

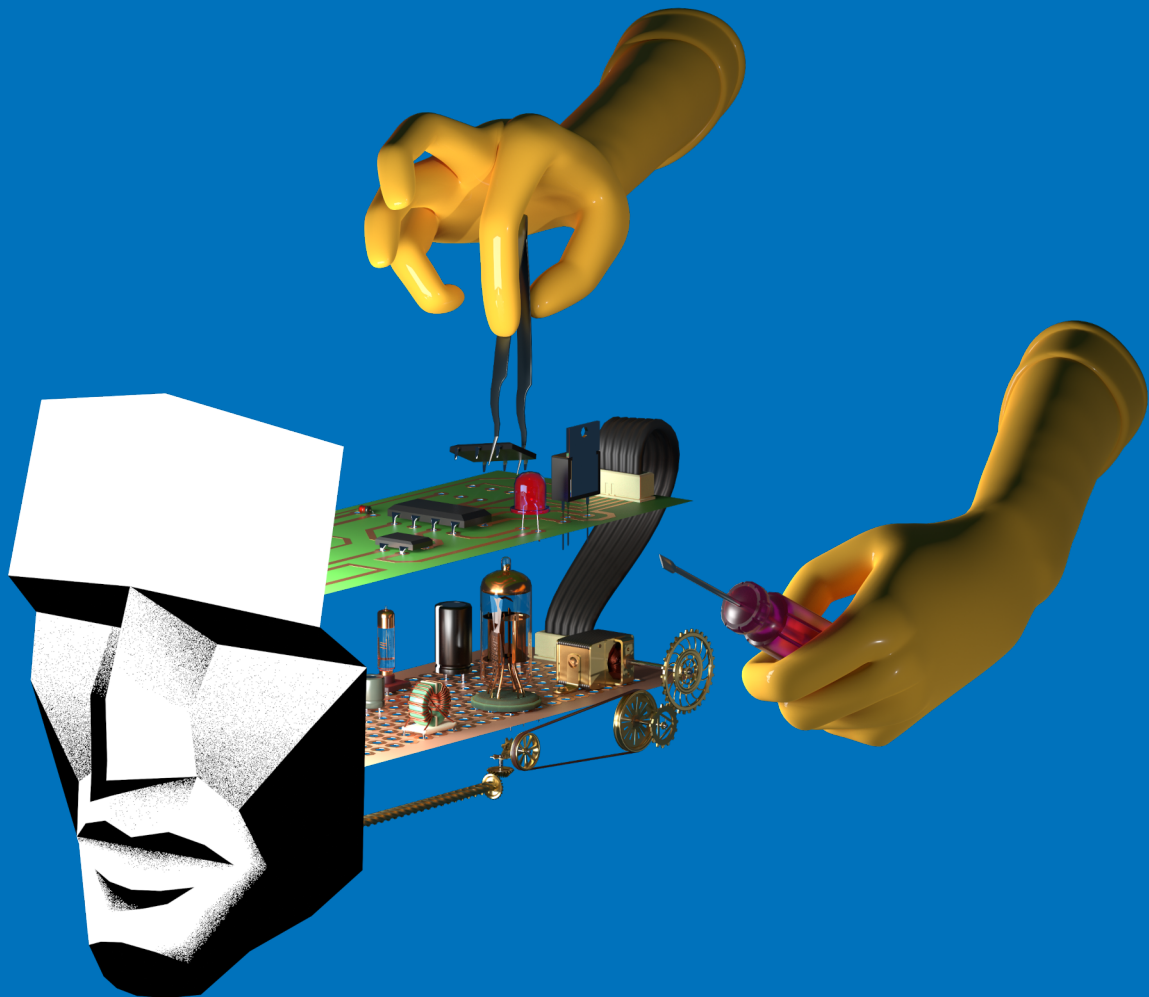


INTERNATIONAL  
**ICON**  
STUDENTS' CONFERENCE MAINZ

# The Appeal of Manipulation

Proceedings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International  
Students' Conference ICON 2019

Edited by Jan Jokisch



Bundesministerium  
für Bildung  
und Forschung



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# **The Appeal of Manipulation**

## **Proceedings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Students' Conference ICON 2019**

**Edited by Jan Jokisch**

In collaboration with Nadine Heckmann, Melanie Kroska,  
Elena Syvokonyuk, and Dr. Daniel Schmicking.



2023

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From a student perspective, ICON is indebted to Dr. Daniel Schmicking, who not only founded ICON but, to this day, serves as a driving force of the program and a constant source of motivation and support. Dr. Schmicking is a true ally to students.

Lastly and personally, I would like to thank my friend Vassilis Cooper for the outstanding cover for this volume, and the Goethe Institut Córdoba for providing me with an office for all my endeavors, one of them being this volume.

## About ICON

ICON Mainz is an interdisciplinary and international students' conference at the University of Mainz. ICON offers students from all over the world a platform to exchange ideas and broaden their horizon by connecting with other students across all borders.

The ongoing goal of ICON is to further the recognition of students within academia and beyond. We want to prove that students and their research can make important and valuable contributions to science and the world. That is why we strive to give students a platform to present and discuss their findings and network across disciplines.

What is special about ICON is that the organization team is made up of students from different disciplines and nationalities: It is a conference organized by students for students.



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## ICON MAINZ

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# Preface

The conference *The Appeal of Manipulation*, the second installment of the International Students' Conference ICON Mainz, was held on November 8 and 9, 2019, on the premises of the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz, Germany. It featured 16 student presentations from universities from Columbia, England, Poland, Indonesia, Morocco, and Germany. Along with the lecture concert "Manipulation and Music" performed by Fe Fritschi and François Heun, a photographic exhibition of works by Johann Friedrich Spindler and a keynote speech by Dr. Alexander Fischer (University of Basel) on "Clouded Thinking: On Manipulation and its Ethics" rounded out the conference program.

The delay in the publication of this volume is one of the many consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, which at the dates of the conference might have already been spreading. Contrary to the oftentimes mostly humorously uttered belief that a lack of social life and the loss of access to the outside world would boost our productivity, we – like everyone else, including many of the authors present and missing in these proceedings – were soon to learn how quickly screen fatigue would set in. It is, thus, somewhat fitting that it is now, as people are discussing that COVID-19 might be entering an endemic state that these proceedings are finally going to be published.

On a less cheerful note, it is also fitting that the proceedings are going to be published now, during the war between Russia and Ukraine, a war that – especially on the Russian side – is being fought with the purposeful dissemination of false information, a manipulation of facts surrounding the war, and a large-scale gaslighting of the Russian population. Manipulation, in the form of the postfactual era, has been a major topic in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and it seems like this is not going to change any time soon.

Of the 16 student presentations only 7 are published here. This is due to both chiefly personal reasons on the side of the authors and the result of their exhaustion triggered by the pandemic and the very long and slow editing process. In recognition of the authors

not included in this collection, and for the sake of completeness, I take a moment to list their names and their presentation titles in these proceedings:

- Kaoutar Hafnaue (JGU Mainz, Germany): “Beneath the Veil:” Seeing Through the Representations of Muslim Women in Mainstream Western Media
- Christopher Ryan Jones (JGU Mainz, Germany): Spiritual Abuse: A Psychological Look
- Sara Kusz (Jagiellonian University Cracow, Poland): One of the Biggest Manipulations in Literature or the Short History of Realism
- Caroline Liss (JGU Mainz, Germany): Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing: Disguised Hate Speech in Political Discourses
- Edward Renmaur (Indonesia Defense University): Positive Identity Manipulation of Javanese to Achieve Community Resilience in Bumi Wonorejo, Nabire, Papua
- Anna Sophie Schmidt (JGU Mainz, Germany): Philanthropy or PR Stunt? Social Engagement and Corporate Social Responsibility in Times of Profit and Cost Leadership, Do The “Big Players” Really Care?
- Dagmara Sidyk (University of Warsaw, Poland): Watching the Watchdog as a Method of Tackling Manipulation: An Overview of Polish Fact-Checking Organizations and Initiatives
- Johann Friedrich Spindler (Royal College of Art London, UK): On the Manipulation of Light
- Mariana Veretilnykova (JGU Mainz, Germany): Nudging Children and Adolescents Towards More Online Privacy: An Ethical View

Jan Jokisch  
Córdoba, Argentina, 2022

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# Introduction: Editing as Manipulation

Jan Jokisch

Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany

*Aggravation and regret soon subsided as I recollected the inspiration in the hills, the lawn chair under the jacaranda, the inner drive, the glow, without which my task could not have been accomplished. I told myself that nothing had been wasted after all, that my scenario remained intact in its folder, and that one day I might publish it – not in pettish refutation of a munificent film but purely as a vivacious variant of an old novel.*

Vladimir Nabokov, Foreword to *Lolita: The Screenplay*

In a volume so directly named after a central concept – *manipulation* –, it is usually customary to include a short overview on the concept in the introduction, go over the different interdisciplinary uses, and ultimately try one's hand at a definition or systematization. Given both the multifacetedness and the more than ample everyday use of the term *manipulation*, it seems both impossible and pointless to try an introduction into the term and its research in just a few pages. We both sufficiently know what manipulation is and are still generally stumped when we find new uses of the term – positive and negative. Thus, instead of helpless and tedious attempts at classification, I will let the papers collected in this volume define by example. These papers will, each in their own way, shine a light on the topic and illuminate a different aspect of the term. An attempt at a definition will lie within and beyond those fragments.

Thus, given the subject of this volume and my position as its editor, I would like to allow myself the meta-commentary of speaking about my own work, the act of editing, as a form of manipulation; thereby introducing yet another fragment as a possible steppingstone on the way to a definition.

One of the ways in which editing is a form of manipulation, manipulation of the texts and the reader – which in this case is the same thing –, has already been employed by me in the form of framing. The papers that make up these proceedings aren't just free-floating instances of writing in some pragmatic vacuum, they are part of a specific form of a collection – conference proceedings –, they are prefaced, edited, published, digitally

bound behind a cover, tied to the real-life event of a conference, and bound to real-life entities and organizations like universities, committees, and a group of dedicated students. All these factors represent the outcome of the editor's decision-making. They decide which papers to include, how to include them, how much time and space to give them, thereby steering the way these proceedings as a whole and the separate papers are perceived.

Now, it is rare that anyone would read a whole volume of conference proceedings (digital) top to (digital) bottom. Preface, acknowledgment, the copyright page as well as this introduction will most likely be skipped. Almost nobody will inquire further into the organizations mentioned or the people listed on the title page. The standard reading of proceedings or any other form of scientific collections of papers or essays is by distinguishing which – if any – papers are worth reading and then skipping forward to them. However, whether they are read or not, it still matters that those parts exist. Their presence lends credibility and is an important part in the appearance of diligently edited and published conference proceedings. While their existence might not be consciously noticed, their absence would be, for it would be seen as an indication of a lack of scientific standard and might dissuade potential readers from ever even engaging with the volume all together. By investing time into all these aspects – that are not directly tied to the content of the papers –, I have nevertheless influenced the papers, their appearance, their audience, the stance a reader might take to them. Just by means of framing I have manipulated both the reader's expectations and the way those papers will be read by them.

