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In this issue:

HISTORY AND SOCIETY SINCE 1970

ISTORIE ȘI SOCIETATE DUPĂ 1970

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IAŞI, 2003

INTRODUCTION

The present volume gathers together presentations offered to the third Historians' Workshop, held at New Europe College, Bucharest in collaboration with the Center for South-East European Studies, University College London, the British Council and with additional funding from the British Academy. Twenty-five participants from universities and research institutes from all over the region met to discuss "History and Society in South-East Europe since 1970". This followed on sessions in London (March 2000) and Belgrade (November 2001) which treated "The writing and teaching of Balkan history" and "History of the Present".

Why history and society? A number of excellent works have appeared about the *production* of history in South-Eastern Europe, its myth-making capacities (usually interpreted in an exclusively negative sense), its role in the construction of (usually national) identities. The relation of these processes to the study of the recent past – not only the analysis of what happened not long ago but its (often contested) relation to the present and the future – had been the object of the previous workshops. But other questions remained: how are people consuming this historical production? The historian's work has an obvious relation to time and images of the past, but what conceptions of societies are being formulated? What is the institutional context of these formulations? Do historians control history any more? If not, is this a good or a bad thing?

The contributions that follow do not amount to anything like a treatise – they display all the drawbacks of a set of workshop papers. But at the same time their heterogeneity will, the editors hope, help people to grasp unexpected aspects of an apparently familiar problematic and, in short, to think about the relationship between history and society in new ways. While some contributions (Mihalache, Zachariah) address more general questions of the importance of theory and method, others take us to varied but specific contexts: editorial and sociopolitical changes (Gasić in 1980s Yugoslavia, Ardeleanu in 1990s Romania); power strategies and their connection to gender and generational relations within the historical guild (Dimitrova); the tectonics of the Church and state historical discourses (Moşneagu); what people try to make history mean in Macedonia (Stefoska); institutional changes and popular attitudes to historical truth in Romania (Deletant); contested paint schemes and pedagogical scenarios in Transylvania (Szabó); mandates, intentions and outcomes in Western and

Balkan ethnographies (Duijzings); the relation between causality and consumerism in recent accounts of life in eighteenth-century Britain (Hitchcock). The interesting questions of the demise or ongoing validity of socialist history in the British and Indian contexts are also discussed (Williams, Zachariah).

No unitary solutions – let alone recommendations – emerge from the various essays. Balkan society's relation to history emerges as a complex one, with a range of do-it-yourself techniques for constructing the past competing with the state enterprises and the semi-private establishments. The partial collaboration here with researchers of an anthropological (Duijzings) or literary (Szabó) training might help historians situate themselves in the post-positivist, post-industrial, proto-capitalist landscapes of South-Eastern Europe today. An analysis of the conceptualisation of the region in Anglophone historiography – a problem raised but hardly exhausted by Maria Todorova's widely-discussed essay *Imagining the Balkans* – is missing here, but would certainly help us clarify the statues of a number of discursive enterprises. If the reader is able to use our contributions alongside other regional efforts to think about these questions[1] to reach a more contextualised understanding of at least some of aspects of our chosen problematic, then the work that has gone into this issue will have been worthwhile.

The organizers are extremely grateful for the opportunity to publish a selection of these contributions as a special issue of *Xenopoliana*, which in its eleventh year is still as far as I know the only specialist review in South-Eastern Europe dedicated specifically to historiography and a conceptual approach to history.

Stephan Roman (British Council Bucharest, Regional Director for South-Eastern Europe) and Snezhana Daneva (British Council London) gave the green light and a lot of organisational support to this project. Andreea Pulpea inputted ideas and (with Oana Macovei) an enormous amount of time and effort: the British Council offices in Belgrade, Sofia, Skoplje and Tirana did their bit with great efficiency. Gabi Massaci and Dragoş Bucurenci are brilliant publicists; Anca Oroveanu (New Europe College) a generous host and an astute interlocutor. Last, but not least, I am grateful to my old acquaintance, Professor Alexandru Zub, for opening the pages of his review to us; to Andi Mihalache for his prompt and efficient collaboration; to Mihaela Daniluc for extremely professional copy-editing, and Adrian Cioflâncă for putting his shoulder to the wheel at the last minute.

Alex Drace-Francis
Iaşi, September 2003

[1] Among recent productions we may note the volumes *Istoria recentă în Europa: obiecte de studiu, surse, metode: lucrările simpozionului internaţional organizat de Colegiul Noua Europă, Bucureşti, 7-8 aprilie, 2000* [Bucureşti]: New Europe College, 2002; and *Nation-building and contested identities: Romanian and Hungarian case studies*, edited by Balázs Trencsényi et al., Budapest: Regio Books / Iaşi: Editura Polirom, 2001.

HISTORIANS' CONFERENCE BUCHAREST, 7–11 APRIL 2003

Dennis Deletant

Have new institutional structures been put in place for the production, dissemination and reception of historical knowledge since the end of the Cold War? Do they work? How?

One of the most pernicious consequences of Communist regimes was the perverted image of the past that they left. Since 1990 new histories of former Communist states have appeared. The approach taken by some of them is original and of value, and not only because of newly-available sources. This is inevitable, but it does not mean that all histories written before the fall of Communism are less valuable than those written after. It means simply that in the research and writing of history there are no final results.

Romanians fret about their history. Often they have given more importance to opinions than to facts. In this respect they do not differ from other peoples. Much of the historical research conducted by Romanians during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was done so with the aim of supporting and then consolidating the idea of a nation-state, in the belief that only the nation-state could offer the cultural unity in which its members could prosper intellectually and economically. The premise was that all those born to a culture must live under the same political roof. This premise was propounded, broadly speaking, in the Communist period in the historical publications sponsored by the Romanian academy, including the four-volume *History of Romania* (1960) which covered the period of antiquity to independence in 1878.

It was only after 1990 that this "national historiography" was challenged by a handful of Romanian historians. They work outside the Romanian Academy, but are based at state-funded universities. The most notable amongst them is Lucian Boia, a professor of history at Bucharest University. His books *History and Myth in the Romanian Consciousness* (1987) was the first serious attempt by a Romanian – non-Romanian scholars have already addressed this problem, albeit in a less extensive manner – to discuss how the past has been distorted for political ends, especially during the period of Communist rule when the regime attempted to forge its own version of history, through manipulating accounts of the distant and not-so-distant past. Boia's refreshing interpretation

of history and myth, and the role they play in Romanian life, has had a potent impact, especially upon the younger generation. His book was discussed widely in the Romanian press and on television, and has been reprinted. In assessing the degree to which myth has implanted itself in the Romanian consciousness Boia shows the reader that what is important is what the Romanians believe happened, not what actually happened. Importance is given to interpretations, not to facts. Boia draws upon a host of examples – in chronological order – to illustrate his point, among them the debate about the Daco-Roman symbiosis, and the role of Michael the Brave. At times, such debates served a positive social purpose, as during the formation of the Romanian national state between the years 1856 and 1918, a time when the creation of a national mythology served the purpose, as it has in many other countries, of consolidating a national consciousness that had been quite diffuse until then. But these interpretations of myths, once considered useful, degenerated during the Communist era and were used to justify a xenophobic and nationalist policy. Virtues, such as heroism, hospitality, honesty, were generalized for that purpose, and a whole patriotic literature was developed with exemplary characters and diabolical plots involving foreigners and traitors. Real events were falsely presented and distorted in the name of those new virtues, and were conveyed in communist propaganda on multiple levels – historical, social and cultural. These distortions were inserted into school textbooks, repeated in national television broadcasts, and reiterated in the compulsory party meetings.

The consequences are not difficult to see in Romania today. Although some Romanians passed this propaganda through a filter of scepticism, many accepted the distortion because censorship denied the possibility of critical debate and contention. In the aftermath of the 1989 Romanian revolution, it has been possible to gauge the measure of this propaganda. Going beyond Boia's book, one had only to see the editorials in the Romanian press regarding the conflict in Kosovo to see how a mythical history shaped attitudes at the time. A spurious "solidarity" with Serbian "Orthodox brothers" was invented; nothing was said about the Serbian invasion of the Romanian Banat in 1919, nor about the present-day treatment of the Romanian minority in the Voivodina. The "sell-out" at Yalta was resurrected as an argument to distrust the motives of the West and Nato. The anti-Nato campaign, in which the present President and Prime Minister were vociferous participants whilst in opposition, was conveniently forgotten as they changed their tune in welcoming Nato's overtures to Romania to join the alliance in autumn 2002.

The ultra-nationalist sentiment promoted under Ceauşescu has left a powerful echo in the public consciousness. This legacy favours the invocation of scapegoats to provide an illusion of security for those who need to feel safe in their homeland. Ultra-nationalism sometimes draws on tragic figures from the past who are seen as personifying, through their own personal drama, the injustice endured by an entire nation. Removing this stereotypical image of the

past, one infused with a sense of "tragedy", "persecution", and "injustice", is one of the tasks set themselves by new historical institutions that have been created since 1990.

Among the new institutions that have established themselves in the field of historical enquiry since 1990, the following have made a mark in Romania and internationally through their published research output and their conference activity; The New Europe College (NEC)[1], the Civic Academy Foundation (CAF)[2], the Romanian Institute for Recent History (RIRH/IRIR)[3], and the National Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism of the Romanian Academy (NIST)[4]. The first three are non-profit bodies and were established with non-Romanian government funding. They seek to dismantle the stereotypes forged not only in Communist Romania, but also in other countries that shared a totalitarian experience during the twentieth century. Through the scholars they support, these institutions pose uncomfortable questions about the past, questions that are often inconvenient to Romania's political class. NIST is, despite its title, focused specifically upon the totalitarian experience in Romania. The energy of its researchers is displayed in its review, although some of its

[1] NEC (Director, Andrei Pleşu) was set up in 1994. It defines itself as an institution for advanced studies in humanities and social sciences and is financed by German and Swiss foundations (Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft, Volkswagen-Stiftung, Zuger Kulturstiftung Landis & Gyr), the Swiss department of Foreign Affairs, and the Higher Education Support program of the Open Society Institute in Budapest. It describes itself as "a center of excellence which aims at improving the chances of young Romanian scholars to develop their scientific personality and establish academic links which are vital for those pursuing a scientific career". Other important objectives are the fostering of contacts between Romanian scholars and their peers world-wide, and also to contribute to the development of the intellectual elite in Romania, the enhancement of their role in the renewal of the academic and intellectual life in Romania. Fundamentally, NEC offers 10 month grants (NEC Fellowships), enabling the recipients to focus on the courses delivered by foreign and Romanian academics and on the proposed project (which is the basis of the selection procedure by an international Academic Advisory Board). The New Europe College also pays a one-month stay abroad for each grantee at the institution of the his/hers choice (see the NEC website).

[2] Founded in 1994 (President, Ana Blandiana), CAF's aims are "to develop a civic spirit and the civic and especially historical education of young people." Its main project is "The Memorial to the Victims of Communism and to the Members of the anti-Communist Resistance", created by the Foundation in 1996 with funding from the Council of Europe and several European donors at Sighet in northern Romania in a former prison notorious for the harsh treatment by the Communist authorities given to its inmates. The Memorial consists of an International Centre for the Study of Communist Oppression, staffed by a number of scholars and archivists, and a museum.

[3] The Romanian Institute for Recent History (RIRH/IRIR) (acting Director, Marius Oprea; Director from 1 July 2003, Dragoş Petrescu) was set up at the end of 2000 on the initiative of Mr Coen Stork, former ambassador of the Netherlands in Romania, with a MATRA grant for institutional building from the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It was created to respond to the need in Romania for a dynamic historical institute that could contribute to the consolidation of the democratic process by offering a critical analysis of the country's recent past. The recent past for IRIR's purpose is defined as the period from 1930 to the present. Its funding is currently administered by the United Nations Development Program in Romania (see IRIR website).

[4] Created in 1993 (Director, Academician Dan Berindei).

published research is highly derivative – I have in mind a directory of political prisoners under Communism which draws heavily on the work of Cicerone Ioniţoiu. In keeping with the *ethos* of the present direction of the Romanian Academy, its interrogation of Romania's Communist past is largely unprovocative.

I take here the liberty of introducing two experiences of mine in Romania to illustrate the need for NEC, CAF and RIRH. Both were associated with my involvement with CAF. The objectives CAF were fourfold: the purchase, refurbishment and transformation into a memorial museum of a disused political prison at Sighet in the north of the country; the publication of a series of studies on Communism in Romania; the establishment of an oral history archive based on interviews with victims and victimizers of the regime; and the organization of an annual summer school for sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds whose theme would be aspects of the recent past. With financial assistance from the Council of Europe, from various European NGOs, and successive Romanian governments – some more generous than others – the Foundation has largely achieved its objectives.

The first experience occurred during a stay at Sighet in summer 1996. My curiosity to learn what impression – if any – the prison had left on the public drew me to cast an eye down the comments in the visitors' book. My attention was caught by a note left by three eighteen-year-olds who had expressed their "awe at seeing the jail in which the Romanian patriots Horia, Cloşca and Crişan had been imprisoned." The three teenagers were correct in their knowledge that the patriots had indeed been incarcerated, but this fate had befallen them at the hands of the Habsburg authorities more than a century before the construction of Sighet jail and more than one hundred and fifty years before its use as a political prison by the Communists!

The second event took place the following year, in the course of the summer school. Summer days in Sighet can be torrid, so early one morning – about eight o'clock – I went to the classroom in the museum – the refurbished prison – to ensure that there were sufficient supplies of mineral water. Upon entering the room I found to my consternation one of the pupils with his head on the desk, fast asleep. The sound of my steps roused him and he rose to his feet and apologized. He introduced himself as Mihai, declaring that fear of missing the bus – the pupils were ferried every morning to Sighet from their billets in a mountain resort some fifteen kilometers away – had led him to make the journey on foot. Mihai had walked for more than two hours. Intrigued by his dedication I asked him about his background. He was from Timişoara, the city in western Romania perhaps best-known for providing the spark for the revolution of 1989. His father, a railwayman, had insisted that he attend the summer school "to take advantage of an opportunity that he (the father) had never had at school under Communism, to learn the truth about the past, not the falsified, mythical version that was being peddled still in the secondary schools." It was the word "still" that intrigued me. I knew that the Romanian Ministry of Education, at the

prompting of the Council of Europe, had invited tenders from publishers for five new history text-books-christened by the Ministry "alternative" text-books – for the twelfth grade (eighteen-year-olds), the year in which the history of Romania is studied in depth in secondary school.

The publication of the new text-books in 1999 removed the misgivings of people like Mihai's father. Some of the text-books were bolder than others in interrogating the Romania's past, indeed one was so bold that a Romanian senator from the Social Democratic Party (composed principally of former Communists) recommended that all copies of it be incinerated! Their publication prepared the ground amongst pupils and secondary school teachers alike for the reception of path-breaking studies on Romanian Communism, especially on aspects of its repressive mechanisms and their consequences for society, written under the aegis of CAF and RIRH. It is no exaggeration to state that both have done more than any other institution, including the National Council for the Study of the *Securitate* Archives (CNSAS), set up by the Romanian parliament in 1999, to uncover the crimes committed by the Communist secret police in order to maintain the Communist Party in power.[5]

If courage, enterprise and intellectual probity are hallmarks of the activity of the new externally-funded institutes of history, the same, alas, cannot be said of that of some of the Romanian Academy's most senior historians. The publication in 2001 of the first four (of a projected ten) volumes of the Academy-sponsored *History of the Romanians*, written by a team headed by Academician Dan Berindei, was met with consternation by the historical community, amongst them a distinguished corresponding member of Academy, Professor Şerban Papacostea. In a series of articles in the respected weekly review of political, social and literary comment "22", Papacostea demonstrated, with copious quotes, that entire sections of the volumes had been plagiarized by the "authors" from other historians, both living and dead, without acknowledgement.[6] What is even more disturbing is that neither the President of the Academy, Eugen Simion, nor the chief editor of the history, Academician Dan Berindei, has made any public apology. Quite apart from the grave damage that publication of the history has done to the reputation of the Academy, the absence of an apology and steps to rectify the matter – either by carrying the correct attribution of the relevant sections, or by having them freshly-authored – suggests that the Academy – which was founded, in part, to guarantee

[5] See, in particular, Marius Oprea, *Banalitatea Răului: O istorie a securităţii în documente, 1949-1989* (*The Banality of Evil: A History of the Securitate: Documents, 1949-1989*), Iaşi, Polirom, 2002, 584 p.; Marius Oprea (coordinator), Nicolae Videnie, Ioana Cîrstocea, Andreea Năstase, Stejărel Olaru, *Securiştii partidului: Serviciul de Cadre al P.C.R. ca poliţie politică. Studiu de caz: Arhiva Comitetului Municipal de Partid Braşov* (*The Party Security Agents: The Romanian Communist Party Personnel Department as Political Police. A Case Study. The Archives of the Party Municipal Committee of Braşov*), Iaşi, Polirom, 2002, 359 p.

[6] See "22", no. 10 (5-11 March 2002), no. 13 (26 March-1 April 2002), no. 15 ((9-15 April 2002), no. 20 (20-26 May 2002), no. 28 (9-15 July 2002), no. 675 (11-17 February 2003).

impeccable standards of scholarship – condones this pernicious practice. Nothing, I would argue, demonstrates more clearly that some historians in the Romanian Academy still display the reflexes of a Communist past which perverted moral values and which attempted to raise mediocrity to the pinnacle of excellence. Insistence upon, and recognition and reward for, peer-appraised achievement, is needed if young Romanian historians are to meet the expectations of society eager to have the black holes about its past filled with precision, but equally Romanians deserve a community of historians in which vanity, and an obsession with income do not threaten to displace intellectual probity and rigour from the top of its agenda.

CHANGES IN THE SOCIAL ROLES OF WESTERN ANTHROPOLOGISTS AND INDIGENOUS ETHNOLOGISTS

Ger Duijzings

In this paper I will address one of the central questions of this workshop –"how has the social role of the researcher changed in the past thirty years?"– focusing thereby on my own discipline, anthropology. More precisely, in trying to answer this question I will compare western "anthropology" at the one hand, and indigenous "ethnology" at the other. There are fundamental differences between the two: we are talking here of two distinct scholarly traditions, which have had fundamentally different trajectories, resulting in different orientations and the use of a different methodology. I hope that my analysis may raise similar issues regarding historiographical traditions pertaining to South-Eastern Europe, both those produced in the West and in the region itself, the obvious question being: Is there a similar clash between the Western historians *of* the region and the indigenous traditions of historiography *in* the region? And, what can we learn from that?

As far as indigenous ethnology in the region is concerned, there is a long tradition of ethnographic production which goes back to the nineteenth century. At that stage (proto-)ethnographies – such as those of the Serbian scholar Vuk Karadžić – played an important role in defining the nation, establishing its boundaries in cultural terms, and defining the unity of the nation. These ethnographies were also instrumental in drawing the geographic borders of the nation, and justifying territorial claims which the new nations in South-Eastern Europe had. In order to define the nation, the new nationalist elites looked away from the urban centres – which during the long periods of Ottoman and Habsburg rule had become mixed and cosmopolitan in character, inhabited by artisans, traders and officials coming from various parts of the empires – but at the countryside, which was considered the repository of native folk institutions which had survived foreign rule.

Ethnographers thus played a crucial role in discovering "our own way of life" which they found mainly among the rural peasant populations. East European ethnology was thus very much linked to the discovery of the (national) Self, i.e. the noble primitive within, who had managed to keep his cultural traditions intact in the face of foreign rule. This type of scholarship served wider

political interests and played a role in the nationalist and territorial designs that developed during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Ethnographers and social geographers, such as Jovan Cvijić and Tihomir Djordjević, were for example closely involved in the creation of Yugoslavia at the Paris Peace Conference after World War One. They were hired as experts in the "Ethnographic Section" which advised the Yugoslav delegation with respect to the drawing of frontiers of the new state.[1]

On the other hand, the rise of Western anthropology as a discipline was very much linked to the colonial encounter: a completely different context but nevertheless as political as the former. Instead of discovering the Self, its objective was the discovery of the colonial Other, in order to facilitate and legitimate colonial rule. Yet, as soon as the process of decolonisation set in, most anthropologists were forced to give up their traditional fieldwork sites in the former colonies. To use John Cole's phrase, they came "part-way home" and started doing community studies in Europe, often at the fringe and periphery of the old continent: the Mediterranean and the Balkans.[2] Greece was a particularly popular destination, but also some socialist countries that followed an independent course such as Yugoslavia and Romania.

As a growing number of western anthropologists started to carry out fieldwork in South-Eastern Europe, they clashed with the other scholarly tradition of indigenous ethnology. The latter, although producing sometimes excellent ethnography, had important drawbacks. It was encyclopaedic and positivist in character, resulting in detailed ethnographic surveys and descriptions of specific communities and regions. Research strategies were based not on periods of prolonged fieldwork, i.e. participant observation of the individual researcher such as in Western anthropology, but on short fact-finding missions by groups of researchers from the urban centres to the villages, usually focusing on material culture and not interested in the mindset or worldview of the peasant.[3] Theoretical reflection was largely absent among the practioners of this scholarly tradition, for instance on how political power and national(ist) designs were implicated in ethnographic representations. Most ethnographic work was traditionalist and inward-looking, and the horizon of most ethnographers was limited to the ethnic group to which they belonged. A comparative approach was usually lacking. All these drawbacks were noticeable in the former Yugoslavia during the 1980s, when I started to do fieldwork: the profession was compartimentalised along ethnic lines. Within the context of "brotherhood and

[1] See: Joel M. Halpern and Eugene A. Hammel, *Observations on the intellectual history of ethnology and other social sciences in Yugoslavia*, in "Comparative Studies in Society and History", 11 (1), 1969, p. 17-26.

[2] John W. Cole, *Anthropology comes part-way home: community studies in Europe*, in "Annual Reviews in Anthropology", 6, 1977, p. 349-378.

[3] For an instructive account see: Longina Jakubowska, *Writing about Eastern Europe. Perspectives from ethnography and anthropology*, in Henk Driessen (ed.), *The Politics of Ethnographic Reading and Writing*, Saarbruecken/Fort Lauderdale, Breitenbach, 1993, p. 143-159.

unity", the ethnologist's primary (i.e. socially sanctioned) role was to document the cultural make-up of his group. I remember, for example, how a prominent Albanian ethnologist from Kosovo, specialised in the "national" costumes of the region, was unable to advise me on the costumes of non-Albanians living in the province. Then, during the nationalist euphoria of the 1990s, ethnologists were once again mobilised to "rescue" or trace the religious traditions and cultural make-up of the nation, which was deemed to have eroded during forty years of communism. Instead of seeing the ethnologist's role *under* and *after* communism as essentially different, however, I believe there was a great deal of continuity in what was expected.

On the other hand, Western anthropologists working in the region spent prolonged periods of time doing fieldwork and participant observation. They were criticised by their indigenous colleagues for their lack of preparation, their ignorance of indigenous ethnography and historical background, and their "slash-and-burn" approach, using their fieldwork to come to sweeping generalisations and then move on to another region. Even though this criticism is understandable and partly justified, Western anthropologists can rightfully claim to have been more outward-looking, holistic and comparative in their approach. They also have had certain advantages compared to indigenous ethnologists in that they could tackle certain taboos more easily, such as the issues of local politics and ethnic relations. They also have been able to provide a nuanced analysis of every-day life under socialism, countering the cruder versions of Cold-War thinking about "the authoritarian East" in the West. For example in the former Yugoslavia, Western anthropologists carried out major research on the effects of urbanisation and modernisation in the 1960s and 1970s, and on the problems and obstacles that occurred in the course of these processes. In this way they helped to understand and alleviate the consequences of social and economic change.[4] More recently, Western anthropologists have studied the consequences of post-socialist transition, primarily describing these processes from the point of view of the rural classes.[5]

During the 1980s and 1990s, a certain degree of rapprochement occurred between the two traditions. There were collaborative projects. Western scholars started to take the indigenous ethnographic traditions more seriously, and scholars from the region (such as from Greece and Yugoslavia) started to study in the West. The latter contributed to the introduction of Western oriented anthropology in existing research institutes, the most well-known and successful of which is probably the Institute for Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb. Nevertheless, differences and frictions between western and indigenous ethnologists and anthropologists have continued. Scholars from the region,

[4] Andrei Simić. *The Peasant Urbanites. A Study of Rural-Urban Mobility in Serbia*, New York and London, Seminar Press, 1973.

[5] Chris Hann, *After Communism: reflections on East European anthropology and the "transition"*, in "Social Anthropology", 2 (3), 1994, p. 229-250.

especially in the former Yugoslavia, were almost inevitably affected by and drawn into the processes of ethnic polarisation that accompanied the break-up of Yugoslavia. As they had just freed themselves from the political imperatives of the Communist period, they now had to write ethnography in the national key. As soon as the war started, they saw themselves documenting the suffering and victimisation of their own nation, for instance in the "Ethnography of War" that was produced in Zagreb.[6] There were strong political pressures to do so, making the writing of alternative ethnographies (for instance describing the suffering of Others) difficult, certainly at the beginning of the 1990s. There was no work done across the newly established ethno-national and political boundaries. At most what these texts showed was that there was variation in how refugees and other categories of victims tried to cope with their experiences and give meaning to them through ritual and narrative.

Most Western anthropologists, on the other hand, have tried consistently to counter the essentialising and homogenising messages of nationalism, particularly when the wars in Yugoslavia broke out. They did this by deconstructing the nationalist rhetorics that were dominating public discourse in the region, by documenting the realities of interethnic coexistence and hybridity that the newly established national states tried to eliminate, and by unraveling the roots of the war in other than ethnic or nationalist terms.[7] There was another trend, however, in Western scholarship and journalism, and also present in some anthropological accounts of the war, which resorted to culturalist explanations of why the violence in the former Yugoslavia had occurred and why the transition towards liberal democracy had not worked out as expected, the underlying assumption being that cultural patterns and traditions determine political possibilities and outcomes.[8]

Many anthropologists doing fieldwork in the region in the last two decades have had to cope, in one way or another, with the problems that the transition has caused. As a result of this, anthropologists have been involved in policy oriented research and other forms of applied or "instant" anthropology: they have done work for the UN, for the OSCE, the Worldbank, for NGOs and other international organisations active in the region, dealing for instance with refugees or post-war reconstruction. I myself have been involved in an official

[6] See especially Lada Èale Feldman, Ines Priza and Reana Senjković (eds.), *Fear, death and resistance. An ethnography of war: Croatia 1991-1992*, Zagreb, Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, 1993.

[7] See for instance: Tone Bringa, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way. Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995; Loring M. Danforth, *The Macedonian Conflict. Ethnic Nationalism in a Transnational World*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995; Ger Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo*, London, Hurst, 2000; Anastasia N. Karakasidou. *Fields of Wheat, Hills of Blood. Passages to Nationhood in Greek Macedonia, 1870-1990*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1997.

[8] See for instance: Mattijs van de Port, Gypsies, Wars & Other Instances of the Wild. Civilisation and its Discontents in a Serbian Town, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 1998.

(academic) inquiry into the dramatic fall of the UN Safe Area of Srebrenica in July 1995, commissioned by the Dutch government. I also have worked as a consultant for the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in the Hague. Although I believe that such activities may carry benefits to the region and may help to allievate suffering, they also have possible downsides: they tend to have political implications, and for instance carry the risk of reinforcing hegemonic practices by the West objectifying and mastering the East. The only remedy to this problem is always to be aware of the fact that our work – also if it is purely "scholarly" – may have (un)intended political consequences and implications.

WRITING THE PAST: COMMUNISM AND THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

Bogdan Moşneagu

This topic speaks about two major concepts: the State and the Church. On the one hand, the State produces a public discourse on general (national) progress and welfare. On the other hand, the Church preaches a sermon concerning the eternal happiness related to material safety. Both the State and the Church use about the same public as the target of their discourses. Both the political field and the religious one resort to propaganda or publicity in order to persuade. More or less, these institutions need recruits to reproduce their systems. Thus, they have to share the power, finding itself, in the same time, in position to negotiate it with public (citizens or faithful).

1. Interwar period: history, Church and public

Between 1920 and 1939 Romanian church historiography established patterns of interpretation of the past, marks used in the future as generalized norms in analysis and synthesis. Historians of the Orthodox Church argued that the past must be written within a specific frame. They identified it with the patristic times, finding ideas for a theoretical foundation.[1]

Ecclesiastical historiography sets up the features of the patristic frame, endorsed by a cultural and intellectual context, encouraged by a traditional and religious public. Historiography believes that the past is sacred: God gave humanity time to pursue its salvation. History becomes a struggle between good and evil, virtue and vice.

Very soon, the Romanian Orthodox Church changes its way. 1948 brings major modifications: Romania becomes a Communist state preaching a new humankind, proletarian. Communists foretell total progress and final happiness. Will the Church manage the new situation? Will the Orthodox Church fight for truth and liberty or for only survival?

[1] Olivier Gillet, *Religie şi naţionalism. Ideologia Bisericii Ortodoxe Române sub regimul comunist*, Bucureşti, Editura Compania, 2001, p. 28.

2. After 1989: historians, Church and opinions

Mircea Păcurariu, a voice of the Romanian Orthodox Church, argues that 23 August 1944 represents a historic event bringing Romanians liberty, progress and peace. He believes that Romanians are now free to build a new society ruled by justice, equality and welfare.[2] He holds these ideas in 1981, probably under the pressure of the Communist censorship. The same historian republishes his book after 1989 and points out that 23 August 1944 establishes a totalitarian regime. Mircea Păcurariu believes that the changes after 1947 involved not only the economical, political or cultural structures, but also the Orthodox Church itself. The Church had to accommodate new modifications in order to survive, doing this with the help of certain prestigious hierarchs like Justinian Marina.[3]

Radu Ciuceanu thinks that the Romanian Orthodox Church is a basic establishment of Romanian people. This is why the Communist Party tried to annihilate the Christian spirituality and turn the Orthodox Church into a device in the hands of the Communist leaders.[4] According to Cristina Păiuşan, the monks led by patriarch Marina played an important role against the totalitarianism. For the so-called Securitate, they represented a veritable enemy.[5]

Mihai Ungheanu emphasizes that certain historians ignored two forms of anticommunist fight: opposition and resistance. Instead, they underlined the street fight and army resistance. In his view, the category of resistance has a smaller branch: the endurance in institutions. He believes that the activity of the Orthodox Church under Communism fits this category.[6] The Christian establishment was a big stake for political power trying to assure the stability of the Communist Romania.[7] Priest Ioan Dură agrees with Mihai Ungheanu. He speaks about another shape of resistance: the silence. In addition, I. Dură thinks there are no studies on clothes during the totalitarian regime. It could show the lack of the Romanians' ideological conformism.[8] Clothes, like those monks used to wear had to show what silence wanted to hide.

