



Cultural Course Correction or Back to the Past?

Edited by:

Przemysław Rotengruber & Juliusz Tyszka

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SHORT SUMMARY

When we feel helpless in the face of present-day problems, it is easy to succumb to the illusion that the past rules of social and political life were perfect. Zygmunt Bauman calls this political nostalgia for the past *retrotopia*. The victims of *retrotopia* are those who are disappointed with the promises of liberal-democracy and unable to participate in public life. How to explain the phenomenon of retrotopia in a way that allows its negative effects to be counteracted? The authors of this collective work try to provide answers to this question. They are creative participants in the discussion about how to maintain a balance between social challenges and the social opportunities to face them.

KEYWORDS

retrotopia, liquid modernity, liberal democracy, monadic identity, public life, civil rights, national stereotypes, defamation, social fields, educational mobility, liveness

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Contents

AUTORS	7
INTRODUCTION	
Przemysław Rotengruber, Juliusz Tyszka Cultural Course Correction or Back to the Past?	9
Christiane Page Léon Chancerel: the Theatre as an Educational Device for the Advent of the “New Order”, 1929-1941	17
Maciej Dudziak Neumark’s Retrotopia in the Context of Zygmunt Bauman’s Theory	35
Jeanette-Christine Bauer Drawing the Picture of the Evil Immigrant. Framing and Reiteration as a Means of Defamation	51
Jeanette-Christine Bauer “The Government and the Media are Our True Enemies”. How German Right-wing Populists Use False Evidence to Reverse the Reporting	79
Henryk Domański Effect of Educational Mobility on Lifestyle	109

Marcin Oleś

Retrotopia in Music 135

Artur Duda

Back to Live Liveness: How Is It Possible Yet in the Pandemic/Post-Pandemic Age? 151

Przemysław Rotengruber

Nomadic ambivalence, monadic nostalgia. In search of a model of culture where the future meets the past 171

RÉSUMÉ

Renouveau culturel ou retour vers le passé? 187

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Introduction

Cultural Course Correction or Back to the Past?

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The title of this book could be misleading. Going back to the past, except for the glorious exception set by Dr. Emmett Lathrop Brown, is simply not possible. Everyone knows this limitation. Time cannot be turned back. However, we may wish to restore what has been lost in time. Especially when we feel helpless in the face of present-day problems, it is easy for us to succumb to the illusion that the past rules of social and political life were perfect. Zygmunt Bauman calls this phenomenon *Retrotopia*.

What is retrotopia? According to Bauman, this is a new type of attitude that Western societies adopt with regard to the – not always beneficial – changes in their lives caused by *liquid modernity*. The explanation of the unknown by the unknown seems to be an unnecessary complication. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. Yes, retrotopia can be defined as political nostalgia for the past.

Many researchers associate the concept of retrotopia with idealized memories of historical patterns of collective life. Unfortunately, this is not enough to understand what is actually happening to communities in the grip of such idealizations. No less important than their belief that the solutions to current political problems reside in the past are the reasons why they have ceased to believe in the solutions that their political present offers them. That is why we must begin with the question of the distinctive features of the present. The answer to this question is contained in Bauman's metaphor of liquid modernity. Bauman used it to describe a culture without solid ground. Its principle is constant change. The victims of retrotopia are those who either cannot or do not want to adapt to a changing world.

The hypothesis concerning the disappointment of the inhabitants of the Western world with the promises of liberal-democracy (which is synonymous with their present) and their inability to participate in public life requires clarification of two other issues. First, we need to establish what the genesis of retrotopia is. It is not only about the origin of the "idea of a carefree past", but also why it penetrates the consciousness of ordinary people on such a scale. To determine this, we have need of not only Bauman's findings on what retrotopia and fluid modernity are, but also why Bauman and other social scientists were so late to recognize the dangers of growing nostalgia for the past. Yes, we can, like Bauman, assume that retrotopia is an unintended consequence of the changes initiated by liquid modernity. Following this path, a retrotopia understood as attachment to monadic forms of existence would not happen to us if we took care of all the inhabitants of our nomadic world. Bauman's supporters believe that this model of collective life is (generally) good, but do acknowledge that (some) implementation procedures have failed.

Unfortunately, their optimistic hypothesis does not take into account all the premises. Retrotopia can also mean that the liquefaction of the rules of behaviour is permanently linked to the social need to protect one's identity. Although these rules are changing, some of them (still) function as "inviolable standards" of collective life. We can ignore this presumption as a sign of the naivety of those who still believe in the objective validity of the judgments of history and metaphysics. However, we can also look for these standards in a culture that give its participants a sense of axiological stability (despite changing circumstances) or in their practice of reaching agreement on matters that divide them. This is where the jokes end. The obvious consequence of losing a sense of participation in the dialogue about the common future is the resistance of the excluded to changes that they do not understand and over which they have no influence. The arguments justifying their resistance are then of secondary importance. What matters to them is to express their opposition to unfair and "incomprehensible" forms of participation in public

life. From here it is only a step to the mythologization of the past (supposedly devoid of similar faults).

Regardless of whether we consider retrotopia as a side effect of the – usually desired – changes initiated by liquid modernity or as a diagnostic error committed by (radical) supporters of the idea of liquidating the rules of collective life, we have a problem that requires urgent solution. After all, the issue is not just a theoretical dispute about a more attractive way of describing social reality: it concerns the reactions of ordinary people to what is happening to them. So how to explain the phenomenon of retrotopia in a way that allows its negative effects to be counteracted? The authors of this collective work provide answers to this question. Although they differ in the degree of generality of their considerations and in their preferences regarding remedial measures, they are all participants in the discussion about the conditions for maintaining a balance between social challenges and the social opportunities to face them.

The author of the first article is Christiane Page. The subject of her research is “Leon Chancerel’s Theater as an Educational Device for the Advent of the ‘New Order’, 1929-1941”. This French director, playwright and theatre theorist is also the author of the program of Education through Art. It would seem that there is nothing innovative about this idea. Art as a space of individual expression has inspired educators since time immemorial. Chancerel, however, postulates a completely different use for it. In his project, the tutor-leader-director is someone who – “having an idea of what people need to be happy” – undertakes their education through the medium of the theatre. The main goal of Chancerel is: “(...) the rebirth of French culture and spirituality, the enhancement of the community spirit, submission to the leader, nostalgia for a golden age uniting theatre and liturgy, the cult of the body and the warning against what he calls intellectualism, contempt for avant-garde theatre”. Therefore, the choice of means enabling the implementation of this idea cannot be accidental. Like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Chancerel believes that the symbolic violence exerted by the theatrical leader on the social environment is justified by the accompanying emancipation goals (identical to the idea of a “new civil religion”). The case study by Page suggests that retrotopia is nothing new in the history of Western societies. On the contrary, the nostalgia of their members and their leaders for the past should be regarded as a distinctive feature of modern culture.

The above thesis is the leitmotif of Maciej Dudziak’s considerations. In an article entitled *Neumark’s retrotopia in the context of Zygmunt Bauman’s theory*, Dudziak states that “Retrotopia is not only a characteristic quality which belongs solely to late modernity, but it accompanies modern ways of defining and

perceiving reality in highly homogenized forms, i. e. nation states, which in fact were born out of the new recomposition of the European scene after World War I". According to Dudziak, the popularity of retrotopia derives from the hope for the final reconciliation of individual freedoms with the need for security, which would be guaranteed by patterns of good life from the past. The state understood as the "institutionalized supervisor of collective memory" plays a key role here. It gives meaning to past events in line with its current political goals. It also suppresses bottom-up initiatives. Two examples illustrate the way the state works: the history of the village of Santok and the case of the Battle of Cedynia. Dudziak believes, that the only – though uncertain – form of resistance to the political manipulator of collective memories are voluntary associations. Only they can counterbalance its aspirations today.

The author of the next two articles is Jeanette-Christine Bauer. Placing them alongside each other is not accidental. While in the first article, Bauer focuses on the practice of electoral-winning by Alice Weidel, a prominent activist of the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD); Bauer's research in the second article focuses on the mechanism of the AfD's use of defamation strategies to increase its own credibility. Although the articles differ in the degree of generality, the reader can find threads directly related to the problem of retrotopia in both of them. In the first article entitled: *Drawing the picture of the evil immigrant. Framing and reiteration as a means of defamation*, the author explains how a dishonest politician can steer (manipulate) the emotions of public opinion using ethnic and national stereotypes. The second article, *The government and the media are our true enemies. How German right-wing populists use false evidence to reverse the reporting*, is an extension of the previously discussed threads. One of them deserves special attention, since it concerns the manipulative use of the concept of truth in political practice. The AfD slogan "Mut zur Wahrheit" (Courage for the Truth) presumes that the truth referenced therein is an attribute of the representatives of this political party. Expanding on this observation, Bauer examines the relationship between the credibility of the sender of a political message and the "expertness" attributed to him or her. Summing up these issues, the sentiment and fears of the public, which are easy to associate with the phenomenon of retrotopia, are the key to the matter.

Henryk Domański, in his article entitled *The influence of educational mobility on lifestyle*, aims to determine whether the habitus described by Pierre Bourdieu is the sole effect of primary socialization, or whether it is shaped by mobile individuals. This doubt obviously extends to two other categories that are the hallmark of Bourdieu – "social fields" and "the games" played by their inhabitants. The possibility for an individual to cross the group boundary by participation in

high culture (in particular in music culture) is of great importance in the research undertaken in this monograph. Counteracting the negative trends in culture related to the phenomenon of retrotopia requires consistency and patience. Western societies succumbing to political nostalgia need to be re-educated. The social educator must take into account the time needed to correct social (group) attitudes. The effect of his work may not be visible until many years later. Domański reminds us that educational mobility is simply a process of resocialization. It does not always lead to the expected changes. An example illustrating this regularity are his research results on the blurring of cultural boundaries and the change of artistic tastes. “In light of my findings – states Domański – decline in education relative to parents educational level did not eliminate cultural tastes related to social background.”

Another author is Marcin Oleś. In the article *Retrotopia in Music*, Oleś, like Henryk Domański, focuses on the question of the social function of music as an area of artistic culture that shapes social tastes and satisfies social needs and preferences. The person of the author deserves attention. Marcin Oleś is a jazz musician of the middle generation with significant artistic achievements. Therefore, he writes about the position of music in its cultural environment from the perspective of a practitioner. His view on the phenomenon of retrotopia is complex. Oleś states that: “The dialectic of repetition and novelty, strongly present in art, corrects all manifestations of constancy and duration. What was new and shocking must give way to what is to come. The persistence of the past does not exclude its negation”. Following Oleś, we must assume that nostalgia for the (musical) past is as much a threat to musical practice as its inevitable component. This, in turn, prompts reflection on culture in general. Perhaps retrotopia – suggests Oleś – should be treated as a legitimate pattern of culture, which today is not balanced by “dialectical” (oppositional) patterns of participation in artistic and political life.

The author of the penultimate article – entitled *Back to Live Liveness: How Is It Possible Yet in the Pandemic / Post-Pandemic Age?* – is Artur Duda. He analyzes the social and cultural effects of the processes initiated by the coronavirus. Due to the current threat of infection which each of us has the potential to transmit, and the progressive digitization of our behavior (including our need for self-expression), Duda asks whether there is a risk of the diversity of life in the media environment becoming homogenized. Translating this question into the language of theatre (and the performing arts), the author asks an additional question, namely: Is not there a considerable discrepancy between a conventional theatrical performance and its Internet streaming – particularly in the area of ontology – (...) and the viewer’s participation in the event? We would like to return to “the traditional perception of liveness, which means: to the pre-pandemic experience”. Meanwhile, “a new

paradigm of thinking of live performance” stands in the way of this goal. Considering all of the above, Duda concludes that: “Time has come, perhaps, to start establishing the theatre of the new, (post-) pandemic age – the theatre of biohazard”.

Finally, the last article, entitled *Nomadic ambivalence, monadic nostalgia. In search of a model of culture where the future meets the past*, by Przemysław Rotengruber, deals with two issues. On the one hand, the author looks for the reasons behind the nostalgia of Western societies for the past, and on the other hand, he examines the possibilities of reversing these negative trends with the help of the forms of capital that are authentically (not declaratively) owned by these societies. According to Rotengruber, it is impossible to explain the phenomenon of retrotopia only by analyzing the memories and political ideals to which its supporters want to return. It is equally important to take into account their ability to influence the political reality. The promises of liberal democracy for civil liberties, and the encouragement of humanists to make people accountable for what happens to them on a daily basis, clearly clash with their abilities and capabilities. Therefore, the search for remedial measures should set out from this discrepancy. If we expect ordinary people to be critical of their dreams of going back to the past, we should first make them understand and like their present.

The eight topics addressed by the authors of this monograph bring the reader closer to the problem of retrotopia. Their approach differs from Bauman’s theoretical proposition. The main difference is the attitude of the authors to the social and political realities of the Western world. Unlike Bauman, they do not treat retrotopia as a side effect of the liquid of modernity, but as an integral component of it. They do not focus on mythologized images of the past, but on the reasons why the masses of society succumb to such illusions. The conclusion to which the considerations of the authors of the monograph lead is that social organization (subordinated to the ideals of liquid modernity) did not meet the expectations of its members, often the expectations corresponding to its own promises. The personal freedoms and civil rights of these people, including their participation in public debate, face serious obstacles. Those who should co-decide on common issues, are neither able to discern their own situation and communicate with others, nor capable of resisting the symbolic pressure of political and economic organizations. The political ideal of people speaking “with one voice” easily turns into a farce of their external control. Under these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that they choose the illusion of the past over the present, which they do not understand and in which they have nothing to say.

In his introduction to *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right*, Karl Marx formulated his famous maxim that “religion is the opium of the

people”. If in Marx’s time that opium was religion, much seems to confirm that in our time it would be mythologized memory. If we want to counteract this, it is not enough to mock or discredit those who use this opium. The condition for a successful fight against retrotopia is to help those who succumb to it – gaining their trust, teaching them to participate in dialogue and to put up political resistance to those (people and institutions) with whom they do not agree. The choice is simple. Either we invite the social masses back to act as a (co-) host of the present, or they will continue to dream of their dream of the “afterlife”.

Léon Chancerel: the Theatre as an Educational Device for the Advent of the “New Order”, 1929-1941

Christiane Page

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Introduction

A pupil of Copeau,¹ Léon Chancerel references his work in the theatrical field back to this first experience. Moreover, having had an idea of what people need to be happy, he undertook to educate them accordingly by means of the theatre. We can see in him a passionate idealist² doing everything to achieve his dream of a society functioning according to his wishes, positioning himself as a leader, aiming for all to follow him to achieve the ideal he has given for himself. In 1921 he defined his project: to help the emergence of a nation endowed with a civic religion in a spirit

¹ Jacques Copeau (1879-1949), French theatre director, manager, producer, actor, playwright, founder and manager of Théâtre du Vieux Colombier, 1913-1924.

² See: Christiane Page, *Léon Chancerel et Miguel Demuyneck: de l'idéalisme passionné à la question de l'éthique (Léon Chancerel and Miguel Demuyneck: from Passionate Idealism to the Question of Ethics)*, in: *Le théâtre jeune public dans les livres mais pas que (Young Audience Theatre in the Books, but not only)*, „Cahiers du CRILJ”, no. 6, November 2014, pp. 106-119.

of union of ‘the new Ideal and the State’.³ To do this, he imagines a plural training tool, a ‘device’ in the Foucauldian sense of the term. That is to say, a structure made up of heterogeneous elements, which responds to an emergency (as per his own definition) which has a strategic function and is inscribed in a power play: ‘This is the device: strategies of balance of power supporting types of knowledge and supported by them.’⁴

This article aims to analyze certain elements of this system that he put in place from 1929, blocking any emancipation process in order to develop the adherence of young people to the new social order, which, in 1921, he defined as the goal to be reached. I will refer to the dramatic plays that he gives as examples and to the theatre texts for children that he wrote between 1936 and 1941, from which I will outline the essential principles. I will focus on the issue of theatre as a tool for learning behavior and values.⁵

Chancerel’s project

Chancerel designs the device that he develops from several elements: 1) dramatic activities by youth (dramatic games) to create a national orchestral; 2) shows and tours of the Théâtre de l’Oncle Sébastien (Theatre of Uncle Sébastien; the texts played there are published in albums entitled *Stories Lived and Told by Uncle Sébastien*); 3) the theatre company of Comédiens Routiers (Performers on the Road) which he will form from 1929 to assume this educational role of the theatre as he conceives it (and where he opposes the healthy character to visions marked by ‘dirt, accumulated grime, mold and rats’)⁶; 4) a publication, ‘Art dramatique, Bulletin du Centre d’études et de représentation’ (‘Dramatic Art, Bulletin of the Centre for Studies and Representation’).

³ *Fragment du journal de Léon Chancerel (Fragment of the journal by Léon Chancerel)*, „Revue d’Histoire du Théâtre” (issue dedicated to Chancerel), 1968, Vol. 2, p. 111.

⁴ *Le jeu de Michel Foucault 1977 (The Game of Michel Foucault 1977)*, *Dits et écrits II (Words and Writings II)*, 1976-1988. Paris, Quarto Gallimard, 2001, p. 300.

⁵ I resume here some points developed for my habilitation thesis published in 2009: Christiane Page, *Pratiques théâtrales dans l’éducation en France au XX^e siècle: aliénation ou émancipation? (Theatrical practices in education in France in the 20th century: alienation or emancipation?)*, Arras, APU (Presses Universitaires d’Artois), 2009.

⁶ Léon Chancerel, *Pourquoi ce Bulletin? (Why this Bulletin?)*, „Art dramatique, Bulletin du Centre d’études et de représentation”, no. 1, November 1932.

He goes so far as to think that ‘one of the first steps, in the way of useful achievements, would be the construction and endowment of such a house of re-education, of research’.⁷ This set of provisions hinges on the power of a leader (him) endowed with the knowledge of what to do, and the authority necessary to bring about the new ideal.

‘The gathering of some truly gifted, truly devoted (in body and soul) people around a leader to whom they grant all authority, (...). A fanatic, certainly, with a taste for martyrdom. We see that this has no relation to what is called in everyday language a theatre director.’⁸

The themes he announces in *Dramatic Games in Education*⁹ are: the rebirth of French culture and spirituality, the enhancement of the community spirit, submission to the leader, nostalgia for a golden age uniting theatre and liturgy, the cult of the body and the warning against what he calls intellectualism, contempt for avant-garde theatre. He inscribes his dramatic project in traditional genres such as tragedy (the choir fulfilling the function of guide of the nation) as well as comedy and farce (making it possible to entertain the nation ‘by denouncing its weaknesses’¹⁰). But, beforehand, it seemed to him necessary ‘to start by creating, among French youth, the need for a national orchestral. It was because the Greek youth had a well-defined orchestral style that Greece had Sophocles, Aeschylus, Aristophanes’.¹¹

His theatrical reform is therefore part of a comprehensive national reconstruction project in which he wants to participate, within the limits of his powers, as he often reaffirms in the interwar period.¹² As Georges Banu points out, ‘a theatrical education is always based on a certain vision of human being,’¹³ and Chancerel, in 1939, wrote: ‘Make no mistake about it. This is not about the theatre business. It is a work of French renovation by means of dramatic art, a spiritual enterprise and not a commercial enterprise.’¹⁴

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ Léon Chancerel, “Art dramatique...” (“Dramatic Arts...”), no. 7-8, May-June 1933, pp. 132-133.

⁹ Léon Chancerel, *Jeux dramatiques dans l'éducation (Dramatic Games in Education)*, pp. 7, 18 et 19.

¹⁰ Léon Chancerel, *Dernière heure ou le péril retardé (Last Hour or Delayed Peril)*, (Noël 1935), “Art dramatique...”, Supplement to no. 3, January 1936, pp. 65-68.

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² Léon Chancerel, *Objectifs (Goals)*, “Art dramatique...”, no. 14, February 1934, pp. 265-266.

¹³ Georges Banu, *Le Théâtre sortie de secours (The theatre emergency exit)*, Paris, Aubier, 1984, p. 141.

¹⁴ Léon Chancerel, “Art dramatique...”, no. 61, Winter 1939, p. 6.

Dramatic games to form a national orchestral

He attaches particular importance to activities that promote a sense of community, the expression of a common thought and a perfect unity of the group. These activities are built on skills developed by gymnastic exercises performed in the open air according to the principles of the ‘natural method’ of Lieutenant Georges Hébert (official method of physical education under the Vichy regime) for whom the goal of education is to make people strong and to exclude the ‘abnormal’¹⁵. He recommends exercises to learn ‘to obey an externally imposed rhythm: the first artistic constraint, the first habit to be made in the child. It will have to permeate all subsequent work’.¹⁶ He favours marches performed ‘following a rhythm given by a sound of percussion instrument’.¹⁷ It is about ‘standing in a line one behind the other, hands on the shoulders of the previous one. Ordinary walking, then forward reverse; then even walk, sticking together as close as possible to each other.’¹⁸ The goal is to achieve perfect obedience to the instruction: ‘For the stopping, we will also give two knocks and on the next stroke, the children will join their feet and stop. We will also agree from which foot we must start. [...] In all the walks we must first get the children to follow the rhythm imperturbably.’¹⁹ He specifies: ‘In addition to the individual correction, it is necessary to arrive at an overall perfection – the file must always remain straight, the distances equal. – It is necessary not to step on the feet of the neighbour – not to look at his feet.’²⁰

Chancerel aims to unify the group and therefore addresses himself to the being in drive that is the young child. For example: ‘The children represent beasts which leave to attack. A man holding fire stops them, and together they advance or retreat, fascinated by the fire.’²¹ The exercise provokes the confrontation between raw animal power and a trainer. And as Chancerel says, ‘you have to have seen a group of children carried away by fiction to feel how much it unites them.’²² The expression ‘carried away by fiction’ conjures up the idea of a loss of control.

¹⁵ His method is directed to elements selected by a medical examination, “setting apart the abnormal ones”. See: George Hébert, *L’Éducation physique, virile et morale par la méthode naturelle* (*Physical, Virile and Moral Education by the Natural Method*), Paris, Vuibert, 1942.

¹⁶ Léon Chancerel, *Jeux dramatiques dans l’éducation* (*Dramatic Games in Education*), p. 32.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 35.

²¹ Léon Chancerel, *Théâtre et jeunesse* (*Theatre and Youth*), Paris, Bourreliez, 1953, p. 41.

²² *Ibidem*.

Everyone is a part of the crowd and becomes able to do things they would not do under other circumstances. As Freud writes,

In addition, simply by belonging to an organized mass, human beings descend several degrees of the ladder of civilization. In his isolation he was perhaps a cultivated individual, in the mass he is a barbarian, that is to say a being of impulses. He possesses the spontaneity, vehemence, savagery and also the enthusiasm and heroism of primitive beings.²³

While it is true that all theatrical work requires emotional investment, the character of the emotions aroused here is to be linked to Chancerel's social project. At no time in his publications is there any mention of a fiction-reality dialectic. On the contrary, it aims at confusing the two registers: similarly, exercises, such as the 'torture walk'²⁴ offered to 'wolf cubs', appeal to emotions, discipline, the correct and collective execution of predefined movements. Obedience, strength, will are the key words of the method. If sometimes the exercises are the occasion for personal research, it is with the objective of constituting the orchestral. The most creative moment, based on improvised comedy, is offered to young people after the 'thankless age', once the habits have been established. A mold is made for the child, which, thus formed, will keep the correct fold:

For my pupil to develop, he must soon believe he is linked, that I impose barriers on him, that I train him in a technique; if I have been for him – not always, but quite often – the ruthless master who demands perfection, once he has returned to freedom, he retains the bend of discipline imposed in the form of habit, habit of effort, especially.²⁵

The child is for him a being to be formed by an approach that is opposed to the emancipatory principles of several currents of New Education.²⁶ The adult decides

²³ Sigmund Freud, *Psychologie des masses et analyse du moi*, (*Group Psychology and the Analysis of Ego*), *Œuvres complètes (Complete Works)*, Vol. XVI, 1921-1923, Paris, PUF, 1991, p. 13.

²⁴ "Art dramatique...", no. 12, December 1933, p. 227.

²⁵ Léon Chancerel, Introduction, in: *Les jeux dramatiques dans l'éducation (Dramatic Games in Education)*, p. 12.

²⁶ It should be emphasized that the term "new education" covers many different practices and ideals. Here I am referring to the current which aims to promote the emancipation of a child (Montessori, Cousinet, for example).

everything, up to the movements and displacements which he defines precisely as we see it in the ‘game of wheat’,²⁷ dramatic play described by Chancerel in 1937.²⁸ It ‘requires a choir and 30 or 40 performers’ to perform the plowman-sower, the ears, the reapers, the gleaners. It takes place according to a precise protocol: the children (blond hair) playing the ears are lying on the ground, on their backs, in five parallel lines, the head of one at the feet of the other; the capes cover them entirely. When the ploughman passes between lines one and two, the Girl Scouts in line one turn sideways, and so on for all furrows.

Chancerel gives this play as an example of what can be done in dramatic play. It does not appear that the children were asked to invent or participate in its development. The work can be reproduced identically and was performed several times between 1935 and 1937. It strengthens the bonds of the group whose members are united around the same objective defined by the leaders. It is a choreography that demands perfect execution rather than a performance that allows creativity. The lack of solicitation of children’s opinions on the themes chosen, the constructions of dramatic games or their reactions after the fact is striking. The objective is different.

Another dramatic game *La Cité des jeunes (The City of Young People)*²⁹ set up by Chancerel as an example for its dramatic qualities,³⁰ gives an idea of the educational content of dramatic games. ‘As soon as they arrive at the colony, the young people are engaged in a great dramatic game which will last until their departure’: before crossing the gate of the colony, the children ‘will have to chase the Boutakis, horrible devils with the word “united” blown by a white angel; then to discover a large cross and say a spoken choir. Then and only then, the bearded porter will open the doors of the City of Young People to them’.³¹ This type of fictional game, inspired by French scouting, creates an adventure space where game and reality are mingled, which appeals to children’s imaginations. But here, the weight of reality mixed with fiction (invented by adults) is far from trivial since the game begins with a manhunt, the devil. And, if we know that the word ‘devil’ means ‘to disunite’, ‘to arouse hatred’, we do not always know that in anti-Semitic discourse, the devil, ‘diabolos, the one who throws himself through, who disunites, who destroys the people, destroys what constitutes the bases of its existence’, is

²⁷ Léon Chancerel, “Art dramatique...” no. 4 et 5, March-April 1937, pp. 329-330. A song text for this game can be found after the description.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

²⁹ See: Claude Lenoir, *Le scoutisme français (French Scouting)*, Paris, Payot, 1937, p. 150.

³⁰ See: “Art dramatique...”, no. 4-5, February-March 1936, p. 101.

³¹ *Ibidem*.

associated with the figure of the ‘Jew’. This gives a special meaning and force to the word ‘united’ spoken in the cited game.

Chancelerel wishes to bring together all souls under his banner³² and these dramatic games played from childhood will contribute to the formation of this ‘collective soul’ that Freud described in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of Ego*. Thus, favouring the resurgence of a herd instinct, it leads these groups towards a kind of fusional ideology in which the individual no longer exists and is assimilated to the whole. He builds a community that acts and reacts collectively, like crowds: loss of the feeling of self, identification with a collective superego represented by the charismatic person of the leader. The individual, when incorporating himself into the crowd, renounces, even temporarily, all that is personal to him/her. This is what Chancelerel aims for his orchestral.

Orchestral

The Greek tragedy is a source of his reflection on the theatre ‘mirror and [the] conscience of the Nation’.³³ He does not retain the function that this genre fulfills vis-à-vis the consciousness that man may have of himself because it is not the tragic hero grappling with his destiny that interests him, but the use of the choir to lead the people. He defines the choir as ‘a communal manifestation of a feeling to win, conquer, draw into the same community of ideas and feelings, other men who are supposed to be brothers by essence or by postulate’³⁴ (...) To supplant an inertia in the audience with an effective and activist feeling; by the feeling of action. Hence the aggressive value of propaganda. Exiled from their torpor, the audience will recognize themselves on the same side (community manifestation) as the choreutes.³⁵

To constitute it, healthy, well-developed individuals are needed. He wants athletes, undistorted human beings. He finds in Hébert’s method what is necessary for him to form the body and mind of his orchestral.³⁶ For the work of the voice, referring again to Hébert,³⁷ he favours not the quality or the nature of the voices, but the emotional and moral harmony between the carefully chosen choreutes:

³² See: “Art dramatique...”, no. 8, July 1936, p. 181.

³³ Declaration of Chancelerel. See: Léon Chancelerel, *Dernière heure ou le péril retardé (Last hour or Peril Delayed)*...

³⁴ “Bulletin des Comédiens Routiers”, no. 24-25, March 1935, pp. 476-477.

³⁵ *Ibidem*.

³⁶ Léon Chancelerel, *Le Théâtre et la jeunesse...*, p. 34.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 87.

‘I have experienced it very often; it suffices for the introduction of a **morally out of tune** element into a choir [emphasis added by the author] for choral expression to lose all effectiveness, for choral work to become impossible’.³⁸ He does not say what he means by the expression ‘morally out of tune’. But, the choristers must be trained from childhood, by the familiar practice of dramatic games, a means of establishing ‘the elementary notions of a true national orchestral’.³⁹ Thus educated from childhood, used to thinking together, reacting and evolving together, having been chosen without physical defects, without sluggishness, with athletic bodies, they are all morally ‘in tune’.

In his conception of the choir, the Game Leader (*Meneur de jeu*) takes the place and function of the coryphaeus. Chancerel transposes his interpretation of Greek tragedy⁴⁰ to the Scout or French community and thus operates a passage between a theatrical form and the reality of the actors. The qualities that it aims to develop do not concern so much the player, the actor or the choreute, for a work of representation, as the youth to be formed – whether on stage or in the hall – but for an act of celebration in order to direct his/her thoughts and actions.

In a celebration as we envision it, the choir surrounding the coryphaeus or Game Leader is above all the living, active projection of the community concerned. He conducts the drama, situates it, ponders it and interferes with it. He intervenes with the characters with the intention of directing their thoughts and actions, according to the own thought and actions of the community.⁴¹

The work he envisions thus goes beyond the framework of fiction and theatre as we commonly understand it, since he keeps of the theatre only the aspect of ritual and ceremony. The qualities that he aims to develop concern not the player, actor or choreute, for a work of representation; but the people to be formed for an act of celebration in order to direct their thoughts and actions. In his texts for children the choir, made up of residents of Uncle Sébastien’s garden, has the function of facilitating the adherence of the young public to an idea, a feeling, an emotion. It punctuates the adventures of the heroes, exclusively male characters: Pouique, Lududu, Sylvestre and Pedro. The intruders (woodlice, vermin) which disturb the peace of the garden, are driven out.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 78.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 78.

⁴⁰ Jean Duvignaud, underlined the part of the imaginary in the multiple references to Greek theatre and warned against misunderstandings. See: Jean Duvignaud, *Sociologie du théâtre*, Paris, PUF, 1999 [1965], p. 231.

⁴¹ Léon Chancerel, *Le Théâtre et la jeunesse...*, p. 75.

- In the comedy/féerie *Piphagne*,⁴² (the name of the main character who represents The Jew) the choir accompanies the *Chant du gai labeur* (*The Singing of Gay Labour*), and the *Chant des puppins de l'Oncle Sébastien* (*The Singing of Puppets of Uncle Sébastien*) song in which we can see a metaphor of the Chancerel educational project.

- In *Les 3 leçons de Lududu maître d'école* (*The Three Lessons of Lududu Schoolmaster*)⁴³ to 'try to make his dear mother, Madame la France forget her dolors and her pain', Lududu takes his guitar and sings, accompanied by the choir of the inhabitants of the garden: 'We will come back to the woods / The laurels are left / The Marshal that is here / Honor has kept. / In spite of our sufferings / Let us cry "Vive la France" / Pray, pray / The Fatherland will be saved'.

The lyrics of the traditional song are changed a bit, the tune is known. Adherence to ideas is made easier by the chorus of songs modeled on those children learn in schools.

- In *Oui M. le Maréchal* (*Yes, Mr. Marshal*)⁴⁴ a chorus of lamentations is made up of Uncle Sébastien, the children, the animals and 'all the inhabitants of the dear Garden of Joy'.

- In his adaptation of *Antigone after Sophocles* 'for the young French of this time' (1941),⁴⁵ the use of the choir is particularly interesting. He had made a first adaptation of it in 1934, but the climate was not yet favorable for such enterprises, whereas in 1941, as he points out, the circumstances were more auspicious:

⁴² Léon Chancerel, *Piphagne: histoire vécue et racontée par l'oncle Sébastien* (*Piphagne: Story Lived and Told by Uncle Sébastien*), "Les Albums de l'oncle Sébastien" no. 5, Bouasse jeune et Cie éditeurs, [1938], notice no. FRBNF33538947. This text is the theatrical version. This document referenced at the French National Library has unfortunately disappeared and is available at the Montreal Dance Library (Tembeck Fund) which I thank for sending me the pdf of this document.

⁴³ Léon Chancerel, *Les 3 leçons de Lududu maître d'école* (*The 3 lessons of Lududu Schoolmaster*), Grenoble, B. Arthaud/La Gerbe de France, not paginated, 1941. This album and the next one were published by the same publisher as the collaborationist newspaper "La Gerbe" founded in July 1940 by Alphonse de Châteaubriant, avowed admirer of Hitler who chaired the *Collaboration* Group under the Nazi German occupation of France.

⁴⁴ Léon Chancerel, *Oui, monsieur le Maréchal ou le serment de Pouique le glouton et Lududu le paresseux par l'Oncle Sébastien* (*Yes, Mr. Marshal or the Oath of Pouique the Glutton and Lududu the Lazy by Uncle Sébastien*), Grenoble, Arthaud/La Gerbe de France, not paginated, 1941. This second album is absent from the most recent official bibliographies and biographies of Léon Chancerel.

⁴⁵ Léon Chancerel, *Antigone d'après Sophocle*, version "pour les jeunes Français de ce temps" (*Antigone according to Sophocles*, version "for young French people of this time"), Lyon, La Hutte, 1941.

We are now beginning to understand the idea, the process and the goals that a few of us have pursued since 1929. Everywhere within the various youth movements, at the Worksites⁴⁶ and even in the young army, in the factory and in the fields, at our call, under our first impulse, choral teams tend to form and learn.⁴⁷

The Elders of the Choir are replaced by young men ‘of today with their preoccupations of today, their vocabulary and their clothes of today’. For Haemon’s costume: ‘The simpler the costume, the more it will show the splendor of a beautiful athletic body, the closer it will come to my vision.’ The Coryphée deplores ‘the civil war, the most painful of wars, the war between men of the same nation, the one against the other thrown. Each other on the same day they died. But, says the Choir: “The war is over, let’s forget it and celebrate our gods.”⁴⁸ The character of Créon seems to represent General De Gaulle who refuses peace. The context of France in 1941, as well as the updating of costumes, lead to interpret these lines beyond the thought of Sophocles.

- Also in 1941, in his desire to decentralize and educate the French people, he was inspired by regional folklore to set up a choral recitation based on the popular tale *Orens l’empailleur* (*Orens, the stuffer*).⁴⁹ He adds to it a poem by Malherbe with a chorus: ‘It seems that this prayer addressed to God for King Henry (...) was written by a contemporary poet and that it is for the Marshal that he raise this prayer’. The choir celebrates the King: ‘We are under such a valiant and wise Chief’, in a dialogue with the ‘half choir’ which responds: ‘The rigor of its laws, after so much license / Will restore the heart to weak innocence (...) And regardless of wealth or race, / Everyone, for fear of pain, will be afraid of failing. / The terror of his name will make the cities strong.’⁵⁰ As in his *Antigone*, he makes the meaning of the text coincide with current Petainism, giving it, because of the cited author (Malherbe), a legitimacy that takes on a heritage value.

⁴⁶ Worksites of French Youth (Chantiers de la jeunesse française, CJF), paramilitary organization which existed in occupied France between 1940 and 1944.

⁴⁷ Léon Chancerel, *Avertissement (Short Introduction)*, in: *Antigone d’après Sophocle...*, p. 3-5.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

⁴⁹ Léon Chancerel, *Orens l’empailleur*, récitation chorale d’après Émile Pouvillon, suivi de la „Prière pour le roi Henri” de Malherbe (*Orens the Stuffer*, choral recitation after Émile Pouvillon, followed by Malherbe’s “Prayer for King Henri”) [1941], Lyon, La Hutte, 2^e édition, 1943.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 15-16.

‘Learn’, with Uncle Sébastien’s theatre

Very early on, he felt that children’s activities should be supported by stories told likely to appeal to them.⁵¹ In 1933 he cites Pierre Goutet⁵² who ‘talks about the role of the Storyteller within the Scout community. We don’t tell enough stories, he basically says. (...) We are in the presence of young boys. We must act on their imagination and on their active life. Education in the form of action. The action will be enveloped, prepared by the stories. Stories and action will work together, okay.’⁵³

The stories take different forms: stories to play (dramatic games), to see (Uncle Sébastien’s theatre), to read (Uncle Sébastien’s story albums). It is difficult to give an account of the shows several tens of years later, except to refer to the testimonies left by the critics, and in particular those that Chancerel retains and publishes in his review, because this makes it possible to define his educational objectives. The information given by the texts confirms that the fables of the albums correspond to the shows. The children, after seeing a play, find the characters in the album. Several elements are constant in the theatre and the albums of Uncle Sébastien. Children, bad guys from the plays, carriers of common faults allowing the identification of young spectators (the gluttonous, the lazy), are described in a position of guilt in relation to their home community. First they are attracted by values presented as negative or dangerous but end up adhering to those of Uncle Sébastien: the submission to the authority of a leader, the relationship with nature and the city, renouncing everything that makes the movement of life and creativity. They are not responsible for what they are, the defects are hereditary and treat by methods not unlike contemporary behavioral therapies.

I will refer here mainly to two texts published in 1937: the albums *Piaf, le cheval enchanté* (*Piaf, the Enchanted Horse*)⁵⁴ and *Pouique-le-glouton* (*Pouique-the-*

⁵¹ See: Léon Chancerel, “Art Dramatique...”, no. 3, January 1933, p. 37.

⁵² Pierre Goutet participated in the foundation of Comédiens Routiers (Performers on the Road). He joined Vichy administration at the Youth Secretariat (June-December 1940), which enabled him to maintain the existence of scouting and to support the creation of Jeune France by the composer Pierre Schæffer.

Jeune France (founded on August 15, 1940, on the initiative of Vichy regime) aimed at survival of French culture under Nazi German occupation.

⁵³ Léon Chancerel, “Art Dramatique...”, January 1933, p. 37.

⁵⁴ Léon Chancerel, *Piaf, le cheval enchanté, Histoire vécue et racontée par l’Oncle Sébastien* (*Piaf, the Enchanted Horse, Story Lived and Told by Uncle Sébastien*), “Les albums de l’Oncle Sébastien” no. 1, text by Léon Chancerel, illustration by René Gabriel, Bouasse jeunesse et Cie Éditeurs, 1937, Bib Richelieu, Département estampes et photo, 4-KA-82, undated (1937/1941).

Glutton)⁵⁵, that is, long before the establishment of the Vichy government, as well as to *Les Trois leçons de Lududu* (*The Three Lessons of Lududu*).

Piaf, the enchanted horse⁵⁶

Piaf, a fiery young horse, is approached by the aging chef to succeed him. But, as he does not feel made to command, he wants to get out of his condition as a horse. He loves freedom and, opposing the will of the chief, he leaves his family to travel the wide world. He meets the men who disappoint him, then gets lost in the desert, and is saved by a fakir who wishes to execute his instruction (to learn the language of men) and offers to transform him into a man. Piaf accepts.

Unfortunately, the fakir only knew half the magic formula and Piaf was only half transformed, paying dearly for his desire to become a man, that is, something other than what he is. He was pulled out of the woods by Saint George: ‘You envy the fate of this old cab horse who dozes gently (...) with that serenity that comes from awareness of daily work honestly and simply accomplished’. Saint George takes him to the garden of Uncle Sébastien, who will treat him ‘with gentleness’, and ‘Piaf knelt in front of Uncle and three times bowed his head in a sign of tenderness.’ To conclude, the young spectator or reader is reassured ‘knowing that Piaf is in safety and perfectly satisfied with his new condition’. Piaf learns that it is impossible to get out of his condition, except in the imagination, that is to say in Uncle Sébastien’s garden.

Pouique-the-Glutton

Pouique’s interest is strictly in food, he is a glutton. His case differs from that of Piaf, because he is from the beginning of the story in the grounds of Uncle Sébastien’s garden and does not come out. His escape will take another form: he has no relation, except with food, and his bulimic attitude appears as a symptom of a malaise that will only grow. He is taken care of by Uncle Sébastien who, describing his ‘horrible’ flaw as hereditary, says that he is sorry and wants to cure him. Uncle’s drastic methods are to lock up the food and shame him. That’s not enough, Pouique doesn’t resist the urge to eat and Uncle intervenes drastically,

⁵⁵ Léon Chancerel, *Pouique le glouton* (*Pouique-the-Glutton*), “Les albums de l’Oncle Sébastien” no. 3, text by Léon Chancerel, Bib Richelieu, Département estampes et photo cote 4-KA-84, undated (between 1937 et 1941).

⁵⁶ Léon Chancerel, *Piaf, le cheval enchanté...*

threatening him with magical powers: ‘The demon of gluttony is watching you. He’s going to tempt you again, putting some bottle that I know on your way. If you give in to temptation, ah! Poor Pouique!’. Of course, Pouique does not resist and he is ‘instantly transformed into a big pig’, with the anguish of staying that way all his life. But, the good Sylvester undoes the spell and Pouique becomes a child again and ‘takes the solemn oath to be now the most sober of fat boys’; Uncle Sébastien concludes: ‘Heaven hears you and helps you!’.

