, especially as time flows, is the Hunger Angel, appearing throughout many pages. Again, one can appreciate Herta Müller's ability to render poetically some of the most degrading states of human existence, when the angel of hunger incites the one that it possesses to commit foul things that an individual would not normally commit. The angel of hunger dissolves almost all preconceived notions towards man and humanity, determining the people in the camp to behave differently from any other human being. These divinities are almost devoid of materiality or concreteness, they are almost abstract, and as such, they do not have a real power like the *nacealnic*, the commander of the camp, the real representative of power for the inmates. Still, the human representatives of power are left in the background, their albeit terrifying presence is overshadowed, gravely and almightily, by some almost abstract forces with concept value, but even more terrifying by their (inhumanly) cold actions. With this inversion of power relations on the conceptual, abstract levels and the concrete, real ones, Herta Müller obtains that dramatic effect that conveys the text its conflicting terrain between the human and metaphysical level without losing for a moment its suggestive power.

Moreover, the modern expressiveness of the text is also rendered by the relationship of *silence* and *word*. There is a pledge of *silence*, whether a tacit one, assumed by the entire community on their return from deportation, or a certain kind of inability of words to speak about things impossible to utter, which creeps into the text as a subsidiary, obvious reality. Referring to his experiences in Nazi Auschwitz, George Steiner talked about a shrinking world of words ("The world of words has shrunk")[17] in the post-war years. In contrast with the abundance of other accounts of the deportation, a vast corpus of texts (confessions, archival material, etc.) accessible

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[16] Herta Müller, *Atemschaukel*, 110.
[17] George Steiner, *Language and Silence* (New York: Atheneum, 1967), 24.

today, the telling silence in Herta Müller's text gains an additional level of meaning due to its extra-textual implications regarding the knowledge and interpretation of the historical circumstances defining the deportation. As long as the heroic action or any kind of heroism converts to *silence*, the tragic is triggered precisely by the contrast between the frailty of life and the will of survival (with nothing heroic about it), as well as the grave tone, suggested by an in-depth level (that of history) inaccessible for the understanding of the protagonists but manifest and explicit from the reader's perspective.

The tragic is realized through Herta Müller's mastery in the *mise-en-scène* of identity translation from the first person singular to the plural, from *I* to *we*, conveying polysemy and an extra poetic value to the text. This affective dramatic transfer, counting on *role* inversion, stands out also in the disposition of the chapters so that it allows for a division of the text into the periods before the deportation, the deportation and after the deportation. In each of the three parts the identity of the *I* is defined/dissociated with respect to the others, the hero's apparent lack of traits, visible especially in the middle part of the text, is conceived as an element of contrast meant to attract attention to the tragic level of the plot.

In the first chapter, *Vom Kofferpacken*, the dramatic conflict acquires a double value, which makes the text open towards two perspectives with different meanings. The first is the perspective of the regard from inside the text, that collective *we* that Leo identifies with, his drama being the drama of his entire community; the second is the perspective of the regard from outside the text, the reader's privileged perspective. Only him, the reader, is offered supplementary information on the escapes of the 17-year-old young man who met with older men in the Park of alders or Neptun resort. The code names of the men he met in the park are interesting; despite their vaguely poetic character, they remind of the terrible semiotics of *Securitate* files, establishing thus a chronological relation with Oskar Pastior's later life, blackmailed by the *Securitate* and forced to become an informer before he left the country.

The middle part of the text, placed between the first and the last six chapters, describes in an almost undetermined chronology Leo Auberg's life in the camp. But as the image of the people at home fades away in a sort of collective, over-individual organism (surviving only in language), Leo discovers in the camp a new community through which and in whose name he speaks. Leo's almost singular voice is perceived even more intensely as the unison, the tuning fork that indicates the tone of the entire choir. However, under the unbearable circumstances in the camp, when hunger drives the inmates to situations of degradation and humiliation close to the limit of humanity, the respect for any kind of social or sexual limits or differences disappears, and any attempt to reinstate a normal order of things on the model of human society outside the camp ends in scenes dominated by a tragic, overemphasized absurdity. The normal/abnormal (human/inhuman) relation is inversed in the camp, the traditional view of the world is turned upside down by forces that instate a new order in which the struggle for survival, regardless of the means, is accepted as a necessary element of balance. There is nothing more in contrast with the natural order of things than the idea of raising hunger to the poetic rank of *angel*, even more so as starvation was one of the most frequent causes of death in the camp. Still, the only and last form of individual freedom that refuses to accept a certain order considered inferior to the order of the

spirit because it is only based on the struggle for survival, appears precisely in the poetic force of the *Hunger Angel*. The contemplation and poetic transfiguration of the smallest and most degrading activities in the camp creates thus a special world, the tragic is expressed both by the introduction of the desecrated sacred in the physical world (deformed as the *angel of hunger*), and the impossible wish to transcend the limits of humanity and abolish the laws of human biology or physiology by a poetic leap. Herta Müller's fine way of intensifying the tragic by absurd or comic elements offers extra grandness and tragic quality to the characters. However, unlike the heroes of classical tragedy, who are made to act in exceptional circumstances, the prisoners of a forced labour camp, fighting every day for their survival, rediscover humanity precisely by reaching its lowest limits.

Being freed from a Soviet camp does not mean in fact a real liberation, for those who survived the harsh conditions in the Soviet Union had to adapt to the circumstances of a country still under Soviet occupation. Thus the tragic thrill that permeates the text in the chapters on imprisonment does not fade but it intensifies, deepening into an even more overwhelming *silence*. Returning home in a world perceived as immovable, fix and mute, *Nichtrührer*, Leo realizes he has nothing in common with his family any more, painfully observing the separation of the two, almost irreconcilable worlds. He suddenly finds himself alone and lost even with his family. He perceived the signs of this rupture even in the camp, when he received a postal card from his mother with the photograph of his new brother (*Ersatzbruder*), born while he was away. This is the moment when the separation from the community of the not deported, of those who did not experience the camp begins. The symbol of this rupture is the birth of the new brother, perceived by Leo from a distance as his possible *replacement*. The rupture from the community of those who stayed home evolves as he returns from the camp by a *pledge of silence* and forgetting of the past. The second rupture, from the community of the deported, happens the moment when one day Leo avoids Trudi Pelikan, by their common tacit agreement, when he sees her around the Great Market Square in Sibiu: "Da kam mir die Trudi Pelikan entgegen, yum ersten Mal seit dem Lager. Wir sahen uns zu spät. Sie ging am Stock. Weil sie mir nicht mehr ausweichen konnte, legte sie den Gehstock aufs Pflaster und bückte sich zu ihrem Schuh. Der war aber gar nicht offen."[18] The same kind of *pledge of silence* and the same desire of forgetting through silence determines those who had not long before shared the same traumatizing experience to distance and separate themselves by cancelling the past through silence.

Analyzing the meanings of *silence* in 20th century literature, Ihab Hassan defines the forms by which *silence* as an alternative of language in creating worlds from modern to postmodern literature, identifying in postmodern texts two kinds of silence, echoes of language itself: "(a) the negative echo of language, autodistructive, demonic, nihilist; (b) its positive stillness, self-transcendent, sacramental, plenary."[19] The first one, defined by Ihab Hassan as negative, is present in Herta Müller's text with the emphasis on the self-destructive, demonic, nihilist character of silence. This has,

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[18] Herta Müller, *Atemschaukel*, 278.

[19] Ihab Hassan, *The dismemberment of Orpheus. Toward a Postmodern Literature*, (New York, Oxford University press, 1971), 248.

within the world of concentration camps, a political dimension which has fatal consequences for the entire community in aggravating the impossibility to communicate. But at the same time, in relation with speech (in the degrading sense of submission through *information*), within the same universe of labour camps, silence can also have a positive, saviour-like character for the one who chooses not to speak and not to betray his kin. This second meaning of silence, more substantial in Herta Müller's other texts, is only vaguely suggested in *Vom Hungerengel*.

Demonstrating how precarious the human condition becomes in the most degrading of situations, Herta Müller's text does not engage in the direction of the nihilistic or alienation literature that proclaims the divine failure, the rupture between man and universe or human crisis. On the contrary, counting on the cathartic effect of the events, Herta Müller compels the attention of the reader (spectator) to focus on human subjectivity, embrittled by history's traumatic experiences, offering the godless world a new role in human tragedy, the role of a both objective and subjective, individual and collective witness *conscience*. The ultimate purpose is not assuming an individual guilt and refusing tragedy through repealing subjectivity for collectivity, but assuming an individual tragic guilt and accepting tragedy as a form of stating a subjectivity limited by the freedom of others. If for the Greek tragedians, conflict was generated by the nature and limits of individual freedom in relation with destiny and the will of the gods, for Herta Müller, tragic tension sustains itself, in the absence of individual conflict with divinity through the author's ability to create, at a linguistic level, an essentiality of the problematic relation between individuals and destiny, as a result of grand history, not as a result of chance. Therefore, in the absence of a god that inflicts conflict, in order to obtain catharsis, the individual is caught without the possibility of personal salvation, in a combination of causes and effects, impossible to control on a human level. Even so, there is a form of salvation, namely through *words*. Resisting silence in order to overcome fear and expressing a traumatic historical experience through words (art) appears, in Herta Müller's texts, in the spirit of both universality and telling the truth.

*Translated from the Romanian by Emese Czintos*

# Who's Afraid of Marxism? Or Why Marx was Right and Pleşu, Liiceanu and Patapievici Are Not!

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**Keywords:** Marxism, Marxist theory, communist hypothesis, neoliberalism, critical theories, ideology, false consciousness, criticism of capitalism

**Abstract**. The paper overviews some of the most important anti-Marxist traditions in the Romanian public sphere and analyses the discourse of three of the most important anti-communist philosophers today: Andrei Pleşu, Gabriel Liiceanu and Horia-Roman Patapievici. The main argument is that most relevant ideas of the author *The Capital* are misused and misinterpreted, due to a primitive understanding of Marxism. One problem is that Romania lacks academic studies of post-Marxism. The other is that the Romanian intellectuals are most often propagating ready-made Marxist ideas, half-truths without referencing the original context. Returning to the classical work of Terry Eagleton, who suggested that "Marx was right," the author proposes a return to Marxist concepts, so necessary when it comes to critically understanding present day capitalism.

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In 2014 three leading Romanian intellectuals (Andrei Pleşu, Gabriel Liiceanu and Horia-Roman Patapievici) published a bestseller entitled: *O idee care ne suceşte minţile* (An idea that twists our minds).[1] In this collective volume, signed only with their family names (Pleşu Liiceanu Patapievici – PLP), the three authors make visible one of the most profound biases in our culture, the unreasonable disdain for Marxism. Using an almost mystical promise, they claim that there is an undebatable fact: communism has "twisted" our minds and their book can cure the flaws caused by Marxism, proposing an "un-twisting" that can bring the readers on the right way. Unfortunately, this claim is not confirmed by the book, which can be described as a reversed form of ideological indoctrination, one conducted with the same inflexibility as the indoctrination accused in the premise of their argument. In order to "heal" everybody from the "twisted" Marxist ideology, the three are using upside-down concepts (and fixed ideas) on Marxist theory. In fact, this collective volume, which is nothing but an eclectic compilation of several conferences and press editorials, coagulated around some undigested truisms about a philosophy which is more complex than the accumulated negative misrepresentations used, is nothing but a conceptual twist, a "spin" in pro-capitalist public relations. As one who teaches contemporary critical theories to university students, it always struck me how inaccurate perspectives

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[1] Andrei Pleşu, Gabriel Liiceanu and Horia-Roman Patapievici, *O idee care ne suceşte minţile* (An idea that twists our minds) (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2014).

about Marxism are circulated, based on truisms that have become commonplaces in our culture over the past quarter of a century – in large part due to the concerted efforts of the authors of the current volume.

The anti-Marxist tradition and the heavy anti-communism of the last 25 years in the public sphere have generated a malignant halo around the ideas of the author of *The Capital*. The collapse of communism and the failure of Marxism in the former socialist countries led, somewhat understandably, to the demonization of Marxism and communism generically. But we must not forget that the Marxist theories are based on a set of concepts that are not by far exhausted. The invalidation of the Soviet Marxism in its praxis are not automatically a confirmation for the fact that the forecasts Marx made about capitalism are incorrect. The primitive simplification is the following: communism was a failure, therefore Marx's philosophy is "bad". Is it, by this logic, true that Heidegger's system of thinking was "bad" only because he was a Nazi sympathizer? Is Cioran's thinking "bad" or is the methodology of Eliade's history of religions "bad" because of their adherence to the fascist ideology?

The book is nothing more than, as one of its authors clearly states, a "vindication," a kind of vendetta against a skeleton, an almost macabre attack staged in a cemetery of political ideas. Yet the central fault of their approach is the utter lack of an updated bibliography, at least referring to studies from the last decade, one which would have been required even for a graduate student applying to a second-class university. The argumentation of the three authors is disqualified from the start. For Marx's conceptual legacy cannot be limited to half quotes from volumes published in the nineteenth century, nor to political practices specific to the twentieth century. We know above all that Marx's theories were distorted even during the life of the German philosopher, and these deformations were criticized by Marx himself. There is a mystification of Marxism anticipated by the creator of the dialectical materialism when he said: "I know one thing about myself, I am not a Marxist". In fact, Marx was aware that there are no "easy to make recipes" allowing us to make "the soup of communism". This was obvious in the political practices of Marxism-Leninism; and, as the Russian theorist Vadim Mezhuev argued in *Marks protiv marksisma*, the application of the ideas of the Communist Manifesto in the Soviet communism was from the beginning based on several deviations from the original tenets of the German thinker.

In addition, given that there is no longer any "clear and present danger" for our societies to return to Stalinist communism, and since even the socialists and communists of today are, in fact, mere capitalists disguised in Armani suits, what is the use of an intellectual approach denoting a complete loss of critical consciousness? This volume is often based on conceptual attacks stemming from a vulgar and primitive form of Marxism, one that even an ideological illiterate would not take into consideration. Meanwhile the studies of post-Marxism have become one of the most advanced academic research areas in Western universities – especially in economics and political and human science – a book uttering aggressive platitudes about the leftist intellectuals denotes an unfortunate provincialism, at least at the level of the academic discourse. In fact, as Liiceanu draws his own portrait at the end of a flamboyant anti-Marxist discourse, we are witnessing a breach of the very intellectual obligation, since any researcher who "becomes the agent of political passions armored with a network of doctrines" is simply betraying his own destiny and his professional obligations. This is

where Liiceanu's lack of lucidity becomes shocking; the author of the famous *Appeal to toadies* (*Apel către lichele*) who claims to be "immune" to political and historical nonsense, he is himself showing signs of infestation with the disease of capitalism.

The apodictic findings of the three authors are, most of the time, based on numerous errors of logic and reasoning. In numerous instances we are presented with the recanting of prejudices and commonplaces about Marxism. But the most deplorable aspect comes from the fact that such influent intellectuals are discrediting ideas without even taking into account the dialectic value of the assumptions. In fact, like all the "smoking room anti-Marxists," our authors are throwing the bathwater out with the baby they should really wash. Because ultimately the role of the intellectuals is not to propagate ruminated ideas, half-truths without filtering them by fair assessments. Unfortunately the PLP triplet is shrouded in an outdated speech and an obsolete argumentation. The readers of such books should be aware of this before any of them take their self-sufficient conclusions for granted.

One of the main mechanisms of the authors, even when they seem to engage in actual readings of the books they refer to, at least in the case of Andrei Pleşu, who is quoting from Althusser or struggling with Emmanuel Terray – the concepts are always distorted. For example in the "battle" with the French Marxist and anthropologist, Andrei Pleşu uses citations which generate parallel arguments and digressive considerations. His associates are even less scientific in their approach, they simply perpetuate a vindictive (and out-of-date) speech without any critical discernment.

One of the most often perpetrated commonplaces, which is underpinning all the argumentative construction of the PLP triplet is the eternal marionette of the association between fascism and communism. The old reasoning is revitalized mechanically, without any new arguments; if we have condemned Nazism, we must condemn communism as well. All three claim, redundantly, the need to accept the idea of the common origins of the two competing ideologies. Nazism and communism are considered "twinned" ways of thinking and the supreme argument is the fact that they both reject liberalism and capitalism, which makes both political systems equally malignant. What gets easily overlooked in these reactionary lines of argument is the fact that the big industrialists of the world, from John Ford in America to the Krupps in Germany provided immeasurable support to Hitler. Another assumption, borrowed from Hannah Arendt, whose theories must be understood contextually, claims that there are elements of direct comparison between Stalinism and Hitlerism, which makes the Gulag-Holocaust equivalence mandatory. This is simply not true. A brief reading of the book published by Robert Gellately (2007) would have brought more nuances to this indiscriminate association. Delivering such enormities as truths, like the presumption that Nazism was using socialism as an umbrella term, does not provide any substance to the fact that Nazism was not an expression of capitalism; while the equivalence of the planned racial extermination and the crimes of class conflict is not even worth taking into consideration, because of its horrible consequences.

Another unprocessed idea arising from incomplete syllogisms is that communism is "criminal," obviously because "communists" like Stalin, Mao, Pol Pot and Ceausescu were criminals. Nobody denies today the monstrosity of the Khmer Rouge leaders, or other terrible manifestations of communist totalitarianism. It is strange, though, that our authors do not seem to have heard of the wars waged by

British colonialism or by the Dutch East India Company of the Netherlands, when entire populations were exterminated for the sheer material benefits of capitalists or for the control of spices, as it was with the hecatomb of Banda islands (or Run), made possible only by the need to preserve the monopoly on nutmeg. Even if they are aware of these historical realities, they seem to treat them as unimportant.

In fact, the three self-proclaimed prophets of anti-communism are writing a "red book" for infants, a sort of "Communism for Dummies"; therefore they freely resort to a form of reductionism that border on ridiculous intellectual oversimplifications and distortions by the value judgments they support. The clear indication of a PR discourse is visible in the handling of the lexical manipulations; Communism is always described with pejorative labels, it is depicted either as "lie," an "illusion" or even a "fiction". This propaganda mechanism is most tedious in Liiceanu's discourse, where communism is always described with derogatory labels. Communism is a "lunacy," a "wagation," is either "unnatural" or simply an "experience of mutilation". One must understand that this is the very essence of any propagandistic language, the pure manifestation of all dominant discourses – when we are not allowed to challenge the ideas of the "good" (in this case capitalism), while only the ideas of the "bad" (of Marxism) need to be refuted and disregarded indiscriminately. Therefore this volume becomes, at a closer look, merely an expression of the "repression of ideas," which was condemned by Marx himself and which was further explained in the post-Marxist tradition. There is no need to further argue on the hypothesis that any discursive repression of an idea, simply on the principle that we disagree with it, is totally unacceptable. The consequences of such an approach are deeply damaging for a culture of dialogue, especially since all "deconstructive" textual devices used by the PLP trio are based on the presumption that we need to overcome the devastating effects of an oppressive ideology.

To paraphrase Tearry, it is at this point where it becomes obvious that the three "thinkers" act as members of "tribe of the right wing". As the author who is targeted from the early pages of this volume pointed out, the "tribesmen of the right" label includes all writers, philosophers or politicians who refuse any form of egalitarianism, who are supporting the compulsory acceptance of social hierarchies and the dominating idea that a good society must maintain at all costs the establishment and, by consequence, a liberal economy. As it will become explicit in the following arguments, all these three features are recurrent in *An idea...*

Like any "right winged" tribesman, the PLP team becomes, once more, a loud mouthpiece for the socially privileged and despise those who are temporarily in position of inferiority in terms of class relations. The eternal contempt of the Ancien Régime towards the *sans-culottes* and the poor is blatantly manifest in the imaginary of the three writers. The most mean-spirited in his disgust towards "inferior classes" remains Liiceanu, who proffers a half sovereign aversion towards the workers and claims that "Communism is the projection in history of the resentment of servants"! For the PLP mind frame, the workers, the oppressed, the disenfranchised are nothing more than yokel servants, cheeky and violent, who dare to question their master's cleverness. All communists "descended from servants," as Liiceanu proudly labels his imaginary enemies, are nothing more than "human debris," they created a society of "characterless humans". The right wing ideologues hate equality with visceral fury,

and Liiceanu expresses bluntly his adherence to this idea – he claims that there is a "natural inequality" between people, thus the whole philosophy of this book, and the entire intellectual approach, is based on the startling dismissal of the fundamental principles of our society, rooted in the French Revolution. For the PLP trio, equality and fraternity are unimportant, there is only the freedom translated as liberalism. Of course, it is relatively easy to scornfully speak about class differences when you own a car worth more than the food of a poor family throughout their existence; it is even more difficult, however, to see the illusion you are trapped in due to the ideology that allows you to establish such distinctions.

This elitist tendency can be seen in the terminology used by PLP in order to describe the everyday life in Romanian socialism and human typologies who supposedly manifested during that period of time. The key presumption, especially obvious in Liiceanu's redundant attacks, is that life under communism was degrading, that the communist ideology turned all of us (Romanians) into "a bunch of losers". Liiceanu's wording describes the lives of millions of his fellowmen as "brutified," a generalized form of "miserable everyday mediocrity," "boorishness" "grovelling" caused by a "plague," a "stench" that verdigrised the pure soul of the poor philosopher, who was forced to serve his apprenticeship at the resort in Păltiniş. And, obviously, the consequences are a society born out of communism which is produced by "touts and wire pullers". This is not untrue, yet it is only a half truth, because all these facts are presented as if the three intellectuals were not part of both the communist elite and the elite who created the Romanian society after 1989. Being one of the beneficiaries of the communist regime, Liiceanu's statements are disgustingly two-faced. He attributes to sheer "luck" the fact that he reached a well to do position in a research institute, where he was free to do his own work and travel, and ignores the fact that the meritocracy of the much hated regime allowed him to take shelter in an academy which was, nevertheless, communist.

The entire book swarms with negative myths about the malignant consequences of Marxist theory. Indeed, the mindless application of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" formula produced terrible effects. However, without going into many theoretical details about how this revolutionary principle was wrongly applied, and by resuming Althusser's classic arguments about the dangers of transforming the communist dictatorship into a clique of unscrupulous individuals, one must underline the inability of the critics to see the similar flaws of capitalism in their single-mindedness designed to gather evidence of the horrific nature of communism. Such practices should be denounced.

Without seeing the palindromic nature of their reasoning, the three legitimate capitalism without any deduction questionings. Sometimes, as it happens with Patapievici, the propaganda speech borders the comical – for him any "normal" society is a liberal society, as if between liberalism and normality there should be a sign of equality, while any Marxist idea is pre-requisitely monstrous and harmful. Although all the three authors manifest as propagandists of liberal capitalism, the most inflexible and dogmatic remains Liiceanu. In his metalanguage borrowed from his mentor, Constantin Noica, he is not simply "cataloguing" the defects of communism; his entire discourse is based on the blind faith that there is a "perfect grace" of the free market capitalism in general. Just as the communist party activists were convinced of the truth

of a doctrine they did not study first hand, but through intermediaries, the PLP triplet manifests the same defect. No wonder that Liiceanu, and also Patapievici in his lecture, turn indiscriminately into parochial apologists of private property. Here we are faced with some of the most simplistic arguments: one is the incredibly scanty sophism of Liiceanu, claiming his right to own his shaver, through the superfluous repetition of formulas like: "capitalism is the best world that we have". In a negative mirror (with dreadful accents from Orwell) Liiceanu and Patapievici recite like devotees: the free market is gooood, communism is baaad!

