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Another *Journal*? In *Humanities* and *Social Sciences*? With its very first issue on *Beginnings*?

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The people who embarked on this adventure on a mellow, sunny day, in September 2020, probably didn't know what to expect. On the other hand, their expectations were high, but they couldn't predict what kind of jobs were going to get, to assume and perform. They were already wearing masks, hoping to get rid of them in not so a distant future, and, of course, they maintained the social distance. ''I would suggest meeting in the lobby", one of them had written a couple of days before, and there they were, each sitting at a different table in that more than generous space of the new building at Partium Christian University. *An emerging team, a sketch, a concept, P'Arts'Hum.*

Their first meeting was also going to be the last of its type, i.e. face to face behind masks. From then on, emails would be written, ideas and opinions would be exchanged in a frenzy, video meetings would be called or even adjourned, sometimes. Some of them would navigate the internet, trying to cover its minefields while checking for specific information, others would work with IT specialists and web designers, in the hope of finding and creating that *out of the box* image that would ensure the new journal its iconicity. And almost all of them would send messages to people they had previously met at various academic events, people they liked and trusted and who would give their enterprise the credits they thought it deserved.

Then came the joy of receiving abstracts, the reserve experienced when rolling the dice of the deadlines, and the emotional setback when not getting the entire avalanche of promised papers. Through the filters of the copyediting & production process, the *pas de deux* or the *paso doble* game between authors and editors began. Sometimes it all looked like a private, solemn ceremony, yet other times it seemed very close to a Russian roulette. Luckily, neither authors or editors have been harmed. Little by little, the project has gotten shape and, as deeply desired, iconicity.

On the verge of the publication of the first isue, the P'Arts'Hum Journal team is looking forward to meeting again. On a mellow, sunny day at the beginning of June 2021, still

wearing masks, as the pandemic, just like the truth, is out there. Perhaps not over what in golden times used to be a cup of cappuccino at the regular academic gatherings, but for uncorking a bottle of champagne instead. However, they will be probably performing that with an increased awareness of the changes undertaken, from their former adventure into something more. A consolidated team, with plans for both the near and distant future. *A mission. A beginning. P'Arts'Hum.*

The Editors' Note

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Greetings to the Reader

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When designating long periods, historical eras, it is customary to use the notations BC ("before Christ") and AD ("Anno Domini," in [the] year of [the] Lord). Due to the cultural tradition rooted in the Western, primarily Christian European past, this periodization and designation spread throughout the world and became well known and accepted to this day. This is so even if other cultures, along these, keep and tend to their time-keeping and periodization (as well), since for them, this is a matter of life and death, a matter of identity even. Whether we want or acknowledge the fact or not, our era is connected to Jesus and the Lord. This is why the notations "before Christ" (BC) and "Anno Domini, in [the] year of [the] Lord" have been used quite naturally and are still consciously used nowadays by some. For me, Anno Domini is more than a mere chronologically accurate designation. It does not stand only for the time that has passed since His birth but also for the system of values, the lifestyle, and life that followed in His footsteps.

AD2020 left a deep mark worldwide from several points of view in the history of mankind. It also left its mark in our public and private life. The past year also affected Partium Christian University in several regards; however, it met the challenges and dealt with them satisfactorily. It is my firm belief that it has done so quite expeditiously. The Centennial Year of National Cohesion was a milestone for our University as well. This year coincided with the anniversary of thirty years serving the Hungarian community in Partium and Transylvania. It is reassuring that all Bachelor's and Master's degrees our University offers are accredited degrees. In addition to this, the University as an institution was reaccredited. By the end of the year, we could diminish all our financial, economic debts and our scales became balanced. It was also by the end of the year that Partium Publishing House, for the first time in its history, was to become an accredited and, from a scientometric point of view, measurable publisher. Last but not least, the idea of an international academic journal was born, the first issue of which we are launching at the moment.

Similarly to its predecessor, Sulyok István Reformed College, Partium Christian University has engaged prominently and in measurable terms in maintaining and strengthening the Partium, Transylvanian Hungarian national, Christian identity, and presence. As a quality-focused institution, our university is committed to holding a strong position on the higher grounds of higher education, where the priority is to increase the opportunities to advance our entire academic society. To achieve this, alongside the ongoing improvement in the areas of education and academic research, we are also working on establishing the conditions for continual development and innovation. A new academic journal not only offers an appropriate platform for the scientific community but also saves our institution a place in the academic world. I am convinced that the new journal will both have a decisive role in the Partium regional intellectual circle in the future and it will act toward professional recognition on an international level. Therefore, the bold idea, plan, and first step must be followed by great erudition, commitment, consistency, exigency, and high-quality work.

Nowadays our age is labeled in many ways. Undoubtedly, not only are we witnesses to vast changes on a large scale, but also forgers of these changes. I firmly believe that, from all so-called transition periods, those emerge victorious who do not forget that there is a persistent pro-life system of values, "cantus firmus," advocating of which is not shameful but a brave and joyful act. I believe that the Partium Christian University in general and this journal, in particular, must remember amidst the ideological struggle of our era, its roots, and in Whose service it stands if it wishes to be true to itself. For this reason, I believe, based on the analogy of the reformer's thought-*simul iustus et peccator* (at the same time righteous and sinner)-that as a university with an endorsable and acceptable system of values, based on the tenet of "preservation by adaptation", we must be at once conservative and progressive.

In lieu of the classics, I wish the journal *simul conservando et progrediens* (preserve and progress). Conservative, in the true sense of the word, because it strives to sustain, protect, and preserve the previously accumulated spiritual knowledge. Progressive, because in the spirit of the here and now, realizing the challenges of the age, it is more likely to be open to novelty, to changes. It opens the door to state-of-the-art innovations that shape the future, it encourages advancement, development because it knows that life is in constant move and it perceives the importance of these changes at all times.

Soli Deo Gloria!

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Nostalgia of the Beginnings: A Rewriting of H. D. Thoreau's *Walden*

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Abstract

Henry David's Thoreau book *Walden* recreates in a literary form the period that the author spent in the woods near Walden Pond. Being a transcendentalist influenced by Emerson's philosophy, Thoreau reiterates the essential role that nature has in the spiritual and moral development of man. In *Walden* the author describes a return to a primordial age in which man lived in a state of wonder before the beauty of the universe and in a permanent communion with it. The sacredness of nature is rendered through ritual gestures that accompany man on his road to revelation. Thus, the period of time spent by Thoreau near Walden Pond acquires the qualities of an initiation during which man rediscovers his self and undergoes a spiritual awakening.

Keywords: sacredness, nature, initiation, vision, transcendentalism

In the essay entitled *Nature* Ralph Waldo Emerson considers that man is part of the universe with which he identifies and according to which he shapes his destiny. In this text Emerson utters the famous words: "I am a transparent eye ball. I am nothing. I see all. The currents of the universal being circulate through me." (Emerson, 2005, p. 8). Transcendentalism is a cultural and philosophical movement that represented a form of evolution of the human intellect, believing that man can find in nature a teacher and a guide on the road to spiritual fulfilment. The transparency of the vision is the key element in having access to a world beyond a common human understanding. The eye must be transparent because as a mirror it reflects the beauty of nature, which actually is the beauty of the universe. A clear reflection allows man to go beyond his limited human experience and enjoy the views the universe offers. By acknowledging the beauty of the

world, he recognizes the beauty in his own soul. "In the tranquil landscape, and especially in the distant line of the horizon, man beholds somewhat as beautiful as his own nature." (Emerson, 2005, p. 10)

Emerson considers that by transcending a common human experience man can meet the Over Soul in nature and due to the initiation in the mysteries of the universe he can enter in communion with the supreme power ruling over the world. In this way he returns to a primordial state of wonder in which he is able to partake in the mysteries of the divinity. Not everybody can have such an experience, only the primal man can see beyond the veil of an ordinary human perception. The mission of the primal man is to share the revelation with the others and to make it available to all. The revelation is filtered through his vision, and thus the primal man becomes one with the cosmos. The currents of the universe circulate through the initiated man as he himself is transformed into the recipient of the vision. In the essay titled *The Over Soul* Emerson provides a definition for the position of man in respect to the universe and to his own soul.

> We live in succession, in division, in parts, in particles. Meantime, within man is the soul of the whole, the wise silence, the universal beauty, to whose every part and particle he is equally related, the eternal ONE. And this deep power in which we exist and whose beatitude is accessible to us all is not only self-sufficing and perfect in every hour. It is the act of seeing and the things seen, the seer and the spectacle. We see the world piece by piece, but the whole is the soul. (Emerson, 2005, p. 35)

Emerson defines the Over-Soul as being a supreme underlying unity that transcends duality or plurality. The human soul is immortal and beautiful. All souls are connected at a certain level, though the degree of such a union differs in terms of intensity.

Henry David Thoreau follows Emerson's philosophy, but brings new connotations to it. In his well-known book *Walden or Life in the Woods* Thoreau transposes his life experience near Walden Pond into a meditation on human destiny. The book narrates about the time spent by Thoreau in the woods in solitude. It recounts his existence there in almost one year, while in reality he remained two years. Much of the text reveals the nostalgia of Thoreau thinking of an epoch in which man was close to nature and had a free and affectionate communion with it. In his book dedicated to Thoreau's late career Michael Benjamin Berger thus concludes on *Walden*: "The lyrical and haunting qualities of the book, its symbolic force and mystical tone, are complemented by, and even strengthened through, a heightened sense of detail expressed in sturdy prose renderings of precise observations of nature." (Berger, 2000, p. 4) *Walden* is not only a literary representation of

Thoreau's unique experience; it is also a philosophical, cultural and symbolical reflection of his thoughts and ideas. Nature is one of the main symbols in the book. Emerson referred to it as the Universal Being, believing that there is a spiritual sense in the natural world surrounding man. "The happiest man is the one who learns from nature the lesson of worship." (Emerson, 2005, p. 7) He clearly states that everything must be spiritual and moral as there should be a tight communion between man and nature.

In *Walden* Thoreau describes his life in the forest in very special conditions. He builds himself a house, a humble abode which he transforms into his own vision of the world. It has no door, one room and six chairs: one for solitude, two for friendship and three for society. He makes a beautiful description of it, underlying its symbolic and sentimental values.

> When first I took up my abode in the woods, that is, began to spend my nights as well as days there, my house was not finished for winter. (…) It was suggestive somewhat as of a picture in outlines. I did not need to go outdoors to take the air, for the atmosphere within had lost none of its freshness. It was not so much within-doors as behind a door where I sat, even in the rainiest weather. (Thoreau, 2016, p. 20)

The house for Thoreau is not merely a shelter, it is a way of being in the world, a way in which he identifies with the nature around. In cultural and anthropological terms the house stands for a return to the origins. It is an attempt to recover the innocence and the simplicity of the beginnings. In his book about the sacred Mircea Eliade speaks about the nostalgia of the origins. He considers that by building a house or raising any construction man creates a sacred space, inside which he tries to gather primordial values. According to Eliade, man makes a *temenos* which is the centre of the world, in which all the elements repeat the divine creation of the world. By raising a construction, man reiterates the creation of the world in his own terms. "A house is always a sacred image because it is an imago mundi and the world is a divine creation." (Eliade, 2000, p. 42, my translation)

Identifying himself with the house, man assumes its building and transforms it into the symbol that gives it life. The house is functional and abstract at the same time because it connects both spheres of human existence. The material combines with the spiritual in the attempt to recreate the world as it was in the primordial times. The house that Thoreau builds near Walden Pond has its own characteristics. It has no door so that nature should enter it freely and infuse it with its spirit. Transcendentalism focuses on the deep communion between man and nature, the latter being seen as a companion on the road to revelation. It is only in nature that man can find true liberty of the spirit as there he

can give up all the ties linking him to society. Thoreau considers that human communities destroy the individual because they make man lose the very essence and connection with the spirit of the world. The primal man has the revelation only in solitude because only in such conditions the universe opens to his vision.

By choosing to live a solitary life Thoreau symbolically resembles the people who first travelled to the American west in search of a space that would offer them the freedom of exploring and of knowing the world. The trappers and path finders living in the west were initiated men in all the aspects of their natural environment. They looked at nature in a concrete and useful way, but they also experienced a state of wonder before the beauty unveiling in front of their eyes. Such people understood the importance of nature and, even though many of them were simple, uneducated people, the respect they showed for their surroundings transformed them into guides for others who wanted to settle there or at least have a similar experience. The first explorers of the west assimilated the land and learned to read its signs, thus accomplishing a spiritual communion among them. They embodied Emerson's concept about the freshness of the vision by integrating in nature. In many cases the trappers and path finders of the west cut all links with society as they saw in it a source of moral destruction. Much of their attitude and the pattern they embodied derives from this deliberate rejection of civilisation.

In *Walden* Thoreau recreates the myth of the explorer and colonizer, but enriches it with mythical and cultural connotations. He symbolically returns to the beginnings of mankind, to a primordial time and space in which man was part of the beautiful divine creation. "Both place and time were changed, and I dwelt nearer to those parts of the universe which had most attracted me." (Thoreau, 2016, p. 23) Space is an important concept because it shapes the identity of people. Thoreau chooses to live near Walden Pond as in a personal exile by which he tries to return to the origins and live in the middle of the divine creation. It is a self imposed exile as it presupposes the need of man to change his destiny in order to achieve a higher spiritual goal. During such an exile man acquires a new status that allows him to judge the others from a new perspective and a superior point of view. The final goal of such an exile is accomplishing an inner spiritual quest since a new vision is obtained by delimiting yourself from the world.

In the case of Thoreau the period spent in the woods near Walden Pond starts as a self-imposed exile and ends with a moral and spiritual assimilation of nature, which becomes a home for the narrator. His nostalgia for a state of wonder corresponds to the wish for a return to the primordial age of universal communion. Although he returned from Walden after two years spent there, Thoreau never actually left it as it had become an essential

part of his self. His exile turns into a blessing since he is given the chance to explore and to know himself. The narrator experiences a deep sense of joy in becoming part of the natural surroundings.

> Every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity and I may say innocence with nature itself. The man who does not believe that each day contains an earlier, more sacred and auroral hour turned than he has yet profaned, has despaired of life and is pursuing a descending and darkening way. (Thoreau, 2016, p. 24)

The things he does constitute the way in which he assimilates nature and integrates himself in it. Fishing in the lake, walking in the woods and admiring the trees or the birds are among the most frequent activities. Catching a fish in the lake is a ritual, reiterating the mythical act of being in contact with nature in the beginnings of mankind. In his book about anthropological structures Gilbert Durand considers that "the fish almost always has the significance of revaluating the primordial instinct." (Durand, 1977, p. 266, my translation) The activity of fishing belongs to the nocturnal symbolism of the image because it implies mysteries and unexpected events. At the same time fishing in the lake offers the narrator the chance to establish a communion with the essence of the universe. Eliade explains that water is the primordial element, the universal matrix since all creation begins there and ends there.

> In all religious systems waters preserve their function. They disintegrate and abolish forms, being purifying and regenerating at the same time. They precede creation and absorb it, being unable to go beyond their unique type of existence which is the one of manifesting themselves in shapes. (Eliade, 2000, p. 99, my translation)

While living near Walden Pond Thoreau reiterates the ritual gestures of the primordial man who used the products nature gave him and identified with natural cycles and phenomena. He recreates the image of a symbolical Paradise in which man was in permanent communion with the divinity. The nostalgia Thoreau feels corresponds to the need of man to return to that state of harmony which characterized man's condition before the Fall. *Walden* becomes for Thoreau a Garden of Eden whose beauty is perceived in the descriptions of the natural surroundings. The seasons during which he lives in the woods are a source of joy and permanent discoveries as each of them comes with its own beautiful characteristics. *Walden* is a celebration of life seen in its essential and profound meanings. Returning to a simple way of life is the path towards a renewal of the human self.

In *Walden* Thoreau looks at nature with fresh eyes and assimilates it into his own soul. He acknowledges that the rhythms of the natural cycles are also the rhythms by which his own life is shaped. The human self cannot exist outside these manifestations of the universe since man is part of the great changes occurring around him. By permanently seeking the essence of the world, man is able to know himself and learn a moral lesson. Returning to the origins implies going back to a mythical time in which man walked freely in the company of animals or birds and enjoyed divine guidance. In *Walden* Thoreau narrates about his vicinity to the birds. "I suddenly found myself neighbour to the birds; not by having imprisoned one, but having caged myself near them." (Thoreau, 2016, p. 30)

The forest itself receives a special connotation. Durand considers that it is an image of intimacy, resembling a house or a cave. "The closed landscape of a forest is a sacred place. Any sacred place begins with the sacred forest." (Durand, 1977, p. 306, my translation) In his turn Eliade analyses the concept of the forest in the context of sacred nature. He considers that any journey through the forest implies partaking in the cyclical rhythms of the universe. A sacred understanding of nature helps the initiated man decipher different aspects than a common person can do. "The deepest and most intimate structures of the universe are unveiled due to sacredness. The believer discovers in them the mystery of life and creation, of renewal, youth and immortality." (Eliade, 2000, p. 115, my translation)

During the time spent in the woods Thoreau returns to that *illo tempore* in which man was in a direct and permanent contact with nature. In that time man was initiated in the stages of natural evolution, being fully aware of his place in the universe. The house he builds has no doors as he wants to let nature enter it freely. Thus, he discovers the regenerating capacity of nature in a state of complete freedom. Transcendentalism insists on the communion between man and nature as there cannot be just a unilateral relationship. It is a reciprocal situation as both participants are implied.

While living in the woods Thoreau changes position. In the beginning he was the disciple, learning from nature how to enjoy it spiritually. In the end he becomes the master able to teach his contemporaries about the wilderness. He offers them an exemplary story about the beginning and the evolution of man in relationship with the universe. He embodies the type of primal man Emerson talks about in his essay *The Poet*. According to the philosopher, the poet is the interpreter of the messages of the universe for the common people. Thoreau chooses the most characteristic aspects of nature and turns them into an image of his own perception. Walden woods become a representation of sacred space seen as wilderness. This concept corresponds to a space of imagination and unexpected encounters. In the period spent there Thoreau meets a Native American

and a fugitive African-American slave. They belong to marginal social categories, which transcendentalism endows with superior knowledge. They preserve the innocence of the beginnings when the world was not yet tainted by evil. Thoreau learns spiritual lessons from them which in his turn he shares with others.

In *Walden* Thoreau places wilderness in opposition to society, rejecting the material world and choosing the freedom of nature. Walden woods identify with a sacred space which forms a parallel world to the real one. Eliade considers that sacred space is fragmentary, as it is made of islands of sacredness opening to the one searching for a deeper meaning. "Any sacred space implies a hierophany, a breaking out of the sacred in the world whose result is the delimitation of a territory from the cosmic environment and an essential transformation." (Eliade, 2000, p. 23, my translation) Walden woods are an instance of the sacred in whose limits the world is reshaped according to its specific rules. From an imaginary projection of dreams and ideals Walden becomes the concrete manifestation of the sacred. It is a world within another world, a microcosm functioning on its own rules.

Thoreau recreates Walden into a mythical place which is a representation of the beautiful divine creation. The world the narrator creates for himself is seen as a projection of his own self. He identifies with the nature around which is seen as a reflection of the narrator's views. Walden woods is not just the forest outside the town of Concord, it is an imaginary construct in which the thoughts and the visions of the narrator take shape. Thoreau does not rely only on exterior elements to describe this space, he finds in himself the exemplary model for his world. It is a very personal view that he has in which the song of the birds and the beauty of the lake originate in his own feelings and emotions.

Time is organized in the cycles of seasons which repeat the primordial pattern. It depends on the natural phenomena occurring in the woods during the narrator's life there. Snow, rain, mist or sunshine are part of such events which confer special connotations to the text. Like space, time has a sacred meaning. Eliade considers that sacred time has a circular, reversible form, it is "a sort of mythical present which is retrieved through rituals." (Eliade, p. 2000, 55, my translation) Time is measured according to the activities performed by man in different specific moments. Strolling in the woods after a shower of rain or walking on a snowy day to the pond do not stand for simple actions, they are ritual gestures due to which man returns to a primordial age in which time was abolished and he lived in the presence of the divinity. The Walden that Thoreau imagines is an idealized projection of reality as it has the beauty and the perfection of the primordial world not yet

tainted by evil. Sacred time is the time of the beginnings when the world was built and to which man continuously wants to return. To find again the time of the origins implies a ritual repetition of the divine act of creation. Walden itself becomes thus a cosmogony as it is the creation of the narrator's imagination.

While living in Walden woods, Thoreau lives an epiphany, a moment of being during which he has the revelation of mythical time. He views the nature around as formed by elements to which he can relate spiritually and which contribute to his personal development. The narrative becomes direct and sincere, changing into a confession about the beauty of nature and the place of man in the universe. "Mythical and sacred time as the time of the beginnings does not flow as it is made of an eternal present which can be permanently recovered." (Eliade, 2000, p. 68, my translation) The house Thoreau lives in is the centre of this world as it gives stability and unity to the newly shaped space. Eliade considers that the nostalgia of the beginnings has a spiritual connotation. "Man wants to live again in the beautiful, fresh and clean world as it used to be at the dawn of creation." (Eliade, 2000, p. 71, my translation) Transcendentalism underlines the need of man to regain that state of wonder which existed in the beginning. It was a state of innocence in which man was able to see and to enjoy the presence of the divinity.

In *Walden* Thoreau combines the transcendental doctrine with his own vision of the world. He believes that the sacredness of nature can be revealed by an exemplary life in which man becomes an equal to nature on his path to initiation. If the initiation is complete man acquires a new identity, which allows him to join the rhythms of the universe. Such an initiation takes place on the vertical line as it brings sacred knowledge. It is favoured by the wish of man to go beyond his common human limits. If the initiation is on the horizontal line, then nothing happens and no change is seen. Revelation does not occur and man remains trapped in his limited existence. In *Walden* Thoreau gains initiation due to the awareness that genuine existence can be obtained only in the middle of nature. The house as a centre of the universe and the trees as symbols of the sacred space surround him in his journey. Eliade believes that the house is a microcosm, a replica of the universe and of the human self at the same time. Life occurs on two levels: the common existence, which is characteristic for the majority of human beings, and the special one during which revelation occurs. They correspond to the two types of initiation that man may have. Sacred knowledge is obtained when man willingly chooses to abandon all ties with the known world and adopt a new perspective on it. The fresh vision Emerson talks about identifies with the second type of initiation occurring on the vertical line. Thus, man becomes aware of his privileged place in relationship to the universe.

By choosing to leave society behind and begin a new life in the woods Thoreau achieves a passage from the inferior level of common people to a solitary yet spiritually rewarding life. He accomplishes a rite of passage that takes place in a double direction. Such a rite, as it is analysed in Van Gennep's book, is made up of three stages. The first one stands for separation as a proper passage can happen only if the protagonist decides to abandon all his links with the common world. Only then can he fulfil the second stage, which is the one of transition. During this period he learns about his capacity to reach a superior level of understanding. This stage is an intermediary one as the protagonist is on the threshold of experience. The third stage is the one of reincorporation, a stage in which the person performing the ritual acquires a new identity. Due to the new status that he gains, the participant in this ritual can share with the others the revelations that he has. Due to this accomplishment man is able to master his capacity in order to enter in communion with the universe.

In *Walden* Thoreau performs a rite of passage as he willingly separates himself from society and chooses to live in Walden woods. A solitary existence offers the path towards revelation. At the same time the narrator returns to the sacred since the new identity he gains allows him to see and understand the beauty and the mysteries of the universe. The return to the sacred also presupposes the return to the origins as in that primordial age man always lived in the presence of the sacred. His existence was sanctified by the close communion with the divinity. The life lived by Thoreau near Walden Pond restores the model of an ideal time spent in a world delimited by the boundaries of the sacred. Eliade considers that by retreating in solitude man is able to perceive the universal connotations of the world. He no longer sees fragments of the universe around, he perceives the unity of the creation that surrounds him. The double direction in which the rites of passage take the narrator in *Walden* consists of both the return to the sacred and the sharing of this unique experience with others.

In his essays Emerson considers that the primal man needs to return to the community in order to fulfil his mission. The initiation he goes through allows him to have a new and fresh vision of the world. The purity of the vision identifies with the purity of the soul. In *Walden* Thoreau is the contemplating man who is able to return to the sacred and share its beauty with the others. He provides the example of a spiritual awakening due to which man is able to perceive the signs of the sacred around him. Spiritual awakening presupposes the relationship between man and nature, which is seen as a mirror reflecting human emotions and a moral evolution. In *Walden* Thoreau reiterates the story of the eternal return, of man's longing to integrate himself again in the world

of the sacred. "What we are, that only can we see", stated Emerson in relation to man's vision and communion with nature. In *Walden* Thoreau achieves the dream of man to live again in the realm of the sacred surrounded by nature. The nostalgia of the beginnings becomes the accomplishment of the initiated man capable to see and assimilate the wonders of the universe.

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Reclaiming Death Acceptance in the Twenty-First Century

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Abstract

In a modern twenty-first-century Western society that extracts its values from youth culture and the fear of aging, death phobia becomes a real issue that needs to be addressed. This study aims to present some of the reasons why death became a taboo subject, why modern man fears death, and how cultural sensitivity can lead to a state of death acceptance, all while the death positivity movement is gaining traction. Keeping in mind that the complex paradox of today is fear of inevitability, let us try and name some of the roots of this problem and what we can do to ease the interaction with death.

Keywords: death acceptance, death phobia, death anxiety, death positivity movement, twenty-first century.

Introduction

The fear paradox consists of the fact that we are frightened by something inevitable, and yet we do believe that we can somehow avoid it by stalling or burying it deep inside our subconscious. What is this fear that we all have but refuse to acknowledge? The fear of death or death-phobia. This has been a part of man's life since the beginning of time since the first discovered death rituals 95,000 years ago (Doughty, 2015). Naturally, society has been changing ever since, and with it, our relationship with death and death culture. This study aims to discuss death as a taboo in modern Western society, modern man fearing death, and the part cultural sensitivity plays in death acceptance in the context of globalization.

"We begin dying the day we are born" (Doughty, 2015, p. 222), and yet we are never prepared to do so. Death is something that we sweep under the proverbial rug with

extreme nervousness and fear that someday we will have to take that rug away and look at the heap of anxiety collected over the many years of denial. The experience of death "represents the possibility of the impossibility of existence in general" (Agamben, 1991, p. 1). Existence cannot be comprehended outside of it simply because everything physical must have a beginning and an end. This tells us that our representation of death is flawed. Psychologically speaking, we can only see it outside of our existence (Kübler-Ross, 1986, 1997) and the only road we can take is through the night, feeling around for some answers that leave us partly satisfied and accepting of our mortality, with the help of approaches that stem from positive psychology (Compton, 2005; Sheldon & King, 2001), spirituality (Marryatt, 1891), and logotherapy (Frankl, 1985), among many others.

The cultural mindset plays an extremely important role in establishing what type of relationship we want to have with death. Culture is such a complex realm, such an individual experience, that we could not possibly choose one single definition and work within its walls, without trying to look outside of it and find some other perspective that we could use. Burnett Tylor (1920) states that culture is a complex whole that consists of habits, customs, traditions, behaviors, laws, beliefs, and capabilities that man follows within his social frame. The frame of reference here is somewhat traditional, compared to the semiotic concept of culture, presented by Geertz (2014), who argues that man is just an animal suspended in manmade "webs of significance" (p. 14), nearly trapped in them as if they were 'the spider webs' of culture. Of course, we must also take into consideration the psychological dimension, which can be described as consisting of psychological structures that man has to follow so that he can be accepted in a social group (Goodenough, 1961, p. 522). For us to discuss the concept of culture in the twenty-first century, this single paper and ten more would not suffice. All the changes, all the shifts that are happening right now in the world change our perception of culture every single time something moves inside of it, and a great part of those changes occur within the frame of a globalizing movement, a subject tackled in the following sections.

Therefore, death is something that should be avoided, according to our present cultural mindset. However, there appeared a movement (silent in the beginning) that made people from all over the world "push back against that oxymoronic idea" (Booth, 2019) and this is the death positivity movement. Its goal is not to make death obsolete or belittle its cultural importance. "This way of thinking simply argues that cultural censorship of death isn't doing us any favors" (Booth, 2019). On the contrary, it sets us up for a life of subconscious fear and anxiety that will, in the end, dictate our every decision. Death-phobia is above all the child of human nature, but it has recently been adopted by modern society and raised as if it were its own.

Death as a Modern Taboo Subject

In 1955, Gorer expressed what the problem in the twentieth century precisely is in discussions about death and dying. The author notices the taboos of sex in the previous century and how they shifted to become taboos of death in the twentieth:

> The natural process of corruption and decay have become disgusting, as disgusting as the natural processes of birth and copulation were a century ago; preoccupation about such processes is (or was) morbid and unhealthy, to be discouraged in all and punished in the young. (p. 51)

On the one hand, the modern denial of death might have begun in the nineteenth century (Leaney, 1989), but collective death experiences such as World War Two have been the real trigger (Jupp, 2006). On the other hand, some sociologists argue that, after Gorer's article, there appeared a constant proclamation of death as a modern taboo (Walter, 1991), which might have given the subject the popularity that made it anything but a topic that must not be tackled publicly.

As a cultural whole, we create this aura of mystery and misery surrounding death and its 'constituents': dead bodies, death practices, rituals, grieving, and mourning. Consequently, "death avoidance is not an individual failing; it's a cultural one. Facing death is not for the faint-hearted. It is far too challenging to expect that each citizen will do so on his or her own" (Doughty, 2017, p. 232). Death acceptance should not be a mission we have to accomplish alone, but a community practice, even though modern culture seems to offer us no help in this regard. Western societies, globalization, and modern man's immense desire to live forever can make starting a discussion about death impossible in most parts of the world. In Moldavia, for instance, rural communities are more open to discuss what will happen to their bodies after death. The elders build their own caskets and place them in front of their houses (Ceremonialul de înmormântare), to prepare not only themselves but also their loved ones for the moment of death. This practice does not only help them reach a stage of acceptance[1], but also breaks the taboo surrounding death and dying and creates a proper environment for conversation within that community.

Psychologically speaking, the taboo around death is an active part of our lives, kept on an unconscious level. Even if it lurks in the background of our psyche and we do not always feel its presence, it still motivates us in certain aspects:

[1] In *On Death and Dying*, Elisabeth Kübler-Ross is the first to acknowledge that we go through five stages of death (or grief): denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.

