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Inhalt

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Gur-Ze'ev's Philosophical Influences: The Frankfurt School.

Introduction

The Frankfurt School understands that there is a difference between 'Traditional Theory' and 'Critical Theory', terms which were first coined by Max Horkheimer; the former is the kind of activity that takes place in a society without a clear connection to social functions and the implications for historical events, whilst the latter, spearheaded by the Frankfurt School, is the kind of activity that understands that there is a connection between social functions and historical events, seeking to take stock of these, transforming society and eventually emancipating human beings (cf. Horkheimer 1937/1972a). I believe that these ideas, namely transforming society and individuals, are embraced by Ilan Gur-Ze'ev, the important Israeli philosopher of education. The Frankfurt School was a major influence in the works of Gur-Ze'ev and the source of much philosophical inspiration for his work in philosophy of education and peace education. This influence started early, with his doctoral thesis being centred around the issue of 'pessimism and utopia in the Frankfurt School'. In fact, in his writings, from the earliest to the very last, thinkers such as Max Horkheimer, Theodore Adorno, Hebert Marcuse, and Walter Benjamin are cited extensively. In a sense, I believe that it can be argued that Gur-Ze'ev's thought could be understood as a negative and positive reaction to these thinkers' respective philosophies, which he both criticises and further develops, applying the outcomes to his own thought.

> Thus, given that the Frankfurt School's main ideas are central to Gur-Ze'ev's philosophical views, I provide a mainstream reading of the Frankfurt School, focusing on the main ideas and critically analysing them, so to provide the reader with an analytical overview of this school of thought.

Frankfurt School – The Foundation of the Institute for Social Research

Max Horkheimer, Theodore Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Walter Benjamin are the founding fathers and members of the first generation of the Frankfurt School, working from the 1930s to the 1960s. In the 1970s, the second generation was led by Jürgen Habermas, and other thinkers such as Klaus Günther, Hauke Brunkhorst, Ralf Dahrendorf, Gerhard Brandt, Alfred Schmidt, Claus Offe, Oskar Negt, Albrecht Wellmer, Ludwig von Friedeburg, Lutz Wingert, Josef Früchtl, and Matthias Lutz-Bachmann. However, it is also possible to speak of a third generation of critical theorists guided in Germany and elsewhere by Axel Honneth, and since the beginning of the 21st century, it is conceivable that a fourth generation emerged around the work of Rainer Forst (cf. Corradetti 2017), demonstrating that this philosophical movement continues to exert an important influence on our modern times. On scrutinising Gur-Ze'ev's works it is evident that his connection was directly related to the founding fathers of the movement and that he conversed very little with members of the following generations; however, I believe that it is arguable that Gur-Ze'ev is one of the 'heirs' of the Frankfurt School, perhaps a member of the third and fourth generation, because of the great influence that the ideas and methodology put forward by the founding fathers of Frankfurt School had on his work.

All that said, it is important for us to understand the context in which the Frankfurt School was established, and in connection with this Rush (2004: 6) comments on the vibrant intellectual *zeitgeist* of the time in Germany:

> If one were to take the year 1930 as a benchmark – when Max Horkheimer becomes the director of the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt – and were to look back upon the decade preceding that date, one would encounter in their most vibrant forms many of the most important philosophical movements of the twentieth century: the hermeneutic phenomenology of Heidegger; the logical empiricism of the Vienna Circle and the early Wittgenstein; various strands of neo-Kantianism; and the humanistic Marxism of Lukács. In political and social theory, psychology, historiography, and economics the situation is hardly less multifarious. Each of these

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> views or schools, sometimes in combination with elements of others, vies for predominance in the Weimar period.

Jay (1973: 3–40) also comments on the historical conditions that led to the creation of the Institute for Social Research (*Institute für Sozialforschung*), the Frankfurt School, and consequently of its formulation of Critical Theory. Jay (1973: 3) says:

> One of the most far-reaching changes brought by the First World War, at least in terms of its impact on intellectuals, was the shifting of the socialist center of gravity eastward. The unexpected success of the Bolshevik Revolution – in contrast to the dramatic failure of its Central European imitators – created a serious dilemma for those who had previously been at the center of European Marxism, the leftwing intellectuals of Germany. In rough outline, the choices left to them were as follows: first, they might support the moderate socialists and their freshly created Weimar Republic, thus eschewing revolution and scorning the Russian experiment; or second, they could accept Moscow's leadership, join the newly formed German Communist Party, and work to undermine Weimar's bourgeois compromise … [T]hese alternatives in one form or another had been at the center of socialist controversies for decades. A third course of action, however, was almost entirely a product of radical disruption of Marxist assumptions, a disruption brought about by the war and its aftermath. This last alternative was the searching re-examination of the very foundations of Marxist theory, with the dual hope of explaining past errors and preparing for future action. This began a process that inevitably led back to the dimly lit regions of Marx's philosophical past.

Hence, it is this third alternative, the philosophical re-examination of Marxist theory, that leads to the creation of the Institute for Social Research (*Institute für Sozialforschung*). In 1923, Felix Weil, who was a student of Karl Korsh, a Marxist philosopher, convinced his father Herman Weil, who had amassed a great fortune by importing grain from Argentina to Europe, to finance a research institute that would investigate society through a Marxist lens. This was the birth of the Institute for Social Research (*Institute für Sozialforschung*), which was immediately recognised by the German Ministry of Education and attached to the University of Frankfurt. The institute eventually gave rise to a specific school of thought, the Frankfurt School, which was centred around 'Critical Theory', a particular set of ideas and methodology. In 1933, with the rise of Nazism in Germany, the institute was closed in Germany, moved briefly to Paris, before finding refuge at Columbia University, New York, when France capitulated to Nazi Germany in 1939. The institute's exile ended in 1951 when it returned to the University of Frankfurt. Max Horkhermeir and Theodore Adorno accepted the West German government's invitation to return home, whilst Herbert Marcuse, Franz Neumann, and Leo Lowenthal decided to remain in the United States – this would represent a split, first geographical then theoretical, in the Frankfurt School (cf. Aronowitz 2002: xiii; Corradetti 2017).

The first director of the institute was Carl Grünberg (1923–1929), a professor from the University of Vienna, who specialised in Marxist legal and political issues. His major contribution to the institute was the creation of a historical archive focusing on the labour movement (i.e. the *Grünberg Archiv*). In January 1931, Max Horkheimer succeeded Carl Grünberg taking the institute in a different direction, focusing more on interdisciplinary research and integration of the social sciences; he also launched a new periodical, the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, which first appeared in 1932 and was published until 1938. Under Horkheimer, the institute continued the policy of not officially supporting any particular party; however, it must be noted that it engaged in a number of research ventures with the Soviet Union (cf. Corradetti 2017). Horkheimer was also responsible for the institute's shifting its focus of enquiry, adopting a more philosophical perspective to research, rather than the previous, more empirically based and sociological approach to studies defended by Carl Grünberg. Indeed, Bottomore (1984: 15) notes that:

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> [I]n the address delivered on the occasion of his official installation as director of the institute in January 1931, [Horkheimer] indicated clearly, while paying tribute to the work of his predecessor, that the institute was about to take a new direction. 'Social philosophy' now emerged as its main preoccupation; not in the sense of a philosophical theory of value which would provide a superior insight into the meaning of social life, nor as some kind of synthesis of the results of the specialized social sciences, but rather as the source of important questions to be investigated by these sciences and as framework in which 'the universal would not be lost sight of '.

This brief historical overview of the establishment of the Frankfurt School, and its development, will suffice for the purpose of this paper, allowing us to discuss the emergence and influence of 'Critical Theory', analysing its main ideas and methodologies.

Critical Theory: A New Theory and Approach

Critical Theory (*Kritische Theorie*) is a set of ideas and methodologies that were put forward and developed by the members of the Frankfurt School. Critical Theory was the source of considerable inspiration for theorists working in the field of Critical Pedagogy, such as the late Paulo Freire, and continues to be identifiable in the works of notable theorists such as Henri Giroux, Michael Apple, and Peter McLaren. As it has already been mentioned, this theory was first developed in the early 20th century, a time of great intellectual activity in Germany. This was a period in which many schools of thought strove against each other, seeking intellectual supremacy. This competition between theories and theoretical approaches provided us with an elegant contest, founded as much on *a via positiva* as on a *via negativa* form of reasoning; that is to say, competing schools attempted to provide a refined, robust, and convincing argument for their case (*via positiva*) whilst strongly criticising opposing theories and theoretical methods (*via negativa*).

Thus, as mentioned already, when Horkheimer became director of the Institute of Social Research he indicated a new direction for research, something that is very evident in his "The Present Situation of Social Philosophy and the Tasks of an Institute of Social Research" (1931/1993). Since its foundation in 1923 and until 1931, when Horkheimer became director, the members of the institute had been engaged in empirical social research that aimed at having a political impact; and consequently, there was very little interest in philosophical questions and methodologies (cf. Rush 2004: 8). However, Horkheimer (1931/1993: 8–9; cf. Rush 2004: 8–9) emphasises the importance of changing direction, of developing more fundamental philosophical and methodological research. He says:

> If social-philosophical thought concerning the relationship of individual and society, the meaning of culture, the foundation of the development of community, the overall structure of social life – in short, concerning the great and fundamental questions – is left behind as (so to speak) the dregs that remain in the reservoir of social-scientific problems after taking out those questions that can be advanced in concrete investigations, social philosophy may well perform social functions … but its intellectual fruitfulness would have been forfeited. The relation between philosophical and corresponding specialized scientific disciplines cannot be conceived as though philosophy deals with the really decisive problems – the process constructing theories beyond the reach of the empirical sciences, its own concepts of reality, and systems comprehending the totality – while on the other side empirical research carries out its long, boring, individual studies that split up into a thousand partial questions, culminating in a chaos of countless enclaves of specialists. This conception – according to which the individual researcher must view philosophy as a perhaps pleasant but scientifically fruitless enterprise … while philosophers, by contrast, are emancipated from the individual researcher because they think they cannot wait for the latter before announcing their wide-ranging conclusion – is currently being supplanted by the idea of a continuous, dialectical penetration and development of philosophical theory and specialized scientific praxis.

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The point Horkheimer is driving at is that there is a great need for a philosophically informed interdisciplinary social science, which in turn would replace social philosophy and sociology, as they were represented in Europe at the time; that is, they were largely centred around empirical research and inspired by approaches sourced in the natural sciences. For Horkheimer this was too narrow a view of reality, and he felt a more philosophical approach should be incorporated because it is philosophy that enables us to identify and explore important issues. Without this process of identifying and exploring fundamental questions, we are not able to pinpoint, develop, and explore particular problems, phenomena, methodologies, and theories (cf. Rush 2004: 9). E.J. Lowe (better known as Jonathan Lowe), one of the leading British philosophers of his generation working on metaphysics and philosophy of mind, made a similar point, which is worth noting here. Lowe (2002: 3) says:

> [O]ne of the roles of metaphysics, as an intellectual discipline, is to provide a forum in which boundary disputes between other disciplines can be conducted – for instance, the dispute as to whether the subject matter of a special science, such as biology or psychology or economics, can properly be said to be subsumed under that of another, allegedly more 'fundamental' science, such as physics … metaphysics can occupy the interdisciplinary role just described because its central concern is with the fundamental structure of reality as a whole. No special science – not even physics – can have that concern, because the subject matter of every special science is identified more narrowly than this: for instance, biology is the science of living things, psychology is the science of mental states, and physics is the science of those states and processes which are apparently common to all things existing in space and time ….

Lowe is making a point about metaphysics; however, this could be expanded to encompass all philosophical fields. Philosophy is not just a tool to identify, develop, and explore particular issues, phenomena, methodologies, and theories as Horkheimer argued; rather, this can be enlarged, arguing that Philosophy can be

understood as an interdisciplinary and unbiased forum where all human knowledge, all fields of human expertise, are discussed and scrutinised, as Lowe maintained. If philosophy is viewed as such, philosophy does indeed play a central role in the development of all sciences and knowledge and more specifically, it is possible to affirm that philosophy of education plays a central role in the development of the field of education. Within this understanding, *critique* is something fundamental if philosophy is to work as a forum for all dis-disciplines, working as a driving force for human development and transformation of reality. Hence, if we refer back to Horkheimer, at the core of his argument is the point that *critique*, *being critical*, and *having a critical attitude* is something fundamental for Critical Theory (and Lowe's argument is that *critique*, *being critical*, and *having a critical attitude* is something fundamental for philosophy, and consequently for the development of all areas of human knowledge). This is an ever-present theme, namely a *critical attitude* in Gur-Ze'ev's philosophy of education, which will be dealt with in detail in Part II.

Horkheimer continued with his argument about the distinction between 'traditional theory' and 'critical theory' in 'Traditional and Critical Theory' (1937/1971). This text is an important one, so much so that it has been considered the founding manifesto of the Frankfurt School. In this essay, Horkheimer emphasises once again that 'traditional theory' is the implicit or explicit outlook of the modern sciences and philosophical movements such as positivism and empiricism, arguing that they had a negative influence on individuals and society (cf. Bottomore 1984: 16–17); Horkheimer (1937/1972a: 191) says: "there can be no doubt, in fact, that the various schools of sociology have an identical conception of theory and that it is the same as theory in the natural sciences". The problem identified by Horkheimer is that 'traditional theory' always looks for Absolute, universal and nonhistorical truths. Rush (2004: 19) notes:

> [T]raditional theory is characterized by a complete disregard for the allegedly constitutive role of social life in knowledge and by a rigid anti-

historical bias. Again, the model of the physical sciences as they were developed in the modern era dictates (a) the dualistic character of traditional theory, in which human agency is either alienated from nature or reduced blindly to it, (b) its vocation of strict universalism of methodology and result, and (c) its nonhistorical character.

Horkheimer, on the other hand, reiterates that 'critical theory' rejects this positivistic outlook grounded in natural sciences; rather, understanding that truths must be constantly re-checked and reconsidered. Rush (2004: 34) notes:

> Critical Theory is a theory of interpretation in the ordinary sense. Critical Theory does not study its objects with the aim of revealing meanings that are already there, independent of the interpretative process. The objects of interpretation, as well as any particular interpretation of them, are always subject to further interpretation. To stop interpretation is to settle on a meaning, … [and] with making life meaningful *qua* status quo and to that extent justifying it.

This epistemological aspect differentiating 'traditional theory' from 'critical theory' is an important one because in revealing and interpreting reality continuously, 'critical theory' "can prescribe what precise changes should take place [and its] role is limited to displaying the relevant possibilities" (Rush 2004: 30). That is to say, 'critical theory' understands that knowledge and truth is something that is verifiable within social-historical contexts, but also changeable because of social-historical developments – thus, differing from 'traditional theory' (and empiricism), which conceived of knowledge and truth in Absolute terms. Hartras (2010: 45) insightfully comments on this:

> The critical theory worldview … is based upon three principles: it must be explanatory, practical and normative. That is, it must explain the factors that work against emancipation in society, identify the actors to change it and provide both clear norms for criticism and achievable practical goals for social transformation. To examine social reality from a critical theory perspective is to

approach participants as agents and 'producers of their own historical form of life' (Horkheimer 1993: 21). This view challenges the technocratic models of social scientists as detached observers and favours contextualized social relationships and a socially distributed practical knowledge. The critical theorists argue for the importance of first- and second-person understanding in an attempt to move away from a technocratic view of social inquiry whose sole purpose is to offer solutions to practical problems. In this regard, a critical theory and its approach to social inquiry have much in common with pragmatism (Bohman 1999a, 1999b). Both strive to generate knowledge that is relevant to people's historical and political contexts, and capable of making an important contribution to their lives.

This understanding about social-historical truths leads Horkheimer to argue that there is a need for uncovering the fabric of reality *and*, consequently, the drive to transform the world. This transformation of the world, "making an important contribution to [individuals'] lives", is to be done through emancipation, and it is imperative for us to understand this concept. The concept of emancipation appears in Horkheimer and Adorno's first essay of the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1944/2002), namely "The Concept of Enlightenment", where they say:

> But a true praxis capable of overturning the status quo depends on theory's refusal to yield to the oblivion in which society allows thought to ossify. It is not the material preconditions of fulfilment, unfettered technology as such, which make fulfilment uncertain. That is the argument of sociologists who are trying to devise yet another antidote, even a collectivist one, in order to control that antidote. The fault lies in a social context which induces blindness. The mythical scientific respect of peoples for the given reality, which they themselves constantly create, finally become itself a positive fact, a fortress before which even the revolutionary imagination feels shamed as utopianism, and degenerates to a compliant trust in the objective tendency of history. (Horkheimer and Adorno,1944/2002: 33).

