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Authors:

Áron Ősze
(Széchenyi István University of Győr)

Rita Nándori
(University of Debrecen)

Zsolt Csutak
(Ludovika University of Public Service)

Bence Keresztes
(University of Debrecen)

Szintai-Major Miklós Gergő
(University of Pécs)

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Table of Contents

ŐSZE ÁRON

Some constitutional questions in the context of secret information gathering subject to external permission by the national security services

Abstract: A sense of security is a basic need of individuals and society, and one of the most important functions of the state. Among the state organs, the national security services are responsible for detecting and preventing elements that threaten the security of society. However, the national security services can only fulfil these tasks if they disclose as little as possible of their activities to the public. Closely related to this is the secret information gathering subject to external permission and which carries risks of intrusion into the private sphere. Of course, these agencies cannot operate without adequate constitutional control, which is clearly difficult given the nature of their operations. In my study, I examine one possible instrument of constitutional control over the Hungarian national security services. Among these, I will analyze the external authorization procedure for the secret information gathering regulated by the Hungarian National Security Act and the legal remedies associated with this procedure.

Keywords: control, Hungarian national security services, secret information gathering, right to legal remedy

Introduction

National security services are essential for the secure existence of society. Within the state system, the structural and functional definition of these bodies is defined at the normative level, yet it is clear that secrecy pervades the functioning of the national security services. While it is true that the requirement of non-publicity is an essential element for the effective functioning of each secret service, it is also necessary that the state control over these services, because it is a guarantee of their constitutional functioning.

The publicity can be understood in several dimensions: on the one hand, we can talk about any kind of public knowledge of the national security services. This is interesting, because the national security services can carry out secret information gathering subject to external permission, under conditions defined by law, which provides a serious opportunity for intrusion into the privacy of individuals. The secret information gathering is authorized by the Minister of Justice (as a political body) or a judge (as a legal body) in cases specified by law. Another dimension of publicity is therefore the information these bodies have to make an informed decision on whether to authorize secret information gathering.

In my study, I examine some of the constitutional issues surrounding the secret information gathering subject to external permission by national security services in the Hungarian constitutional system. In this context, I analyze the detailed rules governing the authorization procedure and examine the decisions of the judge and the Minister of Justice in the authorization procedure from the point of view of legal remedies.

Secret information gathering and privacy
Privacy

As indicated in the introduction, the main activity of the national security services is the secret information gathering, which provides the opportunity to intrude into the private sphere of individuals[1]. Human beings, regardless of their communal nature, inherently have secrets and therefore seek to exclude the community from their private lives or at least strive to do so. In this respect, human existence is dual: there is a communal life and a private life[2]. Thanks to technological progress and the political aims of the state, we have become extremely vulnerable, making us naked to unwanted surveillance. The public and private spheres are increasingly demanding personal information, and modern technology enables different organizations to store, analyze and share information about us in highly complex ways.[3]

Privacy does not mean that others not having information about us, but rather about how much control we have over the flow of our own information to the outside world.[4] In other words, the problem of privacy is the extent to which an individual is in control of the information about him or her, can freely dispose of it, can exclude the outside world from a certain part of his or her life, or is obliged to tolerate the eyes and mouths of the world[5]. Privacy as a concept can be interpreted in a number of ways. Some have argued that there are two ways of approaching the conceptualization: one is to look at privacy in terms of its status, which seeks to answer the question of whether privacy is a state, a right, a claim, a means of control, or a value. While the other direction starts from the characteristics of privacy, which may be information, autonomy, identification of a person, or physical accessibility.[6]

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[1] Note that it is not only the national security services that can collect secret information: The secret information gathering under Act CLXIII of 2011 on the Prosecution Service is a specific activity carried out by the prosecution service without the knowledge of the person concerned, which involves the restriction of the fundamental rights to the inviolability of the private home and the protection of private privacy, confidentiality of correspondence and personal data. Paragraph 25/A. (1) Act CXXII of 2010 on the National Tax and Customs Administration and Act XXXVI of 1994 on the Police (hereinafter: Act on Police) contain the same rules.

[2] Lóránt Csink and Réka Török, "The collision of national security purpose secret information gathering and the right to privacy. The present and future of Hungarian regulation," in *Liberal constitutionalism - between individual and collective interests*, ed. Agnieszka Bień-Kacala, Lóránt Csink, Tomasz Milej and Maciej Serowaniec (Toruń: Wydział Prawai Administracji Uniwersytetu Mikolaja Kopernika w Toruniu, 2017), 159.

[3] Charles Raab and Benjamin Goold, *Protecting information privacy.* (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2011) 5.

[4] Charles Freid, "Privacy," *The Yale Law Journal* 77, no. 3 (January 1968) 482.

[5] Júlia Sziklay, "Az információs jogok történeti gyökerei a köz- és magánszféra kategóriái alapján," *De iurisprudentia et iure publico* 4, no 1. (2010): 2.

[6] Ruth Gavison, "Privacy and the Limits of Law," *The Yale Law Journal* 89, no. 3 (January 1980): 424.

The Hungarian Constitutional Court (hereinafter: Constitutional Court) derives the protection of personality from the right to human dignity and identifies the right to human dignity with the general right to personality and some of its named partial rights.[7] The right to privacy is one of these partial rights. Personality presupposes the quality of life in which a person is free to dispose of himself or herself, free to decide which aspects of his or her personality he or she wishes or does not wish to display to others.[8]

The functional nature of privacy refers to the role of the individual in his or her life. These functions are freedom, autonomy, self-fulfillment, the promotion of individual relationships and the strengthening of a free society. This allows for the definition of privacy in terms of fundamental rights, which are:

a. the right to liberty and security
b. the right to life and human dignity and the prohibitions that apply to it
c. freedom of information.[9]

Security vs. privacy

The Fundamental Law of Hungary (hereinafter: Fundamental Law) provides that everyone has the right to have his or her private and family life, home, communications and good reputation respected.[10] The order for the secret information gathering is subject to a national security ground. And in the use of secret information gathering, certain fundamental rights may be restricted by certain public bodies as provided for by law.[11] In the course of professional activities in the field of national security, citizens' individual rights may be violated, but this must always have a legal basis, comply with the principle of necessity and proportionality, the strict requirement of purpose limitation and be proportionate to the interests of the state.[12]

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[7] Judit Szoboszlai, "A magánélet és a személyes adatok védelme a Dávodi ítéletek apropóján," *Fundamentum* 6, no. 2. (2002): 77.

[8] Márta Görög, "A magánélethez való jog, mint a személyiségi jog újabb, magánjogi kódexben nevesített vonatkozása," in *Számadás az Alaptörvényről*, ed. Elemér Balogh (Szeged: Magyar Közlöny Lap- és Könyvkiadó, 2016), 51.

[9] Tímea Drinóczi and Lóránt Csink, "A magánszféra, a biztonság és a nemzetbiztonság alapjogi szempontú megközelítése," in *A nemzetbiztonság kihívásainak hatása a magánszférára*, ed. Lóránt Csink (Budapest: Vareg, 2017), 27.

[10] Fundametal Law, Article VI., Paragraph (1).

[11] Ágnes Czine, "A titkos információgyűjtés néhány jogértelmezési kérdése," *Fundamentum* 10, no. 1 (2006): 119.

[12] Mihály Tóth Csaba, "A nemzetbiztonsági szakmai tevékenység és személyiségi jogok," *Szakmai Szemle* 7, no. 2 (2009): 19–20.

In addition to its findings on the protection of privacy, the Constitutional Court also dealt with issues of national security.[13] The body declared that the protection of national security interests is a constitutional goal and an obligation of the state. The sovereignty of the country and its constitutional order are fundamental values indispensable for the functioning of a democratic state governed by the rule of law. The enforcement of the country's sovereignty, the protection of its political, economic and defense interests, the detection and prevention of activities that infringe or threaten sovereignty or constitutional order are obligations of the state deriving from the constitution, which require restrictions on fundamental rights.[14] In another decision, the Constitutional Court has also stated that states have recourse to the specific capabilities of the national security services, which cannot be replaced by other organizations, to protect their national security interests. Furthermore, the specific nature of national security activities requires appropriate legal regulation to ensure that national security services do not pose a threat to the democratic legal system.[15]

The Constitutional Court has explicitly pointed out in connection with the secret information gathering[16] that state intervention may only take place in the overriding public interest and must be proportionate to the danger to be averted, and the legal disadvantage caused, and that the constitutionality of secret information gathering is judged by a stricter standard than the requirements of the rules governing open procedures. The reason for this is that the use of these instruments confers extreme power on their users and makes the persons concerned more vulnerable. This decision has therefore primarily emphasized the importance of precise and prior legal authorization, rather than ex-post substantive control.[17]

It is also worth highlighting the practice of the European Court of Human Rights (hereinafter: ECHR). In the case in question,[18] two members of a non-governmental organization referred to the ECHR alleging a violation of fundamental rights under Article 8[19] of the European Convention on Human Rights (hereinafter: Convention). In their

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[13] Decision 8/1990. (IV. 23.) of the Constitutional Court; Decision 46/1991. (IX. 10.) of the Constitutional Court; Decision 50/2003. (XI. 5.) of the Constitutional Court; Decision 36/2005. (X. 5.) of the Constitutional Court.

[14] Decision 13/2001. (V.14.) of the Constitutional Court, 2001, 177, 196.

[15] Decision 16/2001. (V. 25.) of the Constitutional Court, 2001, 207, 213.

[16] Decision 2/2007. (I. 24.) of the Constitutional Court, 2007, 65, 78.

[17] Réka Török, "Nemzetbiztonsági célú információgyűjtés és magánszféra," in *A nemzetbiztonság kihívásainak hatása a magánszférára*, ed. Lóránt Csink (Budapest: Vareg, 2017), 199.

[18] Szabó and Vissy v. Hungary 37138/14. 12 January 2016

[19] European Convention on Human Rights, Article 8., Right to respect for private and family life

   1. Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence.

   2. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security, public

argument, they submitted that the Counter-Terrorism Centre was authorized under the Act on Police[20] to gather secret information both on suspicion of specific crimes and for national security purposes in order to combat terrorism and to assist Hungarian citizens in trouble outside the territory of Hungary. In their view, they could be subject to measures that are unjustified and disproportionate to the protection of privacy, especially in the absence of judicial control.[21]

In its decision, the ECHR set out in detail its position in relation to the secret information gathering. The ECHR stressed that, in striking a balance between the interests of national security and the right to privacy, public authorities have a certain degree of discretion. It is also stipulated that the person concerned does not necessarily need to know in advance about the secret surveillance, but national legislation must be sufficiently clear to make it obvious to citizens under what conditions and circumstances the authorities are entitled to enter the private sphere secretly in order to protect national security.[22] The ECHR also points to the problem of the lack of prior judicial authorization in relation to the regulation of secret information gathering.[23] It also stipulates that either an independent body must authorize the surveillance or the activities of the authorizing body must be subject to judicial review or review by an independent body. Accordingly, in this area, the independent court will, as a general rule, carry out the control, with other arrangements being the exception and subject to scrutiny. However, prior authorization of such measures is not an absolute requirement, as where there is extensive ex post judicial oversight, this may also compensate for the shortcomings of the system.[24]

On control of national security services in general: problems of effectiveness

One of the fundamental elements of national security activity is that the whole process is confidential, often closed to the uninitiated, which has a strong impact on institutional culture, and publicity-secrecy is in constant conflict.[25] Publicity is therefore a demand and

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safety or the economic well-being of the country, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

[20] Act on Police, Chapter VII.

[21] Csink and Török, "The collision of national security purpose secret information gathering and the right to privacy. The present and future of Hungarian regulation," 71.

[22] Szabó and Vissy v. Hungary 37138/14. 12 January 2016, 57. and 60-62.

[23] Szabó and Vissy v. Hungary 37138/14. 12 January 2016, 73.

[24] Szabó and Vissy v. Hungary 37138/14. 12 January 2016, 77.

[25] Péter Szűcs and István Solti, "A magyar nemzetbiztonsági szféra és a nyilvánosság," *Nemzetbiztonsági Szemle* 2, no. 2 (2014): 74.

a right of society against power, which is a basic condition for the democratic functioning of the state. This requirement applies to the whole of the state organization, with certain limitations. However, in the case of the national security services, publicity is severely limited in order to ensure their effective functioning.

The secret services are capable of obtaining, analyzing and protecting information that threatens the security of the state and society, thanks to their specific functioning and their specialized tools and methods. This is why their work is the focus of particular attention and why it is important to ensure that the legality, professionalism and effectiveness of their professional activities are properly monitored.[26] A fundamental prerequisite for the control of national security services is the establishment of a clear and well-defined legal framework and set of rules, and the correction of these rules where necessary. Public perception is that there can be serious obstacles to the control of national security services, and there is a fair amount of skepticism in this respect due to understandable public constraints. The real limitations and difficulties are related to the basic forms of national security services' activities. The primacy of the requirements of conspiracy has the consequence of concealing from unauthorized persons the specific goals of the services' activities, information on the procedures and means used, the sources and information they bring, and other data classified exclusively according to the services' internal rules.[27] In addition, the Constitutional Court has also pointed out that the bodies subject to control have a special legal status, which makes it considerably more difficult to carry out an effective control. Such constraints include the need for secrecy, the specialized nature of the sector and the pressure of circumstances by other states.[28]

Control over national security services is a two-way street. On the one hand, it must guarantee that the various national security services carry out their activities in compliance with the provisions of the constitution and the law, without exceeding their powers, and in the interests of the security of the state. On the other hand, it must also provide the necessary guarantees for the secret services to carry out their activities on a purely professional basis, independently of the interests of the various political parties and other pressure groups outside the national security services.[29]

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[26] Jenő Izsa, "A titkosszolgálatok tevékenységének általános jellemzői, ellenőrzésük és irányításuk kérdései," *Szakmai Szemle* 7, no. 2 (2009): 9.

[27] Jenő Izsa and Zsolt Szilágyi, "A nemzetbiztonsági szolgálatok parlamenti ellenőrzésének elvi *és* gyakorlati kérdései," *Szakmai Szemle* 5, no. 3 (2007): 9.

[28] Decision 9/2014. (III. 21.) of the Constitutional Court, Reasoning [64].

[29] Attila Gulyás, "Politikai és jogi kontroll a nemzetbiztonsági szervek felett," in *A nemzetbiztonság kihívásainak hatása a magánszférára*, ed. Lóránt Csink (Budapest: Vareg, 2017), 125–26.

Secret information gathering subject to external permission
Permission as a possible means of control

Pursuant to the provisions of Act CXXV of 1995 on National Security Services (hereinafter: Act on National Security Services), the national security services can collect secret information in order to fulfil their tasks[30] as defined by law. The national security services can use the special means and methods of secret information gathering only if the data necessary for the performance of their tasks cannot be obtained by other means.[31]

Based on an external permission, national security services

a. with the exception of public places and places open to public, can secretly search a home, other premises, fenced area or, with the exception of means of public transport, a vehicle, and objects used by the person concerned, and may record, using technical means, the things observed,

b. with the exception of public places and places open to public, can secretly surveil and record, using technical means, events in a home, other premises, fenced area or, with the exception of means of public transport, a vehicle, and may place the technical means necessary for this at the place of operation,

c. can secretly open a postal item or other sealed consignment linked to an identifiable person and intercept, verify and record its content,

d. can secretly intercept and record the content of communications conducted through an electronic communications network or device using an electronic communications service, or through an information system,

e. can secretly gain knowledge of data processed in an information system, record, using technical means, the things observed, enter the necessary electronic data in the information system, place the necessary technical means, with the exception of public places and places open to public, in a home, other premises, fenced area, or with the exception of means of public transport, a vehicle or an object used by the person concerned, and interfere with an information system to avert a cyber threat.[32]

A submission for permission for secret information gathering under can be filed by the director-general of the national security service.[33] In the course of the performance of national security tasks specified in the act[34] the secret information gathering can be permitted by a

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[30] For the exception: Act on National Security Services, Section 4. *h)*; Section 8., Paragraph (1) *d)–e)*.
[31] Act on National Security Services, Section 53., Paragraph (1)-(2).
[32] Act on National Security Services, Section 56., Paragraph (1).
[33] Act on National Security Services, Section 57., Paragraph (1).
[34] Act on National Security Services, Section 5. b), d), h)-j) and Section 6. d), i), l)-n).

judge designated for this task by the president of the Budapest-Capital Regional Court. In all other cases provided for by law, the Minister responsible for justice authorizes the collection of secret information. The judge and the Minister responsible for justice (hereinafter jointly: permitting officer) adopt a decision within 72 hours after filing the submission. He or she shall uphold or dismiss, as unfounded, the submission. No appeal can be accepted against this decision.[35] Unless otherwise provided in the Act on National Security Services, the permitting officer permits secret information gathering for no longer than 90 days at a time. Unless otherwise provided in the act, in justified cases, the permitting officer can extend this time limit by another 90 days upon a submission by a director-general.[36]

As we can see, the right of authorization is shared between the "representatives" of the executive and the "representatives" of the judiciary. One could say that the minister proceeds on behalf of an essentially political body, while the judge is involved in the authorization process on behalf of an independent branch of power. In this context, the Constitutional Court has stated that, on the one hand, national security tasks cannot be compared with the collection of secret information for law enforcement purposes under the Act on Police, which requires a judicial authorization. The prevention and protection of national security risks require political decisions[37] and as such fall within the competence of the executive power. This justifies that the Minister of Justice should act as the authorizing authority for the gathering secret information when applying the Act on National Security Services.[38]

Another question that arises in the context of authorization is what the permitting officer considers when decide on permission. Put another way, can mere legality considerations be taken into account in the authorization procedure? The answer to this question is most probably in the negative. Indeed, in addition to the legal criteria, considerations of expediency must be weighed, i.e. whether the conditions for the secret information gathering laid down by law are met. This in turn requires a political assessment. In this sense, no

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[35] Act on National Security Services, Section 58., Paragraph (1)-(3).

[36] Act on National Security Services, Section 58., Paragraph (4).