Most people would say they do not consciously think about death. However, on an unconscious level, the fear of death influences significant aspects of their lives and motivates many of their actions. People avoid death anxiety in a variety of ways. (R. Firestone & Catlett, 2009, p. 19)

How does this avoidance take place? Doughty (2015) explains that the fear of death is the catalyst that pushes us to build cathedrals and have children, and so understanding how we react to death and why we do so may bring us closer to understanding ourselves and each other. Death is the engine of our every action, conscious or unconscious. This can sometimes be seen as a curse of consciousness, which:

> gives rise to a fear reaction of serious proportions. Indeed, the manner in which an individual handles death anxiety as an evolving being, faced with growing knowledge of existential issues, acts as one of the primary determinants of the course of his or her psychological life. (R. Firestone et al, 2009, p. 185)

But it does not necessarily have to be a curse. It can also be the catalyst that inspires us to live in the moment meaningfully and to live a good life so that we can die a good death. Viktor Frankl, the father of logotherapy, wrote *Man's Search for Meaning* (1985), in which he describes his experience in concentration camps. There, he finally understands that meaning, life, and death go hand in hand. He writes: "Live as if you were living for the second time and had acted as wrongly the first time as you are about to act now" (p. 175). In the camp, death was laughed at, the taboo was shattered using "a grim sense of humor" (p. 34), and this led to him finding "some sense in my death" (p. 69). This sense was found by opening himself up—psychologically, socially, culturally—not only to the—verbalized—thought of dying but also to the prospect of it happening.

Another matter that became taboo is the image of the corpse, not as portrayed by the twenty-first-century media—which encourages the public obsession with the Hollywoodian side of forensic science (Penfold-Mounce, 2016)—but by professionals who work for funeral homes, by doctors and nurses, and by people who encounter death in its raw, unglamorous state. This distinction between the fashioned image of death and the raw and real one is expressed in the following paragraph, in which Doughty, as a young mortician, cannot decide whether the dead body is merely flesh or something much more than this:

> This is just a dead person, I told myself. Rotting meat, Caitlin. An animal carcass. This was not an effective, motivational technique. Byron was far more than rotting meat.

> He was also a noble, magical creature, like a unicorn or a griffin. He was a hybrid of something sacred and profane, stuck with me at this way station between life and eternity. (Doughty, 2015, p. 2)

These two opposing views on dead bodies can also be translated into the oppositions body-as-object versus living body (Ricoeur, 2004) and corpse versus cadaver (Scott, 2008). Is it just "rotting meat" or is it a "magical creature"? Doughty seems to find the via media: "a hybrid of something sacred and profane." Thus, the body becomes both an object of external manipulation—through ritual—and a relic that holds meaning—through belief—and the image of the dead body as a product consumed via mass media, lacking in visible and realistic death images (Hanusch, 2008), disappears and is replaced by this mélange between ritual and belief, which holds meaning for both the individual and the community and helps them approach death from a physical and visual point of view, without any misguidance.

Doughty also discusses her first interaction with death when during her childhood years, witnessing a little girl falling from the balcony of a building onto the pavement. She acknowledges that: "I had seen worse on television, but this was reality" (2015, p. 30). For this reason, the question arises: how are real-life atrocities different from what we see in the media? The answer lies within the question: it is indeed real life. When the media depicts a dead body, usually making a show out of death (Florea & Rabatel, 2011), the screen acts as a protective shield. Likewise, when we see this in a movie that we unconsciously perceive as something fashioned by somebody else, the impact is different, because we are more of an observer than a participant. However, when death occurs in our circle, in our reality that we always believe is locked and shielded from tragedy, we develop "a thick layer of denial" (Doughty, 2015, p. 33) so we can live on. Doughty wonders: "Sometimes I think of how my childhood would have been different if I had been introduced directly to death. Made to sit in his presence, shake his hand. Told that he would be an intimate companion" (2015, p. 33).

Death being introduced to us mostly depends on the culture we contribute to. That is why cultural relativism plays an important part in understanding why some cultures have such different views with regards to what the dead body means to them. For instance, Christianity tells us that the living body holds the spirit, and without it, the body is just a carcass (Geary, 2013). But there are cultures that treat the dead body as if it were still living, as the Torajan people in Indonesia do (Koudounaris, 2015), interacting with their dead even long after the burial has taken place, since they mummify the bodies and preserve them in such a way that the corpses can be exposed to the natural elements

without the fear of decomposition. By interaction, one might understand communication, but in fact, it is a ceremony of remembrance, when the bodies are dressed up, cleaned, and involved in the activities of the living. For the Torajan people, this is a particularly important part of the grieving process (Doughty, 2017) that reminds them there is no taboo in discussing and interacting with death.

Moreover, because culture and taboo also encompass language, it is necessary that we mention the importance of communication in conversations surrounding death. Firstly, language produces thoughts and meanings whose reflections turn into the rituals we create around death and grief (White, 1995). Secondly, the relationship between language and death—beyond the ontological meaning of the end of one's existence being put into words, thus into existence—can be transported into a literary device whose purpose is to ease the coming into contact with the awareness of death. Not translating our pain into words contradicts the relation between the "faculty for language" and "the faculty for death" that only human beings possess (Agamben, 1991, p. xii). Is there a possibility for death to exist outside language? Probably not, considering that there would be no way for it to emerge, to develop, and to linger. Language is what makes it linger, and vice-versa. Without death, language would resonate into an eternal void of nothingness, missing significance and intention. At the end of the twentieth century, there developed a new genre surrounding death-related conversation. Now we might call it contemporary death-acceptance literature. This aims to connect death positivity to the written discourse with the help of creative nonfiction authors[2] who project us into a realm where we can witness our own death way ahead of its time, with nonchalant sadness and humor, forcing us to interact with the uncomfortable in a way that essentially eases the painfully unavoidable impact with death.

[2] Such books include: *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes* (C. Doughty, 2015), *From Here to Eternity* (C. Doughty, 2017), *Wil My Cat Eat My Eyeballs?* (C. Doughty, 2019), *On Grief and Grieving* (E. Kübler-Ross & David Kessler, 2005), *Death: The Final Stage of Growth* (E. Kübler-Ross, 1997), *A Memoir of Living and Dying* (E. Kübler-Ross, 1998), *On Life After Death* (E. Kübler-Ross, 1984), *Questions and Answers on Death and Dying* (E. Kübler-Ross, 1997), *All That Remains* (S. Black, 2019), *The Denial of Death* (E. Becker, 1997), *Arta de a Mur*i (M. Eliade, 1993), *Being Mortal: Illness, Medicine and What Matters in the End* (A. Gawande, 2015), *Past Mortems: Life and death behind mortuary doors* (C. Valentine, 2018), *Unnatural Causes* (R. Shepherd, 2019), *Death: The End of Self-Improvement* (J. Tollifson, 2019).

Modern Man Fears Death

A study conducted by Chapman University in 2018 shows that the fear of death is among the greatest fears Americans have. The survey tells us that 56.4% of the people interviewed said that they were afraid of people they love having to die (Chapman University, 2018). As we saw in the previous section, most of the conversations about death are taboo, so we may presume that the number of those who admitted to having such fears might be even higher. Consequently, we know some sort of anxiety does exist, but now let us discuss why modern man might dread death.

Our modern world's obsession with being and staying young for our entire lives triggers in us a chain reaction of conscious avoidance, anxiety, and fear (Howarth, 2013). As part of the young generation, I can argue that we have "zero death literacy" (Doughty, 2017, p. 167), but we also do not seem to mind it. Romanian historian Lucian Boia (2000) admits that today we live in the mirage of adolescence, whose values and attitudes seem to have been imposed even upon the elderly. So, it is impossible for someone who lives inside this youth culture not to fear aging and eventually dying.

Modern times involve not fighting the uncomfortable. Young generations—especially in Europe and America—choose not to get involved in the process of burying a loved one (Parkes et al., 1997) not only because they are not connected to rituals anymore but also because death became an industry that keeps you from contributing in any way. For example, Christian traditions say that the body needs to be bathed by the family before it is buried. However, even in rural Eastern Europe, funeral homes insist that they do it, taking away from you the possibility of interacting with the body as part of the grieving process. Doughty draws a harsh conclusion when she writes about the differences between a "now" and a "then": "What is most surprising about this story is not that an eight-year-old witnesses a death, but it took her eight whole years to do so. ... When the first European settlers arrived, all they did was die" (2015, pp. 30-31). Blauner (1966) argues that this difference exists because modern social systems do not miss their dead as much as their pre-modern ancestors since life expectancy is now longer; also, there are larger populations, so the 'vacant positions' in society can be easily filled by someone else. However, the bereaved individual is even more isolated than before. We are asked to both accept death and, at the same time, reject it (Dumont & Foss, 1972): accept it because it is a part of our reality, and deny it because we must go about our lives as if it did not exist. Moreover, the meaning of death has become overwhelmingly scientific (Prior, 1989) and less spiritual. Because of this secularization of death, the modern man has no choice but to follow the already existing path of death phobia.

The irony that we witness is that "the deepest need is to be free of the anxiety of death and annihilation; but it is life itself which awakens it, and so we must shrink from being fully alive" (Becker, 1997, p. 66). Peter Berger (1967) argues that this duality is natural and that death is essential for the human condition because it forces us to find coping mechanisms rather than neglect a universality that constructs man and society.

The choice should be open to conversation, which can contradict a cultural trend that harms us. But perhaps culture can be manipulated. Perhaps culture creates expectations that reality can never meet. Is it not possible for modern culture to be harmful? Doughty argues that "there is something deeply unsettling … about what is happening to our death values", and our culture "has broken so completely with traditional methods of body disposition and beliefs surrounding mortality" (2015, p. 214), that we currently find ourselves inside a "spiritual supernova" (Taylor, 2007, p. 300), i.e., we have a multitude of choices that overwhelm man precisely because of their number.

However, if culture is made of webs of significance, then significance is made of beliefs. Beliefs are transmitted from generation to generation, and some may come out as being wrong—based on the individual's personal definition of right and wrong—whereas others have been around for a long time and proved to work, to heal, and to keep the family and the community together. What happens today is that my generation breaks away from what tradition tells them, away from ritual and meaning/significance, and we do not even know that we are doing so. Unconsciously, we swim forward in the cultural stream dictated by our surroundings—books we read, movies we see, people we meet. Swimming against the current is frowned upon, but clearly not impossible. It is clear that modern culture is somewhat flawed for not focusing more on belief and ritual. Before being part of a culture—a mechanism of significance and meaning—we hold our personal beliefs, and this infallible relationship that we have with our bodies forces us to have a relationship with their mortality, too. You cannot possibly have one without the other, and if you do, the lack of the latter will propel you into a time of shock and despair when you face death, whether your own or somebody else's.

Herder captures terrifically well the essence of modern man, without even knowing what society would be like in the twenty-first century:

> Who would not feel this 'Ah' penetrate through his heart, on hearing a victim of torture writhe and howl, standing before a dying being who cries out, or even before a moaning animal, when the whole living machine suffers ... . Horror and pain cut through his bones; his whole nervous system shares the pain and destruction; the sound of death

resonates. This is the chain of this language of nature! (1806, p. 48)

I trust that 'living machine' was an accurate prediction of man expected to behave, to be, to exist in a way that perfectly matches mechanical constraints. When tired, "update" or "uninstall" something from your mind and "restart." Even language stimulates this mechanism, with phrases such as "I am going to recharge my batteries at the weekend" or "I have to reprogram for success." However, this system has feelings and consciousness, and gods. Did man become the ultimate machinery that overturns the very system that created it? Perhaps not yet, as we are still aware of something that only we can be aware of, i.e. death. If that sets us apart from every being is debatable, but one thing is certain: death holds onto us with a grip that cannot (will not) let us forget who and what we are.

By extension, the modern industrialized world plays a great role in changing death practices. Industrialized cremation and embalming are two processes that changed the way we look at death and dead bodies in Western society. Whilst families are rarely present during cremations in the West, in Japan, they are offered a huge part in the ritual: the cremation machine is started by a family member, and close relatives pick the remaining bones during the ritual of kotsuage (Doughty, 2017, p. 165-166). This change translated into a shift of attitude toward scenes of death. Gorer admits that in the twentieth century "there seems to have been an unmarked shift in prudery; whereas copulation has become more and more mentionable, particularly in the Anglo-Saxon societies, death has become more and more unmentionable as a natural process" (1955, p. 50), because the emancipation of man is characterized by an effort to master life. "Death is seen as the terminator of purpose … , the antithesis of the modern celebration of life" (Lee, 2020, p. 91). But what we do not know is that celebrating life also means celebrating death. Going hand in hand, these halves of the same whole cannot be separated, and until we learn that, death will be the enemy of life instead of its companion.

Cultural Sensitivity and Death Acceptance in the Context of Globalization

Cultural sensitivity aims to increase understanding between different cultures and decrease rigid and stereotyped attitudes towards others. But it can also be a source of inspiration, a proverbial window to another cultural realm that treats death differently. In today's constant and irreversible globalization, we have to learn to rediscover these windows and also pay attention to our own culture (Raikhan et al., 2014). Unfortunately, borders between cultures began to disappear and make room for a universalized attitude toward death, which might be destructive (Cowen, 2020), especially for those local cultures that built their death practices on ritual and belief. Walter (2005) argues that

modern death attitudes have less to do with global modernity than with national and local cultures, religion, and history. But what he might fail to see is the connection between the center and the periphery of global culture. The center will always influence the margins, and these margins will whether stray farther from themselves or grow even deeper roots into their own beliefs.

Oftentimes "we invoke belief to denigrate others. … We consider death rituals savage only when they don't match our own" (Doughty, 2017, p. 12). This does not only widen the already existing pit between cultures, but it neither offers help when it comes to finding inspiration for death rituals. A culturally insensitive behavior can never lead to the reformation of the death industry. I agree that there will always be the Other, the non-I, who scares us and seems to somehow threaten to take away something of our own, to change us in some way or another, but perhaps there can be a way of communicating with a different culture while also trying to understand and value the differences that are bound to exist among people. Anthony Appiah agrees that "conversations across boundaries can be fraught, all the more so as the world grows smaller and smaller and the stakes grow larger. It's therefore worth remembering that they can also be a pleasure" (2006, p. xx). This is the choice of cosmopolitanism which involves guarding your own values and being curious about and respectful toward the values of the world (Gunesch, 2004). Cosmopolitanism in the sense of cultural sensitivity might be the answer to our death-denying Western society. Even though it has been associated with a one-world government that would end nationalism (Heater, 1996), it is my belief that a culturally sensitive cosmopolitanism will bring a certain balance between 'I' —curious, unjudgmental—and the Other—willing to let me experience his culture as a source of inspiration for my own. Boia (2000) wonders whether it would be better if the reality of the Other resumed to a dialogue, to a mediation between cultures. Conversation without judgment seems to be the answer to the question of alterity, but although we might believe that the latter disappeared when the twenty-first century began, all is but a new arrangement (Boia, 2000), an arrangement that hides these differences in the deep layer of culture, the one that we never get to see but we all get to feel.

In this sense, globalization seems to have erased all borders between cultures, creating (paradoxically) a bigger resistance to the Other within the said cultures (Lieber & Weisberg, 2002). However, some scholars dismiss the idea that there could ever exist a hegemonic culture taking over, and who insist that those "who blame Western modernity in general for all the ills of the world … usually do not bother to learn about other cultures and languages to begin with" (Huyssen, 2008, p. 4). This is partly right. Not all ills can be traced

back to Western lands. But what happened to death culture could be—consider industrial cremation[3] and chemical embalming[4], which were both tested and advertised first in the Western community, then slowly the rest of the world had to follow—because what is the West if not the center of cultural, economic, and, after all, living world (Appadurai, 1996; Featherstone, 1995)?

To exemplify these changes, Doughty discusses the use of the word 'dignity' in Western death culture:

> The Western funeral home loves the word "dignity". The largest American funeral corporation has even trademarked the word. What dignity translates to, more often than not, is silence, a forced pose, a rigid formality. Wakes last exactly two hours. Processions lead to the cemetery. The family leaves the cemetery before the casket is even lowered into the ground. (2017, p. 102)

Dignity can sometimes prevent us from grieving on our own terms and starting the healing process. Does grieving mean breaking down and bursting into tears in front of a crowd at your mother's funeral? Does that help you ease the pain? If so, you should not feel any sense of guilt. Unfortunately, modern society starts resembling more and more Norbert Elias' société polie: the courtier is a master of self-control, and that is why they appear as the ultimate rational person. However, some questions arise, Elias (2002) says. Passions and tensions will grow stronger and stronger and make the individual fight himself, not the others, as was the case inside war-led societies. This means that the superego will constantly fight the id about manifesting emotion, creating huge tensions for the individual. These contradictions within your psyche—one may also call it "soul"—will subsequently sprout into emotional problems.

The question is: "In our Western culture, where are we held in our grief? Perhaps religious spaces, churches, temples—for those who have faith. But for everyone else, the most vulnerable time in our lives is a gauntlet of awkward obstacles" (Doughty, 2017, p. 232). Religious people perceive death differently because they already possess a 'toolbelt' that helps them confront some of their fears, but not all people are religious or spiritual. And apparently, Western culture offers them no support. Should they refuse religion or spirituality, they cannot even find meaning or relief.

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[3] See Caitlin Doughty's *From Here to Eternity*, pp. 130-133. She tells the story of how Lodovico Brunetti, an anatomy professor, attempted to create the first modern cremation machinery in the late 1800s. In a paper published in 1884, Brunetti describes industrial cremation as "a solemn, magnificent moment, which has a sacred, majestic quality" (p. 132).

[4] See John Troyer's "Embalmed vision", published in *Mortality*, 12:1, pp. 22-47.

It is advised that the grieving process should happen behind closed doors, making sure that no one hears our cries of sorrow, and this perception spreads all over the world, touching all cultures. Thankfully, in this flood of globalization, some small islands arise. In Romania, for instance, the tradition of *bocitoare*—wailing women or professional mourners—can still be found in the northern and western parts of the country. In Maramureș, people sing the following couplet: Dragul maichii, după tine, / Îmi pare și rău, și bine ('The fact that you died, my lad, / makes me both happy and sad'[5]). The belief is that life does not end, that the dead person goes on living in spirit, shedding away the human body, and this helps the entire community come together and heal. No taboo, no fear of being judged by other cultures, no hiding away from death.

So, why is cultural sensitivity so important for death acceptance? The reason is that we all take what we need from the different cultures surrounding us. By witnessing other rituals and practices, we find inspiration and comfort not only in the sense that we can allow ourselves to grieve when we need to but we can also face death with the help of those many interactions and experiences that we had with what makes us uncomfortable and anxious. Buddhist monks find liberation through discomfort[6], staring right into the heart of their fears, finding the strength to break away from it (Doughty, 2015). We are not Buddhist monks, but stepping onto this proverbial bridge between denial and acceptance can change the way we live, and most importantly, die.

Conclusions

Modernity entails some sort of disenchantment (Taylor, 2007), even if "only humans can hallucinate their way out of danger … The ego regresses to a more primitive state of magical thinking in the attempt to restore the safety and security of symbiotic bliss" (Piven, 2004, p. 128). This kind of magical thinking is discouraged nowadays. Looking mortality in the eye becomes an exercise that is too uncomfortable. However, if accepting the existence of death means interacting with it and with our thoughts behind the modern culture's back, the islands that I mentioned will grow bigger. Or they will completely sink under the flood of a forced universalization of culture.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, two great currents seem to collide, and there are many names for them, some carrying political meanings that I do not intend to discuss. These are the same two currents that have been clashing since the dawn of

[5] Translated into English by the author of the study.

[6] Also called cognitive behavioral therapy, a psychotherapeutic treatment that helps people find coping strategies to help them with their negative thought patterns.

time: the Old and the New. If the New has sometimes been more beneficial to us than the Old, nowadays it seems that the former became a leveling tool that has little to no awareness of what it destroys in the process.

I believe that death positivity is not just the trend of 2020 (Izadi & Rao, 2019), but a life (and death) style that will save many people from the despair of facing death. This study was meant to present a short introduction to what the twenty-first century could achieve in terms of death positivity. The solution is to come into contact with as much information as possible. Authors[7] who openly talk about their own experience with death have been creating the contemporary death acceptance literature, the environment that allows open interaction with raw and real images of death and dying. We only have to show up.

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[7] See the third footnote.

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Gender Provocation Made by Marcel Duchamp: The Case of the Reversed Fountain from 1917

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Abstract

This essay examines the gender aspects in Marcel Duchamp's conceptual oeuvre, which have long been partially or completely neglected in the Duchamp literature. The analysis focuses on the well-known readymade, called *Fountain* (1917/64), which became the symbolic object of the very beginning of the conceptual art paradigm. My hypothesis is that Duchamp's conceptual work, mixing up the logic of circular arguments with humor and irony, can be interpreted as an 'avant-la-lettre' gender provocation, confronting interpreters not only with a gender task—understanding and defining our social gender roles, tasks and desires facing the already existing possibilities given in our social surroundings—but also with an over-gender task that goes beyond the understanding of our biological endowments and given social gender roles and positions. Hence, on the one hand, this early gender provocation, carried out by the *Fountain* of Marcel Duchamp performing ironic aesthetic value judgments—modeling the structure of logical self-contradictions—encourages gender awareness; on the other hand,—by setting up premises leading to senseless conclusions—it creates a gender trap.

My argument is that the interpretation of this gender trap, modeled by the *Fountain* at the beginning of the 20th century—in the lack of an over-gender awareness—can result in reductions, denying the complexity of our human existential and co-existential roles and neglecting the over-gender roles and positions of human beings as autonomous and yet co-existentially related individuals.

Keywords: conceptual art paradigm, readymade, gender provocation, gender awareness, over-gender awareness.

The Birth of the Conceptual Art Paradigm

The French-born Marcel Duchamp (1887-1868) is considered to be a subversive person, who introduced a new paradigm in the big narrative of western art history at the beginning of the 20th century. This new paradigm called conceptual art became within a few decades a new measure of performance for artists conveying intellectual contents in their artistic productions and questioning the traditional status of the art object as unique, material, and collectible. In the conceptual art paradigm, a work of art, which in the traditional sense, inherited in the big narrative of western art history, refers primarily to itself and then to the world, from here on, it starts to refer primarily to the world, and then to itself. In this new paradigm, an artwork becomes relatively functional, submitted to the idea, just like a non-attractive sign or a seemingly transparent verbal statement. Therefore, the vehicle of conceptual art can be anything, from everyday objects to photographs and texts, because the idea transmitted by the object becomes more important than the medium itself. The classical conceptual artist substitutes the creation of a beautiful art object for the visual transmission of "a great idea."

Although conceptual art is often compared to philosophy, it is rather a new field of cultural production, situated halfway between philosophy and visual poetry. Indeed, poetry and, especially, visual poetry was an important source of inspiration for Duchamp. When reading the visual poems of the late 19th-century French literature by Stéphane Mallarmé and Guillaume Apollinaire, the anti-representational poems, novels, and short stories by Raymond Roussel, the tautological texts by Alfred Jarry, the speculative etymologies by Jean Pierre Brisset, he said that those writers and poets would be the most appropriate to his "ideal library."

As for philosophy, Duchamp was not an expert in philosophy, but he seemed to be very interested in some popular theories and speculations of his age. One of these was that of Gaston de Pawlowski, the author of a science fiction novel (*Journey to the Land of the Fourth Dimension/Voyage au pay de la quatrième dimension*) first published in 1911 and then in 1923, implanting the thoughts of the Einsteinian physics. He liked to refer to the popular thoughts of the logical empiricist philosophers of the Vienna Circle, arguing that "everything is tautology except for the black coffee" where the senses can gain certainty about the existence of things (Duchamp, 1977, pp. 209-210). On the basis of this theory, Duchamp developed his own language theory, which he called "pictorial nominalism," emphasizing the "plastic existence of words," based on "plastic meanings" and used for expressing "plastic truths" (Duchamp, 1999, p. 25).

However, if the primary task of philosophy is to understand the existence and modes of operation of things and phenomena in the world, then works of art—creating tautologies or opening different fields of meanings and playing those fields against each other—are not a traditional task of philosophy. It is rather a poetic function of communication or, as Duchamp said in an interview, it can become a source of humour as well (Duchamp, 1962, p. 83). But if humor and irony have something to do with understanding the world, our relation to the world, and to ourselves, then visual poetics and visual reflection can be connected to cultural fields conceptualizing the world. Conceptual artworks do not conceptualize the world in the way philosophy and literature do—instead, they establish a new field of expression based on the interdependence of rational and intuitive modes of cognition, verbal and visual forms of utterance, conscious and non-conscious ways of expression. This new field, called conceptual art, became a new paradigm in western art history from the 1920s onwards. As Joseph Kosuth, the founder and ideologist of the conceptual art movement stated: "All art (after Duchamp) is conceptual (in nature) because art only exists conceptually" (Kosuth, 1969, pp. 915–917).

Readymade–(Re)made as an Ironic Aesthetic Value Judgement

The prototypical object of conceptual art is the readymade, which is not "made ready" by the conceptual artist in a material sense, but–as an objet trouvé–it is found by him, and it is conceptually remade or reconceptualized by him. The term "readymade" first used by Marcel Duchamp, seems to refer to a three-dimensional industrial object made by a machine based on the plans of an unknown engineer or industrial designer. But in this context, a simple industrial objet trouvé becomes the vehicle of meanings, thus revealing the intellectual dimensions of art—called the fourth dimension by Duchamp—and at the same time it shows, how "meaning-making" can be a personal and personalizing gesture on the one hand, and on the other, it ironically reveals how "meaning-fabrication" can become a ridiculously pointless, and never-ending story—the latter is more readily the lesson of his Opus Magnum, *The Large Glass* realized between 1915–23. The object chosen, selected, and appropriated by the conceptual artist is a personalizing gesture. Choosing only one of the million similar objects from the conveyor belt of the awakening consumer society means on the one hand, the affirmation of the choosing self, on the other hand, a reflection on a crucial change in the object culture, which was based on handicraft until this period, and from now on, it becomes subject to mechanical mass production.

Interestingly, the spread of mass production and photographic reproduction took place

at nearly the same time, raising some similarly troubling questions in several artists and thinkers. At the beginning of the 20th century, and especially in the 1920s and 1930s, this problem was also thematized by some, particularly sensitive and responsive artists such as the Hungarian László Moholy-Nagy, photographer, painter, and master teacher at the Bauhaus School, and by the German Walter Benjamin, philosopher of art and literary critic. Moholy-Nagy created photographic pictures with the exclusion of the camera—called photograms—and thus returned the missing immediacy and personification of the mechanical reproductions to the creative process, the problem that Walter Benjamin complained about in his well-known essay, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (Benjamin, 1935).

Marcel Duchamp, contemporary of Benjamin and Moholy-Nagy, with the personalizing gestures of everyday objects, like a urinary bought in a sanitary ware shop in New York at the beginning of the 20th century and exhibited later as an artwork, also seemed to respond to the problems formulated by Benjamin's 'mechanical reproduction' essay. He did it with an ironic attitude, thereby the readymade can be conceived as an ironic aesthetic value judgment.

Before elaborating this idea more in detail, I consider it necessary to review the most typical interpretations of the readymade and some important statements and definitions of its reception history.

The numerous attempts to define Duchamp's readymades have revolved around three main concepts. Below we seek to present these through the ideas of three prestigious interpreters: Octavio Paz, Thierry de Duve, and Arthur C. Danto.

One approach–which is, among others, the starting point for Danto–is defining a readymade as a thing or object which has gone through a metamorphosis. In this sense, a readymade which turned from a "mere real object" into a work of art performed a miracle of transforming a simple, everyday object of commonplace existence into a real work of art. As he states in the preface of his book, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace*: "(…) as a matter of art-historical precedent, who first performed the subtle miracle of transforming, into works of art, objects, from the Lebenswelt of commonplace existence: a grooming comb, a bottle rack, a bicycle wheel, a urinal" (Danto, 1981, p. 6).

Another definition suggests that readymades are not to be interpreted in themselves but as signs or references behind which one may suggest the artist's gesture or intention. According to Octavio Paz, for instance, readymades (in plural) are signs of questioning and negating artworks (Paz, 1978, p. 20).

A third approach represented by Thierry de Duve states that the readymade is neither an object nor a group of objects, nor the artist's gesture or intention but a statement (énoncé) attached to any object: "this is art" (Duve, 1989. pp. 7-65).

Beside interpreting readymade as an object, a sign, or a statement, a recurring question remains for the three cited authors–and interpreters in general–whether readymades are works of art.

According to Paz, readymades are neither art nor anti-art but something indifferent, as their interest is not plastic but rather critical and philosophical (Paz, 1990, p. 20).

Thierry de Duve thinks a readymade, in the traditional sense of the word (according to the former paradigm of art), is not a work of art but an artifact of a piece of artwork, an artificial work of art on a second level. It is not simply art, nor art for art, but art about art, or in a French term, "art á propos de l'art" (Duve. 1989, p. 15). However, from the '80s and '90s on–as pointed out also by de Duve–it has been evident to almost all interpreters that readymades belong to the art field.

Danto, in whose art philosophy indiscernibility is a central question, i.e., whether one can differentiate between objects which look identical (meaning which one is a work of art and which one is not), comes to the conclusion that an object can only be seen as a work of art in the context of interpretation. The interpretation is the lever–states Danto–that takes an object of the real world up to the art world, where it may take an unexpected guise. Readymades, which he calls commonplaces, were, in this sense, originally no artworks, but with the time elapsed, in the context of interpretation, they became artworks. The act of artistic identification, which elevates the mere thing into the Realm of Art, creates in Danto's views also an ontological difference between common objects and works of art (Danto, 1997, p. 53).

All three concepts–whether they interpret readymades as an individual or collective objects–suggest that one of their essential characteristics is precisely the ontological uncertainty that keeps readymades on the borderline of art and non-art, thus making it possible and even necessary to reflect on art as a changing concept.

The relation between the context of interpretation and the judgment of whether readymades are works of art is also indicated by their consecutiveness. In 1978 Octavio Paz sees the relation between artwork and anti-artwork as a two-way, back-and-forth movement, a movement between statement and negation, and emphasizes the inherent uncertainty (Paz, 1990). However, subsequent studies by Danto and de Duve indicate that the situation changed somewhat in the '80s and '90s. From then on readymades seem to be less attracted to the pole of non-art than that of art. In other words, the movement has taken a direction: readymades have been interpreted more and more as works of art or works of art reflecting on art.

To be able to interpret readymades as works of art, as mentioned by de Duve, the paradigm shift within the medium of art was unquestionably also necessary (Duve, 1989, p. 11). Thus, it became possible to consider something a work of art, which would not have been considered a work of art a hundred years ago.

So, the movement is two-fold and parallel. While the interpretive field depending on up-to-date art concepts and definitions gradually accepts readymades, the interpretive field itself and the meaning of readymade are also changing. For the artistic field surpassing the artwork–as emphasized by Bourdieu who introduced the term field–is itself a product of constant historical and social changes, as, according to him, artistic autonomy and taste cannot be considered as separate from socio-cultural determinants.

> At each moment in time, in any field of struggle whatsoever (the whole social field, field of power, field of cultural production, literary field, etc.), agents and institutions engaged in the game are simultaneously contemporaries and temporally discordant. The *field of the present* is merely another name for the field of struggle (as shown by the fact that an author of the past is present to the exact extent that he is still at stake). Contemporaneity as presence in the same present only exists in practice in the struggle that synchronizes discordant times or, rather, agents and institutions separated by time and in relation to time. (Bourdieu, 1996, p. 158)

Duchamp's readymades, which became "artworks" in the soil fertilized by avant-garde movements, hence having started out with a delay, from the context of modern art, really owe their success story to this very change. Readymades managed to be interpreted as artworks in a context of art and art theory (the '80s and '90s) when theories and ideas on the modern episteme had been accepted. That is when the interpretive field was ready to interpret Duchamp's readymades not only as a provocation despite their uninteresting visual appearance.

