

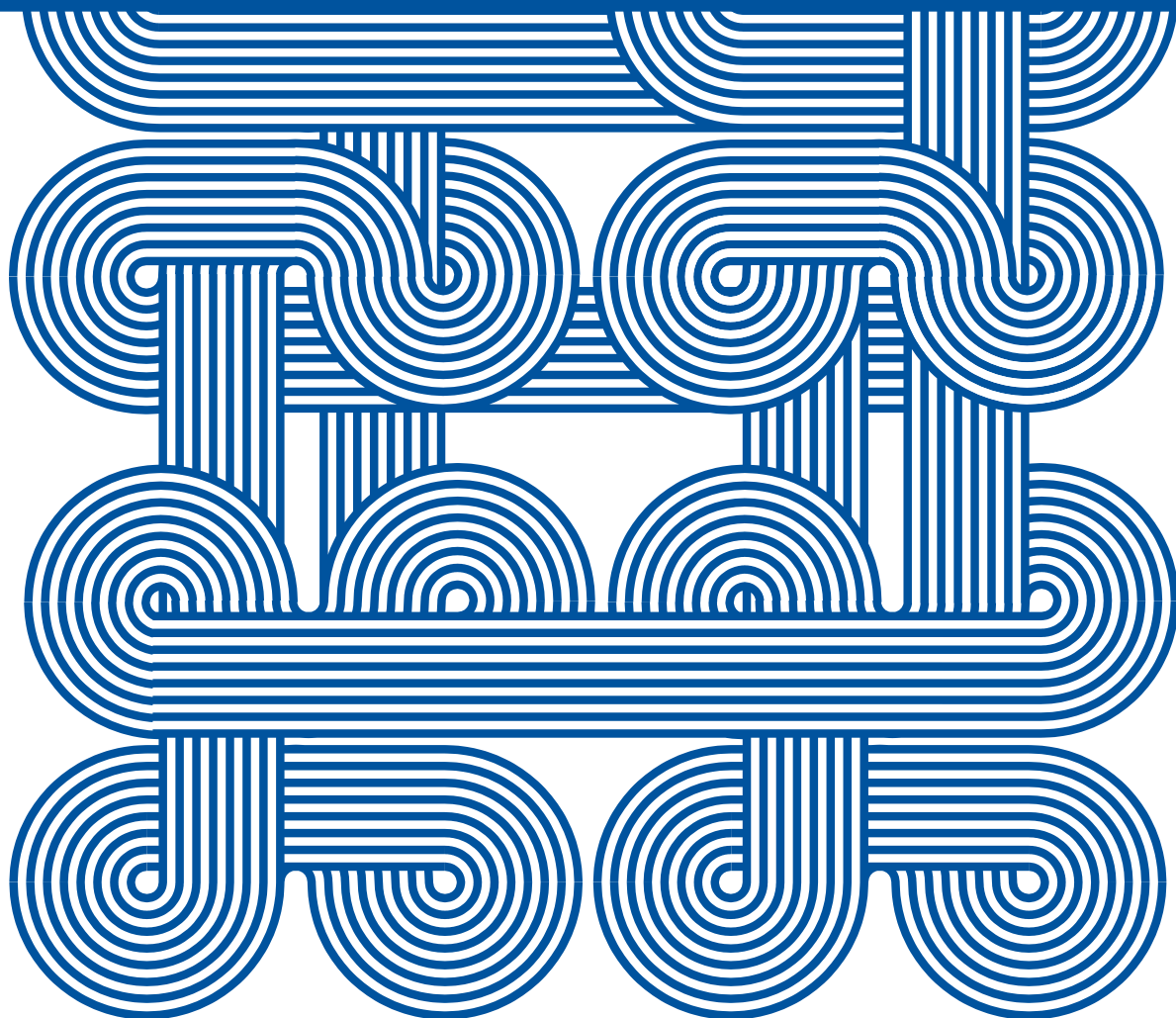
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INTRODUCTION

The fourth issue of the journal "Intercultural Relations" has been dedicated to a reflection on the limits of freedom in contemporary culture(s). The concept of freedom applies to many aspects of the public and individual life, among others: discourse, public space, politics and religion.

The freedom of speech is undeniable important topic in contemporary culture. The modern mass media including social media allow transmitting information quicker and to a broader audience than before, which makes the communication process faster and to some extent poorer in quality (especially in respect of credibility and compliance with the real state of matter). Thus, the unlimited freedom of speech can be questioned here for instance in cases when human dignity is harmed by rude comments and narratives published online or in traditional media.

Freedom in the public space can be identified by looking at the correspondence between architecture and urbanisation processes and the individual and collective human behaviours. The space arrangement of cities influencing inhabitants' patterns of acting play an important role in shaping postmodern societies. The public space can limit or open acting possibilities for humans, unite or part (even isolate them), offer safety and comfort or bring insecurity and uncertainty. Therefore, the concept of public space planning, its borders or unlimited freedom, constitutes a crucial issue not only for urbanists, but also for those who analyse this concept from the perspective of esthetics, politics and economy.

Freedom in politics is based on the relationship of an individual and the state. On the one hand, we may discuss the civil freedom understood as civil right to participate freely in public life. On the other hand, we may wonder to what extent the individual freedom stays beyond the state influence or the state power. Contemporary postmodern societies constitute a space where these two approaches clash. Present liberal democracies also care more about protecting the so-called civil liberties rather than

individual ownership rights. Why? This is one of the numerous questions we would like to address.

Religious freedom is influenced in reality not only by religion itself but also by politics and social order. Religion has not disappeared as it was proclaimed by some post-Enlightenment philosophers and scholars; it is still present, playing in some cases a fundamental role. The power of religion lies in its creative and also anti-creative, destructive potential. Thus, religion is able to integrate or disintegrate a community. Religious aspects occurring in society are mixed with human universalism, individual rights and relativism of community rights (e.g. ethnic and racial groups, nations, languages). The problem addressed in this context applies to religious freedom executed in various social, political and legal orders, which is however located in a broader cultural dimension.

Modern times differ from the past in terms of the discourse on **freedom of speech** that focused mostly on the issues related to the possible expanding of this freedom. Nowadays, however, we notice a diverted process – notions demanding limitation of the freedom of speech are getting more visible. The notions in question do not come from the totalitarian regimes, but from democratic communities concerned about the negative effects of freedom of speech.

Each human being, to develop freely, must be able to express her- or himself. The ability and opportunity of verbal and non-verbal expressions are conditioning self-improvement of individuals as *homo faber* who produces culture. Let us stress, that only free individuals are able to make culture. An inseparable element of freedom of speech is **the truth** to which we as human beings aspire and direct our efforts. The more freedom of speech we have, the more likely we are to discover the truth. Freedom of speech, however, does not give a guarantee of reaching the truth, but our journey towards the truth gives meaning to this freedom. In modern times, freedom of speech is understood mostly as an activity to speak without any ethical and moral (self-)limitations. Such freedom is present also in culture and cultural production.

In science, freedom of expression for some researchers may mean negation of the objective truth. The postmodern dogma of the repressive influence of the truth removed the truth from the language of some contemporary scientists. According to postmodernists, the objective truth enslaves. In this approach, freedom of speech is not meant to discover the truth, but to create interesting narratives and catchy metaphors.

Neo-pragmatists argue that truth has become a useless tool and should be abandoned as such. There is no truth, and if it exists, it should appear in plural. Freedom of speech in this case is a guarantee of pluralism of truth or legitimisation of rejection of all claims to any objective truth. In turn, for some of contemporary artists, freedom of speech means unfettered expression that manifests itself above all in trespassing all boundaries. This crossing alone usually takes form in shocking or insulting, which very often become a content of the work, covering simply the lack of talent of an artist. Not seldom, such freedom of expression leads to a situation where religious feelings of the audience are insulted and moral taboos violated.

The area where the battle for freedom of speech was and is most visible are the media. Free media in democratic regimes have always defended freedom of speech in the name of truth. Today, they are rather defending (just as in the case of science and art) the post-truth. Delivering the message and news in a more attractive form, post-truth appeals to emotions and not to the reason. In modern media, freedom of speech has become an ally of a lie, which serves manipulation, misleading and diffusing the true picture of reality.

Today, when freedom of speech is abused in various aspects of our life, it seems reasonable to ask a question about the limits of the freedom. Also in the area of human activity which is called politics. Freedom in the political space means first and foremost freedom of the individual in relation to the state. In today's pluralistic world, this freedom takes on special significance. Conflict does not appear here in terms of freedom vs. enslavement, but in terms of several competing and conflicting freedoms. Western societies of highly developed countries have ceased to be homogeneous. A multitude of cultures, traditions and religions in a country means a multitude of values that do not necessary match each other. In practice, a conflict between civil, political, religious and moral freedoms may occur. On the one hand, the democratic state is trying to fulfill its duties by protecting the consensus based order; on the other hand it is under constant pressure from non-liberal forces to be more strict and rule-dictating in the context of multicultural reality.

Freedom in the political aspect means the ability of a group or community to officially represent their broadly understood interests. For pluralistic societies, this is a relevant constituency of the internal and external order, being a subject of ongoing negotiations. On the one hand, we have minority groups demanding their rights based on the positive

discrimination (equality replaced by equity – sameness replaced by fairness); on the other hand, the mainstream society may not agree to growing influence of minorities on the cultural, religious and moral dimensions of the host country.

The question about the limits of political freedom is still relevant. It concerns not only the delimitation of boundaries, but also the determination of who should define the boundaries and to whom freedom would be granted: to individuals, ethnic and religious groups or nations.

In the discourse on freedom, a significant shift becomes noticeable, namely the shift or turn from the political and civic perspectives to the social and economic ones. Citizens perceive the state not any longer as a threat to individual freedoms but as the addressee of their claims as citizens. Thus, we are experiencing proliferation of positive economic and social rights. Becoming a guarantor of the implementation of these rights, the state constantly extends the scope of its competences. This is to the detriment of individuals becoming more dependent on the state, and also to the detriment of the state itself, unable to meet its obligations. The state, wanting to realise its economic and social promises, must constantly increase taxes, thereby limiting the economic freedom of all taxpayers. As a consequence, it leads to increased state interference in private property, which is not sufficiently protected by law. It seems that the citizens of modern welfare states have already accepted the idea of the state as a guardian and re-distributor of their property. They are therefore more likely to protest against restrictions on civil liberties than against restrictions on property rights. They do not see that property rights form the basis of all other rights.

The articles included in this publication address issues related to the problems mentioned above, including: freedom of speech, freedom in politics, freedom of religious beliefs and freedom in formatting our physical environment. The collection of texts offers a multicultural view of the phenomenon included in the publication title, as the authors of the articles come from different cultures, different scientific backgrounds and different academic traditions. We believe that the publication may contribute to a better and deeper understanding of the processes happening around us now and having consequences in the future – the near and the more distant.

Monika Banaś and Dariusz Juruś

PETRA CHOVANCOVÁ¹

HOUSES OF CULTURE AS PLACES OF/IN MEMORY²

Abstract

This paper introduces key concepts of a preliminary project concerning houses of culture in former Czechoslovakia. Houses of culture used to be perceived as one of the signs, as well as a platform of establishing power during the communist era. The project will concentrate on various aspects of planning, building and managing houses of culture. In our research project we apply the “history from below” approach while viewing these Houses as a kind of “*les Lieux de Mémoire*” (places of memory). The chosen approach will require one to find historical witnesses and conduct a series of interviews with them in order to find out how houses of culture shaped their life during the communist era and, on the other hand, how people shaped the cultural life of these institutions.

Key words: houses of culture, memory studies, oral history, communist era

INTRODUCTION

Houses of culture, or cultural houses, were one of the significant signs of the power of communist regime in several states in the so called “Eastern bloc”. In this paper, we aim to introduce key notions of a preliminary project concerning houses of culture in former Czechoslovakia. The houses of culture used to be perceived as one of the signs, as well as a platform of establishing power during the communist era.

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I would like to start with a definition of what a house of culture is and how these institutions and buildings were built and used during the communist period of our history.

It may be interesting to start with the most widely available definition of a house of culture, namely that which is to be found on Wikipedia.

Palace of Culture (Russian: Дворец культуры, *dvorets kul'tury*, Chinese: 文化宮, *wénhuà gōng*) or House of Culture (*dom kul'tury*) was the name for major club-houses in the Soviet Union and the rest of the Eastern bloc. It was an establishment for all kinds of recreational activities and hobbies: sports, collecting, arts, etc.; the Palace of Culture was designed to have room for multiple uses. A typical Palace contained one or several cinema halls, concert hall(s), dance studios (folk dance, ballet, ballroom dance), various do-it-yourself hobby groups, amateur-radio groups, amateur-theatre studios, amateur musical studios and bands, *lectoriums* (lecture halls), and many more. Groups were also subdivided by age of participants, from children to retirees. A public library may sometimes have been housed in the Palace of Culture as well. All hobby groups were free of charge until most recent times, when many hobbies with less official recognition were housed based on "self-repayment". A Palace of Culture was sometimes called a "club", but this did not mean that it was membership-based (Palace of Culture, n.d.).

This definition may help us to appreciate the significance of houses of culture in the past and present.

We have attempted to analyse and connect houses of culture according to the location and the size of the building, which has led to them being divided into two main categories:

1. Houses of culture which were enormous monumental buildings intended for thousands of visitors and participants and mainly built in the capital cities of each Eastern bloc country.

Examples:

Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw (Picture 1)

Congress Centre of Prague (formerly Palace of Culture in Prague) (Picture 2)

House of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement in Bratislava (Picture 3)

These houses of culture are the subject of public discussion. The problematic issue in discussions conducted by municipal or regional authorities is the financial support of this sort of multifunctional cultural facility (for instance, various problems with the maintenance of oversized buildings).

2. Houses of culture in smaller towns which were built with the intention of covering not only all local cultural life but also social, communal and, of course, political life in the towns and villages of the country³ (House of Culture in Levice; House of Culture in Skalica – Pictures 4 and 5).

We have found statistical data how many houses of culture were built in formerly communist Czechoslovakia. We will mention these data and their application in our project later in this paper.

THE AIMS OF OUR RESEARCH PROJECT

One of the main goals of our project is to ascertain the significance of houses of culture for the local inhabitants and as a factor in the development of cultural life in the past and present.

Getting to know the real stories behind building and maintaining these particular buildings and institutions will be possible through finding historical witnesses connected with establishing houses of culture, working for such institutions, as well as those going there for entertainment purposes. As, in our view, these Houses are kind of “*les Lieux de Mémoire*” (places of memory), our project could be viewed as a part of memory studies.

We also aim to determine what the local people remember about the communist period of our history. In this sense, houses of culture would constitute a methodological tool through which we would be able to see how they perceive the communist period of Slovak (Czechoslovak) history.

This will be achieved through a qualitative research approach, namely by using the oral history method. However, in the first place, we have to complete archival research in order to find useful materials in archives. Studying and analysing literature from different fields of social science (mainly history, but also sociology and economic aspects) will also prove useful to us.

Our project may be viewed as a part of memory studies (what is remembered and how it is remembered in different ways of meaning) with a subdivision of nostalgia research (how people feel about past periods of history). Thus, is the communist period seen as “the good old days”?

³ Houses of culture could be also very nice and inspiring buildings, such as The Guild House of the Religious and Farmer’s League built between years 1904–1905 (Bořutová & Lehmannová, 2010) situated in a small town in western part of Slovakia called Skalica. The creator of the architectonic design was Dušan Samuel Jurkovič known as the initiator of art nouveau style at the beginning of 20th century in Czechoslovakia.

THE MEANING OF THE TITLE OF OUR PROJECT

Houses of culture as places *in* memory

This meaning views a house of culture as a spiritual place, which was and still is remembered by the participants in the cultural life of houses of culture. The events and circumstances linked to houses of culture are seen as traces in memory. By using the oral history method, we will attempt to record these memories, following which they will be analysed.⁴

Houses of culture as places *of* memory

The second line of our research is as important as the first, namely we are interested in studying houses of culture as material subjects, where various cultural/political and other events were held and various human activities were conducted.

As these two ways of thinking are interconnected, it is necessary to study and analyse them linked together.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE FOUNDING OF HOUSES OF CULTURE

The history of establishing and building houses of culture relates to the growing importance of social and community life of various types, structures and social groups during the 19th century all over Europe. Previously, residences of the aristocracy constituted venues for special cultural events. Various cultural institutions with particular interests, purposes and specific needs were founded during 19th century, namely: museums (oriented towards science or art), theatres, libraries, concert halls, but also buildings for different cultural and sporting activities. In the 20th century, cinemas also started to be part of the facilities offered by houses of culture. Cultural content also needed a certain architectural form, which was adapted to the (additionally representative) function of the cultural institution.

Venues for different cultural events and audiences with different cultural/ethnic/religious expectations were established during the 19th century in the Austrian, later Austro-Hungarian Empire. The importance of establishing this type of cultural institution was also stressed during the existence of the first Czechoslovak Republic.⁵ During this important period

⁴ The memories about the events, which were organised in those houses for instance. The recollections of the organisers and managers of those institutions are significant for our project as well.

⁵ From 1918 to 1938.

of history for Czech and Slovak inhabitants, houses of culture were built for representative purposes. Different confessional, national or professional groups felt obligated to present themselves and their ideas through this sort of platform.

Although it is important to mention the historic roots of this phenomenon, it is not the main subject of our research interests. Therefore, our research will be focused on the specific features of establishing houses of culture during the communist period.

The communist period of Czechoslovakian history started in 1948, with the new totalitarian regime requiring a useful platform for spreading its new ideology. Houses of culture were to be used for this purpose. Thus, there was building boom concerning houses of culture during the period from the 1950s to the 1970s by the communist regime in Czechoslovakia (Sedláková, 2014, p. 25). Between the years 1958 and 1961, for example, 661 and 1,055 houses of culture were built in the Slovak and Czech parts of Czechoslovakia, respectively (Pokorný, 1985, p. 20).

In being interested in cultural life connected with houses of culture, we have not forgotten that the main purpose for establishing these institutions during the period 1948–1989 (Czechoslovakia under the communist regime) was to make sufficient space (both symbolically and literally) for a political agenda (propaganda). Cultural events were not the main purpose of building a huge number of houses of culture spread across the whole country. The above-mentioned Congress Centre of Prague, previously named the Palace of Culture in Prague, is a significant example of the propagandistic aim of this kind of building. Built in the 1980s, it was an enormous architectural act whose main purpose was providing sufficient space for meetings of the Communist Party. Cultural events were merely secondary to the planning of programmes.

An important and surprising finding was the fact that there has been hardly any literature written about this subject, either in Czech or Slovak areas. We were, however, able to find some statistical material and are in the process of searching for different written sources of that time.

HOUSES OF CULTURE NOWADAYS

The transformation of ownership from the communist regime to the new system of democratic government provides interesting aspects for our research. Post-communist countries share the difficult process of

transformation after the year 1989, a process which was slow but, in the end, radical. Many cultural institutions and cultural facilities vanished or slowly disappeared. The reasons for this could be found in financial problems and a lack of interest from the establishing government institution or organisation, or also due to declining interest on the side of a potential audience/visitors. We believe that we can perform a deeper analysis of this aspect of the transformation.

Houses of culture in today's cultural infrastructure

The Velvet Revolution⁶ also brought about a crucial change in cultural infrastructure. After the year 1989, one may observe various changes to cultural infrastructure, namely: the operative authority of the regional and district authorities, meaning bottom-up cultural politics; an increase in the number of cultural subjects; an increase in the diversity of cultural subjects; new multifunctional cultural organisations; the establishment of community centres by transforming the purpose of houses of culture. Cultural events and life stopped relating to the building (in the real estate sense), meaning that various cultural events started to be organised in various kinds of venues, such as industrial sites (abandoned factories). Other factors which completely changed what was on offer culturally was the need to attract visitors to cultural programmes. Such programmes had to be interesting, creative and differ according to the diverse needs of the audience (for example, the programme was to vary according to the age of the audience). Although the non-governmental sector and the private sector were involved in this area, the cultural infrastructure has suffered from cuts to its financial budget (Lázňovská, 2014).

While comparing the past and the present condition of cultural life regarding houses of culture in the later phase of the research project, one must be prepared to cope with the various and deep changes to the cultural infrastructure in the context of a changing social and political system. A process of reflection on all these changes is part of the contemporary discussion within the daily discourse of the mass media, as well as in a professional context.

⁶ The so-called Velvet Revolution or Gentle Revolution is the name given to the fall of the communist regime in communist Czechoslovakia in autumn 1989. The change started with a peaceful demonstration on November 17th at Wenceslas Square in Prague.

In this regard, it is also important to provide a professional definition of houses of culture as employed in recent academic and professional discussions, namely:

The concept of a House of Culture may be imagined as a property, in which legal entities operate and are engaged in the organisation of a variety of cultural and educational activities (Letošní téma, 2009).⁷

As mentioned above, houses of culture are part of the cultural infrastructure or one type in a range of cultural facilities.

The most recent count of houses of culture was conducted for the Slovak Republic in 2006 which found that there were 2,491 such institutions in the country (Čukan, 2006, p. 13). The majority of houses of culture were established by local authorities, basically by municipal authorities.

The division of ownership concerning houses of culture in the Slovak Republic in 2006 was as follows:

- 94.8% – established by municipal authorities
- 1.6% – Church-run
- Around 1% – corporations or companies (frequent owners of houses of culture during the previous regime)
- 0.5% – state-run
- Around 1% – other entities (Čukan, 2006, p. 13).

As may be seen, the most significant owner of houses of culture are municipalities and local authorities. One of the main problems they face is covering all the costs which are connected with managing and maintaining these mostly oversized buildings in terms of their dimensions and capacity.

In order to view the problem of houses of culture from the institutional side, we provide one of several taxonomies of cultural institutions as prepared by Lenka Lázňovská.

Typology of cultural institutions:

- a) According to the type of services
 - Memory institutions (museums, galleries, monuments)
 - Institutions for education and institutions for providing information (libraries)
 - Creative institutions (theatres, concert groups, dance ensembles)
 - Production institutions (houses of culture, clubs and others)

⁷ All translations come from the author of the article unless indicated otherwise.

- b) According to the type of facility
 - Institutions which are based in a building
 - Institutions without a permanent place of work (volunteering base)
- c) According to the law
 - Governmental (contributory organisations)
 - Non-governmental (associations, foundations, church clubs and business associations)
- d) According to the purpose of their establishment
 - Profit-based organisations
 - Non-profit organisations (Lázňovská, 2014, p. 9).

IDEOLOGICAL SCOPE OF OUR RESEARCH

Besides studying the process of change between the communist and post-communist periods, we are interested in different dimensions which create our research framework. In this chapter, we will introduce some of the key concepts which concern our research project and are also reflected in academic discourse.

Community

This is one of the key concepts concerning various sociocultural contexts (cultural politics, project management, but also in the arts, science, and political or religious life). The Latin origin of the word “community” – *communitas* – means not only community, but also affection toward community life. Nowadays, we can see increasing interest in the subject of community from different points of view. Our interest may be seen in the dichotomy of “Gemeinschaft” – “Gessellschaft”, based on the theory of Ferdinand Toennies.

Local culture

Proportionally to the interest of a community and life in a community, we may observe an increasing interest in the existence of local culture.

The status and the conditions of local culture are very important regarding the utilisation of houses of culture.

Public space

The role of choosing a specific site for houses of culture was important for forming the public space in small towns and villages, as well as in big towns.

Freedom

One of the interesting issues is to find out how people (connected in different ways with houses of culture) describe these institutions, in terms of what they meant for them. In the public view, houses of culture were used to shape the public space and often built next to churches, not to be only on the opposite side in symbolic way but also literally.

However, one may pose the question whether there were any gaps, or there was a place for active people who were, for example, able to prepare programme of events which not only supported political ideology but also generated space for creativity.

Houses of culture shaped public spaces in different ways, especially in small towns and villages. The question of restricting the freedom of the citizens of these towns and villages is specifically bound up with these institutions.

MEMORY STUDIES

This research project concerning houses of culture as places of/in memory constitutes part of an academic field called memory studies, if one understands houses of culture as institutions, which we can use as a methodological tool for studying and analysing memory. The phenomenon of nostalgia also constitutes part of memory studies, and which is, in addition, a part of our research interests.

The core interest of memory studies is collective memory and cultural-historical memory. Although these two notions are close to each other, their history is very different. The notion of collective memory has its origin in the French academic tradition (we may find it in the work of Émile Durkheim⁸). On the other hand, the notion of social memory, national memory and cultural-historical memory is connected with the German academic tradition. Memory research is spread across different social and human sciences. Hence, transdisciplinarity is one of the essential characteristics of this field of study.

The relationship between individual and collective memory is important for our research project. Thus, the position of Maurice Halbwachs is close to the project in question, namely that:

⁸ *The Rules of Sociological Method* published in 1895.

Halbwachs was suggesting that an individual's memory is always situated within a collective or group consciousness of an event or shared memories, whether at a family, community or even national level. Furthermore, for Halbwachs, the function of memory is to unite us socially, which means that commonly agreed upon memories will tend to predominate and alternative ones will receive little recognition and therefore fade (Abrams, 2010, p. 96).

Therefore, both theoretical concepts of social/collective memory are important for our research project and we will operate within their frameworks.

METHODOLOGY

In order to carry out our research project, we mean to use several types of research methods. As mentioned earlier, the first stage of our project is based on assembling archival materials, which means working in various archives in the Czech and Slovak Republics (formerly Czechoslovakia). We assume that a lot of material may be found in archives in Prague, due to the centralised state economic system operating during the communist period in Czechoslovakia. That means that almost everything was planned and prepared by the central government which was based in Prague.

The next step requires getting an overview of the field of the academic literature. As our research field is part of cultural studies, we stress transdisciplinarity as our professional basis. We shall be interested in material and articles from various social sciences, such as history, sociology, but perhaps also statistics and economics. Therefore, we are prepared to study various sources from different fields of social sciences.

Besides archival research, the basis of our project will be formed by interviews. According to the aims of our project, we have decided to use the oral history method for conducting qualitative interviews focused on houses of culture from different points of view. We will try to find active people who "brought culture to life" in certain places (small towns and villages), as well as those local people who attended various events. In the future, we plan to compare their history to the contemporary condition and status of houses of culture.

WHY HAVE WE CHOSEN THE ORAL HISTORY METHOD?

Oral history is a method which provides different kinds of possibilities for researchers to work with. First of all, it is a tool for conducting interviews.

This is followed by various possibilities of analysing the interviews. Oral history is a qualitative method used not only by historians but also by other social scientists. Oral history is based on the carrying out of unstructured interviews. In the words of the historian Lynn Abrams:

Oral history is a practice, a method of research. It is the act of recording the speech of people with something interesting to say and then analysing their memories of the past (2010, p. 1).

Subsequently, however, Abrams puts it in more complicated manner and draws our attention to the fact that oral history means two things at the same time:

It refers to the process of conducting and recording interviews with people in order to elicit information from them about the past. But oral history is also the product of interview, the narrative account of past events (2010, p. 2).

This means it is not only a method, but also the result of the process of applying this method.

One of the possibilities of applying the oral history method is conducting interviews about certain periods of a narrator's life (for example, their childhood during the WWII) or a specific event in history (for instance, the Velvet Revolution in 1989). For the purpose of our research, the second methodological option (related to a specific event in history) is the most suitable.

This qualitative method, therefore, supports the aim of our project and is capable of advancing its aims. Interviews or narration can develop materials and support the "history from below" approach.

Oral history is a method which can be used in different ways and in different areas. Since finding and finally establishing its place in the academic world, it has also become a discipline of itself. In the words of Lynn Abrams:

. . . it is a discipline with undisciplined tendencies, continually using other disciplinary approaches, and in flux as it defines acceptable practices and models of theorising (2010, p. 32).

In effect, conducting oral history and biographical research may be viewed as a unique way of preserving one's history, cultural differences and heritage.

PILOT STUDY

The first step, after collecting and studying the research literature, is intended to prepare a pilot study with two research subjects. For this case, we have chosen two houses of culture, one in a small town called **Želiezovce** (Photo 1) and the other in a village called **Župkov** (Photo 2), both in the central part of Slovakia.



Photo 1. House of Culture in Želiezovce. Photo taken in August 2016 by doctor Beáta Beke.

Želiezovce (located in the historical region/county of Tekov) is a small town which is home to 7,186 inhabitants (according to the last census in 2011) (Obyvateľstvo, n.d.). It is typical for its mix of two nationalities, namely Slovak and Hungarian – with 3,550 inhabitants (49.40%) of Slovak nationality and 3,501 inhabitants (48.72%) of Hungarian nationality. This may be an important, perhaps crucial point in this case. In line with the history of establishing cultural houses, nationality was one of the significant features. Indeed, the cultural life (which cannot exist without political life) of a certain area/town/village was framed by this feature. Religious diversity, which was under persecution during the communist period of Czechoslovak history, may be also an interesting point to examine.

Župkov (located in the same historical region/county called Tekov) is a small village with 740 inhabitants (Demografické údaje, n.d.). In contrast to the trend towards urbanisation (moving away from countryside), one can observe a slight increase in the number of inhabitants in Župkov. This could prove to be an interesting point for us, namely whether running the local house of culture is cost-effective in this context.



Photo 2. House of Culture in Župkov. Photo taken in August 2016 by doctor Petra Chovancová.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have introduced the main ideas, goals and aims of a long-term research project based in the field of cultural studies. The key concept is to view the communist era through memories of houses of culture in former Czechoslovakia under a totalitarian regime.

We started with a presentation of a definition, or definitions of a house of culture and emphasised the diversity of such institutions in Czechoslovakia. In this regard, it was important to stress that houses of culture were one of the ideological tools of the totalitarian system.

The newly starting project is rooted in contemporary trends in the social sciences. One of these trends is to focus on studying the communist era. Although there are many topics which relate to this subject, not all of them have been explored. One of the topics constituting the subject of our interest concerns cultural infrastructure and cultural facilities. We will attempt to build a picture based on the memories of historical witnesses who were connected in some way to houses of culture. In this sense, our project is rooted in the field of memory studies.

While the aim of our project is ambitious, we hope, at the same time, that our objectives will be fulfilled, at least partially, in the near future. We believe that our subject will be of interest not only to the academic community but will also be enriching for those participating in our research project.

PICTURES

1. Palace of Science and Culture in Warsaw [image] (n.d.). Retrieved February 9, 2018, from http://res.cloudinary.com/ara/image/upload/c_fit,w_800/1077.JPG
2. Congress Centre in Prague [image] (n.d.). Retrieved February 9, 2018, from <https://i2.wp.com/etn.travel/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/0a1a1-11.jpg?fit=420%2C315>
3. House of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement in Bratislava [image] (n.d.). Retrieved February 9, 2018, from <https://t2.aimg.sk/magaziny/n4aYUbs8SKW7RXtW9shLIA~Bratislavsk-Istropolis-m-za-sebou-bohat-hist-riu.jpg?t=LzB4MjM6NzcweDQ1Ni9maXQtaW4vMTYwMHg5MDA%3D&h=3ar65YrO9Gu6hXkWJn1FYA&e=2145916800&v=5>
4. House of Culture in Levice [image] (n.d.). Retrieved February 9, 2018, from https://www.levican.sk/public_html/uploads/640.informacie_druzba_dom_kultury_levice_rastislav_kasan_poslanec.jpg
5. House of Culture in Skalica [image] (n.d.). Retrieved February 9, 2018, from https://m.sme-data.sk/api-media/media/image/sme/6/23/2313926/2313926_1200x.jpeg?rev=3

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MILENA GAMMAITONI¹

THE SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR OF THE POET DURING THE NEW FREEDOM OF GLOBALISATION: THE CASE OF WISŁAWA SZYMBORSKA IN ITALY AND POLAND

Abstract

This article tries to answer to some questions the author finds of vital importance to stimulate a deeper reflection on the meaning and on the real background of our lives today, starting with the role of literature and poetry and the way they are analysed by sociology. The discourse is focused on the role of science and a particular Polish poet, Wisława Szymborska and the reception of her works in Italy and Poland. All this is presented in the frame of tradition, globalisation and broadly understood freedom.

Key words: sociology, literature, poetry, reading

I chose to study the poet Wisława Szymborska as her work had already reached Italy before she received the Nobel Prize (1996), thanks to a translation by Pietro Marchesani. Thus, by 1995 she had already obtained astonishing success both among critics and readers, despite the small circulation and distribution of her work. Before winning the Nobel Prize, Wisława Szymborska had become popular in Sweden with her books being bestsellers, while after the prize, her work was translated into different languages in the United States. In Italy, Marchesani's translation for Adelphi sold out, with her books having the highest sales in the poetry sector in Italy. Indeed, her work has been translated into 36 languages, while web sites (articles, essays, blogs, music videos inspired by her texts, fan groups on Facebook) have quintupled in the span of a few years. Moreover, the first

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volume published in Italy after Szymborska's winning of the Nobel Prize, which combines different collections of her poems, namely *View with Grain of Sand* (Adelphi), has progressed from 13,000 copies sold from 1998 to 2004 to 35,000 today, while sales for *The Joy of Writing* have reached 80,000 copies. Generally, books of poems sell between 1,000 and 3,000 copies in Italy.

The poetess's death in February 2012, has left a documentary (Szymborska, 2013) that she enjoyed traveling around Europe: a testament of freedom, lightness, being always ready to smile at oneself and at the world.

In this time of globalisation I would like to intervene by posing a question that is also one of the points of my book (Gammaitoni, 2005), namely: what is the role of literature today, how has it changed and how does a local writer, a Polish one in this case, become global and free of ideology or politics? Here, "global" means that readers from different nationalities with different individual and social life stories far from the Polish experience identify themselves with Szymborska.

Today, Norberto Bobbio emphasises the crisis produced starting from the failure of the organic intellectual, becoming a paralysis of intellectual thinking. Some sociologists fluctuate between harshly critical visions, as those of Franco Ferrarotti on the transformation and disappearance of the intellectual as a free-thinker, becoming in today's cultural industry, and world of cybernetics, a professional, a provider of opera, or on interpretations that are based on the history of rationality, as those of Alberto Izzo who believed in the possibilities of posing the best arguments.