[37] It is also worth quoting the dissenting opinion of Péter Paczolay, Judge of the Constitutional Court: 'I do not agree, therefore, that the justification for a system of authorisation shared between the court and the Minister could be based on the mere fact that the prevention of national security risks requires a political decision, and that the authorisation of the Minister responsible for justice is therefore an appropriate institutional solution. The essential question of constitutionality, that is to say, the question of the restriction of fundamental rights, is whether the national security interests and risks, which are also determined on the basis of political considerations, sufficiently justify in the specific case the restriction of the individual's fundamental rights. The resolution of the conflict between the alleged national security interest and individual fundamental rights under the rule of law does not require a political assessment, but an examination of the necessity and proportionality of the restriction of rights. The institutional guarantor of this assessment is the court." Decision 32/2013. (XI. 22.) of the Constitutional Court, Reasoning [155].

[38] Decision 32/2013. (XI. 22.) of the Constitutional Court, Reasoning [105].

distinction can be made between a minister (as a political body) and a judge (as a legal, independent body). The minister cannot allow permission on the basis of mere expediency or political considerations if the legal conditions for granting it are not met. To look at the issue another way: if the legal conditions are met, the permission may be granted, but this does not necessarily mean that the permitting officer will grant the permission, since he or she will refuse it without justification. It is therefore necessary that the judge should also examine the expediency criteria, because if he or she did not, the judge would be incapable of exercising the right to allow a permission. At the same time, it is also necessary for the minister to examine the legality conditions. Consequently, legal and political control are clearly intertwined. There is also the question of the information that the judge or minister has to allow the permission. There is no question that the minister, as a member of the Government that controls the operation of the national security services, is likely to have more information that would allow a decision to be made on the basis of expediency.

Issues relating to judicial authorization

According to the Act on National Security Services, there is no right of appeal against the decision of the permission officer.[39] In order to interpret this from a legal remedy point of view, it is first necessary to examine the procedure by which the judge adopts this decision. Without wishing to be exhaustive, let us look at some of the classic procedures falling within the jurisdiction of the courts. In criminal procedures, the court judges on the basis of an accusation.[40] The Act CXXX of 2016 on the Code of Civil Procedure (hereinafter: Act on Civil Procedure) shall apply to court procedures, if taking the judicial path is allowed by law and no Act requires the application of other rules. The court adjudicate legal disputes falling within the scope of this Act upon request to that effect.[41] The procedures shall be initiated by the plaintiff against the defendant by filing a statement of claim.[42] Act I of 2017 on the Code of Administrative Court Procedure (hereinafter: Act on Administrative Court Procedure) shall apply to administrative court actions seeking to adjudicate administrative disputes and to other administrative court procedures.[43] Separate administrative lawsuits and other administrative court procedures are governed by Part Five

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[39] Act on National Security Services, Section 58., Paragraph (3).
[40] The Act XC of 2017 on Criminal Proceedings (hereinafter: Act on Criminal Proceedings), Section 6., Paragraph (1).
[41] Act on Civil Procedure, Section 1., Paragraph (1)-(2).
[42] Act on Civil Procedure, Section 169., Paragraph (1).
[43] Act on Administrative Court Procedure, Section 1., Paragraph (1).

of the Act on Administrative Court Procedure. There is no doubt that the authorization procedure does not fall under any of the procedural acts referred to.

However, there is also the legal institution of non-litigation procedures. non-litigation procedures are most characterized by the handling of cases of a private nature, which either do not involve litigation or, although there may be an underlying dispute between opposing parties or the enforcement of an existing right, do not require the application of the rules of litigation. The latter distinction was, of course, undoubtedly valid in a legal context which is different from today's in this respect.[44] Non-litigation procedures consist of successive procedural steps, the parties to which are the court or notary and the persons who are entitled to take part in the procedure on the basis of their interests. In addition, the subject-matter of the non-litigation procedures is a civil matter, and their purpose is to administer justice on the basis of the procedural rules laid down for that purpose.[45] Thus the judge's authorization procedure cannot be construed as a non-litigation procedure either.

According to the provisions of the Fundamental Law, everyone has the right to seek legal remedy against any court, authority or other administrative decision which violates his or her rights or legitimate interests,[46] which is also expressed in law: there is a right of legal remedy against the court's decisions, unless an exception is provided by law.[47] The right to legal remedy is a fundamental right,[48] the possibility to appeal against the decision on the merits to another body or to a higher forum within the same organization.[49]

However, it is important to note that the Act on National Security Services excludes appeals as an ordinary means of legal remedy. However, there are also extraordinary

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[44] Tamás Éless, Edit Juhász, Imre Juhász, Mátyás Kapa, Zsuzsanna Papp, Zsuzsanna Somlai, Kristóf Szécsényi-Nagy, Kinga Tímár, Ádám Tóth, Judit Török and István Varga, *A polgári nemperes eljárások joga* (Budapest: ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, 2015), 19.

[45] Ferenc Bacsó, Salamon Beck, Mihály Móra and László Névai, *Magyar polgári eljárásjog* (Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1962), 430.

[46] Fundamental Law, Article XVIII., Paragraph (7).

[47] Act of 2011. CLXI. on the Organisation and Administration of Courts (hereinafter: Act on Courts), Section 13., Paragraph (2).

[48] The essence of the right of legal remedy requires the legislator to provide for the possibility of appeal to another body or to a higher forum within the same organisation in respect of substantive, adjudicative decisions of public authorities. According to the Constitutional Court, the requirement to provide a remedy applies to decisions on the merits. The decisive factor in determining which decision constitutes a decision of substance is the subject-matter of the decision and its effect on the person concerned, that is to say, whether the situation and rights of the person concerned have been substantially affected by the decision. In other words, from the point of view of the fundamental right to legal remedy in constitutional court procedures, the substantive, decisive character of a decision is relative to the decisions considered as such by the substantive law: it is determined by the subject matter and the impact of the decision under examination on individuals. Decision 9/2013. (III. 6.) of the Constitutional Court, Reasoning [28].

[49] László Sólyom, *Az alkotmánybíráskodás kezdetei Magyarországon* (Budapest: Osiris Kiadó, 2001), 576.

remedies, which are regulated in detail in the procedural law.[50] They have in common that they can only be brought against a final decision and on the grounds laid down by law.[51] However, since the authorization procedure does not constitute ordinary judicial or non-litigation procedures, other legal remedies provided for in the procedural acts are excluded.

But can the decision of the permission officer really not be contested? The direct constitutional complaint must be examined in this context.[52] According to the Act CLI of 2011 on the Constitutional Court (hereinafter: Act on the Constitutional Court) a person or organization affected by a specific case may submit a constitutional complaint to the Constitutional Court against a judicial decision, if the decision on the merits of the case or the decision adopted in conclusion of the court procedures:

a.   violates the petitioner's rights guaranteed by the Fundamental Law, and
b.   the petitioner's possibilities of seeking redress have already been exhausted or there is no legal remedy available.[53]

We will not examine all these conditions, but merely point out that, regardless of the substantive and procedural law applied, any decision of a court ruled by the Fundamental Law or the Act on Courts can be the subject of a constitutional complaint.[54] Thus, a constitutional complaint can be lodged *de iure*, but may face obstacles. Firstly, because the permission officer does not inform the person concerned of its procedure or of the fact of the secret information gathering.[55] Secondly, the Act on the Constitutional Court imposes strict substantive requirements for the submission of a constitutional complaint, which the person concerned by the secret information gathering is unlikely to be aware of.

Following the practice of the Constitutional Court, it can be said that the rule that only a constitutional complaint against a judicial decision can be lodged does not violate the fundamental right to legal remedy. The legislature is essentially free to decide on the introduction, content and limits of the means of legal remedy, and this and the practice of the law enforcement authorities in relation to it cannot be subject to constitutional review.

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[50] Act on Civil Procedure, Chapter XXIX.; Act on Criminal Proceedings, Chapter XC.; Act on Administrative Court Procedure, Chapter XIX.
[51] Ervin Belovics and Mihály Tóth, *Büntető eljárásjog* (Budapest: HVG-ORAC Lap- és Könyvkiadó, 2017), 518 –19.
[52] In general, a constitutional complaint is not a normal legal remedy, but a special legal protection instrument. It also follows from the function of the Constitutional Court that it cannot become a "super-court", i.e. a constitutional complaint cannot be used to review court decisions as a quasi-higher court. Botond Bitskey and Bernát Török, *Az Alkotmányjogi panasz kézikönyve* (Budapest: HVG-ORAC Lap- és Könyvkiadó, 2015), 25.
[53] Act on Constitutional Court, Section 27., Paragraph (1)
[54] Adnrás Varga Zs., "Bírói döntés ellen irányuló alkotmányjogi panasz," in *Az alkotmánybírósági törvény kommentárja*, ed. Kinga Zakariás (Budapest: Pázmány Press, 2022), 324.
[55] Act on National Security Services, Section 58., Paragraph (6)

This includes the constitutional complaint.[56] In connection with this, the Constitutional Court also states that the right to legal remedy guaranteed by the Fundamental Law requires that the possibility of effective and efficient legal remedy be guaranteed, so that a violation of the fundamental right can be established not only if the possibility of legal remedy has been completely excluded,[57] but also if the legal remedy otherwise guaranteed by the legislation cannot be exercised effectively and efficiently for other reasons, for example, if it is precluded by the provisions of the detailed rules, thereby depriving or formalizing the right to legal remedy.[58] It is therefore an interesting question whether the right to legal remedy of a person concerned by the secret information gathering is infringed in this case.

Issues related to ministerial authorization

As we have seen, the Minister of Justice appears as the executive branch's authority to permit the secret information gathering. As a representative of the executive branch, the minister is clearly a political actor in the organization of the state. As with the judicial authorization procedure, there is no right of appeal against the minister's decision. However, unlike the judge's decision, the minister's decision can give rise to the possibility of an administrative court action,[59] which requires a detailed analysis of the rules of the Act on Administration Procedures in order to determine the nature of the minister's authorization procedure.

The Act on Administration Procedures defines the concept of client as follows: Party means any natural or legal person or any organization whose rights or lawful interests are directly affected by the case, with respect to whom an official register holds data or who (which) is subjected to administrative audit.[60] In the course of its procedures, the authority applies the provisions of this Act in administrative cases (hereinafter: case) falling under the scope of this Act, as well as in the course of administrative audits. For the purposes of the Act on Administration Procedures, a case means the process in the course of the administration of which the authority, in making its decision, establishes the rights or obligations of the party, adjudicates his legal dispute, establishes his violation of rights,

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[56] Decision 3020/2018. (I. 26.) of the Constitutional Court, Reasoning [37] or Beáta Kovács, "XXVIII. Tisztességes eljáráshoz való jog," in *Alapjogi kommentár az alkotmánybírósági gyakorlat alapján*, ed. Lóránt Csink (Budapest: Novissima Kiadó, 2021), 355–56.

[57] Decision 36/2013. (XII. 5.) of the Constitutional Court, Reasoning [61]

[58] Decision 14/2015. (V. 26.) of the Constitutional Court, Reasoning [31]

[59] Act CL of 2016 on General Public Administration Procedures (hereinafter: Act on Administration Procedures), Section 114., Paragraph (1).

[60] Act on Administration Procedures, Section 10., Paragraph (1).

verifies a fact, status or data, or operates a register, as well as enforces decisions concerning these.[61] And an authority means an organ, organization or person which (who) has been authorized to exercise public authority by an Act, government decree or, in an administrative case of a local government, by a local government decree, or has been designated by law to exercise public authority. The authority may not be relieved of cases falling within its subject-matter competence.[62]

But can the minister's authorization procedure be included in the scope of the Act on Administration Procedures? In this case, the answer is to be found as to the procedural rules under which the Minister grants the permission, since the Act on National Security Services does not contain any provisions on this. It is not difficult to conclude that the person concerned is not a party and that the authorization procedure is a matter for the case, since these do not fall within any of the definitions of the Act on Administration Procedures. On this basis, it is not possible to bring an administrative action against the minister's decision, nor is it possible to use the constitutional complaint described in the section on judicial authorization, which is more clearly a matter of concern from the point of view of the right to a legal remedy.

However, even if it were possible to bring an administrative action against the minister's decision, this would be limited by the following circumstances: 1) the Minister is not under an explicit obligation to state reasons under the Act on National Security Services;[63] 2) The action must be brought by filing a statement of claim containing. And the Act on Administrative Court Procedure lays down strict substantive requirements for the administrative procedure.[64] Thus, the same observations can be made as in the context of the constitutional complaint against the judge's decision.

In summary, to certain fundamental rights derived from the private sphere, the right to legal remedy as a fundamental right is also subject to strong restrictions in the activities of the national security services, which is a problematic point from the point of view of constitutionality control. In this context, the need for and importance of objective legal protection must also be stressed. Indeed, two aspects of legal protection can be distinguished: one is objective, and the other is subjective. The subjective legal protection is the protection of the rights and legitimate interests of the administrator, i.e. the party,

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[61] Act on Administration Procedures, Section 7., Paragraph (1)-(2).
[62] Act on Administration Procedures, Section 9.
[63] It is worth pointing out that the Act on Courts, the court is obliged to give reasoning for its decision, unless otherwise provided for by law, but the Nbtv. does not contain such a provision. However, no such requirement is found in the Minister's decision, which implies that, unlike the Minister, the judge is obliged to state the reasons for his decision to authorise or refuse the secret information gathering. Section 13., Paragraph (1).
[64] Act on Administrative Court Procedure, Section 37., Paragraph (1)-(2).

while the objective legal protection is the enforcement of rights by the administrative bodies. The two levels of protection are expressed in the right to legal remedy, which is otherwise the basis of legal protection.[65]

Conclusion

It is clear from the above that examining national security services is both an exciting and extremely complex task. The dominant activity of the national security services is the secret information gathering, and I have looked at the rules governing the granting of authorizations. The right to authorize is shared between the judge and the minister, and there is no right of appeal against their decisions. With regard to the judge's decision, it can be stated that there is a *de iure* possibility to lodge a constitutional complaint to the Constitutional Court, but *de facto* this possibility is conceptually excluded. There is no possibility to appeal against the decision of the Minister at all. It is therefore clear that the right of legal remedy of the persons concerned is limited.

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[65] Enikő Katalin Kazsamér, "A közigazgatási jogorvoslati rendszer *és* a jogvédelem hatékonyságát elősegítő tényezők a változások mentén," *MTA Law Working Papers* 2019, No. 1 (2019): 5.

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Rita Nándori

Dog Sleds for Ski Doos:
Inuit Identity on the Cusp of Change

Pro&Contra 8

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Abstract: This paper examines Inuit identity and the effects of contact with Western cultures. Alteration to tradition can be traced by establishing generational cohorts and examining their cultural differences. I stipulate that the present Inuit identity is molded from various received elements and in part from traditional *inummariq*. This paper argues that political yearnings have also changed Inuit identity by the introduction of a tertiary system of identification involving a pan-Inuit, a Canadian, and a cultural sub-group (*miut* group) affiliation. Finally, I believe that the creation of the semi-sovereign Nunavut Territory in 1999 introduced not only a regional form of identification (as opposed to other non-independent Inuit territories within established Canadian provinces and territories) but asserted Inuit autonomy over their land. I examine the success of the Nunavut Territory from a sociopolitical stance and assuming that Inuit wish to achieve success beyond gaining political autonomy.

Keywords: Inuit identity, *Inummariq*, Inuit *Nunangat*, Nunavut Territory, Inuit Autonomy

Introduction

Inuit[1] in Arctic Canada lived a semi-nomadic lifestyle before World War II. In seasonal cycles, an animal-derived food source was harvested. Inuit hunted terrestrial game native to the Arctic, such as caribou, in *ilagit*, an extended family unit of approximately fifty individuals, that also functioned as a small hunting party. When pack ice formed, igloos were built close to the floe edge to breathing hole fish, while after thawing, they erected caribou hide tents. In the dead of winter—including the approximately forty days of night—social ties were strengthened by congregating and building a *qaggiq*, a sort of communal feasting place, around locations where cached leftover meat was stored from the previous season. This paleolithic peace was disrupted by the arrival of European whalers and later, Arctic fox traders, missionaries, and explorers. The close-knit world of Inuit hardly maintained any relationship with the Dene and Innu First Nations with whom they shared the southern parts of their Arctic hunting grounds.[2]

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[1] Inuit means "the people;" due to its plural form the word does not take the English plural "s" and does not have a frontal definite article. The word "Inuit" is used both as an adjective and as a noun (https://www.noslangues-ourlanguages.gc.ca/en/writing-tips-plus/inuk-inuit).

[2] Innu are formerly known as the Naskapi-Montagnais Nation, who are an Algonquian-speaking people whose hunting grounds are called Nitassinan, located on the eastern portion of the Québec-Labrador peninsula. Innu means 'people.' Dene, also known as Athapaskan, are from the Northwest Territories (part of which was given to Nunavut) and Alaska; altogether forming the Denendeh, meaning 'the land of the people.'

The transition from semi-nomadic to sedentary lifestyle, quite atypically, happened in the course of the 20th century. The hunter-gatherer existence of Inuit was first supplemented then overcome by participation in trapping, thus creating a ground initially for barter, then for selling pelts, which provided income to spend for the first time in the history of the people. Modern hunting tools and commodities that made both hunting and winter survival easier found their way into Inuit households. Elders acknowledged that the old way of life was passing as new tools and tastes were acquired, leaving behind age-old traditions (Damas, *Arctic* 50). Boats, rifles, and spear guns replaced the use of *kayak*, *unaaq* (ivory and stone harpoon) and *kakivak* (spears). The hardships from the constant moves were alleviated by the adoption of Western inventions and commodities, subsequently, the wandering Inuit lifestyle became obsolete.