Although different, the heroes’ situations have some similarities. Initially, the child appears neither good nor bad, but potentially both. It is during the adventure presented to young audiences that he will switch to the good side. He is initially attracted by values presented as negative (the city), dangerous (forward-looking knowledge, that is to say, discovering the world, people, their activities and their works, to be contrasted with commemorative knowledge, valued by Chancerel), thirst for recognition (glory). Everyone reacts in an instructive way for the young audience: from a desire for freedom, but also from a dissatisfaction, they seek a better being and live different adventures which turn out to be ultimately harmful, due to the inconsistency and encounters of the heroes, (a fakir for Piau, food for Pouique). All the events are threatening their physical, moral and psychological integrity. They finally find themselves in an impasse from which they can only get out thanks to an adult who takes them in hand. Each hero therefore ends his adventure under the tutelage of Uncle, who offers, as his title attests, a protective family where it will finally be possible to live, away from the world and temptations, by renouncing his aspirations (Piau), drawn up at the renunciation (Pouique). The end of the adventures of the heroes appears as this flashback that Lacan deals with in *Family complexes*, emphasizing that the fact of renouncing family peace to take flight reproduces the same type of renunciation as during weaning and is necessary to the young person who emancipates himself: ‘Any return, however partial, to these securities can trigger ruins in the psyche out of proportion to the practical benefit of this return. All personality completion requires this new weaning.’⁵⁷

The heroes’ journey thus bears witness to a regression and not to a conquest of autonomy as in the learning novels. One could almost speak of educational anti-novels, because the discourse of the stories lived and told by Uncle Sébastien is opposed to that found in the accounts of initiation journeys. In the latter, the heroes, if they challenge authority at the start of their adventures and leave to live their

⁵⁷ Jacques Lacan, *Les Complexes familiaux dans la formation de l’individu (Family Complexes in the Formation of an Individual)*, in: *Autres écrits (Other Writings)*, Paris, Seuil, p. 36.

lives, take this opportunity to take a path that makes them grow, allows them to gain autonomy, and ultimately, the esteem of adults. That is not the case here. The reader/spectator, like the hero, understands that it is never good to want or even to accept to rise out of his condition. The only solution offered to them is submission to adult authority, authority being understood as coercive power.

Chancerel aims for the effectiveness of a conditioning instilling in the child a guilt which leads him to think of himself/herself alone responsible and guilty of the misadventures. All that is of the order of desire is condemned, remains the duty towards the community: in *The Three Lessons of Lududu*, to the question concerning what one can do when one loves his mother, the character throws himself flat on his belly to embrace the Earth, 'body of the Fatherland' in an attitude of submission. Lududu explains to the children that we 'give him [the Fatherland] all that we have, all of our strength, all of our courage, all of our work and our life if necessary'. Then he asks them if they are ready for this; to which all answer in the affirmative. The uncle adds and offers to start immediately, and 'there were the rabbits who first set the example of sacrifice. They fix themselves upon the spit so that the good French workers of the reconstruction of the French Fatherland would not die of hunger.' The inhabitants of the 'garden of joy' have integrated the lesson that the individual has place and existence only if s/he fulfills the role that the Fatherland needs, even if that role is to disappear.

The shows were a great success. This is a participatory theatre in which the ramp (which has a function of separation between the object and the gaze) is removed, as several articles point out. It brings about the fusion between the characters and the small spectators, whose enthusiastic participation translates into cries of joy: 'The ramp does not create a barrier between spectators and actors. These mingle with those and thus an atmosphere of healthy joy and good quality is created.'⁵⁸ The reviewer of 'L'ami du peuple' ('The People's Friend') emphasizes the spectators' identification with the heroes: 'I would like to tell you about the delirious enthusiasm of the room and especially the participation in the dramatic performance of all the little spectators.' He insists on the communion between the stage and the room. He reports that the ramp 'no longer existed. A thousand little fingers were saying "No! No!" a thousand little voices cried: "It's not true, it's not true" when the deceitful Gladiolus tried to deceive our brave Uncle Sebastien'.⁵⁹ This question

⁵⁸ *Spectacles pour enfants (Performances for Children)*, "Nouvelles de Rennes", 21.01.1935, Société d'Histoire du théâtre, no. 48, *théâtre de l'Oncle Sébastien 1934-36*.

⁵⁹ "L'Ami du Peuple", 1936, Société d'Histoire du théâtre, no. 48, *théâtre de l'Oncle Sébastien 1934-36*.

of the removal of the ramp is interesting because it means the abolition of the fence between theatrical space and reality and meets what Chancerel aims with his orchestral as we have seen above.

The tour in Germany

In 1937, Chancerel sent his Comédiens Routiers (Performers on the Road) on tour in Germany and published extracts from the tour notes of Olivier Hussenot (one of the Comédiens Routiers) in the 'Bulletin d'Art dramatique'.⁶⁰ What emerges from these notes is:

- 1) not a criticism of the Nazi regime: 'The audience (...) applauds so loudly that they don't hear us throwing at them the only German word the choir has learned: "Freundschaft";
- 2) the report of a friendly reception: 'The director of the theatre offers Dorimène a beautiful bouquet with a red ribbon. On the ribbon, there are gold letters that say: "Welcome to the Comédiens Routiers", and also a white circle with the swastika inside. (...) The mayor speaks to us and the words he says surely come from the heart";
- 3) report on a familiar experience: 'Comme chez nous' ('like at home');
- 4) on an enrichment: 'The hard-won battle';
- 5) on something new and exhilarating: 'In my life this kind of an adventure has not happened to me'.

A little further on, during the stay in Hannover, Hussenot writes:

In Hannover, we are the hosts of the BDA (Association for intellectual rapprochement with foreign countries) and of La Force par la Joie (organization which deals with workers' leisure). The leaders of the Hitler Youth [Hitlerjugend] believe that in France there is nothing but a living force, a chance to save the country: scouting.

The author, himself a Catholic scout, was honored with the tributes of the leaders of the Hitler Youth, accepting the assimilation of Hitler's project to that of Chancerel. Note that La Force par la joie (Kraft durch Freude) is an organization created in 1933 by Hitler's government to oversee free time and vacations for all.

⁶⁰ "Art Dramatique...", no. 6, fifth year, May 1937, p. 349-350.

In Cologne, they receive a compliment: ‘The mayor (...) greets us as the first swallows.’ Of which Spring? The author does not say so. They are received by Professor Niessen, director of the Institute and Museum of Dramatic Art (and SA squad leader from 1933 to 1939). To note, Chancerel insists on the honor bestowed on the Comédiens Routiers by the eminent professor with whom he has been in contact since 1933.⁶¹ In Düsseldorf, the honors continue. It is not just any little notables that they meet, but personalities reporting the evening in high places: ‘At supper I have the representative of the Propaganda Ministry next to me. We are talking about shows for children.’

The ordeal does not seem to have been insurmountable for Olivier Hussenot or for his comrades: ‘already the road back’ attests that the stay in Germany seemed very short. They pass through Saarbrücken at the time of ‘a great youth festival’ (the festival of Hitlerjugend). A customs officer is surprised that they were able to cross Germany, which confirms that it was not easy to stay there in 1937 but that the Nazi regime allowed them to travel and greeted them with honours.

These extracts from Olivier Hussenot’s journal, chosen to be published by Chancerel, do not fall within the scope of a critical discourse, and this in the context of a ‘Bulletin’ which sets itself the objectives of disseminating the goals, doctrine, methods and the story of the effort of Chancerel and its collaborators. Olivier Hussenot and his companions had a good trip in a context that everyone knows in 1937. This experience is positive for them. But, even more, Chancerel offers this account for the approval of his readers in the May 1937 issue. Then, in the 7-10 June-December issue of the same year, he insists on boasting about the achievement of his program conceived in 1929, as well as its development. He returned to the tour twice, congratulating himself on the success achieved in Germany and celebrated by the German press. However, in 1937, the censorship was vigilant across the Rhine and it was necessary to show white paw to have laudatory articles.

In the same issue, Chancerel prides himself on having received the visit of personalities to the new Kellermann Dramatic Center (which he owed to the international exhibition of 1937) during the ten-day session open to all members of the associations of recognized youth, social workers and educators:

Foreign visitors, and not the least – such as the leader of the Hitler Youth or the USSR delegate to the Class Jury – The high officials Commissioners of

⁶¹ See: Chancerel's praise for Niessen in 1933 which he maintains in “Art Dramatique...”, no. 12.

the Exhibition, its chief architects, representatives of the various ministries concerned recognized the novelty, the necessity, the attractiveness of such an organization, as well as the dedication and competence of our collaborators. For many it was a “revelation”.⁶²

He flatters himself that the leader of the Hitler Youth and an envoy of Stalin recognize in his work an approach which interests them at the highest point, the vocabulary employed is unambiguous (‘the novelty, the necessity, the attractiveness of such an organization, as well as dedication and competence’).

In addition, he returned to the question in 1939 and, in Bulletin n° 61 (published in winter 1939) he continued to assume this tour among the others, specifying especially the work carried out by the welcoming authorities. However, between the time the tour took place and 1939 events occurred (for example, the annexation of Austria in March 1938, the Kristallnacht in November 1938, the invasion of Poland and the outbreak of WW II in the beginning of September 1939) which would have amply justified, had Chancerel had considered it to be opportune, taking a distance, inventing his own explanation. But not a word.

In conclusion

These different activities that Chancerel set up during the years between the wars, and until 1941, are all elements of the system he developed with the objective of the advent of a new social order, and, as the reviewer of ‘The Friend of the People’ writes:

Léon Chancerel has major projects; the material conditions in which he struggles to present his current programs do not allow these to be carried out. He must be helped... at least the City or the Government, realizing their duty towards childhood, do for him what Hitler, Stalin and Mussolini did in their countries for others who also had penetrated the deep and fruitful meaning of childish fairyland.⁶³

This involves setting up a system hostile to the principles of New Education (which puts the autonomy of each child at the center of his work, as proposed by

⁶² “Art Dramatique”, no. 6, fifth year, May 1937, pp. 383-384.

⁶³ “L’Ami du Peuple”, Société d’Histoire du théâtre, no. 48, *théâtre de l’Oncle Sébastien 1934-36*.

Cousinet⁶⁴ and Decroly, for example) and of training children to obey the figure of authority, to fit into the mold imagined by Chancerel, without asking a question, in an attitude of total submission. This is very precisely what Imre Kertész, (Nobel Prize 2002) will denounce in his novel *Fateless*⁶⁵ going so far as to question a concept of education from which it stemmed; and which had prepared him to accept Auschwitz, without judgement. He would go so far as to say to his wife: ‘Auschwitz later appeared to me as an exacerbation of the virtues that were instilled in me since my early youth.’⁶⁶

⁶⁴ See: Roger Cousinet, *Le travail libre par groupes (A Method of Free Labor Groups)*, [1925], Paris, Cerf, 1945.

⁶⁵ See: Imre Kertész, *Être sans destin (Sorstalanság, eng. Fateless)*, Arles, Actes Sud, 1997.

⁶⁶ Imre Kertész, *Kaddish pour l'enfant qui ne naîtra pas (Kaddis a meg nem született gyermekért, eng. Kaddish for an Unborn Child)*, Arles, Actes Sud, 1995, p. 133.

Neumark's retrotopia. In the context of Zygmunt Bauman's theory

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Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to attempt to apply, more or less, the definition-based understanding of retrotopia according to Bauman in the interpretation of local events that occurred both in the first half of the 20th and 21st centuries in the today's Middle Oder Region, historically the land which comprised Neumark.¹

The author of the notion defined retrotopia as

a derivative of the second degree of negation – negation of utopia's negation, one that shares with Thomas More's legacy its fixity on a territorially sovereign topos: a firm ground thought to provide, and hopefully guarantee,

¹ For the changing notion of Neumark see: E. Rymar, *Historia polityczna i społeczna Nowej Marchii w średniowieczu (do roku 1535)* [*Socio-political history or Neumark in the Middle Ages (until 1535)*], Gorzów 2015. In this text, the term "margravia" is used as a common historic and geographical link referring to two currently different administrative regions. However, it is worth noting, that the term Neumark is often an excuse for a discussion on the proper name for the Middle Oder Region. It is also worth mentioning that the Town and Provincial Public Library in Gorzów has, for a dozen or so, years carried out a publishing and conference project called "The Neumark – a forgotten province" wherein authors from Poland and Germany present various effects of own inquiries dedicated to broadly understood Neumark.

an acceptable modicum of stability and therefore a satisfactory degree of self-assurance. It differs, however, from that legacy in approving, absorbing and incorporating the contributions/corrections supplied by its immediate predecessor: namely the replacement of the 'ultimate perfection' idea with the assumption of the non-finality and endemic dynamism of the order it promotes, allowing thereby for the possibility (as well as desirability) of an indefinite succession of further changes that such an idea a priori delegitimizes and precludes. True to the utopian spirit, retrotopia derives its stimulus from the hope of reconciling, at long last, security with freedom: the feat that both the original version and its first negation didn't try – or having attempted, failed, to attain.²

It is the sense of security that one of retrotopia's foundations is grounded on, a security rooted in the past, from which a definite majority of dangerous situations has been prepared for the sake of an idealized future; those, however, left in collective memory, always had a clearly indicated enemy.

While the 19th century was symbolically ended by the World War I (1918) and worldwide Spanish flu epidemic (1917-1920), the end of the 20th century was similarly marked with the COVID-19 pandemic (2020) which spread to the farthest corners of the world, thus giving the reality of the 21st century a brand new quality in the scope of the most broadly understood condition of man and culture. It seems almost obvious, that nation states, subject to strong homogenization, not only continuously need to be driven by ideology which, concurrently, attracts its followers and models a past that is more or less appropriated for own needs of the past, but also to be created anew.

Retrotopia is not only a characteristic quality which belongs solely to late modernity, but it accompanies modern ways of defining and perceiving reality in highly homogenized forms, i.e. nation states, which in fact were born out of the new recomposition of the European scene after World War I. A nation state always inspires to the role of an overseer of memory, generating ways and techniques to understand past in the name of present, short-term objectives which, to their authors, may seem the objectives of a long-term strategy. However, there is something that differentiates modern times from what happened in the past, something that belongs to a collection of such processes as: fear, quiver, speed, stroboscopic effect, simultaneousness and parallelism.

² Z. Bauman, *Retrotopia*, Warszawa 2018, pp. 18-19.

Pliability and manageability of the past, its susceptibility to moulding and remoulding, are simultaneously the sine qua non conditions of the politics of memory, its well-nigh axiomatic presumption of legitimacy and its acquiescence to perpetually reenacted creation. In contemporary society, the principal aim of the politics of historical memory is the justification of the entitlement of the group (called 'nation') to territorially delineated political sovereignty – which in turn is the principal aspiration and objective of nationalism.³

In contemporary times, the nation state, having the power of totalizing its subjectivity, deprives of the right to auto-creative identity attitudes, putting an individual in the formula of *outsourcing* in this respect – waiving a considerable portion or entirety of the possibility to define, in an individual or community formula and in favour of meta-community, abstract bonds inculturated in the education system. Moreover, a nation state, in the name of universality, liquidates the local tradition created as a result of age-long cultural interactions which do not fit the sanctioning of such state's primacy. This is how the author of *retrotopia* presents yet another dependence between the past and the present:

Once stripped of power to shape the future, politics tends to be transferred to the space of collective memory – a space immensely more amenable to manipulation and management, and for that reason promising a chance of blissful omnipotence long (and perhaps irretrievably) lost in the present and in the times yet to come. Most obviously – and therefore most damagingly to our self-confidence, self-esteem and self-pride – we are not the ones who control the present from which the future will germinate and sprout – and for that reason we entertain little, if any, hope of controlling that future; in the course of its formation we seem to be doomed to remain pawns in someone else's chessboard and someone else's – yet someone unknown and unknowable – game. What a relief, therefore, to return from that mysterious, recondite, unfriendly, alienated and alienating world, densely sprinkled with traps and ambushes, to the familiar, cosy and homely, sometimes wobbly but consolingly unobstructed and passable, world of memory: our memory – and so my, as I'm one of us, memory, our memory – memory of our, not their past; a memory – to be possessed (that is, used and abused) by us and us alone. In theory, future is the realm of freedom (everything may yet happen there) – as distinct from the past, the realm of immutable and inalterable inevitability

³ Z. Bauman, *Retrotopia*, Warszawa 2018, p. 180.

(everything that could've happened did); future is in principle pliable – the past is solid, sturdy and fixed once and for all. Whereas, in the practice of the politics of memory, future and past had their attitudes exchanged, or at least were treated as if they did.⁴

It may be noted that the condition of contemporary culture is the multi-sensuality illuminated by stroboscopic sensations felt at the same time: information received at the same time is subject to substitute domestication by the reality of thought and, concurrently, implemented and activated to action without being reflected upon. After a while, another piece or pieces of information replace the output information. In a sense, this reminds of spinning around while being simultaneously bombarded with information, events and sensations.

In such an uncertain and fragile reality deprived of foundations, the operation of associations as micro-communities in action is an attempt to create the world anew, in a local micro-scale, in which associations are, to some extent, a substitute of a counter-balance to stroboscopic multi-sensualism.

It is worth realizing that although the term of retrotopia itself, introduced by Bauman at the end of the second decade of the 21st century, is still too fresh to enumerate comprehensively and in confrontation with time its applications, its implications and in fact, application, as an attempt to describe reality, may date back almost to the beginning of the 20th century.

Below, I present two examples from the history of Neumark/Middle Oder Region which refer to the very practical dispute that busied the minds of scientists and public opinion on one hand, while on the other hand, strongly anchored in retrotopia understood directly as the rule of the past over the present.

What is interesting, is the fact that each of the briefly presented debates pertained to the early Middle Ages in the area, when not only state bodies did not function as they do today (let's remember that these were private states in the full sense of the word), but, primarily, discussing the national ethos in that time is describing rather the state of minds of debaters than an account of the state of affairs. The first example refers to the village of Santok, which became a propaganda and ideological example both for the Nazi state and, to a similar extent, for the Second Polish Republic and the People's Republic of Poland as regards attributing various national lineages to the same places and archaeological artefacts. The other example refers to the battle of Cedynia which constitutes one of the founding myth of the Polish state (understood in 20th century categories).

⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 106-107.

Retrotopia of Santok

Dariusz Rymar states that

on 24 July 1933 an interview was published with prof. Wilhelm Unverzagt, head of the excavation works. The title of the article speaks for itself: The Santok hillfort as a monument of fights for the German East (Der Burgenhügel von Zantoch Ein kampfdenkmal im deutschen Osten). In this interview, Unverzagt regretted that the German science was not involved properly in the national movement to undertake research into the German East. The research into the East, according to Unverzagt, was still in its nascent stage. Differently than in Poland, where the study of this region was stressed considerably and where it is promoted that the German East has always been a part of Poland⁵.

As the journalist from the “Landsberger General Anzeiger für die gesamte Neumark”, which published the interview that quoted prof. Unverzagt, said:

The historical migration in the German East has been a rather new topic in science. The Poles started a broad, political and academic propaganda action, supported by the prehistory and ancient history research centres, primarily in Poznań, the purpose of which is to prove that the entire German East is in fact “ethnically Polish”. We may give credit to German scholars for that they immediately realized their national tasks in this respect, which include letting the land itself speak by means of excavations in the most explosive times in history and to give life to historical documents.⁶

The aforementioned excavation in Santok carried out by prof. Unverzagt:

revealed four layers of Polish hillforts built on top of the other. These layers are filled with manure and chopped straw, the smell of which is still distinct today, during excavation: building towns on manure was a Polish culture, while on the Rhine soared proud German cathedrals!⁷

The article was concluded with the following call/statement:

⁵ D. A. Rymar, *Santok między polityką a nauką w latach 1933-1965* [*Santok between Politics and Science in the Years 1933-1965*], in: *Dzieje Santoka* [*Santok's History*], ed. by R. Piotrowski, Santok 2007, p. 85.

⁶ “Landsberger General Anzeiger für die gesamte Neumark” no. 170 z 24 VII 1933, p. 4.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

From the Santok castle hill the watchtowers of the new border between Poland and Germany are visible, a warning from the present that the eternal struggle in the German East has not ended and will continue until complete victory of the German blood and land.⁸

This is how polemics was initiated, joined by prof. Józef Kostrzewski, who, in an extensive statement addressed to prof. Unverzagt, his former colleague from the Humboldt University in Berlin, wrote:

(...) Based on research of hillforts on the Elbe and Oder rivers, established to protect convenient river crossings, the author traces the Slav and German struggle over the land between the two rivers and to the north of the lower Warta river, and presents in more detail the history of hillforts on the middle Odra, primarily the ones in Losowo and Santok. In his conclusions, the author claims that 'on the lower Warta and middle Odra, the tribes of Pomeranians, Veletis and probably also Lusitzi dynamically, though in vain, opposed the expansionist pursuits of the Polish state' and only "when helped by the Germans" did they succeed in freeing the lands of Lubusz and Pomerania from the Polish invaders' (p. 11). The medieval German colonists brought culture to these lands. "A telling picture of relations on the East prior to this colonization is demonstrated by excavations in Opole and Santok. Homesteads and defensive mechanisms were constructed in the most primitive technique of saddlenotch, with open fire inside, based on thick layers of compacted matted straw with manure. The odour still hanging over these remnants gives a too detailed idea of the then cultural relations. If one realizes that such dwellings are present in the seats of Slav princes, while on the Rhine already stand the great Roman cathedrals, which still fill with awe, one will understand what the culturally more developed German West could give to the primitive Slav East. (...) Thus, we go on to an attempt to judge early medieval Polish culture based on primitive structures and heaps of straw and manure discovered in Santok which the author compares to the Roman cathedrals on the Rhine. This vulgar juxtaposition, repeated with delight by the entire German press, does not bring any honour to the author. What would prof. Unverzagt say, if we, having gone back in time a thousand years, concluded based on Tacitus' 'Germania', that when great Roman amphitheatres, baths and aqueducts soared over the Rhein, the Germans east off Rhine dwelt in dugouts covered with thick layer of straw and manure (chapt. 16), that German children were naked and dirty, that both master

⁸ *Ibidem.*

and slaves rolled around among the same flocks on the same earthen floor (chapt. 20)? Obviously, it would be nonsensical to deny our civilizational youth, explained at that not by some inborn inferiority of Poles, but only by unfavourable geographical location, but despite that, it needs to be stated that the juxtaposition made by prof. U. is irresponsible and aimed at a cheap effect. (...) As for the Santok manure to which the local wooden structures owe their excellent preservation, it would be worth reflecting whether or not it played a certain role in the town's defensive system (lining wooden structures with moist manure could protect it from being lit by the enemy), the more that the discovery of toilets in Santok does not corroborate the alleged untidiness of the Polish garrison. If one were to be spiteful, one would quote to prof. U. what a German historian said of hygiene in the second half of the 17th century in the then capital city of the Prussian state, i.e. Berlin. "The streets were not cobbled and in summer, in bad weather... completely impassable, the filth was enlarged by heaps of manure on the streets and pigsties in front of houses." This quote would be the more telling, considering that it is not 11th or 12th century that it pertains to, but the second half of the 17th century and not a border town but state capital. (...)⁹

The polemics carried out by both the Polish and German academic circles demonstrated not only the qualities of an academic debate, but its primary purpose was to legitimize national or, to be more precise, nationalistic ethos, based on exactly the same archaeological material. When in 1935 a viewing tower was built on one of the hills, modelled after a medieval defensive watchtower, administrative and party authorities (German Worker's Party, NSDAP) came from the nearby Landsberg/Gorzów, as well as representatives of the world of science to celebrate the completion of works¹⁰, while the local press, "Neumärkische Zeitung", covered it as follows:

Over the last few weeks many industrious hands made an effort to create, on this on the historical spot, a monument that looks ahead. Its massive walls rise over the 70 metres' high hill descending to the Warta river, on top of which, centuries ago, the Teutonic Order erected a fortified caste and then defended this bridgehead of Germanness. Upon conclusion of the celebration, prof. Unverzagt used the opportunity to thank the starost,

⁹ J. Kostrzewski, *Odpowiedź prof. Wilhelmowi Unverzagтови [Reply to Prof. Wilhelm Unverzagt]*, in: *Niemcy i Polska. Dyskusja z powodu książki 'Deutschland und Polen' [Germany and Poland. Discussion because of the Book Deutschland und Polen]*, Lwów 1934.

¹⁰ D. A. Rymar, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

dr Faust, for active support of archaeological works and to express utmost recognition for this new symbol of Santok, worked upon by the starost with such engagement. This symbol, the realization of which surpasses even the boldest expectations, is a unique moment (underlined in the original). The ceremony was concluded with the "Sieg-Heil" salute in Führer's and our German homeland's honour¹¹.

Political, territorial and ethnic changes following the World War II on the Acquired Territories caused the effect of "wiping the German oil" and intensified the "repolonization" and polonization of the stagnant material tissue. The Santok viewing tower (funded mainly by the NSDAP) and Santok itself became the subject of justifying the historical title to these lands.

In late summer of 1945, a Polish harvest festival was held in Santok, the first to be held in these territories.

The ceremony was organized by District Starosty, Town Council and the agency of the Polish Western Association. The festivities lasted from 8 to 10 September and were the manifestation of the Polish character of the Lubusz Land. On the last day, all the assembled, led by F. Wida-Wirski, voivode of Poznań, travelled to Santok, where the last, culminating point of the ceremony was held: the first [sowing] of Polish crop on these lands after centuries.¹²

Nina Bukowska from "Głos Wielkopolski" gave a colourful account of the Santok harvest festival:

In a small museum, we watch photographs of remnants of a Proto-Slavic settlement and various archaeological excavations which prove irrefutably who lived on this land. (...) In his recent speech, Churchill expressed a fear that on the Western lands handed over to the Poles, depopulation will cause an empty space. He was only slightly wrong. A space was indeed created, not empty, but white and red, a thin ribbon adorning the facings of clothes worn by thousands of Poles, fluttering at each house.¹³

¹¹ *Die Richterkrone über dem Zantocher Schloßberg*, [The Judges Crown over the Zantoch Castle Hill], "Neumärkische Zeitung" no. 145 of 22 VI 1935.

¹² D. A. Rymar, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

¹³ N. Bukowiecka, *Pierwszy chleb Ziemi Lubuskiej* [First Bread of the Lubusz Land], "Głos Wielkopolski" 1945 no. 202, 8 IX, Poznań.

Bukowiecka was echoed by the “Ziemia Lubuska” weekly, which described the aforementioned harvest festivities in an article called: *The Demonstration of Polishness During Harvest Festivities in Gorzów Wielkopolski*:

A three-days’ celebration left an indelible impression on the entire society, in this case it had a propagandistic meaning, and was a manifestation of Polishness. The festivities were absolutely successful in that. Another author of the weekly, described the event as follows: In ancient Santok, a Polish peasant will drop a handful of grain on this soil, which has, for a thousand years, soaked with Polish blood. Let this grain yield crops of power and might! Let us hold this “key to the Polish state” firmly in hand! Here, through Gorzów Wlkp. and Kostrzyn, the Odra river will take the fruit of our soil to Szczecin (...).¹⁴

As Dariusz Rymar wrote:

On 1 March 1946 in Gorzów, a ceremonial opening of an industrial exhibition presenting the achievements of Gorzów’s industry was held. The exhibition was opened by Stefan Matuszewski, the Minister of Information and Propaganda. Hosting such a prestigious persona is a rarity. His stay was honoured with a trip to Santok. There, the minister saw the museum and a performance of folk ensembles.¹⁵

The minister’s visit resulted in a considerable number of articles in regional and national press. “Głos Wielkopolski” reported that:

When German archaeologists researched Santok between 1932 and 1934, the results of their works were contrary to their expectations. The discovered home appliances, foundations of fortifications, indicated Slavic origin. Biased deviousness were in vain. The Germans could not show the excavations to the world, therefore, the remnants of hillforts and settlement were buried and ploughed. (...) The land itself gives us testimonies that these territories belong to the Polish state. Everyone can see and study them.¹⁶

Reports of “Życie Warszawy” were as follows:

¹⁴ J. J., *Gorzów-Santok*, “Ziemia Lubuska”, 1945 no. 11, p. 2.

¹⁵ D. A. Rymar, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

¹⁶ T. Pasikowski, *Wieczór w Santoku* [*An Evening in Santok*], “Głos Wielkopolski” 1946 no. 70.

(...) When thumbing through old papers, one can find traces of disputes between Władysław Jagiełło and the Teutonic knights. In 1934 the Germans, who had occupied the Lubusz Land for a couple of centuries, found traces of some ancient settlement. They were happy about it. – Finally, some indelible proof of “Proto-Germanness” of this land. They were so confident that they invited prof. Kostrzewski from Poland to participate in excavations. The reality, however, shattered their hopes. Each excavated item was so Slavic in character, that even they, experts in historical falsehood, did not dare question it. All they were left with was to cease works and bury the excavations. On a steep hill, which was once occupied by a Polish hillfort, they built later a miniature castle and inside its tower they hid the uncovered artefacts. They were so confident, that they even had a number of photographs of the uncovered settlement, with inscription “Der dritter Polenburg in X-ten Jahrhundert”. However, fate had it otherwise, over a rocky nest which guarded the proof of the Polishness of these territories, one day fluttered a white and red standard.¹⁷

In April 1947, in Santok, a special rally of local residents and people imported from the nearby Gorzów was organized, aimed initially at protesting against the Marshall Plan, bearing so far-reaching consequences. In the communist Poland, the authorities interpreted this European recovery programme after the destruction of World War II as an attempt to challenge the Western borders of the country. The rally resulted in the adoption of a document/resolution, which reads that

Santok is a historic memento, more important than Biskupin. Poznań was the cradle of the Polish state, whereas Santok is where the struggle for the state's borders took place. This is evidenced by the ashes of 12 consecutive burnt castles. It is here that Mieszko I had his two battles with Wichman, here on the Santok's plains he defeated the treacherous Hodon. The Lubusz Land Museum in Gorzów houses the ancient sword dating back to the times of Mieszko I, dug out from our fields, or beads adorning a Polish girl from a thousand years ago. It is then that a farmer sowed with one hand, in the other holding a sword to protect his home and family. Santok, eternally young and hot, still remains a model for others. We came here after the defeats and destructions of war, tired and exhausted. Now, our home is teeming with life. We work, but we also play, we can afford it, from the ground we have

¹⁷ A. Fedorowicz, *Z podróży po ziemi lubuskiej. Prasłowiańskim szlakiem. Polska przesuwa się na zachód [On Travels across the Lubusz Land. Along the Proto-Slavic Route. Poland Moves West, “Życie Warszawy” 1946 no. 175 of 27.06.1946, p. 3.*

clawed our right to live. For these two years we have worked hard, put almost everything in order, and now, just to satisfy the fantasies of Mr Marshall we are to give our hard work to the Germans? To be slaves for others? To leave this place? To where? That'll be the day! We are people and will not let be treated as slaves! Santok has been and will remain Polish. We will not give up the Lubusz Land. We will not give up the Western Territories.¹⁸

It is worth adding that resuming archaeological excavations in Santok was suggested in early 1950s by prof. Józef Kostrzewski, whereas prof. Wilhelm Unverzagt paid an official visit to Santok in 1958¹⁹.

Retrotopia of Cedynia

Another example of how we are ruled by the past in the context of the Middle Odra region, understood both in the narrow and broad sense, is the local, in form and consequences, discussion which was held in the “Gazeta Chojeńska” between August and November 2007. The discussion was started by the editor-in-chief, Robert Ryss, with an article he entitled *Was the battle of Cedynia really at Cedynia?* Ryss wrote that:

news of the battle based on scarce archive sources of mentions by Thietmar and Bruno of Querfurt, give grounds to pose question marks in spaces occupied to-date by exclamation marks or full stops. And thus, firstly, we cannot be certain whether the Latin Cidini denotes Cedynia and not, for instance, Siedzina or Sitno – ancient villages of Polabians, where, during crusades against infidel fellow men, the knights of Mieszko I fought, and where the prince of the Gniezno state also searched for an opportunity to extend his rule. Secondly, it is not certain whether it was the battle of hosts of knights in the service of the emperors against the army of the Piast’s knights or merely a skirmish involving troops of German soldiers disobedient towards their ruler. And thirdly, are we right to name the leader of our knights, prince’s brother, reported as Cidibor, whose name bears one of the hills at the Odra River, as Czczibor or should we rather refer to him as Zdzibor?²⁰

¹⁸ State Archive in Gorzów (hereinafter referred to as: APG), Powiat of Gorzów Starosty (hereinafter referred to as: SPG), file no. 1029 p. 120.

¹⁹ See: *Prof. dr Unverzagt zbadał Santok* [Prof. Dr Unverzagt has explored Santok], “Gazeta Gorzowska”, X 1958.

²⁰ R. Ryss, *Czy bitwa pod Cedynią była naprawdę pod Cedynią?* [*Was the battle of Cedynia Really at Cedynia?*], “Gazeta Chojeńska”, August 2007, p. 1.

As Zbigniew Czarnuch, who was following the debate, wrote

Mr. Ryss, by replacing certainties with hypotheses, also pointed out the relations between our common knowledge of the battle of Cedynia and the erection of monument with political problems coinciding with the celebration of the Polish State Millennium. It was a period when any domestic problems were played by authorities using the anti-German argument of the eternal 'Drang nach Osten', skilfully connecting the year 972 with the bloody battle fought nearby by the Polish army with the Nazi Germans in 1945, which is so tragically documented by the cemetery in Siekierki.

The author concluded his statement as follows:

Should residents of Cedynia then forget the battle? Surely not! In Poland, everyone associates Cedynia with that event and let it stay that way. The thing is, however, to cleanse the topic of any to-date falsehoods and political, propaganda and xenophobic influences.²¹ After all

as Robert Ryss states in the article referred to above:

the battle of Cedynia is an idea for an authentic, free of falsehoods anchor for regional identity. However, the point is that the search for ethnic purity and eternal Polishness of these lands should be abandoned [...], instead, one should focus on borderland, on perceiving the region as a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural melting pot.²²

The thought-provoking Ryss' article was met with a retort of Sławomir Błęcki, an employee of the Chojna Cultural Centre, who, in his text entitled *Bitwa o bitwę pod Cedynią [Battle for the Battle of Cedynia]* quoted historians identifying Cedynia with Cidini mentioned in bishop Thietmar's chronicles and concluded as follows:

Why would we have to discard a beautiful tradition of battle that spanned over a thousand years' sequence of events and persistent efforts of generations

²¹ Z. Czarnuch, *Bitwa o bitwę pod Cedynią: kontrowersje na temat tożsamości kulturowej małych ojczyzn Nadodrza [Battle for the Battle of Cedynia: controversies regarding the cultural identity of little homelands of the Oder Region]*, "Nadwarciański Rocznik Historyczno-Archiwalny" no. 16, Gorzów 2009, p. 391.

²² R. Ryss, *op. cit.*

building the Polish statehood? Who is offended by the beautiful, monumental memorial depicting an eagle looking over the Odra River to the West, erected on Czeibor Hill? If the battle actually took place in these surroundings – its location is perfect. But if it happened someplace else? The Grunwald Monument is located in Cracow, funded in 1910 by Paderewski [...] Robert Ryss proposes bringing one of the major events in the history of Poland down to a brawl of politically unaware barbarian warlords, and the celebrations of its anniversaries to a colourful local fair, devoid of deeper meaning.²³

A response to Błęcki's article was given by Radosław Skrycki, in paper entitled *Rewidować fałszywą tradycję* [*Revising false tradition*] where he accused Błęcki of ideological involvement which won over a rational exchange of arguments:

The Grunwald Monument unveiled by Paderewski [...] was the initiative of the Polish National Association, an armchair satellite organisation of the National Democratic, and Koneczny is not a 'world class philosopher of history', but one of the main theoreticians of the national camp in the inter-war period.

Skrycki writes about the need for investigating the cultural identity of the "Recovered Territories" postulating that:

We will not escape the German past of the region, and can build our future on it. We have not built many lasting, universal signs, we have adopted much more. We do not need to create any false national myths, and the All-Poland understanding of patriotism brings only harm, making us a laughing stock of our neighbour and Europe. Let us abandon the vulgar heroics in favour of a healthy view of our own past, building a modern future free of falsehoods and hatred towards strangers.²⁴

Saba Keller made a point in "Gazeta Chojeńska", in her article *Kto się bije o bitwę pod Cedynią* [*Who battles over the Battle of Cedynia*] she entered into polemics with Błęcki, identifying ahistorism in his paper that consisted in the identification of the battle/skirmish at Cedynia from the 10th century with the clash of the Poles

²³ S. Błęcki, *Bitwa o bitwę pod Cedynią* [*Battle for the battle of Cedynia*], "Gazeta Chojeńska", September 2007, p. 1.

²⁴ R. Skrycki, *Rewidować fałszywą tradycję* [*Revising false tradition*], "Gazeta Chojeńska", September 2007, pp. 1-2.

with Germans, while both states were only at their nascent stages. Mieszko I did not know the notion of "Poland" yet, and empire Otto I defined himself as a Roman Emperor.

For Sławomir Błęcki, the battle of Cedynia, or the myth thereof, determines our identity of this recovered Polish land. Let us look around us

Saba Keller wrote

where in our region is the evidence of 'eternal' Polishness of these lands? As is aptly said, the houses are in majority post-German, the Odra River was regulated by the Prussians, post-German apple and pear trees still grow in the alleys. How can the battle of Cedynia, dating back to 972, prove the Polishness of these territories?

The author concludes:

Let us stop being the 'defenders', let us become able administrators. Colourful fairs will help us in that and will not be devoid of meaning, if they do not create 'fiery signs of war', but for instance 'fiery dumplings' invented by our housewives.²⁵

Polemics and word clashes in "Gazeta Chojeńska", that lasted until the end of October, demonstrated that

its main problem, i.e. the definition of cultural identity of the region or local communication, is the subject of interest of a very narrow circle of representatives of the intelligentsia, mostly humanists. A sour observation may be made at this point: it is also the intelligentsia that in the 19th and 20th centuries who, while carrying the torch of enlightenment and the ideals of the nation state and the adoration thereof, destroyed the local customs together with standards of co-existence of various ethnic groups and tolerance for different faiths... Atonement? We forgive and plead for forgiveness? If so, it means that finally, these last two world wars have taught the intelligentsia something.²⁶

²⁵ S. Keller, *Kto się bije o bitwę pod Cedynią* [Who Battles over the Battle of Cedynia], "Gazeta Chojeńska", October 2007, p. 1.

²⁶ Z. Czarnuch, *op. cit.*, p. 397.

Conclusion

In *The Historian's Craft*²⁷, Marc Bloch advised historians to have the courage to turn their backs to the past and its problems and, above all, to start living. Through the participation in the social life of an environment (and such is the nature of work of a local community historian), a researcher learns better the mechanisms driving human behaviour, as in history, the human being is always in the centre, and can better meet the social needs of co-residents. Zbigniew Czarnuch posed the following questions regarding identity, which, due to their nature and specificity, fit well in retrotopia:

The researchers of the history of this part of Poland, the fragments of which once bore the names of Pomerania, Silesia, or Greater Poland, Lubusz Land, and then Neumark, Brandenburg, Prussia, Recovered Territories, Western and Northern Territories, voievodships of poznańskie, zielonogórskie, szczecińskie and gorzowskie, when starting their work on formulating and defining their little-homeland identity, must answer a series of questions. These include also the following: Is our post-war presence here most of all an act of historical justice, i.e. the recovery of lands lost ages ago, or mainly an effect of the post-war power shifts in Europe? Depending on the answer to the first question, the relevant definition will have to be chosen: in 1945 these lands were: liberated, recovered, conquered, incorporated?²⁸

It is possible for the past not to rule the present? Especially in a world where the use of the term “time” is changing? As always, answers will be brought by the future, which, although it is never certain, its inevitability seems to be the sole answer to such a question.

²⁷ See: M. Bloch, *Pochwała historii, czyli o zawodzie historyka* [*The Historian's Craft*], Kęty 2009, p. 5 and subsequent.

²⁸ Z. Czarnuch, *Pytania o naszą – tu nad Odrą – tożsamość* [*Questions of our identity – Here on the Oder River*], “Nadwarciański Rocznik Historyczno-Archiwalny” no. 2, Gorzów 1995, p. 237.

Drawing the picture of the evil immigrant. Framing and reiteration as a means of defamation

Jeanette-Christine Bauer

Germany

Introduction

On the night to Sunday, 26 August 2018, at the edge of a town festival in Chemnitz, Saxony, a 35-year-old Chemnitz citizen was stabbed to death with a knife. Among other injuries, his heart and his lungs were punched. It had begun with an argument that resulted in a fatal fight. The alleged perpetrators of the crime were two men from Iraq and Syria. The latter was an accepted asylum seeker. A few hours later, 800 right-extremists, among them hooligans, were racing through Chemnitz threatening migrants. The police were overtaxed. The day after, Monday, 27 August, a demonstration organised by the right-wing extremist movement *PRO CHEMNITZ* gathered 6,000 demonstrators. Only 600 policemen were present.¹ A video report taken by the newspaper “Spiegel” shows how aggressive the

¹ See: A. Rietzschel, *Chemnitz und der Rechtsextremismus: Die unkämpfte Stadt (Chemnitz and the right-extremism: The contested city)*, “Süddeutsche Zeitung” 18.03.2018, <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/chemnitz-daniel-h-prozess-1.4365645> and C. Schönberger, M. Jäschke, *Videoreportage aus Chemnitz: “Hier mischt sich die bürgerliche Mitte mit Neonazis” (Video report of Chemnitz: “Here, the bourgeois middle mingles with neo-Nazis”)*, “Spiegel Online” 28.08.2018, <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/chemnitz-wie-die-afd-von-den-vorfaellen-in-sachsen-profitieren-will-a-1225338.html>.

atmosphere was: Already in the afternoon, reporters were molested when they tried to film the place where the killing had happened. People laid down flowers and lit candles, two men shouted at the reporters: “Get lost! Get lost! This is a place of mourning, get lost!” The reporter, Charlotte Schönberger, spoke of a heated atmosphere. On the side of the right-wing demonstrators Hitler salutes were shown and “foreigners out”-shouts could be heard. Roughly 1,000 counterdemonstrators had also assembled. Finally, the situation escalated, firecrackers and pyrotechnics were used, stones were thrown around. At dusk, the demonstration started moving. They shouted chants like “Chemnitz for the Germans, foreigners out!” or “free, social, and national”, a clear allusion to National Socialism. Later on, there were further scenes of chases and attacks.²

Two days later, the Thuringian leader of the party *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD, Alternative for Germany) and leader of the inner right-wing organisation *Der Flügel* (The Wing), Björn Höcke, announced a silent march in Chemnitz, registered for the 1 September. It was not only announced by the regional AfD groups of Brandenburg, Saxony, and Thuringia, but also by the xenophobic *PEGIDA*³ movement.⁴ With that, Höcke had crossed a red line, by cooperating with right-extremists and *PEGIDA*.⁵

Before that, the leaders of the parliamentary political group, Alexander Gauland and Alice Weidel, criticised the media’s handling of the events:

Instead of, at first, severely condemning the fatal knife attacks [...], you only hear about putative hounding. [...] If the horrible killing of a person in the middle of the street receives less attention and outrage than the angry protest against it, then we have a fatal imbalance”.⁶

² See: C. Schönberger, M. Jäschke, *Videoreportage aus Chemnitz*.