In his book *Religion and nationalism,* Olivier Gillet studies how the Orthodox Church accepted the rule of the Marxist State and how Church justified its role during the atheist dictatorship. Published in Romania in 2001, the book aroused passionate discussions among the historians. For instance,

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[2] Mircea Păcurariu, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, Bucureşti, Editura Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1981, vol. 3, p. 461.

[3] Idem, *Istoria Bisericii Ortodoxe Române*, Bucureşti, Editura Institutului Biblic şi de Misiune al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, 1994, vol. 3, p. 481.

[4] Cristina Păiuşan, Radu Ciuceanu, *Biserica Ortodoxă Română sub regimul comunist*, Bucureşti, Institutul Naţional Pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2001, vol. I, p. 15.

[5] *Ibidem*, p.17, 19.

[6] *Ibidem*, p. 24.

[7] *Ibidem*, p. 26.

[8] Ioan Dură, *Pătimirea Bisericii Ortodoxe Române 1945-1989*, Bucureşti, Editura Ramida, 1994, p. 9.

Mihai Ungheanu argues that *Religion and nationalism* is a book that some historians and faithful can hardly come to terms with.[9]

Olivier Gillet points out that religious phenomena in Central Europe and Balkans reveal mentalities related to sociological and political behavior. Spirituality seems to be left the last ideological mark in terms of national identity. Therefore, a topic like this, in Gillet's opinion, could generate fervent discussions in Romania.

Olivier Gillet actually proves that Romanian Orthodox Church supported the Communist regime at an official level.[10] Churches from Eastern Europe, seen usually as a fearless enemy of the Communists have, been blamed for active collaboration with political power. Most of the Romanian historians and political scientists tried to explain this by invoking the former customs of the Orthodoxy. They pointed out that historical alliance between the state and the Church represented the official politics of Orthodoxy in dealing with the authoritarian Communist regime.[11] Gillet seeks other explanations. Firstly, the Byzantine tradition. Secondly, the opportunism, easy to understand under dictatorship. Finally, the collaboration of a conservative Church with a nationalist regime endorsing the popular values in order to reinforce its authority.[12]

Olivier Gillet holds that despite the official polities of the Church, the communist regime tried to suppress liberty of consciousness. Opposition attempts were punished and outlaws imprisoned. Anyway, the Orthodox hierarchy did not sustain those acts of *rebellion*.

At this point, a question arises. Is the idea of liberty a part of the orthodox tradition of theology? Paul E. Michelson thinks not. He believes that liberty has some prerequisites that Orthodoxy lacks: political and social pluralism, rule of the law, private property and total value of the individual.[13] Quoting N. Berdiaev, P. Michelson argues that religious populism annihilates personal responsibility in Romanian culture even before the Communists take over. Quoting Nicolae Iorga, he emphasizes that order is more important in the Orient than individual freedom. For example, clerk Mircea Vulcănescu (an important intellectual of the Christian elite) confessed in 1946 that as the grandson and son of an office worker he served the State with all his heart.[14]

Dennis Deletant explains the lack of individual liberty differently. For example, the patriarch Justinian Marina collaborated with the Communist leaders but he believed, like most people, that the unity of the Romanian Orthodox Church was in fact the unity of the Romanian people. Also, Justinian Marina understood some aspects of Orthodox theology (described in his work

[9] Cristina Păiuşan, Radu Ciuceanu, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
[10] Olivier Gillet, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
[11] *Ibidem*, p. 15.
[12] *Ibidem*, p. 17.
[13] Paul E. Michelson, *Orthodoxy and the Future of Post-Communist Romania*, in "Xenopoliana", VII, 1999, nr. 3-4, p. 61.
[14] *Ibidem*, p. 62.

Apostolatul social) as part of the socialist ideology.[15] Involving the Church in the socialist revolution the patriarch saved it from the Communist rage, saving in fact an important source of spiritual nourishment. Some Orthodox faithful believe that Justinian Marina acted very well. They think that in this approach consist the value of his deeds.[16]

Dennis Deletant argues that unlike the Soviets, the Romanian Communist Party choose to manipulate the Church rather than destroy it. Both the Orthodox and Uniate Church had played an important role in shaping the national modern identity. Therefore, the new regime preferred to tolerate them.[17] State appropriated the goods of the Orthodox Church, forcing her to obey Marxist politics. Thus, any attempt in supporting the civil society was stolen from religious leaders.[18] The Communist Party saw the religious establishment as an institution capable to promote both its politics: internal and external. Catherine Durandin holds that more or less, the hierarchy of the Orthodox Church consented to this.[19] Nevertheless, it seems that lower clergy – especially its most independent elements – continued to attract faithful.[20]

J. F. Soulet believes that the Communist system met with difficulties after 1970. He was undermined not only by the elites but also by the people at least in two major fields: faith and national feeling.[21] Liberty was now to find its new shape in religious practices: christening, confession, burial etc.[22] Many Romanians did not see the practices as special religious acts. In fact, the faith represented a normal part of their day-to-day life.

Trevor Beeson narrates his travel in Romania and states that Romanian parish churches were always crowded for the Sunday liturgy. People entered the churches to venerate an icon, to light a candle or to have a few moments of reflection.[23] Also, Beeson tells us most believers went to confession and received Holy Communion at the major festivals and on certain saints'days.[24] Beeson emphazises that devotion took place not just in public but also in private: "For the Romanian Orthodox Christian the family house is a place of deep devotion. Parish priests are kept busy officiating at the many domestic blessing ceremonies. They sprinkle houses with blessed water at certain seasons of the year. Household implements are blessed."[25] It is there not difficult to understand, thinks Trevor Beeson, way the Communist governments decided to settle for a form of co-existence with the Romanian Orthodox Church.

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[15] Dennis Deletant, *Teroarea comunistă în România*, Iaşi, Editura Polirom, 2001, p. 88.
[16] *Ibidem*, p. 90.
[17] *Ibidem*, p. 76.
[18] *Ibidem*, p. 78.
[19] Catherine Durandine, *Istoria românilor*, Iaşi, Editura Institutul European, 1998, p. 279.
[20] Jean-Francois Soulet, *Istoria comparată a statelor comuniste*, Iaşi, Editura Polirom, 1998, p. 245.
[21] *Ibidem*, p. 243.
[22] *Ibidem*, p. 244.
[23] Trevor Beeson, *Discretion and Valour*, London, Collins Fount Paperbacks, 1982, p. 352.
[24] *Ibidem*, p. 362.
[25] *Ibidem*, p. 360.

3. Writing history: approaches and alternatives

Although it is difficult to state some conclusions, one can say that the history of the Orthodox Church has numerous levels of investigation: cultural, social, political, ideological and economic. However, the most important of them seems to be the level of mentalities: it uncovers the stereotypes of the orthodox theologians and faithful, showing their convictions. Historians could analyze the habits of thinking before 1948 and after 1989. Olivier Gillet argues that stereotypes are the same no matters the time.[26] Voices of Romanian historians and theologians hold that O. Gillet is wrong.

One can conclude that the discussion on Orthodox Church remains open to next investigations. Maybe we will never know how Church came to terms with Communist power. Nevertheless, it is more important to find out if the Orthodoxy matches democracy.

[26] Olivier Gillet, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

SOME REMARKS REGARDING THE EQUATION "PRODUCTION – DISSEMINATION – RECEPTION" OF HISTORY IN POST-COMMUNIST ROMANIA

Constantin Ardeleanu

Imprisoned in the cage of a totalitarian ideology, often mystified by the deformities or exaggerations imposed by servitude towards an unjust political regime, the Romanian historical science has been, beyond any doubt, one of the most deeply affected victims of the communist period. The collapse of the dictatorship, in December 1989, marks, thus, a turning point in the evolution of the Romanian historiography, finally freed from the (mis)conceptions and (mis)judgements serving the interests of a ruling minority.

In a legitimate quest for a new identity, as the result of a natural desire to escape the crisis that still affects a traumatised society, the Romanian historiographers have been among the first to recognise the necessity of a sincere, objective evaluation of the past and, equally, of the way in which it was reflected before 1989. Without preaching, a complete rejection or, either, a thorough acceptance of the historical production written after 1947, the appeal to writing a history "without passionate resentments and without ideological routines" and the duty to "rehabilitate a deformed, crippled or forbidden truth", as Andrei Pippidi put it[1], refer to what seems to be one of the guiding lines in post-communist Romanian historiography – the rush for a *restitution*, understood on two different levels: firstly, a reconstruction of the recent past, a deconstruction of its clichés, a restoration of mystified/mythologised facts, events or characters, a new vision onto moments of our history only analysed from a Marxist-Leninist perspective; secondly, a revealing of ex-taboos of the communist period, an incursion into what earlier constituted forbidden domains, personages or subjects for historical criticism.

In a period of transition, in which the inevitable inertia of numerous authors, still tributary to an already old-fashioned conceptual apparatus, is only overcome by brave vanguards and *en vogue* approaches to the past, Romanian historical writing is in search of a long-desired equilibrium. Faced with new tendencies of integrating and synchronising the historical discourse with the

[1] Andrei Pippidi, *Miturile trecutului – răspântia prezentului*, in "22", III (1992), no. 8 (109), p. 7.

canons imposed by Western standards, the offer of history products on the Romanian market is diverse, both in form and in content.

Swinging between the scientific and the profane, balancing between a science-oriented discipline and a public-targeted product, the historical discourse seems to have gained an immense popularity in Romania in the past thirteen years. It is not our intention here to make a complex dissection of the causes that brought about this phenomenon in our national historiography, but rather to make some remarks upon the place of the historical science in the Romanian society, starting from the new context in which the equation "*production – dissemination – reception*" of history has received an economically dependent variable.

The first important observation derives from the change in the status of the historical discipline in Romania, after the events of December 1989. Thus, it is a well-known reality that history was a priority of the communist regime, as long as it conferred it a degree of political or ideological legitimacy. We can agree here with the remarks made, in a different context, by the French historian Philippe Ariès, by stating that during the communist regime "the study of the past has lost contact with the public, becoming a technical preparation of some specialists isolated in their discipline", many authors seeking refuge against the impositions of the political and ideological rulers by hiding behind an "armour of savant criticism, as if it protected them of indiscreet curiosities"[2].

Ceasing to be an instrument of national militancy, as it was in the epoch when, in the 19th and early 20th century, modern Romania was made, used and abused by the propagandistic servants of the totalitarian regime, the muse Clio has finally gained a long lost independence. In this respect, the return to democracy has signified a complete modification in the functional and axiological foundations of the historical discourse, whose sole justifications have become the scientific and methodological ones. This "liberation" of history, extremely beneficial in terms of the fecundity of its production and the ensuing increase in objectivity, brought with it the economic aspect, as in a consumer society the historical discourse is also intended to be, at least partially, economically viable.

Faced with more and more financial problems, with the difficulties of an economy in a continuous transition, many historiographers "deserted" the purely scientific direction and engaged into the more commercial aspect of dealing with history, that is producing "popular history". The double finality of this trend seems to be useful to both the specialists and the public, as the newest results in the historical research aim at larger audiences in an accessible, attractive and pleasant form, making the study of the past at least popular, if not a completely profitable financial enterprise.

The fate of the historical publications is extremely illustrative here. In a period in which the Academic scientific revues have totally irregular appearances, due to budgetary shortages of the institutional structures involved

[2] Philippe Aries, *Timpul istorie*, Bucureşti, Meridiane, 1997, p. 233.

with the production of history, the flourishing of magazines dealing with "popular history" is a clear sign of an emergence in the public's desire to be familiar with scenes from the more or less recent past, but it is, as well, an indicator that historians are keen to make their message reach the public.

This new tendency in Romanian historiography, disputable and objectionable in terms of the evident simplifications and limitations, due to a certain inferior level of scientific and aesthetic expectations, has its positive aspects, considering the larger formative-educational function of the historical discourse. Nevertheless, the opinion, strongly defended by many specialists faithful to the scientific-cognitive finality of the historical message, that the less accessible to the profane the subject or the style are, the more esteemed the author is, is equally disputable and objectionable. Which of the four constituent elements of the historical products identified by the great Romanian scholar Nicolae Iorga (material and criticism, determining the solidity and the truth of a work; and organisation and style, determining its aesthetic appearance) is affected by any of the two above mentioned antithetic directions is a problem too complex to be discussed here.

So, besides the well-established "Magazin istoric" ("Historical Magazine"), whose continuous publication for over 35 years and whose extremely diverse materials (in terms of the subjects and periods of time covered) assured it, along the years, a constant and rather heterogeneous public, new titles have come to cover an ever increasing demand for history: "Dosarele istoriei ("The History Files"), "Historia" and "Dosarele Historia" ("Historia Files"). Tackling almost exclusively delicate or controversial issues of late modern and contemporary history, using a simple, unsophisticated language, supporting the texts with many iconographical documents, with scientific references kept to a minimum (if not completely absent), with a journalistic page layout, the historical magazines target the numerous non-specialists fond of the enigmas of the past.

Establishing a fruitful collaboration with newly founded institutional structures dedicated to the study of recent history (i.e. "The Institute for the Study of Recent History", "The National Council for the Study of the ex-Securitate Archives" etc.), having the support of reputed Romanian historians, the range of topics analysed in these magazines appears to be both interesting, attractive, and credible. Thus, in terms of the recourse to authorities in the domain, the following examples are more than relevant: the scientific council of "The Historical Magazine" includes Members of the Romanian Academy (Dan Berindei, Virgil Cândea, and Dinu C. Giurescu), whereas "The History Files" has among its councillors reputed specialists in the history of the last century (such as the Romanians Florin Constantiniu and Ioan Scurtu, or the foreign historians Dennis Deletant and Robert Levy).

An enumeration of some subjects from the March issues is also useful here, as it covers the main themes related to the *restoration* and *completion* of the national and world history trends mentioned earlier. *A Genghis Khan of the XXth Century* (Stalin) and *Iron Guard Plotters and Soviet Agents against General*

Avramescu are the most interesting titles from *The History Files. The Historical Magazine* proposes to the readers topics such as *Dictators of Romania* or *1969. China as Subject of Romanian – American Confidential Talks,* whereas *Historia* focuses upon themes like *A movie-like love-story: Queen Mary – Barbu Ştirbey, The Tango, a Sad Thought which Can Be Danced, The Last Victim of King Charles the II[nd]: Nae Ionescu* or *Refined Mistresses who Made the History of France.*

The titles also offer a clear image of many new directions of analyses in the Romanian historiography, both prolific and popular. The monarchy has been the subject of great historical dispute, the private life of the royal family, the personalities and actions of the kings and queens of Romania being thoroughly dissected (although no remarkable monographs have been produced yet). The role of the free-masonry in the past two centuries of Romanian history, completely absent or *factotum,* real or imagined national or universal conspiracies, spying agencies and missions of secret services, confidential arrangements that affected the course of history etc. are other profitable and subjects of study. Equally popular in the last decade are the topics related to the private life domain: romanced biographies, secret adventures of famous people, personal tragedies or just the flavour from the saloons of past epochs. Magic, occultism, the supernatural, myths or mentalities are also among the most attractive and successful themes.

Far from being an isolated phenomenon, these new tendencies in the Romanian historical writing (in the national historiographies from all ex-communist societies, in fact) represent a stage in the process of synchronisation to Western canons, another form of mass-culture manifestation. It responds to the expectance-horizons of a certain public, being a completely sociologically and economically explainable reality.

Another interesting and relevant example for the popularity of the historical discourse is the commercial success of many publishing houses dealing with editing history books. Translations from prestigious foreign authors writing about the modern and contemporary periods, new editions of the most remarkable Romanian historians' works, as well as the latest results of today historiographers' research, form already consecrated collections of books. A simple mention of the multiple editions printed by the most important Romanian publishing houses (Albatros, All, Corint, Humanitas, Institutul European, Polirom, Editura Ştiinţifică etc.), despite the high costs of the volumes (according to Romanian standards), is yet another clear sign of the fact that history sells.

We have induced so far the idea that dealing with history is a profitable business in Romania. The truth should rather be that dealing with publishing, with popularising history, is more profitable than embarking upon producing history. The success of the historical discourse in countries heading towards a capitalist society seems to be more the result of the excellent management of media corporations, aware of the expectations of a large prospective public and

ready to nourish them. The case of Romania, where "popular history" has been strongly promoted by a successful journalist, Ion Cristoiu (founder of many profitable newspapers and magazines, including those dedicated exclusively to history), is illustrative here for the importance of the new commercial strategies in popularising a certain segment of the historical discourse.

This increased interest in the past, mentioned above in terms of the variety of topics approached, is also easily visible when assessing the quantitative production of history in Romania in the last years. The data from the *Romanian Historical Bibliography,* also they do not offer anything more than a general estimation upon the growth of the historical or history-related production are quite illustrative. Thus, volume IV, comprising the historical production for the period 1969-1974, contains 9,920 entries (books, articles, studies, historical essays, collections of documents etc.), published in 181 revues, whereas the titles included in volume VII (1984-1989) amount to 10,584 entries from 192 publications. For comparison, volume VIII, dedicated to the period 1989-1994, comprises 10,367 titles, published in 231 periodicals, while volume IX, covering the years 1994-1999, contains no less than 18,500 entries from 309 magazines and scientific revues.

This important quantitative growth (a relative indicator taking into account the fact that the bibliography is a selective work), which, in economic terms, can be formulated as an increase in supply in response to increased demand on the market, stands as a new proof for the popularity of history in post-communist Romania. Another good example to support this idea (and an explanation for the larger demand of history on the market) is the spectacular development in Romania, as well as in other South-East European societies, of the historical higher educational system.

The role of the extended network of history faculties is of an enormous significance, as it clearly is one of the most important factors responsible for the production, dissemination and reception of history. The Academic staff, deeply engaged in developing the historical science, of continuously enriching it with renewed interpretations, is also engaged in the difficult task of promoting history, of making it accessible to the students and to the public, of combining the scientific and didactic finalities of the historical knowledge.

During the Communist regime, when humanities and social-sciences were very elitist enterprises, there were only three history faculties (one in each large historical province of the country: in Bucharest – Wallachia, in Jassy – Moldavia and in Cluj – Transylvania), the necessities of the educational system being covered by graduates from the pedagogical institutes, with solely didactical purposes. The chrono-topical evolution of the historical higher education is impressive after 1989. In 1993, there were twelve Romanian universities holding 12 history sections; in 2003, the number increased to 15 state-funded universities with 38 specialities in history. Adding 6 private universities with history groups and the alternative methods of education (open distance learning) more than 2,000 students are now graduating history faculties each year. It is also

significant that the number of the students paying taxes for their studies is larger each year, an irrefutable evidence for the fact that history becomes more and more popular.

This remarkable development of the historical education brought with it a similar development in post-graduate studies or doctoral research programs, a very prolific reality taking into account the fact that highly-qualified young specialists have the opportunity to engage into continuing the work of their predecessors, being in the posture of rejuvenating the historical research in Romania, of forming the next generation of historians. Another beneficial effect is the establishment of mixed sections (such as history-geography, history-theology or history-foreign languages), as it encourages interdisciplinary researches and results in the implementation of the historical discourse into a larger socio-humanistic perspective.

The increased need for specialised personnel in the Romanian universities attracted many researchers from the history institutes of the Academy in the educational system, a beneficial situation for the dissemination of the latest trends in the production of history, for spreading the newest results in the historical knowledge to an interested and motivated audience. Taking into consideration the fact that many graduates choose, at the end of the Academic studies, a didactic profession in secondary or high schools, the advantages of this fruitful collaboration are of a huge importance, mediating the large spread of a restored, more objective discourse to larger segments of the public, by means of the compulsory courses taught in schools.

The few examples we have given above are sufficient to support the assertion that history is becoming more and more popular in Romania. The positive effects of this situation are probably to be found in its most visible results: the increased production of history and the multiplied efforts for its reception, even in the diluted form of "popular history". As the expectations and pretensions of the readers will grow, and competition will dictate the rapport between offer and demand on the market, the qualitative factor will definitely prevail. It is an immense opportunity for the revival, for the long expected resurrection of a discipline that produced some of the most reputed specialists in world historiography. As regarding a solution for the equation "production – dissemination – reception" of history in contemporary Romania, it seems to reside in a closer relation with the mass media, in an updating of the marketing policies, which, far from altering its identity, should confer the historical science renewed forces and superior motivations.

CRISIS? WHAT CRISIS?[1] BRITISH SOCIALIST HISTORIANS AND THE UPS AND DOWNS OF WRITING SOCIAL HISTORY

Heather Williams

To examine British historiography since 1970 it is, of course, essential to begin with the 1960s, when a new generation of historians with new forms of historical writing demonstrated the growing importance of social history. This was epitomized by E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*, which put a new conception of social history at the centre of historiographical debate.[2] Thompson inspired a whole generation of social historians to study a whole new range of topics in working class history or to revisit old ones with new questions.[3] At the same time Eric Hobsbawm, Christopher Hill, George Rude *et al* were building on "history from below". They had cut their teeth in the Communist Party Historians Group, and although many resigned from the party after the suppression of the Hungarian uprising in 1956, they remained Marxist historians.

It was a remarkable time for left wing historians, both as a turning point in new ways of studying the past, and in the acceptability of their ideology – contrasting with their 1950s experiences when being perceived as a "Leftie" generally meant exclusion from academic institutions.[4] The radicalization of the 1960s saw the espousal of left-wing, Marxist and even anarchist ideas by people

[1] The original title of my paper was "The Crisis in British Socialist History". However, having heard of the travails of my Balkan colleagues over the three days preceding my presentation, and of the tremendous difficulties many of them have to confront in gaining access to sources and in producing their texts, I was somewhat abashed by the title and felt it in need of some modification. That said, British socialist historians *have* had to face major challenges over the past decade and a half: some have risen to the challenge more effectively than others.

[2] See Willie Thompson, *What Happened to History*, Pluto Press, 2000, p. 34-44, for an excellent analysis of the impact of E. P. Thompson's book.

[3] Richard J Evans, *In Defense of History: Reply to the Critics*, www.history.ac.uk/reviews/discourse

[4] George Rude was one of those excluded, despite his obvious scholarship: eventually he had to leave for Australia, and subsequently Canada, to find an academic post commensurate with his talents. *George Rude, 1910-1993, Marxist Historian: Memorial Tributes*, Socialist History Society, Occasional Papers Series No 2, 1993.

from a whole range of backgrounds, including many lower middle class students as the number of university places expanded. This in turn led to increasing demand for Marxist writings with publishers eager to bring out both classic texts and new writings, in book or journal form, with Antonio Gramsci's work holding a special appeal for left-wing social historians. The trend continued into the 1970s, and many historians who would not class themselves as Marxist were, nevertheless, highly influenced by the new ideas and approaches to historical research that stemmed from the leading Marxist historians. Writing social history with a view to recognizing the contribution of "ordinary" people to British life and society was increasingly looked upon as a moral imperative for radical historians.[5]

As well as the CP Historians Group, the British Society for the Study of Labour History was an important base for research, which published *Past and Present* and the *New Left Review*. Initially, these tended to concentrate on organizational and institutional history, but during the 1970s as many of the radical 1960s – educated historians came into academe, the emergence of the radical feminist movement and the History Workshop, started by Raphael Samuel in 1968 at Ruskin, the trade union college at Oxford, stimulated new directions in research, taking it towards individuals and social/working class experiences and studies. The idea of social history took off to such a degree that at its height *some* social historians were willing to claim that history *is* social history because all history has social dimensions.

The new directions included feminist and black perspectives (both notably absent from Thompson's *Making of the Working Class*): Sheila Rowbottom describes how the emerging feminist movement "could draw on a new left influenced by anti-colonial theory and the black movement in the United States in which the 'personal' had become part of the terrain of politics. The radical intellectual politics of the late 1960s were thus concerned about power not simply in politics or the economy but in the constitution and hold of knowledge."[6] Religious groups, gay people and other neglected or minority groupings all became legitimate historical themes. As these new areas of study emerged the challenge that was thrown up was *who* was qualified to write their stories? Should it be confined to "insiders" and, if that was the case, would the desire to promote a positive image and redress past negatives or neglect skew the picture? This question is still a live issue. The expansion of social studies that had been stimulated by the British Marxist historians was, ironically, one of the major challenges to Marxist interpretation. It was all very well to apply Marxist theory to quantitative analysis of the social/class make-up of cities but for historians working on smaller scale, more particular, studies it was difficult to

[5] Thompson, *What Happened to History*, p. 159.

[6] Sheila Rowbottom, *Shush Mum's Writing: Personal narratives by working class women in the early days of British women's history*, in "Socialist History", No. 17, Rivers Oram, Ed. Kevin Morgan, 2000.

fit their research into a grand narrative. While the practicalities of Marxist methodology – the search for contradictions, conflicts, dissonance – still remained useful to a degree, Marxism became much more diffuse.

Social history flourished in the 1970s, with the appearance of *History Workshop Journal* and *Social History* in the middle of the decade. However, with economic problems stemming from the 1973 oil crisis and later the industrial strife in Britain and the disarray of the institutional left, it became apparent by the end of the 1970s that the radicalism of the 1960s was a spent force. The 1980s and the ascendance of Thatcher and the rightwing Atlantic axis saw a major challenge to left-wing ideology as the traditional socialist base (or what was perceived as the traditional base) was eroded and changed. The decade, culminating in the 1989 "revolutions" allowed the right (prematurely) to proclaim "the end of socialism"; the apparent ascendancy of capitalist social democracy prompted Francis Fukuyama to write (also prematurely) about *The End of History.*[7] In the early 1990s demise of communism stimulated debate among the left about what had "gone wrong" – not so much with the Eastern European systems (which was all too clear) as with ideology. Socialist historians were faced with the challenge of moving from Cold-War to Post-Cold-War climate in international terms. Domestically they were also confronted by a "New Labour" – as opposed to the '50s and 60s "New Left", an entirely different animal – and its concept of the "third way" later in the decade.

Political changes from the 1980s onwards led to the erosion of the idea of historical progress and the concept of society heading for some ultimate destination, the idea which had provided the framework – often unconscious – for much historical work. In the 1960s E. H. Carr stated that, whatever their formal political colouring, English historians were essentially liberal due to the implicit belief (at the time he wrote this) after centuries of conflict, ending in the 1940s, the secret of improvement and progress (assuming we could avoid nuclear holocaust) had finally been cracked. Marxist historians shared similar presumptions, consciously working within a framework of a grand narrative driven by inevitable progress.

In the realms of social history some broadly left historians felt, by the turn of the century, that a huge change (some even described it as a crisis) had occurred. Over the preceding decades the industrial working class, perceived as an essential element in the 1960s was no longer the "vehicle of social and political progress" and that new kinds of division within society were the ones that needed to be seriously addressed by any historian with socialist principles. Contemporary debates in left history were much more far-reaching than those of the 1960s: there was now disagreement over the *concept* of history, rather than debate over *content*. Another turning point seemed to have arrived with new forms of historical writing breaking on to the scene, and younger historians increasingly favouring cultural history rather than social history. The new

[7] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, Penguin, 1992.

political climate had seen social history being overtaken by cultural and intellectual history in which language and discourse play an essential role: the influence of cultural and literary studies became an important element in historical methodology. Poststructuralism and postmodernism, initially confined to literary and media studies found their way, via cultural studies, into historical studies. Proponents of both, in the main, regarded themselves as being on the left with postmodernists feeling their role was to "give a voice to previously marginalized and subordinated subjects".[8] Part of this process was to investigate how identities are constructed and how they relate to "the Other" and to use this as a means of exploring how historical events were *perceived* or *represented* at the time, rather than analyzing the events themselves.

Left historians' reactions to postmodernism varied from outright antagonism to a recognition that it had its uses. Richard J Evans' assessment was that "despite all the various pronouncements of its demise by postmodernists, social history is not dead. Undeniably, it has lost, or is in the course of abandoning, its universalizing claim to be the key to the whole of historical understanding. To this extent, the postmodernist critique has been not only successful but also liberating. By directing historians' attention to language, culture and ideas, it has helped free them to develop more complex models of causation and to take seriously subjects they may have neglected before."[9] In 1999 *Socialist History* journal produced a special issue on *The Future of History* which included a Roundtable discussion on Revisionism and Postmodernism by six prominent socialist historians with the title of "History Today". The consensus was that things had changed radically and the conclusion was that the conviction that historiography has been developing – through the Enlightenment, the Whigs, Liberals, Marxists, Socialists... – as a narrative of human progress and emancipation had been challenged by the postmodernists and that a "grand narrative" no longer applied. Meanwhile, the revisionist undercutting of the significance of what had hitherto been viewed as the major landmarks – the English and French revolutions, the Industrial revolution, the Russian revolution and the establishment of Nation States – also pointed to major changes in the way history was interpreted. Nevertheless, they felt that Marxism was still – despite everything – a useful intellectual tool and while acknowledging postmodernism as potentially a useful critique, it did not constitute an analytical system in itself. However, at least two concluded "we are all postmodernists now".[10]

Another challenge to social and socialist historians thrown up in the 1990s was the re-emergence of national myths, first brought into play with the creation of nation states as the great European empires crumbled in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Competing national mythologies were brought out and dusted

[8] Thompson, *What Happened to History*, p. 65.

[9] Richard J. Evans, *In Defense of History*, Granta Books, 1997, p. 72-73.

[10] *Socialist History*, No. 14, Rivers Oram, Ed. Willie Thompson, 1999. The participants were Jim Sharpe, Peter Jones, Mike Savage, Eileen Yeo, Kevin Morgan and Richard Evans with David Parker as chair.

down as Yugoslavia collapsed and three decades of violence in Ireland fuelled by equally conflicting national myths might, or might not, have been drawing to a close. At the same time, devolution of power to Scottish and Welsh assemblies stimulated English nationalism among some sectors of society who had hitherto been perfectly happy to be just British.

The 1990s was not an arid desert in terms of historical studies and developments however. It is worth noting here that in the mid 1990s no fewer than four new editions of Gramsci's prison writings were published; even after the demise of Eurocommunism and Soviet communism he remained an important influence on the left who recontextualized and reconsidered his writings nearly seventy years on. The combination of Class and Gender continued apace with interesting studies such as Melanie Tebbutt's *Women Talk? A Social History of "Gossip" in Working Class Neighbourhoods, 1880-1960* coming out in 1995. Tebbutt used autobiography, press reports, popular literature and oral testimony to demonstrate how gossip played a complex but formative role in shaping working class social values in the period covered. The following year Eileen Yeo published her *The Contest for Social Science: Relations and representations of gender and class*. Her study of "Do-gooders", from 19th century middle classes to current Social Services staff, their application of social science to the poor and their social problems and the response of the latter to being 'done good' to was described by one reviewer as a "blend of feminist theory, Marxist historiography and a dash of post-structuralism".