The Hudson's Bay Company [HBC] gained major influence in the Arctic through introducing Inuit to the foundations of a trapping-based mixed economy by making staple goods available in exchange for fox pelts, meanwhile Ottawa provided government reliefs from the 1940s on in order to include the Arctic into the welfare state of Canada.[3] Attracted by the goods stored inside HBC trading posts, an increasing number of campers started to congregate around them. Although some Inuit secured jobs this way, by and large, they were not interfered with as a non-interventionist policy until after WWII in order to maintain the traditional way of life.[4] The Canadian government supported a policy of non-interference and encouraged Inuit to stay in their camps and live off the land following their traditions. Although the transactional nature of trapping was not traditional to Inuit, it involved hunting, therefore, Ottawa's preservationist policy was backed by all parties. Encouraging Inuit to trap and hunt, staying on the land and not close to trading posts was a government plan. This was achieved by endorsing a so-called "policy of dispersal;" however, this approach ended up being a failure.

Regardless of the non-interventionist stance of the government, the last generation of wayfaring Inuit—despite the efforts of HBC and the RCMP (The Royal Canadian Mounted Police) staff on the ground—did not want to disperse, instead, they wanted contact with Southerners and by the 1950s, an increasing number of permanent Inuit camps were being maintained near HBC posts. Eventually, the policy of dispersal was abandoned for the introduction of the Canadian welfare state. Inuit, for the first time, were regarded as Canadian citizens who needed healthcare, education, and a job opportunity.

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[3] David Damas, Arctic Migrants/Arctic Villagers: The Transformation of Inuit Settlement in the Central Arctic, (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 39.
[4] David Damas, Arctic Migrants/Arctic Villagers: The Transformation of Inuit Settlement in the Central Arctic, (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 42.

To deliver the welfare state to the North—which is half the size of Canada and was at the time home to only 7700 people— presented a challenge.[5] The solution eventually led to centralization and a tenfold population boost with about 75 000 Inuit living in Canada as of 2025. Hamlets were created around nearby trading posts already frequented by Inuit. Since most Inuit lands are located above the tree line, churches, schools, and healthcare facilities were built from materials shipped from the South. Additional relocations took place in the 1950s to avoid famine in game-scarce locations, but most settlements were initiated by independent migration to areas where an HBC trading post had already been built. The Inuit-operated Inuit Housing Committee, however, *was* found to pressure Inuit who still pursued a traditional lifestyle to move to the newly-built settlements.[6] Soon, instead of hunting, most families lived in settlements, but failed to secure jobs, which presented a whole new problem.

In reality the success of the welfare state was hindered by the difficulties finding Southern (i.e. Westerners South of the Inuit homeland) employees who were qualified and willing to take a post in the Arctic. The idea of travelling doctors and teachers was entertained, but eventually cast aside. For Inuit, who were primarily hunters, the problem was that they were not yet ready to make the leap from hunting to working 9 to 5; furthermore, language barriers and cultural differences plagued the welfare state project.[7] During this time, housing programs were introduced and individual dwellings built from wood transported to the tundra. The decreasing number of full-time hunters reveal that from the contact-traditional era on, Inuit have been losing the commitment and interest in subsistence hunting and fishing, which I believe is largely due to the introduction of Southern goods, such as guns, fishing boats and other commodities and the engagement in a South-induced mixed economy based on trapping (at least until its collapse), an activity that took time away from hunting. However, the new state of living does not please everyone and since the introduction of the welfare state, Inuit citizens have kept complaining. Lack of funds to buy equipment to hunt, lack of training in traditional hunting methods, lack of time to hunt due to wage work (in which—according to the numbers of 2020—only 40% of the population engages in), addiction to organized sports, and television were named as the main problems.[8] Based on my Arctic experience in the Inuit settlement of Nunavut in the

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[5] David Damas, *Arctic Migrants/Arctic Villagers: The Transformation of Inuit Settlement in the Central Arctic*, (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 117.

[6] David Damas, *Arctic Migrants/Arctic Villagers: The Transformation of Inuit Settlement in the Central Arctic*, (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 194.

[7] David Damas, *Arctic Migrants/Arctic Villagers: The Transformation of Inuit Settlement in the Central Arctic*, (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 44.

[8] Richard G. Condon, Peter Collings and George Wenzel, "The Best Part of Life: Subsistence Hunting, Ethnicity,

Canadian Arctic, I observed a considerable degree of unemployment, while truancy and high drop-out rates plagued my classes filled with young adults entranced by modern life. As of 2020, the unemployment rate has soared to 60 %, thus, only the minority of the Inuit settlement residents participate in the labor force. Both the data and the complaints from Inuit suggest that the manner in which Inuit identity is actualized has departed from the time of the Elders who lived on and off the land without needing anything in the form of compulsory education in hunting and commodities beyond what they had made.

The South in the North: The Process of Cultural Change in the Inuit Homeland

European Norsemen have been postulated to have made contact with the *Tuniq* (Dorset) culture in 986 CE, which was prior to the appearance of the Thule, the forebears of the present-day Inuit, however, some, like Northern scholar and anthropologist Robert W. Park, disagree with this hypothesis. The European-*Tuniq* contact is posited based on identifying the sod-house-living sedentary *Tuniq* lifestyle with the Greenlandic *Skrælíngja* whom the Norse met in the 10th century.[9] Park's stance is based on radiocarbon dating *Tuniq* sculptures that were suspected to have European influence.[10] In any event, the *Tuniit* had vanished by the 1100s CE, and made way for the caribou-hide-tent-dwelling nomadic Thule, who are the ancestors of present-day Inuit. In either of the scenarios (Norsemen met either *Tuniit*, or Thule, or both, or neither), as I see it, Norse culture did not influence the autochthonous inhabitants of the Arctic to a significant degree.

Visitors from Europe, particularly since the 17th century on, brought their culture to the North when they first came as whalers, then fur traders followed in the late 18th century, until those businesses collapsed. Ethnographer Knud Rasmussen describes the relationship between Inuit and the Westerners, or *Qallunaat* as that of a barter. Upon meeting an Inuit couple in Naujaat, the wife explains that "she [Takornâq] had moved down [from Igloolik] to Repulse Bay [today's Naujaat] with her husband, Padloq, expressly in order to be near white men and all the wealth which one could obtain by bartering with them."[11] As for the nature of the relationship with *Qallunaat*, once proximity has been established, she expounds further:

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and Economic Adaptation among Young Adult Inuit Males," *Arctic*, vol. 48, no. 1 (1995), 32.

[9] Hans Christian Gulløv, "The Nature of Contact between Native Greenlanders and Norse," *Journal of the North Atlantic*, vol. 1 (2008), 16.

[10] Robert W. Park, "Contact between the Norse Vikings and the Dorset Culture in Arctic Canada," *Antiquity* vol. 82, no. 315 (2008), 196–97.

[11] Knud Rasmussen, *Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos, Vol. VII, No. 1 of Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition 1921-24*. Translated by William Worster and W. E. Calvert. (Gyldendal: 1929), 21.

> It is quite a common thing among us to change wives. And when a man lends his wife to another, he always lies with the other man's wife. But with white men it was different; none of them had their wives with them to lend in exchange. So, they gave presents instead, and thus it was that many men in our tribe looked on it as only another kind of exchange.[12]

The influence of Europe continued between the 1830s and 1990s in the form of Christian missions that functioned as hospitals, churches, and eventually schools. The start of the 1940s saw not only the creation of hamlets, but—due to the resulting sedentism—the end of the Inuit nomads. Sedentism, primarily in the form of permanent settlements allowed for *Qallunaat* or visitor/settler cultures to build more churches and strengthen already existing parishes. Rather than hunting across a land without borders, the polar nomads had first become denizens, people living in Canada on the path of the long road to realize their full potential as voting citizens of Canada.

The primary influence on Inuit identity has been contact with other cultures, not only European, but First Nations, such as the Innu and Dene Nations who lived in their proximity. I stress that in many cases change is welcomed by subsistence cultures, such as Inuit of the contact-traditional era, who wanted to thrive, hence Southern hunting methods were preferred to less comfortable means of hunting. Inuit culture has irrevocably changed in just a few decades: ski-doos have replaced dog sleds and traditional *qaggiq* song and dance festivities have become obsolete as the internet has grabbed the attention of younger generations. The Inuit Homeland boasts the youngest median age (57% of Nunavummiut were younger than 24 in 2011) and this trend has accelerated.[13] Incidentally, the reason why ski-doos are preferred over dog sleds evidences not only the choice of a more convenient method of travelling but the love for Canada's national sport:

> The young men [in Ulukhaktok] were increasingly enamoured of the more powerful, liquid-cooled engines that begun appearing in the early 1990s…they could go faster and pull a heavier load [than dogs]…they could travel further and still get back to town in time for dinner and *Hockey Night in Canada.*"[14]

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[12] Knud Rasmussen, *Intellectual Culture of the Iglulik Eskimos, Vol. VII, No. 1 of Report of the Fifth Thule Expedition 1921–24.* Translated by William Worster and W. E. Calvert. (Gyldendal: 1929), 25.

[13] Data based on Nunavummiut are Nunavut residents via itk.ca.

[14] Peter Collings, *Becoming Inummarik, Men's lives in an Inuit Community, (Montréal:* McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 359.

Due to such rapid replacement of traditions, the successive generation ends up with only fragmented information about the lives of their ancestors.[15] I assert that the swift embracement of cultural loans and the neglect of traditions erodes traditional Inuit culture and changes identity, severely widening the gap between generations.

Inuit identity is not uniform in any one generation as several related linguistic and ethnic sub-groups, also known as "miut" groups exist within Inuit culture. Traditional *inummariq* identity, the concept of the "real Inuk" is referenced in connection with traditional knowledge, such as hunting and other land and sea skills. I suggest that the list of attributes may also be extended to include the acceptance of Southern customs and tools that are a result of contact, such as metal harpoons, hunting rifles, Peterhead boats, ATVs, ski-doos, and ice hockey that have become internalized by Inuit culture as part of the 21st-century Inuit identity.

Once fox pelt trade collapsed after the Second World War, Inuit found themselves living under a different set of circumstances and having their needs changed in the new and permanent settlements. Furthermore, reliance on the newly-available government benefits resulted in a diminished proclivity to hunt. These changes made it obvious that Inuit needed a representational body in national politics. The constitutional formation of Nunavut, the semi-autonomous Inuit territory in 1999, and the later acquisition of additional Inuit lands along with government funds showcase that Inuit have adjusted exceptionally well to a new living situation in a multicultural society, while focusing on the retainment of their cultural integrity, which is one of the prime directives of the Canadian multicultural ethos.

The rapid introduction of modern amenities has altered the way Inuit society functions. Fox trapping changed the originally purely hunting society leading to money playing a role in Inuit life allowing for more Southern influence to enter Inuit culture, such as tea and other staple foods, household utensils, rifles and items needed in the gradually modernized daily life. Inuit resourcefulness in adapting to Arctic life is echoed in their adaptability "to new and ostensibly disruptive technological, economic, and social inputs" arriving from the South.[16] Archival footages from the early contact era display the extreme hardships Inuit had to endure to sustain life, therefore, it is not surprising that technology is appreciated.

Overall, Southern goods and the extension of the welfare state to the North positively impacted the Inuit population and heralded a safer age with a longer lifespan and more comfortable living, but the price of this is the diminishing awareness of tradition. Many

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[15] Peter Collings, *Becoming Inummarik, Men's lives in an Inuit Community, (Montréal:* McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 367.

[16] George W. Wenzel, "Inuit and Modern Hunter-Gatherer Subsistence," *Études/Inuit/Studies*, vol. 37, no. 2 (2013: 181–200), 182.

of the old practices, such as *erinaliutiq*, the use of a shaman's magic words to heal, have long been discontinued due to their perceived uselessness in the face of modern medicine. New mores entered the Inuit homeland along with Southern institutions. Prior to the Moravian missionaries' introduction of writing in the late-18th century, oral dissemination of traditional knowledge was the de facto method of recordkeeping and it so remained for another 150 years throughout most of the North well into the twentieth century, as ethnographer Diamond Jenness recounts:

> [s]torytelling is one of the most favorite past-times whenever three or four natives are gathered together, especially in the long evenings of winter. The old tales and traditions are repeated again and again…until they become almost as familiar to the young men of twenty as they are to the old men of fifty or sixty. [17]

Before paper and pen, songs, myths, epic- and folk tales taught the young; but they also show how culture functions. Listening to the traditional songs performed by a people is the most authentic way of learning about a culture.[18] The personal stories inherent in Inuit songs are markers of identity and inform other generational cohorts as well as outsiders.[19] I argue that this kind of knowledge, or in Inuktut, *quajimajatuqangit* informs us about traditional identity. Orally sharing stories, also referred to as *unikkausivut*, once was the primary method of disseminating knowledge from generation to generation. Today, however, few people know the classic songs called *pisiit*.

I argue that knowing the traditional way although often expressed as desired, has subsided as members of different generations negotiate the defining elements of Inuit identity: what one generation values as essential, a subsequent generation might find redundant, such as land skills. Habitus, or socialized norms, govern thinking and collective practices, but habitus can be varied as people experience identity differently depending on the context within which identity manifests.[20] This is the reason, for example, why Inuit resist Southern culture in one context, such as education, since a high school diploma is not deemed as useful in the North. This trend is evidenced by poor school attendance and academic achievement. On the other hand, Inuit prefer Southern commodities and

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[17] Diamond, Jennes, *Eskimo Folk-lore Part A, Myths and Traditions from Northern Alaska, the Mackenzie Delta and Coronation Gulf* (The King's Printer: 1 924),1.

[18] Gregory Ypunging, *Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing by and about Indigenous Peoples,* (Brush Education: 2018), 1.

[19] Rita Nandori, "Imagined Homeland: *Inummariit* as the Basis for the Concept of Inuit Nationhood," *Hungarian Journal of English and American Studies*, vol. 26, no. 2 (2020) 157.

[20] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge University Press, 1972), 78.

values in other contexts, such as using modern hunting methods and playing hockey. This dichotomous nature of habitus is the reason why most Inuit appreciate tradition but insist on the need for progress in the Arctic, such as the building of more homes and not igloos, which belong in the nomadic past.

As foreign influences have been gradually penetrating Inuit culture, the internalization of identity varies in each subsequent generation. The Elders' generation—Inuit who lived on the land as children during early contact times in the first half of the twentieth century— remains closest to what is referred to as a traditional way of life. This cohort is passing—as they most have become octogenarians by 2025—and so is traditional knowledge. The fact that Inuit values must be displayed in public on the walls of public offices, such as the Igloolik Housing Association, the Nunavut government website and advocacy groups, such as Representative for Children and Youth proves that Southern writing must be used in a traditionally oral culture to try and salvage old values. The transitional generation, who can be called hamlet folk, since they are hamlet-born and attended residential school but were raised by nomads, carry their parents' values with them and remain stuck in the past. Finally, the current generation of adults, the young generation, who were born in the newly created Inuit *Nunangat* (starting with the creation of Nunavut in 1999) reaped the benefits of public education, governments funds, aids and benefits, socialized healthcare, and comfortable houses, is the first generation raised by parents who have never practiced a purely nomadic lifestyle.[21] The three generations of Inuit *Nunangat* each embody different stances to Inuit identity, which is observable in how Inuit have negotiated Southern influences such as religion, economy, technology, education and media into the body of Inuit knowledge. Thus, the manner in which Inuit conceptualize traditional identity, the so-called *inummariq*, is complex and interwoven in everyday life, business, and art.

Global migrations have changed how identity is experienced and interpreted, especially in so-called settler societies that are home to people who do not share a primary or secondary identity. Canadian multiculturalism emerged in the 1970s and proclaimed that a multiethnic and multilingual society can become a unified nation through sharing the same land. The idea of nation, thus, is a group of people linked by land and not by descent. Furthermore, the common cause of building a modern nation unites the many cultures within the Canadian mosaic; a nation, thus, is an imagined political community.[22] Inuit, therefore, are Canadian by law and Inuit by heritage, maintaining a distinct cultural identity. Canada's current political philosophy aims at creating a kaleidoscopic picture of many cultures within

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[21] Inuit *Nunangat* refers to the Inuit Homeland.
[22] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso Books, 2016), 1.

one nation resulting in a multitude of sub-identities within one unifying Canadian identity built on markers based around all-Canadian symbols.[23] Mainly due to the distant location of their homeland, most Inuit live autonomously in Inuit *Nunangat*, while as Canadians they are entitled to the benefits of the Canadian welfare state; subsequently, this duality has created a composite identity. Sedentism and the delivery of national policies related to education, healthcare, and housing, adversely effected those Inuit whose attachment to a semi-nomadic life was believed to be crucial to the formation of their cultural identity, but in a mere four decades the Inuit population had gone through a tenfold rise. Canada today is a multicultural nation with equal rights to all; she is home to many distinct ethnicities of Indigenous, settler, and immigrant backgrounds forming a nation based on a common cause.

The Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), a non-governmental organization founded in 1977, has been acting on behalf of the Inuit in the United States, Canada, Denmark, and Russia, indicating a joint origin and a sense of belonging across borders. The organization proclaims the necessity for unification as "Inuit…must speak with a united voice on issues of common concern and combine their energies and talents towards protecting and promoting their way of life and to strengthen the unity among all Inuit throughout the circumpolar region."[24] Although the Inuit homeland is primarily located in Canada, the loose linguistic and cultural kinship among Inuit *miut* groups, Kalaallit, Iñupiat, Yup'ik and Chukchi is utilized to achieve cultural cohesion. Besides fortifying the relationship of international Inuit, the nature of connections to the rest of Canada are of great importance to Inuit culture and economy. The church used to be a force of Southern values, but since its foundation in 1971, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the premier Inuit Organization of Canada, has become the main intermediary between Canadian Inuit and the government of Canada.