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This is a quite dense passage, but we can identify that for Horkheimer and Adorno, emancipation requires primarily a transformation of thought, and not merely a change in the material conditions. "This does not necessarily separate thought from action, of course, and the quote … speaks of a 'true praxis'. But genuinely emancipatory action is said to depend on correcting problems of thought first, such that Horkheimer [and Adorno] would stress thought for thought's sake. Correcting these problems would require freeing reason from instrumentality, … moving beyond the static form of concepts associated with scientific thinking" (cf. Berendzen 2017). Hence, emancipation of individuals in society requires epistemological changes, which according to Horkheimer and Adorno, cannot take place merely by attaining instrumental and traditional knowledge, knowledge that has been transmitted and sanctioned by society; rather, these epistemological changes also require attaining knowledge through a critique of such knowledge, through perceiving things differently, conceiving issues in a new sort of fashion, 'thinking outside the box'. The importance of education – *critical education* – therefore becomes evident for an individual's emancipation, and for transforming and improving society. Thus, a pedagogy of transformation is required. As a parenthesis and before finishing this section, it is also interesting to note here Berendzen (2017), who makes an interesting point with regard to the connection between emancipatory epistemological changes and modern art. He says:

> [m]odern art might have emancipatory potential, in its ability to express something of the current state of society through means other than formal reasoning. This is, again, a view that is commonly associated with Adorno's thought. But Horkheimer also presents such a view, especially in his 1941 essay "Art and Mass Culture". There, culture is criticized in a manner similar to the discussion of the culture industry in *Dialectic*, and a largely pessimistic picture of the restrictive and homogenizing role of contemporary mass culture is presented. But Horkheimer does note that some art can break free of this and still help the human being "conceive of a world different from that in which he lives". Such works (Horkheimer mentions Joyce's literature and Picasso's *Guernica*) can do so only negatively, however, by displaying the difference between the human being and his or her 'barbarous surroundings'. (cf. Horkheimer 1941/1972d)

I would add that art, not just modern art, can have this effect. It is a matter of perceiving things in different and new ways that go beyond the conventional; if we conceive things in this way, even classical art can be interpreted and reinterpreted in a new fashion. Compare this to Arthur Schopenhauer's argument that 'aesthetic appreciation' provides us with an opportunity to escape the constant demands of our desires that must be continuously fulfilled – the core basis of his pessimism. Moreover, Schopenhauer notes that 'genius' makes use of such contemplations effectively, and that is the reason for its 'ingenuity', and this can be linked to the idea of 'perceiving things differently'; Schopenhauer (1819/1969: 185–186) says,

> The method of viewing things which proceeds in accordance with the principle of sufficient reason is the rational method, and it alone is valid and of use in practical life and in science. The method which looks away from the content of this principle is the method of genius, which is only valid and of use in art. The first is the method of Aristotle; the second is, on the whole, that of Plato. The first is like the mighty storm, that rushes along without beginning and without aim, bending, agitating, and carrying away everything before it; the second is like the silent sun beam, that pierces through the storm quite unaffected by it. The first is like the innumerable showering drops of the waterfall, which, constantly changing, never rest for an instant; the second is like the rainbow, quietly resting on this raging torrent. Only through the pure contemplation described above, which ends entirely in the object, can Ideas be comprehended; and the nature of *genius* consists in pre-eminent capacity for such contemplation. Now, as this requires that a man should entirely forget himself and the relations in which he stands, genius is simply the completest *objectivity*, *i.e.*, the objective tendency of the mind, as opposed to the subjective, which

is directed to one's own self – in other words, to the will. Thus genius is the faculty, of continuing in the state of pure perception, of losing oneself in perception, and of enlisting in this service the knowledge which originally existed only for the service of the will; that is to say, genius is the power of leaving one's own interests, wishes, and aims entirely out of sight, thus of entirely renouncing one's own personality for a time, so as to remain *pure knowing subject*, clear vision of the world.

Critical Theory: What is Critical about it?

Following the line of thought, that philosophical critique should be at the centre of research, not least social research, is then how are we to understand *critique, being critical,* and *having a critical attitude*? How are we to understand the *critical* in 'Critical Theory'? If one is superficial about it, and knowing the Marxist roots of Critical Theory, then one might understand that the *critical* in Critical Theory means that we should be *critical* of political life and the status quo, and ultimately of capitalism and the process of globalisation. In connection to this, Rush (2004: 9) comments that:

Horkheimer takes the term *critical theory* from Marx and early Critical Theory of course is broadly Marxist. It is an account of the social forces of domination that takes its theoretical activity to be practically connected to the object of its study. In other words, Critical Theory is not merely descriptive, it is a way to instigate social change by providing knowledge of the forces of social inequality that can, in turn, inform political action aimed at emancipation (or at least at diminishing domination and inequality). Following this thought one might think that Critical Theory is 'critical' just to the extent that it makes social inequality apparent, specifies some plausible candidates for the causes of inequality, and enables society in general … to react in appropriate ways.

However, this is a simplistic view of the word 'critical' in Critical Theory. Rush (2004: 10) continues and notes that we must understand 'critical' in Kantian terms, and as the members of the Enlightenment movement understood it. This is

in line with the understanding that the Frankfurt School as well as its rivals were interpreting and reinterpreting Kantian philosophy. Thus, 'critical' is to be interpreted in a threefold way:

1. Being critical implies using one's reason (as opposed to, for instance, one's emotions or one's intuitions or gut feelings), which is consequently used to establish the boundaries of knowledge (which sets knowledge apart from mere opinion), something Kant argues very successfully in his Critique of Pure Reason (cf. Kant 1781/1998);

2. Reason is also that which performs the critique, and any attempt to curtail its scope of action, is something dogmatic – that is to say, everything must be critiqued, must undergo the tribunal and judgement of reason; further, this means that being critical implies self-critique, reasserting one's autonomy (cf. Kant 1781/1998); and

3. Finally, the conditions and methodology used by reason to critique must also be explained and assessed to evaluate its power of analysis and efficacy.

Ultimately, this "… is reason criticizing itself. And it is this critical impetus, this fastidious self-reflexivity" (cf. Mendieta 2005: 7), that is the driving force behind Critical Theory. Further, this implies that Critical Theory is involved in "a philosophical reconstruction of idealism" (Rush 2004: 11), in adapting and re-reading Kant's and his *Critical Philosophy*. However, "all of Critical Theory's philosophical competitors also viewed themselves in strong reaction to German Idealism, each offering its own account of the advantages and disadvantages of it, Critical Theory's particular understanding of idealism was also an important way for it to criticize rival contemporary positions" (Rush 2004: 11). It must be noted that Idealism here does not mean the negation of a material reality to subscribe to immaterialism as Bishop George Berkeley would defend in his *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonus* (cf. Berkeley 1713/2007); rather, it means to identifying, characterising, and critically engaging with the conditions that are necessary for human, or for beings like us,

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to experience reality. Peter Strawson seminal book *Bounds of Sense: An Essay on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* explains this well in the following much quoted passage:

> It is possible to imagine kinds of world very different from the world as we know it. It is possible to describe types of experience very different from the experience we actually have. But not any purported and grammatically permissible description of a possible kind of experience would be a truly intelligible description. There are limits to what we can conceive of, or make intelligible to ourselves, as a possible general structure of experience. The investigation of these limits, the investigation of the set of ideas which forms the limiting framework of all our thought about the world and experience of the world, is, evidently, an important and interesting philosophical undertaking. No philosopher has made a more strenuous attempt on it than Kant. (Strawson 1966: p. 15)

Thus, the central question of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, his oeuvre dealing with the issue of idealism, with the "investigation of the set of ideas which forms the limiting framework of all our thought about the world and experience of the world", is "What can I know?" As a conclusion to his enquiry, Kant separates knowledge from opinion and faith, establishing the conditions to both: "I can only know those things that I have empirical experience of". This means, according to Kant, that I can only have faith in God, in the Absolute, and an opinion about things like souls, life after death, and the future.

Let me pursue this line of thought in more detail. As previously mentioned, Critical Theory made use of a *via positiva*, and re-reading and re- establishing Kant's understanding of *critical* was very much part of it, whilst also following a *via negativa*, and criticising its rivals for *the misuse* or *lack of understanding* of Kant's *Critical Philosophy* was also a central component of this critique. In connection to this, it is important to note here that Horkheimer received his doctorate *summa cum laude* from the University of Frankfurt in 1922, under the supervision of Hans Cornelius, with a thesis on Kant,

entitled "Zur Antinomie der teleologischen Urterilskraft" (i.e. The Antinomy of Teleological Judgment) and his *habilitationsschrijt*, also at the University of Franfurt, in 1925, which had the title "*Kants Kritik der Urteilskraft als Bindeglied zwischen theoretischer und praktischer Philosophie*" (i.e. Kant's 'Critique of Judgment' as a Connecting Link Between Theoretical and Practical Philosophy), which demonstrates that the theorist at the centre of Critical Theory's development was an expert on Kant's *Critical Philosophy*. This gives him authority to develop Critical Theory in accordance with Kant's *Critical Philosophy* whilst also giving credence to his criticisms of interpretations of other schools of thought of Kantian philosophy.

This leads us to Critical Theory's main adversaries, that is, those schools of thought that followed positivism or empiricism – the Frankfurt School uses these terms in an interchangeable way; that is to say, those schools of thought that were centred around scientific theories and their methods. These schools of thought became the main targets of the Frankfurt School because they also considered themselves heirs to Kantian philosophy, but there was an obvious disagreement of interpretations. The Frankfurt School's criticisms of positivism are threefold: (i) positivist theories objectify human beings, (ii) it conceives reality as something that is purely given by experience, taking no account of the distinction between essence and appearance, and (iii) it posits a separation between facts and values, separating in the process knowledge from human interest (cf. Bottomore 1984: 16). All three seem to disregard some dictums of Kantian *Critical Philosophy*.

With regard to (i) (i.e. positivist theories objectify human beings), in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, Kant (1785/1964) advances the categorical imperative, a test for morality and ethical behaviour, which in its second formulation says that you should "act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means but always at the same time as an end" (G96). This could lead us to understand that positivist theories go against

this dictum because they objectify human beings. Their treatment of human beings as objects of study narrows the understanding of *being human*, of all the richness that accompanies *humanity*. This positivist understanding of humanity may pose some very serious ethical problems, such as the use of human beings for the advancement of the sciences, sometimes with no regard for their well-being – there are numerous instances of this happening in recent history, and perhaps the experiments conducted by the Nazi's in the concentration and death camps during the Second World War are the prime illustration of how easily things can degenerate.

Germane to the issue of (ii) (i.e. it conceives reality as something that is purely given by experience, taking no account of the distinction between essence and appearance) is Kant's distinction between *appearances* and *things-in-themselves*, which is very well argued in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (cf. Kant 1781/1998), where he says that "From this deduction of our faculty of cognizing a priori … there emerges a very strange result … namely that with this faculty we can never get beyond the boundaries of possible experi ence, … [and] that such cognition reaches appearance only, leaving the thing in itself as something actual for itself but uncognized by us" (pp. Bxix–xx); Kant understands that human experience can be understood on two levels, the empirical level (or the level of ordinary experience) and the transcenden tal (or philosophical) level – that is to say, for any given observer, any given object can be considered as it really is (i.e. a *thing-in-itself* – the transcenden tal or philosophical level) or as the representation of this same object that is experienced by the observer under certain conditions (i.e. an *appearance* – the empirical level of experience). Positivism seems to disregard this distinction between the philosophical and empirical understandings of reality by considering the empirical level as the only possible one.

Pertaining to (iii) (i.e. posits a separation between facts and values, separating in the process knowledge from human interest) is the understanding that statements about facts are value-free for they refer to something in-the-world, and statements of values manifest an individual's opinion. However, this clear-cut separation between these two kinds of statements has been criticised on the grounds that an individual's perception of a fact may involve a value judgement; for instance, if an individual says that 'This is A's property', it implies 'a fact' but also respect for the idea of 'private property' – thus, facts and values are connected. Further, I believe that this distinction seems to have implications for Kant's understanding that 'ought implies can'. In his *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, Kant (1793/2009) says that: "For if the moral law commands that we ought to be better human beings now, it inescapably follows that we must be capable of being better human beings" (6:50); and in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant (1781/1998) says: "The action to which the 'ought' applies must indeed be possible under natural conditions" (A548/B576). This means that according to Kant, if an agent is morally obliged to perform an action, then the agent must also logically be able to do it, which means that it would be wrong to blame people for things over which they have no control. I note that there is much debate about Kant's assertion; however, I am in agreement with Stern (2004: 43–44) who asserted that: "It is argued from 'ought implies can' that what is right must be something that we as agents are capable of following or acting upon, so that the principle 'ought implies can' is said to imply that we should focus on the capacities of agents in moral theorizing and action, and adjust our accounts of what is right and wrong accordingly". That is, the individual needs to *know the facts* so to be able to pass a *value-judgement*, and *act upon it*. Accordingly, it becomes troublesome to blame individuals for acting in a particularly problematic way if they do not know the facts. Positivism disregards this issue by establishing a definite distinction between facts and values, failing to see that they are in fact intrinsically connected; moreover, it can be argued that the separation between facts and values leads positivism to moral relativism because statements about facts tells us about things in the world, that is they are objective, whilst statements about values voice an individual's opinions,

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that is they are subjective. This becomes troublesome because it impedes on our ability to criticise and judge morally dubious positions for we must be tolerant of an individual's opinions; however, we do want to *critique* any individual's positions so to ascertain their rightfulness, or not.

Now that I have discussed the issue of *critique, being critical*, and *having a critical attitude*, we are in the position of returning to the issue of 'uncovering the fabric of reality', 'transformation of society', *and* 'emancipation'.

Conclusion

In this paper, I set out to provide a critical, mainstream reading of the Frankfurt School and Critical Theory. I established the importance of being critical for a diagnostic of reality and for implementing changes in society, and these are central pillars of Critical Theory. It was also established that Critical Theory itself must be continuously re-evaluated, *critiqued*, so as not to become dogmatic; that is to say, Critical Theory's "precepts should not be turned into a new dogma or treated as articles of faith [; t]he best way to remain faithful to the Frankfurt School's legacy is not to follow it mechanically or unreflectively" (Wolin 2006: 17). This is a crucial aspect of Critical Theory, one that is not always followed by theorists, and something that Gur-Ze'ev identified as a failure of Critical Pedagogy (i.e. the pedagogical arm of Critical Theory), and those who follow it.

Critical Theory also emphasises the importance of uncovering the fabric of reality, understanding it critically, *and* the drive to transform the world. However, to transform the world here does not mean to pursue utopias, ideals that are too farfetched to become real; rather, it means to effect the changes that are possible in that given social-political-historical moment. In a way, it could be said that this aspect of Critical Theory is very pragmatic, and something that is not always appreciated by critics and followers of the theory. Certainly, this 'pragmatic aspect' is not directly associated with American *Pragmatism*; rather, it is related to the Marxist concept of *praxis* (cf. Wolin 2006: 104) – and this is very much present in Gur-Ze'ev's writings. However, it is important to acknowledge that there are some similarities between Critical Theory and

American Pragmatism, which have been noted by commentators, and this is particularly the case in its more mature stages; Bonham (2005) comments on this by referring to Horkheimer's *Bemerkungen zur Religion* (1972). I quote:

> Given the emphasis among the first generation of Critical Theory on human beings as the self-creating producers of their own history, a unique practical aim of social inquiry suggests itself: to transform contemporary capitalism into a consensual form of social life. For Horkheimer a capitalist society could be transformed only by becoming more democratic, to make it such that "all conditions of social life that are controllable by human beings depend on real consensus" in a rational society (Horkheimer 1972: 249–250). The normative orientation of Critical Theory, at least in its form of critical social inquiry, is therefore towards the transformation of capitalism into a 'real democracy' in which such control could be exercised (Horkheimer 1972: 250). In such formulations, there are striking similarities between Critical Theory and American Pragmatism.

Finally, I understand that Horkheimer's critique of scientific theories also do some damage to the Enlightenment movement, which understood that the use of one's own reason is, for better or worse, an autonomous endeavour by the individual. It can be argued that this is so, because the Enlightenment movement fails to deal with the web of power relations that are present in the fabric of society, and consequently the impact that this has on an individual's notions of autonomy as well as on the individual's capacity to pursue and develop this autonomy. For instance, it is questionable that someone living in dire poverty,

with little access to education and healthcare, will have an adequate notion of autonomy *and* many opportunities to pursue and develop as an autonomous being – these are individuals at the mercy of the web of power relations in society, too submersed and trapped by the *status quo* that they become unable to make sense of their situation, of the true nature of reality. Connected to this, Bivens-Tatum (2011: 32) notes that the idea of autonomy is so ingrained in Western culture and consciousness that it is sometimes difficult to conceive of a time when this was not the case; the author comments that "[b]efore the eighteenth century in the West, and still today in much of the world, people lived under the constant pressure of religious and civil authorities

directing their actions"; this included all sorts of pressures, curbing individual's voices, beliefs, and behaviour to conform with the status quo enforced by authorities (and avoid persecution, and ultimately death). However, the Enlightenment's focus on the individual, and its autonomy, seems at best to overlook and at worst to completely disregard the issue of power relations and the impact that these have on the individual, and its autonomy. This demonstrates the importance of Horkheimer's critique and insight, namely "'the human bottom of nonhuman things' and to demystify the surface forms of equality" (Aronowitz 2002: xiii), placing Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School in an interesting position to deal with social and political issues.