Framing is just one way of manipulation in editing. There is a more obvious and maybe more interesting one in the form of proofreading. The first submitted draft of an author's text and the text ultimately published can be vastly different. And this time-consuming and delicate process is subject to, the stage of, and represents in-itself a wide array of manipulation techniques – of author and text as well as content and form. After all, every part of the text can – at least in theory – become the subject of scrutiny, of debate, and of change.

If performed in good faith, editing is benevolent and tries to bring the text to itself, tries to channel the author's expression into a publication that is true to them, their positions, and their opinions. Editing functions here as a supportive act which aims at helping the author make the most of their work and research. This process reaches from

direct matters of content like voicing doubts, pointing out inconsistencies and hyperboles, and asking for citations, to more formal matters like proposing a paraphrase, asking for a clarification, and suggesting a change in the overall structure of the paper. Author and paper here are manipulated according to the interests of the author.

If performed in bad faith, however, it tries to divide the author from their text, to restrict their possibilities of expression, or facilitate misunderstanding. Classic examples for this are censorship, intentionally taking something out of context or framing it in a way that misrepresents the author's opinion, or plainly ghostwriting for a supposed author with a total disregard for their actual opinion. What happens here is that the editor puts their own opinions and interests over the author's and uses the publication for their own agenda – one the author either opposes or is unaware of and would oppose if known. Author and paper here are manipulated according to the interest of the editor – and/or third parties – alone.

Between those two extremes is a whole array of more ambiguous cases. Here, I especially want to consider all the cases where the editing process adds something to the text that otherwise wouldn't have been part of it. With this, we have moved past the paraphrase or simple request for clarification of the strictly benevolent proofreading. The editor might introduce a metaphor, coin a specific term, translate a phrase, or coax an author into drawing a conclusion or including an idea that they otherwise would not have had or wouldn't have felt compelled to express.

This is a common practice. The act of editing also always serves as a review. It is concerned with the validity of the text's claims, their relevance, and ultimately the question of the benefit of publishing the text in the first place. Part of this process is, therefore, the desire to publish an especially strong text, a text that might even be stronger than anything the author could have written on their own.<sup>1</sup> This is legitimate. After all, a strong paper is seen as the author's sole achievement, while a weak paper is seen as the editor's failure. But in this very process, the author might be left behind, their efforts and opinions muddled up in the editor's. And while it should be in the author's best interest to have an especially strong paper tied to their name, it opens up the question of agency

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<sup>1</sup> I hereby do not mean to claim that the editor is smarter than the author or needs to be. Collaboration simply yields stronger results. We all do well to remember who we are and on whose shoulders we stand.

and authorship, it dishevels what people expect from the role of author and editor – seemingly almost leaning into ghostwriting.

Now, I don't want to blow this issue out of proportion. I don't think there is anything fundamentally wrong with this editorial practice. While the author takes responsibility for the things published under their name, they are ideally of the opinion the paper expresses and willingly accept the change the editor suggests. The problem here stems more from the cultural practice of and the societal expectations on the role of the author; it stems from the outdated idea of the solitary genius author deserving full credit for every single idea expressed in the work – and when it is marked as a quotation, it is their genius exegesis of this quote or their genius combination of this quote with the topic or with other research that should be entirely accredited to them. Ultimately, however – and I think this is the most productive approach to take in this matter –, my concerns as an editor are about publishing a strong paper that is educational and useful, expresses valid and important ideas, and has a high chance of having a social or cultural impact. Papers are not published for the benefit of individual authors, but to further discourses, the sciences, and – even though this is mostly a fantasy – humanity as that. The current concept of authorship – aside from its legal dimension – seems antiquated here and only obstructs these goals.

Important, however, is that things aren't always cut-and-dried. I mentioned earlier that, all editing aside, the author ideally believes the opinions the paper published under their name expresses and willingly accepts all changes and suggestions made by the editor. And this being *ideal* means that there are less than ideal cases. And for those we don't have to look into intentionally malevolent editorial practices. Editing, to some extent, always relies on nudging the author a little, showing the importance and benefits of certain changes to the paper, and ultimately – and unknowingly – always dangling the sword of Damocles of a non-publication of the paper over the author's head. This means that the editor can – with the best intentions and a clear conscience – enforce changes to the paper that the author – especially when they are still at the start of their career – might feel powerless to oppose and thus begrudgingly accepts. After all, for the author it is about the non-trivial matter of being published. And in the hyper-competitive field of academia, every publication counts. The pressure an official or semi-official instance like an editor

can exert here should not be underestimated – especially not by the editors who might be abusing this power unknowingly.

Having said all of this, I feel a certain urge to defend myself. I will try to resist it and just say that I, despite the sarcasm and exhaustion that have filled my comments and emails at times, and despite some of my changes and suggestions cutting deep into the substance of the paper, sincerely hope that none of the authors here have ever felt pressured by me or powerless against my authority, and that they can be entirely happy with their paper because they can hear their own voice speak from it.

Those papers, fragmented as scattered steppingstones towards the elusive and multifaceted concept of manipulation, are as follows:

Ismail Frouini's text "Manipulated Subjectivities: Power, Body, and Resistance" talks about the situation in post-colonial Morocco. During the "Years of Lead," as this period is commonly called, political prisoners were manipulated on the level of subjectivity and body by being stripped of their name, having their gender redefined, and their personality deconstructed. Against this manipulation they rebelled linguistically and literarily through the practice of autobiographical prison writing, which served as a form of resistance and an attempt to reclaim power over one's self-determination.

Norman Darío Gómez' "Manipulation through languages: Rewriting and ideology during Hispanic American Colony" reconstructs the history of the Castilianization of the Spanish Americas through the lens of translation and linguistic manipulation. It discusses the different techniques the Spanish Crown and Jesuit priests employed to gain linguistic control over their colonial territories. Finally, it looks at the precarious modern-day situation of languages and language learning in Hispanic America.

Daniel Grisales Betancur's paper "'Not even the dead will be safe from the enemy, if he is victorious. And this enemy has never ceased to be victorious': Understanding historical narratives and the role of archaeology as the Angelus Novus" starts out with Colombia's recent history and the manipulation of the historical narrative through the state, and ultimately aims at finding a definition of the discipline of archeology as a means to combat these forms of manipulation. At the center of Grisales Betancur's argument stands a criticism of a Hegelian concept of history – inspired through Marx and Benjamin –, since it lends itself to a defense of the status quo as historical necessity. Ultimately, archeology is shown to fit the function of Benjamin's Angelus Novus in seeing history as

the scattered fragments of actual material remains, thus undermining a concept of history based on progress.

Liliia Hrytsai's text "The Role of Nudging in Sustainable Energy Consumption" discusses nudging, a form of positive reinforcement to influence people's decision making, in the context of sustainability and green policies. Nudging, which from the outset seems related to manipulation, is analyzed with a special focus on its ethical dimension. Based on a thorough discussion of the empirical research, the paper finally proposes that nudging, especially in the area of sustainable energy consumption, is a useful tool with minimal ethical concerns, if used properly.

Karolina Król's "Manipulation in the Polish Holocaust Narrative: The Influence of Language in Dehumanization, and the importance of Piotr Macierzyński's *Antologia wierszy SS-mańskich* [An Anthology of Poems of SS-men]" is a clever deconstruction of the Polish Holocaust narrative through the works of Piotr Macierzyński and other like-minded authors. Król sets out by painting a vivid picture of Poland's relationship to their Jewish citizens and the idealized image of human suffering in the concentration camps that springs from this. She then uses Macierzyński's poems to show the attempts made to portray the real horrors of Auschwitz as well as Poland's ambiguous relationship to them, far from the story of martyrs, heroes, or satanic evil – and thus, far from a language that dehumanizes people not by portraying them as less than human but as more, stripping their humanity from them by denying the humanity of their suffering.

Sören Porth's "Suggestion of false memories under blind interviewing conditions" gives interesting insights into the manipulation of memory by means of interviewing. Using his own empirical research, Porth shows the influence of suggestive techniques in interviewing as well as repeated interviewing on the suggestion of false memories. Interesting about this is that these cases don't generally rely on the malicious intentions of an interviewer but can happen in any interviewing situation. They are, thus, a form of highly negative manipulation that – in the case of therapists or journalist, for example – can spring from the very best intentions.

Malin Christina Wikstrøm's "The Translator as a Mediator: Potential Intentional or Unintentional Manipulation during the Translation Process" looks into the process of translation and discusses to what extent the translator might be considered a manipulator. After acknowledging the existence of different forms of manipulations in translation,

Wikstrøm focuses on the most intriguing kind: unintentional manipulation. Here it is the unreflected biases of the translator that lead them to base their translation on a lacking interpretation of the text and thus to produce a faulty translation. In general, she advocates for a better visibility of the translator, since this, in turn, would allow the reader to better reflect the two voices present in the text and to take a more critical stance towards the translation.

# Manipulated Subjectivities

## Power, Body, and Resistance

Ismail Frouini

SmartiLab, EMSI, Morocco

*The body...is manipulated, shaped, trained, which [the body] obeys, responds, becomes skilled and increases its forces.*

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*

*Oppression and subordination work to destroy the possibility of witnessing and thereby undermine subjectivity. Torture can destroy one's subjectivity. This latter, however, should be restored and reconstructed so that the survivor can be a subject and agent.*

Kelly Oliver, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*

This paper addresses the interplay of power relations, the body, and resistance. It probes how power relations that circulate the bodies of the post-colonial Moroccan subjects (re)shape their subjectivities and resistance inside the prison repressive apparatus. Departing from Foucault's "where there is power, there is resistance" (*History of Sexuality* 95), this paper analyses the different forms of manipulation of the prison subjectivities and the means of resistance offered by the Moroccan political prisoners to subvert and dismantle the hegemonic coercive discourse that mitigates and denies their subjectivities. In doing so, this paper is premised on the close reading of the following autobiographical prison writings: Fatna El Bouih's *Hadith al Athama [Talk of Darkness]*, Mohamed Raiss' *Min Skhirat ila Tazmamart: Tadhkirat Dhahab wa Iyabila al Jahim [From Skhirat to Tazmamart: Roundtrip Ticket to Hell]*, and Abdelkader Chaoui's *Al-Ssahatu al-Sharafiyya [The Courtyard of Honour]*. To articulate its main argument, this paper combines the intersectional cultural studies approach with the close reading method to examine how the physical and symbolic violence exerted on the body of the post-colonial subjects (re)shape their subjectivities. It finally argues that the body of the aforementioned political prisoners, as an arena of power and at the same time of resistance, was manipulated, reshuffled, and re-gendered to render the political prisoners



docile, submissive, and weak. Additionally, political prisoners have resisted such coercive methods by ascribing themselves new antagonist dissident subjectivities.