A simple reading of Marx could have cleared any confusions. Marx simply finds the inherent flaws of the capitalist mode of production, based on the bourgeois economic system, which requires the absolute power of private property. In order to get out of the ideological dynamics that capitalism builds around its own truths, we must exit its logic. As Marx did the very thing, he saw the "contradictions and antagonisms of capitalist production," and we cannot remain indifferent once we see the validity of this reasoning. The main ideas of Marx remain centered around the need to release his contemporaries from the captivity of capitalist exploitation. There is no indication that Marx intended to impose communism on people. Here is what Marx claims: "a communist society which is the only one where the free and original development of individuals ceases to be an empty promise, this development is conditioned precisely by the connection between individuals (...) from the solidarity needed for the free development of all"; in *The German Ideology*, even the communist revolution is considered "a common condition of the free development" of all individuals. Communism, as clearly stated in the *Communist Manifesto*, does not take away the possibility to "acquire social products," it only prevents the possibility, through the use of private property, to turn another man into a slave. Therefore, Liiceanu was able to use his razor privately in the communist society; stealing other people's work is the big problem of capitalism. Obviously, carrying the neoliberal ideology horse goggles, problems such as child labour or forced labour are easily mocked. For example Pleşu wonders, with a sadistic innocence, why should we bother about the "Malagasy prisoners or the low wages in Morocco". Clearly, the ridiculing of the fundamental flaws of capitalism is the central flaw of this type of anti-communist speech.

As Terry Eagleton was wondering "Why Marx was right" in his classic study, a clear answer presents itself only when we look critically at capitalism. Marx properly understood the deep mechanisms of the capitalist modes of production; he described in the most consistent and coherent manner the laws and the dialectics of the Capital. There is no better criticism of capitalism, and especially of the inexorable consequences produced by the process of capitalist accumulation, than the Marxist criticism. Obviously, for the three Romanian authors the capitalist imperative of accumulation does not seem so evil, nor does the terrible brutality of capitalism in its imperialist version seem important enough to be reviewed. These are negligible facts of history. Just as in the historical and political communism we can rightly trace some monstrous defects, the blindness to the monstrosities of capitalism, resulting from a cecity towards exploitation, can be also "twisted". Capitalism in itself is an idea that twists our minds, as it was indicated by Marx as well as by Adorno. Used as dominant ideology, it infantilizes all of us; and the contemporary ideological technologies of

capitalism, from television to Hollywood cinema, play a similar role to the malignant propaganda indoctrination of Stalinism or the Ceauşescu regime.

This is when the discourse of the book becomes indigestible, with stereotypical formulas such as those used by Liiceanu who describes the crisis of capitalism as a simple "flu". Concerned to place a diagnosis on the metastasizing diseases of Marxism, he does not see the germs of capitalism which, as Marx described so clearly, were not cured. A fundamental problem that we cannot take to the junkyard of social and political ideas is the ferocious greed of capitalism. In the pursuit for surplus, the natural callousness of capitalists reaches unimaginable heights. Given the fact that the global poverty is at the highest threshold ever, the frenzy for prosperity led recently to new climaxes – a very good example can be found in the story of Jordan Belfort, told by Martin Scorsese in the movie *The Wolf of Wall Street*. The reality which generates the ideal of communism, which Marx addresses in *The German Ideology*, is how profoundly "inhuman" the ruling class is when it comes to satisfying its needs. Was Marx wrong when he commented on the terrible conditions of employment children were subjected to in the British mines? His findings are still valid today in many parts of the world. Global statistics provided by UNICEF indicate an appalling reality: in the developing countries 30% of the children between 5 and 14 years old are used for labour, often for the benefit of Western multinationals. Should we not talk about our complicity to exploitation worldwide, or about the immoral wars and brutal forms of militarist capitalism? Using a reductionism, pro-capitalist propaganda does not make true that our belief that the only possible relationship between people is based on capitalist relations, founded on "mercantile" interactions, is an ideological illusion.

As seen in the latest crisis of world capitalism, when the planet was near chaos due to the lack of ethics of the Wall Street bankers, as our own capitalists understood very well when they created pyramidal schemes to accumulate immense fortunes, the foundations of economic liberalism are corrupt. "Investors" such as Bernie Madoff or Lew Ranieri anticipated the catastrophe of the Lehmann Brothers, and everything that followed was generated by the all toxic idea of the multiplication of money without doing any work, by simply making "profitable investments". Fraudulent business practices, financial scams, boundless greed and lying, these are the features of capitalism that emerged once again in recent history.

This is where one of the essential laws set by the author of *Grundrisse* comes into place – any capitalist development is based on the accumulation of capital, made possible by the labour exploitation of others, by stealing the surplus value from the workers by the owners of the means of production. Driven only by profit and rush towards prosperity, the capitalists have no moral limits and their principles are as lax as those of the communist thugs. It is enough to look into the recent Romanian society, where the struggle for enrichment produced immeasurable malignant consequences. Yet, after all, how could Liiceanu see these things, when he himself is nothing but a model of capitalist success? The publishing house he owns has a turnover of several million Euros and controls much of the marketplace of ideas in Romania. Using his case one can even illustrate, through the laws formulated by Marx, the link between prosperity, exploitation and the imposition of dominant ideas. How does the couple exploitation-ideology work in the case of Liiceanu? He earns surplus value, derived from the work of his employees who create objects (books) in which capital (money)

has been invested. The capitalist (let's say a "simple" book publisher) will pay his employees a few thousand Euros a year and keep the rest of the benefits for himself. Then he uses the cultural and media resources at his command to give lectures about the ugliness of those ideas that expose his exploitative actions. Thus the circle closes, the financial interest of these "teachers of ethics" is ideologically driven and morally defective.

Why should we return to Marx, what does this mean? As Elmar Altvater showed in his *Marx neu Entdecken* (2012), the rediscovery of Marxist theory involves the rediscovery of its conceptual heritage. This is important because, in Kantian terms, as Altvater underlines it, the Marxist theory is a good theory because it manages to explain the functioning of capitalism. Not because it was a successful political ideology. This is not about the political Marxism. For me there are several important distinctions which were pointed out by Louis Robert Heilbroner, who, in his classic study of the positive and negative traits of Marxism (*Marxism: For and Against*, 1980) describes four fundamental premises of the author of *The Capital*. Of these, I consider that two are essential for the present discussions and their recovery today is compulsory: the socio-analysis of capitalism and the dialectic approach to capitalist cultural products.

The first premise indicates, as I previously pointed out, that Marx's major legacy remains that of identifying the internal contradictions of capitalism and the bourgeois modes of production and property. Marx's central idea (and hence the central idea of Marxism) is based on the description of Capital as "social power". Any capitalist mode of production is, par excellence, leading to "objectification" and "alienation," since it is built on the practice of labour exploitation of other human beings. The exposure of the defects of capitalism and the abhorrent behaviours of bourgeois society must be seen as the starting point of any "Marxist ideas." Hence, the analysis of labour relations extensively described in Section III of *Das Kapital*, where Marx points out the exploitation of children and women in capitalist societies, or the crises of capitalism and the economic forecasts from *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. As the Finance Minister Peer Steinbrück from the German cabinet of Angela Merkel said: "some aspects of Marx's thought are not so bad" (quoted by Altvater).

Here is another truth enunciated by Marx almost 200 years ago and manifested in the Romanian society today. An "ugly and rich" capitalist buys beautiful and young women as sex slaves, just as the ruthless and stupid capitalist buys his political power in Parliament, and their behaviours are made desirable and appealing through the media. Once we recognize the grotesque characters from the public stage of capitalism, we can see how Marx, for the umpteenth time, was right. And if we move into the wider sphere, we must notice that the gross domestic product of entire nations is less than the total sales of a single global corporation, then we must realize why it is important to understand the Marxist criticism of capitalism. Given that less than 150 global companies control 40% of the planet's wealth, things are not as rosy as the PLP discourse would want us to believe. As of 2010, these discrepancies reached shocking contrasts globally. For example, the Yahoo group (which does not produce anything "real," only virtual "surfing") earned higher revenues than the GDP of Mongolia; Amazon is more "valuable" than Kenya, and eBay makes more money than

Madagascar. These contradictions become humongous when we are analyzing companies that reach revenues exceeding 60 billion dollars annually, which makes a company such as Apple, Microsoft or Coca-Cola more profitable than entire countries such as Croatia and Ecuador. At the top of the pyramid are global companies like General Motors or General Electric, with an income between 100 and 150 billion dollars; as General Electric surpasses 50 countries in the world relative to GDP. And, once we consider that Walmart had higher incomes than Norway (over 421 billion), the consequences are almost impossible to dismiss. Moreover, the 2008 crisis and the disaster that took place on 29 October 2009 were caused by the same huge conceitedness and blind faith in capitalism, which governs the thinking of the PLP triplet. "Marxology" is not the mere promise of a better society, it is the necessity to change a defective society – in fact, why should we accept the argument put forward by Pleşu, who minimized as infantile the ideal to change the world. Marx cannot be retroactively charged for the emergence of a society that wanted to replace the "old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms". On the one hand, Marx simply anticipated this budding new society, considering that sooner or later the old system will collapse. However, more importantly, for him communism is not a form of coercion, but a form of "association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all" (*The Communist Manifesto*). In fact, there is a danger which was identified by Althusser in his classical *Pour Marx* – we risk falling into the trap of theoretical confusion if we equivocate the theoretical positions assumed by Marx and their political consequences. Because, to paraphrase Althusser, how can one be a communist without having understood what Marxism meant! In the same way, how can we understand how the markets work and especially how the capital works, without any references to *Das Kapital*. One cannot be an anti-Marxist without understanding Marxism.

Once again, Marx's ideas expose the flaws of neoliberalism, which allow the abandonment of social protection under the guise of cancelling the privileges of "the lazy" in our society, which makes the cutting of wages and pensions justified, which disclose the negative consequences of the rejection of egalitarianism by the abolition of health insurance, or the right to health as these are rights belonging only to the rich. Therefore, it is outrageous when a writer like Patapievici claims that capitalism is the best of all worlds that we can have, when intellectuals refuse any form of debate and criticism that may raise the issues of discrimination or any other sins of capitalism. For them, anybody who dares to criticize capitalism and liberalism is a "criminal," a "morally repugnant" being. This inverted logic is unworthy of a public debate. If we are justified to criticize the moral defects of communism, but we become pariah, creatures deprived of "moral clarity" when we criticize capitalism (especially when adopting a Marxist position) then we are not part of a free minded society. This discourse about a "showcase capitalism" must be refused because we must not believe in the "holiness" of liberalism who does not "kill or persecute anybody," while simultaneously promoting a classical stereotype about the killer Marxism. We can understand the de-legitimation of Marxism through a rational dialectic, but when the thought control is generated through prefabricated ideas and especially by falsifying arguments, this is culturally unacceptable. Ideas such as alienation, class consciousness and false consciousness, exploitation and even Marx's fundamental humanism cannot

be thrown aside – mainly because people are seen by Marx as naturally creative and free and not the robotic slaves of the by-products and ideas of capitalism.

The second element of Marxism which I believe to be fundamental, is that Marxist theory remains an essential research tool in communication studies, media studies, and especially in social critical studies. All these fields stem from Marx's dialectical practice, based on the rejection of the Hegelian dialectics, and by assuming the idea that the material world plays a fundamental role in the shaping of the human mind (a theory known as dialectical materialism). In the *Afterword* of the second edition of *The Capital*, 1873, the basic idea put forward by Marx was that all technological contradictions of capitalism are imprinted in its conceptual products (arts, media, cultural). As he pointed out in the letter to Ruge, from *Briefe aus den Deutsch-Französischen Jahrbüchern*, in order to exit the absurdity and paradoxes generated by the false consciousness, one must resort to a "merciless criticism of everything existing," a criticism that has "no fear of the consequences that can be reached". The Marxist dialectics is the pathway to reach the truth by accepting the negation of negation – which means understanding that the flaws of capitalism are simultaneously the worst and the best thing possible for humanity.

Once more, in order to understand the cultural products of capitalism we must start from the premise of the criticism of the capitalist production system; or, as suggested in *The German Ideology* the "ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the dominant ideas, which means that the class which is the dominant material force of society is also the dominant spiritual force". Thus, the "producers of ideas" not only dominate the "manufacturing of material goods," they control the production of cultural values. The whole field of cultural studies is based on this very dialectic conclusion. The contemporary communication systems can be analyzed only from a critical stand point which sees the material basis of any social construction of meanings. Or, to put it more simply, there is a determination between what we are and the means of production that dominate the society we belong to. As Marx said, "the nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining the mode of production". Thus, as Nancy Fraser showed in *A Future for Marxism* (1998), Marxism today is a theoretical set which includes a number of meta-discourses about society, a common body of critical thinking which is discussing the manifestations of "false consciousness," and which allows a better understanding of culture and social actors in late capitalism (using the formula of Jameson). Since, as indicated by Jameson's classical study (*Postmodernism: The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, 1991), we can apply the same type of interpretations that Adorno and Horkheimer used on "old media" in order to understand the dynamics of the "new media" that shape our "cultural industries".

So, why would the idolaters of capitalism want to eliminate at any cost the social critique of Marx, as if the issues raised by him would suddenly disappear if we demonize his philosophy? Because this is the only way by which we end up accepting the clichés of neo-liberalism as if they were absolute truths. How does this process of delivering lies as great discoveries work? We find it in one of Marx's most fundamental ideas – the false consciousness. The illusions through which capitalism is trying to fool us distort reality so as to make us believe that the only truth is that of the exploiters, one which is imposed by control of the media, the cultural and the artistic forms of production

(movies, books, etc.). There is an "ideological superstructure" built continuously by the owners of the modes of production, which operates like a firewall of beliefs and values which hold us in the captivity of dominant ideas. As Engels said, the ideologist seeks fake explanations for the unacceptable false realities around us, and flips the truth upside down. That is it twists and turns it until we believe it.

Once more, the operations of the Humanitas group in Romania, owned by Liiceanu, are a workbook example of how the "capitalist cultural exploitation industries" operate. As it should have been known by the author of the Romanian *Minima moralia*, Adorno and Horkheimer gave us an outstanding example for how Marx's ideas can be applied in contemporary cultural modes of production. In the "spectacle capitalism" the leaders of the "intellectual right" endlessly propagate and reproduce the myths and false ideas about how exploitation works. By controlling the means of production of ideas, they reach the same level of control as that of the means of industrial production. Capitalism is by its very nature a sordid affair, and if we look around us we can see the effects of exploitation everywhere. What is not that obvious is the fact that a clique of nouveau riche has taken control over our cultural resources, over the natural resources of the land by means of onerous affairs, from the major corporations to the newspapers and television networks. Then they give lessons about the importance of the values of free competition. How can a child, born into a poor family, in a hamlet located in the Carpathians mountains, compete with the children of the fraudulently rich, who are sent to study at Oxford or Cambridge, by their parents who are the beneficiaries of the poverty and ignorance of "the ignorant many"?

This is why exposing that fear from the "Boogieman" of communism is not only infantile, it is also socially harmful. Stigmatizing ideas is a reprehensible fact, yet the denouncing of intellectual "clichés" put forward by the PLP triplet must be made first and foremost in order to preserve an open public dialogue, for a much needed social mental health. What some describe using the generic term "communism" is nothing but a political theory produced by the meeting between Lenin's and Marx's ideas (and then with the supplemented bad readings of Stalin or Mao). The superposition of the two levels is, after all, the source of all misunderstanding about Marx's role in the history of the last century. Last but not least, it is necessary to distinguish between the "communist hypothesis" and the communist praxis, as Alain Badiou proposes (*L'hypothèse Communiste*, La Fabrique 2008). Communism cannot be reduced to some political procedures and we cannot understand it by referring to what Erich Fromm denounced as the Stalinist "fraud," i.e. the set of principles of a dictator who understood Marxism without understanding Marx. Communism is an "Idea" and ideas are neither good nor bad.

# The "Juridist" Fallacy. Methodological Aspects of the Study of Weights and Measures in Romanian Historiography

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**Keywords**: weights and measures, bushel, Wallachia, "juridist" fallacy, state, market.

**Abstract**. The article takes at task the Romanian historiography of metrology for positing the notion of standard measures before demonstrating their existence and before discussing the process of standardization. Contrary to such an approach, a contextual reading of the available evidence shows that the first efforts to standardize measures were late and that several variants of the same measure – I chose for exemplification the bushel – persisted long after the decreeing of the standard. In the end it is suggested that the study of weights and measures from the perspective of state- and market-formation is more profitable than the search for metric equivalents.

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Historical[1] evidence from Wallachia mentions scores of pre-modern (pre-metric) measures of length, volume, capacity and – more rarely – weight. But how can we make use of or interpret this evidence? How much and what do we know about the pre-modern weights and measures from the evidence at hand? Is it possible to establish metric equivalents of these measures or should we rather focus on other aspects related to them? Starting from these questions, the paper challenges the very bold and confident answers given by some Romanian historians; in main, it offers a critique of the tendency to find metric equivalents of pre-modern measures and hence to operate with a notion of standard measure before demonstrating the existence of standard measures. This fallacy comes close to the "juridist method" imputed by H. H. Stahl to some historians of the Middle Ages who started from legal codes (whose existence they failed to document) to reconstruct social realities.

Two faults were already identified in the attempts to establish metric equivalences of the pre-modern weights and measures. One is the fact that they retain as standards only the measures from administrative centres, overlooking the diversity of measures on seigniorial estates; the other is that the authors of such conversion tables have translated in the metric systems the measures in use just before the adoption of the new metrological system, ignoring the changes which affected the

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weights and measures before.[2] In short, they ignored or rather overlooked the history of measures.

This sort of anachronism is actually subsumed to the "juridistic" fallacy which, I argue, takes three forms. Firstly, it posits that a certain measure occurring in documents has a stable size, easily convertible in the metric system, without providing positive evidence that this was the case. Secondly, it reads any particular documentary occurrence of pre-modern measures as a proof of the standard or as a deviation from it. Thirdly, it projects backward metrological equivalences from a period in which standardization was already well underway. The main consequence of these interrelated errors is the obliteration of the standardization process and the accompanying transformation of the state, namely, the centralization and monopolization of the legitimate means of measure. So, I propose that the way out is precisely the study of these processes, starting from the situation in which measures were not standardized and the central authority did not attempt or could not make them uniform.

By standardization I understand the decreeing of a standard measure binding everyone at country level and its implementation in the daily activity of the subjects. A customary measure on an estate is not a standard in this reading but a local measure. The existence of a princely – thus official – measure is not sufficient proof of standardization, unless it is decreed as such and becomes mandatory in all measurements. Once decreed, it has to be enforced, which means that, for a period of time, standard measures coexist with customary measures. Chronologically, my paper covers the period between the mid-18th and mid-19th century. The documentary examples are drawn from the history of Wallachia (Țara Românească).

In what follows, I will define the "juridist" fallacy and show its origin in a polemic regarding the existence or non-existence of Romanian feudalism. Then I will apply it to the problem of weights and measures and will exemplify the occurrence of the fallacy in the context of Romanian metrological literature. More precisely, I will show how one particular measure – the bushel – was considered a standard with a metrical equivalent and how the sources were over-interpreted in order to force such conclusions. In the third part I will suggest how the analysis of documents about weights and measures can be profitable even though we will not be able to find the precise metrical equivalent of pre-modern units of measurement.

**The "juridist" fallacy**

The "juridist method" is the expression used by the historical sociologist H. H. Stahl to rebut an entire research program in Romanian medieval historiography. In his view, Romanian medievalists tried – unsuccessfully – to reconstruct the Romanian feudalism on the basis of legal texts, as if they were accurate and objective descriptions of the various social groups and the relationships among them. On the contrary, Stahl surmises that legal codes are the projection of group interests, a particular point of view and they reflect relations of power. In the case of the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia, the problem was the lack of textual evidence of such legal codes; no such codes were preserved or mentioned in other documents until the 17th century, when some Byzantine legal texts – which could not "mirror" Romanian social realities

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[2] Jean-Claude Hocquet, *La métrologie historique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1995), 3.

– were translated. This is important because legal codes appear in a certain stage in the development of the state. In the absence of hard evidence, the historians turned to particular cases which they interpreted as jurisprudence, as illustrations of the enforcement of the alleged laws; but, the jurisprudence was nothing else than cases selected to confirm the existence of a Romanian feudalism akin to – what was believed to be – the French feudalism, without considering the entire group of available documents.[3]

For my concerns, the last two aspects of the juridist method are important: the assumption that there is a country-wide law even when evidence thereof lacks; and considering various particular documents as instances of that law, as evidence that the law exists, is a far-fetched idea. These two aspects resurface time and again in the studies of historical metrology and fatally weaken the statements made by their authors.

The Romanian metrological historiography consists of a small number of studies dealing explicitly with the problem of pre-modern weights and measures, the most important authors being Nicolae Stoicescu and Damaschin Mioc.[4] They will be the authors most frequently invoked in this article as exponents of the "juridist" fallacy. The first scholarly studies of historical metrology adopted the same approach.[5] Older

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[3] The critique is developed in H.H. Stahl, *Controverse de istorie socială* (Controversies in social history) (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1969), 5–121. However, it is beyond the scope of this paper to assess Stahl's views upon feudalism.

[4] Damaschin Mioc and Nicolae Stoicescu, "Măsurile medievale de capacitate din Ţara Românească" (The medieval capacity measures in Wallachia), *Studii* 6 (1963): 1351–1378; Damaschin Mioc and Nicolae Stoicescu, "Măsurile medievale de greutate din Ţara Românească. Instrumentele de măsurat capacitatea şi greutatea" (The Medieval Measures of Weight in Wallachia. The Instruments for Measuring the Capacity and the Weight), *Studii*, 1 (1964): 88–105; Damaschin Mioc and Nicolae Stoicescu, "Măsurile medievale de lungime şi suprafaţă şi instrumentele de măsurat lungimea din Ţara Românească" (The medieval measures for lenghts and area and the instruments for measuring length in Wallachia), *Studii*, 3 (1965): 639–665. The only book on Romanian pre-modern metrology is Nicolae Stoicescu, *Cum măsurau strămoşii. Metrologia medievală pe teritoriul României* (Medieval metrology on the Romanian territory) (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1971); the book is based on the previous three articles but its scope is wider, covering both Moldavia and Transylvania in the fashion of national historiography. On the basis of these works Alexandru Constantinescu wrote two studies which bring no other contribution to the field, methodologically or empirically: "Măsurile în evul mediu românesc" (I) (Romanian units of measurement during the Middle Ages (I)), *SAI* XXVI (1974): 138–145 and "Măsurile în evul mediu românesc" (II) (Romanian units of measurement during the Middle Ages (II)), *SAI* XXVII-XXVIII (1974): 183–195. Corina Pătraşcu does not fall into this category; she approached the issue at a later stage, overlooking earlier attempts of standardization, "Uniformizarea măsurilor şi greutăţilor folosite în comerţul Ţării Româneşti, o acţiune de unificare a pieţei interne (1829–1840)" (The uniformization of the measures and weights used in the trade of Wallachia, an action of unification of the internal market), *Studii* 21  4 (1968): 667–683. H. Ciocan, *Cotul moldovenesc este cot sacru* (The Moldavian ell is a sacred ell) (Piteşti: Tipografia "Liga Poporului", s.a.).