The story and works of Wisława Szymborska well represent the crisis of the organic intellectual, a devotee of Sartre, lived through and experiencing the transformation of the **intelligentsia** of ex-communist Eastern Countries. Her first collection of poems was published in 1953, *This Is What We Live For*, and is characterised by a strong propagandist intent of communist ideology. However, following the first scandals resulting from large-scales political purges, the poetess did not renew her subscription to the party and wrote poems that are completely different in style and content. From working as an intellectual professional for a literary magazine, after her defection from the party she was demoted to being a literary columnist and writing reviews of books of every type, from botany to literature. She also slowly withdrew from the Association of Writers while her public role became increasingly blurred, with sparks of participation regarding some collective issues.

However, we must not forget the lesson of Hannah Arendt regarding private acts as actions which are never singular but plural. Although one may not appear publicly as she herself often did, one affects the community and becomes part of it by writing, as every work, including works of art, remains in the world, separates from the individual living an independent life: their act remains public and perpetuated thanks to the memory of their audience.

I had all the elements to believe that the story of the life of Szymborska could depict the passing of an intellectual convinced of committing themselves to the implementation of a utopia and that, disappointed by the violence produced on man, a delicate phase of revision of the old world was employed for a utopia become a partial ideology (Mannheim, 1929) and, perhaps, the next step in the search for a life of a different fate for humanity. Szymborska's disenchantment and confusion is alive and makes poetry the **pragma** of internal dissension. With the end of communism, her works came slowly along the path towards the global market.

In the early nineties, laws on copyright were passed in Poland, with dissident authors and publishing houses departing from publishing and copying works in a clandestine manner. Although there was finally the breath of freedom in the process of democratisation and modernisation of the country, the author as an intellectual seemed to die off, deconsecrated (Barthes, 1953). A new world opened up in which artists and intellectuals had to redefine both themselves and the world itself. This is the crucial juncture in which they seem to be more committed to redefining themselves individually, than redefining the world or proposing a different idea on how to live in this new world. Being does not correspond with appearance, in the silence of the appearance of the artist-intellectual's works is to act and find the shape of appearance: private space is the prelude to the space of the public and for the public. In spite of everything, a public act is reborn in the private act of the writer, the work of art being born as a reworking of a collective consciousness (Goldmann, 1977).

My analysis considers two nationalities: Italian and Polish. I address questions regarding Polish intellectuals (considering them as privileged observers, focused interviews with university professors, lecturers, journalists, writers), among them Czesław Miłosz, and various Italians. I delivered 1,000 questionnaires (avalanche sampling) to students (from Krakow, Warsaw, Rome, Genoa).

I therefore believe that outlining the answers to some of the questions I addressed to intellectuals will help one to understand the issue at hand.

Szyborska is immediately recognised as all of the participants have read her poems while at secondary school.

The best-remembered poem is that which may be found in the anthology books of secondary schools. It is a poem that traces a line between the poet's affiliation to the Communist Party and her moving away from communist ideology. The title of the collection *Appeal to the Yeti* is often confused with the title of a poem contained in the collection *Notes from a Nonexistent Himalayan Expedition*.

For Szyborska's scholars, her most important collection is *People on the Bridge*.

They do not identify Szyborska with communism, and generally justify her behaviour as an act of trust far from the logic of power logistics and from easy political opportunism. Szyborska as a poet, according to the people interviewed, emerged with the collection *People on the Bridge*.

Her most appreciated poems by the Poles have been translated into Italian.

Regarding the question whether Szyborska represents the Polish literary tradition, the majority answered that although she represents it, at the same time she brings new styles and themes rarely used by Polish poets, namely: freedom of thought, irony (the absence of nationalism, victimisation and martyrdom), conciseness, hermetism; with philosophical, existentialist and minimalist themes. The Polish tradition is represented by the use of a collective subject, proverbs, songs and references to Polish characters and situations.

One of the first questions I asked Polish scholars concerned the role of the poet in Poland, was how and whether it has changed compared to the past. They answered unanimously that the poet of the last twenty years is not the voice of people, the leading guide to freedom from foreign oppression anymore. Although during the communist period poetry was propagandist, linked to the regime's ideology, there was also a group of underground poets writing against the authorities. Today, all these things are useless and the poet finds their inspiration in themselves and in everyday life. They reflect the sense of crisis and confusion of ordinary people, and do not lead souls as they are a soul among other souls. Therefore, each interviewed person by citing different quotations and by choosing different poems, finds in Szyborska's poetics the same questions whose

answers cannot be found by anyone, namely: death; the meaning of life; the horrors of war; the impossibility to describe pain; risk; but even the positive aspects of being oblivious that helps one to be renewed and start again from the beginning; historic events and their meaning in the life of an individual; the ability to enjoy the marginal moments of everyday life and recognise in such moments the paradox of the randomness and/or superfluosity of such events.

Szyborska never speaks with the typical emphasis belonging to a poet's or philosopher's wisdom. She led a simple life (in the opinion of those interviewed) and, even in this case, did not want to be distinguished by ordinary people. In her poems she asks philosophical questions whose answers she does not know, does not want to find or is unable to do so. Her questions reassure the reader when they have to face the finite nature of humanity or the impossibility of finding ultimate resolutions.

Moreover, none of them consider her works as a typically female way of writing, or as feminist. Her themes are universal, even if some poems provide evidence of a special kind of observation that some interviewees find belonging to the life of women. These include, for instance, poems such as: *The Onion*, *Ruben's women*, *Lot's wife*. In any case, this is considered to be a marginal aspect.

From the second half of the 19th century the role of the poet and poetess in Italy and Poland had a different history and a different development: in Italy we had poets dealing more with intimist themes than with nationalistic ones, while during the early twentieth century, artistic vanguards and futurists linked themselves to politics and power, but then deviated looking for different ways. Regarding women in Italy, who obtained the right to vote in 1947, poetesses are autobiographical writers torn between feminist claims (civil and political rights), or they are conservative in their ideas and/or describe the social reality they have to live in. In Poland, the role of the poet was that of a martyr for their nation, or that of a knight, of the **uħlan** fighting for their homeland and for religious principles, fighting to obtain a social identity, as well as for justice. Women seem to have a weaker voice, and while in the last twenty years we can find openly feminist writers, in their works autobiography prevails, meaning it is an intimist way of writing.

Even in Miłosz's opinion, Szyborska, whom he had chosen as the best contemporary female writer in his *History of Polish literature*, emerged because "her discipline made her able to practice philosophical poetry with

an incisiveness equal only to Herbert's" (Miłosz, 1984, p. 183). Therefore, does Szymborska "globalise" the conflicted feelings of contemporary man? I think she does.

However, as many other artists, Szymborska knew what clearly sustained W. H. Auden, namely that each and every act of poetry is a political act, that the publication of a piece of writing is an assumption of responsibility for what one says, as it denies and doubts.

In 1986, the poetess published the poem *Children of Our Age* where she well describes how every act, although with no original political intention becomes, as a consequence, a public and political act. In it we find Hannah Arendt's meaning of a public act:

Children of Our Age

We are children of our age,
it's a political age.

All day long, all through the night,
all affairs--yours, ours, theirs--
are political affairs.

Whether you like it or not,
your genes have a political past,
your skin, a political cast,
your eyes, a political slant.

Whatever you say reverberates,
whatever you don't say speaks for itself.
So either way you're talking politics.

Even when you take to the woods,
you're taking political steps
on political grounds.

Apolitical poems are also political,
and above us shines a moon
no longer purely lunar.
To be or not to be, that is the question.
And though it troubles the digestion
it's a question, as always, of politics.

To acquire a political meaning
 you don't even have to be human.
 Raw material will do,
 or protein feed, or crude oil,

or a conference table whose shape
 was quarreled over for months;
 Should we arbitrate life and death
 at a round table or a square one?

Meanwhile, people perished,
 animals died,
 houses burned,
 and the fields ran wild
 just as in times immemorial
 and less political.

Nor is she exempt from describing the horrors of the Holocaust:

Write it. Write. In ordinary ink / on ordinary paper: they were given no food /
 they all died of hunger. 'All. How many? / It's a big meadow. How much grass /
 for each one?' Write: I don't know. / History counts its skeletons in round
 numbers. / A thousand and one remains a thousand, / as though the one had
 never existed: / an imaginary embryo, an empty cradle / an ABC never read, /
 . . . Write: how silent. Yes. (*Hunger Camp at Jasło*).

History unfolds mainly around grisly facts; I do not agree with the idea that
 after some event, as terrible it is no longer possible to write. For the simple
 fact that in that event it follows another equally terrible, then yet another . . .
 (Szyborska's Nobel Prize speech).

Szyborska passes from the description of the hero (heroes are companion communists), the protagonist of the story in which the narrator is US for the social construction of a collective identity, alternating with one's writing that interrogates oneself, a Polish actor (of a country that has become democratic), foreign readers (Poland opened up to the international market in 1990), history, fate, in which nothing is certain regarding definitions and therefore opens up a new freedom to speak publicly, especially when the political vicissitudes are so strong that the poet could not remain silent and take refuge in the private sphere: the concept of unpredictable, unconscious, free evil emerges. Szyborska uses the lesson of Hannah

Arendt regarding the “banality of evil”; an example being the poem *Hitler’s First Photograph*:

And who’s this little fellow in his itty-bitty robe? / That’s tiny baby Adolf, the
Hitlers little boy! / Will he grow up to be an LL.D.? Or a tenor in Vienna’s Opera
House? / . . . Where will those tootsy-wootsies finally wander? / . . . No one
hears howling dogs, or fate’s footsteps. / A history teacher loosens his collar /
and yawns over homework.

Man as an individual, in the meaning of being an exception with respect to the world, can, according to Szymborska, learn from the mistakes of history and not cause suffering to others, while the general problems which bind us are the development of a shared awareness by human society.

It is thus that the poetess outlines an epistemology of the poetics existing in the world, conducting a social act aware of past and present, in which the ethics of the poet is manifested, the responsibility to show a respectful method of reflection which readers may grasp, thanks to which each reader will perhaps find space for their answers and actions. As no man is free not to choose, the nonexistence of absolute freedom (not awareness, not the responsibility of one’s actions) emerges clearly in her poems.

For this reason there is no truth, but many existential truths, aware and responsible choices (action and non-action is always a choice: as in Hamlet’s: “To die, to sleep, – to sleep – perchance to dream . . .”). Many existential truths which are never moralistic, but descriptive and which clarify, without placing proscriptions (apart from the Decalogue) on what is hatred, what is violence, what are the consequences, how much pain is to be suffered, supports Umberto Eco’s view that:

Every artistic form may well be seen, if not as a substitute for scientific knowledge, as an epistemological metaphor: that is to say that in every century, the way in which the forms of art are structured reflects this – in the form of similarity, precisely, resolution of the subject in figure – the way in which science or in any case the culture of the age saw the reality (Eco, 2003, p. 43).²

There is a strong emphasis on the ethics of the poet, the function of which should be the pursuit of happiness. In *Literary Letters*, Szymborska criticises precisely the absence of ethics to one of the many aspiring writers:

² All translations come from Kay Mc Carthy unless indicated otherwise.

that dying father who has ordered surgeons to transfer his brilliant brain into the head of his son, arouses fear, apart from the fact that the son was consenting or less. A brain in which a similar idea was born is not suitable – in our opinion – to make future mankind happy (ibid.).

At the same time Szymborska throws many crucial “hows” and many “whys” into her verses. She wants the freedom of an actor to discover and define them, certainly a freedom educated towards a method of reflection that one may define as global and oriented to the globalisation of culture in dialogue with other arts.³

THE ROLE OF THE POET IN AN AGE OF GLOBALISATION, THE ANSWERS OF POETS AND OF SOCIOLOGY

The works of Wisława Szymborska, as has been demonstrated, do not provide definitive answers and often do not formulate them at all. She offers a path of knowledge, an epistemology of the poetic act, in front of which sociological analysis enters into crisis. It is a crisis shared by intellectuals and artists, who in the first person, faced with the great questions of life, respond with the statement “I don’t know.” As the poet and director Sepulveda writes, to say something is to exist, and it seems Szymborska maintains a dialogue going through the crux of the matter: “Do not hold it against me, O speech, that I borrow weighty words and then labour to make them light” (Szymborska, 1999, p. 19). Why does the poet have the task of making what is not light seem lighter? This is because the use of language has to invite the reader in, not to turn them away from universal themes, such as the meaning of life, death, violence, gratuitous evil, pain, happiness, solitude and boredom.

³ For example the poem *Love At First Sight* was used in the film *Turn Left, Turn Right*, starring Takeshi Kaneshiro and Gigi Leung. *Three Colors: Red*, a film directed by Krzysztof Kieślowski, was inspired by Szymborska’s poem, *Love At First Sight*. Szymborska’s poem *Nothing Twice* was turned into a song by composer Andrzej Munkowski performed by Lucja Prus in 1965 making her poetry known in Poland, rock singer Kora’s cover of *Nothing Twice* was a hit in 1994. In her final years, Szymborska collaborated with Polish jazz trumpeter Tomasz Stańko who dedicated his record *Wisława* (2013) to her memory – taking inspiration for the compositions from their collaboration and her poetry.

Mario Luzi, a living Italian poet, writes that the first thing that a poet has to do is to help one forget, and forget themselves too, the fact of being an actor. They will be close to the truth when in their work the actors become others, nature in its fragmentary circumstances, as well as in its deep principles, and they appear both as the interpreter and the witness.

The sensitivity of modern poetry is transposed and identified with linguistic activity. There is no linguistic engineering or technique able to offer the poet real invention if it does not communicate or irradiate a single emotion. Where this is absent we lack the premises to consider poetry as an undebatable reality in the reality of the world.

The period in which we are living is one characterised by a triumphal scientism where “how” prevails over “when” and “why”, thereby banishing poetry to some kind of prehistoric ghetto; if we give ourselves the chance to look at its surface, it dedicates to poetry the same detailed attention it would pay to an object, or better, a product. I am saying this with a social and economic meaning. This transforms books of poetry into a reason for publishing houses to ensure their closing balances are in the red. If this makes the issuing of poetry useless, then the role of the poet becomes itself useless as they will be read by the few, with those few people not contributing to enlarging the cash flows of the publishing market. A sociologist of literature from Warsaw, Stanisław Siekierski denounces the same problems indicated by the Italian sociologist, Franco Ferrarotti (1998), underlining this paradox thus: “Everyone becomes a writer but nobody can read.” Therefore, the number of published books increases while the number of readers diminishes.

How should one interpret these statistics and, most of all, interpret the various artistic phenomena? Husserl opened the twentieth century with his “crisis of the western conscience and the transcendental phenomenology” (Ferrarotti, 1998, p. 53), with positivist scientism reducing reality to an empirically observable enumeration of a series of facts and phenomena. Without the help of observable events the scientist cannot define his theories, laws, conceptual categories: he cannot define and explain the reality of things, of collective actions. He renounces Durkheim for sociology to inquire into the psyche, soul, spirit and metaphysics. This is what the philosophers did not dare to do. Let us not forget that philosophers until the second half of the twentieth century were mathematicians and physicists, thus educated men in the so-called hard disciplines. While trying to solve the debates opened by German historicism, with Dilthey and

Windelband science has actually entered a crisis and together with it the scientist's role, as well as the poet's role, albeit at a different moment; that is what Max Weber (1997) defined as disenchantment of the world and that which Karl Mannheim drew up as the intellectual's invincible perplexity torn between ideology and utopia.

Sociology tends to abandon the field of things not observable through facts. The spirit, the soul, the emotions, the internal movements that generate actions and the interpretation of the actions themselves, remain fields that cannot be explored, areas reserved for literature and philosophy. We can statistically study the fruition of the arts. "How" and technique, as I have just stated, prevail over "when" and, most of all, "why", which is the reason why quantitative methods are preferred to qualitative ones. We must not forget that a Polish sociologist, Zaniecki was the founder of a new analysis method based on autobiography.

Let us now take a look at how some sociologists study the arts. From Max Weber, Mannheim, Elias in Germany, Lukács in Hungary, Mills in the United States, Ferrarotti and Serravezza in Italy. Max Weber looks at art eliminating aesthetic judgement: the sociologist's purpose is to understand why a certain artistic technique stood out and developed at a specific historical moment, without considering its beauty. Lukács (1964) describes socialist realism (literature representing reality the way a mirror would), at the same time it being able to demystify reified forms of the social scheme. Mannheim finds three levels of analysis, namely: objective (the work in its aesthetic meaning); expressive (the artist's life); documentary (the work records the culture where it was produced). Mills, in the sociological imagination, writes that the sociologist's job itself is an art: the art of intuition, of a global and synthetic vision, he/she is a craftsman of society, "the main political and intellectual task of a sociologist is to define the elements of discomfort and indifference typical of contemporary man. It is the main commitment imposed to him by other mind workers, from the physician to the artists" (Lukács, 1964, p. 187). The analysis develops on three main dimensions, namely: the structure of society as a whole; what is the place of a certain society in the pattern of human history; and what kind of men and women prevail in this society at this moment.

Elias, Ferrarotti and Serravezza base their sociological analyses on the meeting point between individual history and social history and on retrieving the intellectual's guiding role, as well as that of the artist, all convinced that each symbolic expression represents a specific social organisation.

Ferrarotti criticises particularly the technical perfection that becomes a perfection of a mere nothing. *Homo sentiens* is man himself. He never stops repeating the Greek language term *téchne*, meaning art, the way of proceeding. Thus, this signifies means, not purpose, not the “eternal return to the identical”, but rather imagination and creation: “From here artist and artisan, talking about those who are able to solve a specific question, satisfy one’s need, but even invent it” (Ferrarotti, 1991, p. 38). In his mind, today it is the *Homo sentiens* that prevails, writing in “Books, readers, society” that he is neither self conscious, conscious of others, nor of the society he lives in. Their memory, memories, their capacity to select, rather than the project, the utopia of the becoming, meaning and curiosity for the mystery of chance, for destiny, seems to have vanished, the edges escaping, along with scents and flavours.

The position we mean to assume is to conceive a creative action by referring it to society, to the historical moment when it comes to life. Art is not the result of an *a priori* action integrated into society, its reflection, but is rather essentially critical, demystifying and propulsory. In the history of art we can find periods and historical-social contests that gave birth to artistic creations that we could define as didactic if compared to the social system; and extremely critical, in contrast. In the west, during the pre-industrial period, art, intended as an element of social cohesion is what prevails, while during the industrial period, art still strongly assumes imitative features. A typical example is the case of socialist realism, where censorship prevented the exhibition of original, innovative and demystifying artistic works. Moreover, production and mass consumption impose industrial rhythms on those artists willing to enter the market.

Therefore, we cannot place artistic activity apart from other human activities, nor consider it as a marginal, unreal, solitary inspiration of the individual facing the reality of the world; a dialectical relationship exists between the individual artist and the artistic community, together with the different ways through which time makes itself real. We have to consider that “even if the individual refuses sometimes to communicate and jealous of his own individuality, he enters a solitary and hidden praxis, and goes under the illusion of being himself alone with his soul, instead the social element is still part of him expressing itself through the language he uses. This language is not a private business, but it has an intersubjective essence, and involves various individuals” (Adorno, 1972, p. 59).

Although the artist, in the mind of the author, has often lived and anticipated contemporary forms of living, in some European nations in the 19th century – for instance their departure from Court – will lead them to an unstable economic condition, a chronic state of unemployment, that is very well described in Norbert Elias' *Sociology of a Genius, W.A. Mozart*. The artist can denounce and reveal the ambiguity of existence through his life and creations, swinging between rational and irrational actions, Pareto's residual, unconscious production, the effect of the contemplative moment, the fantastic, pleasant, imaginary, illusionary, passionate, contradictory, that is not included in the categories of the rational action, which are instrumental, made to be efficient, as well as somewhat utilitarian and economical. The fact that statistics do not consider the category of artist in surveying reports and censuses, as it is considered as non-remunerative, makes this even clearer. If we look for them within the data, we may suppose they are hidden among the entrepreneurs, professionals, housewives or the unemployed.

At the ceremony at which she was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1996, the poetess Szymborska affirms:

there are no poetry professors. If it were like that, that would mean we would be dealing with a profession . . . some kind of a certificate with a stamp on. On such an assumption the Russian poet, who then received the Nobel Prize, Joseph Brodsky, was condemned to political confinement. He was considered a parasite.

Although contemplative action, typical of the artist, is not included within the analyses of the contemporary way of acting, that is no good reason to forget its existence, that they are the origin and the life experience that give birth to the text books which we all study since our early years at school.

The sociology of art, and its literary branch, have started a discussion on the relationship between science and art, on the admissibility of the scientific study of art and of the social representativeness of an individual person that gives the soul motion, observes and describes what they see and feel about human existence. Thomas Khun underlines how these two different disciplines, art and science, are, instead, following two similar development patterns, namely: the creative innovation, common to both of them, leads to their dealing with subjects such as the role of schools,

traditions, mutable standard values and transformed intuitive methods. Art is torn from science because of disputes taking place within science itself: the world of values and that of facts, the subjective and objective, intuition and deduction. However, "the more accurately we try to distinguish the artist from the scientist, the harder becomes our task" (Kuhn, 1972, p. 10), and we create a false problem, an *aporia* itself. What these two disciplines have in common is their estranged existence from the audience, a typical reaction of contemporaneity, a feature of both science and art. That science and art are both productions of the human behaviour is a truism, not without any consequence for this reason. The problems of style for science regarding art and theory may be, in Kuhn's opinion, the price we pay because we ignore the obvious. We have to investigate the intention on the basis of the communicative action of the artist; for this reason, it would be interesting to discover why they have privileged the refinement of one form over that of another.

Stylistic choice is the means to express the reason of the artist, while besides the use of style we also find the story of a personal and collective life. Every matter of style, says Lukács, is a sociological problem that must be investigated on what kind of interdependency exists between the social conditioning and the genesis of literary contents, even understanding the ways through which literature influences social reality. Not being scared to be regarded as non-scientific, Lukács recognises the poet as possessing the capacity, whose roots are mysterious in themselves (the experimental and scientific knowledge facing them is powerless), to represent the social reality in its typicality. When he talks about typicality he means the convergence towards a representation "of all the important aspects characterising the dynamic unity where real literature represents life, every important social, moral, psychological contradiction of an age" (Lukács, 1972, p. 103).

The poet's wisdom consists of their being able to recognise in each single deviation of reality what is typical and individual in order that we may presume that both art and literature represent, by making it apparent, the undulatory action that survives and even changes. For this reason, the sociologist is interested when a mainly technical transformation meet some contents made up of feelings in that aesthetic judgement will not be a judgement on the aesthetic value, but will be rather the observation of a change for which they will have to understand its rational and substantive purpose.

Both Lukács and Hanna Arendt mention Heine as an example. He conceived poetry as a means of struggle, some of his verses revealing the way the poetic form denounces and escapes censure: “it blows, bawls, thunders everyday / until the last oppressor will escape. / It sings only in this direction / but keep your poem / the more you can, close to vagueness” (Heine, 1917, p. 65). As Maria Zambrano writes:

the mask, is an instrument to participate, it becomes a contemplation object *a posteriori*, we use it to obtain something, a means to get in touch with a kind of reality that we are allowed to touch only by imitating it, an imitation that becomes a transformation. Consequently, it is a way to enter reality, some specific realities (Zambrano, 2001, p. 37).

Arendt, who walked the road of exile against the conquest of power by a totalitarian regime, writes in the distance: in the prologue of *Antigone's Grave* the philosopher uses a strange word, that we can hardly translate: *destrierro* – *tra* (‘exile’) and *tierra* (‘land’).

Hannah Arendt gets her inspiration from Weber’s dichotomy pariah/parvenu, as well as Hebrew writers and poets who defended their identity from assimilation, from their becoming parvenus. While translating a Kafka’s tale *Er* (‘Him’), Arendt uses rhetoric to distinguish who a person is from what a person is: what we can tell others about us as a single individual cannot be seen aprioristically in its pure essence by the subject, who, being a person related to what we are and to the way other people describe, knows and recognises themselves within the **common** singularity. It often happens that in an eastern European country’s literature “me” becomes “us”, masculine and feminine become one, communist ideology and post-communism transform the intimist description into a collective way of feeling, ex-ante and ex-post. The encouraging and consolatory hero becomes an anti-hero/anti-heroine fighting absolutist political systems. The hero, as a protagonist and/or as a co-protagonist, a speaking voice, becomes “us”.

Miłosz’s thoughts on the book, *My Europe*, were thus, to “oblige him to unveil at least a piece of that soaring knowledge hard to convey to the west, that he had stored up: a book made up not only of personal memories, but also of those that were geopolitical: the powerful ghost of certain lands within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, when this was a bigger power than that of Russia” (Miłosz, 1996, p. 71). Miłosz writes about “a seized Europe, where the habit is to erase history, time, names, but where

civilization's intrigues were such as to make every single man you met different from the other, not because of his own specific peculiarity, but rather as a representative of a group, of a class or of a people" (ibid., p. 72).

Thus, can a disguising poem, a metaphor of the metaphors, answer a questioning sociologist? Are creativity and life stories sociologically representative? The Russian poetess Anna Achmatova in 1957 wrote:

During the terrible years of Yezhovism I spent seventeen years queuing in front of the Leningrad prisons. Once someone "recognised me". So a woman with livid lips, who stood right behind me, and that, for sure, had never heard my name, shook from the typical torpor that characterised us and asked me in my ear (everyone used to whisper over there):

– But, can you describe that?

And I said:

– I can.

Then some kind of a smile slipped on what had been her face once (Cerasuolo Pertusi, 1974, p. 37).

This is how, Alfredo de Paz writes, the idea of a trans-individual subject able to go beyond the psychoanalytical theories on artistic production was born. From this emerges the primary need for coherence and totality that marks out social and human life. For this reason, the literary act cannot be considered as an abstract act, as it is based on the main relationships between people themselves. The language the artist uses is mainly the tradition and legacy of experience of using a certain kind of language following forms, genres, styles. At the same time, as Goldmann affirms, they receive simultaneously a whole series of mental categories, values and ways of imparting values that we can define with the general term of world vision. Although it is impossible for the individual to escape such circumstances, this is where they get their inspiration without being completely aware. In the imaginary universe expressed inside a work, the purpose of genetic structuralism is to find the structures of a world vision belonging to the social group which the writer is linked to in someway, and that which he took them from, representing or declaring a collective consciousness.

Franco Ferrarotti defines scientific truth itself as an intersubjective truth, to be verified empirically, as science itself is nothing but the verification of a personal idea, of an arbitrary action, as Goldmann writes, a continuous adventure between tradition and innovation that joins it to an artistic production.

In the present day, contemporary art increasingly arouses sentiment, emotion and curiosity; it is strictly individual and solitary, an **unshared** fruition, typical of the **glo-local** process. An artistic production, and any culture it may come from, is consumed at home (home video and Internet). The social use of art works is no longer communal nor an expression of coexistence, of common social opportunities, of institutional pathways and of psycho-social consequences. Therefore, aporia has come to the fore in post-modern society as far as the production/reception of an artistic work is concerned: while artists attempt, as their centuries-long artistic-social function supposes, to **speak** to a **public**, the technological society has changed the ontology of the recipient: the public has dissolved, it no longer exists. We live in an era of the individual consumer, who often buys without consuming: that is, they buy a work of art to distinguish themselves and to conform, at the same time, to the social class they belong to (Bourdieu, 1979).

In different historical periods, in different social contexts, and at turning-points of artistic development as in the case of the “artistic avant-garde”, artists have taken on what we define today as the “role of the intellectual”. They were “guides” *in proprio* (futurists, surrealists, post-modernists), precisely because they had not yet been inserted within the structures of commercial production.

Even though the artist has entered the **control room** of market/publishing production only with the avant-garde, they have held a central role in society since antiquity. In the past they had had religious, moral, political and educational functions; the origin of their talent was considered as divine (magical in other cultures), and, once desacralised, it was defined as mysterious. Art was synonymous with wisdom and science in the humanistic concept of the classics.

The use and functions have now changed, while art in general has passed from a principally religious and/or celebrative function (to thrive as long as European Courts would thrive), to a greatly individualistic artistic creation within which the artist, no longer the Court-employed professional, attempts to reconcile their expressive liberty with the preferences of the public at large. The fields of art have progressively become subdivided into sectors: literature has become the field of those who write anything from prose to poetry; the musician becomes the composer and/or performer; the educator is a figure in itself.

As the social conditions of art change, the modes of its fruition change also. For example, pictures were once private, literature passed from either being read out loud or sung as was done in the classical world, being read in a murmured way as in the medieval cloisters, being read out loud in public places to finally arrive at the reading in one's mind typical of the modern world. Unfortunately, art was something only men could aspire to. In fact, the role of women was not contemplated. Unless they chose the religious life, young women were rarely taught to read and write. They could not exhibit themselves in public places (in Church or outside of the Court, apart from the rarest exceptions). If a woman succeeded in writing secretly, she could not sign her work until the later part of the 19th century. Indeed, this is the subject of a book I plan to have published about the life story of female artists (musicians, artists, philosophers) from the Middle Ages to today.

Regarding the state of art, it is precisely the “irrational” – an aspect which still today has not been very much explored by sociology – which has given life to several forms of mythical tales, full of symbols and allegories. Within this space emerges the relationship between the **idea** and the **real**, as studied by Edgar Morin:

We constantly need the assistance of the real, but what is effectively the real if not an idea that designates it as such? The real is not imperative, as it is believed. Its appearances are fragile and its essence is hidden or unknown. Its substance, its origin, its foundations, its becoming, is uncertain. Its complexity is interwoven with uncertainties. *Hence its extreme weakness before the formidable super-reality of the myth, religion, ideology and even an idea* (2005, p. 22; italics as originally in Morin's book).

Furthermore, the history of Western thought has rarely stopped placing its confidence in the form of **rational thought** being seen as the only road towards progress. Rationality is hence seen as the point of reference of human progress.

In attempting to set aside the inevitability of rationality, and thus of rationalism, we can begin to question the presupposition of their infallibility if we follow a certain epistemological debate that progressively accepts a state of incompleteness and probabilism towards which all the so-called “hard” sciences are moving. “In this regard it must be specified,” Franco Ferrarotti writes, “that the hypothetic-probabilist conception of science

implies instead a presumption of a conventionalist nature, which denies all possible residues of ‘objectivism’” (1998, p. 33). If it participates in scientific knowledge, the form of irrational thought necessarily participates in all human knowledge, reflecting itself in behaviour. A “science” called upon to understand human phenomena, as in the case of sociology in regards to social actions, is obliged to realise just that.

Historically, it may also happen that a *malade imaginaire* of a group, or of a society, takes control: one only has to think about Nazi or communist regimes. This occurs when, as Gilbert Durand explains (2010), an absence of **pedagogy of the imagination** is registered: at that point, the *malade imaginaire* generates “totalitarian myths”. From the viewpoint of social research, it is good to consider the **genetics** of the imagination because, on a theoretical level, nothing is good or bad in an absolute sense: only upon passing into action we do enter into the ethical dimension that connotes myths as values. Therefore, it is the praxis that **connotes** the mythological value of a **world vision** (telling one of/about the world).

It is in this sense that the sociology of art was able to enrich itself with an approach that is attentive to the **social action of artists**, deeply connected with **the social imagination** of which they are both the voice and the mirror. Therefore: the subjective imagination of the artist + social imagination → artistic-social behaviour as fusion of the rational and “irrational”.

The definition of the “artist”, in sociology, for example, is often employed to exemplify the concept of “deviance”. Authors, such as Robert Merton, Lewis Coser, Talcott Parsons, Daniel Bell and other contemporary sociologists, consider the artist either as a rebel or as an innovator who frequently tends to distance themselves from the rules. Once the role and the function of the artist are clearly established, can they still be defined as a “moral guide”, and “intellectual”?

Actually, still today the literary author is a socially marginal figure. Those who live on personal earnings derived from selling copies of their own works are rare. Moreover, these are the only ones who gain visibility: they are listened to when they speak about society, either through their works or when they are interviewed. However, the great majority of authors practice their literary work in the same way it has been practiced for centuries: as their second job. Their products are almost invisible and their voice does not pervade the media and appears unheard.

In the 1960s, the Italian writer Luigi Malerba noted that the economic **boom** society, engrossed in its technological race and interest in products

of practical use, was not yet ready to accept the commerce of intellectual work. On the contrary, literary work, continues Malerba, was still viewed as an extraneous body that does not produce wealth: it was neither an automobile, nor a plastic bucket, nor a new packet of cigarettes: why should society occupy itself with a new “unknown” book, printed in ten thousand copies, when they could reprint the classics? Although the writer had suddenly won their own independence in line with the “law” – their literary conscience – a sector of the market that would welcome their products still did not exist. Thus, they were forced to live a “ghost-career”. Even though some got to experience popularity, economic independence was unattainable: they could almost never succeed in liberating themselves from their second jobs or from the chain of editing imposed by the publishers.

Hence, the social and psychological discomfort that plagues the author, unresolved up to today, will be investigated: intellectual and manual activities are still two separate sectors. The post-modern artist is no longer an artisan bound to the Renaissance apparatus (that lasted until the end of the 19th century). However, they still do not succeed in producing and distributing their works independently. Society still considers them as “unnecessary”. At its best, it sees them as a positive “parasite”, or a good “producer” of mass-produced works of art when they are supplying products for mass consumption (TV shows, commercial works empty of aesthetic and social research, and so on). They have lost their physiognomy as a **creator**. Caudwell called this uncomfortable role “the false position of the poet as a producer for the market” (Caudwell, 1996, p. 63).

As Martha Nussbaum writes in *Artistic Justice*, artists are one of the first and constant agents of both socialisation – think of childhood fairy tales – and of ethical and emphatic understanding of the different psychic and social realities of humanity. Every form of artistic behaviour (their private life, public declarations, produced works), by the nature of its human creation, expresses a thought, a socially conditioned and conditioning vision of the world. Artists are the “interpreters” of the world.