To represent such newly minted Arctic citizens, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami [ITK] presents itself as a representative body of all Inuit. ITK maintains an ongoing dialogue with the Canadian government on issues of importance, such as land claims and welfare.[25] The current president of ITK reflects hopefully:

> We wanted to share this [Inuit *Nunangat*] with Canada. We pushed for it just as much as any
> other entity, and we didn't have to. We could've made this into our Inuit lands, and we could've
> cordoned it off and tried to keep people out, but we see ourselves as Canadians. This land
> is ours, but also something we want to show the world as long as we do it in a way that's

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[23] Hockey, snow sports, outdoorsmanship, poutine, and so on.
[24] ICC, "Aims and Objectives," itk.ca.
[25] ITK, "Aims and Objectives," itk.ca.

respectful. I hope Canadians get excited about that, too—are appreciative of the fact that Inuit want to be Canadians. We want to share our land, we want to have this relationship.[26]

The significance of Natan Obed's words rests in the expression of a composite Inuit-Canadian identity. If the notion of Canada is internalized, then Inuit become not only Canadian citizens legally but culturally as well. Such a change to a nomadic sub-group-based identity is significant and is possibly present is all layers of Inuit culture. In the spirit of fostering Inuit cultural identity along with an all-Canadian one, the inclusion of Inuit knowledge is now regarded as a must in Northern school curricula and is part of, for example, British Columbia's K-12 and Dogwood graduation requirement.[27] The Indigenous addition is especially important for hamlet-born generations who are not taught land skills by their Elders in their camp, as was the traditional way. An enriched curriculum can not only lead to deeper connection to one's cultural identity, but to more Inuit professionals trained as doctors, teachers, police in the homeland and, thus, to financial independence from Ottawa.

Regarding the relationship of language and culture, interviewees in Igloolik and Quaqtaq viewed Inuktut as an essential part of their identity, while English (French in Nunavik) serve as a tool for achieving professional goals in life.[28] Inuktut, on the other hand, is spoken in the home, at cultural functions, and social gatherings. As a result of inclusive public education, culturally enriched programs and language classes primarily in the elementary grades have been introduced in order to raise general Inuktut literacy level. Based on the latest census, nearly 70 percent of Inuit speak Inuktut; about 50 percent of those under fourteen years of age speak it as their primary language of communication. Currently, Inuktut is spoken in 61 percent of Nunavummiut families, a drop from the 76 percent of a similar survey conducted in 1991.[29] Albeit this drop in Inuktut use is apparent, such numbers seem less disappointing in the context of autochthonous language retention in Canada, in which case Inuktut is the most well-preserved language.[30]

Although cultural identity is linked to native language fluency, identity remains intact even in case of compromised fluency. As Obed argues, "the fact that I don't have fluency

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[26] Aaron Kylie, "The Inuit Future," https://canadiangeographic.ca/articles/the-inuit-future/.

[27] K-12 refers to public education from kindergarten to grade 12 and the Dogwood Diploma stands for the B.C. Certificate of Education (Adult Education Diploma).

[28] Louis-Jacques Dorais, "Language, Culture and Identity: Some Inuit Examples," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies,* vol. 15, no. 2 (1995), 295, 302.

[29] Ian Martin, "Inuit Language Loss," https://assembly.nu.ca/sites/default/files/TD-316-4(3)-EN-Written-Submissions-on-Bill-37-Ed-Act-and-LangProt-Act.pdf.

[30] Daniel Chartier, "The Social and Cultural Context of Inuit Literary History," in *Native America: Indigenous Self-representation in Canada, the U.S. and Mexico,* ed. Jeanette den Toonder, Kim van Dam and Fjaere van der Stok (Peter Lang, 2016), 32.

in Inuktitut is only one small part of who I really am", while Jesse Mike, a colleague of Obed remarks that Inuit identity should not be exclusively based on language skills.[31] Obed also observes that:

> There's so many young Inuit now that are not completely fluent in Inuktitut, that have grown up with one parent who's not Inuk and one parent who has grown up outside of [Inuit culture]. [There is an opinion] that if you don't have [adequate] Inuktitut [language skills], [then] somehow you can't be an advocate for [the Inuit and] you are not ever going to be a good one [if you try].[32]

Inuit identity, therefore, might be regarded as an amalgam of cultural skills, one of which is Inuktut fluency.

Present-day Inuit identity rests on the interplay between tradition and incoming influences. Although settlement mixed *miut* groups to an extent, linguistic and cultural differences prevail. *Miut* groups can differ greatly; linguistically, North and South Qikiqtaaluk, Innuinaqtun, Nattilik, Aivilik, Paalliq, and Nunatsiavut are separate dialects; within them hamlets stand for yet another level of cultural differentiation, and within settlements like Igloolik, lies a historic distinction based on religious affiliation. Inuit identity can manifest multiple associations, such as pan-Inuit, territorial, and cultural sub-group identifications.[33] While the Inuit Circumpolar Council represents Inuit across the globe, the Inuit Tapiriit (formerly Tapirisat) Kanatami speaks for Inuit living in Canada. Additionally, several territorial boards and corporations stand for Inuit from Nunavut or other parts of Inuit *Nunangat,* land claims that were achieved on the uniform Inuit identity ticket. Ethnic—but not necessarily pan-Inuit— representation is important for all Inuit superseding other forms of representation.

As far as intellectual culture is concerned, Inuit generally tend to be locally focused.[34] In Greenland, however; there is a cultural preference for Danish authors, especially among the young despite the tendency that many intellectuals, such as Kalaallit poet and activist Aqqaluk Lynge support the pan-Inuit concept.[35] The difficulty of literary dissemination

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[31] Samia Madwar, "Becoming Natan Obed," www.thewalrus.ca/becoming-natan-obed.

[32] Natan Obed, "I am Inuk," www.cbc.ca/radio/unreserved/i-am-inuk-natan-obed-on-his-complicated-child-hood-challenging-questions-and-the-future-of-the-inuit-1.5083529.

[33] Rita Nandori, "Nunangat and Beyond: Acculturation and the Retainment of Inuit Identity in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, vol. 41:1 (2022), 108.

[34] Daniel Chartier, "The Social and Cultural Context of Inuit Literary History," in *Native America: Indigenous Self-representation in Canada, the U.S. and Mexico,* ed. Jeanette den Toonder, Kim van Dam and Fjaere van der Stok (Peter Lang, 2016), 61.

[35] Daniel Chartier, "The Social and Cultural Context of Inuit Literary History," in *Native America: Indigenous Self-representation in Canada, the U.S. and Mexico,* ed. Jeanette den Toonder, Kim van Dam and Fjaere van der

within Inuit culture is best exemplified by the virtually unknown status of *Sanaaq*, the first Inuit novel, most likely because it was written in French. The fact that many Inuit use English, French, Danish or possibly Russian as their means of expression is just one part of the problem; dialectal differences also challenge dissemination, which must then be multilingual and cross-dialectal.

Nunavut: The Crux of Inuit Cultural Identity

Nunavut was first conceived in 1971 by the then-representative body of Inuit, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada. The reason behind the creation of a fully Inuit territory was twofold. Firstly, there was the lack of any land treaty between Inuit and the government of Canada, which meant that Inuit Aboriginal title could still be claimed; and secondly, the Inuit of the Northwest Territories maintained an absolute demographic majority. Additionally, it was theorized that a sovereign Inuit territory would allow Inuit to set their own social, political, and economic goals; Nunavut, thus aimed to function as a culturally Inuit territory that reflects Inuit values and perspectives.[36]

While advocating for the separation of the western part of the Northwest Territories, activists described Inuit as a united people, a claim that wholly disregarded the existence of *miut* groups. The geopolitical boundaries for Nunavut were drawn according to the spatiality of historical Inuit land use and cultural practices.[37] Prior to settlement, however; the term "Inuit" was used verbatim i.e. "person," or "people," rather than as a form of ethnic identification.[38] Such an approach to identity did not allow for loyalty on a pan-Inuit scale and permitted *miut* groups to operate on an individual level when representing their economic and cultural needs; however, it did not prove advantageous when claiming a unified Inuit territory.[39] I suggest that the formation of a distinctly collective Inuit identity can be attributed to the plan to achieve representation for most Inuit by speaking for all the *miut* groups within Nunavut, the most populous Inuit territory. More than two decades later, in 1993, Inuit and the Canadian government signed the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement and after years of further talks, the Nunavut Territory was created

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Stok (Peter Lang, 2016), 58.

[36] André Légaré, "Canada's Experiment with Aboriginal Self-Determination in Nunavut: From Vision to Illusion," *International Journal of Minority and Group Rights*, vol. 15, (2008), 336.

[37] Légaré, "Nunavut," 74.

[38] Louis-Jacques Dorais, "Inuit Identity in Canada," *Folk*, vol. 30, (1088), 24.

[39] Robert G. Williamson, *Eskimo Underground: Socio-cultural Change in the Canadian Central Arctic* (Almqvist and Wiksell, 1974), 31.

from the eastern part of the Northwest Territories on 1 April 1999. Nunavut has been labelled by the Canadian government as the most advanced model of Indigenous self-determination, while Inuit leaders declared that control over their people and land would solve the social issues that heavily afflicted the region.

Upon its creation, the Nunavut Territory had become the biggest political unit of Canada, boasting a strategic location that consists of an extensive marine area which includes the Hudson Bay, the Northwest Passages, most of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago, and the North Pole. Nunavut's area is so large, that if it functioned as an independent country, it would rank as the world's 12th largest. However, Nunavut's nine month-long arctic winter, pack ice frozen over some summers, and permafrost that allows for no trees to grow and makes building hard and agriculture inviable. Traditionally, lichens, plants, and arctic game (both land and marine) served as a source of sustenance. Presently, only about 36 thousand Nunavummiut live in 28 communities, 85 percent of whom identify as Inuit. [40] With no road infrastructure linking the settlements to one another or the territory itself to the rest of Canada, goods are flown in by plane or sealifted once a year and can cost two to three times more than in the South.

Nunavut's general statement of purpose was issued in the *Bathurst Mandate* in the form of principles and priorities developed in 1999 by the government of Nunavut in order to addresses issues relating principally to health, housing, and economy. In the case of health, especially mental health, the main problem remains that many young Inuit report a feeling of boredom due to the lack of intellectual stimulation and the largescale discontinuation of hunting. This leads to problems with drugs and crime, while suicide rates and smoking and nutrition-related diseases are on the rise. Most Nunavummiut live in social housing that is said to be overcrowded, although it must be noted that according to Statistics Canada, four people per home qualifies as overcrowding.[41] Many complain about the long wait; however, the average two to three years, in fact, represent a comparatively shorter time than in the South.[42] Most government employees and other professionals come from the South due to the low number of Inuit recruits, and most development is carried out using funds from Ottawa. Interestingly, Johnny Kusugak, the Languages Commissioner of Nunavut argues that to mitigate this problem, Southern workers in Nunavut should learn to speak Inuktitut, meanwhile communities complain

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[40] André Légaré, "Canada's Experiment with Aboriginal Self-Determination in Nunavut: From Vision to Illusion," *International Journal of Minority and Group Rights*, vol. 15, (2008), 367.

[41] I too lived in three different typical Inuit houses that were excellently built and furnished and above the means of an average teacher in well-off British Columbia.

[42] Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami "Backgrounder," 6 https://www.itk.ca/what-we-do/.

about the declining level of education.[43] Many Nunavummiut remain dissatisfied with the way Nunavut is run; some even believe that Yellowknife (the previous territorial capital before the creation of Nunavut from the eastern of Northwest territories) provided better services than Iqaluit (*Nunatsiaq News* Editorial, 2).[44]

Conclusion

Current Inuit identity has a composite nature having incorporated Southern and generally Western elements into the traditional *inummariq* identity through the past one hundred years of contact with *Qallunaat*. Since the contact-traditional era, components of intellectual and material culture have been gradually left behind. Politically, Inuit have gained pan-Inuit representation through the Inuit Circumpolar Council, and on a Canadian scale from the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. Although Nunavut embodies a unified Inuit identity, in fact, several cultural sub-groups, so-called miut-groups exist with their own distinct identity. Nunavut's fiscal dependency on the federal government along with the territory's socio-economic problems has not improved to a sufficient degree. In fact, I reiterate André Legaré's opinion that the only success of the "Nunavut Project" has been the assertion of Inuit collective identity ("Canada's Experiment" 367) through sovereignty and land management.[45] However, I assume that political autonomy cannot be an end in itself: a majority Inuit territory with its own government has not yet solved the most pressing problems of the region, whether it is called Northwest Territories or Nunavut.

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[43] Greg Younger-Lewis, "Jobs Top Priority for New Languages Commissioner," *Nunatsiaq News*, March 25, (2005:5).
[44] *Nunatsiaq News*, "Editorial," March 25, 2.
[45] André Légaré, "Canada's Experiment with Aboriginal Self-Determination in Nunavut: From Vision to Illusion," *International Journal of Minority and Group Rights*, vol. 15, (2008: 335-67), 367.

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ZSOLT CSUTAK

The Rise of a New Redeemer?
A.I. as a Postmodern Theorem

Abstract: The cyber era of the 21st century, defined by the dominance of computerized technologies, has also brought along new forms of social phenomena and even religiosity within the dimension of postmodernism and artificial intelligence. Social scientists, theologians, and information technology experts are puzzled by the new challenges of the new age featured by the prevalence of expanding AI-driven technologies, smart machinery, and various IT solutions, which tend to penetrate both the military domain and the realm of spirituality shaping the world of trans-humanism. The question is whether a new form of science and technology-based pseudo-religion is about to descend from the virtual heaven in the form of AI-driven redemption and savior or radical transformer of human civilization? Will the new manifestations of postmodern technological divinity be able to alter the classic, transcendental religions and even substitute the services of human clergy?

Keywords: artificial intelligence, trans-humanism, technological singularity, religion

Introduction

> "the accelerating progress in technology (…) gives the appearance of some essential "Singularity" in the history of the race beyond which human affairs, as we know them, could not continue."
>
> John von Neumann

Following the global upheaval and skyrocketing popularity of the ChatGPT platform,[1] Yuval Harari, an Israeli historian and global celebrity thinker claimed that the new cutting-edge AI-based programs might contribute to the elaboration of a new human-machine dimension and use religions and artificial intelligence (or A.I. as well-known scientific iconic term) – generated beliefs to control societies and human behavior in the future. Citing his famous metaphor 'the operation system of the human civilization has been hacked by A.I.' will certainly result in diverse socio-political, and cultural alterations in the human condition of which we do not possess enough knowledge or even presumption at the present moment.[2]

Naturally, the rise of the swiftly developing Artificial General Intelligence (hereafter, AGI) program and various large language models with their impressive interactive communication

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[1] The most popular artificial intelligence-based large language model in the world elaborated by a small American start-up company called *Open AI* Corporation in Silicon Valley, California.
[2] Williams, Dan: "Yuval Noah Harari argues that AI has hacked the operating system of human civilization". In *The Economist*. April 28, 2023.

skills poses a significant and unprecedented challenge for humanity in various ways. The new generation of smart machinery, computer-based applications, and digital solutions tend to transform human interactions, communication modes, as well as cultural patterns. Furthermore, the new methods and information technological (IT) solutions also affect the basic habits of the mind and redefine military operations, and informational warfare styles in such a manner and extent that most humans are unable to cope with and properly adapt.[3]

In this manner and context, the religious frameworks relying on faith in supernatural, transcendental powers and creatures, *per definition* divine (or even anthropomorphic) may not be exempt from the new digital phenomena and technology-based challenges prevailing in most of the societies in the world. The pseudo-religious experiences projected in the conspicuous augmented environment of humans and smart machines have already been forecasted by such Hollywood masterpieces as *The Matrix*, *I, Robot*, *A.I.,* or *Ex Machina.* Nevertheless, in the first phase, the new religious sensations and correlations with smart technological tools and programs will be presumably much subtler and harmless. The "divine touch" proclaimed by the Abrahamic religions, namely by Judaism, Christianity and Islam, may turn into oblivion or be transformed and reinterpreted through man-made, self-learning, intelligent platforms. It appears to be a genuinely postmodern 'reconstructed' idea that might descend from the realm of science fiction into the reality of a technologized profane world.[4] As revealed in the motto from John von Neumann's prediction, the 'technological singularity' is gradually looming upon our world with unprecedented effects and consequences on our human paradigm as it is.[5]

In this paper, I shall explore the various overlapping dimensions and potential confronting spheres of interest between global mainline theistic religions, first of all, Christianity, and the intellectual, cultural (if not spiritual) threats projected by AI-generated cultural or even new types of postmodern religious patterns. I will apply hypothetical case studies and interdisciplinary content analytic methods to immerse the reader in the realm of the cyber world, with a special focus on the impact of technology in spirituality and social studies, as well as to examine the option of the emergence of a postmodern-type technology-driven so-called cyber-religion within the new dimension of trans-humanism. In this regard, I also try to find the answer to the theoretical question of whether the

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[3] Waltzam, Rand: "The Weaponization of Information". In *Rand Corporation Research Papers* (Santa Monica: Rand Corp., 2017).

[4] Postmodernism, as a broad term with alternative interpretations of clashing truths and realities juxtaposing their own narratives, see Frederick Jameson on *Postmodernism*, 1991 and Lyotard, Jean-Francois: *The postmodern condition: A report on knowledge.* (University of Minnesota Press, 1979), 18 – 26.

[5] Ulam, Stanislaw: "John von Neumann". In *AMS Journal.* Online: https://www.ams.org/journals/bull/1958-64-03/S0002-9904-1958-10189-5/S0002-9904-1958-10189-5.pdf 1958, 5.

new forms of technology-driven human dependence, devotion, and spirituality could be considered religious experiences.

As many theorem shifts have occurred in the history of political thoughts and ideas, similar to the rather postmodern belief in science, technology, and especially in AI-based solutions, digital applications might well be regarded or accepted as the new profane redeemer, a mundane salvation from all earthly problems for the end users.[6] The correlation of AI and the emerging new military domains within cyber space evidently constitute a significant new research area, which share several areas and scholarly aspects with the topic of this paper, nevertheless the primary focus of the analysis would be cast on the impact of new technologies on spirituality and society including education.