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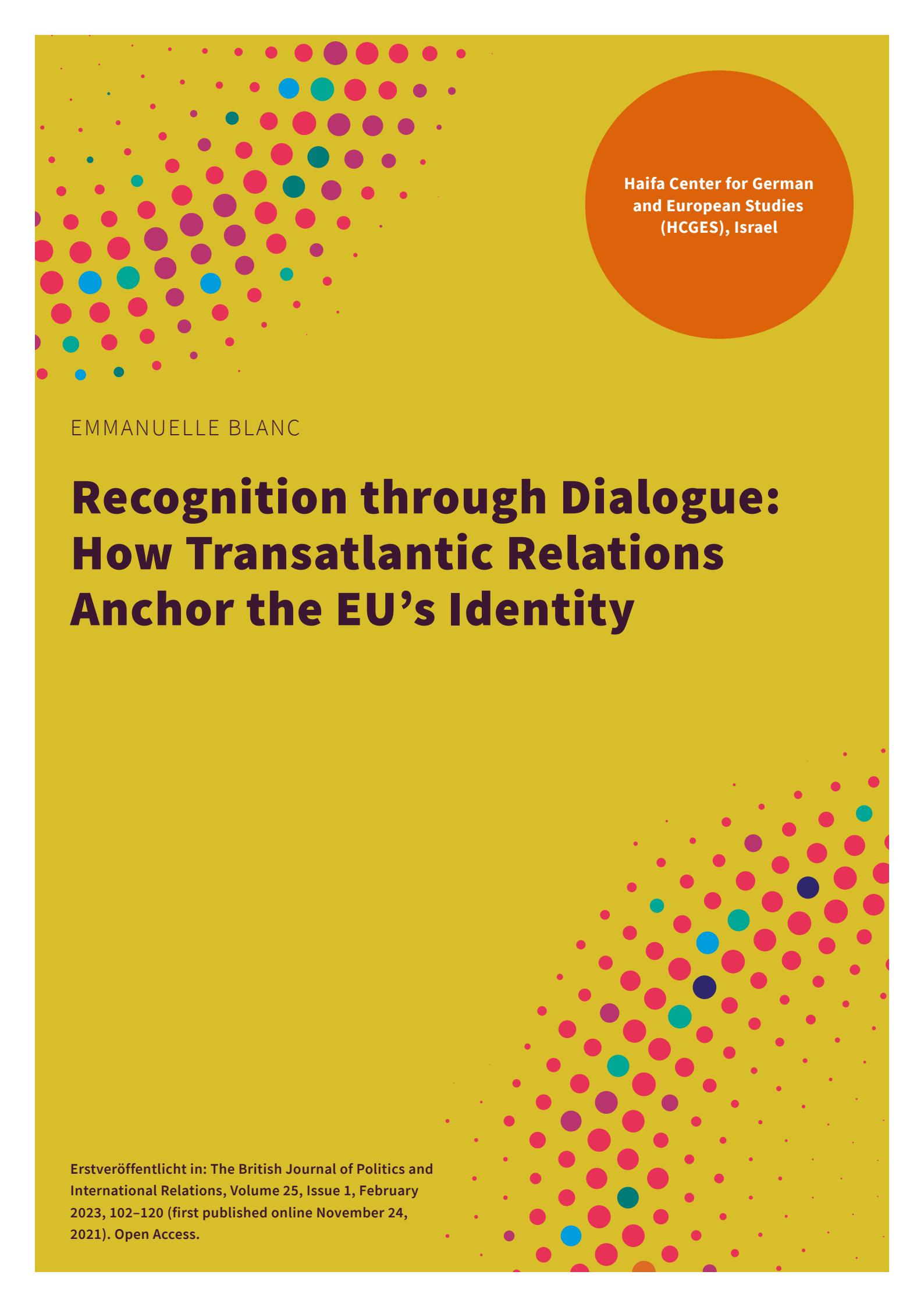
EMMANUELLE BLANC

Recognition through Dialogue: How Transatlantic Relations Anchor the EU's Identity

Abstract

In spite of being criticised as 'talking shops' and easily replaced by technological innovations, dialogues – defined as face-to-face interactions in an institutionalised framework – remain a staple of international politics. While prevailing accounts have shown that dialogues help states advance their quest for security and profit, the key role dialogues play in the quest for recognition has been overlooked and remains undertheorised. Emphasising the socio-psychological need for ontological security, this article argues that institutions relentlessly engage in dialogues because it allows them to seek, gain and anchor the recognition of their identity. The significance for international relations is illustrated through the emblematic case of the European Union–US dialogues, specifically the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue. The multi-method qualitative analysis based on original interviews, participant observations, visuals and official documents demonstrates how the European Union exploits these dialogues with its 'Significant Other' to seek, gain and anchor the recognition of its complex institutional identity.

Introduction

Every day brings news of another diplomatic meeting held somewhere in the world involving representatives of states and/or international institutions. Be it the recent US–Russia Summit in Geneva in June 2021 or the traditional United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) meetings in September, diplomats maintain a long tradition of face-to-face encounters. The persistence of diplomatic dialogues is puzzling, as they have been criticised as cheap talking shops and empty performances (Morrow, 1999) – even more so with the advance of communication technologies. Still, face-to-face meetings between diplomats, and large gatherings of international representatives remain a staple of international politics. So, why do states and international institutions still resort with so much insistence to old-fashioned face-to-face dialogues?

This article analyses diplomatic dialogues, arguing that one of their functions is to recognise and anchor institutional identity. Dialogues – defined as a face-to-face interaction in an institutionalised setting – are part of the struggle for recognition in which both states and institutions relentlessly engage in world politics. Collective actors extensively resort to dialogues to seek, gain and anchor the recognition of their identity, thereby meeting their socio-psychological needs. This conceptualisation draws from scholarship on dialogue (Barston, 2006; Fierke,

1999; Watson, 1982) and recognition theories (Agné, 2013; Greenhill, 2008; Gustafsson, 2016a; Lindemann and Ringmar, 2012), while adding insights from socio-psychology to challenge our established understanding of the role of dialogue in international politics. So far, international relations (IR) theorists have emphasised the role of dialogues in the pursuit of security and profit, conceptualising them as a reflection of power constellations (see realists like Fierke, 1999; Langholtz and Stout, 2004: 3), as an engine for cooperation through information exchange (see liberal institutionalists' accounts like Crawford, 2011: 29; Keohane, 1988), and as a process of persuasion and arguing, leading to shared understandings (see constructivists, such as Adler, 1997; Risse, 2000). Yet, little attention has been given to the role dialogues play in the quest for recognition in international politics. Institutions and states are sensitive to identity matters and therefore take advantage of dialogues as rich social settings to seek, gain and anchor the recognition of their identity.

The socio-psychological approach adopted here proposes a full appreciation of dialogues' human and emotional dimensions, especially in the way micro-practices anchor the institutional identity of international organisations, such as the European Union (EU). Drawing on Goffman (1959), we conceptualise the practice of dialogue as a symbolically framed interaction through

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which institutional identity is recognised and anchored. Participants fulfil a symbolic function as carriers of institutional identity seeking recognition on behalf of their institutions. This explains why institutions are keen in participating in these dialogues and in turning each event within the dialogue into a success story to be amplified through not only official documents, but also through social media. While the literature focuses on formal and informal modes of recognition at the macro-level (Fabry, 2010; Gustafsson, 2016a; Newman and Visoka, 2018), we suggest recognition processes occur also at the micro-level in everyday diplomatic practice. This study therefore broadens the universe of instances in which recognition is sought, granted and routinised. Given the global backlash against liberal assertiveness (Alter and Zürn, 2020) and recognition struggles coming from both West and semi-periphery (Adler-Nissen and Zarakol, 2021), this research is particularly timely.

To illustrate how dialogues are used to seek recognition of institutional identity, we focus on the EU as it has set up an entire 'dialogue system' (Monar, 1997: 272), becoming one of the international actors conducting the highest number of diplomatic dialogues. We examine the transatlantic dialogue, featuring an intensity of consultations unprecedented in the history of diplomacy writ large (Ginsberg, 2001). Specifically, we look at the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue (TLD), which is among the most thriving dialogues institutionalised between the EU and the United States. Methodologically, the article relies on ethnographic methods, including participant observations in confidential meetings and interviews with European and American lawmakers participating in these dialogues, to collect data about the socio-psychological

dynamics underpinning these interactions. Beyond the description of the dialogue's formalities, it offers a novel and textured analysis of the practitioners' perspectives to understand what they do and how they understand what they do – thereby, shedding light on the relevance of the micro-practice of dialogue for wider political phenomenon (i.e. recognition). The data complemented with primary sources are analysed through a thematic analysis. It shows that against the backdrop of a lesser American commitment to the transatlantic dialogue, the EU is eager to conduct these dialogues to gain recognition and anchor its institutional identity.

Section 'Recognition, institutional identity and dialogue' overviews the recognition literature and suggests that institutions are relentlessly seeking recognition of their institutional identity to meet their ontological needs. Section 'Recognising and anchoring institutional identity through dialogue' draws on socio-psychology to conceptualise the role of dialogue in the quest for recognition. It articulates an innovative framework analysing the process through which institutional identity is recognised and anchored. Section 'The quest for recognition through the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue: "We, as Europeans, feel more and more recognised"' empirically exemplifies how the EU uses the TLD to gain the recognition of its identity from its arguably most 'significant other' (the United States). The conclusion highlights the relevance of recognition theory to diplomatic practice and provides suggestions for future research. Focusing on recognition struggles in dialogical interactions helps comprehend the intricacies of diplomatic practice and wider dynamics of identity formation in international politics.

Recognition, Institutional Identity and Dialogue

The struggle for recognition is one of the core motivational dynamics characterising international affairs alongside the search for security and profit (Lindemann and Ringmar, 2012). For Ringmar (2002: 116), 'not only physical, but

also social survival is at stake in international politics'. Several drivers exist behind the quest for recognition. Recognition brings material benefits both for the party being recognised (in terms of prestige, leader's political survival

or resources in the case of an organisation) and for the recogniser, as its powers and legitimacy expand in the process (Agné, 2013). Yet, this instrumental perspective is only part of the story. Recognition is also emotionally loaded and taps into moral and identity matters. Drawing on political theories of justice and entitlement, several studies see the quest for recognition as the ambition to be perceived as an equally 'moral person', capable of taking autonomous moral decisions (Honneth, 1995; Taylor, 1994).

Our view is that recognition is a powerful psychological need related to the process of identity formation and maintenance of ontological security (Greenhill, 2008; Lindemann and Ringmar, 2012). In line with Meads' symbolic interactionalist approach, actors construct themselves and gain a sense of ontological security through interactions with Others (Mead, 1967). While collective actors internally develop a self-image arising from domestic discourses and historical experiences, this self-understanding can only become a secure identity when it is framed and recognised through social interactions (Kinnvall and Mitzen, 2017: 4). Actors need other's validation of their identity, 'lest they feel insecure about who they really are' (Wolf, 2011: 109). This stable sense of identity is crucial as it informs both the actors' interests and how they are to act in pursuit of these interests (Murray, 2015: 70). As Albert et al. (2000: 13–17) remind us: 'Whether an organization, group or person, each entity needs a preliminary answer to the question: "who are we?" or "who am I?" to act and interact effectively with other entities over the long run'. Conversely, a lack of recognition can be perceived as 'traumatic' (Mitzen, 2006; Ringmar, 2014: 7) and have detrimental consequences on peace and prospects for cooperation. While *mutual* recognition pushes IR in a peaceful direction, misrecognition can spark conflict and deteriorate relationships (Gustafsson, 2016a; Strömbom, 2014). It is therefore crucial to scrutinise the ways through which recognition is secured in international politics – dialogue, being one of the most important – yet overlooked one.

But which types of actors seek recognition on the international stage? While states have long been considered the main actors seeking recognition and being able to grant it, recent studies have shown that international institutions and non-state actors are also involved in recognition struggles (Geis et al., 2015). International institutions are not only pursuing material gains but are also seeking the satisfaction of identity needs involving recognition processes (Mitzen, 2006; Oelsner, 2013). This quest for recognition is linked to the imperative to gain legitimacy and assert authority (Tallberg and Zürn, 2019). Yet, not all collective actors have the same recognition needs. The EU, for instance, has pressing recognition needs due to its *sui generis* nature as a political actor, its ever-evolving machinery of decision-making and ambiguous end purpose. Even within the EU, there is variation in the recognition needs of different institutions: the European Parliament (EP) being the neediest one, trying to assert its role as a new foreign policy player (Blanc, 2018). While more theorisation on the sources and evolution of recognition needs of states and institutions alike is needed, this article suggests that the more acute the recognition needs of an actor, the more it will use dialogues to gain and anchor its identity. The exact way through which dialogues are exploited for this purpose remains valid across diverse cases.

In this study, we are interested in 'thick recognition' as opposed to 'thin recognition' (Gustafsson, 2016a). Whereas thin recognition refers to the legal status of a sovereign state, thick recognition acknowledges difference and uniqueness in the form of specific qualities. It refers to the recognition of distinct identity narratives of an individual, group or state (Strömbom, 2014). Institutions, too, develop a sense of institutional identity for which they seek recognition. It corresponds to 'the identity, which is the most central, enduring, and distinctive about an organization' (Albert and Whetten, 1985: 410). It encapsulates the organisation's essential characteristics, like its missions, values, qualities and procedures (Missoni, 2014: 370). In line with the socio-psychological literature on identity construction (Brewer, 1991), we consider two institutional

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identity claims for which recognition is sought: relevance and distinctiveness. Relevance relates to the recognition of a social status (Ringmar, 2012: 7) and of a subsequent privileged relationship (i.e. relationship identity of partners), for which the demonstration of capabilities, efficiency in delivering results, coherence and reliability are indicators. Distinctiveness refers to the positive appreciation of the institution's values, interests and procedures that make it unique. This implies giving respect to the differences of the Other (Scott, 2000; Wolf, 2011).

For Lindemann and Saada (2012: 1–28), thick recognition is granted when the nature of the interaction confirms the actors' self-ascribed value and importance along these dimensions. At the core of the recognition process therefore lies a match between the self-image of the actor seeking recognition and the treatment it deems appropriate to receive by the recognising party. Conversely, the denial of *thick* recognition entails not recognising an actor's unique identity (Gustafsson, 2016b: 617). The actor is recognised in a way that differs from its own understanding and this leads to a mismatch between the actor's self-image and the *perceived* inadequate treatment it receives from the actor granting recognition.

A note on the 'aggregation issue' is in order here. While the actors seeking recognition during the dialogue are individuals, their interactions at the micro-level have far-reaching consequences at the macro-level, reinforcing the institutional identity of the organisation they represent. Without theorising the transmission mechanisms from the individual to the collective, we follow the 'quasi-behavioural approach' devised by IR scholars to incorporate psychological insights into IR by treating aggregate actors as unitary (Gildea, 2020: 3). Adopting the 'social conception of institutional identity', we consider institutions as social actors, authorised to engage in social intercourse as a collective, and possessing rights and responsibilities, as if the collective were an individual (Whetten and Mackey, 2002: 395).

How do institutions and states engage in recognition games? The recognition literature typically privileges macro-level rather than micro-level interactions. Regarding thin recognition, the emphasis has been on legal one-off *acts of recognition* easy to capture (e.g. statehood recognition in the UN); (Agné, 2013: 101). Yet, given that thick recognition cannot be expressed once and for all by a single act, as collective entities are constantly seeking recognition in interaction with Others, recent studies have uncovered subtle ways through which actors seek, grant and routinise recognition (Gustafsson, 2016b). It involves both practices of recognition (Kessler and Herborth, 2013: 158) and representations (Duncombe, 2016). Gustafsson's (2016b) work on the recognition dynamics underlying Sino–Japanese relations is illustrative. While it highlights macro-practices of recognition, including the acceptance of foreign aid and public apologies, it overlooks the fact that recognition also permeates micro-practices of international life. To put it succinctly, 'recognition, or its negative counterpart, "misrecognition" is relevant whenever people or their collective organisations interact – or fail to interact' (Geis et al., 2015: x). As a powerful dynamic omnipresent in any social interaction, it is necessary to conceptualise how recognition unfolds in the micro-practice of dialogues and how it affects the identity of the relevant actors. Hence, this research answers Pouliot and Cornut's (2015: 306) call to explore synergies between practice theory and diplomatic studies using an inter-disciplinary approach. By foregrounding insights from socio-psychology to uncover the micro-foundations of political interaction, this research also complements the growing scholarship on the benefits and pitfalls of face-to-face interactions (see, for instance, Holmes and Wheeler, 2020).