Alfred Schutz, Peter Berger and Ralph Dahrendorf unabashedly confess their debt to art, whose help they seek when unable to give explanations through science. Sociology describes the “whys” of the world, while art explains the “hows”: “How must feel a man after winning a kingdom but losing his soul?” Only artistic stages strengthen the idea of social behaviour in which everything is interconnected, where every behaviour,

Pirandello-like, puts other behaviours into action and is, at the same time, influenced by the same behaviour it produces.

In the past, sociologists used artistic examples to demonstrate certain collective social and mental processes; the earliest approaches included the analysis of life stories which were incorporated into research as ancillary, but never central illustrative material.

In sociology today, we are increasingly more aware that the **construction of reality** takes place as well **through artistic experiences**, from fairy tales to school books; from music to design; from extemporaneous installations and readings to reading festivals (for example: Biennale di Venezia, some festivals in Mantua, Rome, the Tremiti Islands, London, and so on).

The theory of modern and contemporary Western artistic behaviour would not have a foundation if it were a monological theory. The behaviour of the artist is always **dialogical**: today they are looking even more for dialogue, exactly when the traditional market is cutting them out of institutional dialogue. The artist, especially he or she who is young and independent, lives on “discourse” with others, in a dialogical dimension.

I intend to learn about the new roles, behaviours and values of contemporary artists, their imaginary forms of cultural syncretism transmitted into their works, at times using playfulness (Roland Barthes), as well as transforming consumption into a new “religion of the masses” (Edgar Morin) which makes a substitute satisfaction of an artistic object (Arnold Hauser), for all the malaise of social and private lives. Moreover, of course, not all works of art are harbingers of positive content, but may also herald and justify forms of negativity and social violence.

The field of studies concerning the sociology of the arts arose at the very beginning of the 20th century in the works of the German thinkers, Georg Simmel and Max Weber. Consequently, it developed with a strong statistical connotation within the School of Bordeaux in France, under Robert Escarpit. Thereafter, it developed a socio-structural association with Pierre Bourdieu. In the United States, Howard Becker and Vera Zolberg worked contemporaneously on artistic phenomena with a sociological perspective of symbolic interactionism. Today, in France we have a longer Bourdieu tradition and new viewpoints such as Peter Menger, who analyses artistic markets, and Nathalie Heinich, who analyses the question of identity and relations with public institutions. Thus, the above-presented project arises from a need to study this subject in depth and, with an interdisciplinary and international research group, develop research in this field.

Regarding the theory on social action in art, we have neither a strong nor a long tradition: in the USA Howard Becker has analysed the artist's social action through symbolic interactionism while Wendy Grinswold has conducted a structuralist analysis of such action; in Italy Franco Crespi founded the sociology of culture and analysed social action within sociological theories. In UK and Germany we have the Weberian tradition (Alfred and Max Weber).

Although it is possible to investigate statistically the fruition of works of arts, the problem of technique and how to study them remains. By mixing different methods, namely qualitative and quantitative, I have tried to define the social action of the poet, along with Szymborska's poems, during a period a new kind of freedom where various aspects of culture are undergoing a process of globalisation.

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EDMONDO GRASSI¹

ETHICS AND HUMANISM IN THE MACHINE ERA

Abstract

In a society based on technology, the human being loses their centrality and triggers the fourth revolution by means of scientific advancement and digital progress: that of the rupture of anthropocentrism, of industry 4.0 and of the infosphere. The scientific and academic debate must focus its attention, among various elements, on the formulation of new ethical principles that can guide a person in their interaction, interconnection and, in some cases, “fusion” with the “machine” and its accompanying values. The advent of artificial intelligences is producing changes in the management of common liberties, of private and public life, of the individual and of the community, which increasingly seek in the “artificialisation” of the self and in their relationship with machines, places, subjects, reflections of interaction with each other and with the other self. The sophistication of technology and, therefore, of reality indicate the need to re-think the relationship between the tangibility of the natural and its mechanised-digitalised representations. What will be the ethics of the future? What are the values to support in the new revolution that sees the person flanked by the machine? What are, at present, the global choices on these issues?

Key words: artificial intelligence, ethics, machine, human being, digital life

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INTRODUCTION

*Mentre cercavamo senza successo
di inscrivere nel mondo
un'intelligenza artificiale forte e produttiva
stavamo viceversa adattato il mondo
ad un'intelligenza artificiale leggera e riproduttiva.*
(Floridi, 2014, p. 142–143)²

If the last century was marked by rationality, unlimited progress, the centrality of the human being and the great ideologies, today, people find themselves living in a society in which the individual and their representations seem to be losing, at an increasing rate, the boundaries that delimit and characterise one's identity. Observing and analysing the changes that are taking place becomes an increasingly complex and delicate activity, since the individual is the object of their own scientific and technological progress, of their productions, triggering the rupture of anthropocentrism, and not being master either of themselves or their surrounding environment (Floridi, 2009). It has become, in part, a succubus of its creations and is subject to

irrational structures, because it is devoid of any logic in which the subject can recognise himself and also lacks any moral value; the rational universal (from an ethical point of view, duty) is no longer the place of identification of the individual, and indeed is now a compulsion external to the subject (Galli, 1997, p. IX).

The human being, from having inhabited a society of risk (Beck, 2000) through that of crisis (Touraine, 2012), up to that of narcissism (Cesareo & Vaccarini, 2012), lives, today, in an artificial society, characterised by an ultra-accelerated technological progress with respect to the evolution of the self; it has always been a naturally technical entity and, in contemporary society, a part of what is technology has become pre-eminent in the progress of the person and of the environment they live in, namely: applied technology.

Human beings are experiencing a fourth industrial revolution, namely Industry 4.0 (Kagermann, Lukas & Wahlster, 2011), that of supercomputers,

² “While we were unsuccessfully pursuing the inscription of strong, productive AI into the world, we were actually changing the world to fit light.” All translations come from the author of the article unless indicated otherwise.

intelligent robots, autonomous vehicles, the rewriting of the genetic code thanks to technological implementations, in which data – Big Data – becomes the unit of measurement of a person, in a historical period in which industrial automation will be marked by cybernetic systems that will spread into every area of daily life of the human being (Davis & Schwab, 2018): this will be the era of artificial intelligence, of a new social actor – one could already dare to give them the value of real agents of confrontation – that will arise in a dialogue with a person, because, as said by Sabine Hauert, member of the Royal Society's machine learning working group, "artificial intelligence is already around us in a series of practical applications".

In this context, we cannot consider the individual as a strictly "natural" element, such as any animal that exhausts its function in the evolutionary process of nature, which has as its aim the need to make itself suited to the changes in the ecosystems that they inhabit. However, the individual is an entity that by means of an instrument, of a prosthesis external to its own body, affirms its existence, its abilities, its identity and its evolution: when the first human being used a stick to collect fruit from a branch which was too high, there was the first manifestation of the technique that dwells in their being. Moreover, people appear to be totally immersed in a chameleonic structure becoming a predominant element, albeit not the only one, of what will characterise the relationships and society of the future.

People and society find themselves in a historical moment in which even the description of a social fact seems to have become obsolete, since the narration of the near future is founded on semantics based on the past, losing some nuances of what will be manifested. Humanity will have to acquire tools that allow it to analyse the changes in the cultural and social paradigms hitherto considered solid. In particular, it will have to re-examine the values, myths and cardinal principles of society: it is essential to conceive of new ethics that contemplate the relationship between people and machines as "the technological consequences of science have now a universal reach and require an ethical rebirth" (Russ, 1997, p. 7).

What is new will need to be understood in terms of its individual value, in the political and economic context, but more than anything else, on the ethical responsibility inherent in the governance of innovation: if technological progress and its discoveries are necessary, what parameters should be adopted for the evaluation of artificial intelligences? Who will be directly responsible for their actions? Which elements will distinguish the relationship

between the individual and artificial intelligence? Do human beings find themselves having to recalibrate the magnet of their ethical compass?

The relationship between what until now was considered real and what was virtual is losing its boundaries, transforming society into what can be defined as the space of the infosphere (Floridi, 2009), a change sustained by the sophistication of digital devices which have permanently invaded everyday life. Thus, we have moved from an instrument without logical capacity, but one necessary to the individual for the achievement of its goals, to systems and advanced algorithms able to communicate with each other (OVUM estimates that in 2021 there will be 733 million M-to-M cellular connections, presenting the results in its latest study *Cellular Machine-to-Machine forecasts: 2016–2021*). They can also exploit predictive capabilities to help the user, modelling reality and incorporating it into a dimension in which space and time lose their value: artificial intelligences are manifested as immanent elements in the life of a person.

As the ethical purpose of these changes is considerable, it is necessary to reformulate the dialogue between the different scientific disciplines, where engineering will need the philosophy or the mathematics of sociology, since we are in a phase in which a gradual but ineluctable dematerialisation is taking the place of the reality so far conceived (Maldonado, 2012).

From these and other aspects, the need arises to request new ethical guidelines that can help the person to evaluate and contain the technological evolutionary leaps of the fourth revolution, not only that which is industrial, but also social, understanding that ethics is a moment of dialogue for the construction of one's own liberties in a context where unconditional actions could take place. The pervasiveness of contemporary and future technology shows that its influence "does not only manifest itself in terms of concepts or opinions, but much more deeply in the generative structures of the processes of formation and reception of concepts and opinions" (D'Amato, 2012, p. 16).

Faced with the creation of new responsibilities, the demand for new rights, the conception of new forms of creation, the person-machine hybridisation and artificial intelligences, even if weak, which are ever-more evolved and able to understand some social patterns of being human, the urgency of a shared ethic seems to become the only instrument capable of giving a stronger historicity to this community and of bridging that artificial gap which is artificially expanding, albeit even in a more human manner.

GHOST IN THE SHELL: HOW TO CONCEIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCES

Can machines think?
(Turing, 1950)

The idea of generating machines that are able to emulate the capabilities of a human being, not only those physical but also mental, has always been one of the main ambitions of human intellect and research. In the fictional world, we can find “sources” that attest to the human will to give life to their creations. From the myths of Ancient Greece, such as that of Pygmalion, who, devoting himself fervently to sculpture, fashioned the most beautiful statue from a block of marble. He slept by its side for days and, finally, he asked the goddess Aphrodite to grant it a real body, in order to be able to interact with it. His intent was to make his creation more real than reality, to the point of making it his bride and procreating with it, a myth that we also find in *Blade Runner 2049*, a film in which a human being comes to procreate with an android.

As in the Jewish legend of the **golem**, where through the knowledge of the Qabbalah, human beings have the power, in this case between the divine and the esoteric, to create a giant of clay and use it as a slave. This is a legend that unites the progress of learning and knowledge concerning advances in the domain of the body and human anatomy being transferred to another being, with the intent of subjecting it to its will, since the golem was incapable of thinking autonomously, but acted according to the commands it received, and was not able to feel emotions, neither having a soul nor a conscience.

In 1816, Mary Shelly used the metaphor of Dr. Frankenstein’s monster to conceive one of the first forms of modern hybridisations between a biological body and a technical-technological instrument. In her novel, there is a clear and relevant critique of the first industrial revolution, delivering within it and to its readers specific questions, namely: is progress dehumanising the person? Is human nature and its identity formation changing? Are human beings losing their moral compass?

It was at the beginning of the 20th century that society began to question itself with greater attention placed on the implications of technological progress and the will to power in order to generate increasingly powerful machinery to aid the daily life of the individual. It was in the fictional world that the word “robot” was introduced for the first time,

in *R.U.R. – Rossumovi univerzalni roboti*, a 1920's sci-fi utopian drama written by Karel Capek. The word comes from the Czech *robota*, that is 'work' and, in Capek's piece, robots are replicants, real organic humanoids, that could evoke the transhumanist currents of contemporaneity, used to free humanity from physical work. It is important to reflect on the value of language and speech, since the former is the foundation of humanity and social relations, being able to play, by means of the latter, the role of a knot, that of the first weapon in a conflict. In this case, *robota* indicates the will to conceive the production of intelligent machines as tools underlying the choices and power of human beings to become a demiurge of a new race. In this view, the anthropocentric representation of the individual is found, until the machine is aware of its potential, or until it becomes an immanent element in the cultural and behavioural models of society, as is happening in the contemporary world.

The development of artificial intelligence, of robotics, of biotechnologies poses open questions such as: will the diversity born of invasive and speculative technologies replace the concepts within the biological system known up to now?; although the multiplicity of possible interventions on the nature of being requires the redefinition of new ethics, will we be called to define the former ethics as posthumous?; should we conceive new social actors who need different rights and regulations within the same social context?

While these are very broad questions which the scientific and academic community is called upon to answer, one question, above all, is that which will concern the future of artificial intelligence, namely: will machines be able to think?

This question was first posed by Alan Turing in the article *Computing Machinery and Intelligence*, published in the journal "Mind" in 1950, and gave rise to the beginning of the debate on the relationship between the possibility of a "thinking" machine and its capacity, therefore, on the possibility to imitate the behaviour of a human being. Turing wrote that if a machine had to replicate human reasoning systems, it would have to elaborate an intelligent mechanism that could detach itself from a "completely disciplined behaviour involved in computation, but a rather slight one, which does not give rise to random behaviour, or to pointless repetitive loops" (Turing, 1950, p. 459).

To test this hypothesis, the English scientist proposed an "imitation game" which contemplates the participation of three players, namely:

a human being (A), a programmed computer (B) and an observer-investigator (C). The latter, who is located in a place where they cannot see the other two participants, has the task of asking questions to both with the purpose of arriving, through the answers received, at understanding their nature, namely what is human and what is machine. If the observer is not able to distinguish the computer from the human being, we may assert that the machine is able to replicate human thought, at least in its interaction with others, and therefore can be defined as intelligent. As one can see, Turing's approach is behaviourist and, in this regard, he was strongly criticised, both for his methods and for his statements. However, his studies and research on the possibility that artificial intelligence could replicate human intelligence provided the chance of giving life to the discussion on the nascent cognitive sciences.

In 1956, Allen Newell and Herb Simon developed the first thinking machine in history, namely the Logic Theory Machine, one which was able to solve mathematical problems. In the same year, it was thanks to John McCarthy that the term "artificial intelligence" was coined during the Dartmouth Summer Research Project on Artificial Intelligence, a conference on the possibility of simulating human thought by means of machines, held at Dartmouth College, with the intention of proceeding

On the basis of the conjecture that, in principle, every aspect of learning or any other characteristic of intelligence can be so precisely described as to be able to construct a machine that simulates it (McCarthy, Minsky, Rochester & Shannon, 2006, p. 12).

This last statement could echo as a sort of utopian ideal, and this must be so, albeit with a clarification. Utopia must not be synonymous with something impossible, unrealisable and oneiric, but probable and hypothetical. It must be a project that is drawn up to cross the limit observed so far, allowing learning and knowledge to advance in its path: utopia as a regulatory ideal.

Being able to delineate the characteristics, values and patterns of behaviour of the present is becoming an increasingly complex activity, since the individual is in the middle of a society marked by change while being able to describe the currents and impacts with contemporary words, this often denoting a lack of skill and ability, since it is the semantics that are not suitable for grasping the possible worlds that may manifest themselves.

The relevance of speech and communication are fundamental for understanding the technological development and the ethical and moral implications of the individual's freedom, since the two phenomena are radically connected and influenced, and paraphrasing Wittgenstein's studies, one may state that it is language that must be able to adapt to social changes and not the opposite. If one tried to describe the interpretation of the manifestation of a new phenomenon with existing language, one would come to issue an erroneous conclusion about the nature of the facts.

In this way, as Floridi (2017) states, to understand at what point contemporary humanity and artificial intelligence, defined as weak, is in the history of technological development, we need to consider two fundamental parameters, time and space in their present forms, namely: hyperhistory and the infosphere.

Technology is advancing at a speed which the evolution of human beings cannot reach, confining it to the realm of its simplest drives that define its approach to digital devices and artificial intelligence, which will occupy more and more segments relevant to their life. The construction of a semantic meaning more closely related to the machine is necessary, one that is able to conduct a discussion on the deep implications implemented by information and communication technologies (ICT). Contemporary society has crossed the threshold of entering into an era of hyperhistory, which may be defined as that moment in time in which "the progress and well-being of humanity have begun to be, not only connected to, but above all dependent on effective and efficient management of the information life-cycle" (Floridi, 2017, p. 3). Moreover, in this historical period, for the first time, we are witnessing the advent of third-order technologies, i.e. those artificial systems that are connected to other systems by means of yet other systems, namely the moment when a machine communicates with other machines (MtoM learning), able to record, process and transmit increasingly complex data and in an increasingly autonomous way, managing to define interrelations hitherto unexplained by any cognitive system. The infosphere society, that is, hyper-communication, which includes both digital-telematic-artificial channels and classic media, has become the space in which human beings confront themselves and others and where ICT and information are the primary resource for growth and relationships. The infosphere contains both the "online and offline world", thus becoming synonymous with reality, where the boundaries between the imaginary and real blend, leaving the flow of data the possibility of defining what one is.

In December 2017, in Cremona, Italy, the robot-postman YAPE (Your Autonomous Pony Express) independently carried out its delivery through the streets of the city, using its sensors as senses to be able to move among human beings and acquire information on the surrounding environment. These are the first steps of a company that will see, in the future, the sharing of the same space between people and machines. Already in 2016, in New York, the Starship robot was released, conceived by Starship Technologies, with the task of delivering food at home, thus becoming the object of study by large companies in the sector. Perhaps we will come to have robots with artificial intelligences such as those imagined in the *Black Mirror* episode entitled *Crocodile*?

Like all technological innovations, even artificial intelligence, wanting to point towards the wide spectrum of the new existing systems, predisposes changes. This is a question of new and different social changes from those that have been explored so far, since the algorithms underlying the evolution of artificial intelligence, for example, are not entirely predictable.

If the machines of the industrial revolution could have hypothesised limited, circumscribed, latent and manifest scenarios of the future, this new artificial revolution makes it difficult, at the present time, to identify the hypotheses of change. First of all, this is because it involves all social areas and consequently all knowledge but, above all, because intrinsic evolution raises the question of the centrality of the human being and of their relationships. In this regard, it is necessary to solicit an updated ethical reflection on a reality in profound transformation, on opportunities, but also on the risks that this entails. Philosophical and sociological questions reaffirm the need for an interdisciplinary vision of the technological innovation that artificial intelligence implies and places upon anthropology, politics, psychology and law, the need for a redefinition of anthropocentrism and the role of the person.

In trying to summarise what the relevant elements for a discussion on ethics and artificial intelligences in the human sciences are, one could say that the latter:

- have become immanent elements in human society;
- have no limits of space and time (infosphere and hyperhistory);
- are changing the daily perception of human beings in terms of their relationship with the surrounding environment and their relationships with others;
- have produced the rupture of anthropocentrism;

- can become tools to improve and increase the principles of responsibility, cooperation and equality.

The question of technology is essential in defining the organic development of society and is linked to the rediscovery of new ethics: “seeing ethics as a meta-moral moment, a rational moment, which appeals to our freedom and which is constitutive of our freedom” (Ardrizzo, 2003, p. 16). While waiting for computers or robots to become capable of thinking – to date they are only able to perform specific orders to the best of their ability or carry out some tasks faultlessly – what is required of people is to be able to produce responsibilities and formulate better approaches for advancing the social understanding of artificial intelligence.

ARTIFICIAL ETHICS AND THE SPIRIT OF TECHNOLOGY

It is important to define the difference between technique and technology, where the first is to be understood as the *téchne*, the know-how, then the set of all the knowledge and tools that contribute to the execution of intellectual and manual activities, the second is the technical application of knowledge and indicates the reciprocal relationship between the two elements.

Technology is the environment in which we live, structuring itself as the dimension to which we demand, in a manifest or latent way, the possibility of crossing the limits naturally imposed on the human being: we must conceive it as that element capable of enhancing the abilities of the individual and of changing the social paradigms towards a collective improvement, having the ability to trigger a crisis not concerning the material level of its advancement, but the type of disclosure that humankind practices through it.

Moreover, like technique, technology itself has an ethical-value-bearing capacity, so it cannot be considered purely as a neutral element at the service of the person, since, as Heidegger stated in *The question concerning technology*, “*téchne* is not the only one name of craftsmanship and relative skill, but also of superior art and fine arts. *La téchne* belongs to the production, to the *pòiesis*, it is something poietic” (2017, p. 38), thus the technique – and the applied technology of the society of the present and of the future – assumes the value of a probe that has the task of unveiling one’s being.

If a person is called to interact constantly with digital and artificial tools, the latter reveal the double nature of the person: on the one hand, they play the role of creator, a demiurge of a new anthropomorphic structure, created in his image and likeness, a manifestation of a will to power of dominion towards his own creation; on the opposite side, it is transformed into an object of ontological research, since interaction with artificial intelligence can assist it in the research and in-depth examination of its nature. The digital instrument is an element of modification, of knowing that which interacts and changes nature to the advantage of one's being, since a human being is not a purely natural but a profoundly technological entity; the digital instrument is an extension, a prosthesis, an exosomatic organism, able to give intelligibility and interactivity to every element of the environment. In this vision is contained the nature of the technical being and the medium which, from a simple tool, becomes the body's prosthesis that feeds on its own ability to reason, reflect, observe and, therefore, to give life to the infinite technical possibilities of creation. Therefore, "new technologies cause a boundless growth in the power of man, who has become a subject but also the object of his own techniques" (Russ, 1997, p. 10).

Applied technology is becoming a new universe and raises questions that may fill the ethical and ideological vacuum, structuring itself around new principles and new structures: the digital means, designed by the individual, in turn, when they are used, give new form to their own creator, giving new forms to collectivity, convocation, interlocutors, society and the explosion of knowledge. Applied technology, in breaking the anthropocentric vision, molecularises it, and puts forward a cosmocentric point of view, having a previously unknown but necessary normative order, since

no society can survive without a moral code based on values understood, accepted and respected by the majority of its members . . . [In a society of artificialisation] we no longer have anything like that. Will modern societies continue indefinitely to master and control the enormous powers that science has given them with the criterion of a vague humanism tinged with a sort of optimistic and materialistic hedonism? (Monod, 1990, p. 93).

Although this question places an ethical void before humanity, it is a space that is ready to mould itself according to human will – as Sartrean existentialism already affirmed in the last century – bearing in itself the gift

of maieutics, of realisation, of production. It is a place where there is an influx of information, data, expectations and capillary connections, which need a value-based examination that can allow a human being to unravel the uncertain: although the future is definitely moving at a greater speed than human progress, what is required of people is to understand whether the direction taken is correct according to the principles of responsibility and cooperation for the structuring of a society founded on a collective intelligence, “constantly enhanced, coordinated in real time, which reaches an effective mobilization of skills” (Lévy, 2002, p. 248): this is one of the fundamental contributions that artificial intelligence can give to a human being, that is, not to become a thinking machine, but assisting a person in making choices, doing so in a way as quickly as possible and as correctly as possible.

A machine becomes a positive prosthesis of the person that amplifies its qualities – becoming the horse (or the driverless car), one which is hyper-fast, with which one can reach apparently distant horizons – but without depriving it of its poietic ability: although machines are able to respond more quickly than a person, only the person is still granted the gift of knowing how to ask new questions and to investigate them through the utopia.

Living in the *technium*, that place that is built not only “in hardware and [in] machines, [but also includes] culture, art, social institutions and intellectual creations of all kinds [and, with them] the software, laws, philosophical concepts” (Kelly, 2011, p. 14), human beings should understand that technological evolution – at the current historical point – is dependent on the actions of people, their inventors and researchers: thus, we must not be “scared” of the revolt of the machines, but look for an approach that can morally indicate the elimination of what enslaves one from what frees and develops, given the openness towards unexpected decisional spaces that imply the physical and metaphysical implementation of innovative processes for the evolution of society.

A new symbiotic relationship between applied technology and humanism is established to give a machine the positive aspects of human knowledge, which may be improved thanks to the technology of its instruments, trying not to let artificial intelligence know the defects that often stain ethics and human morals.

The primary task of an ethical principle that contemplates the human-machine relationship is to understand the structuring of these new

systems, without making them objects. Otherwise, this would end up emptying them of their potential, thus trying to recompose the current fracture it has created between humanism and technology, redefining the complex relationship that contemplates nature and technology, since, as already asserted, a human being is a more technical and natural entity. It is necessary to educate one with knowledge of a device, of the repercussions – those positive and negative that any tool with an ethical aspect brings with it and can have on the physical and mental functions of the person. This should include the potentialities and unpredictability of a machine, skills and knowing how to communicate, up to the conception of the tangibility of the real and the indeterminacy of the possible, in a social and academic context that is called to the interconnection of knowledge in order to face a market – be it an economic, political, cultural or employment market – dedicated to materialism that must be arrested, because, as Weber stated in 1905, “when the market is abandoned to its self-normative nature, it knows only the dignity of the thing and not of the person, not duties of brotherhood and pity, not original human relations of which the personal communities are carriers” (1968, p. 620).

In 2015, Roberto Zicari and Andrej Zwitter initiated the Data for Humanity project, contemplating five ethical principles for the use of digital data and their application in the development of tools that can manipulate them, decreeing that they should:

do no harm; use data to help create peaceful coexistence; use data to help vulnerable people and people in need; use data to preserve and improve [the] natural environment; use data to help create a fair world without discrimination (Data for Humanity, n.d.).

These are principles that contain the will to use information, the real power of contemporaneity, for the community and for its well-being, with the aim of fighting the great challenges of humanity and the planet.

In February 2017, the Future of Life Institute issued the Asilomar Principles, namely 23 guiding principles for the ethical, safe and collaborative development of artificial intelligence. Among the most important elements, we can highlight the concepts of: safety (AI systems should be safe and secure in their operational lifetime, and verifiably so where applicable and feasible; human responsibility for their use, misuse and actions and their ability to shape those implications); values (human systems should be

designed and operated with human dignity, rights, freedoms, and cultural diversity); objectives (these guidelines cover three groups: Research Issues, Ethics and Values, and Longer-term Issues) concerning privacy, security, up to the control of weapons and the moral, ethical and value principles that the relationship between person and machine will investigate in this mutual sharing of space and time.

In the European context, the British Standards Institution (BSI) drafted, in December 2016, a new guide for the ethical design and application of robotic systems in *Robots and robotic devices. Guide to the ethical design and application of robots and robotic systems*, stating: that AI must not be carried out to harm a person; that it is necessary to identify the person responsible for the behaviour of an AI; that to each AI one has its programmers; that it is essential to establish principles of responsibility, equality, cohabitation and ethical learning.

During a session of the European Parliament, in January 2017, the report of the Commission on Civil Law Rules on Robotics was presented, a hypothetical legislative instrument for the ethical and juridical regulation of AI, establishing some elements related to the relationship between maker and machine, looking for a connection with Asimov's three laws of robotics. Among the elements of innovation were: the need for a robot registration process; a moral structure and a guide for robot builders; the creation of a European robotics agency; the identification of AI and robots.

From ontological uniformity, from anthropocentric illusion, from a rational demiurge, a person must understand that their role is that of *homo poieticus*: one who questions knowledge and places the community at the centre of their attention, as an object to be taken care of.

Artificial intelligence allows one to increase the opportunities for shared visions, to know and to give thought to its positive unpredictability, since artificial "thought" decomposes our world into a multiplicity of parallel dimensions that – as a digital instrument now finding its way into the hands of the person without instruction book – need a manual in order to understand how to put the different discoveries together. Thus, it is necessary to work on a humanistic project that centres its value on the statement that it is not the tool that is the problem and that if a person plays the social role of employee-object-slave is because they have chosen this position. The human project must act "in such a way that the consequences [of its actions] are compatible with the survival of an authentic human life on earth" (Jonas, 1990, p. 16), partly accepting its dematerialisation.

This does not indicate the transposition of the real into the digital, as it would be fictional to hypothesise the termination of tangible society with just one click: being biological and technical bodies enclosed in the same shell, we should always confront ourselves with our physicality, our emotionality, with the capacity to think, to ask, and with a conscience that calls us to obey ethics and morals.

FUTURE PERSPECTIVES OF SHARED VALUES

*My mind is human.
My body is manufactured.
I'm the first of my kind, but I won't be the last.
We cling to memories as if they define us.
But what we do defines us.
My ghost survived to remind the next of us,
that humanity is our virtue.*

(Kusanagi in *Ghost in the Shell*, 2017)

What real and digital space do you want to build for the future of humanity? What kind of ethical and value relationship will be established between people and machines? Are human beings ready and aware of their role and able to accept a cosmocentric vision of society?

Real and digital, natural and artificial, belong to categories that seem, deliberately, to create clashes of ideologies between different groups of belonging – apocalyptic and integrated among others – that will be increasingly difficult to eradicate from the individual's conscience. The centrality of technology in everyday life has become an immanent element of theoretical and moral reflection that must lead to the vision not of battles, but of possibilities of salvation for the person, since artificial intelligence can suggest spaces for investigating the nature of humanity that alone, as a race, would never be investigated. We must conceive the plurality of these intelligences, using the noun in its plural form, as according to the agents, environments, individuals and experiences with which they interact or register, they will have a different formation and, moreover, they will be able to enrich themselves in the machine-to-machine dialogue; this would contribute to adding to a hypothetical evolutionary chain, not of being, but of the cosmos, a missing link having in itself the task of unveiling further ends in reality not contemplated until now.

Artificial intelligence can become an instrument in the fight against poverty, climate change, violence, the disparity of resources among people, revealing itself to be the greatest ally of humanity and the history of civilisation, succeeding in placing an individual on the periphery of social discourse, but only to enable them to grasp the uniqueness of their nature and make them, again, a curator of their environment; to unhinge the binomial capitalism-consumerism, in favour of a human capitalism, of a flourishing and shared economy that breaks down the stereotype of the image, of the simulacrum, in favour of an ecology of the market; allowing knowledge to progress faster, but in a correct, ethically sustainable way and free of space-time limits. Finally, artificial intelligence could be another factor that investigates the nature of humanity, reconciling it with the principles of responsibility, justice and cooperation.

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IF CASTLES AND STATUES COULD SPEAK TO US. THE CHANGING FREEDOM OF HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION IN THE CASE OF SLOVAKIA

Abstract

Beside official “policy of remembrance”, run primarily by state representatives or public institutions, and embodied in national holidays, monuments or in history textbooks, democratic societies offer the possibility to create a “culture of remembrance” by local actors within the public sphere. These local actors consist of NGOs, civic initiatives, local governments or even of the business sphere, the latter including so-called heritage industry actors (like historical hotels or private museums). As a result, the interpretation of historical narratives tends to become multi-faceted, interactive and inclusive, but the risk has also emerged that historical narratives can be fluid and banal as well. The present essay attempts to highlight how these bottom-up historical interpretations launched by local actors coloured the culture of remembrance in Slovakia, in a country where national history had been a servant of nation-building struggles practically throughout the whole 20th century. As many initiatives for renovating fortresses, erecting statues, organising historical events or launching historical hotels elucidate it, non-state actors have become active and immanent change-makers of the policy of remembrance in Slovakia, having a sometimes intentional, sometimes unintentional effect on broadening the freedom of historical interpretation in the country.

Key words: heritage industry, heritage interpretation, culture of remembrance, transnationalisation of memory, Slovakia

Buried under the heritage was the title given to an interesting essay highlighting the alleged passivity of the Monuments Board in Slovakia, in a monograph issued by the Institute of Cultural Policy (Moravčíková, 2017).

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One of the leaders of this think-tank, Magdaléna Vášáryová, a former ambassador of Slovakia to Poland, also refers to this slogan in the foreword of the aforementioned monograph: “one out of three [villages in Slovakia has] an abandoned mansion, castle, or at least a manor house, thanks to the long-term hostile attitude towards our nobility” (Vášáryová, 2017, p. 9). According to this pessimistic conclusion, “hostility” is the word which may describe the general attitude of Slovak national consciousness towards mansions, castles, manor houses. However, has this behaviour been changing for decades, especially those decades since the fall of communism? The present essay addresses this complex problem, namely how the attitude of Slovak historical consciousness towards this – inherited multi-ethnic – heritage has been changing throughout regimes and decades. A special focus will be placed on the recent decades after the fall of communism by posing the question: can we experience a plurality or freedom of historical interpretations in Slovakia rooted in the newly born democracy, and providing space for non-hostile behaviour towards its multi-ethnic heritage?²

HERITAGE PROTECTION IN SLOVAKIA – CHANGES WITHOUT DEVELOPMENT?

In order to answer this question, one needs to outline the main milestones of heritage protection and management in Slovakia, from the birth of Slovakia as an official territorial unit (first as a part of Czechoslovakia). After the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian empire, the strong sense of resentment which went along with the building a new, modern and Slavic statehood tended to consider the heritage of old monarchies to be a kind of barrier in the face of this struggle. Communist Czechoslovakia inherited this attitude from the so-called interwar republic, coupled with the “social engineering” of Marxists, trying to utterly reinvent and replan public community spaces. This does not mean that heritage protection was not institutionalised by these regimes: a Government Committee (Vládny komisariát) was established in 1919 for heritage protection, led by Jan Hoffmann, which was transformed into a permanent institute called the State

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Institute for Heritage Protection (Státny referát na ochranu pamiatok). However, regardless of institutions, heritage protection in Czechoslovakia had to face not just the reluctance of the Czechoslovak elite, but this anti-heritage climate of Czechoslovak modernism was also fuelled by a kind of sense of practicality. A spectacular example for this case is when the State Institute for Heritage Protection initiated a public debate, even an official contest awarding prizes, among experts around the dilemma concerning how to open up historical spaces in a better way for people in Bratislava to move between the Old Town and its surroundings. Several submitted plans incorporated the demolition of old buildings or maintaining just their facades, and even “on the place of these objects, which are today under heritage protection, there were plans to erect new buildings” (Porubská, 2013, p. 37). Jan Hofmann had to conclude that the underlying principle of heritage protection was not favoured by the modern city-planning of those days: both independent plans and regulations of local governmental bodies intended to demolish protected houses in the Old Town. Eventually, the political changes in 1938 stopped these drastic plans and “they did not come to the forefront in this form anymore” (ibid.).