[5] I. Brăescu, *Măsurătoarea pământului la români din vechime până la punerea în aplicare a sistemului metric* (Land measurement in the Romanian Principalities from the ancient times to the introduction of the metric system) (Bucharest: Atelierele grafice Socec & Co., 1913), T.

works, published in the 19th century, cannot be objects of the same critique for they were part and parcel of the process of translating the Romanian pre-modern measures in the metric system, containing conversion tables and hence "freezing" the pre-modern measure in one variant corresponding to a metric equivalent.[6] In addition, the "juridist" fallacy is reproduced in various studies approaching other themes than historical metrology but making reference to various measures.[7]

Before moving on, I must say that the position of Nicolae Stoicescu and Damaschin Mioc is more ambiguous than it might appear in my short rendering. In their studies on medieval metrology in Romania, they do acknowledge that "the first documented decisions taken by the principality for the regulation of measures in Wallachia date from the second half of the seventeenth century, when the size of the fathom was established," as well as that of the bucket and the ell; "in the eighteenth century, the documents and the legal codes testify to a more frequent intervention of the central power in the regulation and the control of the weights and measures."[8] But these statements are contradicted a few lines below, when they write: "in this period [the 18th century, M.O.], due to the differences in the size of some measures, from region to region, misunderstandings occurred between merchants and customers. As long as the merchandise was sold on local markets, the employment of the measures from the respective regions was not an encumbrance on commerce ... on the other hand, the rapaciousness of the boyars led to the falsification of measures to their advantage".[9]

So, on the one hand some measures were "fixed" by the end of the 17th century and the princedom intensified its control over measures in the 18th century; on the other hand, the measures differed from region to region. Not only that the two statements contradict each other, but they also contradict the particular approach to the measures in the subsequent pages and in other studies of the two authors. Everywhere, they manage to identify the standard of a certain measure and its metrical equivalent. They even offered tables of conversion of the pre-modern measures in the modern (metric)

Pamfilie, "Prăjina şi pogonul moldovenesc din 1797" (The Moldavian rod and acre), *Miron Costin* IV 7 (July 1916): 285–286.

[6] Ion Ghica, *Măsurile şi greutăţile româneşti şi moldoveneşti ...* (Romanian and Moldavian weights and measures ...) (Bucharest: Tipografia lui K.A. Rosetti & Binterhlader, 1848) and Dimitrie Iarcu, *Măsuri şi greutăţi sau aritmetică socială* (Weights and measures or social arithmetic) (Bucharest: Typographia Naţională a lui St. Rassidescu, 1862).

[7] Emil Vârtosu, "Sigilii de târguri şi oraşe din Moldova şi Ţara Românească," (Seals of Market-towns and Towns in Moldavia and Wallachia), *Analele Universităţii C. I. Parhon*, Seria Ştiinţelor Sociale, Istorie, 5 (1956): 137. Igor Ivanov şi Gheorghe Ivanovici, "Istoricul învăţământului metrologiei în România" (The history of metrologic teaching in Romania), *Buletinul ştiinţific al Institutului de Construcţii Bucharest* XIII 2 (1970): 228–231. The editors of a Transylvanian fiscal conscription appended a conversion table on the basis of conversions provided by Nicolae Stoicescu's book *Cum măsurau strămoşii*, to help the reader understand various measures mentioned in documents, Ladislau Gyémánt ed., *Conscripţia fiscală a Transilvaniei din anul 1750* (The fiscal conscription of Transylvania from the year 1750) 1, part. 1–2 (Bucharest: Ed. Enciclopedică, 2009).

[8] Mioc and Stoicescu, "Măsurile medievale de capacitate din Ţara Românească", 1353–1354; similarly, Stoicescu, *Cum măsurau strămoşii*, 25–26.

[9] Ibid.

ones. For instance, the *oca*[10] used from the 16th to the 19th century for the measurement of cereals was supposed to measure 1,698 litres, while the one used for liquids 1,288 litres.[11] Alternatively, the *oca* could weigh 1,271 kg, if used for weighing objects.[12] The princely ell circulating from the 16th to the 19th century is confidently equalled with 0,661 metres.[13]

Against such an approach, I concur with Witold Kula's recommendation:

> "Pre-metric measures … are replete with important, concrete social meaning, the uncovering of which should become the chief task of historical metrology. .. To convert old-time measures into the units of the metric system is often, in fact, not a feasible task, and results of such attempts, however painstaking, are often of little practical use because even the most meticulous determination of the dimensions of, say, acre, could not be extensively utilized when even neighbouring villages in the same year, more often than not, would have acres of different sizes."[14]

Let me now turn to one example of the juridist fallacy, more precisely I will demonstrate how a certain measure – the bushel – was discussed in the metrological literature and I will underline the weaknesses of the approach.

### The bushel

The bushel (sg. *baniţă*, pl. *baniţe*) was a measure of capacity used for the measuring of dry items, mostly cereals, until the introduction of the metric system in the 19th century. The bushel is first mentioned in the 16th century, but until the 18th century references to it are quite rare, in contrast to another capacity measure for cereals, the *obroc*. The juridist authors confidently assert that most references about the capacity of the 'just' *baniţa* show it to have a capacity of 22 *ocale*.[15] Moreover, they specify the capacity of the bushel in the metric system: hence from the 16th century to 1832, there were two bushels: the small one of 22 *ocale* or 37,356 litres and the big one of 44 *ocale* or 74,712 litres. From 1832 to the introduction of the metric system the two kinds of bushels contained 20 *ocale* and 33,963 litres and respectively 40 *ocale* and 67,92 litres.[16] Nonetheless, these equivalences are rather problematic.

The first objection against this approach is that the bushel is not explicitly defined in relation to other measures or submultiples up to the middle of the 18th century. From then on, several types of documents – contracts between employers and workers, agreements between landlords and tenants (usually to conclude a dispute), accounts of private estates and legal texts – provide more precise information. For

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[10] *Oca* (sg.), *ocă* or *ocale* (pl.) was a capacity measure for both solid and liquid items used in small market transactions and a subdivision of larger capacity measures. For the plural form I will use *ocă* when quoting from the primary sources and *ocale*, the current accepted plural form, for other situations.

[11] Ibid., 1373 and 1378.

[12] Mioc and Stoicescu, "Măsurile medievale de greutate din Ţara Românească", 93–94.

[13] Mioc and Stoicescu, "Măsurile medievale de lungime", 654.

[14] Witold Kula, *Measures and Men*, transl. by R. Szreter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 98–99 (hereafter Kula, *Measures and Men*).

[15] Mioc and Stoicescu, "Măsurile medievale de capacitate," 1363–64.

[16] Ibid., 1373.

instance, a contract between the Metropolitanate and three swineherds registered in 1742 mentioned corn bushels of 18 *ocale*. Contention over the size of the "just" measures elicits more precision in their definition. In 1750 the peasants of three villages accused the abbot of Nucet monastery of demanding the corn tithe with a *baniţa* of 31 *ocă* – an unjust measure.[17] Unfortunately, the adjudication of the case is unknown, so we cannot see what capacity was considered legitimate by the judges.

Agreements between the monastery of Mărgineni and the tenants of Breaza (April 1752)[18] and between the inhabitants of Călimăneşti and the monastery of Cozia (May 1767) stipulated that the corn tithe was to be collected with the 22-*oca* bushel. In the last case the act is very explicit as to how the capacity of the bushel was established: "at the measurement of the corn tithe from the land of the monastery, the tithe shall be collected with the bushel of 22 *ocă*, and not more capacious, because this is how we settled".[19] A few years later, in July 20, 1771, the report made by the custodian of the Metropolitanate estates also mentions that 122 *baniţe* of cereals, each with the capacity of 22 *ocale*, are stored in a pit in the ground.[20] In 1776, account of the incomes of the Metropolitanate from the estate Fleşti mentions "the millet tithe of 10 bushels of 14 *ocă*" and the "corn tithe of 450 bushels, the bushel of 24 *ocă*" in corn cobs.[21]

These are the first instances in which the bushel is more precisely defined by relating it to its subunit, the *oca*. The variety of the sizes of the bushel is evident. The 22 *ocă* bushel later became the standard capacity. But for the moment it was a local measure, the result of local and private agreement, having nothing to do with the state and, logically, only having a local circulation. Yet sometimes in the second half of the 1770s the princedom began to extend its control over the weights and measures.

This change occurred due to two facts: the growing importance of corn among cultivated cereals in Wallachia[22] and the regulation decreed by the principality, stating the obligation of the tenants towards landlords. Although the regulation of agrarian relations started in the 1740s, under Prince Constantin Mavrocordat, the first attempts

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[17] *Documente privind relaţiile agrare în veacul al XVIII-lea,* (Documents regarding the agrarian relations during the 18ᵗʰ century) vol. I, Ţara Românească [Wallachia] eds. V. Mihordea, Ş. Papacostea, Fl. Constantiniu (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Românâ, 1961), 502/doc. 342 (hereafter, *DRA*).

[18] Nicolae Iorga, *Studii şi documente cu privire la istoria românilor* (Studies and documents regarding the history of Romanians), vol. 5 (Bucharest: Stabilimentul Grafic Socecu), 197 (hereafter Iorga, *St. şi doc.*). The adjudication is allegedly based on a settlement (*testament*), but there is no settlement that regulates the method of paying the corn-tithe and the capacity of the bushel; so the claim that the corn tithe is paid according to the custom – i.e. local method – should be taken literally.

[19] *DRA*, 571/doc. 420.

[20] *DRA*, 581/doc. 430.

[21] DRA, 603/doc. 456.

[22] Florin Constantiniu, *Relaţiile agrare din Ţara Românească în secolul al XVIII-lea* (Agrarian relations in Wallachia during the eighteenth century) (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1972), 48–49. As a tributary principality, Wallachia had to provision the Ottoman military and the city of Istanbul with various food staples (wheat, barley, butter, honey etc.).

to regulate the bushel are documented only in 1770s, during the reign of another reform-minded prince, Alexandru Ipsilanti (1774–1782).[23]

The control took two successive forms. At first, the princely county officials used to intervene in metrological disputes and arbitrate a compromise between the two parties, validating the material objects used to measure by branding them with a metallic sign, "the princely brand". The first such instance is recorded in November 1779: the villagers of Ocniţa (Dâmboviţa County) complained, among others, that the administrator of Dealu monastery exacts the corn tithe of four bushels per acre (*pogon*), a bushel measuring 52 *ocale*. The princely adjudication reduces the obligations of the peasants and asks the two parties to make a compromise. Yet it is surprisingly silent when it comes to the corn tithe and the bushel, for a reason revealed by the report given by two *ispravnici*[24] of Dâmboviţa (February 20, 1780) who judged the matter on the spot.[25] The latter measured "that bushel with wheat, barley, millet and corn" and find it to be of 36 *oca*. To ascertain themselves that this is the just bushel, they summoned the administrators of five surrounding estates to present their bushels; these were all of 36 *oca*. So the villagers from Ocniţa had to accept the obvious and the *ispravnici* made another pair of identical bushels which they also authenticated with a piece of metal, "the princely brand".[26] Another case, involving the Metropolitanate of Târgovişte and the villagers from Săcuieni, was solved identically in 1780 demonstrating the existence of a regional bushel in Dâmboviţa County.[27]

The documents discussed above reveal the variations in the actual size of the bushel used for the collection of the tithes. To find so many variant bushels is not only to commit the fallacy of pseudo proof in the form of reversible reference,[28] in the sense that the evidence provided by the Stoicescu and Mioc contradict their statement about a standard bushel, but also to make the notion of standard bushel preposterous. The "juridist" position, namely the constant attempt to find, anachronistically, a regular capacity of the bushel becomes untenable. First of all, by the beginning of 1780, there is no state endorsed standard bushel, the central power intervening only by arbitrating metrological disputes and by validating measures agreed upon by the parties involved. This is the reason for which the final adjudication of a metrological dispute is entrusted to local officials. Secondly, the bushels of 22 *oca* are not instances of a standard, but the result of local agreements. Thirdly, there are other variants of the bushel recognized as legitimate, which had also been the result of local agreements.

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[23] Ibid., 106–170.

[24] The *ispravnici* were the representatives of the prince at county level. They cumulated administrative, judicial and police functions and were instituted by Constantin Mavrocordat during the 1740s. At first there was one *ispravnic* in each county but Prince Alexandru Ipsilanti (1774–1782) instituted two *ispravnici* in each county.

[25] *DRA*, 657/doc. 511.

[26] *DRA*, 662–664/doc. 516. A day later, a princely decision mentions the 52-bucket used by the monastery of Tismana to exact the corn-tithe; as the decision does not indicate any measure, most probably the metrological side of the dispute was to be arbitrated on the spot by princely agents, *DRA*, 661–662/doc. 515.

[27] *DRA*, 661–662/doc. 515. Villages of Ocniţa and Săcuieni are indeed geographically very close.

[28] David Hacket Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies. Toward a Logic of Historical Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), 44–45.

Thus far, the bushel was still local. The intervention of the state in the definition of the "just" measures enters a new phase in September 1780 with the publication of the Legal register (*Pravilniceasca condică*). For the first time, a legal text established the standard measure for the corn tithe:

> "As with the other harvests, in this register it was decided for the corn tithe to be taken similarly one out of ten, according to justice; but … since the harvesting of the corn does not occur all at one time, both the tenants, who do not have the possibility to gather it all at once, and the landlords, cannot afford to assign men to guard until all the corn is harvested, suffer losses; hence, after a more reasonable evaluation, following the old custom, we decide that the tithe has to consist of four bushels of seeds per acre, the bushel being of 22 *ocă*."[29]

This is the first direct enunciation of a standard bushel for the entire country. From this point on in history, it is justified to assert that the bushel for the corn tithe contained 22 *ocale* and that other variants were derogations from the standard. Now that a legal point of view existed, the standard had to be put in practice, in the daily life of the subjects. Prince Mihail Suţu probably had these stipulations in mind when, on August 22, 1785 he exhorted the landlords to assess the tenants' dues justly: "at the time of tithes collection there shall be no injustice or damage, [avoiding] the use of a bigger unit of measurement".[30]

Mioc and Stoicescu failed to notice the importance of this moment in the history of weights and measures. For them the historical process I described above did not exist. In analyzing the individual documents, they pay no attention to the context, ignore the details which contradict their assumptions and bring together facts divided by several decades in the same paragraph, as if no change had occurred in between. The main trait of their method is the amalgamation of the data in a long series of illustrations of the standard bushel or deviations from this standard. For example, in the same paragraph they mention a stipulation of the Organic Regulation from 1831 and a local agreement from 1767, both mentioning the 22-*oca* bushel.[31] But while the latter dates from a period in which no standard was enunciated, the former is precisely such an enunciation and occurred half a century after the first legal enactment of the standard bushel; hence, the two facts are not on a par. In this reading of the sources, variant bushels – both before and after 1780 – become unofficial ones, deviations from the standard. The methodological error gives way to such paragraphs:

> "Besides this 22-*oca* bushel, considered "just" and official, there were other bushels, with varying capacities of 14, 15, 18, 20, 24, 25 etc. *ocale*, so both smaller and larger than the official one of 22 *ocale*."[32]

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[29] *Pravilniceasca condică* (The legal register), ed. Colectivul pentru vechiul drept romînesc al Academiei R.P.R. (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Romîne, 1957), 156.

[30] D.C. Sturdza-Şcheeanu, *Acte şi legiuiri privitoare la chestia ţărănească* (Acts and regulations relative to the peasant question) seria I, vol. 1 (Bucharest: Atelierele Grafice Socec & Co., Societate Anonimă, 1907), 76 (hereafter Sturdza-Şcheeanu, *Acte şi legiuiri*). A similar order is reiterated the next year by Prince Nicolae Mavrogheni on May 28, V.A. Urechia, *Istoria Româniloru* (History of Romanians) tome III (Bucharest: Tipografia "Gutenberg" Joseph Göbl, 1892), 75.

[31] Stoicescu, *Cum măsurau strămoşii*, 228.

[32] Stoicescu, *Cum măsurau strămoşii*, 226. The same variants of bushel appear in Mioc and Stoicescu, "Măsurile medievale de capacitate," 1363.

The origin of this error lies with the "juridistic" fallacy, the assumption that there is a standard waiting to be discovered by historians in particular cases. A consequence of this fallacy is to ignore or overlook historical developments and retrospectively apply 19th century realities. The idea that the regular *baniţa* comprised 22 *ocale* is actually a retrospective projection of the stipulation of this capacity in the Legal Register from 1780, the Caragea Law (*Legiuirea lui Caragea*)[33] from 1818 and Organic Regulation (*Regulamentul organic*)[34] from 1831. But as I already demonstrated, the bushels of 22-*oca* were originally the result of local agreements, not the application of a gauge established by the state. Other similar agreements, concluded on other estates, defined the just bushel as containing 36 *ocale*. In order to adjudicate metrological disputes, the princely court had to resort to the local customs and local knowledge, because it had no standard whereby to override local customs.

To summarize, only starting with the year 1780 can we speak of a standard bushel, all other variants being derogations from it, non-legitimate and non-official measures. The tendency to impose the standard measures set by the Legal Register is amply documented and irreversible. One way was through ordinances addressed to the territorial princely officials (*ispravnici*) who were exhorted to make sure that the standard bushel was used in the relations between landlords and tenants, as they were in 1784.[35] The other was by applying the agrarian regulations, which stipulated the standard bushel, in the adjudication of disputes between tenants and landlords. In 1783, Prince Nicolae Caragea ruled that the tenants from Bobul and Urlaţi had to render the tithe and the labour dues to the monastery of Colţea according to the Legal Register; among these "for the corn, they have to give four bushels per acre, corn seeds with a bushel of 22 *ocă*".[36] Such dispositions became frequent in the early 18th and late 19th century.[37] Since such ordinances, judicial reports and judicial decisions simply reiterate the provisions of the Legal register, it is possible that sometimes there was no metrological dispute. But even so, it is clear that the bushel is not an indifferent matter to the central power.

However, while it existed legally, the standard bushel varied considerably in practice. For instance, the computation of tithes on two estates of the Metropolitanate in Buzău county in the years 1779–1781 shows different capacities for the same measure. On the Metetelu estate, the barley was measured with a *baniţa* of 21 *ocale* while the millet with a *baniţa* of 22 *ocale*; on the Acsentile estate the wheat and barley was measured with a *baniţa* of 20 *ocale* and the corn with a *baniţa* of 25 *ocale* (cobs,

[33] *Legiurea Caragea* (The Caragea Law), ed. Aurel C. Sava (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Populare Romîne, 1955), 46.
[34] *Regulamentele organice ale Valahiei şi Moldovei* (The organic regulations of Wallachia and Moldavia), eds. Paul Negulescu şi George Alexianu, colaborator Aurel Sava (Bucharest: Întreprinderile "Eminescu" S.A., 1944), 39.
[35] Sturdza-Şcheeanu, *Acte şi legiuiri*, 74.
[36] N. Iorga, "Documente urlăţene" (Documents relative to Urlaţi), *Buletinul Comisiei istorice a României*, V (1927): 277–78.
[37] *DRA*, 793/doc. 636, 803-804/doc. 646, 845/doc. 680, 879/doc. 705, 881/doc. 707, 883/doc. 708; Iorga, *St. şi doc*, vol 5, 200–02

not seeds).[38] One possible explanation is that the assessment started before the introduction of the standard bushel in 1780 by the Legal Register.

Local bushels continued to be perceived as legitimate even by the peasants and even when such bushels were to their disadvantage, a fact indicative of the low infrastructural reach of the state. On November 20, 1793, one of the *ispravnici* of Vlaşca reported to the prince on the adjudication of an agrarian litigation. The peasants from Novaci petitioned that from old times they rendered their corn tithe with a 25-*oca* bushel but, from the income of that estate, the new farmer exacted the corn tithe with a 45-*oca* bushel. The judge argued that the lease-holder has done no injustice, since he exacted as tithe "four bushels per acre, with the iron-branded bushel, which was given to him by the landlord of the estate". Did the landlord possess an official bushel with the princely iron brand, or was it just a local bushel authenticated by a princely official? The latter case is very probable, since none of the two bushels is according to the Legal register; hence, it was an abuse of the landlord who did not attend the Legal Register. What is striking is that both the peasants and the princely officials regarded as legitimate a bushel (of 25 *ocale*) which was in fact not standard. [39] On other estates, local bushels were perceived as illegitimate. In 1814, a petition of the peasants from Suslăneşti against the boyar Niculae Rucăreanu imputes the latter the use of a 44-*oca* bushel, "never heard of before"; still, we don't know what bushel was legitimate in their opinion.[40]

It is interesting to notice that local bushels became illegitimate only at the encounter with the homogenizing state; only documents issued by state authorities or addressed to them refer to illegitimate bushels. In private acts, as evidence of the income of estates, the variant bushels are only registered for the sake of accountancy, no hint of illegality emerging from the texts. A good example is furnished by the accounts of the estates of boyar Nicolae Glogoveanu which mention both official and local (unofficial) bushels. Hence, in 1814 on the estate of Glogova the dues from corn, wheat and barley were collected with "iron-branded bushels" (*baniţe înherate*).[41] Yet, in another village belonging to this estate – Brativoeşti – the corn tithe was exacted with "the bushel of priest Dinu of twenty *ocă*" (*baniţa popii Dinu dă oca dooăzăci*).[42] In 1816, at Câlniu, the corn was collected "with the bushel of 11 *ocă* and one pint" (*cu baniţă de ocă 11 şi o litră*) and also with "iron-branded bushels".[43] A year later, on the

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[38] *DRA,* 679-680/ doc. 531. The explanation of the variation of the bushels in this case by the varying weight of the cereals might be correct, but it doesn't help the juridist authors since the corn bushel is of 25 *ocale*, Mioc and Stoicescu, "Măsurile medievale de capacitate," 1363.

[39] V.A. Urechia, *Istoria Româniloru*, tome V (Bucharest: Tipografia si Fonderia de Litere Thoma Basilescu, 1893), 120–23.

[40] Dan I. Simionescu, "O jalbă de la începutul veacului al XIX-lea. Document muscelean" (A supplication from the beginnning of the nineteenth century. A source from Muscel County), *Revista arhivelor* I 2 (1925): 274.

[41] Nicolae Iorga, *Situaţia agrară, economică şi socială a Olteniei în epoca lui Tudor Vladimirescu. Documente contemporane* (The agrarian, economic, and social situation of Oltenia in the age of Tudor Vladimirescu. Contemporary sources) (Bucharest: Editura Ministerului de Agricultură, 1915), 46-47/doc. LII.

[42] Ibid., 49–50.