³ PEGIDA is an abbreviation for *Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes*, which means. “Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the Occident”. It is a German nationalist, right-extremist, anti-Islam political movement. In autumn of 2014, PEGIDA began their so-called Monday demonstrations in Dresden. Every Monday evening, people met and marched through the city (cf. Bensmann et al. 2017: 154).

⁴ See: B. Höcke, *Announcement of a Silent March in Chemnitz*, “Twitter” 29.08.2018, <https://twitter.com/BjoernHoecke/status/1034754849043345413>.

⁵ See: F. Schreiber, *Inside AfD: Der Bericht einer Aussteigerin (Inside AfD: The report of a dropout)*, München 2018, p. 122.

⁶ AfD-Fraktion im Deutschen Bundestag, *Weidel & Gauland: Media and Established Parties Split the Society*, “Twitter” 28.08.2018, <https://twitter.com/AfDimBundestag/status/1034439878828859392>, 00:00:26-00:00:54.

According to an article of the newspaper “Spiegel”, “a search via Google shows that there are numerous articles about the attack. But the putative non-disclosure by the media has long belonged to the standard repertoire of PR by the AfD.”⁷

Several thousands of people participated in the AfD’s silent march. It was not the first time that a remembrance service was abused by politics. Normally, the state draws back in a case of mourning. That society wishes to emotionally and collectively handle catastrophes became evident after the killing spree in a high school in Erfurt: 100,000 people participated in the following service in the Erfurt Cathedral, which is estimated to have been the biggest mourning ceremony in Germany since the Second World War. But in Kandel, Freiburg, Mainz, and now Chemnitz, all of them cities, where asylum seekers killed people, right-wing populists organised funeral marches.⁸

The silent march was largely peaceful. The aim was not to be violent, so that there would be no images of violence which could be used against them. It worked, at least at the front, where popular members of the party like Höcke were. When the march came to a halt because the police stopped it, unrest broke out further back and the situation was about to escalate. People shouted “Resistance!”, “Lying press!”, and “Merkel has to go!”. “Only 50 metres were between these screams and the AfD’s part of the silent march, which remained calm”, the newspaper “Zeit” reported. When the atmosphere became too violent, the AfD officially ended the silent march trying to avoid official responsibility for whatever happened later.⁹

After what happened in Chemnitz, AfD politicians commented on Twitter. Among them was Alice Weidel, one of the two parliamentary leaders in the German Bundestag. She has a high presence on Twitter as she sends something almost daily, often even more frequently. She does not post only messages, supported by pictures or newspaper articles, which can be linked, but also video messages.

⁷ S. Weiland, *Gewalt in Sachsen: Wie die AfD von Chemnitz profitieren will (Violence in Saxony: How the AfD tries to benefit from Chemnitz)*, “Spiegel Online” 28.08.2018, <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/chemnitz-wie-die-afd-von-den-vorfällen-in-sachsen-profitieren-will-a-1225338.html>, own translation.

⁸ See: A. Prange, *Trauermärsche – Markenzeichen der AfD? (Silent Marches – Hallmark of the AfD?)*, “Deutsche Welle” 01.09.2018, <https://www.dw.com/de/trauermärsche-markenzeichen-der-afd/a-45321225>.

⁹ See: V. Schönian, *Chemnitz: Erst Schweigen, dann Schläge (Chemnitz: First silence, then punches)*, “Zeit Online” 02.09.2018, <https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2018-09/chemnitz-afd-pegida-kundgebung-rechtsextremismus/komplettansicht>.

Social media like Facebook or Twitter are highly relevant for the self-presentation and mobilisation of the AfD. Concerning the latter, social media replaces the inner structure of the party.¹⁰

Although the AfD and their way of using defamatory strategies has repeatedly become a subject of journalistic and scientific works, there is still insufficient examination using mainly linguistic methods of analysis. That is why at the centre of this article, there will be the Twitter performance of Alice Weidel. The aim of this work is to present the strategies she uses in order to discredit their enemies, namely the asylum seekers, following the hypothesis that defamation happens not only hidden, but also openly.

Political linguistics, which investigate the political language as well as the language of politicians,¹¹ rely on pragmatic, semantic, textual linguistic approaches to describe and analyse the public, the political and the communicative domain in all its facets. It is focused on political lexis, metaphors, argumentation pattern, types of speech, political texts types of conversation, discourses and so on. But recent investigations use more and more multimodal approaches which look into the relation between communication through language and the visual aspect. We can find that in election posters, but also in political talk shows or in internet communication, and analyse the importance of social media in this context.¹² In this article, not only the language Alice Weidel uses in her tweets, but also its interplay with the pictures will be investigated carefully. However, language as the main and most powerful instrument of a politician is a manipulative mean. Through framing, which will be in the centre of the analysis, the speaker lays the focus on only one aspect of a situation, namely that one which suits them better.

Since defamation is at the centre of this article, it will be exemplified by the special case of the insult. As the article deals with a socio-political topic, I will depart from the juridical definition of what an insult is using the *German Criminal Code*. Above all, the juridical definition will be important as in the discussion on the AfD it also has to be negotiated to what extent their insults are acceptable and,

¹⁰ See: C. Butterwegge, G. Hentges, G. Wiegel, *Rechtspopulisten im Parlament: Polemik, Agitation und Propaganda der AfD (Right-wing populists in parliament: Polemic, agitation and propaganda of the AfD)*, Frankfurt (Main) 2018, p. 204.

¹¹ There is a difference, since political language means the language used in political context in general, and language of politicians focuses on the individual use of language by a politician.

¹² See: H. Girnth, A.A. Hofmann, *Politolinguistik*, Heidelberg 2016, p. 7.

therefore, could not be considered against the law, and from which point on the freedom of speech hurts the personal rights that much that it is indeed criminal. From a socio-linguistic perspective, the insult is a face-threatening (speech) act, therefore I will consider John Austin's Speech Act Theory as well as the theory about politeness and face by Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson. Finally, I will discuss possible successes of an openly used defamation.

Before commencing the analysis, I will briefly describe the method used for the analysis, which works with isotopies. Then, finally, the results are presented. It will deal with the twitter posts, Alice Weidel published during and shortly after the events in Chemnitz. However, it will only take into account those which attack immigrant openly or in a more hidden way.

Framing

Politicians mainly act in public discourses, may it be in pronouncing a speech, appearing in talk shows, or arguing in television debates. Also, the image the newspaper and other media draw do their part in constructing a public discourse. Its main function is to achieve that the public will be persuaded and informed simultaneously.¹³ The most important and powerful instrument a politician possesses is language, whose relation to power has already been known by the people of the Greek antiquity.¹⁴ Via language, politicians also achieve what sociologist Peter M. Hall describes as *political impression management*.

Impression management means that control over the conduct of others for one's own interest is achieved by influencing the definition of situation in which all are involved. This is accomplished by acting in such a way that an image is created of the author (and related objects) that leads others to voluntarily act as the actor wishes them to act.¹⁵

The definition of a situation means to make the citizens believe the situation is as described by the performer. When right-wing politicians for example speak

¹³ See: A. Grzywina, *Manipulation and pragmatics in political discourse*, in: I. Kecskes, J. Romero-Trillo (eds.), *Research trends in Intercultural Pragmatics*, Boston – Berlin 2013, p. 380.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 368.

¹⁵ P.M. Hall, *The Presidency and Impression Management*, in: D. Brissett, C. Edgley (eds.), *Life as theater: A dramaturgical sourcebook*, New York 1990, p. 366.

about *waves of refugees*, people automatically associate refugees with a natural catastrophe and, therefore, view them negatively.¹⁶ Consequently, people fear them as they fear natural catastrophes, show their hate towards them and vote for the party. They perceive the situation as the author – here the performing party – wishes them to.

Hall divides political impression management into information flow control and symbolic mobilisation of support.¹⁷ Regarding the first, parties let people only know what they want them to. Due to today's widespread use of the internet and especially social media, information control has become possible though more difficult again. So-called filter bubbles and the echo chamber effect can give users only very limited, one-sided news to read.¹⁸ Moreover, by talking about an incident, people always intuitively pick single aspects on which they lay the focus, while others go by the board – another way of defining a situation.

The above-mentioned waves of refugees are an example of how language influences our political thinking by so-called *framing*. The human brain relates events using Frame Semantics which is based on experiences. As a consequence, individual words influence our perception of the world beyond the single concept through frames.¹⁹ Most of the time we do not even notice how in a single word or phrase is a hidden meaning. It could already be spoken of manipulation of the listener, which in the case of political performance means the citizens – most time without us noticing it. In her book that serves quite well as introduction to political framing, linguist Elisabeth Wehling shows how in a single word or phrase there is always more hidden than what is visible to the eye.²⁰

¹⁶ See: E. Wehling, *Politisches Framing. Wie eine Nation sich ihr Denken einredet – und daraus Politik macht (Political framing: How a nation talks themselves into their thinking – and makes policy out of it)*, Köln 2016, pp. 173-176. How the metaphor *wave of refugees* works as framing will be explained in detail within the analysis.

¹⁷ See: P.M. Hall, *The Presidency and Impression Management*, p. 366.

¹⁸ C. Butterwegge, G. Hentges and G. Wiegel, *Rechtspopulisten im Parlament*, pp. 204ff. discuss in their book the importance of filter bubbles – a bubble of search results, news feeds and advertisement which is created by algorithms and orientated by the former behaviour in the internet – and the echo chamber effect, which means to connect on social media mainly with people who share attitudes and ideologies and, therefore, receive primarily agreements and little disagreement. Especially the latter seems to influence the adherences of the AfD.

¹⁹ See: E. Wehling, *Politisches Framing*, p. 33.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 28f.

Defamation

A popular strategy of right-wing populists is to defame their opponents. For that purpose, they have different possibilities though most of them are criminal according to the *German Criminal Code*. One of them is the insult. Since this thesis is set in a socio-political context, it is crucial to part from the insult as defined by the law and, therefore, the state. With regard to Section 185 of the *German Criminal Code*, the insult is “usually a short formula defined as **proclamation of one’s own disrespect, disdain or disregard**”.²¹ The proclamation takes either the form of a “defamatory factual claim” or of a “defamatory value judgement”.²² Related to the insult are the defamation (German Criminal Code: Section 186) and the intentional defamation (German Criminal Code: Section 187). Intentional defamation (Ger. Verleumdung) designates the intentional distribution of untrue facts. By contrast, the requirement of untruth is not necessary in the case of the defamation (Ger. Üble Nachrede).²³

a) The Insult – a Transdisciplinary Approach

In their theory on politeness, Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson broach the issue of so-called *face-threatening acts*, abbreviated FTA. According to their own statements, they derived the term face from two sources: First, Erving Goffman’s use of the term and second, it stems from the expression “losing face”.²⁴ Goffman, too, discussed the expression²⁵, thus, both reasons actually are rooted in his theory. Losing face means to lose one’s own credibility or to make a fool of oneself. As with Goffman, the term concerns the image that the public has constructed of a certain person and that the person in question wants to protect.²⁶

²¹ R. Rengier, *Delikte gegen die Person und de Allgemeinheit: Mit Fällen und Aufbauschemata (Offences against the person and the general public: Inclusive cases and structure scheme)*, München 2014, p. 245, own translation, emphasis in original.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 246, own translation.

²³ The terms of the official English translation of the *Strafgesetzbuch* (German Criminal Code) are partly misleading. The German version entitles this section of articles “Beleidigung” which means insult, the English translation as “libel and slander”. In this paper, the opinion is represented in that all these acts may be summarised under the term “defamation”.

²⁴ See: P. Brown, S.C. Levinson, *Politeness: Some universals in language usage*, Cambridge 1987, p. 61.

²⁵ See: E. Goffman, J. Best, *Interaction ritual: Essays in face to face behavior: with a new introduction by Joel Best*, London – New York 2005, p. 9.

²⁶ See: P. Brown, S.C. Levinson, *Politeness*, p. 61.

With *acts* they refer to an action that is performed verbally or non-verbally. With that they refer to the Speech Act Theory, which first has been developed by John L. Austin as part of his lecture *How to Do Things with Words*. He, there, proposes a distinction between different Speech Acts, namely the *locutionary*, the *illocutionary*, and the *perlocutionary acts*. The locutionary act means the use of language, thus corresponding to the act of making the statement. It exists, if the statement itself has a signification. The illocutionary act performs an action e.g. to order, to warn or to inform. Finally, the perlocutionary act aims for an effect like persuasion or discouragement.²⁷ Depending on the statement different acts may be present: either the illocutionary or the perlocutionary. The locutionary act is always present in a statement, as it has to be performed either way. “Austin, of course, distinguishes between illocutionary and perlocutionary acts of speech, between actions that are performed by virtue of words, and those that are performed as a consequence of words”.²⁸ Hence, FTA are (discursive) actions threatening the self-image of one person or several people.

The insult as well as the accusation, another strategy of defamation, too, belong to the FTA, which happen on a personal level. The speaker *does not like* the hearer’s face or self-image or at least a part of it. By contrast, contradictions and disagreements happen on an objective level: The speaker believes that something the hearer says, does or wishes is wrong. However, the speaker might only claim the listener to be wrong, although it is not true – a case that Brown and Levinson do not mention explicitly. The sole aim here is to destroy the hearer’s face.

At the beginning of the section, I quoted the legal definition of the insult. It has shown that for the law and, hence, for the criminal liability only the expression itself counts as an insult. In comparison with other criminal offences related to defamation e.g. the intentional defamation, which alongside the insult is considered as the strongest form of socio-communicative depreciation,²⁹ or the defamation,³⁰ it gets clear which act count for the law. For the Criminal Code only the action itself (illocutionary act) counts and not what the action may have caused in the feelings of

²⁷ See: J.L. Austin, J.O. Urmson, *How to do things with words: The William James lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955*, Oxford 1976, pp. 98ff., 109f., 121.

²⁸ J. Butler, *Excitable speech: A Politics of the Performative*, New York 1997, p. 44.

²⁹ See: A. Baur, *Beleidigung (Insult)*, in: G. Ueding (ed.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik: Band 10 – Nachträge von A-Z (A historical dictionary of rhetoric: Vol. 10 – Supplements from A to Z)*, Berlin – Boston 2012, p. 116.

³⁰ Intentional defamation (Ger. Verleumdung) designates the intentional distribution of untrue facts. By contrast, the requirement of untruth is not necessary in the case of the defamation (Ger. Üble Nachrede).

the affected person or what it may have caused concerning the person's face in public (perlocutionary act). This means effects "which may defame him or negatively affect the public opinion about him."³¹ Thus, for the criminal liability only the possible effects count. It does not matter whether or not they occur, whether the public changes its perception of the person or not. The mere attempt is already punishable.

Remaining with the Speech Acts but taking a step towards the performativity of language, I would like to touch upon philosopher and philologist Judith Butler's considerations concerning hate speech. In her book *Excitable Speech* (1997) she claims "that the speech act is a bodily act, and that the 'force' of the performative is never fully separable from bodily force: this constituted the chiasm of the 'threat' as a speech act at once bodily and linguistic."³² Consequently, an expressed threat, i.e., means not only a threat to the face but also a threat to the body. Thus, the verbal threat has to be punished. At this point, the question must be asked to what extent an insult constitutes a threat to the physical integrity. An insult indicates a negative emotion toward a person which can swell to hatred. It is not far from verbal hatred to verbal violence, and even less from the latter to embodied violence. As Butler states, "hate speech is understood not only to communicate an offensive idea or set of ideas but also to enact the very message it communicates: the very communication is at once a form of conduct."³³

How true her claim is, was shown by the murder of Walter Lübcke in June 2019. The CDU politician probably became a victim due to his attitude towards a humane asylum policy. Already in 2015, he became the centre of right-wing extremist hate speech after advocating for a humane treatment of refugees and asserting that those who do not like to represent said values are free to leave the country. At that time, he was temporarily under police protection. In February 2019, he became victim of right-wing hate speech again from former CDU politician Erika Steinbach. She published a blog entry on Facebook reminding the public of Walter Lübcke's previous statement. The atmosphere heated up until it finally ended in murder. Moreover, even after his death, right-wing extremists expressed themselves hatefully and viciously.³⁴ Walter Lübcke is the sad example of how hate speech,

³¹ Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection, *Criminal Code in the version promulgated on 13 November 1998, Federal La Gazette [Bundesgesetzblatt]*, http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_stgb/englisch_stgb.html#p0012, Sections 187f.

³² J. Butler, *Excitable Speech*, p. 141.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 72.

³⁴ See: P. Maxwell, *Mordfall Walter Lübcke: Ein rechtes Rätsel (The murder of Walter Lübcke: A right-wing riddle)*, "Spiegel Online" 19.06.2019, <https://www.spiegel.de/panorama/justiz/walter-luebcke-was-wir-ueber-den-mordfall-wissen-und-was-nicht-a-1273031.html>.

a speech act threatening the face, has turned into murder, a bodily act threatening the body. What was even worse, was the reaction by Martin Hohmann (AfD) who literally claimed that Walter Lübcke would still be alive, if Angela Merkel had not illegally opened German borders for refugees.³⁵ However, as the analysis will show, it fits the AfD's performance.

However, even if the body remains unhurt, the face does not, as we have seen above. The public attitude toward the affected person may be influenced negatively. But before it becomes punishable, the courts have to decide whether hate speech is actually hateful, or, in the case of the insult, whether the insult actually *was* an insult.³⁶ At the same time, according to Butler, the courts create hate speech in the first place:

I would like to suggest a formulation for the problem that might seem paradoxical, but which I think, even in its hyperbolic mode, might shed some light on the problem that regulating hate speech poses. That formulation is this: *the state produces hate speech*, and by this I do not mean that the state is accountable for the various slurs, epithets, and forms of invective that currently circulate throughout the population. I mean only that the category cannot exist without the state's ratification, and this power of the state's judicial language to establish and maintain the domain of what will be publicly speakable suggests that the state plays much more than a limiting function in such decisions; in fact, the state actively produces the domain of publically acceptable speech, demarcating the line between the domains of the speakable and the unspeakable, and retaining the power to make and sustain that consequential line of demarcation.³⁷

I would like to challenge her partly. Some statements, in my opinion, do not have to be classified by the state as unspeakable. When Kay Nerstheimer describes homosexuals as a “degenerated species”,³⁸ he was performing a discriminatory

³⁵ See: C. Stöcker, *Mordfall Lübcke und die AfD: Wer ist schuld am NSU? Konrad Adenauer! (The case Lübcke and the AfD: Who is to blame for the NSU? Konrad Adenauer!)*, “Spiegel Online” 30.06.2019, <https://www.spiegel.de/wissenschaft/mensch/walter-luebke-die-seltsamen-theorien-der-afd-a-1274886.html>.

³⁶ See: Butler, *Excitable Speech*, p. 96.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 77, emphasis in original.

³⁸ This statement was made by Kay Nerstheimer who is an independent member of the Berlin Landtag. After the statement, the former AfD politician was sentenced in February 2018 to a fine of 7,000 Euros, see K. Bischoff, *Berliner AfD-Politiker verurteilt. Nerstheimer muss 7000 Euro Strafe zahlen (Berlin AfD politician sentenced. Nerstheimer must pay 7000 Euro fine)*, “Berliner Zeitung” 13.02.2018, <https://www.berliner-zeitung.de/berlin/polizei/berliner-afd-politiker-verurteilt-nerstheimer-muss-7000-euro-strafe-zahlen-29697746>.

action. No court is needed to recognise that calling a person mentally (or bodily) defective due to his or her sexual preferences belongs to hate speech, but moral judgement is able to evaluate it as discriminatory act.

b) Why Use Defamation as Strategy?

As indicated above, the aim of insulting is to depreciate the image of a certain person. Politicians primarily aim to strengthen their own face and undermine that of their opponents like other politicians or opposing parties. Obviously, this should not happen through derogatory statements. However, it can be observed that this is exactly what happens. The intention of the insult as determined by the HWRh describes the relation between the political participants quite accurately:

Its purpose is the public allegation and display that a person's claim of social validity (honour) as part of his or her persuasively usable ethos has not existed, has been destroyed or, meanwhile, has been forfeited.³⁹

The affected person or group of people can lose their face. Certainly, this is the speaker's intention. They may lose credibility or, at the very least, the voters' trust. The expertise of the politician or the whole party might be questioned. In the worst case, as a result of the perlocutionary act of the insult, the affected person has to rebuild his or her image, to win the voters' trust back and prove their expertise in order to repair his or her credibility. However, the HWRh points out another factor which can be attained with the insult or the defamation in general: the destruction of a person's or of a group's claim to social validity. Particularly parties such as the AfD often attack groups of people who do not suit their picture of 'normality', 'typically German' or 'German people' like homosexuals, asylum seekers, foreigners in general, Muslims and so forth. Their intention is to attack those peoples' dignity, devalue them through insulting statements and, hence, publicly demonstrate their putative social irrelevance, inferiority or dishonour.⁴⁰ There must be a distinction whether or not the affected person is present and can defend themselves.⁴¹ This

³⁹ Baur, *Beleidigung*, p. 116, own translation.

⁴⁰ This claim has been analysed and confirmed by me before. See J.-C. Bauer, 'Courage for Truth'. *A Performance Analysis of the German Right-Wing Party 'Alternative für Deutschland' Exemplified by Their Current Leader Frauke Petry's Strategy of Defamation in Two Political Talk Shows*, course paper for the master's degree Sprachen, Kommunikation und Kulturen in Europa at European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder) 2017.

⁴¹ See: A. Baur, *Beleidigung*, pp. 121f.

opportunity for the affected people to defend themselves is often present in public debates like talk shows or parliamentary debates. The person can also react to statements broadcast on the internet, e.g. on Twitter as well as to newspaper articles, TV or radio reports. However, this might occur relatively delayed. In this case, the affected people have a public presence. It is more difficult to defend oneself for communities like those named above as they have less privilege.

On the basis of the insult's particular characteristics to neither be justified argumentatively nor be directly linked with empirical truthfulness⁴² there are only limited possibilities of defence such as counter insults, social (legal) sanctions and abandoning communication. Demanding an argumentative justification for the insult by means of a rhetorical question is paradoxical, because there is no argumentative justification as seen above and does not require any proof.⁴³

Nevertheless, due to the particularity of a missing argumentative basis as mentioned above, not only are there limited chances for defence but also for success. If the addressees are not convinced of the speaker's opinion, they will not accept the insult.⁴⁴ If, for instance, the addressees are not homophobic a priori, they will not accept the statement that homosexuals are a "degenerated species".

c) Interim Conclusion: A Short Definition of Insult

Based on the subsections above, a short summarising definition of the insult shall be given:

An insult is a value judgement that is not based on arguments. It threatens the self-image or positive face of one person or several people through showing i.e. disdain. From the perspective of the Speech Act Theory, the illocutionary act is decisive for the evaluation of the insult. The perlocutionary act can only be assessed by the affected person.

Twitter and Social Media: Structure and imagery of the tweets

Twitter is a microblogging platform. Members can publish short messages, so-called tweets, with a maximum length of 280 strokes. Based on hashtags, words that are linked by the sign #, users can find tweets about any topic. Topicality is the most important characteristic of the real-time medium Twitter. Messages can

⁴² See: *Ibidem*, p. 116.

⁴³ See: *Ibidem*, p. 122.

⁴⁴ See: *Ibidem*, p. 121.

spread very quickly through the function *retweet*, which means sharing a tweet sent by someone else.⁴⁵

Social media like Facebook or Twitter are highly relevant for the self-presentation and mobilisation of the AfD. Concerning the latter, social media replaces the inner structure of the party.⁴⁶ The number of followers of Alice Weidel on Facebook 315 984 and 273 580 people who liked the page, on the date of 21 November 2020) is considerably higher than the number of followers on Twitter (109 300; same date).

Regarding the images, the structure and imagery of the party's tweets are widely consistent in reminding of the campaign for the Bundestag elections in 2017.

In the foreground, in bold type, there is a shortened reproduction of parliamentary debates, a demand, a slogan or a quotation. This is usually contextualised by another line regarding the occasion [...] and framed by party or fraction emblems.⁴⁷

The pictures in the background depend on the topic. Butterwegge and his colleagues have identified two main schemata: The first one shows AfD politicians similar to a passport photo showing the head and the chest. The view is frontally, straight ahead. Thus, they look directly at the person who views the images. That comprises, first, a personalisation of the message and, second, the viewer is directly addressed. The second scheme aims for escalation with regards to content. The image plane tends to leave plenty of room for interpretation. Often, a concept of an enemy is presented.⁴⁸

Analysis approach and methods

Alice Weidel's performance will be analysed by means of statements published on Twitter. Beside pictures, she also posts video messages, which will not be considered in this article.

The analysis of the twitter statements will be mainly concentrated on the pictures she attaches to her tweets. The main focus is on the writing of the pictures. In

⁴⁵ See: Spiegel Online, *Thema Twitter. Alle Artikel: Hashtag-Gezwitscher (Topic Twitter. All articles: Hashtag-tweeting)*, 2019, <https://www.spiegel.de/thema/twitter/>.

⁴⁶ See: C. Butterwegge, G. Hentges, G. Wiegel, *Rechtspopulisten im Parlament*, p. 204.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 208, own translation.

⁴⁸ See: *Ibidem*, p. 209.

order to gain an overall meaning of the pictures, the statements on the pictures are analysed with isotopies.

The isotopy is a concept that goes back to Algirdas Julien Greimas' *Structural Semantics* (1983) and is based on the assumption that the meanings of lexemes or different lexical units are combined to form a complex structure beyond the boundaries of single sentences.⁴⁹ Greimas himself defines the isotopy in his writing *Du Sens* (1970) as "a series of redundant semantic categories which make a uniform reading [...] possible".⁵⁰ That means isotopies are a kind of relational meaning between semantically similar elements within a text. Within e.g. the text semantics, the formation of coherence can be explained through isotopies, since they may change ambiguous elements into monosems.⁵¹ However, text in my work does not mean a self-contained text, but in a broader sense the different expressions of a person within a context.

By means of repeated isotopies, particularly isotopy-combinations on different pictures, the intentions of Weidel are made transparent. Only in cases in which it seems useful for the understanding, the tweet itself, which means the writing accompanying the pictures, will be analysed, too. After the isotope analysis, the tweets were sorted into different groups of meaning. Only those which picture immigrants as the enemy will be included in this article.

Analysis results: Asylum seekers as violent criminals

At the AfD's Federal Party Congress in April 2017, Weidel ran as top candidate for the Federal elections. But she announced only to campaign together with Alexander Gauland, who is somewhat the AfD's *éminence grise*.⁵² He did the same. If he had not, Weidel would not have been voted in, especially by the extreme right, because of her professional career – she had worked for the American multinational investment bank *The Goldman Sachs Group*, at Allianz, and at the Bank of China – and because of her private life – raising two children with her female partner.⁵³ She publicly admitted to being homosexual and raising a family of two sons. Therefore, parts of the AfD, especially the right-wing inner organisation *Der Flügel* considers her a problem since, according to their ideology, children need a mother and

⁴⁹ See: R. Bergmann, *Isotopie (Isotopy)*, in: H. Glück, M. Rödel (eds.), *Metzler Lexikon Sprache (Metzler dictionary on language)*, Stuttgart 2016, p. 311.

⁵⁰ Quoted after A. Zinna, *Isotopy*, in: T.A. Sebeok (ed.), *Encyclopaedic dictionary of semiotics: Tome I: A – M*, Berlin 1994, p. 400.

⁵¹ See: R. Bergmann, *Isotopie*, p. 311.

⁵² See: C. Butterwegge, G. Hentges, G. Wiegel, *Rechtspopulisten im Parlament*, p. 36.

⁵³ See: M. Bensmann et al., *Schwarzbuch AfD: Fakten, Figuren, Hintergründe (Black book AfD: Facts, figures, backgrounds)*, Essen 2017, p. 82.

a father. However, for the AfD’s image, she is useful, because with her the party can demonstrate its tolerance as they do with every Jewish, black or even Muslim member.⁵⁴ Beside Gauland, Weidel is now one of the AfD’s two parliamentary group leaders in the German Bundestag.



+++ Peaceful protest is the means of the moment! +++
Let us not be intimidated any longer, let’s show the Merkels of this republic that we are silent no longer. #AfD #Chemnitz

Picture:
Syrian and Iraqi men slaughter victim stabbing him 25 times!
The slaughter keeps going on!

Figure 1. Tweet from 27 August 2018 by Alice Weidel and its translation

The first reaction by Alice Weidel after the night a young man from Chemnitz was killed and the first demonstration took place occurred directly the day after. Regarding structure and imagery, the tweets sent on the profile of Alice Weidel coincide with those of the party profile described in the section about Twitter and Social Media. She operates within both schemata, the passport photo and the escalation scheme. Although with a critical expression, she still looks straight ahead (Fig. 1). The picture of this tweet might not perfectly represent the first scheme, since there are many pictures in which Alice Weidel really looks straight to the front, but it has a special quality: It combines both schemata. In the background, behind her, the shadow of a hand holding a knife can be seen. Red blots, slightly blurred, are on the poster as if they were blood. Thus, the picture

⁵⁴ See: F. Schreiber, *Inside AfD*, pp. 102f.

not only personifies the content by indicating a direct quote of Alice Weidel, it also creates an enemy concept.

In bold type it says: “The slaughter keeps going on!” (Fig. 1) It is not a shortened reproduction of a parliamentary debate, nor a demand, a slogan or a quotation, but a claim with the intention to scare the viewer. Above, there is another line which contextualises the claim: “Syrian and Iraqi men slaughter victim stabbing him 25 times!” (Fig. 1) Thus, there is the context: Two immigrants, one from Syria the other from Iraq killed someone. The bold typed statement suggests that it was not the first time and will not be the last time that something similar happens. Syrians and Iraqis belong to the typical nationalities that represent the current asylum seekers. Those who have a great deal of imagination or know the party and its contents well enough can imagine to which specific group of people the statement refers. The threatening background of the composite image reinforces the statement that aims to scare the public. Furthermore, it looks like the shadowed hand with the knife is sneaking up to Alice Weidel. Hence, she is in danger just like everybody else. Together with the actual tweet, “Let us not be intimidated any longer, let’s show the Merckels of this republic that we are silent no longer” (Fig. 1), it expresses that the AfD is a victim of the chancellor’s refugee policy, too. One could also take a closer look at the interplay of light and shadow: The shadow represents the evil, which in this case symbolises the refugees. By contrast, Alice Weidel stands in the light – she, representing her party, is the good one, the one who brings truth. At the bottom right of the picture there is the party logo and the sign that indicates that they form a parliamentary group in the German Bundestag. At the bottom left, Alice Weidel’s name is written to associate the statement with her.

In conclusion, the picture suggests that there will be more killings in the future and that the AfD, represented here by Alice Weidel, is a victim of the refugee policy too. The invitation “Let us not be intimidated any longer, let’s show the Merckels of this republic that we are silent no longer” (Fig. 1) is a direct address to the viewer. The *us* is inclusive, comprising the party and the citizens. In doing so, Alice Weidel expresses: *We, the AfD, belong to you, we are one of you.*

Of course, there is only one person with the last name Merkel in German politics, and she is the chancellor Angela Merkel. By using the plural, Alice Weidel also includes those who support the chancellor, mainly the CDU and the government, and claims that the government only complies with what the chancellor dictates them. In the following announcement, Alice Weidel says something else: *We are silent no longer* means that they will not condone their perceived injustices anymore. Thus, she indirectly blames Angela Merkel and her government for the events in Chemnitz. Furthermore, she supports the protests against the reaction, which is

also emphasised by how she titles the caption: “Peaceful protest is the means of the moment!” (Fig. 1) The only problem is that the protests of the 27 August were not peaceful, something Alice Weidel ignores in her statements.

Hence, Alice Weidel does not only create the enemy concept in the asylum seekers, but also in the government, represented by chancellor Angela Merkel. At the same time, she evokes the image that the AfD is ready to fight any unjust act side by side with the people.



Parliamentary group of the AfD in the German Bundestag

+ ++#Chemnitz is everywhere: Wave of knife crimes doesn't break off!+ +
 Instead of report the truth, media and established parties mock the victims, qualify the actions and stir up hatred against citizens, who don't want to accept these conditions anymore. Thus #AfD!

Picture:
 Chemnitz is everywhere!
Title of the homepage at the bottom:
 Knife immigration

Figure 2. Tweet from 28 August 2018 by Alice Weidel and its translation

A day later she published several tweets. One of them (Fig. 2) was originally sent by the account of the parliamentary group of the German Bundestag, Alice Weidel shares it on her page. As it appears on her user profile and therefore contributes to the face constructed by her and serves as attack against asylum seekers, it will be analysed as well. As opposed to the first picture, this does not match the structure described at the beginning. In the foreground, the face of a young woman is shown, but only one half. The woman is blond, which makes her a representative of the ‘typical German woman’. Behind her in the background, the contours of a map of Germany are shown. Said map can be found on the homepage www.messereinwanderung.de which is linked in the tweet and which is indicated at the

bottom of the picture. It is called *Karte des Schreckens* (“Map of Horror”). On the map, there are many blades that indicate places where knife attacks happened. The creators listed crimes such as robberies, inflicted injuries and similar offences in which knives had been used since 1 October 2017. There is also a time line on the homepage listing single cases.⁵⁵ In the picture of the tweet, written in bold type, the declaration “Chemnitz is everywhere!” from the caption is repeated. The second phrase of said caption is revealing as well: “Wave of knife crimes doesn’t stop!” (Fig. 2). It is a typical example of political framing. *Wave* is associated with forces of nature, the worst form being a tsunami which kills thousands of people at once. Moreover, a wave that does continue and the water that keeps on flowing is a danger well known in Germany, especially in flood areas. Just as the river overflows its banks and floods entire towns and villages, so do immigrants flood Germany and with them knife crimes. The defamation of immigrants is doubled: first by equating them with a natural catastrophe and second by placing all of them under general suspicion of being criminals.



+ +Consequence of #Chemnitz:
deport criminal immigrants
immediately!+ +
Daniel H., too, could still be alive, if
foreign perpetrators of violence and
criminals like Yousif A. were to be
consequently deported. That is the
true scandal of these events.
#AfD

Picture:
Consequence of Chemnitz:
deport criminal immigrants
immediately!

Figure 3. Tweet from 30 August 2018 by Alice Weidel and its translation

⁵⁵ See: AfD-Fraktion im Bundestag, *Messereinwanderung – Karte des Schreckens! (Blade immigration – Map of horror!)*, 2018, <https://www.afdbundestag.de/messereinwanderung-karte-des-schreckens-afd-fraktion-im-bundestag/>.

Just two days later she draws a conclusion and requests the government to take the appropriate measures, namely to “deport criminal immigrants immediately” (Fig. 3). The picture (Fig. 3) follows the usual structure and imagery: In the foreground, it shows the head and the upper part of the body of Alice Weidel who looks straight at the viewer. In the background, there is a street with a large blood splatter. The background picture supports the context of violence. Alice Weidel’s request appears in bold type and in another smaller typeface the request is contextualised as “Consequence of Chemnitz” (Fig. 3). The tweet itself reinforces the mental connection of immigrants with violence:

++Consequence of #Chemnitz: deport **criminal immigrants** immediately!++
 Daniel H., too, could probably still be alive, if *foreign perpetrators of violence* and **criminals** like *Yousif A.* were to be consequently deported. That is the true scandal of these events.
 (Fig. 3)

Like the pictures, it contains isotopies of both

Violence: criminal, perpetrators of violence, criminals

and

Immigrants: immigrants, foreign, Yousif A.

It is conspicuous how the single words of both isotopies are linked, as one is the adjective that specifies the subject taken from the other isotopy, except for the final one in which the refugee Yousif A. serves as an example for criminals per se.

However, in this post, Alice Weidel does not openly put all immigrants under universal suspicion by demanding only that all **criminal** immigrants are deported. But through the isotopies, she creates this relation subconsciously in the viewer.

Nevertheless, for the AfD there are others who truly must be blamed. The last sentence of the tweet gives the hint: *That is the true scandal of these events.* Its exact meaning is somewhat hidden. Alice Weidel uses the conjunctive and a modal particle to express herself. The conjunctives are those of a conditional clause type two, thus she expresses an unreal condition of the present. The young man is dead and that cannot be changed anymore. However, it could have been prevented. The modal particle *wohl*, translated as *probably* which she uses in the first part of her sentence indicates an assumption, which she clearly takes as affirmed. Although his asylum application had been dismissed, the refugee was not deported. To ensure that refugees like him leave the country is the task of the government, but they did

not take the action. Hence, in a subtle way, Alice Weidel blames the government for the death of the young man in Köthen.



+ + +Share! Change in immigration now!+ + +

Again, a German murdered of trivial cause. Again migrant, this time from Afghanistan, are the suspects. Is the next sponsored pro-multiculturalism concert now coming to #Köthen? #AfD

Picture:

Murder in Köthen: How many more? Change in immigration NOW!

Figure 4. Tweet from 9 September 2018 by Alice Weidel and its translation

Not until over a week later she expresses herself again, relating immigrants with violence (Fig. 4). In Köthen, a city in Saxony-Anhalt, another young man died after being involved in a conflict between several Afghans, in which he tried to mediate. The confirmed cause of death was a heart failure. Nevertheless, two Afghans were remanded in custody as the young man suffered the heart attack after a blow to his face that knocked him out.⁵⁶

The picture (Fig. 4) accompanying the tweet follows the typical structure with Alice Weidel looking straight at the viewer in the foreground and a contextualising image in the background, which shows the scene of the altercation in Köthen after people laid down flowers and candles. In bold type Alice Weidel demands an “Change in immigration NOW” (Fig. 4, emphasis in original). Another line contextualises that: “Murder in Köthen: How many more?” (Fig. 4). Combining

⁵⁶ See: S. Klormann, *Was über den Vorfall in Köthen bekannt ist (What is known about the incident in Köthen)*, “Zeit Online” 20.09.2018, <https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/zeitgeschehen/2018-09/sachsen-anhalt-koethen-fluechtlinge-rechtsextremismus-herzinfarkt-todesursache-faq>.

both lines, the relation between violence and immigrants is created. Although the tweet does not deal with the events in Chemnitz, it is part of the analysis as it refers to them by asking “Is the next sponsored pro-multiculturalism concert now coming to #Köthen?” (Fig. 4) to mock the government, especially Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier who advertised a concert in Chemnitz with the motto *we are more*.⁵⁷

Alongside the question *How many more?* Alice Weidel shows a picture containing the demand for an immediate change in immigration policy, which is an accusation against the government. Her statement suggests that until the immigration policy is changed, the murders cannot be stopped. However, what happened in Köthen was not murder. The two men were in custody due to grievous bodily harm resulting in death. In this year in May, both men were sentenced, but not for murder.⁵⁸ Nevertheless, Alice Weidel calls it murder. She thus implies a vicious intention of the two Afghans which they probably did not have. However, a murder fits much better in the concept of the evil immigrant. In addition, it creates another opportunity to blame the government for their refugee policy. Furthermore, shortly after the events in Chemnitz, when the debate had not yet completely cooled down, there was another opportunity to maintain said debate in an emotional way, scaring and terrorising the citizens with terrible, though untrue horror stories about the immigrants.

Which is exactly what Alice Weidel does. Two days later, she tweets again creating the enemy concept in asylum seekers and blaming the government. Again, the picture (Fig. 5) follows the usual structure with her looking straight at the viewer. The context is the event in Köthen. According to the tweet, the Afghani, one of the two suspects, “should have already left the country in April”, hence, “[e]xpulsions can save lives” (Fig. 5). The latter, which is the consequence Alice Weidel draws, is the bold typed claim, she particularly emphasises in the tweet itself: “Asylum seekers that have been refused must be immediately deported without further ado; criminal migrants have no place in Germany, the protection of citizens must not be neglected! #Koethen #AfD #Bundestag” (Fig. 5).

⁵⁷ See: C. Teevs, *Wegen Unterstützung für Konzert in Chemnitz: CDU-Spitze kritisiert Steinmeier* (Due to support of concert in Chemnitz: CDU leaders criticise Steinmeier), “Spiegel Online” 03.09.2018, <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/chemnitz-annegret-kramp-karren-bauer-kritisiert-frank-walter-steinmeier-a-1226255.html>.

⁵⁸ See: dpa, *Köthen-Prozess: Angeklagte akzeptieren Urteil nicht* (Köthen trial: Defendants do not accept the sentence), “Süddeutsche Zeitung” 27.05.2019, <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/news/panorama/prozesse---koethen-anhalt-koethen-prozess-angeklagte-akzeptieren-urteil-nicht-dpa.urn-newsml-dpa-com-20090101-190527-99-404102>.



Asylum seekers that have been refused must be immediately deported without further ado; criminal migrants have no place in Germany, the protection of citizens must not be neglected!
#Koethen #AfD #Bundestag

Picture:
Köthen: Afghani should have already left the country in April!
Expulsions can save lives!

Figure 5. Tweet from 11 September 2018 by Alice Weidel and its translation

The tweet contains several implications. First of all, it implies that violence would decrease, if all refused asylum seekers were deported immediately after the rejection of their application. The implication omits that there are far more reasons to refuse asylum seekers entry than the suspicion of being criminal. In Germany, only people who are politically persecuted are entitled to asylum. Nevertheless, there are restrictions.⁵⁹ Hence, not every asylum seeker whose entry is refused is a criminal. On the other hand, it implies that only refused asylum seekers are criminal, which is not true either.

The third implication concerns the government. In the pictures, Alice Weidel uses the conjunctive II *hätte [...] verlassen sollen* (English: should have left). It indicates an irreal condition of the past on the motto: *If he had been expelled after his refusal, there would have been no death*. He was not, hence somebody died. It is the government who is to be blamed for this, because it would have been their task to act.