The protection of historical urban centres was formed and improved gradually during the 20th century, not just in Slovakia but worldwide. In 1933, the highly recognised “Athens Charter” was adopted at the International Congress of Modern Architecture, tackling the question of cultural heritage, among other things. After the Second World War, the international communication of architects and heritage experts went further, adopting new charters while the Socialist Bloc was also active in this discourse, launching its own international platform called the Permanent Working Group of Socialist Countries for Renovating Historical and Cultural Heritage and Museum Values. Even a new law (Act 27/1987) was passed regarding the protection of historical settlements of Slovakia (Husovská, 2013). However, despite all these efforts, today’s experts have reached the bitter conclusion that the era of communism meant the severe and permanent deterioration of historical urban centres. The secret of this contradiction must lie in the fact that these Old Towns were born and developed due to the effect of civic freedom, free markets and self-government, and in the absence of these circumstances, international committees proved to be utterly inadequate for revitalising urban heritage.

As decades passed following the birth of Czechoslovakia, it clearly turned out that the country could not handle the heritage on its territory

which was not in tune with its official narrative, and rooted in the nobility, capitalism, as well as the activities of non-Slavic ethnic groups. However, Slovakia was not able to develop a stable attitude even towards its rural (“ľudové”) heritage. Although the first protected areas (reserves) of rural architecture were declared in the 1970s – and despite the current popularity of some of these sites like Cicmany – the tendency towards protection cannot be regarded as being unambiguously strengthened. According to experts, the number of “protected settlements” in this category has declined by 40% in recent decades (Baroková & Zvarik, 2013).³

The fall of communism may be regarded a new milestone: ideological limitations ceased to exist (1989); national independence created room and responsibility for Slovakia’s own historical interpretations (1993); and, finally, a democracy was born providing space for non-state activism (1998). However, national independence triggered attempts at nation-building, with the image of the country enduring a serious downturn between 1994 and 1998, until, finally, the time could come when historical interpretations were open to being built and raised up by the “people themselves”. An interesting question is whether heritage assets on the territory of Slovakia, full of non-Slovak traces and stories, are able to generate multi-ethnic narratives of history. The hypothesis of this research project is that these tendencies do exist.

Before picking some examples (case studies), some data should be employed to confirm the dominant existence of heritage sites with ethnically non-Slovak and non-peasant roots. According to the existing law on heritage protection, there are two categories of larger heritage sites in Slovakia, namely heritage reserves and heritage zones. The first category was created during the communist era, while the second category came into use after the change of regime. Both reserves and zones have subcategories, such as “urban”, “rural”, and “technical” reserves, and “urban”, “rural”, “special” and “regional” zones. When analysing the ratio of several subcategories, we can reach the clear conclusion that urban sites are in a dominant position among larger heritage areas: 17 out of a total of 28 heritage reserves are historical urban centres, while this ratio is 52 to 83 in the case of heritage zones (Škulavík, 2013). When analysing the 17 urban heritage reserves further, their territorial locations show the following pattern:

³ The authors call for increasing this number once again.

- Five of them are historical old towns of traditional regional centres (Trnava, Nitra, Trenčín, Zilina, Košice).
- Two of them are in the catchment area (“vonzáskörzet”) of old Pressburg (Bratislava Old Town and Svätý Jur).
- All three mining towns of Hauerland have been awarded this designation.
- The seven other urban heritage reserves – more than a third of the total number – can be found in Spis-Saris region.
- It is not too difficult to see, therefore, that the vast majority of the most important urban heritage areas represent the legacy of Slovakia’s former German-speaking citizens.

In the following sections of this article, we will look through some examples of the bottom-up pattern of the pluralisation of memory, triggered by the freedom of historical interpretation. In the second section, the re-inventing of castle areas will be presented with profit-based (market-led) and non-profit (NGO-led) examples. The third section tackles the different ways of conducting the patrimonialisation of urban spaces, primarily through scrutinising initiatives concerning erecting new statues: how efforts concerning the patrimonialisation of urban spaces by the new Slovak middle class have led to post-modern historical interpretations.

REINVENTING RURAL SPACES IN SLOVAKIA

In the following subchapter, some examples will be given concerning initiatives aimed not only at the renovation of castles, manors or other rural sites, but also at the reinvention of their narratives, their “historical message”. Regarding castles, one may assume that these local narratives may differ from the traditional Slovak nation-building narratives which consider the atmosphere of these heritage sites as culturally distant from Slovaks.

Renovated castles, manors and villas may typically serve as hotels after their rebirth. These initiatives have their own association called Historic Hotels of Slovakia. As the part of the umbrella organisation of the European Heritage Hotels Association, many Slovak members have already received international awards, such as the Grandhotel Sary Smokovec which was ranked second in the “A story to tell” category. The association has altogether fifteen members from Slovakia (Members, n.d.).

On investigating the stories of these castle hotels, an apparent aim of trying to mix the business interests with heritage protection and management becomes clear. The latter may be fuelled by the personal commitment of the owners, or, by the pure business interest of seeming “authentic”, “original” and “worth discovering”. One of the members of this association, for instance, is Château Gbeľany, whose new Slovak owner has struggled to renovate the castle in its historic form. Having issued a call to collect old items once belonging to the castle but just securing a few little things, they even contacted the previous owners for this reason. This attempt was successful: “They gave us the coat of arms of Majláths” (Stupacherová, 2016). The most recent event within the association is the joining of the Galicia Nueva Castle Hotel, which is a luxury hotel in Novohrad county and where extensive restoration work was conducted before its opening. In this work, led by the restorer Vladimír Plekanec, 400 m² was examined, resulting in the renovation of portraits of the kings of Hungary, which may also be seen as part of guided tours.⁴

It is also worth dealing with the castle of Hermanovce in detail as it unveils a real grassroots initiative, engaging the previous owners of the historical building in question. Hermanovce is a settlement in the vicinity of Prešov in Saris county, where the Péchy family had a large mansion for centuries that was expanded with an English garden and other small buildings in the 19th century. In the 20th century, this castle had to go through the same brutal process as essentially every mansion in the historical region of Upper Hungary: at the end of the Second World War the castle was robbed, the building nationalised and the owners deported. This rapid destruction was followed by decades of decay, and the castle eventually became a dead stone mound (Tomičová, 2014). However, after the change of regime, Klara Szakall von Losoncz, a Swiss lady who was the granddaughter of the last owner of the castle visited the site. Her grandfather, the last head of this branch of Péchy family found himself in Russian captivity after the Second World War while his daughter was sent to a Czech labour camp. This young woman met a young man from the Szakall von Losoncz family there, a former owner of a spa in eastern Slovakia who worked in the local mine at that time. In the world of labour camps of the 1950s, a real distinguished unification was made between these two families in

⁴ Press releases available at <https://zamockyhotelgalicianueva.sk/press-room>.

the form of their newborn daughter, Klara Szakall von Losoncz. Although she spent most of her life in Switzerland, she maintained her ability to speak Czech from her childhood. In addition, the memory of the deceased half-commoner/half-noble microcosm of her ancestors was absorbed in Switzerland, since the family, forced into emigration, nurtured family memories. Eventually, this motivated Klara to request the ownership of the castle (according to the law of restitution), following which she renovated it, now in the form of a luxury hotel (Vavrová, 2015). It is worth viewing the pictures of the castle on the Internet: the taste and opulence that we see here are the result of a 15-year effort and obviously the result of a lot of money. Architectural and cultural tourism prizes have been awarded to this newly established hotel in Slovakia and abroad. The owner has tried to meet the strongest market trends – offering it as a wedding venue – while struggling to recall something about the deceased multi-lingual world. This interwar world was an unlikely combination of pre-modern multi-lingual aristocracy and modern social life with tennis courts and swimming pools, with relatives arriving from Budapest during the holiday season in a Tatra luxury car from Prague. Although a cosmopolitan microcosm had emerged here with cultural openness, it remained socially closed, in the middle of Czechoslovakian mass democracy, far from the reality of the vast majority of local people. As a kind of good practice, and as proof of the possibility to operate a mansion on a market-based mechanism, it may be a good prospect for similar heritage buildings seeking a better fortune (Szakall von Losoncz, 2017).

The above-mentioned initiatives are profit-based solutions, launched by private owners, having a business model, and aiming to make heritage profitable. However, NGOs, local communities and non-profit initiatives also tackle the question of heritage protection, adding a multi-ethnic narrative to these sites. One of the most successful NGOs in this field is the Black Holes (*Čierne diery*) Civic Association. They achieved one of their greatest successes with a non-profit-based analysis of industrial heritage. Although their original aim was to discover the traces of industrial life, as a side-line, the association is also actively engaged in composing or strengthening multi-ethnic narratives. Their activism was originally the most spectacular in Gemer, a southern county of Slovakia: “Gemer had become the iron county of Hungary, now this legacy of the Andrassy family had fallen into ruins” – they concluded (*Čierne Diery*, 2017). To bring these territories back

from invisibility, and back to the mental map of Slovaks, they mapped and published the technical heritage of Slovak cities, used billboards to warn about the illegal destruction of heritage monuments, as well as urging the police and heritage institutions to deal with the situation.⁵

The Black Holes Civic Association is a good example of when non-profit behaviour meets professionalism. However, there is no evidence that either profit-based or non-profit initiatives will meet high-quality, professional criteria of heritage protection and historical interpretation. In other words, grassroots initiatives may pose a risk of addressing heritage in an enthusiastic, but amateur way. Nevertheless, if we investigate the “amateur activism” in the field of ruined castles and fortresses, we can see that these energetic local struggles can gradually involve official institutions or experts dealing with heritage protection. Therefore, as a general pattern, the gradual process of professionalisation can be shown in several NGO-led initiatives.

A good example of this is the castle of Sklabina. The visitor is attracted to the particular spirit of this place, as a small farm has developed at the base of the castle with pets, while a local civic organisation has established its own small museum here, exhibiting excavation finds. As a result, a mini-ecosystem was formed around the deserted fortress. A local guided tour was also launched here by the Donjon civic association, aimed towards the restoration of the whole castle, gathering historians and young urban professionals among its members who had fallen in love with the countryside. There are a few things in the museum that visitors do not expect in such a place: for example, a giant churn suitable for making cheese, and where fresh sheep’s cheese may be bought and consumed. This cheese is not the end of the “cultural shocks” on offer: the guided tour is also full of surprising stories, constituting a difficult-to-understand narrative about the heroism of Slovak warriors. These confused histories had a major conclusion, however: here the Slovaks have always fought for the independence against “aliens”. Although the values that had been uncovered from the earth served here as a chaotic, amateur nation-building narrative, as stated above, the institutionalisation of such grassroots initiatives can shift amateurism into professionalism. For instance, the president of the Donjon

⁵ See more at <http://ciernediery.sk/kto-sme/>.

civic association published a book about the castle, but together with a researcher (Eliáš & Svateník, 2017).⁶

The very spectacular route of the above-mentioned luxurious castle hotels is still unique. Another village in the near, called Pečovská Nová Ves, which was named after the local landowner Péchy family, is not in such a fortuitous situation, however. Although the settlement has three castles and one mansion on the cultural heritage list,⁷ there is no clear idea concerning their utilisation. Just one mansion is in a renovated state, used by the local council (Program rozvoja, 2016). The development plan of the settlement just displays very general wishful thinking about the future of these objects, while the list of already-elaborated projects does not contain any special ideas for these castles. The desperate struggle of local governments to find investors may produce special solutions. Thus, in order to raise awareness towards the abandoned historic buildings in Pečovská Nová Ves, the deputy mayor Stanislav Karabinoš began to write a book about the village – this is also an example of “amateur enthusiasm”, with the prospect of turning into professionalism (Viaceré kaštiele, 2016).

Another special solution was chosen in the case of the above-mentioned castle in Sklabina, namely local government begun to launch an advertising campaign to sell it. Thus the medieval fortress was placed on a real estate portal, as a strange example of how a ruin can become a marketable product, with exact measurements as calculated by real estate agents, as if it were an apartment or a holiday home. According to the advertisement, “the property” was built in the 13th century, its condition “has deteriorated a lot” and has a floor area of 9,600 m². It is accessible by car, and if somebody has a quarter of a million euros, they may call the real estate agent immediately. At the same time, the ruined castle is also impressive, with its pictures on the Internet worth looking at, along with the real estate agent’s commercial advertisement for it. Indeed, there is also a commercial for Sklabina, aimed at trying to sell it.

These examples show the tendency concerning how lovers of the countryside, archaeologists, ancestor-seeking immigrants, hotel managers

⁶ The question arises logically: Why do such reconstruction works not belong to museums and heritage agencies? This may be related to the confusing property regulations and disputes around property ownership.

⁷ See more at <http://www.pamiatky.sk/sk/page/evidencia-narodnych-kulturnych-pamiatok-na-slovensku>.

and deputy mayors can involve themselves in the historical interpretations of rural heritage sites, having an intentional or unintentional side-effect on the plurality of narratives within Slovakia. In urban spaces, where the city creates a complex heritage site in itself, this process is based more strongly on local government.

REINVENTING URBAN SPACES IN SLOVAKIA

International literature generally acknowledges that local development may have a major impact on local identity, or at least a significant impact on it. Local community developments can not only improve the quality of life, but also increase the internal cohesion of a community and the prestige of belonging to it (geo-branding), which embodies narratives strengthening or building local memory (Graham, Ashworth & Tunbridge, 2016). The main actors of local community development are local governments or NGOs that cooperate with them. If we look through the initiatives of the local authorities or civilians in Slovakia, many of these initiatives are trying to build locally understandable brands based on figures from the pre-modern period, primarily from among the rulers of the multi-ethnic Kingdom of Hungary. Thus, a bottom-up mechanism of the transnationalisation of memory can be distinguished, resulting in local historical interpretations with a multi-ethnic content (Tota & Hagen, 2016).

In Bratislava, the process of the transnationalisation of memory is strongly linked to two rulers: Maria Theresa, and more recently king Matthias. Maria Theresa had already been placed in the forefront in the city's local memory in the 19th century, as one of the developers of former Pressburg. Her ruling years are strongly linked to the historical fact that as a great many aristocratic families erected palaces in this city, close to the Viennese courtyard, cultural and economic life developed. The city honoured her in 1897 by unveiling a statue made in Carrara marble by János Fadrusz. The brutal fate of the statue symbolises the 20th century history of Bratislava: in 1921, in a deep anti-Hungarian and anti-monarchical mood, Czechoslovak legionaries smashed the work of art into pieces (Mannová, 2015, p. 241).

Over the course of almost a hundred years since then, Pressburg, now Bratislava, has changed very much: the question of Slovak attitudes

towards Hungarians and the question of state sovereignty, national emancipation – or their hysterical appearance – are not characteristic of the discourse of public life in the Slovakian capital. In the context of historical memory, the need for the self-representation of the middle class in Bratislava has come to the fore, utilising somehow the multi-ethnic past of this city, and also triggered by the necessity of “place marketing” for an increasing European prestige.

In these struggles, the well-known queen (and, in fact, empress) may be awarded an important role (Čobejová, 2017). Indeed, these are the motivations behind the initiatives of renovating the ruined sculpture of Maria Theresa. This motion has sparked off serious disputes and its reception was not clearly positive. Indeed, these anxieties are not so much related to the character of Maria Theresa but rather to the dilemma of art history, whether it is appropriate to set up a replica of an old statue in the third millennium instead of preparing a new work of art (Hilbertová, 2011). Eventually, the Bratislava Beautification Society temporarily set up a “replica of the replica” on the Danube riverbank in Bratislava, which was a plaster cast of Maria Theresa’s equestrian sculpture.⁸ The Society is also about to erect a bronze replica in the near future.

Moreover, there are also some new royal sculptures beyond Bratislava: the Hungarian king from the Anjou dynasty, Louis the Great, was commemorated by a statue in Skalica in 2008, and his father (Charles Robert) was similarly recognised in Kremnica in 2011. Both of them had gained attention due to their deep influence on regional development in a historical perspective: the previous ruler was the founder of Skalica, and the latter awarded town privileges to Kremnica (1372, the declaration of “free royal town”). Interestingly enough, not only medieval figures have been commemorated by statues in the territory of Slovakia. In 1998, a memorial was erected concerning a medieval charter from the year 1111 which confirmed the privileges of Nitra Abbey, while Kosice chose the same way of remembrance with the unveiling of a statue of its coat of arms which had been awarded by Louis the Great in 1369 (Lacika, 2013).

This dispute will possibly grow broader in the future. For instance, the city administration of Banská Bystrica initiated the commissioning of

⁸ However, in fact, Maria Theresa had already been commemorated by a sculpture in Bratislava after the change of regime: in 1992, a small carving was set up in the garden of the archbishop’s palace, which had been previously found in Nitra (Kollai, 2009).

a statue of king Béla IV who was the ruler who awarded the settlement municipal rights in 1255. Even a call was launched to the public at large to encourage citizens to donate to the project, with city officials expecting contributions by the end of 2017 (Mesto Banská Bystrica, 2017).

Such an open step would not have been possible in the earlier incarnations of Slovakia, under the tight control of state-led memory policy of Czechoslovakism, communism or Meciarism. As a result of these rigorous and monolithic nation-building policies, the memory of monarchs and dynasties, especially of the Árpád dynasty (rulers of Hungary from 1000 to 1301) had faded away utterly, disappeared from the pages of history textbooks and from the mental map of Slovaks. Just some very hidden traces had been maintained, such as the coat of arms of Banská Bystrica or Prešov, featuring the Árpáds' red and silver banners, referring indirectly to the founders (or a tiny street named after Béla IV in Zvolen, as a pale reminder of the king who developed the town). If the present call of Banská Bystrica had been successful, this would have been the first statue commemorating members of Árpád dynasty, initiated directly by Slovak authorities.

In the above examples, the initiators were local governments or NGOs closely related to them. Although, in most cases, they seem to be the actors launching multi-ethnic historical interpretations, market players may also appear among these actors, primarily through the heritage industry embodied in tourism and by real estate developments which need "place marketing" also. A very vivid example of the latter is the case when a new residential and office district was to be planned and built in Bratislava, and in which a new square will be formed by new buildings. This newly-born square is to be named after king Matthias. While this proposal was made by Radoslav Števík, Mayor of Bratislava Old Town, it is also supported by the Blumental Office real estate development company. They argue that king Matthias had a "close and positive relationship" with the city and had a serious impact on Bratislava's educational history by establishing a university named Academia Istropolitana. According to the mayor's statement, the name of the king Matthias (Námestie Mateja Korvína) is appropriate because the king has "done a lot for the city's development in art, culture and economy" (V Starom Meste, 2017). His "popularity" in Bratislava originates from the memory of the university he created here. As a modern brand, the memory of this university is currently being built further by a non-governmental organisation, Academia Istropolitana Nova, located on the elegant outskirts of the capital city, where cultural heritage,

urban development and democratic education are organised, through offering conferences and developing e-learning materials.⁹

One may conclude that local government, market actors and NGOs are also active participants in the field of place branding, and all of them like to choose royal brands. From the point of view of their motivations, the rediscovery and reinventing of kings, queens, dukes and monarchs in such a form can be explained in that their characters symbolise power, success, and a patina of some kind of authentic Europeanism.¹⁰ The renaissance of rulers' popularity in this region seems to be related with the fact that local societies lack the centuries-old urban traditions of citizenry and the centuries-old capitalist traditions of family businesses and deeply rooted local firms. Indeed, in their absence, principally rulers or magnates can become symbols of heritage-based branding, both in public spaces, in private spaces and in business. Thus, the memory of pre-modern dynasties endures not just in dead bronze or stone statues, but also in their spirit which is rejuvenated, reinvented (or, moreover, overwritten in a post-modern style) by living organisms, by local actors such as real estate developers and civilians. In this way, the Slovak audience experiences a kind of "new pluralism" of historical interpretations, being sometimes in contradiction with each other, but colouring the earlier monolithic Slovak self-image, and symbolising that freedom of speech tackles history as well.

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⁹ See citations and more at www.ainova.sk.

¹⁰ This phenomenon of commodification of the past has already been scrutinised by researchers of the heritage industry (Bammer, 1994, p. 111).

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PIOTR BARTULA¹

US AND NOTHING

Abstract

Perhaps everyone is familiar with Aristotle's view that man is a cultural, social and political animal: "... And he who by nature and not by mere accident is without a state, is either a bad man or above humanity; he is like the 'Tribeless, lawless, hearthless one,' whom Homer denounces – the natural outcast is forthwith a lover of war; he may be compared to an isolated piece at draughts." Although Aristotle's view seems obvious, at first sight, it is not so. This is evidenced by the numerous examples of recluses, outsiders, stateless persons, anarchists who dismiss belonging to a state or world culture, thinking nothing of them. Thus, there they feel observed, spied upon, assessed, censored, directed, sized-up, priced, marked, lectured, tied, robbed, repressed, degraded, examined, baited, derided, plundered, judged, manipulated, sold-out, conscripted, corrected, socialised, punished and homeless. These views unmask the political, social and cultural "Us", as a mask hiding the anarchistic and pre-social "Nothing".

Key words: Nothing, Us, Kaspar Hauser, Salomon Perel, political animal

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Furthermore:

The proof that the state is a creation of nature and prior to the individual is that the individual, when isolated, is not self-sufficing; and therefore he is like

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a part in relation to the whole. But he who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god: he is no part of a state (ibid.).

Directed by the spirit of contrariness, I will add Friedrich Nietzsche's comment: "Aristotle says that in order to live alone one must be either an animal or a god. The third alternative is lacking. A man must be both; a philosopher" (Nietzsche, 2013, p. 7).

Of course, Aristotle was not naïve and knew that people break laws, both natural and positive, and can be distrustful, vile, licentious and ill-mannered. However, the state is the fate or destiny of man: "Now, that man is more of a political animal than bees or any other gregarious animals is evident." Teleologically, although the state demands trust and mutual friendship, deluded trust causes enormous damage and disappointment: "... the spirit within us is more stirred against our friends and acquaintances than against those who are unknown to us" (Aristotle, 1885, Book Seven, Part VI).

Although Aristotle's view seems obvious, at first sight, it is not so. This is evidenced by the numerous examples of recluses, outsiders, stateless persons, anarchists who dismiss belonging to a state or world culture, thinking nothing of them. Thus, there they feel observed, spied upon, assessed, censored, directed, sized-up, priced, marked, lectured, tied, robbed, repressed, degraded, examined, baited, derided, plundered, judged, manipulated, sold-out, conscripted, corrected, socialised, punished and homeless. These views unmask the political, social and cultural "Us", as a mask hiding the anarchistic and pre-social "Nothing".

In the anarchistic gallery of asocial figures furthest removed from the social, political and cultural world is found he:

who in 1828 at Pentecost,
to Nuremberg did come a poor boy lost,
from a letter in his hand it was hereby told,
his wish to be a cavalryman bold (cited by Werner Herzog).

Kaspar Hauser, who is here referred to, was found having no idea of his surroundings, unable to speak or pray but only able to sign his name. The municipal authorities took care of his upbringing, but following several years of being the subject of an educational experiment, Hauser was killed by unknown assailants. Books have been written and films made about

him. The Polish philosopher Bronisław Trentowski maintained the legend that he had been born the heir to a throne and had been destined to rule and govern. Although he had been deliberately raised as an animal, once he had begun to regain his humanity he was exterminated in fear of his testimony. The figure of Hauser has also served as to weave analogies between his fate and the fate of one held in the darkness of uncultured people who eventually, however, achieves the power he deserves.² Indeed, it seems that he has achieved this today!

Although in view of the quite poor intellectual level of the mythical natural man this would constitute confirmation of Aristotle's thesis, on the other hand, his innate mildness would refute it. The riddle of a stranger from nowhere indicates a fundamental factor of the controversy around the cultural and political nature of man. Kaspar Hauser was born outside society, went through a phase of socialisation but still remembered life alone as having been better: "Then, when I had not yet come here, I never had such pain in my head and was not tormented as I am now, since I have been here" (Handke, 2009, p. 29). As an acultural and asocial person, he never showed aggression, anger or ambition, with the world of rivalry being entirely foreign to him. At the sight of a soldier with a sword in hand, he would not have fought or fled as he possessed enormous trust towards the world around him. Although he was no beast, he was as far from God as a beast, all the more for the fact that in his simple mind he did not find the concept of the Supreme Being, thereby driving a theology scholar to despair. Although he did not possess an innate sense of formal logic, he did have enough common sense to solve the liar paradox, asking him the question "Are you a red frog?" One by one, he uncovered the concept of God, logic, time and space, ethical imperatives as artificial social products and belief based on violence and/or trust in school, church and state institutions. He was a radical nominalist, treating all general concepts in the collective pseudonym "Us" as a barely voiced breath.

² "With people as the unfortunate Kaspar Hauser this is what happens. He was supposed to have been born as the heir to a throne and was destined to rule and govern. At that time, he was deliberately raised as an animal but when fate allowed him to be delivered into the hands of human friends and come back to his own feelings as a prince, he suffered the blow of a murderer. Is this not the never-ending story of human affliction?" (Trentowski, 1974, p. 74). All translations from Polish come from Marzena McNamara unless indicated otherwise.

The philosophical moral of Hauser's story is simple in its own Rousseauian, romantic and existential meaning: a person comes from nowhere but we see him everywhere in cultural chains and social roles. Here, in recalling the name of Rousseau, one should state some minor reservations. We know his statement that "man is born free but everywhere he is in chains." But what does this actually mean? It is, as if to say, that man is born a cultural fascist but everywhere we see him fighting for peace until everything is razed to the ground.

In the mythological medium of Kaspar Hauser is it even worse, after all freedom – and its division into negative and positive forms – are already cultural categories. This is how person really comes from nowhere as a social and existential "Nothing" but everywhere we see him subjected to the pressure of "Us" which creates a transparent State of the Sun as living in gloomy counter-cultural spaces only gives rise to unnecessary thoughts. Thus, a cruel society forces us into uniforms and epaulettes, shoves rapiers into our hands, dresses us in togas, surplices and academic gowns. Under the social mask, however, every one of us still remains a mystical anarchist who, for the sake of survival, must practice the art of cultural opportunism or die without a position, stabbed with a knife or offered hemlock by advocates of the "common good". And here is the whole mystery of existence: do not allow yourself to be killed by those who have been told they are someone better than NOTHING.

According to Peter Handke, society makes, as it were, in every Hauser (every one of us) an "Us" system of language which restrains and imprisons us. Behind the façade of a sleepy town (Nuremberg or Cracow) always hides a system of social control destroying intruders, losers, strangers from the primeval den of "Nothing" – an existential stateless person from conventional good and evil, beauty and ugliness, truth and falseness, faith and atheism, culture and civilisation (Handke, 2009).³

Every "I"/"Nothing" is then moulded and shaped by "Us" – the agents and police, who therefore fiercely train in the gym of social control: historical, cultural, religious and scientific policies. Experts in social-gymnastics wrap a collar of rosary beads made of guilt around "Kasper's" neck in order to carry him off to the Last Judgement while deriving sadistic pleasure from lashing him with a moral whip of syllogisms. The whip, "collectively

³ See also the film by Werner Herzog entitled *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser*.

Us”, falls on Kaspar’s (Handke, 2009, p. 46)⁴ back who in the end “resembles a picture of a manikin in an exhibition devoted to domestic culture” (p. 41).

In the drama *Iwona, Princess of Burgundy* [*Iwona, księżniczka Burgunda*] a similar case, in essence, is presented by Witold Gombrowicz, an activist of the culturally empty “I” entangled with forms of nothingness. The eponymous “Princess of Burgundy” (a version of Kaspar), a mute almost not able to say anything – a shapeless “Nothing” – concentrates the frightened attention of the court upon herself, which in the end induces someone “culturally foreign” to choke on a courtly dish (carp).⁵ They make her – in self-defence, as it were – participate in this herself on the principle: either “Us” – the Court, or the “Asocial Nothing” – with deadly threats of order and social rituals in which a chamberlain is a chamberlain, a king is a king, a prince is a prince, a peasant is a peasant and a priest is a priest.

The counter-cultural courage of Prince Philip to bring “idiots” to the court is a liberating attempt to counterbalance the established order. Thus, marrying a beautiful, clever and cultured person is no art as any boor can do it. However, falling in love with a Nobody is an act of cultural liberation – here, one should display the aristocratic will to power:

Yes, I am sufficiently rich to become engaged to someone exceptionally poor. Why should I only like a beautiful woman? Am I not allowed to like an ugly one? Where is it written? Where is the law to which I should bend as a soulless organ and not a free person? (Gombrowicz, 2015, p. 22–23).

Fundamentally, every one of us who is an educated whisperer makes the entire system of cultural beliefs. I, for example, grew up in Catholic Poland, did not choose my gender, country, language or whether I was to be

⁴ In accordance with Handke’s interpretation, each one of us is led through whispering to speaking with the aid of material speech (2009, p. 26); “. . . is taught a model of views with the aid of which a decent person makes it through life” (p. 43); “. . . you are free to think that which you say, as you also have to think as you say, as you are not allowed to think differently from what you say” (p. 55).

⁵ This recalls the anecdote of the fox who calls together a meeting of pheasants and turkeys in order to discuss cultural issues, namely: in which dishes they would like to be eaten for supper. When they declare that they do not want to be eaten at all, the fox replies “Please, do not stray from the subject.”

baptised or not. I believe that I imbibed faith in God at my mother's breast and if my father had had milk to give I would have got it from my father's milk also. In other words, I have the impression that God has coercively accompanied me since I was a child. Even the desire to confirm or deny his existence results from pre-philosophical ideas and subservience to instilled cultural models. I once heard that God lives in Poland but holidays in Paris. Indeed, since the time I was a child I heard that mankind had sinned in Adam, had atoned in Christ, that although only innocence atones, I, being subjectively innocent, participate in collective guilt in some strange way. Since I was a child as I have been repeating that in sinning in thought, word, action or neglect, I suffer from the non-culpable guilt of original sin of "Us", although I had done nothing as an individual to deserve it. On the other hand, I am, however, grateful that Polish "cultural models" do not require me to place a visible sign of my religious affiliation on my person. In this sense, I feel free physically, culturally and politically as in existentially liminal situations I could hide and mask my Catholic identity, pretend that I am someone else – that I am Nobody.

Not all of those who believe differently from me have had this luxury in the 20th century. This recalls the example of Solomon Perel (another version of Kaspar), the main character of Agnieszka Holland's film *Europa, Europa*. This is based on the fact that almost from the beginning of his conscious life he became aware that he was guilty but not knowing why. The circumcision, which was to join the boy to a cultural-religious-political community and issue him with a visible sign of his religious, social and racial identity, has become a mark of stigma of non-culpable guilt: that which was meant to be platform opening his mind, heart and senses to the intellectual, cultural and religious legacy has become a vehicle to nothingness. Therefore, in circumstances of the influence of Nazi ideology, this meant a psychological and existential initiation into the nothingness of the world. That which in the intentions of parents was meant to have strengthened the youth's cultural and religious identity, does not allow him to be himself in the new social conditions. On the contrary, it becomes the cause of numerous psychological, political and sexual mishaps, since the youth has to conceal his nakedness from his lover in the Hitler Youth – thus, this was a culturisation and politicisation of nakedness, one whose unmasking is lethal. Desiring to survive in the world of this new Leviathan, Solomon changed his masks – sometimes of hostile and sometimes of friendly

ideologies.⁶ These would be typical symptoms of the lethal process leading to the death of cultural identity, to the disease of an acquired deficit in human nature – to nothingness. Following such awful events, it is no surprise that people fear the shadow of their own national-cultural identity.⁷

A more uplifting example of a stateless person than Kaspar Hauser is Diogenes the Cynic. His behaviour was both part animalistic and part divine, certainly not pro-society and even less pro-state. He has entered history as a philosophical down-and-out scorning society and political authority. His uncouth statement “Stand out of my sunlight” directed at Alexander the Great has given rise to admiration among political and government dissenters up to today. He lived as a nomad, pissing into the idealistic wind of all conventions and cultural theories. He did not wish to be Aristotle’s “featherless biped”, he rather preferred to remain an unplucked chicken performing public masturbation. May one, however, describe such kinds of activities as manifestations of cultural freedom or just normal boorishness?⁸ Undoubtedly, however, this youthful symbol of self-sufficiency makes him the first anarcho-libertarian. He lived in a system unknown to Aristotle: egocentric, living in a clay wine jar, thus not as a trusting part

⁶ The figure of Perel was also the main character of the book entitled *Hitler’s Jewish Soldiers: The Untold Story of Nazi Racial Laws and Men of Jewish Descent in the German Military* by Bryan Mark Rigg (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 2002).

⁷ This is recalled in a book by Ernest Gellner (2009, p. 81): “A concept of not belonging to any nation requires a great deal of acrobatics from today’s imagination. Chamisso, a French emigrant during the Napoleonic period, wrote a wonderful proto-Kafkaesque novel about a man who had lost his own shadow. Although the charm of the book is based, among other things, on intended ambiguity, it is difficult not to suspect that for the author a Man without a Shadow is a Man without a Nation. When the acquaintances of Peter Szlemiel discover his disconcerting property, they begin to avoid him, although he lacks nothing else apart from his shadow. Someone who does not have their own nation, is an affront to commonly accepted categories and offends public opinion.”

⁸ “Someone took him into a magnificent house and warned him not to expectorate, whereupon having cleared his throat he discharged the phlegm into the man’s face, being unable, he said, to find a meaner receptacle” (Diogenes Laertius, 1968). There are various accounts on the subject of the death of Diogenes: some believe that he received a fatal dog bite, others that he died “by holding his breath”. No matter how this occurred, following his death one Cercidas of Megalopolis compared him to a dog: “Not so he who aforetime was a citizen of Sinope, / That famous one who carried a staff, doubled his cloak, and lived in the open air. / But he soared aloft with his lip tightly pressed against his teeth / And holding his breath withal. For in truth he was rightly named / Diogenes, a true-born son of Zeus, a hound of heaven.”

of a kingdom, aristocracy or polity, or a tyranny, oligarchy or democracy to a lesser degree. He was rather an activist of misanthropy, a biophile dismissing the artificial world of the city and its conventions. He was a social Nobody in the complete sense of its meaning. However, in order to be Nobody, one has to be Somebody – a hound, but a Hound of Heaven.

