

*Intersections of Dependency and Ideological
Conflict*
*New Perspectives on Orientalizing Narratives in
Hungary and Poland*

HUN-REN Research Centre for the Humanities,
Institute of Philosophy
Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish
Academy of Sciences

Tuesday, 28th May, 2024, 12h (CET)
Venue: HUN-REN Research Centre for the Humanities,
Institute of Philosophy
4 Tóth Kálmán street, Budapest, 7th floor, lecture room
B.7.16

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Programme

12.00 *Opening words* (Béla MESTER)

1st Section: **Orientalization in Central and Eastern Europe** (Chair: Béla MESTER)

12.10

Tomasz ZARYCKI, the University of Warsaw

Orientalization of Eastern Poland in a Broader Context of European Economic and Symbolic Geographies

12.30

László Attila HUBBES, Sapientia, The Hungarian University of Transylvania

The Turn towards the 'Turanian' Heritage as Mirrored in the Images Circulating in Hungarian Language Social Media Networks

12.50

Rafał SMOCZYŃSKI, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences – IFiS PAN

Orientalization in Central and Eastern Europe in the Negative Ontological Perspective

13.10 Discussion

13.30 Coffee & lunch break

2nd Section. **Hungarian Case Studies** (Chair: Rafał SMOCZYŃSKI (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences – IFiS PAN))

14.30

Bettina SZABADOS, HUN-REN Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Philosophy

Intellectual Evolution of Georg Lukács in the Context of Developing Lenin's Idea of Revolution

14.50

Péter András VARGA, HUN-REN Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Philosophy

From East to West and Back Again

Joseph Somogyi's Way through Phenomenology and Neo-Scholasticism

15.10

László Gergely SZÜCS, Budapest City Archives

A Social-critical and Moral-philosophical Perspective in Ágnes Heller's "Nuremberg Essay"

15.30 Discussion

15.50 Coffee break

3rd Section: **Historical Retrospections** (Chair: Béla MESTER)

16.10

Borbála JÁSZ, Kodolányi János University

Reframing Tendencies in Polish and Hungarian Architecture – The Skyline Effect

16.30

Andrzej GNIAZDOWSKI, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences – IFiS PAN

The Political Significance of the Warsaw School of the History of Ideas

16.50 Discussion

17.10 Coffee break

4th Section: **Contexts of the Past** (Chair: Péter András VARGA)

17.30

Grzegorz PYSZCZEK, The Maria Grzegorzowska University

Elegance and Method

Florian Znaniecki and Bronisław Malinowski in the Anglo-Saxon Academic World

17.50

Béla MESTER, HUN-REN Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Philosophy

Hungarian Philosophy as "Kaffir Thought"

A Catholic Critic of the Contemporary Philosophical Life in the 1880s

18.10 Discussion

18.30 Concluding words (Rafał SMOCZYŃSKI)

Andrzej GNIAZDOWSKI (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences – IFiS PAN)

The Political Significance of the Warsaw School of the History of Ideas

The political significance of the historical works of Kołakowski and other representatives of the Warsaw School of the History of Ideas is a separate and complex historical question. In order to make us aware of the specifics and scope of this significance, this article will first provide basic information about the origin, development, and dissolution of this school, to use Kołakowski's words. The aim is also to present some remarks on the methodological identity of the school, as well as on its influence on past and present intellectual life in Poland. It will be argued here that the political significance of the School for the Polish humanities, if one takes into account the main concern of the Warsaw historians of ideas, i.e. the question of both intellectual and social emancipation in Poland, was primarily the next chapter in the history of the Polish intelligentsia, or, more precisely, its afterlife. With reference to Czesław Miłosz's book *The Captive Mind*, published in 1953, we will discuss the extent to which the original significance of the Warsaw School was not so much the restoration of the Polish intelligentsia as a social class, but rather that it was a mere administrative instrument of the Polish Workers' Party for replacing the old intelligentsia with a new one.

László Attila HUBBES (Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania)

The Turn towards the 'Turanian' Heritage as Mirrored in the Images Circulating in Hungarian Language Social Media Networks

Alternative history has been playing an important role in the forming of Hungarian national identity since the end of the 19th century in strong opposition to the historiographical and linguistical standpoints of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. This alternative history is characterized by an emphatic Orientalism, namely the primacy or exclusivism of the prehistorical ethnogenesis of Hungarians from nomadic Turkic and Scythian steppe peoples, labelled earlier as Turanism. While Turanism as scientific and ideological current receded during the second part of the 20th century, it came back with an even greater tide towards the turn of the millennium, pointing even further back in time, beyond the ancient Turks and Scythians, up to the ancient Sumer. With the rise of the internet and social media, these ideas spread more rapidly and more widely than previously with the printed press. Visual arguments are playing a crucial role in this process: illustrations, maps, images and videos of the exotic (and heroic) Eastern steppe peoples – both historical and present – are highlighting a cultural superiority of the Orient contrasted with and directed against the West.