In this context well soaked in theory, it was no surprise that a so-called missing object (for the first version was lost) no longer existing in its original form, Duchamp's urinal entitled *Fountain* (1917), managed to become one of the most controversial modern (and later postmodern or contemporary) works of art.

On the other hand, the "subtle miracle" performed by the readymades and the "transfiguration" mentioned by Danto (Danto, 1981, p. 6), do not seem to be so mystical and incomprehensible as one may suggest based on the expressions above. The process of readymades becoming artworks and being prepared and interpreted as works of art takes place in rather calculated and identifiable moves, made partly by Duchamp and partly by "players" of the interpretive field (interpreters, critics, art dealers, and audience).

In other words, the readymade becoming a delayed work of art can be considered a long process, which does not start with exhibiting the object, but it does not end there either. It starts with Duchamp's careful preparatory work and continues with the perception history following the exhibition of the object. And it goes on until the canonization as work (or works) of art.

Below we seek to go through this process in a time frame of about half a century by touching upon the main stages of Duchamp's reception in terms of readymades and also highlighting the ideas on which the canonization of Duchamp's readymade–completed by the end of the 20th century–was built. Then we will return to the ontological dilemmas raised by readymades and seek to outline from the perspective of the ideas above what readymades really are.

The shift in the approach concerning readymade can be summarised along the following boundary points:

1. From the early 1910s to the early 1960s: Duchamp is an artist personality known and worshipped by his friends and acquaintances (e.g., Apollinaire, Breton, H-P. Roché); his readymades and all other activities only serve to support his own excellence. A prime example for that is Breton calling Duchamp "one of the most intelligent and hence, (to many) the most disturbing people of the 20th century" (Breton, 1966, p. 355). However, during this period only a few people beyond the personal circle know Duchamp and even fewer know the readymades.

2. The 1960s and '70s. In the milieu defining the theoretical inquiry of the era, the main focus is–with only a few exceptions–on the masterpiece *The Large Glass*, or more precisely on finding the meaning of the Glass. There is still not much talk about

readymades. This period launches an intensive series of interpretation and reception among artists and theorists alike that, despite its temporary extremities, paved the way for the construction of a complex image of Duchamp. A lot of interpretations came to light that later became dominant (J. Clair, O. Paz, J.-F. Lyotard, etc.). Although it was still to be determined whether Duchamp was an artist or anti-artist, sooner or later, he was going to be canonized as one of the most significant participants of the 20th-century art world, comparable in importance to Picasso.

3. Since the late 1970s and mainly from the '80s and '90s researchers have laid more and more emphasis on the significance of readymades in art theory. The time elapsed has enabled some art historians with the necessary theoretical competence (such as Thierry de Duve) to see Duchamp as the creator of a new artistic paradigm as somebody who represents thinking about art and its co-concepts. The Duchamp oeuvre canonized this way becomes a basic reference for art theory (A. C. Danto, Jean-Luc Nancy, P. Bourdieu) and theory of art history (H. Belting, G. Didi-Huberman) discussions about the nature and social position of 20th-century art and its offspring, the so-called contemporary art.

In my view, one of the most interesting features of readymades is that they give us an account of a relation to the world that mattered to him as an ironic subject. In this respect, the objects embody the intellectual prints of the artist–as explained in detail in the relevant chapters of my book on Duchamp (Házas, 2009, pp. 102-121.) They can also be considered parts of an oeuvre concept or parts of a narrative in which the objects with the notes attached to them and the comments about them outline a certain world view. This world view is based on the ironic—or as Duchamp calls it—the "affirmative ironic" relation, in which not only the duality of negation and affirmation is present (as in irony in general) but also the defeat of affirmation over negation.

However, as in the history of western aesthetics and rhetoric, the irony was considered a linguistic formation and/or a linguistic-rhetorical manifestation, the fact that Duchamp —following the footsteps of Socrates, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard (Lyotard 1977, pp. 49-50)—conveyed irony with objects can be regarded as an innovation in itself. It is what Breton saw in Duchamp when he called him "one of the most intelligent people in the early 20th century" in *The Anthology of Black Humour* (Breton, 1966, p. 355).

To express irony, it is necessary to have the characteristically Duchampian titles full of ambiguity and puns, creating a sense of split, duality, and temporality so typical for irony (Man, 1996, pp. 187-228). On the other hand, it was also necessary to have the great narrative of western art history according to which the ironic statement could be worded.

Based on the above-mentioned, we can say that in this system readymades can function as statements–as de Duve revealed (Duve, 1984). However, as they are ironic statements stating something about works of art and art within the artistic field, the introduction of readymades as a genre can be interpreted as ironic aesthetic value judgments about art and works of art depriving the statement of its very clarity, and thus of its judging nature.

Based on all this, it is not surprising at all that readymades achieved considerable theoretical success in the realm of modern and postmodern art philosophy, which do not necessarily prefer obvious answers, and especially in contemporary art and art theory.

What Is a "Gender Trap" for and how to Avoid it?

When we look at Duchamp's more important works, it is not at all far-fetched to state that one of the central ideas in his oeuvre is man-woman relation, entering into its details, its variations and its differentiated problematization. By that, we do not only mean the obvious prints depicting genitals such as *Female Fig Leaf* (*Feuille de vigne femelle*, 1950) shaping female genitals and breasts, the breast-shaped statuette *Please Touch* (*Priere de Toucher*, 1947), or the phallus entitled *Dart Object* (*Objet-Dard*, 1951). The topic of the sexes also comes up in other works of his, such as early paintings and drawings, or his masterpiece *The Large Glass* (1915-23), in L.H.O.O.Q. (1919), a Mona Lisa with a mustache, or in the readymade labeled *The Air of Paris* (*L'aire de Paris*, 1919). It surfaces even in his various conceptual photos, such as J. Wasser's photo of the chess performance made at a 1963 exhibition where a clothed Duchamp played chess with an anonymous naked woman with *The Large Glass* in the background, or in his Cine-Sketch: *Adam and Eve* in which Duchamp appears as Adam.

And last but not least, let us include the central subject of the present study, which is probably the most commented object of the 20th-century art theory. It is an everyday object, "original" dating of which in 1917 was lost, and which Duchamp replaced with a seemingly identical object in 1964: the urinal turned upside down, entitled *Fountain*, which we will scrutinize below from the perspective of the contemporary discussion revolving around social and biological gender roles and positions.

However, for a long time, the reception history of readymades either completely ignored gender-related questions or they were only marginally represented. But for a few exceptions authors did not deal with gender issues, or if they did, they relied on popular cultural schemes often neglecting the unique, Duchampian interpretation. A typical example for that is André Breton's simplifying and–without any doubt markedly

male-centered–reading, which launched a long series of interpretations. Breton judges Duchamp's apparent masterpiece, *The Large Glass* as a mechanistic, cynical interpretation of the phenomenon of love (Breton, 1969). In the range of interpretations on the relation of Duchamp and gender, those of Arturo Swartz (Schwarz, 1997) and Octavio Paz (Paz, 1990) are less simplifying; however, they totally ignore the dialogue between the works and the spirit of the era. The profound studies by Jean Clair and Georges Didi-Huberman (Didi-Huberman, 1997) on research about the spirit of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the gender issue from a culture-historical perspective, however, analyze the works thematizing the male-female issue but exclude the feminist movements themselves and their impact on the spirit of the age from their point of view, thus, considering gender relation a timeless, eternal and constant issue, which Duchamp on the other hand, examined apparently from the perspective of here and now (or there and then).

The questions were first examined thematically by Amelia Jones in her book *Postmodernism and the En-Gendering of Marcel Duchamp* published in 1994. Besides analyzing the works professedly as a feminist art historian, she scrutinized Duchamp's author-function and stated that Duchamp rebelling against "the phallus of artistic authority" became, paradoxically, a kind of a "father figure" for the American postmodern authors (artists, critics, and art historians) protesting against the masculinist ideologies of the Greenbergian modernism (Jones, 1994). The fact that starting with the '60s and '70s Duchamp became a substitutive "father figure" for art interpreters could be explained by Gizella Horváth's notion of vacancy aesthetics. She introduces the term in her book as a comprehensive theoretical principle of modern art which in her view as well starts with the story of Duchamp's urinal (Horváth, 2016, p. 17). According to Horvath's theory, derived from the lack of the Kantian notion of beauty, vacancy is the foundation of the modern paradigm, as it is a constitutive element of modern works of art (Horváth, 2016, pp. 19-20).

The urinal which Duchamp bought in a sanitary ware shop at the dawn of consumer society, in the early 20th century in New York, labeled it with the name of the shopkeeper (R. Mutt), and the year (1917) and then sent it to an exhibition where Duchamp himself was one of the jurors. However, as the members of the jury did not accept the urinal as an exhibit, he went on trying. He asked his friend, Alfred Steiglitz, the famous photographer, to take a photo of the object. Steiglitz's photo of the urinal was published in the avant-garde New York journal *The Blind Man*, which was edited by Duchamp and his friends. The journal published it as "the exhibit" declined at the Exhibition of Independent Artists.

All this took place at the time of the suffragette movements when civil rights movements demanding equal rights for women were thriving. There was a mushrooming for women's organization forums and the news–especially in women's newspapers–featured heroic stories about "the first woman to..." on an everyday basis (Albistur and Armogathe, 1977, pp. 339-401).

In a sense, *Fountain* was also such a vacancy-work, where vacancy is not only a capacity but also a trap. Like many other readymades, *Fountain* also draws attention to apparent contradictions and the resulting trap situations. Such a trap situation is one of the central topics in the increasingly popular gender philosophies of today: the issue of the relationship between biological and social gender. The issue, which has often been simplified and politicized since the beginning of the twenty-first century, has been circulating in public discourse as a "gender ideology", subordinated to a battle of values between different lifestyles.

How our biological and social gender roles relate to each other, and how individual identity constructs can relate to role constructs in society–were the questions that Duchamp found highly intriguing in a culture-historical era when differentiation of gender roles and role patterns had already begun but the theories underlying the understanding of the social phenomenon had not yet been born. It means that well before Simone de Beauvoir's influential book, *The Second Sex*, was published in 1949, and before the apotheosis of its frequently quoted and even more frequently commented sentence: "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman" (Beauvouir, 1949, Tome 2, p. 13) Duchamp had provoked his audience into gender consciousness before the social field of gender philosophies emerged and the description of such a concept was introduced.

On this basis, from a perspective of nearly a hundred years, we can say that many of Duchamp's works were avant-la-lettre gender provocation, as they did not only direct attention to one of the most rapidly changing areas of the western culture but also pointed out the contradictions underlying the changes.

For readymades conceived in the 1910s and '20s, around the creation of *Large Glass*, are also objects highlighting the dynamics of permanence and changes. The first readymade, for instance, *The Bicycle Wheel* attached on a stand upside down from 1913 (whose original was also lost), on the one hand, conveyed ideas of movement, changes, and pantha rhei by Heraclitus, and on the other hand, it also conveyed the human desire to freeze and fix change; all this in its own contradiction.

Fountain, the urinal, taken from its use and turned sideways, can be considered a prime example of a male object. A urinal is designed and made for men only because women cannot use it without inconvenience. It is an object connected to the biological level of a man's existence. Seemingly, it has nothing to do with gender roles. However, as Pierre Bourdieu states in his book *Masculine Domination* introducing the term paradox of doxa, these two levels are very hard to separate. Accordingly, masculinity, as a relation, is constituted paradoxically in society, the worldview that ranks the sexes institutes the phallus, which is constituted as the symbol of masculinity, and constructs from their biological differences genders as two hierarchized social essences:

> For the paradox is that it is the visible differences between the female body and the male body which, being perceived and constructed according to the practical schemes of the androcentric worldview, become the most perfectly indisputable guarantee of meanings and values that are in harmony with the principles of that worldview: it is not the phallus (or its absence) which is the basis of that worldview, rather it is that worldview which, being organized according to the division into relational genders, male and female, can institute the phallus, constituted as the symbol of virility, of the specifically male point of honour (nif), and the difference between biological bodies as objective foundations of the difference between the sexes, in the sense of genders constructed as two hierarchized social essences. Far from the necessities of biological reproduction determining the symbolic organization of the sexual division of labour and, ultimately, of the whole natural and social order, it is an arbitrary construction of the male and female body, of its uses and functions, especially in biological reproduction, which gives an apparently natural foundation to the androcentric view of the division of sexual labour and the sexual division of labour and so of the whole cosmos. The particular strength of the masculine sociodicy comes from the fact that it combines and condenses two operations: it legitimates a relationship of domination by embedding it in a biological nature that is itself a naturalized social construction. (Bourdieu, 2001, pp. 22-23)

And he does that on the one hand, regarding other men, and on the other hand, regarding the other sex (here women). The difference in viewpoints—as Duchamp also emphasized in his notes written about "changing viewpoints" (Duchamp, 1994, pp. 191-192)—largely defines the attitudes and interpretations.

The object entitled *Fountain* does not state or negate anything apart from itself, it merely separates, highlights, deprives or makes things incomplete and turns things around. With its contradiction, it provokes questions. Can we separate our biological and social

gender roles from social norms and stereotypical role patterns? And can we separate our biological and social roles that belong to our own gender? And if we can, do we do all that compared to whom or what? Who or what is the other one that we relate ourselves to? Is our biological and social gender identity a part of our identity construct? How similar and how different are we as women and men? What is the origin of our similarities and differences, and how do they relate to each other? How do we see each other and ourselves in this relation? To what extent is this relationship a part of our individual and cultural identity?

In this sense, the interpretation of Duchamp's works can really be considered an opportunity or even a challenge or a philosophical riddle, which, according to the logic of Zen-Buddhist koans, does not provide an answer to the question. One can only find an answer to these riddles in one's own life, going down the road of self-knowledge and world-knowledge based on one's own experience, overcoming one's own traps. And by answering one's own questions one can ideally form an own inner balance also adapting to one's own changes.

A probably necessary but not always sufficient condition towards that is one's own awareness of one's biological and social gender roles and their affirmation on a social level. Reflecting on Duchamp's early gender provocations, one could say that there is something here that one should not avoid, something that is beyond one's awareness-raising processes about gender roles. Something that is getting harder and harder to avoid, as reflected by the narratives of popular culture and the increasing number of theses on gender theories. Perhaps that something is none other than the riddle also suggested by the readymade *Fountain*:

> What is it that is beyond our similarities but within our differences?

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The Radical Avant-Garde and the Obsession for a New Beginning

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Abstract

Rising in an extremely troubled context in the first decades of the 20th century, the so-called radical avant-garde (especially Futurism, Dadaism, Suprematism and Constructivism) obsessively pleaded for a "new beginning", a real "restart" of art. Its discourse, both theoretical, of the avant-garde manifestos, and visual, aimed at giving alternatives for what were meant to become the new benchmarks of art history.

We know today that the face of art definitely changed as a result of avant-garde assaults. Even if the effects of this radicality faded in the past century, they are still evident. This study is intended to understand this radicality within the context of its occurrence, to find some of its constants, and to follow its effects upon contemporary art, in order to attempt to understand to what extent we can speak about a success or a failure of the avant-garde.

Keywords: art history, modern art, avant-garde, beginning, contemporary art

Introduction

On April 7, 1917, it was Hugo Ball's turn to give a lecture on his favorite artist at Galerie Dada in Zürich. It did not surprise anyone that he had chosen Kandinsky, with whom he met in München in 1912 and whose spiritual interpretation of the purpose of art in a materialistic age impressed him deeply. However, before referring to the painter Kandinsky, Ball decided to speak about "The Age" and its condition. There was no wonder since Europe was on fire at the time .... Here are the words with which he began his lecture:

> God is dead. A world disintegrated. I am dynamite. World history splits into two parts.

> There is an epoch before me and an epoch after me. (...) A thousand-year-old culture disintegrates. There are no columns and supports, no foundations any more–they have all been blown up. (...) The transvaluation of values came to pass (Ball, 1996, p. 223).

The intuition that European civilization was going through a time of deep crisis and that it was at a crossroads had become commonplace for the artists and intellectuals of the age. There are countless testimonies in this respect. Let's point out just two more examples; so as not to leave the impression of favoring artists, I chose a scientist and a philosopher. Max Planck, a Nobel Prize laureate in Physics in 1918, noted in an essay published in 1933:

> We are living in a very singular moment of history. It is a moment of crisis, in the literal sense of that word. (…) Many people say that these symptoms mark the beginnings of a great renaissance, but there are others who see in them the tidings of a downfall to which our civilization is fatally destined. Formerly it was only religion, especially in its doctrinal and moral systems, that was the object of sceptical attack. Then the iconoclast began to shatter the ideals and principles that had hitherto been accepted in the province of art. Now he has invaded the temple of science. There is scarcely a scientific axiom that is not nowadays denied by somebody (Plank, 1933, p. 64).

Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, stated in a lecture delivered at the Vienna Cultural Society on May 7, 1935:

> The crisis of European existence can end in only one of two ways: in the ruin of a Europe alienated from its rational sense of life, fallen into a barbarian hatred of spirit; or in the rebirth of Europe from the spirit of philosophy, through a heroism of reason that will definitively overcome naturalism. Europe's greatest danger is weariness. Let us as "good European" do battle with this danger of dangers … If we do, …, the phoenix of a new inner life of the spirit will arise … (Husserl, 1965, p. 192).

We could fill numerous pages with such alarm signals generated by the era. We will stop for the time being but we must bear in mind , in addition to the signals, the intense use of the figurative language: "crisis", "barbarian hatred", "alienated Europe", "rebirth", "battle", etc. There seemed to be only two alternatives: doom or a new beginning. Within this context, Virginia Wolf's famous words become perhaps clearer: "on or about December 1910, human character changed" (Woolf, 1966, p. 320). This accuracy of the date is intended to be nothing more than mere irony. We know today that the statement was made right after the shock caused by the opening of the First *Post-Impressionist Exhibition*, in London, on November 8; it introduced the works of Cézanne, Matisse, Van Gogh and Gauguin to the

British art-loving public.

In the meanwhile, these intuitive thoughts and ideas have become a certainty for us, contemporaries who, a century later, have the ability to follow this rupture happening in all fields of humanity. Modernism–written in an important work dedicated to 20th century culture, namely *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* by Daniel Bell–was "responsible for one of the great surges of creativity in Western culture" (Bell, 1978, p. XXII). Such a transformation implies a profound upheaval in consciousness, perception, value systems and ideology, influencing our way of understanding both ourselves and the world as a whole and having an analogous impact on art, science, philosophy, religion and political theory. As we have seen, this change was perceived by even its contemporaries who strongly felt that European civilization was experiencing the overthrow of the most important convictions and conceptual models whose origins were traced back to the thinking of Plato or Aristotle.

Any attempt to outline the profile of this so complex epoch, with which we are at least partially contemporary today, must begin from that "transvaluation of all values" that Hugo Ball was talking about (the expression belongs, of course, to Nietzsche, a true fetish-thinker of the age). The complexity of this disruption makes it impossible to present it in an exhaustive manner. What is certain, however, is the fact that it has touched all areas of human existence.

Signals were coming from all sides, mainly from least-expected areas, like science. Research in the fields of subatomic physics and astrophysics conducted by the extraordinary generation of physicists around the 1900s, reconfigured the understanding of the way in which physical reality functions. Albert Einstein, Louis de Broglie, Erwin Schrödinger and Paul Dirac (to name just a few) demonstrated that, beyond the seemingly stable and harmonious world of classical physics, there is a "different world" that cannot be described in terms of Newtonian physics. If, for almost two thousand years, Euclid's *Elements* were considered to provide a complete and accurate image of the physical space, Henri Poincaré, in his suggestively entitled book *Science and Hypothesis* (1905), came to the conclusion that Euclidean geometry is conventional and relative:

> What, then, are we to think of the question: is Euclidean geometry true? It has no meaning. We might as well ask if the metric system is true, and if the old weights and measures are false; if Cartesian co-ordinates are true and polar co-ordinates are false. One geometry cannot be more true than other; it can only be more convenient (Poincaré, 1905, p. 59).

As with Newtonian physics, Euclidean geometry continues to be operational only on the scale of everyday experience, and Poincaré noted that, beyond this area, there were "other worlds" where applying non-Euclidean geometries was far more "convenient". As for this radical change in the concept of physical reality, Werner Heisenberg wrote down that

> ... modern physics is in some way extremely near to the doctrine of Heraclitus. If we replace the word "fire" with the word "energy" we can almost repeat his statements word for word from our modern point of view (Heisenberg, 1958, p. 63).

In essence, what scientists ascertained right after 1900 was that things were not what they seemed to be, that 19th century certainties were not as certain. To this state of confusion, created by physics and mathematics, a certain book published in 1900 brought its major contribution: *Die Traumdeutung*, written by a Viennese psychologist, Sigmund Freud. Readers were stunned by the striking similarities with the ideas presented by contemporary physicists and mathematicians:

> The unconscious is the true psychical reality; in its innermost nature it is as much unknown to us as the reality of the external world, and it is as incompletely presented by the data of consciousness as is the external world by the communications of our sense organs (Freud, 2010, p. 607).

The corrosive impact of Freud's thinking upon 19th century assumptions regarding the inherent rationality and morality of human nature is difficult to overestimate. The human ego, Freud claims, is nothing more than a cluster of discrete structures without any substantial unity, and, correspondingly, the structure of human culture was built at the cost of suppressing the subconscious.

The parallelism between physics, mathematics, and psychoanalysis is more than evident. Ball reinforces it during his lecture on Kandinsky:

> Three things have shaken the art of our times to its depths, have given it a new face, and have prepared it for mighty new upsurge: the dissapearance of religion induced by critical philosophy, the dissolution of the atom in science, and the massive expansion of population in present-day Europe (Ball, 1996, p. 223).

And the consequences are devastating:

> Man lost his divine countenance, became matter, chance, an aggregate, animal, the lunatic product of thoughts quivering abruptly and ineffectualy. Man lost the special position that reason has guaranteed him. He became a particle of nature, seen (with-

> out prejudice) as a froglike or storklike creature with disproportionate limbs, a wedge jutting out of his face (called "nose"), and flaps protruding from his head (which people used to call "ears"). Man, stripped of the illusion of godliness, became ordinary, no more interesting than a stone, and constructed and ruled by the same laws as stone; he vanished in nature; one had every reason to avoid giving him too close a look, unless one wanted to loose, in terror and disgust the last remnant of respect for his desolate reflection of the dead Creator (Ball, 1996, pp. 223-224).

If physics redefines physical reality and psychology redefines psychic reality–i.e. each of the two sciences basically rethinks its own object of study–art will also engage itself in reconsidering its own object , that is "art", as it was configured under the auspices of modernity. This was the crucial task undertaken by artists who would later become the "historical avant-garde". This task suited them like a glove, and the attack on the art institution would prove to be devastating.

Who were the avant-garde artists? The idea of avant-garde first appeared in France, in the midst of utopian socialism in the early 19th century. The idea–obviously taken from the military and political vocabulary–acquires precise aesthetic connotations for the first time with D. Levardant, in 1845:

> Art, the expression of Society, communicates, in its highest soaring, the most advanced social tendencies; it is the precursor and the revealer. So that in order to know whether art fulfils with dignity its role as initiator, whether the artist is actually of the avant-garde, one must know where Humanity is going, and what the destiny of our species is (Apud Călinescu, 1987, pp. 106-107).

The importance of this origin of the avant-garde is underlined by Adrian Marino in the following words:

> All the fundamental notes of the concept begin to group together around this "military" nucleus, by extension: militant, … . A fact often overlooked: before setting up a "current" or an aesthetic way, the avant-garde defines an attitude of life, a way of conceiving and living existence, almost a Weltanschauung (Marino, 1973, pp. 179-180).

During the 19th century, a number of French writers and artists, especially those grouped in the realm of realism, united more or less consciously, placing themselves in a critical position towards bourgeois society and what was being perceived as official culture. The radicalization of this position became more intense towards the end of the century, yet it remained constantly peripheral.

The term "avant-garde" really came to the fore during World War II in the writings of the American critic Clement Greenberg, and was later intensely theorized. Although it imposed itself, being universally accepted as designating the artistic currents that appeared in the first decades of the 20th century (over forty!), analysts agreed that the concept is far too broad to be approached as a whole. The reason for this precaution was seized by Adrian Marino in the following words: "Heterogeneous, pulverized, often chaotic, the "avant-garde" defies by its very nature, description, clarification, precise definition" (Marino, 1973, p. 177). This is why syntheses are extremely rare, and when they occur, they are intensely criticized by specialists. Peter Bürger's *Theorie der Avantgarde* (1974) is no exception. However, we continue to resort to this work because, beyond its sometimes forced generalizations, it has managed to highlight exactly what we are interested in: the attack of the historical avant-garde on the institution of art. The book is important primarily because its author tries to individualize the progressive artistic movements of the early 20th century, distinguishing them both from the avant-garde of the previous century, but also from other contemporary art movements of the time. More specifically, Bürger is interested in what he calls the "historical avant-garde", i.e., the radical "hard core" of the avant-garde of the first two decades of the 20th century: Futurism, Dadaism, Surrealism and Russian Constructivism. The German theorist considers that what brings together the so diverse movements of the avant-garde, is, more than anything else, the attack focused on the institution of art, doubled by the constant attempt to bring art as close to life as possible. Indeed, the stakes of the avant-garde were not just aesthetic. Bridging the gap between art and life, the avant-garde artists set out to revolutionize both. Bürger repeatedly emphasizes that the movements of the avant-garde

> ... can be defined as an attack on the status of art in bourgeois society. What is negated is not an earlier form of art (a style) but an institution that is unassociated with the life praxis of men. When the avant-gardistes demand that art become practical once again, they do not mean that the contents of works of art should be socially significant. The demand is not raised at the level of the contents of individual works. Rather, it directs itself to the way art functions in society, a process that does as much to determine the effect that works have as does the particular content (Bürger, 1987, p. 49).

In his analysis of the self-critical impulse of art, Bürger highlights the importance of the concept of the "institution of art" and he uses it to study the social administration of the aesthetic sphere.

It is important to remember that the way we understand art today took shape during the 18th century. Like many other modern ideas, such as "rationality", "science", "nation," "art"

became a point of reference for all modernity, fulfilling a new social function and being responsible for creating a new category of objects, the so-called "objects of art". The development of most modern artistic practices was profoundly influenced by the logic that resulted from the emergence of two disciplines that became essential for shaping the world of modern art: aesthetics and art history. The new concept of art, as a distinctly modern phenomenon, was the result of the concerted effort of these two disciplines. Aesthetics played such an important role in establishing the new field of art that it would be no exaggeration to say that it was responsible for the way art was understood in modernity. The way in which aesthetics managed the appearance, the definition and delimitation of this new field was to be found, during the 19th century, in the aesthetic doctrine of the autonomy of art and later, at the beginning of the 20th century, it culminated in the aesthetic formalism. This aesthetic understanding of art led to the transformation of art into an autonomous, self-referential field, one that would be evaluated only in its own terms, that is, only according to its internal standards. The doctrine of the autonomy of art would lead to an increasingly accentuated ontological distinction between art and the other things of the world; also, the values and standards by which art is judged would become immeasurable compared with the other kinds of values and standards that governed ordinary life. The essential feature of the development of art in the bourgeois society of the 18th and 19th centuries was, as Bürger remarks, the increasing emphasis on aesthetic autonomy, a condition defined by the German theorist as "the independence of the work of art from its extra-aesthetic use" (Bürger, 1987, p. 110). This process of liberating art from all its external practical requirements culminated in the aesthetic movement. 19th century aesthetics appeared as a radical attempt to reposition itself, resulting in an increasing concern for the artistic environment. The historical avant-garde, which reached maturity in the 1920s, rose up against this isolation of art. Its importance lies in the fact that this was the first artistic movement in the history of Western art that conceptually raised the issue of the separate social status of modern art. In doing so, the avant-garde opened the possibility of a new understanding of art, an understanding that helped art insert into everyday life, rather than seek to escape from it. The historical avant-garde launches a direct and open attack on the very autonomous status of art, so what is denied is not an earlier form of art, but art as an institution. In other words, art enters the era of "self-criticism" (Bürger, 1987, p. 22).

It is essential to remember here that the goal of the historical avant-garde was not only to record the experience of modernity but, more importantly, to deconstruct that experience. This is the case, for example, with Dadaism. It was one of the most important phenomena of interwar culture until around 1924 when its energies were taken over and

transformed by the surrealists. The various manifestations of the international Dada were rapidly spreading from Zürich and New York to the major European cultural centers. Dada was not an organized movement (no matter how hard Tristan Tzara had tried), but rather its sympathizers shared similar positions and reactions to the disastrous consequences of mechanization and war, in particular. This was the main reason why Dadaism gained a large number of adherents in post-war Germany. We can hear the echo of the post-war traumas in the language of the manifesto of the Dadaist group in Berlin in 1918:

> "Life appears as a simultaneous muddle of noises, colours and spiritual rhythms, which is taken unmodified into Dadaist art, with all the sensational screams and fevers of its reckless everyday psyche and with all its brutal reality. (…) Dada is the international expression of our times, the great rebellion of artistic movements, the artistic reflex of all these offensives, peace congresses, riots in the vegetable market, midnight suppers of the Esplanade, etc., etc." (as cited in Richter, 1965, p. 106).

The First International Dada Fair (Berlin, 1920) displayed, among other more than two hundred works, a stuffed military uniform topped by a papier-mâché pig's head, dangled from the ceiling, next to a large painting by Otto Dix depicting war cripples–a savage indictment of war, mocking postwar hopes.

The avant-garde artists shared a political desire to look beyond artistic creation to the role of art in building a new world. Their belief in the regenerating capacities of art had been a constant in avant-garde philosophy. However, to achieve this goal, art had to be revolutionized, redefined, and brought back into contact with everyday life. In such a short time (about 2 decades) they challenged all conventions, rules, and aesthetic presuppositions they could identify. The logical conclusion reached by the avant-garde artists was the need for a new beginning. There was only one alternative: the doom. This "new beginning" had to be "new" in the most radical sense of the word. It should not preserve any impurities, nothing reminiscent of that completely perverted "old" state of the art they had so vehemently condemned to death. This explains, as Boris Groys remarks, the fascination exerted on the avant-garde artists by the dogma of the creation of the world from nothing or from the original chaos:

> Many artists of the classical avant-garde in fact set out from this dogma in reflecting on their own creativity. Malevich talks about his creation of the suprematist world out of the void. The constructivists and Dadaists in Russia, Germany, or France also talk about the void as the origin of their creative work (Groys, 2014, pp. 76-77).

This new beginning takes extremely different forms. Let us give, at random, a few examples: zaum language (`transrational`), invented by the Russian avant-garde poet Aleksei Kruchenykh; Kazimir Malevich's aesthetic gnosis ("I have transformed myself into the zero of form, (…) and through zero I have reached creation, that is suprematism, the new painterly realism–nonobjective creation" (Malevich, 1915, pp. 128-133); the utopian ideal of universal renewal through the language of forms, proposed by the De Stijl group; Mondrian's Neoplasticism; the effort of Russian Constructivists to create a new aesthetic vocabulary, universal forms, and images, striving to represent the world in the most objective way, etc. And this "novelty" did not only reshape the art world (we cannot imagine the world of contemporary art without collage, montage, ready-made, etc.), leaving as a legacy the probably most frequently repeated question all along the 20th century ("What is art?"), but it also remodeled our world since the art of the avant-garde managed to reach an essential structure of our present state, invading our homes, streets, and cities.