Another positive development has been the emergence of Community History: Oral history has long been recognized as an invaluable source, especially for social historians, but now the people are collecting and writing their community's history for themselves rather than feeding professional historians with raw material. This could be the ultimate "history from below", and the democratization of history, as people and communities take ownership of their own history and, as a result, understand and value history and their place in it. This is not as parochial as might be imagined as various websites – such as Valley and Vale – have been established to facilitate the sharing of experiences, not just at a national but also at an international level, between communities in order to enable them to compare their experiences.

Comparative history is playing an increasingly important part in left thinking, and has been a major focus of conferences over the last few years. The perception is growing that in addition to developing beyond organizations and ideology, comparative social and labour history needs to take on an international dimension. Stephan Berger noted in 2000 that the early days of socialism saw a great deal of cultural exchange and argued that a return to this original internationalism will revive and renew left history.[11] Some comparative studies have been published, but they are very few in Britain (due to the generally hopeless provision of language teaching in schools there): since the 1970s an

[11] Stefan Berger, Editorial, "Socialist History", No. 17, Rivers Oram, 2000.

increasing number of comparative histories has been published beyond British shores, but often with a tendency to be Eurocentric and focus on Western Europe. Berger suggests the solution may be found in collaborative historical studies with scholars from other countries including Eastern Europe and the rest of the world. He also argues for an end to the distinction in British universities between British and European history.

History is an ongoing and moveable feast. No-one would dream of consigning Michelet to the bin, and similarly it would be foolhardy to consign the past thirty years of social history to oblivion because political realities and theories of how to write history have moved on. We learn from the past and this is particularly true of past historical approaches and methodology. One thing that came home to me very clearly during the Historian's Workshop in Bucharest was how very fortunate British socialist historians were over the last three decades of the twentieth century: they were able to *choose* Marxist methodology and theory, or any variation on those.

TALKING ABOUT REDUNDANT ISSUES SUCH AS THEORY OF HISTORY

Snezhana Dimitrova

For my daughter Nikoletta[1]

I. "A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN"

When Wendy Bracewell and Alex Drace-Francis invited me to participate to the Workshop "History and Society since 1970" (Bucharest, 7-11 April 2003), suggesting that it would be nice to talk about my own experience as a historian, the first book I picked up was Virginia Woolf's *A room of One's Own*. I should rethink theoretically my paper, and refine my awkward English, I thought, grabbing this essay. But I realized how deeply unconscious was my necessity by facing the ironical rhetorical question of my partner: "Why this feminist icon, aren't you attending the serious conference of Balkan history in Bucharest? Or, do you need to learn from her how to be original and successful?"

Of course, his smart remark, made half jokingly and half seriously, made me roar with laughter whose fading away had relaxed noting but confronted me with a corroding question: "Why actually?" I tried to find a theoretical approach for arranging my chaotic thoughts from the draft and I reached for Woolf's

[1] Encouraged by the invitation to speak on my personal experience I for the first time grasped how significant are the people to whom we confess our research frustration. How often these people are left out of our attention regardless of the ritual of the acknowledgements. In my perception these sections of the books tend to frame and schematize rather then to express what we every day receive from these people. I gradually transformed my daughter into my first translator. Her ironic remarks were more successful then the colleagues' reviews in making me realise the problems of inter-generational communication. Due to her I understood how dry is history's language, how little it conveys to the young people, how greatly it is a prisoner of intellectual fashions and established structures, of literary tropes and trivial expressions. The people that were close to me gradually turned into first readers, critics and editors of my texts. Provoked by their short sharp questions I analysed in endless monologues my crises, uncertainties, defeats... This I did on their shoulders, which I easily named "Freud's couch in the study". They helped me to tame my fears, to channel the aggression and to dominate over the tensions, created by the politics within my historical profession and by the struggle to be included in a project or to preside over such. If one opens the CVs of the new Bulgarian historical élite one could see that the participation in projects is emphasized, and not the list of publications.

essay. Did I do that only because of the context and its impulses? (Virginia Woolf's books and portraits were on the window display of bookstores. The critiques of *The Hours*, of Nicole Kidman's interpretation and her photos as Virginia Woolf with thoughtful look and yellow long fingers of an old nervous smoker revived the idea and image of "the suffering sensitive lady novelist"[2]. Their aura filled, at least for me, the pages of serious English newspapers and journals.)

Or, I said, "I would be original and scandalous as a reaction to some deep cultural complex connected with the symbolical paralyzing perception of the excellence of English as created in my childhood?" No less frustrated by digging for some cultural atavism and fitted gender roles that seemed to me more like a transferring culpability, I continued rereading feverishly *A Room of One's Own & Three Guineas*. I did keep my attention with the book for I sought something else, apparently linked with my profound professional problems. Probably, I told myself, it was due to my endless conversations with my friend and colleague Tatyana Kotzeva, specialist in Gender Sociology, aimed at solving our professional problems of working women. We were unraveling V. Woolf's biography, and I might unconsciously turn it into the chief source of my academic actions. But, what performance I would like to legitimize publicly? A conscious aggressiveness and a spiteful attitude towards "old authority" and "new establishing scientific élite" – I allowed it only in a "room of my own" and sometimes I have charged and discharged it in talks on our professional situation with my colleagues-friends-women-sociologists Nina Nikolova, Tatyana Kotseva and Svetlana Sabeva. Or, was it only for the sake of originality and scandal? I went on fretting about it. Why did I take this "feminist essay"? What did it tell me about my professional preoccupations and searched academic actions? Did I try to challenge some deep fears and to unlock some suppressed emotions...? What anguish about my professional identity is there? Why can I not help thinking about the reasons that directed my hand to the shelves with Woolf's books?

Maybe, agreeing to answer the quite tantalising questions such as "What is to be done with historiographical production from the 1970s and 1980s?", I would have to rethink Bulgarian historiography in critical way and to be critical of my own work as a historian. This situation drives me usually to a scientific identity crisis: I start to feel insecure professionally and to realise the lack of self-confidence in my research and academic position. And, asking myself "Who are you to dare do that?", I used to suppress my problems rather than to solve them.[3] Probably, I thought, this position is linked with some strategy for

[2] "A recent film *The Hours* presents Woolf in a way surely her contemporaries would have marveled at. She is the very image of a sensitive suffering lady novelist. Where is the malicious spiteful woman she in fact was? And dirty-mouthed, too, though with an upper-class accent", Doris Lessing writes on Virginia Woolf's newly discovered journal ("The Guardian", 14.06.03.)

[3] The first critical reprisals of Bulgarian Historiography have been done by the late director of the History Institute of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (Issusov, 1991), and by Maria Todorova (Todorova, 1992).

surviving. I have worked it out, consciously and unconsciously, through the influence of my personal character and perceptions of tacit rules and written laws of the academic world of Bulgarian historiography.

Reading more and more Woolf's essay I overindulge in her acid remarks on why and when "the figure in the looking-glasses shrinks", on the use of "mirrors in civilized societies" ("they are essential to all violent and heroic action"), on the way to release the bitterness caused by the attitude of/to "other", on the fears of powerful person... and so on (Woolf, 2001: 28-37). That indulgence takes me by association to the reasoning of my own fears, of the rising idea that shocked me: "we have not had a real historical debate on the questions that my English colleagues are interested in".

"Old stories of old deans and old dons came back to mind", in Woolf's wording, when I recalled how rarely in our academic milieu we are able to rethink history, to criticize in ways related to freedom of mind and critical independence that have nothing to do with partisanship, aggression and "wounded vanity". Adversely, often rewriting history in a critical way risks being seen as conscious/unconscious necessity to "heal" our somehow concerned vanity, to deal with "the other", to confirm positions of "one's own circle" to the detriment of "enemy one", to endorse "network interest" legitimizing its establishment and enlargement of influence (explicitly or implicitly articulated at the different levels of scientific space). Those perceptions blur the science as a coin of "critical attitudes" and leave the bitter feeling of neglecting and marginalizing the own scholar and ethical values. And, the figure: "being critical" shrinks becoming only conscious/unconscious intentional act for politics' own sake.

For example, recently after the fall of communism the new historian élite occasionally performed ostentatious discursive aggressiveness in public space: sometimes the lobbies of the University would recall Medieval place not only because of the darkness due to the architecture and spare lightning but also because of guild's relationships. Accusing the "old élite" of introducing communist politics and ideology in scientific life, rather than aiming at making room for new trends of history, they provoked nothing but difficult communication between generations. Aggressiveness of the "younger" evoked the stubbornness of the "older": they still held their academic power petrifying in "old history paradigms" (positive political history and neo-Marxist structuralism of 1960s and 1970s). The dividing lines between them were not drawn by age but by style of behaviour and academic affiliations. More often than to criticize the "old professors" was linked in 1990s with personal interests and was related to "squaring accounts" with "old political enemies". The "old élite" perceived these critiques as a sure way of the "younger" to advance in hierarchical upheaval of Universities of transition by pleasing the new anti-Communist political élites in 1990s, in a manner similar to the 1950s when the ostentatious affiliation with Marxism was a *sine qua non* of the successful professional position. This similarity made the criticism towards the "old professors" start

fulfilling political functions in some way. The "older" constructed in the early 1990s the image of "whistling the old professors" as a cultural reaction connoted with "dirty career intentions" and "thirst for power". The rethinking and rewriting of history was depraved from positive scholar and moral values. In the Bulgarian context of 1990s this negative image of "being critical" functioned with clear disciplinary effects. It restrained the explicit aggressiveness and "bloody" personal attacks; it suppressed the debate on real scholar values of the historiography of 1970s and 1980s; the debate that would not take account of present positions of authors in new restructuring scientific space of history of transition. Leaving aside, for the moment, the discussion on "knowledge as the driving force behind political practice" (Hart, 1996: 10) in principle, I would only underline the creating of images through which exactly the critical and academic positions of recognized other (not belonging to my/our interests, politics, ideology of history-making) could be negatively connoted as intentional situation. Let put aside also the particular dispute about the impossible rewriting of history in post-communist societies as an act alien to politics and career intentions, to fears of marginalization and exclusion from the scientific and academic upheaval of transition. Here I would emphasize some facts that respond to the questions of our English colleagues.

The historical debate has never been supposed as an intentional situation; on the contrary, we were frightened of its emergence. It was never practiced as a need to release accumulated tension over inter-generation contradictions and over conflicts of interests in following different historical schools crossing the generational divides. Faced with the question of our session and focused on answering them, I discovered at least for myself: the missing debate on historical knowledge and scholarly and political limits of history did not allow us to come to terms with painful inter-generation relationships. In this way Bulgarian historiography preferred to suppress rather than debate; it missed a clear opportunity to display the nets of norms and values that connect and divide the different generations and historical schools. That explosion would have stopped the corrosion of the communicative channels in historian's craft. In other words, many of the generational and scholar tensions would have been discharged. Some of the "younger" would have realised why and where they felt close to the "older" (i.e. due to shared values of national historical discourse) and why and where they differed and parted with their predecessors (i.e. because of the difference over the norms of traditional political history making). I was astonished that the cultural, political and social foundations of this situation were never problematized and thematized by the Bulgarian history didactics.

Moreover, this desire of rewriting and rethinking history in critical manner used to be labeled in public space of history as "Young Turks" rebellion. This term bears specific cultural connotations in the Bulgarian case: it represents the attitude to these critics and reduces the problem over historiography debates

only to the power conflict between the "young" and the "old".[4] Thus what was suppressed was precisely the "healthy necessity" for evaluation of the 1970s-1980s history production by its timing and contextualization in broader historiographic world trends. The tacit suppression translated an (un)conscious anguish to reveal the "shadows of biographies" as well as fears of ensuing historiographical coup d'état. The latter seemed to have been perceived as a sure way of creating new main resources for scientific power for "young" (a priori supposed to not be stigmatized as bearers of Marxist ideology "condemned" in the public space as a source of all evil) to challenge the establishment. The irony of fate: due to this situation, Marxism as a world recognized methodology with its serious critical potential was banished from the public space of history. In this way the scholarly achievements of Bulgarian historiography of 1970s and 1980s have never been measured in their real terms: the inner development of Marxist science, velocity of its self-exhausting, its movement to neo-Marxist structuralism. Instead of this the accumulated tension in generational communication was released in the University lobbies through spiteful remarks on the "venerable congregation"; often accompanied with piquant stories of personal biographies. That had noting to do with scholar reasoning.

The scholar and social revenge to this is the return of the suppressed in the form of either crypto-Marxism/communism or clearly pronounced anti-communism exercised by the generation that started its career during 1980s and sometimes by us, their students – regardless if members of both generations are inside or outside Bulgaria. This hinders the way to the reflexivity and auto-reflexivity in historian's work, which is supposed to help us, among other things, to stop thinking of debate as something that is aimed to threaten our positions in science and academic hierarchy.

One might call it one of life's ironies, but after 13 years of transition the "young" ones became the "old" ones not only due to aging but also because of the performance. They are beginning to use the worn out expression of "Young Turks" with respect to their younger and scholarly more ambitious colleagues. This usage reconfirms the cultural functions charged upon this image in the public space of history: to tame the communicational tension between generations at the cost of suppressing the Bulgarian history debate. By trying to keep away from discussion on the new necessity of refreshing the history by topics and approaches with their proper language and figurative expressiveness we are still conceiving of rising new knowledge as a powerful source of challenging the balance of distributed symbolic and real capitals. Moreover, nowadays the

[4] In this context both the specialists and the public often forget the case of the first textbook rewriting – it was done by Stayko Trifonov (Trifonov, 1991) who could not be accused of power thrust or of a drive to settle historiographical accounts. He simply laid down "his history" – a national meta-narration that emancipated the national history from the party one and equated the Thracian question with the Macedonian one in the "Bulgarians' historical destiny"; thus he emancipated his identity discourse. The fall of the communist system permitted liberation and return of some of the layers that were hitherto suppressed by the official normative discourse.

critical opinion on established academic status quo is rarely accepted as an expression of professional ethics and pursuit of scientific values; such critique is usually thought as an "aggression" and is associated with feelings and fears of marginalization and exclusion from the newly emerging centers of power linked with processes of global politics. We tacitly resort to new tactics: to greet with silence the historiography that somehow has escaped from the symbolic power of recognised authority centres – in terms of either thematic content or theoretical approach. Everybody of us, I thought, plays such role in different situations: editor, supervisor of MA and Ph D theses, reviewer and so on. This role confronts us, at least in *A room of One's Own*, with our strained relationships with the texts that, in Jörn Rüsen's wording, challenge our identity discourse as historians; i.e. we are discomforted to recognize that some of our theses are obliterated and our knowledge power over the "young" is vanishing. The newly established institutions and young authors experience this silence and perceive it as an act of "condemnation" and a verdict of capital punishment upon their own professional status. This experience produces the bitterness that erodes the values of scholars choice; their response to their defeat brought about by our tactical silence creates conditions for clientelism.

At the same time "local wars" are waged, expressed in the personal/circles conflicts on different levels of scientific life over the trends of history development.[5] Interests of authority structures and different university lobby groups (crossing the borders of different universities, NGO-s and departments of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) stand behind those encounters. Despite those "family quarrels" their fight for repartition of real and symbolic capitals has never become a "drastic retribution for the past", nor a "fair struggle" for a "noble cause" (as an intentional situation). Probably, it is due to the Bulgarian context: inextricably interwoven interests of "old communist reformist and new anti-communist élites", relatively high level of Bulgarian historical science of 1970s-1980s, international recognition for so many Bulgarian historians forming part of the "venerable congregation". The Bulgarian historiographical world is articulated as networks in and out of the university and the Academy, circles of interests within the establishment and "friends circles" crossing the borders of universities, Academy and NGO-s. Somehow tacitly excluded from the Guild are the historians working in museums, teachers and authors of history books who are not affiliated with the above mentioned institutions; they are really voiceless. The silhouette of this situation is displayed clearly when the new international projects loom up in the Bulgarian scientific horizons blurring the dividing lines and drawing new ones in the historians' world. In the process a kind of clientelist attitudes is created, which reveals the powerful centres of

[5] It will be very helpful to read the minutes of meeting to decide which new courses to introduce, which historians to invite and associate to the programs, of debates on titles, topics of MA and Ph D thesis and the votes of their advisers, and so on. Probably, they will be one of the more important archives of Reflexive History.

knowledge whose symbol capital do not necessarily coincides with the real one. The new international projects require different capitals such as: project experience, list of publications, archival and theory information, personal acquaintances and connections with global academic élite, money, and so on, which are not accumulated in only one of those powerful centers of history knowledge.

Moreover, the historiographical re-orientation to the new methodology, demanded by all those projects in principle, logically started to happen in provincial universities and in periphery departments in Sofia University, but not in the History Faculty of Sofia University or in the history institutes of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences: normativeness of history science was maintained by the powerful centre, yet it left scientific niches in the province which were used for experiences – the situation due to the relaxing impulses of the current politics that sought to deal with the unified single communist version of the past. The historiographical *coup d'état* was achieved to a certain extent at those "periphery" places. It upset the relationships between periphery and center in the inter-institutional "race" for the international projects. Precisely these new projects led to rare fading away of the high tensions between traditional political history and other paradigms. The interest in history of socialist period re-established to certain extent the "pure political history", the "history of events" that remained a privilege for the historians acquainted with party and state archives of this period. At the same time this history demands other types of archive, those of experienced history such as ordinary people's memoirs, oral stories, interviews, letters and so on – a domain of the "new historians" dealing with the methods of historical anthropology, cultural history or social history of the German school of Jörgen Kocka and Hans-Ulrich Wehler. It is bewildering to see the same "scientific enemies", that are exchanging spiteful remarks in the lobbies of universities and within "friend's circles" and are expressing total disagreement with historical research done in the paradigms that they saw as foreign to their own history-making affiliations, to be suddenly sitting together discussing the strategy of a common international project. Whatever one night say about the present Bulgarian historiographic re-orientation, that tension continues to mark it. It can be discerned both in the spiteful attitude to the new methodologies and in their superficial appropriation in the historical studies in order to cover the requirements of the new international projects. This engenders some of the cultural patterns of the transitional historiography.

Probably, I thought, the Bulgarian historiographical situation is due to the ambiguous status of academic critique enmeshed in a double symbolic coercion[6]. On the one hand, currently a vision of powerful institution of "special authority centre" is set up (regardless of whether it is officially or tacitly

[6] Here I can refer to the book reviews published in all Bulgarian historical journals (1948-2000).

recognized due to its bureaucratic or/and scientific positions within the establishment). That vision legitimizes and keeps in the public space of history the "figure of critic": voicing the establishment's opinion in a way to perform "special rites" for "excluding from and inclusion in" the Guild of Historians. That voicing urges us on unconscious/conscious auto/censorships of writings, preparing "newcomers" and ourselves to play roles, which are expected of them/us[7] because of needed "appreciation of" and "recognition for" whose social and cultural functions have been clamed by all well-known theory of social. On the other hand, to be critical stands for idealistic images of freedom of mind and critical independence and for representations deprived of conscious/unconscious intentions for the power's own sake. But precisely the first setting shapes the Bulgarian history critique as a discourse of power whose functioning corrodes implicitly and explicitly the ideological foundations laid down by the Enlightenment's conceptions; this corrosion permits every "critical position" to be perceived and explained as a "squaring accounts", irrespective of the goals of a "criticizing agent". This allows every "critical position" to be downgraded to doing explicit politics, partisanships or (un)conscious outburst of "wounded vanity" despite of ostentatious manifestation of scholar ethics and implicit idealistic intention of fighting for the sake of science and ethics. This situation further worsened due to the attitude to academic book reviewing and Ph D thesis during the socialist period when the politics was installed in academic life. The absence of sense and scientific values ensued from the tacit recognition of that political play by the historians of the time; the official positions of establishment were a kind of winking at this play of complicity, saying: "Everybody like me knows what this position means!". In this way the gestures of intellectual cynicism acquired the status of a valued position and expression of freedom. The real attitudes to research production and its politics and strategy were expressed only within the "friends circles" based on family relations and/or professional/career interests. The critical opinion was increasingly confided between the walls of office spaces or/and in *A Room of One's Own* rather then unleashed on the review sections of the historical journals. The profanation of critical opinion could be seen in the replacement of Bulgarian public debate with the opinions and attitudes to colleague's works made in colors. There the "thinking" and "talking" references in the mood of "praise" and "spatter" about colleagues' works aims to include or exclude them from the Guild's space. The scholarly positions are very rarely articulated in the "discursive catharsis" of the professional critique (setting the utmost limits of the professional discussion), and that is why, perhaps, our generation would bequeath to the next one the same historiographical problems.

[7] I myself have played a variety of such roles by going personally through different academic promotions, by being supervisor of student M.A. theses, by ending as "soulmate" of many colleagues that needed to confess his experience of those procedures, by directing and participating in different regional and international projects.

I should confess that very often my first attitude to colleague's works is overwhelmed to some degree by all those politics and strategies I spoke on above. Although being aware of that, you may ask: "Why she should involve us in her problems and project her tensions which are worsening her relations with surrounding milieu into our pure intentions of professional historians?", I cannot help asking these questions. How I am involved in critical positions which scarcely could be appreciated as something for the sake of science? How I internalised that to be critical always risks being perceived and performed both as "personal attack" and "squaring accounts" with the "old professors" and the new "networks of interests?" And here, I consciously agree with Janet Hart's reasoning of "autodidacticism with the final product": the writings in some way "propel me toward a consciousness regarding my connection with the world. That world is a place where we at least try, often with mixed results, to comprehend the meaning of personal and collective responsibility. I take the commitment to self-exploration to be fundamental to research..." (Hart, 1996: 10).

But, on the other hand, I neither absolutely share Harts' pessimism (identifying her's to Michel Foucault's bitterness) nor share Foucault's contempt for intellectual autobiography: "Referring to my own personal experience I have the feeling knowledge can't do anything for us and that political power may destroy us. If somebody thinks that my work cannot be understood without reference to such and such part of my life, I accept to consider the question." (Foucault, 1988: 16). And, probably because I have not had Janet Hart's experience marked by the warning generations of American children against "making a spectacle of yourself", I do not "recognize my own discomfort at the potential for spectacle" (Hart, 1996: 9) when I dare open the "room of her own". Saying all that, I do not intend to voice in utopian syntax some position of knowledge purged from politics and career ambitions. I only stand for understanding of my personal responsibility for and involvement with postponing the Bulgarian historiographical debate and for reflecting on stakes of my own and our complicity in it. Here I would refrain from the expected question "Who is to blame?", because all of us are involved in and responsible for. I think again, probably mistakenly, that precisely the suppressing of Bulgarian historiographical debate on "ancestor legacy", on historical schools and their theory and methodology has to do something with the answers to the questions asked in our session.

Moreover, to be a historian is somehow linked up with a specific cultural context marked also by "ancestral relationships" and its ensuing ethics. The links were wonderfully explained by Jörn Rüsen's study on the historians' work (Rüsen, 2001a) in a way to help us to reflect on the "burden of legacy" and on the cultural patterns of historical understanding as well as to assist us to deal with resurfacing of ideologically and politically unconscious; yet these links are rejected or neglected by our historiography as something alien to "the proper work" of a "true historian".

These situations were blocking my capability to reflect on our historiography and my own works, showing at the same time insufficient internalization of the values that I have imagined I was fighting for. I became more and more unable to deal with theoretical problems that I was confronting as a lecturer and researcher. I have not worked out a coping narrative strategy that could relieve me of the "burden of legacy" allowing me to express a really existing inside of me estimation of the "venerable congregation" as a part of my professional identity: they are my teachers indeed[8]. Coping narrative strategy – I used to say – that could help me to bridge the gap between the generations and historical schools as a sure and comfortable way to go on in my own historical research. Because this bridge, let say, even as imagined one, is providing me with an idea of stability (perceived as a land under my feet) and helps me not to feel lost and vulnerable to the inside and outside views (due to solved professional identity crisis through the freedom of debating on history and its theories and their languages, without fear of consequences to own scientific positions and without contemplation on the weight of politics on my own position). This bridge, I do not why, was imagined by me in the sense of *Die Brücke*'s painters of early 1900s as a route to over-going and under-going[9].

That is why I found a kind of relief in Virginia Woolf's: "Old stories of old deans and old dons came back to mind, but before I had summoned up courage to whistle – it used to be said that at the sound of a whistle old Professor – instantly broke into a gallop – the venerable congregation had gone inside. The outside of the chapel remained" (Woolf, 2001:6), because I related, absolutely wrongly I know, those impressions to the academic milieu and symbolic space of the University rather than to the physical one.

But, at the same time, I was intuitionally sure it was not what I looked for.

Since in my opinion I couldn't find a satisfying link between Wendy Bracewell's and Alex Drace-Francis's invitation to the Bucharest Workshop and my spontaneous interest towards these particular Woolf's texts, I abandoned those feminist stories. I left them consciously with a masochist explanation that most probably all that was a purposeful search for a haughty theoretical introduction. Hence, I concentrated on the "dry" historical text. I had decided to talk about my difficulties in overcoming the "structuralist in me" and about my

[8] How much I am indebted to Professor Margarita Tacheva and Professor Tsvetana Gueorgieva, to the late Professor Milcho Lalkov, all of Sofia University! I would never succeed in expressing that, despite of my articles dedicated to the late Prof. Lalkov, of my research done specially to contribute to the Miscellanies in honor to the great ladies of Bulgarian History. Due to that I would want to state here: "thank you for all I have learnt from you; without you I would have felt like an orphan. I am especially grateful for your essential lessons not be afraid of being different and of paying the price for that, for your bequest to encourage professionally the opinion of the differing other in the name of the otherness as a cultural pre-condition of an independent mind."

[9] I appropriated in this way the ideas of the Manifesto of the artists' group in Dresden that called themselves *Die Brücke* in allusion to a metaphor in Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883-1885): "What is great in Man is that he is a bridge and not a goal; what is lovable in Man is that he is an over-going and an under-going..." (Wolf, 2003: 23).

painful transition to the phenomenological history, working with the experience that interested me. I thought to match my own defeats with events from the Bulgarian historiography and its inability to overcome the Marxism and neo-Marxism, displayed in the new postcommunist historical élite's attempt to rewrite the "Marxist" textbooks in Bulgarian history trough the research methods of the contemporary world historiography. Reflections through which I looked for answering negatively to the one of questions of our section: "Why the complex theory has not emerged since the discrediting of Marxist historical schemes in our historian's milieu?" I had read with a great interest all really emblematic Bulgarian historic books of the transition period (from traditional political/event history to social, mentality and cultural one).

I was trying to reflect on the links between the lack of theories, inner exhausting of historical materialism and the suppression of our Bulgarian historiographical debate. This caused, I was convinced, the resistance of both "Orthodox" Marxism and neo-Marxist western structuralism of 1960s-1980s in our contemporary history-making. Despite of our explicit and implicit effort to part with them as methodological research approach, nobody reached the methodological point permitting our divorce with (neo)Marxism and "old social History" of Jörgen Kocka and Hans-Ulrich Wehler: phenomenology and its research devices, or, at least, "rebellion" of the new German school in the history of everyday life nicely argued by Alfred Lüdtke (Lüdtke 1995). All those ideas were clarified but not sufficiently systematized for being presented for 15 minutes, and as usually in the cases of conferences, I promised to myself that I would rework my paper either during the flight or the night before its presentation.

During the discussions, however, something both pleasant and unpleasant happened to me – suddenly, I realized why I was hypnotically attracted to this "feminist essay" through the coming back of one of my traumatic memories that I had deeply suppressed. As we discussed the difficult financial situation of the Balkan historian and the influence of this over the contemporary science of history, a phrase jumped into my consciousness, and to my surprise in decent English: "A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" (Woolf, 2001:2). I understood that what I searched for was exactly this wonderful impression of woman necessities when they have to write – her own psychical space where one can be with herself, releasing fears, anguishes, frustrations and looking for her specific language of expression, guaranteed physic by her own room and money. In other words, to be free, at least for a while, from powerful outside and inside view controlling on her performance, trying to escape from it in order to reflect in her own dependencies on "rules of play", limits of independences from them and their prices to pay... I.e. to be angry, anguished, spiteful and reflecting why?

Of course, it does not mean to go too far, over limits that tamed our aggression and where the process of civilization is mirrored, according to Norbert Elias. It means only to problematize thus constructed relationships of

desired freedom of mind and critical independence (remaining always as intention foreign to the aggression and partisanship) with the building of artistic female self-confidence. It means only to reflect on the validity of those relations and their "phychological and physical (pre)conditions" to the process of professionalization of our generation. Problematization and thematization refer to the situations making, for example, the Frida Kahlo's spontaneous excitement so intimate to female biographical experience of our époque: "I kept about twenty-eight paintings hidden. While I was on the roof terrace with Mrs. Robinson, Diego showed him my paintings and Robinson bought four of them from me at 200$ each." For me it was such a surprise that I marveled and said: "This way I am going to be able to be free, I'll be to travel and do what I want without asking Diego for money" (Herrera, 1989: 226). Despite conscious keeping away from tantalizing swarm of questions on close relationships between "the room of her own", the desire to travel and women's emancipation, I am tempted to refer once again to Frida's life experience: "After that (traveling in the broadest sense of the word – S.D.) – Frida Kahlo had gained self-confidence and financial and sexual independence and was recognized artist" (Herrera 1989: 226). Experience that fed to this obsessive image of allowing luxury of "room of her own" from where "she" will return as a self-confident professional woman.

And, exactly these deep needs to have "a room of her own" in order to legitimate the "right" of its existence were touched and disquieted by the invitation to speak on my own experience. Legitimizing, which, in my mind, somehow is confined to talk on possibility to make room for reflexive history similar to the reflexive anthropology, sociology and so on, and to bridge the gap between poetics, philosophy and history, fantastically claimed by Jörn Rüsen and categorically rejected by Bulgarian historians. But those relationships, I mentioned above, were founded on my painful personal history of identity crisis. Eight years ago I met Janja Jerkov, professor at "Sapienza", First Rome University, who graduated in History but afterwards shifted to literature; she has been frequenting Lacan and Freud psychoanalytic seminars for 10 years. After some months of wonderfully spent time in professional discussions and autobiography analysis, I proposed to open one section in our journal "Balkanistic Forum", called "A room of One's Own" where we would have published the reflexive autobiographies of women concerning their academic career. I asked her to do the first one and she did, but I did not. Coming back to Bulgaria, I lost my self-confidence built during our conversations and did not dare to propose all that to my colleagues for I felt and perceived that the academical context would not allow that (1995). For that reason I did something that fitted very well in the historiographical policy at the time. I initiated the section designed as "Our interview" by printing a dialogue with Professor Francesco Guida. Or, instead of self-portraying a woman whose research corresponds to the French school of history of mentality and Lacanian textual analysis and has, in some way, been bridging the gap between literature and history, I presented a man, a well-known in Bulgarian academic milieu

Balkanist historian with his books that could be included in so called "new political history of the Balkans". In this time our journal, essentially, provided space for the implementation of Oral History and historical anthropology of the Austrian school and kept on making history through the issues "where" the social is not a function of the political, and the political is not marginalized and euphemistically dissolved by the social. The images of my weakness, lack of self-confidence in my research interests and theoretical position, incapability to orientate in making academic policy drove me to the bitter questions about my identity as a professional historian. Of, course, successful start of "Our interview" and its prodigious continuation, settled my career into a somewhat calmer routine as well as Janja Jerkov's comprehension – she never asked me about the destiny of her text – allowed me to cover with silence this problem and thus helped me to overcome this critical situation at the beginning of my professional life.