Emil Cioran describes a contemporary “Diogenes” in the form of a flute player in a café, a tramp who sleeps under bridges or in great hotels, earning lots of money but spending it all:

During our encounter, I said to him: Listen, you’re the greatest philosopher in Paris, the only great contemporary one. And he replied: You’re making a fool of me, you’re mocking me. I protested: Not at all. I said that to you because you live, you contemplate all the time; you experience your problems while they are interwoven with your life. He lived in a manner recalling the Greek philosophers who orated on the streets and in the markets. That which they said, was in line with life itself (Cioran, 1999, p. 87).

Socrates himself was also in conflict not only with democratic Athens but also with the entire politico-cultural sphere of the polis. Although it is true he lived at the cost of the city as the unbearable child of Athenian democracy and was for a time tolerated and maintained by the politico-cultural system, he was eventually forced to drink a quite bitter dose of hemlock. While he stood, therefore, on the basis of real democracy, he had promoted an anti-democratic system of values amongst the young. The decision to accept this political sentence and decline escape places him between cultural anarchy, civic nothingness and government legalism – regarding civil disobedience. Socrates is a great anarcho-legalist who died, however, on a position of civil law.⁹

As a continuator of both positions one must mention another disobedient citizen, Henry David Thoreau. If Hauser was thrown into an urban world from his own burrow, myself, Thoreau (and Socrates) have taken a conscious decision to abandon the so-called cultural polis which is really a fountain of nothingness: evil, slavery, war and degeneration. As a Platonist without political ambitions, he tore up the social contract and in the name of asocial egocentricism withdrew to the shores of a lake where

⁹ Socrates was right to choose death and not escape: “Do you imagine that a state can subsist and not be overthrown, in which the decisions of law have no power, but are set aside and overthrown by individuals?” (Plato, 1984, XI B).

he consumed home-grown fruit. However, this self-imposed exile was not completely successful since the town came for the deserter. He kept himself, therefore, on the point of the border of culture and the state of nature, thereby presenting the opportunity for the powers that be to conduct a tax inspection in the person of a tax collector who came to reprimand a citizen desiring to be only (and just) an apolitical Nobody. As a result of this tax incident, Thoreau was deemed a criminal and spent a night in prison but was released once an aunt had paid what was “owed” to the government (reportedly to the great dismay of the accused). This disobedient citizen declared the existence of a pre-state consciousness which the state wished to question, destroying “I”, the person, for “Us”, the citizens. The person is above the state, the state is evil and not an Aristotelian common good. Thoreau reveals particular distrust and contempt of the state, as a form of nothingness, in the following words:

The mass of men serve the state thus, not as men mainly, but as machines, with their bodies. They are the standing army, and the militia, jailers, constables, posse comitatus, etc. In most cases there is no free exercise whatever of the judgment or of the moral sense; but they put themselves on a level with wood and earth and stones; and wooden men can perhaps be manufactured that will serve the purpose as well. Such command no more respect than men of straw or a lump of dirt (Thoreau, 1849).

On this lump of dirt Behemoth pays homage to Leviathan (as communicated by Piotr Bartula):

Let the slenderness of my body not deceive you nor the tender white of the neck, the brightness of the open forehead, the down on the sweet lip, the cherubic smile, the sprightly step. Let not my innocence move you, nor my purity, tenderness and simplicity, or the cut of jacket, trousers or Hugo Boss socks. Let not the brightness of my phosphorous eyes paralyse you as from them shines splendour, enchantment, magic, beauty, sumptuousness, magnificence, prestige and a Gnostic certainty of work well done. It is I who conducted the betrayal for which there are no mitigating circumstances, no justification. I did not have any parents, no genes nor any bad experiences from my childhood; I am not Russian, Chechen, Ukrainian, German, Polish, Chinese, Tibetan, Serbian, Croatian, Sunni or Shiite, man or woman, local or newcomer, black or white. I am not affected by socio-biology, behavioural psychology or psychoanalysis as I walk legless over cultures, nations, races, not considering the colour of anyone’s skin, height, muscular build, accuracy

of eyesight and brain capacity. Your literature, poetry, plays and films adore the pictures of nothingness which I have painted. The aesthetics of violence, denunciation and death is a specialisation at my university. It is for you that I weave thousands of tales of demonism, crime, vengeance, greed, perversion, hatred and war. You prefer to hear about gamblers, alcoholics, drug addicts, those who committed suicide, tramps, nomads and heartbreakers than good citizens and fathers of families. Take the world away from me and the bars, gambling houses and shopping malls will disappear. It is for me that the best fashion designers work as you prefer the splendour of the robes of popes, kings and princes and not the coarse attire of beggars, monks, hermits and the apostles. It is I that causes those who are cruel to have more freedom if they wear chic uniforms and sing catchy songs. It is I who is the apostle of your beautiful disasters: the enchanting Austrian, the Georgian minister, the killer of moneylenders from St. Petersburg. It is thanks to me that human nature is wild, unpredictable, cruel and beautiful. My portrait of Dorian Gray shows that youth and aesthetic beauty is worth committing the sin of crime which is a symbol of human freedom. My act of creating the nothingness of the temporal state was absolutely ingenious. A result of this determined ingenuity is your contemporary universal fear and total lack of trust, the essential active existence of the Tyrant freeing himself from the tyranny of his neighbour. Let every one of you consider yourselves armed when you travel and try to find yourselves in good company. Let them consider what he thinks of your countrymen when he travels armed anyway; and what does he think of the inhabitants of a town when he bolts the doors; and what he thinks about his children and servants when he closes his chests. Here, does he not charge all of humanity? The whole dimension of power, social discipline has been created only due to me. I cause all uncertain property, dangerous agreements and threatened dangers. It is for me that you establish the police, arm young boys training them how to shoot, use stratagems and interventions. Without me there are no uniforms, epaulettes, ranks and discipline. It is I who is the original substitute for creative power. It is for me that you train armies of undercover agents present in stadiums, city streets and village markets. It is because of me you fear losing sight of your baggage at airports, railway stations and playgrounds. It is for me that groups of detectives work in shops, banks and public buildings. It is due to me that in the doors of every school a guard in a black outfit stands while numerous cameras ready to undercover my presence are located in the corridors of government offices and universities. In this way, I am carrying out my sophisticated plan of Secular Panopticism. It is for me you oil the guillotine, repair the drop on the gallows and the electric chair, and sterilise syringes of death. The executioner's sword is only

forged because you fear my dagger, my revolver, my baseball bats. It is for me you put locks on your doors, train bulldogs, put bars on your windows and fence off your property, build fortified castles and prisons, put on crowns, shoot cannons, carry muskets, brandish lances and banners, start battles, place curses and issue anathemas. It is due to me that you may trust no one but must suspect everyone. It is on my wishes that you must send a priest for whom the only justification for an act requiring confession is my crime, my "sin", my nothingness. It is for me that you train sociologists and psychologists designated for the rehabilitation of those who sell my services. It is for me you safeguard your property by depositing it in a bank, hiding it in your socks or under a floorboard. Already from birth you heard from your parents: don't trust strangers (or acquaintances), don't show anyone your expensive toys because you will draw jealousy upon yourself (or cheap ones, as you will draw contempt), hide your ideas because they will be copied, insure your home because they will come to take, burn or rob it. Don't open the door to anyone; whoever knocks on the door calling for help could be me: me – the thief, me – the kidnapper, me – the false saint, me – the rapist, me – the poisoner, me – the robber, me – the harbinger of violence, me – the nobody. Your sons will pass on to their sons and daughters Konrad Wallenrod's evil infinity of the kiss of Almanzor, with they subsequently passing it on to their sons and grandsons, thereby creating generation after generation of mistrust:

With a kiss I infected your soul
 With a venom which eats you away
 Go and look at me in agony whole
 You all have to die anyway (Mickiewicz, 1846, p. 75)

The whole dimension of power, all social discipline has been created by me and for me. Take the social world from me and the entire deprivation of your legal inventions and philosophical tracts concerning the philosophy of law will be revealed, written in regard to myself. The whole dimension of power, all social discipline has been created only due to me. It was on my wishes that Leviathan was created, a god armed with the lethal weapons of sword and crosier, with cannons and anathemas. I speak to you as the Prime Mover of the temporal state – I who is directed crosswise, in opposition, creating chaos, a deceiver, a slanderer, a tempter, a killer, an accuser, the governor of this world, the angel of darkness, the sower of discord. I speak to you as Asmodeus, Azazel, Belial, Abaddon, Mastema, Samael, Lilith, Shedim.

I speak to you, I – the agent of the Deadly God of Nothingness formed from the waste of the Universal Distrust of your "Us" (through Piotr Bartula).

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PETER PIVODA¹

THE POSSIBLE ROLE OF ART MUSEUMS IN REGARD TO EDUCATIONAL REFORM²

Abstract

This paper concerns ongoing educational reform in Slovakia and its goals as declared in the foundation document entitled *Learning Slovakia*. Within these goals, we have chosen those which are connected to freedom and supporting concepts of civil society. Besides the political circumstances of reform, we analyse art museums as educational institutions. The aim is to find common interests in education being provided both by schools and art museums, and especially how they may become partners in fulfilling the needs of a new school curriculum. To illustrate one possible way of partnership, we use examples of three individual educational programmes from the Slovak National Gallery in Bratislava.

Key words: transformation process in education, educational reform, art museum education, freedom in education

THE POSSIBLE ROLE OF ART MUSEUMS IN REGARD TO EDUCATIONAL REFORM

The Slovak Republic is currently in a turbulent stage of educational reform. Although there have been several attempts to bring the current school system closer to international trends, many of them failed due to complicated relationships between political representatives, schools and educators.

In 2016 the Slovak government came up with a new effort to solve some of the serious problems in the field of education. However, at the beginning of 2018 the situation regarding this announced educational reform

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still remains unclear. For bridging the gap in preparation, there are several ways for schools to move towards the goals of this reform through partnership with other institutions providing educational programmes.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES BEFORE THE EDUCATIONAL REFORMS

In order to better understand the current situation regarding Slovak educational policy, we need to mention some of the main preconditions.

The current situation in the Slovak educational system is, to a large extent, a result of its former transformational phases. As Kosov and Porubsky (2011) state, although a socialist educational system was already in place, changes made in 1976 brought it closer to international trends, having several positive effects. The system was, however, still full of unsound theoretical difficulties, conceptual over-concentration on the school curriculum, and tendencies towards formalism in education. According to the authors, the above-mentioned features of socialist education in Slovakia led to the over-burdening of pupils.

After a short phase of political change characterised by the deconstruction of the old ideology, between 1992 and 1998 the Slovak republic entered the next phase, politically speaking, of two antagonistic tendencies – namely openness and closure which influenced the shape of the educational system. Thus, while political parties were enforcing the preservation of a high quality of education and maintaining the status quo, teachers were, in contrast, seeking to introduce essential changes in their educational approaches in order to implement innovative processes into the educational process. These innovative teachers were therefore introducing, for example, alternative educational concepts, creating a positive atmosphere in class, the application of cooperative strategies and critical thinking development. These changes had a hugely positive resonance. Despite the educational policy promoting merely minimal changes, this phase constituted a foundation for further modernisation and created favourable conditions for the subsequent political decisions in order to conduct the first system reform since 2001.

The above-mentioned innovative approaches of teachers further inspired the adoption of the National Programme of Training and Education for the Following 10–15 Years, entitled *Milenium*. This programme,

however, did not gain political support and, thus, the process stopped with just partial changes having been implemented (Porubský, 2014). As Kosová and Porubský (2011, p. 40) write about this situation: “Disappointed teachers surrendered in their battle with state bureaucracy and transformation began to stagnate.”

Kosová and Porubský (2011) point out that, since 2008, Slovak educational policy has finally begun to move towards creating legislative conditions for systematic reform. The reasons were, among others, the adverse performance of Slovakia in international OECD measurements in reading, mathematics and science. It needs to be stated that these scores were still present until 2015, as far as it is known from OECD data (OECD Data, 2015).

A new Education Act (2008) announced the implementation of a two-track curriculum, where the state educational system was supposed to define basic educational lines for individual types of school while the role of the school educational programme was to specify the state educational system, according to Vincejová (2013). The above-mentioned Education Act was the first legally approved change allowing organisational and educational autonomy for individual schools. The aim was to allow greater freedom in education for teachers, as well as to give them a possibility to decide when and how they would teach given content. However, as this new education content had not yet been created, the old educational standards were slightly adapted (Porubský, 2014).

As it has been shown, the pro-reform policy still remained declarative in its nature and real content reform was needed. In an atmosphere of several political establishment turnovers and a global economic crisis, the next phases in educational transformation proceeded as a correction of previous government decisions.

This concise summary of the transformation process shows how non-conceptual, long-lasting and ambivalent the process was, as well as why the new school reforms became so urgently required both for teachers and the public.

SOURCES OF CURRENT EDUCATIONAL REFORMS AND *LEARNING SLOVAKIA*

The new wave of Slovak educational reforms started in 2016 when the incoming government declared a need to carry out fundamental changes

to the educational system in its policy statement (Programové vyhlásenie, 2016). These circumstances are an essential base for our goal to define art museums as a partner in the education process.

At the beginning of 2017, former Slovak Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sport, Peter Plavčan, gathered together six experts in order to create the support material for *Learning Slovakia*³ as a foundation for the following educational reforms contained in a document entitled the *National Programme for Training and Education Development until 2027*. This support material was supplemented by public consultations, then finalised and sent to the new minister, Martina Lubyová, in October 2017.⁴ Shortly afterwards, the minister deemed this document to be impracticable and in need of revision (Autorský document, 2017). The reason was that it did not contain any particular budget, timeframe, prioritisation or action plans. Since then, the process has stopped and a date for its resumption is still unknown.

Although various goals of the final document are formulated relatively broadly and it is not set to be submitted to government, we still consider it to be sufficiently factual. Our aim is to analyse it through the perspective of freedom as an important value in a civil society. Moreover, it reflects many of the past efforts of the transformation process, new trends and important visions for the future. It may also be expected that a majority of the articulated approaches will one day become a core part of the final educational reforms.

We have chosen several main aspects from *Learning Slovakia* in connection to the values which then will be subject of further analysis. It should be noted that many of them are common or substantially similar to the educational goals being used in art museums.

As the authors of *Learning Slovakia* (Burjan, Ftáčnik, Juráš, Vantuch, Višňovský & Vozár, 2017) have declared, the aim of the new educational reform programme is to reformulate school as an open and sociocultural

³ Eight chapters of the document *Learning Slovakia* are devoted to analysing the current situation and to proposing changes in a number of areas, namely: education quality and availability; the teaching profession; vocational education and training; the directing and financing of regional education; the quality, openness and availability of higher education; science, research and creative activities in universities and academies; the social mission of universities and academies; and the directing and financing of higher education.

⁴ Former minister Peter Plavčan resigned, with Martina Lubyová taking up the position in September 2017.

institution. The main goal resonating from the whole document is to bring a new, individual teaching approach to pupils and students. Instead of currently ignoring weaker pupils, schools should nowadays support those with special needs. Schools should also be able to set their own lesson durations or class arrangements, to choose educational subjects by themselves and to end unpredictable state interference which complicates the educational process.

In terms of freedom, pupils and students should be allowed to educate themselves in groups with other pupils of their age group, and even with older or younger students together. A school should also provide opportunities for one to engage in more creative, practical, physical and manual activities, as well as so-called soft skills, such as communication training and presentation skills, team working, empathy, meeting challenges, conflict resolution and linking knowledge from various subjects. The majority of educational activities should take place outside the school building. Schools should be actively involved in public life and create a space for commenting on current affairs, as well as form critical thinking (Burjan, Ftáčnik, Juráš, Vantuch, Višňovský & Vozár, 2017).

The chosen ideas of reforming the education system are reactions to the current situation in Slovak schools where classes are ordered in a strictly standardised way. The moving around of pupils in class is often forbidden and they work mostly alone. The daily curriculum of an individual subject is narrowly focused on one topic prescribed long beforehand. In such an environment, it is very difficult to respond to current affairs, to exercise critical thinking and to take account of a pupil's own learning tempo.

Until the lengthy process of educational reform starts, schools have several possibilities regarding how they can overcome the issue of time and begin with some improvements in education. Many of these are already underway, depending on the individual teacher. Moreover, at this important individual level, schools may also take advantage of some other types of institutions.⁵ Art museums constitute one of these, offering several benefits, although in *Learning Slovakia* they are mentioned just incidentally as possible places of education without any other characteristics.

⁵ Educational programmes for pupils in Slovakia and most of the other European countries are also offered by various types of institutions, mainly cinemas, libraries, philharmonic concert halls, various types of museums, observatories, zoological and botanical gardens, non-profit and non-governmental organisations, etc.

LEARNING IN ART MUSEUMS

Art museums as institutions for preserving, researching and presenting cultural values through works of art, have a long tradition in education (Stránský, 2005). This kind of education is, however, often erroneously considered to be strictly focused on teaching about art theory, art history or art training.

According to Šobáňová (2014), the first milestone in museum education, namely an international conference entitled “New Museology” held in 1972 in Santiago de Chile, introduced strong influences into the field of museum education which still remain relevant today. The most important of them is accentuating an active role and a flexible approach to education, thus enabling prompt reactions to current sociocultural changes.

Another important advantage of museums is their demonstration to be a major aspect of any educational process. As Šobáňová (2014) claims, original artworks are used for demonstrating educational contents. The specific nature of artworks as a rare type of artifact lie primarily not in their role of a particular contribution to some historical event, as it is in a historical or natural museum artifact, but often refer to themselves as special symbols and fusions of sensual form and meaning. Works of art do not have just a factual layer, but also an emotional one and thus they are capable of affecting feelings and influence our value systems. However, the affecting of feelings and the influence on values may arise only if communication with a piece of art is attainable and a person starts to interpret it. Especially in the case of contemporary art, there is often a necessity to start with communication free from a conventional perception. To help with entering into such communication, art museums have already developed a whole set of progressive methods, aims, phases, forms and didactic tools which are gathered under the term “art museum” or “gallery education”.

According to Meyrowitz (as referred to by Kitzbergerová, 2013), an educational programme of art museums is, in connection to the above-mentioned features, supposed to create and provide a space for a creative and open understanding of the content of artworks or the message of an exhibition. A role of art museum educators is to create a situation which would help to uncover the deeper dimensions of art. This uncovering should be accompanied by finding conjunctions in the space beyond the exhibited objects and by linking this with other fields of knowledge. Thus, artworks

may also help in finding similar ways of linking things in everyday reality. An important aspect is that these contents are not necessary to be articulated or revealed in an exact way, while this discovery should be the natural component of engaging the layers of art. The perception of artworks also supports skills leading to simply looking in a sense of finding meanings that are not necessarily hidden, but those regarding which the person has to be careful and concentrated on during their search.

As it appears from the above, the objectives declared in the document *Learning Slovakia* match the objectives of art museum education in many respects.

EXAMPLES FROM THE SLOVAK NATIONAL GALLERY

Our analysis continues with a description of a concrete way of providing educational programmes for school groups in one individual art museum institution, the Slovak National Gallery in Bratislava.

We focus on two types of school, elementary and secondary. The reasons for focusing on these are because of the scope of how they are analysed in *Learning Slovakia*, as well as the high frequency of their attending educational programmes in the Slovak National Gallery.

The Slovak National Gallery (SNG) in Bratislava, established in 1948, is a typical European state memory institution with its own collections of art from the medieval era to contemporary art of local and wider European provenance. The artworks are presented mostly during thematic exhibitions related to specific art history and art theory issues, historical events and current sociocultural affairs. The normal duration of an exhibition is approximately two to three months.

Besides the operational offices connected to many other art museum functions, such as curatorial offices, archive workers, a department of digital collections and services, a department of marketing and programming etc., the SNG also has a special department for art museum education called the Department of Gallery Education. With a team of six internal employees and a wider range of external personnel, the department creates educational programmes not only for school children but also for many different target groups. Although the prepared educational programmes are always related to ongoing exhibitions, they do not necessarily have to operate with the message of exhibited objects, which are

often just an inspiration to developing a programme suitable for various age groups. The programmes take place in a free atmosphere and pupils and students are allowed to sit and stand in a way which is comfortable for them. A majority of programmes also involve physical activities. Each programme lasts approximately 90 minutes, occasionally more, and consists of two parts. The first part is usually more theoretical and it takes place as part of an exhibition where a theme is communicated through activities and discussion. The second part is more practical with a possibility of creating and allowing the participants' new knowledge to sink in through some practical work.

Both parts and their activities are specific forms of interpretation. The activities do not lead to accurate interpretation by making copies of artworks or artists' approaches, but rather to transmit an individual's experience of a new way of looking at things.

In this part we present several examples matching *Learning Slovakia* for various exhibitions and age groups of school children. The selection of programmes follows the ideas of the educational reform mentioned above.

UNDER THE SEA

The first example to be examined is an educational programme connected to the exhibition of a maker of contemporary art jewellery, Anton Cepka. The exhibition ran from March to June 2016. The prepared activities were suitable for 10 and 11-year-old children. The programme was entitled *Under the Sea* and it is an example of how a school and an art museum may cooperate in preparing the most appropriate activities in connection with the school curriculum. The British International School in Bratislava requested a programme which would fit into their project's educational form. The topic of the project was the sea and pupils were supposed to grasp it as a whole set of problems: ocean streams, sea plants and animals, global warming, chemistry basics and so on.

The jewellery artist, Anton Cepka, often works with some extraordinary shapes of technical devices such as radars, probes, submarines and planes. Some of his characteristic methods are pressing and imprinting various rasters on metal surfaces, using precious reflective gemstones and movable parts. Thus, the educators decided to direct the programme to the topic of physical underwater processes such as movement, light and pressure. After a short explanation of the physical aspects of the processes

involved, in the first part children were supposed to analyse how Cepka had utilised them during the creation of his artworks. In this part, cooperating in groups was required. Instead of making jewellery, during the practical part, which took place in a studio, children were supposed to create a water surface effect on transparent pieces of paper which were afterwards installed on a glass ceiling to simulate a view from below sea level (Pod morom, 2015). This programme is one of the examples of a school cooperating with an art museum, and of introducing an inter-disciplinary education.

FICTIONAL REALITY

The second example is an educational programme for older pupils of 14–17 years of age, thus those attending the last years of primary school and the first years of secondary school. The programme was prepared for an exhibition of Slovak photographer Martin Kollar, who often works with a principle of confusing viewers.

The exhibited photographs were created in Israel as a part of an international project mapping culture, society and the inner life of individuals. Confusion was present in how the photographs seemed to capture military actions or places bearing the scars of terrorism and how they seemed to constitute a documentary. A detailed look, however, revealed that they had presented just a staging of war during exercises, day-to-day activities or absurd situations not related to fighting (Hrabušický, 2015). These principles were the main sources of the educational programme called *Fictional reality* focused on realising the limits of reality in photography. In the first part, the pupils had an opportunity to find out for themselves during a short writing activity how important it is when perceiving any photograph to know its aim and its creators' intention. The writing activity aimed to explore the nature of basic photography and movie genres and its three grades of information value, namely: a documentary transferring as much information as possible; a reportage intermediating selected information; and artistic photography as a very subjective statement. Pupils could use this knowledge not only while perceiving any photography, but also in their everyday life. In the second practical activity they further discussed the importance of the way of looking at various entities around them and how one different angle could change their perspective. A result of the activity was a tool with mirrors for changing the point of view as a metaphor for

the programme topic. The activity we mention is an example of developing soft skills, of carefully looking and achieving a better understanding of day-to-day situations (Fiktívna realita, 2015).

ON A GREEN MEADOW

The third programme we describe is connected to one of the most controversial periods of modern Slovak history, the issue of art and propaganda in the Slovak State during the Second World War. Since the preparation phase of an exhibition entitled *Dream vs. Reality, Art and Propaganda 1939–1945*, educators were dealing with the question of how to communicate such difficult content as Slovak participation in the Holocaust and manipulation of the public by the use of propaganda. Moreover, the Slovak political situation evolved unfavourably with the election of an extreme right-wing political party to the Slovak parliament⁶ in 2016 and, as is shown by several studies including that by Velšic (2017), those who voted for this party were mostly young people in the 18–39 years age bracket. The above-mentioned circumstances were to be taken into account while choosing the forms, contents and problems of the new programme. In respect to the thematic difficulty, educators decided to prepare not only one, but rather a cycle of several programmes which would provide a deeper insight into the problem of Nazism and nationalism. The cycle finally consisted of the three following programmes which were available as three different visits to the gallery.

In the first programme, there were several activities to strengthen empathy in the students. One of them was to make the participants think more about the problem of Jewish deportations and how the Slovak nation failed to take reasonable steps in order to prevent them. The activity started with allowing the students to mark out their own selected space with paper tape in one room of the exhibition. The room was, however, too small for all of them and thus some conflicts occurred when someone wanted more space. The students were therefore provided with a staged opportunity of realising how their own comfort often clashes with somebody else's comfort.

⁶ Kotleba – Ľudová strana naše slovensko gained 8.04% in parliamentary elections in 2016 and received 14 seats as a new party in the Slovak parliament.

In the following activity, one chosen person was supposed to stand up in a front of the others. The crowd was supposed to move in one line against the chosen person whose task was to stop the crowd without using violence. In the second step, the movement of the crowd was to be transformed into a rhythmical marching. Afterwards the members of the crowd were asked why they did not stop. They realised that it is much easier to stop thinking about the individual standing in front of them and how the effect of doing as others do may be stronger when in a stereotyped rhythm. This activity was related with making one's own decisions and being responsible for them.

The next important component of the cycle was the second part, prepared as a set of self-directed learning worksheets. These worksheets were not focused only on historical events but also on current affairs. They were entitled *Symbol, Literature, Folklore, Design* and *Etymology*, thus quite openly formulated topics usually considered to be non-problematic when they are not misinterpreted. The worksheets were therefore supposed to extend the student's scope. These worksheets were also published on two official websites developed by the Slovak National Gallery. The first one, entitled webumenia.sk, is a portal for publishing digitalised artworks from various Slovak art museums. The second one is a special website devoted to the exhibition, where the visitors could find more information about selected chapters of these historical events. Thus, the worksheets could also be used for the educational purposes of other schools unable to travel to Bratislava.

The third and the final part of the cycle was conducted as a discussion in the gallery regarding the topics of the worksheets, as well as involving the principles of storytelling working with empathy in various other real life situations (Na lúke zelenej, 2016).

The analysis of the programme forms shows how responsive a gallery may be in reacting to current sociocultural affairs by preparing exhibitions on current themes, as well as by drawing up appropriate topics for educational programmes aimed at developing such soft skills as humanity and empathy. The chosen approach of publishing educational materials on the websites mentioned also shows another form of cooperation between a school and an art museum by providing additional information in order to fulfil the needs of a school curriculum.

CONCLUSION

We have attempted to analyse one possible way for schools to bridge time by creating a partnership with art museums. We compared the educational aims and forms of art museums with a foundation document of the reforms. The comparison showed that art museums, with their developed methodology and long tradition in providing educational programmes, are capable of meeting some of the needs of the new school educational system, such as reacting to current sociocultural affairs, developing several soft skills, employing inter-disciplinary education, providing a learning process in a free and relaxed atmosphere, joining creative elements together, and working in groups. As a tool for their educational proposes, they use original artworks with not only an informational but also a factual layer. Thus, an art museum's educational process may contribute to searching for deeper connections in everyday life.

We are aware that educational reform, as a part of a cultural change, requires a longer time to implement its goals. Art museums and features of their educational aims may, however, already be helping to shape its future form today.

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JAROSŁAW PŁUCIENNIK¹

LIBERTY, ENLIGHTENMENT, AND THE POLISH BRETHREN

Abstract

The article presents an overview of the history of the idea of dialogics and liberty of expression. This liberty is strictly tied to the problem of liberty of conscience. Since the 17th century, the development of the dialogics traveled from an apocalyptic – and demonising its opponents – discourse as in John Milton's approach in *Areopagitica*, through dialogics of cooperation and obligations and laws (in the Polish Brethren, so-called Socinians, especially Jan Crell), through dialogics of deduction (transcendental deduction in Immanuel Kant), to dialogics of induction and creativity (John Stuart Mill).

Key words: liberty of conscience, liberty of expression, Enlightenment, history of ideas, dialogue

AREOPAGITICA BY JOHN MILTON AND THE APOCALYPTIC AND MARKET DIALOGICS (1644)

The best starting point of my analysis is John Milton's *Areopagitica* from 1644, which not only concerns liberty and freedom of speech, but also is the most famous and most extensive prose work of Milton, who has become world famous, above all, due to his poetry (Tazbir, 1973, p. 111).

The text was published on November 23, 1644, without a license, without registration, without the identification of the publisher and printer, and was the first English text entirely devoted to freedom of speech and publishing. The fact that responsibility was taken for the "free word" of the author, who allowed himself to be identified on the title page is critical.

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In this treatise (although formally the pamphlet is defined as a speech, it was never presented to parliament, contrary to the information on the title page), the relationship of the philosophy of mind and social philosophy seems to be its most interesting aspect. Books, according to Milton, are a material record of reasoning and disputation. They not only record all opinions and arguments, but also cover the truth in the form of correct evidence and proven facts in the record that people can see. Thus: "he who kills a man, kills a rational creature, the image of God; but the one who destroys a good book, kills the mind itself, destroys the image of God, just as he appears in the living eye" (Milton, 1644). In the context of a discussion on dialogue, one cannot overestimate such a bold and modern approach to this issue. This perspective anticipates Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* in a very sharp metaphorical way, a novel in which people become individual books because they have learned them by heart. However, the matter is more serious, especially in the context of a more modern discourse about the birth of the public sphere. The presupposed vision of the "mind of books" according to Milton is a vision of public reason, which comprises reasoning and debating, and possessing a discursive mind. It is important that the truth according to Milton is dispersed and fragmented. Habermas himself recalls Milton's *Areopagitica* in his post-doctoral thesis when he talks about the progress of postulating Mill's concept of freedom of speech (Habermas, 2007, p. 267). The killing of a single mind (or the mutilation of the body – its material carrier) is not as sinister and fateful as the censorship of books because books are a space embodying public reason, having a divine sanction in this version. It is no anachronism to see Milton's anticipation of the concept of the mind as a dialogue, as well as Habermas' idea of communicative reason (see Pask, 2004, and Guss, 1991).

It is very characteristic that Milton is also radical in the conclusions of his treatise, where he writes: "Let Truth and False grapple with each other" (Milton, 1644). He puts free and open experience above all else. Protestant individualism and the autonomy of the individual in confrontation with tradition and doctrine are significant, while the living dialogue of the believer with the Scriptures may foster the truth. Indeed, even the pamphlet itself is the result of a dialogue: "Even Moses or Paul learned from the Egyptians, from pagans, if not for such a free exchange, the sacred truth of the scriptures would not be shaped" (Milton, 1644). Therefore, "the real truth" of the Scriptures is not equal to monologue stone inscriptions, but the vivid dialogue of the saints with God – and a horrendous one with

pagans! Milton drew the correct conclusions from Luther's determination in the dispute with tradition: although for both the Scripture is the most crucial point of reference, for Milton the Holy Bible itself is also the result of a dispute.

However, it is also worth noting that this dialogue of various truths is, in essence, a dialogue of truth and falsehood, from which drama is understood as an existential tension between values, not as a genre. If we take a closer look at *Areopagitica* and Milton's other writings, the metaphorical conceptualisation presupposed by his discourse is outlined inconsistently: on the one hand, it suggests the libertarian dialogue of the nascent market of ideas in the public space, with this conceptualisation forming a dialogical free marketplace of ideas. On the other hand, this very intense existential tension between the values of truth and falsehood suggests a kind of discourse derived from entirely different registers, from the apocalyptic millenarian genre. This tension comprises a register where the principle is obvious: from sharp opposition and a fierce battle between the two elements, good and evil, or, as in *Areopagitica*, the struggle between truth and falsehood. Here, one may see a peculiar dramatic debate that finds its counterpart in Milton's other writings, in the dialectics of Ramus's logic. The inconsistency of this conceptualisation stems from Milton's religious commitment and historical context: during the Cromwellian revolution in England, the apocalyptic discourse was quite natural (Hill, 1972). This discourse is probably also responsible for the very pointed exclusion of Catholics from the area of tolerance: an apocalyptic beast in the form of the papacy cannot be tolerated if it is behind not only a secular power with a universal reach, but also Satan as the embodiment of evil. Such a reconstruction of Milton's way of thinking is conjecture based on the context of his occurrence in the times in which he lived. The apocalyptic conceptualisation is not a worldview profile which is possible to reconcile with the prospect of market negotiations, where the grand discursive strategy is flexibility in negotiation: in the Polish language the words "to bargain", "to haggle" (pol. *targować się*) constitute a great metaphor, or rather metonymy. Bargaining cannot be reconciled with the discourse of apocalyptic destruction, the reasoning for haggling not being consistent with the ambivalent elevation of the sublimity of prophecy. Apocalyptic logic constitutes dialogics in the literal sense because it is the logic of two opposing values and worlds. In this sense, the apocalyptic dialogue resembles the dialectic of Ramus's concept of opposition, whose supporter

and translator, as well as propagator, was John Milton. It may be surprising that traces of such a dialogue of these two main values may also be found in Bakhtin's concept of carnival (Bachtin, 1975, Bolecki, 1999, Szahaj, 1996). The war between fasting and carnival is based on the logic of oppositions and is a kind of apocalyptic logic, which is best seen in the visual arts and literature, in which the aesthetic quality of the grotesque marks this motif. Similarly, the logic of carnival warring with fasting may be found in an author writing much earlier than Bakhtin, namely Lord Shaftesbury, whose view was that prophetic enthusiasm opposes the test of ridicule and satire (Płuciennik, 2006). This topic is best summarised in the metaphor of "Bartholomew's Fair" that is the conceptualisation of the market and democratic satire for the prophetic-apocalyptic rapture, especially when mentioning the possible relationship of this Shaftesbury metaphor with Jonson's drama, satirising the righteous and just ecstasy of the Puritans. "Bartholomew's Fair" is the embodiment of theatre and literature, elements that are already democratic, but still rooted in the premodern world of apocalyptic struggles.