[43] Ibid., 79/doc. XCV. For lack of a better term I translated *litră* – which was ¼ of the *oca* – with pint.

same estate, only the iron-branded bushels were used.[44] In 1817, at Glogova, the wheat is collected with "the bushel of 32 *ocă*" (*baniţa de ocă 32*).[45] Finally, in 1826 on the estates of Prunişori, Degeraţi, Ercila and Şărpeşti the dues of wheat were rendered with the "iron-branded bushel" (*baniţa cea înherată*).[46]

This considerable metrological variety existed on the lands belonging to a single landlord. Different measures were used on different estates and villages; on the same estate, different measures were used in different years; and on the same estate, in the same year, the same cereal was measured with different measures. What is more surprising is that what appears to have been an official measure, the iron-branded bushel (the standard bushel of 22 *ocale,* or a local measure authenticated by a local official?), coexisted with several local measures and no notion of unlawfulness of the latter appears in the documents. It is not difficult to imagine that the situation was more or less similar on other estates.

The state regulation of the agrarian relations was insufficient to standardize the bushel as long as local measures were still accepted. As Witold Kula showed, an additional trigger was necessary, namely, the extension of the range of commercial ties across territories; according to the Polish historian "the will of the state would win through, but not until much change in economic life, and in the nature of the state itself, had taken place".[47] In 1824, mirroring the intensification of trade, Prince Grigore Dimitrie Ghica orders the *ispravnici* to make bushels of stone according to the gauge delivered from the centre in order to facilitate commercial transactions. Such bushels were supposed to be made of hard stone – to avoid alteration of size – and had to be placed where they were needed most in a county; if necessary, the *ispravnici* could make more than one.[48] If such stone-bushels had to be located in one important place of the county, after the Organic Regulation (1831) the central authorities delivered standard bushels in each village.

After the Treaty of Adrianopole (1829) and the opening of the Wallachian trade to the outer world both standardizing factors became stronger. The merchants started to purchase grains from all over Wallachia and transport the cargo to the Danube ports for export. In turn, the state needed to gather accurate data about the production, consumption and surplus of grains to know how much export it could afford. Both operations required standard measures.[49]

It is in this context that gauge measures were delivered not only to the administrative centres of the counties, but also to the villages, marking a big step forward in the standardization process. An echo of this measure dates from 1840 when the magistrate of the town of Giurgiu showed that the standard bushels from villages, being made of wood, had dried up and shrank.[50] The problem resurfaced in 1846 when

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[44] Ibid., 80/doc. XCVII.

[45] Ibid., 88-89/doc. CX.

[46] Ibid., 287/doc. CCCLXXVI.

[47] Kula, *Measures and Men*, 114-115; the quotation at page 115.

[48] I. Cojocaru, *Documente privitoare la economia Ţării Româneşti 1800-1850* (Documents concerning the economy of Wallachia 1800-1850) vol. I (Bucharest: Editura Ştiinţifică, 1958), 337-338/doc. 227 (hereafter Cojocaru, *Documente*).

[49] Corina Pătraşcu, "Uniformizarea măsurilor," 673.

[50] Ibid., 681.

the governor[51] of Romanați county reports that the iron-branded bushels distributed through villages have dried up, "some more, some less," and suggests that iron bushels were needed.[52] So, the desired uniformity of measures was faulted by technical problems. However, we can remark that towards the middle of the 19th century, not only was there a theoretical standard bushel, but the state had also gone a long way in imposing it in practice at the very local level, the village.

**Conclusion**

When Ion Ghica published in 1848 his booklet with tables of conversion of the pre-modern Romanian measures in the metric system,[53] he was participating in the standardization process – long underway. The aim of his work was to provide a set of guidelines to merchants, statesmen and engineers; hence the obliteration of the wide variety of the pre-metric measures in favour of one variant considered standard was absolutely necessary. But to adopt the same approach in scholarly works, to retrospectively project the standards fixed in the 19th century, and to assume that such a standard existed before its enunciation by the central power is misleading.

This is the mistake I impute to Romanian metrological historians. They formally acknowledged the diversity of weights and measures and the late intervention of the central authority in their control and definition; and yet, due to what I call the "juridistic" fallacy, they assumed the existence of a standard and looked for its illustration in the historical evidence at hand, instead of trying to demonstrate it.

Focusing on the bushel as a unit of measurement, I showed in this paper that such an approach is erroneous. Thus, it is also mistaken to believe that some scattered references to princely measures are expressions of standard measures, in the absence of any source referring to standardization before the end of the 18th century. In addition, even when a standard was decreed, local measures could still be used and accepted as legitimate. Finally, it is equally misleading to rely on the 19th century tables of conversion of the old measures in the metric correspondents, because such tables obscure the history of weights and measures and – in their attempt to simplify – overlook local variations in the size of weights and measures. In the light of these considerations, the explicit aim of the metrological historians – to provide an instrument of calculation for economic historians – becomes questionable.

If metrological history based on the assumption – not the demonstration – that there are standard measures is a rather unproductive endeavour, then what is the use of the study of weights and measures? Similarly to legal codes, standard measures emerge at a certain stage in the history of a state and indicate a certain situation of the economic market. Hence, we can use the study of weights and measures as a vista on the larger social process like state formation and market formation.

In the first case the study of weights and measures and of their standardization reveals the nature of the state. The imposition of the standard measures is an indicator of the infrastructural power of the state, its capacity to act at a distance through its own

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[51] After 1831 the top county official was no longer called *ispravnic* but called *cârmuitor* (which I translate as governor).

[52] Cojocaru, *Documente*, vol. II (Bucharest: Editura Științifică, 1958), 887-888/doc. 684.

[53] See footnote 6.

infrastructures. Imposition of standard measures reflects centralization of power and monopolization of the legitimate means; conversely, failure to impose standard measures indicates a weak state facing other competitors in the same territory. Moreover, the regulation and imposition of standard measures in the daily life of the subjects represented everyday encounters of the latter with the state. Through measures bearing the princely stamp, the state is brought in the daily life of the subjects and represented as a just and legitimate entity.

Equally, the study of weights and measures can illuminate the constitution of national economic markets. Intensification of commercial exchanges and commodification of landed property also required a stable and homogenous metrological system. In opposition, local measures existed where the range of commercial ties was short, where local markets prevailed and long-range trade was rare and limited to several expensive items.

Tracing the process of standardization and linking it to the development of the state and of the economic market could be less ambitious than trying to figure out the metric equivalent of a certain pre-modern measure; yet at the same time, it can be more realistic and more profitable.

# Vasile Goldiş' Contribution to the Philosophy of Education and the Development of Social Pedagogy

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**Keywords:** national education, school, faith, Goldiş, social group, "ASTRA".

**Abstract.** The present study considers Vasile Goldiş' contribution to the development of the philosophy of education and social pedagogy, in his position as a political leader, director of "Românul" ("The Romanian"), journalist, president of "ASTRA," author and, last but not least, a teacher. His pedagogical view on shaping the "soul" of the crowds, i.e. fostering self-awareness in human communities – nations in particular – represents an integral part of his general worldview on society, humanity and values, and can only be understood as a subsystem of the latter and a part of the universal culture. The value of Goldiş' original contributions to the philosophy of education and the development of social and political pedagogy are demonstrated, above all, by his life events and a five-decade long activity in the service of national liberation and solidarity among social groups within the Romanian state, while also envisioning an ever-increasing unity among the European nations, leading to the creation of a future world state.

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## Introduction

With a degree in Philosophy and Letters, having attended the Universities of Budapest and Vienna, Vasile Goldiş (1862–1934) was a versatile thinker, multilingual scholar, connoisseur of universal history, philosophy and of the great currents of thought in culture, religion, literature, and fundamental sciences. Goldiş made original contributions in various fields of culture, the best known of which were ontology, philosophy of history, philosophy of culture, psychology, ethics, philosophy of law, sociology, national psychology, political ideology, and history.

As a teacher at the Normal School of Caransebeş (since 1886) and the Orthodox School in Braşov (since 1889), Goldiş embraced, with all his responsibility and spiritual devotion, a career as a teacher; he was interested in the development of the pedagogical sciences, seeking to achieve superior performance in teaching. In this capacity, he published Romanian-language textbooks on History, Law and Constitution, Latin, and Geography, he developed various projects, and he published several articles in journals devoted to the philosophy of education, methodology, or social pedagogy. Throughout his lifetime, he served as a Secretary of the "Society for the creation of a Romanian theatre," located in Braşov, as a Member of Parliament in Budapest and, a few decades later, in Bucharest, as director of the "Românul" newspaper, President of "Astra" Association and as a Minister. In these positions, Goldiş sought to increase the literacy and civic education among the people, shape

their national awareness, and reform Transylvanian institutions, continuing the work he conducted as a teacher, on a much broader, macro-social level. His ideas on education were completed and developed, resulting in a unitary outlook on guiding (teaching) the nation as a social "body". In this professional exercise as a scholar and illuminator of his people, Goldiş makes a substantial contribution to the development of social pedagogy. His views on pedagogy can be properly understood only as part of his philosophical worldview on society, history, culture and values. In the following pages, we endeavour to systematize his pedagogical ideas, which show a creed and an ideal well integrated into a system of thought concerning education in general and teaching in particular.

**Views on education**

An influential figure as a teacher, minister of culture and religion, social pedagogue and educator of the nation, Vasile Goldiş developed an overview on the essence and role of education in society. This included the directions of its development, the evaluation of educational factors in close connection with the role of the Church and the various other cultural institutions, with a civilizing impact for different social groups and the nation as a whole.

Goldiş conceived education through school, Church, the press and other cultural institutions, as a conscious, uninterrupted process on both a historical scale and at individual level, obeying generally valid principles for all ages or social groups (whether a nation, nationality, social class, age category, human community, functional institution, family or political party). The specifics of the school or the community-based educational work consist not of regulatory principles, but of methods, procedures and techniques employed, goals or ideals to be achieved in the actual cultural context where it is applied, leaving a mark on the effectiveness of educational activities.

Man as an individual is defined by Goldiş as a social being (in accordance with Aristotle), as an individual who lives and develops by and for the society, which, by assimilating its culture, distances itself from ignorance and advances in the sphere of civilization, stepping away from barbarism. Any human being and any social body are subject to the inexorable law of life: they are born, live and die. Any human individual, any group of people "who have a feeling of belonging are a single being, a biological individuality, a man who thinks and feels, hates and loves, who serves others if he cannot do otherwise, who pretends, lies, fights and sometimes dies fighting, but in all this he is driven by the inexorable law of life, which wants to assert, spread and perfect itself through the struggle for existence".[1]

The development of an individual or social body is regulated by ideals and values, resulting in the degree of civilization. The more complete the individual being is (a man, a nation, a people or any other social organization), the higher the level of civilization. The human struggle to conquer truth (through scientific research, discoveries, innovations, streamlining knowledge) in order to make life easier through benefits resulting from civilization, to master nature more rationally and to a greater

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[1] Vasile Goldiş, "Ţară şi popor" (The country and people), in *Scrieri social-politice şi literare* (*Socio-Political and Literary Writings*), eds. Mircea Popa and Gheorghe Şora (Timişoara: Facla Publishing House, 1976), 223.

extent, requires overcoming possibly infinite obstacles that oppose human possibility to achieve progress of civilization. Therefore, the education of an individual or nation demands effort, sacrifice, and struggle with oneself. The same feature applies in terms of human emancipation from the dominion of man. This pertains to the political and civic formation of man and social organizations. Above these, Goldiş placed the moral and spiritual order of society, i.e. the religious education, which is always focused on cultivating solidarity, love of man by man, which unites any social element and gradually strengthens cohesion and character. In this way, by the action of cultural factors, particularly school and Church, overcoming the biological individuality, the intellectual and spiritual individuality will gradually develop. Intellectual individuality grows through knowledge, intelligence, extension of experience; spiritual individuality increases through the formation of feelings, beliefs, skills, present habits, often subconsciously, in accordance with the political, moral and spiritual values.

Man is distinguished from other creatures, Goldiş said, not only in that he is a social being with a social, spiritual personality, but especially in that he can "grow intensively and without limit,"[2] i.e. to reach perfection by overcoming smaller or larger obstacles. Other creatures have a purely biological individuality and can only grow extensively and limitedly. Individuals, states, nations, cultural institutions will be born, live and die, guided by the same eternal law: "the life force of any nation is directly related to the extent to which individuals are willing to subordinate their individual interests to the interests of the entire nation, and only that nation may have eternal life, the nation whose sons are ready at any moment to sacrifice their passing lives so that their nation may live forever."[3]

As a social being, man lives his life on Earth, being subject to the physical laws of his environment, and "as a society, to economic laws, but the real life of man is contained within his feelings, his thoughts, his preferences, the ideals he worships, the beliefs that reconcile him with the absolute, affording moments of satisfaction to the needs of his soul."[4] Therefore, the development of man involves not so much the accumulation of knowledge and various products of intellect and reason, but, especially, his moral and religious feelings, his faith-based character. Faith has been and will always be the backbone of civilization. At the same time, "the power of faith has been shown at all times to have an inexhaustible spiritual fruitfulness, and a moral order without a religious order has proven illusory".[5]

In accordance with his general views on man, society and values, and his philosophy on human history and culture, Goldiş generally conceived education as a conscious process of development, corresponding to a belief and an ideal of man from the cradle to the grave. Education is a continuous, lifelong process, extending to the whole history of a people. It is not only children, young people, social groups, peoples or nations that need improvement, guidance, education on the scale of civilization, but any social body. At micro-social level, education is made by the mother, family, teacher, and priest. In this context, Goldiş conceives education as "preparing the

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[2] Goldiş, "Ţară şi popor", 231.

[3] Ibid., 232.

[4] Vasile Goldiş, "Statul universal" (The universal state), *Observatorul politic şi social* 9 (1930): 4.

[5] Vasile Goldiş, "Şcoala confesională" (The confessional school), *Gazeta învăţătorilor* 14 (1929): 3.

individual for community service."[6] At macro-social level, education is carried out by historical figures, the true "apostles of the nation," the great teachers, shapers of the national soul, serving as true models, as were George Şincai, Mihail Kogălniceanu, Octavian Goga, Andrei Bârseanu, Vasile Lucaciu, Spiru Haret, Ion Maiorescu, Mihai Eminescu, George Coşbuc, I.L. Caragiale, Aurel Vlaicu, Simion Bărnuţiu, Gheorghe Lazăr, Avram Iancu, Vissarion Roman, Gheorghe Bariţiu and many others. Goldiş portrayed such figures in his various writings and speeches, using appreciative words to highlight their merits as follows: guiders and enlighteners of the people, forerunners, "sowers of national ideals," "teachers of peoples," great "educators of the Romanian people," "moral compasses of future generations," "leaders of the national soul," those who have awakened "the national awareness, who built our soul, faith and ideals," "conductors of crowds," "apostles of the blessed ascension of souls" etc. Such personalities, political, cultural and spiritual leaders, men of genius make education for the masses, guide and direct the various cultural institutions, as was "ASTRA" and many other cultural societies, media outlets, schools, universities, houses of culture, libraries, museums, etc. Through their efforts, the cultural and educational factors succeed in unifying the energies of isolated individuals and groups, forming close-knit human communities with faith in their ideals, elevating peoples on the glorious ladder of perfection, developing the capacity and the will of peoples to overcome barriers, and harmonizing life with universal values. Social-scale education leads to the development of social bodies, the gradual increase of human solidarity in relation to undertaken ideals, the progress of civilization towards ever greater justice, freedom and love of people. With these ideas, Goldiş proves himself an enlightened social pedagogue, as both a practitioner and a theorist. In both positions, he referenced the existing literature in sociology, crowd psychology, social psychology, general pedagogy (including works published by E. Durckheim, C. Bouglé, D. Gusti, G. Wells, G. Le Bon, V. Barbat, Herbart, Rousseau, James L. Hughes, Georg Simmel, Gabriel Tarde, J. Maxwell, Bertrand de Juvenel, etc.).

Goldiş conceived training as a component of education, as transmission and acquisition of knowledge, as a communication process that broadens the individual's knowledge and experience and increases his intellectual capacities. But the main purpose of education is not to give children and learners in general, a massive amount of knowledge, "a lot of learning" as "the good school is not that which gives a lot of knowledge, but rather that which builds characters, spreads morals and plants ideals. The value of an individual is not given by his knowledge, however extensive, but by his character, the morals that guide him and the ideals that inspire him ... Characters provide the safety conditions for any human society. History is witness that nations perish from the weakening of their character, not by that of their intelligence."[7] In other words, the ideal of education is to mould a man endowed with moral and spiritual virtues, whose synthesis lies in the character. Character requires initiative capacity, sound judgment, strong will, determination, and perseverance – qualities that gradually

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[6] Ibid.,173.

[7] Vasile Goldiş, "Şcoala cea bună" (The good school), *Anuarul Liceului Ortodox Român Andrei Şaguna din Braşov* (*Yearbook of the "Andrei Şaguna" Romanian Orthodox High School in Braşov*), jubilee year 1924-1925 (Braşov, 1925), 3.

form in the personality of the learner through the agency of faith, rather than thought or reason. Our faith is our ultimate reason to be and the only guarantee of character, morals and ideals in the real world of human societies – Goldiş thought.

Thus conceived, the ideal education should guide all efforts of learners and teachers towards continuing improvement and self-improvement of human and social bodies. Ideals stand above all else; the struggles of human beings and humanity have always focused on attaining ideals – which led to improvement of people, i.e. the progress of civilization. "Civilization," Goldiş said, "is the summary of ideals that have heated human souls throughout history,"[8] and peoples who left barbarism did so when they found their ideal. From ideals, peoples evolve to civilization through education, as they strengthen their characters, their unity of will and their ability to perform historical actions.

At the core of the teacher's efforts, Goldiş believed, "lies the noble ideal of Christ: the love of people, which is the source of spiritual unity and of the character of every man and every social body. This ideal is the ultimate source of Western culture today; it is the first to proclaim distinction, equality, freedom, and fraternity to the world, mercy for the weak and condemnation of the shameless and hypocritical."[9] The school that truly wishes to be a guide to a nation cannot be deprived of ideals, and the most sacred ideal is the law of Christ: it must remain the ideal of school, as it is eternal, while all others are transient.

In his various writings, Goldiş addresses education from other perspectives, as well: as institutional and spontaneous (non-institutionalized) education, as systematic education in and outside of school, as lifelong education, as multi-lateral education leading to the development and perfection of man (moral, civic, aesthetic, work-based, religious, political education, etc.), as education depending on the factors that deliver it (patriotic and national education delivered by Astra, political and civic education made by the Romanian National Party, education conducted by theatres, museums, houses of culture, etc.), as education achieved through subjects (History, Latin, Geography, Constitution, etc). Regardless of its form, in order for it to be efficient and yield the desired results, education must adhere to principles and methodological rules according to field specificity.

The principles of education are natural laws, on the observance of which depends the degree of achievement of ideals and goals. Among these, Goldiş approached the principle of vivid intuition as the source of scientific knowledge, the principle of accessibility, the principle of active participation of learners in their training, the principle of systematic and logical organization of knowledge, the principle of assimilation and applicability of knowledge etc. He also insisted, with convincing arguments, on complying with some principles in the process of reorganizing the national education system in Romania, reconstructed after World War I, and in building a national system of education and culture in the interwar period, such as: equal access to education for all children; free public education; general elementary education; a more democratic education; respect for human rights; the principle of non-discrimination based on nationality, sex, race, religion, etc.; focusing education on the training of teachers; freedom and autonomy of education and culture, etc.

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[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.

Vasile Goldiş' myriad concerns (in education, training, development of national awareness, solidarity of social bodies able to make progress in culture, civilization, strengthening the unitary national state of the Romanians and making life easier for all people, etc.), his original arguments, his causal and functional explanations emphasize his responsibility, skill, and ability as an organizer of vast cultural, political, and social events, as a publicist, as a social pedagogue, and as a teacher of the Romanian nation. These dimensions of his personality come to complete those as a high school teacher and author of textbooks for Romanian schools in the multinational imperial education structure.

In respect of the level of development of education in his time, Goldiş was very much interested in its future. His vision is optimistically pedagogical, relying on the fact that although man is a limited being, he aspires to perfectibility and has a natural desire for perfection. So are nations, states, or other social organizations. Their path to perfection, civilization and progress is education, especially moral education – focused on cultivating ancestral faith, customs, morals, Romanian attitudes and solidarity between generations. The future of industrial civilization, the ease of work from decade to decade, the increase in people's ability to master nature reasonably require further enhancement of science education and a larger amount of knowledge to be learned. But the purpose of future education should not reside in increasing the stock of basic knowledge that should be stored in the memory and learned by children, as they are ephemeral and "however much it may progress, science shall forever remain insufficient for the satisfaction of the soul."[10] It is more important to shape characters based on ancestral faith. The future will be dominated by the school of the masses. Therefore, general and compulsory education will have to be the centre of concern for decision-makers who bear responsibility for the peoples' future.

Mankind will evolve to new levels of organization of human solidarity, within which a new, universal moral and spiritual order will gradually assert itself until, after a long period of time it will lead to universal solidarity, a global institutional organization, from which war will be permanently excluded. This future organization of humanity will result mainly from the action of spiritual forces, as was the case with Reform and liberal society in Europe. Education will be a determining factor in this respect, its fruits will be the awareness of human solidarity, the human able to understand his freedom in the process of living with others, to articulate his individual interest with respect to that of the community, to exercise his will in accordance with the requirements of physical, economic, social and moral laws. "In the state of mankind," Goldiş believed, "education will be made institutionally."[11] As man and his soul are eternally perfectible, education shall also be eternal and perfectible within the future universal organization of mankind.

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[10] Vasile Goldiş, "Sufletul şcolii primare" (The Soul of the Primary School), *Gazeta învăţătorilor* (*The Teacher's Gazette*) 11–12 (1931): 7.

[11] Goldiş, *Statul universal*, 6.

**Perfection of national awareness and community spirit – a central concern of Vasile Goldiş**

Undoubtedly, Vasile Goldiş was a great national and social pedagogue, a teacher of European nations, who leveraged, in his political and cultural activities, his vast knowledge in the field of history, philosophy of culture, religion and law. By World War I, the goal of his life was to contribute to the perfection of self-awareness of the Romanian nation by shaping, among Romanians in Transylvania, Banat and other parts of Europe, the belief that they belong to the same historical core which is the Romanian people, that they have the same origin, language, customs and mindsets, regardless of the administration they are under. His actions of various kinds, especially in the area of politics, organization, and educational communication, were aimed at Romanians' national awareness. This included the expansion and enhancement of self-awareness of the Romanian people and every member thereof. Such a major historical work is complex and lengthy; it is a cultural process in its general meaning, and an educational one, in a narrower sense and as part of the former.