How I was affected by it, I realized during my experience with this Workshop (for the first time I was asked to speak and reflect on my own professional career as a part of serious scholar discussion) when the painful feelings and traumatic images exploded in my face. They were now returning under the corroding questions, which I did not ask myself eight years ago because of my professional and personal immaturity. These search and problematize our dependencies on the politics and the career pursuits, on the nature of our characters and on the traps of our biographical illusion; the questions that attempt to thematize the price we are ready to pay for being "a rebel", the impetus to do that: fashion, selfishness, money, interests, specificity of character, academic values...? This problematizing seeks to release all tensions in order not to be consciously aggressive and spiteful towards the "old authority" and the "newly establishing academic élite", even in a "room of my own". Or, discovering one's own ego history – making we can transform "I" – "a convenient term for somebody who has no real being" (in Woolf's wording) – into "one's self – professional woman". Absorbed by this experience and its obsessed images due to the atmosphere and talks during first four days of the Workshop, I rethought and rewrote my paper the night before its presentation and it took the following form and content.

2. WOMEN AND FICTION-HISTORY, but no more... [10]

"Why did men drink wine and women water? Why was one sex so prosperous and the other so poor?" (Woolf, 2001: 20). Probably, those questions will provoke a lot of laughs in some societies, probably they could be relevant to the other ones and will encourage us to rethink our contemporary historiographical situation in the gender perspective. But, here, I would like to reword Woolf's question "what effect has poverty on fiction?" in "what effect has

[10] Woolf, 2001: 20.

poverty of theory on history, in the Bulgarian case?". In searching for its answers, let me start by Voltaire's motto: "When reading history it is but the only business of a healthy mind to refute it" (Voltaire: 427). Please, do the same with my paper, because I will be telling you anti-stories trying to talk on theory of history and its close relation to the fiction. And thus I intend to answer to Alex Drace-Francis' first question: "Have any complex theories emerged since the discrediting of the Marxist historical schemes?" I think the very title of my paper responds negatively to it. "No, Alex, no complex theory has emerged in our historians' milieu, created by us, the historians, because we do not like to deal with theories!" These are still perceived as something alien to our "proper Historian's craft". We are still waiting to be provided with theories from "outside", either by sociologists or by philosophers – and this only if we get trapped in the research situation which requires it (often it is due to the application forms for fellowship and projects funded by western institutions where the theoretical approach and devices are demanded; only in some cases it is provoked by the need to deal with the avalanche of sources. More often we are spiteful about developing theory that is thought to be useless and unserious work which can only distract us from our true craft in the archives. We are still trying not to worsen the real work of a historian aimed to discover the truth through objectivity, impartiality and scholar virtues proclaimed as normative structure of history and guaranteed by its privilege to deal with archives (until today thought as a place where the Truth is kept). We still avoid the discussion about what stands for our interests to that and not to the other archives, documents. We still consciously prevent ourselves from disputing the background that directs our research policy and strategy (individual and collective). The theorizing is considered as a speculation proper to the ideological disciplines, and the history rarely is thought as such in our own milieu. The theory is seen as something that can blur the lens of our objectivity. Or, even if we are convinced in the helpfulness of the theory of history in order to be objective in the sense of Paul Ricoeur (following specific methodology and theory as an access to the research), we hand this work over to our colleagues from the departments of social sciences. We still avoid the question about the nature of historical narration or, at least, we evade to deal with it as a "process of making sense of the experienced time" (Rüsen, 1993: 4) bringing "philosophy and linguistics much near than usual to historical studies" (Rüsen, 1993: 3). We still do not stand for the critical discourse in Rüsen's sense, i.e. that is the discourse, which is "based on people's ability to say no to traditions, rules and principles which have been handed dawn to them. This 'no' stands before each intended alteration of cultural patterns of historical understanding. It opens up the space for new patterns" (Rüsen, 1993: 8). Why actually we do all that? "Because of the effects of poverty of theory on history", I will answer.

First, we used to explain our attitudes by Marxism and its philosophy of history – the historical materialism imposed to our discipline from outside as a theoretical and methodological approach. This violence was experienced as a

trauma corroding our relations with philosophy of history. It made our relationship with theory an ideological one. It was thought by historians only as a negative act of introducing principle of class struggle in the research studies thus hindering the way to the historical truth. The truth search was supposed to be an ideal intention purged *a priori* from politics and ideology. I do not deal here with history works written for the sake of party history by introducing consciously the pure ideology whose topic, dictionary and style used to echo the communist propaganda in a way to profane the critical potential of the Marxist science and the work of historian.

For example, the same best historians of 1970s-1980s that were linked politically and ideologically with the socialist/communist establishment used the trends of the "April Spring" to rewrite the history in reformist-communist manner; they introduced the "national history" that was implicitly opposed to the international one. Even those 1970s-1980s historians from establishment whose names, to certain extent, could be cited in positive way as Marxist ones were convinced that their books on Bulgarian political and social-economical history were in the pursuit of "truth itself" based on scrutiny of archives that had nothing to do with the pure ideology and politics. That socialist era's tacit compromise and consensus among the historians' guild on history-making ensured that in the following years of transition period the image of the best representatives of this generation could be legitimately revealed in the figure: "nevertheless, he/she was a good historian". To illustrate this point one could open the recently published memoirs of a prominent Bulgarian writer, himself an offspring of a bourgeois élite family, yet making a successful career during the reformist period: "Nobody could doubt the professor's ideological devotion to Marxism, however he was a decent historian" (Danaïlov, 2002: 629). This figure kept on in the public space of history the idea of separateness of the scholarly and political biography of the historian of communist period.

The younger historians of 1980s, not (directly) linked with the establishment, considered that Marxism was closely entangled with the communist party's ideological history with its wooden language of propaganda. Hence, they tried to escape from the direct impulses of Marxism by focusing on topics of ancient history, on Bulgarian political, cultural and social history. The "perestroika élite" was recruited also from younger representatives of this 1980s generation performing historian's craft. They rewrote and rethought party history, history of socialism and communist politics by appropriating the perestroika approach to the past. The young historians' élite relaxed its tensions with "older ones" and with inadequate internal and external government policy. Echoing the perestroika values in late 1980s and early 1990s they were convinced that had purged their historical works from party pressure and ideological influence. They stood for the image of "Historical Truth" that will fill the "blank spots in historical knowledge" left by the ideological (auto) censorship. Consequently, they demanded a free and unhindered access to the archives as a first and all important step towards the "Absolute Truth". Like the

previous reformist-communist generation, they somehow linked the commitment to the pursuit of Truth to the hours spent in the archives and the number of cited archival documents. They shared the idea that the true historian's work aims at nothing but at discovering the truth through objectivity and impartiality, guaranteed by its privilege to deal with the institutionalized archives. To certain degree, the perestrojka historians claimed that the objectivity and impartiality are also a moral position of a historian's craft; the ethics that could be filtered through "honest dealing with archives and sources" (the expression used and bearing pedestrian rather then philosophical connotations). Thus they maintained in the public space of history the argument that the scholar character of our craft springs from the privilege to have the access to the truth of our past. Thus in the public space of history the ideas about specificity of historian's craft were constructed. They stood by the image of positive history, associated with rigorous archive research or erudite antiquity sources processing as the most trusted way to escape from ideological pressure on historian's work (somehow separated from the political and ideological links of author) and to achieve a historical truth. Precisely this emphasis on thorough labouring of archives/ sources laid down the measures for assessing the work of 1980s and early 1990s historians, which in 1990s strained the relations with other historical paradigms. (I will not deal here with the use of these measures for "squaring accounts" with academic enemies within the same milieu of established historians). The historical élite continued to consider the political/event history as a major task of the historian and thus it made difficult to rewrite or rethink history in tune with other history schools such as *Annales*, the social history and so on. The term "Oral History" was a kind of a "dirty word" that had nothing to do with the true history. In an ironic turn several representatives of that generation switched nowadays to making autobiographical interviews thus including themselves in international projects researching the communist period. Thus the 1980s consensus on the criteria for a true historian continued to pervade the profession and to marginalize the burgeoning endeavours for discussion on the ideological, political and cultural content of our scientific interests and on the particular types of archives in use. A debate on the context and its role in history writing was once again suppressed as were any attempts to reveal the role of the ideological and political unconsciousness in our work.

The structure of almost all 1980s history books was thought to have been done in agreement with this attitude countering the influence of ideology. The theory was confined to the introduction within several phrases and terms, often quotations of Marx, Engels, Lenin or Bulgarian influential party leaders on the respective issue while the "real historian's work" – done in archives and telling the real truth about our past – remained foreign to the ideology. That is why plenty of books on political history and on Bulgarian nation-building (with revised or unrevised introductions) were reprinted as relevant and valued historical works during the period of transition. (Here do not discuss in the republication of the best books on Antiquity and Medieval History.) The

republished books were explicitly thought and perceived as a "detached study" based on documentary archival scrutiny and supposed to be ideologically free and alien to passions and sentimentality of the bourgeois predecessors (1878-1944) – positions so dear to the 1980s Bulgarian historians and their alumni. (To a certain extent this feverish work of printing houses was a response to the boom of republished memoirs – and scholar studies in some cases – of the interwar generation).

The Bulgarian historian of 1980s rarely claimed him/herself to be a Marxist one. Adversely, the distance with Marxism was underlined; the positive history and work with archives were solid channel of achieving historical truth and as a preventive defense against possible profaning influence of ideology on historian's work (somehow separated from the political and ideological links of the author) Believing in this achievement became their symbolic capital. I remember nice moments when as a student at history faculty of Sofia University, I used to admire the verbal art of my best teachers to play with Marxist terminology. They were making ironical remarks on "class struggle", on "socialist progress", and "on proletarian culture" acquainting us with "bourgeois Bulgarian" and contemporary European historiography. At first glance their lectures had nothing to do with Marxism and in some way their historical interpretations clashed with our studies of dialectical and historical materialism in the formal classes in so called "Scientific Communism"; and I believed they told me the historical truth perceived as a highest scientific value. After years, when I started to analyze their texts professionally through the techniques of discursive analysis I was astonished to discover implicit historical materialism: I came upon the Marxist scheme of interpretation that regards the societal development as a relation between the base and the superstructure and that retells the past through the concept of linear time of progress. I was astonished to discover a kind of crypto-communism and some manifestations of ideological unconsciousness anti-European ideology of reformist-communist discourse in the studies of European perceptions on the Balkans. Both, they reproduced to certain extent either the appropriated neo-Marxist western structuralism of 1960s-1980s (despite their formal distance from this approach) or the historical materialism.

Leaving aside the artificiality or impossibility of thus performed ambiguity of historical works of 1980s, to which I will come back soon, let's ask: "what effect has poverty of theory on history?" By refraining from using Marxism proper as theoretical approach, i.e. to deal with it in the way of their colleagues, western Marxist historians, Bulgarian reformist-communist establishment split history from theory and thus hindered the route to reflexive history and to the social history in the western Marxist traditions. This impoverishment has been felt by the generation of transition trying to shift to social history – it lacked the terms, themes as well as knowledge on western "purifying" 1970s-1980s debates on social theory and history research. This generation refrained from theories and left some vacuum of debating values and norms. By and large it

continued to appropriate positivism and to believe in objectivity as a normativeness of history. Precisely the lack of theories and hostility to them produced the internalization of Marxist scheme of economic structure and ideological superstructure that unconsciously plotted the historical narratives making room for the ideological premises and assumptions. The best researches on ethnology and national and political history, including Bulgarian historiography in the best traditions of *histoire événementielle* and approaching it to Braudel's school, Levi Strausse's structuralism and so on, have proved that to the different extent.

The reformist-communist historian élite achieved the re-differentiation of the national topic as an autonomous identification resource. They constructed historical narratives articulating the key idea "of the authors and their readers" about their continuity in time and space: the efforts of the Bulgarians to emancipate Bulgarian *ethnos* as a separate "national body" within the historically attested borders in the Balkan cultural/political space. Thus three narrations emerged that began implicitly or explicitly to structure almost every historical discourse at the time: historical materialism, on party ideology, and on national narration. Though related and being in mutual interference, each one had its own inner logic and interpretative scheme. On the one hand, the historical materialist narration frequently referred to the notion of "Bulgarian society" designed as a framework of social relationships. On the other hand, the national narration made an extensive use of the symbol of "land": liberation and unification of the lands forcefully taken away from Bulgaria; herein a "land" did not imply territory but *ethnos*; Bulgarian lands were defined as predominantly Bulgarian populated ones; their unification within national state was postulated as a *thelos* of Bulgarian historical time. Thus the two narrations coincided in certain points, but the historical-materialist line played the crucial role as a major cause of national development: neither the accumulated ethnic strains, nor the people's dreams, nor certain traditions, cultural or educational ones, but precisely "the growth of capitalism", "the national markets" and so on laid ground to the Bulgarian national renaissance. The emphasis was placed on the events following from the objective laws governing the society's evolution – an approach typical for the historical-materialistic narrative. The modernization ideologies were engrained here: the development of modernity was connected with such undoubtedly capitalistic phenomena as the initial capital accumulation, the bankruptcy of small owners, the aggravation of class conflicts. At the same time when the emphasis was laid upon specific given moments it tended to evolve within the context of the national narration (Boundzhilov et al., 1995).

The historical-materialist narration told the history of Bulgaria as a playground of the grand collision between backwardness and progress, as an offshoot of the worldwide processes. The national narrative told the history of Bulgaria, its tragic destiny, the story of its loss, of its calamities and failures, of the conquered. The historical materialist narrative imposed optimism on the reader whereas the national narrative put forward the question "who is to

blame?" The ideological layer of the normative official memory – the Marxist philosophy of history – reproduced the normative scheme of the positive historical science – scientism, objectivity, and impartiality. Some appropriation of the Braudel's structuralist approach could be discerned in the emphasis on the structures that had supposedly preserved the Bulgarian nationality – organization of family economy, the cultures through which the space was mastered, the religion and community patterns. The prominent place among them was attributed to the unofficial folk culture that was free from the restraint of the foreign official norms during the long ages of Ottoman rule. It was represented in the figure: "stimulating element that freed the creative energy of the people". Thus despite of ostentatious resistance of historians to theory and philosophy of history and their demonstrated distance from Marx, the latter's philosophy of history did serve as an ideological layer of normative official memory and influenced to a substantial extent the development of historiography of the time.

How deeply this normative structure (scientism, objectivity, and impartiality of positive history) had been internalized to the different degrees by us, Bulgarian historians, could be seen in the attempt of rewriting the 1980s history textbooks by the transitional generation of the 1990s. The Bulgarian historiographical situation reconfirmed Rüsen's conception about historical narrative and its capacity to "establish the identity of its authors and listeners", persuading the listeners of their own permanence and stability in the temporal change of their world and of themselves (Rüsen, 1993: 5).

The analysis of both the 1990s history curricula and the Bulgarian History textbooks of the transitional period reveals that history continues to be charged with function to resolve the crisis of national identity (by forming the key idea "of the authors and their readers" about their continuity in time and space). It is still supposed to provide the chief legitimizing source of the political elites' current power. The "hidden ideological program" of the official Bulgarian curricula (1992-2000) required from the historical narrative, in Rüsen's wording, to guide "the temporal change of humans and world, to which the listeners must accordingly adjust their lives in order to cope with the challenging alternations of time" (Rüsen, 1993: 7).

Since the official historical discourse was unavoidably bound up with new visions of identification with "Europe" and with the universal notions of parliamentary democracy, market economy and welfare society, the post-communist textbook was expected to provide historical resources legitimizing this transition and giving an European identity to the Bulgarian past. The privileged political history of the previous reformist-communist élite had to be challenged for its 1980s textbook's images of otherness that became unacceptable in the new transition period: negative vision of the Other, non-Slavic and Western capitalist Europe; elevated figure of Russia-Soviet Union as "natural ally then and now". The 1980s representations of "foreign or enemy Western/Capitalist/Latin/Catholic world" were in sharp conflict with the trends of the new geopolitical perspective: the symbolic identification with "Europe", a

vision which emphasized the "universal" rather then the national identification (Grekova et al., 1997).

This was supposed to be accomplished by the historiographical transition to social history and its two essential themes, everyday life and modernization. By introducing the social history the new textbooks sought to marginalize the traditional event history that privileged the political élites' perspective from above. By using the new venues of everyday history the schoolbook of 1990s was supposed to produce new historical sources to national identity able to weaken the value-normative power of political history narrative that set up the negative identity of the "Europe and European" and over-emphasized the ethnic sign of the Bulgarian (uniqueness of language, traditions, culture, past...) in a way to confront it and exclude it from the European space. The social history, articulated by the stories of everyday life and modernization, was expected to legitimize the civic society and market economy by emphasizing the civic layers of national identity and suppressing the ethnic ones. This new history was seen as a narrative re-appreciating such European social and political institutions as family, education, parliament, constitution, government. All these structures, it was demonstrated, had contributed to the advancement of the Bulgarian nationhood and its progress.

Hence, the textbook writing was charged with tensions that reflected the crisis of the respective author. These crises were caused by the conflict of the interpretive scheme of the implicit educational program with the historical discourse with which the respective author identified himself. The major layer of their identity discourse was the national narration of the reformist-communist generation: it appropriates the Bulgarian through its ethnic structures – language, family, religion. The only new trend is the shifting from Marxism, from its scheme of structure – superstructure with its proper language, to the 1960s-1970s western structuralism: to think the social through Braudel's agents of progress.

In this way the 1990s textbooks fell victims of the basic deficiency of our own historiography: the non-realised theoretical debate left room for unconscious continuation of the old ideological and paradigmatical practices of history-making.

Although removed and suppressed from the textbook content on the explicit level, the Marxist schemes on the social-economic formations and the figures of anti-European pathos and ethnic nationalism returned on the implicit level. The mechanisms, described by Freud as pushing away, suppressing and return of the layers of the collective non-conscious, are likely to have worked here. The avoidance of normative pressure of the educational program, the returning and filtering of the collective unconscious in the implicit content of some narratives, the resistance of the older patterns of history-making were repeated in the textbooks in Bulgarian history that dominated the Bulgarian school in 1990s.

The new textbooks resulted from and displayed the weak points of the Bulgarian historiographic situation during the transition. The unveiling of the iron curtain in the historiography did not open a Bulgarian debate on the

reception of the historical science and of the theoretical orientations and scholar achievements of the Bulgarian and West-European researchers. For that reason the enlightening levels of the new conceptual terminology are still not revealed, nor a consensus is reached on its use in history writing. Instead of this, the Bulgarian historiography often assimilates rather mechanically theoretical models on the political modernization or on the structuralism. It stops its terminological development with the 1960s-1980s European historiography.

Continuing to say "no" to the theory of history we still live under the deficit of methodological devices of archive work. Many archives, especially those of social history, remain closed due to our inaptitude to approach them. While trying to shift to social history we often face questions we are unable to answer, and then we transfer this responsibility to the sociologists.[11] Essentially, the clues to those research problems lie in the silenced unopened documents in the national, regional and private archives, in fiction, in films and so on. Probably in order to end this silence we must open avenues to the interdisciplinarity in historian's craft, we must liberate ourselves from our own fears and prejudices. Trying to answer the questions "What is a historical narration? How we are constructing our stories?" (Sâbeva, 1999), we will realise how close we are to the poetics and fiction.

By crossing the invisible limits of our work, hitherto drawn by the different inside and outside pressures, we could more freely analyse the different levels of dependencies and hidden ideologies in our historical work. We could make an idea of how the society is functioning. Probably if we reflect on our work of Balkan historians we would be able to come to terms with our traumas caused by the feelings of political and ideological pressures upon our work, by the images of colonisation and by metaphors of self-colonisation; we will open doors for newly arising theories on our societies (Rüsen, 2002b). We will come closer to the reflexive history: to the understanding "the form, in which the historic science considers its reasons", and to achievement of the kinds of open historical narration, in which "the histories are told in way that the addressee has the chance to agree or not with them" (Rüsen, 1998).

However, all these processes are still unrealised, and this substantially facilitates the deep internalization and maintenance of the 1980s reformist-communist discourse that preserves the ethnic and prepares the ground to the turn to Levi-Strauss or Braudel's structuralist approach narrating everyday life.

In these circumstances, the only way to come to terms with Marx and to settle the historian craft's relations with him is to open the door to reflexive history and make 1980s historiography a serious subject of its research. Thus we could say: "Goodbye, Marx! Goodbye, reformist communism of 1980s!", in the same reflexive but less nostalgic manner of the German film "Goodbye, Lenin!" After that, we might bequeath a more relaxed history then the one we inherited from 1980s.

[11] For example see the newly published very interesting and scrupulously written book on Bulgarian woman and their education (Nazarska, 2003).

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SERBIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY AND THE SOCIETY IN THE 1980s

Ranka Gasić

The year 1980, when president Tito died, marks a turning point for Serbian and Yugoslav society, and consequently, for its historiography. Yugoslav society lost its supreme political authority embodied in the person of its late president, being already in the process of disintegration, shaken by global debt crisis, and even more thoroughly, by a generalised internal crisis. The non-conflicting, balanced and controlled image of the past was questioned too. New historical approach to Tito's person caused an important revision of the recent past. Before 1980 facts of Tito's life have been a taboo. After his death, propagandistic books about his life were published in abundance. But at the same time, the audience was in need for more true facts about Tito. The book called *Josip Broz Tito – Autobiografska kazivanja (Autobiographic tales)* was sold in 195,000 copies.[1] Djilas's book *Druženje s Titom* (*In Company with Tito*) (first edition in 1980) and Dedijer's *Novi prilozi za biografiju Josipa Broza Tita (New contributions to the biography of J. B. Tito)* in three volumes (1981-1984) form landmarks in the gradual deconstruction of Tito's personality cult. The latter was especially popular, for Dedijer's partly exposing the "unknown", more or less compromising facts, and his partly indicating numerous mysteries and secrets that were not yet to be "revealed". Such a discourse was carried out with enthusiasm by journalists and publicists in the next two decades. An admirer of Dedijer has claimed that "Novi prilozi" definitively marked the end of illusions that our history can be written by traditional methods, based on documents. "Our true history... is still exclusively oral", as Ivo Banac said[2]. That rather widespread attitude had two consequences: it lent support to the already existing disdain for academic historiography, and on the other hand, it gave the green light to the writing of all kinds of "alternative" and "secret" histories.

[1] P. Damjanović, N.B. Popović, M. Vesović, *Josip Broz Tito – autobiografska kazivanja*, Beograd, Narodna knjiga, 1982.

[2] Milomir Marić in *Duga* magazine 1984. The quotation comes from Ivo Banac, *Historiography of the countries of eastern Europe: Yugoslavia*, in "American Historical Review", October, (1992), p. 1094.

In general, the ideological heritage of the Tito's regime has been challenged in the 1980s, especially the official representation of the Second World War. Five major developments occurred in Serbian historiography and even more in public opinion, which reshaped the image of the recent past. These developments continued and reached their climax in 1990s. These are as follows: **a)** re-evaluation of the Chetnik movement; **b)** change of approach to pre-Communist Yugoslavia; **c)** reinterpretation of Serbian casualties in WWII; **d)** rediscovery of Communist repression and its victims after 1944.

a) Redefinition of the Chetnik movement

This process in official historiography (notwithstanding history writing of the Serbian emigration) was initiated by a famous Yugoslav historian Branko Petranović. In his book *Revolucija i kontrarevolucija (Revolution and Counter-revolution)* (1983), he implied that the Chetnik movement was also a kind of Anti-Fascist Resistance, which was quite a revolutionary statement at the time. But, it was done only implicitly, so that the public opinion and Party structures would not be disturbed (The only reaction came from Slovene historian Dušan Biber)[3]. The case of Veselin Đuretić and his book *Saveznici i jugoslovenska ratna drama (The Allies and the Yugoslav military drama)* (1985) was quite different. This book reversed the prevailing image of the civil war, depicting Chetniks as victims of "British betrayal", of the conspiracy among Soviet spies in the ranks of British intelligence services. The book was officially forbidden for a while, and thereafter sold in 8000 copies. Otherwise, very few people would have read that voluminous book written in a not very readable style. The Chetnik rehabilitation trend was to be continued during 1990s.

b) Different approach to pre-Communist Yugoslavia

As Ivo Banac noted, a new approach to pre-Communist Yugoslavia was announced at the Ilok conference on the very eve of the 1980s.[4] However, in the 1980s historians from different Yugoslav centers, expressed opposing views of the history of Yugoslav state. Namely, up to the 1980s, the only source of common Yugoslav identity was seen in the revolutionary tradition (Partisan resistance, Tito, Self-management), which was undermined since 1980. Two paths were opened for Yugoslav historians, as to the question of legitimacy of the federal state. The one was to search for the roots of state-building process of each federal unit, understanding that each people within its own federal republic, forms a political community, a nation with its own history. The other was to find a common historical heritage that was not the Communist one. That was easy to say, but difficult to accomplish. Even though a Party leadership

[3] B. Repe, *Jugoslovanska historiografija po drugi svetovni vojni*, in "Tokovi istorije", 1:4, (1999), p. 312-325.

[4] Ivo Banac, *Historiography*, p. 1084-1085.

officially strongly supported at the 13th Party Congress continuation of the project *History of peoples and ethnic minorities of Yugoslavia,* the project was never brought to fruition.[5] Ironically, at the historians' conference in Neum (February 1985) organized by the Central Committee Presidium, historians were divided as to their opinion along federal and ethnic lines: Bilandžić, a Croatian historian, had previously criticized Serbian colleagues for attempts to rehabilitate the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Branko Petranović, a Serbian historian, argued the opposite. Janko Pleterski, a Slovene historian, contributed to the disputable topics. He argued that Yugoslav revolution was not a single achievement, in other words that every nation (i.e. every ethnic group) within Yugoslavia fought its own socialist revolution.[6] In the same year, three important books on Yugoslav history were published: Pleterski's book about alleged "federal" character of Yugoslav revolution, Bilandžić's general survey of the Yugoslav history, and a collection of documents edited and commented by Petranović and Zečević.[7] A year before, in 1984, Đorđe Stanković published a book about Nikola Pašić (1845-1926), famous politician of the Kingdoms of Serbia and Yugoslavia.[8] The book was sold in 35,000 copies, and that public interest for an "old regime" politician also indicates a change in the attitude toward pre-Communist Yugoslavia.

Marxist theoretical magazines organized public discussion about these books both in Belgrade and Zagreb. Historians from Belgrade (Zečević, Stanković, et al) mainly argued against "local perspective" in history and "artificial symmetry", and claimed that positive sides of the Yugoslav Kingdom should be taken into account. Slovenes (Prunk) argued that, since the peoples of Yugoslavia have become nations (having their own political units), they should be allowed to have their national historiographies as well. Serbian historians were also criticized for being too reluctant to condemn centralism of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, and the Chetnik movement (Pleterski).[9] However, the discussion between Slovenian and Serbian historians did not cause such havoc, as disputes between Serbian and Croatian historians did, especially those about casualties of WWII.

A new trend of reprints in the 1980s was another sign of the changed attitude towards the pre-Comunist Yugoslav and even more Serbian tradition. Dozens of books written at the beginning of the 20th century or in the inter-war

[5] B. Repe, *Jugoslovanska historiografija*, p. 314.

[6] B. Petranović, *Istoriografske kontraverze o Jugoslaviji*, in *Istoriografija, marksizam i obrazovanje*, Beograd: Izdavaki centar Komunist, 1986, p. 57-75; J. Pleterski, *Pitanje nacije i revolucije u jugoslovenskim zemljama u XIX i XX veku*, Ebenda, p. 76-102.

[7] J. Pleterski, *Nacije, Jugoslavija, Revolucija.* Beograd: Komunist, 1985; D. Bilandžić, *Historija Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije-Glavni procesi, 1918-1985.* Zagreb, Školska knjiga, 1985; B. Petranović, M. Zečević, *Jugoslavija 1918-1984, Zbirka dokumenata,* Beograd, 1985.

[8] Djordje Dj. Stanković, *Nikola Pašić: jugoslovensko pitanje*, Beograd, BIGZ, 1985.

[9] Discussions are published in "Naše teme", Zagreb, 12, 1986, p. 1907-2027; "Marksistička misao", Beograd, 4: (1986), p. 189-263.

period were republished which helped the public to become acquainted with "forgotten historians" and to learn about different methodological approaches. This trend was politically motivated with the rise of nationalism in ex Yugoslavia. Most of the reprinted books were dealing with history of Yugoslav peoples, especially with relations between Serbs and Croats. Most of them were written during the First World War and Paris Peace Conference. They reflected problems regarding relations between different Yugoslav peoples and were used at the end of the eighties to argue that relations between those peoples were "always the same, and therefore, beyond repair". This trend of reprinting helped the revival of historiography but it also showed how history could be misused for political purposes. One of the greatest public scandals in the 1980s was the ban of reprint of Slobodan Jovanović's *Collected Works*. Ironically, Slobodan Milosević as the Head of the City Committee, was among those who were against reprinting of "nationalist" and "reactionary" works of Slobodan Jovanović, whose extensive work on Serbian 19th century history (12 volumes) was finally republished at the end of eighties in spite of many political obstacles[10].

c) Reinterpretation of Serbian casualties in WWII

In Tito's time, civilian casualties were not subject to debate. The ideological accent was on resistance fighters, while civilian casualties were not so much emphasized. They were ascribed either to foreign invaders, or, proportionally, to "forces of collaboration". During the 1980s, the name of Jasenovac (the Ustasha concentration camp) became a symbol of Serbian martyrdom during the Second World War. The initial estimate of the number of victims in this camp was 700,000 people, mostly Serbs. Some Croatian historians (like Tudjman) tried to diminish the number of victims, stating that a "Jasenovac myth" had been created in order to create a guilty conscience among Croats. On the other side, some Serbian historians argued that the casualties in Jasenovac numbered over 1 milion, and that the real estimate was made inaccessible, in order to keep Serbo-Croat relations in order.[11] The echo of such polemics was far from purely academic.

d) Rediscovery of Communist repression and its victims after 1944

During 1980s hitherto "taboo" themes were for the first time discussed in public. Oddly enough, the first publications to challenge old ideological image of the past were not history books, but fiction. So, in the early 1980s dozens of books dealt with the breach with Stalin in 1948 and the "Goli otok" prison.[12] A

[10] S. Djukic, *Kako nam se dogodio vodja*, Beograd, Filip Visnjic, 1992; Slobodan Jovanović, *Sabrana dela.I-XII*, Beograd, Srpska književna zadruga, 1989-1990.