Recognising and Anchoring Institutional Identity through Dialogue

Dialogue as a Unique Form of Social Interaction Favourable to Recognition Processes

The term 'dialogue' has been used in different contexts, ranging from cooperation and diplomacy to conflict resolution (Jönsson and Hall, 2005; Rothman, 1992; Watson, 1982). We define dialogue in narrower terms as 'a face-to-face interaction in an institutionalized setting', as it allows to conduct a granular analysis of a specific and long-lasting diplomatic practice. On this basis, two features allow recognition processes to unfold intensively at this level of interaction: (1) the temporal and spatial immediacy inherent in the face-to-face encounter and (2) the symbolic nature of the institutionalised meeting.

Temporal and Spatial Immediacy

The temporal and spatial immediacy opens verbal and non-verbal opportunities not easily obtained in other communicative settings (Markova, 1990: 6). It provides subtle ways for collective actors to seek and grant recognition. While diplomacy scholars have shown that non-verbal communication in direct visual contact allows the exploitation of body language (gestures, dress code etc) and of social rituals (Berridge, 2005: 113–114), thereby facilitating communication processes – we go further and argue that these gestures are used to signify a certain type of relationship in a subtle recognition process. Similarly, emotional display is not only a mechanism for intention understanding (Holmes, 2018; Wong, 2016) and trust-building (Markova, 2012). It provides cues regarding the degree to which actors *feel* that their identity has been recognised, as the recognition of one's identity – or lack thereof – taps into personal and collective emotions. Denial of recognition is understood as humiliating whereas acts confirming an identity are seen as respectful and thus induce pride and joy, making actors feel ontologically secure (Wolf, 2011).

Dialogue as a Symbolically Framed Interaction

The institutionalised nature of the interaction entails a strong symbolic dimension. It is thanks to the symbolism inherent in the institutionalised encounter between representatives of institutions that the recognition process at the micro-level can be extrapolated to the macro-institutional level. Symbols make relationship between abstract entities concrete. For Failluzaev (2013: 92), the abstract nature of any political institution requires a degree of objectification to allow meaningful interactions. 'When no one see the state, and international politics does not present itself directly to our senses' (Wendt, 1999: 5), the use of symbols becomes indispensable to make institutions more tangible. Well-aware of their role in the interaction, actors engage in a 'team performance' defined as a collection of individuals cooperating to project and maintain a certain impression upon others (Goffman, 1959: 47). The key point is that if the individual's activity is to become significant to others, he must mobilize its activity so that it will express during the interaction what he wishes to convey. The performer may be required not only to express his claimed practices during the interaction but also to do so during a split second in the interaction.

To achieve this aim, 'the individual typically infuses his activity with signs, which dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts that might otherwise remain unapparent and obscure' (Goffman, 1959: 19). The dialogue therefore becomes the scene on which the actors 'perform' their institutional identity to get this identity recognised. The power of symbolism helps us make the jump from the interactions at the individual level to the macro-level, tackling the 'aggregation issue' (Gildea, 2020). By their very essence as representatives, individuals engaged in institutionalised dialogue, embody and perform the institutional identity for which recognition is being sought. The

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image of an institution is the result not only of its activities but also of the behaviour of those who represent it. A negative image of the organisation will be generated if their attitudes are not coherent with the organisation's declared values and aims (Missoni, 2014: 370). The anthropomorphic discourse equalising the characteristics of the diplomats with the institution they represent shows we can experience institutions (Failluzaev, 2007: 532). The dialogue can thus be conceptualised as an instance in which the state or institution represented is experienced firsthand, opening unique recognition opportunities. While this study focuses on the use of dialogue to seek and grant recognition, it can equally be exploited negatively to misrecognise the other and hurt its self-esteem (Failluzaev, 2020).

The Threefold Process of Recognition of Institutional Identity through Dialogue

We map three stages in the recognition process of institutional identity through dialogue: *seeking recognition* by projecting different dimensions of identity (relevance and distinctiveness), *gaining recognition* in the case of a perceived match between one's self-image and the treatment received, and *anchoring recognition* through the enactment of visual, discursive and practical anchors. These stages roughly overlap with key moments of the dialogue: first, 'the entry to the room', including the preparation; second, 'the interaction within the room', corresponding to the bulk of the dialogue in which participants experience the relationship; and third, 'the leaving of the room', whereby symbolic elements are projected to the world allowing the recognition of identity to be anchored and celebrated outside the room. Regarding the debate on how to recognise thick recognition (i.e. 'the recognition of recognition'; Lindemann, 2012, 2014; Steele, 2014), we follow Gustafsson's (2016a: 260) approach, which identifies the main dimensions of an actor's self-identity and the acts and statements interpreted as recognition by recognition-seeking actors. Relying on Failluzaev (2007, 2013), we specify the symbolic elements available in the dialogical context that are exploited by representatives to seek, gain and anchor recognition or alternatively to misrecognise Others.

Seeking Recognition before and during the Dialogue

The participants' recognition-seeking behaviour is apparent in the preparation and during the dialogue through the efforts made to project the different dimensions of their institutional identity. The preparation corresponds to the 'rehearsal' of the dialogue whereby actors coordinate 'their team performance' (Goffman, 1959: 47) to come across as competent, coherent and knowledgeable in line with the relevance component of institutional identity. Taking a leadership role is a way to project these qualities and the ability to organise high-level meetings is a symbolic demonstration of power and prestige (Failluzaev, 2013: 109). The intense coordination efforts among relevant bodies are also part of this 'team rehearsal' aimed at sending a unified message to convey a coherent image of the institution. This is particularly relevant for complex organisations, such as the EU, often criticised for its incoherent foreign policy (Gebhard, 2017). Likewise, the selection process of participants matters. Top experts are selected to participate in the delegation to project a high degree of competency. The more focused the discussions are, the stronger the image of the institution is, and consequently, the higher the likelihood of recognition to be granted.

Similarly, participants exploit the dialogical interaction itself to seek recognition by performing key dimensions of institutional identity. For instance, the distinctiveness component is enacted through specific procedures. Turn-taking is strategically designed to reflect the delegation's composition and hence the plurality of views characterising the institution. For a deliberative and normative body, like the EU, it is important to exemplify the values it represents. Ensuring that all views are given due consideration and respect is a defining feature of democracy and consensus-building. Informal activities, outside the formal meeting room, equally reflect recognition dynamics. Activities, such as fact-finding visits, are designed to prove the institutional relevance of the organisation in certain policy areas by highlighting its achievements and ability to deliver.

Gaining Recognition within the Room: Match between Self-Image and Treatment Received

To be granted recognition, there needs to be a match between the self-image of the actor seeking recognition and the treatment it *deems* appropriate to receive (Lindemann and Saada, 2012: 1–17). This does not imply that the interaction goes perfectly smooth. Actors seeking recognition can at times feel not properly recognised through certain practices. Yet, what matters is the *predominant* perception of the interaction among members. Here are symbolic aspects of the dialogical interaction that can be interpreted as acts of recognition in line with the dimensions of institutional identity. The dialogue's format is instructive in terms of relevance; the large size of a delegation and the presence of influential personalities demonstrate the foreign delegates' interest to invest time and resources to make the visit (Failluzaev, 2013: 109), thereby recognising the host's importance. The 'relevance' component of institutional identity relates to the concept of 'relationship identity', describing the roles that actors play vis-à-vis each other (Failluzaev, 2013: 110). As the EU and the United States have long held a relationship identity of partnership and friendship, we focus on the ways through which the nature of the dialogical interaction provides recognition for this type of identity. First, actors defining each other as friends share a project of 'world building' and strive towards realising this shared vision of international order (Berenskoetter and Van Hoef, 2017: 6). This commitment is expressed in the practice of dialogue whereby actors understand the aim of their encounter in terms of the advancement of common objectives with the ambitious vision of setting world-wide standards. Friendship is also associated with practices consisting of 'giving counsel and privileged access'(Berenskoetter and Van Hoef, 2017: 8), whereby actors disclose private information exclusively. For Oelsner and Koschut (2014: 20), 'friends usually expect each other to reveal more information to each other than to others and to display a higher level of tolerance towards bad news'. One observes this characteristic when actors display mutual trust.

Extra-gestures, like a visit to a publicly restricted site, can also be perceived as a recognition act. Finally, another indicator revealing the recognition of identity (i.e. distinctiveness dimension) is the widely shared feeling among actors seeking recognition that their counterparts fully understand and respect their fundamental differences, and hence distinctiveness.

Leaving the Room: Anchoring and Celebrating Recognition with the Rest of the World

While the bulk of the recognition process unfolds within the meeting room, it needs to be externalised and publicised for the institutional identity to be effectively anchored. So how does the recognition process experienced by individuals at the micro-level transcend the meeting room to reinforce the institution's identity? We identify three forms of anchors of institutional identity emanating from the dialogue: visual, discursive, practical anchors.

Visual anchors comprise photographs carrying the visualisation of recognition and anchoring institutional identity. More than objective reflections of reality, images have their own agency in the sense that they can do things (Lisle, 2016). They are part of a visibility strategy deployed by institutions to make tangible their identity and increase their visibility world-wide. Thanks to the 'circulability' inherent in visuals, that is, its capacity to transgress linguistic boundaries, images reach more audiences than words (Hansen, 2011: 53). While in the past, few people could observe diplomatic interactions wrapped with symbols and rituals, technological developments have made digital public diplomacy effective in making these images available for millions of television viewers and Internet users.

Second, dialogues generate discursive anchors of institutional identity in the form of official documents. These statements carry the recognition of the actors' distinctiveness and the essence of their relationship. As Oelsner (2013: 119) points out: 'Institutional identity crystallises in normative and discursive statements that define what the institution is: what

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its purpose, goals and limits are; how it plans to achieve them'. The wording of the documents captures the recognition process and discursively anchors institutional identity in a long-lasting manner. Indeed, these statements result from tough negotiations, in which each party attempts to integrate into the text the values at the core of its identity. Having these distinctive identity features reflected in the final documents amount to the granting of recognition. Praise and congratulatory remarks anchor recognition, as they give credibility and acknowledge achievements. The recognition of relevance claims (articulated in a discourse of partnership) is enshrined in the final text, whereby both sides highlight their shared values and interests. The world-wide dissemination of these statements further embodies the partnership identity, as it presents to the world a unified front sending strong signals to third countries and delineating 'them versus us' (Berenskoetter and Van Hoef, 2017: 10).

Finally, institutional identity is anchored through practices emanating from the dialogue – or 'practical anchors' of institutional identity. The 'consultation reflex' that develops, thanks to personal contacts created during face-to-face encounters, is another act of recognition of friendship. It corresponds to the pavlovian habit of consulting counterparts and involves the formation of informal and ad hoc meetings in-between formal meetings. As one American official put it: 'Through these inter-personal connections, you want to create an institution-to-institution relationship' (Interview, Brussels, 2 November 2016), making clear the link between the individual and institutional level of relationship. This practice of ongoing consultation anchors institutional identity as it establishes a partnership relationship in which both institutions are regarded as relevant and necessary interlocutors (Oelsner and Koschut, 2014: 16).

Conversely, in the case of misrecognition, the *predominant* negative feeling of not being properly treated in line with one's self-image has a negative influence on the dialogical dynamics in the room and does not lead to a fully-fledged anchoring of institutional identity. Instead, the misrecognised actor must reposition itself and engage in various strategies to seek further the recognition of its identity (Greve, 2018; Ringmar, 2012).

Methodology

In Table 1, we summarised the symbolic elements used and interpreted by actors, as recognition acts and markers of recognition-seeking behavior – or conversely as indicators of misrecognition. To test this model, we investigated the practices related to the dialogue and the participants' perceptions thereof. Despite the confidentiality and lack of accessibility issues surrounding these high-level meetings, we collected innovative data relying on ethnographic tools. We conducted 25 semi-structured interviews, consisting of open conversations around core questions to understand the subjective perspectives of TLD's participants (Bogner et al., 2009: 52). They were conducted in person between December 2015 and July 2017 with a representative sample of members of European Parliament (MEPs) and Congressmen that participated at least once in the TLD. A combination of convenience, snowball and purposive samplings was used to reach 'theoretical saturation' (Morse, 2004). We also conducted participant observations in high-profile meetings[1] to capture thick descriptions of these social interactions (Gold, 1958). Finally, we gathered primary sources (private records related to the dialogue, joint statements, and social media reporting, including photographs of the dialogues) and conducted a thematic qualitative analysis of the data.

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1 It includes the meeting of the D-US delegation of the European Parliament (EP) in December 2015, the 77th and 78th inter-parliamentary meetings.

Table 1. Indicators of recognition and misrecognition in face-to-face dialogue.

	Evidence: Yes	Evidence: No
Phase 1: Seeking recognition	Preparation ('team rehearsal') • reflexion and considerable efforts made to project institutional identity (including taking the leadership role, selection of varied and top-notched representatives etc) During the dialogue: • deliberate team performance projecting key dimensions of institutional identity – both in formal and informal activities	Absent or very minimal preparation revealing a lack of interest or very low stake in terms of recognition During the dialogue: • no coordinated attempt to project institutional identity
Phase 2: Gaining recognition	*Predominant* positive perceptions of the interaction confirming the match between self-image and treatment received. • Format of the dialogue: appreciation of the physical presence of high-level officials • Quality of the dialogue (characteristics of a dialogue among friends and partners: advancement of a common goal, flow, mutual disclosure of confidential information) • Overall perception of better understanding of one's institutional identity	*Predominant* negative perceptions of the interaction corresponding to the mismatch between self-image and treatment received. • Feelings of being humiliated and not treated with due respect • Dialogue of bad quality • Overall perception of a dialogue that has not led to better understanding of one's institutional identity
Phase 3: Anchoring recognition	• Extensive use of visual, discursive, and practical anchors	• Absence or limited use of visual, discursive, and practical anchors

The Quest for Recognition through the Transatlantic Legislators' Dialogue: 'We, as Europeans, Feel More and More Recognised'

To exemplify these theoretical dynamics, we present the case study of the TLD that has gathered MEPs and members of US Congress since the 1970s. The bi-annual dialogues held in Europe and the United States are composed of official sessions and informal activities, including dinners in sophisticated locations and fact-finding visits. These meetings culminate with the signature of the joint statement summarising the spirit of the discussions. As such, the TLD lends itself to the analysis of the constellation of symbolic practices that are mobilised to seek and anchor recognition. While the TLD officially aims at increasing democratic oversight and leading to a greater convergence of positions (European Parliament, 1999), our analysis – conducted under the Obama administration – demonstrates that the TLD *also* allows MEPs to seek recognition and anchor EU's identity. It highlights a striking asymmetry in the dialogical engagement between the EU and the United States. From the preparation to the anchoring phase, MEPs are more invested than their American counterparts. However, while the way through which the dialogue is conducted renders this asymmetry visible, it also provides an opportunity for MEPs to project the different dimensions of EU's identity and gain recognition.

The European Parliament's Recognition-Seeking Behaviour before and During the Dialogue

MEPs approach the dialogue as a performance in which they can seek recognition by projecting the 'relevance and distinctiveness' dimensions of EU's institutional identity. In the EU case, relevance refers to the competences attributed to a 'partner' capable of delivering results and to the identity of 'friendship', as we scrutinise EU–US relations (Steffenson, 2005). Distinctiveness relates to the values associated with the EU as a normative power, like the commitment to representative democracy, the promotion of human rights, multilateralism and more (Manners, 2002).[2]

The preparation reveals an asymmetry in terms of commitment to the dialogue between European and American representatives whereby the EU invests greater efforts to be recognised as a relevant and unified interlocutor. First, while the EU and the United States formally have the co-responsibility to prepare the meetings, in practice, the EU drives the choice of topics to be discussed and the drafting of the Joint Statements (Interview, Washington, 19 May 2016). As an American official mentioned, 'the initiative comes mainly from the EU, they are in the driver seat while for the Americans, this is a reactionary thing' (Interview, Washington, 24 June 2016). This strong sense of initiative is not only a subtle way to exert influence on the dialogue's parameters and hence on its outcome. It is also designed to convey the image of a highly committed and competent partner.

The asymmetry is also blatant regarding the 'rehearsal of the team performance'. MEPs are more committed to the provision of expertise and the coordination of their institutional position than their American counterparts – the aim being to appear as a knowledgeable and unified actor. Eager to counteract the criticism regarding the EU's lack of coherence as a political

actor, the EP takes measures to ensure excellent coordination both among MEPs and other EU institutions.[3] This internal process crystallises EU's institutional identity as it requires members to define their identity's core elements. As MEPs highlighted, 'the preliminary meetings are crucial, we try to figure out our positions, what is important for us. We try hard to coordinate ourselves to avoid sending contradictory messages to the Americans' (Interview, Brussels, 16 March 2016). The rationale behind this preparation is therefore to prove to the Americans that it was worth talking to Europeans, in short that Europe is relevant: 'Meeting for the sake of meeting is not good enough so we need to bring some added value to convince Americans to travel' (Interview, Brussels, 9 December 2015).