However, it needs to be mentioned that Alice Weidel again differentiates in the tweet itself between asylum seekers or immigrants in general and those who are or

⁵⁹ See: Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection, *Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany in the revised version published in the Federal Law Gazette Part III*, 2014, http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_gg/englisch_gg.html#p0017, Article 16a.

have been criminal. Though, compared to the bold type of the claim in the picture, which refers to all asylum seekers, it is written in fine print. Thus, it is crucial to read the whole tweet to see that reservation.

In short, the tweet can be compared to the tweet in which Alice Weidel uses the same strategies to claim that Daniel H. could still be alive, if the asylum seekers had been deported as officially required (cf. Fig. 3). In this tweet, however, she does not place every asylum seeker under general suspicion but differentiates. Furthermore, she blames the government in both and places herself beside the citizens.

Conclusion

As we have seen in the theoretical part of this article, language is a very powerful though manipulative instrument which has the power to influence our perception of the world. One method of evaluating a situation is linguistic framing: Using certain words, the human brain associates a situation with a different one through so-called cognitive frames and, thus, adapts a certain perspective, which was demonstrated by the example of “wave”.

As an example of how defamation works, the insult was approached in a transdisciplinary intent. Based on the legal definition, the insult was determined as a value judgement that is not based on argument. According to Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson, it threatens the positive face or self-image of a person or several people through showing e.g. disdain. From the perspective of the Speech Act Theory by John L. Austin, the illocutionary act is decisive for the evaluation of the insult as the perlocutionary act can only be assessed by the affected person. This view is confirmed by the German Criminal Code. Furthermore, Judith Butler claims that speech acts are also bodily acts. Therefore, a speech act that threatens the addressee’s social face, threatens also their body. Hence, the speech act should also be punished, which, in fact, is covered by the Sections 185-187 of the German Criminal Code, but also by those that follow. Nevertheless, politicians are likely to undermine the face of their opponents or devalue groups of people by attacking their dignity. Due to a missing argumentative basis behind the insult or defamation in general, it is hard to defend oneself. However, for the same reason there is also limited success as people of different opinions are hardly convinced.

The data of the analysis was taken from the Twitter account of AfD politician Alice Weidel. Through isotopies it was shown how she connects the world field of immigrants with that of violence by combining the isotopies of violence and immigrants in most pictures and, hence, putting a special focus on blaming them for the crimes that happen, putting all of them under general suspicion. By doing

so, Weidel creates the enemy concept in asylum seekers and immigrant from outside Europe in general. Alice Weidel defames them openly by openly accusing all immigrant of being criminal. Sometimes, she pretends to differentiate, but only superficially, since she forces the readers to associate immigrants with being violent. To achieve that, she manipulates the reader's mind by e.g. first incorrectly talking about murder and then by speaking of knife crime waves, which belongs to the strategies of framing. Beside her verbal communication also the pictures she publishes in her tweets support her defamations reinforcing the feeling of violence and threat, and, hence, appealing to the audience's emotions. However, her accusations are not only manipulative, some of them are also untrue: She accuses them of murder, though it was proven by the law that it was not. Nevertheless, it reinforces the picture of asylum seekers being evil and dangerous.

It has to be mentioned that she uses her defamation of immigrants in order to also accuse the government of acting wrong and having made lots of mistakes. Both are linked to each other.

As we have seen from various examples here, defamation happens also openly. Hence, the hypothesis that defamation does not only occur hidden is proven to be correct.

As it seems that the AfD will further establish itself in German politics – and other right-populist parties in their countries–, it might be interesting to investigate additional aspects of their performances as this article concentrated on just one representative member regarding one event. Xenophobia is one of the characteristics of AfD politicians, although they regularly deny it. However, lately also increased anti-Semitism can be observed. The AfD's performances, acting in a more and more multicultural world can be interpreted as a failure of intercultural communication. Instead of trying to understand those who are foreign to them, they rather frame the immigrants as the enemy.

Figures

Figure 1.

Weidel A., *Das Abschlachten geht immer weiter (The slaughter keeps on going)*, “Twitter” 27.08.2018, https://twitter.com/Alice_Weidel/status/1034121959460810752.

Figure 2.

AfD-Fraktion im Deutschen Bundestag, *Chemnitz ist überall (Chemnitz is everywhere)*, “Twitter” 28.08.2018, <https://twitter.com/AfDimBundestag/status/1034365255156162562?s=20>.

Remark: Retweets cannot be linked. The link from a retweet always leads to the original tweet and not the retweet.

Figure 3.

Weidel A., *Kriminelle Zuwanderer sofort abschieben (Deport criminal immigrant immediately)*, “Twitter” 30.08.2018, https://twitter.com/Alice_Weidel/status/1035182309576765445.

Figure 4.

Weidel A., *Einwanderungswende jetzt (Change in immigration now)*, “Twitter” 09.09.2018, https://twitter.com/Alice_Weidel/status/1038810464086577152.

Figure 5.

Weidel A., *Abschiebungen können Leben retten (Expulsions can save lives)*, “Twitter” 11.09.2018, https://twitter.com/Alice_Weidel/status/1039482744823263232.

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“The government and the media are our true enemies”. How German right-wing populists use false evidence to reverse the reporting

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Germany

Introduction

Regularly, the German right-wing populist party *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD, Alternative for Germany) attacks the media and the government or the established parties in general. This was also the case after in August 2018, a young man died. It happened at the edge of a town festival as a consequence of an argument that resulted in a fatal fight. His killing led to widespread and violent demonstrations and counterdemonstrations as the alleged perpetrators were asylum seekers from Iraq and Syria. Right-wing extremists, but also representants of the AfD, organised several demonstrations. Some of them ended violently. The government and the media condemned their vigilant justice. That in turn led the AfD to defame the former.¹

Credibility is a decisive factor for a politician. Without being credible, a politician cannot be convincing. Thus, this article asks for credibility strategies. How does the defamation of others create credibility and which consequences does it have for the AfD's image building? Which strategies do they generally use to achieve credibility?

¹ For more information, see the article *Drawing the picture of the evil immigrant* in this volume.

Credibility is further one of the important issues of the analysis, because of the AfD's slogan *Mut zur Wahrheit* (Courage for the Truth). Claiming to be the only party which tells the truth is a way of claiming credibility too, and at the same time, an attack on all other parties, which are blamed for not telling the truth. Furthermore, the slogan suggests that truth is no longer taken for granted – if it ever was in politics – and that the AfD in daring to name the truth also takes certain risks. It is one of the hypotheses of this work that truth and lies play a decisive role in the party's self-presentation. Another hypothesis concerns the victim role which might be of importance as part of their image building. As well as their slogan, it is an attack on politics and implies a failure of democracy.

Credibility

In order to ‘live’ and to participate in politics, which generally is the aim of a political party, parties must be elected. The citizens who are entitled to vote mostly support the party which corresponds to their conviction – or which best presents themselves. The elections in Germany during the last few years – both the Federal elections and the state elections – have shown that the party which most loudly protests can succeed, too. The phenomenon of so-called protest voters can be explained as people who are discontent with the current governmental politics and, therefore, vote against them. In particular populist parties benefit from these.²

Political parties, thus, have to convince the voters. In order to do so, they present an image to the public: What does the party stand for? What do they aim to achieve? Why should the voters vote for them? The politicians of the respective party are responsible for the creation of that image.

Thus, in the following, I will discuss two concepts of the persuasive communication research on self-presentation. Parting from the Ancient Greece, namely the philosopher Aristotle, who ascribes a crucial role to the speaker's character, finally the research of credibility by psychologist Carl Hovland will be mentioned

² Redaktion Netzdebatte, “*Es sind keine reinen Protestwähler*”: Interview mit Johannes Kiess (“*They're not just protest voters*”: Interview with Johannes Kiess), Bonn – Berlin 2018, <https://www.bpb.de/dialog/netzdebatte/258654/es-sind-keine-reinen-protestwaehler>. In the interview, the political sociologist Johannes Kiess explains that it would be wrong to speak about a mere protest vote in the case of the AfD. Indeed, there are voters who express protest and their frustration by voting for right-wing populist parties. But, according to Kiess, the frustration can be based on a deception of values, too, and, therefore, it can hardly be separated.

Ancient Greece: Aristoteles' *ethos*

Even the Ancient world realised how important the speaker's character is in convincing others for an opinion. For this purpose, the speaker can use several strategies. Aristotle divides the so-called means of persuasion in artistic (Greek: *entechnic*), those which arise from the speech itself and "belong strictly to the art of rhetoric", and inartistic (Greek: *atechnic*) ones. The latter do not arise from the speech itself, but already exist e.g. witnesses and evidence.³ There are three artistic means of persuasion: the speaker's credibility (the "personal character"), the excitations of the audience's emotions ("putting the audience into a certain frame of mind"), and the logical argument ("the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself").⁴ These three, *ethos* (the character's credibility), *pathos* (emotions and psychology of the audience) and *logos* (pattern of reasoning), together form the so-called *Triade of the means of persuasion*. In order to persuade his interlocutor, the speaker has to argue not only rationally, but also emotionally. Aristotle attributes the character the greatest power of persuasion. He writes:

Persuasion is achieved by the speaker's personal character when the speech is so spoken as to make us think him credible. We believe good men more fully and more readily than others: this is true generally whatever the question is, and absolutely true where exact certainty is impossible and options are divided. This kind of persuasion, like the others, should be achieved by what the speaker says, not by what people think of his character before he begins to speak. It is not true, as some writers assume in their treatises on rhetoric, that the personal goodness revealed by the speaker contributes nothing to his power of persuasion; on the contrary, his character may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion he possesses.⁵

At first glance, the relation between the speaker's character and their persuasion seems to be in conflict. Through the speech, the speaker shall appear credible, because humans are tempted to believe the good person. Up to this point, probably everybody would agree. However, Aristotle claims that the credibility arises from the speech itself – it is an artistic mean of persuasion – and not out of an existing

³ See: Aristotle, *Rhetorica (Rhetoric): (Books I and II complete Book III, Chapter 1, 13-19 [Chapters 2-12 omitted])*, in: R.P. McKeon (ed.), *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, New York 1941, p. 1329.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 1329.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 1329.

opinion. To be good, in the sense Aristotle refers to, means “[p]ossessing or displaying moral virtue”,⁶ which seems hard to derive from a speech. Even more so, if the audience may have doubts about the situation in question. In this case, the audience may find it difficult to identify the speaker’s moral virtue based on what they say. Instead, the audience must rely on former experiences they had have with the speaker. Of course, it is always possible to talk about ideologies and thus to prove decency or to create the semblance of decency. Nevertheless, it is unclear whether or not this is what Aristotle meant. Aristotle himself does not explain, how the speaker can demonstrate their moral virtue through their speech and, therefore, act credibly. But he describes the nature of human beings:

Let us now consider the various types of human character, in relation to the emotions and moral qualities, showing how they correspond to our various ages and fortunes. By emotions I mean anger, desire, and the like; these we have discussed already. By moral qualities I mean virtues and vices; these also have been discussed already, as well as the various things that various types of men tend to will and to do. By ages, I mean youth, the prime of life, and old age. By fortune I mean birth, wealth, power, and their opposites – in fact, good fortune and ill fortune.⁷

He then goes into detail on the characteristics mentioned and illustrates what respectively is representative.⁸ Nevertheless, none of these characteristics arise from the speech itself, but, remaining in Aristotle’s terminology, are *inartistic*. Thus, he does not give the speaker any direct strategies to build their *ethos* with regard to their oratorical aim. However, the speaker can take advantage of the characteristics of the particular stages of life in their speech. The young, for example, are driven by desires, but not by greed for money. Although they are impulsive and have a violent temper, at the same time, they are ambitious, fiery and hopeful.⁹ Depending on the aim of the speech, the speaker can develop his argument around these inartistic characteristics and generate both sympathy and, to some extent, trustworthiness.

Aristotle mentions three more qualities that prove the speaker’s credibility, namely “good sense, good moral character, and goodwill”,¹⁰ which the rhetoric professor

⁶ C. Soanes, A. Stevenson, *good*, in: C. Soanes, A. Stevenson (eds.), *Oxford dictionary of English*, Oxford 2005.

⁷ Aristotle, *Rhetorica*, p. 1403.

⁸ See: *ibidem*, pp. 1403-1408.

⁹ See: *ibidem* p. 1403ff.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 1380.

Joachim Knappe rewrites in a more modern way of expression as “Sachkenntnis” (expertise), “Vertrauenswürdigkeit” (trustworthiness) and “Sympathie” (sympathy towards the audience).¹¹ Trustworthiness and sympathy have just been outlined above. Expertise will be briefly clarified on the example of the political consultation or decision speech (Greek: *genus deliberativum*) dealing with political matters. Using the example of various political issues such as finances, warfare or internal security, Aristotle enumerates of what the speaker should be aware: if one wishes to advise on finances, one should know the amount of income and expenses of the state; if one wishes to speak about war and peace, one should know the power of both the own and the enemy’s army; if one wishes to talk about state security one should understand legislation.¹² If the speaker is not aware and well informed, they have no expertise and, consequently, their credibility is limited. However, Aristotle adds at the end of his descriptions: “But all this is the business of political science and not of rhetoric.”¹³ This leaves the question open, to what extent the speaker should actually be familiar with the respective field.

The impact of credibility on the listener **The importance of expertise and trustworthiness for credibility**

What Aristotle observed back in Ancient times was experimentally investigated in the middle of the last century: the importance of the speaker’s¹⁴ character, especially their credibility, which Aristotle attributed to decent people. Credibility is not an inherent characteristic. As the wording above indicates, the audience *attributes* credibility *to* the speaker. Hence, it can be increased through communication – speech, if we remain with Aristotle, but also through any communicative contribution, for instance in a talk show, on Twitter or on an election poster.¹⁵

In a series of experiments, a Yale University research group headed by psychologist Carl I. Hovland investigated the impact of credibility on the formation

¹¹ J. Knappe, *Allgemeine Rhetorik: Stationen der Theoriegeschichte (General rhetoric: Stations in the history of theory)*, Stuttgart 2000, p. 43f.

¹² See: Aristotle, *Rhetorica*, p. 1337ff.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 1339.

¹⁴ In their book, Hovland and his colleagues speak about a “communicator” (see, e.g. the title of the chapter “Credibility of the Communicator” on page 19), thus a person who communicates not only through speech. For convenience only, this person will be continued to be named “speaker” in this article.

¹⁵ See: M. Kuhnhenh, *Glaubwürdigkeit in der politischen Kommunikation: Gesprächsstile und ihre Rezeption (Credibility in political communication: Conversational styles and their reception) (Thesis (PhD), University of Greifswald, Germany)*, Konstanz 2014, p. 14f.

of and change in the listener’s opinion. The research group varied credibility factors in the experiments. The research results are presented, among others, in *Communication and Persuasion* in the chapter “Credibility of the Communicator”.

According to the researchers, the hearer can adopt different attitudes toward the speaker, among them awe and fear due to the communicator’s power.¹⁶ Such an attitude can be convincing, too, but involuntarily. It can happen, for instance, in a dictatorship. Beside awe and fear, trust and confidence are important to achieve persuasion in an unforced way. “Still other important attitudes are those of trust and confidence. These are related to perceptions of the communicator’s credibility, including beliefs about his knowledge, intelligence, and sincerity.”¹⁷ These characteristics of credibility can be divided into two superordinate ones as Hovland and his colleagues do, namely the speaker’s “expertness” and his or her “trustworthiness”. Hence, expertise and trustworthiness also play an important role in this context.¹⁸ The research group headed by Hovland explains it as follows: The hearer may believe that the speaker knows their field well but doubt their intentions. Conversely, it is possible that the speaker can talk with good intentions but not have the necessary knowledge. In the first case, the speaker is an expert, but the hearer mistrusts them; in the second the speaker is trustworthy but has no expertise. In both cases, the listener can hardly be persuaded. Therefore, both factors, expertise and trustworthiness, are necessary to build credibility and, thus, convince the audience. However, the experiment’s results do not permit disentangling the effects of both.¹⁹

Credibility in politics

On the audience’s side, trust in the speaker is also important insofar as, for example in politics, voters are not familiar with all topics. Years after the Hovland’s investigations, communication scientist Martha Kuhnnehn asserted that trust replaces knowledge and information. If an individual knew everything, they would not have to trust in politicians.²⁰ Here, it is interesting to observe what happens, if the speaker is trusted per se, but makes a point in his speech that obviously does not make sense to the listener. In this case, speaker and content would be regarded

¹⁶ See: C.I. Hovland, I. Janis, H.H. Kelley, *Communication and persuasion: Psychological studies of opinion change*, New Haven 1953, p. 20.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁸ See: *ibidem*, p. 21.

¹⁹ See: *ibidem*, p. 35.

²⁰ See: M. Kuhnnehn, *Glaubwürdigkeit in der politischen Kommunikation*, p. 28.

separately. According to Hovland,²¹ the listener would either question the speaker's responsibility for the speech's content or would try to reinterpret the content and the conclusion.²² Nonetheless, the hearer's attitude would change. Beside the two changes mentioned above, regarding the speaker's responsibility for the content and regarding its reinterpretation, Hovland and his colleagues propose a third possibility: a change in the attitude toward the speaker. One of the three changes will happen in any case. However, the change toward the speaker will not be radical but in a way that is in accordance with the former attitude.²³

Moreover, so-called dissociation between speaker and content is possible, if the speaker is under suspicion of having the wrong motivation. In this case, the hearer tends less to accept the message as such and will hardly be convinced. Nevertheless, if the argument is presented impressively, it may be accepted independently from the speaker. In this case, too, speaker and content are separated from each other. It could even happen that the attitude toward the speaker improves, if it was far too negative before.²⁴

That shows a difficulty that politicians have: the speaker's motivation. The audience knows that politicians aim to persuade the people to vote for them and their party. According to a hypothesis by the research group headed by Carl Hovland, the audience, therefore, classifies them as less trustworthy:

One of the most general hypotheses is that when a person is perceived as having a definite *intention* to persuade others, the likelihood is increased that he will be perceived as having something to gain and, hence, as less worthy of trust.²⁵

Obviously, politicians benefit, if the audience – potential voters – is persuaded. The more voters the party persuades, the more votes they win and the stronger their influence in parliament becomes. Thus, there is mistrust against any politician from the very beginning, following the hypothesis. So how should they handle it? Dissociation might be the key: the speaker should present their argument so

²¹ C.I. Hovland, I. Janis, H.H. Kelley, *Communication and persuasion*, p. 43.

²² See: *ibidem*, p. 41. This phenomenon of “dissociation” can also happen, if the hearer does not remember, who said a certain thing. In this case, which is not important for the article, speaker and content would be considered independently from each other. The message's acceptance would be regardless of its source.

²³ See: *ibidem*, p. 43.

²⁴ See: *ibidem*, p. 46.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 23, emphasis in original.

impressively that the hearer is not able to combine it with the person whom they mistrust. As a consequence, one of the three changes of attitudes described by Hovland and his colleagues is supposed to happen.

Politicians face another difficulty. The research results displayed in the acceptance of a message that decreases after a while. Hence, persuasion is not permanent. Carl Hovland also refers to former experiments that he performed. In those experiments, another survey was carried out three weeks after the experiment. The results demonstrated that persuasion declined.²⁶ This might be an explanation for political parties to campaign intensively shortly before elections: The politicians aim to convince as many voters as possible, even those whose votes they might have almost lost.

Interim conclusion: Self-presentation and credibility from the perspective of persuasive communication research

Credibility is a decisive factor politician should have in mind when building up their image. Both Aristotle and Hovland’s research group highlight the importance of trust toward the speaker, thus the politician and their expertise. Nevertheless, the character alone is not always effective. As seen in the case of dissociation, it may occur that a speaker without a former good reputation can build a more positive image through an impressive argumentation. Hence, the character and the argumentation are correlative

However, there is one important difference between Aristotle and Hovland: Aristotle requests the speaker to use their character to seem a credible person. By contrast, Hovland and his colleagues believe that credibility does not depend on the speaker’s character, but on speech itself. Here both agree: Credibility is an *entechnic* means of persuasion.

Methods

The data used for this analysis are of different kinds. In order to disseminate her opinion on Twitter, Alice Weidel publishes tweets not only accompanied with images or newspaper articles, but also with videos. Therefore, the videos which appeared in the period between 27 August 2018, the day the killing in Chemnitz happened, and 11 September 2018, her last post related to the events in Chemnitz

²⁶ See: *ibidem*, p. 33, 36.

and Köthen, are transcribed into orthographic transcriptions. Then, I will examine the transcription, in a first step the modality of the utterances.

Modality is a linguistic category which is used in different areas with distinct meanings.²⁷ Therefore, it should first be determined what modality means for this article. What is meant here, is the semantically pragmatic descriptive perspective, which “refers in the broadest sense to the way in which the speaker makes a statement on the validity of the facts in the current world expressed by an utterance.”²⁸ Different statements are, for example, certain knowledge, probability, improbability or impossibility. But also, necessity can be expressed by modality.²⁹

Modality is primarily indicated by verbs – by verb modes, by modal and modality verbs – as well as by modal particles and sentential adverbs.³⁰

Through modality, a speaker may increase his credibility, for example by 'proving' his knowledge. He achieves this by presenting his statement as true by facts,³¹ referring to an authority, to hearsay or to the mind.³²

Linguistic characteristics of the German language are words like *Tatsache* (fact), *Beweis* (proof) or introductory main clauses according to the scheme "It is true / clear / ... that". A special case is *Hearsay evidence*, which is expressed in German mainly by the verb *sollen* (be supposed to). In this case, there is no reference to a particular authority, but to the general public. Further linguistic characteristics are e.g. “it is said” or “I have heard”.³³

For the analysis, the modes of the verbs are determined, and modal particles are brought out. On the basis of these, assumptions are made as to what is meant by the utterance and how Alice Weidel as speaker sticks to it.

In the second step semantic word fields are worked out and the statements are interpreted with the help of the isotopies.³⁴

Finally, I will do an overall interpretation of the analysis results, taking into account the theory described above.

²⁷ See: A.-M. Simon-Vandenberg, *Image-building through modality: the case of political interviews*, “Discourse & Society” vol. 7, no. 3, 1996, p. 391.

²⁸ N. Fries, *Modalität (Modality)*, in: H. Glück, M. Rödel (eds.), *Metzler Lexikon Sprache (Metzler dictionary on language)*, Stuttgart 2016, p. 437, own translation.

²⁹ See: A.-M. Simon-Vandenberg, *Image-building through modality*; J. van der Auwera, *Modality*, in: W.J. Frawley (ed.), *International Encyclopaedia of Linguistics*, Oxford 2003, p. 71.

³⁰ See: N. Fries, *Modality*, p. 437.

³¹ From a purely formal point of view, it is not proof, if the speaker only presents his statement in this way. For a valid proof, he must refer to generally accepted facts.

³² See: A.-M. Simon-Vandenberg, *Image-building through modality*, p.392-397.

³³ See: *ibidem*, p. 396f.; J. van der Auwera, *Modality*, p. 72.

³⁴ The article *Drawing the picture of the evil immigrant* gives more details on isotopies.

Analysis results

The video messages

On the 28 August 2018, two days after the killing of Daniel H., and the first ‘demonstrations’ by right-wing radicals and hooligans, Alice Weidel shares a tweet sent by the *Political group of the AfD in the Bundestag* (Fig. 1). It contains a video, in which she and Alexander Gauland comment on the events. In the video, neither Alice Weidel nor Alexander Gauland speak themselves, but a voice actor repeats their words. While the speaker is talking, pictures or short video recordings are shown. It begins with Alice Weidel and Alexander Gauland at the AfD press conference, which shows that it is an official statement the two presented as AfD parliamentary group leaders. The following recording shows the demonstration in Chemnitz with the police in the background as well as smoke which may have been caused by glowing pyrotechnics with obvious associations. People in the foreground are recording with their mobile phones. Further pictures display headlines of the newspapers *SPIEGEL* and *BILD*, of which the first seems to be defamed by the video and the second appreciated; a demonstration by night, a police station, a funfair, a street with a blood stain, the government spokesman Steffen Seibert during a speech, chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU) shaking hands with the federal minister of the interior Horst Seehofer (CSU), and an advertisement for the homepage *messereinwanderung.de* (English: knifeimmigration.de).

The text (Fig. 1) consists of seven isotopies:

- 1) Violence: violence, self-justice, knife attacks, chasingW
- 2) Death: fatal, killing, fatal, bloody deed
- 3) Law: constitutional state, condemn, proceed against, with all severity in words and deeds,
- 4) Journalism: handling, dealing, media, politics, reporting, political commentary, attention
- 5) Protest: outrage, angry protest
- 6) Consequences: polarisation, imbalance, society split
- 7) Negative valuation: criticise, unacceptable, obscene, horrible generalising, undermine, fail

Regarding the whole text, violence and death clearly refer to the killing in Chemnitz during the night to the 26 August, apart from two exceptions: Chasing is an action by right-wing radicals, but the adjective *putative* expresses that Alexander Gauland and Alice Weidel do not think it is true. The second *fatal* in the text refers

Sprecher: Die AfD-Fraktionsvorsitzenden, Alice Weidel und Alexander Gauland, kritisieren den Umgang von Politik und Medien mit den Vorfällen in Chemnitz. Gewalt gegen Unschuldige und Selbstjustiz sind fraglos völlig inakzeptabel und dürfen von einem funktionierenden Rechtsstaat nicht hingenommen werden. So viel zum Selbstverständlichen. Die Art und Weise wie jedoch Medien und Politik mit den Vorfällen in Chemnitz umgehen ist unanständig und trägt zur weiteren Polarisierung bei. Anstatt zuallererst die tödlichen Messerattacken, die noch Zyniker als Einzelfall abtun können, scharf zu verurteilen und mit aller Härte in Worten und Taten dagegen vorzugehen, hört man nur noch von vermeintlichen Hetzjagden. Die Kausalität wird völlig außer Acht gelassen. Wo bleibt hier in der Berichterstattung und in der politischen Kommentierung eigentlich die Verhältnismäßigkeit? Wenn die abscheuliche Tötung eines Menschen auf offener Straße weniger Beachtung und Empörung erfährt als der wütende Protest dagegen, dann haben wir hier eine fatale Schiefelage. Politiker und Redaktionen, deren Antwort auf die Bluttat in Chemnitz ein verallgemeinerndes Sachsen-Bashing ist, tragen zur Spaltung der Gesellschaft bei, untergraben ihre eigene Glaubwürdigkeit und zeigen, dass sie auf ganzer Linie versagen.

Speaker: The group chairpersons of the AfD, Alice Weidel and Alexander Gauland, criticise the handling of the events in Chemnitz by politics and media. Violence against the innocent and self-justice are unquestionably completely unacceptable and must not be tolerated by a functioning constitutional state. That much is granted. The manner, though, how media and politics deal with the events in Chemnitz is obscene and contributes to a further polarisation. Instead of at first severely condemning the fatal knife attacks, which cynics can still dismiss as an individual case, and proceeding against them with all severity in words and actions, one only hears of putative chasing. Causality is completely ignored. Where is the proportionality in reporting and in the political commentary? If the horrible killing of a person in the middle of the street receives less attention and outrage than the angry protest against it, then we have a fatal imbalance. Politicians and editors, whose answer to the bloody deed is a generalising bashing of Saxony, contribute to the society split, undermine their credibility and demonstrate that they fail all along the line

Figure 1. Transcript and translation of the video message sent by Alice Weidel on 28 August 2018
“Weidel & Gauland: Media and established parties split the society”

to the alleged fatal imbalance caused by the media and the government. As we live in a constitutional state, the law defines what should have been done after such a crime, but according to the AfD parliamentary group leaders no one took action. Instead, the media and the government reported on the events in a way that

is valued negatively by Alice Weidel and Alexander Gauland. As a consequence, the AfD politicians deem the media and government guilty of polarising society. By their dealing with the events and commenting on them the way they did, the government and the media triggered the fatal imbalance, and therefore the AfD accuses them of being responsible for any future deaths. To prove their point, the two AfD parliamentary group leaders compare the protest of the people against the killing to the outrage the killing receives by the media and the government: Instead of paying attention to the crime, they perform a general bashing of Saxony and, thus, defame a whole Bundesland.

The pictures underline what is claimed in the video. They show, among others, two articles, one by the *SPIEGEL* and one by the *BILD*. The first belongs to the serious newspapers. By contrast, the *BILD* is a tabloid which intends to create scandals with its headlines. Nevertheless, based on the articles, the *SPIEGEL* is condemned as a co-creator of the fatal imbalance as the article is about the chasing. The displayed article of the *BILD* is about the death of Daniel H., thus, it is presented as one of the few ‘good’ newspapers. Moreover, the images that show Angela Merkel, Horst Seehofer and Steffen Seibert ‘support’ the accusations, in this case the ones against the government. The last defamation shown in the video is the advertisement of the homepage *messereinwanderung.de*, which criminalises immigrants.³⁵

However, in the following, a section of the transcript (Fig. 1) will be examined in more detail:

Violence against the innocent and self-justice are unquestionably completely unacceptable and must not be tolerated by a functioning constitutional state. That much is granted. The manner, though, how media and politics deal with the events in Chemnitz is obscene and contributes to a further polarisation. Instead of at first severely condemning the fatal knife attacks, which cynics can still dismiss as an individual case, and proceeding against them with all severity in words and actions, one only hears of putative chasing.

The adverb *unquestionable* in the first sentence expresses that what they are describing is unacceptable beyond any doubt. It is accompanied by the negated modal verb *must not*, which prohibits the toleration of violence. The attitude expressed by this wording is that of course it is not acceptable to even worth discussing, so why is it necessary? However, the media and the government have

³⁵ The article *Drawing the picture of the evil immigrant* in this volume goes into more detail about the homepage.

aggravated everything with their handling of the situation. The sentence ends with the agent *by a functioning constitutional state*. As mentioned, the first part of the sentence expresses that it should not be necessary to discuss the issue. However, although it should be taken for granted, it needs to be addressed and the actions of media and government are criticised. Thus, between the lines, there is the question of whether the constitutional state is failing.

In short, Alice Weidel and Alexander Gauland create the enemy concept in media and government, which as a consequence of their reaction to the events “undermine their credibility and demonstrate that they fail all along the line” (Fig 1).

One day after the official statement by Alexander Gauland and Alice Weidel, the latter tweeted a personal statement (Fig. 2). This time, it is herself who speaks in a non-professional video, recorded with a selfie sequence. While she talks, pictures are faded in. Most of the pictures and short video recordings were already featured in the earlier video from the day before. Some others are new. In the middle of her text, a recording appears in which an excerpt from a speech by the government spokesman Steffen Seibert is shown. The voice of Alice Weidel is husky as if she were sad and shocked because of the events about which she is talking.

In the first part of the video, beside the isotopies violence and death (attacked, stabbed, violent criminals, stabs), and protest (on the street, demonstrate, powerlessness), two particularly attract attention: [Fig. 2 in next page]

- 1) Media and government: federal government, media, doesn't report, media, government spokesman.
- 2) The others: led in, people, where from, false identities, Somali, migrants.

However, unlike the others, the last word in the list of “The others”, *migrants*, is meant to be neutral instead of negative. Both groups of people, media and government and the others, are to blame for violence and death and, therefore, people demonstrate and protest on the streets.

Let us have a closer look at the beginning of the statement: “Chemnitz. Now let's just keep track on what happened there” (Fig. 2). She starts with the word *Chemnitz* to put special emphasis on the city. In the second phrase, she announces that she will describe what happened there. However, she does not. Instead, already in the next but one sentence, she starts blaming the government. First, she describes the causality between the events she and Alexander Gauland claim to miss in the first video message: “Three men have been attacked, one has been bestially stabbed. Thousands of people are on the streets demonstrating against the powerlessness in which the federal government dismisses them” (Fig. 2). The killing happened first

Weidel: Chemnitz. Jetzt wollen wir einfach mal festhalten, was da passiert ist. Es wurden drei Männer angegriffen, einer wurde bestialisch abgestochen. Tausende von Menschen gehen hier auf die Straße (.) um gegen die Ohnmacht zu demonstrieren in die der Staat und diese Bundesregierung sie entlässt, weil sie tausende von Gewalttätern reingelassen hat, tausende von Menschen von denen wir nicht wissen woher sie kommen, die hier in falsch- mit falschen Identitäten in unserm Land sind: ein Somalier, der in der Praxis einen Arzt vor seiner zehnjährigen Tochter absticht, die Medien davon nicht berichten, und jetzt diese Woche Chemnitz. Was machen unsere Medien daraus, was macht der Regierungssprecher Seibert daraus? Ein rechter Mob, der Migranten jagt.

Seibert (Aufnahme): der Bevölkerung klar zu sagen, solche Zusammenrottungen, Hetzjagden auf Menschen anderen Aussehens, anderer Herkunft oder der Versuch, Hass auf den Straßen zu verbreiten, das nehmen wir nicht hin.

AW: Jaaa, so einfach ist das immer für die Regierenden, obwohl wir hier ein eklatantes Staatsversagen haben. Und deshalb macht sich die Bundesregierung, machen sich die Medien, linksradikale Parolen zu eigen. Es geht letztendlich um die Bürger, die ein Recht darauf haben, dass sie vom Staat geschützt werden, an den sie Steuern zahlen. Was diese Regierung praktiziert ist unverantwortlich und sie lässt uns Bürger allein mit alimentierten Messermännern und sonstigen Taugenichtsen und Kostgängern.

Weidel: Chemnitz. Now let's just keep track on what happened there. Three men have been attacked, one has been bestially stabbed. Thousands of people are on the streets (.) demonstrating against the powerlessness in which the federal government dismisses them, because they led thousands of violent criminals in, thousands of people about who we don't know, where they're from, which are here in fals- are in our country with false identities: a Somali, who stabs a doctor in his surgery in front of his ten-year-old daughter, the media doesn't report on it, and, now, Chemnitz this week. What do our media do with it, what does the government spokesman Seibert do with it? A right-wing mob who hunts migrants.

Seibert (recording): to clearly tell the population that such unlawful assemblies, hounding people of different appearance, of different origin or the intent to spread hatred on the streets, will not be accepted.

AW: Yees, it is always that easy for our government, although we have here a blatant government failure. And therefore, the federal government, the media appropriate left-wing radical slogans. In the end, it's about the citizens who have the right to be protected by the state to which they pay taxes. What this government practices is irresponsible and she leaves us, the citizens, alone with subsidised knife men and other scapegraces and boarders

Figure 2. Transcript and translation of the video message sent by Alice Weidel on 29 August 2018
Personal statement: The citizens have a right on being protected by the state

and only then did the demonstrations began caused by the government's inaction. At least that is what Alice Weidel suggests. By blaming the government, she places all migrants under the general suspicion of being criminals at the same time: First she calls them violent criminals, then she goes back to admitting that more often than not it is unknown who the asylum seekers are or where they from. Which, for her, is a valid reason to classify them without reflection as delinquents. As proof for her accusations, she uses "a Somali, who stabs a doctor in his surgery in front of his ten-year-old daughter" (Fig. 2). It is the only example she names, except for Chemnitz. The stabbing happened in front of a little girl. That makes the crime even more cruel and demonstrates how atrocious this Somali, who represents all migrants, is. Alice Weidel intends to evoke emotions in her audience, to trigger fear and rejection. The government is to blame for the cruelties and for the fact that people now have to live in fear in Germany, because they led them all in. However, it is not solely the government. The media are also to blame, because either do they not report and provide disinformation like in the case of the Somali, or they blame the wrong group of people like in the Chemnitz case, which they converted in a "right-wing mob who hunts migrants" (Fig. 2).

That, however, is factually incorrect. The knife attack by the Somali was covered by local media and some supra-regional newspaper, although not by the larger ones like *SPIEGEL*, *SÜDDEUTSCHE* or *ZEIT*. At least, as of today, more than two years later, articles published by those cannot be found. The AfD, though, fabricates a scandal out of both the stabbing and the putative missing covering.

According to the German Federal Statistical Office, 762 sentences for crimes against life have been handed out in the year 2017,³⁶ which was the year before the knife attack on the doctor. Statistics concerning the year 2018 are not yet available, but it is not very probable that the number differs much. Out of the 762 crimes against life, 290 were committed by foreigners, of which 157 were from Europe.³⁷ The ethnic groups blamed by the AfD thus only amount to a minority.

Moreover, with more than seven hundred crimes against life, of which again 123 are murders, not every single one can be covered in supra-regional newspapers. Otherwise, that would imply approximately two articles about a crime committed against life per day and an article about murder about every third day. A big newspaper report particularly on the case described above and every other crime

³⁶ See: Statistisches Bundesamt, *Rechtspflege: Strafverfolgung 2017 (Judicare: Criminal Prosecution 2017)*, 2018, https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Staat/Justiz-Rechtspflege/Publicationen/Downloads-Strafverfolgung-Strafvollzug/strafverfolgung-2100300177004.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=5, p. 498.

³⁷ See: *ibidem*, p. 518.

committed by asylum seekers would stigmatise them in public, thus support the AfD’s intent to defame them. In her twitter profile, Alice Weidel cites many cases in which Germans, mostly young girls, have been murdered by asylum seekers. The newspaper *BILD* usually serves as her reference. As mentioned above, that newspaper belongs to the tabloid newspaper intending to create scandals. So, it is no wonder that they report on every murder committed by asylum seekers, wherever it happens.

Returning to the personal statement from 29 August 2018, in which Alice Weidel creates the enemy concept in the media due to their reporting, and in the government, because they allowed the ‘criminal refugees’ access to Germany, and the refugees themselves for being criminals. In the middle of the video, there is a snippet of a recording of Steffen Seibert. The excerpt that is presented to the audience is chosen in order to demonstrate how the government blames “the right-wing mob”: “... to clearly tell the population that such unlawful assemblies, chasing people with a different appearance, of another origin or the intent to spread hatred on the streets, will not be accepted” (Fig. 2). The excerpt is taken from an answer at the federal press conference on Monday, 27 August 2018 after he was asked for his evaluation of the vigilante justice. Steffen Seibert condemns the crime itself, but he demands that in a constitutional state, it is the task of the police to solve the crime and nothing beside that is dealing correctly with criminal offenses.³⁸ This excerpt serves as a potent example of the fatal imbalance Alice Weidel and Alexander Gauland mention in the first video message: Not the crime is condemned by the German government, but the reaction to it. It is ground enough for Alice Weidel to call out “a blatant government failure” (Fig. 2) and again, accuses the government for using “left-wing radical slogans” (Fig. 2.) and acting “irresponsibl[y]” (Fig. 2), although they have a strong responsibility toward German citizens. In the same breath, she alleges the general reproach that all migrants are “subsidised knife men and other scapegraces and boarders” (Fig 2).

A week later, after the demonstration announced by the AfD and the subsequent concert, Alice Weidel publishes another video message under the title “The right to demonstrate must be protected” (Fig. 3). A semantic analysis of the transcript demonstrates that beside five already mentioned isotopies (violence, law, protest,

³⁸ See: Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, *Im Wortlaut: Regierungspressekonferenz vom 27. August 2018 (In the very wording: Government news conference 27 August 2018)*, 2018, <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/aktuelles/pressekonferenzen/regierungspressekonferenz-vom-27-august-2018-1504516>.

AW: Die Deutschen haben das Recht, sich ohne Anmeldung oder Erlaubnis friedlich zu versammeln. So steht es in Art. 8 des Grundgesetz'. Das Demonstrationsrecht ist ein grundlegendes Freiheitsrecht der Bürger gegen die Herrschenden. Es ist dafür da, dass die Bürger, denen, die sie regieren, ihre Meinung sagen und sie kritisieren können. Wo das Demonstrationsrecht sabotiert wird, sind Rechtsstaat und Verfassung in akuter Gefahr. Genau das haben wir am vergangenen Wochenende in Chemnitz erlebt: Einer Handvoll Linksextremisten wurde erlaubt, den Trauermarsch für die Opfer der Migrantengewalt zu stoppen. Statt das Demonstrationsrecht der Bürger durchzusetzen, wurde mit fadenscheinigen Begründungen die Auflösung der Kundgebung erzwungen. Und das ist ein Skandal. Und es ist ein Skandal, wie seit mehr als einer Woche Politik und Medien demonstrierende Chemnitzer Bürger pauschal verunglimpfen. Daniel H., ein Mitbürger und junger Familienvater, wurde brutal ermordet. Das hat die Chemnitzer aufgewühlt und empört und das zu Recht. Übergriffe und Rechtsbrüche Einzelner dürfen nicht missbraucht werden, den spontanen und legitimen Protest der Chemnitzer Bürger gegen die grassierende Messergewalt zu verunglimpfen und zu diskreditieren. Auf der anderen Seite trommeln Bundespräsident und Regierungspolitiker für ein geschmackloses Konzert mit linksextremen Bands, die sonst zu Gewalt gegen Polizisten aufrufen und „Deutschland ist Dreck“ schreien und die jetzt auf dem Grab von Daniel H. feiern, Hass auf Andersdenkende schüren und den Toten mit „Refugees welcome“ Parolen verhöhnern. Staatsdemos sind ein Missbrauch des Demonstrationsrechts. Verteidigen wir gemeinsam das Demonstrationsrecht als Freiheitsrecht der Bürger!

AW: The German have the right to gather without registration or permission. This is Article 8 of the German Constitution. The right to demonstrate is a fundamental freedom of citizens against the rulers. It is for the citizens to express their opinions and criticise those who govern them. Where the right to demonstrate is sabotaged, the rule of law and the constitution are in acute danger. This is exactly what happened in Chemnitz las weekend: A handful of left-wing extremists had the permission to stop the funeral march for the victims of violence by migrants. Instead of enforcing the citizens' right to demonstrate, the dissolution of the proclamation was forced with flimsy justifications. And that is a scandal. And it is a scandal, how for more than a week politicians and media generally disparage demonstrating citizens of Chemnitz. Daniel H., a fellow citizen and young family father, was assassinated brutally. That churned and outraged the Chemnitz people and justifiably so. Assaults and breaches of rights by individuals may not be abused to disparage and discredit the spontaneous and legitimate protest by the citizens of Chemnitz against the raging knife violence. On the other side, the federal president and the government round up for a distasteful concert with left-wing extremist bands who normally instigate for violence and shout out "Germany is shit" and who now celebrate on the grave of Daniel H., stir up hatred against dissidents and mock the dead one with paroles of "refugees welcome". State demonstrations are a misuse of the right to demonstrate. Let's defend the right to demonstrate together as a right of freedom for the citizens!