[11] Velimir Terzić, *Slom Kraljevine Jugoslavij 1941: uzroci i posledice*, Beograd-Ljubljana-Titograd, 1983; M. Bulajić, *Ustaški zločin genocida I-IV*, Beograd, Rad, 1988-1989; F. Tudjman, *Bespuća povijesne zbiljnosti*, Zagreb, 1989, especially p. 316.

[12] Antonije Isaković, *Tren 2*, Beograd, Prosveta, 1982; Slobodan Selenić, *Pismo glava*, Beograd, Prosveta, 1982; Dušan Jovanović, *Karamazovi*, Beograd, 1984.

book dealing with oppression of peasants after 1945 had three editions, from 1984 to 1986.[13] Even some films (a very successful Emir Kusturica film *Otac na službenom putu* (*Father on a business trip*), Stole Popov's *Srecna nova 1949 godina (Happy new 1949)* dealt with 1948. Some other scholars contested the legitimacy of the Communist seizure of power (Koštunica and Čavoški).[14] A shortened edition of that article was published in the historical review "Istorija 20. Veka" in 1983.[15]

Conclusions

As we have seen, the disproportionate role of non-academic history writing (and thinking) in public life was a feature of the 1980s. Unfortunately, academic history was lagging behind. The problem lied in the communication between the "academic community" and the society that "consumed" all kinds of history books. As K.E. Fleming notes, the field of Balkan studies has long been characterized by a "bifurcation" between a small group of academic specialists and a larger number of "semi-scholarly" authors who dominate public discussion whenever a crisis brings attention to the otherwise obscure region.[16]

Secondly, the attempt to "reinvent common tradition" went through desintegration, just like other integration projects in the country. Therefore, not only the political, cultural and economic life was fragmented, but also the image of the communist resistance movement. Such a constellation had some devastating effects, both on methodology and on the respectability of the entire profession, in spite of the fact that only a minority of academic historians participated in these dealings. As for methodological development, some of the most promising innovations (oral history, everyday life history, micro-history) could have been encouraged by the local initiative. A growing distrust towards "official" history as a kind of fact-forging and regime-praising discipline has created a void in historical consciousness. To make things worse, false notions of history were suppressed into the "historical subconsciousness" of the nation, to nourish hidden, often hideous political and national passions.[17] As a result, books about "secret" organisations and their role in history, especially free-masons, became very popular.[18] Such an "alternative historiography" would have a bright future in the 1990s.

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[13] Mladen Markov, *Isterivanje boga*, Beograd, 1984-1986.

[14] Vojislav Koštunica and Kosta Čavoški, *Stranački pluralizam ili monizam: Društveni I politički sistem u Jugoslaviji 1944-1949*, Maribor, 1983. See about that Ivo Banac, *Historiography*, p. 1096.

[15] V. Koštunica, K. Čavoški: *Opozicione političke stranke u Narodnom frontu Jugoslavije (1944-1949)*, in "Istorija 20 veka", 1, (1983), p. 93-116.

[16] K.E. Fleming, *Orientalism, the Balkans, and Balkan Historiography*, in "American Historical Review, 105: (2000), p. 1218-33.

[17] A. Mitrović, *Raspravljanja sa Klio*, Sarajevo, 1991, Quotations comes from the Belgrade 2001, edition: Čigoja štampa, p. 97.

[18] Zoran D. Nenezić, *Masoni u Jugoslaviji (1764-1980)*, Beograd, Rad, 1984.

THE RECEPTION OF THE HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE: THE CASE OF MACEDONIA

Irena Stefoska

I come from a region where history has happened every day during the past 13 years. I have had a chance to live in two states: the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia and today in independent Republic of Macedonia. Two passports, two political systems, two patterns of social and political values, two histories – personal and collective, and two memories – if I may say so. I myself am a child of a marriage of two different cultures (a relic of ex-Yugoslavia).

Since 1945, UN diplomats have been trying to invent polite terms for the Balkans and Eastern Europe as "undeveloped" or "in development", which, in fact, define relatively or absolutely poor and backward society. In this sense, I am a citizen of a country that completely fits these terms. I also live in a state which in 2001 went through military conflict and still does not have a completely defined identity; for example, the problem with the name and the state symbols, the borders etc. Yet, I'm not claiming that the uncertainty and the insecure feeling regarding the existence are monopoly and exclusivity of the country or of the region from which I originate. Today, in the modern world, these feelings are much more universal than ever. Nevertheless, living in a region/regions between people disappointed of their past, even more dissatisfied with the present and uncertain about their future generates a very dangerous situation – anger, despair, disappointment, xenophobia, intolerance, and most of all fear. People ask who is to blame and looking for the culprits, often blame foreigners.

After the dissolution of Yugoslavia, new states (except Slovenia) still experience their transitions (which seems to be without end) in the attempt to adjust themselves to the pattern of parliamentary democracy, erroneously "translated" capitalism into the idea of free market economy, and promotion of civil values. In Macedonia, this process is going very slowly, and it could be noticed that it is more on a formal-legal than on a social level.

In this respect, the Macedonian reality represents almost an ideal ground for use and abuse of the historical consciousness, as a substitute for the ongoing extremely unstable and uncertain existence which the citizens of Macedonia are facing every day. "The great past" and "the rich tradition" that are continuously

a subject of interest in the scholarly, semi scholarly, as well as in the literary and public discourse, represent a psychological axis that for the majority of the citizens provides the necessary level of security and a feeling of belonging. I will quote several statements that are frequently heard and present in the public discourse of the past 12 years: "Macedonia a biblical country", "Macedonia – the clasp of the world", "Macedonia – cradle of Christianity and Slavic literacy", "Macedonia a mythical country", "2000 years of Macedonia", etc. History, or more precisely the historical myths, became the most secure refuge and shelter for the vast majority of the Macedonian citizens. "Transition" becomes a magic word that could transform anything into its meaning. On the other hand, keeping in mind the political dimension in the use of the myths, they were, and still are, a sort of a background for certain political elite, manipulated for political purposes. The support found in history and in tradition offered by some political parties to the voters of Macedonia, was neither scholarly based, nor critically reviewed: it is an "instant" history for obtaining votes. Many politicians were hoping that the response of the voters will depend on the one who offers the best history – the more glorious is the history of the Macedonians, Albanians, Vlachs, the more votes will be obtained. Although this model was not implemented completely, it still produced results. Clearly, 2000 years of Macedonia sounds far more delightful than 58 years of the Republic of Macedonia, 46 of which in the SFRY and 12 of complete independence. And again we come to a phenomenon, also present in the other ex-Yugoslav countries which is the timid or I would rather say ignorant attitude towards recent communist past. The more remote past is considered to be "authentic" Macedonian, Albanian, Vlach which is a paradox if we are familiar with the 19th century Balkans' history. The national identification in a contemporary sense was impossible and almost unknown for those times[1].

The key question is whether the changes in the society, at least on a formal level, have reached the institutions in which the history is made, and if these changes influence things like: the preparation of history curricula on all levels of education as well as the history text-books as a part of the educational reform in any way.

Unfortunately, the changes that happen in the institutions of educational character like the universities, institutes, the *Bureau for promotion of education* etc., instead of giving a result with a positive trend in the society, show a retrograde tendency. The researches carried out by my colleagues from the Institute for Sociological, Political and Juridical Research regarding the educational system in Macedonia (the figures are from 2001), with a special focus on the school subject – history, reveal that: 40% of the students do not think that the differences make life more beautiful, 44% think that they are

[1] A. Karakasidiu, *Fields of wheat, Hills of blood*, The University of Chicago Press, 1997, p. 54-77; N. Jordanovski, *Between the necessity and impossibility of a national history*, Paper presented on the second workshop in London, 2000.

endangered by enemies from everywhere, 51% think that the neighboring countries are a threat for the survival of Macedonia, and 59% would like to live in another country[2].

The name of the institution I work for is *Institute for National History* (INH). It was founded in the distant 1948, under the protection of the Government, striving to research, study and acknowledge the history of Macedonia and the Macedonian people, in order to assert the Macedonian national identity. The name of the institution in 2003 is still the same. In a symbolic way it shows that almost nothing has been changed in its concept, organization, research methodology, the methodology of education and consequently, in the historiographical production as a creator of "truths" related to history, above all the local and the regional one. If we look at the catalogue of publications of the INH in the last 12 years, we can notice the following:

1. Almost 90% of the publications contain in their title the name Macedonia, no matter which period of history they concern;

2. The publications are mostly from the field of political history with the difference that now, the Ilinden period is treated more "explicitly", as well as the role and the activities of IMRO,[3] in comparison to the previously over-researched World War II, the communist past and the contemporary history;

3. The old fashioned positivistic approach in the survey of the past is still a dominant model in the INH;

4. There is no publication that treats the problems of everyday life of the people of the Balkans or more general aspects of Balkan history.

In 1998 this Institute, a part of the University "St. Cyril and Methodius", introduced postgraduate studies for "national history and the history of the people and the states of the Balkans". The study groups are structured chronologically, so the problem and interdisciplinary approach in the study of history are non-existent. Whatever period of history the students choose to study, they are obliged to take one foreign language as well as methodology of history as subjects. The students studying Antiquity or the Middle Ages will have to pass: "National history of Macedonia and the Macedonian people from prehistoric times until 1371" and "History of the people and the states of the Balkans". Those studying the period of the Ottoman Empire and recent history, have to pass exams such as: "National history of the Macedonian people from 1371 until the Balkan wars" and "History of the people from the Balkans and the Macedonian people in the Diaspora". Students interested in contemporary history, study the subjects "National history of the Macedonian people from 1913 until 1945" and "National history of the Macedonian people from 1945 until 1991".[4]

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[2] M. Najcevska, *The high-school education a factor in the inter ethnic (in)tolerance*, in *The sources and the factors of inter ethnic (in)tolerance in the process of education*, Skopje, 2001, p. 50.

[3] IMRO – Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization.

[4] V. Karapeeva, *Postgraduate Studies and Doctoral Theses at the Institute of National History*, in "Review of INI", 45-1/2001, p. 155-159.

The entire program of postgraduate studies is based on studying, political history as well as national history (and everything that it might mean), with occasional references to the (political) history of the neighboring nations. We all know that history plays an important role, not only regarding our self-consciousness but also regarding the development of a collective identity of the society as a whole. Unfortunately, the problem is that in 2003 at the INH and at the Department of History (Faculty of Philosophy), which are both research and educational institutions, we can not see change in the notion that a society that is unable to have a critical view of its past, will not be able to define its own opportunities and position within the multinational and multicultural Balkans' identity as a part of the European society.

Historians are a part of society[5]; they have a personal historical consciousness and they themselves are a part of historical cultures. Therefore, they are not only influenced by the historical consciousness, but they also play an important role in the national history consciousness by providing an appropriate discourse. Since the term objectivity, especially in the social sciences, was seriously and convincingly put into a question, we need to keep in mind the political dimension and the responsibility in our scholarly and educational work. The great historian E. Hobsbawm once said that he thought that the profession of a historian, unlike the profession of a nuclear physician cannot harm anyone, but he changed his mind when became older. Thus, he said: "Our researches can be converted into bomb factories, just like IRA has learnt to produce explosive from a pesticide". We, the historians, are responsible for the historical facts in general, as well as for criticizing the political and ideological abuse of history in certain cases.

In spite of the efforts made in the last two years for restructuring and moving towards the credit-transfer system, which would also mean a complete reorganization of the educational program and curricula for the university courses, we are forgetting one very important thing. That is that there is no supplementary education and communication with the scholarly institutions in Europe, especially for those working in the field of history and use the credit-transfer system. It is like spinning around in a vicious circle. Why?

The same scholars who take part in writing the standard history of the Macedonian people, are working on the history curricula, write the text-books for the elementary and high school programs, and teach history at University. In other words we are dealing with a closed group of historians that is creating the image of the past on all levels of the educational process.

In the past 12 years, *The Bureau for Promotion of Education of the R. Macedonia* together with the *Ministry of Education and Science* has changed

[5] P. Burke, *Historical facts and Historical fictions*, in "Filozofski vestnik", 2/1994, p. 179-180. Burke says: "Historians can not observe the past as it really was with an eye innocent of prejudice because like everyone else are prisoners of their 'point of view', in other words stereotypes, assumptions or mentalities of their own time, place, social group (including of course their gender)".

history curricula and the text-books several times. Some of my colleagues and few professors from the Department of History are also members of the commissions which plan and create the history curricula. However, there is no structural change in the quality of the books or in the methodology for the subject of history. The choice of topics, the terminology, the conceptual apparatus, the black and white approach, the confusion over the name Macedonia throughout the centuries, the lack of human dimension in the interpretation, and the almost total neglect of the minority communities, *let alone human rights*, point to a retrograde process in which the old-new stereotypes and prejudices, especially those related to the "national" history, produce for the recipient an image of a victim-nation throughout the history, which they comprehend in an emotional and an affective way, rather than in a rational and a critical one.

There is a strong domination of the political history of the region over the history of everyday life and the anthropological phenomenon from the history of human kind in all dimensions of its existence. *People are not present.* The literal reading of facts is the main characteristic, with no contextual analysis of the problems, with deficiency of multiperspective view in the interpretations especially in those related to national history, using partial rearrangement of mythology by means of creating ultimate truths once again when it comes to the national past.

I will briefly quote some of the conclusions of the research (conducted in 2001) related to elementary and high schools' history text-books used in the Macedonian and Albanian classes. "The composition of the books and the space given to certain topics underlines clearly the main intention for an ethno-national education. Patriotic feelings are clearly profiled within the margins of ethnicity. With a historicism predominated by an aesthetic history in a literary form (indecent for historical analysis), with an inappropriate balance between the history of today and tomorrow, the only achievement could be a kind of emotional satisfaction for the students that may result in an uncritical attitude, and further on with a permanent discontent and frustration. The education headed to ethnocentrism has manifestation in the historical meaning that is being attributed to everything (even in a most distant way) that can be connected through space, population or the nature with the name 'Macedonia', being of course always highly appreciated".[6]

From all the things I pointed out in my paper, it clearly reveals that the treatment of past either in research activities or in the educational process is not at all an optimistic one. However, I think that with some changes in the Macedonian society that took part last years, there are opportunities for creating the critical nucleus of experts and clerks of the public administration, working according to their competence and within the institutional structures, for an improvement and general reconstruction of the educational process on all levels.

[6] M. Najcevska, *op. cit.*, p. 62-63.

To live in the Balkans, a region which is said to produce much more history than it can consume, is extremely hard, mostly because of the uncertainty one faces every day; wars, changes of borders, economic blockades, poverty, misery, interethnic problems, increasing corruption, enormous unemployment rate, nationalism. By saying this I do not like to fall into stereotyping the Balkans as a place where "people kill each other and it (the killing) is in the very essence of their cultural identity". A kind of "truth" that fits easily in the already determined European myth for a man of the Balkans from Ruritania, which from a political point of view is going to be current on the market for a long time.

Apart from the declared principles of civil society to which the Republic of Macedonia is aspiring (this phenomenon is also present in some other ex-Yugoslav countries), after the attainment of independence, the matrix of the former ideology was transferred, with an incredible easiness, in the so-called national or more precisely ethno-national ideology. At the same time, the minority communities in the Republic of Macedonia, especially the biggest – the Albanian one, were no less infected with the national-romantic dreams. The political parties, founded strictly on national bases, started a fight for voters' sympathies. This showed that the citizens, whose environment (even the one they disliked) was seriously damaged, needed some kind of support for setting a new way of existence. The support was found in history.

TOUCHY ISSUES. HISTORIANS, EXPECTATIONS AND CONFLICTING HISTORIES IN POST-SOCIALIST ROMANIA

Levente Szabó

The paper will try to focus on the pragmatics of contemporary Romanian historical myth-making, foregrounding mostly the boundary-defining characteristics of the historical myths at issue. In an attempt to survey both the micro- and the macro-, the local and the national level of Romanian myth-making the article will start off from a case-study of a 1992 incident that occurred in Cluj, then passes on another case-study, but on a national level. The analysis of the first major post-socialist Romanian history textbook debate will use some of the results of the interim conclusions of the first case-study so as to picture *a* possible global explanation for the better understanding of Romanian historical myth-making as a post-socialist phenomenon.

"We are the masters of this land"[1]

On November 24, 1992, Hungarian citizens reported to one of the local newspapers that in Cluj, one of the major cities of Romania, populated mostly by Romanians, Hungarians and Rroma people, the mayor and the local representatives of the Romanian government plan to commemorate the national holiday by placing an inscription on the statue of King Matthias. The statue, a historic monument, the work of art of János Fadrusz, was erected in 1902 during the Austro-Hungarian government, and since it has a certain symbolic value for the Hungarian ethnic community, the plan immediately resulted in several types of protests, even after the inscription was placed on the statue.[2] In

[1] The quotation is part of a very popular Romanian folk song, sung both before and after 1989 mostly in commemorative contexts. According to its refrain: "We are Romanians, we are Romanians / We are the masters of this land" (in original: "Noi suntem români, noi suntem români, / Noi suntem pe acest pământ stăpâni").

[2] The figure of the represented, King Matthias is itself a controversial one in XIX-XXth century Romanian historiography: he is reckoned to be descended from a Romanian family and thus to be directly linked to the Romanians themselves.

On the other hand the statue itself had the Hungarian national symbols on it, these being removed in 1918, after the unification of Basarabia, Bucovina, Transylvania, Banat, Crişana and

the following I will try to approach the events taking the use of historical myths as the basis and focal point of the discussion.

The occasions when and where the historical myths are employed are not contingent and neutral regarding their (actual/on-the-spot) meaning: the occasion of the employment thus can be considered a meaningful aspect of the pragmatics of the historical myths. It is visually and logically not contingent that Funar Gheorghe and the party (and the cultural foundation) backing him (then The Party of the Romanian Unity, respectively The Romanian Stove Cultural Foundation) chose the 1st of December, the Romanian national holiday to place the inscription on the statue. The local organizers of the commemorative acts also emphasised the double symbolic element underlying the holiday in the city of Cluj: according to them, since on the 1st of December Stephan the Great won over the Hungarian King Matthias, the two occurrences, that of the 1918 union and that of the 1467 victory are intimately linked and should be treated as such.[3] The endeavour to join the two symbolic acts, and thus to incorporate the new (the uncertain and unfitting) element into the framework of the commemorative ritual can easily be noticed in the communiqués announcing the programme of the commemorations: "The celebrations of the national day of Romania will begin at ten o'clock in front of the statue of Michael the Brave [in the Michael the Brave Square] with a wreath-laying ceremony. It is going to continue on the Liberty Square [the centre of Cluj] with the unveiling of an inscription inspired by Nicolae Iorga on *Matei Corvin*'s statue, respectively with a wreath-laying ceremony at the statue of Lupa Capitolina [i.e. the replica of the famous Roman sculpture of Romulus and Remus]."[4] The statue representing King Matthias and some of his comrades is included within an already value-loaded structure: Romulus and Remus alluding to the alleged Roman origin of the Romanians and Michael the Brave standing – in the very pragmatics of the respective commemorative act – for all the Romanian heroes who died or lived for the Romanian nation.[5] In this complex framework that

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Maramureş among themselves and also with the Romanian Old Kingdom (Vechiul Regat). The Hungarian inscription "Mátyás király" (King Matthias) was replaced with a Romanian one ("Matei Corvinul"), and in 1932 a new text was placed on the statue, containing a quotation according to which: "Triumphant everywhere, defeated only at Baia by his own people when he tried to conquer the invincible Moldova." The quotation from Nicolae Iorga, a contested Romanian historian of the first part of the XXth century alludes to appropriates and ethnicizes the figure of the king, considering it along another controversial event that has divided Romanian and Hungarian historians: whether the battle (1467) between Stephen the Great and King Matthias was won by the former or the latter. The controversial inscription referring to the controversial event and the controversial descent of the ethnically problematic king was now planned to be placed again on the statue.

[3] For this argument see, for instance: *Ziua naţională a României*, in "Adevărul de Cluj", December 1, 1992, no.767, p. 3.

[4] Gheorghe Funar, *Comunicat*, in „Adevărul de Cluj", November 28-30, 1992, no. 766, p. 1.

[5] "In the Michael the Brave Square the wreath-laying commenced in honour of the heroes of the nation [...] The Holy Father Irineu Bistriţeanu celebrated an extraordinary mass in honour of all the heroes who died for the ancient land." Dorin Serghif, *1 Decembrie: a fi român*, in "Adevărul de Cluj", December 2, 1992, p. 1.

encompasses the myth of antiquity into that of being *sui generis*, the figure of King Matthias is reinterpreted, the new inscription and its constructed history (with the quotation from the oeuvre of one of the most important – but also a highly controversial – Romanian historiographers) makes the instability of the appropriation and transition more easy and credible.[6] So the context of the historical myth of *being sui generis* favours the embedding of an uncertain element into a certain historical and commemorative structure, ascribing from the meaning of the latter to that of the former.

The choice of the Romanian national holiday, a political rather than a neutral type of holiday[7], politicizes every segment of the commemorations. On the other hand the nature of the national holiday itself is to magnify the otherwise insignificant elements to the level of the national[8], respectively it prescribes for the individual a certain type and certain number of possible attitudes towards the act of commemoration itself: For instance, every criticism regarding the national holiday itself or those participating at it in the prescribed manner, and every misbehaviour according to the norms of commemoration is naturally perceived in a much more negative way than it would be interpreted outside the commemorative framework. So, the commemorative situation itself frames every segment within it, be it a more or less recent or old element, establishes the norms with the help of which also the more recent elements will

[6] So in the process of the Romanian affirmation of the myth of being *sui generis* while the Hungarian ethnic minority (and also a few Romanians) emphasize the differences between the two ethnic communities, the Romanian one emphasizes the similarities in order to appropriate the canonical figure of the Hungarian king.

[7] December 1 is not a neutral, civilian type of national holiday since it foregrounds the political act of the beginning of a unitary Romanian state, signalling the importance of the 1918 political events. Its political and boundary-making character is emphasized by the fact that it not only includes, but also excludes and divides, since for the Hungarian ethnic minority it may invoke the end of the Austro-Hungarian (Dual) Monarchy. This argument has a rare and taboo character, but it is an existing argument. For instance, the December 1, 1992 issue of the Romanian newspaper reports on a meeting of the Association for Interethnic Dialogue: "Szilágyi N. Sándor presented the meaning of the Great Unification for the Hungarian minority. He read an article written two years ago, considering it still valid. According to its text 'For the Hungarians December 1 represents the nostalgia for the Great Hungary.' 'The unification meant the end of our normal Hungarian being and our transformation into a minority of the Romanian society. [...] Nobody could ask us to become Romanians.' [...] The text ends in the hope that the 'Romanians' [sic] don't expect the Hungarians to do the impossible and appeals to the Romanians for a mutual understanding and respect for each other's feelings." Rodica Costea, *Semnificaţia zilei de 1 Decembrie pentru minoritatea maghiară*, in "Adevărul de Cluj", December 1, 1992, no. 767, p. 3.

According to the Romanian Mircea Iorgulescu the choice of the day of December 1, 1918 was "a grievous political error" since the national holiday should be a day of "coagulation and not division" and "for an important part of Romania December 1 remains the day when its status and condition took a radical change." Mircea Iorgulescu, *Provocarea*, in "Dilema", October 29–November 4, 1999, p. 4.

[8] Cf. in general: Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields and Metaphors. Symbolic Action in Human Society*, Cornell U. P., Ithaca – London, 1974, p. 105; regarding specific cases: D. Rihtman-Augustin, *The Metamorphosis of Festivals in a Socialist Country*, in "Ethnologica Europaea", XX, 1990.

be interpreted, respectively foregrounds a certain set of possible and canonic meanings that can be attached to the new elements.

The embedding of the new element into a Romanian national narrative that foregrounds the Roman mythical antecedents of the nation, the claims of primevalness by positioning Michael the Brave as a new founder of the Romanian nation (certainly neglecting the dynastic and not language or ethnically based character of the province Michael led, respectively the fundamentally divided and different character of the provinces of that time from modern Romania) and all these in the context of the 1918 Romanian unification, make also the new figure, that of King Matthias, part of the narrative of a continuous founding[9] of the Romanian nation in which those who side with foreigners (like Matthias did according to the new interpretation conveyed by the inscription) will be defeated by their own fellow nationals. So in the process of meaning attribution not only the existing framework (including different types of historical myths) attaches a special semantics to the new element (making it similar to the type of narrative and historical myths it is included within), but also the recent constituent produces an effect on it (though according to the logic of the system it is embedded into): it makes the narrative of continuous founding more consistent, less sketchy and offers a quasi negative example with didactic purposes: the defeat of King Matei from the Romanian family of the Corvins that sided with the Hungarians on the one hand, and the figure of the glorious Romanian king who was so brave that he even became to rule the Hungarians, too.

Taking into account the afore-mentioned, these could serve as *partial* interpretative arguments to understand both the position of many Romanians (including that of the Romanian Government and Presidency[10], respectively the local authorities, other than the mayor) and the symbolic and concrete power[11] of the placing of the inscription. So, *the intensity and actual semantics of the historical myths depends also on the occasion and the temporal and spatial framework they are remembered and re-acted / re-constructed.*

In the following I would like to focus on the intimate relationship between the appropriation of the symbolic space and the enactment of the myth of antiquity regarding both a national and a local space.

The events of late November and early December 1992 of Cluj viewed in the context of the events of the following years (events concerning the meaning attribution to the public space of the city) show an intimate connection and may be interpreted as different phases of a unique narrative, that of the enactment of the myth of antiquity through a kind of use of the public space. If we take a chronological order, the first thing that might occur to us is the circumstance

[9] Ernst Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1983.

[10] Of course, the nationalist discourse (anterior to the then approaching national elections) of president Ion Iliescu and of some of the political parties cannot be neglected either.

[11] The national authority in matters of protection of monuments and historic buildings protested in vain against the placement of the inscription, considering it the infringement of the law.

that the endeavour to place the Iorga inscription to the statue already coincided with an attempt to place Romanian flags on the statue: "Gheorghe Funar declared to our newspaper that he is going to remove the inscription MATHIAS REX [i.e. the only inscription on the statue before the events of December 1992] and will place two columns in front of the statue so as the Romanian flag could permanently wave on them."[12] The communiqué of the National Board for the Protection of Historic Monuments and Sites[13] that protested against any kind of alteration of the monument and stated that any unauthorized modification is forbidden according to the laws protecting the historic monuments and sites, contained also a recommendation regarding the two flagpoles: "Any flagstaff needed for the celebration of the national holiday are to be erected independently and further from the monument, in the immediate vicinity of this."[14] The mayor took the recommendation literally and erected also the flagpoles he had mentioned earlier, literally framing the space of the statue. The endeavour to appropriate and reinterpret the history of and the history represented by the statue can be viewed in an interesting manner if taking into account the next step in the alteration of the public space of the centre exactly in front of the statue: as shown by picture 1. The mayor's office took the initiative in excavating the space in front of the historic statue two years later. Speaking from the specialist's view the results that led to the excavation of the remains of a Roman settlement were not surprising at all since in the autumn of 1991 other rich remains were found in another part of the central area and the archeologist of the Historical Museum considered that a former Roman town was to be found almost under the whole centre.[15] In spite of this the remains of the Romans "discovered" in front of the statue – though contested also by specialists – became almost immediately integrated into the myth of antiquity of the former pattern. The protest of the Hungarians (who saw in the excavations an additional sign against "their" historical site) in fact enforced the symbolic boundary – making nature of everything that could be spatially related to the statue. The struggle over the excavations became thus directly linked to the statue both for the Romanians and the Hungarians. On the other hand the excavated Roman remains became directly linked to the Daco-Roman myth of origin of the Romanians[16], so they were integrated into the founding narrative aforementioned.

[12] Bogdan Eduard, *UDMR este o organizație teroristă*, in "Evenimentul Zilei", December 3, 1992, no. 140, p. 5. Hungarian account of the statements of the mayor: *Az RMDSZ terrorista szervezet*, in "Európai Idő", December 9– December 22, 1992, no. 49-50, p. 3.

[13] Published in facsimile in "Szabadság", December 3, 1992, no. 236, p. 1.

[14] *Ibidem.*

[15] For an interview with the archeologists leading the excavations see: *Város Kolozsvár alatt?*, in „Szabadság", July 11, 1992, no. 131, p. 1.

[16] According to the English version of the explanatory inscriptions "the objective" [i.e. the aim] of the excavations is: "Documentation on the historical evolution of the ROMAN-DACIAN NAPOCA CITY [sic]".

On the 1st of December 1998 a small column was erected just in front of the excavations, almost in the midst of the pavement, with the inscription: "On this site the replica of the Column of Traianus will be erected on the original scale. December 1, 1998. The mayor's office. Cluj-Napoca." (see picture 2). The point of time chosen for the unveiling of the small statue, the place chosen for the statue, the simultaneous wreath-laying ceremony (like usual after 1992) at the statue of King Matthias made the excavations and the intended replica of the column part of both the same micro-narrative (including the struggle over the statue) and the very same myth of antiquity. But they also enacted the myth of antiquity by spatially rewriting / remodeling the space of the centre: they were placed symmetrically in front of each other, and both in front of the statue of King Matthias. *The myth of antiquity became visualized by means of the position of the new sites. The space can thus be considered not a contingent, but a value-loaded, semanticized medium regarding the historical myths: these can be made palpable also by spatial references and enactments.*

Moreover the appropriation of the space of the centre of Cluj can be viewed in the context of the appropriation of the public space of the town. Thus the claims of primevalness suggested on a national level become the endeavour to actualize the myth also on a local level. Cluj abounds in monuments built by the Hungarians: from the present-day headquarters of the main university of Romania (Babeş-Bolyai University) to the building of the major library very many buildings reflect another ethnic past than the Romanian one. Thus the following strategies employed by the mayor may be considered as parts of a symbolic struggle to overwrite the space of the town and to suggest a strong claim of primevalness with regards not only to the national, but also to a local Romanian identity. First and foremost: national flags were hoisted on every [!] lamppost of the town, and also the Christmas lighting wore the national Romanian colours. The benches painted in the colours of the Romanian national flag and the metal kerbs protecting the traffic islands in the broader centre (painted also in red, yellow and blue – see picture 2), the presentation of a red-yellow-blue football to the local (and non-local) schools (with special regard to Hungarian ones) were also part of the strategies of symbolic struggle over the local ethnic space and implicitly over the ethnic character of both the synchronic and diachronic times. [The procedure which has a certain pragmatics in Cluj parts from the original context and reappears also in other circumstances (for instance, the railway-stations of Apahida and Câmpia Turzii, both located in Cluj county): in this case they rather underline the belonging to a certain identity that enact the myth of antiquity – at least, not with the intensity one can find represented in the city of Cluj.]