As a philosopher of history, Goldiş argues that historical eras are dominated by an idea, or a "spirit," as the Middle Ages was possessed by the idea of religion, and the modern age, due to the French Revolution, proclaimed human rights and religious tolerance as triumphant ideas in the mind of European peoples. After Napoleon's war, the national idea emerged as a driving force of the peoples, in the light of which nation states arose, built on the ruins of the great Napoleonic Empire. "The new spirit, the spirit of the national idea, quickly conquered all mankind. The whole nineteenth century especially bears the national mark, which gave birth to nation states."[12] The inevitable course of history, the call of the "spirit of history" is also true for the other empires and nationalities composing them. Therefore, Romanians within the empire had to be educated in light of national ideals, aspirations and interests in order to assert their solidarity and to strengthen the unity of their national awareness. Obviously, this process is secular; it had begun around 1600. A series of 'teachers of the people' ensued, artists who dedicated their lives to the enlightenment of the Romanian people. In 1816, Gheorghe Lazăr had sowed "seeds" that sprung barely a century later and which matured national awareness, awakening in the souls of Romanians the "will of national unity and freedom"[13] and, behold, today "Romanians, all together, give life to the right we have to rule the land of our fathers, and from the waves of a history of human unrest, our great Romanian country rises to the surface of life,"[14] i.e. Greater Romania, the dream and precious treasure of our ancestors, our own and our heirs'.

As a result of history, the 1918 act of Alba Iulia was prepared through a complex, rightful and comprehensive cultural and educational work, carried out mainly by intellectuals, especially teachers, priests and writers. Such an ideal and corresponding activity was upheld by the "Association for Romanian Literature and Culture" or numerous other cultural societies, associations and organizations. "Astra" served national ideals, committed to "forever settle down Romanian solidarity and

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[12] Vasile Goldiş, "State naţionale" (Nation States), *Românul* (*The Romanian*) 231 (1912): 1.

[13] Vasile Goldiş, "Gheorghe Lazăr", in *Scrieri social-politice şi literare*, 261.

[14] Ibid.

unity,"[15] managing to light the flame of national awareness in the souls of Romanians, to hasten steps to freedom, justice and culture, to achieve that "every people must be cultured, administered and judged in its own language, by individuals who not only know the habits, character and spirit of the people, but who share it, too."[16]

The education of national spirit involves leveraging, developing and broadcasting national and universal culture, literary and artistic creation, the press, libraries, universities, cultural centres, and all cultural establishments. Goldiş noted that "with the development of means of communication, the awareness of spiritual unity has become increasingly strong."[17] The education of national awareness is organically correlated to longing for unity and cultural development, to strengthening political and administrative unity in a legal framework that is institutionally specific to the nation state.

But it is not national awareness, devoid of feelings, beliefs, customs, traditions and mindsets that are the main factors which unite and strengthen a nation, but character. A predominant role is played by feelings of patriotism, national pride and dignity, the spirit of sacrifice for the nation's destiny. They must be well-secured by a common ideal and creed. The final goal of patriotic education is to shape souls. In this respect, Goldiş appreciated the role of music, visual arts, architecture, literature, theatre, folk performances, ceremonies and rituals, without diminishing the role of information or knowledge transmission through modern means of communication. The action of various factors of education – be it political, civic, or patriotic – is driven by school and Church – two synthesizing factors that have generated, over time, the formation of human associations and organizations. Only if twinned with faith and the spread of culture will education of social groups and citizens actually lead to civilization.[18] The two forces – Church and education, are the creators of souls of men, nations and institutions; they will gradually be able to defeat the beast in man, to create a world in harmony with the great values of humanity, such as freedom, justice, solidarity, the greater good, peace within and among States, and prosperity.

Thus, believing that history has produced sufficient evidence to demonstrate that healthy bodies are created and fortified, in particular, by the awareness of national belonging, Goldiş undertook, as the main purpose of his life, what he himself wrote in 1920: "we fought the hardest of fights against our oppressors for centuries. I knew that the national awareness of our subjugated people was a matter of being or not being. The propagation, the strengthening of this national awareness is the sole purpose of our fight."[19] In the service of this supreme goal, Goldiş revealed, through thought and deed, his brilliant qualities as a national and social educator, acting persistently to strengthen the national spirit, which would master all of the Romanians' feelings and skills.

In the period after the Great Union of 1 December 1918, Goldiş developed his theoretical and practical work on another level, aimed at strengthening the Romanian nation state and laying new foundations for the economy, social relations, education and culture. To this end, in April 18, 1920, Goldiş said that the shaping of the Romanian soul

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[15] Ibid.

[16] Vasile Goldiş, *Scrieri social-politice şi literare*, 156.

[17] Ibid., 151.

[18] Vasile Goldiş, "Politică şi cultură" ("Politics and Culture"), *Transilvania* (1929), 969.

[19] Vasile Goldiş, "O crimă ce nu se iartă" ("A crime that is not forgiven), *Românul* 189 (1920): 2.

should continue until union will be strengthened not only institutionally, but also spiritually, and the Romanian National Party, whose leader he was, should work harder until attaining the complete spiritual unity of the Romanian people and the formation of a homogeneous mindset – as a basis for preventing political divisions, deviations from the agenda of the Union, betrayals and anarchic manifestations. Building the new state should be based on Christian morality, on a healthy and rational economy, on the appreciation and fair organization of labour, on a flourishing culture – all being supported by the creation of appropriate institutional networks. The political agenda initiated by Goldiş, of a Christian – democratic essence, held, as national priorities, the cultivation of Christian morality, rational labour and economy, culture and human rights, the progress of the Romanian people on the scale of human civilization. "Above all, however," Goldiş wrote, "as an absolutely indispensable condition for progress, will have to be the perfect honesty, the impartiality and sacred altruism of all those who receive the burdensome entitlement and the very noble duty of conducting public affairs."[20] As a minister, party leader, president of "Astra," cultural activist and writer, Vasile Goldiş continued his work as a national pedagogue, "father of the country" – as defined by Octavian Goga, in the new socio-political, institutional and international context, to diminish discord and anarchy and promote the affective, spiritual, cultural, economic and political unity of all Romanians.

Christian moral education, the promotion of moral values, the education of Romanians in the spirit of human and civil rights is the pivot of resettlement of economic and social order, designed to strengthen the character and identity of the Romanian people, its vitality and will. Despite the tensions and difficulties that occurred after World War I, Goldiş trusted that the Romanian people, "having returned to the health of political thought, will know how to distinguish the tears from the wheat and will return to the political views that are likely to ensure its happiness."[21] He strongly believes that "soon, my kind will heal from the disease that had it in its grips for a while and will assume its natural role in the history of world civilization, as an element of order and an absolutely entitled factor of human culture".[22] But achieving this state requires literacy efforts, directed at all walks of life, from ploughmen, industrial workers, government officials, to the training of educators, needed in all types of schools, and priests.

The assumption of moral education, verified by history, the cultivation of altruism, the Christian love of man by man, the rule of justice, honesty, solidarity and other moral values consist of the fact that "people are not guided by *raison* (reason – *our note*), they are guided by feelings, opinions, beliefs .... Because of this, we must turn the national idea into faith".[23] Moral sentiments, including those of national solidarity, must be part of every Romanian soul. Enlightening factors, such as "Astra,"

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[20] Vasile Goldiş, "Disciplina şi solidaritatea partidului" (The discipline and solidarity of the party), *Vasile Goldiş. Politică şi cultură (1919 – 1934)* (Vasile Goldiş. Politics and Culture (1919–1934), ed. Vasile Popeangă (Timişoara: Mirton Publishing House, 1993), 43.
[21] Vasile Goldiş, "Interviu acordat ziarului Izbânda" (Interview for the Victory Newspaper), *Românul* 134 (1920): 2.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Vasile Goldiş, "Cuvânt rostit la constituirea Asociaţiei arădene pentru cultura poporului român" (Speech delivered at the foundation of the Association for Romanian Literature and Culture), *Românul* 242 (1920): 2.

including educational ones in a narrower sense, are called to cultivate moral values in the souls of Romanians in this direction.

Throughout his life, Goldiş hated discord and sought to spread love among people, regardless of nationality, race, religion, gender or social class. From this position, he criticized, with historical and legal arguments, fanatical nationalism, chauvinism and irredentism. The formation of a nation's character, the propaganda and education conducted by different factors must exclude these manifestations which violate human dignity, human and civic rights alike, being opposed to the principles of civilization and to the direction of historical evolution of humanity. The development of national and cultural awareness among non-Hungarian peoples in pre-war Hungary, as well as non-Romanian ones in Greater Romania, should follow universal principles resulting from history, their natural rights and democratic values. Otherwise, the governing power of the state becomes enslaving for certain parts of society, it becomes an immoral and corrupt governance. In such a situation, a discriminated, exploited nationality, deprived of its natural rights, is entitled to exercise the right to self-determination, to rebel until liberated. Goldiş argues in favour of these ideas by invoking a quote from the work of the Hungarian revolutionary, Lajos Kossuth, "Without nationality, life is useless. When we lose our national language, we shall lose our souls. Losing nationality is dying as a people. As such, nationality and language are dearer than freedom; for freedom can be regained, but nationality is lost forever".[24] Likewise, Goldiş concludes, for us Romanians, our nationality is our dearest possession in the world and "whoever wants to take our nationality, wishes to rob us of our souls. One cannot have his soul torn from him and then left to live on."[25]

Through his entire work as an educator, writer and political practitioner, Goldiş pleaded for observance of universal principles enshrined in the civilized world of Western democracies, including equal national entitlement of all peoples and nationalities within multiethnic empires. Such principles, he maintained, are, above all, moral, educational, spiritual and political, and must also be enshrined in legal terms. Therefore, the entire activity of political and civic education, the perfection of the national spirit of the Romanian people and its every citizen must respect universally enshrined principles and be conducted in harmony with the stated values of universal history, accepted by civilized peoples.

In conclusion, we can summarize Goldiş' outlook on education, in his position as a social reformer and guider of the Romanian nation, as an integral part of his philosophy, his general worldview on society, man and values, as a constituent of dissemination of culture to the people, which perfects its soul, its national awareness, its character based on ancestral faith. The dissemination of culture to the masses, through different factors, especially through education institutions, Church and various publications, leads any people, any social body to strengthen its unity of conscience, soul and belief, to increase its power to walk on the path of civilization, discipline and prosperity. In this historical process, promoting moral values and strengthening faith in the hearts of peoples, nations, and men as individuals, is the key to universal solidarity. Moral values are required in conjunction with justice. Great figures in history, politics,

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[24] Ibid., 124.
[25] Ibid.

art, science and culture are those who plant ideals, who enlighten and guide the people, working as teachers of mankind, as social reformers.

Goldiş' philosophical views on education have not only oriented his conduct as a teacher and textbook author, but also as a politician, a cultural and social campaigner for perfection of the unity of national and cultural awareness of the Romanian people, whose life, culture and spirituality are free to develop in equal entitlement to other peoples. Through his work on education, instruction, enlightenment of the masses, nations and peoples, Goldiş made a substantial contribution to the development of European social pedagogy, philosophy of education – being himself a brilliant and tireless guider, national educator, that is, not only an illustrious teacher during his youth, but also a social pedagogue, a great thinker on the roles of education in his mature years.

# MISCELLANEA

**Lidia GROSS:** *Bresle și conferirii, sau despre pietatea urbană în Transilvania medievală (secolele XIV–XVI)* **(Guilds and confraternities, or urban piety in medieval Transylvania, 14ᵗʰ–16ᵗʰ century) (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Argonaut, 2014), 266 p.**

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Lidia Gross's book published at the Argonaut Publishing House in Cluj-Napoca is a continuation of her previous work, presenting the most recent results of her research. The prominent scholar developed the subject of her doctoral dissertation[1] into a new book by further explorations resulting in new data shedding new light on our knowledge of urban piety in 14ᵗʰ-16ᵗʰ century Transylvania. This analysis presents the operation of Transylvanian medieval society, the mentality and social structure of the 14ᵗʰ-16ᵗʰ century. The author points out already in the preface: the most important task for her and the scholarship is to eliminate a very widespread and stubborn view of the literature regarding the secular – ecclesiastical opposition. One of the great merits of the book is precisely the fact that the author does more than just demolish this rigid misconception and declare the pointlessness of this opposition in the 14ᵗʰ-16ᵗʰ century (and let me note: even a long time afterwards); she presents, by her source analyses, how the expectations of church and society and the personal piety and religiousness were built upon each other in a symbiotic relationship in the life of urban communities.

The structure of the volume follows a personal to institutional logic. One of the text types of this age that gives largest room to individual representation is the last will, as also a document of urban piety. In the first two studies of the book the author publishes and analyzes two relatively early testaments. These texts are included into the volume not simply because they put forth the new research results of the author since her dissertation, but also because they are the manifestations of late medieval Transylvanian urban piety. The first last will analyzed comes from the early 16ᵗʰ century: the testament of a member of the influential Eiben family from Bistrița, Ursula Meister Paulin. One may ask whether it was necessary to return to a long known source (especially as the first study of the volume), for Mrs Ursula's last will was already published in 1864, and it has been present ever since, albeit sporadically, in Transylvanian historiography. However, Lidia Gross's thorough argumentation and the profound analysis of the text may justify this decision. The previous scholarship has failed to agree on the dating of the testament, but Lidia Gross clarifies the exact date of formulation based on well-established arguments: 2 July 1512. A further reason that

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[1] Published in 2004, new edition in 2009.

makes the investigation even more intriguing is the criteria of analysis: Lidia Gross places special emphasis on the sex (female) of the testament writer, and highlights the possibilities of a gendered analysis of the text. Mrs Ursula's decisions regarding her movable and immovable properties, the passage of her immovable properties into ecclesiastical use, the justification of her decision is interpreted in Gross's book as one of the few – in this age – manifestations of female urban piety.

The text discussed in the second study is again a fortunate choice: the testament of Thomas Jo from 1531, a generic pair of the previous will. In the Cluj County state archives, Gross found the testament of the castellan of Ieciu who died in the plague outburst in Bistrița, and published it in a volume of articles in 2011. The republication is justified by the fact that this time it also contains the source edition. The nobleman had relatively few movable properties to dispose of, but the instructions about his funeral make this testament even more interesting. These gain their full meaning understood, on the one hand, in the context of the mentality of the age (the plague as a proof of salvation), and, on the other hand, in that of the intellectual and political network of Thomas Jo's entourage. His relations, as Werbőczy's *familiaris*, with the judge of Bistrița, Thomas Wallendorffer, in a time of political unrest, explain how a foreigner could be buried in the town church, with the expenses of his funeral ceremonies reaching as high as the price of a good Turkish horse or a house. The instructions regarding the funeral procession also reveal how such a community event could mobilize the masses.

The time period fixed in the title of the book covers precisely the age when religious, often charitable associations flourished all over Europe. Four other studies of the volume deal with religious societies, institutions auxiliary to the Catholic church, the existence of which in Transylvania can be documented from an early age. To define the specific scope of the guilds of craftsmen organized on a professional basis, and the professional confraternities adjoined to these is a serious challenge for a historian. The author maps and presents these religious and professional associations and their fields of operation, while solving terminological problems as well, as there was no consensus in the previous literature about the name and relations, hierarchical or other, between the various kinds of associations. These inquiries take one step closer to the understanding of how medieval Transylvanian cities and urban piety worked.

The first religious association discussed in the book is the Confraternity of the Rosary, functioning in Bistrița between 1525 and 1544. This again is not a new topic for Gross, but the newly found register of the Confraternity justifies a reiteration of the subject. The society which was founded after the onset of the Reformation in Transylvania was not accidentally placed in Bistrița: the ideas of the Reformation penetrated the strong Catholic community of the town somewhat later than in other great cities of Transylvania, e.g. Brașov or Cluj. Gross procedes to a contrastive analysis and contextualization of this confraternity by mentioning some Europan examples of its history. On the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary there was one single such Confraternity of the Rosary in Košice/Kassa, which is one more reason why the foundation of the confraternity at a relatively early time in Bistrița was an outstanding event. The newly discovered register offers new data to the history of the society whose members were exclusively laymen and mostly women. The study

presents and analyzes the data found in this register; the register itself and the names of the members of the society are published at the end.

The fourth, longest text in the volume deals with the religious associations organized by criteria of profession in medieval Transylvania. The roots of this discussion are already there in the author's dissertation, but here it is turned into a thorough analysis extended both in terms of sources and literature. In this chapter Lidia Gross gives an answer, relative to Transylvania, to one of the hardest questions of European historiography: that no general conclusions can be drawn about the religious confraternities formed beside professional groups (guilds) following Western European (German, English, French) models, either in terms of terminology or organization. On the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary (Transylvania included) the German model was followed, as proven by the statutes of the confraternities in three large Transylvanian cities: Cluj, Sibiu and Braşov. In these three cities the first religious confraternities adjacent to guilds were established quite early, in the mid-15th century. Their function was to harmonize economy and religion, satisfy spiritual needs, while the guild preserved its secular economic character all along. In respect of the religious associations established on professional criteria, the most complex case of the three cities was Cluj: in addition to a dynamic economy and trade, it also had a strong interest in devotional movements. Religious professional confraternities existed next to seven guilds (butchers, tanners, blacksmiths, weavers, shoemakers, harness makers, tailors). Gross also examined the statutes of five other guilds (potters, hoopers, goldsmiths, furriers, ropemakers), some of which undertake religious functions as well. The comparison with the cities of Sibiu and Braşov is difficult because of the lack of similar types of sources; however, the sources available permit the author to draw the following conclusions: the use of other types of sources (increasing number of guild statute requests, documents on altars or saints served by guilds) may yield insight into devotional needs and the accessibility of the ideas of religious innovation and the Reformation. Gross also finds that, although similarities exist between the organization and attitude towards religious life of guilds of Sibiu and Braşov, there are also significant differences: the Braşov guilds were primarily interested in trade, and were more indifferent to religion than those of Sibiu. Gross ends her insightful analysis with reference to the examples from Bistriţa, starting with the testament of Mrs Ursula discussed in the first chapter, as there is no other evidence extant as yet for this town about religious confraterneties organized on professional basis. One may agree with the author to encourage new perspectives and criteria for research: she states that she was not interested in a technical description of guilds, in how their hierarchical structure changed throughout the ages, but in their complex roles within the Transylvanian society. Her question was how it could fulfil several functions (profession organization, military, religious-charitable and cultural roles at the same time), as such questions take one step closer to the understanding of how the medieval Transylvanian society worked and how it was organized. In contrast to the author's very accurate questions and exhaustive answers, her remark that the Reformation brought the end of the previous colourful world of Transylvania seems oversimplifying.[2]

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[2] Gross, *Bresle şi confrerii*, 182–183.

The fifth chapter continues the subject of the previous one, in a structure that corresponds to the hierarchy within a guild. She now presents the religious confraternities of journeymen, created on the basis of the same devotional needs as seen before, and highlights their outstanding role in Transylvanian urban piety. This is a subject of special importance for two reasons: these associations were motivated by the same religious needs as the ones discussed before, therefore are organically connected to the confraternities of the guilds; and the research of this subject is quite marginal in Romanian historiography: if it is discussed at all, it is usually viewed as class struggle within the guild hierarchy. The analysis conducted with the close reading of the sources reveals that another town can be added to the list of Transylvanian towns with confraternities: the association of journeymen shoemakers from Saschiz and the neighbouring settlements had an irregular status, a double authority of moral education and religious-charitable work under the supervision of both the town authorities and the church.

The topic of the last chapter is a group completely unlike any of the confraternities previously discussed: the Saint John confraternity of shoemaker journeymen from Sibiu. Several attempts have been made in the scholarship to explain this, and Gross starts the presentation of this most special confraternity by summarizing and rectifying them. The society's preserved register book contains the number of its members: between 1484 and the end of the 16th century more than 1900 members were registered. The membership of this confraternity is outstanding not only because of the number of members but also because this was the first society with members from abroad. This shows that the medieval mobility in Transylvania was not unidirectional (from Transylvania to Western Europe), but people from the West also spent some time in Transylvania, at least in Sibiu, and they were obliged, but also felt the need, to belong to some local community. This Sibiu-based confraternity comprised a larger area: in addition to the foreigners, journeymen from other Transylvanian settlements also joined in. Apart from its numbers and territorial range, the composition was also outstanding: it comprised not only the shoemaker journeymen, but also master craftsmen, and even wives and children as well. It was also more spiritual than most confraternities: not only did it have an altar and a patron saint, but is also accepted members from other professions and its main purpose was the cult and care of its patron saint and altar. Gross's most important rectifications in the scholarship are that this confraternity was not a professional association but an explicitly religious society, and that the settlement name *Ardesch/Ardisch* was misunderstood and the confraternity was wrongly placed in connection with Wallachia. The register of the society allows the reconstruction of its profile, but the statutes, which could offer more information about its operation, have not been discovered yet.

Lidia Gross's book yields insight into the life of medieval Transylvanian society. She reads the sources already known with a fresh eye and discovers new ones, her competent analyses almost visualize the pulse of the community. The German and English summary is a helpful tool for the book, but a bibliography and a final index of names and places, and a more detailed table of contents marking the subtitles as well would have made it easier to use. It is not (necessarily because of?) the author's carelessness that the text contains an almost confusing amount of typos; also, a more

thorough proofreading could have eliminated many of the optional use of synonyms marked with a "/".[3]

<div style="text-align: right;">*Translated from the Hungarian by Emese Czintos*</div>

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[3] Just some examples: înţelegeri / convenţii (agreements/conventions, 14), ipotetic / prezumtiv (hypothetical/presumtive, 16), ilustrative / grăitoare (illustrative/telling, 55), aleatoriu / nu consecvent (aleatory/inconsistent, 81), întărire / confirmare (enforcement/confirmation, 142), aluzie / sugestie (allusion/suggestion, 156), refăcut / reconstruit (remade/reconstructed, 175), model / exemplu (model/example, 181), clericală / ecleziastică (clerical/ecclesiastic, 187), estimării / aproximării (estimate/approximate, 211), contribuţii / taxe anuale (contributions/annual taxes, 220), etc.

**Katalin LUFFY,** *"Romlás építőinek fognak neveztetni": prédikátori szerepek és alkalmi beszédek az Erdélyi Fejedelemség válsága idején* **(Preacher's Roles and Occasional Speeches during the Crisis of the Principality of Transylvania) (Debrecen: University of Debrecen Press, 2015), 356 p.**

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Katalin Luffy's monograph,[1] a developed version of her PhD thesis, has a double subject. Firstly, she offers a thorough analysis of three printed volumes of sermons of the volume's protagonist, Pál Medgyesi (*Hármas Jajj [Three woes]*, 1653; *Sok jajjok [Many woes]*, 1658; *Magyarok hatodik jajja [The sixth woe of Hungarians]*, 1660), court priest of György Rákóczi II, Prince of Transylvania. This period, the second half of the 17th century, was a critical time for the Principality of Transylvania; Prince Rákóczi's unsuccessful campaign in Poland was followed by a retaliating attack of the Turks, his army was destroyed, and the Prince himself was deadly wounded in the battle at Gilău (Gyalu) and Floreşti (Fenes). The title of the monograph is a quotation from Medgyesi ("Romlás építőinek fognak neveztetni" [Their name will be builders of destruction]), in reference to the fact that he can address those who are capable of restoration even in times of destruction and peril because there is hope for change. Secondly, she treats Puritanism as another major subject of the book, introducing several representatives of this religious movement by analyzing their sermon books. Katalin Luffy's primary interest in Puritanism is not church history, church government or the history of ideas, but its literary historical and cultural anthropological aspects.