The interaction between European and American representatives during the formal and informal sessions exposed the MEPs' recognition-seeking behaviour vis-à-vis their American counterparts. Every single gesture, statement and facial expression matters in this symbolic interaction. Thus, nothing is left to chance, not even the rules for taking turns to speak. As the EU and US chairmen have the prerogative to give the floor to the participants from their own delegation, the European chair purposefully reaches to members from various parties to reflect the EP's unique features in terms of the plurality of its political views. As one MEP testified:
It's true that we are supposed to portray the position of the EP, but this does not mean that we may not expose our divergences. We have done so in the past, and Americans appreciate it because they understand that we are not a uniform parliament. The beauty of the exercise is to see the nuances that characterize our parliament. This is who we are. (Interview, Brussels, 17 March 2016)

This is a compelling illustration of how the dialogue turns into a performance in which the distinctiveness of the institution becomes more

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2   A thicker conceptualisation of European identity could be explored in future research. Here, we privilege a thin understanding along the dimensions of uniqueness and relevance.

3   It entails the formation of working groups led by expert members of European Parliament (MEPs) responsible for the preparation of the working sessions and 'non-papers'; a preparatory meeting with the delegation's members and exchange of views with European External Action Service (EEAS; Interview, Brussels, 9 December 2015).

tangible thanks to the concerted efforts of the members to project this identity.

The on-site visits in Europe are perceived as another opportunity to prove to the Americans that the EU can deliver by highlighting its achievements often underestimated by the United States. The visit to Europol and to the Rotterdam harbour (78th TLD) is a case in point. As a senior figure in the EU parliamentary delegation to the US explained:
This visit to Europol serves our agenda. If the Americans see how serious the work Europol is doing, they may not just think Europe is letting all the terrorists run free. I hope that when they see what is happening in Europe, they will not be so aggressive and tell us we are naïve. (Interview, Brussels, 18 March 2016)

In the Room: Match Between Self-Image and the Treatment Received

The MEPs' *predominantly* positive perceptions of the dialogue suggest they succeeded in gaining recognition from their American counterparts, and by extension from the United States. First, the mere presence of American representatives is considered a success. Given the competing demands of US reps, the fact they prioritise travelling to Europe indicates the importance of the transatlantic relationship: 'Most important in the end, is to get the American side involved. In the last meeting, we had good American participation. If you get ten Americans coming to Europe, it's a huge achievement' (Interview, Brussels, 9 December 2015). Likewise, the increased involvement of Senate members is seen as a sign of honour for the European participants and their institutions (Interview, Washington, 3 June 2016). This is confirmed by American participants:
The attendance to these dialogues is a way to show commitment to the value of the dialogue and the transatlantic relationship: It is important not to neglect the fact that Congressmen are coming because they see value in these dialogues. Otherwise, they wouldn't come! (Interview, Washington, 24 May 2016)

Second, the content of the interaction confirms the relationship identity as friends and partners – reinforcing the EU's relevance as an international player. First, the fact that the rationale guiding the discussions corresponds to the advancement of a common project in terms of world governance strengthens the feeling among MEPs that they are part of an important endeavour with the United States, whereby both entities are leading the world as partners and form the pillars of the Western liberal order (Interview, Washington, 22 May 2016). Many ideas discussed during these working sessions refer to the EU–US ambition of 'setting the gold standards so that others can follow' (Fieldwork notes, The Hague, 2016). Second, by contrast to distrustful dialogues (i.e. dialogue with Iran), the flow of the dialogue is appreciated by European and American lawmakers because it confirms the friendship relationship identity whereby both sides are part of the same community of values and recognise each other as such. For many participants, the exceptional quality of exchange is due to shared political and cultural values (Interview, Brussels, 24 March 2016). Third, MEP interpret the high-level of mutual disclosure as the recognition of the EU as a valued partner and friend. Highlighting this routine of amity whereby both sides feel comfortable to talk openly, one EP official mentioned:
It's not a dialogue of the deaf but a dialogue between friends. I am happy, as a European, that we can be frank and tell them why we think they are wrong sometimes. If we would agree with everything, we wouldn't behave like friends. We need them and they need us. (Interview, Brussels, 10 December 2015)

The same interviewee added that, sometimes congressmen admit the partial responsibility of the United States in global problems (Interview, Brussels, 10 December 2015). MEPs appreciate these 'confessions', as it highlights their privileged relationship with the United States. Even outside the room, MEPs interpret the extra-gestures of their American counterparts to honour them as a way to grant recognition for their relevance as friends and partners:

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The little bonus we [EU] got when we were in Washington, is that the Americans took us to the balcony of the Speaker of the House. It's nice, they let us go through 'secret' corridors not open otherwise to the public. These little things are part of the meetings and help build the relationship. (Interview, Brussels, 11 December 2015)

Overall, the dialogue is deemed effective in helping Americans better understand the EU's distinctiveness, thereby granting the EU recognition for its institutional identity. As one EP official put it:
There is recognition, they recognise now who we are. Ten years ago we had to repeat in each meeting 'who we were, what was the European parliament'. Now we don't have to go through all this anymore. One of the biggest achievements is that, even if we don't agree on everything, we are discussing on an *equal-to-equal basis*. (Interview, Washington, 24 May 2016)

This assessment of the increased recognition of EU's distinctiveness is shared among American interviewees, who admit that 'Congressmen have begun to realise MEPs have legislative authority. The EU all the sudden had become an important legislative institution – even though it was this "union thing," which is something that people are still trying to grasp' (Interview, Washington, 21 June 2016). They also admit that they '*learn* a lot from the EU – particularly regarding Justice and Home Affairs issues'. This last quote illustrates the anthropomorphisation of the EU as a distinct and competent actor achieved through the performance of its representatives.

Leaving the Room: Anchoring and Projecting Recognition to the World

In the third stage, European representatives exploit visual, discursive, and practical anchors emanating from the dialogue to clinch the recognition of their institutional identity and project it to the world. The asymmetry in the dissemination scope of the dialogues' outcomes between the EU and the United States reflects yet again the EP's acute need to have the recognition of its institutional identity also *seen* by others – by contrast to the United States.

In terms of visual anchors, the EP does not miss an opportunity to take pictures of the delegations standing side-by-side in a spirit of equality and cooperation, with the landmark buildings in the background to emphasise distinctive cultural features. Apart from being the official portrait of the relationship, this 'family picture' visually captures the relationship identity as equal partners; the same number of European and American representatives on the picture, their respective flags at the exact same length and the honourable position in which they stand, are part of the strategy of symbolic equalisation (Figure 1). These visual anchors become even more relevant when publicised. Noteworthy is the difference between the European and American delegations in the way they publicise these images towards their domestic constituencies and international audiences. While the EP pro-actively publicises the TLD using various media channels – TV, radio and social media – coverage of these meetings on the American side is much more modest (Figure 2).

The drafting and dissemination of joint statements anchor the recognition of the EU's identity. The recognition that has taken place in the room is literally 'imprinted' on the documents. It matters as these statements are key references on transatlantic inter-parliamentary cooperation (Interview, Brussels, 9 December 2015) and crystallise the identity of the actors involved. For instance, the EU's and the United States' identity as shapers and guarantors of the current world order feature heavily. During the transatlantic trade and investment partnership (TTIP) negotiations, several joint statements reiterated that 'the EU and the US were unique strategic partners' working on a transatlantic trade agreement that shall "establish modern *global* trade rules"' (European Parliament, 2016). Moreover, the incorporation of the EU's achievements in these statements – signed by the US Congress – contributes to the EU's recognition as an 'efficient' partner able to deliver. The recognition of the EU's distinctiveness is also anchored in joint statements, reflecting the fact that US participants understand and accept their European counterparts' concerns. For instance, the United States' willingness to

consider the refugee issue as a matter of shared responsibility following the dialogue was mentioned in an internal EU report with a great sense of pride. This achievement reinforced the EU's institutional identity through the reification of differences: 'When we must defend our values as Europeans, it makes us feel more Europeans' (Interview, Brussels, 10 December 2015).

Finally, the recognition of institutional identity is carried out of the room through the intensification of dialogues. A constellation of contacts takes place in-between the formal inter-parliamentary meetings among representatives *ignited* by the contacts established during the TLD (Interview, Washington, 24 May 2016). These intense exchanges are tangible proof of the recognition granted to the EU in terms of relevance. The very act of consulting each other on matters of common interest and organising further meetings reinforces the institutional identity of the EP as a relevant partner with whom it is worth engaging.

Conclusion

This article has shown that dialogical interactions *also* serve to anchor institutional identity by enabling recognition processes to unfold. The TLD's ethnographic study has revealed the socio-psychological function of dialogue related to the ontological and recognition needs of institutions, thereby adding value to the study of dialogue in IR. While traditional IR theories have conceptualised the role of dialogue in the search for security and profit, we proposed a novel understanding of dialogical interactions among representatives of states and institutions, rooted in the quest of recognition. Unpacking the powerful socio-psychological dynamics in dialogue matters not only for the outcome of the interaction (i.e. agreement) but also for the very identity of the actors involved.

This study also contributes to the recognition scholarship by enlarging the scope of 'recognition acts' identified so far. Current approaches to recognition obscure important ways in which

Figure 1. Signature of the Joint Statement, 76th IPM, 27–28 June 2015, Riga© (European Union, (2019) – Source: European Parliament).

Figure 2. Tweet by MEP Adina Ioana Valean on the 78th Interparliamentary Meeting between the European Parliament and the US Congress, 26–27 June 2016, The Hague (Source: https://twitter.com/adinavalean/status/747413852766220288, accessed 21 February 2019).

recognition is provided and withheld internationally. Going beyond the macro-level of interaction, be it in the form of legal recognition or public statements, we proposed that the quest for recognition permeates everyday practices jumping over different levels of analysis: from individuals, groups, states and international institutions. With the revival of recognition

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politics, this insight has profound consequences on how one should conduct these emotionally loaded interactions, potentially triggering powerful responses. It is noteworthy that even lawmakers – which are not fully considered diplomatic actors – *feel* the need to get their institutional identity recognised. It speaks to the salience of these significant identity dynamics too often overlooked.

This article represents a first step to systematically investigate the quest for recognition of institutional identity through dialogue. While the EU may have acute recognition needs due to its *sui generis* nature and crises of legitimacy, future research could explore other instances of dialogues to determine the background conditions impacting the saliency of recognition processes; to what extent are these recognition processes of institutional identity at play with other interlocutors? Does the nature of the recogniser significantly change the dialogical dynamics? Furthermore, given the proliferation of virtual dialogues in the age of COVID-19, future research could scrutinise how recognition dynamics play out online. These examples outline a promising agenda to further investigate the salience of recognition processes through the persistent practice of dialogue in IR.

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REGINE STRÄTLING

Mehrdeutigkeit –
Zur Stellung der Philologie
bei Szondi und Barthes

Peter Szondis Rolle als Vermittler neuester französischer Theorie in Deutschland ist bekannt. Als „erste Anlaufstelle der großen französischen Denker, deren Strahlkraft sich erst in den 80er und 90er Jahren in Deutschland entfalten würde" (Lethen 2016: 58), hat Szondi vor allem die deutsche Rezeption von Jacques Derrida befördert. Auf Szondis durch seinen Assistenten Samuel Weber vermittelte Einladung hin hielt Derrida 1968 am drei Jahre zuvor an der Freien Universität Berlin eingerichteten Seminar für Allgemeine und vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft zum ersten Mal einen Vortrag in Deutschland[1]. Die Einladung erfolgte im Rahmen von Szondis Oberseminar zum Thema „Probleme einer strukturalistischen Literaturwissenschaft" im Sommersemester 1968. Der Seminarplan sah für zwei Seminartermine die Lektüre von Auszügen aus Derridas im Vorjahr erschienenen Büchern *De la grammatologie* und *L'écriture et la différence* vor. Mit Derridas Besuch in Berlin setzte ein regelmäßiger Austausch mit Szondi ein, der bis zu dessen Tod 1971 andauerte und – zumindest in seiner ereignisgeschichtlichen Dimension – in der Forschung inzwischen ausführlicher dokumentiert ist (cf. Reinisch 2016).

Dass aus der Reihe der im Seminarplan aufgeführten zeitgenössischen französischen Autoren gerade Derrida eingeladen wurde, ist vermutlich vor allem auf die Vermittlerrolle des US-Amerikaners Weber zurückzuführen, der von seinem Doktorvater Paul de Man schon vor der Buchveröffentlichung der *Grammatologie* auf Derrida aufmerksam gemacht worden war[2] (cf. Weber 2016: 303). Aus dem Seminarplan ergibt sich diese herausgehobene Rolle Derridas eigentlich nicht, haben hier doch – angesichts des Seminarthemas naheliegend – die großen Namen des literaturwissenschaftlichen Strukturalismus, vor allem Jakobson, Genette und Barthes, ein viel größeres Gewicht (ebd. 305), wobei freilich nicht übersehen werden darf, dass der Titel des Seminars den Fokus auf die Probleme – und nicht das Potential – einer strukturalistischen Literaturwissenschaft richtet. Nichtsdestoweniger kann die Auseinandersetzung Szondis mit diesen Autoren im Kontext seines Bestrebens situiert werden, der Literaturwissenschaft eine theoretisch-methodische Fundierung zu geben, die ihrem Erkenntnisobjekt angemessen ist. In diesem Zusammenhang stand auch Szondis Interesse an der hermeneutischen Tradition, der er im Wintersemester 1967/68 eine Vorlesung widmete. Für sein Projekt einer methodologischen Erneuerung des Faches boten vermutlich die genannten Vertreter des literaturwissenschaftlichen Strukturalismus und ihre von der Linguistik inspirierten Ansätze sehr viel konkretere Anschlussmöglichkeiten als Derridas ‚poststrukturalistische' Präsenzkritik, bei aller Hochachtung, die Szondi dessen minutiöser Textarbeit entgegenbrachte. Das zeigt etwa Szondis Fragment gebliebene Studie „Eden", die in der Analyse von Paul Celans Gedicht „Du liegst" abschließend auf de Saussures linguistische Terminologie und Jakobsons Unterscheidung von Metonymie und Metapher rekurriert[3] (s. Szondi 1978: 398). Im Folgenden möchte ich die Frage nach möglichen Anschlüssen Szondis an französische Strukturalisten mit Blick auf Roland Barthes konkretisieren und damit dem vielfach tendenziell ‚ereignisgeschichtlichen' Zugang, der in der Forschung Szondis Austausch mit Derrida bestimmt, einen möglichen Dialog der Texte Szondis und Barthes' zur Seite stellen[4]. Meine Überlegungen könnten sich auf ausführlichere Äußerungen von Szondi selbst dazu stützen, wenn die 1967 von Pierre Bourdieu ins Auge gefasste Publikation einer französischsprachigen Fassung von Szondis „Über philologische Erkenntnis" nicht erst lange nach Szondis Tod, 1975, realisiert worden wäre. Wie Solange Lucas anhand eines an Szondi gerichteten Briefes von Bourdieu zeigt, regte dieser für die französische

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1   Die diesbezügliche Korrespondenz ist transkribiert und kommentiert von Sima Reinisch in: Reinisch 2016.

2   Auch der im Seminarplan mit zwei Texten vertretene Todorov war in der Folge ebenfalls zu Gast im Seminar für Allgemeine und Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft, s. Eberhard Lämmert (1994). „Peter Szondi: Ein Rückblick zu seinem 65. Geburtstag". *Poética*, Jg. 26, Nr. 1/2, S. 11.

3   Vgl. auch die abschließenden Erwägungen zum Potential an der Linguistik orientierter Verfahren in Szondis 1968 entstandenem, 1971 publizierten Aufsatz „Der Mythos im modernen Theater und das Epische Theater". In Peter Szondi (1978) *Schriften*. Bd. 2, herausgegeben von Wolfgang Fietkau und Jean Bollack. Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, S. 203–204.

4   Eine Ausnahme bildet ders. Lämmert 1994, der die Beziehung zwischen Szondi und Derrida nicht nur anhand der ereignisgeschichtlichen Stationen nachzeichnet, sondern eingehender auch ihre jeweiligen Verfahren und Grundannahmen vergleicht (s. insbesondere S. 21–25).

Fassung des Artikels eine Ergänzung an, in der sich Szondi nicht nur im Hinblick auf die französische akademische Literaturwissenschaft

positionieren sollte, sondern auch auf die Literaturtheoretiker um die Zeitschrift *Tel Quel*, denen Barthes zuzurechnen ist[5].