The traffic island surrounding the mayor's office, respectively the one leading to a major student campus has recently been paved with colourful flagstones in the colours of the national flag. The similarly coloured litterbins in the broad centre raised the protest of some Romanians themselves (including the local council – in conflict for some time with the mayor).

The inscriptions posted at several spots in the centre and at the borders of the town (so in highly symbolic places) contain references to specific paragraphs of the Romanian constitution according to which: "[i]n Romania the official language is the Romanian one"[17], "[i]n the eyes of the law and of the authorities all the citizens are equal without any privileges and discriminations"[18], and "[i]n Romania the dispositions of the constitution are obligatory."[19]

All these strategies of space appropriation are canonically defined and adequately received as border-making strategies that constitute ethnic identities that are made to define themselves *against* each other. On the other hand *the appropriation of the local space enacts the myth of antiquity itself on a local level.*

The inventing and reinventing of historical myths as boundary making and defining entities in the specific context of the November-December 1992 Cluj events and during the whole mayoralty of Funar Gheorghe can also be interpreted from the point of view of the (literary / historiographic) genres they employ. Historiography rarely considers questions of genre since they are tacitly considered transparent and hardly relevant in the constitution of meaning.[20] In the first decades of nineteenth-century Hungarian culture the epic poem was considered a truly relevant (literary) genre that could produce historical truths regarding the ancient history of the Hungarian nation. Meanwhile (literary / historiographic) genres like biography resisted the refunctionalization of the genre-system in which an allegedly true history can be told and the epic poem became irrelevant from this point of view. But in the last decades professional historiography – with the *ego-histoire* type of turns – seems to reinterpret the value of the first person-narrative (literary) genres in historiography, from the genres like diary and autobiography to that of the memoirs. So the relevance of the (literary / historiographic) genres as history-producing media is itself historical: it might suffer serious changes over the time.

On the other hand it is not irrelevant whether a history is told in the form of a biography, a commemorative speech or a diary. All these forms produce rather different histories depending on the rules of their genres (including their narrative perspective) and the way certain interpretive communities are using them. So history doesn't depend only on language and narrative in general, but also on another "form" that partly prescribes and constitutes its meanings: the (literary / historiographic) genre.

[17] The 13th paragraph of the Romanian Constitution.

[18] The quotations make reference to the 16th paragraph of the national constitution, the mayor usually using both the former and the latter paragraph in an idiosyncretic way to deny the rights of the ethnic minorities to use their language in the education and administrative system, qualifying such types of requests as being privileges and discriminating the ethnic Romanians.

[19] The 15th paragraph of the Romanian Constitution.

[20] Even Hayden White and those representing the linguistic and cultural turn in historiographic studies rarely mention genre, they generally speaking about narratives: cf. e.g. Hayden White, *The Content of the Form. Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins U. P., 1987, p. 1-57.

The dispute between those opposing and those siding with the mounting of the inscription to the statue is a wide and complex one directed towards different types of communities. It embraces different levels of the public sphere, operating not only with face-to-face interaction, but also with endeavours to "convert" both those siding with one or another opinion and the neutral viewers of the conflict (for instance by means of communiqués, handing out rival leaflets with rivalling histories of the inscription etc.). The initiators of the placement of the inscription – headed by the mayor itself – beside the classical type of historiographic reasoning (or at least beside a reasoning that is formally similar to the text criticism and norms of the canonic historiographic discourse) seems to employ other genres, that are less or non-canonical in official historiography, but are often accepted as truth-producing genres regarding Romanian diachronic or synchronic events: gossip and rumour. The use of this genres as an endeavour to produce truths that seem probable is not an "invention" of the mayor and of his fellows, it has a certain – though in certain sense different – tradition from the era of the Communist regime itself and a strong use and abuse during the 1989 Romanian events, nay also during the ethnic conflicts of March 1990.

During socialist times the so-called "politics of duplicity"[21] helped the formation of a cultural space where on the one hand the public space of the regime aggressively penetrated the private space of the people, but on the other hand (also as a consequence of this characteristics) it resulted in an intimate and strong borderline between the discourse of the regime and the alleged truths on it. Thus, for instance, the official version on the history of the present was continuously and tacitly emended in the private sphere. The gossip and the rumour became the most important genres of these emendations, a specific value being attached to them as to "the most intimate, and thus most believable, publicly unutterable truths". This overvaluing of the gossip and of the rumour and the attribution of a high value of probability and truth to them in general, made these genres be functional also during the 1989 events when a considerable amount of this type of information was present in the mass-media. In a certain sense thus the 1989 events perpetuated the overvaluing of these genres from the point of view of their content of an alleged truth.

In March 1990, during the ethnic carnage of Târgu-Mureş between the Hungarians and Romanians, the very same genres come to have a paradigmatic ethnicized semantics, i.e. they are misused so as to demonize ethnic groups. This type of usage has a certain tradition already from the time of the 1989 events, when the leaders of the communist regime alluded to a foreign (also Hungarian) peril that aimed at destroying the country.

[21] For the introduction of the concept regarding the political regime of Ceauşescu and the application of the term on a specific problem, that of social and biological reproduction during Romanian socialism see: Gail Kligman, *Politica duplicităţii. Controlul reproducerii în România lui Ceauşescu*, trad. Marilena Dumitrescu, Bucureşti, Ed. Humanitas, 2000, p. 47-52 (originally: Gail Kligman, *The Politics of Duplicity. Controlling Reproduction in Ceauşescu's Romania*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, University of California Press, 1998).

So the mayor of Cluj took over not only a certain poetics of speaking on past and present events, but also a certain politics of them when he began alluding to Hungarians from Hungary that might stand behind the fiasco of his Timişoara canvassing, a Magyarization of Cluj and of Romania in general.[22] The same paradigm may include the statements according to which the Democratic Alliance of the Hungarians is a terrorist society[23], the Huns (and not the Hungarians) entered Europe in the years 900-1000 AD coming also from today's territory of India[24], the Hungarians of the Hungarian counties of Romania committed "brutal deeds" and "acted in hords like a thousand year ago"[25], "Ceauşescu was a good Romanian in what he did" and "actually at the end of 1989 there were interests that differed from the ones of the Romanian nation, and Ceauşescu's end was decided by the Great Powers"[26]. The textual strategy that often backs these rumours and gossips during the 1992 events and afterwards is the quotation that by foregrounding only a part of the original text, distorts its original meaning. So apparently the discourse comes close to the classical notion of historic text criticism, but functions in a manner wholly different from it. This type of text criticism is actually typical concerning the genres at issue: they don't have a fixed meaning, no craftsmanship and professional training is required to utter and / or modify them (like in the case of canonical elite historical genres), their meaning and the spreading of this meaning is elusive. That's why they can be easily used in the spreading of historical myths.

So in the context of the different types of historical myths that occur within the 1992 Cluj events (and not only)[27] *these genres prove a highly*

[22] See for instance Dorin Serghie, *Domnul primar Gheorghe Funar îi amendează pe organizatorii manifestaţiei U.D.M.R.*, in "Adevărul de Cluj", no 773, December 9, 1992, p. 1; *Precizări necesare cu prilejul aşa-zisului bicentenar al Teatrului şi Operei Maghiare din Cluj-Napoca*, in *ibidem*. In order to back the reality-effect of his assertions, the mayor sometimes refers to concrete thing, details. For instance, after being chased from the Timişoara canvassing trip by a furious crowd consisting of several hundred people (that considered his person as being not worthy of placing a wreath at the foot of the memorial of the Timisoara revolutionaries) he reckoned that about ten-eleven supporters of the Hungarian's party were identified (among them, a deputy) as being present at the spot of the incident together with a bunch of „young and blue-eyed people from Hungary" that probably planned to go on to the next place of his canvassing trip. The construction of the physical traits of the alleged group responsible for the incidents makes way for the construction of an entire characterology of the side to be blamed in the case of a conflict (involving the mayor). Cf. for instance "Szabadság", September 17, 1992, no. 181, p. 1.

[23] Bogdan Eduard, *UDMR este o organizaţie teroristă – a apreciat dl Gheorghe Funar*, in "Evenimentul Zilei", December 3, 1992, no. 140, p. 5.

[24] Csók Etelka, Andreas Oplatka, *Szeretne-e ön ma és itt magyar lenni, polgármester úr?*, in „Szabadság", July 17, 1992, no. 137, p. 3.

[25] *Ibidem.*

[26] *Ibidem.*

[27] The analysis might end in similar results if applied to the textbook-debate. I am going to approach later, but so as to maintain the coherence of the paper I decided in treating the question along the my first case-study.

effective and fit media for the spreading and success of the very same historical myths. According to this experiences: the effectiveness (including its boundary-making character) of an historical myth may be in direct ratio to the genres, the poetics, respectively the politics of the (historical) genres it is employed within.

"[L]et the young shock us"[28](?)

Early in the autumn of 1999, following the reform of the curriculum also regarding the teaching of national history, a history textbook was granted permission to be published.[29] Several days later sixty-four deputies – the whole Opposition and some deputies from the then governing parties, too – signed for a motion of no confidence backed by a former recommendation of the Commission for Culture, Science, Youth and Sport. The motion of no confidence regarding the textbook had also many opponents: first and foremost the Minister of Education and at the same time rector of Babeş-Bolyai University (where the textbook in question was composed), intellectuals, the Romanian diaspora of Paris[30], many historians protested against the motion and considered the textbook as being good or very good. The motion of no confidence was aimed at the immediate withdrawal of the history textbook since – according to its text – the latter "ignored, underrated and ridiculed" the Romanian national heroes.[31]

According to several deputies the textbook "strikes out the national-patriotic content from the educational process"[32]. But not only the motion, but also a part of the written and audiovisual press attacked with a rarely seen vehemence the idea of the writers of the textbook to focus more on the "mentalities of a given period" than on individual historical characters. Another controversial aspect was a critical attitude towards the mythologies constructed along the Romanian nation-formation (e.g. the myth of the concerted Daco-Roman founding of the nation, a historical analysis of the archaic historical times by operating with modern, for instance language-based, identities and territories) and in former textbooks, highlighting the fragmented nature and lateness of the founding of the modern Romanian national state (thus, for instance, demythologizing the figure of Michael the Brave, who had been constructed as a foremost leader of an allegedly common Romanian state). The authors even introduced the present-day world into the framework of the

[28] Adrian Cioroianu, *Şo pă Sorin Mitu*, in "Dilema", October 15-29, 1999.

[29] Sorin Mitu (supervisor), Lucia Copoeru, Ovidiu Pecican, Virgiliu Ţârău, Liviu Ţârău, *Istoria românilor. Manual pentru clasa a XIII-a*, Bucureşti, Sigma Publishing House, 1999.

[30] For the declaration of the Romanian diaspora from Paris see: *Diaspora română din Paris – de partea manualului de istorie*, in "Evenimentul Zilei", November 16, 1999, p. 3.

[31] For a synopsis of the motion of no confidence see: Cornel Nistorescu, *Bulă cu papion*, in "Evenimentul Zilei", November 16, 1999, p. 1.

[32] *Parlamenti vita a tizenkettedikes törvénykönyvről*, in "Szabadság", November 14, 1999, p. 8.

textbook, considering it worthy of historical analysis: contemporary personalities, from famous TV presenters to former anti-communist human rights fighters were included in the last chapters. This latter solution led to a new type of argument according to which the authors politicized (so *fragmented*) the otherwise united national history and overvalued contemporary phenomena by treating them in a manner similar to the "legendary heroes".[33]

The motion was also implicitly directed towards the then recently changed national curriculum on history that gave preference to several historical methodologies over the political historical one; already the title pointed out this broader interest and stake of the parliamentary debate over the textbook and its authors: "Motion of no confidence the object of which is the educational policies promoted by the textbooks on Romanian history". The reasoning of the motion foregrounds the idea that the most excruciating characteristics of the textbook was the fact that it reduced the attention usually dedicated to "legendary" figures of Romanian history and "with a view to reach these goals a forced demythologizing and an enforcement of the imaginary took place." The motion itself contains a hidden reference to the stereotype of foreigners (usually those from Western Europe and the United States – a stereotype that appears also in the December 1992 events of Cluj to explain the opposition of the Hungarians towards the deeds of the mayor) that might stand behind the strange and demythologizing character of the textbook: the book "imposes some ideas from Recommendation no. 1283 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe[34] selectively, disproportionately and not at all in harmony with the historical truth".

So the motion not only recommended concrete and immediate action, but also gives a sketchy explanation to the way such a deed could have ever occurred: it seeks explanations outside the community so as to be able to picture the community as being pure and immaculate, respectively wholly homogenous. It also contains a hidden, identity-strengthening narrative about all the good things originating from the community itself, while the bad things having their origin outside the national community.

The very same type of discourse operating with similar imagery recurs in the broader reception of the textbook: during a popular TV-show the chief editor of the textbook was attacked for having a Hungarian wife and having formerly accepted the support of a foreign foundation to participate at a conference. Other views uttered throughout the same discussion established a close link between the allegedly Jewish background of the authors and the problematic characteristics of the book.[35] The newspaper entitled "Curentul"

[33] See for instance: *Maşina de vot a Puterii a respins moţiunea îndreptată împotriva manualului lui Mitu*, in "Curentul", October 17, 1999.

[34] The respective recommendation was aimed at improving the Bill of minority rights, especially after the serial complaints of the representatives of the Hungarian ethnic minority.

[35] For an account of this episode see: Alina Iordache, *Ei/noi evreii şi manualul de istorie*, in "Dilema", October 29–November 4, 1999, p. 2.

placed in the same column, one beneath the other the news according to which *Hungarian teachers from Romania ask pupils to tear the dustjacket of the Hungarian textbooks so as conceal that they come from Hungary* and the negative comments on the rejection of the motion of no confidence, ethnicizing the case of the history textbook in a very subtle way.[36]

So the discussion employs a myth that claims a comprehensive explanation and thus goes far beyond the authors of the textbook, functioning as a construction of an allegedly pure and perfect Romanian identity. It also aims at positioning the participants of the discourse to those who can / may represent the whole community and those who should be excluded from or negatively received in this process of representation, selects the values which should stand at the basis of the judgements that are to be made. And it has also another characteristics, perhaps the most important from the point of view of an interim conclusion I would like to draw regarding the nature of the historical myths in general and of some specific ones in particular in the context of the debate I am trying to approach. Notably that the discourse that focuses on the apology of the historic myths contained by former textbooks seem to work according to similar principles to those of the historical myths themselves, respectively establishes the negative myth of the demonic trying to destroy good and valuable things and threatening the identity of the community itself. Many historical myths operate on binary principles[37] and not only include, but also exclude; provide not only a positive and valuable picture, but also more or less firm borders and a symmetrically *other* world beyond these borders (of course, constituted by values with a symmetrically different symbolical load). While refuting the challenge of the ideas contained by the textbook, those completely accepting the presence of the historical myths seem to operate with the same type of constitutive strategies, the historical myths do. The imaginary of the debate (of course, those parts I have predominantly discussed here) thus has the angelic types siding with the "real", "patriotic" and "national" past and the demonic character of the demythologizers. It is the dichotomy of the *inside* and *outside*, of the *us* and *them*.

The discourse attacking the demythologizing character of another, historical discourse and attitude, and thus siding with the mythologizing discourse actually reproduces the structures of the mythological historical discourse itself. So by speaking for the mythologizing discourse this viewpoint comes very close

[36] *Profesorii maghiari din România cer elevilor să rupă coperţile manualelor ungare pentru a nu se vedea că provin din Ungaria. Banii şi voinţa Budapestei nu înfrâng legile vecine Ungariei*, in "Curentul", October 17, 1992, respectively *Maşina de vot a Puterii a respins moţiunea îndreptată împotriva manualului lui Mitu*, in "Curentul", October 17, 1992.

[37] For excellent comments on this type of structures and the way enemy-construction uses them: Reinhart Koselleck, *Feindbegriffe*, 1994; Carl Schmitt, *Über das Verhältnis der Begriffe Krieg und Feind*, 1938; George Schwab, *Enemy or Foe: A Conflict of Modern Politics*, 1987; Kenneth Burke, *Rhetoric of Hitler's "Battle"*, 1941; Murray Edelmann, *The Construction and Uses of Political Enemies*, 1988; Paul Ricoeur, *Violence et language*, 1967.

to the strategies, the core of the world-view and the type of discourse used by the attitude it tries to protect / speak for. Indeed, in this specific case the viewpoint that tries to defend the *raison d'être* of the Romanian historical myths has recourse to another myth (that often permeats also the historical myths): that of the *demonic other*.

One of the major assumptions of those contesting the figure of the main author of the text-book was that by having a Hungarian wife and by having received the occasional support of a foreign foundation he could be considered at least suspicious when dealing with Romanian national history.

This assumption might offer us the possibility of a theoretical consideration regarding the nature of the process that in this specific case legitimises of the old historical myths and underpins the argumentation. When positioning the co-author and supervisor of the textbook in question outside the Romanian community (by calling him a "bad Romanian" and "agent of foreign powers" respectively alluding to his marriage as being underhand) the argumentation constructs a homogenous "we" within and in the name of which it speaks and also solves the painstaking problem of identifying the cause of the allegedly illegitimate nature of the textbook. The framework this argument employs outlines the different logic according to which the process of vindicating the historical myths works in this case. It focuses primarily not on a professional reasoning, but on the process of *othering* all the figures that could refute the myths. This is why it might prove more successful in a culture where the cultural attributions are not specialized, but interwoven. Specialists are considered not the sole producers of *the truth* regarding the specific cases, but – for instance – politicians, journalists or the opinion of the public are able to produce similarly – if not more – truthful accounts of both present and bygone events. Historical myths in general in this case seem to be supported by the symbolic exclusion (by means of the process of *othering*) from the homogeneously imagined nation of all the professionals and non-professionals that question the legitimacy of the historical myth or myths at issue. On the other hand this nation-conception sketches what stands on the margin or what remains outside the borders of Romanian nationhood: the ethnic minorities (Hungarians and Jews in this case) and the foreigners are strongly believed to be disreputable / incompatible with Romanian history in general and / or its historical myths in particular.

Till now I have focused mainly on the analysis of those discourses that sought an immediate withdrawal of the textbook (and even for the punishment of their authors) and I have hardly used the counterarguments of those siding with the writers, the textbook and the methodologies it represented. In the following I will look at a recurrent idea of those intellectuals and historians that commented not only on the textbook, but also on its multiple uses throughout the debate.

The then Minister of Education Andrei Marga the intellectual who gave the new history curriculum the go-ahead and had pleaded for the idea of alternative textbooks and alternative history teaching for several times, backed

the textbook and its authors: "This textbook – like all the other alternative textbooks – was supervised and judged by a recognized group of historians and diverges in nothing from the principles the Government of Romania agreed with the World Bank: i.e. a modern, scholarly open view on history".[38] But already this first detailed reaction of the minister contained an argument that recurs later, during the parliamentary debate itself on the part of those defending the textbook: "History should be written by those skilled in historiography [...] The majority of the protesters is not competent to question the conception of a textbook"[39]. Or, as a councillor of the Ministry of Education put it from the very beginning: "The judging of the history textbooks and of their methodology is the task of the specialists."[40] Nay, a deputy of the House of Representatives, member in the Committee for Educational Problems reckoned even that "the evaluation of a textbook is outside the sphere of authority of the Parliament. The committees of experts [of the two Houses] go beyond the bounds of their sphere of authority when they try to interfere with professional questions"[41] and "in the whole Europe there has been no precedent for a parliamentary committee of experts to question the competence of the scholars. Between this and a political decision that changes the result of the twice two is hardly any dividing line."[42] All the above-quoted opinions remark on a specific distribution of competences (between political and scientific attributions) that should exist and the borders of which have been transgressed by Parliament itself. The very same distribution of competences is touched upon in a special number of the independent weekly "Dilema" of the time. The periodical enumerates a series of incidents that – according to the authors of the thematic number – have one common feature: the protagonists of all are persons who are not competent to decide the value of the textbook: the prisoners of a Romanian prison lodge a protest against the book, "being offended at the way it treats the Romanian sovereigns"[43]; parents threaten the authors of the book; the same authors are accosted on the street by furious citizens; a director of historical films questions the competence of the supervisor of the book; an influential (and bellicose) journalist puts forward the proposal to return to the single history textbook (and implicitly to a single Romanian history).[44]

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[38] Klárik Attila, *Marga miniszter és az i-re tett pont...*, in "Romániai Magyar Szó", October 13, 1999, p. 1.

[39] *Ibidem.*

[40] *Szakemberek dolga minősíteni a tankönyveket*, in "Szabadság", October 9, 1999, no. 236, p. 1.

[41] *Parlament előtt a vitatott történelemkönyv. Asztalos: a képviselőház túllépte hatáskörét*, in „Szabadság", October 13, no. 239, p. 8.

[42] Gál Mária, *Bukarestben győzött a józan ész. Kihallgatták Andrei Margát tankönyvügyben*, in „Szabadság", October 14, 1999, no. 240, p. 16.

[43] Adrian Cioroianu, *Puşcăriaşi şi academicieni*, in "Dilema", October 29–November 4, 1999, p. 3.

[44] Mircea Vasilescu, *Cum se naşte un "caz"*, in "Dilema", October 29–November 4, 1999, p. 3; Adrian Cioroianu, *Şo pă Sorin Mitu!*, in "Dilema", October 29–November 4, 1999, p. 3.

What is of paramount importance for me is not the literal level of this discourse, but the conceptual one: the circumstance that some protagonists of the debate signal the need for the distribution of competences and foreground one of the very interesting characteristics of the debate: the intermingling of the otherwise specific spheres of activities and the fact that this intermingling leads to the blurring of the borders between the different parts of the same culture. In this context the truth of a specific segment of culture will not be produced anymore by somebody who is suited for this by means of his / her qualification etc. Another relevant aspect of the problem that this blurring of the borders I am speaking about occurs with a particular intensity exactly around questions of the national past.

All these aspects are important because – as we could have already noted – they already occurred in the case of the Cluj events both in November-December 1992 and afterwards: a mayor with no special training in historiography decides and comments in extremely delicate matters of history against the national authority in matters of conservation of the historical buildings and sites, then – in spite of the opinion of the local specialists in archaeology and history – maintains historical excavations even with brute force, then decides about the erection of a statue that is disapproved by the same specialists[45] (not to speak about his attempt to erect a statue in the memory of somebody convicted for criminal behaviour during the war[46] and to recently place the bust of the same person in the assembly room of the local city council against the dispositions of the law). Putting together these similar segments of the two case-studies – the local and the national – they seem to allude to a paradigm and may lead us to broader interpretive conclusions regarding the survival (and in some cases: revival) of the historical myths in Romania.

First of all let me introduce some notions that will further the approach. A Hungarian literary historian, Katalin Hász-Feher refers to the nineteenth-century Hungarian (and broadly Eastern European) notions [!] of literature when elaborating the notions of integrated and structured literature – literature, of course, taken in its broader, historical notion, prior to the disciplinary divisions into parts. She derives the notion of *integrated* from its Latin stem, meaning "intact", "whole", "untouched", "complete" and refers to a paper of Plumpe and Werber using the notion in the same way to mark a common endeavour of the avant-garde of the 1910s-1930s to restore the original, broad notion of literature

[45] For a detailed interview with the supervisor historian of the excavations, the director of the Historical Museum see: Gál Mária, *Kifürkészhetetlen a főtéri gödrök sorsa. A Történelmi Múzeum igazgatója a változásban bízik*, in "Szabadság", November 10, 1999, no. 263, p. 8.

[46] On the debate upon the question see for instance: Balló Áron, *Buchwald Péter felfüggesztette az Antonescu-szobor felállításáról szóló határozatot. Ideiglenes prefektusi minőségében cselekedett*, in "Szabadság", November 11, 1999, no. 264, p. 1; Kiss Olivér, *Antonescu-szobor közkívánatra? Sălcudean nem akar ujat húzni a lakosság nagy "részével"*, in „Szabadság", November 20, 1999, no. 272, p. 1.

prior to its differentiation.[47] Taken in this sense, literature as a subsystem of culture has similar values and functions as all the other subsystems of the very same cultural system. In this framework there are no disciplinary boundaries and specific disciplinary values and specialists. A very frequent form of the framework at issue throughout the nineteenth century is the one within which all the subsystems of the culture pinpoint at the value of *nationhood*, its revival being their common aim; they all function subordinated to this value and idea. The other type of system strives after differentiation: in this sense, as a subsystem of culture, literature foregrounds its specific, unique values (for instance, the aesthetic ones) that make it different and performing different functions from any other subsystem of culture. In this latter case the discourse on a specific part of culture is subsystem-specific, i.e. the truths on a discipline, for instance, can only be asserted by specialists of the respective field and the truths of different fields of the same national culture are thus probably incompatible with one another. This latter type of system might be called *structured* one based again on the Latin stem of the term at issue, meaning: "structure", "construction", "building", "wall", alluding to the manifolded and split nature of the respective system.

Let me take the notions of integrated and structured literature to a higher level of conceptualization since they could be extremely useful in interpreting not only the textbook controversy, but also the Cluj dissentions of 1992. I will speak in what follows about the integrated type of culture and the structured type of culture, the former denoting a culture where the subsystems (including that of the disciplinary discourse on the past) are hardly specialized, or in spite of the existence of the institutions and persons of specialization they have the similar function of legitimating a common cultural value, mostly that of the nation.

The structured culture is the framework comprising different subsystems that – on their turn – have different, sometimes incompatible functions, and even if their values are similar or identical, they use it according to different pragmatics. The notion of the structured culture – as hinted upon in the foregoing – is not identical with the institutions or institutional aspects of the respective culture, since each institution might have a different programme and view on its own, respectively others' functions regarding questions of history and specialization.

Naturally, the reality modeled by this dichotomy is much more complex: we could most probably speak of cultural orientations, respectively about differently oriented situations of the very same culture, this latter being

[47] The original *locus* of the paper at issue is: "[...] diese Differenz von System und Umwelt noch einmal als Medium wählt, nun aber in der Absicht, diese Differenz zu *ent*differenzieren: Kunst, Literatur und «Leben» zu integrieren oder zu «verschmelzen»." Gerhard Plumpe, Niels Werber, *Literatur ist codierbar. Aspekte einer systemtheoretischen Literaturwissenschaft*, in Siegfried J. Schmidt, ed., *Literaturwissenschaft und Systemtheorie. Positionen, Kontroversen, Perspektiven*, Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1993, p. 39.

constituted not only by converging tendencies and homogeneities, but also by inhomogeneities, hesitations, divergencies, internal differences and transitional states and aspects.

So *the model of unspecialized culture* (where the production of the truths regarding national history is not linked to specialization and craftsmanship, but some other segments of the national culture may have similar (or even more important authority) to produce historical truths like the discipline of historiography itself) *proves a framework that enables the use and misuse of history and historical myths.*

Conclusions

Several conclusions can be drawn that go beyond the interim conclusions of the paper.

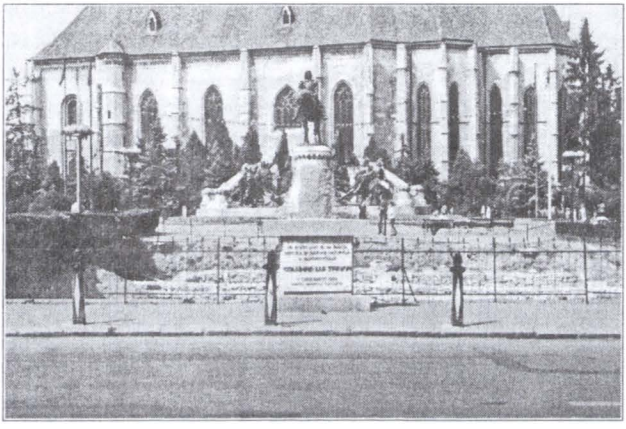
1. First and foremost should be mentioned that *the historical myths of today's Romania are often perpetuated by the ethnic differences and struggles*; the conflicts that arise from the different interpretations of the myths not only perpetuate and strengthen the ethnical borders (thus functioning as border-making and identity-constituting formations) and ethnical affiliation to these myths, but also reproduce and strengthen the myths themselves, respectively often intensely ethnicize them.

2. The type of unspecialized culture in the framework of which history and historical myths *can be* used and *are* used exactly because the production of the truths regarding national history is not linked to specialization and craftsmanship, but some other segments of the national culture may have similar (or even more important authority) to produce historical truths like the discipline of historiography itself. If we view this characteristic of contemporary Romanian culture in a historical framework, a historically argumented interpretation may be given that provides a macro-framework for the understanding of the preservation, uses and misuses of historical myths both in Romania and in specific parts of the Balkans.

Romania – unlike Hungary, for instance – became a unitary state only in 1918, after the unification of Transylvania and some smaller regions with the other Romanian realms. Though the ideology of the Romanian nation-construction is partly prior to the actual formation of the national state, the successful actual constitution of a homogenous national state was much delayed both because of the regional differences and also as the result of the existence of significant ethnic communities (mainly the Hungarian and German ones) in Transylvania. The slowness of modernization also slowed the process of nation-formation. According to my view this is why *there is a huge (and sometimes anachronistic – of course, from the point of view of the new, more global, and less national identities) phase shift in the process of nation-construction:*

history is still being viewed by a serious part of the elite and of the population as the foremost ground of an allegedly homogenous national identity.

That is also why there seems to be as much continuity as paradigm shift in general between the former patterns and interpretations of national history, prior to 1989 and those after it, both on the part of the Romanian Academy of Sciences and the public at large. A type of unspecialized culture (i.e. an integrated one) including a teleological way of defining the value of the national and the relationship towards it (i.e. positioning the value of the national above all types of values of the respective culture and imagining it as the value that transcends the whole culture, irrespectively of disciplinary boundaries and of subsystems of the respective culture) functions as a fertile ground for the perpetuation and strengthening of the historical myths.



Picture 1. Statue of Mathis Corvinus and proposed site of Trajan's Column emplacement, Cluj cites centre

Picture 2. Red, yellow and blue – painted metal bollards in a central Cluj street

HISTORICAL AGENCY IN A WORLD OF CONSUMERS: SIMON SCHAMA AND THE HAMBURGER OF HISTORY

Tim Hitchcock

In 1965 Simon Schama, the author of several important books, the star of Britain's recent renaissance of television history, and the person who, more than anyone else epitomises the successful achievement of the aspirations of a generation of Western historians on both sides of the Atlantic, discovered food.[1]

He had grown up in a Kosher household and during his first years at University, his mother lovingly dispatched parcels of roast chicken, strudel and fish cakes to his college rooms. His undergraduate tutor, the incredibly rude and acerbic Jack Plumb, elaborately accommodated his dietary requirements, serving him rubbery omelettes, while Plumb himself tucked in to partridge and grouse, and the exotic servings of the high table tradition of Cambridge University.