The preachers of Puritanism rejected the pericope system and introduced the free choice of biblical text as starting point of a sermon. This practice has had far-reaching consequences. Any part of the Scriptures could become thus the basis for a sermon, which led to the transformation of both the content and the rhetorical composition of a religious speech. Through two case studies (Ferenc Veréczi and János Miskolczi Szenczi) at the end of the second chapter, the author proves that the preacher's role that Medgyesi also undertook – a mediator between the community and God, and interpreter of God's message – and the popular discourse that the Puritans

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[1] Katalin Luffy, "Romlás építőinek fognak neveztetni" : prédikátori szerepek és alkalmi beszédek az Erdélyi Fejedelemség válsága idején (Preacher's Roles and Occasional Speeches during the Crisis of the Principality of Transylvania) (Debrecen: University of Debrecen Press, 2015), 356 p. ISBN 978-963-318-467-7

also favoured were widely spread even among those who opposed the church governing principles of Puritanism.

The third chapter deals with the sermons of Medgyesi and his contemporary, Mihály Báthori. Their common feature is the concern for the composition of their volumes: they rewrote their previously delivered or printed speeches, and signalled new relationships between the sermons organized in book-form. The ravaging of the Turks added a new apocalyptic perspective to the previous sermons; indeed, the title of Báthori's volume ("Hangos trombita" [Loud trumpet]) is a reference to the Apocalypse.

The fourth chapter examines Medgyesi's ability to create language – and by this, community identity. Luffy accepts and enforces the statement that the concept of nation existed already in the 17$^{th}$ century, it is not a 19$^{th}$-century product. Older scholarship also emphasized the social sensitivity of Puritanism. Luffy extracts all Hungarian equivalents of the words *natio, populous, gens, tribus* from Medgyesi's texts and proves that the concept of country/homeland did not only include the members of the nobility or the Estates.

The fifth and last chapter analyzes the sermons and orations prepared for funerals of members of the aristocracy, and presents their representational function within the funeral. Ferenc Rhédey and István Bocskai were Calvinists, Ferenc Rákóczi I and his mother, Zsófia Báthory, were Catholics. This way the comparison also shows that the major task of a Catholic orator at a funeral is *movere* (moving), which lends a higher value to *delectare* (delectation), while the *docere* (teaching) is a function hardly present in a funeral oration. Sermons and orations were delivered in two languages (Latin and Hungarian), making the author state: "one may say different things in different ways in Latin, than in Hungarian". The Latin text merges the elements of biblical and classical education, which is not a characteristic of Hungarian speeches. The speeches of the three priests preaching at Ferenc Rhédey's funeral (István Czeglédi, István Szántai Pócs and Pál Görgei) are examples for the transfer between genres: each sermon is different from the other two, the first is related to meditation, the second to political journalism, the third – with its subject on good fame – with oration. The author argues that, contrary to the claims of Hungarian scholarship, the Baroque style, the images of the sublime and the terrible are also present in protestant prose.

In summary, it can be said that Katalin Luffy's monograph is a pioneering work. Although similar works about church literature in Hungarian have been written before, this is the first comprehensive literary historical discussion of the occasional speeches in Transylvania in the second half of the 17$^{th}$ century. The value of the book is also enhanced by the analysis of a previously unexamined work (János Miskolczi Szenczi), and publishes and uses the manuscript oration (János Pósaházi: Hungarian funeral oration) preserved at the author's workplace, the Central University Library of Cluj-Napoca.

*Translated from the Hungarian by Emese Czintos*

**Andrei OIŞTEANU, *Ordine şi Haos. Mit şi magie în cultura tradiţională românească* (Order and Chaos. Myth and Magic in Romanian Traditional Culture), 2nd revised edition (Iaşi: Editura Polirom, 2013), 624 p.**

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"The Romanian people were born Christian" is a phrase that was always repeated obsessively, with pride, at the beginning of every Romanian history lesson. Nonetheless, this apparent lack of a Romanian pantheon cannot quench the thirst for "tales of gods" and cannot generate a sense of resignation and a need for refuge in other peoples' mythological tales, but it gathers all hermeneutical forces, channelling them towards folklore. Andrei Oişteanu offers precisely this sort of reading code of the Romanian folklore, with the purpose of unearthing the inner springs that had initially actuated this mechanism of communication with the superior plane, through ritual.

The superior dimension of common imagination, explored in art and literature, is populated by archetypes, laden with a type of symbolism that transcends the form of words and languages. It represents a superior dimension of primal energy and an eternal source of inspiration. That very same dimension of common imagination, endowed with living faith, becomes mythology, in which case inspiration becomes revelation. Religious syncretism, in the first centuries A.D., was usually a political solution for protruding a single, unifying system of beliefs to the pagan people. The idea was not to completely eliminate archaic beliefs, due to the fact that such a manoeuvre would have met a particularly violent resistance, but to gradually eclipse the archaic beliefs, to slowly superpose them through cohabitation and synthesis between the two systems. This dimension of common imagination that thus became mythology still exists in a secondary layer, deeply buried in the human ritual consciousness. The traditional Romanian culture is an example in which this mythical consciousness still manifests, covered by syncretism in a Christian aura. This particular mythical consciousness later becomes folklore and, in the end, it becomes folk literature. Thus, an entire system of desacralisation will occur, a system which Andrei Oişteanu will traverse backwards, in order to reach the original sacred plane?, the echoes that are still produced by the pre-Christian beliefs.

The matter of study in *Ordine şi Haos. Mit şi magie în cultura tradiţională românească* (Order and Chaos. Myth and Magic in Romanian Traditional Culture) is represented by Romanian carols, fairytales and legends, but they are brought into discussion in order to contextualize certain ritual events that take place within an intelligible time-space, populated by motifs and symbols that, together, weave a mythical time, in the form of a timeless loop: cosmogony and eschatology are no longer isolated events, within a past that cannot be appointed in history with certainty;

they are cyclical events that take place in every moment "of passing"; Order and Chaos are no longer states of the universe that had been irredeemably established. They are mobile states of constant boiling. The purpose of a ritual is to interact with these exterior elements, offering people the chance to contribute to keeping the cosmic balance.

The ritual, as a *human action*, has the final purpose of keeping the timeless loop in its primordial balance. What is distinctively interesting to see is not the ritual itself, the pre-established steps within a human action. What needs to be explored is the intelligible made sensible through ritual, i. e. what takes place *inside* the loop. This is the primary difference between Oişteanu's book and other contemporary studies regarding the Romanian mythical consciousness. He does not give detailed descriptions of the steps required by certain rituals, with transient explanations for the meanings of every object or gesture. Oişteanu explores the space that certain ritual addresses.

Lucian Boia affirms that a myth offers a key, allowing access to a system of interpretation, but also to an ethic code (a form of behaviour). It is strongly integrating and simplifying, reducing the diversity and complexity of a phenomenon to an axis that is privileged of? interpretation. It introduces a principle of order in the universe and in human lives, a principle that is assigned to the needs and ideals of a certain society.[1] Even in the absence of a pantheon, it would have been impossible for the Romanian mythical and archetypical consciousness to not manifest itself. Even more so, in the absence of a pantheon, in the absence of "tales of gods," meant to incarnate cosmogonical and eschatological philosophies, Romanians embody pure philosophy in archaic rituals. The elaborate explanations for the rituals are either hiding behind a passive voice ("it is said that…," "this is how it is done" etc.), or the Christian hybridization suffocated what was left of the magical consciousness that would have been able to translate everything into words.

The analysis of carols such as *Furarea astrelor* (The stealing of the stars) suggests that, in spite of the fact that the Christian overlapping had indeed taken place after the aforementioned syncretism, it is visible only at the level of words. Their *subject* is the one that invokes the pre-Christian layer. The ritual that takes place in moments of passing, of palingenesis, is not the one that had been adapted to Christianity, but the other way around: transposing a mandatory ritual incontinence at a divine level, incontinence practiced by people during the celebrations regarding the renewal of the year. This refers to an archaic and orgy-like behaviour, but no less ritual than, for example, the abstinent-ascetical behaviour during the fast that precedes the celebrations[2] and the carol includes the Christian divinity and the saints in this ritual, imposing upon them a sort of behaviour that is quite un-canonical – the abuses are even more obvious. Saint John is "relishing" in a "fair beauteous bed" (…) and/or is

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[1] Lucian Boia, *Pentru o istorie a imaginarului* (For a History of Imagination) (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2000), 40.

[2] See Andrei Oişteanu, *Ordine şi Haos. Mit şi magie în cultura tradiţională românească*, 23 ("transpunerea la nivel divin a unui obligatoriu desfrâu ritual, pe care-l practică oamenii în timpul sărbătorilor legate de înnoirea anului. Este vorba de un comportament anarhic şi orgiastic, dar nu mai puţin ritual, ca, de pildă, comportamentul cumpătat-ascetic din timpul postului care precedă sărbătorile").

drinking wine until he gets drunk.[3] Therefore, the idea that the Cosmos' regression into Chaos is followed by the birth of a new Cosmos represents the archaic belief *to which* Christianity later adapted – The arbitrary and late overlap of celebrating the birth of Jesus over this complex archaic mythical ritual of cosmogonist structure generated a multitude of traditions and customs.[4]

The terrestrial effects of the syncretism, in the space outside the "loop," form a long list of mutations suffered by the archetypes: The god or the dragon slaying hero became Saint George. The god of storm was replaced by Saint Elijah (…). The goddess of fertility was assimilated with Saint Mary. The evil spirits became different states of Judas or Scaraoţchi [the devil].[5] But even in the case of legends that appear to have strictly biblical roots, their nucleus consists of pagan beliefs regarding a continuous cosmogony. For instance, the myth of the flood, although it is a singular biblical event, is constantly relived through rituals based on reasons that no longer regard the religious Christian canon – The meteorological elements are thusly banished: an axe is thrust "with its blade facing upwards in the door sill" (…). The folk belief that justifies this sort of practices is as following: "When they [the dragons that bring storms, hails etc.] see the axe, or the knife, or the shovel, or the scythe, or any other sharp metal object, they leave in the fear of being pierced"[6] – elements that outline the fantastic tale of the myth, and that also form the connection between the sacred space inside the "loop" and the terrestrial space. On the other hand, Oişteanu also offers the philosophical side of the myth that transcends the purely functional need for protection against a flood. If the ark, in the structure of the legend of the flood, is a symbol for a house, *The Ark* is a micro cosmos that has the purpose of regenerating the macro cosmos: *the ark* floats on the *primordial Ocean* (the aquatic Chaos), (…) like a *cosmogonical egg* (or, more precisely, a biogonical egg).[7]

The archetypal elements of dendrolatry are also found in the Romanian archaic belief. The axis as an *Axis et Imago Mundi* appears in different states, depending on the situation, but it is heavy with magical attributes – sacred axis, layer of the god / layer of the daemon, cosmic axis (…), votive axis, judgment axis, oath axisand swearing axisetc.[8] Different species of axesappear in different cultures with sacred attributes. In

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[3] Ibid*.,* 23 ("excesele sunt şi mai evidente. Sf. Ion se 'liboveşte' într-un 'pat mândru frumos' (...) sau/şi bea vin până se îmbată").

[4] Ibid*.,*19 ("Suprapunerea arbitrară şi târzie a celebrării naşterii lui Isus cu acest arhaic complex mito-ritual de structură cosmogonică a generat un amalgam de tradiţii şi obiceiuri").

[5] Ibid., 73 ("Zeul sau eroul ucigător de balaur a devenit Sf. Gheorghe. Zeul furtunii a fost înlocuit de Sf. Ilie (...). Zeiţa fertiţităţii a fost asimilată cu Sf. Maria. Duhurile rele au devenit ipostaze ale lui Iuda sau Scaraoţchi").

[6] Ibid., 77 ("Stihiile meteorologice sunt alungate astfel: se înfige toporul 'cu muchia în sus în pragul uşii' (...). Credinţa populară care justifică astfel de practici este următoarea: 'Aceştia [balaurii aducători de furtună, grindină etc.], când văd săcurea, ori cuţitul, ori sapa, ori coasa şi orice obiect de fier ascuţit, se bat în alte părţi de teamă să nu fie străpunşi'").

[7] Ibid., 83 ("*Arca* este un microcosmos care are menirea de a regenera macrocosmosul: pe *Oceanul primordial* (Haosul acvatic) pluteşte *arca*, (...) ca un *ou cosmogonic* (sau, mai exact, ou biogonic)").

[8] Ibid., 155 ("arbore sacru, lăcaş al zeului / daimonului, arbore cosmic (...), arbore consacrat, arbore de judecată, de jurământ şi de învestire etc.").

the case of Romanian culture, the maple seems to be the most often encountered axle at this metaphorical border between heaven and earth, not only as a natural, lively entity, but also as an organic tool that is introduced in the ritual: sounding the maple semantron ("toaca"), the "Romanian" Noah casts the devil that ruins his ark.[9]

Somewhere outside the timeless loop, Oişteanu identifies the "solomonari," the conjurers, anchorites, Getae-Moesian priests, probably followers of the Zamolxian? doctrine.[10] The author then observes their diachronic evolution within the folk beliefs and legends, thus producing an elaborate portrait of the anchorites who simultaneously live in both times (terrestrial and mythical). What is particularly interesting to observe is the fact that the conjurers' magical attributes take shape, first and foremost, in their ability to tame the meteorological phenomenon – the Chaos principle once again appears as a flood, or as a dragon that brings the storm.

Order and Chaos are concepts that have proven themselves unstable, mobile within the lines of their characteristics. In the chapter entitled *In the Labyrinth* (*În labirint*), John D. Barrow puts forth a quantic description of the universe in the form of a ball of yarn: "the universe, with the enormous densities in which the quantic attributes become overwhelming, behaves like a four-dimensional ball. But then, some cosmologists started to question what would happen if the surface of the ball was not uniformly smooth: let's suppose that some tubes existed that would connect one side of the surface with another (…). These tubular connections have been named "wormholes". They are connections between the time-space regions that would otherwise be inaccessible to one another (…). The presence of wormholes with a diameter equal to the distance covered by light at that certain moment (approximately $10^{-33}$ centimeters) is probably a consequence of the chaotic interconnection state of space."[11] This is not the first time when the mythical consciousness intuitively created congruent metaphorical scenarios – describing the image of the labyrinth in the timeless space, Oişteanu avers that Chaos can be seen as "a type of Order". A *paradoxical Order* – insofar as it is governed by a single law, that of lawlessness[12] and he describes the universe labyrinth using the image of a ball of yarn, not only as a solution given by Ariadne, but also as an initial general state of the primordial universe. Thus, this mythical thinking precedes the scientific thinking – truly, as a polyvalent mythical and symbolic motif, the labyrinth had also been interpreted as a

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[9] Ibid*.,* 154 ("Bătând în toaca de paltin, 'românul' Noe alungă diavolul care-i năruia arca").

[10] Ibid*.,* 202 ("preoţi-anahoreţi geto-misieni, adepţi probabil ai doctrinei zamolxiene").

[11] John D. Barrow, *Originea universului* (The Origin of the Universe) (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2007), 124, 125 ("universul, la densităţile uriaşe la care atributele cuantice devin covârşitoare, se comportă ca o minge cvadridimensională. Apoi însă, unii cosmologi au început să se întrebe ce s-ar întâmpla dacă suprafaţa mingii nu ar fi uniform netedă: să presupunem că ar exista nişte tuburi care ar lega o parte a suprafeţei de alta (...). Aceste conexiuni tubulare au fost numite 'găuri de vierme' [*wormholes*]. Ele sunt legături între regiuni spaţiotemporale care altminteri ar fi inaccesibile una alteia. (...) Prezenţa găurilor de vierme cu un diametru egal cu distanţa străbătută de lumină la acel moment (aproximativ $10^{-33}$ centimetri) este o consecinţă probabil a stării de interconexiune haotică a spaţiului").

[12] See Andrei Oişteanu, *Ordine şi Haos. Mit şi magie în cultura tradiţională românească*, 305 ("Haosul poate fi privit ca 'un fel de Ordine'. O *Ordine paradoxală* – în măsura în care este guvernată de o singură lege, cea a lipsei de legi").

"representation of the starry universe (…). In the Romanian space, this mythical-symbolic interpretation looms in both the astral way in which some labyrinths are represented, (…) but also in the way the Milky Way is named in folk tradition and the decorative motif that embodies it (…): "The Mazy Way," "The Tangled Road".[13] Before diving into analyzing the ways in which this motif appears in Romanian carols, it is even more interesting to study the ways in which this motif appears in other forms, but forms which suggest a type of archaic quantum mechanics.

If archaic thinking predicts in colourful ways certain aspects of analytical, "educated" thinking, one step further would introduce infantile archaic thinking, capable of producing reasoning and value judgment that are endowed with an even stronger faith than adult mythical thinking – the ability to wonder is the only thing that we would need in order to become good philosophers. All young children have this ability, this is clear. In a few months, in the beginning, they are pushed into a completely new reality,[14] an idea that has also been explored by Oişteanu, analyzing children's folklore: the defining aspects of child psychology are not only the characteristics that deviate and modify the magical and ritual manifestations and the mythical concepts of the adults, but also (or especially) the ones that turn a child into a good receptor: the excessive curiosity, great power of assimilation and retention, the tendency to imitate adult behaviour, the predilection to the fantastic and miraculous, the spontaneous solidarity with nature, etc.[15] This implies that the product of infantile mythical-symbolic imagination is in its purest state, before the erosion of maturity. Without looking for explanations in psychoanalysis, this place of infantile imaginary, being the closest one to the intelligible plane, is populated by scenes that would have a very powerful impact on a "more experienced" receptor – ritual beheadings, human and alimentary sacrifices, human authorities invested with supernatural powers (all with the purpose of taming the meteorological phenomenon), and certain aspects of an almost playful demonology.

Throughout the entire book, the parallels between the Romanian practices and magical-ritual beliefs and the universal ones are not constructed synthetically, or comparatively. They appear within a Rosetta Stone-like system, enabling a system of translation of beliefs from one culture to another. In this case, just like any other

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[13] Ibid., 309 ("Într-adevăr, motiv mito-simbolic polivalent, labirintul a fost interpretat şi ca 'o reprezentare a universului înstelat' (...). În spaţiul românesc, această interpretare mito-simbolică transpare atât în felul astral în care sunt reprezentate unele labirinturi, (...) cât şi din felul cum este denumită în popor *Calea Lactee* şi motivul decorativ care o întruchipează (...): 'Calea întortocheată', 'Drumul încâlcit'").

[14] Jostein Gaarder, *Lumea Sofiei* (Sophie's World) (Bucharest: Univers, 1998), 17 ("CAPACITATEA DE A NE MIRA ESTE SINGURUL LUCRU DE CARE AM AVEA NEVOIE PENTRU A DEVENI BUNI FILOSOFI. / Toţi copiii mici au această aptitudine, asta e limpede. În câteva luni, la început, ei sunt împinşi într-o realitate complet nouă").

[15] See Andrei Oişteanu, *Ordine şi Haos. Mit şi magie în cultura tradiţională românească*, 377 ("definitorii pentru psihologia infantilă nu sunt numai caracteristicile care deviază şi modifică manifestările magico-rituale şi concepţiile mitice ale adulţilor, ci şi (sau mai ales) cele care fac din copil un bun receptor al acestora: curiozitate excesivă, mare putere de asimilare şi memorare, tendinţă de a imita comportamentul adulţilor, înclinaţie către miraculos şi fantastic, solidaritate spontană cu natura etc.").

translation, the original will contain nuances and subtleties that are absolutely specific to the culture they are part of. A translation of belief in different cultures inevitably implies a diachronic approach of its language, in direct relationship with the symbol at a semiotic level – the association between the birth of the universe and the act of weaving can be explained through the demiurge-like quality of weaving. The ball of yarn (*massa confusa*) is a *prima materia* in the hands of the Demiurge, who then transforms it – through a rhythmic and repetitive action (row by row) – into a matter perfectly *shaped*, *ordered* in a Cartesian manner (Lat. ordo = row, line) (…). The two actions of the Demiurge – ordering and "weaving" the World – are related not only from a symbolic perspective, but also from an etymologic perspective: lat. *ordior* = "to weave a fabric," lat. *ordino* = "to order, to organize".[16] The syllogism through which the connections between the planes, beliefs and the evolution of metamorphosis of symbols are formed will construct this space within the loop: many of the terms that appoint the *locality* have roots or are related to terms that appoint the *borders*: see the relationship between Alb. *fšat*, Rom. *sat* (old Rom. *fsat* in *Psaltirea Scheiană*) and Lat. *fossatum* = "chamfer, surrounding furrow" (…) and *orbis* = "circle,"[17] syllogism that regards the evolution of the sound of the image that echoes in its transcription in the sensible plane, through the circular form of the "borders," of the village.

This second edition of the book contains an author's note that brings into discussion both the first edition, from 2008,[18] and an edition prior to that one, from 1989.[19] The main differences between the first edition, from 2004, and the present book consist of elaborating chapters VII and VIII (*Narcotics and Hallucinogens*[20] and *The Speech of Angels*[21]), chapters which have meanwhile gained their textual autonomy and have become writings independent of this book: either in books of their own, or within independent studies, published in a separate book. The ideas that are presented in the chapter entitled *Narcotics and Hallucinogens in the Carpathian-Danube Space. The Usage of Psychotropic Plants for Religious and Magical-Ritual Purposes*[22] have been elaborated by the author in a previous book, *Narcotics in*

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[16] Ibid., 313 ("Asocierea cosmogenezei cu actul țesutului își are explicația în calitatea demiurgică a țeserii. Ghemul de ață (*massa confusa*) este o *prima materia* în mâna Demiurgului, care o transformă – printr-o acțiune ritmată și repetitivă (rând după rând) – într-o materie perfect *orânduită*, cartezian *ordonată* (lat. ordo = rând, șir) (...). Cele două acțiuni demiurgice – ordonarea și 'urzirea' Lumii – nu se înrudesc doar din perspectivă simbolică, ci și din perspectivă etimologică: lat. *ordior* = 'a urzi o țesătură', lat. *ordino* = 'a ordona, a orândui, a organiza'").

[17] Ibid., 582, 583 ("Mulți dintre termenii care desemnează *localitatea* au ca rădăcină sau sunt înrudiți cu termeni care desemnează *hotarul*: vezi relația dintre alb. *fšat*, rom. *sat* (vechi rom. *fsat* în *Psaltirea Scheiană*) și lat. *fossatum* = 'șanț, brazdă înconjurătoare' (...) și *orbis* = 'cerc'").

[18] Andrei Oișteanu, *Ordine și Haos. Mit și magie în cultura tradițională românească* (Order and Chaos. Myth and Magic in Romanian Traditional Culture) (Iași: Polirom, 2004).

[19] Andrei Oișteanu, *Motive și semnificații mito-simbolice în cultura tradițională românească* (Mytho-Symbolical Motifs and Meanings in Romanian Traditional Culture) (Bucharest: Minerva, 1989).