Figure 3. Transcript and translation of the video message sent by Alice Weidel on 5 September 2018
Comment concerning Chemnitz: "The right to demonstrate must be protected"

negative valuing, the others) from the two previous video messages, there is a new one which is defamation:

Table 1. Tabular register of the isotopies used by Alice Weidel in her video message sent on a tweet on 5 September 2018

Violence	Law	Protest	Negative valuing	The others	Defamation
sabotaged	right	funeral march	flimsy	the rulers	generally disparage
acute danger	Article 8 of the Basic Law	proclamation	scandal	left-wing extremists	disparage
victims	right to demonstrate	demonstrating	scandal	migrants	discredit
violence by migrants	freedom	churned	brutally	politicians	Germany is shit
dissolution	right to demonstrate	outraged	distasteful	media	mock
forced	rule of law	protest		federal president	
assassinated	constitution			government	
assaults	right to demonstrate			left-wing extremist bands	
breaches of rights	legitimate			refugees	
abused	right to demonstrate				
knife violence	right to demonstrate				
violence	right of freedom				
hatred					
misuse					

As identified in Table 1, the comment focuses on violence and law, while protest, negative valuing and defamation are not that relevant. However, the column concerning law contains the *right to demonstrate* five times, which is content related to protest. Hence, she legitimises the protests in Chemnitz on a legal basis. The right to demonstrate, which indeed belongs to the Basic Rights in Germany and is covered by Article 8 of the German Basic Law, the Freedom of Assembly, “is for the citizens to express their opinions and criticise those who govern them”

(Fig. 3). In the German original, the phrase is constructed with the modal verb *können* which literally means *can* and thus, indicates possibility. They do not have to criticise, if there is no need. Nevertheless, the Basic Law also restricts the Freedom of Assembly in the first paragraph: “All Germans shall have the right to assemble *peacefully* and *unarmed* without prior notification or permission.”³⁹ The images and video recordings of the demonstrations in Chemnitz prove that they were not entirely peaceful or non-violent. However, according to Alice Weidel, violence and hate stemmed from everyone but the AfD: politicians, particularly those who form the government, the media, left-wingers and migrants including refugees, who Alice Weidel portrays as the enemy. The government and the media, then, according to her, want to revoke the right to demonstrate and therefore, have joined forces with left-wing groups. For her, the attitude of both towards the law is a scandal. Moreover, both allegedly defame those who demonstrate. The column “Defamation” refers to how “The others” and is dealing with citizens. It is noticeable that Alice Weidel often uses the word *citizen*, a lexically related term like *fellow citizen* or semantically related expressions like *German people*. The citizens are those who demonstrate, because it is their right to do so, which is soon to be taken from them by the government. Furthermore, the victim of the crime was a citizen, too, and now the citizens are defamed.

Apart from that, Alice Weidel uses the personal pronoun *we* twice. The second time, in the last sentence, it becomes evident that it is an inclusive *we*: “Let’s defend the right to demonstrate together as a right of freedom for the citizens!” (Fig. 3) *Us together* appeals to everyone who hears her words. *Together* means that the AfD will support the citizens, because they belong to them, too. The AfD are the good ones, they fight for and together with *us*.

The next day, Alice Weidel publishes one more video about the “Lie of the chasing” (Fig. 4). In this video message, she only addresses the government. Examining the containing isotopies, it quickly becomes apparent what the statement is about:

- 1) Facts: facts, evidence, confirm, accounts, declares
- 2) Truth and lies: fake news (2x), lie (2x), incorrect assertion (2x), illusory world,
- 3) Government: chancellery (2x), chancellor (2x), speaker Steffen Seibert, governmental, Merkel and Seibert (4x), the chancellor and her speakers,
- 4) Violence: chasing (5x), knife murder, mob, pogrom,

³⁹ Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection, *Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany in the revised version published in the Federal Law Gazette Part III*, 2014, http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_gg/englisch_gg.html#p0017, Article 8, own emphasis.

AW: Fake News aus dem Kanzleramt. Die Hetzjagd-Lüge der Kanzlerin und ihres Sprechers Steffen Seibert ist ein ausgewachsener Regierungs- und Medienskandal. Gegen die Fakten halten Merkel und Seibert stur an der Behauptung fest, bei den Kundgebungen nach dem Messermord eines Asylbewerbers an dem 35-jährigen Chemnitzer Daniel H. seien Menschen ausländischer Herkunft verfolgt worden. Beweise haben sie dafür bis heute nicht auf den Tisch gelegt und das sind Fake-News aus dem Kanzleramt. Die Chemnitzer Polizei weiß nichts von Hetzjagden. Merkel und Seibert behaupten es trotzdem. Torsten Kleditzsch, den Chefredakteur der Chemnitzer Freien Presse, sagt, es gab keine Ereignisse, die man als Hetzjagd bezeichnen könnte. Seine Reporter, die als einzige vor Ort waren, können das aus eigener Anschauung bestätigen. Merkel und Seibert beeindruckt das nicht. Wolfgang Klein, Sprecher der Generalstaatsanwaltschaft Sachsen, bestätigt auf Nachfrage: „Nach allem uns vorliegenden Material hat es in Chemnitz keine Hetzjagd gegeben.“ Merkel und Seibert bleiben bei ihrer Falschbehauptung. Und auch Sachsens Ministerpräsident, Michael Kretschmer, erklärt im sächsischen Landtag, es gab keinen Mob, keine Hetzjagd und keine Pogrome. Die Kanzlerin und ihre Sprecher lügen weiter. Die Kanzlerin hat sich in ihrer Scheinwelt von der Realität abgeschottet. Eine von linksextremen Antifa-Agitatoren in die Welt gesetzte Propaganda Behauptung genügt ihr, um Chemnitz und ganz Sachsen einer üblen pauschalen Verleumdungskampagne auszuliefern. Statt ihren Fehler zuzugeben, bleibt sie selbstgerecht in ihrer Falschbehauptung und schadet damit dem Ansehen Deutschlands in der ganzen Welt. Das ist ein Stück aus dem Tollhaus. Hören Sie endlich auf, die eigenen Landsleute in den Schmutz zu ziehen, Frau Merkel. Feuern Sie ihren Regierungssprecher und entschuldigen Sie sich in aller Form bei den Chemnitzern und bei ihren sächsischen Mitbürgern. Vorher brauchen Sie sich in Chemnitz gar nicht erst blicken zu lassen.

AW: Fake news by the chancellery. The chasing lie by the chancellor and by her speaker Steffen Seibert is a full grown governmental and media scandal. Against the facts, Merkel and Seibert continue to stubbornly maintain that people of foreign origin have been persecuted at the proclamations after the knife murder of the 35-year-old Chemnitz Daniel H. by an asylum seeker. They have not put evidence on the table until today and that is fake news by the chancellery. The Chemnitz police doesn't know anything about chasing. However, Merkel and Seibert claim it. Torsten Kleditzsch, the editor-in-chief of the Freie Presse (Free Press) says that there haven't been any events that could be called chasing. His reporters, which were the only one there, can confirm it from their own personal experience. Merkel and Seibert are not impressed by it. Wolfgang Klein, speaker of the Attorney General of Saxony confirms upon request: "According to all the accounts, there hasn't been a chasing in Chemnitz." Merkel and Seibert keep their incorrect assertion. And Minister-President of the Free State of Saxony, Michael Kretschmer, declares in the Saxon State Parliament that there was no mob, no chasing and no pogrom. The chancellor and her speakers continue to lie. The chancellor has sealed herself off from reality in her illusory world. An assertion of propaganda, which was begotten by left-wing extremist Antifa-agitators, is enough in her eyes to deliver Chemnitz and the whole Saxony up to an evil and general slander campaign. Instead of admitting her mistake, she remains self-righteous with her incorrect assertion and, thus, harms the reputation of Germany in the whole world. That is a play from the madhouse. Finally stop dragging your fellow countrymen in the mud, Mrs. Merkel. Fire your government spokesman and formally apologise to the Chemnitz people and to their fellow Saxon citizens. Before doing that, you don't have to appear in Chemnitz at all

Figure 4. Transcript and translation of the video message sent by Alice Weidel on 6 September 2018
Lie of the "chasing": Fake News by the chancellery

- 5) Defamation: evil and general slander campaign
- 6) Scandal: scandal, mistake, self-righteous, harms, madhouse, mud

The frequency of which the names of the chancellor Angela Merkel and the government spokesman Steffen Seibert or their titles are mentioned indicates very clearly that they are the core issue of this message. Moreover, the syntax in the accusations stands out: First the fact is stated. People with a status of the Chemnitz police, the editor-in-chief of the “Freie Presse” (Free Press), Torsten Kleditzsch, the speaker of the Attorney General of Saxony, Wolfgang Klein, or Minister-President of the Free State of Saxony, Michael Kretschmer (CDU), serve as authority which Alice Weidel refers to in order to strengthen her credibility. After having presented the fact, a phrase always follows beginning with “Merkel and Seibert” (Fig. 4) who, however, claim something else. The fourth time Alice Weidel employs that structure, she does not use the names, but their titles: “The chancellor and her speakers continue to lie” (Fig. 4).

As the list above shows, the isotopy violence is mainly about the chasings which are mentioned five times. Thus, it refers to violence which, according to Alice Weidel, never happened as the mob and the pogroms as well. Only the fatal knife attack is certain to have happened.

Toward the end of the video message, Alice Weidel accuses Angela Merkel of defaming Chemnitz and all of Saxony through “an evil and general slander campaign” (Fig. 4). From Alice Weidel’s point of view, it is a scandal which harms all of Germany and the chancellor should admit her mistake. The AfD politician claims that it “is a play from the madhouse” (Fig. 4). A madhouse historically was an “institution for the care of mentally ill people.”⁴⁰ The definition also includes the German equivalent *Tollhaus* (Fig. 4) which Alice Weidel uses originally. In both languages, the word is used to describe “[a] scene of extreme confusion or uproar.”⁴¹ Whether it is the accusation of mental confusion or just riot and tumult, the statement can be perceived as an insult.

At the end of the video message, Alice Weidel appeals to the chancellor:

Finally stop dragging your fellow countrymen in the mud, Mrs. Merkel. Fire your government spokesman and formally apologise to the Chemnitz people and to their fellow Saxon citizens. Before doing that, you don’t have to appear in Chemnitz at all.

(Translation 9, ll. 20ff.)

⁴⁰ C. Soanes, A. Stevenson, *madhouse*, in: C. Soanes, A. Stevenson (eds.) *Oxford dictionary of English*, Oxford 2005.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

Although it might be that Angela Merkel, or her employees, would watch the video message and, hence, she would know about it, the appeal is only illusionary, and serves to impress her audience. Alice Weidel dares to demand something directly from the chancellor in a criticising way and she dares to tell Angela Merkel not to come to Chemnitz before having apologised first. Actually, it reminds one a little of a parent who talks to their child. At the same time, it is an allusion to the chancellor's reaction as she did not travel to Chemnitz right after the events, but only in November. Furthermore, it would certainly please the AfD if the chancellor fired her spokesman. It would be a first step toward the elimination of the government, which the AfD considers as the enemy. Apart from that, in doing so, Angela Merkel would admit that she was in the wrong, which the AfD could then exploit for their own purposes. Actually, the AfD had already done that before, and in a manipulative way. In September 2016, Angela Merkel said the following: “And if I could, I would turn back time for many, many years.”⁴² The former AfD chairwoman Frauke Petry later claimed that Angela Merkel wished to turn back time, which gave the statement an entirely different meaning. If someone desires something, because perhaps they do not find any other solution, that gives the impression of being in despair, in contrast to someone who simply would do it, if the possibility were there to make it better.⁴³

In doing so, the AfD manipulates the image of the chancellor, framing her as not having solutions for the problems in Germany.

Both Franziska Schreiber and the research centre CORRECTIV affirm that it is not factually true that Germany is now less secure than before the arrival of the asylum seekers.⁴⁴ Hence, Alice Weidel blames the chancellor for something that is not even based on facts.

⁴² VotumEins, *Wenn ich könnte, würde ich die Zeit zurückdrehen (If I could, I would rewind time)*, “YouTube” 19.09.2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZacCWF0ii5w>, 00:01:38-00:01:43, own translation.

⁴³ This manipulative form of quoting the chancellor by the former AfD chairwoman was discussed in a former paper about the AfD. Particularly, the talk show, in which Frauke Petry wrongly quoted Angela Merkel, was made a subject of discussion, see Jeanette-Christine Bauer, ‘*Courage for Truth*’. *A Performance Analysis of the German Right-Wing Party ‘Alternative für Deutschland’ Exemplified by Their Current Leader Frauke Petry’s Strategy of Defamation in Two Political Talk Shows*, course paper for the master’s degree Sprachen, Kommunikation und Kulturen in Europa at European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder) 2017.

⁴⁴ See: F. Schreiber, *Inside AfD: Der Bericht einer Aussteigerin (Inside AfD: The report of a dropout)*, München 2018, p. 87; M. Bensmann et al., *Schwarzbuch AfD: Fakten, Figuren, Hintergründe (Black book AfD: Facts, figures, backgrounds)*, Essen 2017, p. 228.

Newspaper articles to strengthen credibility

In order to support her credibility, Alice Weidel links to articles in her tweets. The *German Press Code* by the German Press Council requests: “Respect for the truth, preservation of human dignity and accurately informing the public are the overriding principles of the Press.”⁴⁵ Hence, articles must be objective and true. However, at the same time Alice Weidel defames the media for their coverage of the events in Chemnitz as well as for not reporting on certain others. This creates the paradox of on the one hand using media for credibility and on the other defaming it for bad reporting.



It took a little longer than usual, but here it is, the #AfD-is-to-be-blamed-for-everything-article! #Chemnitz #Bundestag

Picture:

The arsonists of the AfD

(title of the newspaper article)
<https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/meinung-am-mittag-chemnitz-die-brandstifter-von-der-afd-1.4107557>

Figure 5. Tweet from 28 August 2018 by Alice Weidel and its translation

In fact, the first article she links is used to criticise the media. It is an article by the newspaper “Süddeutsche” (Fig. 5) which summarises the debate about the events in Chemnitz and the comments by AfD politicians and claims that the biggest danger emerges from the AfD which tries to legitimise the protest of the neo-Nazis. Alice Weidel comments on the article: “It took a little longer than usual, but here

⁴⁵ German Press Council, *German Press Code: Guidelines for journalistic work as recommended by the German Press Council*, 2017, https://www.presserat.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Downloads_Dateien/Pressekodex2017english.pdf, p. 2.

it is, the #AfD-is-to-be-blamed-for-everything-article!” (Fig. 5). It resembles the defiant reaction of a child when Alice Weidel claims that the AfD is blamed for everything, which is not factually correct as the article only identifies them as a danger. However, once again the opportunity to present her party as victim of the media coverage and, hence, frame the media as the enemy is given.

Nevertheless, two articles support her claims against the government. The first one (Fig. 6), with the title “Steinmeier: Federal President relies on confrontation in Chemnitz”, mocks the promoting of the concert in Chemnitz and Alice Weidel quotes from it. She is therefore able to blame the government but relies on an ‘authority’ represented by the liberal-conservative opinion piece “Tichys Einblick”.

The second article refers to the death in Köthen and blames the migration policy (Fig. 7). Its title: “Migration policy: entered illegally, criminal and at large. It reports on one of the two suspects, which Alice Weidel uses to strengthen her claim that the government lies and fails: “When will our government finally be honest and admit that the failure of its administration exemplified by the murderer of #Chemnitz is not an exception but the general rule?” (Fig. 7). She speaks of murder, although the suspects were charged with manslaughter and implies an intention which is not proven.



Figure 6. Tweet from 3 September 2018 by Alice Weidel and its translation

“The state has not only abandoned its monopoly on the use of force, it has delegated & privatised it. At a space where he needs not to take responsibility for the desired riots. A punctual civil war is accepted.”
#AfD #Chemnitz

Picture:
Facebook profile of the Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who promotes the concert “#wearemore” and announces the bands.

Steinmeier: Federal President relies on confrontation in Chemnitz (title of the newspaper article)
<https://www.tichyseinblick.de/daili-es-sentials/steinmeier-bundespraesident-setzt-in-chemnitz-auf-konfrontation/>



When will our government finally be honest and admits that the failure of administration exemplified by the murderer of #Chemnitz is not an exception but the general rule?
#AfD #Bundestag #Koethen

Picture:
Migration policy: entered illegally, criminal and at large
(title of the newspaper article)
<https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article181486260/Migrationspolitik-Unerlaubt-ingereist-straffaellig-und-auf-freiem-Fuss.html>

Figure 7. Tweet from 11 September 2018 by Alice Weidel and its translation

The fourth article she uses covers the event in Köthen as well (Fig. 8). It was published by the newspaper “Welt” with the title “Autopsy reports: 22-years old died of acute heart failure”. The article claims that according to the autopsy report, there is no evidence for a direct connection between the injuries from the fight



Beaten until heart attack.
#AfD #Koethen

Picture:
Autopsy reports: 22-years old died from acute heart failure
(title of the newspaper article)
<https://www.welt.de/vermischtes/article181477442/Obduktionsergebnis-22-Jaehriger-in-Koethen-starb-an-akutem-Herzversagen.html>

Figure 8. Tweet from 9 September 2018 by Alice Weidel and its translation

and the heart failure. Nevertheless, Alice Weidel comments: “Beaten until heart attack” (Fig. 8). Her words imply that the heart failure was a consequence of the fight. However, it is a clear lie to frame the migrants who participated in the fight as enemies. After what happened in Chemnitz, which was manipulatively designated as murder although it was not, it perfectly fits the image of immigrants being criminal. Obviously, in this case it seems to be acceptable for Alice Weidel to not stick to the truth.

Conclusion

All four video messages clearly blame somebody, mostly the government and the media. First of all, the media who supports the defamation of the protest are to be blamed. They do not report correctly and even leave the citizens improperly informed. Alice Weidel creates the enemy concept in the media due to the supposedly unbalanced reporting on the events in Chemnitz. According to her the media should concentrate their coverage on the killing itself and write less about the demonstrations, or at least, be less condemning about them. She complains about the unjust reporting about the AfD and right-wing movements in general. What is remarkable here is the use of false accusations. Alice Weidel resorts to this strategy in her tweet in which she links to the article by the “Süddeutsche” along with the assertion that the article blames the AfD for everything, which is not true. However, she is caught in the paradox of on one hand defaming the media of lying and, on the other hand, using them for supporting her claims and strengthening her credibility.

The second group which is seriously maligned is the government. Alice Weidel blames it for the preventable deaths of so many people. According to her, the government did not act responsibly. Instead, in order to evade admitting their mistake and their failure, they lie. Hence, it is the government’s fault that there is such a high rate of violent crime and murder in Germany. It is a signal that the constitutional state and the government are failing, because the government does not abide by the law, but blames those who demonstrate instead of blaming the refugees.⁴⁶ In addition, refugees and migrants are shown as the enemy by Alice Weidel.

The image which Alice Weidel creates for her party is that of belonging to the citizens and, hence, of being good. Since all citizens of Germany are victims of the government and the media, the AfD is a victim of them too.

⁴⁶ To what extent the AfD represented by Alice Weidel defames immigrants, especially asylum seekers, is examined in the article *Drawing the picture of the evil immigrant* in this volume.

In order to strengthen her defamation, Alice Weidel create credibility in the following three ways: First, by referring to authorities, second, by referring to the law, and thirdly, by using videos or newspaper articles as proof.

In her video message about the lie of the chasings, she supports her claims referring to several authorities who all assert differently from Angela Merkel and her spokesman Steffen Seibert, who in turn supposedly spread fake news. In another video message, Alice Weidel claims that the protests in Chemnitz were based on legal groundwork quoting the Basic Law. Since it seems reasonable, the audience has no reason to demand or search for proof, which makes the strategy very effective. Although what she quotes is correct, she leaves out important information without commenting on it. Hence, her claim is incorrect. The strategy is even more effective as she applies it in a video message. Thus, the information is given really quickly and the viewer would have to stop the video to start research.

The third strategy is to enhance her claim with a video snippet as poof as in the case of government spokesperson Steffen Seibert. However, she uses it manipulatively by showing one excerpt taken out of context that suits proof for her accusations. Further, she refers to newspaper articles to support her claims, although this leads to the above-mentioned paradox.

All these strategies demonstrate how defamation may create credibility. The AfD presents itself as being one of the rare political groups that comply with the law and to the truth, whereas their enemies, the government and the media, are either lying or breaking the law and not acting for the citizens but against them. Furthermore, it offers the possibility of playing the victim: The media wronged them by accusing them of demonstrating violently and chivvied by blaming the AfD for putative rioting and racist protests instead of reporting on the truth. By that, the two hypotheses raised in the introduction are confirmed. The victim role certainly plays a role for the AfD's self-presentation. Finally, truth and untruths also become relevant, though not so much as supposed.

Figures

Figure 1.

AfD-Fraktion im Deutschen Bundestag, *Weidel & Gauland: Medien und Altparteien spalten die Gesellschaft (Weidel & Gauland: Media and established parties split the society)*, “Twitter” 28.08.2018, <https://twitter.com/AfDimBundestag/status/1034439878828859392>.

Remark: Retweets cannot be linked. The link from a retweet always leads to the original tweet and not the retweet.

Figure 2.

Weidel A., *Persönliches Statement: Die Bürger haben ein Recht darauf, vom Staat geschützt zu werden (Personal Statement: The citizens have a right on being protected by the state)*, “Twitter” 29.08.2018, https://twitter.com/Alice_Weidel/status/1034751567931625473.

Figure 3.

Weidel A., *Kommentar zu Chemnitz: “Das Demonstrationsrecht muss geschützt werden” (Comment concerning Chemnitz: “The right to demonstrate must be protected”)*, “Twitter” 05.09.2018, https://twitter.com/Alice_Weidel/status/1037251468884148226.

Figure 4.

Weidel A., *“Hetzjagd”-Lüge: Fake News aus dem Kanzleramt (Lie of the “chasing”: Fake News by the chancellery)*, “Twitter” 06.09.2018, https://twitter.com/Alice_Weidel/status/1037687960412598272.

Figure 5.

Weidel A., *AfD hat Schuld an allem (AfD is to be blamed for everything)*, “Twitter” 28.08.2018, https://twitter.com/Alice_Weidel/status/1034428350520090624.

Figure 6.

Weidel A., *Der Staat hat sein Gewaltmonopol nicht etwa nur aufgegeben (The state has not only abandoned its monopoly on the use of force)*, “Twitter” 03.09.2018, https://twitter.com/Alice_Weidel/status/1036511871619264513?s=20.

Figure 7.

Weidel A., *Wann macht sich die Regierung endlich ehrlich (When will our government finally be honest)*, “Twitter” 11.09.2018, https://twitter.com/Alice_Weidel/status/1039523402384633856.

Figure 8.

Weidel A., *Zum Herzinfarkt geprügelt (Beaten until heart attack)*, “Twitter” 09.09.2018, https://twitter.com/Alice_Weidel/status/1038863431506571264.

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Effect of educational mobility on lifestyle

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This study revisits and extends a classic question in sociology and tests three competing hypotheses about the effects of intergenerational educational mobility on cultural tastes. By applying diagonal reference models to data coming from nationally representative survey carried out in 2019, I show that mobile individuals come to resemble their nonmobile counterparts in their current educational level which confirms hypothesis of maximization. This is inconsistent with Bourdieu's view that habitus is largely determined by primary socialisation at parental home. I also show that upwardly and downwardly mobile individuals switch musical tastes of both parental and current educational level.

Social mobility, which refers to a movement between fixed class categories, shapes both social structure and people's cultural identities. It has been suggested that on the macro-level approach upward mobility promotes modernization, democracy, and integration into political system though it also appears as a threat to class formation in having negative impact on the cohesion of classes. Thus, mobility is seen as the principal indicator of a fair and just society, a society where no individual is prevented from fulfilling his or her potential. Concerning the individual level, there is set of ideas connecting the experience of social mobility with a wide variety of positive consequences such as making mobile persons more dynamic, versatile and inventive¹ but it is also an issue of paramount importance

¹ See: Sorokin P. A., *Social and Cultural Mobility* (2nd ed.). Glencoe IL, Free Press, 1959.

for adjustments of mobile individuals to new social environment, leading to severe strains on individuals, causing alienation and mental diseases, encouraging conformity to the dominant values, and to produce political conservatism among upwardly mobile people.²

This paper aims to examine effect of intergenerational mobility on cultural attitudes, focusing specifically on musical tastes. My analysis concerns educational mobility that refers to the relative influence of parental level of education versus own educational achievement on cultural resources. The question is to what extent intergenerational advancement or degradation in educational achievements affects participation in culture and how it results in processes of cultural accommodation of mobile persons to the new status positions. This is in line with other domains of social mobility effects research, for example with regard to political preferences, preventive healthcare use, antagonistic attitudes, smoking, fertility, etc.³

My measure of intergenerational mobility focuses on educational attainment as an important marker of social position. Education is a central determinant of occupational class and income,⁴ the ‘main vehicle for intergenerational reproduction and the main avenue for social mobility.’⁵ Moreover, in comparison to income or occupation, education can also be measured for those not currently employed, which represents especially an important advantage for studying young adults and older cohorts. The fact that both family of origin and the attained educational level are strongly related to cultural participation indicates that both intergenerational transmission and cultural mobility are at work as mechanisms for cultural behavior. Further, educational qualifications are particularly relevant to understanding cultural participation such as attendance at concerts, art galleries, museums, engagement in recreation, and so on. As noted, whatever social advantage might arise from heavy engagement in cultural activities it will accrue to those who are highly educated,

² See: Lipset S. M., Bendix R., *Social Mobility in Industrial Society*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1959; Merton R. K., *Social Theory and Social Structure*. New York, Free Press, 1968.

³ See: Nieuwebeerta P., De Graaf N.D., Ultee W., *The effects of Class Mobility on Class Voting in Post-war Western Industrialized Countries*, “European Sociological Review”, Vol. 16, 2000 no. 4, pp. 327-348; Daenekindt S., Roose H., *A Mise-en-Scène of the Habitus: The Effect of Social Mobility on Aesthetic Dispositions towards Films*, “European Sociological Review”, Vol. 29, 2013 no. 1, pp. 48-59; Gugushvili A., Zhao Y., E. Bukodi, *Intergenerational Educational Mobility and Smoking: a Study of 20 European Countries Using Diagonal Reference Models*, “Public Health” Vol. 181 (April 2020), pp. 94-101; see also: de Graaf et al. 1995; Missinne et al. 2015; Tolsma et al. 2009; Yang & Cheng 2018;

⁴ See: Blau & Duncan 1967; Reisel 2012.

⁵ Torche, 2015.

who occupy higher occupational class positions, and who have backgrounds within higher social classes. Higher education is associated with regular attendance at the theatre, art galleries, opera, cinema, musicals and rock concerts. It is also strongly associated with owning paintings and reading books. In contrast, belonging to the lowest social classes tends to be associated with never doing these things⁶

Largely, under the influence of Bourdieu, sociological thinking about relationships between social and cultural stratification tend to be dominated by notions of cultural capital which resides, among others, in capital institutionalized in educational level.⁷ In the area of music the contrast is between the tastes of individuals with tertiary education for elite music – e.g. classical music, and to some extent, jazz, and rock – against the preferences of individuals with the low educational credentials for popular genres such as pop music, disco polo, and dance.⁸ Certainly, these associations are reciprocal, and for example, attending philharmonic may be beneficial for occupational career, esteem, and other rewards. Acculturation into elite groups became an entry to lucrative positions, although primary link of this is educational capital.

The aims of the present study is to examine the relative importance of educational mobility for cultural involvement in listening music, going to theatre, reading, and broadly understood consumption patterns. The social stratification of lifestyles was an important concern in the pioneering work of Simmel (1997), Sorokin,⁹ Veblen (1967) and Weber (2010) and it has now been restored to the heart of the analysis and theorization of social class. It was only later on that a large number of studies have empirically established the importance of intergenerational transmission for

⁶ See: López-Sintas J., García-Álvarez E., *Omnivores Show up Again: The Segmentation of Cultural Consumers in the Spanish Social Space*, “European Sociological Review”, Vol. 18, 2002 no. 3, pp. 353-368; Alderson A. S., Azamat J., Heacock I., *Social Status and Cultural Consumption in the United States*, “Poetics” Vol. 35, issues 2-3 (April-June 2007), pp. 191-212; Yaish M., Katz-Gero T., *Disentangling ‘Cultural Capital’: The Consequences of Cultural and Economic Resources for Taste and Participation*, “European Sociological Review” Vol. 28, 2010 no. 2, pp. 169-185; Bukodi E., *Social Stratification and Cultural Participation in Hungary; a Post-communist Pattern of Consumption?*, in: *Social Status and Cultural Consumption*, Chan T.W. (ed.), Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 139-168; Nagel I., *Cultural Participation Between the Ages of 14 and 24: Intergenerational Transmission or Cultural Mobility?*, “European Sociological Review” Vol. 25, 2009 no. 6, pp. 541-556.

⁷ See: Bourdieu P., Passeron J. C., *The Inheritors: French Students and their Relation to Culture*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1979.

⁸ See: Bennett T., Savage M., Silva E.B., Warde A., Gayo-Cal M., Wright D., *Culture, Class, Distinction*, London and New York, Routledge, 2009, p. 77.

⁹ See: Sorokin P. A., *Social and Cultural Mobility...*

cultural participation. These all show a strong relation between actual cultural practices and the cultural activities by the parents. Having culturally active parents strongly enhances a person's interest in culture and the arts. Those brought up in a culturally rich milieu are more likely to develop aesthetic dispositions and to acquire cultural skills through the 'habitus' that enable them to secure more easily potentially advantageous degrees. Moreover, higher-status parents would use their lifestyle to help their children attain a similarly high status, first through education.¹⁰ As high-status culture corresponds to what is taught and valued in schools, children raised with highbrow culture in the parental home have an advantage in education. As a result, the children of parents with a high cultural status are most successful in school, and consequently move on to higher cultural positions, as their parents did. One can therefore expect to find strong intergenerational transmission of parental lifestyle to their adult children, both a culturally oriented and a lifestyle oriented at luxury.

The fact that both family of origin and the attained educational level are strongly related to cultural participation indicates that both intergenerational transmission and cultural mobility are at work as mechanisms for cultural behavior. Partly, a culturally oriented lifestyle is reproduced from parents to their offspring; for another part cultural participation may also be developed during the educational career. The theoretical literature on mobility effects offers a lot of hypotheses about the cultural impact of social class mobility. One of them suggests, for example, that class mobility of any kind creates permanent feelings of anxiety, strain, and distress because mobile individuals can never become fully accustomed to life in a new and alien class position.¹¹ Another hypothesis emphasizes the direction of mobility, and suggests that downward class mobility leads individuals to suffer feelings of self-blame, distress, and personal failure (Newman 1999). This study extends theoretical implications of prior research and asks how intergenerational educational mobility influences cultural activity in Poland, based on a representative national survey carried out in 2019.

Hypotheses

The social-psychological impact of mobility can largely be grouped into two competing strands. According to the first, perhaps more dominant view, the mobile are overwhelmingly content with the progress of their lives and rarely plagued by

¹⁰ See: Bourdieu P., Passeron J. C., *The Inheritors: French Students...*

¹¹ See: Sorokin P. A., *Social and Cultural Mobility...*

any cultural disequilibrium (e.g. Goldthorpe¹² Marshall & Firth¹³). According the reverse understanding of the mobility experience, it had a largely ‘dissociative’ effect on the individual, resulting in a higher incidence of social and psychological problems. Mobility, these scholars argued, usually implies a process of detachment from, and attachment to, particular class cultures. In turn, these processes may be particularly stressful because they are often leaving individuals with uncertain cultural and personal ties to two distinct social realms (Jackson & Marsden 1962; Strauss 1971; Sennett & Cobb 1977; Hopper 1981).

The traditional claim that social mobility had profound psychic implications is reflected in the vast literature. In this vein, mobility is deemed to weaken criticism, to encourage conformity to the dominant norms and values¹⁴ and to produce political conservatism among upwardly mobile people (Bendix & Lipset 1959). Generally, experience of upward mobility comes at a considerable discrepancy between new elite milieu and lower social origin in patterns of lifestyle that could produce a painfully fragmented self, and a habitus “clive”¹⁵ (Fourny 2000; Steinmetz 2006). According to this understanding while movers up certainly attempt to adopt the cultural dispositions valued in their new elite milieu, they are never able to eliminate their nostalgia for reintegration into their community of origin. Disrupting social relationships, mobility tends to increase heterogeneity and undermines internal cohesion.¹⁶

This study revisits these questions drawing on a classic and frequently suggested explanations of the link between intergenerational educational mobility and cultural tastes. These explanations invokes the effects of varying intergenerational class mobility patterns. The first theory concerns the “dissociative” effect of social mobility. According to this pattern, the experience of social mobility – be it upward or downward – may be a disruptive, and subsequently detrimental experience for the individual arguably because mobile persons find it hard to adapt to a new class position they have not been socialized into (Friedman 2015; Van Der Waal & De Koster 2014).¹⁷ The argument is that incongruity and conflicting demands between

¹² See: Goldthorpe, J. H., *Social Mobility and Class Structure in Modern Britain* (2nd ed.). Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980.

¹³ Marshall G., Firth D., *Social Mobility and Personal Satisfaction: Evidence from Ten Countries*, “The British Journal of Sociology” Vol. 50, 1999 no. 1, pp. 28-48.

¹⁴ See: Merton R. K., *Social theory and social structure*, New York, Free Press, 1968.

¹⁵ See: Sorokin P. A., *Social and Cultural Mobility...*; Bernstein B., *Class, Codes and Control*, London, Paladin, 1972.

¹⁶ See: Durkheim E., *Education and Sociology*, Glencoe, IL, The Free Press, 1956.

¹⁷ See: Sorokin P. A., *Social and Cultural Mobility...*; Hollingshead A., Ellis R., Kirby E., *Social Mobility and Mental Illness*, “American Sociological Review”, Vol. 19 (1954), pp. 577-584.

the class position of origin and the class position of destination generate insecurity and may undermine well-being. Such contradictions may create cultural uprooting that leads to stress and anomie.

The second hypothesis refers more specifically to effect of the downward mobility. It predicts that downward social mobility is the only mobility trajectory that will provoke problems for people's well-being. The general idea is that it is the experience of downward mobility that – in contrast to upward mobility – may spur feelings of frustration and failure (Tolsma et al. 2009).¹⁸ In this vein, damaging impact of skidding down the occupational ladder is associated with feelings of failure, stress, social disorientation and loss of control. These interpretations suggest the “falling from grace” explanation to hold. According to this perspective, the downwardly mobile never become accustomed to life in their new social class, are unsure how to reverse their fall, and suffer from lasting feelings of failure and self-blame (Newman 1999; Houle 2011).

Whereas downwardly mobile individuals will tend to keep the norms of their class of origin, upwardly mobile people will tend to adopt those of their class of destination. According to the third hypothesis often referred to maximization,¹⁹ upwardly mobile tend to align their behavior with the one of their highest status reference group, i.e. the norms of the class of destination. Correspondingly, the maximization strategy applies also to the downwardly mobiles. Due to feelings of failure, downwardly mobile individuals may resist the status implications of their downward mobility. In such case, they stubbornly reject processes of acculturation, denying their failure that force them to keep the norms of their class of origin instead that of destination class.²⁰ In case of upwardly mobile individuals, the maximization strategy may well display in ostentatious identification with highbrow culture. For example, in Poland, striving for distinction would reside in being visible in philharmonic, vernissages, and in emphasizing one's knowledge of art in order to show up, to be counted as ‘cultural’ *intelligentsia*.

The fourth competing explanation in the literature, which I do test, is termed the hypothesis of „socialisation”. Contrary to hypothesis on maximization, advocates of hypothesis of „socialisation” emphasize the crucial role of social origin. Since socialization takes place primarily early in life and many attitudes tend to be rather

¹⁸ See: Blau P. M., *Social Mobility and Interpersonal Relations*, “American Sociological Review”, Vol. 21 (1956), pp. 290-295.

¹⁹ See: Daenekindt S., Roose H., *A Mise-en-Scène of the Habitus...*

²⁰ See: Wilensky H. L., Edwards H., *The Skidder: Ideological Adjustments of Downward Mobile Workers*, “American Sociological Review”, Vol. 24, 1959 no 2, pp. 215–231.

stable during the life course, a ‘socialization’ perspective would expect a larger effect for origin position than destination position.²¹ Effect of the family background is so strong that persons who have moved from low to high find it difficult to accommodate to the dominant culture *if that's even possible*. These are not only to be stuck to old habits but also they don't feel to do reject them. According to pessimistic interpretation it works both ways which means that also people who experience downward mobility tend to identify themselves more strongly with class of origin than with lower classes.²²

An alternative to these scenarios is hypothesis on “acculturation”. The acculturation thesis describes the possibility that social mobility is not a harmful, and dislocating experience. According to this perspective, social mobility involves a process of resocialization, which does not necessarily generate dissociation or psychosocial problems.²³ Thus, socially mobile individuals gradually abandon values, norms, and customs from the social position of origin and adopt those of their newly acquired status position. Because of their success, upwardly mobile individuals have more incentives to adopt the culture of their new social environment and to manifest their newly acquired, more prestigious social position. Possibility of acculturation in a weaker version assumes that mobile persons are not well integrated in either social class. They are marginal men, in some respects out of tune with others both in their new and original strata They do not have sufficient opportunity for complete acculturation to the values and style of life of the higher or lower class “inheritors” which results from lack of extensive and intimate social contacts.²⁴

The acculturation hypothesis may be reformulated to the “intermediate pattern”. According to this argumentation, socially mobile people, both upward and downward, poses special dilemmas for establishing interpersonal relations and becoming integrated in the community. This leads to the formation of attitudes midway between those of people's class of origin and class of destination (Lopreato 1967; Jackman 1972; Thompson 1971; Coulageon 2012).²⁵ Perhaps, in cultural

²¹ See: Durkheim E., *Education and Sociology*...

²² See: Jæger M.M., *Equal Access but Unequal Outcomes: Cultural Capital and Educational Choice in a Meritocratic Society*, “Social Forces”, Vol. 87 (2009), pp. 1943-1971.

²³ See: Blau P. M., *Social Mobility and Interpersonal Relations...*; Goldthorpe J. H., *Social Mobility and Class Structure in Modern Britain* (2nd ed.). Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980.

²⁴ See: Blau P. M., *Social Mobility and Interpersonal Relations...*; Daenekindt S., Roose H., *A Mise-en-Scène of the Habitus*...

²⁵ See: Coulangeon P., (2015). *The Omnivore and the ‘Class Defector’*. *Musical Taste and Social Mobility in Contemporary France*, “Notes & Documents”, n° 2013-03 Join.

domain the ‘intermediate pattern’ appears more likely to occur than any strict realignment since people’s tastes result from the combination of both “primary” and “secondary” socialization, rather than from the exclusive influence of either the cultural norms of their class of origin (complete socialization) or the norms of their class of destination (complete acculturation).

A great deal of quantitative work tested these hypotheses extensively and was the subject of contentious discussion. In this article, I proposed an empirical reappraisal of the way educational mobility affects the formation of cultural attitudes, mostly through the canonical example of the distribution of musical tastes. Music, especially classical music, is a focus for cultural analysis because it so clearly evokes hierarchy and power: the memories of legitimate cultural capital.²⁶ Based on the above description, I propose three hypotheses that seem relevant in the Polish context.

The first hypothesis to be tested relates to effect of socialization. Musical preferences turn out to be strongly connected with social background, not giving way effect of educational attainment as some findings reveal (Sintas & Alvarez 2004; Katz-Gero et al. 2007).²⁷ Research in Poland suggests that effect of social origin affects not only preferences for classical music – to which the results of most analyses were limited – but also preferences of other musical tastes. It shows that, preference for jazz and rock is largely related to parents’ preference for jazz and rock and the same holds true for popular music and disco polo (Domański and al. 2020). This is in clearest opposition to much lower effects of social origin on educational or socio-occupational achievements. Cultural patterns seem to be particularly susceptible to processes of intergenerational transmission, despite contemporary cultural dynamics and transformation of the musical field.

In order to clarify these association I will, separately, investigate effect of educational mobility on cultural activities – i.e. watching the TV, going to theatre, eating in restaurant, listening to rock music – and on effect of educational mobility on preferences, expressed in likes and dislikes. I will focus on participation in musical events and on liking musical genres that most “infallibly” reflect class

²⁶ See: Bourdieu P., *A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. London and New York, Routledge, 1984, p. 18.

²⁷ See: Yaish M., Katz-Gero, T., *Disentangling ‘Cultural Capital’: The Consequences of Cultural and Economic Resources for Taste and Participation*. “European Sociological Review”, Vol. 28, 2010 no. 2, pp. 169-185; Nagel I., *Cultural Participation Between the Ages of 14 and 24: Intergenerational Transmission or Cultural Mobility?* “European Sociological Review”, Vol. 25, 2009 no. 6, pp. 541-556.

division in culture.²⁸ One may assume that socialization exerts greater impact on preferences than on cultural activity as the former are mostly rooted in the family background which hardly declines in adulthood. As regards mobility pattern, one would expect that those who have moved from low to high will be less culturally active than stationary highs, because they have been endowed with less cultural resources in their family. As newcomers, they are thought always to lag behind those who have been familiar with cultural consumption from childhood onwards (De Jager 1967). This is also the case for identification with the conjugal family. The downwardly mobile are, in turn expected to maintain the lifestyle they were brought up in the family of origin and are therefore expected to be more prone to consume legitimate culture than stationary lows.

Second hypothesis relates to strategy of status maximization. Its underlying idea is that people in general tend to adopt the more prestigious identity and, thereby, to maximize their status. Specifically, it means that people may prefer to take as their normative reference group whichever is the higher of their classes of origin and destination. The status maximization hypothesis, then, is that those who have moved from low to high orient themselves more to their origin class while upwardly mobile persons will orient themselves more to their destination class. A further question that has often been asked is whether there is an asymmetry in the patterns of acculturation of upwardly and downwardly mobile people: especially, whether upwardly mobile people adapt more quickly to their destination class than do those who are downwardly mobile (Lipset 1960; Parkin 1971). I expect that strategy of maximization works better in case of cultural activity relative to cultural preferences given that mobile persons take care to demonstrate their higher position. Concerning acculturation I predict that upwardly mobile at least parallel stationary highs. In turn, people who have moved from high to low will tend to keep the norms of their class of origin, i.e. they are no less pronounced than stationary highs.