When Morocco gained its “independence” from France in 1956, there were so many subaltern voices that aimed at meeting the expectations of the post-colonial project by maintaining an “autonomous” rule from the French colonial power. Many of these voices, who were opponents of Hassan II’s regime, were arrested owing to their politically strategic locations as well as affiliations (predominantly Leftist and Marxist affiliations). The dissidents and activists who have spoken truth to their hegemonic and coercive powers have been arbitrarily driven into the prison repressive apparatuses on false allegations and long prison sentences. The overwhelming violence and ubiquitous power relations, that the post-colonial Moroccan political prisoners were subject to, presuppose and provoke resistance. Such coercive practices have worked towards undermining the subjectivity of the prisoners. The latter have broken their silence to speak “truth to power” and act as agents of resistance.

Having said that, as a starting point, a theoretical foundation should be foregrounded for the following discussion about the forms and also frames the subjectivity of a prisoner. The French political theorist Louis Althusser conceives “subjectivity” as being shaped within the dominant ideology. According to Althusser, “all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects” (117). So, the state apparatuses, either ideological or repressive, hide the hegemonic ideology that shapes, forms, and interpellates the individual into the subject. In the Moroccan prison apparatus, the prisoners are subject to such manipulative interpellation. They are conceived of as “docile” subjects to “discipline and punish” (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 4).

This paper also employs what Michel Foucault calls “the power of writing,” “subject,” and “subjectivity” as described by him in his book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. His theories about “power” with regard to “self-writing” empower the prison writing subject as an agent of discourse. Writing, for him, is “like a game (jeu) that invariably goes beyond its own rules and transgresses its limits” (Foucault, “What is an Author” 102). Jean Francois Lyotard also argues that writing is a form of resistance (Olson 394). Writing alludes to taboo issues that are not easily communicated. Such attempts to speak of the unspeakable costs their progenitors years of traumatic

incarceration and torture, as is the case with the outspoken Moroccan activists and political dissidents.

Moroccan Prison narratives highlight the political, historical, and material aspects of post-colonial Morocco. In the 1970s and 1980s, Moroccan society was in political ferment. In the Moroccan political history, this period is known as *sanawat rasas*, the “Years of Lead. Many political events shaped the mode of existence of the “Years of Lead” in Moroccan society. This period is notorious in post-colonial Moroccan history. It witnessed the violations of human rights and the arbitrary imprisonment of many dissidents. The “Years of Lead” is notorious in the Moroccan history for the cruelty and the abuse of power, forcible disappearance, arbitrary arrest, and imprisonment of the opponents of Hassan II’s regime.

The overwhelming use of systemic, symbolic, and epistemic violence and ubiquitous abuse of power characterized the post-colonial Moroccan carceral system. The activists who were trying to meet the premises of post-colonialism – to be free from the shackles of oppression and neo-colonialism – were arrested, imprisoned, abused, manipulated, and traumatized. Their demands were answered with mass torture, “enforced disappearance and arbitrary imprisonment” (Slyomovics 36). The “Years of Lead” Morocco (1956-1999) has influenced the political and the cultural subjectivities of the political prisoners who have experienced postcolonial trauma as well as physical and symbolic violence. This contributes to (re)shaping and generating new subjectivities in the Moroccan prison apparatuses.

Prisoners use “self-writing” or autobiographical writings to restore their undermined and manipulated subjectivities and attribute agency to themselves. Articulating the self by means of autobiographies is a source of empowerment and agency. Following Daphne M. Grace, “writing the autobiography is a way of re-appropriating the past and a methodology of redressing the enforced silencing of the colonised ‘subaltern,’ it has also been seen as an active strategy for political empowerment” (183). Being aware of this source of empowerment, Moroccan political prisoners of the “Years of Lead” have made recourse to autobiographical writing to resist the manipulation of the carceral system. As a result, there is a noticeable autobiographical turn in the Moroccan Literature in general, and “resistance literature” in particular. They

challenge the official power by means of writing the unsaid history of trauma and manipulation.

To manipulate a prisoner-activist, the Moroccan prison apparatus generates a set of techniques and mechanisms of manipulation; this includes penal and legal control. Prisons, which, on a metaphorical level, have the architectural form of a panopticon, aim at making prisoners docile within that homogeneous space by having recourse to the normalizing ‘carceral’ system. The prison apparatus generates a “capillary and disciplinary power” that is meant to make prisoners feel that they are observed and under the power gaze (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 198). The prisoner’s body becomes an arena of manipulation and power negotiation. El Bouih contends that “everything in this world is subject to surveillance” (31). Prisoners are put under the gaze of the panoptic disciplinary and manipulative power of surveillance. This presupposes the interplay of power and resistance as an antagonistic response to the overwhelming use of power in the Moroccan “Years of Lead” prison apparatus.

In the Moroccan “society of control,” the “carceral” apparatus uses myriad ways of manipulating and controlling the prisoners to render them docile and submissive. To deny the subjectivity of prisoners and hail them into the subjects of the state ideology, prisoners are conceived of as mere numbers. It is one of the coercive and hegemonic mechanisms of disempowering and weakening the dissidents and detainees in the prison apparatus. The prisoner feels that his or her subjectivity is just reduced to numbers. For instance, Mohammed Raiss (132) in his prison autobiography *From Skhirat to Tazmamart: Roundtrip Ticket to Hell* says that:

لقد أصبحت شئيت أم أبيت، مجرد الرقم 14 في نظر الحراس، و معنى ذلك أنني لم أعد  
موجودا كإنسان، بل أصبحت مجرد شيءي يحمل رقما وضع على الرف لأسباب خاصة

Whether I like it or not, I become just like a number (14) for the prison guards.  
That means that I no longer exist as a human being, but I become just a thing  
that holds a number and then placed on the shelf for special reasons [transl.  
I.F.].

This form of symbolic violence is meant to deny the agency of Raiss, as a political prisoner. These prisoners lose their subjectivities, and they are meant to be docile and submissive. As subjects to the disciplinary hegemonic prison apparatus, which is meant to be, as Foucault views it, like a “machine that alerts minds” and which tries to inculcate some “corrective” behaviors into prisoners’ minds, prisoners are in the process of experiencing the state docility (*Discipline and Punish* 125).

The aforementioned prisoners have been subject to such corrective and manipulative prison mechanisms that aim to mitigate their subjectivities. Bouih, for instance, says that a prison officer said to her: “I erase you. If you speak, I cut out your tongue. Take her away to be educated” (5). Fatna is interpellated as a subject to be “educated” and to be shaped by the manipulative silencing prison apparatus. Their female identities lead them to suffer twofold; they are denied voice and agency, and accordingly become subject to systemic and symbolic violence. As argued by Habib Nassar, silence is meant to crush opposition and resistance. “The repressive political system in Morocco... resorted to violence and human rights abuse to silence political dissent and social protest” (63).

The abuse of power in the prison apparatus is meant to deny the subjectivity of prisoners. As subjects-to-be in the prison apparatus, prisoners are given other names and sometimes even scandalous and rebuking names instead of their real ones. Other prisoners, like Fatna El Bouih, have their subjectivities re-gendered; she is given a male name: Rashid. Moreover, as she mentions in an interview with the Moroccan Feminist and sociologist Fatima Mernissi, it is “Rashid N 45.”

Being shaped by such coercive and manipulative methods of imprisonment, Moroccan political prisoners have offered different means of resistance. Departing from Foucault’s oft-quoted thesis, “where there is power, there is resistance” (*History of Sexuality* 95), the prison autobiographies show the different forms of manipulation of the prison subjectivities and the means of resistance offered by these prisoners to subvert and dismantle the hegemonic coercive discourse that mitigates and denies their subjectivities. Writing, as a form of subaltern resistance, enables a sense of agency by “inserting it retrospectively into the event where that very agency was destroyed” (Oliver 93). The “Years of Lead” survivors highlight the need to write the past. To show how his subjectivity was undermined and manipulated, Chaoui (71) asserts that:

لم تسعفني شجاعتي وظل الجبن لصيقا بي، فبدأت أنظر إليه دون كلام، لأنني فقدت شخصيتي «تقلص  
كياني» وتحولت إلى بيدق، يومها التزمت الصمت ملتفا في خوفا ونفاقي وانعدام شخصيتي شاخصا  
النظرات خنوعا

My courage didn’t help me and cowardice got me. I started to look at it without words. for I lost my personality hence my subjectivity has shrunk and is reduced to a pawn. It was the day I kept silent and curled up in my fear, hypocrisy and low self-esteem, looking meek [transl. I.F.].

Writing the “self” is doing resistance. It is noticeable that traumatized and manipulated subjectivities use the subjective I and We to reclaim their subjectivities which are destroyed by trauma and power abuse. This traumatized and manipulated subjectivity is also echoed in Chaoui following lines:

Yes, we had low morale. Our best wishes were to die a sudden death that deters us from the horrors of the long agony; it turned the prisoner into a tattered corpse, which mosquitoes, flies and countless types of flying and crawling insects are in a hurry to bite. (147)

There is a relationship between the prisoner’s manipulated subjectivity and traumatic violence incited by arbitrary incarceration and torture. According to Kelly Oliver in his *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*, “torture can destroy one’s subjectivity. This latter, however, should be restored and reconstructed so that the survivor can be a subject and agent” (7). To inscribe agency to these prisoners (subalterns), this paper considers their prison writings “as a site of identity production, as texts that both resist and create cultural identities” (Gilmore 4).

Being aware of this source of empowerment, Moroccan political prisoners have made recourse to writing. Mohammed Raiss, for instance, makes it clear from the outset of his autobiography that: “Today, I decided, after thinking for so long, to write these real testimonials” (3). Articulating the traumatized self is a way of doing trauma recovery and resistance. Fatna El Bouih in her prison writing *Talk of Darkness*, similarly, makes it clear from the outset of her autobiography that “I began writing about other women political prisoners and their amazing courage that should be part of Moroccan history” (43). These prison autobiographies have worked towards alluding to the excluded traumas of the Moroccan “Years of Lead” history by ascribing agency to the silenced prisoners.

Prisoners have offered resistance to disciplinary power and docility. Prisoner’s resistance is meant to restore their stolen and manipulated subjectivities. These forms include writing, struggle, revolutionary action, opposition, disobedience, hunger strike, and so on (Scott 33). The idea that resistance can take place outside the direct surveillance and “observation” of the powerholders is very problematic. The prisoner’s body is placed under a meticulous control and gaze. That is what Foucault refers to as “the panopticon” (*Discipline and Punish* 195). He turns to the “body” of the prisoner as an arena and object of power and resistance. He contends that “bodies” are the “rallying point for a counterattack” (Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 157). Ultimately, by dint of waging a

hunger strike, Raiss, Chaoui, and El Bouih offer resistance to the oppressive prison system. Chaoui and his comrades “are on a sit-down strike in block G refusing to obey the orders of the prison guards” (207). This kind of resistance is meant to maintain the prisoner’s sense of autonomy and rejection of the methods of coercive control in prison. Prisoners maintain a kind of agency and control over their bodies.