In Milton's treatise, therefore, it would be necessary to perceive an intermediate stage between folk-apocalyptic and carnival culture and an entirely free marketplace of ideas ("market") and civic culture. We have here a metaphorical image of the "Chapel" struggling with the "Church" (as in the Church of England, but it is just metaphorical). Such metonymies may be used in English culture: dissenters, meaning the smaller "chapel"; and the Anglican church meaning "the church" *sensu stricto*. The metaphor uses the categories of thinking characteristic of carnival culture, the fair-ground area, embedded strongly into other areas of culture, such as a feudal church or mansion. Sharp opposition occurs as a result of the fact that the category of identity becomes discordant and dissident. A subject who achieves their identity through the negation of inertia, namely inertia of the semantic structure, places himself or herself in the opposite and in differentiation of the the proper force. The margin becomes the centre, and dislocation is subject to what is being repulsed and unwanted. Interestingly, we connect this state of English culture with a short period in Poland after the Warsaw Confederation, when the words "dissident", "dissenter" did not refer to the followers of non-Catholic churches, but only determined all faithful Christians. It was only due to the influence of the facts of violating the Confederation agreement that the Polish "chapel" was sharply opposed to the "church". The issue of discussions concerning freedom

of conscience in Poland is self-imposed as Milton was indirectly involved in this discussion. As Janusz Tazbir writes:

The atmosphere of religious disputes, accompanying the English Revolution, meant that the views of the Polish Brethren on the subject of freedom of conscience and the role of reason in assessing the truths of faith arouse special interest in their timeliness and intellectual innovation. The works of Samuel Przykowski and other Arian writers were well known to the creators of the concept of freedom of conscience in England. One man who was interested in the Socinian views there, was, among others, John Milton, author of the poem *Paradise Lost*; he was also involved in the printing of the Racovian Catechism, which appeared secretly in England in 1652. The treatise of John Crell *On the Freedom of Conscience* (the original English title of the 1646 translation is *A learned and exceeding well-complied Vindication of Liberty of Religion*) was twice translated into French; it also appeared in the Dutch language, it also had a few Latin editions. All these editions were printed in Amsterdam (Tazbir 1973, p. 111).²

Confusion regarding the case of Milton in his relationship with the Polish Brethren consisted of the fact that while he had power to be genuinely censorial, he allowed the publication of such anti-Trinitarian, unorthodox writings. However, the issue of the liberty of conscience was vital to him, as is also demonstrated by the dissenter character of the Westminster Confession, with which Milton may also be identified. One of the crucial points of this confession is Chapter 20 on Christian liberty and freedom of conscience (Pasek, 1999, p. 115). This point, moreover, has become a contentious issue concerning so-called independents, or the separation of Congregationalist churches which issued the so-called Savoy Declaration in 1658 (*A Declaration of the Faith and Order . . . 1658*). Subsequently, the cause of freedom of conscience became the source of conflict, leading pilgrims from England to become founders of the New World in America. This is why this treatise on the freedom of conscience by one of the Polish Brethren is of such crucial importance in this context.

² All translations come from the author of the article unless indicated otherwise.

FOR LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE (*A LEARNED AND EXCEEDING
WELL-COMPLIED VINDICATION OF LIBERTY OF RELIGION*)
BY JOHN CRELL (1637) – MARKETPLACE DIALOGUE
AND 17TH CENTURY ENLIGHTENMENT

Unlike in England, where Milton still used the language of anti-Catholic confrontation, the situation appeared different in the case of the Socinians in Poland, that is the so-called Polish Brethren (Ogonowski, 1991, Szczucki & Tazbir, 1959, Tazbir, 1973). In their treatises, they focused on the issues of tolerance and liberty of conscience. Here, various non-confrontational regulators of public discourse are cited. They do not postulate absolute freedom of speech (one can hardly know for sure what this should be), but propose, on the one hand, regulations entirely different from such cruel solutions as persecution and censorship, and, on the other hand, from apocalyptic and satirical negation. Their conceptualisation appears entirely as subject to marketplace discourse, as “bargaining” and negotiating. The concept is most apparent in the treatise *For the Liberty of Conscience* [*A learned and exceeding well-complied Vindication of Liberty of Religion*] by Jan Crell, who was famous all over Europe and whose work was published four times in the 17th century (in 1637, 1650, 1666, and in 1681) (Crell, 1957). He probably had a major influence on the creation of John Locke’s *Enlightenment Letters* [*A Letter Concerning Toleration*]. In Crell’s treatise, one may find anticipations of Kantian and Enlightenment solutions. Crell invokes excerpts of Holy Scripture, pointing to the principle of reciprocity: “Do that to no man which thou hatest” (this probably comes from the canonical Book of Tobit (4:15) unaccepted by Protestants), or “do to others what you would have them do to you” (Matthew 7:12). These arguments are to justify the principle of Catholic and Protestant co-operation: if Catholics have sworn not to obey to the principle, they cannot simply revoke this oath as they have promised to honour it. Here, we can see the conceptualisation of the full marketplace dialogue: we have in this passage of the treatise a dialogue designed for honesty and fidelity, an amicable commitment and promise, a dialogue of trust, discourses based on the communicative principle of cooperation and reciprocity. It should be noted that the concept of Paul Grice’s principle of co-operation three centuries later is derived from the fully conceived concept of John Austin’s discourse (criticism accused the bourgeois prejudices against literature and theatre).

This oath dialogue is, at the same time, a dialogue of ritual bonds. Specific rites create commitments and networks and systems based on trust. The haggling discourse, which is not blind faith, and chooses equal negotiation of at least two sides, not only is an anti-apocalyptic discourse but also has the power to create social bonds, not to say society as a whole. This discourse means the equality of its subjects. Equality, however, is also a diminution of self-confidence. Zbigniew Ogonowski, in his introduction to Crell's treatise, writes that the Socinians found a natural scepticism associated to historicism. Thus, Samuel Przypkowski simply stated that although we are convinced of the truth of our truth, who will say for sure that we are not going astray. Socinus himself claimed that no one has the key to the truth (Ogonowski, 1991). Milton, with his concept of scattered and fragmented truth, would fit into this context. In the plan of the Polish Brethren, there is already an outline of a secular state, while for Milton, there is still a marriage of state and religion: "A spiritual and perfect religion, this reaches for what a person thinks and feels – without violence" (Crell, 1957, p. 42).

My interpretation of these writings by Crell indicates that Enlightenment concepts of public reason were born in the 17th century, not only in the 18th century, when a famous discussion about what enlightenment was took place in Germany during its closing years. (I refer to this in the first chapter of my book – Płuciennik, 2009, pp. 23–50).

Against this background, the major idea John Locke expressed in *A Letter Concerning Toleration* is much less radical (Locke, 1963). He disagreed unambiguously with the radicalism of the so-called Socinians and anti-Trinitarians, even though he was in possession of their writings. However, his view of the Christian religion was apparently "nice" to the "chapel", that is, he sympathised with the apostate:

He, certainly, that follows Christ, embraces His doctrine, and bears His yoke, though he forsake both father and mother, separate from the public assemblies and ceremonies of his country, or whomsoever or whatsoever else he relinquishes, will not then be judged a heretic (Locke, 1963, p. 4).

As if that were not enough, his plan concerning the separation of church and state (ibid., p. 7) was outlined with the requirement that "each of the mortals" should be free to conduct debates and discuss matters of importance to him (ibid., p. 9). It is also important to freely associate with "churches" and "chapels" (ibid., p. 11). The state should not use its resolute

power beyond those cases that Locke says are outside the limits of tolerance: "no opinions contrary to human society, or to those moral rules which are necessary to the preservation of civil society, are to be tolerated by the magistrate" (ibid., p. 53). For Locke, tolerance should also not apply to Catholics (because they have a foreign ruler in Rome and want to kill the English king) and atheists. The latter have no power over themselves and are therefore dangerous. While it must be said that Locke's vision has its limitations, it remains, apart from Crell's treatise, the foundation of the concept of civil society and the development of the public sphere. Although religions outside of Christianity are not taken into account at all, this is due to the historical context of the time, as they did not constitute a real civic force and were, therefore, not a problem. Freedom of conscience is found in the treatises of Crell and Locke and they are very important advocates. Moreover, in the short history of dialogics, they constitute milestones towards a full marketplace dialogue based on trust and (self-)scepticism at the same time. Both treatises show the emerging ethics of a financial, economic and logical account. However, this quality is even more visible at the end of the Enlightenment. In this respect, the Polish impact is much more valuable than it has been usual to admit in Poland.

WHAT IS ENLIGHTENMENT? BY IMMANUEL KANT AND THE POLISH BRETHREN. A DIALOGUE OF TRANSCENDENTAL DEDUCTION

I will now look at the brilliant concept of the dialogue of rational intellect formulated by Andrzej Wyszowaty (*On religion in accordance with reason*, 1676), (Wyszowaty, 1960) who was centuries ahead of the solutions proposed and refined by Kant (*Critique of Judgment*, 1790). Leibniz's logic could, however, probably be considered an intermediary (Huber, 2005, Ogonowski, 1991). In Wyszowaty's book, we find the reason for conducting a free debate (this directly affects intelligibility; the gibberish and incomprehensibility of inspired prophecy are excluded, which is confirmed to some extent in the Scriptures). In the concept of Kant, one may see that it is practical reason (lat. *sensus communis aestheticus*) that excludes Cartesian egotism (Cascardi, 1999, p. 48, also Cascardi, 1992).

On the one hand, one may find in Kant's work a suggestion of unlimited freedom, including debate, at least within academic circles, which

seems to be quite conservative minimalism today. An academy is not a voluntary café association. Thus, in the article *What is Enlightenment?* (1784) (Kroński, 1966) it may be said that trust in mutual relations within the framework of democratic bargaining and negotiation discourses must also postulate self-confidence, and this will be impossible to achieve without the autonomy of the individual. The market enforces equality which emancipates the subjects participating in the negotiations.

A somewhat less frequently quoted text of Kant defining enlightenment is Chapter 40 concerning the part called “Analysis of Sublimity” in his *Critique of Judgment*. This is an excerpt where enlightenment is invoked as making one free from superstition (Kant, 2004, pp. 211–212). It only fits to summarise Kant’s brief deliberations: he praises individualism and Cartesian autonomy and his break with society, family and tradition in spirit. However, instead of a Cartesian *deus ex machina*, Kant proposes a *sensus communis* as a signpost. The maxim of taste requires the extension of its subjectivity through a “broader way of thinking”, which allows the individual to “rise above the individual subjective conditions of the judgment”. At the same time, Kant is categorical regarding uniqueness and universality. It may be said that Kant’s categorical approach eliminates his recognition for subjectivity as he appreciates and negates it at the same time: “feeling in the judgment of taste comes to be imputed to everyone, so to speak, as a duty” (Kant, 2004, p. 214). Kant’s dialogue is a dialogue of reason with transcendental pretensions. In Wiszowaty’s treatise, we have the classic dialogic of Aristotle’s deduction, and in Kant the dialogue of transcendental deduction, which is a dialogue of autonomy and intersubjective ecstasy, going beyond oneself and identifying with others. However, there are other concepts as a model. In this lies the totalitarian dimension of Kant’s ideas, although it is the output towards them, the deflection and openness of the presupposition for dialogue rather than the monologue model of the mind. The way of thinking in this model is dictated by deduction; there are abstract rules regulating dialogue. It is interesting that Wiszowaty excludes inspired prophecy based on deductive reason, while Kant leaves the gate open for inspired prophecy in the form of a transcendental subject. The above-mentioned ecstatic of “expanding” oneself to different perspectives is close to the illogicality and babbling of inspired prophets: it is a metaphorical speaking in tongues; it is a transgression beyond one’s language; a confusion of languages; and introspective polyphony. At this point, one may already see the potential of subjective idealism for objectivisation.

It is very similar to the subject of transcendental deduction which produces an objective spirit. Although Kant's criticism does not allow this transition, when autoscepticism fails, criticism will cease to be the primary signpost, and romanticism will be unleashed.

ON LIBERTY (1859), JOHN STUART MILL – EVOLUTIONARY INDUCTIVE DIALOGUE

An entirely different model of thinking is found in the next excellent text which established, at the same time, another milestone on the "way of freedom" – in a treatise entitled *On Liberty* by John Stuart Mill (1859) after the Declaration of the Rights of the Man and of the Citizen had been issued (Mill, 2005). Interestingly, Susan Mendus has juxtaposed Locke and Mill, awarding the latter strong praise for diversity (Locke argued only for tolerating debates and addressed his letter to rulers) (Mendus, 1989, p. 38), whereas, for Habermas, the combination of Milton and Mill is important (Habermas, 2007, p. 267). If Kant's view was somehow summarised by the 18th century, Mill perfectly synthesises the trends of the 19th century. In Mill, we find another model for the dialogue of deduction, which is the dialogue of the authentic diversity of subjects, as well as being a dialogue of creativity: "There is no freedom without diversity" and "there is no creativity without diversity". Social discourse is enlightened, and therefore self-aware and leaning towards another, namely the dialogue of diversity, although the minority should be protected from the tyranny of the majority. Moreover, in Habermas' text this is what he comments: if Milton pleads for the public sphere in the face of power, the same educated public sphere is the addressee of Mill's treatise. The space created at the intersection of the "chapel" and "church" tends to change into a dictatorship of the majority. This area must constantly be expanded; one cannot stop progress in this regard. Regulation, in the form of endless creativity or inventiveness, makes it impossible to silence the truths seemingly wrong today as it is unknown what the situation will be in a few or several dozen years away. Moreover, if one does not know and if one acknowledges an evolutionary way of reaching the truth, society may suffer irreparable damage, excluding any other points of view. Mill already acknowledged the evolution and usefulness of scientific inventions. Hence, this goes beyond the dialogue of enlightenment; there is already a dialogue of induction leading to

invention and creation. Mill's social discourse is a dialogue of evolutionary induction. The most important of Mill's developments, however, is that the main and only regulator of discourse is the so-called harm principle. Freedom possesses a degree of this in the form of the principle of "harming another": you can say anything that does not harm others more or less directly. Therefore, it cannot be argued that Mill opts for total freedom and freedom of speech. Dialogics is limited and regulated, both by the principle of creativity and by harm to others. However, it is also vital that Mill recalls this harm to others as the most critical regulator, as this constitutes an openness to the possibility of establishing a discourse of emancipation and, in consequence, one which is critical. I do not think Habermas is right when he writes:

Mill demanded not criticism but tolerance, because the dogmatic residues could indeed be suppressed but not reduced to the common denominator of reason. The unity of reason and of public opinion lacked the objective guarantee of a concordance of interests existing in society, the rational demonstrability of a universal interest as such (Habermas, 2007, p. 268).

Although one may agree with the second part of this quote, to state that Mill did not demand criticism is unfair as Mill was also a co-author of *The Subjection of Women* and the President of the Society for Women's Suffrage.

In conclusion, it may be argued that the Polish Brethren's legacy must be taken into account when talking about liberal views on freedom. Although their probable influence on the concepts of enlightenment is much wider than usually imagined, even if this cannot be confirmed by very much evidence, the quality of their reflections are such that it should not be excluded from the record of thinking concerning liberty and enlightenment. Thus, they constitute a crucial part of the European liberal tradition in Christianity (Płuciennik, 2009, Chapter 1).

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RUSLAN SADUOV¹

THE PURSUIT OF FREEDOM IN PRIVATE LIFE AS REFLECTED IN CONTEMPORARY RUSSIAN COMICS²

Abstract

This article reviews how *My Sex*, the Russian autobiographical graphic novel by Alyona Kamyshevskaya, reflects public-private relationships in the USSR and contemporary Russia. In particular, the focus is on how the Soviet state tabooed sexuality, leaving its people unaware of basic physiological information and causing them to make harmful uninformed decisions. *My Sex* is seen as an example of the consequences of public intrusion into the private sphere regarding aspects that should stay untouched.

Key words: comics, graphic novel, freedom, private life, public life, USSR, communist state, sexuality

INTRODUCTION

Comics, as a literary genre, constitute a relatively young and rapidly evolving phenomenon with a growing audience and increasing number of production techniques and varieties. In fact, the art of combining pictures with text goes back to the 12th century when a Buddhist monk drew a scroll of what would later become the first comics. However, contemporary comics emerged much later in the early 19th century through the skill of Rodolphe Töpffer, a Swiss teacher who produced his renowned *Les Amours de M. Vieuxbois* (Rodolphe Töpffer, n.d.). Since then, in many parts of the

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world, comics has developed into a tradition with rules and laws to be followed and broken.

Despite this, in other parts of the world, such as the Soviet Union, the “bourgeois” art of comics was condemned and mocked as primitive. Paradoxically, the country had its own popular comics for children (e.g. *Murzilka* and *Tramvai*) which were hardly different from western examples. However, most people in the USSR believed in the inferiority of comics, even if they knew what they were. Surprisingly, the fall of the Iron Curtain further undermined the reputation of comics as expensive and high-quality comics were out of reach for Russian publishing houses which often found it difficult to make ends meet, while the market was flooded with cheap and badly translated low-quality comics, only convincing readers further that comics were worthless (Zimina, 2006).

It was not until the 2010s that the first quality comics were translated and introduced to the general public: the Amphora Publishing House pioneered this development with Alan Moore’s *Watchmen* and was followed by other publishers (Serebryansky, 2014). Hollywood movie franchises made a major contribution to the industry leading to the expansion of the comics market (Ivanov & Gabrelyanov, 2014). This also coincided with the establishment of Bubble, a comics producer which grew into the industry leader by coming up with new Russian comic characters. Despite comics in Russia being still looked down upon, all the above-mentioned developments combined have led to the rapid growth of a domestic comics culture, a wider readership of comics in Russia, and the increasing role of comics in the publishing industry.

The concept of a “graphic novel” is understood according to the definition by Rothschild (1995) as “original sequential art stories done especially for the graphic novel format” (p. xiii), it being used in this paper as a synonym for “comics”. The latter is defined as “juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence, intended to convey information and/or produce an aesthetic response in the viewer” (McCloud, 1994, p. 9). According to guidelines of the famous artist and theoretician, Scott McCloud, comics should be used with a singular verb despite its grammatically plural form as a noun (ibid.).

MOTIVATION AND AIM

The insignificant role of comics as literary genre in Russia, as well as the condescending approach and little attention given to it, allows its authors to address topics commonly avoided in domestic fiction. One such example is the recent graphic novel *My Sex* by Alyona Kamyshevskaya which has inspired this research. This comic is the story of the author from childhood to adulthood with an emphasis on how she discovered her sexuality and uncovered the mystery of male-female relationships. Apart from the personal feelings of the main character, the comic offers reflections on the social and cultural background of the story, as well as the attitude to sex and the private sphere in the Soviet Union and contemporary Russia, namely the environment in which the protagonist grew up. Among other things, the comic addresses the approach to sexuality in the given society and the implications of this for those who grew up in it.

In the light of its setting, the comic becomes particularly important as it shows the relationship between the private and public spheres in the USSR and how the former depended on the latter. Therefore, this article aims to use the examples given in *My Sex* to demonstrate the adverse effects of public and state influence on one's private life. In particular, the focus of this paper is on the consequences of silencing the role of sexuality and the lack of sex education in Soviet society. One important aspect of the comic being discussed is that it is an autobiographical story which gives more credibility to the narrator.

The main hypothesis of this paper is that sexuality, as an aspect of private life, cannot thrive when it is considered socially unacceptable and unacknowledged. Therefore, the state model whereby the public intrudes and controls one's private life is destructive to itself and the individuals living in it and has to give way to a model whereby the public sphere promotes private life, scientifically informs it, and liberates it.

PRIVATE-PUBLIC LIFE IN THE USSR

"There is no sex in the USSR" is a popular joke which reflects the practice of tabooing anything referring to the private life of the Soviet people. This does not seem uncommon in other countries also. According to Drucilla

Cornell (1998), “most societies impose upon their citizens a conception of good, or normal, sexuality as a mandated way of life, thus refusing them the freedom to personalize who they are sexually” (p. x). As a result, it “stifles our choices of how we want to live out our sexuality and express our love” (ibid.). The influence of a society on the private life of individuals can manifest itself in the guidelines of churches or healthcare professionals: “Through its [the state’s] symbiosis with the forces of moral regulation (from the churches to the medical profession) it [the state] can shape the climate of sexual opinion” (Weeks, 1990, p. 40) and, therefore, “determine the patterns of marriage, child-bearing, child-rearing” (ibid.). As Lynn Jamieson and Helen Corr (1990) framed it in their introduction to *State, Private Life and Political Change*, it is hard to imagine “how bound up the development of the state and our personal lives are” (p. 1).

Though public control over private life is a common practice in many societies, it is in communist states that the degree of intrusion into private lives is visibly higher. Orlando Figes in his book *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin’s Russia* (2007) tells the stories of a few Soviet people who had to hide their private lives in order to live under a communist regime. He contends that the Soviet population had “learned to whisper” (p. 40) and “keep to themselves” (ibid.) in fear that the state would learn something it could punish them for. Even children were “taught to hold their tongues, not to speak about their families to anyone, not to judge or criticize anything they saw outside the home” (ibid., p. 39). By using the example of Antonina Golovina, the author demonstrates how secretive and conformist the population came to be. Golovina kept it to herself that she came from a family of kulaks (rich peasants): “Antonina concealed the truth about her past from both her husbands, each of whom she lived with for over twenty years” (ibid., p. 35). It was only after the fall of the Iron Curtain that she learned that her husband had been doing the same. Apparently, this duality of the public and private lives people lived formed a lasting legacy across the nation: “A silent and conformist population is one lasting consequence of Stalin’s reign” (ibid., p. 39). In fact, even the term “private” was so hostile to the authorities that the “official Soviet documents usually operate with such terms as ‘individual’ and ‘personal property’ instead of ‘private property,’ and ‘individual labour activity’ instead of ‘private labour activity’” (Shlapentokh, 1989, p. 4).

One of the key areas of private life the Soviet state paid attention to was sexuality. As a term, sexuality includes “the condition of having sex”,

“sexual activity”, and the “expression of sexual receptivity or interest” (Sexuality, n.d.). Understood in this way, sexuality was attacked and tabooed in the Soviet Russia. It was replaced with the notion of the family as a societal unit and a positive institution. The propaganda of family had its positive outcomes: “For instance, the Soviet state protects children and women against abuse, sometimes takes measures against adultery” (Shlapentokh, 1989, p. 11). However, this care concerning the family had its own reasons and purposes, namely to control activities within the family: “The Soviet state also persecutes illegal family business, as well as other activities in culture, education, sex, and so on not approved by the state” (ibid.). Therefore, one’s understanding of sexuality was sourced from unreliable sources or family (seldom), which caused frustration and mere sexual illiteracy among the greatest part of the population.

It is worth mentioning that after a brief period of attempting to liberate private life in the 1990s, contemporary Russian society has returned to the notion of the strong family unit and to imposing opinions on how the family should be established and what values should dominate in it. Thus, State Duma deputy Yelena Mizulina drew up a bill to control the dating of young people and issued recommendations about how their relationships should develop, including when the couple would be allowed intimacy:

Can a strong and healthy family emerge from a couple if, after a few hours after getting to know each other, they do what only people very close to each other can do? . . . Usually such behaviour is a result of alcohol abuse or dissoluteness and lack of any moral norms (Doterpi do desyatogo raza, 2016).

Pavel Astakhov, Children’s Rights Commissioner for the President of the Russian Federation, finds it equally important to teach children the *Ethics and Psychology of Family Life* while sex education should be banned by law (Astakhov, 2013). Moreover, public organisations, such as conservative parents’ committees, are equally against the liberation of private life and the introduction of sex education in schools (Dudkina, 2017, para. 24).

In the Soviet system where the role of family was reinforced by the public sphere, women and their interests, including sexual pleasure and health, were sacrificed: “women’s sexuality was tightly controlled because women were primarily to serve as the ‘people’s’ reproducers” (Cornell, 1998, p. XI). Even if any benefits were provided, there would be reasons for this: “benefits were provided because women were necessary both as reproducers and as workers” (ibid., p. x).

This environment, in which Soviet society intruded in private life, regulated the family, and eliminated sexuality, resulted in the complete lack of awareness and dissatisfaction of women as depicted in Alyona Kamyshevskaya's *My Sex*, the material on which the present research is based. It would not be incorrect to say that the entire plot of the comic stems from the conflict between the attempts of the protagonist to find out about sex and sexuality and to build personal life of her own, on the one hand, and the societal norms, public intrusion into private life, and ensuing insecurity of the character on the other. Frustration arises when Alyona realises she is trapped by social opinions and completely lacks information about sex. The next part of this article is devoted to the analysis of this comic with an emphasis on the protagonist's intentions to discover her sexuality.

SEXUALITY IN THE USSR AS DEPICTED IN *MY SEX*

This section of the article is devoted to the graphic novel *My Sex* as an example of what happens to privacy and sexual freedom if the public sphere intrudes into the private. Since the comic portrays a range of adverse effects of such intrusion, the section is subdivided into several parts to address various aspects of the difficulties Alyona (the protagonist) faces in her private life.

LACK OF BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT PHYSIOLOGY AND SEX

The description of the protagonist's sexual life in the comic contains a statement that her parents never took any part in her sexual education: "My parents never took part in my sexual education . . . Instead, they put a lock on the door of their room"³ (Kamyshevskaya, 2014, p. 29). The inability to explain one's physiology, as well as shame, prevented many parents from educating their children on the most intimate issues; adolescents were left wondering about their bodies and relationships with the opposite sex. The sources of Alyona's knowledge were other children, a few books, and unpleasant experiences which caused disgust towards the physiological aspect of love. To compensate for the lack of proper information, the main character replaced education and experience with sentimental love

³ All translations come from the author of the article unless indicated otherwise.

novels. Later, the protagonist would regret this: “Now I regret a lot that I spent so many years of my life on it [sentimental literature], since what I did lack was the real world. Real friends and relationships” (ibid., p. 37).

Not only was the sexual part of the life in the USSR denied but so was one’s physiology; and Alyona knew very little about the female body. Even her first period was perceived as something hostile and unnatural: “I kept feeling my new unknown and unpleasant smell, and I was afraid to move and produce a new portion of it” (ibid., p. 30). Even the physical reaction to her first experience of sexual intercourse was a surprise to her (ibid., p. 57).

Insufficient information about the physiological part of growing up and having sex was not only unwise but also dangerous to the health of females, especially those who were younger. The sexologist, Amina Nazaralieva, gives examples of outrageous ignorance concerning physiology and sex (Dudkina, 2017, para. 4), while Igor Kon in *Sexual Culture in Russia* adds that not only families but also schools were not ready to speak about sexuality: “It is impossible to make female teachers, many of whom were dissatisfied themselves, to say such indecent words as ‘genitals’” (Kon, 2010).

This lack of experience in relationships jeopardised Alyona’s health. Because she could not distinguish an indecent man from a decent one, she was raped, an event which further undermined her confidence and instilled fear and disgust: “It stayed with me for a long time. I drowned in hatred, fear . . . and loneliness. I did not get pregnant or infected, but . . . life did not make me happy any longer” (Kamyshevskaya, 2014, p. 105).

OPINIONS MATTER IN THE USSR

One of the key features of a communist state is the power of social opinion. In the USSR, it was common for people to judge others and to be afraid of being judged. Interestingly, the opinions of this society often meant more than solid facts or good judgment. In comics, this feature is exemplified with a “sex scandal” which occurred to the protagonist when she was a small girl. Her neighbours believed the story of another small girl that the protagonist, Alyona, who was 4–5 years old, had a sexual intercourse with another boy of her age. Despite how absurd this accusation was, since then she felt constantly observed: “the entire yard was following our actions” (Kamyshevskaya, 2014, p. 14). The children were not allowed to see

each other: "My mother put up another restriction by saying 'you must not' and 'what will everyone think'" (ibid.).

Such an attitude was characteristic of the society at the time. It could be part of the larger fear that neighbours could report on them any time. As with the subjects of Figes's *The Whisperers* who could not tell the truth even to their family, the characters of *My Sex* are fearful of looking different from others and therefore comply with the societal norms, even at the cost of common sense.

In addition to lacking common sense, Alyona's parents were capable of sacrificing her health and safety in favour of the interests of the state. The main character belonged to the family of a Soviet ambassador of a far-away country, which meant that her father was serving his country, and sometimes the matters of the state prevailed over the best interests of the family.

In particular, the protagonist gives an example of a paedophile who once kissed her. He traumatised Alyona, back then a child, so much that she could not build relationships with members of the male sex. However, when she tried to reveal the truth about the man, her mother only advised to "keep away from him" (Kamyshevskaya, 2014, p. 26) and some years later added "your father needed him for some reason" (ibid.). This put her mother's indifference to what had happened in a different context: "Does it mean I was suffering for the cause of my motherland?" (ibid.). Apparently, the cause of the motherland was above the health and safety of a child.

INSECURITY AND INFERIORITY COMPLEX

The lack of knowledge about sex combined with illusions about relationships led to the main character possessing feelings of insecurity and inferiority, as well as an inability to have relationships. This is how she describes one of her attempts to build relationships:

First, I was afraid someone could see us. Second, I had not had a man until then, and I was afraid I would not live up to the expectations of my friend. Third, I still dreamt of a knight of my life. Four, I just did not know what do I do with his physiology and mine (Kamyshevskaya, 2014, p. 48).

It was the "complete uncertainty, fear, stress, and quirks and twists" (ibid., p. 66) that did not allow Alyona to enjoy her life and build a proper attitude to her sexuality. The repeated failures to know more about herself as a woman turned her to despair and extreme measures: "I started

to deny my womanhood and tend to asexuality” (ibid., p. 71). As if deciding that private life is something beyond her understanding and necessity, Alyona “almost turned into a regular woman with avoska mesh bags” (ibid., p. 74), which is the Russian high point of ordinariness and mediocrity.

FINDING INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM

Alyona’s story could have ended like many other stories of people in a society where the private sphere is considered taboo and controlled. She could have abandoned any hopes for a happy life and reconciled herself to continuous anger and dissatisfaction with life. However, the protagonist was stubborn enough to keep fighting for her happiness, and after numerous attempts to find love, Alyona concluded that love and harmony can be achieved through proper relationships which, in the end, make her closer to God (Kamyshevskaya, 2014, p. 136). Although the comic has an open ending, and the main character never finds love, she is determined to continue looking for happiness.

DISCUSSION

The analysis given above has provided an example of the consequences when state policy interferes with the private life of ordinary citizens – in particular, those who grow up in such society. Thus, the author demonstrated that a reluctance to acknowledge privacy can lead to its neglect by one’s own parents and a lack of relevant information about one’s physiology, as well as interpersonal relationships. As a result, the lack of real relationships is compensated with illusions and fruitless aspirations. Insufficient experience results in disappointment and frustration leading to asexuality and abandonment of any attempts to acknowledge one’s femininity.

Despite the example analysed in this paper being a result of the subjective opinion of the author represented in an artistic form, facts and statistics show that tabooing private life or regulating it cannot bring good results. The stifling of private life and “shyness” about sex are detrimental to the entire country. Facts show that the higher the level of sex awareness, the healthier the society, since its members – in particular, those who are immature – are capable of defending themselves from bad decisions in private life.

As Drucilla Cornell (1998) contends, in the past, western countries were not very different from those which were communist or socialist:

The Western democracies have not been much better than the socialist societies in recognizing the right of women, let alone gays and lesbians, to represent their own sexuality. Sexual privacy has been almost exclusively limited within the parameters of “normal” heterosexuality, so significant social equality is often deemed unnecessary because heterosexual women can always turn to their husbands for support (p. XII).

Today, it seems that the situation has changed for the better. However, the USA, for example, is still deficient concerning sex education. The evidence suggests that, more often than not, religious education in America attacks personal liberty in one’s private life, as well as diminishing sexuality. This is argued, both by researchers and in works of art, such as the famous American graphic novel *Blankets* by Craig Thomson. For example, scientific investigations suggest that “abstinence-only education as a state policy is ineffective in preventing teenage pregnancy and may actually be contributing to the high teenage pregnancy rates in the U.S.” (Stanger-Hall & Hall, 2011). Nevertheless, despite the ineffectiveness of sex education in the USA, the country has managed to make significant achievements since the 1960s when it started introducing sexual awareness lessons in schools: comparing with 1960, by 2016 the number of teenage pregnancies was reduced from 82 to 21 per 1,000 females aged 15–19, respectively (Adolescent fertility rate, n.d.).

The experience of European countries concerning sex education is even more fascinating. For example, Sweden pioneered sex education back in the 1950s, while the Netherlands has shown the most spectacular results in this area. This country introduces the basics of sexual education at the age of 4–7, which has led to one of the world’s lowest adolescent fertility rates in the world (ibid.).

One would have to admit that in contemporary Russia the attitude to sex education and public-private dichotomy has not changed much comparing with that of the USSR which was vividly described in *My Sex*. With the main authorities opposing sex education in schools, it is now prohibited to depict or describe sexual intercourse to children under 16. Indeed, the Minister of Education, Olga Vasilyeva, has claimed that sexual education should be limited to the family (Kochetkova, 2017, para. 2).

However, data show that such a strategy is less than successful. UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) reports rather high rates of adolescent pregnancy in Russia (30 females aged 15–19 out of 1,000), as well as abortions (8 abortions per 10 childbirths). Moreover, despite schools not discussing sex with adolescents, research says that over 60% of females in Russia have sex before the age of 19 while 70% wish to know how to protect themselves (United Nations Population Fund, 2013).

In this way, the artistic representation in *My Sex* constitutes real-world proof and serves as a vivid example of what happens when private life is stifled by the state. Instead of dry statistics, Alyona Kamyshevskaya shows the effect of a detrimental state policy on the individual life of a typical Soviet child and woman.

CONCLUSION

My Sex is an entertaining and clever way of depicting the consequences of public intrusion into the private sphere. In line with the aim of this paper, we have provided an example of a protagonist of a comic (the author herself) who experiences insecurity and dissatisfaction due to a social environment in which awareness of sex is undesirable and sexuality is tabooed. Even though the article is limited to a single example, it is supported with solid facts and statistics, which show how this artistic view reflects real-world indicators. The examples and data provided in the article support the initial hypothesis that both public control over the private sphere and silencing sexuality lead to frustration.