Figure 1.

From left: Russolo, Carrà, Marinetti, Boccioni and Severini in front of Le Figaro, Paris, 9 February 1912

Commenting on the well-known photograph taken by an anonymous of the group of five initiators of futurism during their visit to Paris in 1912, Hans Belting remarks ironically, but with good reason:

> Futurist paintings and sculptures may still look modern–in fact, more modern than anything today's art has to offer–but these gentlemen themselves do not. They were still young then, but their very clothing reveals how old modernism has meanwhile become. They look as if they are in costume, wearing the clothes of the bourgeois society against which they have declared war. But this intention does not make the era any less remote from us (Belting, 2003, p. 28).

Indeed, according to our tastes, at least, the five signatories of the incendiary futuristic manifestos do not look barbarians at all and do not seem ready to set fire to the old world to make way for a new one. Let us not be misled, however. Their creations, and especially their ideas, like those of other avant-garde artists, remain extremely modern to this day, or, to paraphrase Belting, more modern than most of the ideas circulating today in the art world.

However, there is talk of the failure of the avant-garde. It was Bürger who set the tone. The German theorist believes that the avant-garde failed to achieve its goal of destroying the institution of art in order to dissolve the boundaries between art and life. The obvious proof: the institutionalization of the avant-garde. The failure of the avant-garde as an artistic revolution would coincide, according to Bürger, with the beginning of its reign as predominant aesthetics, a process that begins with the inauguration of the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York, or with the monopolization of the avant-garde aesthetics by the consumer society. In other words, the failure of the avant-garde would coincide with the moment when its protests against art as an institution became, through a "perfidious" strategy of the institution, accepted as art. This is why Bürger disregards the neo-avant-garde of the 1960s, seeing it as a mere sterile "repetition" of the historical avant-garde. Disagreeing with Bürger, American art historian Hal Foster argues in his book *The Return of the Real* that the failure of the historical avant-garde is not total, as criticism of art institutions was revived by the second wave of the avant-garde (neo-avant-garde) in the 1960s.

> However different aesthetically and politically, both practices contest the bourgeois principles of autonomous art and expressive artist, the first through an embrace of everyday objects and a pose of aesthetic indifference, the second through the use of industrial materials and the transformation of the function of the artist (Foster, 1996, p. 4).

Foster believes that the historical avant-garde failed only within the context of its age, but the effects of its critique spread, influencing decisively the neo-avant-garde. And not only that, we would add. Without succeeding in destroying the institution of art, the avant-garde managed to raise important questions about the validity of "conventional" norms and criteria. A proof of its success was precisely the disclosure of the conventionality of all criteria and norms and implicitly the impossibility of any artistic movement or particular art form to issue claims of universal validity. And this has become evident in the art world, especially since the 1960s, after the American Abstract Expressionism, probably the last art movement that issued such claims.

Despite its flaws and often unhappy mésalliances, the avant-garde enriched our culture with a complex understanding of the human personality and the relationships with its environment; it transformed the way we connect the past to the present and gave us new ways of representing the world and our place in it, ways that were non-existent or barely intuited before 1900. The avant-garde campaigned for the return of art to the "agora", for its reinvestment with "utility". Using the cognitive force of art to defamiliarize a specific set of institutionalized conventions, the expressionists unmasked the true image of war and the dehumanized man, the surrealists explored the depths of the human psyché, opening new windows to look at the world and ourselves, the Dadaists signaled the dangers of reifying language, etc. Yet, most importantly, the avant-garde artists did their best to keep alive our capacity for wonder and delight in the midst of the industrial discipline, bureaucratic routine, quantification, and the invasion of commodification and market imperatives in all aspects of life.

The crucial problem that avant-garde was facing at that time can be described in the following terms: did modern society, technology, art, education impose a rupture with the Western humanist cultural tradition, or was it a mere reconstruction of its venerable ideas in the light of new experiences and circumstances? This was probably the most difficult problem for the avant-garde. It assumed it, explored it intensely, but never solved it sharply, oscillating dramatically between modernolatry and modernophobia. It remains, in fact, a problem for us postmodernists too.

The assumption providing a basis for the avant-garde movements was that the relationship between art and society had fundamentally changed, that the old ways of seeing were no longer adequate, and new ones had to be found. This assumption is obviously correct. Therefore, the problem of the failure of the avant-garde is a false one. As Daniel Bell rightly remarks:

> The commonplace observation that today there is no longer a significant avant-garde–that there is no longer a radical tension between new art which shocks and a society that is shocked–merely signifies that the avant-garde has won its victory. A society given over entirely to innovation, in the joyful acceptance of change, has in fact institutionalized the avant-garde … (Bell, 1978, p. 35).

Or, to use Hal Foster's words, the avant-garde, as a tradition, won, even if its victory was "à la Pyrrus" (Foster, 1986, p. IX).

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The Beginning of Typographic Installation and Contemporary Graphic Creativity

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Abstract

Beatrice Warde's crystal goblet has changed the perception of typography and typographic expression in the print and online media since it was published. "Bear with me in this long-winded and fragrant metaphor; for you will find that almost all the virtues of the perfect wine-glass have a parallel in typography" (Warde, 1956, p. 1). Since 1932, when Warde introduced type and typography as a *'crystal goblet',* typography has evolved significantly, and probably in the fastest way with the contributions of technological improvements and printing technologies. Typography has proliferated in the early decades of the 20th century as an essential and highly visible aspect of modern art and design. It has also became a production practice in post-modern art in the middle of the 20th century and early 21st century.

As it is known, text is not new to art and avant-garde and so is typography. With postmodernism, the usage of text, type and typography in post-modern art practices, contemporary artwork examples, design arts, installations and conceptual art movements blurred the boundaries between art and typograph. Especially artists and designers started to use typography in their personal expressions as a post-modern art strategy and, as a result, typography became a hybrid form to assess in 21st century art practices and also a *raison d'être* to convey idea, thought and message.

In this paper, by using the descriptive method, I will focuse on the relationship between typographic installation and contemporary graphic creativity. In this regard, evaluating Beatrice Warde's philosophy along with the samples of typographic installation of artists such as Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, Stephen Doyle, Barbara Kruger etc. and a special museum Deportee Memorial Museum Carpi, will be helpful in order to compare the changes in the past and present approaches in typographic applications and it will be useful in order to understand today's graphic creativity.

Keywords: typography, typographic installation, Beatrice Warde, Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, Deportee Memorial Museum Carpi.

Introduction

> What we call the beginning is often the end.
>
> And to make an end is to make a beginning.
>
> The end is where we start from. And every phrase.
>
> And sentence that is right (where every word is at home,
>
> Taking its place to support the others,
>
> The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,
>
> An easy commerce of the old and new,
>
> The common word exact without vulgarity,
>
> The formal word precise but not pedantic,
>
> The complete consort dancing together)
>
> Every phrase and every sentence is an end and a beginning. (T.S. Eliot, 1968)

In *Little Gidding* (1942) (final poem in *Four Quartets*), T. S. Eliot questions time, past and future, perspective, the beginning and the end etc. The beginning means opening a new chapter in history of anything and it means to initiate something that hasn't been done before and something that has a potential to influence others in some way or another that can shape the cultures, cultural conditions or sometimes ages.

> Every age is defined by the art it inspires. For in every era, an elite group of works succeeds in transcending the tethers of history, the ephemeral intrigues of politics and the intimate entanglements of the artist's personal life, while at the same time capturing the essence of the generation that generated it. So what of our own era? (Grovier, 2013, p. 10).

In contemporary age, when considering the relationship between typography and contemporary graphic creativity and art, typography is a significant subject and a hybrid medium that both designers and artists use for personal expression, individual creativity,

for the creation of artwork. Furthermore, in this connection, typography gains a leading role in our creative lives. Besides, typographic installation achieves the same status as well. From graphic designers to conceptual artists, from designers who make design arts to painters, artists use typography.

Typographic installation is both an individual and cultural expression that can define today's creativity. Here, the aim is not merely to learn about the works but to explore them for what they can tell us, and how they can build the profile of our age and the meaning of typographic installation today by using the descriptive method. Examples in the article give us some clues to articulate something fundamental about the era and its artistic sensibilities by focusing on mostly the American and Italian works (according to resources, a first example of modern typographic installation was by an Italian artist, Fortunato Depero, 1927. And after that, with conceptual art and postmodernism in the 1960s and 1970s, the use of typography in an artwork and public installation became more common among American artists), which are considered to be at the heart of contemporary creativity. Therefore it is possible to come to an understanding of today's typographic and artistic approaches by evaluating the artists'visions, skills and passions.

Typographic Installation and Graphic Creativity

"A bee that has seen a food source can communicate the message to bees that did not see it, but a bee that has not seen it cannot transmit the message to others that did not see it" (Deleuze and Guattari, 2005, p.77). Typography is perhaps the best way to convey the message and the idea to the others; and it makes the world readable and visible. Eyes focus on words. Deleuze and Guattari stated that as human beings, we can communicate, think, understand or perceive through what we see. In this case, the theory of Deleuze and Guattari related to visual world shows similarity with "The Allegory of the Cave" by Plato. In his book titled *Republic* (2020), Plato has also explained that our reality is based upon what we see.

We live in world of images and with the help of technological improvements and multimedia design tools, so creating images, texts, type or design has become easier probably more than ever in contemporary age. Moreover, in the 21st century, postmodern culture, digital culture or cyber-culture have caused the changing of design language and graphic creativity and so has typography. Nothing in the universe remains constant, and there is nothing that does not change or transform, or stays as it is. Fluidity of the universe alters time and the zeitgeist as well. Changing of time has also shifted typography and typographic expression. Designers and artists have begun to use typography in different

forms, shapes, sizes, scale and began to use it from indoor to outdoor. Typography has evolved from two-dimensional to three-dimensional, from still to motion.

In addition, typography has the power to represent the spirit of the times and to reflect the characteristic of the context. In his essay titled *The Philosophy of Modernism in Typography* (1929), American typeface and graphic designer Douglas C. McMurtrie points out his philosophy which can guide not only modernism but also postmodern and contemporary age. According to McMurtrie,

> "as all art of any vitality is a reflection of life, the typography which is truly representative of its period is expressive of the life of that period. Perhaps the most typical characteristic of present-day living is the quick tempo at which it moves. The tempo of our typography should be in keeping. It should be dynamic rather than static. Its balance should be that of motion rather than that of rest. The balanced composition suited to the leisurely contemplation of an earlier generation must give place to arrangements in which the sense of movement is inescapable. For we of the present age must, so to speak, read, as we run" (Bierut, Helfand, Heller and Poynor, 1999, p. 41).

In time, typographic expression has become enormous in terms of usage for almost all kinds of design and art. Nowadays, seeing large letters in the streets, on the walls of buildings, in the stations or any kind of places, is possible. Not only two-dimensional but also three-dimensional versions and different kinds of expressions or installations are visible. That kind of diversity has also brought designer and artist to the realm of freedom and extensive creativity, and it is a reflection of the spirit of postmodern world. The limitless utilization of typography, therefore, has led to a paradigm shift within typography itself. This also offers a new point of view on assessing typography within contemporary graphic creativity. In contemporary age, typography is in the leading role; and it connects directly to the context. Typography is as visible as possible and expressive, and sometimes context is transferred to the audience only through typography, as especially many of typographic installations are boisterous in terms of artist and designer's attitude, transfer of content, creativity skills, typeface, font, size, shape, scale, and material usage. Typography speaks with people, catches them and makes itself readable. It can also influence people's psychology and behaviour. In the 21st century, typography itself becomes protagonist. For this reason, one of the components of contemporary creativity is typographic installation.

At this point, however, *the beginning and pioneers* are significant to form a proper frame of the definition and explanation for typographic installation. Beginning means opening a

new chapter in the history of anything. Accordingly, the pioneers of typographic installation have begun a new period in typography and postmodern graphic design. Avant-garde designers who pushed the boundaries from Futurism, Dada, Situationist International, Modernism or Postmodernism have considerably contributed to build a new experimental design approach by using typography and installation together. Thus, avant-garde vision has helped and still helps to shape the contemporary graphic creativity.

Typography (lettering) is as ancient as the history of humanity and lettering on stones and buildings dates back to cave people in the ancient times. Even though some instances, such as large letterings, advertisement signs and outdoor typography like HOLLYWOODLAND were designed by Thomas Fisk Goff in 1923 or some others were made from the 1930s, when it comes to modern typographic installation, in 1927 Italian Futurist graphic designer and painter Fortunato Depero designed and built perhaps the first building to be made out of concrete block letters for Bestetti, Tuminelli, and Treves Publishing Houses in book pavilion in Monza (Pavilion for the Monza Biennale Internazionale delle Arti Decorative, Monza, Italy). The book pavilion spells out the structure's function as a kind of "typography parlant" (typography whose physical form speaks to the semantic meaning of the words) (Heller and Ilić, 2013, pp. 10-22). The pavilion and the usage of typography were an experimental structure, which represented a new stage of avant-garde typography and the beginning of typographic installation.

"The end of 20th century saw the gradual breakdown of the hegemony of the International Style in the face of challenges that arose as part of the postmodern movement" (Eskilson, 2007, p. 336). Thus, the beginning of the 1970s and 1980s can also mark the rise of postmodern typography and typographic installation. Avant-garde designers and artists such as Barbara Kruger, Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, and Stephen Doyle have begun to produce typographic installation and public art.

> A signature facet of postmodern graphic design is the fact that it is often combined with social activism on the part of the artists. This draws a stark contrast with the *depoliticization* that was characteristic of the International Style overall, and represents essentially a *repoliticization* of graphic design. This type of postmodern work is also another historicist impulse, as artist sought to intervene in the political discourse in the same way that earlier generations (the avant-garde of the 1920s) involved their profession in social action. (Eskilson, 2007, p. 369)

> Design forms and terminology have political and social meaning, expressing attitude and values of their time; postmodernism gained a strong foothold among the generation of designers who emerged in the 1970s. (Meggs, 1998, p. 432)

Barbara Kruger, for instance, is the most well-known art director, graphic designer and artist who has shifted her working from commercial design to art, particularly activist art. Kruger has created her signature style by combining dramatic photographs and strong declarative discourse. Later, Kruger started to produce huge typographic installation from public space to museums and galleries with her signature style designed by using Futura bold italic font. She made possible to see huge letters, words and strong messages wherever we look at. There is no escape among the words in her installation and a complete typographic interface. As typographic installation, Kruger's style and works are one of the most significant instances that create contemporary vision and cotemporary graphic language and also artistic discourse. Typography in her works is loud and clear. Without complex graphical aesthetic concern, conveying the message and the thought is the main purpose, which shows that this is an embracement of postmodern style.

On the other hand, according to Meggs (1998, p. 432), "postmodern designers place a form in space, because it "feels" right rather than to fulfil a rational communicative need. Much postmodernist design is subjective and even eccentric; the designer becomes artist performing before an audience with the bravura of a street musician, and the audience either responds or passes on." In 1996, for example, graphic designer Stephen Doyle created a typographic installation in Grand Central Terminal in New York.

> The Nineteenth Amendment was created as a typographic installation commemorating the 75th anniversary of the amendment which granted women the right to vote. The text was applied to the floor of Grand Central Terminal in 9,276 point type. The Nineteenth Amendment, promising enfranchisement to women and suffrage regardless of sex, is reproduced on the floor of the Vanderbilt waiting room, which is traversed by millions of commuters daily, with the fanfare that these historic words deserve. (Doyle, 2021; Heller and Ilić, 2013, p. 106).

Installing the work in a station where thousands or millions of people walk every day means bringing the audience and artist together. The message conveyed is explicit and direct. During contemporary age and the times when we live so fast, typography is an indispensable tool and a medium for expression. Avant-garde spirit is around us and builds a contemporary style. Accordingly, in this example, as Meggs mentioned above, designer transforms and becomes an artist who performs inside and around the audience, sometimes in the street, sometimes in public or not. Furthermore, the audience walk with the artist every day with or without their awareness.

Deleuze and Guattari point out that language is not content to go from a first party to a second party, from one who has seen to one who has not, but necessarily goes from a second party to a third party, neither of whom has seen. It is in this sense that language is the transmission of the word as order-word, not the communication of a sign as information (2005, p. 77).

Furthermore, typography is not just the organization of letters and words but is the language itself and a substantial form of art in contemporary society. At this point, it becomes an obligation to mention the term of *langage*. The grammar of art is langage. In the light of all mentioned above, the usage of typography is a *graphical langage*, especially in modern and postmodern age. However, in contemporary age, saying that typographic installation itself becomes a contemporary *graphical langage* will not be wrong.

Moreover, in contemporary age, the use of typography turns into an explanandum among artists and designers. In this regard, typography is a hybrid form which interconnets art and design as well as artist and designer and it becomes an aesthetic decision and a *raison d'être*. Besides, according to Heller and Ilić, "typographic installation and typographic art are accepted genres" (2013, p. 179).

As a result, typography is in leading role in contemporary age, particularly since the early 1900s when is the beginning of contemporary graphic design and typography. Also, typographic installation has the same leading position. And, basically, a definition can be given, i.e. that typographic installation is the installation which is formed by using letters, words; the installation with which walls, floors can be covered; the installation with which buildings, bridges, stairways and buses can be enveloped; the installation which can be placed in stations, or on fronts of buildings, trees, mountains or any kind of surface and space etc. by using any kind of material; the installation which is ephemerae or permanent. Anywhere is a *tabula rasa* for designer and artist.

In the 21st century, we live in a completely digital age. Since 1990s, computer technologies, powerful design software and hardware system have made it possible to do anything, even the things we can barely imagine. Hence, artists and designers use these opportunities to produce LED installation, neon installation, or motion installation by using typography. These are the part of typographic installation and typographic art as well. In this sense, to understand contemporary graphic creativity also requires a good analysis of avant-garde, postmodern, typography, typographic installation in both graphic design and visual arts fields. As opposed to Beatrice Warde' theory given below, typography is not invisible but visible. In addition, it is never colourless. Contemporary graphic creativity includes all

kinds of creative approaches and aesthetics expressions. Indeed, it consists of all of their components. Here, avant-garde, modern, postmodern and contemporary are in fusion according to time spirit.

Beatrice Warde and Crystal Goblet

Typography was known especially as a male-dominated area in the design realm. Besides, it is known that design's roots in the historically male-dominated world of typography and type design has led to gender inequality in recent history and modern day. No doubt that in a male dominated area, as a woman Beatrice Warde was a very significant woman designer and writer in the field of typography. In the 20th century, she was the first woman and one of the pioneers of importance in the history of the field, before Zuzana Licko or Carol Twombly, or Nelly Gable, who now cuts punches, as far as we know the first made ever by a woman, at the Imprimerie Nationale in Paris. Thus, she is an avant-garde and inspirational figure, who led her successors (Lussu, 2018; Morley, 2016).

On the other hand, the *Crystal Goblet or Printing Should Be Invisible* has been a controversial essay since it was published. In 1930, Beatrice Warde gave a lecture called "*Printing Should Be Invisible*" to Society of Typographic Designers at St Bride Institute in London. Then, in 1932, the text of the lecture was published under the title of *The Crystal Goblet or Printing Should Be Invisible* (Bierut and others, 1999, p. 56). Since then, much has been said and written on it, because Warde's essay had plenty of metaphors on typography or how typography should be. In the essay, Warde drew significant parallels between typography and a perfect wine-glass or a crystal goblet. According to Warde, *transparency* and *invisibility* of typography equaled to the crystal wine-glass. Whether or not we have seen the wine in this metaphorical rhetoric, we choose which glass we take between solid gold goblet and crystal-clear glass. According again to Warde, the only thing which matters is to see the wine. When it comes to typography, what matters is to read the text. And typography should be invisible and colourless. As Warde (1956, pp. 1-2), formulated

> imagine that you have before you a flagon of wine. You have two goblets before you. One is of solid gold, wrought in the most exquisite patterns. The other is of crystal-clear glass, thin as a bubble, and as transparent. Pour and drink; and according to your choice of goblet, I shall know whether or not you are a connoisseur of wine… Bear with me in this long-winded and fragrant metaphor; for you will find that almost all the virtues of the perfect wine-glass have a parallel in typography.

Here, Warde drew attention to readable typography, which conveys an idea and message. Beautiful solid gold goblet can not show the fine wine within, but crystal is clear. Accordingly, well-used type is invisible as type, just as the perfect talking voice is the unnoticed vehicle for the transmission of words and ideas.

Author Robin Kinross (2018), explaines why Warde chose the methaphor of wine-glass and the crystal goblet. It is because "she was speaking after dinner to the Society of Typographic Designers, and this explains something about the approach of her discussion and her metaphor of the wine glass–the 'crystal goblet'. " Giving the example of flagon and goblet has been criticized by writers and theorists of typography. If we look from the viewpoint of typography, Warde's methaphors "transparent typography" and "invisible typography" have been considered as stereotypical discourse among Modernist typographers, particularly after Bauhaus typographers introduced and embraced the modern and new typography. Nevertheless Kinross' argument can be reasonable but looking beyond that is an obligation in order to reach the final conclusion. According again to Kinross (2018),

> What is a flagon? The word has gone from English usage. *Flagons* were perhaps last heard of in Errol Flynn movies of the 1950s, when men in tights jumped onto tables littered with *goblets*, and challenged each other to a sword-fight… Through the years of modernist ascendancy, in the 1960s and 1970s, the *Crystal goblet* essay was ignored. There was no need for it: *transparency* as an ideal was understood and accepted. But with what was sometimes known as *the legibility wars* of the late 1980s and early- to mid-1990s, Warde's essay was given a new life. The deconstructive critics sometimes suggested that *transparent typography* was not just a false theory, but was actually oppressive to the reader.

At this point, the questions "What is invisible typography?" and "What is transparency in typography?" are significant in order to analyse and compare Warde's perception of typography and the conditions of typography in contemporary age.

In June 2006, Giovanni Lussu and his colleagues, Antonio Perri and Daniele Turchi wrote an article that included a sharp and serious critique related to Warde's idea of typography for the *Journal of Progetto Grafico* (supported by AIAP, the Association of Italian Graphic Designers). Lussu and his colleagues analysed Warde's text in terms of rhetoric and language. According to Lussu, Perri, and Turchi (2018),

> is out of question to read every text and books etc. in the same way. These two can not be adapted to all. It is hard to see what this invisibility is that Warde talks about. Indeed,

> it seems rather clear that in this case 'transparency', namely the possibility of getting quickly and surely to the 'wine' provided by the authors, is ensured by the fact that the typography is anything but invisible.

Furthermore, Lussu points out that type, size, bold and italic fonts, smal caps, compositions or columns used to form a composition are very visible differentiations that guarantee good assimilation of the texts. In this regard, his questions are as follows:

> How could it be read without careful treatment of differences and visibility, without giving prominence to the numbering of the verses? Could we read Euclid's *Elements* in the form in which it was presumably written, with no differentiation between upper and lower case letters, without punctuation marks and without highlighting of the titles? (…) Since we are talking about things which are read and which are therefore assimilated by means of sight, it is very hard to separate the wine from the goblet, the text from its visible form" (Lussu and others, 2018).

"The Crystal Goblet", however, still gives us two different issues and discussion subjects or presumably more than two. Whether the essay is oppressive to the reader and stereotypical or to quote Warde (1956, p. 2),

> one main idea that the most important thing is that it conveys thoughts, ideas, images, from one mind to other minds. This statement is what you might call the front door of the science of typography. Within lie hundreds of rooms; but unless you start by assuming that printing is meant to convey specific and coherent ideas, it is very easy to find yourself in the wrong house altogether.

On the other hand, in contemporary age, grandeur of typography has become the exuberant mannerism, with significant contribution to contemporary graphic creativitiy. Also, Meggs (1998, p. 432) states that "mannerism describes a departure from the norm by taking liberties with the classical vocabulary of form." The Age itself we live in is boisterous, so are typography and typographic installation. Extraordinary typographic and very unorthodox installations are a testimony of our age and a fascinating inspiration source to express artist and designer's thoughts, ideas, messages and contents in any subject. And the usage of typography is not neutral or invisible but completely opposite. As Heller and Ilić (2013, p. 10) stated "letterforms, which were never as neutral as Warde would have us believe, are often boisterous. Crystal goblets are routinely shattered in the service of today's typographic expression in print and online media."

Despite all the critiques that have been made to the essay, as a result, many of typographic installations, typographic art and concept artists, who use typography to convey their standpoints have a common point with Warde, that typography should be readable to communicate. Today, typography is limitless. In addition, typography is a precious ingredient that allows us to gain a good quality of food.

Sheila Levrant de Bretteville and Public Art

> In the public domain, in streets, people don't expect to see art. If you go to a museum you expect that everything inside there is art. In the street, if you stop on street, they look to see what is this thing? I think, then they are in a very questioning position. And they are open to seeing what it is. (de Bretteville, 2019)

Sheila Levrant de Bretteville is one of the legendary figures in graphic design. As a feminist and a woman, she is a pioneer in the realm of graphic design. In both graphic design and public art, her works reflect her political and activist approaches, which she tried to insert into public places expressing the voices of overlooked persons, groups of people and perspectives. According to de Bretteville,

> I really do not like it when anyone is left out, in any situation — parties, admissions, neighborhoods. One way to compensate is to help others to pay attention to the people in the forgotten parts of cites. Whenever possible I choose marks such the ellipses' three dots . . . which I see as giving a location for someone's else thoughts. (Sfligiotti, 2016)

Works of art can define our age. However, do they affect the society? Do they touch the people's lives in any way, anywhere? Do they create a utopian culture? In her essay tittled *Some Aspects of Design from the Perspective of A Woman Designer*, (1973), de Bretteville said that

> the process by which forms are made, and the forms themselves, embody values and standarts of behavior which affect large numbers of people and every aspect of our lives. For me, it has been this integral relationship between individual creativity and social responsibility that has drawn me to the design arts. It is possible and profitable to reinforce existing values through design. In my work, however, I try to project alternative values into society in the hope of creating a new, even utopian culture, by acting in accordance with values of my own chosing. (Bierut and others, 1999, p. 238)

"

"Every city is a paragraph. Every street, a sentence. Every building, a word. And those who inhabit the city whisper through its streets like syllables in search of a syntax or grammar that might give meaning to their lives" (Grovier, 2013, p. 150). Simply, public art is an art form that is made in public space, that can be a wide variety from ephemeral to permanent, from large scale to small. In de Bretteville's works, this diversity can also be seen. By using typography, the artist made enormous size of works. Typography is the protagonist in her works. In a meeting in September 2019, she explained that her choice of the use of typography in public art as follows: "If you are not there you have to use letters. If you are not going to be there yourself, you have to have words" (de Bretteville, 2019).

Cities as a whole have always been in a relationship with society, elements of society and the history of society. Every city is inescapably tied to its own characteristic. The cities affect people, but the people also influence the cities and every city evolves and builds according to its own texture. Thus, when society changes, the city changes either. The city also depends on direct relationship between people and groups (families, organizational structures, professions and corporations, etc.) In this context, when its relationship and communication with people is considered, the city and the using of the city mutually affect this change in terms of both social and urban axis. Accordingly, the city is not just a space where people live in, it becomes a space which has the opportunity to experience everything happened around them. de Bretteville (2019) points out her vision of public art that

> I think, maybe it is different for me from the others. So, it's always giving to the neighborhood something that it doesn't have, not so much. You could say that any art piece did it. But I find out what they really need, a supposed to what they don't have. what's really needed in that places. That's important to me that they needed than just to make something look at but something that are actually pretty urgent that they need it. That's true in these projects.

Public art, on the one hand, not only contributes to the diversity of society but also has an active role to play in realizing and thinking people over the places where they live and how public space can be used in the city. On the other hand, it has the power to transform places into something else and to give a chance to sustain their existence through art. For instance, abandoned places turn into places for the people where they come together or walk through in safe. People can gather around them or can enjoy them or can learn from them.

At the start… At long last… (1999), for example, she, indeed designed an interface of a whole station for the people who live there. 207th Street station in Inwood is the longest subway in New York. The design in the station is on the walls and on the floor. *At the start… At long last…* includes phrases. Both phrases reflect the experience of the subway travelers and the three dots of the ellipses invite them to finish the sentence after the … with their own thoughts. Moreover, the artist tells the stories "from generations of people who have arrived or have left from this train station: Native Americans coming to a Pow Wow at Inwood Park, merchants of various shops, resident musicians, singers, dancers in shows downtown, designers, academics, artists and activists from countries in Europe, Asia, Latin America —and most recently from the Dominican Republic" (See Figure 1) (de Bretteville, 2021). In this context, here, the artist becomes a storyteller who narrated history from generation to generation through her artistic expression, through art, public art.

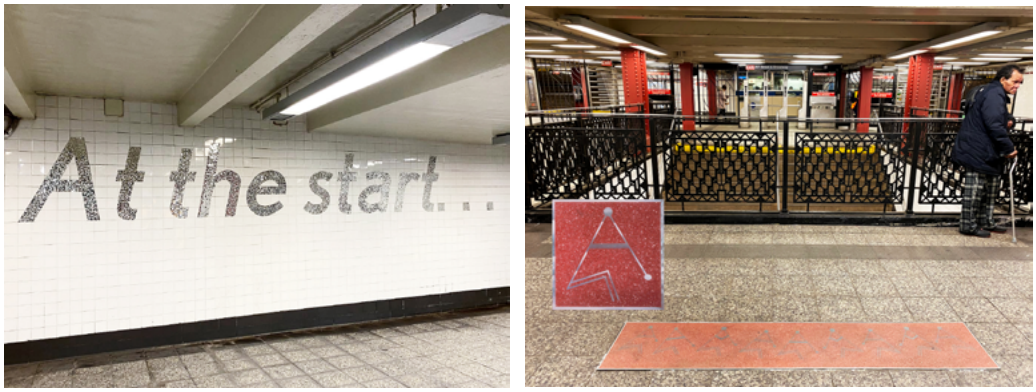

Figure 1: At the start… At long last… 1999, Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, photographed by Selma Kozak, 2019

Today, designers are more attracted to making public art; and typography is not just integrated into commercial design, it is also integrated into noncommercial art projects. Sheila Levrant de Bretteville is one of the first graphic designers and artists who made it, and she is one of the pioneers who shifted her personal expression from graphic design to more public art. Concrete and typography are in coherence in her works. Mostly, she has used these two elements. She indicates that *"I knew about concrete because it is was very impressionable.* To make permanent works, she who decided on concrete," she said (de Bretteville, 2019). Furthermore, her husband (Peter de Bretteville) is an architect, which was an effective factor for her to choose the concrete. When it comes to places, de Bretteville makes better to sides. Her contribution to cities as an artist is to make the places better, such as a side, a wall, a pedestrian path, a highway etc.