The abuse of power in the prison apparatus is meant to deny the subjectivities of the prisoners. Being subjected to the disciplinary and manipulative power, Chaoui and Raiss are assigned other names and sometimes even numbers instead of their real names. Female prisoners, like Fatna El Bouih, have their subjectivities reshuffled. All these discursive practices are meant to manipulate the subjectivity as well as deny the agency of the prisoners and to make them submit to the state disciplinary power. These prisoners have made recourse to “self” writing to resist, restore their interpellated subjectivities, and recover from the trauma of imprisonment and systemic and symbolic violence.

To conclude, the body of the aforementioned political prisoners, as an arena of power and at the same time of resistance, was manipulated, reshuffled, and re-gendered to render the political prisoners docile, submissive, and weak. Additionally, political prisoners have resisted such coercive methods by ascribing themselves new antagonistic dissident subjectivities. The resistance voices and activists examined in this paper are at pains to write and “work-through” the trauma they have experienced in the Moroccan “Years of Lead” repressive state apparatuses. It is noticeable that many “Years of Lead” prison trauma victims and survivors share different voices and focalizers to resist and subvert the effect of the belated psychological trauma they have experienced.

The “Years of Lead” political prisoners’ writings have offered a fertile space for the trauma survivors to articulate their manipulated subjectivities and break the myth of their silence. Their highly charged political resistance narratives have resisted the state-sponsored forms of violence. The insertion of the subjectivity, as is the case with the writings from prisoners and the survivors of the “Years of Lead,” is meant to both contest and dismantle the epistemic violence; this latter relegates the prisoners from the history-making of the nation and restores their manipulated subjectivities and agencies. Such attempts to write and articulate the trauma of postcolonial Morocco are defined within the framework of the Moroccan hegemonic “regime of truth” of the “Years of Lead” as contestatory. As argued before, assigning numbers and masculinizing female identities of

the political prisoners are meant to mitigate the political prisoners' subjectivities and deny their agencies as active agents. The Moroccan political prisoners have generated new subjectivities in their autobiographical prison writings to dismantle coercion and manipulation.

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# Manipulation through languages

## Rewriting and ideology during Hispanic American Colony

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In this article, we discuss the manipulation related to the selection and use of a given language within a given community. For this purpose, we provide some examples of how stakeholders have taken advantage of the power of language to obtain or maintain specific social, political, or ideological outcomes during the conquest and the colonial period in Latin America. Finally, we outline the current situation of languages other than Spanish in that vast territory.

How does ‘manipulation’ occur?

As stated by Payás and Garbarini (349), not knowing the language of the Other represents a serious deficiency in any conflictual relationship. For that reasons, policymakers, teachers, and other stakeholders should be aware of the implications that their decisions bring about when promoting particular languages or adopting specific rewriting tendencies (in the sense given by Lefevere) in their particular countries. In order to understand the term manipulation, we have chosen the definition provided by Asya,

[...] a type of psychological affection, which in case of skillful realization leads to implicit provocation of another person’s intentions that do not correspond to his actual wishes and his stimulation towards commitment of actions required by the manipulator (81).

In relation to linguistic manipulation, the same author states that it constitutes any verbal interaction between the subject (speaker) and the object (listener) of communication, in which the former regulates the behavior of the latter through speech, stimulating him to commence, alter, or accomplish an action whenever it is needed (79). In other words, this form of manipulation is understood as the

[...] influence exercised by one person upon another or a group of people through speech and non-verbal means oriented toward achieving a certain

goal that consists in changing of the addressee's behavior, perceptions and intentions in the course of communicative interaction (Asya 80).

### Manipulation in literature: Rewriting and rewriters

The concept of rewriting was introduced by André Lefevere in his seminal book *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (1992), and is widely known in the field of translation studies as part of the so-called 'Cultural Turn.' In his work, Lefevere combines the information from three sources that he considers as being complementary for the study of the discipline: Translation, Culture, and History. Rewriting, for Lefevere, is both innovation and manipulation "it is literature's way of shaping society" (Forrai 29). For that reason, he argues that translation should be considered as something more than a linguistic exercise, since this intellectual activity involves literary, cultural, social, and political factors. "Lefevere draws our attention to people and/or institutions in positions of power (for instance, universities or publishers), by analysing how professionals rewrite texts in various ways to serve various ends, for example, the cultural and political interests of their patrons" (Forrai 30)

For Lefevere, translation is "the most obvious instance of rewriting." But, apart from translators, rewriting is also carried out by editors, critics, anthologists, historiographers, librarians, teachers, and other actors who exert some kind of 'manipulation' through their literary practices, in order to serve various purposes (i.e., cultural, political, 'patronage').

In his approach, Lefevere assumes literature as a system under the control of two different groups: on the one hand, there are those involved with poetics: translators, anthologists, critics, and teachers; on the other hand, there is a second group more concerned with ideology, and composed by those who exert the power (patronage).

In this scenario, manipulation in literature can be accomplished from a personal point of view due to the rewriter's own aesthetic preferences or ideological convictions; but it could also be exerted as a consequence of external pressure coming from those in power.

### Language manipulation: Who manipulates whom?

Of course, literature is just one of the ways of using language manipulation. Through history, many people or interest groups have been in position or in charge of exerting that

manipulation by other means. Instances of such manipulation have been performed by governments and international organizations, as well as by the private sector. In this chapter, we will focus on the manipulating activities exerted by the translators and interpreters, the Church and its missionaries, and the elites in power during the colonial period in Hispanic America. Below we exemplify some of those cases.

## Language Manipulation in Early Hispanic America: Conquest and Colonization

### Early translation and interpretation in America

It is said that before the arrival of Columbus to America, about 300 languages were spoken in Mexico and Central America by roughly 5 million people, and over 1400 other languages were spoken by 9 million natives in South America and the West Indies (Kaufman 46). Considering that plethora of languages, it is unthinkable that the different peoples did not count on the intervention of language mediators to facilitate the required exchanges among their communities.

Shortly after the arrival of the Spaniards to the New World, the role as language mediators for all the communicative exchanges between the natives and the newcomers was assigned not only to the missionaries who accompanied the Spanish expeditions but also to selected native interpreters, known as *'farautes,' 'trujamanes,' 'lenguaraces,'* and, most commonly, as *'lenguas'* (Vega Cernuda 81).

Due to the relevance of linguistic and cultural mediation in many different areas, some of those skilled interpreters reached great status among their locals; consequently, the Spanish Crown found necessary taking control of that business. That was an important endeavor for the Crown since the lack of expertise and training of both natives and missionaries often brought about errors, misunderstandings, and confusion; “[s]ince the Catholic religion was so new for the indigenous population, it was a great challenge for many priests, [...] to express the Christian concepts in the indigenous languages, and when they tried to, they often used words which suggested erroneous and improper concepts” (Zwartjes 10). On the other hand, interpreters were not always reliable or honest professionals. Thus arose the obligation to reinforce the controls for translation and interpreting. In fact, the early interventions in that field coming from Spain were not

particularly aimed to the formation of interpreters, but mostly to the regulation of their activities.

[T]he colonial emphasis was more on regulating a suspect profession than actually producing professionals. Significantly, the numerous Spanish laws that stipulated the rights and duties of interpreters in the American colonies said nothing about how anyone actually became an interpreter (Caminade and Pym 281).

The participation of language mediators in everyday activities became more and more needed since their presence in official procedures was made compulsory by the Crown. The double participation of the '*lenguas*' in the expansion of Christian faith and the development of public and legal affairs was not a minor one, as explained below:

Throughout New Spain, missionary friars, with the collaboration of indigenous elites, as linguistic and cultural informants, rendered local languages into alphabetic writing as a means of facilitating evangelization. Native language writing allowed the friars to produce dictionaries, grammars, guides to confession, catechisms ('doctrinas'), and other pastoral literature, which they and their indigenous assistants put to use for the purposes of conversion and pastoral education and service. Alphabetic writing also equipped indigenous municipal council ('cabildo') officers with the tools to govern Spanish-style municipalities ('pueblos de indios') (Schrader-Kniffki and Yannakakis 161).

A more formal instruction in the Jesuit universities, administered by the Crown, was offered at a later stage. About 26 of those universities were founded in the Latin American territories during the Spanish rule, between 1538 and 1791. The main purpose of those institutions was to educate the 'criollos' (American-born from Spanish ancestry) for the Catholic clergy. However, the work of their missionary-teachers was highly related to language education, being that one of the main areas of formation. Some of the important activities that those clergymen carried out in relation to the language field included:

- studying the indigenous languages,
- training translators and interpreters from Spanish into indigenous languages and vice versa,
- writing grammars (*artes*), dictionaries (*vocabularios, diccionarios*) and religious texts such as catechisms (*catecismos, confesionarios, doctrinas, sermonarios*),
- translating texts from Latin or Spanish (L1) to the indigenous language (L2),
- creating monolingual texts directly in L2 or bilingual texts, starting with L2, accompanied with translations into L1, for didactic purposes (Zwartjes 2).

Despite the massive work of missionaries concerning the knowledge of native tongues in the new territories, their contribution to language studies is an aspect that still needs further investigation. For Zwartjes, “[t]he didactic function of translation and the accompanying source texts within the [missionary] grammar has been hardly studied systematically” (8). However, several authors have conducted relevant research trying to acknowledge the work of those men in the field of translation and teaching (Arencibia Rodríguez; Bastin; Pagni et al.; Schrader-Kniffki and Yannakakis; Vega Cernuda; Zimmermann and Stolz; Zwartjes). These studies show that the missionaries’ translations of religious texts included examples of translation techniques, problem-solving strategies, linguistic or grammatical explanations, glossaries, among other helpful teaching aids:

[S]ome grammars devoted a section at the end to translation problems, but generally this was not the case. When reconstructing the translation problems and strategies in missionary grammars, the examples are the most important data. [...] The examples given were not only useful tools for the learners which enabled them to understand how the rules were applied in practice, but they often also supplied information related to the translation of metaphors, or the untranslability of some grammatical features (Zwartjes 8).

### Elite in power and language manipulation

Together with the diversity of languages existing in America before the Spanish conquest, there was an active contact among the different native communities, and among them and the local empires. Unsurprisingly, the inhabitants of several territories were coerced to understand and use the language of the most advanced native civilizations. That was the case of the Aztec empire, which imposed Nahuatl as its official language in Mexico and Central America. The Incan empire also forced all its subjects to understand and speak Quechua.