Despite being looked down on by society and critics, comics in Russia constitute one of the bravest genres addressing taboo topics, namely: people with disabilities as in *Me, Elephant* by Rudak; undesirable themes, such as homosexuality, referred to in some comics by Bubble (*Red Fury, Major Grom, Club*); or translating and publishing those that had been banned, such as the *Death of Stalin* by Fabien Nury and Thierry Robin. In the same fashion, *My Sex* addresses the lack of sexual awareness in Russia, which is also an unpopular topic. Without trying to promote sex education or blame communism for removing physiology from the agenda, the author shows the consequences of both and provides a reason for one to rethink existing policies and social norms.

In conclusion, this study could be expanded with a comparative investigation of how comics reflect public-private relationships in other cultures and societies. One such example could be such a comparison with the American graphic novel *Blankets* by Craig Thomson, in order to see what societal obstacles the protagonists of US and Russian comics overcame in discovering their sexuality and experiencing love, as well as how these comics reflect their respective societies.

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DOMINIK STOSIK¹**#DEATHTOFREEDOMOF SPEECH**

Abstract

In this analysis the author sets out to examine the concept of freedom of speech on the internet, drawing upon the development of the World Wide Web, the Big-Data-Trade-Off-Dilemma and the nothing-to-hide argument fallacy. A key finding is the observation of a multitude of emerging challenges in the field of ethics, privacy, law and security. Furthermore the most recent exertion of influence on the freedom of speech, that is to say astroturfing should adduce as an instance to demonstrate the possibilities of manipulating public opinion. Further on, the analysis of governmental military enhancement programmes and the example of a recent entertainment programme production shall serve as a visualisation that the research on unprecedented signal resolution and data-transfer bandwidth between the brain and electronics might be far more close to reality than one might be expecting. The results suggest that the freedom of speech is preceded by the freedom of thinking. Its manipulation on a bigger scale (e.g. national elections) could serve as a new way of psychological warfare and therefore the freedom of thinking, or the right to a free mind should remain unviolated.

Key words: privacy, bioethics, neuroethics

“Laws and ethics can’t keep pace with technology” (Wadhwa, 2014). The internet, originally conceived in the 1960s and developed in the 1980s as a scientific network for exchanging information, was not designed for the purpose of separating information flows (Michener, 1999). The World Wide Web as we know it was not foreseen, neither was the evolution of ways in how we access it. Developments over recent years have each created new ethical and legal challenges, e.g. the discussion around the use of cookies (Palmer, 2005), the “like” button (Krishnamurthy & Wills, 2009), cloud

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computing (Ruiter & Warnier, 2011), and the interactive web, known as Web 2.0, where users generate much of the content themselves.

In increasing numbers, devices other than smartphones, such as watches, refrigerators and cars, that are not limited to user-owned computing devices, will be connected to the internet, containing chips and/or connected in the so-called Internet of Things.

DeNardis (2014) notes that individuals using a social media platform or smartphone app may have the impression that their online activities are private, but in practice, much more information is collected, some of which is not related to content but to associated information to identify the user in an administrative and logistical way. Some services collect information as device information, including unique hardware identifiers, mobile phone number (if accessing the internet from a phone), IP address, time and date of phone calls, actual location based on GPS, Wi-Fi, or cellular signal from a mobile device. Above all, it seems pertinent to remember that some of this information might not necessarily be needed to provide a particular service. Following the line of argument by DeNardis, the gathering and sharing of data about individuals is at the heart of both online advertising and new forms of government surveillance or, to put it another way, we are facing a situation that Gallagher (2014, p. 5) calls “multiveillance”, which is surveillance not just by the state but also by companies, marketers, and those in our social networks.

The most compelling argument within the Big Data discourse is that the user has become the product and is not the customer any more. Although those who are involved in the “free software movement” advocate for “free” as in free speech (Latin: *libre*) rather than “free” as in free beer (Latin: *gratis*), what has occurred in practice, and is still taking place, is a supremacy of software as free as in free beer. The public does not feel that they are paying for the use of social media platforms: Facebook or Twitter, or internet search engines such as Google, Yahoo!, or Bing. Provided that maintaining those services costs a lot of money and provided that anything can become something of value, one could conclude that not only has personal data become the currency the user is paying those services with, but also “the world’s most valuable resource is no longer oil, but data” (Regulating, 2017), the fuel of the future.

We see that there is a transformation from *ad valorem* to *gratis* software, which still is an ongoing process and which makes it difficult to draw definite conclusions. With this in mind, let us look at the possible

motivations that make people put themselves in an exposed position on the internet. In order to understand these motivations, which may only be limited to assumptions, we need first to understand which information people think is available about themselves online. In light of the evidence from a survey entitled *Anonymity, Privacy, and Security Online* (Rainie, Kiesler, Kang & Madden, 2013), we have a better understanding of what adult internet users say which information about them is available online. Thus, 66% of them think it is “a photo of you”, 50% think it is their birth date, followed by general information such as home address, phone number and the company one works for.

If things were only that simple. Consider for a moment the records that Google has of your searches you did on the internet: records of your wonderings, musings, and fantasies. Think of the records your e-mail provider has of your communications, or a cloud company has of your documents. Consider the (machine learning) algorithms behind all those services that make them improve with every input by every internet user.

Although the possibilities of the internet to keep in touch with one another are very convenient, think for a moment about the records social networks hold concerning their users. Possible motivations in addition to usefulness could be derived from an evolutionary point of view. Human beings are by nature social animals. In other words, it may appear convenient to have all of your contacts within shouting distance, that is, not too far away, but also not too close. Psychologically speaking, one could assume that some people might fear that they will not exist if they do not have an online identity, since studies (Ong et al., 2011) suggest a link between narcissism, extraversion and adolescents’ self-presentation on social media platforms. Furthermore, there is evidence to support this theory considering the ingenious methods how social media platforms remind their users on a constant basis to “complete” their profiles, which basically is nothing more than adding more personal information.

Another key point to remember is that social media services tend towards the creation of an allegedly wholesome shell of positivity, where users get to express themselves by liking something and others receiving those likes, which is a manufactured mutual win-win situation by default, considering that there was and is no “dislike” button. Recently, Facebook users got upgraded from expressing one emotion up to 6 basic emotions, in addition to the “like” button there now is “love”, “haha”, “wow”, “sad” and “angry”. Similar to the limitation of expression in order to keep the

atmosphere positive, the idea of an ideal online world is kept alive by, for example, only notifying users that they have gained a new friend, but not if they have lost one.

Users have to accept the terms and conditions of services and have to give permission to the apps on their mobile devices so they may use its camera, storage or microphone. Studies confirm that people tend to accept the terms of service without actually reading them (Obar & Oeldorf-Hirsch, 2018). The results of this study suggest that there may be a divergence between in-depth knowledge and an ambiguous sciolism of what actually is happening with the user's data.

Then again, there is the nothing-to-hide argument. Why bother if one has nothing to hide? One could ask these people if they have curtains in their homes. If they do, one could ask them why, since they have nothing to hide.

The problem with the nothing-to-hide argument is the underlying assumption that privacy is about hiding bad things. This biased use of the term "privacy" which is so often used interchangeably with the term "secrecy" may be a cause for the misconception that having nothing to hide is not the same as not having anything one feels they need to show someone else, either.

Significantly, there is a desire to remain anonymous on the internet and as one study (Rainie, Kiesler, Kang & Madden, 2013) suggests: 33% of adult internet users say they have used the internet in way to avoid being observed by hackers or criminals, followed by 28% who were trying to avoid advertisers, while only 5% were trying to avoid the government. Another study with the programmatic title *Why do people seek anonymity on the internet?* (Kang, Brown & Kiesler, 2013) finds that the third biggest group of interviewees seeks anonymity in order to share art or work, while the second smallest group is engaged in discussing, or is involved in politics.

With this in mind, one could theorise that people who try to share art anonymously or discuss certain topics are not looking for the "dopamine high", which social media triggers when people get likes for sharing content. As studies suggest that reward differs with respect to social networks, a study entitled *Social network modulation of reward-related signals* suggests that reward valuation in social contexts is sensitive to the distinctions of social networks, such that sharing positive experiences with in-network others may carry higher value (Fareri, Niznikiewicz, Lee & Delgado, 2012).

FREEDOM OF SPEECH ON THE INTERNET

Freedom of speech on the internet may be a benefit for citizens living in oppressive states. Moreover, during the Middle East uprisings in 2011 that would later be called the “Arab Spring”, media outlets around the globe became captivated with the personal blog postings of Amina Abdallah Ar-raf. The freedom of writing one’s opinion on the internet not only can be a benefit in favour of free press (free as in *libre*), but also bears the danger of getting away with anonymously posted denigrative statements thrown at some person, or even the manufacturing of public opinion on a large scale known as “astroturfing”. This is achieved through anonymous internet comments, stories or websites that promote misinformation in an attempt to sway consumer opinion or behaviour. There are many points in support of illustrating this phenomenon. Firstly, this could be an author who writes online critiques of their own books. Secondly, it could be a restaurant-owner who writes positive reviews of their own restaurant, probably knowing that a one percent increase in the reputation score can bring about a half percent increase in occupancy and about a one and a half percent increase in revenue (Anderson, 2012). Thirdly, it could be the news which, in theory, can be manipulated and with governments seeming to have realised that forming public opinion may be one of the most powerful information weapons of the 21st century. However, let us take a step back – perhaps this does not concern freedom of speech but freedom of thought.

Bypassing the question of who should be in control, or whether there should be a controlling instance at all, one should notice the fact that before we engage with specific arguments for limiting free speech, we are in fact free to speak as we like. As a consequence, freedom of speech is different from some other types of free action.

If someone, such as the government, wants to prevent citizens engaging in certain actions – riding bicycles, for instance – it can do so by a multitude of restrictions. It can make sure that bicycles are no longer available, all existing bicycles could be burned and a ban could be placed on future imports. Freedom of speech is somehow a different case. Although one could limit the access to forms of free expression by banning books, plays and films, it is beyond one’s area of authority, as well as even the possibility to make it impossible to say certain things. The only thing a government could do in such case would be to punish people **after** they have spoken.

In this line of argumentation we are, in fact, free to say anything we like. We do not necessarily have to publish it (write it on the internet), as some institution can make that freedom more or less costly to exercise. Following this line of reasoning, one may conclude that in order to **pre-vent** someone who has no fear of punishment from making use of their freedom of speech, one would have to remove their vocal chords. Hence, to prevent someone from exercising their freedom of thought, one would have to remove their brain. It appears that forming, influencing and directing public opinion, which in a way amounts to the same thing as to not let people think freely in the first place, seems the least drastic option while probably also being more cost effective than the former two options.

To give an illustration of what I mean, let us take a look at an episode of the British science fiction anthology series *Black Mirror*, entitled *Hated in the Nation*. In the near future, extinct bees have been replaced by robotic equivalents to maintain the balance of the ecosystem. Equipped with sensors and a script (a sequence of instructions) that is executed by a processor inside the bees, they autonomously fulfil their task nature has given them *a priori*. The government has planted a back door in the code (just in case) and the whole system is managed from one centralised headquarters. A social media movement arises where people use the hashtag “#DeathTo” adding the name and a picture of a someone slated for death, thereby giving vent to their hate of that particular person, who usually is some public figure that has become unpopular by not following the public code of behaviour. After 5 p.m., when the “polls” close, the person hated the most, namely he or she possessing the most-frequently mentioned name and that particular hashtag, gets attacked by a bee in an invasive manner and which makes its way into the brain of the victim, causing such agony that eventually leads to suicide. In the next step, the algorithm, after taking control of law enforcement, goes into a second phase, that is to say punishes all the people that had ever taken part in this social media activity (meaning they have posted #DeathTo, a name and a picture) by turning the bees against them, resulting in a multitude of deaths, thereby adding a moral value to the whole narrative.

Coupled with ingenious bits of multilayered social commentary, as well as the theoretical possibility of such a scenario occurring by considering the status of current information technology and medical research, this episode constitutes a good example in order to elaborate on the dangers

emerging from “Bridging the Bio-Electronic Divide” (see also Bridging the Bio-Electronic Divide, 2016). At this point a brief excursus is required.

“BRIDGING THE BIO-ELECTRONIC DIVIDE”

Modern efforts at “military human enhancement” draw on the fields of neuroscience, biology, genetics, pharmacology, nanotechnology and robotics. The Pentagon’s high-tech Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) is well on the way to developing a number of prosthetic projects aimed at producing super soldiers. According to Lin, Mehlman & Abney (2013) one may divide the research on enhancement into physical capabilities, cognitive capabilities, senses, metabolism and a miscellany of dual-use research applications. Neurowarfare may be defined as warfare using “neuroweapons” that are designed to specifically target the brain or the central nervous system in order to affect the targeted person’s mental state, mental capacity and, ultimately, the person’s behaviour in a specific and predictable way. Psychiatry is *inter alia* based on the assumption that mental states and behaviour can be regulated or controlled with pharmaceuticals. The US military, for instance, had already become interested in “psycho-chemical warfare” back in the late 1940s. Nowadays, neuroscientific enhancement stands at the forefront of DARPA’s research, including non-invasive and invasive brain stimulation, such as: brain-computer interfaces, brainwave entrainment, transcranial magnetic stimulation, intracortical microstimulation, transcranial direct current stimulation, and deep brain stimulation. Thus, by “Bridging the Bio-Electronic Divide” and with every intervention and every observation concerning every human brain, we confront a multitude of ethical issues. The moral questions related to “Bridging the Bio-Electronic Divide” concern its use as a method for modern warfare. The moral dimension has at least two different angles: (1) where does the human end and the technological begin, or what is exterior to the body of the soldier and what is interior; and (2) in which ways may the cross-linking between biological and electromagnetic enhancement potentiate the already existing “psychological” methods, such as political warfare, “psywar”, institutional conflict and psychosocial combat using the great potentiality of television and the internet, all of whose primary purpose is to disorient and disarm the opposition and bear the potential to blow a state up from within. In the future, the battlefield should

be expected to shift progressively into the intellectual realm, impacting on the consciousness and feelings of many millions of people. New conflicts may no longer be wars only among people but wars of artificial intelligence and the equipment and virtual reality created by this kind of intelligence. There is a good case to believe that neurowarfare is likely to extend over many decades with the distinction between peace and war becoming not just blurred, but meaningless. The effects of combining “Bridging the Bio-Electronic Divide” with information weapons (e.g. mass media and cyber weapons) may derive – if circumstances so require – new research in neurosecurity as neuroethics. Although such weapon systems may be considered as dangerous as nuclear weapons, they will probably be more acceptable in terms of political and military ideology.

CONCLUSION

The trouble with all these developments is that one cannot go back. We are engaged in a grand social experiment, the outcome of which we can only guess at. Above all, we should keep in mind that the “smarter” our technology gets, the bigger the attack surface grows, considering all the multiple emerging side branches which every technological evolutionary step contains.

Human organisms are susceptible to infections and so are software-controlled machines, which can be infected by a virus, for instance. The underlying mechanism is the same, meaning a virus needs a host to replicate itself.

Although it seems natural to suggest that all technology should be used in moderation and in a reasonable way, there is one essential “interference factor”, namely emotions. According to Phelps, Lempert & Sokol-Hessner (2014), the prevalent view of emotion and decision making is derived from the notion that there are dual systems of emotion and reason. Making a decision often occurs in the face of uncertainty about whether one’s choices will lead to benefit or harm. By contrast, the somatic marker hypothesis is a neurobiological theory of how decisions are made in the face of uncertain outcomes. This theory holds that such decisions are aided by emotions, in the form of bodily states, that are elicited during the deliberation of future consequences and that mark different options for behaviour as being advantageous or disadvantageous. This process involves an

interplay between neural systems that elicit emotional/bodily states and neural systems that map these emotional/bodily states.

DISCUSSION

We have seen that the internet was not designed to become the World Wide Web as we know it. Furthermore, we have mentioned the Big-Data-Trade-Off-Dilemma (the user trades his personal data for services or what is more, “becomes” the product eventually) and looked for possible explanations for the mindless spreading of personal data on the internet. However, there are tendencies where users seek privacy. Having said that, we have tried to deconstruct the nothing-to-hide argument fallacy. Yet the marketing divisions of Big Data corporations are doing a good job in appealing for the emotions of the users. The continuous development of something that cannot be turned off for maintenance (the internet) can be compared with replacing the engines of an airplane while flying. This continuous development makes it difficult to draw definite conclusions. With this in mind, we are constantly facing a multitude of new challenges in the field of ethics, privacy, law and security.

We have been discussing the differences between freedom of speech in contrast to the freedom of other actions (riding a bicycle in this case) and possible sanctions. In view of the lack of possibilities to control freedom of speech, which is preceded by freedom of thought, we have demonstrated possibilities of influencing public opinion. Importantly, since “Bridging the Bio-Electronic Divide” is no dystopian science fiction scenario but a potential development of the near future, further research in robot ethics and safeguarding of the emerging “smart” devices is needed. We have tried to link the feasible dangers emerging from the ingenious but malicious misuse of social media in connection with a hijacked centralised system by using the example of a contemporary and popular science fiction series.

In conclusion, it may be beneficial to educate the public as to what data is actually processed while using allegedly free (as in beer) services, since human beings may be susceptible to Alzheimer’s disease, but the internet is not. Furthermore, the evident misconception of the discussion around the term “privacy” should be enlightened, since it should be treated in a neutral way, provided that studies suggest that the care for privacy is negatively connoted. The whole conception of privacy gains momentum

if we consider the possible ways of manipulating public opinion (e.g. astroturfing or military psychological warfare).

All things considered, privacy is not something one should not care about because one has nothing to hide but “privacy is the right to a free mind” (Snowden, Chomsky & Greenwald, 2016).

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KATARZYNA KRAWERENDA-WAJDA¹

THE SPIRITUALITY OF CONTEMPORARY DANES – BETWEEN PAGANISM AND SECULARISATION

Abstract

The topic of the article is the issue of the place of religion in contemporary Danish society. Not only Scandinavia, but all of Europe is subject to secularisation processes. As a result of this process, the role of the Christian religion remains limited or eliminated. However this crisis of religion, does not affect the deep-rooted desire for transcendence and individual search for it. In the case of Denmark, it appears in a return to neo-paganism – a reconstructionist religion that attempts to return to the religion of the “nature” of ancient and early medieval Germans. An example of this religion is the Ásatrú movement, dynamically developing in Denmark. On the other hand, the need for transcendence is realised by the phenomenon of spirituality, which is the need for self-transcending. Both of these directions are an expression of freedom, finding meaning, but also a conscious search for identity in a dynamically changing Europe.

Key words: spirituality, religion, Denmark, crisis of Christianity

INTRODUCTION

This article discusses the place of religion in contemporary Danish society, showing the forms in which the “need for transcendence” in human life is manifested. The crisis of Christianity and the departure from Lutheran Church do not imply, necessarily, resignation from the spiritual needs of every human being, but rather that these needs may manifest themselves in a desire to return to the origins of one’s culture: in this case, sagas, Edda and religious rites practiced before the Christianisation of Scandinavia.

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To address the issue of religion in Denmark, we must first show how religiousness differs from spirituality. Religiousness is associated with an institution, its requirements, orthodox teaching, duties resulting from belonging to a specific community, and obligations towards Church and God. Spirituality, on the other hand, is a private religion, the spiritual involvement of a human being, independent of any institution. This phenomenon is referred to as “the new spirituality”, and although it is not clearly defined, it can be understood intuitively. Below is an understanding of spirituality as proposed by Zbigniew Pasek:

We suggest calling the word “spirituality” these actions, attitudes and beliefs of man in which his pursuit of transgression is realised. This is understood in various ways to transcend his own temporal condition and current life situation. This process is done in the name of values, considered by the individual human to be positive, good (often these values are referred to as *summum bonum*). We believe that these values can be religious as well as ethical, aesthetic, or other, unrelated to the sphere of religion. In this way, we emphasise the fact that the individual’s involvement in these values, ideas and activities, perform similar functions to traditional religions, in that they provide sense, explain the world, and sometimes also satisfy the needs of belonging and acceptance. They answer the questions of “final concern” posed by Paul Tillich (Skowronek & Pasek, 2013, pp. 18–19).²

It is worth emphasising that spirituality in the Christian tradition has been a synonym of religiosity or a more profound internal life, e.g. monasticism. “Spiritual” is what comes inspired by the Spirit, from within. According to Socha (2014, p. 24), this understanding of spirituality does not exclude the traditional form of religiosity and may mean a deepened dimension of religiousness.³ This paper now proceeds to present the relationship between these two concepts and how they refer to the individual existence of contemporary Danes.

² All translations come from the author of the article unless marked otherwise.

³ According to the psychologist of religion, Paweł Socha, spirituality makes human existence beyond the material, carnal and temporary side of humanity. In this sense, one’s spiritual nature is primordial in relation to one’s innate nature. What in traditional religions is called the soul and what is eternal, it defines the character of a person (Socha, 2014, p. 24).

RELIGION IN DENMARK

It seems that Danish religiosity and spirituality may be considered against two backdrops: one is the Lutheran Church, which is the state religion in Denmark, and the other is slowly resurging neo-paganism, i.e. the Asatran movement.

The Lutheran Church will be discussed first. With the Reformation in Denmark in 1536, Lutheran Christianity was established as the state religion. With the Constitution of 1849, Denmark introduced freedom of religion, although Lutheranism remained the established church. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark is also called the Church of Denmark: *Den Danske Folkekirke*, which literally means “the People’s Church” or “the National Church”. The Danish monarch is the head of the Church of Denmark. Most Danes belong to the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession, which is subsidised by the government. In January 2018, 75.3% of the population of Denmark were registered members of the Church of Denmark (*Den Danske Folkekirke*), the officially established church, which is Protestant in classification and Lutheran in orientation (Kirkeministeriet, 2018). The attendance, measured as a weekly participation, is only 3% (Bureau of Democracy, 2009).

Members of the Church of Denmark pay a church tax. The Church does not participate in political debates. The highest administrative body is the Ministry of the Church, also known as the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs. Denmark proclaims the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* (“whose realm, his religion”). Denmark remains a Protestant country, even despite the unrestricted presence of the Catholic Church during the last 100 years. However, it should be noted that Protestantism in Denmark is not so much a matter of faith and spirit, as it is a matter of culture. The Danish people consider religion to be a part of their national culture, the reason for which they are willing to pay the church tax, take care of the maintenance of churches and pastors, even if they rarely visit the institution itself. Why is this so?

Whereas the older generations simply followed moral principles, such as honesty, solidarity, responsibility and diligence, today’s thirty-year-old Danes do not attach importance to these values, or religion as such – it is no longer of meaningful value to them. The new generation identify themselves not so much as Danes, but more as Europeans. A Danish person does not want to live according to Church rules anymore, opting instead

for the approach of contemporary Europeans for whom the questions of faith and values are a private matter.

The typical participant in religious activities in Denmark is a woman (97%), who is also a member of the Church (93%). She is a university graduate (86%), in most cases with a postgraduate degree (75%). Socially, she belongs to the middle class and has the necessary resources to support her lifestyle choices (Vejrup Nielsen, 2015, p. 143). These participants, however, tend to have a general openness towards questions of spirituality. Most of them perceive themselves as “someone who believes”, who either prays or meditates, at least occasionally. As argued by Marie Vejrups Nielsen (2015, pp. 142–143), the majority of the respondents were identified as occasional consumers of church activities in line with the typology of “cultural Christians”.⁴ According to a research study by Phil Zuckerman (2009, p. 56), entitled *Why are Danes and Swedes so irreligious?*:

- Denmark has the lowest rates of church attendance in the world, only 12% of Danes attend church once a month and only 3% of Danes attend it at least once a week.
- Belief in life after death among Danes is as low as 30% – one of the lowest in the world.
- 31% of Danes believe in heaven, and 10% believe in hell.
- 7% of Danes believe that the Bible is the actual/literal word of God.
- 21% of Danes claim to pray at least several times in a given month.
- 15% of Danes claim to have ever had a “religious experience”, while only 8% chose to describe their denomination as “Christian faith”.

In March 2006, the Danish newspaper “Kristelig Dagblad” asked Danes what was the most important to them in relation to Easter: 58% said being with their family; 41% indicated getting a day off from work; 31% said the

⁴ A study by Marie Vejrups Nielsen is cited here. The research project began with a pilot study of three churches in 2013 in Aarhus, the second largest city in Denmark. In the spring of 2014, a nationwide research project was developed and carried out. The provider survey was sent out to approximately 1200 parishes, obtaining a 65% response rate (776 responses). A high degree of consistency in the answers was found across different contexts and between the pilot study in the Aarhus area and the nationwide study, but the lack of response rate for the participant survey means that the findings cannot be used to claim universal patterns for specific target groups. The survey questionnaire for participants focused primarily on motivations for participation. The questions concerning motivations for participation were multiple-choice questions, and the responses are shown as percentages in order to identify the high and low scoring options.

arrival of spring; while only 11% mentioned the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Overall, only 51% of Danes claim to believe in a “**personal God**”, while a mere 15% believe in a **divine power**. When asked “How important is God in your life?” (with 10 meaning “very important” and 1 meaning “not at all”), only 21% chose a number between 7 and 10 – again, among the lowest rates in the world (Zuckerman, 2009, p. 56). Let us now try to identify a number of possible reasons for this situation:

1. Stark and Finke (2000, p. 225) argue that the Lutheran Church has a “virtual monopoly” on religion because it is financed by the government. Other organisations do not have this kind of support. Stark and Finke claim that, when there are many different religions in a society – with none of them being state-subsidised – interest and involvement in religion will be high. Conversely, when there is only one dominant religion – one which is subsidised by the state – interest and involvement in religion will be low (Stark & Finke, 2000, p. 225). In addition, its pastors are paid salaries and enjoy free medical care, which results in them having no motivation to solicit the faithful.⁵ This may be why the Danish National Lutheran Church sees little or no incentive to attract potential new members.

2. Another important factor affecting the level of religiosity among the Danish people is the issue of prosperity and security in Denmark. High earnings, social insurance for every citizen and generous social benefits all translate into a sense of safety, security and a high standard of living in Denmark, ultimately pushing religious needs and interests to the background (Lüchau & Andersen, 2012, pp. 39–40). This is not an entirely new concept. Historically, people who experience difficulties or suffering in life have turned to religion for guidance and hope. Already in 1843, Karl Marx called religion “the opium of the people”, a refuge for security, an illusory and false hope. Nevertheless, this interpretation seems to be mistaken.

⁵ Lutheranism is the predominant religion in Denmark. Lutheranism has been consistently state-enforced and state-subsidised. Today, 83% of Danes continue to pay annual membership taxes/fees to keep their national church afloat. Thus, the “religious economy” of Denmark is one in which there is very little serious competition; the national Lutheran Church holds a virtual monopoly, albeit not an absolute monopoly, of course. About 4% of Danes belong to independent, so-called “free” Christian churches (be they Baptist, Pentecostal, Methodist, Jehovah’s Witnesses, etc.), another 1% of Danes are Catholic, and there also exist smaller religious movements such as the Baha’i Faith, Judaism, Scientology – not to mention the new and ever-growing influx of Islam.

Religion arises instead from a certain lack of something, from human insufficiency. In the past, e.g. in the 19th century, Denmark and Sweden were poor countries plagued by epidemics and hunger. However, a higher rate of religiousness was observed at that time. Donald Connery describes 19th-century Scandinavians as “a poverty-stricken mass”. Over the course of the 20th century, Denmark and Sweden became not only one of the wealthiest nations in the world, but also one of the most egalitarian (Connery, 1966, p. 6). Scandinavian countries boast the most well-developed welfare systems in the democratic world. Wealth in Scandinavia is shared throughout the population to an impressive degree, which is to say that the gap between the rich and the poor in Denmark and Sweden is smaller than in any other industrialised democracy. Accordingly, the high level of welfare these countries enjoy means that religion is becoming increasingly less important.

3. Working women. Callum Brown (2001, p. 10) argues that it was women who historically kept their children and husbands interested and involved in religion. Therefore, when they opted out of religion, their husbands and children followed suit (*ibid.*). It has long been known that women are inherently more religious than men, and it is up to them to maintain interest in the religion of their husbands and children, because women often teach prayers and take care of reading the Bible in the family. However, what can cause a change in women’s religiosity? It can be argued that joining the labour force has a major impact. As researcher Ole Riis acknowledges, women in paid employment are less religious than women working at home (Riis, 1994, p. 122).⁶

4. Another reason for the poor condition of Christianity is that Denmark is a country of islands and peninsulas, strongly associated with nature, sagas and Edda, an aspect which will be discussed in more detail later in the article. One may ask why Christianity has never really taken root

⁶ In the 1960s, the vast majority of Danish women were engaged in unpaid domestic work as mothers and housewives. But over the course of the last four decades, there has been a big change in terms of women’s involvement in the labour force. In 1960, over 800,000 Danish women worked at home as housewives. In 1969, just over 43% of women worked outside the home in the paid labor force, but by 1990 that had increased to over 78%. Today, the vast majority of Danish and Swedish women work outside the home (Møller, Andersen & Stokholm, 2017). Thus, it is quite possible that the remarkably high degree of women in the paid workforce in Denmark helps account for the low levels of religiosity there.

in Denmark. On the one hand, reaching back to history and following the situation of Christianity in Scandinavia from the 10th century onwards, it seems that it has never really taken serious root anywhere in the Scandinavian world. Why? Mostly because the Scandinavians are islanders or the inhabitants of peninsulas, who live close to nature and whose spirituality is inseparably connected with it. In either case, the pre-Christian beliefs from poetic Edda, sagas and runic inscriptions point to their being rooted in nature and the search for transcendence within it. Therefore, Christianity will not take root in Denmark, while the neo-pagan movements are gaining traction in the same area.⁷ On the other hand, the reason for the poor condition of Christianity may be the fact that Denmark has never really had to defend the boundaries of its faith. Although this may now be challenged by Islam, one should not expect a defence-of-faith reaction, rather a certain form of rationalisation, justification or defence of European values, but not an increase in the Christian faith as a reaction to Islamisation.

5. The governing party in Denmark, namely the Social Democrats, have always been relatively anti-religious. This party seeks the removal of Lutheranism from schools, as well as the elimination of all religious images. Religious education in schools teaches a certain knowledge of religion as a whole, as well as the history of all religions. However, does this mean that religion is disappearing in Scandinavia and secularisation processes are well advanced? Not exactly, given that various forms of religion may be observed outside the Church.

AN INVISIBLE RELIGION

It is worth stressing that the whole of Europe has been undergoing secularisation for many years, including the Lutheran Church. The concept of secularisation was touched upon by the leading sociologists of religion, namely Émile Durkheim and Max Weber. Generally speaking, along with the advancement of societies, mainly through rationalisation and modernisation, religion loses its importance in all aspects of social life. This was first influenced by the rational disenchantment of the world (Weber's

⁷ It is also worth noting that Scandinavia can be said to be geographically "separated" or "distanced" from what the outside influence. Historically, it meant that ideas arrived there with a slight delay and even without resistance, skepticism or suspicion.

term). The disenchantment of religious life leads to a devaluation of special religious activities and valuing instead the activities of ordinary life.⁸ This devaluation is understood by Weber as a consequence of an alternative conception of rationality that develops as religions themselves go through an inner rationalisation, which tends to shift them into the irrational sphere. All this brings along lifestyle changes. Man becomes the centre of the world, and there is a departure from religious practices and the traditional role of the priest as the one who mediates in contact with God. It also prompts the creation of new religious movements. However, does it necessarily mean the disappearance of religious needs in man? The same question was posed by Thomas Luckmann, who studied changes in the religiosity of modern Western societies. Indeed, Luckmann showed that in the field of research on religiosity (defined as the sphere of the manifestation of religion), we are not dealing with the process of its dying, but rather its profound metamorphosis.

Luckmann argues that the focus should be shifted from secularisation to individualisation. He believes that individual religiosity loosens up, or completely breaks the connection with traditional religious institutions. Luckmann and his "invisible religion" (2006, p. 60). emphasise the growing role of the individual in contrast to the significance of the community. Individuals make decisions and act in respect of the principal value, namely life. Janusz Mariański (2009, p. 191) writes about the sacralisation of the individual autonomy. This new type of individualised religiosity, of a non-ecclesiastical nature, is sometimes called invisible, hidden, analogical, post-modernist, indefinite, syncretic, dispersed, fluid, privatised, disharmonious, diverse religiosity. According to Luckmann, irreligion would mean denial of the human self and, consequently, challenge society itself. Man needs to transcend his biological nature, which is a certain anthropological constant. Religion, therefore, appears when a human being transcends a purely biological existence and enters the world of meanings. This is a transition from the so-called Big Transcendence to the Little Transcendence. According to Luckmann, religion is a necessity for an individual to become a human being as otherwise he would lose his personality. However, it can also be a private religion – one that moves from institutional dimensions to the inner world of an individual. For Luckmann (2003, p. 275),

⁸ Charles Taylor speaks in his *Sources of the Self* that "affirmation of the ordinary" is a central motif of the emergence of modernity (1989, pp. 211–302).

religion is the basic feature of the human condition and is a universal aspect of it.⁹ New religious forms include: personal experiences in the New Age, Zen meditation, reincarnation, magic, spiritualism, divination, astrology and horoscopes. The experience of little transcendence can also manifest itself in emancipation, self-realisation, coaching, or in various forms of psychotherapy or therapy. Thus, there is no question of the disappearance of religiosity in the present times, but rather of its transformation (privatisation or individualisation). Admittedly, in modern society, or even in post-modern societies, religion is becoming less important and people no longer refer to the sacred when making important decisions. However, religion has not gone from society, even if its manifestations have changed. Moreover, the definition of religion concerns its functions rather than its essence.¹⁰ It is more difficult to describe whether something is a religion or not, which is why the definition of spirituality seems to be very helpful in describing modern phenomena which emerge and change very dynamically. Mariański even speaks about a certain “spiritual productivity” of contemporary culture.