Nevertheless, when discussing a specific nexus between technology and religion, aligning with the new term of pseudo-religion in this context, we must define the core term applied in this study, namely what can be, first of all considered religion? The author of this paper shares the definition and approach rooted in the Christian civilizational dimension when discussing and applying the term of religion as a cultural, social system based on the "ultimate concern, the touch of divinity and the moral binding among the believers", as expressed by revered Protestant thinkers like Paul Tillich and Paul Ricouer among many others.[7]

Notwithstanding, within the context of a pseudoreligious[8] concept of "digital redeemer" has already been displayed as an organic part of the unique fantasy world elaborated by such grandmasters of science-fiction as Isaac Asimov, William Gibson or Ray Bradbury, the new cyber dimension and pseudo-religiosity seem to be looming upon humanity in the second quarter of the 21st century. Moreover, this new socio-cultural, technological phenomenon may well be supplemented with the realistic prospect of technological singularity as predicted by Alan Turing, John von Neumann, or lately by Ray Kurzweil and his fellow futurologist IT-experts.[9]

One of the greatest experts of the new discipline of machine-human interface as well as a visionary thinker of the cybernetic future of humanity is the Australian scientist Hugo de Garis. He has claimed for several years before the astonishing rise of the generative

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[6] See also the famous remark of Harari mentioned above Williams 2023.
[7] See „What is Religion?" In *Encyclopedia Britannica. Religions.* May, 2025.
[8] The term primarily tends to refer to an intellectual, socio-psychologic stance and human attitude, which aim for explanations stemming from entities seemingly transcending the humans, let it be technology, scientism or ideological „omnisms"; see Paul Kingsnorth: "How the West fell for Pseudoreligions" *UnHerd.* 2025.
[9] Kurzweil, Ray: *The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology.* (New York: Viking, 2005).

language models and presently overwhelming AI platforms that our human condition is rapidly and irreversibly changing.[10]

Our world is evidently shifting into a new, transformative phase of development that we have no clear knowledge or any previous experience of, with the active contribution of information technology (hereinafter, IT) and cognitive science experts, who constitute less than 0.5% of the world population. All the same, as a parallel counter-trend to the rise of smart machinery and digital solutions, the general intelligence level and mental resilience of the common users, at least in the Western world tend to show a slow but steady decline compared to the surge of human intelligence in the 20th century.[11] This may ensue in a rather antagonistic condition, where the cognitive superiority of humans, in general, is going to be drastically challenged, if not diminished by artificial intelligence-generated new technologies. The prevalent rise of smart technologies entails the emergence of so-called pseudoreligious phenomenon wherein users tend to seek salvation, redemption from technology equipped with a seemingly omniscient clergy of experts, "IT-geeks". This new 21st century trend may echo with the Marxian presumption stating that "religion is the opium of the masses"[12]. In the new cyber dimension the "oppressed" users of the digital technologies initiate new habits of the mind, new social paradigms, affections as well as addictions mostly generated by the omnipresent global IT-companies and service providers.

As clearly stated in the motto above by the much-revered Hungarian-American mastermind of Mathematics and pioneer of IT, John von Neumann more than half a century ago, the frequently recalled "technological singularity" of artificial intelligence would inevitably change all aspects of civilization. The imminent IT-driven technological conversions will cover all areas of life, including human interactions and religion, as well. The ensuing alterations would inevitably contribute to a new type of Kuhnian paradigm shift in human disposition and in the way humans comprehend the external world or other non-human factors, such as the concept of ubiquitous divinity juxtaposing the prevalence of artificial intelligence.[13] The latter might as well be considered a secularly omnipresent power factor, a sort of postmodern technological divinity through its various applications in the realm of the Internet of Things (or IoT) with billions of interconnected smart devices driving our life.

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[10] Garis, Hugo de: "Species dominance & our cybernetic future" *Lifeboat*. Online: www.Lifeboat.com 2022.

[11] Dockrill, Peter: "IQ Scores are falling in "worrying" reversal of 20th-century Intelligence Boom". www.sciencealert.com. 2018.

[12] See Cline, Austin: „Religion as Opium of the People". In *Learn Religions*. www.learnreligions.com April, 2019 citing Karl Marx and his *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*.

[13] Kuhn, Thomas S.: *The structure of scientific revolutions*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

Furthermore, the undisputed dangers of implementing complex artificial language models and AI-driven programs for creating and disseminating fake news, disinformation and even conducting informational warfare programs, should evidently be examined. Similarly, the impact analysis of educational, labor market and public policy implications of the penetration of smart machinery and AI applications might not be neglected, either. Martin Ford in his book "Rise of the Robots" thoroughly examined the predictable consequences of full-scale automation in the labor market and the social-political implications of smart technologies. Concerning the above-mentioned media literacy and educational aspects of AI-based technologies and social media platforms, recently there have also been some mini-surveys conducted among high school and college students of Central and East European states, all young members of generation Z and Alpha, active users of virtual reality tools.[14] The rather gloomy findings were published in a relevant paper in the matter reaffirming the presumptions that the great majority of youngsters of the new generations consider their presence in the virtual cyber universe almost as their primary existential condition as well as their dominant source of information and vantage point.[15] Nevertheless, neither the length nor the academic focal point of this paper allows further immersion in these important research fields related to the human and educational impact of the prevailing smart technologies.

The first Holy Network on Earth

> "Christianity is the global liaison of God's people in a sinful world."
> Reinhold Niebuhr[16]

Ultimately, there are two gigantic global networks, which can be considered as the most complex man-made organizations and structures, which all the same could not be more different and merely juxtaposing each other than they actually are. On one hand, there is the two millennia-old network of parishes, and dioceses of the Roman Catholic church[17] with almost 3 million clergymen worldwide and more than one billion faithful believers in

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[14] Ford, Martin: *Rise of the Robots*. (New York: Basic Books, 2015)

[15] Csutak, Zsolt: "Virtual universes: the various impacts of conspicuous alternative realities". In *CEEe-gov'22: CEE eDem eGovDays Conference Publication*. Vienna: Austrian Computer Society: https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3551504.3551515 2022.

[16] He proved to be one of the most influential Christian realist political philosopher of the US in the first period of the Cold War, advisor of several US presidents.

[17] Pew Research: "The Global Catholic Population. In *Pew Research*. www.pewresearch.org. 2013

almost all the countries in the world (even in such a dystopic communist state as North Korea). The rather centralized church, practically being the earthly representation of the will of its founder Jesus Christ, is facing a much more profane, yet even more efficiently elaborated decentralized structure: the astonishing web of interconnected computerized devices, also called the Internet. creating its own secondary virtual universe with stunning popularity ever since the 1970s, encompassing more than 5.1 billion users and approximately 25 billion smart devices as per April 2023.[18]

Many scholars and network experts agree with the recognition that the first globally renowned networker in history proved to be Apostle Paul, the involuntary zealous follower of Jesus Christ.[19] According to the New Testament's accounts, Saul of Tarsus, the initially ardent and hate-filled persecutor of Christians on his way to Damascus had a divine encounter and miraculously turned into the 13th Apostle of Christ and hereinafter the future Saint Paul, basically turned the entire Eastern Mediterranean basin almost into a cluster of Christian territories within two decades. Undoubtedly, it proved to be quite an astounding organizational and networking performance by Paul (and of the Holy Spirit as for the believers) within the demanding conditions of the 1st century AD. Through his extremely frequent journeys on foot and by sea as well as through his extensive correspondence, Apostle Paul basically laid the foundations of a very efficient rudimentary transcontinental network of early Christian religious communities and congregations. Through his network Paul shared practically two major goals for his pious followers: preach the gospel of Jesus Christ about the Savior, as also announced in Matthew 28:19[20], and survive by loving and helping each other and those in need.[21]

Without desecrating the extraordinary performance of Apostle Paul, projecting his work into the realm and terms of IT networks, he practically functioned as the central hub, the key node root server of his informational network, which could not have been established and operated without his essential interactions. Interestingly enough, that was the case only in the initial, foundational phase of Paul's network building, because many early Christian communities managed to survive and prevailed even for several centuries after the martyrdom of Apostle Paul. The Pauline network of Christian communities turned into a resilient, self-sustainable system that flourished and operated in ancient Greece,

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[18] Statista: "*Number of Internet users in April 2023*". S*tatista*. Online: www.statista.org
[19] Lee, John: "Learning from Paul to leverage networking for missions." In *Christianity Today*. Online: https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2017/august-web-only/learning-from-paul-networking-evangelism.html , 2017.
[20] *The Holy Bible*, Standard online edition. Online: www.bible.com, 2023.
[21] McGrath Alistair (ed.).: *Christian Belief*. (Oxford: Lion Hudson Plc., 2006), 214.

the Middle East, and the Byzantine Empire until the rise of a rival hostile religion-based network set up by the expansion of Islam more than a thousand years later.

The Roman Catholic church, and particularly its missionaries spread the word of Christ about redemption, salvation, about something utterly otherworldly, a divine message, through quite ephemeral tools: food, care, and brotherly/sisterly love. Besides the fundamental human needs, the Christian missionaries from Paraguay to the slums of Calcutta also provided the newly converted something very important and benevolent for their future: schooling, education, and the option of building liaisons with others of the same belief all across the world through the expanding, vast network of the church from Rome. The entire global network of parishes, dioceses, or autonomous abbeys has been ultimately organized, directed from one single mega-hub, the Vatican in Rome and led by a monarch and a pontiff in one person, the Pope. The vast church network also applied rudimentary sub-systems, too, and spread the central message of the Vatican (encyclical, and synodic documents) through the complex network of supervisors via abbots, archdeacons, bishops, and archbishops.

The challenge of the profane network

"Governments of the Industrial World, you weary giants of flesh and steel, I come from Cyberspace, the new home of Mind. On behalf of the future, I ask you of the past to leave us alone. You are not welcome among us. You have no sovereignty where we gather. (…) You have no moral right to rule us nor do you possess any methods of enforcement we have true reason to fear."

John Perry Barlow

Besides the network of the most popular religion in the world, Christianity, a similar though much less centralized typology emerged in the world in the midst of the Cold War, in the second half of the 20th century: the Internet.

The fast-expanding network of wires, computational devices, and servers started with the foundation of the American ARPANET[22], later expanding into a vast network of intercontinental information hubs.[23] In the first period, similar to the ancient network

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[22] As *Advanced Research Projects Agency Network* of the US Department of Defense from 1966, also being the first organization to use the TCP/IP protocol suite in 1970, See Wright, Gavin: "What is ARPANET" https://www.techtarget.com/searchnetworking/definition/ARPANET, 2023.

[23] Barabási, Albert László: *Linked: how everything is connected to everything else and what it means for business.* (New York: Basic Books, 2014), 47.

of 'living saints' of Apostle Paul, the digital network also offered two major goals and essential features: to provide a non-material flow, or highway of information, as well as to become a marketplace of scientific data, exchange of knowledge envisaged by its founders.

The very first stage of the US-based internet was designed and managed by Paul Baran, an engineer of the American defense think-tank Rand Corporation in 1969. The pioneering project proved to be a joint military and civilian, scientific enterprise aiming to connect the science and military research facilities on the two shores of the United States. The IT experts, and network engineers involved in the secret program soon managed to establish the first digital, landline connection between two computer centers located at Stanford University and the University of Los Angeles on the historic day of October 29, 1969.[24]

Within a decade a mini-internet arose in the United States, which soon incorporated British and Swiss sub-branches, and affiliated research centers, like the famous European Nuclear Research Center (or CERN) operating under Geneva. The research facility where a young physicist Tim Berners Lee, together with Vint Cerf, practically established the base structure of the internet, relying on a network-based program named Inquiry. The development of the hypertext markup language (or HTML) platform as well as the elaboration of the uniform resource locator (URL) typology made their new system run smoothly and reliably. The new computer network was initially called Mesh in 1989 and then was renamed to World Wide Web by Berners-Lee.[25] The rest is history, as it is said, since the computerized network turned into the most complex system and largest data cluster the human race ever compiled and established with billions of devices and users without physical borders.

Nowadays, in the 21st century, after three decades of unprecedented expansion and development of their child product, the internet, it seems that the two above-mentioned founding fathers Berners-Lee and Cerf expressed their solid disappointment with the course of events and controversial technological transformations related to their masterpiece in the digital world. As Sir Berners-Lee put it in a gloomy interview in 2013 celebrating three decades of the internet, "the web got loose," the "system is failing, with nasty winds blowing" and the digital data traffic is out of control, while the incomprehensible amount of digital content prevailing on the network shows nothing of the primary objectives and missions of the founders, which were meant to be: sharing knowledge, scientific data on the "information superhighway" or at the 'marketplace of human knowledge'.[26]

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[24] Caldrelli, Guido, Catanzaro, Michelle: *Networks*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 37.
[25] Hall, Wendy, "The Ever-evolving Web: The Power of Networks." In *International Journal of Communications*. (No.5. 2011), 652.
[26] Solon, Olivia: "Tim Berners-Lee on the future of the web: 'The system is failing.'" In *The Guardian*. 16 November 2017.

Concerning global website content analytics, the exponentially growing amount of digital information available on the internet mostly consists of extremely controversial content in quite a significant ratio of 35%.[27] The elements of this enormous, incomprehensibly vast digital cluster amount to many zetabytes and spread across the various strata of cyberspace, and it can also be considered either totally illegal or/and immoral, junk materials, e.g. adult and child pornography, and other violent, disturbing contents, not to mention the terrifying materials accessible on the Dark Web. Furthermore, approximately 5% of all the global digital content fulfills the initial dreams and intentions of the founding fathers of the internet. Namely to focus on science and to share common human wisdom via the computerized network of interconnected experts in different fields of science. The disappointing statistics and observations derived from the new digital trends altogether demonstrate sensible intellectual decay and controversial morality both on the part of users and content creators of the digital world.

Interestingly enough, Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of State of the United States, the 100-year-old doyen of international relations labeled the preposterously false virtual world of the internet, as a form of postmodern "Hobbesian semi-chaotic cyber state of nature". In this new cyber reality, everyone is seemingly free to do whatever one wishes although everyone appears to live, work, and be mused in a controversial state of anxiety and even fear of being hacked, tracked or insulted by other users, let it be state or non-state actors. The much-revered American doyen of diplomacy affirmed that the 21st-century digital anarchy also reflects the present stage in the theater of international relations, too, having no super-power hegemon over the system rather a multi-layered multi-polar, decentralized hub of actors. Moreover, the newly established self-developing computerized mega-network tends to be the ultimate hegemon, determining and more or less controlling the lives of billions of users, including the functionality of governments, too.[28]

The controversially famous "Declaration of Independence of the Cyberspace" issued by John P. Barlow at the site of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, cited in the motto above[29], signifies the new quasi-sovereign features of the postmodern cyber domain. As it is highlighted in the proclamation the users and generators of the virtual cyberspace tend to revolutionize and determine the course of history and transform the primary human perception of the world, even seemingly transgressing the legitimacy of nations, nation-states as such.

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[27] Castleman, Michael, "Dueling statistics: how much of the Internet is Porn?" In *Psychology Today.* 11. 3. 2016
[28] Kissinger, Henry: *World Order.* (London-New York: Viking, 2014), 340–360.
[29] Barlow, John Perry: "A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace*". Electronic Frontier Foundation,* Online: www.eff.org., 1996.

All the same, in terms of identifying and analyzing the common features and overlapping factors between the two totally different universes of Christianity and cyberspace featured by the rising significance and influence of AI, we can pinpoint the idea of seeking refuge and finding redemption. Christians tend to do it by conducting their lives abiding by the words of the gospel and through the institutional framework of the church as well as hoping for salvation on Judgement Day when the true believers in Christ will be saved and could enter the divine sphere of God, the Augustine "City of God", or *civitas dei.*[30] Ever since the 18th century Enlightenment until our times, most of the profane secular versions of Christian political theology, also called ideologies have attempted to get salvation and establish the ideal, utopian city of God here on Earth.[31]

Theorists and pursuers of liberalism, and socialism, not to mention the extreme trends of communism, Nazism, or even Maoism denied, abandoned, and replaced the concept of transcendental divinity and that of a creator, caring God, (together with Christ or any other divine representations from Mohamed to Krishna) with newly elaborated political ideas, such as human equality, total liberty and omnipresent profane state and omnipotent secular science free from God and any sacred religious spirituality.[32] By replacing the spiritual primacy of the church, with its obsolete religious beliefs and transcendental experiences, and the idea of other-worldly missions, the new redeemers of Modern Age people emerged in the form of the State as well as science and technology. Its iconic representations are embodied by ideologues, politicians, and spin doctors bringing along the rise of omniscient experts, social engineers, and social media communicators.[33]

The new intellectual trend and paradigm of the Cold War, postmodernism proceeded further on with desecrating, and secularizing, modern societies as well as the scientific disciplines and philosophy. Its core concept, among many others, shares the notion of non-judgmental, relativizing deconstruction of ideas or of any concept with the touch of divinity or holding any sense of universal objective truth. The controversial, even paradoxical postmodern condition of existence incorporates the concept of living for the present in a whimsically eternal, virtual moment also cherishing the hope of an ideal utopian perfect world which may as well be formulated within the imperfect ephemeral conditions of our world.[34] The self-justifying materialistic scientism and digital technologies have become the

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[30] See Saint Augustine, of Hippo: *The City of God* (New York-London: Independently publ., 2021).
[31] Common political philosophical assumption also elaborated by conservative thinkers e.g. Marilyn Robinson: *The Death of Adam: essays on Modern Thought* (New York: Picador, 2005) or Paul Ricoeur, see Richard Kearney: „Religion and Ideology: Paul Ricoeur's Hermeneutic Conflict" *Irish Theological Quarterly* 52 (1-2)109–126, 1986.
[32] Jasay, Anthony de.: *The State*. (New York: Liberty Fund, 1998), 254.
[33] Johnson, Paul: *The Modern Times*. (London: Harper Perennial, 2011).
[34] Jameson, Fredric: *Postmodernism, or the cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 27–32.

heralds of new cults and idols as well as vantage points for most of the Western intellectuals and spin doctors of academia as well as for liberal policy-makers, replacing old sources of wisdom with technological expertise or know-how seemingly available for everyone.[35]

It is a commonly held conception that borderless computerized smart technological solutions have democratized knowledge, global information access, and allocation of networks, which for centuries used to be the privilege of a few masters of *scientia,* renowned *doctors of philosophy* belonging either to the church or to church-founded academic centers, namely the universities. The postmodern virtual realities founded by an almost unlimited number of digital content creators and information generator platforms, tend to rely and focus predominantly on multimedia-style visual elements. Until the turn of the millennia, for several centuries the primary manifestation of intellectual activities, the center of contemplation had been transferred *via* words and letters, the λόγος heralded by the printing machine, and libraries and schools as central institutions of knowledge in a book-centric Gutenberg Galaxy. Nevertheless, despite the skyrocketing impact and prevalence of digital educational platforms, the most complex and sophisticated process of teaching and learning, or the classic way of knowledge transfer as *studium* has been and, for the time being still proves to be the school.