After their arrival, the Spanish realized that teaching Castilian would imply a difficult and time-consuming task from the beginning, for the missionaries and colonizers. Linguistic actions had to be taken rapidly in order to procure the initial communication with locals and the subsequent imposition of the Spanish language. Therefore, they opted for using local interpreters to communicate with other locals, while learning and propagating the use of the privileged native language to evangelize.

According to Pym, “[t]he great European colonisations were also associated with rudimentary translator training based on the capture and training of natives. Translator training was thus carried out on the fringe of empires or at the points where civilizations

met” (1). That procedure took effect from the very beginning. When returning to Spain, after his first travel, Columbus reportedly took several boys and girls (aged 14 or 15) with him to teach them Castilian and to train them as interpreters (Tanoue 15). But most of the interpreters were trained locally by missionaries whose role included far more than promulgating the Christian faith:

[T]he few Santa Cruz teachers/interpreters/translators were forced to improvise a good deal and overcome many technical difficulties since they did not have even lexical guides or manuals except those that they developed themselves [...] While trying to learn a foreign tongue, they taught Latin, grammar, arts, basic theology, and music (Arencibia Rodríguez 268).

As it can be seen, the role of Church was crucial in the process of domination and linguistic imposition. Subjugating the local inhabitants only by force would have been (even more) catastrophic. That would also have been too risky for the newcomers due to the great number of natives living in the Americas. According to Lipski:

[D]uring the sixteenth century (often regarded as the formative period for Latin American Spanish) and even later, the indigenous population often outnumbered Europeans by hundreds to one, and yet the nature of Spanish settlement was not always conducive to substratum influences (65).

Together with the formation of interpreters, there came the Castilianization of everyday activities. Within a relative short period, many native languages disappeared, and others were relegated to those territories or scenarios where the white settlers did not have full control. That situation brought about the imposition of Spanish as the almost unique language of daily exchange in all Hispanic America, despite the enormous territory and the different interactions occurring among the Spanish colonizers and the diverse indigenous peoples during the colonial period. A case in point to show that drastic change towards the imposition of the Castilian tongue was the prohibition of using a language as rich as the Quechua in the conquered territories, by the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In linguistic terms, the negative impacts brought about by the colonization in America included the political domination, the prohibition of using the native languages, the attempts of Castilianization, the cultural hegemony, the intellectual decapitation of indigenous society, the substitution of non-oral means of communication by imposing the alphabet, and the institution of Spanish as a language of non-oral communication (Zimmermann and Stolz 31). The expansion of Spanish in Latin America, and its historical consequences for the indigenous languages, is summarized as follows:

In the Caribbean, for example, the indigenous populations rapidly disappeared, and had little effect on the development of Spanish. In Venezuela, Argentina, Uruguay and Chile, hostile indigenous populations were pushed ever further from Spanish settlements. In much of Colombia and Costa Rica, and in coastal Peru and Ecuador, Spanish settlers had minimal contacts with the indigenous population. This contrasts with Paraguay, Mexico and the Andean countries, in which indigenous languages remain vigorous even today, and where many Spanish colonists learned and used the native tongues (Lipski 64).

In sum, the so-called ‘encounter’ between the European and American cultures brought about mostly negative consequences for the development and expansion of native American languages. As a result, only about 350 of those languages could survive the colonial period, and Spanish was finally imposed after being declared official language for all the 19 nations that constitute the actual Hispanic America. Therefore, the hegemony of the Castilian tongue all along the conquered territories in Latin America constituted an unescapable situation.

### Has anything changed?

The domination of Spanish along Latin American countries has certainly continued until the present days. It is necessary to ask why such a situation of linguistic inequality has not improved substantially and, in many cases, has even worsened over more than five centuries. It is possible that it is due to the lower value assigned to some languages by the so-called “linguistic market.” In this sense, Bourdieu states that “[...] there is a clear relationship of dependency between the mechanisms of political domination and the mechanisms of formation of the language prices” (146).

Along the last centuries, besides Spanish, other languages associated with the world powers have also gained a privileged space in the language policies of the Hispanic American countries. Despite the well-known discourses promoting a pretended multilingualism for the entire population, and some attempts to rescue and preserve the native languages in each region, English, as the international language of commercial and political exchange (and, to a lesser extent, French, German, and Italian) has been accepted as the only language deserving attention by the society at large. As Hamel mentions:

In most Latin American countries, the dominant language ideology expects their citizens to be monolingual speakers of the national language and, in the middle and upper classes, to have some command of a foreign language. Those who speak *other mother tongues* arouse suspicions about their national

loyalty, even if they are equally proficient in the country's language [emphasis in original] (610).

Thus, in practice, the bilingualism policies undertaken during the last decades in several Latin American countries have been limited to the promotion of English and “[to ignore] the linguistic diversity of the Latin American nations and [adhere] to the pervasive view that true bilingualism is only that which includes access to the language of an economic empire” (González and Llurda 96). As an example, all the policies adopted by 8 Latin American countries, just between 2004 and 2015, were oriented exclusively to the promotion of that language (Cronquist and Fiszbein 82; González and Llurda). In sum, the linguistic policies of the Hispanic American countries are mainly oriented towards promoting the languages with the greatest ‘prestige’ and, generally, the most favored classes are those that have a ‘real’ access to their knowledge and use. Meanwhile, the minor languages (whether foreign or native) of each country are set aside in the respective national language policies.

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**“Not even the dead will be safe from the enemy, if he is victorious. And this enemy has never ceased to be victorious”**

**Understanding historical narratives and the role of archaeology as the Angelus Novus**

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*If one does not speak, does not write and does not tell the stories, one forgets and little by little it gets covered by fear. People who saw the dead body begin to forget and are afraid to speak, so that we wind up carrying around a darkness that has lasted for years and that nobody talks about [...] And since nobody talks about what happened, nothing has happened. So, if nothing has happened, then we continue to live as if nothing happened.*

Testimony of an inhabitant of Trujillo, Valle del Cauca (GMH 37)

Aside from the rare headline-grabbing discoveries or sensationalist fictional depictions, archaeology has never been able to generate the same level of academic interest that is generally afforded to history. In fact, despite the efforts archaeologists have made to show the theoretical depth and reach of their discipline, the other social sciences and humanities still perceive archaeology as an amorphous set of recording techniques for curious objects and places.

This is not only due to the limited spectrum of divulging material to reach the public, but also because there is some sort of “tacit agreement” between the newer generations of archaeologists. Their research objectives tend to be either pragmatic, as they are focused exclusively on registering and preserving sites, or greatly limited, as they only try to answer or compile information around a single topic and then move to another. In other words, there is not a transcendental question around which the ever-growing knowledge of the material remains of the past could be articulated.

It can be said that this lack of direction is a common trope in a lot of disciplines. However, due to the complex and strong relationship of archaeology with public imagination and the role that heritage plays in historical narratives, the consequences of this lack are felt most strongly here.

In this paper, I will analyze how the breakdown of history through material evidence can allow us to be more aware of the manipulation of historical narratives and give us the tools to contest them within a scientific framework. As a starting point, I will use the historical memory work of the *Grupo de Memoria Historica* (GMH) on Colombian armed conflict as an example. It illustrates how the material evidence often shows an abruptly different reality to that of the official narrative of hegemonic institutions, in this case the government. In the second part, I will explore how the use of material evidence is not a mere methodological choice, but instead a different paradigm to understand the past. For this, I will offer a general overview of my interpretation of the concept of history as informed by the German philosophers G.W.F. Hegel, Karl Marx, and Walter Benjamin. Finally, it will be shown, with the help of some case studies, how archaeology allow us to critical address different historical presuppositions that are used to justify different attitudes in the present day, ending with a reflection on why archaeology could be deemed as what Benjamin called the *Angelus Novus*.

Regarding the information on the Colombian armed conflict, most of the data here described is taken from the publication of *Basta Ya! Colombia: Memories of war and dignity*,<sup>1</sup> the General report of the GMH of Colombia that, from the early 2000s to this day, has been in charge of reporting and compiling the information concerning the victims' experiences, testimonies, interpretations, explanations, and demands during the long armed conflicts that have left everlasting scars in Colombian history and society. In the words of the director of the Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica, the National Center for Historical Memory, at the time, Gonzalo Sánchez G., the purpose of the report was to “clarify what has happened and to make the victim’s tragedy visible” (GMH 15).

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<sup>1</sup> Aside from this book, there are at least 24 other books that compile the experiences of the victims in different places of the country. Personally, I highly encourage everyone to check out the vast amount of information that is available on this topic online: [www.centrodehistoriamemoria.gov.co/micrositios/informeGeneral/](http://www.centrodehistoriamemoria.gov.co/micrositios/informeGeneral/) (Accessed 19 Jan 2022).

## The GMH search for historical truth.

Colombia is a country located in the northern part of South America. It occupies a total area of 1,141,748 km<sup>2</sup>, which is at least 3.1 times the size of Germany. Colombia is known for two things: its everlasting state of war and the drug-trafficking business. Explaining the relationship between both phenomena is way beyond the extent of this paper but it is necessary to point out that, regardless the spotlight occupied by the drug cartel activities since the mid-80s, the causes for the Colombian conflict are social and historical, rooted in two major issues: a precarious democracy and an extremely unequal distribution of land that tracks back to the conquest of America. Thus, it is important to understand that the drug business is something that came after, that has been profitable for different actors across the spectrum of legality. More importantly, it has been used to simplify the complexity of the social issues and instead serves as a scapegoat for an inefficient state that has been unable to fulfill the needs of its citizen.

The contemporary Colombian armed conflict has its roots in the bipartisan confrontation in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, known as *La Violencia*. During this time, the Conservative party (traditional landowner elites) faced the Liberal party (nascent bourgeoisie and a part of the working class) and Communist groups (intellectuals, peasantry, and working class). This conflict is characterized as being a non-declared civil war, in which it became the norm for the state to employ the army and paramilitary groups. During *La Violencia*, three major events took place. The first was the assassination of the liberal leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán on April 9, 1948, that plunged the country into 10 years of exacerbated violence making people lose faith in social change through the means of democracy. The second one was a successful coup led by Gustavo Rojas Pinilla in 1953, who would help reduce the bipartisan violence but later declared the communist party of Colombia illegal, co-opting the political participation of a part of the population that until that point was relatively close to the liberal party. And finally, the third major event was the consolidation of the *Frente Nacional* in 1958, which was a period in which both parties agree to rotate power, intercalating presidential terms until 1974 (Caballero ch. 11).

The consequences of the *Frente Nacional* would set the conditions for the current armed conflict, giving the excluding nature of said agreement. Indeed, the open violence between conservatives and liberals disappeared almost completely but this did not solve

the conditions of inequality that to this day reign in the country. The problem of the political participation of the nascent urban bourgeoisie were solved securing a new type of elite. The issues of a substantial part of the working class and peasantry were not addressed, however, prompting the consolidation of left-wing guerrilla groups such as the FARC-EP, the ELN, and the EPL in the 1960s.