> I am choosing a side. What I am going to do on the side is obviously different and also I am competing against other people. They suggest something and I suggest other things at that side. Right! So, for me either I use the sidewalk or I am creating a wall was originally supposed to be there" (de Bretteville, 2019).
>
> S.K: So, can I say, all of them have created to serve a purpose? They actually have a specific mission to give the people something.
>
> de Bretteville: Right! They have mission to provide the people who are there with something that lift them up in some way or have them feel hopeful in some way or give them an understanding of what could be as well as what was. It is not only to tell them it was. What could be for them also. There is a kind of potential I am looking for something being open ended that people who live there or work there or move through there have something that can inspire them (de Bretteville, 2019).

West End Echoes, 1995, for instance, is a huge installation written T*he Greatest Neighborhood This Side Of Heaven* (See Figure 2). The work was made:

> to create a pedestrian path where the new highway would replace the elevated Green line and a thriving neighborhood has been razed four decades earlier. Highway abutments are representations of the old West End buildings. Names of obliterated streets are embedded in the new sidewalk where the old street pattern intersected the pedestrian path under the new highway. (de Bretteville, 2021)

Figure 2: West End Echoes,1995, Sheila Levrant de Bretteville.
photographed by Selma Kozak, 2019

de Bretteville works are completely samples of site-specific art. Her artworks have a particular location and an interrelationship with the neighborhood, with people. As de Bretteville (2019) stated "for me, I am interested in people who live there and some way

to have them reflected in what has being done in their community and I look for having make a connection".

In addition, in the short or long term, site-specific art and site-specificity can make the connection the artists and designers look for. Mostly, "site-specific work focuses on establishing an inextricable, indivisible relationship between the work and its site and demands the physical presence of the viewer" (Kwon, 2002, pp. 11-12). Accordingly, the space of art is no longer perceived as an abandoned place, a blank slate, but as a real place. Jenny Holzer and Lawrence Weiner are probably the most well-known artists to convert a space into a space of art. Like Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, and Barbara Kruger,

> Holzer and Weiner are also concerned with words, text, language, the power and ambiguous function of language as a means of communication. Jenny Holzer sees verbal ideas in the form of signs, as integral components of daily life. Her art appears in the form of texts, essays, posters and electronic message signs, mostly as a public art. (Landau, 1986)

One of the founding figures of conceptual art, Lavrence Weiner uses words and language as a material, redefining the relationship of "human beings to objects and objects to objects in relation to human beings" (Galerie Hubert Winter, 2021). By transforming how we see art, he transforms how we read the world. As Weiner stated "art is not a metaphor upon the relationship of human beings to objects and objects to objects in relation to human beings but a representation of an empirical existing fact" (Reading Resources, 2021; Galerie Hubert Winter, 2021).

Deportee Memorial Museum, Carpi (1973)

Consider if this is a man

Who works in the mud

Who knows no peace

Who fights for a bit of bread

Who dies because of a yes or a no.

Consider if this is a woman,

Without hair and without name

Without enough strength to remember

Her eyes empty and her womb cold

Like a frog in the winter. (Primo Levi, 2013)

Although Nazis wanted to destroy and erase everything that remained from the holocaust and Jewish people, they could not achieve it. They could not erase the memories of victims at all, who survived the Nazi persecution. Primo Levi is one of the significant eyewitness who is a survivor from Auschwitz. Being a Jew, he was sent to Fossoli concentration camp near Modena, then to Auschwitz. He and his poem above (*If This Is a Man*, 1947) are magnificent testimonies of this wildness.

Fossoli concentration, camp which was originally constructed as a prisoner-of-war camp by the fascist regime, was used as a concentration camp later by Nazis during the World War II. The Deportees Memorial Museum of Carpi in Modena (Museo Monumento al Deportato Politico e Razziale di Carpi/ Italy), which was opened in 1973, is quite unique.

"The museum was opened for the memory of victims of Fossoli Camp, and it is very special, because the inside of museum is a unique structure that commemorates the Jewish deportation victims during World War II. The goal of the installation is to express the memory of this horror" (Heller and Ilić, 2013, p. 105). The museum consists of 13 various sized rooms where quotations (inscribed using the graffito method) create an intense emotional atmosphere in sombre and essential surroundings that at the same time remain reverential. The walls of some rooms are decorated with graffiti of sketches of great artists–Cagli, Guttuso, Leger, Longoni, Picasso, while the showcase contain significant exhibits that document the prisoners' lives in camp. The last room (The Room of the Names) which ends the visit, bears the inscription of about 15.000 names of Italian citizens deported to the camps. Outside the museum, visitors can see the "Cortile delle Stele": a squared area where 16 monoliths six meters high, face the engraved names of some Nazist concentration camps. (Fossoli Foundation, 2013).

The quotations in the museum are quotations that remained from the victims of the camp and bear the immortal significance of the victims' thoughts, which fill the visitors with a deep sense of participation. The usage of typography is intense. Words and sentences are clear like a crystal and the witnesses of that time. When it comes to design and typography, the museum is a coherent example of combination of concrete and letters. These two elements are representations of meaning of past painful time, concrete

represents the coldness and typography becomes a vessel of meaning, a language of pain. The combination forms a poignant expression.

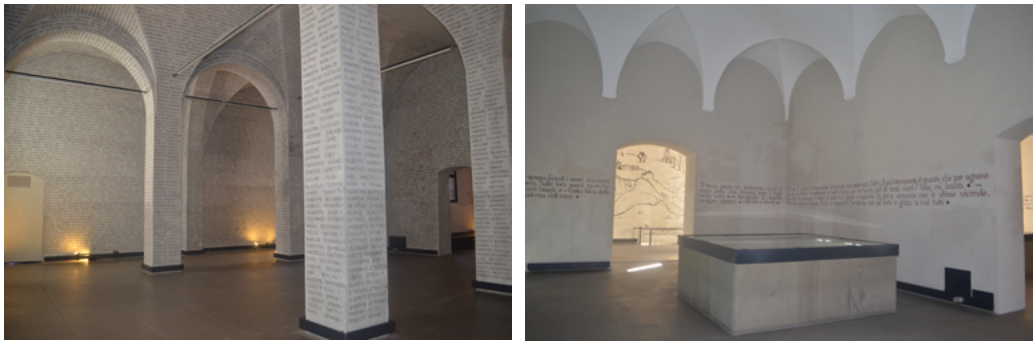

Figure 3: Deportees Memorial Museum of Carpi, The Room of the Names and One of the Rooms photographed by Selma Kozak, 2017

"Today they sentenced seven of us to be shot and sentence will be carried out in a short while. Nobody is afraid and many are even singing" (Milan, Yugoslavia), Room 2.

"Against the idea of violence, the violence of an idea" (Franz, Austria), Room 6.

"My daughter, your father will also be a mother to you…"(Olga, Rumania), Room 8. (Fossoli Foundation, 2013).

On the other hand, the museum itseif is a typographic installation that narrates bitter stories. Letters, words and sentences are a tool to convey pure painful stories. Hence, typography is in intermediary position here. Nothing is as tragical as the systematical killing in camps of over six million people. Therefore, the museums like in Carpi or *The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe* in Berlin or *Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum* in Poland and more are the museums standing against oblivion. Nothing has been left from them, and no one survived but at least their memories can be preserved. Thereby, generations can witness that dishonor in the history of mankind through museums. And humanist vision tries to preserve historical memory to remind us once and again.

Figure 4: Deportees Memorial Museum of Carpi, One of the Rooms and Cortile delle Stele photographed by Selma Kozak, 2017

Conclusion

In contemporary age, typography and type can be anything from design medium to art, from art itself to structure, from signifier to artistic and aesthetic expression. Any surface is a tabula rasa for creator and for ideological rhetoric. And typography has always constant power to be delegate of our creative realm. In this regard, typography has became a hybrid form and a raison d'être for designers and artists from graphic design realm to art world.

The beginning of typographic installation has changed the design perception, especially in outdoor, in the street and has begun to create a contemporary interface. In this sense, typographic istallation has become a contemporary graphical langage. Moreover, typographic installation and typographic art are accepted genres today. Types, letters, words are the voices of artists and designers. They speak with these letters, which can be seen in any place from street to building, from museum to gallery, from bridge to LED screens.

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The Origins of Recycled Films: Archive Film Art Found Footage Created through Post-Production Strategies

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Abstract:
At the beginning of cinema, in his early twentieth-century research the Soviet director and film theorist Sergei Eisenstein developed his theory of associative montage "1+1=3." Nowadays, new methods have been added to this theory.

These variables include the creative re-use of allusions to film history. In contemporary cinema, when a new archive film uses sequences from cinema heritage, it quotes from the past and can activate visually and content-wise complex cultural memories. In these films, the successive placement of two sequences, beyond their association, creates new associative meaning, thus, it calls forth *metacinematic associations*. This additional meaning is the imprint of cinematic heritage. *Final Cut* by György Pálfi and Péter Lichter's works make use of the archives of cinematic heritage through a reinterpreted film language, attempting to create independent, innovative works of art. They use the same starting point, based on a directorial concept, but the two attempts resulted in completely different motion pictures. Due to the approach at the basis of their conception, these films illustrate both the linear, i.e., the archetypal narrative film representation and the nonlinear narration. However, these films are not only defined by the scenes they are compiled of, but also bear the particularities of the original motion pictures, referring to and going far beyond the individual characteristics of the scenes themselves. Despite being linear narrative films, the cinematic rhetoric of neither motion picture is continuous but associative - they bring into play layers of film culture. Overall, Eisenstein's formula can be extended in the following way: 1 afs (archive film sequence) + 1 afs (archive film sequence) = 3 mca (*metacinematic associations*).

Keywords: archive film art, found footage, *metacinematic association*

> The most frightening experience I've ever had—and the most impossible to describe—is that of border crossings. I'm talking about the border between everyday life and various other conditions I'm acquainted with but that are as difficult to describe as death. (Ulickaja, 2008, p. 101)

The quotation became the motto of my research about *archive film art found footage productions* due to the feeling it suggests. Some cinematic works are highly interesting due to the criteria prevalent in post-production, namely in terms of editing. In this case–having stepped out of the box of imagistic thought–I also cross borders, those between the visual and verbal mode of creation. Thus, I do not wish to undertake the examination of the topic from the point of view of film theory, film aesthetics, or the history of film; instead, having experience in film editing and post-production work, I wish to focus on the technical side and on the layout of the films' visuals. The present paper is the forerunner of a motion picture experiment in progress. I hypothesize that on the one hand, the border crossing in *archive film art found footage productions* takes place due to the usage of works of film history; on the other hand, it is realized in the wide-ranged game of associations. This border lies between recognition of the archive film footage used in the new cinematic production and the realization of the new context. In order to know the origins of *archive film art found footage works* a brief overview about the beginnings of cinema is needed. However, for this, the ever-expanding collection of volumes written about the subject is available as teaching material as well. A general picture of the subgenre is offered through a range of samples of film history that are close to the above-mentioned border crossing and thus to the characteristics of the *archive film art found footage productions*. The most important criteria that I wish to keep in mind (in cinematic terms as well) are the following: leaving behind the comfort zone of cinematic paradigms, the extent to which the game of associations is realized in the new production, and the power of the imagistic line of thoughts. The selection of works under scrutiny is not made based on the scenes utilized; neither is it my goal to enumerate all productions concerned from the film archives, as if the latter were merely a databank. I am highlighting only the cinematic productions that contribute to the investigation of the notions of *archive film art found footage productions* and to that of *metacinematic association*, generated by the first one. The process of association starts when the first quoted frame from the film archive appears. Besides the recognition on a heuristic level, I find it even more important that an associative roaming in the film archives comes into existence, irrespective of any previous knowledge about the source productions, even beyond that, on the level of social history.

The beginnings of *archive film art found footage productions* are as old as film. Imprints of our vast cinema heritage are strongly present in contemporary visual (mass)culture. Due to the quick diffusion of information, certain elements of cinematic rhetoric are activated as independent formulas, they become known to a wide range of receivers/ users who may not have any prior knowledge or experience in the field. The great number of digitalized images available nowadays evidently lends itself to recycling. Similar to *intertextuality* or *patch-work in literature* and *ready-made, post production* or *appropriation art* in visual art, recycling and reinterpretation such as *archival found footage* appears in cinema as well (Bourriaud, 2007).

I find it of paramount importance in the case of *archive film art found footage productions* that they generate *metacinematic associations* the motion pictures that–due to the current digitalized online means–have become part of common knowledge. One of the footages that have become iconic is the Odessa steps scene. In the modern digitalized cinematic virtual world it appears in thousands of online image references, transcripts, and film clips. In 1925, Eisenstein produced one of the most well-known productions of film heritage, *Battleship Potemkin*, a black and white silent film. The production illustrates the basic tenets of the theory of montage. The most famous stairs scene expresses the emotional build-up in dramaturgy using cinematic rhetoric: dynamics, composition, change of shots. The stairs scene, which has become iconic in cinematography, expresses eternal brutality, cruelty. The dramatic extreme long shots, in which the soldiers march on the stairs against the fleeing crowd, alternate with close-up shots of suffering people. The baby carriage rolling down on the stairs has become so well-known that it is one of the school examples of illustrating montage (Bárdos, 1986). Through montage, Eisenstein explores the wide range of cinematic rhetoric, not resuming only to the employment of the continuity of action and chronological order, thus triggering intense emotional effects and associations.

> … no montage sequence exists in isolation but it is in the nature of a partial depiction of the single overall theme which in equal degree pervades all the sequences. The juxtaposition of other such partial details in a particular montage structure evokes in the spectator's perception that common essence which generated each separate element and binds them together into a whole, and specifically into that generalized image through which the author (and after him the spectator) has experienced the theme of the film in question. (Eisenstein, 1938, p. 299)

The stairs scene in *Potemkin* has been imprinted in the (sub)conscious cultural association that is being formed in our visually satiated world. The abundance of images

nowadays makes iconic film images known to anyone. This apprehension sometimes lacks accurate knowledge, information. The superficial knowledge of the scene may trigger deep associations because the digital spread and use of sequences on the internet activates images from the early stages of film heritage in a wider group of viewers, not only in the devotees of cinematic art. The familiar feeling, the often-experienced image triggers certain additional information both in terms of content and form. For example, the technical parameters of film, such as the authentic format of the film and its aspect ratio are not the typical widescreen HD display we are accustomed to nowadays. The barely perceivable flicker is the particularity of the celluloid material the film is made of. The costumes, hair, and make-up of the actors on the screen reflect the period in which the film was produced. All these together, even without an in-depth insight concerning the film, carry the marks that rouse up layers of association of cultural film heritage to the contemporary viewer.

Similarly, another scene in the online visual material database that has also become iconic is the razor blade sequence in *An Andalusian Dog*. Salvador Dali, in collaboration with Luis Bunuel in 1928, creates the masterpiece of the Surrealist short film, *An Andalusian Dog*. In the opening sequence, an ideal associative version of montage is realized (Kiss, 2001). The shots of the opening scene introduce, suggest, and present the horror while alluding to the opening of the seeing eye, typical of Surrealism. The shots placed one after the other reflect upon each other, like the blade held in front of the wide-opened eye and the thin ribbon of cloud swimming in front of the moon. However, in the storyline, it also triggers layers of association, such as one of the most important aims of avant-garde art, the expanding of visual perception (Kiss, 2001). The specific frame becomes schematic, the blade held in front of the woman's eye in the close-up shot awakens associations, not only as memorabilia of film history, but it also pulls up memories of social history. The close-up on the actress shows the typical woman's face of the 1920s: the big, wide-open eyes are in contrast with the narrowed lips with lipstick. The entire make-up and the wavy hair parted to one side jointly conjure up the ideal woman of that era. The age-specific technical particularities of the shot, like black-and-white, silent; its texture shows the characteristics of celluloid, such as grains, dust, scratches, and the slight vibration of light, as well as the mild trembling are all signs indicating the beginning of cinema.

The by-now iconic sequences generate *metacinematic associations* both by themselves and put in a new context. Thus, their appearance in *archive film art found footage productions* entails far more than mere identification and euphoric recognition. Among the many exciting productions, I would like to highlight two illustrative examples–two

pieces of film art that apply different cinematic rhetoric, these are two *archive film art found footage* that happen to have been produced using two different post-production procedures: *Final Cut* by György Pálfi and Péter Lichter's *The Rub*. Although the two productions were created using completely different cinematic rhetoric, they both invoke film heritage productions. In Pálfi's film classic cinematic productions in the film archives, heroes and scenes that have become iconic are used, while Lichter recycles scenes that have not become iconic.

It is important to understand in connection with *archive film art found footage productions* the contrast and the connection that lie behind the continuous narrative mode of films and nonlinear narrative. The application of the two procedures completely differentiates the productions, however, they are not mutually exclusive, either both or their combination can be seen in a given production. Pálfi's and Lichter's above-mentioned productions illustrate the differences between the two types. While *Final Cut* applies the method of linear film narrative, *The Rub* handles the visual tools in a more associative manner and realizes continuity by means of sound through narration, and the repetition and rhythmic dramaturgy of certain visual elements. Therefore, it may be asserted that due to Hollywood large-scale film productions, the linear narrative spreads, and the storytelling based on canonical patterns make up the story (Bordwell, 1996). My assumption is that this may also be an important particularity of *archive film art found footage productions* since this is the basic cinematic rhetoric applied in, as the director himself declares. At the same time, in the educational material that accompanied the film, Balázs Varga offers a comprehensive picture of the origins of film history relevant to the production and also provides a precise description of the rules and procedures at the basis of this production (Varga, 2014). According to Báron, the linear narrative means that every image conveys the amount of information that is needed to understand the previous and the next sequence. In this type of storytelling, the various shots are consequences of the previous ones and represent a transition to the following ones. The story, apart from the unambiguously marked flash-backs and the dream sequences, progresses in chronological order. It has a beginning and an end and there is an explanation of the reasons for the conflict unfolding before us, the emergence and denouement of which are presented. The viewers feel that they received all the necessary information and that nothing has been concealed from them (Báron 1999). The rules of editing that ensure linear storytelling in film, which triggers the sense of continuity, take concrete shape. What is primary in linear storytelling is creating the illusion of continuity; it is important to guide and steer the viewer's attention and to present the location. Continuity editing, in other words, match-cut, serves the clear interpretation of the story, it illustrates the plot

in an understandable way (Smith, 2012). The stage of the action must become a genuine location so that the space visible in the shot and unperceivable outside the shot together should create the feeling of a three-dimensional real space. The Hollywood storytelling film creates this by employing tools of visual storytelling such as: framing/ the shots (the camera's distance from the objects in focus, their size on the screen, the compositions/ shots: extreme close-up, close-up, close, medium close, cowboy, full, long); camera focus (depth of field, that is what is in the camera's focus); spatial arrangement (depth of focus: how various objects relate in the shot). One of the most common tools of match-cut is the 180°-rule, according to which every shot of the same object must be filmed on the same side of the axis, but there must be at least 30° between the two cameras to avoid discontinuity. Match-action also serves continuity, this is when a certain movement, action begins in one shot and after editing ends in the following shot, thus, suggesting both spacial and temporal continuity (Vincze, 2010). Naturally, the broad interpretation of those rules and breaking them if deemed appropriate during post-production do occur as part of the creative process that goes along with artistic freedom. Thus, despite *Final Cut* being created along the lines of linear film narrative, it defies the rules of match-cut by interpreting them broadly. At the same time, due to triggering *metacinematic associations*, the nonlinear film narrative is an equally important cinematic rhetoric.

Due to narration via sound, *The Rub* has a continuous narrative in some sense. However, the visual composition is far more associative; it is a visual experiment between abstract formal play and transcription of film archive. In this respect, in order to outline the sources of *archive film art found footage productions*, we must consider the experimental films as well that do not present action through the Hollywood pattern, the classical linear narrative. Although the experimental films mostly use the Hollywood narrative to a certain degree, beyond the process needed to ensure narrative continuity, they walk on the thin line between real and unreal. They are pushing the limits between real and surreal, thus, in many cases leaving the comfort zone, they create shocking images both in terms of form and content. Later, this tendency surfaces in the recycling of archive film productions. These employ an upgraded Hollywood narrative since they both present associative montage of the by-now iconic sequences. This tendency is present in both *Final Cut* and *The Rub*, albeit to a different degree and manner. The difference is due to Pálfi's objective as a director, which is to turn into one story the various sequences taken from film heritage, Lichter aims to be more adventurous and achieve more comprehensive productions using film archive. Naturally, both productions are preceded by numerous outstanding archive film art creations either in terms of narrative or experimental motion picture.

In the early period of film, when generally speaking, while the Soviet film theorists believe montage–the rapport between images, the relation between them–plays a decisive role, German theorists believe in the power of the image and simultaneity. In the same time, in Hollywood, the classical film narrative is being developed and besides filming new raw material, the recycling, re-cutting of previous productions also appeared. Thus, f*ound-footage*, *supercut films*, that is *archive film art* appeared in the early periods already. The latter is the term coined by Christa Blümlinger, which is applied mainly in the German experimental film theory (Cowan, 2013). In the US, it was in 1936 Joseph Cornell's *Rose Hobart*, a 20-minute long supercut film is a fan-made re-cut of East of Borneo produced in 1931. Even though this recycling was not done based on an artistic conception, as far as its genre and mode of production are concerned, it is a forerunner of experimental archive cinema because it recuts an already existing film. In 1958 Bruce Conner stitches together current and found sequences from a broad range of genres. The marks appearing on the frames, the subtitles function as raw material equivalent to parts from B-category and erotic films or even cuttings from newscasts. The 12-minute *A Movie* can be considered an early experimental found footage, which utilizes older films and offers an overall universal feeling of the world. Due to the spread of the super8, the 16-millimeter films, and that of video technique, numerous found-footage pieces are created with a similar technique. The already-produced found raw material is re-cut, but in many cases, they are parodies, not the representation of a comprehensive worldview. The works of art, which recycle through re-editing, put in a new context existing movie clips. Not only do they present the properties of found-footage or supercut, but also they are independent works of art as well. Thus, they can be considered found-footage archive cinema. There are several experiments within the genre, such as Arthur Lipsett's *21-87* production in 1963, which places in new context various previously produced movie clips both in terms of content and cutting. The widespread distribution of the amateur video technique generates the remix in the 1980s including the re-cut of found home videos as well (Konkol, 2018). Irrespective of the films' length, the challenge of reinterpretation lies in the re-editing and the artistic aim is to call forth new contents. Matthias Müller's *Home Stories* (1990) collects scenes of struggling housewives of the 1950s from Hollywood productions into one melodramatic continuous stream. Due to the dramatic musical underscore and the same chain of motions repeating over and over again, the production is a real feat. The plot can be considered a linear storyline, which the artist guides through from the lonely room scene through the open door until an outer sign comes from the non-diegetic world. The exaggerated emphasis is placed on the dramatic moments of the archetype of the American housewife fluctuating through several players. The typical

Hollywood pattern, the linear storytelling technique is realized employing a common tool, that is, he uses the match-cut while repeating the shots. Therefore, some parts of the plot of various films are repeated once or even more. In the shot presenting classical continuity, even a few frames of repeated movement would be a mistake, but the pace of *Home Stories* is given by this cyclic repetition. Following a similar directorial concept dominates Christian Marclay's *Telephones* (1995). He links scenes from various Hollywood films into one telephone conversation. In this case, the linear storytelling starts from the ringing of the phone through picking the receiver up and talking on the phone to the receiver being hung up. The numerous actors, from different ages, differing locations, and in different visual settings react to the phone ring. Editing the reactions upon each other and upholding a silent moment from time to time heightens the tension in the film, creating a telephone conversation that has not been directed and pre-recorded and which does not even have a script written beforehand. The artist produces his grandiose found-footage archival film, *The Clock* in 2011 in the twenty-first-century digitalized post-production studio. The basic tenet of the film is putting film sequences in a new context, that is also (self-)reflection on time. In this 24-hour piece, the linear storyline is time itself because the scenes picked from film archive and put in chronological order make up and present an entire day. Besides signaling exactly the time in the current time zone, the scenes are linked to each other mostly based on the principle of continuity, more than a thousand films intertwine according to the rules of match-cut. The watch and the events taking place around it on the locations mentioned in the film, the performances of the actors taken from various other films, and the overarching soundtrack together result in a meditative piece, respectively, through cinema heritage a new work of art is created, which stands as an *archive film art found footage production* as well (King, 2015).

At the same time, György Pálfi's film the *Final Cut* is being made in Hungary. Based on a similar directorial concept, they combine an archetypical found-footage piece from hundreds of other films. The story is common, the timeless love story between a man and a woman is presented through numerous actors' performance and cinematic rhetoric. The action is presented in the vein of the canonical linear film narrative based on the rules of match-cut mostly. In connection with his film production *Final Cut*, György Pálfi claims that one of his principles is that there are no new stories only shifts of emphasis and slight formal changes in the archaic stories with the help of which these stories may be presented to the viewer (Kovács, 2012). The archetypal story is materialized, the linear plotline can be traced through the masterpieces of film history. In this case, the typical story is the pattern between man and woman. *Final Cut* is built without disturbing the source images through the wide range of post-production procedures. The colors,

the contrast, the aspect ratio remain untouched. In the trailer, one can see scenes from several films (such as Avatar (2009), Hair (1979), Psycho (1960), and many others) with various technical and visual characteristics, with different color grading, some of them black and white, others colored.

The question occurs that unless the primary aim is not the creation of an educational resource, must creators adhere to the strict rules laid down by artists? Visual-wise, the film could have been unified on the level of style through simple post-production procedures, either by color grading or by reshaping the aspect ratio. Therefore, an experiment I performed–the alteration of the film's trailer–illustrated that synchronizing cinematic rhetoric (beyond editing) does not always benefit the film. I made the color correction scene by scene in the trailer, so that in the end they became black and white and I also fitted the picture size of the frames. Stylistic unity is created, but at the same time, it loses the extra layers of meaning present in *archive film art found footage productions*. In the visually unified material, the *metacinematic associations* are terminated, that is, the extra content carried by the films—such as the evocation of a given time or the actual presence of the atmosphere of the movie—gets obliterated. Without the colors and without the difference between frame sizes the extra content from the whole film is eliminated.

I hypothesize, since schematic stories are formulated by a motion picture using cinematic rhetoric, then the storytelling is archetypal. In other words, if the film narrative places the chain of events in a typical pattern, then we may call this archetypal film narrative. The definition of archetypal film narrative includes the linear, canonical storytelling and the film transcription of archetypes. According to Jung, the definition of archetypes is the symbolic formulae originating from the collective unconscious (Jung, 2010, p. 356). This definition is connected to types of psychological character, but in the case of *Final Cut* and of most archetypal films the story they present is archetypal. Thus they become symbolic stories inspired by the collective film heritage. Pálfi tells the story of everlasting love, selecting his material from a range of 500 films. The major stations of his story are the woman, the man, the first look, the acquaintance, shared adventures, the kiss, making love, misunderstanding, breaking up, sorrow, finding each other, and the final separation or death (Varga, 2014). Bordwell and Jung's common denominator is that the archetypal film consists of patterns that become a canonical story activated in the receiver's unconscious. If an archival film becomes a typical story, the archetypal film narrative is joined by the particularity of found-footages, the recycled raw material, and the recollection of parts of film heritage. Thus, the re-cycled archive films that have an archetypical narrative should be called archetypal *archive film art found footage*

production. Examples for these would be the love story in *Final Cut*, the dialogues in Christian Marclay's *Telephones*, the linear passing of time in *The Clock*, as well as the melodrama of American housewives in Matthias Müller's *Home Stories*. Also, in Hungary, since 2000 Péter Lichter produces such pieces, most of his works are archetypal found-footage archive films, but he does not apply the linear film narrative either in the chain of events or as far as continuity is concerned. In the motion picture *The Rub* (2018), created together with Bori Máté, the relationships between images and content are abstract associations of ideas and, in many cases, carry open associations. Sound and image do not relate based on fixed rules, or direct connections, the distant coupling creates new meaning, new content, and associations. The film archive is quoted by showing the flaws of the raw material, by emphasizing the technical particularities of the film–such as the film perforations, footage numbers, and date–which constitute extra-information relevant from the point of view history of film technology. On the other hand, in the motion picture the actual film sequences from the archive material appear, not only from fictional feature films but also from old newscasts,–and in the opening and closing images the motion logos of American major film production companies come to life. The logos are iconic images that are easily recognizable and trigger associations related to watching film and film theatres. At the same time, the promise of quality by the sign of the brand are transcribed into images that appear accompanied by film noise, haltingly, unclear, or even upside down, thus, upsetting the stable, identifiable film period and the professional company's credit. Besides all these, through the entire film the animation drawn on the raw material appears, that is the scribble showing the characters and the emulsion-like abstract color patches. The plot of the action is discernable on the audio track, in the male voiceover narration, in a kind of linearity. However, the dramaturgy is realized through the alternation–rhythmic formation–of three different visual elements, triggering the *metacinematic association* through Hamlet. On the whole, the film creates a special film form language on the level of style without aestheticizing or using aimlessly using the visual marks. Thus, it does not reinterpret montage through stitching so-far untouched elements in the film archive; in other words, it does not recycle our film heritage through nonlinear narrative, but through images and sound, and thus by applying it, they reinterpret associative montage.

Based on the films mentioned above, I hypothesize that *archive film art found footage* pieces may display linearity in terms of action or time, these carry the canonical scheme, thus they are archetypal *archive film art found footage works*. Besides these, there are associative *archive film art found footage works* that do not present the narrative based on action or chronology, but suggest a global impression about the topic. In both cases,

to the 1+1=3 formula, new content is added, which consists of the creative re-cycling of references to the history of film. If in contemporary cinema, a new *archive film art found footage* uses sequences from cinema heritage, it quotes from the past and can activate visually and content-wise complex cultural memories. In these films, the successive placement of two sequences, beyond the association it evokes, creates new associative meaning, thus, the film calls forth *metacinematic associations*. Therefore, in the re-cycled archive cinema works of art, the association evoked by the successive placement of two sequences draws a circle spiraling upwards because the same association takes place as in associative montage only with a surplus. This bonus is the imprint of cinematic heritage. The archive film art found-footage works are not only defined by the scenes they are compiled of, but also bear the particularities of the original motion pictures, referring to and going far beyond the individual characteristics of the scenes themselves. On the one hand, linear storytelling is created through cinematic rhetoric; however, the visual elements are not homogenous because every episode represents a different vision. The general effect in these cases brings into effect associative, collective even, layers of cinematic culture. Overall, Eisenstein's formula can be extended in the following way: 1 afs (archive film sequence) + 1 afs (archive film sequence) = 3 mca (*metacinematic associations*). The archive film section, on the one hand, reflects the physical particularities of the age the film was produced in; on the other hand, they suggest the social realities of the age as well as represent a kind of visual presence. All these pieces of information together trigger a certain association of ideas in the viewer, in various proportions and with varying content irrespective of the degree of familiarity with the topic. At the same time, perhaps the film from which the sequence is taken from may be known to the viewer. This variant is a kind of knowledge that depends on the previous cultural experience of the receiver, and it may influence the quality of the general effect triggered by the production but it does not question the formation of *metacinematic associations*. All in all, as far as impressions are concerned, there is no unity from the point of view of style because various visual sequences of film archive are built-in together. Besides the aesthetical pleasure and comprehension, deep cultural reception based on *metacinematic associations* also takes place.