However, the focus point and emphasis on knowledge share or obtaining any kind of useful information tend to be shifting spectacularly into the realm of the virtual universe featured by digital libraries and artificial intelligence-ruled clusters of data. The human-like chat programs and seemingly knowledgeable language models pose severe challenges to educational institutions as well as to learners, redefining the process of teaching and learning, too.[36] Naturally, if the classic vaults of knowledge seem to be under siege by digital solutions and AI-driven machine learning platforms, the religious dimension cannot remain untouched or unpenetrated by the new forms of secular challenges.

The various new theories and schools of postmodern New Age deconstructed the prevalence of classic wisdom and divinity, *logos,* as the word of ultimate knowledge stemming from the Creator. Furthermore, the mainstream secularized Western world has also abandoned the idea of objective reality, together with the application of information gatekeepers and masters of knowledge or truth as such. It has also brought along the visual experience of pictures and digital information as a potential and even ultimate source of knowledge, freely creatable and available for billions of users. The newly developed AI-driven large language model programs, such as the well-known American *ChatGPT, Claude*

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[35] Molnár, Thomas: *The Pagan Temptation.* (New York/ London: Eerdmans Pub co., 1987).
[36] Bauman, Zygmunt: "Liquid modern challenges to education". *Lecture at Coimbra Group Annual Conference.* (Padova, 2011), 1–54.

or most recently their Chinese rival open-source program *DeepSeek* and its several replica variations seem to be turning into some sort of postmodern digital wells of wisdom and psychological and even theological aspirations for many secular users including seekers of new faith or disillusioned apostates of classic transcendental religions. The pseudo-sentient, intellectually indifferent smart machines have ultimately emerged, as projected and envisioned among many other scholars by the Hungarian- American catholic philosopher Thomas Molnár.[37] For many anxious conservative believers and scholars, the omnipotent sage applications and AI-driven machinery have become the manifestations of new pagan temptation in the form of digital idolatry.

As Paul Getty put it aptly at the dawn of the information age, "data has become the new oil" of the 21st century[38], while digital information has proportionately outgrown its own usage and utility as merely a neutral tool it has become a weapon, as well. The defense industrial researchers at Rand Corporation in the United States highlighted the new methods of applications and engagement within the network-centric 5th-generation warfare in the age of the cyber era. Digital information warfare tactics also imply the concept of creating, manipulating, and distorting information in order to deceive, misinform, and ultimately ruin the enemy or the potential target devices or programs of adversaries of any kind. Professor Waltzman and his team clearly outlined in their studies and researches conducted at Rand Corporation that the rise of internet has turned digital information basically into an efficient tool of weapon utilized by major military organizations of state and non-state actors around the world.[39]

The famous case of the *Stuxnet* worm program,[40] or the Russian-origin digital ambush against Estonia from April 2007 labeled as Web War One also demonstrated the power of the new warfare manners and efficient implementation of destructive digital solutions.[41] *Nota bene*, we should not be astonished either that the Russian-Ukrainian war demonstrates numberless cases of information-based cyber and electronic warfare tactics with autonomous, AI-driven military vehicles, and drones prevailing in all military domains.

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[37] Molnár op.cit, 1987, 187.
[38] The Economist: "The world's most valuable resource is no longer oil, but data." In *The Economist*. May 6th, 2017.
[39] Waltzman op.cit., 2017.
[40] Malwarebytes: "What is Stuxnet?" In *Malwarebytes*: https://www.malwarebytes.com/stuxnet , 2022.
[41] O'Neill, Patrick: "The cyberattack that changed the world". In *The Daily Dot*. May, 2016.

A.I. and the trans-human redemption

The idea of technology-based transhumanism received its global momentum among secular intellectuals, particularly by the activity of the American tech-geek futurologist Ray Kurzweil, so much revered and frequently cited in this dimension. The new controversial concept has been conveyed in the cyberspace through the outstanding works and initiatives of Kurzweil in this matter. His bestselling book, which became the book of the year in 2024 in the USA entitled "The Singularity is Nearer: when we merge with the AI",[42] similarly to his private research university, the Singularity University,[43] also founded in the Silicon Valley, altogether align with this new A.I.-driven paradigm of the 21st century: the perfection of humans through smart machine interfaces, when we shall face potentially eternal life as well as the second creation of human kind with the rise of the human-machine *androids*[44].

The bright dawn of the digitalized world has also contributed to the dusk and plausible death of divinity with the apotheosis of new technologies and disciplines, featured by social engineers, techno-geeks, futurologist philosophers, and various new secular prophets of the cyber era, who eagerly try to fill the void left by the exiled God, as also projected by Friedrich Nietzsche two centuries ago.

Furthermore, the renowned and rather controversial cultural philosopher of the new era Michel Foucault claimed that the Freudian subconscious along with science and technology can substitute God as well as the primordial dimension of transcendentalism in Western society[45]. The newly formed postmodern identities and socio-cultural paradigms have been primarily featured by redefined concepts on sexuality, genderism, and the desperate zeal of materialistic science to reveal the 'ultimate formula', or the great synthesis model suitable for all the possible queries from micro to macro levels. Something like the universal intellect we could find in the bestseller sci-fi masterpiece of Douglas Adams "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy", in a typically postmodern melodrama fantasy story. In one famous chapter of the saga, the reader can encounter a rather awkward contemplative scene, when the omniscient super-computer named Deep Thought after contemplating for merely 7.5 million years ultimately comes up with an answer to the perennial core question asked by the protagonist "what is the meaning of life?". The digital brain of the universe apathetically replies: '42'![46].

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[42] Kurzweil: *The Singularity is Nearer: when we merge with the AI.* (New York: Viking, 2024).
[43] See the site of „Singularity University": https://www.su.org/about-us, 2025.
[44] See Kurzweil op.cit, 2024, 28.
[45] Foucault, Michel: *The History of Sexuality.* (London: Vintage, 1990), 273–280.
[46] Adams, Douglas: *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.* (London: Crown, 2004), 210.

Many AI-sceptic experts and social scientists share the assumption that users of digital technologies may be expected to obtain somewhat similar ruthless and senseless answers from any artificial intelligence-driven program and android human-like machine concerning the major, crucial queries of the human condition.

Human-face robots or androids with AI-driven processors have already been tested for religious ceremonial functions from Buddhist Japan to deeply pious Catholic Poland, with rather controversial if not scandalous outcomes and reactions from the believers.

As Joseph C. Jackson, senior researcher from the University of Chicago has pointed out in his study he elaborated for the American Psychological Association, many religious denominations have already made steps and pioneered in this direction and attempted to incorporate the new AI-driven applications and machines into their clerical services.[47] However, as the researchers also highlight, the special quests resulted in rather negative consequences concerning the popularity, and trustworthiness of the church services not to mention the significant drop in the number of donations. Interestingly, the idea of robotic sermons and even funeral services stemmed from the technologically advanced countries of the Far East.

Two cases hit global popularity and caused real shock and awe in this respect. *Mindar* a Japanese monk assistant robot with a human-like face serving in Kyoto's *Kodai-Ji* Buddhist temple, and *Pepper* robot operating in a Taoist temple in Singapore. The production and development costs of the two AI-driven robots amounted to more than 2 million USD altogether, yet they produced damage both financially as well as spiritually, in terms of generating mistrust and disbelief among the believers. Based on their research findings, Jackson and his fellows revealed that those progressive congregations, which are eager to apply the new technology-based robotized clerical services in their everyday practices tend to lose many believers and face a significant decline in spiritual commitment.[48]

Hence, pious believers as well as theistic scholars may argue with the controversial presumption that technology-driven materialistic scientism even in the form of ubiquitous AI solutions displayed by humanoid robots cannot convey any spiritual content or holy message from potentially transcendental dimensions. This is emphatically evident, particularly within the paradigm of the dualistic Abrahamic religions, which do not tend to tolerate the interference of profane and sacred dimensions. In that context, a humanoid robotic clerk or clergy assistant may as well be regarded as a blasphemous intruder, a sort of diabolic Faustian manifestation of a postmodern Frankenstein monster. It may be so, despite a

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[47] Jackson, Joshua Conrad: "Robot preachers get less respect fewer donations" American Psychological Association: https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2023/07/robot-preachers-less-respect, 2023.
[48] Jackson, op. cit., 2023.

rather antagonistic and controversial initiative from 16th-century Spain when a wooden metallic friar with an inbuilt clockwork was presented as a sort of automated Christian monk, which has been preserved and stored in the Medieval Collection of the prestigious Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C.[49]

On the other hand, there are consenting voices with the implication of new technological solutions in place or beside the anointed priests, even from within the framework of the Roman Catholic church. The progressive reformist voices within the church tend to challenge the allegedly obsolete patriarchic heteronormativity and two millennia-old rigid hierarchy of the clergy. The implication of technology may be an efficient spearhead for this quest and desired change in the oldest and maybe the largest religious organization in the world. Particularly vocal female theologians, such as Ilia Delio, a Franciscan sister and theology lecturer at Valladolid University, Spain, who emphasizes the possibly benevolent impact factor of the alternative emergence of an AI-based, gender-neutral trans-human priesthood, which may be even exempt from sexual abuses and other sinful thoughts prevailing among the clergy.[50] Furthermore, sister Delio claims that the robotic priests would also be able to perform clerical services for the greater glory of God, and of the church, too. Not as competitors of humans but rather as active collaborators. Noteworthy, this rather radical progressive assumption does not correlate with the teachings and doctrines of the mainline Christian churches and remains solely an individual theoretical initiative for the sake of trans-human technological priesthood.

All the same, the new Roman Catholic Pope, Leo XIV, formerly an American-Peruvian Augustine monk with a mathematician degree and doctorate from theology, has firmly contradicted the above-mentioned rather affirmative and amicable Catholic attitudes towards the new technologies. The Pope expressed his deepest concerns and repulsive thoughts on the rise of the smart machines and particularly of the spiritual affections towards AI programs, which tend to substitute humans and harm human dignity, justice and the rights of the laboring people, as well as the transcendental divine dignity of God for many disoriented people.[51]

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[49] Smithsonian Institute: "Automaton of a Friar" Smithsonian Institute: https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_855351, 2023.

[50] Samuel, Sigal: "Robot priests: the rise of A.I. in religion". In *Spotify*: https://open.spotify.com/episode/3cCt-K1qvsuNgRnP8nInUy7?si=OMAQzlziRAOdjEr7nvvrwQ&nd=1 , 2019.

[51] Davis, Barney: "Pope Leo XIV speaks out against AI.„: In *The Independent*. 10 May, 2025.

Conclusion

Referring back to the initial hypothetical question of this paper concerning the prevalence of digital smart technologies and the rise of omniscient AI as a challenge to the spirituality, and religiosity of humans, it can be stated that humans cannot find spiritual or intellectual redemption and philosophical, theological immersion from any hyper-developed artificial intelligence unit. It is so, paradoxically despite and due to the imminent features of smart machines, namely that they are merely human creations, pieces of equipment, and sophisticated clusters of algorithms that are quasi-capable of pseudo-thinking processes, but of nothing more. Naturally, they miss and for the time being will certainly lack any sense of human social life context, empathy, spontaneity, sensitivity, spiritual framework, or within the divine clerical dimension, they do not possess consecration or any touch of divinity.

These crucial factors altogether constitute the genuine human dimension and condition which cannot be mass-produced and mechanically reiterated and tend to make a significant difference and advantage for the dominance and primacy of human nature in society and religions, too. One might ask, if humans are unable to find proper answers to the primordial questions of the world via millennia-old scientific, and philosophical inquiries, then how would manmade machines, even with their sophisticated fast "thinking" processes, and algorithms be able to fill the unfolding spiritual and intellectual void in a more comprehensive and satisfactory manner?

At the present moment, taking into account the development level of artificial general intelligence and despite the skyrocketing popularity of large language models, the short answer to this question proves to be: irrelevant. Human civilization is still quite far away from the technological singularity moment projected by von Neumann several decades ago, or more recently by Ray Kurzweil, though the pace of development in this dimension proves to be rather impressive. Nevertheless, the magic moment when a new form of trans-human history with prevailing human-machine interfaces unfolds may be drawing closer faster than expected even within the horizon of the forthcoming decades.

Recalling the wisdom of renown conservative English thinker G.K. Chesterton, we might align with the observation that the moment when people stop believing in God they would not become non-believers but rather start believing in everything, including the profane new idols of political ideologies and scientific achievements as well as in the illusionary redemption of technological saviors.[52] However, based on the present status of technological conditions, a scenario seems rather improbable where the scientific

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[52] See Chesterton, G.K.: *Chesterton's world on the web*. Online: www.chesterton.org.

profane dimension of the AI-driven universe may overlap with the spiritual dimension and realm of divinity within the framework of transcendental religions.

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Bence Keresztes

Revolution or civil disobedience? – the interpretation of the taxi blockade in the *Beszélő* between 1990 and 1994

Pro&Contra 8

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Abstract: In October 1990 taxi drivers protested against the rising fuel prices, which were introduced by the newly elected government after the change of regime. The event which later became known as the taxi blockade, divided the political parties and the Hungarian press. Many columnists interpreted it as an organized putsch attempt against the government or as a mass demonstration. In my study, I analyze the changing press coverage of the blockade in the early 90s in the magazine *Beszélő (in English: the Speaker)*, which was a samizdat outlet during the late Kádár regime. The authors at first emphasized their fear from a possible violent riot on the streets and used as many as 56 metaphors. However, after the blockade they highlighted the non-violent way of it and interpreted it as a civil disobedience. In my study, I am willing to show how the authors saw the role of the civil society at these times, when political scientists and politicians struggled to define it as well. Furthermore, I attempt to answer the question: how the authors (some of them as former dissidents) could adapt a new language in the new democratic system.

Keywords: taxi blockade, *Beszélő*, samizdat, civil society, change of regime

Introduction

In my study, my aim is to show the changing interpretations of the taxi blockade in the liberal magazine, the *Beszélő* (*the Speaker*) from the beginning of the blockade until December 1990. The authors, first, emphasized the chaotic, revolutionary atmosphere of those days and they drew many parallels with the Revolution of 1956. After the agreement between the Antall government and the trade unions, they started to call the taxi blockade a demonstration or civil disobedience, instead of the responsibility of the government. Then they started to draw the main inferences from it.

The question is why they called attention to a possible uprising and used so many metaphors regarding to 1956? Why did they switch their language after the events? Before answering these questions, I will summarize the historical background of the taxi blockade and its general press coverage which – as we will see – was crucially divided. Moreover, from the articles we can see a transformation period when the former dissidents adapted the language of the new democratic system.

The general interpretations of the taxi blockade in the Hungarian press

After the fall of the communist system in Eastern Europe in 1989-90, Hungary became a free democratic state after 45 years of communism. The first elections were held in the spring of the 1990s, based on the 1989 agreement between the oppositional parties and the former state party (Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party). It resulted in a victory for the Hungarian Democratic Forum (HDF) led by József Antall and the Free Democrats became the biggest oppositional party.

The newly elected government faced an economic crisis, which created a political crisis in Hungary. The Soviet Union stopped oil supplies to its European partners due to the war between Iraq and Kuwait, and because of the increasing oil prices, the HDF government had to raise fuel prices. However, the government did not communicate it properly. One day before the announcement, their spokesperson stated that they would not raise fuel prices but on October 24, a few minutes before midnight, they released a communiqué contradicting their previous statement. This misleading communication led to the occupation of the gas stations and the next day the taxi drivers, who had the most difficulties with the new decisions, decided to gather at Heroes' Square. They occupied the bridges in Budapest and closed many junctions in many Hungarian cities, demanding reduced fuel prices.[1]

There was a common fear among many citizens that the government could use police forces against the taxi drivers. They previously were warned by Balázs Horváth. the minister of the interior on Friday (October 27). Horváth, who had substituted the prime minister, József Antall, due to his illness, declared on the radio that if the taxi drivers had not left their places until noon their cars would have been removed by the police with the help of the Hungarian Army. Finally, it did not happen because Árpád Göncz, as the highest commander of the armed forces by constitution, ordered to stop the action. The next day, on October 28, the youth section of the HDF organized a demonstration in front of the building of the Parliament to protest against the blockade. The tension grew between those who opposed the taxi blockade and the supporters of it. However, on Sunday the worker unions finally agreed with the government on a reduced oil price and the blockade was ended by night.[2]

The blockade was the first political crisis after the transition, which divided society. Throughout the autumn of 1990, intellectuals and politicians continued to debate about the blockade. In the Parliament, the government, by the proposal of Árpád Göncz, decided that every taxi driver who took part in it, could receive amnesty, and would not be punished.[3]

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[1] "Bénult utak, nincs megállapodás", *Népszabadság*, October 27, 1990, 1

[2] "Vége a blokádháborúnak". *Népszabadság*,. October 29, 1990, 1.

[3] "Lesz kegyelem- Vihar a blokádügyben," *Népszabadság,* February 20, 1991, 1.

The liberal or left-wing newspapers described the blockade as a demonstration, while the right-wing press narrated it as a putsch attempt against the HDF government. I agree with László Kéri who emphasized the media's responsibility in his studies. According to Kéri, the media was rather a blockade party at that time.[4]

However, there were many critical articles too, mostly among the right-wing oriented press, in which the authors compared the event to the revolution of 1956. Whether as a revolution or as a counter-revolution. István Csurka, a representative of the governmental party, was one of the first who called the blockade a putsch, which, according to him, was organized by the former – though still active – secret agents of the previous Kádár regime.[5] His interpretation was quite similar to those former communist interpretations which declared that the revolution of 1956 was a counter-revolution.