[20] *Narcotice și halucinogene.*

[21] *Graiul Îngerilor.*

[22] *Narcotice și halucinogene în spațiul carpato-dunărean. Utilizarea cu caracter religios și magico-ritual a plantelor psihotrope.*

*Romanian Culture: History, Religion and Literature,*[23] as well as in an article published in the *Journal of Literary History and Theory.*[24] Part I of this book is found unabridged in *Order and Chaos*, its subject regarding this general idea of ascending into the intelligible plane of the timeless loop. What stands out, in conjunction with the previously expressed ideas, is the fact that the lucid and "corroded" state of consciousness seems to be insufficient for achieving a certain form of asceticism. The contact through ritual with the timeless loop is mediated by a certain altered state of consciousness.

Unlike the first, 2004 edition of the book, this second edition contains an additional subchapter of chapter VII, namely *Involuntary Intoxications.*[25] This element itself underlines the duality that characterizes the inner space of the loop, described not only in the terms of Order and Chaos, but also through the opposition between good and evil: in the terrestrial space, the involuntary intoxication, in the absence of a ritual, has adverse effects, and in the plane of translating them into words, the dynamics between the symbol and *semiosis* is capsized. What may have seemed symbolic in the text, or what may have seemed to be a vegetal metaphor for a certain condition is, in fact, a rudimentary reference to a poisonous plant that was mixed in with the wheat bread – Vasile Alecsandri knew a thing or two about the neurotic effects caused by the consumption of cockle. Only once the "bad seed" was destroyed, could the "kindness" replace "enmity" (*The Hora of Unity*, 1856). The folk saying also cited by Creangă: "May the enmity among us disappear, and the cockle from the fields".[26] Thus, the altered state of consciousness, in the absence of a ritual, is the one that ascends into Chaos. By introducing this subchapter in his study, Oişteanu completes the description of the forked road to the superior dual plane.

I have previously mentioned the strong connection that children have with this superior plan. Chapter VIII of this second edition elaborates the way in which, through children, people have tried to discover the language used in a time before the mythical Babel, the primordial language that is clean of the parasitical nuances, specific to every culture. These experiments consist of isolating the children from society, in order to observe the language that they produce in the absence of any influences: not perverted by society, physically and mentally robust, born and raised in the woods, among animals (a representation of Paradise), "the wild child" could have spoken the language of Adam.[27] But their production proved to be limited to noise, without any actual articulation of syllables. But this could lead to the conclusion that the Word itself does not hold spirituality or magic, but the *sound* does, in a form of sacred phonetics. Speculatively, this generates the explanation for the fact that rituals contain song and

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[23] Andrei Oişteanu, *Narcotice în cultura română: Istorie, religie şi literatură* (Narcotics in Romanian Culture: History, Religion and Literature), (Iaşi: Polirom, 2010).

[24] *Revista de istorie şi teorie literară.*

[25] *Intoxicări involuntare.*

[26] See Andrei Oişteanu, *Ordine şi Haos. Mit şi magie în cultura tradiţională românească*, 432 ("Vasile Alecsandri ştia câte ceva despre efectele nevrotice provocate de consumul de neghină. Doar odată distrusă 'iarba rea', 'omenia' poate să ia locul 'duşmăniei' (*Hora unirii*, 1856). Vorba populară, citată şi de Creangă: 'Vrajba dintre noi să piară, şi neghina din ogoare'").

[27] Ibid*.,* 551 ("Nepervertit de societate, robust fizic şi psihic, născut-crescut în pădure, printre animale (o reprezentare a Paradisului), 'copilul sălbatic' ar fi putut să vorbească în limba lui Adam").

music. In this situation, the Pythagorean "music of the spheres," *Musica Universalis*, would be the closest version of the language of the angels.

It is natural that the studies that later gained their scriptural independence were also included in this book, for a broader synthesis of the ideas regarding the Romanian archaic beliefs and rituals. But what is even more interesting to notice is the evolution of the book's structure, comparing it to the version from 1989. During such a historical period of national chaos, the communist censorship still held its power of desacralization (remaining in this analytical register): the communist activists feared not only ideas, but also words. After December 1989 I had the opportunity to see a list of terms that had been banned by censorship. One of them, ranked first on the list, was "freedom". Others were "chaos" and "magic".[28] The "ideas," in the most Platonic sense possible, translate into the sensible plane through words, they themselves having the intelligible consignment and addressing the sacred dimension. Even more so, the edition from 1989 was robbed of forms of *mimesis* – the later edition was illustrated and thus constructs not only a translation of images into words, escaped from the suppression of the censorship, but also a translation of ideas into images, resulting in a multidimensional study, in both the depth of the discourse and its structural surface: *Mytho-Symbolical Motifs and Meanings in Romanian Traditional Culture* has five primary chapters and seven subchapters; later, in 2004, the magic numbers are completed – nine primary chapters, with seven subchapters each. The confession-like note at the beginning of the second edition, from 2013, denotes a type of relief after this "straightening," fifteen years later: "Only later, in 2004, I published this book at the Polirom Publishing House in its true form, without censorship exclusions, bearing its original title, having nine (not five) studies in its table of contents, illustrations etc. I intentionally considered this form to be the first edition of the book,"[29] and in 2013 this book came out with a global and complete view upon the sacred space, along with this incipient note on the fact that the struggle between Order and Chaos, between the sacred and the profane, takes place not only in the intelligible plane. "On earth as it is in Heaven," as we well know.

Andrei Oişteanu offers, through *Order and Chaos. Myth and Magic in Romanian Traditional Culture* a Rosetta Stone-like construction of universal mythology, focusing on the Romanian culture within a radiogram of the mythical consciousness that was buried under many layers of religious and etymological drifts. His book is a revealing, detailed study of the pure archaic layer that lies under conceptions like the one according to which "The Romanian people were born Christian".

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[28] Ibid., 5 ("Activiştii comunişti nu se temeau doar de idei, ci şi de cuvinte. După decembrie 1989 am avut ocazia să văd o listă de termeni interzişi de cenzură. Unul din ei, aflat pe primul loc, era 'libertate'. Alţii erau 'haos' şi 'magie'").

[29] Ibid., 6 ("Abia mai târziu, în 2004, am publicat la Editura Polirom acest volum în adevărata sa formă, fără excluderi cenzoriale, purtând titlul iniţial, având nouă (nu cinci) studii în cuprins, ilustraţii etc. Am considerat anume această formă ca fiind prima ediţie a cărţii").

**Miruna RUNCAN,** *Teatralizarea şi reteatralizarea în România (1920–1960)* **(Theatricalisation and Re-theatricalisation in Romania [1920–1960]) 2ⁿᵈ Edition (Digital) (Bucharest: LiterNet, 2014), 200 p.**

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At the end of last year, the online publisher LiterNet.ro, hosted by the digital platform of the same name, made available to the Romanian-speaking readers, free of charge and in .pdf format, the second revised and completed edition of Miruna Runcan's volume *Teatralizarea şi reteatralizarea în România (1920–1960)* (Theatricalisation and re-theatricalisation in Romania [1920–1960]).[1] Since the first (hard copy) edition of the book, published in 2003 by Eikon Publishing House in Cluj-Napoca, was very well received by the theatre scholars, it sold out quickly and, therefore, it did not benefit from the dissemination it deserved. Three years earlier, the author had published another volume of "theatre criticism and anthropology," called *Modelul teatral românesc* (The Romanian theatre model) (Bucharest: Ed. UNITEXT, 2000), which became an almost mandatory point of reference in the discourse of the new generation of theatre critics, playwrights and directors trained in the first decade after the fall of the Romanian communism. On the one hand, the book gathered the young generation's concerns, questions and especially their discontent regarding the state of the Romanian theatre, by accurately identifying its "ailment," which she named the "exclusive theatrical model" (a phrase that denounced the absence of the actual performance alternative, regarding both the construction of the work and the level of addressability); on the other hand, it became the (theoretical) spearhead of those who wanted to disrupt the domination of the "theatrical model" described by the author – a real statement against the patrimony-oriented manner of making theatre in Romania and its backing institutions (the repertory theatre, the national theatre, the higher schools of theatre). However, the author was not satisfied with this first "swift description of the exclusive model" (in her own words) and she returned to *Teatralizarea şi reteatralizarea...* with a considerably wider perspective of the issue and with a history of the said model. Therefore, the book traces the "evolution of an aesthetic idea," starting from its emergence, meaning from the interwar period, when several directors and writers initiated the movement of "theatricalization" of the Romanian theatre, to its reaffirmation, toward the end of the 1950s (the movement of

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"re-theatricalization"), when "the idea," developed late because of history accidents and because of the ultra-conservative mentalities of the place, settled in the performing arts pattern to be established throughout the communist period, and has since continued to dominate the Romanian stage (even if its prestige – at least the critical prestige, if not even the "box office" one – has shrunk visibly since the publication of *Modelul...*, in 2000). Writer, theatre critic and professor at the Faculty of Theatre and Television of the Cluj-Napoca "Babeş-Bolyai" University, Miruna Runcan has organised her volume rigorously academically (in fact, to help students and others, the author has significantly extended the reference apparatus in this second edition of the book), but with disguised sympathy for the promoters of the movement of theatricalisation and re-theatricalisation of the Romanian stage in the described time interval. Polemic emphases are also present; in fact, like in *Modelul teatral românesc*, they target – an aspect now obvious – not only "the model" as such, but also the "tardiness" in the shifts of place-specific mentality, which considerably hindered its gestation and subsequent assertion and which equally hinders, nowadays, the efforts of surpassing it and/or the birth of the authentic theatrical alternative.

In the interwar period, theatricalisation, "a distinctive phenomenon of our slow modernity" (which struggles to survive even if its "evolutional cycle" has been completed a long while ago, according to the author), was a relatively fragmented and hesitating movement, theoretically speaking, for the affirmation of the primacy of setting and direction over the dramatic text; in other words, the primacy of performing arts autonomy over dramaturgy, literature and the other arts. Re-theatricalisation, however, was a form of resistance to the interference of the political in art rather than a new theatrical charge. Thus, at the end of the "obsessive decade,"[2] the advocacy of the autonomy of the performing arts became a barely disguised protest against the ideological pressures exerted by the communist authorities on theatre. The autonomy of the performing arts was defined and negotiated in (conflicting) relation with the commandments of the single party, on matters of artistic creation, and against the famous doctrine of the Soviet-inspired socialist realism doctrine, rather than in relation to the other arts.

The first part of the book (nearly three quarters of it) is dedicated to the theatre between the two world wars. The author archives and comments on the Romanian artists' contacts with the Western theatrical world (direct contact or contact via readings), the attempts of synchronisation with the newest tendencies of the performing art in France, Germany, Austria, Russia, Italy or England, the standpoints of the most important directors, playwrights or scholars (sometimes all three in one) interested in the theatrical phenomenon related to the issue of the modern stage art, as well as a series of representative performances signed by the main artisans of theatricalisation (Victor Ion Popa, G. M. Zamfirescu, Soare Z. Soare, Aurel Ion Maican, Ion Sava). The subsequent conclusion is that, at the dissemination of ideas, the Romanian theatre and culture specialists were perfectly linked to the Occidental theatrical mind-set in the interwar period, being acquainted with what was happening in the field. For example,

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[2] The phrase, coined by prose writer Marin Preda, went a long way in the Romanian literary sphere; it concerned the 1950s, during which a considerable part of the first and most brutal phase of Romania's communisation took place.

Haig Acterian, writer, director and at the same time a remarkable theatre reviewer, exchanged correspondence with Gordon Craig, on whom he also published a book of familiarisation (*Gordon Craig şi ideea în teatru* [Gordon Craig and the idea in theatre], 1936), while the English scholar wrote the preface to Acterian's paper *Pretexte pentru o dramaturgie românească* (Pretexts for a Romanian Dramaturgy), also published in Bucharest, in the same year. However, the best reference to this end is *Modalitatea estetică a teatrului [The Aesthetic Modality of Theatre]* (1937), a very original "treatise on the aesthetic making of modern theatre" written by Camil Petrescu[3] – admittedly, with a theoretical scope unique in the Romanian space. Thus, despite the aforementioned aspects, the author is bound to note, at a point, "the categorically eclectic, 'culturalist' manner in which theoretical and practical influences enter" the local theatrical environment. Even at some of the most eager partisans of theatricalisation, who were part of the avant-garde of the Romanian theatrical movement,[4] the author detects more than once a distinct reluctance in the assertion of the full autonomy of the performance over the text; she explains it by their double training: as theatre scholars AND as men of letters – amongst them some of the most valued playwrights. They were represented by Camil Petrescu, Victor Ion Popa or G.M. Zamfirescu. Even though other "theatricalisers" did not lack a penchant for the visual arts (for example, Victor Ion Popa, a skilled drawing artist and scenographer, in addition to being a director and a playwright), it seems that in the case of Ion Sava, his vocation as a visual artist seems to have been predominant and it decisively influenced his view of theatre in the direction of the total emancipation of the performance from the domination of the word. Therefore, the author sees Sava as *leader* of the movement of theatricalisation which coincided, she notes, with the rise of setting and of scenography in the hierarchy of the arts that participate in the making of a representation. Thus, more often than not the supremacy of the representation over the text was disputed starting from the setting-related issues; even more frequently, the discussions regarding the setting (scenery) were marking, in fact, the real background problem of the autonomy of the performance. The interwar theatre practitioners and reviewers' or theorists' increasingly marked interest in scenography and scenery is explained by the fact that theatricalisation and, later, re-theatricalisation meant, according to the author, "both conceptually and practically (...) the gradually revealed and installed primacy of the image-metaphor"; Radu Stanca, one of the frontrunners of the movement of re-theatricalisation in the post-war period and an excellent poet, playwright and director, would write a vivid essay called *Metafora în arta regiei [The Metaphor in the Art of Directing]* on this image-metaphor (1957). Unfortunately, Sava's generation, i.e. the generation of the inter-war "theatricalisers," was shattered much too early, their searches being suppressed brutally, by the premature physical disappearance of some of its most important representatives (Sava himself, not long

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[3] Camil Petrescu (1894–1957), important Romanian novelist, playwright, theatre theorist, philosopher, poet and journalist. Director of the Bucharest National Theatre from February to December 1939; left his mark on this institution through the Seminar of experimental directing he taught in there in 1945–1946.

[4] We note that avant-garde theatrical experiments were a strictly marginal, non-essential phenomenon, although two of the most important representatives of the Dada movement, Tristan Tzara and Marcel Iancu, came from Romania.

before he put on stage, in 1946, a memorable representation after *Macbeth*, with masks; Soare Z. Soare, Mihail Sebastian or Victor Ion Popa). But even without these disappearances, the war and then the installation of the communist regime would change their crumbling world forever.

In the second part of the book, Miruna Runcan mainly approaches the 1956–1957 "theatre moment" which coincided with a short-lived period of relative ideological "relaxation/thaw," allowing some degree of emphasis, by public stances, in the journals Contemporanul and Teatrul (the latter being founded in 1956), and then the January 1957 Counsel of the theatre specialists, of the representatives of the second generation of "theatricalisers" or the Romanian theatre. After a very useful introduction to the new political, social and cultural context created after the end of the Second World War, the author succinctly describes and analyses the points of view regarding the various aspects of the post-war Romanian theatre – such as the organisation and functional errors of the theatre institutions, the role and meaning of stage directing, the deficiencies in the Romanian theatre education or the condition of young practitioners of the theatre art – expressed in the aforementioned journals by a number of then recently affirmed theatre scholars, along with the corresponding "adjusting" reactions of the "former masters". The debates prompted by young directors such as Val Mugur, Mihail Raicu, Sorana Coroamă, George Rafael and Radu Stanca, who were later joined by Liviu Ciulei, Lucian Giurchescu, Miron Niculescu, scenographer Toni Gheorghiu or poet Ștefan Augustin Doinaș, concluded with the Report of the "V.I Popa" Circle of Young Directors, presented within the aforementioned Counsel and "signed, in order, by: Liviu Ciulei, Sorana Coroamă, Gheorghe Jora, Lucian Giurchescu, Vlad Mugur (son of the director Val Mugur, *my note*), Dan Nasta, Horea Popescu, Miron Niculescu, Mihail Raicu, George Rafael, George Teodorescu". The young directors' challenge was answered (on opposing positions) by the prolific writer and playwright Victor Eftimiu (several times director of the Bucharest National Theatre), by the directors Ion Șahighian (peer and rival of Ion Sava, who did have some real professional qualities and who later joined the side of the "reaction"), Marin Iorda and, especially, Sică Alexandrescu, and then (cutting a distinct figure) the literary critic G. Călinescu, the actor and pedagogue Ion Finteșteanu or Aurel Baranga, the star of the new official, party dramaturgy. Sometimes surprisingly, they were defended by characters such as Ion Marin Sadoveanu (prose writer and fine theatre scholar, one of the important promoters of theatricalisation in the interwar period, but ready to compromise with the communist power and appointed director of the first stage of the country in 1956; he thus became one of the targets of the young generation's more or less direct criticisms), N. Massim, theatre scholar Simion Alterescu, young theatre critic Valentin Silvestru, director and pedagogue G. Dem. Loghin and, a fairly relevant fact, literary critic and historian Paul Cornea who, at that time, was director of the General Directorate for Arts in the Ministry of Culture. These polemic discussions, triggered by the collective initiative of the young generation, had a threefold impact: first, through the theoretical clarifications they prompted, they contributed to resuming the "thread of theatricalisation," in the author's words, i.e. the restoration of the relationships with the inter-war theatre attitude, which "gave to the definition (of theatricality, *my note)* at least its natural finality, if not even the prospective scope"; then, regarding the director's role, they drove "the assertion, within the possible limits, of its freedom of

creation in relation to all the forces engaged in the representation and to the ideological-aesthetic dogmas of the age"; last but not least, they encouraged the artists who had already taken the path of "re-theatricalisation" of the Romanian theatre and those who would follow them. "The auspicious circumstances of this moment would not remain unexploited – says the author –, which proved that the natural evolution of an artistic movement cannot be stopped, it can only be decelerated, briefly, by the chains of the repressive system". At the end of the book, following the analysis of some of the stage representations by the members and followers of the Young Directors' Circle from the perspective of the theatricalising poietic practised by their creators, the author reiterates the limitations of the representation model they proposed and which is furthered by their imitators, in line with a "synthetic and poetic realism," because "re-theatricalisation establishes (...) a kind of 'traditionalist' version of theatricalisation, the one in which the performance is a channel and its text is a message; but this temporary establishment is also joined by a smooth and gradually more widely acknowledged aesthetic and functional autonomy of the text-performance pair, represented as a standalone creation". Or, systematically fostered, autonomy has come to mean more and more often the isolation, the "enclaving" of the theatrical performance in relation to contemporary dramaturgy (the interwar representation did not communicate too consistently with it either, notes Miruna Runcan, despite the dramatic directors' and authors' freedom of expression) and, perhaps an even more severe reality, in relation to its own audience.

The second edition of the book also includes an addendum, a text published by the author in 2007 in the journal *Observator cultural*, after she read, eight years into its publication, the volume *Istoria critică a filmului românesc contemporan [Critical History of the Contemporary Romanian Film]* (Bucharest: Meridiane, 1999), signed by the film critic and historian Valerian Sava. Coup de théâtre: the reading of this book prompted the author to discern a new possible scenario, in which the 1956–1957 ideological opening and relaxation, marked by press debates and similar meetings of theatre and film experts, appear to be directed by the authorities of the age. Even though the participants to these seemingly **arranged** debates, scheduled by the leaders of the moment, were generally honest minded (meaning mainly those from the "liberal" side of the young directors), the rights they had gained at that time could hardly be considered, from this less glorious perspective, rights they had earned with great efforts; instead, they look like rights "allowed by the police". Thus, "in retrospect, what looked like a natural reflex of defence and reassessment of their own tradition, be it a reflex limited by the heavy chains of the ideological-repressive apparatus, seems in fact an official form of 'synchronisation'. With the East rather than with the West, this time." Therefore, this could be a reform driven first in the upper levels of the power and later felt at the basis – apparently, as the author believes, in the wake of the convulsion triggered by Khrushchev's revealing report, which had condemned the "excesses" of Stalinism. However, since history does not allow its classification, and critical approaches and revisions such as those written by Miruna Runca or Valerian Sava are exceptional in the Romanian culture, new revelations are imminent.

*Translated from the Romanian by Magda Crețu*

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**Bogdan GHIU, Vlad ALEXANDRESCU, eds.,** *Ateliere ale modernității. Istorie intelectuală și filosofie franceză contemporană* **(Workshops on Modernity. Contemporary French Intellectual History and Philosophy) (Iași: Polirom, 2013), 558p**[**]

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In 2011, Le Centre National du Livre (The National Book Centre), Paris and Institutul Cultural Român (The Romanian Cultural Institute) ventured together in a collaborative project aiming to strengthen the 'French-Romanian collaboration in the domains of books and lecture'. The first step in this significant enterprise was to translate, from French into Romanian, several small pieces of wider philosophical texts. The idea behind this was to firstly present an anthology of authors and texts representative for the French humanistic disciplines, thus facilitating their coming together with the Romanian public. Subsequently, the project was desired to stimulate the complete translation of the texts, equally introducing, on the one hand, the French authors and their work and, on the other hand, the young translators undertaking the assignment of converting the pieces from French into Romanian.

The texts included in this volume are, in the editors' words, selected by personal choice. Their intention was to maintain an 'equilibrium' between old and new, between continuity and innovation, and to assemble, in terms of stylistic and terminological suggestions, as many challenges as possible. The editors' expertise in this sense speaks for itself. Bogdan Ghiu is renowned for his multiple translations of French philosophers into Romanian language, while Vlad Alexandrescu is well known, nationally and internationally, as an important figure in Cartesian studies. Their knowledge in particular fields of study could be another argument favouring the selection of the texts.

In order to fulfil these already declared plans, the present volume proposes a glimpse of French intellectual history, starting from early modernity to the contemporary world. The collection of texts seems to be built upon the idea of intellectual power brought forth by modernity (in terms of the success of rationality over the superstitions, the scientific approaches of efficient causality, the organization of production in accordance with capitalistic relations) and the increased capacity of

individuals able to manipulate these instances to overcome current challenges. The selection of the texts included in this volume appears to argue for this idea.

The book opens with a translated text from Pierre Hadot, *Le Voile d'Isis. Essai sur l'histoire de l'idée de Nature* [*The Veil of Isis: An Essay on the History of the Idea of Nature*, translated into Romanian by Dragoş Jipa]. Considering Heraclitus' aphorism, according to which 'Nature loves to conceal Herself' as a starting point, Hadot tracks this idea through Romanticism. It is interesting how the book points out the way in which modernity captures this idea. The way in which modernity captures this idea is also interesting. For instance, Francis Bacon declares that nature unlocks its secrets through the means of experiment. Bacon uses another beautiful metaphor, 'the hunt of Pan'. The hunt of Pan is nothing more than a method man uses to unveil the secrets of nature.