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Bunuel L. & Dali S. (Directors). 1929 *An Andalusian Dog [Film]*
Recycled Films:
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Conner C. (Director). 1958 A Movie *[Film]*
Lipsett A. (Director). 1963 *21-87 [Film]*
Müller M. (Director). 1990 *Home Stories [Film]*
Marclay C. (Director). 1995 *Telephones [Film]*
Marclay C. (Director). 2010 *The Clock [Film]*
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Nagyvárad at the Beginning of Parliamentarism: The Political Weight and the Role of the Town in the Hungarian House of Representatives 1867–1918[1]

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Abstract:
In the final decades of the 19th century Nagyvárad became a progressive, dominant town in the Austro-Hungarian Empire's Kingdom of Hungary. The town's prosperity overlapped with the emergence of the Hungarian civil institutional system, the founding of modern parliamentarism. The question is whether the town played a role in the new Hungarian House of Representatives in proportion to its weight or not. To what extent did Nagyvárad have the opportunity to be represented in accordance with its interests?

The study reviews the role of Nagyvárad in the House of Representatives from two perspectives. The first is that the city is represented by only one person in the House of Representatives consisting of 413 (later 415) members. We examine to what extent Nagyvárad stands out from the other towns with a single mandate (Arad, Temesvár, Hódmezővásárhely, Kassa, Pécs, Győr, etc.) and to what extent it would fit with towns with several mandates (Debrecen, Kolozsvár, Miskolc, Marosvásárhely, Brassó, Nagyszeben, etc.). In the second half of the study, we examine the individual weight, party affiliation, and quality of individuals representing the town. We find an answer to the question of whether Nagyvárad belonged to the ranks of pro-government or rather opposition towns. Finally, we present a short biography of the politicians.

Keywords: history of Nagyvárad, town development, demographical development, electoral system, members of Parliament

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Several books and studies have dealt with the economic and social development and political history of Nagyvárad (Oradea)[2] in the Dualist Era; therefore, one cannot say that this would be an unresearched period in the town's history. However, the question of how the city fits into the framework of the institutional system at the beginning of modern parliamentarism has not yet come within the scope of historical interest. This article examines the way in which Nagyvárad was part of the Hungarian parliamentary politicization. In the first part of the study, I analyze the structure of the institutional system, focusing on whether the political role given to Nagyvárad is proportional compared to other cities. I then discuss the representatives in terms of individual quality and party affiliation.

Let us first review the situation of the city in the period of the development of the modern civil institutional system. The history of Nagyvárad's progress in the Dualist Era started when Várad-Újváros (Oradea–Orașul Nou) and Várad-Olaszi (Oradea–Olosig) were merged to create one constituency, which was declared by the 5th article of the act of 1848. This act was quite modern given that, although in the eyes of the law, the two above-mentioned districts were independent, they were merged into one constituency. This was followed by the legal unification of "central towns" in January 1850. After the Turkish era, the town was divided into four districts. While from an economic and social pointof view, it remained one unit, in terms of administration and ownership, it was not unified for one and a half centuries. Várad-Váralja (Oradea–Subcetate) belonged to the Hungarian Royal Chamber, Várad-Újváros was owned by the Roman Catholic chapter of Nagyvárad, while Várad-Olaszi and Velence (Oradea–Velența) were in the possession of the Roman Catholic Bishop. The administrative dilemma of Nagyvárad was solved two decades later in the Dualist Era, when by virtue of article 42 of the act of 1870, it was granted the status of a municipal borough, which was the second category used in the legal classification of Hungarian towns after the capital itself.[3]

After this the town's modern civil administration system and its specific departments experienced a rapid and large-scale development. Interwoven with several economic, cultural, and civilizational achievements, this system of institutions became one of the

2 Since Hungarian was the country's official language at that time the names of the towns are given in Hungarian; however, when they are first mentioned in this study, the current official Romanian names are also indicated in brackets.

3 Besides Nagyvárad the following towns received the status of municipal borough: Kecskemét, Nagyvárad, Versec, Zilah (Zalău), Gölnicbánya (Gelnica), Abrudbánya (Abrud), Vízakna (Ocna Sibiului), Vajdahunyad (Hunedoara), Kézdivásárhely (Târgu Secuiesc), Hátszeg (Hateg), Sepsiszentgyörgy (Sfântu Gheorghe), Székelyudvarhely (Odorheiu Secuiesc), Bereck (Bretcu), Csíkszereda (Miercurea Ciuc), Szék (Sic), Kolozs (Cojocna), Ilyefalva (Ilieni), Oláhfalu (Vlăhiţa), Szászrégen (Reghin) és Fogaras (Făgăraş). Most of the towns listed here lost this status when it was repealed by a subsequent act.

encouraging factors behind local urban growth, which took place within a few decades and could not be matched anywhere in the country.

In this era, the administrative status of Nagyvárad became more complex. It had already been the center of a county, the religious center of various denominations (it was an Episcopal seat for a Roman and a Greek Catholic Diocese and the seat of a Calvinist and an Orthodox deanery archdeaconate) and it was also an educational center (the town had a grammar school, a Royal Academy of Law, and a Theological Seminary). Now the number of the town's central functions increased as it became a jurisdictional, a financial, a medical, and last but not least an economic and within that mainly an industrial and commercial center. It reflects the high standards of the age: at the turn of the century Nagyvárad had 72 educational institutions at various levels, eight hospitals and medical institutions, and 41 significant factories.

The growth of the town's population kept pace with the expansion of its municipal roles. In the Dualist Era, the population of Nagyvárad doubled; its population had been under 29,000 in 1869, but in 1910 it had over 61,000 citizens. Due to this large-scale development, the appearance of the town and the social status of its inhabitants reflected the values and characteristics of the modern middle class, making Nagyvárad one of the most modern towns of its age. In his work entitled *The Unmatched Town*, János Fleisz states that in 1910 only 3% of the town's population lived on the peripheries of Nagyvárad, and only 5.2% of merchants belonged to the agricultural population, while more than 50% of them were employed in the industrial, commercial and transportation sectors. The number of intellectuals within this group stood at around 10% (Fleisz, 1996, pp. 46-47; Kormányos, 2019, pp. 508-509, 572-575). These figures are exceptionally outstanding even on the nation-wide level and are only matched by those of Budapest, the capital city. Knowing this development, we can state that Nagyvárad was one of the most modern towns in Hungary in the period of the development of the civil institutional system, at the beginning of the modern era.

Table 1.
The occupation structure of the working population of Nagyvárad between 1890 and 1910

Classes of occupation	1890		1900		1910	
	number	%	number	%	number	%
Agriculture	1,542	8.5	1,344	5.7	1,627	5.2
Industry	6,614	36.5	7,283	31.3	11,209	35.7
Commerce	2,145	11.8	2,382	10.2	3,488	11.1
Transportation	879	4.9	1,161	5.0	1,910	6.1
Civil service	1,408	7.8	2,031	8.7	2,763	8.8
Military	2,193	12.1	3,159	13.5	3,135	10.0
Day-labourer	2,008	11.1	1,335	5.7	1,490	4.7
House servant	1,011	5.6	2,962	12.7	3,546	11.3
Other	304	1.7	1,703	7.3	2,226	7.1
Altogether	18,104	100	23,360	100	31,394	100

Note: Adapted from *Nagyvárad krónikája* by J. Fleisz, 1996. p. 185.

Despite its quick advancement outlined above, Nagyvárad, which competed with Arad and Debrecen in the area, never became the center of either the Trans-Tisza region or that of the Partium. Besides, the town's role in national politics was not as prominent as its development would suggest. The town's occasional political appreciation was not due to the political institutions but rather the consequence of the connections between various public figures of the given period. This statement can be maintained even if one is aware of Nagyvárad having been the constituency and "political heartland" of Prime Minister Kálmán Tisza, who consolidated the Dualist system in the long run.

The greatest deficiency of Bihar County's seat in national politics was owing to it having been classed among those towns which could only delegate one representative. In the Dualist Era, the constituencies were set up in virtue of Articles 5 and 7 of the Act of 1848 which listed 40 towns, each having one parliamentary seat; Várad-Újváros and Várad-Olaszi elected one representative together. The following towns were the exception to the rule: Buda, Pozsony [Bratislava, Pressburg], Szabadka [Subotica], Szeged, Kecskemét,

Miskolc, Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca), Gyulafehérvár (Alba Iulia) and Marosvásárhely (Târgu Mureş) had two representatives, whereas Debrecen had three and Pest had five.[4] Article 5 of the Act of 1848 primarily followed the population criterion and established one representative mandate per 15-20 thousand people in towns (Barta, 1951, pp. 688., 703, as qtd in Pap, 2020, p. 65). In the middle of the 19th century, when the town was still not united, it was reasonable that Nagyvárad was left out of the group of those towns that could elect two representatives because in terms of population the individual districts of Nagyvárad were lagging far behind the towns belonging to this group. After the Compromise of 1867, however, this explanation was getting increasingly hard to accept. After 1867 the population of Kolozsvár, Miskolc or Marosvásárhely was smaller than that of Nagyvárad, yet each of these towns could elect two representatives. On the other hand, Nagyvárad—or as it was called "Paris on the banks of the Pece"—and other towns such as Arad, Temesvár (Timişoara), Hódmezővásárhely or Kassa (Košice) were in the same category as Abrudbánya, Bereck, Oláhfalu, Szék, and Vízakna despite the latter towns having been much smaller than the former ones. (The changes in the population of those towns which had two or three representatives and about the same number of inhabitants as Nagyvárad can be seen in Table 2. Table 3 presents the changes in the population of large towns with only one representative. The changes in the population of small towns are shown in Table 4.)

Among the Transylvanian towns with one parliamentary seat, only two, Brassó (Braşov) and Nagyszeben (Sibiu), were elevated by Article 10 of the Act of 1877; consequently, these towns could elect two representatives. It is worth mentioning that neither of these two towns could match Nagyvárad in terms of population; and in this respect, they were also lagging behind Arad. Temesvár and Hódmezővásárhely. (The act of 1877 granted two additional parliamentary seats to Budapest, and with that, the capital had nine seats altogether. By virtue of the Act of 1848, Gyulafehérvár had two seats, of which one was taken away by the Act of 1877.)

4 After the amalgamation of Buda and Pest in 1873, Budapest could elect seven representatives.

Table 2.

Changes in population and number of voters in towns with two or more parliamentary seats, 1869–1910

		Brassó	Debrecen	Kecskemét	Kolozsvár	Marosvásárhely
1869	Population	27,766	46,111	41,195	26,628	13,018
1880		29,584	51,122	44,122	30,363	13,192
1890		30,739	56,940	48,493	35,855	14,575
1900		34,511	72,351	56,786	46,670	17,515
1910		38,999	90,153	65,716	58,481	23,728
1900	Voters (%)	2,424 (7.03 %)	4,854 (6.70 %)	3053 (5.4 %)	3,251 (6.96 %)	986 (5.63 %)
		Miskolc	Nagyszeben	Pozsony	Szabadka	Szeged
1869	Population	21,535	18,988	46,540	57,556	71,022
1880		24,319	19,446	48,006	62,556	73,625
1890		30,408	21,465	52,411	74,250	85,569
1900		40,833	26,077	61,537	82,935	100,270
1910		49,182	29,599	73,459	93,232	115,306
1900	Voters (%)	2,209 (5.41 %)	1,564 (6.00 %)	2,949 (4.80 %)	5462 (6.6 %)	7129 (7.1%)

Note: Adapted from *A Magyar Szent Korona Országainak 1910. évi Népszámlálása*, pp. 757–878; I. Szivák, 1901, *Országgyűlési képviselőválasztás és Curiai bíráskodás Codexe*, pp. 1003–1033.

Table 3.

Changes in population and number of voters in Nagyvárad and in other municipal boroughs with one parliamentary seat, 1869–1910

		Arad	Győr	Hódmező-vásárhely	Kassa	Nagyvárad	Pécs	Temesvár
1869	Population	32,725	26,225	49,153	21,742	28,698	23,863	36,844
1880		35,556	27,574	52,425	26,097	31,324	28,702	37,815
1890		42,052	30,021	55,475	28,884	38,557	34,067	44,849
1900		53,903	36,308	60,824	35,586	47,018	42,252	55,812
1910		60,969	42,589	62,394	40,476	61,034	47844	68471
1900	Voters (%)	3,494 (6.50 %)	1,915 (5.28 %)	4,289 (7.05 %)	2,029 (5.70 %)	2,695 (5.73 %)	2863 (6.8 %)	3487 (6.2 %)

Note: Adapted from Census of 1910, pp. 757–878; I. Szivák, 1901, pp. 1003–1033.

Table 4.

Changes in population and number of voters in small towns with one parliamentary seat, 1869–1910

		Abrudbánya-Verespatak	Bereck	Erzsébetváros	Oláhfalu	Szamosújvár	Szék	Vízakna
1869	Population	7,032	4,469	2,550	3,512	5,188	3,505	3,904
1880		6,338	3,033	2,500	3,623	5,317	2,759	3,683
1890		6,355	2,929	2,795	3,744	5,793	3,203	3,772
1900		6,318	2,913	3,539	3,993	6,171	3,379	3,914
1910		5,501	3,267	4,111	4,161	6,670	3,709	4,041
1900	Voters (%)	306 (4.84 %)	166 (5.70 %)	227 (6.41 %)	278 (6.96 %)	350 (5.67 %)	224 (6.63 %)	322 (8.23 %)

Note: Adapted from *Census of 1910*; I. Szivák, 1901, pp. 1003–1033.

The controversy regarding the arrangement of constituencies, which characterized the whole period, was reconciled by Article 14 of the Act of 1913 and Article 15 of the Act of 1914. According to the new regulation, the number of constituencies was raised from 413 to 435 partly by creating new municipal constituencies. Consequently, Arad, Győr, Kassa, Pécs, Temesvár, and Nagyvárad could have had two parliamentary seats. Pozsony and Szeged would have been granted three seats each, while Budapest could have elected twenty-two representatives. Although these acts only modified the most striking controversies of the previous system, it would have been a great step forward for the towns that started to develop rapidly in the previous years–and Nagyvárad was certainly one of these. Unfortunately, because of World War I and the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the acts could not be applied.

It remains an open to question why the most significant problems regarding this disproportionate electoral system were solved so late. There could be a number of reasons why this reform was postponed, but perhaps first and foremost of all, the proportion of national minorities within the population of the towns comes into mind. Based on the census of 1910, more than 75% of the urban population were Hungarians, while the proportion of Hungarians within the whole population was only 54.5%. The issue of nationality cannot be the reason for having delayed the increase of the number of representatives. It must be kept in mind that in such towns as Arad and Kassa the proportion of Hungarians within the local population was the same as the country's

average, while in Pécs, Nagyvárad, and Győr the proportion of Hungarians was significantly higher than that of the national average. For the sake of completeness, it also needs to be pointed out that although Abrudbánya, Erzsébetváros (Dumbrăveni), Vízakna, or Szamosújvár (Gherla) had a significant Romanian or German (Saxon) minority, they were among those towns which were permitted to elect their own representatives. In this respect, Brassó and Nagyszeben should be emphasized again due to both towns having been given an additional parliamentary seat in 1877 even though the majority of their population belonged to national minorities, among which the Romanian minority was the most significant. At the same time, Gyulafehérvár most probably lost one of its seats not because of the growing proportion of Romanians in the town but on account of the town's shrinking importance (Pál, 2011, pp. 346-360). (For the proportions of national minorities within the towns concerned, see Table 5 and 6.) From the point of view of the nationality context of the elections, constituencies with mixed or majority nationalities had a higher proportion of supporters of government parties, while constituencies with Hungarian majority were more likely to elect opposition representatives. Thus, in Nagyvárad, where the Hungarians had a large majority, the government was not interested in doubling the mandate, as it would have increased the chances of the opposition (Gerő, 1988, p. 21).[5]

5 In the ethnic context of the elections, it is necessary to clarify that it was not the Hungarians who were in opposition and the ethnicities who were pro-government, but that voters from ethnically mixed or majority-ethnic constituencies (regardless of nationality) supported the government in greater proportions. Unconditional pro-government votes were a characteristic of the Transylvanian Saxons only.

Table 5.
Social stratification of voters in 1900

	By tradition (%)	Land owners (%)	House owners (%)	Income (%)	Intellectuals (%)
Municipiums	0.2	18.7	16.4	53.1	11.3
Towns with Parliamentary Seat	3.4	50.2	10.8	26.4	9.1
Abrudbánya–Verespatak	0.3	0	6.2	76.5	17
Arad	0	9.8	18.2	60	12
Bereck	72	0	0.6	16	11.4
Brassó (2)	0.3	7.6	12.5	65.6	14
Debrecen (3)	0	20.5	26.2	41.3	12
Erzsébetváros	12.4	1.3	8.4	58.3	19.6
Győr	0.5	4.8	16	63.8	14.9
Gyulafehérvár	0	16	14.4	55.4	14.2
Hódmezővásárhey	0	79.2	4.7	9.7	6.4
Kassa	0.1	0.8	30.5	53.9	14.7
Kecskemét	-	56	12	24	8
Kolozsvár (2)	0.5	1.9	35	57.4	5.2
Nagyszeben (2)	0	5.1	24.9	59	15.7
Nagyvárad	0	1.6	32.2	56.8	9.4
Pécs	0	6.4	35.2	56	2.4
Pozsony (2)	0	6.9	10.9	72.1	10.1
Szabadka (2)	0	59	4.5	20.7	15.8
Szamosújvár	19.7	0	26.3	38	16
Szeged	0	42	6.4	31.3	20.3
Szék	81.7	7.5	0	5.2	5.6
Temesvár	0	0	29	58.5	12.5
Vízakna	6.8	21.2	2	56.2	13.8

Note: Adapted from I. Szivák, 1901, pp. 1003–1033.

Table 6.

Native language composition of the population of Nagyvárad and other towns (Hungarian. German. Romanian. Slovakian and Serbian) 1910

Towns	Hungarian	German	Romanian	Slovakian	Serbian
Abrudbánya–Verespatak	45.4 %	0.7 %	53.2%	-	-
Arad	72 %	7 %	17 %	0.4 %	2.9 %
Brassó	43 %	26 %	29 %	0.4 %	-
Erzsébetváros	59 %	11 %	21 %	-	-
Győr	94 %	3 %	-	1%	-
Gyulafehérvár	45 %	7 %	44 %	-	-
Kassa	75 %	7 %	-	15 %	-
Nagyszeben	22 %	50 %	26 %	-	-
Nagyvárad	91 %	2 %	6 %	-	-
Pécs	84 %	13 %	-	-	-
Pozsony	40 %	42 %	-	15 %	-
Szamosújvár	67 %	3 %	27 %	-	-
Vízakna	30 %	5 %	65 %	-	-
Debrecen	98 %	0.8 %	0.3 %	0.1 %	
Szeged	96 %	2.2 %	0.2 %	0.5 %	1 %
Szabadka	59 %	2 %	0.1 %	-	3.7 %
Temesvár	39 %	44 %	10.5 %	0.5 %	5 %
Kecskemét	99 %	0.6 %	-	0.1 %	-

Adapted from: Census of 1910, pp. 2–756.

In the Dualist Era, the proportion of eligible voters within the total population of Nagyvárad was between 4.7% and 7.5% (the number of voters varied between 1.488 and 4.667), which was more or less the same as the country's average, but was lagging far behind the European trends (Fleisz, 1996, p.62; Ruszoly, 1986, pp.217-249).[6] However, in real terms,

6 The electoral system was based on the actual voter population when the electoral system was established by the 5th Article of Act of 1848. Ruszoly only gives the 1848 data of Váradolaszi.

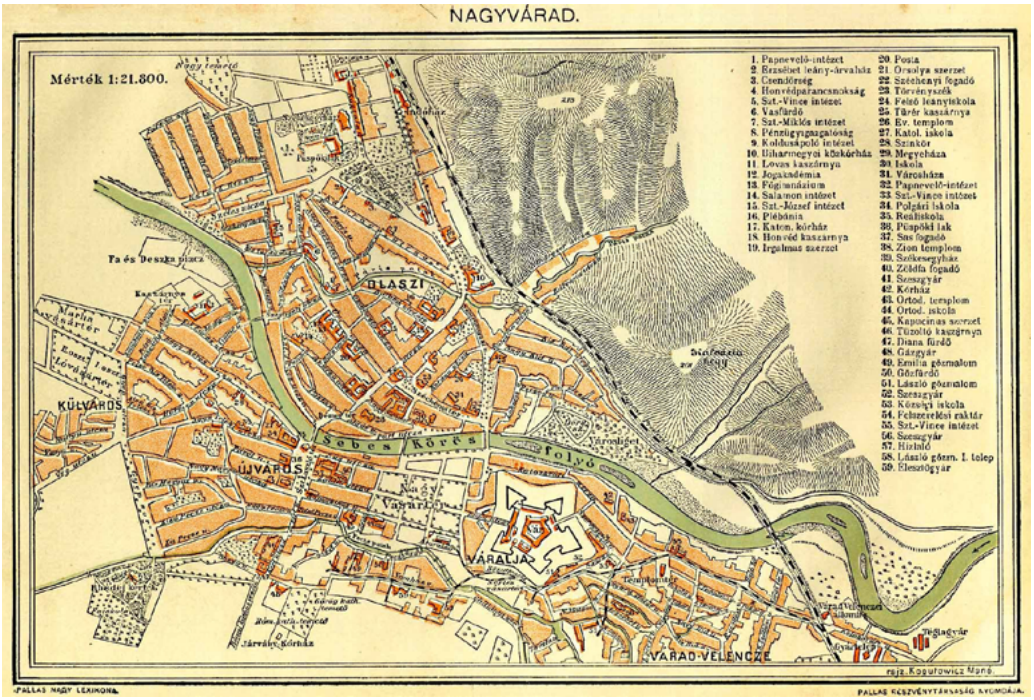
the number of voters in Nagyvárad was somewhat lower than in other municipia with similar populations or in cities with similar populations having the right to elect their own representatives(See Table 2. Table 3., and Table 4.). Elections were held openly and in the individual constituencies, the majority rule was applied; however, the list of eligible local and national candidates was not displayed. Nagyvárad formed one constituency consisting of five smaller districts, namely, Olaszi, Újváros, and Külváros, Váralja, Velence, and also Csillagváros, which was being organized in this period. By virtue of Article 14 of the Act of 1913 passed at the end of the era, Nagyvárad was divided into two constituencies and nine smaller districts. The first constituency consisted of Olaszi, the settlement of Heves, Kertváros, Váralja,and Csillagváros; while the second one covered the area of Újváros, Külváros, Velence, and the wine-growing community of Nagyvárad. To identify the constituencies and the districts, see Map 1.

On the contrary, these towns did not have an equal representation in Parliament was, most probably, due to their social stratification and their modern bourgeois and civil entity. This can only be comprehended and proved by using and analyzing several indicators simultaneously, such as the social structure of the town's population, the number of voters, the number of dwellings, the town's income from taxation, the ratio of citizens living in the center and in the peripheries, etc. Based on the development discussed in detail at the beginning of this study, it can be concluded that in the case of Nagyvárad—and in that of other towns in a similar situation such as Arad, Kassa, and Temesvár—the high proportion of the modern bourgeoisie within the total population and the typical characteristics of bourgeois towns is undeniable. Studying the social structure of Pécs and Győr, both of which also faced the issue of unequal parliamentary representation, might solve the problem. The reason is that in these towns not only the middle class strengthened significantly but so did the working class . Since Arad, Kassa, Pécs, Győr, and Nagyvárad had multi-colored societies, they were also characterized by changing party preferences: sometimes electing the candidates of the governing party, at other times those of the opposition. This unpredictability regarding the outcome of local elections did not help the towns in their attempt to find a remedy to the problem of uneven representation. In connection with this, it is also worth mentioning that the number of representatives of Brassó and Nagyszeben was raised in 1877, not on account of the number of their inhabitants, but it was probably put on the agenda to redress the Saxons' grievances given that in the previous year, the government attempted to assimilate the Universitas Saxorum into the public administration.

Population: 7422, voters: 548 (7,38%).

Map 1.

Nagyvárad at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries



Note: Adapted from: *A Pallas Nagylexikona*. Vol. 12. (1897)

Finally, to summarise, let us look at the positive and negative aspects that may have influenced the two-mandate constituency status of Nagyvárad, based on the data presented. The criteria discussed above were (1) population size, (2) nationality structure, (3) proportion of voters in the total population, and (4) social composition of the electorate. In addition to this, it is also important to identify the cities that have developed a similar type (model) to Oradea in each of these aspects (Gerő, 1988, p. 19; Pál, 2011, pp. 346-347).[7]

1. Regarding its population (more than 60.000 in 1910), Nagyvárad belongs to a third group following the capital and Debrecen-Szabadka-Szeged, so the creation of two urban constituencies would have been obvious. In this respect, Arad, Hódmezővásárhely, and Temesvár were in the same situation as Nagyvárad.

7 In the typology of the towns, in order to give preference to settlements with a Hungarian and Saxon majority, I treat the Transylvanian towns separately from the ones in located in narrowly defined Hungary.

2. In terms of ethnic composition, it is one of the cities with a large Hungarian majority (about 90 %). The cities with a large Hungarian majority were generally not supporters of the governing party in the elections. Nagyvárad was in a mixed position in this respect, sending an opposition candidate to the House of Representatives in six of the fifteen elections of the period. The city's ethnic situation did not justify an increase in the number of seats. Győr and Pécs were in a similar situation (Ballabás et al., 2020, pp. 186–187; 123).[8]

3. Regarding the proportion of voters to the population, Nagyvárad was within the lower half of the average. This relatively low proportion and the number of voters do not justify an increase in the number of seats. The situation was similar for Győr and Kassa.

4. According to the social composition of the electorate, nearly 70% of Nagyvárad's voters were eligible to vote because of their income and intellectual status. The urbanized structure of the city's electorate (and population) was considered rather risky in terms of government support. Thus, it did not justify an increase in the number of seats. Several other cities of similar size, such as Győr Kassa, Pécs, Temesvár, and Arad also fell into this group.

Of the four aspects listed, only the size of the urban population would have justified an increase in the number of seats, while the other three (nationality composition. number and proportion of voters. social structure of the electorate) did not.

We can conclude that the embourgeoisement of Nagyvárad was much more rapid than that of the country —and although it had a very positive effect in terms of internal development, as far as national politics is concerned, the town could not really benefit from it. The significant number of modern urban industrial and commercial bourgeoisie Nagyvárad and in other towns raised the government's doubts because it tried to maintain the social and political status quo, or at best, to encourage predictable social development.[9] For this very reason, the town, despite its spectacular growth, did not get the chance in the Dualist Era to represent its interest in the country's legislation in due proportion.

* * *

8 Sixteen elections were held in both Győr and Pécs during the period, with ten government representatives elected in the former city and eight in the latter.

9 The government was not doubtful only about raising the number of constituencies, but also about raising the number of citizens eligible to vote, which can also be traced back to social issues.

In the following, I review the Parliamentary Representatives of Nagyvárad between 1848 and 1918 and outline trends that emerged with the elections (Ballabás et al., 2020, pp. 149-150). The first general election of Nagyvárad (Várad-Újváros and Várad-Olaszi) was held in June 1848 and was won by Imre Szacsvay, who later became one of the leaders of the Radical Party.

The next election took place in 1861 and the future Resolution Party won the majority of the voters. Between 1861 and 1875 the town was undoubtedly dominated by the opposition and in all four elections held during this period, the majority of the votes was won by the Resolution Party and later by the Left Centre which evolved from the former. In 1861 and 1865 György Lukács was elected as representative of Nagyvárad. In 1868 the citizens voted for Ágoston Tokody, while in 1869 and 1872 they gave their votes to Gyula Győrffy. Finally, in 1873 István Teleszky was chosen as representative.

Even though the person who had previously represented the town was re-elected in 1875, this was the first time when the candidate of the governing party won the local elections. This marked the beginning of an era characterized by the dominance of the governing party, which lasted until 1901. In 1875 and 1878 István Teleszky, while in the subsequent elections (1881, 1884, 1887, 1892, and finally 1896), Kálmán Tisza won the majority of votes for the Liberal Party.

After the turn of the century, neither the governing party of 1867, nor the opposition of 1848 could secure a long-term dominance. From 1901 Béla Barabás, the candidate of the Independent Party, represented the town. However, he was defeated by Endre Hlatky the candidate of the Liberal Party in 1905. A year later, when the Independent Party won with a great majority nationwide, the citizens of Nagyvárad elected Béla Barabás as their representative, however, owing to his successful election both in Arad and in the seventh constituency of Budapest, he resigned from his original position, which was taken by Tamás Szokoly. The last election of the Dualist Era was held in 1910 and was won by Géza Hoványi, the candidate of the National Party of Work.

Looking at the results of elections in Nagyvárad between 1848 and 1918, we find that the city was initially more oppositional and later became more pro-government. This category puts Nagyvárad into the same group as Békéscsaba, Esztergom, Gyula, Komárom, Pécs, Szarvas, Csongrád, Debrecen's third constituency, Kassa, Nagykikinda, Szabadka's first and second constituency (Pap, 2020, p. 83).

Imre Szacsvay (Kisürögd, 1818–Pest, 1849) representative of Nagyvárad: 1848–1849

He attended grammar school in Nagyvárad and studied law in Nagyvárad, Kassa, Pest, and Pozsony. In 1834 he engaged in the daily parliamentary work as the clerk of Ödön Beöthy, the representative of the oppositional group from Bihar County. In 1839/40 he became a Member of Parliament representing Count József Csáky. After returning to Nagyvárad in 1840, he worked as a lawyer. In March 1848, he took part in the organization of the local revolution and the town elected him as its representative on June 24. He participated in the work of the Parliament first in Pest and then in Debrecen where he was even chosen as the keeper of the minutes. In April 1849, he became one of the leaders of the Radical Party and was also one of the drafters of the Hungarian Declaration of Independence. He was executed on June 24, 1849 and was the youngest victim of retaliation for the War of Independence (Fleisz, 2010, pp. 19–35; Pálmány, 2002, pp. 807–810).

György Lukács (Nagyvárad, 1820–Budapest, 1892) representative of Nagyvárad: 1861. 1865–1868

He had already appeared in the Dieta (non-modern Parliament) Parliament of 1838 as a graduating law student and received his degree in the same year. After that, he worked together with Ödön Bőthy, who was a representative and the leader of the oppositional group in Bihar County. At the beginning of the 1840s, Lukács and Imre Csengery became the political leaders of the youth of their county. In 1848 he was the leader of the county department of the Ministry of Interior, and then he became a permanent participant of the meetings of the National Defence Committee. He followed the government when it moved to Debrecen in 1849. After the fall of the War of Independence, he retreated to Nagyvárad where, in 1861 he was elected as mayor for a short time. Owing to the assistance of the Resolution Party lead by Kálmán Tisza, he was also elected a representative of his town. In 1865 he won the elections in Nagyvárad for a second time (1865–1867) and he held the office of mayor between 1867 and 1875. In the meantime, he was also the leader of the Left Centre in Bihar County. When Kálmán Tisza took the office of the Minister of Interior in 1875, Lukács first became a counselor to Tisza, and then his undersecretary in his ministry and remained in this position until 1890 (Borovszky, 1901, p. 659).