In response, and under the second hand tutelage of movie stars, and through the assiduous study of the works of Julia Child, Jane Grigson and Elizabeth David (the writers who more than any others introduced an English reading audience to the delights of world food), Schama developed a passion and a facility for cooking. He made ratatouille, sole meuniere and gazpacho, to the applause of his Cambridge contemporaries.

At first he cooked within the boundaries of Kosher cuisine. But, at the end of the day, tempted beyond endurance by Plumb, encouraged by his ever hungry fellow students, and discouraged by the seemingly humble and parochial offerings of his own family and background, Schama gave in. He turned his back on the lovingly prepared weekly packages of roast chicken, strudel and fish balls sent by his doting mother, he turned his back on a central element of his own upbringing.

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[1] Besides his recent starring role in the BBC's *History of Britain* series, Simon Schama's major publications include (in reverse chronological order): *A History of Britain*, vol. 3, *The Fate of the Empire*, Talk Miramax Books, 2002; *Rembrant's Eyes*, Knopf, 2001; *A History of Britain*, vol. 2, *The British Wars*, Talk Miramax Books, 2001; *A History of Britain*, vol. I, *The Edge of the World 3500 B.C.–1603 A.D.*, Talk Miramax Books, 2000; *Landscape and Memory*, Vintage Books, 1996; *Dead Certainties*, Vintage Books, 1992; *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution*, Vintage Books, 1990; *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*, Vintage Books, 1997 (first published 1987); *Two Rothschilds and the Land of Israel* (Alfred Knopf, 1978); *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands 1780-1813*, Vintage Books, 1992 (first published 1977).

What is important for us today, is not his abandonment of a millennial old culinary tradition, but the direction of the journey he took from this most European of backgrounds. Guilt ridden, but determined, he did not look for a small French bistro, or a bit of cheese and pate, or even a chicken masala. Instead he walked directly to the nearest Wimpy Bar.

For those unfamiliar with the British Wimpy Bar, they are studies in American cultural hegemony. They serve up a pallid British simulacrum of the fattiest and most disgusting of American fast food. The meal that Schama chose to mark his transition from smart Jewish boy to international scholar was a hamburger – something called, in a beautifully ironic twist, a "real McCoy".[2]

In a very direct way, Schama's journey and choice, years ago in Cambridge, from a well defined community with a well defined cuisine, to American fast-food, reflects the journey of his generation of historians, of writers like John Brewer, Linda Colley, David Cannadine and Roy Porter. This is a group of historians, whose work has centred on eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain, who were trained by J.H. Plumb, and who have crafted a powerful tradition in their own right, that shares a peculiar, if largely unexamined, ideology. The purpose of this paper is to explore the work of this generation of historians, their contributions to history, and the extent to which, underpinning it all, is a model of social change and development of which we need to be explicitly aware. At the same time it is an attempt to reflect on the very peculiar place in which we as historians now find ourselves. To reflect on how we can write history that is relevant, political and engaging, that helps to explain the past and informs the present, without recourse to the ideological constructs associated with Marxism, a construct that no longer has the political and intellectual purchase it possessed for most of the last hundred and fifty years. In other words, this paper is an attempt to critique one major strand of Western history and to suggest other ways of writing the past.

In terms of Simon Schama and his hamburger, it is an attempt to suggest that European historians have been seduced by the joys of American intellectual life. They have seen the well appointed libraries of Harvard and Yale, spent time at the Huntington and at Princeton, and in the process have abandoned many aspects of their national historical and intellectual traditions, in favour of an ill-thought out and essentially unfulfilling intellectual perspective. They have eaten fully of the empty intellectual calories of American academic life, and are now purveying that junk food to an European audience.

Sir Jack Plumb was the supervisor of all these historians. He was also a very unpleasant man. He has the reputation for having been the rudest man ever to occupy a professorial chair in Cambridge, and to have quite unnecessarily trod on the feelings of other scholars in his headlong dash to advance his own career. He was also an inspirational teacher and intellectually powerful figure in

[2] Simon Schama, *Michael Caine inspired me to cook (and not a lot of people know that)*, "The Guardian", 19 September 2002, "Food", p. 10-11.

the Cambridge history department of the 1950s and 60s. Indeed, his was the closest thing that Cambridge possessed to the personification of a liberal historical tradition. From an undistinguished class background, and with socialist leanings for much of his life (until his volte face and adoption of extreme right wing views in the 1970s), he was the only research student ever trained by the single most important British social historian of inter-war Britain, G.M. Trevelyan, and could arguably lay claim to the liberal middle ground of social historical thought. Plumb recognised earlier than his less gifted colleagues, such as Geoffrey Elton, that social history would replace its constitutional competitors in the hearts of a wider readership, and in the job descriptions scanned by ambitious young historians.[3]

Through his students, much more than through his own work, Plumb has given focus to the recent historiography of eighteenth and nineteenth century Britain, and because of British history's central role as the first industrial society in a Marxist paradigm, created a model that many scholars around the world have followed.

The distinctive characteristic of this historiography is its apparently liberal but not ideological nature. It eschews supply-side economic models of either social division or agency, and combines a history of consumption with a Habermasian analysis of the development of political culture and civil society. In other words, this tradition gives authority to the individual in part through studying what they choose to buy (whether the products of the industrial revolution, or Britain's growing empire), and secondly through what upper and middle class people, said and read.

To simply review some of the more important works of this school of history gives a sense of the proclivities these authors share. The best starting point in this literature is the jointly authored *Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialisation of Eighteenth-Century England*, first published in 1983.[4] In this volume, J.H. Plumb, John Brewer and Neil McKendrick laid out a stark, and largely new vision of eighteenth-century Britain, of its industrial revolution and political landscape. In a series of essays on John Wilkes and the commercialisation of radicalism, on leisure, shaving and fashion, the authors embedded a new idea in to British history, the notion of a "consumer revolution". They argued that the transformations associated with the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries could be most readily understood by exploring what people wanted to buy, and why. In many respects this new pre-occupation was a simple reflection of the changing nature of 1970s British society, with its own new emphasis on the joys and cultures of consumption.

[3] For a sympathetic account of Plumb's career by his one time student and collaborator, Neil McKendrick, see Sir Jack Plumb, "The Guardian", October 22, 2001, p. 20; for a more critical assessment see Jeremy Black, *A plumb with an acerbic aftertaste*, "The Times Higher", August 16, 2002, p. 18-19.

[4] Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and Sir John Harold Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England*, Indiana University Press, 1982.

A few years later Simon Schama brought out his most substantial volume, *The Embarrassment of Riches*.[5] This book provides a history of the Dutch Republic during its seventeenth-century golden age. In it, Schama pits the incredible new wealth of the Netherlands in the seventeenth century, against its puritanical religious culture, to provide an explanation of change that places consumption centre stage. In this volume class conflict is replaced by an internal psychological battle between religion and desire, between an essentially medieval notion of physical restraint, and what Schama depicts as an essentially modern desire for luxury and excess.

These volumes, along with a raft of further studies, essentially reconfigured British history away from economic explanations of the development of industrial society based in supply side economics, to versions of history in which marketing and desire were central.[6]

In many respects this new intellectual turn towards consumption was a simple reflection of the broader social change both Western Europe and preeminently North America underwent in the post war era. As mass psychology, advertising, and the creation of new kinds of desire through the manipulation of public fantasies (both in film and television) took hold of whole populations, older histories that sought to explain change through either industrial innovation or even class conflict, seemed increasingly irrelevant. For the generation of historians like John Brewer and Simon Schama, who grew up in a Britain still wedded to rationing, and whose early adulthood was marked by the discovery of American over indulgence, the idea that desire could be manipulated and was itself a powerful historical force, was self-evident.

The success of this move from supply-side analysis to demand side, is reflected in the woeful decline of economic history in Britain. There was once, just twenty years ago, a flourishing group of economic history departments in Universities up and down the country – all busily employing people to map the development of Britain's industrial infrastructure, and to salve that peculiarly British sense of anxiety over its gradual economic decline. Today, only one separate economic history department remains, and even here, among the shards and fragments of a once dominant tradition, you will be hard pressed to find a supply-side economic historian.[7]

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[5] Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age*, Vintage Books, 1997 (first published 1987).

[6] A brief sample of this larger literature might include Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783*, Oxford University Press, 1992; Maxine Berg, *The Age of Manufactures*, second edition, Routledge, 1994; Linda Colley, *Britons*, Yale University Press, 1992, in particular chapter 2; L. Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain 1660-1760*, Routledge, 1988; Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, Methuen, 1989; Robin Reilly, *Josiah Wedgwood 1730-1795*, Macmillan, 1992; Beverly Lemire, *Fashion's Favourite: the Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain 1660-1800*, Oxford University Press, 1991.

[7] The only free standing department that has not been combined with either a department of economics or department of social history is at the London School of Economics.

The culmination of this transition came in a series of books edited by John Brewer with Roy Porter, Susan Staves and Ann Bermingham.[8] These volumes charted the history of consumption in Britain during that long eighteenth century between the Civil Wars of the 1640s and 50s, and the triumph of industrial society in the mid-nineteenth century. And were crafted from a three-year series of seminars run by John Brewer at the Huntington Library in Southern California. In books entitled *Consumption and the World of Goods, Early Modern Conceptions of Property*, and *The Consumption of Culture, 1600-1800*, the whole of British and British colonial history was constructed around the centrality of the act of buying and consuming. Scholars from around the world, sat in the sunny capital of consumption, and imposed an essentially late twentieth-century notion on a powerful national history. They reconfigured British history to make it fit more easily in to an essentially American worldview.

The important element of this development is not simply the elimination of older forms of economic explanation (however important these might have been). Instead, it is the extent to which this new, essentially economic model has been tied directly to a political story. John Brewer, Simon Schama, Linda Colley and David Cannadine were all initially labourers in political history. Brewer's *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III*, Colley's *In Defiance of Oligarchy* and Cannadine's numerous works on the history of the Aristocracy in the nineteenth century, were contributions to the history of the British state.[9] In some respects they partook of the characteristics of a social history of politics, but their *raison d'être* was describing the exercise of institutional power.

What allowed these historians, again all students of, or deeply influenced by, J.H. Plumb, to integrate a history of consumption (that essentially American idea and ideal) within their own more European pre-occupation with the politics of power was the work of the German philosopher/historian, Jurgen Habermas. By combining Habermas' *Authentic Public Sphere* to their own growing interest in consumption and desire they created a more powerful historical tool, than either Habermas's ideas or the history of consumption on its own.

Habermas' *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* was originally written in the early 1960s, but was only translated in to English in 1989, and as

[8] John Brewer, ed., *Consumption and Culture in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: A Bibliography*, UCLA Center for 17th and 18th Century Studies/Clark Library, 1991; John Brewer and Roy Porter, eds, *Consumption and the World of Goods in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, Routledge, 1993; John Brewer and Susan Staves, eds, *Early Modern Conceptions of Property*, Routledge, 1995; Ann Bermingham and John Brewer, eds, *The Consumption of Culture: Word, Image, and Object in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, Routledge, 1995. John Brewer himself went on to cap this series with a substantial monograph, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, Harper Collins, 1997.

[9] See for example John Brewer's, Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III, Cambridge University Press, 1976: Simon Schama, *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands 1780-1813*, Vintage Books, 1992 (first published 1977); Linda Colley, In Defiance of Oligarchy. The Tory Party 1714-60, Cambridge University Press, 1982; David Cannadine, Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy, Yale University Press, 1990.

I am informed, was translated in to Romanian in 1998. Habermas suggested in this work that the origins of modern politics could be found in the coffeehouses of eighteenth-century London. That it was among the literate and urbane inhabitants of London that the first politically aware public could be found. Under the rubric "the authentic public sphere" middle class urbanites who in previous centuries were supposedly politically powerless, became, in the historian's eyes at least, suddenly powerful. The emergence of this "public" with its opinions, in Habermas' view, radically reshaped the nature of the modern state, and laid the basis for the creation of democratic politics in the next century.[10]

When this theory of the transformation of the "public sphere" was combined with consumption, what was created was a subtle and powerful idea that has swept most dissenting voices from the stage, and encouraged a new generation of historians to follow in its broad wake. Quite suddenly and dramatically, an economic story of the creation of desire could be melded with the story of the rise of the nation state, to create what appears to be a coherent narrative that helps to explain "modernity". The very same generations of well-to-do English men and women could be depicted as the originators of industrial power, colonial expansion *and* political stability.[11] These developments could now be explained by appeal to the self-serving desires of an urban elite. These were the products of a set of new desires that encouraged the industrialists to set up factories and merchants to set up colonies, and politicians to be ever wary about a newly fickle and hungry public opinion. In effect, what was created was a story that explained both democracy and the creation of the wealth of the West, as the result of rich people doing precisely what they wanted. The parallels between this analysis, and the self-serving justifications for the orgy of consumption that has characterised British and American cultural politics in the 1980s and 90s is self-evident.

This was a heady and powerful intellectual mix that has gone on to inform the work of many other historians. Feminist historians such as Amanda Vickery have used both consumption-led models of historical change, along with a Habermassian emphasis on conversation, to reshape a traditionally Marxiant women's history. She has created a story in which elite women's ability to both consume the new goods of the industrial revolution, and to participate in the political debates of the salon, are used to locate women's experience and authority in general.[12]

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[10] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a category of Bourgeois Society*, Trans. Thomas Burger with Frederick Lawrence MIT Press, 1989.

[11] For example see Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class: The Political Representation of Class in Britain, c. 1780-1840*, Cambridge University Press, 1995, and Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785*, Cambridge University Press, 1995.

[12] See Amanda Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England*, Yale University Press, 1998.

The coincidence of the rise of this new and markedly non-Marxist analysis with the collapse of the Soviet Empire was, of course, not a coincidence. In a very real way the events of the late 1980s and 90s forced historians to look for new, and decidedly non-Marxist ways of analysing the past. "Public Sphere Consumption Theory" if you will excuse me coining a particularly lumpen phrase, was simply the most readily available explanatory narrative, and the narrative that most fully encompassed the positive joys of consumption of the sort that a reconfigured, post-Soviet world seemed to offer.

As should be apparent however, there is a slight problem with this approach. And that problem lies in the notion of agency that seems to lie at its heart. Agency can be defined as the ability of an individual or group of individuals to self-consciously effect the course of historical change. Agency is the linking concept that melds our personal, modern behaviour, with our explanations of the past.

But more than this, it is a perennial problem for historians. Indeed, one could argue that most of the historical models we have created in the last two hundred years have lacked any substantial notion of individual agency. Within the British Marxist tradition, the heroic plebeian politics of Edward Thompson's class warriors attributed point and power to at least a politicised sub-section of the poor; while the work of Marxist historians of crime has seen agency in the acts of a range of apparently socially disenfranchised smugglers and poachers. But, even within this most humane of Marxist traditions, the ability to impact on the course of history has been largely restricted to the tiniest minority of working people – a minority largely defined by their intelligence, their desperation and their male gender.[13]

Other historiographical traditions have given even less authority to the individual, and none to working people. Michel Foucault and his followers essentially abandoned any attempt to provide a model of historical agency, and depicted everyone as equal victims of discourse – unable to think outside the languages they knew. In this tradition the inequalities of power and agency cease to be questioned, and the historian's task becomes little more than the subtle describing of gradually changing discursive constructions. For Foucault, the gaoler and his prisoner, the capitalist and her employee, the rapist and his victim, are all sides of a single coin minted from the specie that is language.[14]

Similarly, the historical tradition associated with the Annales school, Braudel, et al, restricted individual agency to the narrowest of elites, and hedged about even that limited agency with geography and weather.[15] More recent

[13] For some recent discussion of this historiographical tradition see Harvey J. Kaye, *The British Marxist Historians: An Introductory Analysis,* Polity Press, 1984, and Bryan D. Palmer, *E.P. Thompson: Objections and Oppositions*, Verso, 1994.

[14] For some recent literature on Michel Foucault and his work see Mitchell Dean, *Critical and Effective Histories: Foucault's Methods and Historical Sociology,* Routledge, 1994, and Michael Kelly, ed., *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate*, MIT Press, 1994.

[15] See Peter Burke, *The French Historical Revolution: The Annales School, 1929-89*, Polity Press and Standford University Press, 1990.

history, informed by anthropology, has abandoned agency in the same breadth as it abandons the explanations of change. In the works of historians such as Keith Thomas and Natalie Zemon Davis, anthropological models provide a wonderful and powerful means of unpacking complex relationships and texts, but no way of actually explaining them.[16]

"Public Sphere Consumption Theory", the works of John Brewer, Simon Schama, David Cannadine and Linda Colley, et al, does have a notion of agency, but one that is peculiarly restricted. What it does is to sneak into the equation notions of agency and explanation that have their own dire political effects. In other words, the rich become important, their agency being located precisely in what they choose to buy, while the poor, workers and non-metropolitan populations, become so much historical dead wood. In the feminist historiography, buying a frock or a dining room table, becomes a political act, while every new painting commissioned by a member of the gentry, every new built country estate, every novel read and new dish eaten, becomes a building block in the creation of the modern state and of modernity itself. At the same time, every hard won, but unbought, item on a cottager's shelf becomes literally meaningless.[17]

This state of affairs is deeply depressing, and more importantly neither correct nor necessary. We can be more ambitious than this. We can have a model of historical change that is more inclusive and more democratic. We can have a history that gives full credence to the importance of gender, without limiting women's role to what kind of dress they buy. We can have political histories that re-insert the beliefs and actions of the poor, and we can have histories, freed from the restrictions of the language of Marxism, that still recognise the significance of conflict along divisions of class, gender and race.

Having made these points, it is incumbent upon me to give an example of the kind of analysis I would substitute for consumption theory. And perhaps the easiest way for me to do so, is to spend the rest of this paper describing what I can only think of as the *agency* of just a few paupers – the contemporaries of the elite men and women, who Simon Schama, and John Brewer, David Cannadine and Linda Colley place so much emphasis upon.

When Mary Brown, a seventeen-year old London prostitute and orphan went into labour, she asked the advice of her landlady and bawd, Mrs Davies. A long discussion ensued in the house in Jackson's Alley, off Bow Street, where Mary had entertained men for several years. The question on everyone's lips

[16] See Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, Widenfeld and Nicolson, 1971, and Natalie Zemon Davis, *Anthropology and History in the 1980s: the possibilities of the past*, "Journal of Interdisciplinary History", 12 (1981), 267-275.

[17] An instructive attempt to integrate the consumption patterns of the poor in to a broader understanding economic development is Peter King, *Pauper inventories and the material lives of the poor in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries*, in Tim Hitchcock, Pamela Sharpe and Peter King, eds, *Chronicling Poverty: The Voices and Strategies of the English Poor, 1640-1840*, Macmillan, 1997.

was "which is the casualty parish?", or in other words, where is the best casualty department in town? One young woman suggested St Martin in the Fields, but was answered, "No, no, St Clement is the best casualty parish – send her there!" Mary was hustled into a coach, and presented herself at the door of the workhouse. And while the workhouse mistress vainly attempted to restrict her access by insisting that the overseer be summoned before she would be admitted, the demands of nature ensured that Mary soon found herself in the well-appointed lying in ward, giving birth to a healthy boy. She was later examined as to her legal right to have relief from the parish, giving a well-crafted but probably spurious, story. She claimed to have been born on shipboard between Ireland and England, and hence completely outside the system of settlement. As a result both Mary and her little boy stayed put and St Clement Danes reinforced its reputation as the best "casualty parish" in London.[18]

The point about this story is that it exemplifies the way in which individual paupers could make decisions, and could, in the process help to shape the nature of the bureaucratic systems provided for their relief. In this instance, Mary Brown's claim, based on the undeniable evidence of an infant eager to be born, and her perhaps truthful, but certainly opportune, response to the questions posed by the Overseers, resulted in the parish providing a set of resources it did not want to provide, to a person it did not want to relieve. As a result, in a small way, Mary Brown self-consciously contributed to the evolution of the comprehensive system of poor relief gradually developed in eighteenth century London. By demanding relief in circumstances in which she could not be refused, she forced the parish to extend its care beyond the limits demanded by the law. To this extent she possessed an historical agency that has been largely denied to women and men of her class by historians.[19]

Paul Patrick Kearney was a uniquely verbose, pedantic and literate London beggar. He had been a householder in Fenchurch Street, part of the parish of St Dionis Backchurch in the 1740s, and by the late 1760s was in dire straights, in danger of perishing on the winter streets. He was ragged and begging, and on applying to the churchwardens he was eventually relieved with a shilling. During 1766 and 67, he received a course of balsamic tincture and balsamic lohock for his ills. He was also given a cap, a hat, shoes, hose, breeches, a waistcoat and a great coat. On medicines and clothing for Kearney, the parish spent £4.16s.1d in one year alone. It also arranged, at his request, for treatment as an outpatient by Westminster Hospital and for him to be taken in to the hospital at the first opportunity. On his release from Westminster he was placed in a contract workhouse in Rose Lane in Spitalfields run by Richard

[18] Westminster Archives Centre, *St Clements Settlement & Bastardy Examinations Book*, MS B1187, p. 147-150.

[19] For an example of similar material used to create a genuinely democratic history see Catherina Lis and Hugo Soly, *Disordered Lives: Eighteenth-Century Families and their Unruly Relatives*, Polity Press, 1996.

Birch. Kearney was disgusted by the conditions and the idea that he would be required to work regularly at jobs he considered demeaning and within seven weeks he was once again outside the workhouse, under the treatment of an "eminent physician". From here he was sent, again at his own request, and at parochial expense, to Guy's Hospital, where he continued for a couple of months, before finally falling into dispute about the quality of his "body linen" and the hospital's charges for cleaning it.

Having been discharged from Guy's he was lodged at the Ipswich Arms in Cullum Street for several weeks and the parish paid to allow him to advertise for a position. He later tried to take employment as a secretary to a Captain Scott. At this point, after years of frustration and grumbling on the part of the parish officers, they finally concluded that he was mentally ill – a conclusion shared by the house doctor at Guys among others – and he was placed in a private mad house in Hoxton.[20]

The point is that Kearney moved several times through a range of London institutions. He was able to force his parish, over the frustrated whinging of generations of parish officers, to give him the care he desired. Certainly, that care was not always in the form he wanted, and certainly the final outcome, confinement in a madhouse at Hoxton, was not what Kearny had intended. But, throughout the process, Kearney's ability to browbeat and manipulate the parish officers is abundantly clear.

If you begin to piece together the lives of London's paupers, what immediately strikes you is the extent to which the various institutions of the capital were forced to inter-relate with each other as a result of the requests of the poor themselves. There is a constant stream of letters and notes from the administrators of parish workhouses and charitable institutions organising the transfer of paupers and the repayment of fees. Women went from the lying in hospitals to the workhouses to the infirmaries and back. Their children (at their mother's request) where delivered to the Foundling and the marine society. The elderly were constantly moving from workhouses to almshouses, or on to their relatives.[21]

In the process, what had been created as a disparate set of institutions founded upon a set of unrealistic stereotypes, became an increasingly integrated system of social services. By the third quarter of the eighteenth century there were 86 parochial workhouses in London, and innumerable private charities and

[20] Guildhall Library, *St Dyonis Backchurch, papers relating to a poor law appeal form Paul Patrick Kearney, 1771*, Ms. 11280C.

[21] On the workhouses of London and the patterns of behaviour among inmates see Tim Hitchcock, Paupers and Preachers: The SPCK and the English Workhouse Movement, in L. Davison, et al, eds, Stilling the Grumbling Hive: The Regulation of Social and Economic Problems in England, 1689-1750, Allen Sutton Press, 1992, and Tim Hitchcock, "Unlawfully begotten on her body": Illegitimacy and the Parish Poor in St Luke's Chelsea, in T. Hitchcock, P. King and P. Sharpe, eds, Chronicling Poverty: The Voices and Strategies of the English Poor, 1640-1840, Macmillan, 1997.

hospitals, alms houses and mad houses, not to mention prisons, bridewells, compters, and watch-houses. For the poor, access to this system was available through the parochial workhouses for those who could claim a settlement, and through the complex prison system for those who could not. And the point I want to make here is that this integration was not created by design, or as a result of the opinions or behaviour of the middling sort, but rather by the demands of the poor themselves.

What looks like a rigid and well-demarcated set of institutions, governed by expressed prejudice and legal precept when viewed from the printed books collection of the British Library, looks very different through the eyes of Mary Brown or Patrick Kearney. For them, what emerged in the flurry of foundations was a system of relief that for all of its failings still seemed to promise the resources and care they needed. And having apparently made the promise, the governmental and non-governmental agencies involved were held to it – not by the middling sort, but by the poor.

The way paupers used workhouses, for instance, had only the slightest connection to how the designers thought they should be used. Workhouse populations were dominated by women, children and the ill (as were the British poor as a whole). The vast majority of the population of the workhouse of St Luke's Chelsea, for instance, was made up of people seeking some kind of medical treatment. As a result the medical provisions available in London's workhouses rapidly increased in both importance and cost. In an excellent recent dissertation on the care of venereal disease in the capital, Kevin Sienna notes that within three years of the establishment of almost all the major parochial workhouses of Westminster, substantial infirmaries had been created from the spaces originally intended to house and set on work the able and the idle.[22]

More than this, it is clear that these same institutions soon took on a range of further roles for which they had never been designed. They became crèches for working mothers, lying in hospitals and geriatric wards. They quickly became short stay hostels for domestic servants out of work, and one facet of a more complex urban economy of makeshift that included hawking, and selling, service and casual labour. Even the apparently insuperable issue of settlement did not allow institutions to filter out those who failed to fit the stereotype. One little observed aspect of the workings of the system of vagrancy in eighteenth-century London is the extent to which substantive medical care became a growing component of the process of removal. In effect Bridewell and Clerkenwell, the London Workhouse, the Poultry Compter and Woodstreet, the crowded prisons of London, were drawn into an increasingly close relationship with hospitals and workhouses, that effectively gave vagrants (those without a legal settlement) a new route of access to the well funded and extensive medical care of the capital. While an aspect of the development of the nightly watch that again

[22] Kevin Patrick Siena, *Poverty and the Pox: Venereal Disease in London Hospitals, 1600-1800* (PhD thesis, University of Toronto, 2001).

garners little historical comment, is the extent to which these night-time institutions served as a first port of call for many ill and desperate paupers. While watchmen frequently arrested and confined people it did not want on the streets, they were also frequently confronted by paupers clamouring for admission, seeking a referral to the local workhouse, or prison and then hospital.[23]

A clear measure of this process can be found in the accounts of the City of London. Year by year, the amounts spent on capturing and processing vagrants was recorded. Money was spent to keep them alive during their prison sentences, and to pay for their whipping and their removal. But money was also paid to support them through illness. Every death in Bridewell was subject to a mandatory Coroner's inquest – and the first questions asked were always about the food, clothing and medical care provided the prisoner. Gradually over the course of the second half of the eighteenth-century, the City of London was forced to refer a higher and higher proportion of its vagrants to hospital for medical care. By the 1790s, the cost of these referrals had risen to an average of £756. 14s. 1d per year for vagrants clothed and supported in St Bartholomew's Hospital, and up to £1057. 9s 3d. for those referred to St Thomas'.[24] Getting on for £2000 per year was being spent giving vagrants and beggars the best hospital care available in the Capital. But from our perspective, what is important here is that the individual vagrants involved were able to use even the apparently unlikely pathway of arrest and imprisonment to gain access to a comprehensive medical service. And given that City vagrants as a group look substantially different than the broader category of London beggars, I think our assumption must be that the vagrants involved quite self-consciously sought arrest as a way of accessing resources. In the process the nature of the hospital care involved, and the penal approach to vagrancy pursued by the City, were necessarily transformed.

And this process of integration and expansion does not work simply in terms of by-lateral relationships between paired institutions. The recent work of Lisa Cody's and Tanya Evan's on lying in hospitals and the Foundling, has made clear that the whole range of London's foundations gradually developed strong relationships with a wide range of alternative sites of care.[25]

One can tell essentially the same story for any number of foundations.

The Foundling Hospital, for instance, soon became an integral part of parochial provision, as the parishes of the South East England looked to it as a

[23] For a recent account of the development of the Night Watch see Elaine A. Reynolds, *Before the Bobbies: The Night Watch and Police Reform in Metropolitan London, 1720–1830*, Stanford University Press, 1998.

[24] See Corporation of London Record Office, *City's Cash Accounts*, 1791-99, MS. 2/61, fols 130-131, 294-295; MS. 2/62, p. 303-305, 358-361; MS. 2/64, p. 353-356; MS. 2/65, p. 365-368; MS. 2/66, p. 344-347; MS. 3/67, p. 352-355; MS. 3/68, p. 263-266.

[25] See Tanya Evans, *Unmarried Motherhood in Eighteenth-Century London* (University of London, PhD thesis, 2001), and Lisa Forman Cody, *The Politics of Body Contact: Disciplines of Reproduction in Britain, 1688-1834* (University of California at Berkeley, PhD thesis, 1993).

haven for the babies of anxious pauper parents. While the Magdalene Hospital for Penitent Prostitutes quickly realised that none of the prostitutes of London were particularly interested in its brand of reformation, forcing it instead to concentrate on the children of the ne'er-do-well middling sort.[26] These changes were the result of hard pressed administrators and parochial officers finding that the demands of the poor contradicted the rules of their institutions. In every vestry room, at the door of every workhouse and hospital, individuals were faced with a constant stream of demands from the clearly needy. And while the poor quickly learned the type of story they needed to tell in order to gain admission, the gatekeepers of charity were forced to re-assign resources to meet real needs. In the process, and this is the really impressive element, the poor wove these disparate institutions into a single system, largely accessible, and inter-related, that actually worked. They also, in the process ensured that more and more money was spent on their needs.

Peter Mandler has recently pointed out that the poor need to understand how social policy and the niceties of social interaction work much more thoroughly than do their richer neighbours. For the poor knowledge of these systems is a necessary key to survival.[27] In eighteenth-century London paupers knew how the system worked, and it was through their individual actions, the collective force of their individual demands and behaviours, that an incoherent system was forced to evolve into one that could cope with their difficult and disparate needs. And if this was true in the inchoate and ridiculously complex world of London social policy, it was by extension, equally, if not more true in the thousands of smaller towns and cities about the country and beyond.

The poor could do this, could shape this system to their needs, precisely because they did have a currency to spend. It may not have been the pounds, shillings and pence beloved of the historians of consumption, but it was nevertheless a tradable commodity – it was the language of right and charity, the notion of hospitality, and the substance of Christianity. Ironically, given Foucault's denial of individual agency, attention to the languages of poverty suggests early modern "discourses" gave the poor the heavy coin of social authority.