The second text, Jean Luc Marion, *Sur la théologie blanche de Descartes* [*Descartes' White Theology*, translated into Romanian by Daniela Măricuţa], suggests that, although Descartes has never developed a fully articulated metaphysics, he uses an onto-theological approach to question a metaphysical problem: human likeness to God the Creator. In terms of knowledge, humans are unable to comprehend infinity. All knowledge depends on our knowledge of God but God is incomprehensible. Humans' resemblance to God is in terms of will, which is intrinsically free, but human intellect is finite, therefore they can make moral decisions having an unclear perception of what is true or good.

Continuing, in a sense, this onto-theological approach, the third text (Jean Greisch, *Du 'non-autre' au 'tout autre'. Dieu et l'absolu dans les theologies philosophiques de la modernité,*[1] [*From the 'non-other' to the 'any other'. God and the absolute in the philosophical theology of the modernity*], translated into Romanian by Lucia Vişinescu) uses as a starting point the belief that each epoch has a particular idea of God and concludes that God continues to be present in contemporary thought under the form of three essential questions: Where is God? Who is God? How does God become an idea?

The text authored by Jean Robert Armogathe (*La nature du monde. Science nouvelle et exégèse du XVIIe siècle* [*The nature of the world. New science and exegesis in the 17th century*] translated into Romanian by Maria Măţel-Boatcă) approaches science as a hermeneutics of nature and an analysis, paralleled by the scientific discourse and the biblical one. Interesting names and well-known metaphors are evoked – Robert Fludd, Christiaan Huygens, Sir Isaac Newton are some of them. As for the re-interpreted metaphors the text advances, I would like to mention the very famous 'All the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players' (William Shakespeare, 'As you like it') used by Armogathe to mark the moment of replacing the church with theatre in modernity. Theatre not only substitutes the role of the church, but it converts itself into a world and becomes a world in itself. The dramatization of time is possible due to the mathematization of time and to the enouncement of modern physics.

Michel Henry (*Généalogie de la psychanalyse. Le commencement perdu* [*The genealogy of psychoanalysis*], translated into Romanian by Alexandru Matei) proposes

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[1] The book has not yet been translated into English.

a radical text, which rejects Cartesianism as an intellectual discourse 'par excellence'. The text is structured as a dialogue equally involving psychologists and philosophers. For Michel Henry, 'cogito' is the original manifestation of 'the self', the essence of life, the primal fact of the subjective presence, and not the self articulacy of the human consciousness.

Georges Didi-Huberman, in *L'image survivante. Histoire de l'art et temps des fantômes selon Aby Warburg* ([*The surviving image. The history of art and the times of ghosts by Aby Warburg*], translated into Romanian by Andreea Rațiu), discusses a central concept present in Aby Warburg's thought, 'the concept of surviving'. This particular concept introduces a temporal model for the history of arts, the concept of surviving, of restoration and of expressing 'the unconsciousness of time'.

Marc Fumaroli's text, *Quand l'Europe parlait français* (*When Europe Spoke French*, translated into Romanian by Speranța Sofia Milancovici) depicts an image of Europe in the period of the Enlightenment, a world speaking French and sharing French ideas and ideals. Although English gained more and more territory in the global context (especially in the twentieth century), Fumaroli argues that French is and will always be the language of the veritable intellectuals, of the elegant and 'clandestine' spirits, of refinement and select companionships.

The Israeli historian and political scientist Zeev Sternhell advances a text (*Les anti-Lumières. Une tradition du XVIII$^e$ siècle à la guerre froide* [*The Anti-Enlightenment Tradition from the 18$^{th}$ century to the Cold War*], translated into Romanian by Mihaela Gabriela Stănică) trying to identify the specifications of an intellectual tradition that emerged as a reaction to the Enlightenment and has been transformed into an anti-enlightenment alternative (a movement originally identified by Nietzsche). The decline of reason engendered the fall of democracy and the rise of radical political movements such as nationalism and fascism.

Maurizio Gribaudi and Michèle Riot-Sarcey (*1848, la Révolution oubliée* [*1848, The Forgotten Revolution*], translated into Romanian by Raluca Vârlan) introduce a book reporting the events of the 1848 French Revolution. The authors reject the idea that the collective memory always records the processes and events that support the course of history in a linear fashion. History is not just a string of phenomena governed by causality, but it is made up of different perspectives on the same event. The case of the 1848 French Revolution is the same, constructed of the perspectives of the actors involved: Alexis de Tocqueville, George Sand, Alphonse de Lamartine.

The closing text of the book, Pierre Rosanvallon, *La légitimité démocratique. Impartialité, réflexivité, proximité* (*Democratic Legitimacy: Impartiality, Reflexivity, Proximity*, translated into Romanian by Andreea Maria Blaga) asserts an analysis of contemporary democracy as well as its changes, alienations, and mutations. Starting from the idea that the simple act of voting cannot confer political legitimacy, the author draws a comprehensive account of the past and present problems associated with the issue of majority. The political concept of 'people' is not regarded as it has been considered by Rousseau anymore, but as a sum of singularities, whereas the majority is not able to capture the singularity.

The book can be divided into two parts, the one builds around the most debated issues over Modern Europe (questions concerning our relation to God, several

re-interpretations of classical metaphors, the importance and the position of natural knowledge in our path through gaining intellectual power and a sovereign position) and can be easily regarded as constructed under the sign of Cartesianism, while the second half of the book deals with the particularization of the aforementioned ideas, insisting on the different forms of alienation associated with the concept of intellectual power achieved in Modern Europe.

The major aim of the book is to introduce to the Romanian public a number of interesting works belonging to some of the most influential contemporary figures and to open further exploratory pathways in the realm of culture and knowledge. Simultaneously and of equal importance, another aim of the project has been to present the young Romanian translators who devoted themselves to the task of deciphering and introducing the texts to the Romanian public. Assuming this task, the book addresses a wide range of audience, from young researchers, linguists, philosophers, and historians to a larger public interested in the ideas that significantly contributed to the development of the last century of European thought.

**Iuliana Angela MARCU,** *Bibliografiile literare: Bibliografie de bibliografii şi studiu de sinteză (**Literary Bibliographies: Bibliography of Bibliographies and a Summarizing Study)* **(Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2012), 243p.**

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In the reception speech held at the Romanian Academy on 23 May 1941, entitled *"Ioan Bianu and the Romanian bibliography problems,"* Dumitru Caracostea solemnly stated that *"the fields of culture and literature are united, an attitude is defined by the opposing attitudes, meaning that it is the primacy of the synthesis, which is impossible without a systematic inventory of the entire literature"*.[1] Important inventory efforts have been made before and during the following decades, some of which with remarkable results and continuous validity but, even so, a complete and coherent image of this literature remains a desideratum. In this context, the publication reviewed here must be received with great interest,[2] as part of a larger project of the Lucian Blaga Central University Library from Cluj, dedicated to the researchers in the field.

As Angela Marcu mentions in the *Introduction*, the theoretical synthesis in the first part of the book is compiled and developed starting from, and revolving around, the *Analytical Bibliographies of Romanian Literary Bibliographies*, a perfect information tool, discussed in the second part. . This bibliography was thought of and compiled by the author due to a very clear, clean-cut and well argued motivation: the documentary corpus of information tools from the Romanian literature field, compiled during two centuries, is so fragmented, dispersed and uneven, that the access to information from the respective field and, implicitly, their value is damaged. Building this tertiary tool of definite use, which she places in Barbu Theodorescu's series of affirmations: "through the bibliography of bibliographies you can form an overall view on what Romanian bibliography means," Angela Marcu fulfils a duty, mentioning the fact that "the present paper proposes that this desideratum be satisfied for the literary field".[3]

The author's concerns about the Romanian literature bibliographies have manifested over a long time. The conclusions of her research and, determined by them, her view on the domain implies the necessity of collecting and organizing the secondary information sources in Romanian literature in a unitary, ample, but critical

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[1] Dumitru Caracostea, *Studii critice* (*Critical studies)* (Bucharest : Albatros, 1982), 148.
[2] Iuliana Angela Marcu, *Bibliografiile literare: Bibliografie de bibliografii şi studiu de sinteză* (*Literary Bibliographies : Bibliography of Bibliographies and a Summarizing Study)*, (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut, 2012).
[3] Ibid., 12.

and selective document. At the same time, she stresses the fact that the very field of Romanian literature, from a diachronic point of view, is not fully covered in terms of a complete analytical and synthetic bibliographical processing by types of documents (monographs, serials), thematic coverage areas, chronology (retrospective, current), etc. The general view on the secondary and tertiary bibliographical areas in Romanian literature is heteroclite, lacking unity and cohesion. Most often, the information sources in literature are encapsulated in the general information tools, which makes their identification more difficult. "The bibliographies of books and periodicals from the Romanian literature field are far from being complete, but this lack is partially compensated by general bibliographies,"[4] the author states in a synthesis published in 1995, revealing alsothe necessity of their common identification and marking within a single system designed for discovering sources in literary research. This is, in fact, something Angela Marcu also mentions in the introductive part of the book: "…emitting valuable assessments regarding the bibliographic tool designed for Romanian literature research is difficult, as long as there is no clear identification of all the existing publications,"[5] taking up the difficult task of trying to reach this objective.

The first chapter of the book – **Preliminaries** – analyzes the alternation between *completeness and critical selectivity*, in the context of the dichotomy regarding *informational explosion and information crisis*. The author begins her study with Paul Otlet and Henry Lafontaine, with their plan for creating the Universal Repertoire of Documents, she continues with the "decline of reading" caused by a "text inflation" mentioned by Andrei Pleşu and with "assuming the principle of critical selection," stressed by Adrian Marino.[6] José Ortega y Gasset also assimilates the "necessity of critical selection" as a "real book police" in which the critical librarian has a decisive role through selection, capitalization, ranking and, implicitly, through eliminating the irrelevant publications in order to distribute authentic value in the end.[7] Tudor Vianu referred to the same "selection problem" in the preface of the Romanian Literature Bibliography (1965), stressing the necessity of distinguishing between authors and works of interest to literary history and the ones who/which lack authentic value.[8]

The second chapter, entitled **About the Connection between Romanian Literature History and Criticism**, explores the relation between literary criticism and bibliography as a primary work tool in literary research and it implicitly analyzes the interest in bibliography, manifested by the literary exegesis. Great figures of Romanian literary history and criticism are mentioned, figures who had been especially implicated in bibliographical and documentation activities. Remarkable contributions to the field were brought by the great coryphaei of the classical period of the Romanian Academy and by their important followers. Ion Bianu, Nerva Hodoş, George Baiculescu, Perpessicius, Ioan Muşlea, Tudor Vianu, Paul Cornea, Mircea Anghelescu, Ion Simuţ, Th. Vârgolici, Adrian Marino are but a few of the names mentioned by the

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[4] Angela Marcu and Daniela Todor, "Referinţe critice: o bibliografie a criticii şi istoriei literare româneşti" ("Critical references: A Bibliography of Romanian Literary Criticism and History"), *BiblioRev* 17 (1995), http://www.bccluj.ro/bibliorev/arhiva/nr17/info-focus1.html
[5] Marcu, *Bibliografiile literare*, 10.
[6] Ibid., 14.
[7] Cf. Ibid.
[8] Ibid., 15.

author, stressing the importance of a real and substantial preoccupation for the bibliographical and documentary aspect of any critical approach or literary exegesis. In this context, a significant aspect is Ion Simuţ's warning about the danger of "continuing to practice a precarious, defective, approximate type of literary history, with all the doubtfulness inherited during a century,"[9] in the absence of a solid and efficient bibliographical tool.

Following the round table discussions on the topic *Critical editions in Romanian Culture. A Scientific Research Project of National Interest,*[10] namely the *Critical Editions and Literary Histories* segment, held on 22 January 2008, one can also observe important preoccupations from this perspective. Considering the bibliographical and documentation research equivalent to "written archaeology, from all aspects" and the bibliographer similar to the "literary archaeologist,"[11] Theodor Vârgolici states that "no critical edition can begin without a bibliography or end without the absolute knowledge of the entire work, in order for it to be thematically or chronologically classified".[12]

The third chapter, **Literary Bibliography as an Integrated Part of Romanian Cultural Bibliography** is both interesting and substantial, with its subchapters *Romanian Bibliography – A Short Retrospective Summary*, *General Bibliographies of National Level*, *Main Steps in Compiling the Retrospective National Bibliography* and *Unfinished Projects and Overlapping Researches*. The diachronic coverage of the bibliographical and documentary field is analyzed by the author from a perspective that is directly imposed and laid out by the approached theme: documents on history, criticism, aesthetics and literary theory that have been processed bibliographically, analytically and synthetically during two centuries of activity in this field.

The detailed discussion of all the aspects the author brought forward does not end here, for they represent a broad synthesis of bibliographical and documentary history, aspects that are analyzed and debated in the professional literature.[13] Starting with the first attempts of compiling simple documentation lists with a bibliographical role and an obvious retrospective character,[14] the author covers the Great Bibliographical Plan of the Romanian Academy from 1895, initiated and supported by Ioan Bianu, up until the prestigious realizations of his successors.[15]

What we find remarkable is the author's pleading for the idea of the literary bibliography's affiliation to the ensemble represented by the Romanian nation's cultural inheritance. "It would be wrong to separate the evolution of Romanian literature bibliography from the evolution of Romanian culture, of which it is an

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[9] Ibid., 21.

[10] "Critical editions in Romanian Culture. A Scientific Research Project of National Interest", *Revista de istorie şi teorie literară (Literary History and Theory Journal),* 1-2 (2008): 57-88.

[11] Contribution by Mircea Coloşenco, Ibid., 71.

[12] Contribution by Theodor Vârgolici, Ibid., 80.

[13] The bibliography that the author investigates in order to compile the present publication is a good indicative for the richness of information given in the theoretical discourse from the first part of the book.

[14] For example: Vasile Popp, Timotei Cipariu, B.P.Hasdeu, Georges Bengescu etc.

[15] For example: A-Sadi Ionescu, N. Georgescu-Tistu, Sextil Puşcariu, Ioachim Crăciun, Gheorghe Adamescu, Barbu Theodorescu, George Baiculescu, Dan Simonescu etc.

integrated part,"[16] the author also stressing the fact that the first bibliographical works of Romanian literature are included into the general bibliographies, covering the entire cultural production, at a national level. Even drawing together the notions of *bibliography* and *culture* suggests that, through this relation, the cultural value of bibliographies can be recognized. "By juxtaposing the two terms, even more aspects are realized, a logical link between them is thus formed," as another researcher in this field recently stated[17] and, furthermore, literary bibliography is part of the national one, contributing to the knowledge of the cultural phenomenon on different levels: current and retrospective, analytic and synthetic, sectorial and general.

It is also remarkable that, restricting the *bibliography–culture* relation to the binomial *bibliography–literature* relation, the author resorts to the arguments that were well established by Adrian Marino in *The Biography of the Concept of Literature*, according to which, although they are sometimes underestimated and minimized by the literary aesthetes of all categories, the bibliographies are now an essential component in literary research, they represent an information tool that is indispensible to an astute research activity.[18]

The cultural values of the bibliographies analyzed by Angela Marcu are sustained here mostly by the effect of the period of time in which they were created, contributing to the formation of national cultural memory. "With precision, they reflect the period's ideology, movements, tendencies, cultural and social life in its entirety, constituting not only a tool necessary for literary research, but also a standard of Romanian cultural life,"[19] as the author concludes at the end of the third chapter.

Another aspect that is mentioned in this first, theoretical chapter of the book and which then leads to **Conclusions, Findings and Proposals** presented in the final chapter, refers to the bibliographies of bibliographies and to the electronic resources-bibliographies that were, sadly, poorly represented in the professional literature. In this context, the importance of cooperation between the different institutions with attributions in creating and distributing the professional databases is stressed, without which the entire palette of secondary and tertiary information sources seems fragmented, repetitive and with blanks. The graphics in the addendum are also edificatory regarding the time periods covered in general national bibliographies,[20] general retrospective national bibliographies, current general bibliographies for titles of periodicals and general bibliographies for articles in periodicals.[21]

The second part, **The Analytical Bibliography of Romanian Literary Bibliographies** represents, in my opinion, an original contribution, the *pièce de résistance* of the entire work analyzed here. It is original through concept, data organization and in-depth analytical processing of the general and literary

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[16] Marcu, *Bibliografiile literare*, 33.

[17] Cristina Popescu, *Evoluţia bibliografiilor literare române, Studiu critic : 1932-1998* (The Evolution of Romanian Literature Bibliographies, Critical Study: 1932-1998) (Bucharest: Editura Universitatii din Bucuresti, 2011), 118–119.

[18] Adrian Marino, *Biografia ideii de literatură* (The Biography of the Concept of Literature), Volume 4, Part II, (Cluj-Napoca: Dacia, 1997), 230–231.

[19] Marcu, *Bibliografiile literare*, 69.

[20] For monographs, and in case of serial publications for journal titles and articles in periodicals.

[21] Marcu, *Bibliografiile literare*, 205–207.

bibliographies listed. Although many of them are already well known, "gathering them into a bibliography for bibliographies brings them into a new perspective by integrating them in a unifying frame of a unitary system".[22] This unitary system is also important because "the literary bibliographies published until now have either completely ignored the bibliography segment, or they are outdated compared to more recent publications".[23]

The concept and structure of analytical bibliographies, the selection criteria, the bibliographical classification system (primary and complementary), and the compound of auxiliary instruments created for a more productive access to data from within the bibliography are all mentioned in the introductive part of the book.[24] We thus find out that the bibliographies that refer to a single author, as well as the journal indexes (individual ones, per journal title) are not found within the publication.[25] Also, we find out that the work only comprises the publications that exist in the collections of the Cluj libraries, printed before 2008.[26] . For extending the documentation coverage area, the author pointed out, in a separate segment of every thematic division, all the bibliographies she identified in other collections, apart from the ones stated in the beginning.[27]

The applied methodology is as following: *primary classification* – the thematic one, according to the field to which each registry work refers to; *complementary classification* – the chronological one; *analytical processing* – an in extenso presentation of the summary of each work (when necessary) + a narrative and an in-depth analysis of the contents; *additional information* – referents to the professional literature[28] for the processed publications (where they had been identified); *auxiliary indexes system* – subject indexes, editorial indexes (authors, editors, preface writers) and index of names (referenced authors/ writers).

*The classification scheme applied in the paper – mentioning the respective entries*[29] indicates not only general themes, each with their subdivisions, but also their positions within the bibliography where one could find sources of information belonging to the respective thematic categories. The main chapters established by the author classify the documents that are described bibliographically by three taxonomic criteria: thematic coverage area (general, special, i. e. literary), by the length of the chronological period the bibliographic material refers to (retrospective and current) and then she differentiates between the types of documentary sources to which the respective bibliographies refer (monographic and serial). Within the chapters and

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[22] Ibid., 70.

[23] Ibid., 11.

[24] Ibid., 70–73.

[25] They are found only in the repertoires that exist for the same type of paper, i. e. the journal indexes.

[26] Lucian Blaga BCU, Cluj, The O. Goga County Library, Cluj and the Academy Branch Library, Cluj.

[27] Therefore, the bibliographical publications identified in the collections held by the university libraries in Bucharest, Iasi and Timisoara are also presented.

[28] Here we can identify the pattern applied by Tudor Vianu in *Bibliografia literaturii române 1948–1960* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei R.P.R., 1965).

[29] Marcu, *Bibliografiile literare*, 73–75.

subchapters, the material is chronologically organized, according to the date of publication. Thus, we have the following sections within the analytical bibliography: **A.** *National level general bibliographies*, **B.** *Literary bibliographies*, **C.** *Bibliography of bibliographies*[30] and **D.** *Bibliographies – electronic resources.* Each of these segments also has multiple subdivisions, established in accordance with thematic processing requirements.

In addition to this detailed scheme of bibliographic processing, the author establishes a set of essential problems in literary research, indicating papers within the bibliography that might offer possible solutions.[31] References such as: *See entries: ...* clarify questions that might be formulated during any research, for example: Which volumes did a Romanian author publish in the literary field? Which journal index entry appeared in Romania? What kind of collaborations did the Romanian writers have in the cultural-literary press? Which bibliographical publications dedicated to literary and critical history appeared in Romania? Etc. It is an extra way to access information within the bibliography, one that additionally values the author's organizational, analytical and systematic efforts for a vast documentary material.

Another remark must be made at this point: the quasi-entirety of secondary documents that were analytically processed by Angela Marcu were directly researched. A classic author in the field once said that the bibliography must be enriched by "exegesis, interpretation and criticism of a work, this exegesis contributing to compiling a methodology of documentation hermeneutics"[32] and this can only be accomplished starting with direct contact with the work-object of study.

As we stated in the section regarding the second part of the book, **The Analytical Bibliography of Romanian Literary Bibliographies** is constituted as a useful information tool in literary research. In this context, we would have a few suggestions.

Firstly, for a more productive means of accessing the information from within the bibliography, a simplifying operation of "cleansing" or "purification" of the bibliographical data would be in order. The bibliographical and documentary descriptions are so "thick," that finding the essential information for identifying sources can become quite stressful. For professionals in the bibliography/ documentation field, the density, extension and depth of the available bibliographical data is a positive aspect, a useful and necessary one, but for a researcher who is not necessarily interested in all the details concerning the external description of documents, they can become upsetting. This bibliography of bibliographies can also be consulted as a database[33] but, in order for the access to information not to be obstructed by too large a quantity of extended bibliographical descriptions, the version dedicated to the general public should, within reason, be restrictive.

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[30] It is interesting to notice that here we are now talking about a bibliographical section of level IV, namely about a bibliography of bibliographies of bibliographies.

[31] Marcu, *Bibliografiile literare*, 76.

[32] Bruno Richardot, *Des pratiques bibliographiques à la hermeneutique documentaire,* cited in Popescu, *Evoluţia bibliografiilor,* 119.

[33] Marcu, *Bibliografiile literare*, 9.

Secondly, the thematic classification scheme of the bibliography could be more balanced, there are very rich thematic divisions and others very poorly presented (with one or two references). Certain divisions can be cumulated in a superior class without the risk of losing the thematic specificities – it can be found in the subject index.

Finally, we hope that databases will keep their basic characteristics, of being open, up to date, implying periodical updates with all further publications in the field. They can also be updated by including bibliographical data from other categories of documentation excepted from the present bibliography (sectorial/authorial bibliographies, bibliographies of published literary documents, dictionaries, encyclopaedias, etc.), resulting in "a database for all information tools for the Romanian literature field".[34] Although comprehensiveness remains an impossible desideratum, the aspiration to its accomplishment can produce remarkable results. It is a difficult task but, at the same time, an exciting one which Angela Marcu herself mentions at the very beginning of her book.

*Translated from the Romanian by Anca Chiorean*

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[34] Ibid., 12.

# PREVIOUS VOLUMES OF PHILOBIBLON

**Volume I.** Number **1–2 / 1996 134 p. (Culture, Books, Society:** Europeanism and Europeanization; **Librarianship: A Changing Profession in a Transitional Society**: Data – Conditions – Possibilities; **The Special Collections of the Library)**

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**Volume XV. 2010 601 p. (Science, Culture, Books, Society:** Time, Past, Future, History**; Librarianship: Hermeneutica Bibliothecaria:** Data – Conditions – Possibilities**; The Special Collections of the Library; Miscellanea).**

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