Ágoston Tokody, representative of Nagyvárad: 1868 (by-election)–1869.

He worked as a lawyer in Nagyvárad, in 1867 he became the editor of the political daily paper of the Left Centre, called *Bihar*. Following the resignation of György Lukács, he was elected as a representative in January 1868 in a by-elections, but he sat in Parliament only for a short time as the Left Centre did not nominate him in 1869 (*Vasárnapi Újság*, 1892, p. 162).

Gyula Győrffy (Veszprém,1835–Budapest 1885) representative of Nagyvárad: 1869–1872, 1872–1874

He attended the law academy of Nagyvárad and that of Pest and became a vice-notary of Bihar County in 1860. Two years later he started a law office in Nagyvárad and founded an opposition daily paper, *Bihar*. In 1863 he was sentenced to three months imprisonment for offense against press law. In the 1860s, he visited Bayern, the Netherlands, Great-Britain, and the United States of America, and even met Lajos Kossuth in his home in Turin. He was elected representative of Nagyvárad with the help of the Left Centre, but due to financial difficulties he unexpectedly gave up his political career at the beginning of 1874 and started to work as a lawyer in the capital (Szinnyei, 1896; *Vasárnapi Újság*, 1885, p. 666).

István Teleszky (Szatmár, 1836–Koritnica, 1899) representative of Nagyvárad: 1874 (by-election)–1875, 1875–1878, 1878–1881

After studying law in Pest, he settled down in Nagyvárad. He soon became the honorary public prosecutor of both Bihar County and Nagyvárad. He was first elected the town's representative in a by-election on May 13, 1874 when he stood as the candidate of the Left Centre. Nominated by the Liberal Party, he won the elections of 1875 and 1878 in Nagyvárad. In 1887, he was elected representative of Nagyszőlős in Ugocsa County, and two years later, he was appointed under-secretary of the Minister of Justice. In 1892 he won the elections again in Ugocsa County, but this time, in the constituency of Halmi (*Magyar Zsidó Lexikon*, 1929, p. 889).

Kálmán Tisza (Geszt, 1830–Budapest, 1902), representative of Nagyvárad: 1881–1884, 1884–1887, 1887–1892, 1892–1896, 1896–1901

He started his career as an assistant draftsman in 1848 in the Ministry of Religion and Education. Then he studied law and political science at German, French, Walloon, and English universities. He made his first notable appearance in Parliament related to the "Protestant Patent" of 1859 and the "October Diploma" of 1860, condemning both in his sharp speech. In 1861 he joined the Resolution Party lead by his uncle László Teleki, and with the help of his party, he became a representative. After Teleki committed suicide, Tisza and Kálmán Ghyczhy became the leaders of the Left Centre. Tisza was critical of the Compromise of 1867 and set up the program of the opposition. In March 1875, the Left Centre and the major wings of the governing Deák Party united and created the Liberal Party, which was the governing party until it was dissolved in 1905. Tisza first

became Minister of the Interior in the Wenckheim government on March 2, 1875 and then from October 20, 1875 to March 13, 1890 he held the office of Prime Minister, which makes him the longest-serving head of government in Hungary to this day.

Between 1861 and 1902, he sat in the House of Representatives in every parliamentary session: from 1861 to 1878, he represented Debrecen (elections held in 1861, 1865, 1869, 1872, and 1875). From 1878 to 1881, he was the representative of Sepsiszentgyörgy after winning the local by-elections, and finally, he represented Nagyvárad between 1881 and 1902 (elections held in 1881, 1884, 1887, 1892, and 1896). In 1901 he could only secure a parliamentary seat by winning the by-elections in Abrudbánya–Verespatak (Abrud-Roșia Montană) (Kozári, 2003).

Béla Barabás (Arad, 1855–Arad, 1934) representative of Nagyvárad: 1901–1905

He attended grammar school in Arad, Nagyszeben, and Kolozsvár and studied law in Budapest. He had already been politically active as a university student as he was one of the organizers of the demonstration in support of Turkey.

After returning to Arad at the beginning of the 1880s he became the leader of the local opposition. In 1886 he set up a law office in the town and he was a member of the local legislature until 1918. Between 1892 and 1911 he was elected representative five times. In 1892 and 1911 he entered Parliament as a representative of Gyoma. In 1901 he won the elections in Nagyvárad. In 1905 he was given the majority of votes in Arad and in 1906 he was elected representative in Nagykörös. Following his electoral defeat in his hometown in 1910, he won the by-elections in Szilágysomlyó a year later. He also took an active part in the work of the Independent Party and was its vice-president between 1901 and 1918. In 1917/1918, he was lord-lieutenant of Arad County and the town of Arad. In 1919, when an anti-revolutionary government was set up in this town, he became its Minister of Religion and Education. From the 1920s he participated in the political associations of the Hungarian minority in Romania, and he played a leading role of the National Hungarian Party — in 1926, he even became a senator of the Romanian Parliament in Bucharest. He was a notable publicist and the editor of the paper *Arad and Vidéke*, and later also that of the *Hungarian Newspaper of Arad* (Sturm, 1901, p. 211; Fabro & Ujlaki, 1905, p. 211; Barabás, 1929, pp. 86–88; Kenyeres).

Endre Hlatky (Lunka, 1851–Nagyvárad, 1916) representative of Nagyvárad: 1905–1906

After studying law in Nagyvárad and Pest, he worked as a lawyer in Nagyvárad. From the 1880s, he participated in the organization of the local members of the governing

party, and he was also a member of the town's municipal board. In 1890 he became the president of the Liberal Party and the local president of the Incorporated Law Society. He was one of Kálmán Tisza's most trusted supporters, and after Tisza's death, Hlatky succeeded him as the candidate of the governing party in Nagyvárad. In the elections of 1905, he defeated Béle Barabás, the candidate of the Independent Party, and for a short time, he became a member of the national legislature. In 1906 he decided not to stand for elections, and when the coalition of the opposition was in office, he retired from political life. Between 1910 and 1916, he served as lord-lieutenant of Nagyvárad. His son, also called Endre Hlatky, was also lord-lieutenant of Nagyvárad from 1940 to 1944, and for a short time, he became the government commissioner of MTI, a Hungarian news agency, and also that of the Hungarian Radio (Szinnyei, 1896; Fabro & Ujlaki, 1905, p. 284; Borovszky, 1901, p. 373).

Tamás Szokoly, representative of Nagyvárad: 1906–1910

After graduating from law academy, he worked as a lawyer in Nagyvárad. By the 1890s he had become one of the leaders of the Independent Party and also a member of the town's municipal board. At the turn of the century, he was the local president of the Independent Party. He often appeared in Ady's works as well. In 1901, he outmatched Kálmán Tisza by winning over Béla Barabás, the candidate of the local opposition, who had already been well-known nationwide. Szokoly accepted the candidacy of his party after Béla Barabás stepped down during the by-elections of 1906, and was elected representative of his town. When his party split in 1909, he belonged to the followers of Gyula Justh, and he stood for elections in 1910 but did not get enough votes to secure a seat in Parliament (*Képviselőház Napló*, 1906, vol. I; Barabás, 1929, pp. 80–83; p. 12).

Géza Hoványi (Nagyvárad, 1853–?. 1939) representative of Nagyvárad: 1910–1918

He attended grammar school and studied law and commerce in Nagyvárad and Budapest. In 1873, he started to work at the Savings Bank of Nagyvárad, he became its secretary-general in 1882, and its managing director in 1895. He participated in the Board of Supervisory Directors of various local and national institutions, such as the local chamber of industry and commerce, the National Savings Bank, etc. He was the vice-president and the last president of the Liberal Party in Nagyvárad, and he took part in the local legislature in several sessions. In 1910, he became the local president of the National Party of Work and by defeating Antal Glatz, the formal lord-lieutenant in the elections, he became representative of Nagyvárad (Végváry & Zimmer, 1910, pp. 301–302; Magyar Lapok, 1939, p.7).

Table 7.

Nagyvárad Members of Parliament

1848–1918

The Year of Election	Members of Parliament	
	Address Party. Deák Party/ Liberal Party/ National Party of Work	Resolution Party. Left Centre/ Independent Party
1848	Szacsvay Imre (no party)	
1861	-	György Lukács
1865	-	György Lukács
1868	-	Ágoston Tokody
1869	-	Gyula Győrffy
1872	-	Gyula Győrffy
1873	-	István Teleszky
1875	István Teleszky	-
1878	István Teleszky	-
1881	Kálmán Tisza	-
1884	Kálmán Tisza	-
1887	Kálmán Tisza	-
1892	Kálmán Tisza	-
1896	Kálmán Tisza	-
1901	-	Béla Barabás
1905	Endre Hlatky	-
1906	-	Tamás Szokoly
1910	Géza Hoványi	-

Note: Adapted from: Ballabás. et al.2020, pp. 149–150.

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"Eternity roll'd wide apart": The Creation of the World and Man in William Blake's *The [First] Book of Urizen* in Light of Emanuel Swedenborg's *The Last Judgment*

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Abstract

Beginnings are usually regarded as either hard or energizing times that set our inner world in motion. However, there is a beginning that is more important for humanity than any other: the origin of human life and of the world. The knowledge of our origin and the mystery concerning the beginning of the world have been the most intriguing and most engaging issues since man became aware of their own physical and spiritual existence. For many centuries, it was the duty of religion to provide humanity with a teaching about their origin and the foundation of human dignity. However, the 18th and 19th centuries were critical in the treatment of the biblical creation stories in Europe. The debate between misinterpreted creation myth accounts and scientific theories led to a sharpening confrontation between religion and science, but it also divided the believers and resulted in the birth of new theories. Emanuel Swedenborg, an influential theologist of the period, wrote detailed commentaries and genuine tractates related to the topic that influenced the ideology and art of William Blake, a versatile and ingenious artist and thinker of the era, whose influence is still significant today. The aim of this study is to highlight the parallels and contrasts between Blake's Genesis myth and Swedenborg's teachings, mainly through the unusual pairing of *The [First] Book of Urizen* and *The Last Judgment*, to show the connection between Swedenborg's unorthodox views and Blake's ideas about the creation of man and the world.

Keywords: Blake, Swedenborg, Bible, Genesis, Urizen

Introduction

Emanuel Swedenborg's influence on the *oeuvre* and ideology of William Blake is proven fact among scholars of the period. Many of them—including Ágnes Péter—claim that Blake possibly did not have a greater or longer intellectual relationship with anybody else of his contemporaries than with Swedenborg (Péter, 2017, p. 40), and this spiritual, intellectual relationship, even though they had never met in person, had a very fruitful impact on Blake. The clearest, and perhaps the most fully explained work to date, in which there is an obvious critique of Swedenborg, but also a kind of recognition from Blake, is *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793), which has a clear reference to Swedenborg's *Heaven and Hell* (1758). However, it is not the only work on which Swedenbrog's influence can be felt. The different periods of Blake's work can be distinguished in several ways, depending on the subject of the particular study, but in order to determine when and how much he was interested in Swedenborg, Paley's division might be the best. Paley defines four related periods, and claims that the second one ended in 1793, a year before the publication of *The [First] Book of Urizen*, which is in the centre of my study. According to Paley, Blake showed relatively no interest in Swedenborg in the third period after 1793 until 1800 (Paley, 1979, sec. I). I see two problems with this theory regarding the closure of the second period in 1793: the first is that we know from Bentley's research that Blake's notebook contained sketches for *The [First] Book of Urizen* during the period between 1790 and 1793 (Bentley, 2003, p. 142), the years when he worked on *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and other works in parallel with this particular one. For Blake, these years were undoubtedly spent partly on the study, interpretation and critique of Swedenborg's teachings and works. The other problem derives from these facts, namely that it seems more than unlikely that Blake, who was very much interested in the ideology and works of Swedenborg, and had already started his work on *The [First] Book of Urizen*, which was published only a year after 1793, would miss to incorporate Swedenborgian theology and thoughts into his Genesis myth. *The Last Judgment* could be a very important work for Blake, as it indicated 1757, the year of his birth, as the time when *the Last Judgment* had already come to pass (LJ, p. 87). In addition, this work contains very important theological teachings of Swedenborg, even Paley mentions it as a reference work in connection with Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (Paley, 1979, SN 54). All things considered, a certain connection between *The [First] Book of Urizen* and *The Last Judgment* is highly probable.

For my study, I am going to use Copy A of *The [First] Book of Urizen* and the first English translation of *The Last Judgment*, published in 1788, to reveal parallel ideas and contrasts about the creation of the world and man between Swedenborg's teachings and Blake's

Genesis myth in his "Bible of Hell" (E, p. 44). To highlight these parallels and contrasts, I am going to focus on the pre-creation and the first creation of the Book of Genesis in the Holy Bible. Swedenborg also wrote long and elaborate tractates on the Biblical creation accounts, especially on the first story of which certain ideas and teachings are also in *The Last Judgment*. However, before the comparison of the texts and theological ideas could begin, I want to specify what dimension I intend to focus on in my study.

When the subject of our analysis is *The [First] Book of Urizen*, it is very important to decide what aspects we want to analyze and which are only present as background information that might be useful in our study. There are several researchable dimensions in this work, and despite their intertwining and interaction, their study might lead to different results and knowledge, which, although connected at the level of principles, may want to convey a specific message. In the light of the works on which my comparison is based, I intend to draw my attention to the religious dimension and I do not want to go into detail about the political, social, psychological and other dimensions, although their significance is unquestionable for a comprehensive understanding of Blake's work as a whole. In order to get a more comprehensive picture of the religious message of the two examined works, I first want to address the colourful religious background of Blake's work and the assumed authority behind Swedenborg's teachings to outline the theological views that influenced the conception of creation in *The [First] Book of Urizen* and *The Last Judgment*.

The Background of Blake's and Swedenborg's Theory of Creation

When we undertake to unravel the multitude of ideas and religious doctrines and tendencies in *The [First] Book of Urizen*, the work of several renowned scholars is at our disposal, but Leslie Tannenbaum's *Biblical Tradition in Blake's Early Prophecies: The Great Code of Art* proved to be an excellent starting point for my study. Due to the fact that Tannenbaum relies primarily on Bible-related influences and the tendencies that can be associated with them, he identifies some major ones in the 8th chapter of his book: Jewish faith, Gnostic sects, John Milton's Paradise Lost, and Christianity, including Swedenborg's teachings, but he also mentions Boehme, Philo, and others. In addition, we know from Keith Schuchard and Davies (2004) that Blake, just like Swedenborg, was in close connection with the Moravians and knew their teachings very well (36-43; Regier, 2018, pp. 151-166). Blake, however, reinterpreted all the influences and sources, the most important of which is the Bible itself, and used each in his own way. His views on the Bible and his approach to biblical texts is in close connection with contemporary criticism and also with his image of God. Tannenbaum (1982) shows that, in Blake's view, the God of

the Old Testament is not merciful, He divides humanity, He is jealous, and that jealousy, "the desire for an exclusive position of power" (p. 215), is at the heart of the whole Book of Genesis. This God allows, but forbids, He wants justice over grace—as for Blake, mercy is represented by Jesus who is not one with the Old-Testament God—and expects obedience (Tannenbaum, 1982, pp. 207-211; KJV, Gen. 1:22).[1] Blake combines the image of Elohim, as God is called in the first creation story (Gen. 1-2:4a), and Yahweh (JHWH), as God is called in the second creation narrative account (Gen. 2:4b-23), in a single creation, the abstract creation of Urizen, which is a break from Eternity, and Los's creation driven by pity (Tannenbaum, 1982, p. 206), to shape clod-of-clay Urizen into a distorted human image. By doing so, in *The [First] Book of Urizen*, Justice triumphs over Mercy, because "Blake combines the Creation with the Fall, his vision of the heavenly debate inverts both the rabbinic and Christian sources" that regard the creation of man and of the world as "the victory of love and righteousness over the Torah (the Law)" (Tannenbaum, 1982, pp. 209-210; p. 210). As a result, Blake's creation myth, when viewed solely from a religious perspective, is actually the story of the Fall, an inevitable consequence of Blake's Old-Testament image of God. To lead people back to the right path, Blake reinterpreted the symbols of Christianity that had been, according to him, misinterpreted by orthodox Christians, and he did this to cease Satan's influence among Christians and in the world (Péter, 2017, p. 271; Damrosch, 1980, p. 280), to free mankind from the poison of 18th-century Rationalism and Deism (Péter, 2017, p. 92). In my view, Blake sought a path to ancient Christianity, to spiritual freedom and the Gospel of love, to a personal and unique relationship between God and man without an institution. Unfortunately, in the century of radicalism, surrounded by Dissenters and opposed by prophets of science and conventionalism, his way led through the fires of spiritual, intellectual and political rebellion, where his "Mental Fight" (E, p. 95), as he writes in the Preface of *Milton*, could never cease.

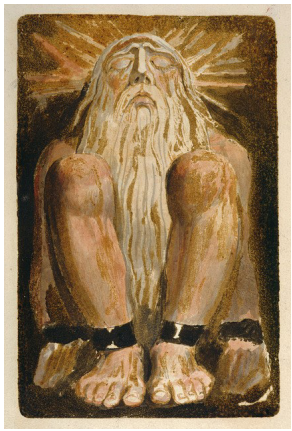
Swedenborg, like Blake, saw himself as God's chosen one whose duty was to proclaim the true teachings of God, including the time and real meaning of *the Last Judgment* (LJ, p. 87). It seems as if the thoughts of the radical French biblical scholar Antoine Fabre d'Olivet came to life in the person of Blake and Swedenborg. In his opinion, as Prickett (1986) put it, "the Pentateuch was written in a code to be interpreted only by initiates" (p. 125), and Blake, the artist, regarded himself as a prophet of God who could interpret that code, and Swedenborg, the theologian, claimed to have received an enlightening guidance and teachings directly from heaven (LJ, p. 142; AC no. 5). Swedenborg's attitude

1 I consistently use the electronic version of the Authorized KJV Standard for all biblical references and quotations. https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/.

to the orthodox Christian doctrines and interpretations related to the creation accounts is unique: he agrees that the creation of the world and man is a divine act, but he understands it in a completely different way. As he writes in *Arcana Coelestia,* everything in the Bible can be understood according to their "internal sense" and "external sense" (AC no. 4), that is, according to their spiritual (or heavenly) meaning and to their literal sense. If we read the Bible literally, the first chapters of Genesis tell that the whole world, including man, was created by God, and we learn about a lost paradise due to the sin of the first man. Swedenborg explains in the same section of *Arcana Coelestia* that according to the 'internal sense', however, the creation accounts describe the "regeneration" or "the new creation of man", which means that the creation is not a complete and one-time act, but a continuous work of God in man.

Blake approached this subject somewhat differently. Despite the fact that he borrowed many thoughts from Swedenborg and, by rethinking or criticizing them, incorporated them into his own theological system, his approach is based on the antagonism that he saw between the Old-Testament God, the Legislator and Punisher, and Jesus Christ, the Lord of Mercy and Love. For Blake, these two entities are not one divinity, and they are essentially opposites of each other. As the creation is attributed in Judeo-Christianity to the God of the Old Testament, whom Blake identified with the Law and the Law with cruelty and oppression (E, p. 618; Grimley Kuntz, 2000), the creation or materialization is also the account of a spiritual Fall done by a Demiurge, a "fragmented, imperfect being" (Tannenbaum, 1982, p. 210). Blake's understanding of the creation accounts is rather an interpretation against the orthodox image of the Old-Testament God and all his actions, his laws in the first place, and he does not seem to deal with the distinction between literal or spiritual sense in *The [First] Book of Urizen*. As in the case of Swedenborg, there is a difference between the external and internal sense of the biblical creation stories, so does the Law have a literal and a fulfilled meaning (Matt. 5:17-20), but for Blake, there is no continuation between the Mosaic Law and the teachings of the Saviour, hence Yahweh is a subordinate, inferior entity compared to Jesus, and so are his laws and actions, including the creation of the world and man. In contrast with Swedenborg's double understanding of the creation accounts, Blake's approach is based mostly on the literal sense. He claims that it is the personified Reason alone, Urizen (Yahweh), deprived of Mercy, who is responsible for the imperfect Creation and the oppressive, absurd and abstract laws. If we look at Blake's famous print, *The Ancient of Days* (Dan. 7:9), we can see Urizen measuring and overseeing the universe while imposing order on the world according to his own rules of scientific reason (Figure 1):

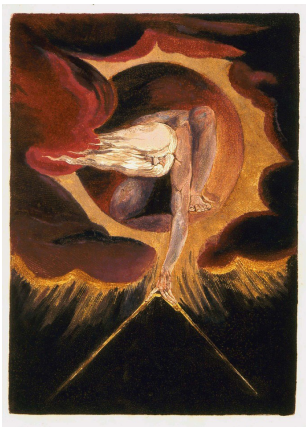
Figure 1



The Ancient of Days in Europe, a Prophecy, Copy B, Object 1 (Bentley 1, Erdman i, Keynes i), 1794. http://www.blakearchive.org/copy/europe.b?descId=europe.b.illbk.01.

This depiction of Urizen is rooted in Blake's negative, sometimes hostile attitude to contemporary Enlightenment with its scientific and philosophical theories, as well as to the orthodox law-giver God. Contrary to Swedenborg's interpretation, Blake's interpretation captures only the external or literal sense, and cannot regard Creation as part of the One True God's saving plan, therefore he reveals to us the image of man doomed to die in a terrible and miserable way, and oppressed by a god who is also bound by the chains of his own physical and moral laws, as it is depicted in *The [First] Book of Urizen* (Figure 2):

Figure 2



The [First] Book of Urizen, Copy A, Object 3 (Bentley 22, Erdman 22, Keynes 22). http://www.blakearchive.org/ copy/urizen.a?descId=urizen.a.illbk.03

It follows from what has been discussed that Blake and Swedenborg apparently do not understand the Decalogue in the same way, thus their approach to the God of the Old Testament is different, consequently they disagree on the positive divine nature of the

biblical Creation. However, their views and theories meet at certain points. Both Blake and Swedenborg deny the orthodox dogma of the Holy Trinity and also the possibility of a Trinitarian Creation theory (E, p. 664; TCR no. 112; AC no. 6887; LJ, p. 103),[2] but they have different reasons for their belief that leads to this agreement. Blake claims that the god of the Old Testament is either an evil law-giver and subordinate to the real God, or might not even exist, because there is only one God, and He is Jesus Christ. Swedenborg, on the other hand, denies only the Trinity of persons, but not the positive divine character, or existence of Yahweh, since, for him, Christ is Yahweh, the One and Only God, in a visible human form (TCR no. 339, 647). Blake agrees with Swedenborg that Jesus is both human and divine in one person, that the Holy Spirit is God's spiritual power in man, and that man's physical appearance is the outward form of the "Spiritual Man" within (LJ, p. 38; E, p. 1; LJ, p. 43). If we compare Swedenborg's teachings with Blake's *The [First] Book of Urizen*, we can find a significant Swedenborgian influence in Blake's concept about man, and through the image and creation of man, about the creation of the world.

The Creation of the World and Man in *The [First] Book of Urizen* and *The Last Judgment*

In my comparative analysis, I will proceed according to the biblical passages, and in parallel with the passages of the Book of Genesis, I will present Blake's work and Swedenborg's relevant thoughts and teachings written in *The Last Judgment*, supported by thoughts from *Arcana Coelestia*. I chose this method because the interpretations of the two thinkers and their relationship to each other's thoughts are difficult to understand without the biblical passages.

As it is written above, the passages that teach about the pre-creation period that comes before the seven days of creation is used for my analysis together with the first creation account. The description of the pre-creation period, which belongs to the Priestly source together with the seven-day creation account (Puskás, 2010, p. 47), starts at the very beginning of the Torah and shows God's preliminary creating acts that provide the necessary conditions for life and start the clock of history: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. // And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen. 1:1-2). First of all, we learn that there is a God, and this deity has the power and will to create. Since He creates the heaven and the earth *ex nihilo*, it is obvious that the material world has no precedent, the whole world is the production of this God. However, Puskás

2 For Trinitarian considerations related to Creation, see Puskás, 2010, pp. 103-106.

(2010) notes that "*creatio ex nihilo* claims something that has no exact equivalent in human experience. It is an assumption of an original aspect that is related to the onliness of God and therefore as incomprehensible as the existence of God itself" (p. 191).[3] This passage does not tell much about God's nature or intentions, but since the creation accounts are historical aetiologies (Puskás, 2010, p. 43), the holy writer's knowledge, experience and beliefs of a positive God are implied in the creation accounts. It is unnecessary to mention that God is good, it is per se evident at the time the texts are written. Urizen, however, decides to create his world because he wants to stop the everlasting change and burnings that he sees in the Eternals, identified with irrational death. He did not see the change only in others, but also in himself, and to solidify what is changing, he had to conquer himself first to be able to create:

4. From the depths of dark solitude. From

The eternal abode in my holiness,

Hidden set apart in my stern counsels

Reserved for the days of futurity,

I have sought for a joy without pain,

For a solid without fluctuation

Why will you die O Eternals?

Why live in unquenchable burnings?

5. First I fought with the fire; consum'd

Inwards, into a deep world within:

A void immense, wild dark & deep,

Where nothing was: Natures wide womb. (BU 2:4-5)[4]

3 "A *creatio ex nihilo* olyasmit állít, aminek nincs pontos megfelelője az emberi tapasztalatban. Egy eredeti vonatkozásnak a tételezéséről van szó, amely Isten egyedülvalóságával függ össze, s ezért éppoly kevéssé felfogható, mint Isten léte maga." (The English translation from Hungarian is the author's.)

4 Following a common scholarly practice, when I quote from or refer to *The [First] Book of Urizen*, I will indicate the no. of the chapter(s) followed by the no. of the verse(s) similarly to the practice that we apply when we cite biblical books (e.g. BU 2:4-5). The quotations from this work will be taken from Erdman, D.V. (1988). *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake* (Newly Rev. Ed.). Doubleday.

The cradle of life is born, which is rather the cradle of materialization and laws. Urizen's intentions might be good, but he places himself above others with his enormous power, which is an error. When we compare Gen 1:1 to *The [First] Book of Urizen*, we see that Urizen, unlike God, is not alone, he is only one of the Eternals, the other equal powers that inspire the prophetic poet to write down their "dark visions of torment" about Urizen (BU Preludium), his acts, his separation from his peers and Eternity, and his self-division. In the first chapter, the beginning of this negative separation is described as follows: "1. Lo, a shadow of horror is risen / In Eternity! Unknown, unprolific! / Self-closd, all-repelling: what Demon / Hath formed this abominable void / This soul-shudd'ring vacuum?—Some said / "It is Urizen", But unknown, abstracted / Brooding secret, the dark power hid" (BU 1:1). Urizen turns inwards, and the other Eternals regard him as a Demon because of his abominable separation from the balance of powers and from holiness. Urizen sees their state as death, while the Eternals see his state as torment. In this self-closed state, the self-proclaimed god prepares himself for the act of creation. First, he lays down the foundations of Creation within himself, being the source of material creation, and this preparation includes the creation of the laws that govern the universe: "8. Laws of peace, of love, of unity: / Of pity, compassion, forgiveness. / Let each chuse one habitation: / His ancient infinite mansion: / One command, one joy, one desire, / One curse, one weight, one measure / One King, one God, one Law" (BU 2:8). As Urizen is the Eternal of Reason, abstraction always comes before action. The mental foundations must precede the work of creation, and this abstraction includes the laws and also the purpose of existence. His laws are logical, but rigid, scientific, but inhuman, consequently unjust. Of course, these are not the laws of nature, but the laws according to he and his creatures should live. For Blake, they are laws of undesirable uniformity (Spalovszky, 2020, p. 49), which is oppression (E, p. 44). When he is over the inner fights and contemplations, the barren wasteland and the waters appear and become subdued, the elements are ruled by Demiurge-Urizen, and Heaven and Earth become separated. Urizen represses his internal conflicts into "A wide world of solid obstruction" (BU 2:5), and rises above the waves of supposed falsities and weaknesses within. This might be a parody of Swedenborg's teaching about the regeneration of man, his rebirth as a "spiritual Man" (LJ, p. 52), which, for Swedenborg, is the actual story of the biblical creation according to its spiritual sense (which is not the literal, but the spiritual meaning of the texts), discussed in detail in the first volume of *Arcana Coelestia* (AC no. 6-181). However, a relevant teaching appears in *The Last Judgment* as well when Swedenborg writes about the "Exteriors" and "Interiors of the Mind". If man focuses on heavenly things, then his "Interiors" are open and the spirit of man becomes healed and regenerated. If man focuses on earthly things and not the

heavenly things, sin appears and takes control of man's life, and man drifts farther away from Heaven:

> in Proportion as the Interiors of the Mind are open, in the same Proportion Man looks towards Heaven, but in Proportion as the Interiors are shut and the Exteriors open, in the same Proportion he looks towards Hell; for the Interiors of Man are formed for the Reception of heavenly Things, and his Exteriors for the Reception of worldly Things, and they who receive the World and not at the same Time Heaven, receive Hell. (LJ, pp. 28-29)

For Swedenborg, creation is reformation in a spiritual way (LJ, pp. 6-7), which is based on man's right attitude and thinking. Blake's Urizen, however, attempts to regenerate alone, that is, to reform himself to be able to shape the new world according to his own laws. Unfortunately, he is closed in himself and cannot see the truth anymore, his search for answers is a purely rational journey within, his tools are limited to rationality, and he loses contact with Heaven (Eternity). A Swedenborgian regeneration cannot happen without Christ's regulations and government (LJ, p. 43, p. 104), and those who refuse to surrender to Him, and choose to follow their own laws, cannot be reformed until they do not give up to be being their own god. Urizen relies on reason alone, which allows him to create an imperfect, imbalanced world, which only proves that Urizen is not an omnipotent deity. For Blake, "God's omnipotence and his foreknowledge of the Fall cannot be reconciled" (Tannenbaum, 1982, p. 210), and his Urizen is the Old-Testament God. However, it is interesting that Swedenborg writes in *The Last Judgment* about the similarity of the human mind and Heaven that

> The Form of Heaven is like the Form of the Human Mind, the Perfection whereof advances according to the Increase of Truth and Goodness, for thus Wisdom and Intelligence are promoted: The Reason why the Form of the Human Mind, which is heavenly Wisdom and Intelligence, is similar to the Form of Heaven, is because the Mind is the smallest Image of that Form . . . (LJ, pp. 16-17)

This passage advocates the positive heavenly nature of intelligence and wisdom. Urizen, the Eternal of Intelligence, however, is not a heavenly Lord, but a Satanic, Demonic creator. This antagonism is probably due to the contrast between Swedenborg's and Blake's Old-Testament image of God, and that image is closely connected to their interpretation of the Mosaic Law. Blake thinks that the Old-Testament laws are oppressive human creations (Regier, 2018, p. 170), and Yahweh is not one with Jesus, the Only God, consequently Yahweh (Urizen) is not god and his laws are inferior to the teachings and example of

Jesus. He openly declares that "The laws of the Jews were (both ceremonial & real) the basest & most oppressive of human codes" (E, p. 618). Swedenborg, on the other hand, argues that the Law contains all things that belong to the love of God and other human beings (TCR no. 287). He claims that the Old-Testament God is one with Jesus (AC no. 15), hence He is good in nature, and His creation is a positive act of regeneration.