In the first few days, most of the authors expressed their fear of a possible riot control against the taxi drivers or the government, while others began to blame them for the traffic problems. Csaba Könczöl, for example, wrote in his article in *Magyar Nemzet* in which he reported that the taxi drivers had taken over the country and, apart from the fact that they had the right to do it, it was unacceptable to shut down the whole country.[6]

In opposition to these viewpoints, other opinions expressed the peacefulness of the event. In 1992, on the anniversary of the blockade, István Tanács in the *Népszabadság* interpreted the blockade as a civil demonstration,[7] while the *Kurír*,[8] declared that a whole country was sitting in the striking taxis.

However, the definition of the blockade was not sure at that time. There was no consensus between political scientists and political parties regarding the question of what was the blockade: a civil disobedience or just an illegal demonstration against rising fuel prices? If the Parliament would choose the second definition of it, many taxis drivers would end up in jail, which would cause dangerous consequences for the new parliamentary system. By the proposal of Árpád Göncz the Parliament gave amnesty for the protesters but the right legal definition of the blockade was unanswered. Was it a civil disobedience or something else? One year later there was a conference organized by the István Bibó College for Advanced Studies where the speakers, mostly political scientists, tried to answer this question.

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[4] Kéri mentioned the report of László Murányi in the television who tried to regulate on of his interviewer in his report. László Kéri, *Hatalmi kísérletek*, Helikon Kiadó, 1991, 244

[5] Miklós Somorjai, *A taxisblokád a sajtó és közvélemény kutatások tükrében*, PPE BTK, 2003, 22.

[6] Csaba Könczöl, "Túsz ország," *Magyar Nemzet*, October 29, 1990, 2.

[7] István Tanács, "A blokád emléke és tanulságai," *Népszabadság*, October 26, 1992, 7.

[8] *Reggeli Kurír*, October 27, 1990. In: Somorjai, 2003, 18.

As András Bozóki stated, the taxi blockade – by definition – had elements which should be understood as a social movement and as a civil disobedience at the same time.[9] According to Tamás Csapody the blockade did not have a deep moral claim as other civil disobedience actions because the rising fuel prices were not a moral issue, rather an economic question. As he said: when a group of people decide to start civil disobedience, they state that a current law is ethically unacceptable despite the fact that the Parliament accepted it.[10] As he wrote the concept of civil disobedience originated from Henry David Thoreau, the American essayist, who refused to pay his tax as a sign of protest to the American wars against the Indians and Mexico. Thoreau stated that when a government is unjust, people should refuse to follow the law and distance themselves from the government in general.[11]

The practice of civil disobedience is usually the outcome of unsuccessful meetings between the government and trade unions, civil society, and/or organizations which was not the case with the taxi blockade. It was a reaction from the taxi drivers to the news of the rising fuel prices. As Szabó emphasized, the usage of CB radio created a common communicational space for the protestors[12] who could organize their actions easily, but he did not think that it was a social movement. Instead, it was a spontaneous mass reaction. However, according to Bozóki, it was a peaceful, non-violent action despite the minor conflicts which is generally true for most civil disobediences.[13] In 1991 the speakers of the conference could not agree on whether the taxi blockade had been a civil disobedience or not, but they demonstrated their opinion towards the government's economic policy, which was seen from the results of the local election in October 1990. At the end of the conference most of the speakers stated that Hungarian citizens were disappointed in the new democratic system which could have dangerous outcomes if the government and the new political parties would not change their relationship with the civil society. They also agreed that Hungarian citizens did not take part in the change of regime and during the blockade they wanted to raise their voices.

Several years later the authors confirmed their opinion. Máté Szabó, a political scientist stated, there was a danger at that time, that Hungarian citizens could lose their trust in the newly formed democratic system.[14] According to him. Hungarian citizens did not take part

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[9] András Bozóki, *A polgári engedetlenség eszméje és gyakorlat in: A Polgári engedetlenség helye az alkotmányos demokráciában*, T-Twins és Tipográfiai Kft, 1991, 99-100.
[10] Tamás Csapody, *"Polgári" engedetlenség- magyar módra,* In: Polgári. 1991, 87.
[11] Henry David Thoreau: Civil Disobedience, 1849.
[12] Máté Szabó's comment to the debate, Vita In: Polgári, 1991, 120.
[13] Bozóki*, A polgári*, 1991. 99-100.
[14] Máté Szabó, *The Taxi Driver Demonstration in Hungary Social Protest and Political change* In: *Human Rights and Civil Society in Hungary (1988-2008),* Parliamentary Commissioners' Office, Budapest, 2009. 204

in the democratic changes during the transition period, so by expressing their solidarity towards the taxi drivers, they could feel that they did something for their future, but as László Kéri pointed out, their lack of representation was crucial in the new democratic system.[15] However, the taxi blockade remained a typical single-issue protest and did not become a general social movement.

The rising fuel prices affected every Hungarian citizen, only the difficulties of the taxi drivers could remain the mainstream problem in the media.[16] On October 28th, delivery companies' representatives consulted with the government and the consultation was seen on television. As we can see there was not a common agreement under the right usage of the civil disobedience and the exact meaning of it, which can be seen on the pages of the *Beszélő* throughout the autumn of 1990.

The *Beszélő*, which was close to the Free Democrats after the change of regime, had different interpretations throughout the analyzed period. Members of the editorship previously were members of the Hungarian Democratic Opposition, which consisted of mostly left-wing, liberal philosophers, and writers.

Inspired by the Polish Solidarity movement, they launched their own samizdat journal, the *Beszélő*, whose most important aim was to publish those topics which were banned from being published in the legal Hungarian press. Topics like the fallen revolution in 1956, the situation of the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia and Transylvania (Romania), poverty and refusal of compulsory military service had only appeared in samizdat publications. Tamás Csapody[17] and András Bozóki[18] questioned that these actions could not be identified as a civil disobedience with western European terms, because they called attention to the illegitimacy of the whole system. The editorship of the *Beszélő* valued those people who disobeyed the Hungarian law due to its immorality and they published their cases regularly. Although, as we will see in the next chapter, they did not want to raise popularity for violence against the state.

When the blockade broke out, their voice was as radical as the politicians of the Free Democrats, and Miklós Haraszti and Ferenc Kőszeg, the chief editor, called their readers' attention to a possible violent conflict between the police and the protestors. In the following, I will show how the interpretation of the blockade changed in the *Beszélő* over time. I will focus on the moment when the authors (beyond Haraszti and Kőszeg) began to interpret the blockade as civil disobedience, rather than revolution compared to

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[15] László Kéri, *Összeomlás után*, Kossuth Könyvkiadó, 1991, 59.
[16] Szabó, *The Taxi Driver,* 207.
[17] Csapody, „*Polgári",* 1991, 85.
[18] András Bozóki, *Gördülő rendszerváltás,* L'Harmattan Kiadó, 2019, 163.

the fallen revolution of 1956. Furthermore, I try to analyze how did they see the possible consequences of the blockade and the situation of the civil society.

Analysis of the *Beszélő*

In my paper, my aim is to show the changing interpretation of the blockade in the liberal-leaning *Beszélő*, during the 1990s. On October 28, two days after the blockade broke out, the editors released a special edition focusing on the current events. There were several journalistic materials in it, like reports from the bridges, opinion articles and other reports about the difficulties of local people in Budapest.[19]

In the special edition of the *Beszélő*, many authors, such as Miklós Haraszti and Ferenc Kőszeg, drew parallels between the revolution of 1956 and the taxi blockade. They emphasized the danger in the situation, which was the government's mistake, and Haraszti and Kőszeg called attention to possible violent action between the protestors and the police. Although, at the same time, Haraszti highlighted the role of the taxi unions, as an organization which can consult with the government.

Moreover, they thought that the newly elected government lost its legitimacy in the eyes of the citizens which means that the legitimacy of the Hungarian parliamentary democracy was in danger. They even thought that the parties and unions should have consulted but they had not been strong enough for it. They also saw the government as unreliable and unable for the consultations with the protestors.

Miklós Haraszti stated that the deputy prime minister and minister of the interior, Balázs Horváth – who acted as prime minister instead of József Antall due to his illness – communicated similarly to Ernő Gerő. The basis of Haraszti's argument was that at the beginning of the blockade, Balázs Horváth sent a warning to the protesting taxi drivers. In this proclamation, which was read on the radio on October 26, Horváth said that he would authorize the police to take steps against them, if they did not give up their position by noon. Haraszti also compared Árpád Göncz (President of Hungary in 1990) to István Bibó (Hungarian political thinker who had been a minister in 1956). According to Haraszti, Göncz acted as a real statesman, like Bibó in 1956[20], when he (Göncz) ordered to stop the intervention against the taxi drivers. Even though based on the Hungarian constitution, he could not have done this (even as the official head of the Hungarian Army) it was a heroic

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[19] The journalist of the *Beszélő* made interviews with residents of their own apartment building, where the editor-ship functioned at that time. "Öreg házunk vasárnap este 9-10 között," *Beszélő Különszám,* October 28, 1990, 7.
[20] Bibó was the last parliamentarian to remain in the building during the Soviet occupation,

action, which prevented violence between the police and the taxi drivers.[21] Haraszti was a member of the former democratic opposition whose political thinking was shaped by the articles and books of István Bibó, a political philosopher, which were published after the Second World War. Especially those writings in which the author wrote about 1956 and about the civil society. The opposition emphasized the heritage of the fallen revolution, and they considered the workers council as an important element of the revolution. In the 80s by writing articles about the importance of the civil society they considered the trade unions as a relevant institution for empowerment. In my opinion, it was the reason why he made a parallel between the taxi unions and the workers' council.

Similarly, to Haraszti, Ferenc Kőszeg – who was the main editor of the *Beszélő* at that time – also emphasized the danger of the current situation when he wrote about the responsibility of the Antall government, whose unrightful acts led into fear and uncertainty.[22] He had a terrible vision about a policeman who is lying in his own blood, which could be a sign of the author's personal experiences from 1956, too. Ferenc Kőszeg was a sixteen-year-old secondary student during the revolution and as he remembered back to it in his memoir; he saw injured people in the city center and he was near to the Radio where the state security officers shot into the crowd.[23] Here, as I suppose, the blockade reminded him of 1956, the last occasion when such a huge number of people protested against the government.

On that page, there was another article, entitled "Towards Romania." Here, the author expressed his fears about Hungary's international reputation. He pointed out that if the government did not handle the situation properly, foreign investors would turn away from Hungary because it would appear that Hungary is an unstable democracy and an unsafe country, like Romania and Yugoslavia after the revolutions and civil war.[24]

In addition to this, there were other parallels with 1956, but with different conclusions. György Konrád – who was also a member of the former democratic opposition and the Free Democrats – also compared the protesting unions to the workers' councils of 1956, but he stated[25] that the government did not treat the protestors as the Gerő government did in 1956. Instead, the current government lied to its citizens. He stated that the protestors' act was a non-violent civil disobedience to protest poverty and the communication style of the government. However, he emphasized the peaceful way of the dialogue between

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[21] In that time, there was not a state of war or any other exceptional security situation.
[22] Ferenc Kőszeg, "Mire megjelenünk," *Beszélő Különszám*. October 28, 1990, 3.
[23] Ferenc Kőszeg, *K történetei*, 2009, 26-30.
[24] "Románia felé", *Beszélő Különszám*, October 28, 1990, 3.
[25] Gyögy Konrád, "A második figyelmeztetés*," Beszélő Különszám*, October 28, 1990, 8.

the protestors and the police which strengthened him to recognize that that are other ways for handling the conflicts beside the government's aggressive demands.[26]

On October 26, János Kis read out the party's central statement on television.[27] He said that the government misled the society with its false communication and now, Hungarian people need a trustworthy government to solve their problems. Because of this interview, the members of the HDF considered that the Free Democrats had joined forces with the taxi unions and, according to Balázs Horváth after many years of the blockade, this statement was the reason why he stopped the police forces on Friday. Throughout the 90s, authors of the right-wing press claimed that the Free Democrats wanted to overthrow the government. However, the Free Democrats later changed their communication and called on every activist not to join the taxi drivers, as János Kis explained in an oral history interview.[28]

As we have seen from the *Beszélő* articles, all of them emphasized the fear and uncertainty in those days but neither of them – except for Konrád – named the blockade as civil disobedience or something else. They blamed the government for the current situation, and they gave right for the protestors, even respected the way as after almost forty years of Kádárism, could organize themselves, as they had no following examples, since 1956. However, they feared the protestors, too. On the one hand, they expected the first violent step from the government's side, but on the other hand, as Ferenc Kőszeg pointed out in his short opinion article, there could be dead policemen too on the streets. They saw the HDF government as undemocratic, and their members had a rather autocratic behavior. György Konrád was the only author in the special edition who called the events as civil disobedience and emphasized the peaceful way of it.

The question is: why did Kőszeg and Haraszti fear the demonstrations? On the one hand, it was because of the authors' personal experiences with the revolution in 1956 (like Kőszeg), but on the other hand, my view is that the fear was motivated by their former viewpoints before the regime change. In articles, which were published in the samizdat *Beszélő*, they wrote about the possible changes among the society and some of them warned of the growing tension between the HSWP and the Hungarian society.

Some of their articles pointed out possible putsch attempts from the Party's side[29] and others speculated about movements from the society.[30] As János Kis said in his article in 1988, "everyone is expecting that the demonstrations, strikes and riot between the

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[26] Konrád, "A második", *Beszélő Különszám*, 1990 .

[27] "A kormány hibát követett el amikor erőszakkal fenyegetőzött," *Népszabadság*, October 27, 1990, 5.

[28] János Kis, *Szabadságra ítélve*, Kalligram Kiadó, 2021, 603.

[29] Mitől féljünk? Kis János, A visszaszámlálás megkezdődött, *Beszélő,* 1989, 27. szám

[30] *Beszélő*, 1988, 25. szám, Tájkép csata előtt.

mass and the authorities will return". He thought that because of the declining economy the leadership would be questioned and later lose their reliability among the Hungarian citizens who already had started to organize independent clubs and circles. The author expected that with the beginning of the new liberal market in the country tension would just grow among the leadership and the masses and there could be violent riots. It would be most dangerous if the workers started to organize themselves. They even thought that the lower living conditions and the spiritual effect of the change of regime could break down the society's political passivism since 1956 as had happened with the Polish and Czechoslovak citizens. They never wrote down what they actually feared from a civil war in Hungary, but they did not exclude the fact that there could be violence on the streets if the Party leadership would not change their politics. Moreover, they never supported violence as dissidents.

Since the ratification of the Helsinki Act, the democratic opposition expressed their attitude towards non-violent actions against the regime. According to András Bozóki and Tamás Csapody, the activities of the dissident movements in Eastern Europe could not be identified as civil disobedience, nobody could deny their moral right against the Communist regime which is a central element of the civil disobedience as practice for protest. Beyond it, some members from the opposition, like Miklós Haraszti or Ferenc Kőszeg did hunger strikes too, as a form of disobedience in the 70s and 80s when they claimed rights which, based on the Hungarian Constitution, were guaranteed for them.[31]

This approach was close to other Eastern European dissident movements' strategy. Since Adam Michnik wrote his famous essay "New Evolutionism," the Polish dissidents and later the Czechoslovak Charta 77 movement, emphasized their basic human rights for free speech and they carried out peaceful activities and nonviolent acts to demonstrate their rights. These were crucial elements of the Eastern European dissident activities. Due to these acts, the Hungarian opposition never supported violence against the Communist regimes, instead, they called attention to avoid it as some members of the opposition did.[32] Moreover, in another samizdat journal, the Hírmondó (Newspeaker), Miklós Haraszti denied the possibility of a revolution in the Eastern bloc. As he stated "it would be luxurious if we have a revolution". Instead, we only have the peaceful methods to stand against the Soviet regime."[33] Later in 1988, Miklós Szabó, lecturer of the Free University sessions,

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[31] Miklós Haraszti did a hunger strike when he was imprisoned because of his book, Piece-Rates in Hungary and Ferenc Kőszeg did a hunger strike when he protested against the passport laws in 1988.
[32] For example, Miklós Gáspár Tamás.
[33] Haraszti, Miklós. "Jogvédő rögeszmetár", 1988, In: *Bába Iván: Szamizdat 81-89'*, Budapest: AB-Beszélő Kft, 1990, 147.

organized by the opposition from the mid-70s, strengthened their central opinion about it, reflecting on those critics in the Party which said that they, the opposition, are too radical and because of their activism the ongoing reforms could be in danger.

Analysis of articles between November and December 1990 and until 1994

Beside Haraszti, another *Beszélő* columnist, Tamás Bauer emphasized the country's international reputation (which was in danger in these days). In his view, the HDF government wanted to reassure the Western governments about the Hungarian situation, but according to Bauer, the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, interfered into the Hungarian sovereignty. He referred to the election campaign in spring, when Kohl's party, the CDU supported HDF. According to him, the HDF government acted in the same way as the Hungarian Communist Party during the revolution, whose leaders turned to the Soviets for advice. The phrase "Kohl's favorite pupils" refers to Mátyás Rákosi, who described himself as Stalin's favorite pupil. With this word, Bauer expressed his fear about the HDF government which would follow CDU's discipline as the Communists did in 1956. However, despite his fears, he believes that the government could learn from the past because otherwise the Hungarian people would lose their trust in them.[34]

However, the image of riots and civil war disappeared from their articles, and they began to discuss the reasons behind the blockade and its consequences. Interestingly, they still saw it as a spontaneous event, but instead of calling it a demonstration, they called it civil disobedience. Gábor F. Havas[35] described the taxi blockade as a kind of movement and many people supported it, mostly those who had financial problems after the change of regime. Moreover, society was not prepared for economic changes and, according to him, there were opinions among the protestors who demanded financial equality too. Though, as he emphasized, they had different motivations. People could have not just financial but social and political reasons too to demonstrate. According to Havas, since the elections, the quality of life had declined, and citizens had lost their trust in the new political system. However, the "people of the barricades" did not react to the government's threat, showing their peaceful demonstrational habit. Havas emphasized their debating skills too in the meetings which he evaluated in great detail. He said that the blockade (which he called an "underground movement") spread across the country within a day and the government's

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[34] Tamás Bauer, "Gazdaváltás," *Beszélő,* November 10, 1990, 4.
[35] Gábor F. Havas, "Négy-öt iFA összehajol- elcsábítva elhagyatva," *Beszélő,* November 3, 1990, 4.

only reaction to it was threatening them with the police forces. He only appreciated the activities of the trade unions that could agree with the government which practice should be used in the future. But for achieving it they need to find reliable figures like János Palotás, or Pál Forgách.