The third hypothesis refers the aforementioned “intermediate pattern”.²⁹ If mobility affects cultural patterns, one may expect that both upwardly and downwardly mobile individuals take up an intermediate position between their current educational status and their status of origin. The switching effect theory predicts that the cultural tastes of the mobile will be close to those of their class of destination, although given the evidence on counter-mobility³⁰ one might expect

²⁸ See: Bourdieu P., *A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste...*, p. 18.

²⁹ See: Daenekindt S., Roose H., *A Mise-en-Scène of the Habitus...*

³⁰ See: Goldthorpe, J. H., *Social Mobility and Class Structure in Modern Britain...*

there to be some modest influence from social origins too. Given this interpretation, one would predict that the cultural preferences of the mobile will be closer to the typical cultural preference of their class of destination than to that of their class of origin where people tend to align their behaviour with the one of their highest status reference group, i.e. the norms of the class of destination for the upwardly mobiles and the norms of the class of origin for the downwardly mobiles. In a stronger variant of “intermediate pattern” hypothesis, some people might expect their current class positions to be temporary and might anticipate returning to their class of origin – hence they might define their interests as those of their class of origin.

Many scholars argue that social mobility plays a key role in the emergence of cultural omnivores. Although the social mobility idea does not preclude the blurring of cultural divisions, it is rather based on individuals crossing class barriers. As socially mobile are recruited from diverse social backgrounds and move in different cultural environments they are more likely to be culturally omnivorous than those who hold stationary positions.³¹ Empirical studies continue to show that members of the higher status groups are more likely to display an omnivorous taste pattern than members from lower status groups and that differences in schooling levels are in large part responsible for this (Ultee and de Graaf 1991)³². This does not exclude that upwardly mobile individuals may be less omnivorous than those who are intergenerationally stable in higher educational levels as it shows, for example, in the UK (Chan and Turner 2015). In this paper I seek to clarify the outlines of omnivorousness as former research conceptualized it. I hypothesize that social mobility could explain the emergence of cultural omnivores. This leads to more omnivorous lifestyles, because norms surrounding cultural behavior of newcomers will become more flexible as a greater diversity is perceived within one's reference group. Both upwardly and downwardly mobile individuals are more likely to engage with a greater variety of cultural forms than the stationary highs.

In examination effect of educational mobility on cultural tastes one has to distinguish influence of father's and mother's. Research on cultural consumption in Poland reveal that women are over-represented among people attending theatres, operas, museums, libraries, and reading books. The sex differences' predictions

³¹ See: Goldthorpe, J. H., *Social Mobility and Class Structure in Modern Britain...*; Van Eijck K., *Socialization, Education, and Lifestyle: How Social Mobility Increases the Cultural Heterogeneity of Status Groups*. “Poetics”, Vol. 26, 1999 no. 5, pp. 309-328; Blau P. M., *Social Mobility and Interpersonal Relations*. “American Sociological Review”, Vol. 21 (1956), pp. 290-295.

³² See also: Daenekindt S., Roose H., *A Mise-en-Scène of the Habitus...*

are based on Parental Investment Theory in which the sex that invests more on offspring is choosier than the less investing sex that is more competitive and more prone to show off. Women have a greater obligatory parental investment (due to pregnancy, breastfeeding and continuous care), so they are the choosiest sex, and men are the competitive and performing sex (e.g. Schmitt et al. 2005).³³ This lead us to fifth hypothesis saying about gendering effect of educational mobility on cultural practices. I predict that educational mobility related to mothers exerts higher impact on cultural consumption as compared to father's effect. This difference would be reflected in higher effect of social origin than effect of destination in case of mothers'.

Data and variables

To explore these questions, I use data from the stratification of musical tastes survey, conducted in 2019 between February and June by means of a computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI).³⁴ The sample of 4200 people aged fifteen or more was drawn on a personal sampling frame based on Polish national identification number PESEL. A final sample of 2007 cases were realized without a reserve sample. The analysis of socio-demographic variables does not indicate any significant differences between sample distributions and results of previous studies, except for some underrepresented categories classified as “managers and specialists” and “owners outside of agriculture.”

The questionnaire covered various forms of practicing culture, especially those concerning music. In this article, I focus on the analysis of selected musical preferences, and cultural activities which may be treated as representative of practicing culture. As regards preferences, the explained variables are classical music, jazz, ambitious rock, and disco polo. In order to capture them I used answers to questions about liking different songs and music genres. Survey participants first responded to an open question: “What music do you like most? Please provide

³³ See: Schmitt, D. P. et al., *Sociosexuality from Argentina to Zimbabwe: A 48-nation Study of Sex, Culture and Strategies of Human Mating*, “Behavioral and Brain Sciences”, Vol. 28, issue 2 (April 2005), 2005, pp. 247-275.

³⁴ Study *Musical tastes and social stratification in process of Poles lifestyles formation* was funded by National Science Center (UMO-2017/25/B/HS6/01929). Research team comprised Henryk Domański, Dariusz Przybysz, Katarzyna Wyrzykowska, and Kinga Zawadzka researchers in the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology Polish Academy of Sciences). The survey was administered by consortium *Danae and Realizacja*. Questionnaire and other technical characteristics are described in: <http://www.md.ifispan.pl/>.

names of your favorite performers, bands, composers.” The respondents recorded answers in their original form, which at the coding stage were assigned to several music genres. In a closed question the respondents received a list of seventeen genres which they were to grade on a five-point scale ranging from “I definitely dislike” to “I like very much.” The same scale was used in another closed question about preference for the music of selected composers, performers, and music bands.³⁵

In order to measure musical tastes in detailed way, we used a method of listening to fragments of music pieces. Respondents rated individual compositions on a scale from one (“I do not like this at all”) to five (“I like it very much”).³⁶ An indicator of preference for classical music is the sum of answers: (i) “I like it very much” and “I like it” in the closed question on classical music; (ii) respondent’s declaration that s/he “likes” or “very much likes” Bach, Mozart, and Wagner; (iii) a statement that s/he “likes” or “very much likes” the compositions of Bach, Boulez, Beethoven, Puccini and Tschaikovsky s/he just heard; (iv) respondent’s answer to an open question, in which s/he declared that s/he listens to classical music. The classical music liking index created in this way ranges from zero to 10, with reliability (Cronbach’s alfa) of 0.88. The indices for other music genres were constructed in a similar way. The attitude to jazz is the sum of answers indicating that the respondent “likes very much” or “likes” jazz and the music of Louis Armstrong, positively thinks of Miles Davis’ “Kind of Blue” when listening to it, and includes jazz when answering the open question. Finally, an indicator of liking rock music is the sum of the answers “I like it very much” or “I like it” in reference to the music of Metallica, Led Zeppelin, U2, Nirvana, and in the case of listening to the song “Time” by Pink Floyd. The index of liking disco polo includes the positive rating of Bayer Full and Sławomir, the Weekend’s song *She Dances for Me (Ona tańczy dla mnie)*, and naming disco polo as the preferred genre in both closed and open questions. Indicators’ reliability ranged from 0.75 to 0.78. In order to ensure indicators’ comparability, I transformed them into a uniform scale ranging from 0 to 10.

³⁵ In the case of the closed question, the respondent was first asked if he or she knows a given composer, performer, or band. If the answer was negative, the question about liking the music of a given artist did not appear. In the question on liking respondent could also answer “hard to say.”

³⁶ The duration of each listening session did not exceed 30 seconds. Respondents could listen to the songs directly from laptop speakers or using headphones. After listening to each piece of music, respondents were asked: “Whose music do you think it is? Please pick one of the given possibilities.” The respondents could pick from a list of 10 bands or composers and were asked to choose one correct answer. The next question was: “Do you like this music?” This question was asked regardless of whether the respondent identified the music correctly or not.

Table 1. Liking music and cultural practices in Poland. 2019

Variables	Percentages/ mean	Standard deviations
Attending concerts of classical music	32.06	46.68
Visiting theatre	12.80	33.50
Eating in restaurants	17.50	38.00
Number of books read last year	2.60	4.99
Index of liking classical music	2.42	2.82
Index of liking jazz	1.65	2.43
Index of liking rock	2.98	3.27
Index of liking disco polo	4.18	3.53
Index of omnivorism in liking music	4.33	2.97

Table 1 (above) presents percentages and means for respondents who declared liking some musical genres, reading books and visiting cultural institutions. As regards cultural activity I employed questions asking people how often they have visited a theatre, attended concerts of classical music, ate in restaurant, etc., based on 7-point grades from „never” to „more than once a week”. These were classified as zero-one variables coded 1 for „active” (visiting „on average from one a week” or „more”) and 0 for “non- active”(“no more than one a year” and “lower”). For reading respondents were asked to assess number of books read last year including also electronic and speech-sound books with exception of books read for education and work. Finally, omnivorousness is operationalized as the number of musical genres respondents likes. The scale sums respondents’ (0-1) scores of liking on the fifteen items. It ranges from zero (3.4% disliked all genres) to 15.

Main explanatory variables are own educational attainment, parental educational attainment, and intergenerational educational mobility as the comparison between the two (i.e., distinguishing non-mobility, downward and upward mobility). I measure educational attainment using a reduced form of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). Four educational levels were distinguished: (i) tertiary education completed, (ii) not completed tertiary education, post-secondary, and upper secondary (iii) not completed secondary and basic vocational, (in) elementary completed and below. Parental attainment was constructed in the same way. Mobility is captured by a categorical variable distinguishing the non-mobile (i.e., same educational attainment as parents), from the upwardly mobile (more highly educated than parents) and the downwardly mobile (less highly educated than parents).

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by parents' education and own education (cell percentages)

Mother/Father		Respondent				Overall
		1	2	3	4	
1. Elementary completed or lower	mother	9.2	14.2	9.8	2.5	35.6
	father	8.8	12.5	8.3	2.2	31.8
2. Basic vocational or secondary not completed	mother	2.5	10.2	12.6	6.2	31.5
	father	2.7	12.4	15.8	9.0	39.9
3. Upper secondary completed, post-secondary, or non completed tertiary	mother	1.8	1.8	9.0	8.2	20.8
	father	1.8	1.8	7.6	6.9	18.0
4. Tertiary completed	mother	1.1	0.8	2.9	7.2	12.1
	father	0.7	0.5	2.9	6.1	10.3
Overall	mother	14.6	27.0	34.3	24.1	100.0
	father	14.0	27.2	34.6	24.2	100.0

Table 2 reports the distribution of respondents by their own educational level and that of their parents. It can be seen that, between the two generations, the share of university graduates has doubled from 10-12% to 24% (in case of mothers' and fathers' respectively), while the proportion of people with lowest education dropped from 35% to 14%. Also, just over third (34.9-35.5% relative to fathers' and mother's respectively) of the respondents are educationally immobile (i.e. found in cells on the main diagonal), 52-54% are upwardly mobile (found in cells above the main diagonal), and 10-11% suffer downward mobility (below the main diagonal). Note, high similarity between mobility patterns for fathers and mothers. The most common mobility experience is short-range mobility, i.e. between educational categories found in cells close to main diagonal. Much less common is long-range mobility. The results show that percentage of respondents with basic vocational schooling originating from mothers with elementary education is 14.2%, while only 2.5% respondents with the same origin attain tertiary education.

Finally, individual-level controls include age (five categories), family incomes per capita (in ths. PLN), gender, and size of place of residence (6 categories from rural areas to cities above 500 ths. inhabitants).

Method

To assess the relative impact of social origin and destination position on cultural tastes I use diagonal mobility models.³⁷ As educational mobility is measured through mobility effect, the impact of both parents' and respondents' educational attainment, these three effects cannot be incorporated simultaneously in a conventional regression framework. A diagonal reference model provides a way of disentangling the three effects so that the impact of intergenerational educational mobility can be examined over and above the influence of parents'. The central idea behind diagonal mobility models is that the immobile represent the 'core' of each social position and bear the characteristics of that class more than anyone else. In my case, these core characteristics will be represented by respondents who have the same educational degree as their father. In a mobility table showing respondent's educational category by educational level of their parents, the immobile respondents will fall on the main top-left to bottom-right diagonal. Members of these referent positions establish their cultural practices and musical tastes without mobility experiences.

Formally, within diagonal mobility models, the attitudes of respondents in the ij cell of the mobility table are modelled as a function of the attitudes of the immobile respondents in social origin position i (cell ii) and of the immobile respondents of social destination position j (cell jj). The additive diagonal mobility baseline model without covariates for a dependent interval variable is given by:

$$(1) \quad Y_{ijk} = p\mu_{ii} + (1-p)\mu_{jj} + \varepsilon_{ijk},$$

where ε_{ijk} is a stochastic term with expectation 0, and μ_{ii} and μ_{jj} are the population means of the ii th and jj th cells of the mobility table. The parameter p indicates the salience of origin education relative to destination education to the dependent variable in question. Parameter p can thus be interpreted as the relative weight, or importance, of the origin category and $1 - p$ the relative weight, or importance, of the destination category for the explanation of the dependent variable, Y_{ijk} . If p is smaller than 0.5 the destination has a stronger relative impact on the dependent variable than the origin position.

To test my hypotheses I put forward two models. The extended model estimates two additional parameters (B_1 and B_2) for the dummy variables UP and DOWN that capture net upward and downward mobility effects and can be interpreted like OLS

³⁷ See: Sobel, M.E., *Diagonal Mobility Models: A Substantively Motivated Class of Designs for the Analysis of Mobility Effects*, "American Sociological Review", Vol. 46 (1981), n° 6, pp. 893–906.

coefficients. I characterize upward mobility as a shift from not tertiary to completed tertiary education (coded 1 and 0 otherwise). Downward mobility was defined as intergenerational educational mobility in the opposite direction. Henceforth the model is given by:

$$(2) \quad Y_{ijk} = p\mu_{ii} + (1-p)\mu_{jj} + B_{1*}UP + B_{2*}DOWN + \varepsilon_{ijk},$$

The second model corresponds to the *culture switching* hypothesis according to which cultural tastes of the mobile individuals are affected equally by their origin and destination categories. According to this model, both origin and destination are equally significant as determinants of the outcome variables among the mobile subjects. Formally, *cultural switching* amounts to setting the weights to one-half:

$$(3) \quad Y_{ijk} = 0.5 * p\mu_{ii} + 0.5 * (1-p) \mu_{jj} + 0.5(B_{1*}UP) + 0.5(B_{2*}DOWN) + \varepsilon_{ijk},$$

All models include the same control variables. I used the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) and a Deviance test to assess models fit. The models are estimated using the DREF subcommand of the General Nonlinear Models (GNM) package in R (Turner and Firth 2015).

Results

Tables 3-6 show the diagonal reference coefficients estimating the association of educational mobility and cultural participation. Each table includes two models. Model one shows estimates with no mobility variables. Model 2 displays estimates for more detailed mobility, including upward mobility, and downward mobility with control variables (not presented here). Deviance and AIC fit statistics are displayed beneath the reported coefficients for their respective models.

The origin and destination weights parameters inform us about the extent to which the mobile individuals represent cultural activity of their education of origin or destination. On average, these results show that mobile individuals tend mostly to resemble stayers in their destination, rather than their origin educational level in cultural tastes reported. In case of attending philharmonic concerts, for instance, the current education weight doubles the effect of origin ($p = .67$; $1-p = .33$). Then, destination is more important than origin for mobile individuals as regards cultural participation and liking music. These estimates strongly suggest that both weight parameters are significantly different from one which means that any educational mobility is associated with cultural tastes.

Across all models, predicted population means of cultural participations for stayers in their respective educational categories (the diagonal means) are reported. The predicted means vary slightly from model to model, though in general they indicate that more educated are more likely to engage with a greater variety of cultural forms than the culturally sedentary. Higher education translates also to higher preferences for classical music, jazz, and perhaps also other genres classified

Table 3. Diagonal reference coefficients estimating the association of educational mobility and attending concerts and visiting theatre

	Attending concerts				Visiting theatre			
	Mother		Father		Mother		Father	
	model 1	model 2	model 1	model 2	model 1	model 2	model 1	model 2
Origin Weights								
Baseline	0.33**	0.30**	0.30**	0.34**	0.47**	0.21**	0.43**	0.43**
Upward		0.26**		0.22**		0.32**		0.18**
Degradation		0.21		0.40*		0.55**		0.48**
Destination Weights								
Baseline	0.67**	0.70**	0.70**	0.66**	0.53**	0.79**	0.57**	0.57**
Upward		0.74**		0.78**		0.68**		0.82**
Degradation		0.79**		0.60*		0.45**		0.52**
Estimated effect for immobile by level of education								
Elementary	-1.88**	-5.60**	-1.98**	-0.74	-1.89**	-3.49	-1.95**	-0.63
Basic vocational or uncompleted secondary	-1.36**	1.94**	-1.55**	0.24	-1.48**	-2.18	-1.50**	-0.47
Secondary or uncompleted tertiary	-0.57**	1.20**	-0.56**	0.86	-0.19**	-1.46	-0.06	1.02
Tertiary	0.74**	2.48**	0.81**	2.08	-1.56**	-0.51	1.47**	2.23
Number of observations	1845	1318	1769	1261	1828	1306	1753	1740
Deviance	2065.4	1444.3	1390.3	1405.4	2026.7	1961.7	1371	1833.2
Degrees of freedom	1845	1318	1769	1261	1828	1306	1769	1740
Akaike Information Criterion	2075.1	1482.3	1981.8	1428.3	2036.7	1971.7	1361	1869.2

**p<0.01; *p<0.05

as representative for highbrow culture. For example, the score on liking classical music for immobile individuals who achieved – like their mothers – no educational or primary education is 1.29, whereas immobile individuals with the highest education score 3.92 (Table 5). Moving up the educational ladder, the diagonal intercepts show a clear monotonic increase in all cultural activities and musical tastes except of disco polo. As predicted, disco polo enjoys greater popularity among people at the lower status levels, favored mostly by farmers and non-skilled workers, and by people with low educational level (Domański and al. 2020). The findings echo the idea of homology between social stratification and the cultural tastes.³⁸

Model 2 includes the asymmetry parameter and thus allows the relative weights of origin and destination to differ between upwardly mobile and downwardly mobile individuals. The result show that in case of upward mobility cultural tastes is mostly affected by the current education, i.e. cultural activity and liking of musical genres of moving upwards are predominantly related to the educational position of destination. In other words, cultural tastes of mobiles is closer to their immobile counterparts at the same level of education. This pattern mostly displays in liking classical music. For upwardly mobile individuals relative to mother's education the weight parameter of the destination for classical music is 0.96 and that of the origin is 0.4. This means that for those who came from lower-educated backgrounds, but they themselves attained tertiary education, the preferences for classical music are 24 as high as among their immobile counterparts. The same holds true as to omnivorousness in liking music concerning the impact of the fathers' education (0.89/0.11). Relatively weaker, although visible, tendency towards dominance of destination can be observed for attending philharmonic concerts (0.82/0.18), and reading books (0.80/0.20). This provides some evidence for hypothesis that cultural choices for upwardly mobile individuals are predominantly rooted with destination rather than with origin on educational hierarchy.

Acculturation is less pervasive for upwardly mobile in liking rock and eating in restaurant. A reference point for those whose mother had lower education than for those whose mother graduated from some university in liking rock destination is 0.54 and in case of visiting restaurant it is 0.63 respectively. There are many arguments in favor of treating rock as appreciated as much as classical music among more educated people and its lesser popularity in the lower education categories. People with low education have difficulties in the reception of rock, especially

³⁸ See: Bourdieu, P., *A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, London and New York, Routledge, 1984.

Table 4. Diagonal reference coefficients estimating the association of educational mobility and eating in restaurants and reading books

	Eating in restaurants				Reading books			
	Mother		Father		Mother		Father	
	model 1	model 2	model 1	model 2	model 1	model 2	model 1	model 2
Origin Weights								
Baseline	0.77*	0.51**	0.78**	0.50**	0.39**	0.32**	0.46**	0.71*
Upward		0.37**		0.39**		0.41**		0.20**
Degradation		0.54**		0.48**		0.43**		0.68**
Destination Weights								
Baseline	0.23**	0.49**	0.22**	0.50**	0.61**	0.68**	0.54	0.29*
Upward		0.63**		0.61**		0.59**		0.80**
Degradation		0.46		0.52**		0.57**		0.32*
Estimated effect for immobile by level of education								
Elementary	-3.13**	-9.12	-3.38**	-3.82	0.58**	0.23	0.41**	0.02
Basic vocational or uncompleted secondary	-1.72**	5.57	-1.57**	2.46	0.50**	0.25	0.61**	0.24
Secondary or uncompleted tertiary	-1.07**	8.13	-0.97**	9.39	1.28**	0.82	1.35**	0.96
Tertiary	-0.40**	1.31	-0.55**	1.31	2.49**	2.16	2.64**	1.74
Number of observations								
Deviance	1526.6	935.1	1478.8	914.0	4503.8	2994.2	4242.1	3989.9
Degrees of freedom								
Akaike Information Criterion	1536.6	973.1	1488.8	952	6251.5	4462.5	5959.9	5891.1

**p<0.01; *p<0.05

avant-garde pieces. “Ambitious” rock may be also an alternative to classical music in that it requires musical preparation. Thus, it does not come as surprise if the rock pieces became as emblematic for highbrow culture *in recent decades*

Table 5. Diagonal reference coefficients estimating the association of educational mobility and liking classical music and jazz scores

	Like classical music				Like jazz			
	Mother		Father		Mother		Father	
	model 1	model 2	model 1	model 2	model 1	model 2	model 1	model 2
Origin Weights								
Baseline	0.00	0.10**	0.31**	0.32*	0.25**	0.21**	0.39**	0.31**
Upward		0.04**		0.25**		0.35**		0.29**
Degradation		0.38**		0.50**		0.56**		0.43*
Destination Weights								
Baseline	1.00**	0.90**	0.69**	0.68**	0.75**	0.79**	0.61**	0.69**
Upward		0.96**		0.75**		0.65**		0.71**
Degradation		0.62**		0.50**		0.44**		0.57*
Estimated effect for immobile by level of education								
Elementary	1.29**	-0.05	1.51**	-0.06	0.86**	-0.02	0.96**	-0.09
Basic vocational or uncompleted secondary	1.74**	-0.04	1.61**	0.01	1.16**	0.01	1.13**	0.02
Secondary or uncompleted tertiary	2.44**	1.08	2.60**	1.48	1.60**	0.08	1.60**	0.09
Tertiary	3.72**	2.17	4.31**	2.86	3.02**	2.41*	3.27**	2.32
Number of observations								
Deviance	13294	8423.4	12686.2	8016.5	10019	6188	9388.2	6307.7
Degrees of freedom	1844	1318	1769	1261	1845	1236	1769	1261
Akaike Information Criterion								
	8896.2	6295.1	8536.3	1278.7	8387.3	5603.9	8002.3	5714

**p<0.01; *p<0.05

as *performative theatre did*. Contrary to these expectations, rock seem not to gain tremendous esteem, at least in the Polish society, and it could be that – for example – *Led Zeppelin* or *Deep Purple* are not regarded as prestigious as classical music. In turn, eating in restaurants may spur feelings of negatively assessed conspicuous

consumption and *nouveau riche* strategy. If this is true, the ‘new money’ still would consume low-brow culture and remain high-brow snobs.

Overall, one has to reject hypothesis on socialization saying that the socially mobile individual is never completely able to overcome the influence of the social position of origin, and “is doomed to think and to look at the world through the glasses of his ‘social box’”.³⁹ The results lend rather support to hypothesis of status maximization insisting that whereas upwardly mobile people will tend to adopt cultural patterns of their class of destination, downwardly mobile individuals will tend to keep the norms of their class of origin.⁴⁰ Tentatively one can hypothesize that downward educational mobility would foster feelings of frustration, cultural competition and need to defend higher position related to parental education. It shows at strongest in liking disco polo, and slightly lower in liking rock and in omnivorousness in musical preferences. For individuals who moved from tertiary-educated backgrounds (relative to mothers) to secondary and lower education, the odds for liking disco polo is 15.7 as high as among their immobile counterparts (0.94/0.06). They also tend to maximize social status in terms of musical omnivorism (0.89/0.11) in case of outflow from fathers education, and liking classical music (0.89/0.11), respectively for mothers.

Predominant effect of status maximization does not exclude „switching culture” model meaning that mobile individuals are exposed to diverse cultural milieu. This view implies that both origin and destination play a non-negligible role in shaping cultural consumption. The downwardly mobile tend to retain the values and behavior patterns of their class of origin, but at the same time are assimilated into the social networks and culture of their class of destination. The same “switch” applies to newcomers into the top categories. Crucially, the „switching culture” strategy implies that both upwardly and downwardly mobile individuals are “in between” in cultural dimension: lowbrow taste established during childhood can be hardly rejected and highbrow tastes cannot be easily accommodated – i.e. to the same extent as among those who are immobile in high status positions. In line with this view, to speak of educational mobility effects, we need to establish particular combinations of origin and destination on the outcome of interest.

To verify this hypothesis I use switching culture model assuming equivalent impact of origin and destination on the outcome variables. It shows that the switching culture model does not fit better as compared to the model assuming

³⁹ Sorokin P. A., *Social and Cultural Mobility...*, p. 509.

⁴⁰ See: Nieuwbeerta P., De Graaf N.D., Ultee W., *The effects of Class Mobility on Class Voting...*; Daenekindt S., Roose H., *A Mise-en-Scène of the Habitus...*

Table 6. Diagonal reference coefficients estimating the association of educational mobility and liking rock, disco polo and omnivoroussness

	Like rock			
	Mother		Father	
	model 1	model 2	model 1	model 2
Origin Weights				
Baseline	0.61**	0.38**	0.57**	0.41*
Upward		0.46**		0.33**
Degradation		0.69**		0.82**
Destination Weights				
Baseline	0.39	0.62**	0.43	0.59**
Upward		0.54**		0.67**
Degradation		0.31**		0.18
Estimated effect for immobile by level of education				
Elementary	0.93**	-0.30	0.82**	-0.49
Basic vocational or uncompleted secondary	2.57**	-0.02	2.55**	0.02
Secondary or uncompleted tertiary	4.22**	1.61	4.19**	1.70
Tertiary	5.25**	2.61	5.29**	2.55
Number of observations				
Deviance	16817	10616	16241	10129
Degrees of freedom	1845	1318	1769	1261
Akaike Information Criterion				
	9345.4	6604.5	8974.5	6320.2

**p<0.01; *p<0.05

competing impact of origin and destination on cultural tastes. The former displays also a higher AIC. This, substantively, suggests that socially mobile individuals come to resemble those in their current (or origin) education rather than being affected equally by their origin and destination categories. Model of the competing impact of origin and destination will then be retained as the best. There is a good deal of cultural crossover: question for further research is to determine whether acculturation leads to clash between various cultural choices or rather to soft cohabitation.

Like disco polo				Omnivorism in liking music			
Mother		Father		Mother		Father	
model 1	model 2	model 1	model 2	model 1	model 2	model 1	model 2
0.61**	0.72**	0.54**	0.59**	0.39**	0.01	0.33**	0.00
	0.36**		0.27**		0.26**		0.11
	0.94**		0.89*		0.41**		0.89
0.39**	0.28**	0.46**	0.41**	0.61	0.99**	0.67**	1.00**
	0.64**		0.72**		0.74**		0.89**
	0.06		0.11*		0.59**		0.11**
5.35**	1.13	5.12**	-0.01	3.38**	0.014	3.35**	0.13
5.45**	1.20	5.17**	-0.07	3.84**		3.79**	-0.23
3.67**	-0.48	3.88**	0.59	4.92**	0.92	4.81**	-0.88
1.17**	-2.48**	1.13**	1.55	5.55**	1.72	5.58**	1.56
20046	13144	19452	12688	15536	9962	14597	10086
1845	1318	1769	1261	1845	1237	1769	1262
9670.3	6890	9294.6	6608.6	9198.8	6199.4	8785.3	6312.8

Finally, one cannot find support for hypothesis that cultural practices are more affected by mothers' than by the fathers' education. Under this scenario, mothers' are more involved in practicing culture to more extent as compared to father's (Collins 1992; Bihagen & Katz-Gero 2000). Mobile individuals, then, should be more affected by mothers education. But we do not see significant gender differences regarding the estimated weights for parental education. As is apparent, effect of mothers overlaps, or mitigates, that of fathers' educational level.

Conclusion

Empirical studies continue to show that members of the higher status groups participate more actively in highbrow culture than members from lower status groups and that differences in schooling levels are in large part responsible for this. This article has offered a general endorsement of this statement, but, in addition, I have attempted to extend the arguments by showing how educational mobility affects cultural activity and musical tastes. Educational improvement which would lead 'naturally' to gravitate to an appreciation of the higher taste cultures would imply certain disruption of social barriers. This could indicate that educational mobility does not boil down to occupational achievements but transfers also into openness in cultural domain. Contrariwise, relatively strong effect of parental education would provide evidence that educational mobility does not parallel by decline in cultural barriers. In particular, this implies that the social origin of individuals determines their cultural consumption pattern, with destination playing little or no role.

I found evidence for processes of acculturation. That is, regarding cultural activity and liking music, educationally mobile individuals adapt to the characteristics of the social position of destination, suggesting that educational mobility is simply a process of resocialization. Crucially, processes of acculturation are asymmetric as they differ between upwardly and downwardly mobile individuals: Acculturation is more pervasive for upwardly mobile individuals, i.e. moving to the top of educational gradation associates with higher liking of the classical music, attending theatre, philharmonic concerts, and other attributes of the highbrow culture. The blurring of cultural boundaries by educational achievements goes against the experience of downward mobility. In light of my findings, decline in education relative to parents educational level did not eliminate cultural tastes related to social background. In fact, quite reverse: downwardly mobile tend to keep customs of their class of origin. They do not lose high cultural capital. Effect of socialization leads to defend prestigious position.

It is also worth considering that, contrary to expectations, musical tastes do not depend more on socialization as compared to cultural activity. In addition, upward mobility does not induce more cultural engagement than liking music. Finally, against stereotype educational mobility relative to mothers do not affects cultural tastes more than mobility related to fathers'.

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Retrotopia in Music

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*The tradition of all dead generations weighs
like a nightmare on the brains of the living.¹*

Karl Marx

I. In principio

We are not a culture of endurance, but a culture of progress. The Euro-centric imperative invariably pushes us towards the unknown, it looks for answers to the unexplained and rejects continuity. Progress, like a precious signpost, has accompanied us continuously (since the invention of printing Europe has reevaluated itself in every age) and almost always was associated with hope for greater prosperity and convenience. Although this may be too much of a generalization and an unnecessary personification of the continent, for our considerations it highlights the cultural differences in the perception of time. The time of progress with its linearity and the presence of the Aristotelian *télos* has nothing to do with cyclical growth *in principio*, about which Eliade wrote “as long as something did not exist, its time could not exist” [formatting in accordance with the original].

¹ The citation from K. Marx’s *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, in: Zygmunt Bauman, *Retrotopia*, Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2017, p. 50.

For a Westerner, it is an excuse to create something. Is it still the case or has like our desire to seek prosperity and comfort ceased? As Zygmunt Bauman claims in his last opus, *Retrotopia*, what has been one of the main motivators of modern man has been eroded – the future no longer tempts, the future scares. Demotivated by the future, people devote themselves to the search for safe havens, idyllic retreats where they can take a respite from the pursuit of utopia. This is “a defense mechanism in a time of accelerated rhythms of life and historical upheavals,”² as Bauman says after Svetlana Boym, causes a “global epidemic of nostalgia,”³ which is nothing other than “a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one’s own fantasy.”⁴ This romantic relationship with the supposed stability of the past causes the pendulum of social sentiment to swing significantly towards the proven and the undead, even if they are only imaginary. Bauman aptly adds: the “future is in principle pliable — the past is solid, sturdy and fixed once and for all.”⁵ Paradoxically, “true to the utopian spirit, retrotopia derives its stimulus from the hope of reconciling, at long last, *security* with *freedom*.”⁶ The feeling that we are not the ones in control of the present from which the future is to evolve dims our hopes for progress along with our self-confidence. David Loventhal, whom Bauman quotes, writes that “heritage consoles us with tradition”⁷ and goes on to say – as if to shift the emphasis from action to its motives – “the past is more admirable as a realm of faith than of fact.”⁸ Returning to a place where the system was not so complex and dynamic restores a comfort zone, that satisfies the need for emotional warmth and suppresses discomfort “inside the infuriatingly yet hopelessly turbulent, notoriously chaotic and confusing world.”⁹

Like a hamster in the wheel of economic growth, contemporary man did not even notice when he was robbed of all the privileges that previous generations could enjoy (and as Bauman says, “there is no finish line on the treadmill of consumption”¹⁰). Strapped to the screen of his own smartphone, he has exchanged

² Z. Bauman, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 7.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 7.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 54.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 11.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 52.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 53.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 56.

¹⁰ Jacek Żakowski, Prof. Bauman: wojna z kłamstwem jest nie do wygrania, „Polityka”, January 1, 2019. <https://www.polityka.pl/tygodnikpolityka/klasykipolityki/1776382,1,prof-bauman-wojna-z-klamstwem-jest-nie-do-wygrania.read>. (Access: December 15, 2020).

human solidarity for temporary alliances whose “main preoccupation always being to extract more profit from the situation than your competition.”¹¹ As Paul Verhaeghe, quoted further in *Retrotopia*, notes, this has led to a state where “there is a buried sense of fear.”¹² How, then, does culture, and music in particular, fare in an age where life is made bearable only by “the strategy of illusory gratification of the phantom ones”¹³? Does the tradition of previous generations weigh on us like a nightmare, refusing to let go, or is the tradition an inexhaustible source of abundance?

Music, like a faithful companion of our dilemmas, joys and pleasures, accompanies us both in the salient and mundane moments of our histories. Current philosophical trends and echoes of social changes resonate in music of every era. Each epoch has its *Rite of Spring* and its Stravinsky, although it is often difficult to acknowledge them by acclamation. The imprints of an epoch remain hidden in music practically forever, so does the personality of the artists who created it. Is it possible, then, to find evidence of retrotopia in music currently being created? Is retrotopia equally present on the side of performance and its spectators? Finally, is its discrete influence possible to grasp at all, considering the temporal constraints of Bauman’s perspective?

II. Thinking Sociologically

The phenomenon that Bauman calls “retrotopia” certainly accompanies music. It is present and perceptible in music, although it should be assumed that any attempt to explain it must necessarily be subjective in nature. I call such phenomena retrogradation to emphasize the retrospective nature of these aspects as opposed to the prospective nature of others. The history and development of music is a pendulum constantly moving between progress and novelty, and heritage and continuity. Here, once again, it merits quoting Bauman and about the dialectics of repetition and novelty. Citing Gabriel Tarde, he notes that “human actors’ search for safe bets, triggered whenever they are faced with a risky choice; and the second by the similarly powerful yearning of the self for distinctiveness and autonomy.”¹⁴ So, when faced with the problems of the contemporary world, inside the infuriatingly yet hopelessly turbulent, notoriously chaotic and

¹¹ Bauman, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 84.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 105.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 26.

confusing world, does today's music listener look for safe solutions or does he or she strive for autonomy and individuality? On which side, in the face of the aforementioned problems, will the present-day artist stand, wanting his or her work to be correctly interpreted and properly appreciated?

I must admit that it is not easy to answer these questions unequivocally. On the one hand, when dealing with the ostentatious decorativeness of pop music with its accessibility and intrusive presence, it may be concluded that Bauman's theses clearly apply to music. On the other hand, in the comfort zones of our homes, musical decor can take various and often surprising forms. However, domestic comfort zones may also be where Bauman's retrotopia reveals its face the most, reanimating the undead past and plunging listeners into musical nostalgia.

The matter is not as simple and obvious as it may seem. Following the lead of an audience-hungry contemporary media might be pointless. Based on current doxes (which media co-create and on which they depend), using the modus of repetition and novelty known from fashion, media produce only easily readable phrases, and about these it is known only that "they cannot be explored; they can only be replaced by others."¹⁵ However, the phenomenon of imitation, based on the dialectics of novelty and repetition, is common not only in fashion and media. The development and history of music provide us with unequivocal evidence that without this phenomenon, we would not be able to create a language thanks to which music, as an abstract being, can be read and continued at all. Thus, the question is not about the history of music, but about recognizing the fact that the trail I intend to follow in this text is legitimate. The discrete influence of this mechanism is, somewhat hidden, or perhaps indistinct, due to the lack of accommodation resulting from a narrow perspective and – as Zygmunt Bauman once again says – "this truth is not easy to see at first sight."¹⁶ But Bauman was not concerned with music. Writing these words, in his book *Thinking Sociologically* published in 1990¹⁷, he wrote about our need to possess: "It is the fact that something is needed for my survival that makes it a good, which is like the reverse (side) of need. Because I need something, it is a good, and it is a good because I need it."¹⁸ In our times, this good, apart from "night silence, clean air and unpolluted water"¹⁹ is the need to have a shelter from

¹⁵ R. Barthes, *Roland Barthes*, Gdańsk, Wydawnictwo Słowo/obraz terytoria, 2011, p. 139.

¹⁶ Zygmunt Bauman, *Thinking Sociologically*, Oxford, UK; Cambridge, Mass., USA, B. Blackwell, 1990, p. 132.

¹⁷ Polish edition: Zygmunt Bauman, *Socjologia*, Poznań, ZYSK i S-ka, 1996.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 131.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 131.

the turbulence of the world, a deregulated labour market, or the disappearance of human solidarity. Therefore, it can be considered that music provides such shelter with its gift of moving through time and transforming emotions. Recognizing this fact makes music good for the present-day man who can use music to isolate himself from the world. However, someone would cheat himself if he thought that the tendency to associate with his favorite music is only a symptom of retrotopia. Since its early days, and later with the development of phonography, it has become common to amass a collection of one's favorite music. A nostalgic attitude toward the music of one's youth is common among non-professionals. What has changed is the revolution in the media and the wide availability of music services. These facilitate the phenomenon of retrotopia in music, and with the help of ubiquitous algorithms, keep their audience (although the word customers seems more appropriate here) trapped like prey in a snare. Here is Bauman's commentary:

The new media facilitate (and by the same token favour) the selection of cultural omnivorousness as much as they do a stringent while whimsical selectiveness in information-gathering, network-building and communication – all three being the most common functions/uses of those media. They encourage openness and Hans Gadamer's 'fusion of horizons' no more (though no less either) than they do the hermetically locking oneself off from everything loftily dismissed for being found unwieldy, inconvenient and discomfiting. Both the multiplication of inputs and their strict limitation become that much easier than ever before to achieve (and then they still are inside the offline universe).²⁰

My experience (and this is certainly not an isolated assessment) is that when listening to music on any of the music services or internet portals, we relatively quickly become hostages to our own choices. As a result, without moving a finger, we remain in our comfort zone, which is not so much expanding as it is narrowing our perspective. This situation there is no question of an evolution of musical tastes or a fusion of horizons. Our openness becomes our diaspora and we, thanks to and through our choices, remain subjected to a voluntary musical quarantine. Of course, our personal talents and predispositions also play a role here, which in theory allow us to go beyond this bracket, but more and more often we have neither the will nor the time for it. I would add here something else that is related to the reception of music, and which is certainly not subject to the current doxa. Back in the 1980s, it

²⁰ Z. Bauman, *Retrotopia...*, pp. 71-72.

was a good practice to have a stereo audio system at home, which made listening to music a little more valuable. Nowadays, the vast majority of consumers are content with the speakers of their smartphones and computers, and a bluetooth speaker seems to satisfy the maximum needs. This clearly shows the current popular attitude towards music – the ease with which we can access something makes us no longer appreciate it. On the other hand, Polish cities that are still in the process of development, invest huge amounts of money in world-class concert halls. Here we can clearly see that investing in the quality of music presentation favors its perception and reception (let's take the sold-out concert halls of the National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra in Katowice or the Philharmonic in Szczecin, which after the transformation of their premises gained a new and numerous audience).

After all, music and the problem of media is not a new thing. The breakthrough, which takes place with each appearance of a new format, generates a twofold reaction. On the one hand, it facilitates access to music (this is not the place to describe here an otherwise interesting phenomenon and the history of phonography), and on the other hand – personally, I believe that this aspect is much more noticeable – it guarantees the reprinting of the most sought-after titles (by the way, for retrotopia to come true, there needs to be constant access to the music we know). *Nota bene*, among music lovers and audiophiles there seems to be a widespread collector's imperative to own different editions of the same title (vinyl enthusiasts go even further, sometimes spending their last penny on another pressing of their favorite title). Much less interest is aroused by new titles, which triggers a trend among artists and producers where the dialectic pendulum of novelty and repetition is currently on the side of the latter.

III. Spectator donor

As we can clearly see, this complex process overlaps with the barely perceptible metaphor of retrotopia in music. Its presence is as undeniable as it is difficult to detect. Where one influence ends and another begins is impossible to know without making an arbitrary decision. The utopia associated with the constant development of music has been replaced by the imperative of success, which is clearly visible not only in the attitude of young musicians, but also in the productions they undertake. The eternal entanglement of the creator and the donor (I introduce this figure deliberately, because today each of the recipients is at the same time a donor of the creator) stimulated the development of music like the mechanism of repetition and novelty. The difference is significant, however, because despite the contemporary dissolution of the figure of the patron, its role and function remain unchanged. The

one who pays expects the results of the commissioned work to conform to his own ideas. Biographies of great artists abound in anecdotes related to the complicated relationship between artists and their patrons. A memorable example of this is the comment Joseph II von Habsburg once made to Mozart about the number of redundant notes.

However, today's artist does not have the opportunity to face such a direct correction of his/her actions, and the decision-making takes place using the mechanism of sales or popularity rankings. Artists who win such rankings share almost the same status and it is almost irrelevant whether we are talking about pop stars or creators of much more sophisticated music. Exposed to the chimerical volatility of an invisible patron, and as precarious as a contemporary corporate employee, the artist must on his own "to seek and find or construe individual solutions to socially produced problems and apply them — while deploying one's own wit and individually possessed skills and resources."²¹ Such a situation, if not even encouraging creators to make retrotopian decisions, stimulates them. A creator who resonates with the needs of his donor (in some cases it is the market and the YouTube algorithm, in other cases it may be a scholarship program or grant support) creates opportunities for himself not only to earn money, but above all to continue his work. My own observation leads me to believe that the carrot and stick approach, increasingly common in grant systems to support higher culture, is as effective as the expectations of wedding guests towards the Master of Ceremonies who is to provide musical accompaniment. And while there is a certain exaggeration in these words, the mechanism described is nothing new, and even less, nothing shocking. Although various, all forms of patronage have one thing in common – they are able to support only such creativity that they themselves are able to accept and understand. As the history of art clearly shows, only time can correct their actions and decisions in tempus. Patronage for art is as important as talent for the artist.