Another important aspect of creation that Gen 1:1 reveals is time. "In the beginning" testifies that before God's creation, there was no time, it was born together with creation. In *Arcana Coelestia,* Swedenborg interprets Gen. 1:1-2 as the early childhood of man, when man is about to receive the mercy of the Lord, portrayed as "the Spirit of God" Who "moved upon the face of the waters". In parallel with this interpretation, Swedenborg presents interesting thoughts about the beginnings in *The Last Judgment*. He saw the beginnings in three historical periods that are much more related to *the Last Judgment* than to the creation itself (LJ, pp. 87-90), because it places much greater emphasis on the recreation than on the beginnings. This is true of Heaven, the Church, and man, consequently the creation of the world is interesting to him in relation to them. He claims that there were three Last Judgments in history, and each Last Judgment was also a new beginning, a recreation. These beginnings, although they have a specific time in our history, are also new beginnings to Heaven and Earth. When a Last Judgment takes place, a new Earth and Heaven are created and the previous ones are abolished (LJ, pp. 139-140). Since Earth and Heaven are closely connected in Swedenborg's theology, and this connection is realized through human existence (LJ, p. 13), the destiny of Heaven is linked to the destiny of mankind. When sin rises to an intolerable level, when the denial of God's Word endangers the spiritual survival of mankind, a Last Judgment takes place: ". . . the way to Light and to Heaven is shut up, when the Knowledges of spiritual Things are dispersed by Idolatries, and when the Word is adulterated, lightly esteemed and taken away" (LJ, p. 135). It must be told, however, that Earth means the Church in the world, and Heaven means its pair for those who are no longer in bodily form (LJ, p. 2). The consequence of a Last Judgment is a new, recreated spiritual reality, and the reformation of Man is also a recreation, when the natural Man becomes spiritual (LJ, p. 7). Consequently, a Last Judgment is the end of a sinful state and the beginning of a new era, which is similar to God's Creation, the end of the age of timeless existence, and the beginning of times. The Creation can therefore be interpreted in retrospect, it can be deduced from *the Last Judgment*: God's Creation is the defining beginning that determines the content of *the Last Judgment*, since that judgment must weigh and measure all that creation has always been directed to, otherwise it would be an unfair, arbitrary punishment. Swedenborg's Last Judgment comes when it is necessary due to sin, it is not a one-time and unrepeatable

occasion, and it contains reference to the creation of the world that took place at an indefinite time in history, but is also a definite moment in individual life, which is the beginning of man's spiritual recreation.

Blake attributes the beginning of times to the beginning of Urizen's abstractions, which is the actual beginning of Creation. This change, however, is similar to Swedenborg's spiritual regeneration that affects the whole human life, not only the spiritual, but also the corporeal. The following verses show that time was born with Urizen's abstract creation inside of him, but could be determined in some way with his existence as a creator:

> 2. Times on times he divided, & measur'd
>
> Space by space in his ninefold darkness
>
> Unseen, unknown! changes appeared
>
> In his desolate mountains rifted furious
>
> By the black winds of perturbation
>
> 3. For he strove in battles dire
>
> In unseen conflictions with shapes
>
> Bred from his forsaken wilderness
>
> Of beast, bird, fish, serpent & element
>
> Combustion, blast, vapour and cloud.
>
> 4. Dark revolving in silent activity:
>
> Unseen in tormenting passions;
>
> An activity unknown and horrible;
>
> A self-contemplating shadow,
>
> In enormous labours occupied. (BU 1:2-4)

When the abstract world is made, it is time for Urizen to materialize all abstractions. Due to his abstraction and self-apotheosis, "Eternity roll'd wide apart" (BU 3:3), and this

also includes the separation of rationality (Urizen) from imagination (Los) (BU 3:9). The abominable nature of this separation can be paralleled with Swedenborg's teaching in *The Last Judgment* about the unity of man's two faculties: will and understanding, where "the Will of Man is the very Esse of his Life" and "the Recipient of Love", and "the Understanding is the Existence of his Life" and "the Recipient of Faith" (LJ, p. 76). Swedenborg writes as follows: "How perverted a State they are in, whose Understanding and Will do not act in Unity" (LJ, p. 78). Those whose "Will of Good" and "Understanding of Truth" do not work in unity, cannot do what is right according to the Lord (LJ, pp. 78-79), thus the actions of man are not in accordance with the heavenly order. If this unity is broken, a perverted state is realized. Urizen separates himself from Los (BU 3:9, pp. 12-14), and the other Eternals see the consequences of this action: "10. But Urizen laid in a stony sleep / Unorganiz'd, rent from Eternity // 11. The Eternals said: What is this? Death / Urizen is a clod of clay" (BU 3:10-14). "CLAY is the substance with which the creator works" (Damon, 2013, 88d-89a), and Urizen has transformed himself into this raw material of the world. Los has to act out of pity in a creative way, and shape the world from Urizen's body, that is, according to Urizen's abstract plans. The biblical Creator is also in the world, but at the same time outside of it. Prickett (1986) notes that "Nature and God are both separate and intimately connected" (p. 121). The regeneration of Urizen, which is rather a degeneration, begins, and it lasts for seven "Ages" (BU 4 [b]). This description parallels to the seven-day creation account in Gen 1:3-2:4, which is a central theme in Blake's theology of creation, and forms a significant part of both The Book of Los and *The [First] Book of Urizen*.

When we read the seven-day narrative in Genesis, we find an expanding, growing, progressing world in exuberant beauty, which due to God's unlimited creative power, becomes full of life. In Blake's cosmogony, however, it seems that "the creation of the material world was really a Fall caused by the contraction of the deity" (Larrissy, 1979, p. 165). Shrinkage is a negative tendency in Blake's creation myth, and this degeneration ends in spiritual death: "And now his eternal life / Like a dream was obliterated" (BU 5:3). It is clear from the description of the Creation that Blake does not speak about the material world. The biblical story of the seven-day creation is only a model to contrast with. Blake uses a similar pattern, but the changes in the story are in the opposite direction: the world is not expanding, but condensing into solidity through a process of ossification.

In the Bible, God creates by his word, and the description of the days always ends with the same line: "And the evening and the morning . . ." (Gen 1), which divides time into units. A similar division can be observed in *The [First] Book of Urizen*, although Blake takes great

care to extract the harmony of intellect and imagination from the process of creation, and presents a consistently negative description to the reader. The appearance of sulphur, for instance, is a sign of evil materialization, which is contrary to spiritual existence and progress (Damon, 2013, 390a-b): "And Urizen (so his eternal name) / His prolific delight obscurd more & more / In dark secresy hiding in surgeing / Sulphureous fluid his phantasies" (BU 4:2). Blake used sulphur possibly because of its traditional connotation with hellfire (Damon, 2013, 390a-b). This association leaves no doubt concerning the evil nature of Urizen's division from Eternity and the process of creation. The time periods end with recurring closing lines, only the number changes according to the actual "Age": "And a first Age passed over, / And a state of dismal woe." As much as Reason's abstraction unfolds and materializes, taking the shape of his own fantasies, so does Imagination become more tired and closed within the universe of Reason. When the Old-Testament God is done with a phase of Creation, the holy writer always concludes that God saw that His creation was good, the opposite of which is true in Blake's book with the negative confirmation of the process full of torment and "dismal woe". The body parts and senses are bent to the will of Urizen, who from his embryo thoughts is smitten into a human shadow of his former glory. The infernal Creation lasts for seven Ages, not six, because the creation of the world is equal with the transformation of Urizen where a day of joy and holy rest is impossible. Los is the creator, and Urizen is the recreated. When Los is ready with the full creation process, standing exhausted by his tremendous labours, he is terrified to see what he has done:

> 1. In terror Los shrunk from his task:
>
> His great hammer fell from his hand:
>
> His fires beheld, and sickening,
>
> Hid their strong limbs in smoke.
>
> For with noises ruinous loud;
>
> With hurtlings & clashings & groans
>
> The Immortal endur'd his chains,
>
> Tho' bound in a deadly sleep. (BU 5:1)

Los's power has diminished, he remains silent telling no prophecies. Reason and Imagination, however separated, are now bound together:

4. Shudd'ring, the Eternal Prophet smote

With a stroke, from his north to south region

The bellows & hammer are silent now

A nerveless silence, his prophetic voice

Siez'd; a cold solitude & dark void

The Eternal Prophet & Urizen clos'd. (BU 5:4)

It seems obvious that Urizen's transformation is the opposite of Swedenborg's regeneration. However, there is a striking similarity that cannot be ignored: we see a single human regeneration/degeneration in the creation account of both Blake and Swedenborg. Although Blake's person is an exact character, the manifestation of Reason, and Swedenborg's person is not an exact person, but anybody who is regenerated or reformed, the process takes place in a spiritual and psychic dimension, and both interpretations of the biblical Creation are different from the orthodox interpretation of the Genesis creation narratives. This new interpretation must be attributed to Swedenborg, and it is obvious that Blake adopted, then adapted Swedenborg's thoughts to his own theological system. Swedenborg mentions in *The Last Judgment* that "Man is also created after the Form of Heaven as to his Mind, and the Form of Heaven is from the essential Divinity" (p. 41), and this is exactly what we see in *The [First] Book of Urizen*, except that the two faculties of the mind are separated from each other in Blake's work, thus it is a perverted form and Creation. When Swedenborg reinterpreted the orthodox teachings, he did not reject Creation as a myth, he rather used it as an explanation to show how God reforms the spirit of man. His teaching about man is also the teaching about the world and God. Consequently, if we truly want to understand Swedenborg's approach to Creation, we need to discuss his interpretation of the sixth day in the seven-day narrative, as it is the climax of God's Creation.

We can conclude from Gen 1:2 that God has always been present in the world from the very beginning of times: "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters". It means that there was no other existence before God, and the world is dependent on Him. This is equally true for man, the most important and the last one in the line of creations, full of dignity. This dignity and importance is underlined by the fact that Jesus incarnated for the salvation of mankind. For this reason, "God created man in his own image" (Gen 1:27). This point of view is important for both Blake and Swedenborg, because their

anthropology is inseparable from their Christology and cosmogony. They see Jesus as the One and Only God, who is a "Divine Humanity" (LJ, p. 10), that is, a human being who is equally God Himself (Phil. 2:6-8). A decade after the publication of *The [First] Book of Urizen*, Blake interpreted this teaching in his poem Milton as follows: "But the Divine Humanity & Mercy gave us a Human / Form /Because we were combind in Freedom & holy / Brotherhood" (E, p. 131). This unique relationship between human body and heavenly spirit has a special significance in Swedenborg's theology. He claims that the human spirit is formed after the "Image of Heaven", while the human body is the "Image of the World" (LJ, pp. 28-29, AC no. 3628, 4523). Swedenborg explains that man is created in a way

> "that in every Man there is an inmost or supreme Part, into which the Divine Principle of the Lord first or proximately flows, and from whence the Lord regulates and governs the other Interiors belonging to the spiritual and natural Man . . ." (LJ, p. 43)

This teaching implies that man is in direct contact with God and heaven in an ontological sense, since his soul is made in the heavenly image of God, on which Jesus has a direct influence. This spirit, however, has a direct connection with the outward form of man: the "Spiritual Man, which is within every one's natural Body, is equally in a Human Form as the natural Man", and "the natural Man derives it's Human Form from the Spiritual Man within it" (LJ, p. 38). Blake promulgates the same theory in *All Religions are One* (1788), when he states that

> . . . the Poetic Genius is the true Man, and that the body or outward form of Man is derived from the Poetic Genius. Likewise that the forms of all things are derived from their Genius. which by the Ancients was call'd an Angel & Spirit & Demon. (E 1)

These thoughts have a great impact on *The [First] Book of Urizen* as well: when Urizen is transformed into the world, he assimilates with his own perverted thoughts, and his own shape is like his inner world. Blake calls the 'Divine Principle' the 'Poetic Genius', but his thoughts are identical to Swedenborg's doctrines. In addition, he uses the nouns "Angel", "Spirit" and "Demon" to describe the soul of man. If we compare these facts to the following passage from *The Last Judgment* about the creation of man, the parallel ideas are strikingly obvious: "… to create in the Image and Likeness of God, is to reposit in Man all Things of Divine Order from first to last, and thus as to the Interiors of his Mind to make him an Angel" (p. 35). In Swedenborg's theology, since every man's spirit is heavenly, the man's soul is an 'Angel', that is, the "spiritual Man": "the true Man is the spiritual Man, the natural part is just a Servant or Instrument" (LJ, p. 52), hence only the

'spiritual Man' can be the subject of Creation and judgment, which is a key doctrine in Swedenborg's theology. For Blake and Swedenborg, creation means that the individual endowed with dignity goes through all the phases of transformation, from the embryonic existence of faith, love, purity, and knowledge to the reformed man, that is, he returns to the beginnings, to the original state assigned to man in Creation (LJ, p. 34). For the restoration of the balance of powers, for regeneration, Urizen (Reason) should give up his claim for dominance over the other Eternals, but this does not happen in *The [First] Book of Urizen*, since Creation in this work is about the Fall. According to Swedenborg's theology, the sixth day of God's creation is the end of man's spiritual rebirth: ". . . by a new Creation of Man is meant his Reformation, inasmuch as he is made anew, that is, from natural he becomes spiritual; and hence it is, that a new Creature signifies a Reformed Man" (LJ, p. 7), whose faith and love, will and intellect are combined and form a unity, which makes man become God's image (AC no. 60-63), and this is the ultimate fulfillment of Creation.

Conclusion

To summarize the impact of Swedenborg's *The Last Judgment* on Blake's *The [First] Book of Urizen*, we can conclude that we can discover the parallels, contrasts and parodies of countless ideas and theological teachings in Blake's work. While Swedenborg's understanding of the Book of Genesis is according to two different senses, the literal and the divine meaning, Blake's work also has multiple dimensions and layers that provide us with different meanings. We can regard Blake's book as a psychological journey, a protest against state religion and institutionalism, a critique of the intertwining of political and religious powers, but it can be read as Blake's version of Creation in his "Bible of Hell" (E, p. 44), influenced by multiple contemporary religious and philosophical tendencies. Blake, like Swedenborg, wanted to find the ultimate truths about man and God, and he worked tirelessly throughout his life to explore the meaning and purpose of man's existence, which undoubtedly starts with Creation, be it spiritual or corporeal. However, for both Swedenborg and Blake, the Creation of man and the world is inseparable from other interconnected theological issues that form the basis of their conclusions. We cannot comprehend the message of their works and understand their conclusions unless we become familiar with those issues and realize that their concepts of Creation are only a result of interpretations of other complex Judeo-Christian doctrines. Not surprisingly, the impact of *The Last Judgment* on *The [First] Book of Urizen*, even if we focus on Creation, is most detectable when we compare and contrast Swedenborg's and Blake's teachings concerning the existence, nature and dignity of man, the complexity of human and divine

faculties, the importance of Jesus as "Divine Humanity", love and mercy, the identity and nature of God, and the authority of biblical laws.

We all have our own beliefs about the beginning of human life and the world. Whether we accept the teachings of Swedenborg and Blake or not, we can certainly be enriched by knowing them, and we can realize that, in spite of all our attempts to this day, the beginning of existence can be brought closer to the truth only by the joint effort of science, art, and religion.

List of Abbreviations:

AC	Heavenly Secrets (*Arcana Coelestia*)
BU	*The [First] Book of Urizen* (Copy A)
E	Erdman, D.V. (1988). The Complete Poetry & Prose of William Blake (N. Rev. Ed.).
KJV	Authorized King James Version Standard (https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/)
LJ	*The Last Judgment*
TCR	True Christian Religion

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Book Review: Douglas Murray's *The Madness Of Crowds*

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Abstract

Douglas Murray, the author of *The Strange Death of Europe* (2017), and *The Madness of Crowds* (2019; 'expanded and updated edition' in 2020), is one of the leading journalists and authors in Great Britain in the fight of the centre-conservative intellectuals against the 'woke' ideologues. His latest book deals with four of the most controversial issues of today's 'identity ideology': *Gay, Women, Race* and *Trans*, showing that such unstable concepts cannot be the solid ground for any serious conversation, or for the social edifice. On the contrary, they are treated in such a way that the danger of totalitarian states is no longer unconceivable; what is more, with the cancel culture of today, it is more likely than not that it will cause a serious backlash in the future, which may reverse some of the advancements of the fight for rights of all kinds.

Keywords: ideology, identity, woke, gay, race, women, trans

The publication of *The Strange Death of Europe*, in 2017 (Murray, 2017), introduced on an international scale the journalist and author Douglas Murray, as a very interesting, yet controversial figure. His ideas regarding identity, the Islam, and immigration were very much against the official narrative of the EU, and he was attacked as a far-right racist, even if his book is a very thorough and well-conducted study of Europe as it was then. With his newest book, *The Madness of Crowds*, published in 2019 and re-published with a copious addition in 2020, Murray comes against such narrative again, as he considers four of the most important *ideological bricks* of the so-called 'woke' generation in reference to *Gay, Women, Race* and *Trans*. These also constitute the four chapters of the book. Each chapter is very well-researched, with an impressive number of references to journals, television interviews, social events, people's testimonies, as well as philosophical, sociological, and psychological studies.

The Introduction gives an account of the Social Justice Movement and the new dogma,

with the concepts they advance–like intersectionalism, feeling safe/unsafe, being 'harmed' by words, white supremacy, toxic masculinity, and others–which are the pillars of a new kind of dogma, or social religion; such ideologues do not allow any interpretation or critique, but just total, immediate and public acceptance. These are seen by Murray to form the foundation of a new "interpretation of the world through the lens of 'social justice', 'identity group politics' and 'intersectionalism' [which] is probably the most audacious and comprehensive effort since the end of the Cold War at creating a new ideology. ... Even the term itself is set up to be anti-oppositional. 'You're opposed to social justice? What do you want, social *in*justice?'" (Murray, 2020, pp. 2-3). Such ideas of 'social justice' have become most familiar in the new view of society as formed by 'identity groups'–a new division of people according to race, gender, sexuality, and other such 'group identifiers'. These identity traits function, though, as more than just descriptive characteristics–being black, or being a woman, or being gay is seen as a kind of single trait, as the most important characteristic, defining such people/groups, and allowing them just a certain type of reaction, conviction and social activism. The newspeak of most such representatives of the new ideology will make them commence their speeches with 'Speaking as a... ', which somehow also means 'being better than anyone who does not share into such identity'. Those who do not have the 'experience' of identifying as a member of such a group, are not 'on the right side of history'.

Douglas Murray uses a very convincing metaphor, when he refers to the gay rights movement and to the women's rights movement, which have done much progress in the past half-a-century, and which seemed to have arrived at a long hoped-for destination; like a train that arrives in a station. At the moment of arrival, though, the train starts speeding and is derailed, and the whole fight seems to be at the very beginning–people today are declared to be more homophobic, more misogynistic, and more bigoted than ever before, as if the entire advancement in the domain did not exist. The same is maintained in reference to race relations, as if racism is now worse than ever before (it is even 'systemic'). This is how the 'movement' has persuaded the media to reflect on reality:

> Having begun to view everything through the new lenses we have been provided with, everything is then weaponized, with consequences which are deranged as well as dementing. It is why *The New York Times* decides to run a piece by a black author with the title: 'Can my children be Friends with White People?' And why even a piece about cycling deaths in London written by a woman can be framed through the headline: 'Roads Designed by men are Killing Women'. (Murray, 2020, p. 4).

These stories across all media, especially in the United States and the Great Britain, will make divisions even deeper, and weary of each other. For some people, these concepts and tribulations have translated into very painful realities–they have lost their jobs, their careers were brought to an end, they have even been questioned by the police for 'crimes' that have only to do with not conforming with the narrative. Public figures, artists, writers, or even very average people are being accused of being 'bigots', 'homophobes', 'transphobes', 'sexist'–and the list may continue–while the activists are courageously fighting with such expressions of 'social retardedness', and demonstrate their 'progressive' views at all times. Murray refers to the Australian political philosopher Kenneth Minogue, who was the first to speak about 'St. George in retirement' syndrome:

> After slaying the dragon the brave warrior finds himself stalking the land looking for still more glorious fights. He needs his dragons. Eventually, after tiring himself out in pursuit of ever-smaller dragons he may eventually even be found swinging his sword at thin air, imagining it to contain dragons. If that is a temptation for an actual St George, imagine what a person might do who is no saint, owns no horse or lance and is being noticed by nobody. How might they try to persuade people that, given the historical chance, they too would without question have slain that dragon? (Murray, 2020, p. 7)

In fact, the four chapters of the book do nothing else but show how all these apparently 'new' ideas–sometimes using new names–started as legitimate campaigns and activism for human rights. What happened was that activists, NGO's, politicians, academics in the fields of all kinds of 'studies' (women's, queer', etc.) could not just stop, or *settle* (Murray's term) for equal rights, even if equal rights was what they had been fighting for. They started maintaining the idea that their 'groups' are 'better', that majorities have to somehow pay for historical wrong-doings, that if in the past things were not very well arranged, now 'it is our time', when 'they will pay'. Little do such activism care that the ones they want to make 'pay' are not the ones who actually might have been to blame–which, is also questionable, because today's filter cannot be applied on people's mentalities and behaviour of the past. Those who do not conform to the new ideas and the new speech laws will not benefit from any kind of indulgence–as there is no freedom of speech, and no freedom of conscience, either. One has not only to behave nicely, but admit to their inner 'faults', repent publicly and be vocal in supporting the movement. Who is not 'with us' is not just silent, but 'against us'. It does not matter what one believes, they have to 'bend the knee' (as so many did in summer once that the BLM movement asked for it).

For younger people, as Murray shows, who have a very limited knowledge of history, such ideas are new, they can blame older generations, as they do not understand that

due to their development and fight society has arrived to this moment of 'illumination'. For those who experienced communism, or other totalitarian regimes, though, things are more visible:

> There is something demeaning and eventually soul-destroying about being expected to go along with claims you do not believe to be true and cannot hold to be true. If the belief is that all people should be regarded as having equal value and be accorded equal dignity, then that may be all well and good. If you are asked to believe that there are no differences between homosexuality and heterosexuality, men and women, racism and anti-racism, then this will in time drive you to distraction. That distraction–or crowds madness–is something we are in the middle of and something we need to try to find our way out from" (D. Murray, 2020, p. 9)

The four chapters, referring to gay, women, race and trans explore how activism has transformed real and very sensitive issues, which are still debated and debatable, into indisputable realities that have to be acknowledged as such. The issues that constitute the basis for all these fights and for such radical activism, are in an ever changing status: they are not fixed, they are bound to change and evolve together with the changes and evolution of our entire humanity. If we just agree to the fact that they are fixed in the manner in which they are today presented, as if they have never been known before–like relations between men and women, for instance–and we consider being gay a matter of *software* and being trans a matter of *hardware*, in time people might start reacting and a backlash to many democratic and juridical advances might be destroyed. If further *atomization* happens, people will be more and more enraged, and the silence of today of so many might become violent action tomorrow.

Douglas Murray advocates for two very important human qualities our society needs these days: social trust and forgiveness. Without being able to forgive mistakes of the past, without trusting that those who advance certain policies actually do want to see them through, without trusting that what has already been gained is good and solid, there is very little chance that we get out of this 'madness'. He also considers that intellectuals, authors, independent observers such as himself, as well as other people should resist this 'woke-ism', denounce it courageously, or, at least, not join the 'mad crowds'.

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Book Review. 21(Im)Possible New Beginnings in Ali Smith's *Spring*

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Ali Smith's third novel in her Seasonal Quarter, *Spring*, is a very well received novel, just like *Autumn* and *Winter* before it. "The most political book thus far in this earthy and humane series", according to Dwight Garner (2019), *Spring* once again sets Ali Smith apart as "a masterful storyteller" who "with just a few words […] can build engaging worlds and identifiable characters". (Butter, 2019) It is only fair to mention that not all of the reviews of Smith's third novel in the series were as positive. Sam Jordison's (2019) article in *The Guardian* depicts the plot as "feeling too unreal" while the "summaries of our current woes", that is, the contemporary issues that the novel tackles are considered "too familiar". However, another reviewer in *The Guardian*, Justine Jordan (2019), feels that with each new novel in the series, Smith's "own role in British fiction looks ever more vital". In addition, Ceri Radford (2019) writes for *The Independent* that "*Spring* is an astonishing accomplishment and a book for all seasons", since it is a "timeless novel", which "burns with moral urgency". There is, therefore, general agreement that Ali Smith's *Spring* is a successful novel, statement that is also supported by the fact that it is a *Sunday Times* number one bestseller.

Being used to the Dickensian realism and the poetic style that Smith beautifully combines, as well as with the author's way of depicting the world in motion with its difficult complications like Brexit, racism, immigration, poverty, climate change in a hopeful way, the readers of Ali Smith's *Spring* might expect the most positive novel in the series. However, the third novel is the gloomiest, since spring does not always come in full force, especially after a long winter:

It was the time of the year when everything was dead. I mean dead in a way that meant it seemed that nothing would ever live again.

The sky was a massive closed door. The cloud was dull metal. The trees were bare and broken. The ground was ungiving. The grass was dead. The birds were absent. The fields were frozen ruts of earth and the deadness went down under the surface for miles.

Everywhere the people were afraid. Food stocks were low. The barns were almost empty. (Smith, 2019, p. 225)

Such is the onset of the season of new life, in which everything and everyone receives a new beginning. Thus, after a bleak political rant right at the beginning of the novel, we enter the mind of Richard, a film director, whose lost hope because of the death of Paddy, his closest friend and his source of inspiration, lead him to a premature end: an attempted suicide. Smith plays with time once again, and the novel goes back and forth through Richards's memories, pausing on the character's interior monologue as he remembers different dialogues to the extent that the film director cannot help but wonder: "Is a single minute really this long?" (Smith, 2019, p. 49) Moreover, Smith continues her intertextual and artistic games, depicting Richard as a version of Shakespeare's *Pericles, Prince of Tyre as well as using his ekphrastic narration to shed light on the creative work of Tacita Dean.* Richard's remembered conversations with Paddy also stress the importance of literature in the life of the individual, focusing on the avant-garde works of Katherine Mansfield and Rainer Maria Rilke. Therefore, Adam Smyth (2019) concludes that *Spring* is not a Shakespearean adaptation since "Pericles is only the loudest in a chorus of voices from the past" that are used by Smith both "to organize the torrent of the contemporary" and to "offer another way of navigating" it.

The second character that Smith uses to keep the narrative going is Brittany, mostly called Brit, whose name is as symbolic as her function in the chapters of the novel. Brit is a young woman whose future seems bleak as she was financially unable to attend university and, therefore, is currently working "as a DCO at a UK IRC" (Smith, 2019, p. 165), that is, as a guard at a detention estate, where refugees are incarcerated for an indefinite period. Brit's job in "the underworld", as she calls it, numbs her day by day, as she learns:

• How to choose which deets to speak to, and which to ignore

• How to talk weather with other DCOs while they're holding someone in headlock or while four of you are sitting on someone to calm him

• How to say without thinking much about it, they're kicking off. *We're not a hotel. If you don't like it here go home. How dare you ask for a blanket.* The day she heard herself say that last one she knew something terrible was happening, but by now the terrible thing, as terrible as a death, felt quite far away. (Smith, 2019, p. 165)

In addition, Brit's love life comes to an end, as Josh, her boyfriend, cannot help but notice the transformation that her job is doing to her: "You can't give hardly anything. You've

stopped giving. … It's making you unreasonably self-righteous, ... It's not your fault. You've taken a job that's making you go even more mad than the rest of us." (Smith, 2019, pp. 157-8) Therefore, Brit becomes the embodiment of a post-Brexit England that walled itself against the whole world and is more than willing to indefinitely surround with walls whoever dares to trespass the border: an end for those in search of a new beginning.

Brit's chance, however, is her meeting with Florence, a twelve years old school girl, who convinces the DCO to accompany her to Scotland in search of a place that is illustrated on a postcard. According to Justine Jordan (2019), the presence of Florence "in the novel is a beautiful piece of synchronicity", since Smith writes *Spring* in a time when "schoolchildren are currently leading climate change protests", Jordan obviously referring to the famous Greta Thunberg. A Shakespearean Marina, filled with hope and capable to open doors, enter extremely well-guarded places, like Brit's workplace, and persuade people to do unusual acts of kindness, Florence is actually a foster child on her way to meet her mother, a "deet" who managed to escape:

The story also went that the girl's mother was a deet in the Wood, that her mother'd been picked up by the HO because she'd applied to do a course at a uni, she'd grown up here but she'd no passport and the HO picked her up off the street, she'd nipped out for ten minutes, gone down to Asda, no coat on, bag of shopping left on a pavement when they picked her up. (Smith, 2019, p. 138)

The friendship between Brit and Florence make the former feel smart, alive and happy after a long period of numbness, becoming a symbol of possible new beginnings. In addition, Florence's brief involvement in Richard's life right after his attempted suicide also has a revitalizing effect. The three characters end up riding together in van with a woman who is part of an underground organization that try to help migrants escape detention; a woman who is on the point of reuniting Florence with her mother. Sadly enough, when Brit realizes what is happening she calls her boss and the IRC organization interrupts the family reunion, detaining Florence's mother again.

The novel ends with descriptions of the three characters: Richard takes advantage of his chance at a new beginning, raises money by selling his old belongings and symbolically letting go of the past, and films a movie about ALDA, the secret organization that tries to help migrants;

Brit resumes her job and her life, "got to stop taking my work home with me, she thinks to herself" (Smith, 2019, p. 329), emphasizing her identification with the system; while Florence is reunited with her mother, who "was picked up, kept for two months, got let

out on indefinite in case of media attention (she's got a story now)". (Smith, 2019, p. 320)

Ali Smith's novel is a complex book, offering possibilities more than answers or solutions. While time continues in its cyclical nature, season after season, people are faced with chances that they handle according to their choice. Some might choose to benefit from them, while others might remain the same. However, Smith's invitation, as the author states through the ALDA woman who tried to reunite Florence and her mother, is to take advantage of the chances, "try not to miss them. A missed chance, a ruined life" (p. 276) in order to "change the impossible, to move things an inch at a time all those thousands of miles towards the possible" (p. 275). Accepting change is the prerequisite for an enchanting new beginning:

We are a fairy story. We're a folk tale. I don't mean to sound in the least fey. Those stories are deeply serious, all about transformation. How we're changed by things. Or made to change. Or have to learn to change. And that's what we're working on, change. (Smith, 2019, p. 276)

A serious novel, and certainly not a fairy tale, depicting the harshness of a bleak reality from multiple angles, Ali Smith's *Spring* hopefully advocates that we become a fairy story.

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