The author is an associate professor at Sapientia Hungarian University of Transylvania, founder of the SZEMEISZTOSZ Web Semiotics and Online Rhetoric Research Group, and founding member of the Modern Mythology Research Workshop, established in 2014 together with István Povedák, within the framework of MAKAT (Hungarian Association of Cultural Anthropology).

Borbála JÁSZ (Kodolányi János University)

Reframing Tendencies in Polish and Hungarian Architecture – The Skyline Effect

The term "skyline" refers to the outline of a city's buildings and structures against the sky. It is typically viewed from a distance and is often characterized by the tallest and most prominent buildings, including skyscrapers, towers, and other notable architectural features. The skyline serves as a visual representation of a city's architectural style, economic status, and growth over time. It is also a key aspect of a city's identity and can be a significant factor in its aesthetic appeal and tourism.

Budapest and Warsaw, like many capitals and major cities around the world, have distinctive skylines. Despite similarities in their architectural and cultural traditions, there are notable contrasts in their locations, styles, and purposes. This presentation highlights the visual elements of the two cities' skylines, reflecting both historical and contemporary architectural theories.

Béla MESTER (HUN-REN Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Philosophy)

Hungarian Philosophy as "Kaffir Thought"

A Catholic Critic of the Contemporary Philosophical Life in the 1880s

The first series of the *Hungarian Philosophical Review* (*Magyar Philosophiai Szemle*, 1882–1891) was the first periodical of philosophy in Hungarian, established by the spontaneous initiative of several circles of philosophers in Budapest, with the financial support of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. The single Hungarian periodical of philosophy and its open-minded editors inspired the scholar community of the Hungarian philosophers to use it as a forum for controversies of highly diverse opinions. A Catholic monk-teacher, Valér Maczki provoked the most vivid controversy, addressed to the Lutheran founder-editor, Károly Böhm. However, the denominational background of their controversy is clear; it was and will be discussed in my other papers. In here, I will focus on a widespread pattern of the Hungarian intellectual life, as it appeared in the controversy on the pages of the abovementioned scholar periodical. Valér Maczki as a relatively young newcomer in the Hungarian philosophical life, proposed the redefinition of the tasks of the Hungarian philosophers, in his first publication. He evaluated the actual state of the Hungarian philosophy by a typical metaphor of the self-orientalization: Hungarian philosophy is like a translation of Homer into the language of the so-called 'Kaffirs' who do not want read it.

Grzegorz PYSZCZEK (The Maria Grzegorzowska University)

Elegance and method

Florian Znaniecki and Bronisław Malinowski in the Anglo-Saxon academic world

The subject of the presentation will not be Orientalism itself, but rather how specific individuals deal with situations in which Orientalism is the inevitable context. Examples include the cases of two Poles who became world classics of social sciences. These are the anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski (1884–1942) and the sociologist Florian Znaniecki (1882–1958). Both Malinowski and Znaniecki fully entered the research paradigm that dominated in their times. However, they did not intend to passively submit to him in any way. They actively participated in shaping this paradigm. Interestingly, both of them developed original methodological proposals: Malinowski the method of participant observation, Znaniecki the method of personal documents. Elegance enabled them to adapt to a foreign environment, method allowed them to stand out and give their work a purely individual mark. Elegance overcame orientalism; method made it a useful tool.

Rafał SMO CZYŃSKI (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences – IFiS PAN)

Orientalization in Central and Eastern Europe in the Negative Ontological Perspective

This paper extends the discussion on the pervasive presence of culturalized political discourses in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) by situating it within the Essex School's negative ontology framework. Specifically, this research aims to broaden the narrow focus of existing inquiries into the dependent position of CEE relative to Western countries. Traditionally addressed through the lens of world system theory, these inquiries highlight, among other aspects, the intelligentsia's extensive use of orientalist strategies to legitimize asymmetrical economic development between capital-receiving semi-peripheral CEE and capital-sending Western core countries.

According to the Essex School's negative ontological perspective, inspired by Heidegger's distinction between ontic and ontological categories, the formation of social objectivity – including power relations, social classes, and ideological frameworks – should be analysed by shifting the emphasis from ontic categories, such as the description of social groups and their positive identities, to the ontological conditions of their emergence. This “underlying negative logic” or “constitutive outside” makes positive or ontic categories possible, yet contingent and open to re-articulation.

Therefore, following this theoretical approach, understanding the dominant position of the intelligentsia in CEE requires scrutinizing not only the overt ideological articulations, such as modernization policies throughout different historical periods, but also the conditions that have been excluded from the field of power. These exclusions, shaped by antagonisms and unstable boundaries, are crucial in maintaining the privileged position of the intelligentsia.