Barthes bei Szondi

In Szondis Strukturalismus-Seminar standen für vier der insgesamt zehn, stets in Zweierblöcken organisierten Sitzungen Texte von Barthes auf dem Programm[6]. Die beiden Eröffnungssitzungen sahen neben Texten von de Saussure, Trubetzkoy, Jakobson und Derrida – man fragt sich, wie die Studierenden dieses Programm bewältigt haben – die Lektüre von Barthes' Aufsatz *Éléments de sémiologie* (1964) vor, außerdem die des Artikels des Ostberliner Linguisten Manfred Bierwisch „Strukturalismus: Geschichte, Probleme, Methoden", 1966 in Enzensbergers *Kursbuch* publiziert. Zwei weitere nun fast ausschließlich Barthes gewidmete Sitzungen firmieren unter dem Titel „Zeichentheorie und Dramenanalyse: R. Barthes *Sur Racine*". Der Plan für die Sitzungen ging indes weit über Barthes' *Sur Racine* (1963) und erst recht die Dramenanalyse hinaus, indem er auch die mit dem Buch verbundene Kontroverse zwischen Barthes und dem Racine-Spezialisten Raymond Picard einbezog. Die Kritik Picards an Barthes' Racine-Studien unter dem Titel *Nouvelle critique et nouvelle imposture* (1965) sollte ebenso im Seminar gelesen werden wie Barthes' unter dem Titel *Critique et vérité* (1966) erschienene Replik. Weiterhin ist eine Auswahl aus Barthes' *Essais critiques* (1964) in das Lektüreprogramm aufgenommen, von denen drei Essays explizit genannt sind: „L'activité structuraliste", „L'imagination du signe" und „Littérature et signification"[7]. Mit Barthes, der hier von offensichtlich außerordentlich lesewilligen Studierenden

erschlossen werden soll, ist, wie im Folgenden noch eingehender zu zeigen ist, nur bedingt ein gänzlich homogenes theoretisches Korpus gegeben, und so stellt sich die Frage, welcher Wert den unterschiedlichen Texten Barthes' für Szondis Projekt der Entwicklung einer genuin literaturwissenschaftlichen Methodik zugekommen ist.

Sandro Zanetti hat in seiner Beschäftigung mit Szondis Celan-Interpretation in „Eden" gezeigt, wie nahe dessen Bemühen, die ‚Struktur' von Celans Gedicht freizulegen, dem kommt, was Barthes in „L'activité structuraliste" als ‚strukturalistische Tätigkeit' konzipiert, die darin bestehe, „*de reconstituer un ‚objet', de façon à manifester dans cette reconstitution les règles de fonctionnement (les ‚fonctions') de cet objet*"[8] (Barthes 1993 [1963]: 1329). Beider, Szondis wie Barthes', Verfahren „im Spannungsfeld von Mimesis und Abstraktion" bestehe darin, in der Interpretation eines Textes dessen sprachliche Struktur freizulegen und dabei einen „reflektierenden Standpunkt" einzunehmen, der sowohl die Nähe zum gelesenen Text als auch „eine Nähe zu dem aufsucht, was das Gedicht reflexiv nachvollziehbar werden lässt" (Zanetti 2015: 362). Beide Autoren bemühten sich darum, das herauszuarbeiten, was Szondi in seinem Aufsatz „Über philologische Erkenntnis" in Anlehnung an Adorno als „Logik des Produziertseins" bezeichnet (Szondi 1970 [1962/1967]: 34). In meinen eigenen Erwägungen zu einem Dialog der Texte von Szondi und Barthes möchte ich im Folgenden gleichfalls die

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5   Vgl. Lucas, Solange (o.D.). Um der französischen Kritik willen. Pierre Bourdieu an Peter Szondi. www.literaturarchiv1968.de/content/um-der-franzoesischen-kritik-willen-pierre-bourdieu-an-peter- szondi/ [letzter Zugriff: 17. Januar 2023].

6   Der Seminarplan ist abgedruckt in Reinisch 2016: 45–46.

7   1968 war Barthes dem deutschsprachigen Lesepublikum vor allem durch die deutschsprachige Publikation der *Mythologies* 1964 bei Suhrkamp unter dem Titel *Mythen des Alltags* bekannt, weiterhin u.a. durch die neuester französischer Theorie gewidmete, von Peter Gente zusammengestellte Ausgabe der Zeitschrift *alternative* Anfang 1965 (Heft 40), die zwei Texte von Barthes enthielt, ebenso die oben genannte Ausgabe vom *Kursbuch*, Heft 5 1966, das eine Übersetzung von „L'activité structuraliste" publizierte.

8   „ein ‚Objekt' derart zu rekonstruieren, daß in dieser Rekonstruktion zutage tritt, nach welchen Regeln es funktioniert (welches seine ‚Funktionen' sind)" (übersetzt von Eva Moldenhauer, in Barthes 2008 [1996], „Die strukturalistische Tätigkeit", in Dorothee Kimmich, Rolf G. Renner, und Bernd Stiegler (Hg.), *Texte zur Literaturtheorie der Gegenwart*, vollständig überarbeitete und aktualisierte Neuausgabe, Ditzingen, Reclam, S. 216).

Verbindungslinien von Szondis „Über philologische Erkenntnis" zu Barthes'schen Theoremen und Lesepraktiken aufzeigen, allerdings nicht, um die Affinitäten des von Szondi vorgeschlagenen bzw. praktizierten Lektüreverfahrens mit Barthes' Vorstellung von ‚strukturalistischer Aktivität' abzugleichen. Stattdessen möchte ich das Problem semantischer Mehrdeutigkeit aufgreifen, das prominent in „Über philologische Erkenntnis" verhandelt wird und das nicht zuletzt auch im Zentrum der Kontroverse um Barthes' *Sur Racine* steht. Damit einher geht ein Nachdenken darüber, welche Stellung eigentlich Philologie bei beiden Autoren hat bzw. was für ein Begriff von Philologie ihren Argumentationen zugrunde liegt.

Grundsätzlich teilte Roland Barthes, wie auch andere strukturalistische Theoretiker, mit Szondi das Bemühen darum, die traditionellen Verfahren der Literaturwissenschaft und ihren unreflektierten Objektivitätsanspruch durch wissenschaftlich fundierte Methoden zu ersetzen. Während sich die französischen Ansätze dabei in großem Maße auf die Terminologie theoretischer Korpora wie Marxismus, Existentialismus, Psychoanalyse und Linguistik stützten, vertiefte sich Szondi seit Beginn seiner Lehrtätigkeit in die Geschichte der literarischen Hermeneutik. Beiden gemein ist die fortgesetzte Reflexion über das eigene Vorgehen, auch wenn diese Reflexion letztlich mit sehr unterschiedlichen Begrifflichkeiten verbunden ist. Während Szondi seine Forderung nach einer methodologisch reflektierten Literaturwissenschaft 1962 in „Über philologische Erkenntnis" im Namen einer Neufundierung der Philologie als kritische „Wissenschaft des Singulären"[9] formulierte, ist ‚Philologie' eben der Begriff, unter dem Barthes all das vereinte, wovon er sich distanzierte. ‚Philologie' wurde für beide zum Schlüsselbegriff im Nachdenken über die methodischen Voraussetzungen der Literaturwissenschaft, wenngleich sie den Begriff zumindest tendenziell in diametral entgegengesetzter Weise operationalisierten.

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Philologiekritik und die Pluralität der Bedeutung bei Barthes

Repräsentativ für Barthes' wiederkehrende Invektive gegen die Philologie ist sein Beitrag „Texte (théorie du)" zur *Encyclopædia Universalis*, in dem es heißt: „*On peut attribuer à un texte une signification unique et en quelque sorte canonique : c'est ce que s'efforcent de faire en détail la philologie et en gros la critique littéraire*"[10] (Barthes 1994 [1974]: 1682). Ganz im Sinne Diderots, der die Leistung eines guten Wörterbuchs in dessen Vermögen, die gewohnten Denkweisen zu verändern, bestimmte (siehe Diderot 1751: Sp. 642A), strebt auch Barthes' *Encyclopædia*-Artikel nichts weniger als die Formulierung eines neuen Konzepts von Literatur an. Der Begriff der Philologie dient dabei vorrangig als Mittel, seine eigene Position zu profilieren. Unter dem Banner der Philologie wird die gegnerische Seite subsumiert, welche, so Barthes, das literarische Werk als ein geschlossenes Objekt mit einer bestimmbaren und festgelegten Bedeutung verstehe, während der von ihm und seinen Mitstreitern vertretene Ansatz eine solche Vorstellung dezidiert ablehne. Auf den ersten Blick erscheint die antiphilologische Haltung, die Barthes in seinem Lexikoneintrag und anderswo einnimmt, vornehmlich eine bloß polemische Instrumentalisierung eines Schlagworts. Seit die Philologie im 19. Jahrhundert ihren Anspruch ausbildete, eine ‚Leitwissenschaft' zu sein (Lepper 2012: 113–117), ist die Ablehnung oder Aneignung des Begriffs ‚Philologie' ein wiederkehrender Schachzug im akademischen Ringen um die jeweils einflussreichste Methode, die avancierteste Konzeption des Untersuchungsgegenstandes

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9   So die Formulierung Gert Mattenklotts: *„une philologie comme science du particulier"*. In (1983) „Peter Szondi comparatiste". Übersetzt von Sabine Cornille. *Raison présente,* Jg. 68, Nr. 4, S. 76.

10   „Man kann einem Text eine einzige, gewissermaßen kanonische Bedeutung beimessen: Dies erstrebt die Philologie im Detail und die Literaturkritik im Ganzen" [Übersetzung d. Verf.].

und, in einem größeren Zusammenhang, um die eigene Stellung im Reigen der Disziplinen[11]. Es stellt sich jedoch die Frage, gegen was genau sich Barthes unter der Bezeichnung Philologie, ohnehin ein schillernder, in unterschiedlicher Ausdehnung und Bedeutung gebrauchter Begriff, wendet und ob die Arbeiten von Barthes, anstatt philologische Techniken gänzlich ad acta zu legen, nicht eher dazu beitragen, die Philologie selbst neu auszurichten – durchaus im Einklang mit anderen zeitgenössischen Ansichten wie derjenigen Szondis[12].

Zur Klärung dieser Frage bietet sich ein Umweg über einen Text an, der parallel zu Szondis Strukturalismus-Seminar entstand: Barthes' Essay *S/Z*, basierend auf seinem Seminar an der *École Pratique des Hautes* Études in den Jahren 1967–1969. Dieses über zwei akademische Jahre geführte Seminar mit dem Titel „Analyse structurale d'un texte narratif : ‚Sarrasine' de Balzac" war ausschließlich der Lektüre von Balzacs Novelle *Sarrasine* gewidmet. Wie aus Barthes' Notizen für das Seminar hervorgeht, war seine Lektüre so minutiös, dass er am Ende seines Seminars kaum das Ende der Rahmenerzählung der Novelle erreichte. Das 1970 publizierte Buch *S/Z* zeugt von dieser Akribie, die Barthes als ein Vorgehen „*pas à pas*" und „*un* ralenti" bezeichnet (Barthes 1993 [1970]: 562–563)[13]. *S/Z* stellt Barthes' umfangreichste Analyse eines einzelnen literarischen Textes dar, zugleich auch gewissermaßen seine methodisch anspruchsvollste Literaturanalyse in dem Sinne, dass hier nicht nur eine Vielzahl terminologischer Setzungen vorgenommen wird, sondern diese auch permanent reflektiert werden. Barthes selbst kündigte *S/Z* als die erste umfassende Strukturanalyse eines narrativen Textes an. Mit Blick auf den Stand strukturalistischer

Textwissenschaft konstatierte er, dass sich der Strukturalismus nach einer Periode, in der er sich der Extraktion der Makrostrukturen von Texten gewidmet habe, nun einer neuen Herausforderung zu stellen habe: Er müsse zu einem umfassenderen Ansatz übergehen, der auch die Mikrostrukturen eines gegebenen Textes mit einbeziehet (s. Barthes 1993 [1968]: 521). Wie wir sehen werden, verlässt Barthes aber im Grunde mit diesem Essay das Terrain des Strukturalismus.

Barthes' auf solche ‚Mikrostrukturen' zielender Modus „*pas à pas*", sein „*ralenti*" wird vor allem darin sichtbar, dass Barthes Balzacs Novelle in 561 „*lexies*" genannte Lektüreeinheiten unterteilt. Diese lineare Einteilung folgt bis zu einem gewissen Grad dem strukturalistischen Verfahren der Segmentierung und Rekombination, wie es Barthes in seinem auch in Szondis Seminar gelesenen Artikel „L'activité structuraliste" konzipierte[14]. Dabei überschreitet aber diese Segmentierung bei weitem strukturalistische Ansätze durch die schiere Anzahl der Segmente; diese ist viel zu groß, als dass es noch möglich wäre, aus ihnen eine zugrundeliegende Struktur zu extrahieren. Eine ‚Lexie' kann bei Barthes aus mehreren Sätzen bestehen, sie kann aber auch kleiner sein und nur einen Teil eines Satzes, nur einige Wörter umfassen. Sie wird weniger als Sinneinheit verstanden, welche im Hinblick auf eine gegebene Handlung signifikant ist, sondern vielmehr als ein künstlich isoliertes Segment, in dem der Leser bedeutungsstiftende Prozesse identifizieren kann. Wie detailliert Barthes dabei vorgeht, macht nicht zuletzt ein Blick auf den Umfang des Essays deutlich: Die zweiundzwanzig Seiten der am Ende des Essays abgedruckten Novelle werden von Barthes auf mehr als 200 Seiten analysiert, wobei er

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11 Zur Geschichte der Philologiekritik siehe Lepper (2012: 117–122). Zur neuerlichen Verteidigung der Philologie und der Ankündigung ihrer ‚Rückkehr' siehe z.B. Spoerhase, Carlos (2012). „Studien über die Philologie". *Arbitrium,* Jg. 30, Nr. 2, S. 141–147.

12 Paul de Man hat in „The Return of Philology", publiziert 1982 im *Times Literary Supplement*, die letztere Möglichkeit angedeutet, wenngleich ohne Nennung Barthes', in seinem Versuch, den Konflikt zwischen Literaturwissenschaft und Philologie aufzulösen bzw. zu relokalisieren. De Man stellt eine Verbindung zwischen Philologie und „French Theory" her, da beide eine ähnliche Form des Lesens praktizierten: *„[I]n practice, the turn to theory occurred as a return to philology, to an examination of the structure of language prior to the meaning it produces"* (In *The Resistance to Theory*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1986, S. 24; „In der Praxis erfolgte die Wende zur Theorie als eine Rückkehr zur Philologie, zu einer Untersuchung der Struktur der Sprache vor der Bedeutung, die sie hervorbringt" [Übersetzung d. Verf.]).

13 *„Schritt für Schritt"* und „in Zeitlupe" (übersetzt von Jürgen Hoch in: Barthes, *S/Z,* Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1987, S. 17).

14 Vgl. Barthes' Definition der strukturalistischen Tätigkeit in „L'activité structuraliste": *„L'activité structuraliste comporte deux opérations typiques : découpage et agencement. Découper le premier objet […] c'est trouver en lui des fragments mobiles dont la situation différentielle engendre un certain sens […]"* (Barthes 1993 [1963]: 1330). Deutsch: „Die strukturalistische Tätigkeit umfaßt zwei typische Operationen: Zerlegung und Arrangement. Indem man das erste Objekt zerlegt, findet man in ihm lose Fragmente, deren winzige Differenzen untereinander eine bestimmte Bedeutung hervorbringen […]" (übersetzt in: ders. Barthes 2008: 218).

die unterschiedlichen und sich überlagernden Signifikationsprozesse einer jeden ‚Lexie' darstellt. Man könnte also auf den ersten Blick annehmen, dass *S/Z* ein Werk von beeindruckender philologischer Sorgfalt darstellt, zumindest wenn man Philologie im Sinne einer besonders detaillierten Aufmerksamkeit für den Text versteht, wie auch Roman Jakobson Philologie definiert haben soll, d. h. als „*the art of reading slowly*"[15].

Auf den ersten Seiten von *S/Z* begegnet uns jedoch erneut Barthes' Ablehnung der Philologie, oder zumindest die Ablehnung der ‚Kaste' der Philologen:

> *Les uns (disons : les philologues), décrétant que tout texte est univoque, détenteur d'un sens vrai, canonique, renvoient les sens simultanés, seconds, au néant des* élucubrations *critiques. En face, les autres (disons : les sémiologues) contestent la hiérarchie du dénoté et du connoté […]*[16] (Barthes 1993 [1970]: 559).

Barthes begründet auch hier seine Ablehnung damit, dass die Philologen nur eine einzige Bedeutung als die primäre, korrekte Bedeutung eines Wortes, eines Satzes, eines Textes zuließen. Andere Bedeutungen würden allenfalls als Nebenbedeutungen zugelassen. Die Semiologen hingegen, zu denen sich auch Barthes selbst zählt, bestritten diese traditionelle Hierarchie und proklamierten eine Pluralität gleichwertiger Bedeutungen.