IV. In tempus

The observation of the discrete presence of retrotopia requires an example, the impact of which exceeds at least one generation (if we assume that retrotopia is a phenomenon observed by Bauman at the end of his life, this seems to be an adequate time frame). The traces left by retrotopia in music are not only ambiguous, but they also easily escape any direct observation. This example, although it may seem

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 14.

controversial at first glance, is the activity of a record label present on the music market for 50 years, whose activity oscillates within the limits of high culture, being at the same time its foreground. We are talking about the Munich-based ECM Records, whose five decades of exceptional, as far as Europe is concerned, activity is both a coherent and authoritative case study. Fifty years, more than 1600 albums, a large part of which are authorial proposals and projects of the founder and owner of the label, Manfred Eicher, allow us to believe that the discreet presence of retrotopia in music will reveal its face to us. This example is all the more interesting as it allows us to observe not only the changes in the approach of individual artists with whom ECM has established long-standing collaborations, but also in the catalog of the label as a whole, whose reputation has outgrown most of the artists in its ranks.

Although known primarily for presenting a quasi-authorial vision of jazz, ECM today publishes classical music, world music, early music, contemporary music, all under the personal vision of its founder, who, as producer, signs almost the majority of its catalog and which is published in exclusive form. Like Andy Warhol with his Factory, Manfred Eicher leads his company to success with a firm hand, creating art that is accessible and communicative. Although both of them can be accused of being somewhat instrumental in their treatment of the partners and artists whose work and talent they benefit from, in both cases, this activity produces spectacular results and brings to life a significant catalog of works. The words of Norwegian trumpeter Mathias Eick “I would do whatever he told me”²² are an oft-repeated dicit from the lips of musicians for whom a career under the auspices of ECM is a guarantee of success and international recognition.

When Eicher brought his company to life in 1969, at the age of 26, music and the music market were very different. The Second Avant-Garde of music was in a frenzy in Europe, and the civil rights movement in the United States influenced the rise of free jazz (please don't confuse the movement with the title of Ornette Coleman's 1961 album of the same title; Atlantic SD 1364). Music became a terrain of exploration and struggle. Hidden in the ECM acronym, the full name Editions of Contemporary Music, while also concealing the publisher's probable mission statement, tells us little about what would soon become the mark of its activities. That something would be the sound and quality of the recordings. It's a sound that Eicher first learned as a musician, graduating from

²² J. Woodard, *ECM and Manfred Eicher on the Search for the Sublime*, October 24, 2019, <https://downbeat.com/news/detail/ecm-manfred-eicher-search-for-sublime/P3> (access: December 17, 2020).

the double bass class at the Berlin Academy of Music, and then as an assistant sound engineer at Deutsche Grammophon. At a time when “the international music industry had exploded, but for rock, pop and soul demand outstripped quality: *nth* generation copy masters and scratchy recycled vinyl with impurities including ground paper were often used for so-called obscure music, and most labels considered jazz of low importance”²³ Eicher's approach was surprisingly different and revolutionary.

Since its inception, in 1969, Editions of Contemporary Music has exclusively reflected the taste of its founder. By then independent jazz labels were becoming a thing of the past, and the great American imprints, such as Blue Note and Impulse, were being swallowed up by conglomerates. But through its nearly five decades ECM has remained independent and uncommercial. A few of its releases have made handsome profits – notably the pianist Keith Jarrett's celebrated *Köln Concert* and Jan Garbarek's crossover hit, *Officium*.²⁴

ECM was a little different from the very beginning, and this otherness attracted not only a lot of fans, but also the greatest artists from overseas and Europe. As Eicher himself says: “I wanted to record things a little different.”²⁵ And while many consider the Munich-based label to be a bastion of European jazz, ECM is also a sort of artistic refuge for creative American musicians who have struggled to find recording opportunities in their own country. The list is long and, as the founder of the publishing house himself admits: “I have actually recorded all the important Americans after the 1960s, after this first October Revolution in New York. I mean, except for Ornette [Coleman] and Miles [Davis], most of the important American musicians recorded with ECM.”²⁶ Moreover, it was during the decline of the Second Avant-Garde in music that Eicher began to discover minimalist composers like Steve Reich and Arvo Pärt for the public. It is then, perhaps, that the earliest significant traces appear that can bring retrotopia to our considerations. Let us again give the floor to Eicher: “I chose this music of Arvo Pärt because it is so simple

²³ M. Prendergast, *Manfred Eicher – the Man Who Invented Himself*, *Hifi Critics*, Hifi Critics, n.d., p. 50.

²⁴ C. Larkin, Manfred Eicher: *The Man Who Made ECM on Working with Keith Jarrett, Steve Reich and Arvo Part*, “The Irish Times”, <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/music/manfred-eicher-the-man-who-made-ecm-on-working-with-keith-jarrett-steve-reich-and-arvo-part-1.2446498> (access: January 12, 2021).

²⁵ *Ibidem*.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

– not simplistic, but pure and simple and clear”²⁷. It was 1984 and ECM had just recorded the album *Tabula Rasa* with music by Arvo Pärt.

Since then, the publishing house formerly interested in and focused mainly on improvised and jazz music, began to turn its attention to composed music.

In 1984, Eicher – who started his career as a classically trained double bassist – launched the New Series, a dedicated classical line, spotlighting such names as Arvo Pärt, György Kurtág, Kim Kashkashian and Steve Reich. To date, Eicher has won three Grammy awards, all for his production work on classical recordings.

Eicher explained how he maintains a balance between jazz and classical music. “One line deals with music created primarily through improvisation,” he said. “The other line starts from the carefully realized score. Both approaches are important to me – form and freedom. I benefited from one and the other”.²⁸

This change may seem cosmetic, but in retrospect it is clear that ECM has transformed itself from a company that “for the first 15 years did not differ in any significant way from the music offered by other labels”²⁹ to a trendsetting record label. Wojciech Pacuła writes, following a report by a Korean magazine “Brand. Balance”: “What set ECM apart was Eicher's [sic!] belief that recording jazz music should use the same techniques used to record orchestra and chamber music.”³⁰ And that's not going to change. What's more, I have the impression that it becomes more perfect with every decade. What will change is that the producer will more and more boldly start proposing more and more communicative music. There will be more and more of that which captured him so much in the Estonian composer: *pure, simple and clear*. In ECM's music there will begin to emerge more and more a characteristic sonic nostalgia (some critics and fans of the old ECM even speak of an epidemic), which, being difficult to pin down geographically or stylistically, will make ECM begin to break down not only the barriers of age, but also social trends. It began with the 1994 album *Officium* by the Hilliard Ensemble performing early music with jazz saxophonist Jan Garbarek. “According to Mr. Eicher, the latter collaboration has resulted in sold-out concerts for nearly 25 years. ‘The churches

²⁷ M. Prendergast, *Manfred Eicher – the Man Who Invented Himself...*, p. 52.

²⁸ C. Larkin, *Manfred Eicher: The Man Who Made ECM...*

²⁹ W. Pacuła, ECM. *50 Lat Doskonałości (ECM. 50 Years of Excellence)*, “High Fidelity”, November 1, 2019, <http://highfidelity.pl/@numer--138&lang> (access: January 14, 2021).

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

have been filled with both young and old. I am proud of this. It was risky – the music, blending old and new, was not done this way before. This ensemble was brought together at the right time’.³¹ A precise understanding of the needs of an audience hungry for the undefined indicates not only a producer’s vigilance, but also the need (if not the imperative) of the moment. This imperative caused the label’s catalog to devote more and more space for music outside of jazz, more and more of it was *simple, pure and clear*. The aforementioned *Officium* perfectly responded to the needs of the time and caused a wave of changes. Its use of clear codes (such as the liturgical music of the Middle Ages and Renaissance) refers us to the undead past, the common and shared with others mystical experiences. Sometimes it might be Perotinus, sometimes John Dowland or Josquin des Prés, sometimes music from the Maghreb, sometimes music from India, all subjected to a sophisticated transliteration into contemporary language. This music is impossible to pass by indifferently, but not because it will attack us with its intrusiveness: rather, because it will accompany us in moments of rest and tranquility. The nostalgia mentioned at the beginning is present here, there is also the search for a safe solution and the provision of emotional warmth. The question is, is it retrotopia, or more accurately, is there retrotopia behind it? Assuming Bauman’s diagnosis is accurate, it certainly is. If its mechanism works as predicted, it is hard to assume that it will not work in music, and that it will not address the needs we satisfy with music. And if that is the case, then music made by ECM becomes an asset for any listener who tries to reach for it. The accusations of some that this is music that does not meet the artistic assumptions of originality and authenticity are true insofar as we consider the imperative of prospectivity to be exclusive. One of the most outstanding Polish jazzmen, who recorded for ECM, trumpeter Tomasz Stańko, also faced such accusations. And his late recordings, which were accompanied by considerable commercial success, were accused of being backward and decorative in comparison with what he had created in his youth. Yes, there was little of the trumpeter’s roughness left at the end of his life, but – please forgive my not entirely unfounded comparison³² – good wine ages by revealing its attributes and losing its weaknesses. This also seems to be true of the publishing house itself, whose owner,

³¹ S. Isacoff, *A Striking Exception*, “The Wall Street Journal”, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/a-striking-exception-on-ecm-records-at-the-grammys-1423092445> (access: January 12, 2021).

³² On the office’s far end, ECM’s founding (and funding) partner Karl Egger’s health food and wine company LaSelva has a showroom combining its products with an ECM record store. See: Woodard, *ECM and Manfred Eicher on the Search for the Sublime*, <https://downbeat.com/news/detail/ecm-manfred-eicher-search-for-sublime/P3>

when asked “what's next?” on the occasion of the company's fiftieth birthday, answers “tomorrow”³³.

V. *Dolce far niente*

Although it is not certain now what the future will show, the past certainly shows that retrotopian traces in music, so present and legible in the ECM catalog, began to appear also in record labels whose foundations are much older and whose muses are much more dignified. If the highbrow music of ECM is often on the verge of jazz and classical, then another example is the activity of a company that by definition is based on the presentation of highbrow music (if we consider classical music as such). I am referring to Deutsche Grammophon, a significant and one of the oldest record publishing companies in Germany. Founded in 1898 by no one other than the inventor of the gramophone, Emil Berliner (let us add, for the sake of clarification, a gramophone for flat discs as opposed to Thomas Edison's cylindrical ones), it was not only the first company entirely dedicated solely to pressing (playing) records, but also the first dedicated solely to classical music. It is also a company that can boast the status of the oldest, continuously operating company in the world dedicated to recording music on physical media. The sheer history of phonography is an extremely interesting thread related to both music itself (it is necessary to add here that the emergence of phonography significantly influenced music itself; the so-called phonograph effect, about which Mark Katz writes in his book *Capturing sound*³⁴), and its dissemination. I am not writing about it without a reason. The Deutsche Grammophon imprint is a mark of the highest quality, and its presence in the catalog confirms the status of both the artist and the label as such. To follow the Deutsche Grammophon catalog is to follow the history of 20th-century music, but not only in its compositional aspect, but first and foremost in its performing aspect (this is what the phonograph effect, which led to a re-evaluation of the roles of performer and composer, among other things, speaks of).

Is it possible, then, in a catalog of classic and unequivocally recognized works, to discern traces of the retrotopia that interests us? Is it easier to trace their presence in compositional or perhaps performance practice? Finally, how visible is it in the catalog of a company whose opus includes all the greatest of the era? Although

³³ Woodard, *ECM and Manfred Eicher on the Search for the Sublime*, <https://downbeat.com/news/detail/ecm-manfred-eicher-search-for-sublime/P3>

³⁴ M. Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music*, First Edition, Revised, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2010.

I will not answer all these questions, I would like to draw attention to one important fact, which is related to the power of the publishing house itself and its catalog. For while we may acknowledge that the musical output of the classics has an ennobling effect, it should also be noted that the publishing house itself has an equally ennobling effect on the perception and positioning of artists of the younger generation.

If we then refer to the main signs of retrotopia, which are the need for a refuge from an infuriatingly yet hopelessly turbulent, notoriously chaotic and confusing world, the need for nostalgic inclinations present in us, then we will not be surprised by the presence in the catalog of a major label of an artist whose work seems to be, *nomen omen*, retrotopian. I am referring to the composer whom Deutsche Grammophon in its own promotional mechanisms currently places before Beethoven, Wagner, Penderecki and a whole host of others.³⁵ The unquestionable success of his music leads us to believe that we are dealing with music of the highest quality, although it is certainly music that the aforementioned Manfred Eicher would describe as *pure, simple and clear*. Max Richter and his almost, as he puts it, “an eight-hour lullaby”, *Sleep*, not so long ago could be considered relaxation music and as such would certainly, as we should suppose, not find its way into the catalog of an outfit dedicated to classical music. It is a phenomenon not only of a musical nature, but also perhaps a sociological one. It is music that is thoroughly melancholic and chronically nostalgic.

Although it would be difficult to prove that it is the retrotopia that is its main source, it would be equally difficult to deny that its character is clearly echoed in its musical spectrum. Max Richter is, however, a classically trained composer, and one cannot accuse him of lacking either technical or aesthetic competence. Nor can one accuse the producers of Deutsche Grammophon, nor the critics, who have greeted Richter’s work with great acclaim. What’s more, the acclamatory reception of this music by audiences around the world is a clear indication of an aesthetic feedback loop among the recipients of highbrow culture (here once again the *phonograph effect* comes into play). That “Richter has recently passed one billion streams and one million album sales”³⁶ speaks for itself. As Dr. Clemens Trautmann, CEO of Deutsche Grammophon, says, leaving no room for doubt: “Max Richter remains

³⁵ See: *Deutsche Grammophon – Composers*, n.d., <https://www.deutschegrammophon.com/en/composers> (access: January 15, 2021).

³⁶ A. Paine, *Max Richter Launches Imprint, Renews Deals with UMG’s Decca and Deutsche Grammophon*, <https://www.musicweek.com/labels/read/max-richter-launches-imprint-renews-deals-with-umg-s-decca-and-deutsche-grammophon/078354> (access: January 19, 2021)

the pioneer of new, artistically credible repertoire at Deutsche Grammophon that draws inspiration from the classical and avant-garde music tradition as well as from electronica, minimal and ambient music.”³⁷ The word “credible” seems to be the key word here, whereby possible doubts will yield under the pressure of the prestige of the brand representing the artist.

Certainly, it is not that the aesthetic hermeticism of high art emphasizes its value and guarantees quality, nor that commercial success denies them. The sense of art and communing with culture, its potential understanding, appear when we are ready to read the codes it uses. These codes are, on the one hand, an unchangeable palette of means and, on the other, fluctuations and trends depending on the epoch. For art, as a creation of human activity, is much more dependent on the cyclicity of time in principio than on its purposefulness. One should not expect that its prospective features, so anticipated in the last few decades, will accompany it unchangeably. The dialectic of repetition and novelty, strongly present in art, corrects all manifestations of constancy and duration. What was new and shocking must give way to what is to come. The persistence of the past does not exclude its negation.

The phenomenon of blurring stylistic boundaries and simplifying musical language, supported by sales and the opinions of critics or the position (ennoblement) of publishers, is neither new nor harmful/conterproductive. The nods of high art towards less noble genres, however, have a completely different meaning and source in times of strong media influence. At first glance one may think that this source and its main cause are the influences flowing from royalties. However, after a moment of reflection, it should be noted that the extraordinary pop-popularity of the phenomenon loosens the somewhat rigid corset of classical music and positively influences its image among the audience and viewers.

For me, the source of this music’s success lies in retrotopia, in the need for escape and refuge from an infuriatingly yet hopelessly turbulent, notoriously chaotic and confusing world. I’m not writing this as a critic or antagonist of the composer’s work or of music “pure, simple and clear” – moreover, despite knowing what I am dealing with, I reach for it myself. Our need for serenity, the *dolce far niente* musical journey offered by the world-famous icon of neo-classical music, shows that retrotopia in music is doing well.

Finally, let us recall again the words of Zygmunt Bauman, which were written in May 1993 in Leeds in the essay entitled *Ponowoczesne wzory osobowe (Post-Modern Personality Types)*. Discussing “the stroller”, “the vagabond”, “the tourist”,

³⁷ A. Paine, *op. cit.*

and “the player”, Bauman anticipates the retrotopia he launched at the end of his life. These words seem to sum up the above reflections just as accurately:

One dreams of a simpler, more unambiguous world, capable of being grasped at a single glance and measured with a single yardstick. The yearning for the “great simplification” is a typically postmodern version of the melancholy familiar for centuries, a postmodern edition of romantic *ennui*. One can say that the dream of simplification is the most acute psychosis of postmodern times, an inherent and recurrent ailment of the postmodern lifestyle.³⁸

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³⁸ Zygmunt Bauman, *Dwa szkice o moralności ponowoczesnej (Two Essays on Post-modern Morality)*, Warszawa, Instytut Kultury, 1994, p. 38.

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Back to Live Liveness: How Is It Possible Yet in the Pandemic/Post-Pandemic Age?

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The Covid-19 pandemic has turned upside down the lives of billions of people in various aspects. New keywords such as social distancing or lockdown have come into being. Pharmaceutical companies have entered the competition to provide a vaccine and efficient anti-COVID medicines. Due to the lockdown, numerous countries suspended all kinds of live performances such as pop and classical music concerts, sports competitions, football matches, meetings, demonstrations, social events, public festivals, etc. In response to the pandemic crisis, all performers who were willing to carry on with their work had to move to the Internet. This mass digitalization of performances has given a new impetus to rethink the phenomenon of liveness, which was thoroughly discussed by Philip Auslander in his thought-provoking book¹. First of all, Auslander proved that liveness has appeared as a cultural phenomenon due to the development of recording technologies which allowed its mediatization: “Similarly, live performance cannot be said to have ontological or historical priority over mediatization, since liveness was made

¹ Auslander Philip, *Liveness. Performance in a mediatized culture*, London and New York, Routledge, 1999.

visible only by the possibility of technical reproduction”.² The phenomenon of *live* defines itself by negation – live is what has not been recorded, has not undergone the process of mediatization. In the ontological dimension, the most distinctive feature of liveness is disappearance.³ Applying temporariness as dominant in the definition of liveness allows assigning the feature of being live to:

- traditional cultural performances which have been present in human culture for thousands of years,
- some mediatized performances on the radio and television,
- as well as a wide range of mediatized digital performances that have been appearing recently within Internet communicators area (YouTube, Skype, Microsoft Teams, Big Blue Button, or Zoom).

Respectively, the phenomenon of digital liveness imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic (new and, so far, not experienced on such a scale) leads to rethinking the nature and a variety of liveness, concerning the media environment in which the live performances appear. Some questions must be asked: is there a risk that applying the same expression may lead to equating the phenomena of heterogeneous nature? Is not there a considerable discrepancy between a conventional theatrical performance and its Internet streaming – particularly in the area of ontology (not above mentioned evanescence but corporeality) and the viewer's participation in the event?

Another issue refers to the possibility of returning to the traditional perception of liveness, which means: to the pre-pandemic experience? If and how would this return to the previous state of mind be possible – for the viewers/ listeners/fans co-performing in the field of theatre, classical or pop music or sports events, etc. All institutions delivering either ultimate live performances (i.e. without using any media technology) or its hybrid variant (media technologies used within the frame of meeting with the audience in real time and space, here and now) have attempted to return after the strictest restrictions have been lifted. The question is, whether it is not a new paradigm of thinking of live performance, thus ... back to the future.

Nearly twenty years after publishing *Liveness* by Philip Auslander, Matthew Reason, and Anja Mølle Lindelof, the editors of the multi-author monograph *Experiencing Liveness in Contemporary Performance. Interdisciplinary Perspectives* decided to reconsider the issue of different cultural reality making a few basic assumptions:

² *Ibidem*, p. 54.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 43-44.

- 1) the ontology of liveness is not the most significant issue. What counts is the process of experiencing it by a human being – not being live but “how it matters”;⁴
- 2) the analysis of liveness in various areas of human activity may be divided into two research areas: audiencing and materializing.

According to the editors of the monograph:

‘Audiencing’ describes the work of the spectator. It describes acts of attention, of affect, of meaning-making, of memory, of community. A focus on audiencing recognizes that attention is a constructive or performative act, that spectators bring performances into being through the nature of their variously active, distractive, or contested attention. In a volume that focuses upon experiencing live, this is central.⁵

Considering live performances from the perspective of audiencing allows revealing the creative character of the viewer's perception, as well as including manipulative aspects and illusion mechanisms into the definition of liveness. In turn, the perspective of materializing allows interrogating „processes of materializing in acts of performance, acts of making, acts of archiving and acts of remembering.”⁶ Thus corporality and material objects founding live performances are coming into focus.

Accepting these assumptions enables here to go beyond Peggy Phelan’s and Philip Auslander's argument over ontology and discover various dimensions of liveness respectively to the medium in which the performance is happening – no matter if it is:

- live liveness, e.g. within frames of “old” theatrical evening here and now;
- mediatized liveness interpreted as an event without a feedback loop between performers and the audience (the case of “old” electronic media – radio or television)
- at least, mediatized liveness in case of interactive, digital “new” media with a self-referential and ever-changing feedback loop (as it happens in all

⁴ Reason Matthew and Lindelof Anja Mølle, *Introduction – Experiencing Liveness in Contemporary Performance*, in: *Experiencing Liveness*, in: *Contemporary Performance. Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, Matthew Reason and Anja Mølle Lindelof (ed.) London and New York, Routledge, 2017, p. 1.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 17.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 1.

Internet communicators broadcasting image and sound – reciprocally between interlocutors).⁷ To name it directly: going beyond ideological prejudices of the argument between Phelan and Auslander,⁸ enables discovering numerous variations of liveness. Leaving out Reason's and Lindelof's discussion over polysemy and selected semantic contexts of the word itself '(a)live(ness)', their excursions into the field of phenomenology, allows a shift to the conclusions of Martin Barker who indicates as audience researcher miscellaneous 'livenesses' instead of one ontologically homogenous phenomenon. First of all, in his article *Coming a(live). A Prolegomenon to Any Future Research on 'Liveness'*, Barker broadens the perspective and goes beyond the narrow definition of liveness:

And I am not addressing any of the features traditionally said to characterize 'liveness': simultaneity, co-presence, performers' interactions with audiences, and so on. In a previous study,⁹ I compared approaches to liveness across a series of fields of study: theatre and performance, television, film and cinema, comedy, music (especially opera), radio, sport, and virtual presence. That study was prompted by the rise of the phenomenon of simulcasting of theatre, opera, and other events into cinemas – events that stress their 'liveness', but are clearly not live in many of the traditional senses.¹⁰

This method of coming to cognitive conclusions is close to my heart.¹¹ Barker goes much further, as his definition of liveness incorporates certain phenomena contrary to the literal meaning of the word. He embarks on indicating four elements typical of "traditional" live performance ("these four features are particularly stressed by theatre and performance scholars"):

1) **co-presence** – performer and audience are both here and now;

⁷ See: Fischer-Lichte Erika, *Ästhetik des Performativen*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 2004; Duda Artur, *Performans na żywo jako medium i obiekt mediatyzacji (Live Performance as Medium and the Object of Mediatization)*, Toruń, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu im. Mikołaja Kopernika, 2011 (chapter one).

⁸ See: Fischer-Lichte, Erika, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

⁹ See: Martin Barker, *Live to Your Local Cinema: The Remarkable Rise of Livecasting*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2013.

Martin Barker, 'Live at the Cinema Near You: How Audiences Respond to Digital Streaming of the Arts', in: *The Audience Experience: A Critical Analysis of Audiences in the Performing Arts*, eds. Jennifer Radbourne, Hilary Glow and Katya Johanson, Bristol, Intellect, 2013, pp. 15-34 .

¹⁰ Barker Martin, *Coming a(live). A Prolegomenon to any future research on 'liveness'*, in: *Contemporary Performance. Interdisciplinary Perspectives...*, p. 22.

¹¹ See: Duda Artur, *Performans na żywo...*

- 2) **simultaneity** – the performance is happening at that moment;
- 3) **risk** – the outcome is not guaranteed, the event has still to happen, it is emergent;
- 4) **audience-impact** – the audience's reactions (laughter, applause, etc.) might affect how and what way the event goes.

There are numerous exceptions from this strict definition if we shift our interest to the phenomena connected with various media technologies. However, the study of Barker lacks in some places sufficient precision. For instance, in point five he includes recordings of music concerts to the domain of liveness:

For instance, music scholars generally have no problem with recordings – as long as these capture the **grain** and perhaps **virtuosity** of a performance. Then, recordings can count as ‘captured liveness’.¹²

Music scholars present here an example of fully mediatized performance and it is not so much "the grain and perhaps virtuosity of the performance" appreciated by both ordinary fans and audiophiles, but the fact that exceptional circumstances of the recording and deviations from the perfect long-play or CD version are captured. This unique version of a music piece seems to be a particular attraction for fans preferring recorded versions of concerts. There is a connection between this aspect of liveness and point 7 where Barker indicates performances of touring comedians who introduce elements of ‘local color’ to ‘their standard routines’, in other words: they adjust variations of the exemplary, fixed in the process of rehearsing, performance to the local context and the local audience (see Theodore Gracyk's remarks on live recordings¹³). Here we reveal the realm of the aesthetics of versions – no matter, chains of live or mediatized variations of the imagined patterns of ‘the most perfect piece of art’.

Variants of liveness described in points 6 and 8 might be connected similarly. It does not seem inappropriate to compare an opera broadcast (firstly, simulcasting, always with a certain time delay, secondly, a recording where liveness is an illusion eagerly accepted by some listeners/ viewers) with the phenomenon „of **created communities** like at pub football screenings”.¹⁴ In both cases, despite the spatial distance between performers and the audience, a process of creating a community with phantoms appearing on a screen develops similarly, although there could be

¹² Barker Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

¹³ Gracyk Theodore, *Rhythm and Noise: An Aesthetics of Rock*, London and New York, I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 1996, p. 87.

¹⁴ Barker Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

perceived a significant discrepancy between conventions and expressiveness of both communities' behavior.

In point nine, Barker presents manipulative power of liveness which could also emerge in all mentioned above examples of not entirely simultaneous live broadcasts. As the desired "live" or "liveness" increases the attractiveness of the television or the Internet content, it has been occasionally used for commercial or ideological purposes:

Finally, virtual performance scholars are essentially interested in how audiences can be **persuaded** that what they are doing is 'live', by techniques which generate **immersion** and closeness to avatars, for instance. Film and television studies, meanwhile, are largely suspicious, seeing claims to **liveness as part of commercial or ideological devices**.¹⁵

Simulating liveness – which is often perfectly known to the participants of such performances – becomes an element of the experience of immersion – being involved in a present, happening here and now, a virtual or fictional world.

Both – Martin Barker's analysis and Philip Auslander's basic concept of liveness – are heading in the same direction, towards equating live liveness typical of theatre and live performances common to the “old” electronic media such as radio and television as well as to the “new” digital media. This unifying approach has been strengthening since the Internet media appeared enabling mutual communication, thus creating a self-referential feedback loop according to Erika Fischer-Lichte's term. It is also Auslander who introduced the idea that mediatized performances (audio recordings, films, television broadcasts) should be valued higher than live performances, assuming that recording inevitably is gaining increasingly high appreciation in a community, which leads to deleting, in a way, not mediatized phenomena from the highest place in the hierarchy. Martin Barker follows Auslander's claim in the second part of his article. In the field of mediatized liveness audiences, Barker appreciates above all the aspect of comfortable perception, the power of close-ups, repetitions, the ubiquity of cameras and microphones, which results in the hyperreality of images („Screen presence means hyperreality of presence” – say the editors in the preface to their monograph, Reason, Lindelof 2017: 4). Barker is right when he puts forward the idea of regularly repeated,

¹⁵ Barker Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 23 (author's emphasis).

careful research into the processes of perception and involvement that take place in communities of viewers:

My proposal is that we should understand experiences as emergent: that is, as they are experienced they are felt to grow, to integrate, and to open up new possibilities.¹⁶

However, making the same assumption, it is necessary to consider what could be lost while abandoning, either voluntarily or under pressure, a live performance as an event happening here and now with corporeal and sensual co-presence of performers and viewers/listeners. The question should be asked and answered: is the loss of difference between various live and mediatized livenesses worth yearning for? Particularly now, in the era of the COVID pandemic? And how would the return to this primal experience be possible?

Reducing the risk of infection and constant awareness of sanitary regime became a priority in many aspects of social life nowadays – in the entertainment industry, professional sport, in numerous cultural institutions such as theatres, cinemas, galleries, and museums. In Germany, when the idea of Bundesliga resuming after many weeks of suspension was discussed, journalists immediately coined the expression: *Geisterspiele* – ghost plays or ghost matches.¹⁷ Paradoxically, a team sport (such as football which is a self-sufficient game and does not require the spectators' presence to fulfill its essential purposes) revealed as a vital problem the absence of fans who participate in creating the event based on genuine live liveness. It is known that at the same time ghost concerts were played in concert halls, ghost performances on stages or even ghost cabarets were held. All these examples of Derrida's hauntology or Baudrillard's simulacra procession that has gone to such extremes that even the latter mentioned above wouldn't be able to envisage have hit gatherings of people who earlier constituted the essence of live performances. Additionally, the sanitary regime prevented people from gathering in theatres or concert halls to experience live performances staged by real people and to watch broadcasts or rebroadcasts as well as from gathering in fully mediatized cinema screenings. The audience has dispersed, turned into monads, as they were sent to separate, individual home bubbles – capsules equipped with computers with access

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 29.

¹⁷ Laskowski Christoph, „*Ausgehungerte Fans*“? *So planen Klubs und Polizei für Geisterspiele*, [www.kicker.de](https://www.kicker.de/_ausgehungerte_fans_so_planen_klubs_und_polizei_fuer_geisterspiele-775305/artikel), https://www.kicker.de/_ausgehungerte_fans_so_planen_klubs_und_polizei_fuer_geisterspiele-775305/artikel [access: 25.10.2020].

to the Internet.

As a result, some types of artistic expression are sentenced to death in the literal meaning. In his article *Will impro die of COVID-19?* Paweł Najgebauer illustrates how performers dealing with improvisation (shortly: impro) transfer their shows to Internet platforms such as Zoom. This comprehensive description of performers' invention in the process of transforming the impro genre into its digital substitute is followed by a pessimistic observation:

Unfortunately, a computer or television screen cuts off this intimacy that is mutually created by an improviser and spectators gathered in the theatre. Additionally, if the performance has been recorded, the argument that it was improvised loses its importance.¹⁸

And later even more disheartening forecast:

Impro, similarly to traditional theatre and other businesses whose activity is based on cramming people in tiny spaces so that they can breathe in each other's germs, was first to lose its *raison d'être* and is the last to regain it.¹⁹

Impro belongs to the most extreme examples as performers' meeting with the audience takes place in common (and limited) space and time, with corporeal coexistence, exposure to the full risk of failure, and with spectators affecting the shape of performance. Four key factors shaping a live performance according to Barker undoubtedly create the meaning of impro. An impro performance deprived of any of them loses its sense i.e. its performative power.

What is worth pointing out is the fact that, among all factors mentioned before, the risk is the one that has gained a dominant position in the hierarchy. However, it does not mean the risk of misperformance (in the meaning of a “boring, non-artistic evening”) but the threat of losing health or even life (“the most memorable evening of life”). The increasing number of infections has led to introducing rules of social distancing and sanitary cordons of all kinds within frames of the “new normality” which means neither less nor more “after lockdown but still not after the pandemic”.

¹⁸ Najgebauer Paweł, *Czy impro umrze na Covid-19? (Will impro die of COVID-19?)*, “Teatr” 2020 no. 7-8, http://www.teatr-pismo.pl/przestrzenie-teatru/2715/czy_impro_umrze_na_covid-19/ [access: 26.10.2020].

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

Radical decisions have been taken within the domains connected with huge risk and money. In professional sport, it was the strategy of arranging competitions in bubbles. Elite Football Champions League ended with a tournament held in Lisbon in August 2020 without the participation of any football fans. Matches, broadcasted as usual to all continents and billions of people, were held at the empty stadium, where every single shout from a dugout was perfectly heard (as never before). Television stations, in an attempt to fill in this unpleasant phonic vacuum, played recorded earlier spectators' reactions simulating their presence at the stadium. An even greater impetus was added to the American and Canadian basketball league NBA when it moved to Walt Disney World in Bay Lake, Florida, to complete the 2019/2020 season. Closing 300 basketball players in the comfortable Disney Bubble have cost 170 million dollars.

All these competitions in bubbles were preceded by meticulous preparations. The authorities of German Bundesliga (similarly to NBA) issued a special instruction including one hundred pages with all recommendations on how to avoid the risk of infection with COVID-19. The document entitled *Task Force Sportmedizin/Sonderspielbetrieb im Profifussball. Version 3.0 – Stadien/Trainingstätten/Hotels/Häusliche Hygiene* (more details on the website www.dfl.de) apart from reasonable indications such as washing hands, disinfection, leaving the door open, not touching door handles, regular airing rooms out, includes a wide range of recommendations regarding sports event in the times of so-called “new normality”. At most 300 people are allowed to stay in the stadium, they can participate in a match in a site divided into three zones – let's refer to them as “a play zone”, “stands” and “surroundings of a football field” – no more than 100 spectators in each. Initially, football fans were not allowed in any of these zones. In addition to empty stands, a club mascot (i.e. a person wearing a costume of a mascot in team colors) was not allowed to appear, playing football fans' applause was forbidden while playing a team anthem, and music after each scored goal was permitted. The players entering a football field could not be accompanied by escort kids (holding their hands), there won't be a team photograph, handshakes between captains and referees or, finally, a mixed zone where footballers used to meet with journalists after a match.

To complete this picture of far-reaching restrictions imposed on „new normality's” performances, it is worth to mention regulations regarding opera performances or symphony concerts at the same time. In her article *Virus at the opera*, a music critic Dorota Szwarzman writes about the first rule of organizing concerts or spectacles with no audience but available via live web streaming. Moreover, the number of musicians is supposed to be reduced so that the distance between players will be

at a minimum of 90 cm and between choir members and singers 150 cm.²⁰ It's no wonder then that the Bayreuth Festival was canceled for the first time in its history. Everybody who has seen the orchestra pit in Richard-Wagner-Festspielhaus is aware that after separating the musicians only about a quarter of the necessary orchestra members would be able to fit in. During summer opera performances it was always so hot and stuffy that the musicians usually used to in the orchestra pit in shorts and t-shirts. In the year 2020, the easiest target for performing coronaviruses. Coronavirus as a significant agent in the age of "new normality" is worth analyzing because in many cases like this – attempts of arranging live performances despite pandemic biohazard – we can observe a clash of two opposite scenarios which merge and compete. It is a war between the old tradition of playing or broadcasting plays/ concerts/ films against typical of pandemic times post-humanist coronavirus bio-performance. Empty seats and whole sections, silence, social distance, echo, arduous procedures imposed by bio-authority (completing questionnaires, taking temperature, disinfection when our hands go through a catharsis in the oldest sense of the word) introduce (often only hypothetically) the presence of a non-human agent, i.e. coronavirus, which has become an actual protagonist of pandemic and, probably, post-pandemic live performances.

It also appears to be a great agon of three immune systems of humankind. German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk in his provoking book *Du mußt dein Leben ändern* (*You Have to Change Your Life*) claims that our biological immune system independent of human consciousness was, along with the development of civilization, completed with another two systems: a range of socio-immune activities, i.e. legal regulations, social conventions and military protection and the third system including symbolic and psycho-immune acts. All these systems are aimed at increasing human capacity to survive as a species.²¹ From this point of view live performances occur as Sloterdijk's anthro-techniques where theatre as a human medium and memory machine (according to Marvin Carlson's term²²) represents such anthro-technique par excellence – allowing to gain self-consciousness and depicting the world.

By the way, Sloterdijk's slogan „You have to change your life!” resonates strongly in our reality. The German philosopher, thinking of an authority that would be able to encourage both individuals and entire communities to take this appeal and challenge seriously, rejects the influence of pieces of art, fallen „religions” or

²⁰ Szwarcman Dorota, *Wirus w operze* (*Virus at the opera*), „Polityka” 2020 no. 39, 22.09.2020.

²¹ Sloterdijk Peter, *Du mußt dein Leben ändern*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 2009, p. 22.

²² See: Carlson Marvin, *The Haunted Stage. The Theatre as Memory Machine*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2001.

wise intellectuals or philosophers. He claims that only global crisis (die globale Krise) may assume the role of an authority nowadays:

It (the crisis) is an authority because it refers to something unimaginable which is only signaled now – a global catastrophe. We do not need a particular religious awareness to understand why the Great Catastrophe was supposed to become the goddess of the century.²³

Sloterdijk does not point out any particular incarnation of the Great Catastrophe but he indicates a lack of an „effective co-immune structure [effiziente Ko-Immunitätsstruktur] common to all members of the whole world community [humankind]”²⁴ Above all, human solidarity has appeared to be an empty idea:

Effective individuals of co-immune solidarity are today, as well in the past, family-oriented, tribal, national and imperial, recently also formatted in regional alliances and function – if they do – according to respective patterns of a discrepancy between friends and strangers.²⁵

People (within the whole human civilization) have to develop as a response to the Great Catastrophe a set of anthropo-techniques that will enable them to survive. Humankind is attempting, precisely in the pandemic era, to enter the stage of „co-immunity“, i.e. macrostructures of global immunities – within all three immune systems. What becomes a challenge is creating a community of a new kind – reaching further than mentioned above family or tribal, national or imperial bonds.

Social distancing – logical behavior from the point of view of hygiene rules and indications of infectious disease specialists – seems to destroy the basis for everyday solidarity practice as human co-existence and leads to eradication of the oldest human performance patterns, i.e. the Gathering. At the same time, the cancellation of the Bayreuth Festival, huge pop music festivals such as Open'er or Roskilde as well as European Football Championships or Olympic Games in Tokyo 2020 prove that the coronavirus pandemic hits also a pattern of the vortex of behavior essential for the development of human culture, which is the Feast. It destroys Carnivals – the local ones such as yearly student carnival or global festivals such as invaded by thousands of tourists carnivals in Venice or Rio de Janeiro. It has

²³ Sloterdijk Peter, *op. cit.*, pp. 701-702.

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 711.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 711.

become impossible (temporarily?) to experience physical and sensual co-existence in a festive crowd, in a lively community, to enter a vortex of behavior (according to Joseph Roach's term²⁶).

It becomes (temporarily? – this question must be asked again and again) impossible to experience safely aspects of life described by Leszek Kolankiewicz in his seminal book *Samba with Gods*:

- 1) the experience of mobility – traveling into foreign places and taking trips through unknown spaces;
- 2) multisensory experience: “There was already such noise that even car honking was inaudible. Along the edges of the square, there were stalls with Bahian garish crap and glowing coal of primitive stoves with kettles and skewers. Scents more intense than usual: with smells of coffee, fish, seafood, alcoholic fumes [...] fermenting remains of tropical fruit, human excrement and common dirt, the smell that is always present in Salvador mixes with the smell of coconut oil, reek of beer, urine, the smell of sick”²⁷;
- 3) the experience of eating and drinking together and shared experience of risk – “On Tuesday I did not eat on Pelourinho. I bought a big bottle of beer Antarctica instead because it is unthinkable to take part in a carnival without being at least a bit squiffy. Two bottles would be too much – it would destruct participating observation and expose me to a robbery. However, I didn't even have a chance to drink it on my own, as somebody immediately slipped a plastic cup – a gesture of carnival familiarity. Either because of beer or this gesture, I found myself in the center of the festival”²⁸;
- 4) finally, the experience of physical co-existence and often co-performing: “As gathered people stuck tightly to each other, there was no escape from this waving – everybody, whether they wanted or not, gave in this dance which danced itself. From time to time dancing crowd shook with mighty thrill, when the regular pulse of drum beats was broken by syncopes [...]. It is all but trance dancing technique.”²⁹

Many features of the carnival listed above are typical of pop culture – a sensual experience of smell, taste, and touch (not always pleasant), of mobility, and physical

²⁶ See: Roach Joseph, *Cities of the Dead. Circum-Atlantic Performance*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1996.

²⁷ Kolankiewicz Leszek, *Samba z bogami. Opowieść antropologiczna (Samba with Gods. An Anthropological Story)*, Warszawa, Wydawnictwo KR, 2007, p. 33.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 35.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 35.

cooperation. Even if recently food is consumed in specially arranged food truck areas during the concert of Metallica at the National Stadium in Warsaw or at rock music festivals in Jarocin. If I were to indicate the best analogy to Kolankiewicz's description of the carnival in Salvador de Bahia it would be my personal experience of football carnival during the match Ireland versus Spain at the stadium in Gdańsk (Euro 2012). The city was overwhelmed with excitement, the carnival on that particular day and night until the next morning meant suspending all rules binding on regular bases: pubs and restaurants increased their prices to their extremes, public transport was free, the police discreetly hid in side streets. Old Town, Gdańsk Central Station, or the area of the stadium were occupied by crowds of little green people – thousands of Irish football fans conquered the city, carrying whole crates of beer from the shops. Rivers of alcohol (as well as urine – I would better not go into details) were flowing down the streets of Gdańsk that afternoon. From the aspect of the motoric activity, it was also an exceptional time – from walking together to the stadium, through cheers and applause, to an extraordinary farewell song – nearly ten minutes long Irish choir performance of *Fields of Athenry*. The Irish suffered a bitter defeat at the stadium but their carnival in the city ended not earlier than in the morning.