Bettina SZABADOS (HUN-REN Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Philosophy)

Intellectual Evolution of Georg Lukács in the Context of Developing Lenin's Idea of Revolution

The Hungarian philosopher, Georg Lukács, recognized the ‘*Krisenbewusstsein*’ (crisis-consciousness) of his generation at the turn of the 20th century and began to search for solutions in the art. However, his theory about art proved to be illusory, being unable to reshape society. After many philosophical attempts to realize, his theory in praxis Lukács turned to Marxism in 1918 and became one of the most influential Marxist thinkers of his time. Many of Lukács's works interpret Lenin's ideas about revolution, proletariat, culture, or epistemology. This research would like to reflect on the idea of revolution: 1919 was the year when the Hungarian Soviet Republic fell and many intellectuals had to flee abroad. In emigration, Lukács started to summarize the experiences of the fallen revolution and referred to Lenin's ideas in his early Marxist works, in *History and Class Consciousness* (1923) and *Lenin: A Study on the Unity of his Thought* (1924). This research seeks answers to the following questions: How did Lukács reuse Lenin's concept of revolution? How did he interpret it based on the experience of the fallen Hungarian Soviet Republic? What ideas of Lenin outlasted in Lukács's philosophy?

The talk is based on the already published paper written by Bettina Szabados and Aleksandr Sautkin (Department of Philosophy, Social Sciences and Social Security Law, Murmansk Arctic State University). The research was funded by RFBR and FRLC, project number 20-511-23002.

László Gergely SZÜCS (Budapest City Archives)

A Social-critical and Moral-philosophical Perspective in Ágnes Heller's "Nuremberg Essay"

In my presentation, I will examine the social criticism and moral philosophy of the young Ágnes Heller in the light of a little-known piece of her writing. Ágnes Heller's *The Nuremberg Trial Has No End*, which is the subject of my analysis, was written in 1965 and published in 1969 in her volume *Value and History*. The year 1965 is particularly significant in Ágnes Heller's oeuvre. On the one hand, it is the first year in which Ágnes Heller's writings are already born in the dialogues of the Budapest School, a society that grew out of György Lukács's disciples. On the other hand, she describes this period as the end of her "student years", when her attention turned increasingly to New Left themes: social manipulation and the possibility of autonomous human action. I argue that in this writing Heller's two perspectives: moral philosophy and social critique are almost inextricably linked. The line of thought, however, remains "tellingly" open in both directions: while Heller sketches the outlines of a possible social-critical project, she turns to moral philosophy rather than elaborating the details. She also sketches out the programme of a possible Marxist ethics, but this too remains only an outline. Heller wants to answer the question of how it is possible to remain morally pure in an era of total guilt. Heller, I assume, can only answer this question by turning to the Christian roots and archetypes of moral action, leaving behind the perspective of Marxist social theory and ethics.

Péter András VARGA (HUN-REN Research Centre for the Humanities, Institute of Philosophy)

From East to West and Back Again

Joseph Somogyi's Way through Phenomenology and Neo-Scholasticism

As I have argued elsewhere (*Continental Philosophy Review* vol. 56, nr. 4), the Hungarian philosopher Joseph Somogyi (Somogyi József, 1898–1948), who personally studied at Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenological philosophy, during the winter semester of 1923/24 in Freiburg, might be justly regarded as a genuine member of the international early Phenomenological Movement whose snapshot of philosophical life in Freiburg around Husserl, as recorded in Somogyi's letter written to his Hungarian mentor Ákos Pauler (1876–1933) and first published by me, provides an important correction to the received historical view of Husserl and Freiburg phenomenology that has hitherto been dominated by the subsequent generation of phenomenologists who often had a stake in portraying Husserl and other minor phenomenologists in accordance with their own philosophical agendas.

In my contribution to the edited volume, I intend to provide an in-depth exploration of the road that led Somogyi from his native Hungary to the international stronghold of phenomenology in Freiburg, respectively his road back from international centres of philosophy to Hungary – or, more precisely, the lack of his successful integration of the professional philosophical life in Hungary (not to mention that his further career was pre-empted by his untimely death in 1948, while being shortlisted for a professorial position at the University of Budapest, due to a tragic cycling accident linked to the economic deprivation of Somogyi and his large family).

In my current presentation, I am going to focus on the first stage of this intellectual voyage, namely on Somogyi's early intellectual upbringing: the effect of the acclaimed secondary educational system in the Austro-Hungarian (Habsburg) Monarchy on Somogyi's philosophical coming to mind, including the hitherto unexplored micro-cluster of contemporaneous philosophers in the Piarist secondary school in Vác (near the capital Budapest) that was attended by Somogyi.

Tomasz ZARYCKI (University of Warsaw)

Orientalization of Eastern Poland in a Broader Context of European Economic and Symbolic Geographies

The paper will discuss the major trends and mechanisms of orientalization of broadly defined Eastern Poland. Two basic modes of orientalization will be distinguished: conservative and liberal. A structural interpretation of the given phenomenon will be offered, in particular, its possible functions in the context of relations of economic and political dependence on different levels. The paper will also point to an apparent structural similarity between several southern and eastern European countries, particularly regarding their electoral as well as economic and political geographies. Taking as a point of reference the Western core, we can observe that distance to that central zone produces crucial internal spatial divides in specific countries. They are most pronounced in Poland and in Italy (with the division into Northern Italy being part of the European core and the South also known as *Mezzogiorno*). However, divides following similar spatial logic can be observed in Hungary, Slovakia, and Spain, to name just some countries from both parts of Europe.