Wenn Barthes die Suche nach der einen, richtigen Bedeutung als ‚Philologie' abwertet, hat dies möglicherweise mit der Langeweile zu tun, die er in seinem Studium der Altphilologie empfand[17]. Zweifellos ist damit aber kaum der entscheidende Punkt in seiner Ablehnung der

Philologie berührt. Dies zeigt sich nicht zuletzt, wenn man sich vor Augen führt, welche Rolle der Begriff ‚Philologie' in Barthes' berühmter Kontroverse mit dem Literaturwissenschaftler Raymond Picard spielte, die auch Szondi im Rahmen seines Strukturalismus-Seminars thematisierte. Picard hatte Barthes' Essays über Racine scharf kritisiert, ja Barthes philologische Unredlichkeit vorgeworfen (s. Picard 1965). Teilweise wurde dieses Verdikt durch die von Barthes in seiner Racine-Lektüre verwendete Terminologie provoziert, insbesondere durch seinen Rückgriff auf psychoanalytisches Vokabular. Picard warf Barthes nicht nur eine ungenaue, metaphorische Verwendung von Fachbegriffen vor, die seiner Ansicht nach zu einer gänzlich subjektiven und willkürlichen, wenn auch dogmatisch formulierten Konstruktion einer Racine'schen Anthropologie „*au gré de ses [Barthes'] besoins*" führte[18], er wertete dies auch als einen fatalen Mangel an historischer Kontextualisierung (ebd., 79). Für ihn kollidierte das zeitgenössische analytisches Vokabular ebenso mit einer Würdigung Racines wie die Subjektivität der Barthes'schen „*besoins*". Picard warf Barthes aber auch grundsätzliche Fehler hinsichtlich der Bedeutung von Wörtern vor, Missverständnisse, die, so Picard, wiederum ihren Ursprung in Barthes' ahistorischer Lektüre hätten. Picard nennt als Beispiel das Wort „*respirer*", das Barthes – so Picard – in der Bedeutung des 20. Jahrhunderts als ‚atmen' verstanden habe, nicht aber in der Bedeutung, die das Wort zur Zeit Racines im 17. Jahrhundert gehabt habe (ebd., 53–54; s. auch Pilcher Keuneman 1987).

Man versteht, warum sich Szondi für diese Kontroverse interessierte, denkt man an seine in „Über philologische Erkenntnis" formulierten Vorbehalte gegenüber dem „berechtigten Drang der Philologie zur Objektivität", welche

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15 Vgl. Calvert Watkins (1990). "What is Philology." *Comparative Literature Studies*, Jg. 27, Nr. 1, S. 25. Im Hinblick auf die Langsamkeit der Lektüre als grundlegendes Element einer Minimaldefinition von Philologie siehe auch Sean Gurd (2010). „Introduction". In *Philology and Its Histories*. Herausgegeben von Sean Gurd. Columbus, Ohio State University Press, S. 1–19; sowie Stephen Best und Sharon Marcus (2009). „Surface Reading: An Introduction". *Representations,* Nr. 108, S. 1–2.

16 „Unter Philologen wird behauptet, daß jeder Text einstimmig sei, Inhaber eines wahren, kanonischen Sinns; die zweiten, simultanen Sinngehalte werden in den Bereich der Hirngespinste von Kritikern verwiesen. Andere wiederum (die Semiologen) zweifeln die Hierarchie von Denotiertem und Konnotiertem an." (übersetzt in: ders. Barthes 1987: 11)

17 Vgl. Barthes' Text „Biographie", geschrieben im Kontext seines Seminars „Le lexique d'auteur" und der Arbeit an *roland BARTHES par roland barthes* [1975], posthum publiziert in Barthes (2010). „Biographie". In *Le lexique d'auteur. Séminaire* à l'École pratique des hautes études *1973–1974 suivi de Fragments inédits du Roland Barthes par Roland Barthes*. Herausgegeben von Éric Marty. Paris, Seuil, S. 256.

18 Picard 1965: 25 und 30, Zitat 36 (dt: „je nach [Barthes'] Bedarf"; [Übersetzung d. Verf.]).

vom individuellen, subjektiven Erschließen eines Textes zugunsten einer „Objektivität", die sie „einzig vom Belegmaterial" erhofft (Szondi 1970 [1962]: 18, vgl. auch 25, 27), absehen zu müssen meint und die Treue zur Historizität des Materials nur um den Preis der eigenen Geschichtsvergessenheit hält. In der Kritik Picards zeigt sich zudem eben die Problematik, die Szondi in seiner posthum publizierten Vorlesung *Einführung in die literarische Hermeneutik* in Bezug auf das Verhältnis von Hermeneutik und Geschichtlichkeit erörtert und im Gegensatz zwischen grammatischer und allegorischer Auslegung eines Textes zuspitzt, im Gegensatz zwischen einem Beharren auf dem *sensus litteralis*, dem ursprünglich Gemeinten eines nun, durch historischen Abstand, „fremd gewordenen Zeichens", und einer Auslegung, die der historischen Position des Auslegers, dessen „Vorstellungswelt" entstammt (Szondi 1975: 19). Aus Szondis Perspektive erscheint Picard tendenziell als Vertreter einer sich – fälschlich – „vom eigenen historischen Standpunkt unabhängig wähnende[n] Philologie" (ebd., 25), wenn dieser annimmt, es ließe sich das Problem der Historizität des terminologischen Zugangs zu einem gegebenen Werk dadurch lösen, dass man die historische Distanz durch ein Zurückversetzen in die Epoche der Textentstehung eskamotiert. Szondis Problematisierung der scheinbaren Objektivität der Philologie und seine Forderung, auch die Philologie bedürfe ein „Bewußtsein der eigenen Historizität" (ebd., 24), da der eigene Standpunkt doch notwendig auch bereits die philologische Bestimmung eines *sensus litteralis* affiziert, zielt auf eben das, was auch Barthes im letzten der drei in *Sur Racine* versammelten Essays einfordert: Die Reflexion auf die eigene Geschichtlichkeit ist Bedingung jeglicher Literaturgeschichtsschreibung (vgl. Barthes 1963: 155).

Barthes reagierte auf Picards Vorwürfe in seinen gleichfalls in Szondis Seminarprogramm aufgenommenen Essays *Critique et vérité* und „Littérature et signification". Auf Picard bezogen und diesen zitierend schreibt er in *Critique et vérité*:

> *On professe qu'il faut 'conserver aux mots leur signification', bref que le mot n'a qu'un sens : le bon. […] On en vient ainsi . de singuli.res le.ons de lecture : il faut lire les poètes sans évoquer : défense de laisser aucune vue s'élever hors de ces mots si simples et si concrets […]*[19] (Barthes 1994 [1966]: 22–23).

Trotz seiner Polemik gegen Picard erkennt Barthes allerdings eine Berechtigung philologischer Rekonstruktion an:

> *[L]e discours de l'œuvre a un sens littéral, dont la philologie, au besoin, nous informe; la question est de savoir si on a le droit, ou non, de lire dans ce discours littéral, d'autres sens qui ne le contredisent pas; ce n'est pas le dictionnaire qui répondra à cette question, mais une décision d'ensemble sur la nature symbolique du langage*[20] (ebd., 22).

Barthes argumentiert hier also nicht wie Szondi in seiner Vorlesung *Einführung in die literarische Hermeneutik*, sondern er bestreitet den Primat der Philologie unter Berufung auf die immanente Vieldeutigkeit eines jeden literarischen Textes. Im weiteren Verlauf des Essays entscheidet sich Barthes dann eindeutig für die Freiheit des Lesers, die Pluralität der Bedeutungen losgelöst von jeglicher Verankerung in den historischen Gegebenheiten der Textentstehung zu erkunden und auch frei von der Notwendigkeit, eine Interpretation an die vermeintlichen Absichten des Autors zu binden.

Während Barthes in *Critique et Vérité* zunächst einräumt, dass die Philologie an erster Stelle steht, aber nur der erste Schritt bei der Erkundung der vielfältigen Bedeutungen ist, die

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19 „Man verkündet, man müsse *die Bedeutung der Wörter bewahren*', das heißt, daß das Wort nur eine Bedeutung habe: die richtige. […] Das ergibt sehr merkwürdige Leseanweisungen: man muß die Dichter lesen, ohne etwas zu evozieren; es ist der Analyse untersagt, sich über so einfache und konkrete Wörter wie Hafen, Serail, Tränen zu erheben […]" (übersetzt von Helmut Scheffel in: Barthes, *Kritik und Wahrheit*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1967, S. 30–31).

20 „[D]ie Sprache des Werkes [hat] einen wörtlichen Sinn […], über den uns im Bedarfsfall die Philologie informiert. Die Frage ist, ob man berechtigt ist oder nicht, in diesem wörtlichen Diskurs andere Bedeutungen zu lesen, die nicht im Widerspruch zu ihm stehen. Nicht das Wörterbuch wird auf diese Frage eine Antwort geben, sondern eine Grundentscheidung über den Zeichencharakter der Sprache" (ebd., 30).

einem literarischen Werk innewohnen, wird der Begriff ‚Philologie' in *S/Z* polemisch zur Bezeichnung für eine Leseweise, die nur eine Bedeutung eines Textes zulässt, die richtige. Und nun wird sie eindeutig zurückgewiesen. Barthes' eigener Ansatz in *S/Z* ist dem diametral entgegengesetzt: Anstatt in der Interpretation eine einzige – richtige – Bedeutung bestimmter Textstellen zu bestimmen, diversifiziert er seine Zugänge zum Text, um die möglichen Bedeutungen zu vervielfachen. So erklärt er in Bezug auf seine „*pas à pas*"-Lektüre: „*Ce qui sera noté c'est […] la translation et la répétition des signifiés. Relever systématiquement pour chaque lexie ces signifiés ne vise pas à* établir *la vérité du texte (sa structure profonde, stratégique) mais son pluriel […]*"[21] (Barthes 1993 [1970]: 564). Um diese Pluralität von Bedeutungen zu Tage zu fördern, wird die Methode einer Entschleunigung des Lesens durch die Wiederholung des Lesevorgangs ergänzt. Ähnlich wie Deleuze sieht auch Barthes die Wiederholung – hier die Wiederholung der Lektüre ein und desselben Textes – als eine Bewegung, die nicht Identität, sondern Differenz produziert:

> *Mais pour nous qui cherchons à* établir *un pluriel, nous ne pouvons arrêter ce pluriel aux portes de la lecture : il faut que la lecture soit elle aussi plurielle […]. La relecture […] est ici proposée d'emblée, car elle seule sauve le texte de la répétition (ceux qui négligent de relire s'obligent à lire partout la même histoire), le multiplie dans son divers et son pluriel […]. Si donc […] on relit* tout de suite *le texte, c'est pour obtenir, comme sous l'effet d'une drogue (celle du recommencement, de la différence), non le 'vrai' texte, mais le texte pluriel : même et nouveau*[22] (ebd., 564–565).

Die differentielle Pluralität, auf die Barthes abzielt, ist somit sowohl auf der Ebene des Textes als auch auf der Ebene der Analyse angesiedelt; sie hat sowohl eine reflexive als auch eine produktive Komponente. Der Schlüssel zu beidem ist das langsame und wiederholende Lesen. Um die (wenn auch begrenzte) Pluralität der Bedeutung in Balzacs Novelle herauszuarbeiten, bestimmt Barthes zudem fünf verschiedene Lesarten, fünf so genannte Codes. Jede Lexie wird nach mindestens einem Code, oft aber nach mehreren, wenn nicht gar allen fünf Codes gelesen oder dekodiert. Um diese durch die fünf Codes produzierte Pluralität abzubilden, entscheidet sich Barthes in *S/Z* für eine typographische Darstellung, die die unterschiedlichen Lektüreergebnisse parallel anordnet, ohne sie in einer harmonisierenden Gesamtaussage zusammenzufassen und damit zu reduzieren (vgl. ebd., 568). Um die verschiedenen Ebenen der Lektüre – ‚Lektüre' in ihrer mehrfachen Bedeutung als das zu lesende Schriftgut, als Vorgang des Lesens und als eine bestimmte Interpretation – zu markieren, operierte Barthes zudem mit unterschiedlichen Schriftarten. Über diese lineare Gliederung des Buches gemäß der Einteilung in 561 Sinneinheiten und der vertikalen Gliederung gemäß der fünf ‚Stimmen' des Textes, die durch die fünf Dekodierungsmodi akzentuiert werden, hinaus ist das Buch in 93 Kapitel gegliedert, die in wieder anderer, größerer Schrifttype die fortschreitende Lesepraxis theoretisch reflektieren. So wird der Untersuchungsgegenstand, Balzacs Novelle, von einem ausufernden kritischen Diskurs überlagert, der in gewisser Weise wie ein überbordender philologischer Kommentar wirkt, der jedoch permanent sein eigenes Vorgehen und seine eigenen methodischen Voraussetzungen reflektiert. Barthes' Kriterium für die Qualität des Gesamtergebnisses seiner Lektüre ist nicht die Feststellung irgendeiner im Rekurs auf einen *sensus litteralis* verifizierbaren Wahrheit über Balzacs Novelle, sondern allein die Konsistenz der Analyse.

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21 „Notiert wird […] die Translation und die Wiederholung der Signifikate. Für jede Lexie systematisch diese Signifikate auszumachen, geht nicht darauf aus, die Wahrheit des Textes (seine tiefe, strategische Struktur), sondern sein Plurales […] freizulegen […]" (übersetzt in: ders. Barthes 1987: 19).

22 „Aber für uns, die wir ein Plurales festzulegen suchen, ist es nicht möglich, dieses Plurale zu Beginn der Lektüre anzuhalten : die Lektüre selbst muß plural sein. […]. Eine wiederholte Lektüre […] wird hier gleich zu Beginn vorgeschlagen, denn sie allein bewahrt den Text vor der Wiederholung (wer es vernachlässigt, wiederholt zu lesen, ergibt sich dem Zwang, überall die gleiche Geschichte zu lesen), vervielfältigt ihn in seiner Verschiedenheit und in seinem Pluralen […]. Liest man also den Text *sofort* von neuem […] , so soll damit, wie unter der Wirkung einer Droge (die des Neubeginns, der Differenz), nicht der 'wahre', sondern der plurale Text erreicht werden : immergleich und neu" (ebd., 20–21).

Philologie der Mehrdeutigkeit bei Szondi

Szondis Vorlesung *Einführung in die literarische Hermeneutik* problematisierte, wie wir gesehen haben, die Selbstgewissheit der Philologie, in dem er auf die historische Bedingtheit jeder Bestimmung eines *sensus litteralis* verwies; er beschnitt ihre Vorstellung, objektive Ergebnisse erarbeiten zu können, und forderte die Reflexion auf die eigenen Verfahren ein. Ziel seiner Überlegungen war die Grundlegung einer literarischen Hermeneutik, verstanden als eine „zwar nicht unphilologische, aber die Philologie mit der Ästhetik aussöhnende Auslegungslehre" (Szondi 1975: 25). Diese ‚Aussöhnung' lässt sich in dem Sinne verstehen, dass die Philologie nicht das sichere Terrain bereitet, auf das die ästhetische „Würdigung" (ebd.) eines Textes aufbauen kann, sondern dass jede philologische Bestimmung von vornherein in das hermeneutische Unterfangen der Deutung eines ästhetischen Gebildes mit hineingenommen werden muss. Der ästhetische Charakter wird „zur Prämisse der Auslegung selbst gemacht" (ebd., 13), der auch die philologische Klärung bestimmter Wörter oder Wendungen unterliegt.

Wie die Hermeneutik-Vorlesung bemüht sich auch Szondis 1962 erschienener und 1967 erneut publizierter Aufsatz „Über philologische Erkenntnis", Philologie und Hermeneutik – als Lehre von der Auslegung literarischer Werke bzw. in der von Szondi zitierten Wendung Schleiermachers, als Kunstlehre oder Technik zum „vollkommene[n] Verstehen einer Rede oder Schrift" (Szondi 1970 [1962]: 9) – in ein Verhältnis zueinander zu setzen. Schon 1962 wird wie in der späteren Vorlesung die Stellung der Philologie zunächst insofern geschwächt, als ihr abgesprochen wird, einen dem Einlassen auf ein ästhetisches Gebilde vorgeordneten gesicherten Grund schaffen zu können. Stärker vielleicht noch als in der Hermeneutik-Vorlesung fallen in dem Aufsatz von 1962 Hermeneutik und Philologie tendenziell in eins, insofern hier hermeneutische Erkenntnis „auf das bloße Textverständnis beschränkt werden soll" (ebd., 9). Dieses Textverständnis ist bereits hermeneutisch grundiert und keineswegs faktisch gegeben. Auch hier ist Philologie also keine

positivistische Textwissenschaft, sondern integraler Teil der Hermeneutik und nicht dieser vorgeschaltet. Mag sich der Aufsatz auch „einer spezifisch philologischen Erkenntnisproblematik" widmen, so besteht diese Problematik eben in der Unmöglichkeit, philologisches Wissen unabhängig von Fragen der Auslegung behandeln zu können. Diese Problematisierung der Stellung der Philologie zur Hermeneutik weist nun Parallelen zu Barthes' Plädoyer für eine multiple, der Pluralität der Verstehensmöglichkeiten Rechnung tragende Lektüre auf, wenngleich sie bei Szondi eben im Namen der von Barthes abgelehnten Philologie erfolgt.