There is no doubt that not all features of a festival or carnival as live performance mentioned above may be ascribed to the average experience of any theatre spectator. The range of sensory experiences and the scale of mobility is usually (perhaps except for street theatre) extremely limited. As well as spontaneous physical closeness, mutual presence, and cooperation. It seems appropriate here to refer to Erika Fischer-Lichte's observations concerning a new type of community in performative cultures of post-industrial societies. This is a new type of temporary and ephemeral communities “that do not ask for any long-lasting commitment nor for a collective identity to emerge. They leave it to the individual whether and when to join or leave the community without the threat of sanctions, thus allowing individualists as well as conformists to participate.”³⁰ The crucial feature of these communities is expressed in the following sentence: “Such communities may provide a 'viable dialectic between solitude and being-with-others' for members of post-industrial societies”.³¹ The pandemic time experience proves that within dialectics mentioned by the German researcher there is a shift towards the solitude pole. To such extent,

³⁰ Fischer-Lichte Erika, *Theatre, Sacrifice, Ritual. Exploring Forms of Political Theatre*, London and New York, Routledge, 2005, p. 257.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 257.

that it is hard to imagine organizing any rock concerts, particularly in small clubs while it is possible (and it happens) having theatre performances or cinema shows for viewers occupying every second seat.

It is still important to maintain the statement that the dimension of corporeality makes theatre and live performances differ from mediatized performances of all kinds in terms of experience quality. This thesis may be confirmed based on Fischer-Lichte's position regarding the transformative power of (live) performance concerning the first modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896. Fischer-Lichte indicates that Pierre de Coubertin's "new religion", "religion of muscles"³² which was supposed to defeat the crisis in European societies at the end of the 19th century reflected in inclination to conflicts and wars, served circulation and exchange of energy:

In terms of the dynamic and energetic bodies of the performers [...], I have defined energy as a physical as well as mental quality, **as a contagious force** [emphasis – A.D.] emanating from the phenomenal body and spreading out in space, circulating among all those present, affecting and energizing those who sense it. The athletes in the contest not only generated energy and spread it into space. According to Coubertin, it seems that they overflowed with energy, even 'wasted' it.³³

So, let's name the crucial problem – the clash between two powers: "a contagious force" of the human energetic body with the non-metaphoric contagious force of the same body as a source of Covid-19 "army" of viruses. Fischer-Lichte's metaphor of "infection" applied by her to the picture of spectators during the Olympic Games "infected by this energy"³⁴ has changed its meaning in the pandemic age. From the newest point of view, the global coronavirus infection blocks the circulation of energy within live performances all over the world. These events allowing crowds the waste of their energy, mutual and repeatable energy transfers between performers and the audience play a significant, regulative role in our social life. So the implementation of lockdown in the area of different cultural activities must affect the social order and – let me say – the welfare of whole societies, smaller groups, and individuals. Blocking these energy transfers can not go unpunished. There is possible a serious threat of opening "wild", totally uncontrolled transfers

³² *Ibidem*, p. 70.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 81.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 81.

of energy independently of social control, unbridled. Even if protesting people will march under bizarre banners of “not believing in the coronavirus existence” or anti-vaccine movements.

Finally, I would like to return to the issue of the relationship between live and mediatized performances. Nowadays it is hard to support Peggy Phelan's assertive statement, that the art of performance makes sense only when it is live and its mediatized versions may be regarded only as means of documentation (“performance is the art form which most fully understands the generative possibilities of disappearance”)³⁵. Sixty years after an array of performance artists appeared and the artistic and political revolt was ennobled, new ideas came into being in opposition to Phelan's concept of “genuine” art of performance. First of all, the way of perceiving an artist's body as a unique, authentic material, residuum of its subjectivity, as well as its social and political identity, has changed.

Amelia Jones focused in her articles about Marina Abramović's re-performances as a part of *Seven Easy Pieces* (2005) and New York exhibition MoMA *The Artist is Present* (2010) on the fact that the artist ostentatiously rejects the idea of the possibility of creating a truthful or authentic live event, “even at the moment of its enactment”.³⁶

Marina Abramović has been crossing for years the boundaries of unrepeatable, happening only here and now live performance with the implementation of the very person's, nobody else's body. Indeed, she has treated her body ruthlessly, it has become a useful vehicle, a boat which had to be cleansed of symbolism and meanings imposed by language-oriented culture (Pejić 1993: 10). Being a niche artist, Abramović could emphasize the exceptional and non-commercial nature of her performative practice. When she became a global icon of modern performing arts, the repetitiveness of her performances became an issue. Even earlier, while traveling around the world, she did her performances in various galleries as re-enactments – it was still her, the same body injured with a blade such as in the performance entitled *Lips of Thomas*. However, later the idea of re-performance came into being. It meant employing anonymous performers to re-create her classic performances. This way the independent art was transformed into its copy,

³⁵ Phelan Peggy, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*, London and New Yor.: Routledge, 1993, p. 192.

³⁶ Jones Amelia: “*The Artist is Present*”. *Artistic Re-enactments and the Impossibility of Presence*, “TDR: The Drama Review”, Vol. 55, Issue 1, Spring 2011, p. 19.

corporeal, sensory, and motoric imitation. The elite practice was transfigured into a “repeatable, marketable experience”, as Lisa Newman claims³⁷.

The process of historicizing performance through live re-enactments, by using surrogate bodies of anonymous “workers”, not autonomous artists, brings questionable results. Utilitarian and commercial aspect becomes dominant. Newman underlines that “the experience of liveness-as-product can be marketed to more consumers”³⁸, and it may lead to accusing the great artist of exploitation, taking advantage of cheap labor, using only “workers” bodies, even if they appreciate both the “work” and remuneration. Liveness experienced by gallery visitors seems prior to alleged “exploitation”. I had an opportunity to see the retrospective of Marina Abramović’s work in the Centre of Contemporary Art (CSW) in Toruń. The exhibition was entitled *The Cleaner/Do czysta* (2019) and it resembled a process of constructing a spectacular monument of the great artist. It made numerous visitors realize the fundamental difference between the logic of the audiovisual archive, where the past is stored in images and recordings, and the logic of repertoire, i.e. live physical activities which are repeated not employing mechanical reproduction but organic repetition with its typical deviations from the model or maybe even requiring author's reference to the “original”. I'm referring, of course, to the opposition introduced by Diana Taylor³⁹ to prove that employing anonymous performers to transform Abramović's former performances into contemporary live sculptures occurs as an artistic failure. For example, her famous performance *Imponderabilia*, where she and Ulay stood once naked in a narrow passage making the visitors rub against their naked bodies, in the context of Toruń exhibition became a curiosity – indeed, a couple of naked performers stood in the door passage but everybody was able to pass them by easily choosing another way. It was not the museum’s main entrance so the pressure on spectators disappeared. Similarly, the performance *Balkan Baroque* seemed inauthentic and fake, as cleaning hundreds of real beef bones deprived of the context of the Yugoslav War lost its primary value of provocation.

This leads to the conclusion that mechanical repetition typical of electronic media cannot be adopted as an artistic strategy in the field of live performance. While a film copy retains its prior aura of a piece of art, a re-performance given by “whoever”

³⁷ Newman Lisa: *Objectifying Liveness. Labour, Agency and the Body in the 'Il Rooms' Exhibition*, in: *Experiencing Liveness in Contemporary Performance...*, p. 202

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 203.

³⁹ Taylor Diana, *The Archive and Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in Americas*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, 2003, e-book.

deprives this action of the force of serious influence on anybody. On the other hand, those performances by Abramović which were presented in Toruń as video versions had a powerful impact on viewers. I mean both legendary *Lips of Thomas* with drastic scenes of self-harm and the meditative performance *The Kitchen V: Holding the Milk* – where the performer “simply” stood in an abandoned kitchen in Spain, holding a pot with milk and, over time, losing control over her trembling body. The hyperrealism of a large-sized high-quality video image turned out to retain, much more effectively than re-performance, certain features of the original version as well as the performer's aura (Abramović's energetic body according to Erika Fischer-Lichte). And again – the (post)pandemic time fosters strengthening the experience of liveness mediatized by video images. A viewer's mind that is exposed to this profound influence may want and accept the re-definition of liveness, i.e. communing with what is incorporeal and (which is crucial these days) antiseptic, germ-free on-screen avatar.

To summarize, I would like to quote a fragment taken from the brand new book written by William B. Worthen *Shakespeare, Technicity, Theatre* in which the author develops a concept of theatre as more than medium, namely a kind of hypermedium which means a medial technology that represents other medial technologies:

The technologies I have in mind here are not only those represented in the drama: **social technologies [1]** like juridical proceedings in *The Eumenides*; **representational technologies [2]** like the printed book Hamlet uses to goad Polonius; **visual recording technologies [3-4]** like the camera that freezes the action of *Three Sisters*; **audio recording technologies [3]** – box three, spool five – reanimating *Krapp's Last Tape*; **interactive and** (much the same thing) **surveillance technologies [4]** like the cellphone of Sarah Ruhl's *Dead Man's Cell Phone* or the video cameras of Michael Almereyda's film *Hamlet*. I am also thinking of the technologies that have historically defined the place, practice, and medium of theatrical performance: **the architectural structure of the theatre space [2]** and the available instruments that stage and so define how and so what dramatic performance means – periaktoi, ekkyklemai, grave traps, chariot-and-pole, electric elevators, rear projection, live tweeting, all alongside the constantly changing **technologies of acting [1]**. There is no essential theatre apart from its apparatus (...).⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Worthen William B., *Shakespeare, Technicity, Theatre*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2020, pp. 9-10 (my emphasis A.D.).

I have added in this quoted fragment some numbers linked with media types represented in the typology proposed by German media researcher Werner Faulstich, to say that the ideal model of theatre could be perceived as an example of pure live medium (not needing any technologies, except first-degree media such as live performances [1]). However, it makes sense to follow William Worthen's standpoint that theatre constitutes a laboratory space open for all kinds of media: second-degree media of print and architecture [2], third-degree audiovisual media [radio, TV, video, phonographic technologies) and last but not least fourth-degree digital media based on the computer as a counting machine and a principle of convergence engaging all types of technology⁴¹. From this point of view, theatre creates a site of visualizing and researching both embodied culture patterns "performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing – in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, nonreproducible knowledge"⁴² and more: all possible livenesses – mediatized and digitalized through all available communication technologies. This complex process of media convergence constitutes as its result "a blurring of realities"⁴³ onstage:

The contemporary theatre may illustrate a crisis in the theatre as technology, but it cannot do so by posing a dichotomy between the technological and the theatrical, or by dissolving it in a sense that intermedial theatrical technicity is so fully absorbed by the contemporary audiences' "regular exposure to and their personal use of new technologies" that it becomes as natural to us as, say, an awareness of the social meaning of when to retain and when to remove one's hat was for Shakespeare's audiences [...] As a technology, theatre has always represented this crisis, representing it with and through the technologies it appropriates, redefines, and represents as theatre.⁴⁴

All these processes of remediation and hypermediacy (when the mediated medium is made visible for the viewer), all practices of mediating human behavior, especially in the aspect of embodiment has gained more importance during the global pandemic crisis which has challenged every-day life routines of performing here

⁴¹ See: Faulstich Werner, *Medien und Öffentlichkeiten im Mittelalter (800-1400)*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996.

Faulstich Werner, *Medienwandel im Industrie – und Massenzeitalter (1830-1900)*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004.

⁴² Taylor Diana, *The Archive and Repertoire...*

⁴³ Worthen William, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 15.

and now. On the one hand, digital worlds have colonized “traditional”, “genuinely live” territories, on the other hand, human body has been transforming into the source of contagious infection. Time has come, perhaps, to start establishing the theatre of the new, (post-) pandemic age – the theatre of biohazard.

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Nomadic ambivalence, monadic nostalgia. In search of a model of culture where the future meets the past

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1. Introduction

The beginning of the 21st century turned out to be a big surprise for representatives of the social sciences and humanities. Many of them doubted not only the self-regulating properties of the market or the effectiveness of international law, but also the development perspectives of Western societies applying multicultural integration rules. The economic crises of 2008, the Arab Spring, the war in Ukraine, mass migration from Middle East and Africa to Europe? Brexit and Covid-19 are global events that have come to justify these doubts. They lead us to ask the question: in which direction is the Western world heading? On the one hand, many people would like to return to familiar solutions. They believe in the strength of local traditions, possibly supported by metaphysical sanction. On the other hand, the same people are aware that it is impossible to stop civilization processes that involve new patterns of individual and collective life. The paradox contained in both aspirations lies in the fact that the postulated return to the past depends on the knowledge and skills acquired as a result of breaking with the past. Zygmunt

Bauman calls this phenomenon *Retrotopia*.¹ The representatives of cultural studies are following the trail of this Polish sociologist. They are taking up the challenge of establishing a relationship between the growing need to protect the monadic identity of contemporary societies and the nomadic-performative principles of collective life in their heteronomic (global) cultural environment.

The purpose of this article is to initiate a discussion about actions that could be taken to (reconcile) these extremes and strategies that might offer them a chance for success. The subject of the study is equally the demythologization of the idealized past and criticism of radical attempts to break with the past justified by the alleged depletion of (pre-modern and) modern integration resources of Western communities.

I have divided the article into three sections. In the first, I will reconstruct their historical context. For this purpose, I intend to refer to *The Social Contract (Du contrat social 1762)* by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, as well as *The Closed Commercial State (Der geschlossene Handelsstaat 1800)* and *The Addresses to the German Nation (Die Reden an die Deutsche Nation, 1808)* by Johann Gottlieb Fichte². The choice of these authors and their theoretical proposals is not accidental. After all, they set the political course of modern Europe. The events of more than two hundred years ago are of great importance: before liberal-democratic changes, these patterns were treated as obvious and universally valid. It is worth recalling these patterns not only to know what the 'victims of Bauman's Retrotopia' seek to come back to, but also why our predecessors so radically rejected the old rules of the organization of the public sphere after World War II. Something must have prompted them to deeply revise their attitudes regarding their relationship to each other. These events preceded changes in collective thinking. The attitude revision would not have been possible without the critical sense of those who carried it out. Does this justify the view that the critical sense became their distinguishing feature? Until recently, we believed that these changes were irreversible. Today we have more and more doubts about this.

In the second part of this article, I will answer two questions. First, I will determine what path of development Western societies took, what ideals became their hallmark after the Second World War. Later, I will focus on what has been forgotten in their development. The assumption that something has been forgotten is not accidental. The political nostalgia of these societies for the past is very

¹ Z. Bauman, *Retrotopia*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2017, pp. 1-13.

² Cf. I. Nakhimovsky, *The Closed Commercial State: Perpetual Peace and Commercial Society from Rousseau to Fichte*, Princeton University Press, 2011.

telling. It suggests the existence of identity deficits in ordinary people, which they compensate for in a clearly irrational way. I intend to substantiate this hypothesis by comparing the features Bauman attributed to Western societies two or three decades ago with his final diagnosis of retrotopia. Stewart R. Legg explains the validity of this comparison. In his opinion:

The key themes identified [by Bauman P. R.] are the fluid society, comprising fluid ethics, fluid dynamics, fluid self and fluid spaces, and aesthetics. There are, however, outer limits to liquid modernity as they are enacted in terms of myths that Bauman refers to as leading to Retrotopia: a sickly nostalgia for an imagined past as a source of inspiration, a mythical utopia, where things were better managed and organized. Thus, the outer limit of a liquid society becomes a retrospective and backward looking utopia: Retrotopia, a myth whose contours are outlined and whose implications for management and organization studies are expounded.³

Finally, in the third section I will try to find ways out of the impasse. In my considerations, I will refer to two premises. The first, a historical premise, concerns Western communities' memory of their recent prosperity. These memories, confronted with the conditions of the progress that has been made in the lives of those people, may turn out to be a remedy for their present-day trauma. Unfortunately, this mechanism does not apply to post-communist societies. On the one hand, they do not remember the recent past; on the other, many of their members do not feel the positive effects of integration with the West. In their case, therefore, political nostalgia for the imaginary past may turn out to be a serious threat. The second premise, related to the intention to find a solution to this dilemma, concerns the mistakes in social planning made by politicians and scientists. If the presumption concerning the violation of the balance between the postulate of tolerance of the inhabitants of the Western world and their need to protect their local identity is considered credible, then restoring this balance may prove to be the sought-after solution.

2. 'The gardening state'. Longing for the monadic past?

The title of this section refers to the book by Zygmunt Bauman, written almost three decades before Retrotopia. In *Modernity and Ambivalence*, this Polish-

³ S. R. Legg, *Reading Bauman and Retrotopia*. Elsevier, "Scandinavian Journal of Management", Vol. 34, December 2018, p. 354.

British sociologist characterized 'the gardening state' as a caring defender (1) who knows what is good for 'citizens' and (2) who monopolizes power to effectively 'care for' them.⁴ The gardening state implemented its development plan by eliminating harmful or unnecessary plants and, at the same time, pruning those that were to be an integral part of the political garden. In Poland, Bauman's diagnosis found fertile ground. In the 1990s we broke with the communist past. It took us a few more years to understand that Bauman's proposition had a much wider application. (After all, it concerns the processes initiated in European culture long before the emergence of the communist state.)

Bauman's concept of 'the gardening state' can and should be included in research on retrotopia. This concept refers to the political realities before the socio-political turn that took place after World War II. In order to understand Western societies which are succumbing to political nostalgia, we need to determine what they want to come back to. It is possible to understand both their lack of distance to what is happening to them and their fascination with the past (even if they mythologize the past). The problem is how they connect both of these perspectives. The basis of these people's critical thinking about the present is provided by their nostalgic memories, which are taken for granted (i.e. excluded from the analogous obligation to critically evaluate their content). In view of (the obviousness of) this inconsistency, the key question facing a social scientist is what does his collective creator want to communicate to himself and others with this strange mental construct?

The last question harmonizes with Bauman's metaphor of 'the gardening state'. It refers to the political history of Western societies glorified by their nostalgic members. Their dissatisfaction with liberal democracy may be explained by their willingness to return to the state as a defender of permanent and unchanging rules of collective order. The symbol of such a set of rules is the 'garden'. Unfortunately, this choice has side effects that are not always taken into account by those who wish to make it. The most important of such effects is a significant shift of emphasis from state power and civil rights. The monopoly on violence – as is well known – is the main, defining feature of the state. It monopolizes violence in order to pursue its goals. In the case of 'the gardening state', we can argue about the universal or particular nature of its goals. However, the status of these goals will remain unchanged. There is no place for civic debate about them in 'the political garden'.

The precondition for the proper functioning of the state is the careful selection of its constitutional (political and legal) priorities. They concern how to legally

⁴ Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and ambivalence*, Polity, Oxford 1991, pp. 54-55, 176-178.

monopolize violence and then use it for the benefit of citizens. If this condition is not met, the criteria of justice applied by the modern state will evolve in a way beyond anyone's control. (After all, metaphysical and religious norms do not apply here.) Being aware of this requirement, Jean-Jacques Rousseau proposed a solution to compensate for the moral deficits of modern societies, the cause of which is the immunization of its members against the voice of conscience. This solution was *The Social Contract*. Rousseau explains that a social contract is secured against the partiality of its signatories by the mode of its conclusion. It consists in turning the 'will of all' into a 'general will'⁵. An educated and vigilant society can bring out what is in its real interest by comparing its members' expectations regarding their rights and security guarantees⁶. In this way, such a society gives birth to an impersonally valid law.

Rousseau found many followers. The idea of the Jacobins to make the general will the basis of modern legislation became a symbol of the time. Meanwhile, the step taken by them was not the last step. The idea of universal law at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries led the French to embark on wars with the whole world. A key episode of the Napoleonic Wars was the French occupation of German-speaking territories. Their inhabitants, deprived of the possibility to decide their own fate, opposed the French invader with their own vision of a collective order. Johann Gottlieb Fichte, in *Speeches to the German Nation*, defined the nation as a community of history, language and fate⁷.

This professed Jacobin, in the face of his later experience of enslavement, abandoned the belief in reason – understood as a sufficient basis for determining what civil duties are. By creating an alternative to J.J. Rousseau, Fichte established the canon of means by which the nascent state has been shaping its national identity ever since. That state, in Fichte's opinion, should combine universal reasons with deviations resulting from the specificity of the place for which it takes responsibility. We must not forget that this place is more than territory. According to the definition of the nation given in the previous paragraph, it is made up of people who play the role of the depository of the majority culture (here: 'lawful culture'). By cultivating the memory of their own past, looking for its present equivalents,

⁵ J.-J. Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, London, Penguin Classics, 1968, pp. 554-562.

⁶ J. Habermas, *Der Philosophische Diskurs der Moderne: Zwölf Vorlesungen*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp Verlag, MIT Press, 1985, pp. 40, 306.

⁷ Johann Gottlieb Fichte, Edition Holzinger. Berliner Ausgabe 2017, pp. 105-106; Cf. J. G. Fichte, *Der geschlossene Handelsstaat*, Edition Holzinger. Taschenbuch, Berliner Ausgabe, 2015, pp. 54-55.

they follow the rules imposed on them by the state, and at the same time exercise their own freedom.

The concepts of ‘general will’ and ‘closed commercial state’ have proved very useful as political tools. Unfortunately, their use came at great moral cost. The full-scale estimation of these costs began after World War II. It took a historical cataclysm to see that the problem is not so much with philosophical projects of collective order as with the political institution which gives meaning to these declarations and makes an arbitrary choice between them. In other words, the rules of justice (nominally resulting from reason and / or national tradition) – contrary to the beliefs of Rousseau and Fichte – do not protect the modern state from the axiological drift that makes it a ‘political gardener’. Several decades of efforts by Western societies to minimize this threat have resulted in a solution that took the form of liberal-democratic patterns of political correctness. Two features of this process deserve mention. On the one hand, its participants were mistrustful of ‘ready-made regulations for the state’. On the other hand, they believed in public opinion, viewing it as capable of debating its own future and ensuring that the state carries out the tasks entrusted to it. Did these solutions guarantee the success of liberal-democratic changes? Of course not.

In the name of freedom and tolerance, the structure of nation-state domination was called into question. However, we should not draw too far-reaching conclusions from this fact. More important than our political plans are the possibilities of their implementation. Social scientists have never been unanimous on this point. For example, Michel Foucault, half a century ago, drew attention to the cultural determinants that cause the permanent incapacitation of Westerners. According to Foucault, the modern state differs from its historical counterparts in that it is not content with access to means of external control, such as law or physical violence. Of course, it does not give up on disciplining recalcitrant citizens. The emphasis, however, is on something else. The essence of the control exercised by the contemporary state is its ability to rule over man from the inside. Political institutions – as biopower – stimulate his desires and fears, confirm his belief in the ‘rightness’ or ‘scientific nature’ of the political programs implemented by these institutions. Szymon Wróbel comments on this as follows:

Defining reality by defining rationality is the primary tool with which power establishes itself. This does not mean that power seeks criteria for rationality or that it produces knowledge itself; rather, it means that authority

defines what is considered rational and what is considered knowledge, and consequently decides what is considered reality.⁸

Foucault's cultural diagnosis, supplemented by warnings by authors such as Paul Rabinow, Steven Lukes, Thomas Lemke and others, sheds light on the problem of the social control of political power. Despite all the appearances of the democratization of public life, the contemporary state has not lost the ability to influence the decisions of its members. It did not lose this ability because it could not lose it. Even if we consider the metaphysical or historical justification for this practice to be anachronistic, the *raison d'état* (reason of state) will remain as an argument that gives it a lasting advantage over other participants in political life. Perhaps this is what John Locke had in mind when in *Two Treatises of Government* (1689) he tried to combine the fiduciary duties of the state with its functions as educator and arbiter.

It is hard to resist the impression that this restriction has become the reason why ordinary people wanted 'the gardening state' to return. This premise, however, is not sufficient to comprehensively explain what retrotopia is. An issue parallel to the question of whether civil society can speak with its own voice is whether it can speak with one voice. The second issue relates to its political and cultural identity. Therefore, in the next step, I will focus on the political ideals and moral guarantees with which Western societies have decided to replace the previous requirement of absolute obedience to the state. In the search for the causes of retrotopia, it is not only what has failed or has not been fully implemented that matters. Equally important is what we have managed to do and what we have forgotten when initiating epochal changes in our collective life.

3. 'Liquid modernity'. Faith in a nomadic future?

Along with the changes taking place in the contemporary world, their participants were faced with a choice regarding their attitude to these changes. They saw the benefits of the spreading liberal-democratic patterns. However, they were not able to take full advantage of them. They were to exercise democratic control over the welfare state. Meanwhile, their own identities slipped out of control. On the one hand, they were forced to deal with their own monadic past. Tradition, memory,

⁸ S. Wróbel, *Władza i rozum [Power and Reason]*, Poznań, Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2002, p. 88.

group membership, and other elements of the former symbolic order were no longer sufficient for them to recognize the challenges they face each day. On the other hand, the diagnosis of their neo-tribal (nomadic) forms of existence made many individuals and groups dizzy. With people encountering 'strangers' and experiencing the weakness of the old-type of social ties, losses began to outweigh the gains associated with the historic shift of priorities. Add to this their disappointment with the unfulfilled promises of liberal democracy, along with their perception of economic insecurity, and their awareness of cultural wars and terrorism, then their longing to be free from such problems becomes understandable.

The alternative to old and new forms of social life is important in research on the political course of a liberal democratic state and the (alleged) cultural preferences of its citizens. Until recently, multiculturalism and neo-tribalism were treated in official scientific reports and political declarations as 'patterns of legitimate culture', while attachment to monadic forms of existence were viewed as resulting from fear of strangers and longing for 'the closed state'. Meanwhile, the retrotopia has happened to us. It clearly proves that although there is no return to what was, there is no consent to what is.

What made us suddenly doubt that the nation-state would soon be replaced by the network state, suspect that (old) customs have become worn out, and conclude that the criteria for belonging to a national community, religious group or neighborhood environment have changed? We should have posed these questions to social scientists such as Eric Hobsbawm, Michel Mafesolli, Manuel Castells, Wojciech Burszta or Zygmunt Bauman. The common feature of their theoretical propositions is the preceding assumption about the fluidity of contemporary culture. These authors explain this assumption in various ways. Hobsbawm writes about 'inventing traditions'. This practice is related to the cultural resources and the current needs of the 'innovative community'. The imaginative nature of this process proves the impermanence of the created image of collective life. Mafesolli believes that the cause of the changes taking place in contemporary culture is the growing popularity of 'new tribes'. In contrast to the old forms of association, the feature of the 'new tribes' is that they offer a sense of belonging – as strong as impermanent – to a community of like-minded people. When its members change their interests or fascinations, they move on to a different group. This cycle is endless.

Finally, Bauman – the author of the liquidity metaphor – contrasted his earlier diagnosis with his observations from the last period of his scientific activity. In his opinion, the accelerated wear and tear of the patterns of modern culture (such as nationality, attachment to local tradition or respect for authorities) does not entail our final resignation from them. Bauman points out that we are sometimes

influenced by retrotopia. It's hard to disagree with him. Today, the Russians dream their dream about a new incarnation of the tsar, the Catholic Church in Poland (and not only in Poland) wants to return to the pre-conciliar times, (so-called) right-wing politicians formulate the thesis on the Suicide of the Enlightenment. What do they all want to go back to? Nobody knows... It is indisputable that their desires have surprising consequences.

The nomadic Western world has recently turned into a conglomerate of monads, increasingly separate from each other. If we return to the considerations of such sociologists as Hobsbawm, Mafesolli, or Bauman, we can add to this the observation that it concerns internally contradictory aspirations. The reasons why the participants of Western culture rejected the old rules of collective life are identical to those that now make these people nostalgic for them. Their choice between what is criticized and what is admired concerns only what – here and now – they want to change. They just do not know how to do it. So they fall into the trap of two extremes – bold social projects and deep disappointment with them. What predominates in the lives of societies that respond to both these tendencies? How to estimate the risks associated with the selection of each of them? Where to find a way out of the impasse?

Two social scientists provide answers to these questions. On the one hand, Jon McKenzie highlights the imperative need for the people participating in democratic governance to engage in personal development. In the book under the suggestive title *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*, McKenzie distinguishes three rules/conditions ('performance paradigms') of human decision-making autonomy, namely: the efficacy of cultural performance; the efficiency of organizational performance; and the effectiveness of technological performance⁹. To the extent that we can resist the (not always overt) pressure exerted on us in each of these spheres, we can believe that we have an influence on our own lives and on public affairs. McKenzie explains the combination of both factors as follows:

Rather than quickly embrace or dismiss Foucault's model of discipline, let us take a cue from Deleuze, who stresses that 'what Foucault recognized as well was the transience of this model'. In 'Postscript on the Societies Control', Deleuze writes that 'the disciplines underwent a crisis to the benefit of new forces that were gradually instituted and which accelerated after World War II; a disciplinary society was what we already no longer were, what

⁹ See: J. McKenzie, *Perform Or Else: From Discipline to Performance*. London and New York, Routledge, 2001, p.VII.

we have ceased to be.’ (...) let us deviate a bit from Deleuze and call things another way: we’re living, dying, on the tip of a massive formation that I call the performance stratum.¹⁰

There is an important warning in this generally optimistic view of the situation of contemporary human beings. Individuals and groups who have not acquired performative skills (in the sense that McKenzie gave this term) are unable to participate effectively in public life. And while they are indeed nominally part of civil society, they never in fact ceased to be part of a world where their powers and responsibilities were ‘over their heads’. The fact that these people belonged to the welfare state was determined by its generosity. When this generosity was put to the test, its ‘disappointed citizens’ stopped believing it. Whose fault is this? Undoubtedly all those who have forgotten what they owe to other citizens. However, it is equally the fault of the state, which forgot to educate its members and to help them in their integration efforts. (Or maybe it hasn't forgotten...)

On the other hand, Jürgen Habermas summarizes the reasons why the modern state so often takes the form of a ‘political gardener’ and its citizens so easily fall into a nostalgic mood (retrotopia) when under the influence of current difficulties. Habermas, unlike many other authors, does not criticize ‘the project of modernity’, but draws our attention to the fact that it is ‘unfinished’.¹¹ Influenced by Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg and John Rawls, he defines the conditions under which Western political communities can complete what they began to implement two centuries ago. It is true that achieving by them the ‘efficacy of cultural performance, the efficiency of organizational performance and the effectiveness of technological performance’ was a necessary stage in building a civil society. However, it was not the final stage of this process. What was missing from it?

The free-market economy and the modern public administration are the foundations of the welfare state. This state has a lot to offer to its citizens. Along with this, however, it imposes on them its standards of correctness. Its economic needs and political requirements increasingly affect the way of life of ordinary people. Yet should it not be the other way around? Faced with this threat, the actions of dispersed individuals and groups to protect their autonomy are insufficient. Without communication skills and a willingness to integrate with others, even the most ‘effective performers’ (of their own life roles) will not be able to be sure

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 175-176.

¹¹ J. Habermas, *Modernity an Incomplete Project?* <http://theoria.art-zoo.com/modernity-an-incomplete-project-jurgen-habermas/> (access: 20.07.13).

if they managed to avoid the sinister ‘... or else’ mentioned by McKenzie in the title of his book. The counterbalance to the personal efforts of these people will still be political and economic institutions playing the roles of ultra-effective performers.

Habermas has no doubt that the condition for the success of consensual action is the upholding of democratic standards that enable members of civil society to express their views freely. The symbolically repressed interlocutors are unable to reach agreement. At most, they duplicate pseudo-communication patterns that mimic social debate. Therefore, their performative efficiency may be considered the criterion of their authenticity. Also, their awareness of the threats posed by the administrative and economic system justifies the view that they want to cooperate with each other. Unfortunately, they are still separated by difference in experience, group affiliation, or goals they want to achieve. So how to make them join the process of negotiating the rules of the organization of the public sphere?

In response to this need, Habermas developed a proposal for reaching social agreement based upon the principle of rational argumentation. In this project he contrasted two types of discourse – theoretical and practical.¹² The objective of theoretical discourse is the creation of formal criteria for agreement on common goals, and for relevant measures to be taken in order to achieve these goals, by the society of interlocutors moving to increasingly general levels of argumentation.¹³ On the other hand, practical discourse seeks to find the rules for operating in the public sphere (analogously, by reaching increasing levels of argumentation).¹⁴ The conclusions reached by the community of interlocutors using these forms of discourse converge in the project of ‘the good life’. Using Kohlberg’s developmental scheme, Habermas reconstructs the relationship between the development of the communicative habits of a given society and the level of its moral and political-legal integration.¹⁵ The consensual openness of its members leads to their

¹² J. Habermas, *Erkenntnis und Interesse*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Mein, 1968, p. 385.

¹³ Sf. Edgar Schnebel, *Values in Decision-Making Processes: Systemic Structures of J. Habermas and N. Luhmann for the Appreciation of Responsibility in Leadership*, “Journal of Business Ethics” Vol. 27, No 1-2 September (guest editors: J. Sójka, J. Wempe), Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, Boston, London 2000, pp. 79-88.

¹⁴ A.M. Kaniowski, *Filozofia społeczna Jürgena Habermasa [Social Philosophy of Jürgen Habermas]*, Warszawa, Kolegium Otryckie, 1993, pp. 478-479.

¹⁵ Jürgen Habermas, *Aspekty racjonalności działania*, in: A. Szahaj, A. M. Kaniowski (editors), *Wokół teorii krytycznej Jürgena Habermasa*. Kolegium Otryckie, Warszawa 1987, pp. 135-136.

diverging convictions being transformed into their shared view of who they are and where they are heading.¹⁶

Apart from the way that social interlocutors reach agreement, legal regulations protecting the effect of their agreements are no less important. The point is that communicative action should refer to previously established arrangements that defined the rights and obligations of those who participate in debates. Of course, these arrangements cannot be considered inviolable. This would reduce the notion of consensus to the principle of obedience to norms which have been adopted once and for all. At the same time, the conventional status of such arrangements does not undermine the principle of protecting the normative basis of communicative action. Such reconstruction is only possible if the citizen questioning its content acts in accordance with the accepted principles of law-making. In this case, the depository of the concept of justice is an open community of interlocutors. In this extended approach to the problem of principles of communication, the burden of legitimizing the claim shifts from citizens' qualifications to legally institutionalized procedures of discursive opinion- and will-formation. The juridification of communicative freedom also means that the law must draw on sources of legitimation that are not at its disposal.

Instead of an oppositional approach to communicative practice and legal regulations, Habermas puts both factors in one recipe for (sane) civil society. It is true that a democratic state that is beyond the control of its citizens poses a serious threat to them. It imposes its will on them, pretending to act on their behalf. This does not mean, however, that the state as such is an enemy of civil society: one cannot exist without the other. This thesis may be considered the sought-after solution to the problem of retrotopia only if it is correctly interpreted. It is not just about what citizens owe the state: far more important is what they owe each other as representatives of public opinion (shaping the legal framework of that state). Meanwhile, the list of their mutual obligations does not begin with Habermas' description of communicative action. In order for the act of communication to be possible, the political community must meet – directly or indirectly – a number of conditions mentioned by McKenzie. Its members must master the difficult ability to perform their own identities while developing critical skills to protect their collective identity. In this perspective, McKenzie's warning needs to be supplemented with its social context. Now it reads: Perform... in dialogue with others... or else.

¹⁶ Sf. J. Félix Lozano, *Proposal for a model for the elaboration of ethical codes based on discourse ethics*, "Business Ethics. A European Review" Vol. 10, No. 2, April 2001, Blackwell, pp. 157-162.

4. Conclusion

The theoretical propositions of McKenzie and Habermas provide an answer to the question about the causes of political nostalgia to which contemporary people succumb. The undoubted advantage of these diagnoses is that they take into account the political history of the Western world over the last two centuries, the emancipatory aspirations of its inhabitants after World War II, and finally their fears about the uncontrolled ‘liquefaction’ of their collective identity. People unsure of who they are, in the changing political (and cultural) reality, and of who is responsible for the results of these changes, began to yearn for a mythical past in which ‘everything was clear’. Zygmunt Bauman called this phenomenon *Retrotopia*. In revising his earlier position – in his latest scholarly achievement – he recognized the threat that the Western world urgently had to face. It turns out that the ideals of the closed state and the nation (as a community of history, language and fate) have not been forgotten at all. These demons can come back at any time. So, what can we do to prevent them from returning?

McKenzie and Habermas – taken together – establish the conditions under which the inhabitants of a liberal-democratic state can achieve their full (individual) freedoms and, at the same time, exercise civic control over that state. Only the combination of the two perspectives allows us to state what the authors of the optimistic hypotheses regarding the ‘painless liquefaction of forms of collective life’ have forgotten. (It is worth adding that Zygmunt Bauman had omitted or marginalized this until he deemed it necessary to undertake research on *retrotopia*.) The conclusions of this comparison concern the cognitive and decision-making deficits of ordinary people appointed in the liberal-democratic project to make the most important political decisions. The first remedy, in this context, is to improve the personal competences and civic skills of *retrotopia* victims. Re-energizing their critical sense and focusing it on current political problems may become the solution sought. It may, but then again it may not. Why?

Our knowledge of what caused the *retrotopia* does not necessarily imply that we can stop it. Yes, investments in the critical sense and communication skills of public actors can help. These investments do not provide certainty as to their effects. At the same time, however, this uncertainty does not give us any reason to fall into pessimism. Although Western societies have reasons to seek alternatives to the standards of a liberal democratic state, they have many more reasons to stick to these standards. This is because this state has been taking care of its members for the last several decades. Memories of this care (along with positive, current experiences) become a buffer protecting potential supporters from an idealized

image of the past. They have a lot to lose. So, it may turn out that it is in their interest to save what – here and now – makes them angry. (As a reminder, Donald Trump has just lost the US presidential election.)

Meanwhile, this alternative requires an important exception. The safety valve in the form of two images of the past – protecting people from going to extremes – is an attribute of successful societies. It is difficult to find its equivalents in Poland, the Baltic Republics or even the Eastern Länder of the Federal Republic of Germany. There, the costs of unsuccessful experiments turned out to be very high. Since the inhabitants of those regions have experienced nothing but nostalgia for a better life in the last few decades, their disappointment with the present may have a cumulative effect. As a result, the idealized past will turn into a completely unreal story about the times of the former greatness and glory of the community making an imaginative escape into retrotopia. That is why it is so important that the research on this phenomenon takes into account both its universality and the differences in the way it manifests itself in different places of the world.

In connection with the above, an additional condition for an effective fight against retrotopia should be taken into account. This is the solidarity of Western communities, aware that the durability of their political ideals will be determined not only by their (internal) creativity, tolerance and communication skills, but also by their common concern for societies most threatened with losing faith in the possibility of ‘completing’ the liberal-democratic project. ‘Completing’ this project is possible only in cooperation with others, taking into account the differences between political partners. Together they have to look for a new shape of culture where the future meets the past.

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Résumé

Renouveau culturel ou retour vers le passé?

Le temps ne peut pas s'inverser. Cependant, nous souhaitons peut-être restaurer ce qui a été perdu. Surtout lorsque nous nous sentons impuissants face aux problèmes actuels, il nous est facile de succomber à l'illusion que les règles passées de la vie sociale et politique étaient parfaites. Zygmunt Bauman appelle ce phénomène la *rétrotopie*.

Qu'est-ce que la *rétrotopie*? Selon Bauman, il s'agit d'un nouveau type d'attitude que les sociétés occidentales adoptent à l'égard des changements – pas toujours bénéfiques – de leur vie provoqués par la «modernité liquide». La *rétrotopie* peut être définie comme une nostalgie politique du passé. De nombreux chercheurs associent le concept de *rétrotopie* à des souvenirs idéalisés de modèles historiques de la vie collective.

Nous devons établir la genèse de la *rétrotopie*. Il ne s'agit pas seulement de l'origine de «l'idée d'un passé insouciant», mais aussi de la raison pour laquelle elle pénètre dans la conscience des gens ordinaires à une telle échelle.

La *rétrotopie* peut aussi signifier que des règles de comportement se liquéfient en lien avec le besoin de protéger son identité. Bien que ces règles changent, certaines fonctionnent encore comme des «normes inviolables» de la vie collective. On peut voir là un signe de la naïveté de ceux qui croient encore à l'objectivité de l'histoire et de la métaphysique. Cependant, nous pouvons également rechercher ces normes dans une culture qui donne à ses participants un sentiment de stabilité axiologique

(malgré l'évolution des circonstances) ou dans leur espoir de parvenir à un accord sur des sujets qui les divisent. La conséquence évidente de la perte du sens de la participation au dialogue sur l'avenir commun est la résistance des exclus à des changements qu'ils ne comprennent pas et sur lesquels ils n'ont aucune influence. Ce qui leur importe, c'est d'exprimer leur opposition à des formes de participation injustes et «incompréhensibles» à la vie publique. De là, ce n'est qu'une étape vers la mythologie du passé (supposément dépourvue de défauts similaires).

Comment expliquer le phénomène de la rétrotopie de manière à en contrer les effets négatifs? Les auteurs de cet ouvrage apportent des réponses à cette question. Ils participent tous de manière créative à la discussion sur les conditions de maintien d'un équilibre entre les défis sociaux et les opportunités sociales pour y faire face.

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Monografia poświęcona jest różnym strategiom społeczno-kulturowym mającym na celu (...) korektę kursu obranego przez daną społeczność, (...) przy czym postulowana korekta (...) jest wyrazem zarówno zagubienia w niezrozumiałej, chaotycznej, „płynnej” rzeczywistości, jak i nostalgii wobec uporządkowanej przeszłości, z jej klarownymi i zrozumiałymi regułami życia społecznego i politycznego. Konsekwencją utraty poczucia uczestnictwa w dialogu o wspólnej przyszłości jest opór wykluczonych wobec zmian, których nie rozumieją i na które nie mają wpływu. Argumenty uzasadniające ów opór mają wówczas drugorzędne znaczenie: liczy się wyrażenie sprzeciwu wobec niezrozumiałych form uczestnictwa w życiu publicznym, skąd już tylko krok prowadzi do mitologizacji przeszłości.

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Tom zawiera teksty badaczy rodzimych i zagranicznych – z ośrodków we Francji i Niemczech. (...) Prezentowane teksty w sposób teoretyczny, przeglądowy oraz praktyczny i szczegółowy ukazują współczesne tendencje i kierunki rozwoju badań nad trwałością, obecnością czy płynnością. Poszczególne rozdziały stanowią (...) ważny materiał, który posłużyć może do pogłębiania badań nad czasem w kulturze i społeczeństwie – wpisuje się w żywy nurt dociekań nad współczesnością (łącznie z rozważaniami na tematy post-pandemiczne), nostalgią, pamięcią, przeszłością, świadomością i tożsamością, teraźniejszością i retrotopią. (...) Monografia stanowi lekturę nie tylko przyjemną, ale też wielce inspirującą i pobudzającą do zastanowienia nad kondycją człowieka w świecie nastawionym na przyszłość, lecz tęskniącym do przeszłości.

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