The birth of guerrilla groups prompted the apparition of paramilitary organizations that were created as self-defense mechanism under the control and auspice of the Colombian Army to fight against the menace of communism in the context of the Cold War. This counter-insurgency offensive was not illegal, but quite contrary allowed by the law 48 of 1968, becoming a well-established policy of the armed forces during the presidency of Julio Cesar Turbay in the early 80s when there was a call for the population to arm and defend themselves (Gómez 48). In general terms, different sources have shown that paramilitary groups have always been associated with the army and powerful political and economic groups; owners of extensive and underdeveloped land, who were threatened by the growing control of the guerrilla groups over territory in the peripheral parts of the country and who, at the same time, took part in the drug trafficking business. As is proposed by Arias and Prieto, the paramilitary phenomenon that consolidates itself during the 90s is the result of the convergence of small drug cartels which centralized their military power guarantying safety and control over the territory.

The longevity, low intensity, and degenerative nature of the confrontation of these three mayor actors would give the conflict its own identity. Moreover, the way history is being built around it generates a tension between a historical narrative proclaimed by the state based on the justification of its own ideology and a genuine historical narrative build from the empirical evidence scatter between the testimonies of the victims and the material traces of the conflict. Which version is supported is especially troublesome for Colombia because the perception of the recent past has an impact in the political decisions and attitudes of the present day. That way, the recent past becomes a contested territory where the state, who has played an active role as a perpetrator in this conflict, consistently tries to manipulate the facts with high rectory to put itself in a better light and justify the brutal actions that sustain its ideology.

Because violence is only fully experienced in the countryside (or the vulnerable parts of the cities) and the material elements that configure the perception and memory

of the conflict are confined to these outlying spaces (the remains of the conflict), the narratives weaved around the social conditions of rural life (or the marginalized urban areas) are easily manipulated. This manipulation consists of articulating the social reality in discursive elements that minimize the suffering of those who experienced the violence and abandonment of the state and instead creates an illusory image of a country in the state of a working democracy. Meanwhile, it is undermining the foundation of any social movement, seeing them as an obnoxious disruption of an imaginary order and not as the legitimate social reclamation that they are. At the same time, the absence of action from those who indeed have the means to act and the lack of empathy of those in power generates a perception amongst those in need that democracy is something precarious and useless, even something to be feared, as the GMH describes: “In Colombia, the dominant concept of politics is that dispute or opposition are not seen as the components of political life, but threats to the integrity of identity of the dominant order” (21).

The aforesaid also implies that there are specific ways to make sense of history while denying its brutality. For example, as has been stated above, Rojas Pinilla led a successful coup in 1953 that kept him in power for four years. He has been deemed as the only dictator in the history of the country, and, as such, his government had the militaristic aura of a 20<sup>th</sup> century dictatorship. Because it was short lived and its transition to democracy was smooth, there has been a generally accepted notion that Colombia has the most stable democracy in Latin America. This general notion is accepted and advertised,<sup>2</sup> although, between 1958 and 2012, there have been at least 220,000 violent deaths caused by armed conflict and at least 80% of these deaths were unarmed civilians (around 176,000).<sup>3</sup> In comparison, different sources estimate that the number of enforced disappearances during the Argentinian dictatorship was around 22,000 people (Alconada Mon) and, in the case of Chile, which is probably the most infamous authoritarian regime of the whole continent, the number of victims comes close to 40,000 people (Garde Eransus). Taking these numbers into consideration, it is quite ironic that the “most stable democracy in Latin America” almost triples the number of civilian victims of two of the most brutal dictatorships of recent history. Additionally, according to the GMH, the

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<sup>2</sup> According to Colombia.co, the official website the government uses to advertise the country, Colombia is not only the most stable but the oldest democracy on the continent (Gobierno de Colombia, “Por qué”).

<sup>3</sup> This number does not include the victims of enforced disappearance, enforced displacement, abduction, extrajudicial executions, unlawful recruitment, torture and abuse, anti-personnel mines, and sexual violence (GMH).



number of people who have been registered as displaced by force is 4,744,046, with the projected number being as high as 5,700,000. To put this number in perspective, the actual population of Berlin is about 3,500,000 inhabitants. How then is this a stable democracy?

### What is the GMH?

The GMH<sup>4</sup> is a historical research group that was originally part of the *Comisión nacional de reparación y reconciliación* (National commission for reparation and reconciliation). It was created after the passage of Law 975 in 2005, better known as the “Ley de Justicia y Paz” (Law of peace and justice), which falls into the armed demobilization process of the paramilitary groups during the second mandate of the infamous Álvaro Uribe Vélez. It started to operate as the investigative branch of the *Centro Nacional de Memoria Histórica* (National center for historical memory, CNMH), earning its current name.

Since 2005, the work carried out by the GMH has been fundamental in compiling information to allow us to understand causes, consequences, and the material manifestations of the conflict. In simple words, the labor of the GMH has been to recover empirical evidence about the gigantic crime scene that is Colombia’s conflict, while confronting the reductionist vision of the untrustworthy witness of the state.<sup>5</sup> They made the results of their reports accessible to the national and international public, showing that war and violence are not abstract categories that are defined only conceptually, but instead realities capable of being analyzed from sets of empirical data (Clastres ch. 11). This approach to the conflict has produced marvelous conclusion concerning the relationship of the *modus operandi* of the armed factions and their objectives.

Assessing the testimonies of the victims and victimizers, the GMH found substantial differences between the *modus operandi* of the different actors in the Colombian Armed Conflict: paramilitary groups killed more than the guerrilla, while the guerrilla kidnapped more people and tended to cause more damage to the civil infrastructure. Paramilitary victims were often regarded with suspicion, and their deaths,

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<sup>4</sup> It is important to address that the GMH has not been the only actor involved in the process of acknowledgment of and reparation for the victims – which can be seen as more impactful than the search for historical truth alone. Multiple organizations and institutions have been working towards this goal. Yet, I have chosen the GMH as an example due to their concern about history, and the similarity of their work to what I am proposing for archeology.

<sup>5</sup> For almost a decade there was a bond of trust between the CNMH and victims’ rights groups. This changed with the naming of the current director Ruven Darío Acevedo in February 2019. Since then, a substantial part of these victims’ rights groups has started to remove their archives and cut ties with CNMH given the institution denial of the nature of the armed conflict.



disappearances, or displacements were often considered, and even revered, as an act of social cleansing or social improvement. In contrast, the victims and casualties of the guerrilla forces, mostly composed of soldiers, police, and wealthy people, were seen as martyrs. Paramilitary groups balanced both the frequency of violent acts and the degree of brutality with the unwanted attention their actions might draw (GMH 21). On the other hand, guerrillas would try to gain visibility through their terrorist acts on a national and international level (GMH 26). Paramilitary violence exercised an unimaginable level of brutality. The GMH reports the existence of crematory ovens, clandestine cemeteries, and schools for torture and dismemberment (GMH 30). Additionally, the military forces often work together with the paramilitary groups. They use methods of violence and terror such as arbitrary detentions, torture, selective assassinations, and enforced disappearances. The regularity of the alliances between the army both with drug-traffickers and paramilitary groups is deeply disturbing because they were formed to defend economic and political interests or to secure the access of land and resources to powerful groups.<sup>6</sup>

GMH’s work helps us to break the illusion of war as solely the evil doing of evil people, showing that the conflict is the result of a deeply inhuman system and proving that it is possible to differentiate between distinct types of violence and identify their underlying causes. Recognizing this violence as a manifestation of deeper-rooted problems resulting from Colombia’s political and social order is fundamental to propose solutions that are more than a simplistic call to “finish the war.” These solutions must guarantee the welfare of the whole population. The acknowledgement of the victims as more than collateral damage is pivotal to a wider transformation of society. Furthermore, it is important to note that there are other forms of violence that are not as easily perceived as massacres and kidnappings but require constant opposition just as much. Social inequality maintained by the economic elites is the root of all other issues in Colombia, regardless the perception of the people that are in an advantaged position thanks to this system.

In historical terms, the GMH contribution has not only been the availability of new data and the consolidation of new and more accurate descriptions around the recent past

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<sup>6</sup> Two of the most notorious examples of this alliances between the army and paramilitary groups in recent history are the “Massacre of Trujillo,” a sequence of enforced disappearances that took place in the department of Valle del Cauca between 1986 and 1994, and the “Operación Orión,” that took place in the marginal zones of Medellín in 2002.

in Colombia. Instead, they served as an example of another way of understanding the past, similar to what we believe archaeology has been doing at least since the second quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the next part of this paper, the characteristics and implications of the Hegelian and Marxist philosophy of history, and its relationship with the establishment of historical narratives are going to be explored briefly.

### Hegel, Marx, Benjamin, and the concept of history.

Questioning the reasons behind why and how we study history is not a novel thing to do. The discussion around what is called philosophy of history has been a common subject of debate throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as can be seen in the works of Collingwood (1956) and Le Goff (1995), but it can be seen as a part of all recorded history. It can be said that the reasons underlying this interest are varied, but in modern times this is related to the awareness of the fact that the way history is understood conditions the way it is written. This is something easy to spot if historical accounts from different periods are compared. Suffice to said, history has been done by different means and objectives, affecting their present in measured but more often unexpected ways.

The French historian Jacques Le Goff proposed that modern history is built upon the paradigm of historicism (88). This paradigm, consolidated in Germany during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, places history in the center of the analysis of reality. According to Le Goff, two different currents developed within the historicist paradigm: on the one hand, there is a tendency which sees the historical development analogous to the growing of living beings, of which Hegel is a representative. On the other hand, there is a trend to establish a science of social developments through history, close to Marxism.

What has been said above is, of course, a general distinction, but it serves to point out that there is an acknowledgment of the difference between the philosophy of history proposed by both currents of thought. The reader must be aware that by no means this small chapter would solve the complexities of the relationship between the Hegelian and Marxist concept of history. For example, in the third part of his posthumous published book *The idea of History*, Collingwood explored the evolution of different concepts used by both Marx and Hegel, addressing the contributions of Schiller, Fichte, and Schelling, whose works I barely know by name. What I am trying to do here is offer my interpretation of Hegel's idea of history, based on a reading of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the implications of Marx' materialist counterproposal to Hegel's idealism and

its posterior development in Walter Benjamin’s work. My goal is to show their relationship with the historical and archaeological praxis, and their impact on them.

The *Phenomenology of Spirit* is a book that can be used to address general aspects of the whole system of thought of its author Hegel. Given the complexity of the book, it is hard to claim that one’s interpretation is the only and correct one, yet there are certain elements that are easier to spot and around which a general idea of Hegel’s position (in this case towards history and reality) could be established, indistinct of the later developments produced by his dialectical conception of reality.<sup>7</sup> The preface is especially insightful to understand his perspective towards reality and science. At the very beginning, Hegel claims that, “the true shape in which truth exists can only be the scientific system of such truth,” (3) this riddle-like statement, common in Hegelian prose, basically states that reality can only be known as a conceptual entity.