The implications of this story of pauper agency for Western history seem to me substantial. The institutions discussed above were at the heart of the creation of both an effective modern state, and the construction of a post-Enlightenment personality. Prisons and workhouses became the most common

[26] For a recent analysis of the origin of foundlings see Alysa Levene, *Health and Survival Chances at the London Foundling Hospital and the Spedale Degli Innocenti of Florence, 1741-99* (University of Cambridge, PhD thesis, 2002); and for the Magdalen Hospital see Sarah Lloyd, *"Pleasure's golden bait": prostitution, poverty and the Magdalen Hospital in 18th century London*, "History Workshop Journal", 41 (1996), 50-70; S.D. Nash, *Prostitution and charity: the Magdalen Hospital, a case study*, "Journal of Social History", 17 (1984), 617-628.

[27] Peter Mandler, ed., *The Uses of Charity: The Poor on Relief in the Nineteenth-Century Metropolis*, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990, p. 1, 15-16.

and powerful expression of state authority. And the ideas that underpinned them, were those most clearly derived from the new rationalist systems of thought, which were themselves constructed in the context of the new economic ideology of the age: capitalism. If the poor, if the weak and ill, are effectively shaping this important fragment of the wider phenomenon of modernity, we must assume that their contemporaries were having an equally profound impact on other aspects of this broad transition. In other words, to understand the evolution of the modern world, we need to re-insert the actions and agency of the poor, of working people, of the demotic masses, who are almost universally excluded by the kinds of history associated with consumption.

But to conclude with Simon Schama's hamburger. The valorisation of consumption, informed by individual desire is simply not enough to explain Western History. A generation of historians has been seduced by the easy answers. Answers that fit happily with modern American ideologies, that don't threaten the well-springs of global capitalism, or the peculiarly inhumane beliefs prominent in North America about the role of the state and social policy. I believe Western historians need to rediscover the wealth of ideas, the legitimate traditions that we have inherited, that give full credence to the real power and authority of the individual. We cannot allow ourselves to be satisfied with the intellectual equivalent of some faux fry-up served on pre-pressed plastic.

POLITICS, HISTORIOGRAPHY AND THE HISTORICAL IMAGINATION: PERSPECTIVES FROM INDIA

Benjamin Zachariah

The question that we have set ourselves, in what to my mind is a retrospective look, after the Cold War, at historiographical production, reads as follows: Have any complex theories of society emerged since the discrediting of Marxist historical schemes? What is to be done with historiographical production from the 1970s and 1980s? Two hidden questions appear in these two questions: whether "Marxist historical schemes" have indeed been altogether discredited; and to what extend historiographical production from the 1970s and 1980s adopted Marxist paradigms. The answers to these four questions naturally vary with the specific historiographies being discussed.

If we are to deal with these questions from a comparative perspective, we might come up with more evocative answers than if we were to attempt to answer the question from within the historiographical perspectives of a particular region or country, or as is more commonly done given the continued hegemony of nationalism in many countries, a particular "nation".

This paper, therefore, seeks to make a few comparative remarks on the importance of a framework of analysis that compares peripheries rather than routes its comparisons through the centre. It goes on to provide a short account of historiographical trends in writing about India after formal decolonisation, and more specifically since the 1980s. By way of conclusion, it provides nothing much, for fear of imposing closure; instead it makes some suggestions regarding productive comparative frameworks, a sort of looking-over-one's-shoulder as one works, in the interests of a self-reflexive historiography that nonetheless avoids the anarchy of complete relativism and ultimately solipsism.

I. COMPARATIVE REMARKS

Comparative perspectives are particularly important to avoid the obsessive particularisation that has become a feature of many historiographical fields and sub-fields. If we compare peripheries, and in this case the historiographies of South Asia and of South-East Europe, we might observe, at a basic and possibly

rather simplistic level, a number of similarities. Problems of nationalism, of ethnicity and religion (these themes often being confused and mixed up in the historiography) have been extremely important. One of the problems that needs to be grappled with is what has been called "rescuing history from the nation": can the needs of nationalism to create its own comforting and often mythical genealogies be allowed to dominate the work of the historical profession?

Another problem has been one of a historiography whose agenda has to a large extent been imposed from the outside: by theories of "backwardness" or "modernisation", for instance, or more recently of the "development" of "civil society". This stems from the political asymmetry of centre-periphery relationships: central debates often remain debates imposed by outside agendas. Assumptions that are made about the peripheral societies – "ancient hatreds" between "peoples" inexorably and irrevocably divided into "communities" rather than relating to each other as "individuals" – begin to dominate historiographical production, and much energy must be expended on exploding these stereotypes, historicising and qualifying them, before other agendas can be set.

We might dwell on this point a little further: during the negotiations between British and Indian leaders of various description on a potential "transfer of power" in India, various people spoke of the dangers – or advantages – of "Balkanising" India. Names that in themselves might be descriptive then acquire normative or stereotypical attributes that can no longer be detached from the names themselves.

And to stay with the question of political asymmetry: the assumption that certain societies are somehow inherently prone to irrational, brutal or lawless behaviour carries with it the corollary that certain others inherently aren't. I live in a country ruled by a war criminal, a murderer who has no respect for democracy or the lives of civilians. I mean, of course, Britain; but Tony Blair is not on trial for crimes against humanity in the Hague; nor, I think, will we ever see this happen.

This political asymmetry is also exacerbated by problems of funding: when resources are scarce, outside donors have much leverage; but how far does it remain possible for receivers of monetary assistance to set their own agendas?

All this is premised on an assumption that we are, of course, likely not to question: that there is a role, and a need, for professional historians.

II. "SOUTH ASIA"

II.1. Abstract

In India, the historical establishment from the time of "independence" – formal decolonisation – in 1947 was overwhelmingly dominated by left-of-centre readings, but tended nonetheless to be "nationalist". Marxism was often not explicit or dominant in historical writing, but was a very influential paradigm. Non-alignment was taken very seriously, and consequently the collapse of the

Eastern Bloc and fall of the Soviet Union did not altogether discredit the Marxist paradigm for historians, although the influence of post-modern or post-colonial modes was strongly felt from the mid- to late-1980s onwards. But it was a world of great academic freedom. Conservative and liberal histories had plenty of space.

Parallel to that, previously outside the historical establishment, and now taking over, are explicitly right-wing and fundamentalist appropriations of history. Since they run the government (in 1998 a Hindu fundamentalist party with strong and explicit fascist sympathies came to power), they control the establishment now. And the remaining left and liberal spaces are controlled, censored and intimidated – history is live politics, and historiography is fiercely political, contested, debated in parliament; historians are abused or discussed in the press, intimidated and assaulted by right-wing paramilitary units. Schoolbook history is rewritten to glorify in particular Hindu right-wing readings of history. Mythological figures are recast as historical heroes; Muslims are denigrated as murderers, terrorists, and above all, foreigners.

The historical profession has been rethinking its own position on the moral anarchy of the late 1980s, where "truth" was abandoned as imposing closure in favour of fragmentary histories – although they maintain professional standards and therefore academic recognition on a world scale, they fear they may have eroded their own basis for making hard claims about what constitutes proper history and what does not. This leads back to a reassessment of the 1970s and 1980s historiography (before the post-*al* turn) that is not yet complete.

All of this takes place against a backdrop of an earnestly debated question: how far does popular historical imagination diverge from professional historical work? How far should this divergence be accepted? Is a reasoned understanding of history necessary for a reasoned political and social order?

These historiographical concerns are intimately intertwined with the political economy of the emergence of the disciplinary area of "South Asian history". To properly understand the developments in Indian historiography, we must keep in mind three broad centres of historical research: India, Britain and the United States. The latter two have had a strong bearing on how the historiography has developed.

A further distinction is extremely important: Indians working in India, and Indians working outside India.

II.2. Before the 1980s

The nationalist movement was the main current in Indian history-writing in the post-independence period, from the 1950s to the 1970s. This was in contrast to history-writing on India from e.g. Britain, which still worked within imperialist paradigms, suitably tempered for the times. Indian political "progress" towards a "modern nation" were gifts of the imperial civilising mission, which admittedly had an ugly side but was on the whole progressive.

History was a national project; historians who studied in Britain were careful to restate their nationalist credentials when they returned to work in India.

A third centre, the United States, had not yet acquired the same emotive involvement in the historiographical consciousness in the immediate post-independence period: after all, the US was in theory opposed to formal colonialism, and therefore US-sponsored histories of the colonial period took sides with the nationalists. (In time, this was to change: with a growing awareness of US-led neo-colonialism in Latin America, Asia and Africa among practitioners of history in India, the assumption of US disinterested innocence in matters historiographical began to shift. In addition, the Cold War-led establishment and funding of "area studies" programmes, although they provided some autonomy to scholars, certainly ruled out writing within explicitly revolutionary or Marxist paradigms. This influence extended to India, where political propaganda and political parties were funded by the CIA front, the Congress for Cultural Freedom; academic practitioners of history and literary studies also benefited from this largesse. Although not all those funded by the CCF were explicitly pro-US, the condition of CCF funding was anti-communism – which artificially provided research and publishing resources to a group of writers who had one thing in common: they were not Marxists.

Not all the CCF-funded figures were unimportant puppets: the Cambridge-trained historian of Indian Ocean trade, Ashin Dasgupta, was possibly the most famous member of the CCF circles. He taught for much of his career at Presidency College, Calcutta, which from the late 1960s became a by-word for student radicalism and Maoism – a reputation it could now well afford to lose.

II.3. The "mainstream"

"Mainstream" historians, many of them accommodated within Government-sponsored Research Councils, "did" Nationalist History: the early years were spent documenting the heroics of the nationalist struggle against imperialism, and defending the nationalists against claims of narrow self-interest, regional or upper-caste/class chauvinism (leveled against them, from the 1960s, *inter alia* by the so-called "Cambridge School").

This "mainstream" had been culled from a wider range of historians pre-1947, who tended to identify the "Indian" nation with the "Hindu" religion. In the interests of a secular, left-leaning, democracy (the self-definition adopted by the Nehruvian state), the more overtly sectarian and anti-Muslim of such historians (who traced "Indian" cultural decline from the time of the "Islamic conquest" of India) were ostracised. The "mainstream" still contained, however, conservative historians who explicitly or implicitly regarded the "national" entity as a "Hindu" one in which sectarian voices were by definition Muslim ones: a sectarian majority can hide in a majority ethic. Prominent among them was one Romesh Chandra Majumdar, who wrote and published a great deal. But these were men whose best days were often behind them, and the next

generation of Hindu fundamentalists found themselves largely without historians who could speak for them from legitimate platforms.

The historiographical trend that proved most assimilable to the new state's need for a "secular" view of the "nation" was a nationalist-tinged Marxism. Historically, this was a product of the political struggle in which Marxists were allies of the nationalists against imperialism; a hangover lasted into the post-independence period that had historiographical as well as political consequences (we shall consider only the former here).

Now the "nationalist-Marxists" to use a term that has now acquired some derogatory connotations, also wrote about nationalism, but were less concerned with how nationalism was defined than how it involved itself in struggle: how nationalists led the "masses". Since one potential definition of India that had been mooted by the Marxists in 1946 was that of a multi-national state (on the Soviet model) they could hardly be expected to take the definitional question terribly seriously. The avoidance of an answer to this question was provided by what was the typical slogan of schoolbook history: "unity in diversity". India, according to this argument, had an ability to assimilate all that entered its boundaries. Religion or other "identity" questions were largely irrelevant: and there was a consistent distinction between a "true" nationalism – directed against the British – and a "communalism", which was a false nationalism that directed its aggressions against fellow-Indians who happened to be of a different religion – or "community". Aligarh Muslim University, formerly the intellectual home of Muslim separatism and the movement for a separate Pakistan, now became a centre of Marxist scholarship of extremely high quality.

Class struggle, with tales of trade-union activity, strikes, peasant movements, was indeed written about; but the nationalist movement was seldom decentred. The deferral of socialism to the post-independence period that was the agreed coalitional strategy of the pre-1947 years was defended. By the 1970s, histories of movements of ordinary people had begun to be written.

Under this consensus, non-alignment could be defended on nationalist grounds: an independent foreign policy. The left-leaning, but never properly socialist, orientation of Jawaharlal Nehru's government could be defended as the best of all possible worlds in current conditions; and as neo-colonialism came to be recognised as the new enemy, difficult questions about internal politics were externalised.

Of course, this was simplified by the fact that then, as now, most historians never crossed the chronological barrier of 1947. History happened before that; mere politics took place afterwards. Moreover, the history of precolonial times was written up according to the concerns generated by colonialism and by the nationalist movement.

The Marxist history practiced here, however, never degenerated into Stalinist oversimplification, because when it did, other professionals, Marxist as well as non-Marxist, rapped the practitioners over the knuckles.

II.4. The 1980s: Early Subaltern Studies

In the early 1980s, a group of historians launched an attack on all existing historiography of South Asia: nationalist histories told a tale of nationalist heroes leading the masses to victory; imperialist histories told a tale of "England's work in India", with modern nationhood as a British gift; and even Marxists tended to talk of left-wing struggles as if only the leaders counted and the led simply obediently followed. What was missing was the "politics of the people". Influenced by the 'histories from below' of the British Marxists, and of EP Thompson in particular, and armed with selections from Antonio Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, the "subaltern studies" group began a quest to find subaltern agency, an "autonomous domain" of subaltern activity; to restore to the subaltern his [still 'his] own voice. The subaltern was defined negatively and relationally: he [she, eventually] was not elite; and an elite in one context might be a subaltern in another – but nevertheless, "subaltern" was assumed to mean marginal, downtrodden people.

The driving concerns of the project were broadly Marxist; they rebelled against a doctrinaire, economistic version of Marxism, and sought, as Gramsci had recommended for the Italian peasantry, to understand how the subaltern mind worked. There was, initially, and despite their best efforts, a residual nationalism in what they wrote: Ranajit Guha's Subaltern Studies manifesto sought to find the contributions of the subaltern *to the nationalist movement.*

There might be an interesting parallel to the Subaltern Studies movement's beginnings and the writings of Gramsci: many of the former had been involved with or inspired by the agrarian movements and student radicalism – broadly Maoist, in the sense that revolution was expected to come be a radicalised countryside surrounding the cities – of the late 1960s and early 1970s. This movement had been crushed under cover of war with Pakistan and the "liberation" of Bangladesh by India in 1971, with most of the casualties being middle-class students; the peasantry had failed to live up to its radical potential, and the working classes had proved a terrible disappointment. As for Gramsci, for the Subaltern Studies group, here was a moment of defeat that gave cause for reflection: why did the Italian peasantry support the Fascists? Who were they anyway? The questions were suitably reformulated for India.

The problem the Subaltern Studies group encountered was often one of sources: underprivileged groups could often only be traced in written records of elites or even of the coloniser. So it became necessary to read the existing records "against the grain"; to read what Guha called "the prose of counter-insurgency", in which ordinary people appeared only as "insurgents" and as "threats to law and order", and to find the subaltern in this way.

Obviously, this led on to a good deal of text-criticism, to expose hidden assumptions in the sources, to examine what would come to be called "colonial discourse". And this led in the direction of high theory.

II.5. The 1990s: late Subaltern Studies, post-*al* addresses and the Great Schism

Before we proceed, let us note that Indian scholarship had always had a tendency, especially in writing in English, to veer towards the high altitudes of current social theory in Europe: from colonial times, a need to be more current than current had driven Indian scholarship to seek legitimation from academic sources that their colonisers were forced to regard as valid. Veering towards "indigenism" was, in addition, the hallmark of the reactionary who was unable to distinguish between what was universally progressive and what was contingently imposed by the "West" (the category "West" was itself not properly questioned – nor has it yet been – even by Marxists).

The 1980s had seen the beginnings of critiques of dominant perspectives through an understanding of discourses *à la* Michel Foucault – in the historiography of India, by the mid-1980s this had been supplemented by Edward W Said's *Orientalism* (itself drawing on the Gramscian description of hegemony as well as Foucault's conception of a discourse as power-knowledge), and by Gayatri Chakrabarti Spivak's translation of Jacques Derrida and her own intervention into Subaltern Studies when she argued that the subaltern could not speak except when – and therefore even when – mediated through the representations of well-meaning educated historians: her paraphrase of Marx's dictum, "sie können sich nicht vertreten, sie müssen vertreten werden". The "Vertreter", the historian, could never fully find the authentic subaltern voice, let alone re-present it. This exploded the more ambitious claims of early subaltern studies. By the 1990s, in a now familiar story, because the genealogies of the "post-structural" or the "post-modern" in historiography are broadly the same across the field of professional history, debates moved on to the subjectivities of "identity", the false claims of the "Enlightenment" to universalism, the "constructed" (and in some readings the "Western") nature of "history" itself.

This gave rise to a problem. Post-modernism, "deconstruction" and an attention to discourses of imperialism challenged existing conventions of representation, exposed their complicity with various forms of oppression and opened out a space that could potentially give a voice to minorities. However, in the course of the assault on "history" and existing claims to "truth", the spokespeople for the subalterns had undermined their right to make any hard claims. They could now only insist on attention to the particular, to the celebration of the fragment against all grand narratives.

Marxism was a victim of this process: it was a Eurocentric discourse – and (after Said) an Orientalist one.

In some readings, "Western" became as much of a suspect word as it had been to the practitioners of "Hindu" history before 1947; one could certainly accuse the cruder practitioners of such history of "Occidentalism", of stereotyping the "West".

The outcome, of course, was that some of the absurd claims to mythology as history that accompanied a shift of politics to the right had been given their

space: with "truth" dead, relativisation to the point, at times, of solipsism legitimised, and "history" being only one way of looking at the past, why was it illegitimate to claim that a mythological figure or ancient god had really existed – according to the (legitimate) point of view of true believers? Or that "secularism" was an imported, "Western" concept that had no place in India?

The old "mainstream" now accused the post-modern, post-colonial, subaltern studies side (I shall abbreviate this to PoMoPoCoSS) of scoring "same-side goals". The latter were now, in many ways, the new "mainstream", since they fit better into the agendas of North American academic debates, where the funding and the jobs, increasingly, were to be found. The Marxists among the old "mainstream", including defectors from Subaltern Studies (the "old" Subaltern Studies) accused the new "mainstream" of neglecting their political duties and undermining the positions of those who did not neglect them: celebrating the "fragment" and the particular undermined attempts to create solidarity on the basis of wider and more universal principles. There was no epistemological basis remaining from which to make political arguments.

There was a politics of postcodes involved in this: the importance of Metropolitan Location. The "old" mainstream also accused the North America-based PoMoPoCoSS of being more interested in the academic agendas of their chosen location than in the history of South Asia.

New entrants to the field had to declare their allegiances clearly. Ironically, in this context it was relatively easier to be a non-Indian practitioner of "South Asian history", because the locational factor became less emotionally charged. (In the other large space in "South Asia", Pakistan, the discipline of history had not been given sufficient space for such agonised debates to emerge: access to archival material was enough of a struggle on its own).

II.6. The rise of the right

The rise of the right was not intrinsically connected with the historical profession. And in much of their populist rhetoric, the right did not particularly care for the historical field (although they clearly took their inspiration from Fascist and Nazi history – *Mein Kampf* was readily available on street corners across North India from the mid-1980s – with Muslims presumably taking over the Jewish-Bolshevik positions). But the so-called "moderate" right was alive to the uses of history for different audiences: the official Indian Council for Historical Research positions were quickly occupied, publications of document collections blocked (with the partial collusion of the publishers) and the old "mainstream" hounded from their positions, to be replaced by persons of no professional standing – even, in some cases, policemen. The Archaeological Survey of India started falsifying archaeological finds. School textbooks are rewritten to include what in an epistemologically less uncertain environment would be referred to as downright lies – as they are, in Parliament, by the opposition: the Left has complained about the "Talibanisation of history" under the Hindu right.

This does not affect professionals in their dealing with fellow professionals: very few of the right-wing ideologues have enough intellectual sophistication to make an impact in terms of the standards of the discipline. But since a secular, broadly non-aligned and somewhat left-leaning reading of history had been seen as a necessary underpinning for a tolerant "national" entity, professional historians and non-sectarian politicians alike are worried about the consequences for public debate.

II.7. Rethinking the Public Role of History

The battle has now moved into public spaces. Since the high theoretical debates on the contingency of truth and the "constructed" nature of History itself had reached ordinary people, if at all, as a complaint against "Western"-imposed and offensive readings of the Indian past, how can they be weaned away from right-wing readings that celebrate a völkisch, "pure" past that needs to be returned to?

But the old "mainstream", now fighting a strong rearguard action, has to address and reformulate a problem that has emerged: how far do the "facts" of history need to conform to a desired political order? For instance, does the loss of a historiographical battle over a "secular" reading of the Mughal Empire have to mean an acceptance of the Hindu right's right to persecute Muslims, allegedly as retrospective revenge? How far must history (or readings of the past) provide justifications or positive normative examples for the present?

III. CONCLUSIONS?

These are explicitly political questions that require historians, as everyone else, to take part in explicitly political debates. Let us return here to some of the questions we have raised. Public expectations of history, we have said, tend to revolve around "the truth". Historians are cast as "experts" who can tell the "truth"; only, in a buyer's market, those historians who tell the most palatable alleged "truths" are those whose "truths" are accepted. Others are "biased".

In a way, the problem is that everyone has some way of relating to the past, and to memories of the past. Since historians have claimed some special custody of a privileged way of seeing the past, it is also the duty of a profession to convey to a public that "experts" are not those who possess "truth" but those who attempt to impose upon themselves certain standards of debating "evidence": standards that can, and must, be shared with and communicated to, a wider public.

This also requires historians to place their own histories, their politics, their "interests" (in the crude and instrumentalist reading of the problem) before a readership and leave these open for scrutiny and comment. In a way, we have called for a new genre of historical autobiography of the historian, which lies implicit in many projects, to be made explicit. This is an imperfect and partial project; but it is worth the effort.

THE SECURITATE FILES FROM A CULTURAL HISTORY PERSPECTIVE

Andi Mihalache

My paper focuses on the Securitate files as a political stake, but also as first rank sources for academic research, not from the current perspective of recent history, but from that of cultural history. In post-communist Romania, *silence* is the secret's poor relative and *confidentiality* its respectable form. Ironically or not, we could state that in our country the secrets of communist repression are literally protected by law. The secret is an unbidden, illegitimate competence. In its ethics it does not matter what is good and what is bad, what is true and what is false. The main interest is what is said and what isn't. The secret being a convention, a pact, the gesture of not saying seems to be more important than the thing unsaid. The inexpressible, the unsaying create relationships, social complicity, but also hierarchies, demarcations between those who hold a secret and those who do not know it or are afraid for this not to be divulged.

Together with the already sanctioned utilization in the electoral *political fight*, where the secret, once unveiled for the public, does not look like a foul hit but like a victory of truth over the lie. In the years after 1989, the very things that had lived under the aegis of the "strictly confidential" have become, paradoxically, arguments to defend principles fragrantly violated under communism. For example, in supervising "suspect" individuals, the regime proved no respect for private life. Now, to avoid knowing how the private life was damaged by political police actions, it is "sincerely" invoked the privacy respecting principle. Thus, the concealed truths get to have, allegedly, a *civic function*, that of defending the national consensus, the social peace. They also get a *patrimonial character*, of some people's sufferance concealed in the name of everybody. The tragedies of certain individuals are forgotten under the pretext that they would have belonged to the whole society, to all Romanians, and it would be indecent, they say, to be claimed by one individual or another. Not to talk about yourself because the same distress happened to someone else as well is a new form of censorship political, but also social. One way or another, people today reject the idea that sufferance would be a merit. Eventually, the secrets of communism are defended even with the help of democratic and religious values.

It is pretended that there is no point in digging up the past, that we should respect, now at least, the individual's intimacy, the human rights, and that it would be unChristian to take revenge. Therefore it is considered a good thing that all secrets of our lives during communism should be kept with care by a small group of civil servants, from a specialized institution, SRI (Romanian Intelligence Service). As it demands all the time a credit of trust, the secret sets up thus a relationships of communication *sui generis*. The stake of the state secret does not lie in the concealed piece of information. It is rather concentrated in the order that its disclosure might threaten. This is why, it decides what must and what must not be known, in the public sphere. The public sphere is modelled, constrained, delimited; and it is through this process, and through the omission of inconvenient truths, that the community's historical identities is formed. The idea that the secret protects renders the truth traumatic. They also say that the sufferance provoked by Securitate was so great that its current investigating would be premature and we should consider the possibility that its verbal resurrection might generate the risk of having to relive it in facts. The secret is a truth unassumed. It plays the role of a mediator between the contradictory truths, between what a social group wants and what it no longer wants to know about itself. It eliminated part of those aspects that contradict the need to explain coherently the self-image. On the background of this obstinate search for continuity, for historical identity, the divulged secret passes as an unwanted, traumatic event, which troubles the senses. Furthermore, once unveiled, the secret is egalitarian, a destroyer of sociability, complicity, values. The latter indicate the different degrees to approach a secret. We have, in theory, the secret of the Securitate files, currently held by the inheritor institution, the Romanian Intelligence Service. The silence on the administration of these secrets could be divided into two: 1) silence on the secrets known to exist but which are not yet made public and 2) complete silence, on those secrets that nobody knows as such. In the first case, the secret suspends some truths, refusing their actualization. In the second, the secret is denied its own existence, the declarations being either that there is nothing to be hidden or that nothing happened. The secret not known as a secret brings certain pieces of news out from the flux of memories, it draws them out the commemoration, accentuating their pastness. It therefore consigns certain historic facts, tortures or denouncements, for instance, to nothingness, by pretending they just never occurred. The secrets of Securitate are found out in an arbitrary, fragmentary way, urging us to anticipate, to imagine, even more breath-taking disclosures. No matter how much they may want to steal from memory, to create blanks, the secrets of the former regime function, involuntarily, as *active silences*, as permanent hotbeds of conflict. Silence stores political and historical information using traditional archival methods, thus promoting not disinformations but rather incertitude and fabulation. It thus multiplies the imaginary, the rumour-mongering and other such zones of cultural reproduction of the state secret.

If there weren't so many things to negotiate, as it happens in fact in the relationship between the CNSAS (National College for the Study of Securitate Archives) – SRI, the secret of the files would not transform knowledge into privilege, in fact it would not exist as a form of power. The divulged secret rather than accuses, the unmasking of the Securitate informer provoking no indignation but rather transforming him into a victim, in a person subjected to blackmail, forced to act against a supposed conscience and give compromising information about other close individuals. As the Ristea Priboi case shows, the one who raises the mask is more discredited than the unmasked. The above mentioned individual starts a court action against the historian Marius Oprea, a trial in which Priboi is not the one to prove his non-implication in the political repression in Braşov, but Marius Oprea is the one who has to respond for the impudence of having written about the activity of the former Securitate officer.

A society that defends the secrets of the past in this way only accentuated their actuality. Furthermore, getting people used to the idea that it is not decent to have access to the secrets of their own lives, the authorities transform the present chicanery of legislative, bureaucratic nature, into an element of political culture, of mentality. It resigns itself to the thought that the biographies, the legitimacy of the current political leaders is not essential, that the truths about communism cannot replace the economic effectiveness. From the cult of *personality* we pass to the fervent adoration of *utility*. Living in a secretive world, the historian could let himself influenced by the general state of mind, sharing some people's conviction that the history of communism cannot, for now, be written, because the main sources are not yet accessible to us. It is quite true that many archives are not accessible to the historians of communism and that we risk compiling insufficiently documented works, with the material presently available to us. That is, to risk that later, after other briefs are given to investigation, our books might become obsolete, out of date, like the one-day old news in the press. These reserves belong particularly to the high education field, which, waiting for definitive surveys on Romanian communism, prefer to avoid including this subject in the curricula. *A society that protects the secret with such fervour fetishizes it, it lets itself be fascinated by it and tends, predictably we could say, to understand even its past through the lens of some endless conspiracies.* Moreover, the historian cannot wait forever, he cannot give up in front of the bureaucracy-related drawbacks. Though the sources for the history of communism are indeed truncated, the present solution cannot be but one of methodological order. The important thing is that the historian should formulate with prudence his issues of interest and confine with precision the sources, so that his studies keep their validity in spite of the time. As one interested in analyzing history from a cultural-anthropological perspective, I think that the researches made on the period 1945-1989 could progress with the help of an interdisciplinary investigation of the document, provided that the accent should not be placed on their "published" or "never published"

characteristics, but on their quality as *text*. Approached from the point of view of hermeneutics and discourse analysis, the "traces" left by communism could offer us plenty of hints about the cultural codes of the "democratic-popular" societies, about private life, about the relationship between power and authority, about symbols and taboos in these regimes. Or, if we stay in the conviction that the historian should absolutely "discover" something novel, unseen things, all these subjects of research will always remain marginal, delaying all the time the deepening of the history of communism. We should also say that over these years, since the totalitarian regime collapsed, historians have established the basic features of the system in which they lived for 45 years. The great truths related to communism cannot be hidden any more. But people have the natural tendency to forget and we think that what would be important today are not the strictly factual details, the exactitudes easy to remove from the memory, but certain interpretations of these, certain conclusions we could draw out of them. Furthermore, given the assiduity with which Securitate used to watch its victims, we think that instead of a *history of repression*, rather impossible because of the huge amount of documents which we don't have access to yet, we could write a very interesting *history of the daily life*, based upon the so minute supervising reports.

Today, in a world overwhelmed with *information*, history cannot have a public any more, unless it offers *significations*, unless it avoids the old empirical paradigm of the "historian-detective" who, for the sake of as many "disclosures" as possible, fails to interpret them. One of the common laws of the research activity accords priority to the unpublished archive document, making thus the confusion between the absolutely unknown source, and the unpublished one, known, used by many historians and yet favoured from the start as a first hand source just because it hasn't been yet published. Or, if we rate discovers over analysis, why publish volumes of documents, taking their "virginity" and, for those people maybe passionately fond of it, the pleasure of searching and of a primordial reading? Moreover, if we follow the logic mentioned above, disciplines as numismatics and archaeology, which do not use archive documents, appear dilettantish or frivolous. Nobody can deny that the publishing of documents is indispensable to the historian, for factual reconstruction, but similar importance is not given to analyses inevitably focused on published writings. Far from denying the argumentative value of the archive document, we only want to rate that it only becomes useful if joined, in the same story, to other types of sources, having, by itself, no privileged relationship with the truth. As in the international scientific community it was established that everything that can provide viable information on the past becomes document, we think that the value of a source is given by its contribution to the formulation of hypotheses about the past and not by the place of its storage. Lengthy archival researches do not excuse the refuge in statements of a formal, descriptive order. And the literal understanding of the document is quite risky for the researchers of the

communist regime, known as one of self-mystification par excellence. This is why cultural history aims to distinguish the *interpretation* of the document from its *paraphrasing*, it doesn't confound the *meaning*, mainly precise, of a text with its *significance*, often unstable, which it can obtain under diverse contexts and readings. We insist on the aspects of methodological nature fully consciously, believing the culturalist option is one of the ways to follow for those aware that the work of deciphering the document shouldn't be an end in itself but only a phase in the way to synthesis. With no *mise en intrigue*, history cannot hope to gain its audience back. And this result will not be achieved simply by reading sources and reciting them.

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