Bei allen Unterschieden, die Szondis und Barthes' Weisen, literarische Texte zu lesen, offensichtlich trennen – ein experimentelles Lektüre- und Publikationsprogramm wie dasjenige von *S/Z* wäre bei Szondi kaum denkbar –, treffen sich ihre Positionen doch in entscheidenden Punkten. Das zeigt sich zunächst darin, dass sich auch bei Szondi aus der Erschütterung philologischen Selbstverständnisses eine Dynamisierung ihrer Praxis ergibt:

> Dem philologischen Wissen ist ein dynamisches Moment eigen, nicht bloß weil es sich, wie jedes Wissen, durch neue Gesichtspunkte und neue Erkenntnisgewinne ständig verändert, sondern weil es nur in der fortwährenden Konfrontation mit dem Text bestehen kann. […] Das philologische Wissen hat seinen Ursprung, die Erkenntnis, nie verlassen, Wissen ist hier perpetuierte Erkenntnis (ebd., 11).

Diese Dynamisierung prägt sich aus in der Bevorzugung des Begriffs der ‚Erkenntnis' gegenüber dem des ‚Wissens'; ist letzter konnotiert mit dem Gedanken gesicherter Bestände, betont erster die zeitliche Dimension einer sich plötzlich einstellenden neuen Einsicht. Szondi versteht also Philologie weniger als Technik zur Ermittlung der korrekten Version eines Textes bzw. der korrekten Bedeutung eines Ausdrucks, sondern vielmehr als ein fortdauerndes, nie zum Stillstand kommendes Bemühen um Erläuterung, genauer noch als „kritische Tätigkeit" im Rekurs

auf die Etymologie des Wortes ‚Kritik', abgeleitet vom griechischen Verb ‚krínein' (‚unterscheiden', ‚trennen'). Philologie als kritische Tätigkeit ist dabei konzipiert in Anlehnung an die angloamerikanischen und französischen Bezeichnungen für Literaturwissenschaft; sie ist nicht im Sinne einer wertenden Beurteilung zu verstehen, sondern im Sinne einer Erkenntnis, die sich wesentlich durch das Herausarbeiten, ja Produzieren von Unterscheidungen konstituiert. Die Tätigkeit „des Scheidens und Entscheidens"[23] (ebd., 13) als der Individualität eines jeden Kunstwerks angemessenes Verfahren hat damit ein produktives Element. Frappant ist hier die Parallelität bis in die Formulierung hinein mit Roland Barthes' Verteidigung seiner Racine-Studien in *Critique et vérité*, wenngleich ohne die bei Barthes angedeutete politische Dimension, wo es heißt: „*Cependant, la véritable critique des institutions et des langages ne consiste pas à les ‚juger' mais à les* distinguer*, à les* séparer*, à les* dédoubler". (1994 [1966]: 19)[24]

Die produktive Dimension einer hermeneutisch reflektierten Philologie beruht, folgt man Szondi, darauf, dass Bedeutung beim literarischen Kunstwerk und allemal beim in „Über philologische Erkenntnis" vorrangig behandelten hermetischen Gedicht nicht durch eine scheinbare Faktizität des literalen Materials vorgegeben ist, sondern sich erst im subjektiven Vertiefen in das Kunstwerk ergeben kann:

> [E]s gehört zu den Gefahren der philologischen Arbeit, daß die grundsätzliche Bevorzugung der Faktizität gegenüber der Deutung als bloß subjektiver einem jeden Beleg schon auf Grund seines Vorhandenseins das zuschreiben lässt, was ihm zwar per definitionem eigen ist, worüber aber eine jede als Beleg herangezogene Stelle sich erst einzeln auszuweisen hätte, nämlich: Beweiskraft (Szondi 1970 [1962]: 21).

Noch deutlicher wird Szondis Betonung der subjektiven Dimension auch der philologischen Bestimmung von Bedeutung, wenn er die Frage aufwirft, „ob in der Literaturwissenschaft das objektive Material von der subjektiven Interpretation überhaupt streng kann getrennt werden" (ebd., 25). Wir können von dieser Fundierung der Wissenschaftlichkeit der Literaturwissenschaft im Eingeständnis ihrer Subjektivität noch einmal den Bogen zur Kontroverse um Barthes' *Sur Racine* schlagen, ist damit doch eben der Punkt berührt, den Ricard gleich eingangs seiner Schrift *Nouvelle Critique ou nouvelle imposture* thematisierte: Barthes' programmatisches Eingeständnis einer „*impuissance à dire vrai sur Racine*"[25] (Barthes 1963: 166) öffnet für Picard nur einem schlechten Relativismus Tür und Tor. Damit fällt er letztlich eben dem von Szondi beklagten Verkennen „einer spezifisch philologischen Erkenntnisproblematik" zum Opfer. Während Picard Barthes' *Sur Racine* beschließende Definition vom Kritiker als „*un être pleinement subjectif, pleinement historique*"[26] (ebd., 167) nurmehr polemisch zitierte und zum Ausgangspunkt seiner Kritik machte, kann mit Blick auf Szondi davon ausgegangen werden, dass gerade dieses Eingeständnis unhintergehbarer Subjektivität und einer jede ‚Objektivität' verunmöglichenden eigenen historischen Situiertheit Barthes' Text für das Strukturalismus-Seminar interessant machte.

Schließlich bildet Szondi darin eine Nähe zu Barthes' Überlegungen und Praktiken aus, dass er wie letzterer argumentiert, eine jede Lektüre, ob sie nun philologisch genannt wird oder nicht, käme nicht umhin, sich mit Polysemie und Mehrdeutigkeit auseinanderzusetzen. Wie Barthes geht auch Szondi davon aus, dass diese Mehrdeutigkeit eine grundlegende Tatsache ist, die sich aus der besonderen Natur von Texten ergibt, insofern ihre Materie sprachliche

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23 Auch Christoph König hebt die Bedeutung hervor, die Szondi der Tätigkeit des Unterscheidens zuschrieb; Unterscheiden habe für ihn ein wesentliches Mittel des Verstehens dargestellt. Siehe Christoph König (2014). *Philologie der Poesie. Von Goethe bis Peter Szondi*. Berlin, De Gruyter, S. 102.

24 „Aber die wirkliche Kritik an den Institutionen und den Schreibweisen besteht gar nicht darin, zu urteilen, sondern darin, sie zu *unterscheiden*, sie voneinander zu *trennen*, sie zu *verdoppeln*." (übersetzt in: ders. Barthes 1967: 23).

25 Das Zitat entstammt „Histoire ou Littérature", dem dritten und letzten der in dem Band versammelten Essays. Dt.: „die Unmöglichkeit, die Wahrheit über Racine zu sagen" (übersetzt von Helmut Scheffel in: Barthes, *Am Nullpunkt der Literatur. Literatur oder Geschichte. Kritik und Wahrheit*, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 2006, S. 92).

26 „noch der vorsichtigste Kritiker sich selbst als ganz und gar subjektiv, ganz und gar historisch erweist" (ebd., 93).

Zeichen sind. Die von Szondi ohnehin mit Skepsis betrachtete positivistische Beweisführung durch Parallelstellenabgleich kann diesem Umstand nicht abhelfen. Mehr noch: Die Mehrdeutigkeit ist damit unabhängig von der Intention des Autors. Sie kann daher nicht durch den Rückgriff auf Versuche der Rekonstruktion der Intention des Autors gelöst werden und ist auch nicht auf Fälle beschränkt, in denen der Autor Mehrdeutigkeit intendiert hat:

> Das wissenschaftliche Postulat, daß nur die vom Dichter intendierte Mehrdeutigkeit vom Verständnis zu berücksichtigen ist, scheint nämlich weder der Eigenart des dichterischen Prozesses, noch der Eigenart des sprachlichen Kunstwerks ganz gerecht zu werden. Denn es setzt voraus, daß ein poetischer Text die Wiedergabe von Gedanken oder Vorstellungen ist. […]
>
> Sobald aber das Wort nicht mehr als bloßes Ausdrucksmittel gesehen wird, gewinnt es eine Eigenmacht, die es verwehrt, seine Auslegung einzig von der Absicht des Dichters abhängig zu machen (ebd., 30–31).

Die Auseinandersetzung mit Mehrdeutigkeit führt Szondi dazu, die Bedeutung eines Textes von einem vom Autor kontrollierten und intendierten Ausdruck hin zur Eigenbewegung des sprachlichen Materials zu verlagern. Ohne damit die Instanz des Autors aufgeben zu wollen, wie das Barthes 1968 in seinem berühmten Essay „La mort de l'auteur" fordern wird, vollzieht diese Verlagerung doch tendenziell eine ähnliche Bewegung in dieser Ablösung der Deutung von Fragen der Intention. Bei Barthes deutet sich die in „La mort de l'auteur" und auch *S/Z* radikalisierte Haltung schon in seinen Essays über Racine und erst recht in seiner Replik auf Picard von 1966 an. Für Szondis Versuche, das Verhältnis von textueller Eigenbewegung und Autorbezug in der Interpretation auszubalancieren, sind vermutlich letztgenannte Texte Barthes' gerade darin besonders interessant, dass hier die Ablösung von der Autorintention nicht in ein

Aufgeben des Bezugs auf Racine mündet, sondern dazu dient, nachzuvollziehen, wie sich eine Racine'sche Anthropologie in den dramatischen Text einschreibt. Der Vergleich mit Barthes bezeugt nicht zuletzt, wie sehr Szondis Auseinandersetzung mit dem Problem der Mehrdeutigkeit literaturwissenschaftliche Grundfragen berührt. Mag seine konkrete literaturwissenschaftliche Praxis wenig mit Barthes' pluralisierenden Lektüreverfahren gemein haben, teilt sie mit letzteren doch die Skepsis hinsichtlich einer Wissenschaft, die ihre Wissenschaftlichkeit durch unzulässige Komplexitätsreduktion gewinnen will.

Es lässt sich abschließend festhalten, dass Szondis Ausführungen zur Philologie auf zumindest dreierlei Weise eine Nähe zu Positionen Barthes' ausbilden. Diese besteht zunächst in beider Annahme einer grundsätzlichen und unhintergehbaren, von jeder Autorintention unabhängigen Pluralität der Bedeutungen, der die literaturwissenschaftliche Analyse Rechnung tragen muss, wenn sie ihrem Gegenstand angemessen sein will. Bei beiden führt dieses Einlassen auf Mehrdeutigkeit nicht zum Plädoyer für Beliebigkeit und interpretatorische Willkür, sondern steht im Zeichen methodischer Selbstreflexion. Zweitens eint beide ein Verständnis von Literaturwissenschaft als dynamischer Tätigkeit. Bei Barthes zeigt sich dies etwa auf den ersten Seiten von *S/Z,* wenn er seine eigene mobile Praxis gegen das strukturalistische Standardziel der Aufdeckung einer einem Text oder mehreren Texten zugrundeliegenden Struktur profiliert, ein Ziel, das auch noch den ersten seiner drei Racine-Essays, „L'homme racinien", gerade in dem „Structure" überschriebenen Teil dominierte, welcher eine sämtlichen Dramen Racines zugrunde liegende Struktur zu bestimmen suchte. Bereits in der Abkehr vom Begriff Struktur hin zum Begriff der Strukturierung in *S/Z* wie etwa auch in der Rede von einer ‚*activité structuraliste*', im gleichnamigen Aufsatz von 1963 schlägt sich in nuce die Idee einer dynamischen Prozesshaftigkeit nieder[27]. Bei Szondi

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27 Vgl. das Kapitel „Le tissu des voix" [„Das Gewebe der Stimme"] in Barthes' *S/Z*: *„Il s'agit en effet, non de manifester une structure, mais autant que possible de produire une structuration"* (1993 [1970]: 568) Dt.: „Es geht in der Tat nicht darum, eine Struktur deutlich zu machen, sondern, so weit es geht, eine Strukturation zu produzieren." (Barthes 1987: 25)

prägt sich die Einsicht in die Dynamik des analytischen Prozesses vor allem in seiner Definition von Philologie als „perpetuierte Erkenntnis" aus. In der Praxis ist Szondis Vorgehen zweifellos methodisch sehr viel weniger experimentell als Barthes' psychoanalytisch und existentialistisch grundierte Auseinandersetzung mit den Dramen Racines und seine programmatisch diversifizierte Lektüre in *S/Z.* In den Grundannahmen weisen Szondis methodische Überlegungen aber in eine ähnliche Richtung, wird die Wissenschaftlichkeit der Literaturwissenschaft doch gerade darin bestimmt, dass sie auf ein objektives und ein für alle Mal gesichertes Wissen im Hinblick auf den Bedeutungsgehalt von Texten verzichtet und sich stets aufs Neue auf den Untersuchungsgegenstand einlässt. Schließlich zeigt sich die Affinität der Positionen Barthes' und Szondis in der Konzeption der Literaturwissenschaft als ‚Kritik' im Sinne einer wesentlich durch das Unterscheiden gekennzeichneten Praxis. Dieser Aspekt wird, wie gezeigt, in Szondis „Über philologische Erkenntnis" adressiert, er stellt aber auch eine wesentliche Qualität des analytischen Ansatzes in *S/Z,* ja im Grunde von Barthes' gesamtem Werk dar. In *S/Z* wird dieser Gestus des Differenzierens bereits im Titel auf den Punkt gebracht, identifiziert Barthes doch in der minimalen graphischen (nicht phonetischen) Differenz zwischen den beiden Buchstaben ‚z' und ‚s' den zentralen Konflikt von Balzacs Novelle (vgl. ebd., 626). Der Gestus der Differenzierung erfasst bei Barthes nicht zuletzt die Terminologie selbst, u.a. in der in *S/Z* vorgeschlagenen Unterscheidung zwischen zwei Arten von Texten, dem lesbaren („*lisible*") Text einerseits und dem schreibbaren („*scriptible*") Text andererseits. Dieser zweite Typus, der schreibbare Text, ermöglicht eine Lektüre als Praxis, die nicht bloßer Konsum eines Textes ist, sondern einer lustvollen Produktivität weicht, die es dem Leser oder der Leserin erlaubt, „*[d']accéder pleinement à l'enchantement du signifiant, à la*

volupté de l'écriture"[28] (ebd., 558). Angesichts dieser dezidierten Erotisierung der Lektüre, gewissermaßen die etymologische Bedeutung von Philologie als „Liebe zu den Wörtern" aktualisierend, muss allerdings auch vorliegender Aufsatz die Lehre aus der Konzeption von Literaturwissenschaft als differenzierender Tätigkeit ziehen – denn hier ist ein Punkt erreicht, bei dem die bislang konstatierte Parallelität der Positionen Barthes' und Szondis grundlegenden Differenzen weicht.

Nichtsdestoweniger erlaubt der Vergleich beider Positionen zu zeigen, dass sich Szondis Neukonzeption von Philologie in wesentlichen Punkten mit eben dem trifft, was Barthes zeitgleich als ein genuin antiphilologisches Lesen profiliert. Die mit Szondi geteilte Einsicht vor allem in die essenzielle Mehrdeutigkeit und die Pluralität der Lesemöglichkeiten eines jeden Textes, die die Interpretation zu entfalten hat, führt Barthes letztlich dazu, sich von der strukturalistischen Methodologie zu distanzieren. Diese Distanzierung bedeutet weder den Verzicht auf das linguistische Vokabular noch den Verzicht auf die strukturalistische Weiterführung der Saussure'schen Konzeption des sprachlichen Zeichens, sondern eine Problematisierung der Tendenz strukturalistischer Textanalyse, im Freilegen allgemeiner Strukturen die Singularität eines Textes zu reduzieren. Barthes' Verlangsamung des Lesevorgangs und die Entfaltung der vielfältigen Verästelungen des Sinns wollten eben dieser Reduktion entgegenwirken[29]. Einiges spricht dafür, dass genau diese Problematisierung strukturalistischer Methoden zumindest teilweise dem entspricht, was Szondi bei der Formulierung seines Seminartitels „Probleme einer strukturalistischen Literaturwissenschaft" im Sinn hatte.

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28   „den Zauber des Signifikanten, die Wollust des Schreibens ganz wahrzunehmen" (übersetzt in: ders. Barthes 1987: 8).

29   Vgl. Barthes 1993 [1970]: 563. Es ist bezeichnend, dass der Hinweis auf den Strukturalismus im Titel des Seminars über Balzac an der École *Pratique des Hautes* Études, das eine „strukturale Analyse eines Erzähltextes" („*analyse structurale d'un texte narratif*") ankündigte, im Titel des darauf basierenden Buches gestrichen wurde.

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