This equivalence between the system and the truth is what Hegel would define as the representation of the absolute as spirit:

That the True is actual only as system, or that Substance is essentially Subject, is expressed in the representation of the Absolute as Spirit—the most sublime Notion and the one which belongs to the modern age and its religion. The spiritual alone is the actual; it is essence, or that which has being in itself; it is that which relates itself to itself and is determinate, it is other-being and being-for-self, and in this determinateness, or in its self-externality, abides within itself; in other words, it is in and for itself. (14)

The inherent difficulty of the prose should not make us deter from the objective of grasping the meaning of the words. For Hegel, the absolute is a category composed by the subject and the substance. The great philosopher proposes that the relationship within these two categories have been different through history, and that history in itself is the movement of the spirit to realize that it is both substance and object. Moreover, Hegel proposes that history as thought is governed by reason, hence the historical process is by default rational and it has a purpose.<sup>8</sup> Because it is rational and it has a purpose, it is possible to understand the movement of the spirit and to see the relationship between its different manifestations in a sort of general logical scheme. In the prologue of the

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<sup>7</sup> As is mentioned in the prologue of Ramiro Flórez’ book *La dialéctica de la Historia en Hegel*: “Toda auténtica filosofía comienza hoy por ser una conversación con Hegel” (Flórez 8, “All authentic philosophy today, starts with a conversation with Hegel [transl. D.G.B.]”).

<sup>8</sup> “Reason is purposive activity” (Hegel 12).

*Phenomenology of Spirit*, he summarizes his position in this famous statement: “Nor is there such a thing as the false, any more than there is something evil” (12).

Now that the conceptual nature of reality in Hegel’s phenomenology has been broadly explained, it is important to address an important element of the historiographical structure of the book: the beginning of the struggle for acknowledgement described in the subsection A (“Independence and dependence of self-consciousness: Lord-ship and Bondage”), of chapter IV (“The Truth of Self-certainty”) of part B (“Self-Consciousness”) in the Oxford University Press edition.<sup>9</sup> Prior to this point, the section A (“Consciousness”) is concerned with the development of the consciousness on an almost physiological level. With this, I am not implying that Hegel was aware of something like the development and transformation of the brain as is part of the modern theory of evolution. But Hegel is suggesting that the whole consolidation of the notion of self happens in a pre-social moment. From here onwards, it could be said that history actually started, or at least that the history of society begins here.

To understand the independence and dependence of self-certainty as the starting point of culture, I think it is productive to imagine a primeval setting where two individuals that have never meet before try to impose over each other, claiming “this fruit belongs to me.” Now, if there were only one of them, such confrontation would not take place, because, as Hegel maintains, “Self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged” (111). Acknowledgement is fundamental for Hegel, after all, history is the transit of the spirit to acknowledge itself as true. Thus, the two individuals, these two human consciousnesses that are part of the movement of the spirit but do not know it, feel the necessity to assert dominance on the other because they are simply unable to see that they are the same, according to Hegel:

They must engage in this struggle, for they must raise their certainty of being *for themselves* to truth, both in the case of the other and in their own case. And it is only through staking one’s life that freedom is won; only thus is it proved that for selfconsciousness, its essential being is not [just] being, not the immediate form in which it appears, not its submergence in the expanse of life, but rather that there is nothing present in it which could not be regarded as a vanishing, moment, that it is only pure *being-for-self*. The individual who

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<sup>9</sup> In the Spanish edition by the *Fondo de Cultura Económica*, which is the one I originally used, this subsection is divided in three. This has been a conscious decision by the translator Wenceslao Roces to improve its readability.

has not risked his life may well be recognized as a *person*, but he has not attained to the truth of this recognition as an independent selfconsciousness. Similarly, just as each stakes his own life, so each must seek the other’s death, for it values the other no more than itself; its essential being is present to it in the form of an ‘other’, it is outside of itself and must rid itself of its self-externality (114).

However, death, as Alexandre Kojève has shown, is not the objective of the fight, instead, “[...] if man risk his life to make his personality acknowledged, it is not as a corpse that he wants and can be acknowledged. And if he wants to kill others, it is not by corpses that want and can be acknowledged [transl. D.G.B.]” (57). This is because death is understood by Hegel as the “natural negation of consciousness” (114). If all self-conscious beings are dead, the spirit lacks the means to reveal itself as the true, and because the spirit is wise, it will not allow this. Hence, the confrontation would eventually lead to the establishment of an opposition between lordship and servitude, between a consciousness that was not afraid of death and one that was.

Kojève is also helpful in understanding the interaction in this antagonistic relationship (59). Following the example stated above, the reason underlying the confrontation between the individuals is a material one (“this fruit belongs to me”). The ownership of the master over the thing is acknowledged by the slave. The slave works for the master, and not for himself, hence the master appears as a man to the slave, while the slave is not deemed as one properly. The master is not satisfied with the acknowledgment of the slave, because he does not perceive him as man, regardless the fact that the world that he inhabits its produced by the slave. The master fights like a man, but lives like an animal because he reaps what he has not planted. The master is then an incomplete man, and only the slave would become the subject of history because he is the one making it. Kojève also suggests that for Hegel the philosopher is the one who will understand the “why and the how of the definitive satisfaction produced by the mutual acknowledgment [transl. D.G.B.]” (59). This also means that a conceptual solution to the imbalance of the confrontation of self-certainties that originated in the material realm would suffice to Hegel. This is one of its mayor problems, as is going to be seen below.

One critique of the Hegelian conception of history has been proposed by Védrine. The author suggests that to propose a universal history model, Hegel suppresses the individuality of the historical events transforming them into concepts that become meaningful in the “movement of the spirit to gain awareness that he is the true [transl. by

D.G.B.]” (qtd in Le Goff 93). That is why the development of the spirit, as described in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* can be considered an abstraction of the different achievements of the spirit throughout human history, without special care for a continuity in terms of chronology until today. As Collingwood suggests:

[...] since all history is the history of thought and exhibits the self-development of reason, the historical process is at bottom a logical process. Historical transitions are, so to speak, logical transitions set out on a time-scale. History is nothing but a kind of logic where the relation of logical priority and posteriority is not so much replaced as enriched or consolidated by becoming a relation of temporal priority and posteriority. Hence the developments that take place in history are never accidental, they are necessary; and our knowledge of an historical process is not merely empirical, it is a priori, we can see the necessity of it (117).

Stating that reality needs to be conceptually addressed is not problematic in itself, every science and every way to know uses categories that are built to classify reality. The problem comes when models or systems of categorization are deemed as reality in themselves. Something that makes sense conceptually does not necessarily make sense in reality, especially when it comes with human experience. Thinking that history is rational implies that every single historical process makes sense in the grand scheme of things, in an almost theological way, irrespective of the brutality of the process itself. As was seen in the Colombian example, thinking that the actions of certain actors were justified because they helped to keep the inherent inequality of the status quo, is by no means a rational process.

Marx approach to history was an answer to Hegel’s proposal. Historical materialism differs from Hegelian idealism in a pivotal point: it is not solely the evolution of the spirit and its conceptualization that determinates the material conditions, but instead material conditions are the starting point of said movement. In Marx’ words, “the entire movement of history is, therefore, both its actual act of genesis (the birth act of its empirical existence) and also for its thinking consciousness the comprehended and known process of its coming-to-be.” (103) That way, institutions like the state only appear when certain material conditions are set and not the other way around. Moreover, Marx was against the event-driven history, pointing out that it tends to overlook the real social relationships in favor of sound political and historical events (Le Goff).

A direct critique of Hegel’s philosophy can be found in the last chapter of Marx’ *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, titled “Critique of the Hegelian

Dialectic and Philosophy as a Whole.” The bulk of the chapter consists in a throughout dialectical explanation of the flaws inherent in Hegel’s proposal of reality as the mere product of the self-conscious coming to terms with the fact that nature is part of it, appearing first estranged to it. This leads Marx to propose the inadequacy of Hegelian logic to understand reality, revealing it as just the mere description in which thinking works. As he put it:

Subject and predicate are therefore related to each other in absolute inversion – a *mystical subject object* or a *subjectivity reaching beyond the object*- the *absolute subject* as a *process*, as *subject alienating* itself and returning from alienation into itself, but at the same time retracting this alienation into itself, and the subject as this process; a pure, restless revolving within itself (162).

Regarding the aforesaid, Collingwood points out that:

This is what Marx was thinking of when he said he had turned Hegel’s dialectic upside down. When he made that statement, what he had in mind was history, perhaps the only thing in which Marx was much interested. And the point of his remark was that whereas for Hegel, because logic came before nature, it was for logic to determine the pattern on which history worked, and for nature only to determine the environment in which it worked, for Marx himself nature was more than the environment of history, it was the source from which its pattern was derived. It was no use, he thought, to draw patterns for history out of logic [...] (123)

Notwithstanding that Marx himself did not develop a whole theory of history, leaving bits of his conceptualization in different works, as has been suggested by Le Goff (94), the general notion that can be described as the imposition of reality over logic, the Hegelian inversion, helps us to understand the implications of a new way of understanding history. In the *Communist Manifesto* (1888), co-authored by Friedrich Engels, the opening line of the chapter called “Bourgeois and Proletarians,” is a direct reference to the Hegel notion of Master and Slave:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. (219)

For Marx and Engels, these struggles are not a logical movements of the spirit, but instead the developments of historical contradictions that are created by and the source of different material conditions. Because the material conditions dialogical determinate the institutions, these have to be understood as historical categories and not as transcendental



concepts. Hence there is no such thing as a universal category for property, democracy, or state. Addressing the bourgeois society, Marx and Engels stated that:

Your very ideas are but the outgrowth of the conditions of your bourgeois production and bourgeois property, just as your jurisprudence is but the will of your class made into a law for all, a will, whose essential character and direction are determined by the economical conditions of existence of your class (239).

The critique of the lack of awareness of the historical and material origin of the bourgeoisie, represented by the categories of the political economy, can be extended to Hegel as an author. For him, our world would be the best of all possible worlds because it is the one that exists, so every historical event previous to the present makes sense because it led civilization to where it is today. Progress then became an abstract objective, because everything could be categorized as an intermediated step towards some unknown better future. This can clearly be seen, for example, in the way liberal democracy perceives itself, as both the ultimate form of governance and a work in progress, shielding itself from any structural transformation by promising a state of welfare that does not seem to ever come. In the example of Colombia, this can be seen in the way those benefitting from the status quo intend to build peace, a peace that it is in general terms abstract and only convenient to those in power, a peace that only seems to have problems with the armed fighting.