NEO-PAGANISM, OR A RETURN TO THE PAST AND ITS TRADITIONS

Neo-paganism belongs to the so-called new religiosity. It is an idea of the return and reconstruction of pre-Christian European traditions. Although the first concepts of this return date back to Romanticism, it was only the 20th century that brought about the revival of this movement in Europe.

Speaking of neo-paganism in Denmark, I refer to the Forn Siðr¹¹ movement, which is also the name of the largest organisation within Asatru (literally “faith in the Asses” gods). Forn Siðr is an old custom within Danish tradition whose goal is to reconstruct the religion of northern Germans, namely Vikings from before the period of Christianisation of Denmark

⁹ According to Luckmann, religion is not a transient phase in the evolution of the human species, but a universal aspect of the *conditio humana* (2003, p. 275).

¹⁰ Functional definitions define what religion does in society, how to deal with problems, social integration, give meaning to reality, and assume that religion is a human phenomenon.

¹¹ Official website of Forn Siðr: <http://fornsidr.dk/>.

(965 AD).¹² According to Arkadiusz Sołtysiak, a Polish researcher of neo-paganism, this religion is “a faithful reconstruction of early-medieval Scandinavian beliefs, based on scientific criticism of literary sources – reborn and adapted to the contemporary reality of the Scandinaviansituation” (1999, p. 243). There is no extensive organisation in Asatru. The movement was officially founded in 1997 in Odense with its founders wanting to organise this movement in Denmark based on the Icelandic model. Currently, the movement has 1,000 members in Denmark, while 100 people are members of other organisations associated with the idea of returning to the Nordic religion from before the Christianisation of Denmark, based on sagas and poetic Edda. It is an apolitical organisation that is very active in the media (press, radio, TV, internet). The proponents of the movement strive to raise social awareness about the old-custom beliefs of Denmark. According to the content of Forn Siðr’s declaration of faith we can say that they believe in the same gods who once gave their ancestors meaning and helped them, *Æsir–Vanir*, and they trust them. Each individual divine figure represents an aspect of reality that cannot be denied. They also recognise the existence of elves, ghosts, giants, the Sun and the Moon. Everything is a part – and a symbol – of our multi-faceted world. The Yggdrasil Ash Tree is the centre of the world, where the wise Norns controlling the past, present and future, sit and spin our destinies. The contact between the divine powers and the individual person is given to anyone who is looking for it, in its own, unique way. They honour their ancestors and give greetings to those, who will come after us. They believe that mankind, animals, nature and holy places are full of both life and spirit. They treat the world around us with respect and consideration (Forn Siðr, 2016).

This text emphasises the individualism of faith where free space is left to interpret the figures of the deities. Gods are generally understood as symbols (Asatru is a symbol that serves human development). On the one hand, gods are interpreted as forces of nature and the other as archetypes, which represent separate aspects of human existence.

¹² In Scandinavia, we observe a strong attachment to pagan gods and visions of the world presented in mythology, strong relationships with the natural world, nature which is harsh but also nursing and feeding what in that climate is particularly meaningful and important. This is why one may observe a return towards neo-paganism in the last decade and the dynamic growth this organisation in Denmark: Asatru (Danish old customs). They strive hard for institutionalisation and for the denial of Christianity.

In article about the movement of Asatru, Michalina Biel quotes the statement of a member of this movement:

The word “believe” is too strong for me, but it is something that makes sense to me. I do not believe in Thor riding in the sky, but I believe that his picture is what makes sense in explaining the enormous energy released in a storm. I do not believe that gods exist as people, but that they are very strong images that make sense in individual humans’ life context. That suits me, it’s like coming home, this makes sense to me (Biel 2009, p. 39).

Freedom of interpretation and trust in one’s own feelings may be observed in this statement. Odin, for instance, who is customarily described as the god of war and warriors, is also perceived as the personification of wisdom, magic, poetry, death, the discoverer of the runic script. One of the people belonging to Forn Siðr perceives Odin as an extremely strong image, a personification of inner wisdom, ecstasy, death, struggle and magic, everything that is inexplicable in wisdom. An individual who meditates or prays to these gods, assimilates the same kinds of values in themselves, which the gods represent as archetypes. Joining the gods is equivalent to connecting with the source, while the way the source is interpreted and the way it is understood is different.¹³

The main ethical principle is honour, understood, on the one hand, as being faithful to the gods, and on the other hand, as a responsibility for oneself and for one’s actions. One must emphasise that the gods known from Edda make the same mistakes as ordinary people. They are not ethical role models – they are neither good nor bad. It is man who decides what they mean to him. Members of the Asatru movement criticise Christian ethics for restrictions in the sexual sphere, rejecting the notion

¹³ Pagan beliefs created many gods, deities, good and bad beings – similar to people, with similar vices, passions etc. – gods such as Thor or Freja were like people and therefore close to them. The rich reservoir of characters provided a broad spectrum of references – everyone could choose someone from this pantheon, while some gods appeal in every aspect of life. Christianity did not offer such diversity – it showed “only” one God, indeed one with his human incarnation, but one after all. Perhaps he was also “weak”, because he was defeated by death. After three days, he overcame death by resurrection, but before this happened, he suffered and was humiliated. Perhaps this is why Scandinavians were afraid of humiliation and weakness, while Christianity did not have a chance to take root not only in Denmark. It can be said that the Danes are a proud and detached nation as they are descendants of the Vikings. This issue remains open.

of sin and eternal punishment. It is a religion that calls for self-confidence and refuses to follow social norms and principles. Another important element is the honour for the memory of one's ancestors – what lives on after death is one's deeds during one's lifetime. Moreover, family values are emphasised.

This religion is a form of reconstructionism. The reconstruction here is based on the revival of an old religion in the conditions of the modern world, providing sensible answers to the needs of contemporary man. It is an attempt to dig out the old roots in order to grow a new tree. Neo-pagans feel a strong need to build identity, create bonds and cultivate tradition. It is through memory that this religious group finds its sense of identification. Rituals are employed to recall a past that gives meaning to the present and creates a religious thread. On the one hand, we can point to the rejection of the radical authority of tradition; on the other, to the need to refer to it. Society must maintain the continuity of tradition in order to exist, as argued by Danièle Hervieu-Léger in *Religion as a Chain of Memory*. According to Hervieu-Léger (1999, p. 142), religion is one of the forms of belief which is characterised by legitimising the exclusiveness of reference to tradition. However, for such reference to be religious, the belief must refer to some past and include the perspective of the future. This past may be either real or made up, as long as the religion remains a tool for creating and maintaining continuity, which is a collection of pictures, images, knowledge and behavioural patterns in the name of binding the past and the future. The essence of tradition is not that it is a bridge between the past and the present, but that it awards a transcendent authority to the past (ibid., p. 125).

CONCLUSIONS

Not only Scandinavia, but all of Europe is subject to secularisation processes, as a result of which the role of religion (Christianity) is being reduced or eliminated from social life. However, the need for transcendence has yet to disappear in man. In addition, it must be emphasised that the realisation of this need is an expression of human freedom. As has been demonstrated in this article, this need manifests itself in the return to neo-paganism, the religion of reconstructing the beliefs of ancient and medieval Germans, which died out as a result of Christianisation in the 10th century. The return

to neo-paganism is an attempt to overcome the feeling of lack of roots what is so typical of the Danish people. On the other hand, the need for transcendence is realised via spirituality, which is expressed in self-directedness.¹⁴ Both of these directions are a choice of freedom and fulfilment of the need to look for meaning and identity in a dynamically changing world.

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¹⁴ The disappearance of the need for transcendence (although I would rather refer to it as “dimming”) and turning towards oneself, seeking an inner sense that is subordinated to the principal goal: self-development. Hence, the great popularity of workshops on developing personal potential or interest in coaching. Man has become a goal for himself but also, to borrow from Protagoras, he has become the measure of all things. The whole of Europe, including Poland, is being subjected to this process of secularisation.

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ŁUKASZ KRZAK¹

FREEDOM IN CULTURE – SYMBOLS AND MYTHS IN BUILDING CULTURAL IDENTITY

Abstract

This article refers to a broadly understood issue of freedom usage in culture. It discusses the relationship between the Greeks and Macedonians, concerning the use of the name Macedonia and the image of Alexander the Great in the names, culture and symbols of both countries. The author reviews a problem of deriving benefits for one culture from another's heritage, exemplified by Romania as the heir of the Roman Empire. Some consideration is offered also with regard to legality of such procedures and the reaction of the international opinion. The Author provides specific and undeniable examples of relevant behaviours and approximates possible scenarios of relevant situations in the future with consequences to which such conflicts may lead.

Key words: culture, freedom, relations, Greeks, Romanians

This article raises issues of using symbols and myths in the process of shaping cultural identity based on the cases of Macedonia and Greece. The phenomenon is fairly prevalent, while the countries I have chosen are not the only ones that make such efforts. The usage of these two cultural mediums, namely symbols and myths, is a reference to a broader concern, which is freedom in culture itself. A fundamental question arising in this context may be formulated in the following way – are citizens really enjoying a vast array of rights, liberties in democratic European countries in the 21st century or rather, are they witnessing progressive censorship, along with limitations on freedom of speech and action? A further question that develops from that above concerns whether culture is a realm where no

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restrictions are conducive to creativity and one where there are no limitations imposed on using its products by individuals, groups, communities and societies. I propose to answer these questions within the context of the European Union as the entity which speaks out on international conflicts and disputes.

The European Union, as an institution with a rich history and multiple perspectives, unites the countries of Europe (Davies, 2010, p. 1125). The majority of the countries of the Old Continent are part of it, and in spite of their many vested interests, are able to work out compromises. The EU constitutes a system which is made up of representative bodies and departments, whose overriding goal is multilayered co-operation and the avoidance of situations from the 20th century when nearly the entire world was engaged in two bloody global wars. In order to find a common interest and strengthen its status among the Member States, the EU must appeal to events and symbols which provide the guarantee of existence and secure its position in history. Symbols are an important element of the identification process and form an emotional attachment to institutions (Stradowski, 2013, pp. 157–158). The EU anthem, namely *Ode to Joy* by Ludwig van Beethoven, a shared European currency, the EU flag, European Day which occurs on the 9th of May, or the motto **“united in diversity”** may be classified as such symbols (Skrzypczak, 2010, p. 212). This motto underscores that the EU safeguards cultural diversity while, at the same time, defining the axiological foundations of unity. In building its own identity, this refers to aspects of European history and culture which constitute fundamental values. These are Christianity, antiquity, democracy, respect for the rights of minorities, acceptance, communication and peaceful dialogue, all of which build close ties among all its members (Paleczny, 2008, p. 57).

Many times these premises are put to the test. Among instances of co-operation, numerous conflicts occur in Europe on many levels, from those which are economic down to those which are ethnic. One example is the Greek-Macedonian dispute. Although I use the term “Macedonia” regarding the eponymous country, this term is not acknowledged by everybody to be correct (Karadzoski & Adamczyk, 2015, Wilczak, 2018). If I had used this name to describe the Greek region, already known from ancient times, then I would have won Greeks’ support and recognition. Unfortunately, Macedonians cannot expect that. Greeks do not approve of the name in the context of the existence of the country neighbouring them. They do not allow its usage either in full or in part. Although the acronym,

FYROM (the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) has been thus far acceptable, this was only given temporary approval (Pietruszewski, 2008, Wilczak, 2018).

I shall cite the history of the shaping of Macedonian statehood regarding its connections with the Greeks as it is a starting point for understanding both parties in the conflict, as well as further reflections.

Ancient Macedonians were the descendants of the Dorian tribe, thus the same as their Greek neighbours. They also spoke similar languages. They were one of many groups inhabiting the Balkan territories in ancient times. They played an important role, along with Thessalians and Epirots, since the 4th century BC when they became the Hellenes. Living in the mountains at the meeting point of two cultures, they were the subject of an identity which was difficult to ascertain. Greeks regarded Macedonians as a people which could trace back their origins to a similar cultural circle (albeit one understood as having a barbarian language and beliefs), with certain differences, such as monarchy being the political system established in Macedonia. In view of the fact that they partook in the Olympic games, they were considered Hellenes. Macedonia emerged as a hegemonic force in the region over time and brought other city states under its control. Its glory days occurred during the reign of Philip II of Macedon and his son, Alexander the Great. They were annexed to the Roman Empire in the 2nd century C.E. Subsequently, Slavic settlers began to flock in these lands from the 4th century C.E. These territories were inhabited by many peoples in latter centuries and each one left their stamp on relations in the Balkans. Upon the decline of Byzantium, Serbs, Turks and Greeks wielded power in these lands. Each of the conquerors strove to pursue the policy of nationalisation towards their subjects, which led to divisions within society (Hroch, 2003, pp. 49–50).

Upon the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the partition of Macedonia then followed. Territory inhabited by many nations of diverse provenance and denominations (Pietruszewski, 2008, Felczak & Wasilewski, 1985, pp. 367–368) resulted in the awakening of modern-day Macedonians' national awareness. In the face of attempts made at annexations by their neighbours, who only promoted historical arguments in favour of legitimising the occupation of their lands, Macedonian peoples put up resistance engendered by the will to establish their own independent country. Up to the First and Second World Wars, ethnic Macedonian lands were part of adjacent countries. The process of denationalisation and a ban on speaking

their own language got under way. Christians were displaced to Bulgaria, and Muslims to Turkey (Ślupkov, 2011) after the Balkan wars. During the Second World War, Macedonians served in ranks of the communists who, in return for help, promised to establish a federal Greek state in which Macedonia would obtain full rights. After the end of the war, a subsequent civil war broke out, as a result of which they were defeated by Greeks and which led to reprisals and the mass displacement of entire families. The names of towns, villages, as well as surnames were changed to Greek while the Macedonian language was forbidden to be used in public life. Corporal punishment, imprisonment, and even displacement to desert islands were inflicted for the violation of these rules in order to undermine the national and cultural identity of these emigrants. Efforts were also made to uproot the element of Hellenic heritage from Macedonian history and acknowledge them as a "Slavic language-speaking minority" (ibid.). Policies implemented against Macedonians led to the exodus of the nation, including emigration to Poland. Returning was made impossible due to obstacles put in the way of those who sought to join their families, as well as because of conditions in the country itself, which had split into three small homelands. These were: Aegean Macedonia, with its capital in Solun (Greek Thessaloniki); Vardar Macedonia, with its capital in Skopje; as well as Pirin Macedonia situated in Bulgaria, where a policy of Bulgarisation was pursued towards these inhabitants in order to break any ties with the Greek legacy (Pietruszewski, 2008, Śmieja, 2009). Raised beyond their boundaries as Greeks, Macedonians came across an ethnically and culturally divided land. "Aegeans" were not welcomed by privileged "Vardars" as they were able to cross the Greek border without restraint. Moreover, having deprived "Aegeans" of their wealth, they have left them without any sense of close links with the country.

The period of 1967–1974 was the time of rule of the Greek military junta, the so-called "Regime of the Colonels". It was the period of denationalisation, exile and denunciations by neighbours. Despite the fact that socialists subsequently rose to power, the situation was not subject to change in principle. Although Macedonians only could return to the country unobstructed, they were required to signing up an oath of loyalty and change their surname to sound Greek. With accession of Greece to the EEC (European Economic Community), Macedonians expected their neighbours to change their approach (Strzałkowski, 2018). In spite of many mediation efforts, the situation did not improve.

Greeks feared that Macedonians were eager to usurp their achievements and culture, leading to review of their administrative frontiers. Since they were treated as a fifth column, they aspired to obtain the same rights as Greeks and be acknowledged as rightful citizens. They currently comprise 2% of the population in the Greek province of Macedonia. Even though they have been recognised as a national minority, they are still not entitled to form associations, which is considered a violation of the European Convention on Human Rights (Patek, Rydel, Węc, 2003b, pp. 123–124). Although they are treated as a national group in Bulgaria, in the political sense, this does not concern ethnicity as they are perceived to be part of the Bulgarian nation. They are treated as fellow countrymen in Serbia since the existence of Macedonians as a separate nation is not recognised there (Pietruszewski, 2008).

How did this come to be a conflict over names and symbols? The Soviet-led Comintern acknowledged the existence of Macedonia in 1934, the inhabitants of which were Greeks, Bulgarians and citizens living within the limits of what was then Yugoslavia. Subsequently, Josip Broz Tito gave a new name to this region in 1944, namely the Socialist Republic of Macedonia and codified the language using dialects spoken in this land. An independent Republic of Macedonia emerged upon the collapse of Yugoslavia at the beginning of the 1990s. For Greeks, this was a temporary arrangement which had grown on transitory Balkan soil and expecting that when the post-communist order was to be brought into effect, the name would change too (Bodalska, 2018). However, it did not happen so. Macedonians, who did not have their own flag but instead used as their symbol the Star of Vergina, the burial site of Phillip II of Macedon, began to take steps on the international scene as an independent country while at the same time exposing themselves to the risk of being invaded by a powerful neighbour.

As the Greeks are anxious that Macedonians are willing to lay claim to their heritage and land, they remain unconvinced regarding conceding the name “Macedonia” to FYROM. Relations are tense to such an extent that the UN has intervened and negotiated the change of flag and constitution to reassure the Greek side since the Republic of Macedonia recognised the star/sun of Vergina as their emblem in 1992, an emblem officially reserved for Greeks (Biernacka-Rygiel, 2015). Both parties, however, identify with this symbol. It is an element of cultural identity for contemporary Macedonians, a link with the former Macedonia whose empire, history, culture goes far beyond the framework of the present country. Subsequently,

in 1993, Greeks used it as the official emblem of the region of Macedonia within the borders of their country, which was to identify it as a reference to its antique and ancient traditions. Not being satisfied with the situation, Greece imposed an embargo. Upon UN intervention, the Greeks lifted sanctions imposed earlier on their neighbours, although they had an effect in that the Macedonian side renounced of all territorial pretensions and changed its flag to an eight-rayed sun. In addition, the Turks joined in, which owing to their own conflict with Greece, supported the Macedonians in their struggle for acquisition of the right to their own identity and national symbols. As their maritime borders are under dispute up to today, Turkey was able to exert pressure on the Greeks by supporting a weaker neighbouring state.

Let us, therefore take a closer look at the famed warrior who, as with the name of the Macedonian state, is an object of controversy. Alexander the Great is a symbol of both sides, an ancient figure who reinforces and supports the historical and cultural identity of either nation (Davies, 2010, pp. 135–136). To Greeks, he is regarded as a symbol of great glory and victories, while at the same time reminding Europe of who first laid the foundations of philosophy, science and democracy. According to Macedonians, however, Alexander is the figure who has given them the right to their own identity, their own state, and is considered the most famous and well-known of all Macedonians. Indeed, the ancient ruler is ubiquitous in Macedonia. Apart from monuments erected in his honour, his name is given to streets, airports or motorways, while the personal names of Alexander and Philip are among the most popular. It is incomprehensible to Greeks, however, that a nation which nowadays has more in common with the sphere of Slavic culture, identifies with Greece and considers itself the heir of Alexander the Great. It is worth noting that the Macedonians of today are more Slavic than Greek. The region of Macedonia, however, is an internal part of Greece and Greeks consider themselves solely entitled to refer to the legacy of the illustrious conqueror of Persia. In the present-day rhetoric, Alexander is being juggled around as a symbol. Thus, the airport in Skopje bears his name, whereas the Greeks have named the airport in Thessaloniki in honour of Macedonia, which is to aimed at signifying the strong devotion of their nation to the region. On the other hand, Macedonians have raised monuments, such as one worth a few million euro in Skopje, which represents “a warrior on horseback”. It is not difficult to guess who the warrior is. This led to an inflammation of relations between

Skopje and Athens and further obstruction of the accession of Macedonia to the European Union and NATO (Wilczak, 2018).

Moreover, in Athens it is easy to notice many motifs related to Alexander the Great, such as those on T-shirts, mugs, or little busts at souvenir shops. Associated with Greece and antiquity, he presents a unique attraction to tourists. If one pays a visit to the military museum, one will find their way to a separate room dedicated exclusively to the warrior. Mock-ups of parts of his military campaigns are exhibited there together with display of the 1956 movie *Alexander the Great*, starring Richard Burton. On display are replicas of armour and weaponry, maps presenting his journeys, and the entire legacy Alexander left upon his premature death. Interestingly, one may notice across inscriptions everywhere citing: “Alexander the Great” – not Alexander of Macedonia. Thus, Greeks’ attitude towards the warrior itself is unambiguous and requires no additional commentary.

The Macedonians, however, are ready to meet half way. Although they are willing to change provocative names given to streets, motorways and the airport, as well as add qualifying adjectives such as North, Vardar, Upper to their country’s name, this is still unacceptable to Greeks. It is necessary to mention steps undertaken by the government of Macedonia, and more precisely nationalist parties, who use populist slogans that meet with favourable reception and thus add fuel to the flames.

What kind of policy should the European Union adopt towards the Greek-Macedonian conflict? While there are a few solutions, it is certainly impossible to opt for one that will satisfy both parties as one party will always be forced to make concessions. Although Macedonia will probably be this party due to an increased inclination to compromise, the Greeks must limit their range of demands to those which are more feasible and which will not negate the existence of Macedonians, who having shaped their own cultural identity, constitute an independent nation with a turbulent history in a borderland country.² The question may be posed as to what constitutes cultural identity. This is defined as a variety of collective identity and a certain persistent identification of a group of people with a cultural setting. These include the customs, outlooks and ideas which solidify the unity of a group. This identity distinguishes us from others

² Borderland country is characterised by blending influences of diverse countries and cultures, and also relatively few years of existence.

which creates a certain newness out of a group, a sense of exceptionality (Waszczyńska, 2014).

The European Union is grappling with many domestic issues today. Established after the end of the Second World War as an economic community of unclear political-institutional frameworks, it was essential in the process of uniting Europe. At present, it enjoys a high level of confidence, albeit not on all grounds, especially as regards issues of migration and terrorism (47% of mistrust among Europeans) (Komisja Europejska, 2018). Brussels is remote from many centres of Central and Southern Europe, who perceive it as a mediator dictating certain solutions not necessarily consistent with the tendencies and sentiments in a given country. This is related to a lack of specialised institutions of cultural integration thus far. A European Union oriented towards economic strategy and politics does not always take historical-cultural factors into consideration when taking decisions. In order to rationalise processes, schemes of building a common identity ought to be implemented as Europe is both multinational and multicultural (Skrzypczak, 2010, p. 204). To help with its construction, researchers have put forward two positions, namely essentialist and constructivist. The first of these is peculiar to traditional societies and pertains to a belief in a common ancestry, a quest for history and myths helpful in building cultural identity. The second of these is characterised by a constant process and a lack of stability (Skrzypczak, 2010, p. 206).

The already mentioned cultural identity is an ambiguously described concept (Skrzypczak, 2010, p. 205). The term “culture” alone has been awarded many definitions (Bogucka, 1991, p. 1, Świątkiewicz, 2002, p. 16). A common feature they hold are individuals and communities, namely “entities”. These are the ones who create culture, which comes into existence and develops along with the human being, its moderator. It is of a personalised nature, while even in ruminations on material culture, we mean “the human factor” both as the author and recipient. These individuals own their identity, with the components which distinguish them including the following:

- National spirit
- Historical memory
- Anticipation
- Territory
- Awareness (ibid.).

All these attributes create a link with one's culture and build the cultural identity of a given group, nation, etc. Identity makes references to the cultural world, elements of symbolic reality, which allow one to distinguish categories of **own** and **foreign** (Pietruszewski, 2008). Aside from the European awareness of many nations, which is buttressed by the EU itself and its governments, there is currently a great number of cultural identities in Europe. Each state, or ethnic group displays their own, which forms an interesting mosaic and conglomerate, although, on the other hand, this is conducive to conflict.

The European Union is not only a federation of states, but also a "Homeland of homelands" in a broader context (Skorowski, 2005, pp. 26–27). One of principal objectives of the EU should be cultivating the cultural heritage of each member state. This does not concern full unification but co-operation in various fields, without the need to force one into renouncing one's own identity. The EU ought to make every effort to support not only countries but also ethnic groups in the sense of their own value and uniqueness. It is unacceptable for members of the EU, namely the Greeks to discriminate against their Macedonian national minority by not granting them fundamental and guaranteed rights. The European Union reacted too late to events in this part of Europe, which took place not earlier than the 1990s. As far as the Greek-Macedonian conflict is concerned, it should be settled amicably. The case is difficult to such a degree that symbols used by two countries are similar. Macedonia, which bears its own identity, will not accept assimilation, incorporation and is hoping not to be pushed to the margins of Europe either (Suchocka & Królikowska, 2014, p. 82).

We know from everyday life how important the cultivation of national symbols is. The example of Macedonia and Greece is not an unusual case in global terms. Within the concept of the self-determination of nations, each state is entitled to take advantage of the legacy of the cultural sphere from which it originates. In the past, Poles were referred to Sarmatians, while Hungarians sought their ancestors among the Sumerians. As regards Macedonia, there is no question of discussing the stealing of symbols since it is a fairly extraordinary case. The state in question, which has gained its independence recently, is striving to write its own history and the figure of Alexander the Great is a good example of legitimising and raising the profile of Macedonia as a country of centuries-old traditions. As their rights should be respected, whilst not forgetting about Greeks, the target of European Union is to reach a proper consensus in compliance with effective

rights and international standards. As the EU itself was, as an institution, also involved in creating and seeking out symbols for its unification with the European continent, it should be a good peacemaker in settling this dispute in which the aggrieved party is undoubtedly Macedonia, a country unable to unite with the rest of Europe.

To my mind, the idea of compromise is possible in the current European situation as no one can either take over or restrict anyone's cultural identity. Such an example may be found in the case of Romanians and Italians, who share the tradition of the Roman Empire, as well as Russia and Bulgaria which relate to the concept of the Third Rome.

The above-mentioned Romania shall be the subject of further deliberations on freedom in culture, regarding the use of symbols (the symbol in this case being the Roman Empire). Additionally, the issue of myth is worth taking note of since the theories of many Romanian researchers classify it exactly as the pursuance of historical policy.

Romania is a country which stakes out a claim to the inheritance of the Roman Empire, entirely due to the fact that the province of Dacia was part of this once-great empire. This land was conquered by the emperor Trajan and was included in the empire, while its historical borders partially overlap with today's Romanian frontiers (Jaczynowska, 2002, p. 522). The short-lived period of Roman rule in these territories surely left mark on their subjugated peoples. Although the influx of cultural exemplars, religion and administration caused the lands to be strictly governed by the empire, the question remains whether a period of just over a century and a half could have brought about a complete Romanisation of the population.

The regions along the Danube were very attractive as transport on the river and its control yielded high profits. Thus, Rome directed its attention to the Dacian tribes inhabiting these lands. Although two campaigns conducted by the empire cost a great deal of effort, the brave Dacians under the command of Decebalus were conquered successfully. While Roman rule did not last long, it left an indelible stamp. As Roman settlers and legionaries were representatives of highbrow culture, they exerted a strong influence on their subjected peoples (Rumuńskie mity, 2009).

After the short-lived rule of Rome, these lands first came under the influence of the Goths before being seized by Slavic tribes. In later centuries, the Pechenegs and Byzantines arrived. Slavic incursions resulted in supplanting Byzantine influences in these territories (Wendt, 2014, p. 76). In a subsequent period, these regions came under rule of Kievan Rus',

Hungary (Hroch, 2003, pp. 11–14), Turkey, and even the Polish Republic (Szczur, 2003, pp. 493, 509, 511, 541), that is countries originating from completely different cultural spheres (Wendt, 2014, p. 77). Under rule of the Ottoman Porte, the Phanariotes, namely Greeks dispatched from Constantinople as lieutenants, wielded power. In the 17th century, Russian and Austrian influences were also noticeable. Therefore, the question may be posed as to why Romanians have connected a kind of myth of common roots with the empire. The answer to this lies in events that occurred in the 19th century.

Thus, attempts were made on the combined Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia (1859–1861) (Davies, 2010, p. 886)³ to romanise the country, which was the conglomerate of a great many of cultural influences due to constant changes regarding the nationality of Romanians (Moldavians and Wallachians had begun to be called Romanians in these regions from the 19th century on) (Willaume, 2011, p. 242). The authorities contributed to revision of alphabet, which was enriched with a great number of Latin words, and to the changing of the names of towns. The example is Cluj, to which the name of Napoca was added, which was to commemorate a by-gone Roman factory in these territories. Monuments of a she-wolf feeding the twin brothers, Romulus and Remus, were put up in many other towns, with legend having it that one of brothers had been the founder of Rome. All these measures were aimed to show that Romania is the lineal heir to the legacy of the Roman Empire.

When subjecting the Romanian language to observation, a close similarity to Italian and French may be observed, while it also belongs to group of the Eastern Romance languages. Cyrillic script was removed as the alphabet since 1860 and was replaced with the Latin alphabet. Slavic influences were meticulously cleansed away and connotations with the Occident were restored. Nowadays, as only a small percentage of the language is of Slavic origin, Romanian is, therefore, easily comprehensible to an Italian. Ethnic Romanian lands in 1859 that preached adherence to the cultural sphere of Slavs, chose the pro-Western course due to the influence of politicians (Malessa-Drohomirecka, 2016). From today's perspective this is a curious phenomenon, since 250 years ago the language was regarded as Slavic, called Wallachian, and written in Cyrillic script. Indeed, Romanians

³ Duchies had already begun to develop in the 14th century.

were called Wallachians until the 19th century. Moreover, the etymology of the word “Wallachian” traces back its origin to Roman times. Populations of romanised shepherds bore such names, although it literally means a coarse human or a vagrant (Willaume, 2011, p. 242).

The aspirations of Romanians, therefore, should be considered with a certain reserve. The attribution of the descent of present-day Romanians to Roman settlers needs to be regarded as a myth since history has not found an irrefutable source of evidence to acknowledge this as a fact (Rumuńskie mity, 2009). Nevertheless, alluding to this legend has allowed Romanians to build their own national identity. Thus, a country under the influence of the Middle East and the Slavic cultural sphere felt the need to create its own unique identity than espouse that of one of these sides. The attribution of Roman descent was distinguished by Romanian historians since they are more recognisable than barbarian Goths who were present in these territories too. In their view, Romania was and still is “a Roman island in a sea of Slavs” (ibid.). Moreover, the attribution of their origins to the Romans serves the purpose of ennobling the pedigree, consolidating the nation and broadening the Romanian spectrum of historical events. In spite of efforts to debunk the myth of Roman descent during the communist period and underscore the country’s Dacian roots by nationalists, Romania is consistently striving to allude to a tradition of being the progeny and heirs of Rome. Pro-Western parties aim at linking the country with the Western cultural sphere (Malessa-Drohomirecka, 2016). This is difficult due to the ethnic mix of inhabitants of Romania, which is conducive to volatile sentiments in society and decentralisation. Integration with the EU is, therefore, not at the highest level. In addition, there are many stereotypes prevalent in Romania, while a significant proportion of country’s population is rural, and eurosceptic in general.

Although the origin of Romanians from Roman settlers is considered to be a legend, it is commonly said that in every legend there lies a grain of truth. There is no denying the fact that these lands were influenced by the Romans. Historical monuments from the time of the empire times bear testimony to it. Romanians – that is citizens of Rome who have low self-esteem, have used their connections with the empire to provide the basis for their nationality. It is important to remember that their lands have remained a peculiar cultural mosaic until today. It was also influenced by the policy of superpowers who treated Romania as their dominion and sphere of influence. As a rule, apart from a few exceptions in history, Romanian

statehood was not uniform, and lands consolidated today were under influence of countries from various cultural spheres (Bulgarians, Turks, Russians, Hungarians). With such diversity to be taken into account, finding a common denominator was the one and only possibility to unite and show that despite the differences that divided them, there were common roots – namely Roman roots (Całus, 2015, pp. 9–15). During the short-lived reign of the empire in these regions, the full Romanisation of the Wallachian population was impossible. Moreover, the influences of civilisation would not have stood a chance of survival up to now if it had not been for the effort put by Romania into “dusting them off” and imposing them upon its citizens. Despite the efforts of nationalists to focus attention on the Dacians,⁴ Romanian society gladly adapted to its Roman roots, surely through their historical merits and an established empire. It is no accident that among the most popular personal names in Romania today one may find: Ovid, Adrian (originated from Hadrian), Romulus, Diana, Sabina, Claudia, Livia or Constantine. By deriving from a widely understood freedom in culture, and backed up by certain historical facts, which are exaggerated, Romanians may claim to be the heirs of the Caesars today, a claim which native-born Italians take with a pinch of salt. Nevertheless, an anecdote is to be heard among linguists, namely: “If you wish to find out whether a particular word was used in ancient Rome, go to Romania and make sure of it.”

Freedom in culture is a privilege that offers many possibilities. Some people recall it due to a myth of common descent and their place in history, which builds historical memory, while others perceive it as quite the opposite, namely that it provides reasons for contention and animosity. Although the examples set forth here are similar, the Greek-Macedonian dispute seems to have more serious consequences as it is based on EU interference.⁵ Nevertheless, freedom constitutes a relevant element of present-day public discourse, namely the question of how much freedom

⁴ The cultivation of commemorating Romania’s Dacian roots is visible apart from its identification with Rome. Thus, Dacia is a popular make of car in Romania.

⁵ Despite Macedonia having had the status of candidate for joining EU since 2005, its accession to membership has been effectively blocked by Greece. Even though the EU Commission concedes that the Greeks are infringing the law, no significant steps were taken. Macedonians feel as if they have been left stranded with no support from the EU, which they accuse of taking a protective approach towards Greece.

may there be in a culture and when it may be limited, or whether it should be limited at all. In my opinion, on the condition that it does not belie the facts or leads to abuses and misrepresentations, this should be respected.

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The articles included in this publication address issues related to the problems like freedom of speech, freedom in politics, freedom of religious beliefs and freedom in formatting our physical environment. The collection of texts offers a multicultural view of the phenomenon included in the publication title, as the authors of the articles come from different cultures, different scientific backgrounds and different academic traditions. The publication may contribute to a better and deeper understanding of the processes happening around us now and having consequences in the future – the near and the more distant.