Similar to Havas, Iván Pető, whose speech in parliament on Monday, October 29 was published in the next edition of the *Beszélő,* emphasized the peaceful way of the demonstration and the role of the trade unions, too. According to him, the society had lost its trust in the new political system, and he described the blockade as a political demonstration and civil disobedience. He emphasized again the government's responsibility for the outcomes of their misleading and later aggressive communication. He considered it is a valued reason to set up a blockade all around the country, which was supported by many sections of society. Here he argued the government's former accusations (many HDF member said that the Free Democrats were behind the whole event) and stated that they – the government – did not stand against a "dwarf minority". The phrase here is idiomatic, referring to János Kis's articles in the samizdat *Beszélő*, when the philosopher said that two minor groups are standing against each other above the head of the Hungarian citizens in 1981; The Party and the Democratic Opposition. By this phrase Pető wanted to highlight that it is not true in this particular situation, instead, the whole society is dissatisfied with them.[36]

Like Havas, the historian Miklós Szabó – former member of the Democratic Opposition and regular speaker on the Free University lectures in the 80s[37] – used the term civil disobedience to describe the taxi blockade. He wrote an article after the parliamentary session in November when – by the proposal of Árpád Göncz – the Parliament granted amnesty to everyone who took part in the blockade. He referred to a letter written by György Szabad (President of Parliament) to the Constitutional Court, in which he explained the limits of civil obedience emphasizing that it did not endanger the security of society.[38]

Miklós Szabó mentioned several historical examples about practicing civil disobedience from the Middle Ages until the 20th century. He referred directly to the taxi blockade as a form of civil obedience which, in contrast to the HDF and its supporters (referring to the 28th of October demonstration), was the "road" for leaving "the Balkan path", not the road up to it.[39]

Finally, in December, the Free Democratic Party held a congress in Szombathely, where the party leader, János Kis, summarized their activities in the first half of the parliamentary year and the party's responsibility in the blockade. The speech appeared in the *Beszélő,* in

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[36] Parliamentary speech of Iván Pető, Iván Pető,"Erős érdekvédelmi szervezeteket," *Beszélő,* November 3, 1990, 14.
[37] Miklós Szabó, "A jogsértéshez való jog," *Beszélő,* November 3, 1990, 13.
[38] Szabó, A jogsértéshez, *Beszélő,* 1990.
[39] Szabó, „A jogsértéhez" *Beszélő,* 1990.

which Kis directly described the blockade as a peaceful act of civil disobedience. At the beginning of the events, he considered the situation dangerous, because of the government's communication style. According to him, it was the Free Democrats who were able to stop the violence by demonstrating their solidarity with the taxi drivers, but in the future, as he called attention to it, they should act differently. As he said, Hungarian society and they – the politicians – should not handle such political crises differently than with disobedience.[40]

According to Kis, radicalism was acceptable during the Kádár regime but now, as a parliamentary party, they would have to follow different rules and behave like elected representatives as they are living in a parliamentary democracy. After the party congress the word civil disobedience became more and more used in the *Beszélő* throughout the 90s. As we can see from the articles the authors of the *Beszélő* started to discuss not just the responsibility of the government but the future of the civil society and trade unions which could be a third social force beside the press and the oppositional parties to control the government's actions. We can state that the *Beszélő* started to interpret the blockade as a civil disobedience, even without naming it. After the successful meetings between the government and the trade unions they emphasized the nonviolent way of it, and they – opposite to the governmental party accusations – accepted the people's disappointment as a moral reason for the civil disobedience. Most of the authors did not discuss the blockade's illegal acts (they did not report it to the police station before the event). Instead, they expressed their hope (but at the same time their dilemma) about the future of their empowering power as trade unions. By publishing György Kondrád's article they wanted to strengthen this former viewpoint. Beyond it, by publishing János Kis's speech about the party's new challenges, they strengthened their attitude towards it.

The columnists and journalists of the *Beszélő* referred to the taxi blockade as a civil disobedience rather than revolution after 1990 but its similarities with 1956 and the blockade's uncertainty returned in some articles. When they commemorated or discussed the political heritage of it, they often emphasized the revolutionary atmosphere in those days. Throughout the 90s when they wrote about the acts of Árpád Göncz they (mostly Ferenc Kőszeg) used the 1956 parallels, but in other cases, when the blockade was only mentioned during a discussion of a current political case they referred to it as civil disobedience.

In 1991, Ferenc Kőszeg and Ottilia Solt wrote a common article about Árpád Göncz's strengths.[41] Kőszeg and Solt said: "By stopping the police, Árpád Göncz saved Hungary from a possible civil war". Like Miklós Haraszti, they drew comparisons between Göncz

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[40] János Kis, "A magyar demokrácia válsága nem végzet," *Beszélő,* December 8, 1990, 4.
[41] Ferenc Kőszeg- Ottilia Solt, "Az elnök védelmében," *Beszélő*, March 2, 1991, 4.

and István Bibó and Imre Nagy, and the situation with the revolution of 1956. According to them, Göncz, like Bibó, was an example of how a political situation should be treated politically and not by using the armed forces. Here they commemorated the acts of Göncz. However, at the end of 1992, there was a new political scandal linked with the taxi blockade. Mátyás Eörsi, parliamentary representative of the Free Democrats, lost his case against the government in the court. He stated in an interview in television that had evidence against Balázs Horváth, who – according to Eörsi – wanted to use the army against the taxi drivers during the taxi blockade.[42] To reflect on it, Kőszeg, the author, described the blockade as civil disobedience and discussed the legal aspects of the case. He mentioned that Eörsi had every legal right to call Balázs Horváth a tyrant (it was another aspect of the case: the tolerance level of politicians and the limits of free speech) and he also described the taxi blockade as a political crisis.[43]

Kőszeg returned to the 1956 narrative in 1992 when HDF sympathizers called for action over the change of radio directors. He mentioned, ironically, that those who considered the blockade as an obstruction now wanted to organize civil disobedience.[44]

Later in 1994 the editors did not use the term revolution but emphasized the chaotic atmosphere of the blockade which was the result of the government's misleading communication. On January 20, 1994, they published a telephone conversation between Balázs Horváth and Győző Szabó, who was the head of the National Police Headquarters in 1990. In this conversation, Horváth instructed Szabó to call Antal Annus, state secretary to the Minister of Defense, and ask him to send some vehicles to remove taxis from the roads and bridges on October 26 1990.[45]

The reason could be Balázs Horváth's speech in Canada in 1991, which appeared in the press in 1993.[46]

All the recordings were published under the title "Found Objective". This frame was later explained by the journalist who did not sign the article. Incidentally, in the 1990s it was common practice for journalists to sign their articles only with their monogram, which was also missing here. The journalist simply stated that he had received this record by post from an unknown person, and that his aim might be to manipulate the forthcoming elections.

The editors stated that they did not want to get involved in a political fight, however they commented on the material with their way of editing. They said that the records showed

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[42] "Ki mit (nem) mondott?" *Pesti Hírlap*, June 11, 1992, 3.
[43] Ferenc Kőszeg, "Fontolgatta- Felmentés az Eörsi perben," *Beszélő*, December 12, 1992, 15.
[44] Ferenc Kőszeg, "1946," *Beszélő.* July 11, 1992, 3.
[45] "Talált tárgy," *Beszélő*, January 20, 1994, 10.
[46] "Horváth Balázs 'puccsot szimatolt'," *Magyar Nemzet,* February 2, 1993, 4.

how the government related to reality at the time of the blockade, and they published the whole conversation between Balázs Horváth and Győző Szabó, which was also revealing. The article also included radio correspondence from the time of the taxi blockade, which indirectly suggested a different perspective on the blockade.[47]

        The aim of these reports was to show the spontaneous nature of the blockade, with traffic problems throughout the country to remind readers that the reality was different from the HDF's narrative of the blockade. Here they wanted to emphasize that there was not any organization behind the events, as some of the members of the HDF, like István Csurka, suggested. They did not call the blockade neither a revolution nor civil disobedience, but the message of the article was close to both interpretations. It expressed the uncertainty on those days and at the same time the spontaneous way of it, which is generally true for any civil disobedience.

Conclusions

In my paper, I aimed to show the interpretation of the taxi blockade in the *Beszélő* which, before the change of regime, was a samizdat journal and the authors were dissidents. I was interested in how the new democratic system could shape the writing style of the journal, which was partly reassured. However, in the future it is advisable for other researchers to deepen the connection between the *Beszélő* and the Free Democrats to gain more significant and different interpretations between the party and the editorship, which was not controlled by the party. Moreover, it is also advisable to analyze the relationship between them as some members of the editorship – as I have pointed out – were party members and parliamentary representatives at the same time.

        As we can saw from the analyzed articles, the Beszélő's editorship was shocked during the blockade, which was one of the reasons why they wrote differently into the special edition as Ferenc Kőszeg pointed out. Some of the authors like Haraszti, Kőszeg and Bauer had memories about the days of the revolution in 1956, especially Kőszeg, who was a teenager at that time. These articles had radical rhetoric, and we can experience the authors' fear behind the lines. However, their fear of possible riot control between the taxi drivers and the police related to their memory in 1956. Beside this, in the late 80s the Hungarian Democratic Opposition called attention to the possible unknown reactions of the citizens regarding the changing economic and political situation. They wrote about the

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[47] "Ki mit (nem) mondott?" *Pesti Hírlap*, June 11, 1992, 3.

dangerous outcomes of the possible economic and political changes which they could feel during the taxi blockade come true. The members of the former Democratic Opposition (Haraszti, Kőszeg, Konrád) were devoted to the practice of civil disobedience during the communist area as dissidents but in the new democratic system they did not describe the taxi blockade with this definition, except György Konrád through as András Bozóki and Tamás Csapody pointed out, their protesting actions like denying paying penalties and hunger strikes could not identify exactly as civil disobedience).

In the special edition of the *Beszélő* they emphasized only the possible risks of the event but since November they wrote about the role of the trade unions and the civil society in the new democratic system. Except for Gábor F. Havas, they did not name the blockade as civil disobedience but based on the current concepts in the early 90s about the practice itself, we can suppose that they considered it. They accepted the protestors right in the demonstration and the underground way of it. The usage of 56 metaphors can be related to their experiences from the time of the revolution and the returning fear of violence from the late 80s, which disappeared later from their articles. We can see from their language through in the early 90s that the 56 metaphors were only used by Ferenc Kőszeg, but the rest of the editorship followed the directions of János Kis from December 1990. Even though the Beszélő was not a party newspaper at that time, the party's ideology shaped their journal's narrative and the language style of it.

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Mikós Gergő Szintai-Major

**Review on William McEvoy's *Reanimating Grief*.
Manchester University Press, 2024.**

Review on William McEvoy's *Reanimating Grief*. Manchester University Press, 2024.

William McEvoy is Joint Head of Drama, Theatre, and Performance and Associate Professor in Drama and English at the University of Sussex, with a distinguished career spanning teaching, research, and theatre criticism, including contributions to *The Stage*, *TLS*, and various academic journals. *Reanimating Grief* (2024) is his meditation on grief born out of personal experience with loss. The book investigates the concept of reanimation through case studies in theatre, literature, and Irish folk songs. While the term's meaning of revival is central to the kind of questioning the author employs, reanimation is utilized through its many cognates as well as metaphorical connotations. The analysis explores the expression of grief's emotional and perceptual aspects while examining its influence on reading, critical thinking, and creative writing. It is a work thoughtfully crafted and structured with the reader in mind, with chapters further divided into subchapters ranging from three to ten pages, each with their respective introductions and conclusions. Reflecting on the personal experience of grief that prompted the research, the chapters begin with autobiographical reflections presented as short sections of creative writing. In the introduction, the author situates the key concepts and their interconnectedness such as reanimation, grief, mourning, death, and loss, along with a general outline relating to their application in the upcoming chapters.

Chapter one titled *Genealogies of Grief: Classic Reanimations* "explores classic examples of reanimation in theatre and literature," serving both as a foundation for constructing the concept's genealogy and as a way to investigate theatre's tendency to blur the line between life and death (18). Through the katabases in Homer's *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid*, McEvoy highlights the ontological shifts caused by the death of a parent and the difficulty of conceptualizing death for those they leave behind. The analysis continues with the reanimating and recursive qualities of grief and the power of poetic elegy in Virgil's and Ovid's versions of the Orpheus myth. Through Sophocles' *Electra*, the knowledge and perception of grief, along with the kind of narratives it can generate, are examined in relation to their contribution to the power of fiction and performance on stage. The chapter also alludes to Maria Crepsi's painting *Noli Me Tangere* and Jean-Luc Nancy's interpretation of the resurrection narrative before moving on to Shakespeare's elegies in *Cymbeline* and *The Tempest*. The focus here is on how the poetic acts of said elegies transform the body into textual beauty.

In the following chapter, *Animate Objects of Mourning*, the author explores questions of animacy and inanimacy through "enchanting" moments of dramatic coups de théâtre, which he argues act as mnemonics of grief (43). The four examples discussed are Societas Raffaello Sanzio's *Giulio Cesare* (1997), Formalny Theatre's *School for Fools* (2001), the UK Complicite's *Mnemonic* (1999), and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (1997). These plays contain moments in

performance where the permanence of death is disrupted. The enchantment arises as the transformations in these examples do not lend themselves readily to logical explanation and thus, they also mimic the grieving process. In the chapter, Freud's concept of the uncanny is connected to the dual ontology caused by the transformative power of death.

Chapter three by the title of *Grief, Fiction, Passion* discusses Shakespeare's *Hamlet* with a focus on the death of the father, his ghost as a revenant, and Yorick's skull as a memento mori. The play's many reanimations are also explored through Freud, Lacan, Greenblatt, and Maguire, as well as Maggie O'Farell's *Hamnet*, with a focus on grief and mourning. The author concludes the chapter by arguing that literature and theatre mediate our grief creating metatheatres of mourning (86).

The chapter *Dead Forms, Living Characters* "explores the death and reanimation of realism" in Chekov's *The Seagull* and *Three Sisters* (88). In the former, this is symbolized by the taxidermic bird, which acts as a representation of the failed portrayal of nature while signaling its propensity to return, not to fade away entirely. In the latter, it is shown through various styles and structures that move away from simple, realistic portrayals of the self. McEvoy argues that *The Seagull* had set the stage for the innovations applied in *Three Sisters* by deliberately exposing the limitations of realistic theatre. One of the innovations is that while deaths are not represented and thus grief is "impossible" in *The Seagull*, in *Three Sisters*, Chekov reanimates a form of realism that is capable of representing death and grief, predicated on absence (90).

In chapter five, *Burying the Living and the Dead*, Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* and *Happy Days* are contrasted with Enda Walsh's postmodern metatheatre in *The New Electric Ballroom* and *The Walworth Farce*. McEvoy argues that Walsh's reanimations of Beckettian themes such as entrapment, trauma, and guilt serve as an antidote to Beckett's theatre (121). Both playwrights challenge the medium and its form, with Beckett pushing theatre to its limit by subtraction, while Walsh does so by accretion. Walsh's plays use comic linguistic excess in the place of Beckett's linguistic minimalism, and absurdism through vivid colors instead of Beckett's tension between light and dark. It is argued that through farce Walsh provides a critique of myths of nation. The chapter also acts as an intermediary between the theatre and song sections of the analysis by highlighting the role of music in *The Walworth Farce*.

The last two chapters turn to the analysis of Irish folk songs that reanimate the dead through evoking "bereavement and loss" (132.) In *Medical Afterlives* grief's reanimations are discussed through the intertextuality death and grief create in different forms of media: Joyce's short story *The Dead*, the folk song *The Lass of Aughrim* by the Dubliners, and the novel *Beautiful World, Where Are You* by Sally Rooney. In Joyce's short story, the song's narrative role is examined, highlighting gender relations and the transmission of cultural memory. In contrast, McEvoy argues that Rooney's novel employs the same song to show

how "old folk ballads like *The Lass of Aughrim* no longer possess the evocative, connotative power they once had" (134).

The final chapter, *Mothersongs*, is the most autobiographical, as its title suggests. The songs it discusses, namely *Finnegan's Wake*, *The Ballad of William Bloat*, and *Navy Boots On*, hold strong evocative power for the author, particularly in relation to his early years in London and memories of his mother. *Finnegan's Wake* is given additional context unraveled by the discovery that the song originates from the United States. The different ways of mourning, the conflict that arises from it, the comedic resurrection, and how these aspects connect to Irishness are explored at the beginning of the chapter. Attitudes towards death and mourning resulting from different cultural traditions are contrasted through a series episode from *Derry Girls*. We learn about the author's revelations on grief and mourning through *The Ballad of William Bloat* while recurring features of gender relations in Scottish and Irish songs are explored in *Navy Boots On*.

The vastness of the topic and the universality it holds in relation to the human experience are appropriately focused within the author's expertise and further narrowed by autobiographical connotations. While the choices arising from these defining factors are relevant, one might wish other works had been included in the research such as Killroy's reanimation of *The Seagull* for chapter three, or *Raglan Road* paired with *Navy Boots On*. The writing of the book and the research that went into the different reanimations of grief through the different types of media were a revelatory experience for the author and helped him "cope with the potentially overpowering emotions of loss" (178). Although unconventional for an academic work, the creative writing at the beginning of the chapters highlights the personal nature of the grief experience. Granted, the book was featured in the 2024 Gothic reading list by Manchester University Press and addresses a central theme in the field, it may be of greater interest to those focused on Theatre or Irish Studies, especially those of us who are looking for ways of navigating loss and sorrow.