Marx used Hegelian dialectic to build the foundations of the materialistic critic of history. His immediate concern was to understand the way capitalist society has come to be and to show the necessity and almost moral obligation to transcend it. However, Marx and Engels did not witness the horrors to come during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Marx, of course was not able to predict the future, and so, similar to Hegel, certain aspects of Marx as an author could be deemed outdated regardless the validity of his system of thought. This is where Walter Benjamin comes into play. Benjamin was a German philosopher of Jewish origin, associated to the Frankfurt School, who died by his own hand while trying to escape the fascist occupation of Europe. He understood that what was happening all across Europe was not to the result of evil people doing bad things, but the result of a very complex social process that was not being addressed properly. As Echeverría suggests, Benjamin was coming to terms with the fact that the whole theoretical framework of the history of social democracy had failed and he intended to offer an



alternative explanation, truly historical and truly materialistic, for the sunset of capitalist modernity (81).

Two main elements characterized Walter Benjamin’s theoretical proposal: The Western utopian tradition and the Jewish messianic tradition (Echeverría 32). The first one consists of understating the imperfection of the world in which we live and its possibility to improve. This dualism allows a spontaneous critique of what things are in relationship of what things could be, not only as a *what if*, but as an objective requirement of *what should be*. The second element is built around the idea of redemption and the chance to overturn the tragedy of history through the means of a concrete action. So, the relation between class struggle and history is further developed by Benjamin, showing that if it is true that the class struggle is for the “crude and material things” they in fact lead to the appropriation of the “refined and spiritual things” (390). History and by extension the greatest works of humanity represent different things for the master and the slave. For the master, history is the story of the spoils of war, a collection of victories only connected to each other by a Hegelian notion of continuity or progress. This is especially evident in the nationalist movements, in which diverse and distant events of the past are connected as a cohesive narrative that indicates the manifest destiny of a specific group of people, often the ones in power. They overplay or underplay the importance of different historical events and social unrest as has been shown in Colombia’s case. But for the slave, it is both a chance and reminder of their role in the movement of history which both encapsulates the utopian and messianic traditions, showing that things can change, and that change can happen at any time. This true image is fleeting and threatens to disappear if its relationship to the present is not made clear.

Progress is then a mayor element of discontented in Benjamin understanding of history. In Hegel and Marx, this concept is a given as has been stated above. But for this author, the sole category is problematic. In Walter Benjamin’s 9<sup>th</sup> thesis on history, the one that is known as the “Angelus Novus,” he compares historical materialism to a painting of an angel by Paul Klee. Concerning this, I like to propose that from my point of view archaeology could also play, even embody the metaphor of the Angelus Novus. The thesis goes like this:

There is a picture by Klee called *Angelus Novus*. It shows an angel who seems about to move away from something he stares at. His eyes are wide, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how the angel of history must look. His

face is turned toward the past. Where a chain of events appears before *us*, *he* sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it at his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise and has got caught in his wings; it is so strong that the angel can no longer close them. This storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows toward the sky. What we call progress is *this* storm. (392).

### Archaeology as the *Angelus Novus*

The different topics that have been explored so far give this paper a patchwork appearance. Parting from a present-day phenomenon, we have examined how the use of empirical data, that is often outside the historical documents and official accounts, can help us advert the manipulation of the recent past, and, in turn, question the political decisions and attitudes that are sustained by it. It has also been shown that this manipulation of the past does not stem solely from a conscious exercise of denial or alteration of the data, but from a way to understand how history works. Indeed, when an end goal is given to history, when an abstraction allows historians to rationalize every single fact and to eliminate the particularities of historical and social processes, conflict seems to be a mistake and not a part of the historical process. Now, to conclude this paper, it is important to finally show what archaeology has to do with all of this.

The word *archaeology* is composed of the Greek roots *archaios* (archaic, ancient) and *λόγος* (knowledge, science). According to the Italian archaeologist Federico Perinetti, Plato defined the objective of archaeology as the search for the relics of ancient heroes (13). However, archaeology as we know it, is one of the most recently developed social sciences, given the fact that even antiquarianism or early art history only share with it a fascination with the objects. It passed from being a set of techniques to explore the glorious past to a comprehensive body of tools and theories that are often used to question the veracity of historical narratives. Similar to how the GMH went to the places where armed conflict took place to interview the victims and study the traces of war, archaeologists go to places where there are material remains of history to understand what happened and how it happened.

For years, it was thought that archaeology was there just to fill the voids that history could not, that it was just an auxiliary discipline limited to analyze those groups that did not leave behind written records, and that it was doomed to paint an incomplete image of

the past due to the fragile and scarce nature of its object: the material remains of the past. Even Le Goff, one of the most progressive and representative historians of the twentieth century was not sure about the ultimate contribution of archaeology (106). He knew it represented something new but was not sure of the impact it could have on our perception of history. But with the passing of the years, archaeology started to adapt multiple techniques that allowed it to penetrate the past in ways historians never dreamed of. Techniques such as microscopically evidence, micromorphology, and use-wear analysis have helped us identify a larger range of evidence concerning aspects of daily life such as diet or cooking techniques. Those are areas that were not able to be perceived prior, given the lack of documentation or real remains capable of clearly showing the dynamics and complexities of past societies. Moreover, since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, archaeology started to occupy periods and places that were formerly reserved to historians, often questioning not only the veracity of certain facts but also the idea of progress as such.

A multitude of examples in which archaeology has challenged pre-established notions of the past can be quoted here. From the stone axes of Perthes (Daniel 61-67), that helped us understand the true antiquity of humankind, to the reassessment of gender in Viking warriors (Hedenstierna-Jonson et al.), and Early Holocene hunter burials that show the social nature of gender (Hass et al.). Excavating archaeological sites originating during the Spanish Civil War, González-Ruibal (2016) identified through archaeological records new dimensions of the conflict. Similar to what has been described in Colombia's example, González-Ruibal shows that violence can be carried out in different ways and towards different parts of the population. The body analysis shows how violence was exercised on the poor people. The material culture shows the complexity of the ideological background of those that were defending the republic and even their professions. The architectural analysis tells the story of resistance of professional workers and authorities planning the defenses of *La Segunda Republica* against the *Bando Nacional*.

The history of the discipline is full of discoveries illustrating the contingency of cultural manifestations and social institutions which in the present are often taken as pre-given, immutable laws and facts. Patriarchy, nationalism, racism, capitalism, and their means of coercing or manipulating our way of thinking are often put in an uncomfortable

position thanks to archaeological evidence. The materiality cannot be denied. And with this I am not implying that the interpretations that archaeologists make are bulletproof or immediately correct. Instead, the mere fact that the history is being built from a more abundant, common, and rich source of information implied a new way to perceive the past. In Jones' words:

The key point here is that due to the physicality or perdurance (physical persistence) of material culture, things act as a means of presenting past events to the senses. If we treat objects as indices of past action, then we come to realise that objects do not so much preserve distinct memories in fidelity; rather, they evoke remembrance. Material culture therefore actively precipitates remembrance (2010).

As remembrance mechanism, the artefacts are embedded and determinate by a set of contextual relationships in which multiple meanings are possible, yet only a few are plausible: a piece of pottery is not just a piece a pottery, it could be chronological marker, a chorographical indicator, and even a manifestation of prestige. The fact that not all types of objects are known, and we do not always know all the possible meaning of an object implies that there is a material impossibility to access all aspects of human life in all different places and periods. This shows the limits of our knowledge (in terms of methods and techniques) but also of our ideology (the things that are meaningful to us in history). Yet it also shows that history as a social fact is bigger than history as a concept. Material culture shows that history exist outside the mere concept of history, as Marx has pointed out. Archaeology sets itself apart from other approaches to the past because its narrative cannot always be convenient, uplifting, or even cohesive from our present point of view. It embodies the *Angelus Novus* of Benjamin in a very direct way: the past presents itself as fragments, as a disperse collection of non-rationally sorted events, as material culture that is there to be woven by the present. Somehow, archaeology also understands the tragedy of history, its fragmentary nature, and the impossibility of bringing back the dead, but as more than just idealized steps in the grand plan of history.

With the aforesaid, I do not mean that archaeology is the only and true way to perceive the past, or that it could achieve a total and absolute knowledge of it that history cannot. Instead, my proposal is that archaeology allow us to bring to the historical arena voices that were not heard before, similar to what has been exemplified in the first part of this paper. It is true that neither archaeology nor history are uniformly structured fields of knowledge, and neither is there a uniformly agreed upon objective in either of them.

But it is also true that in general terms historians and archaeologists produce different types of history with similarities within each discipline. I think the way history is taught and understood by the public is Hegelian in the way that it is mostly about the transformation of institutions or categories. Things like the history of England or of the Western world presuppose a logical progression from a given point in the past that somehow always was clearly going to become the present. In other words, the discipline of history often emphasizes the continuity, creating a narrative that seems logical, because it's the construction we made to give sense to our reality in relationship to the past.

This seems to be a rational assumption because there is a whole ideological construction around the past that maintains and is maintained by Hegel's idealistic and conceptual notion of history and reality. In this notion, every historical phenomenon is logical. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it has been widely accepted that the present is the result of some sort of conscious effort done by a very specific set of actors. Much criticism has been brought against what would later be called *social Darwinism*. For example, Alfred Russell Wallace, co-discoverer of the theory of natural selection, was against this form of scientific racism; his reluctance to acknowledge the alleged superiority of Europeans was not only out of principle but based on his ethnographical work with South American and Southeast Asian indigenous communities (Trigger 113). The famous North American ethnographer Franz Boas developed an alternative approach to social evolutionism called *historical relativism*, in which he basically acknowledges the uniqueness of every group's historical process (Trigger 121). And historians like Carlo Ginzburg have shown how our ideas of the past can drastically change if we try to give voice to those that are usually marginalized (31). Regardless the aforesaid, the Hegelian ideas are still highly reproduced by both historians and the general public alike. That is why history is presented to the public as a collection of milestones and great names and not as the result of the accumulation of day-to-day activities. People cannot see themselves reflected in this narrative and, just as the fruit of their labor, so is their history alienated from them.

Archaeology tends to deal more with the discontinuity of human experience. It sees history as a collection of ruins both metaphorically and literally. Archaeology data can also be used to reassure a sense of continuity, but more often than not, archaeological sites offer us a glimpse into something that is entirely different, a reality that is no more and that cannot be easily connected to our own, similar to what the angel in Benjamin's

metaphor sees. Archaeology embodies way more easily the historical materialism consolidated by Marx, because the interaction with the objects of the past often shows the insufficiency of our categories to give sense to a human reality different to that of the bourgeoisie society. The remains are too scarce compared to the feats of the heroes of the historical account to see the Hegelian spirit working, and when they are magnificent and monumental the spirit acting seems to be another one. But this does not mean that, as a discipline, it is doomed to just fill the cabinets of the museums with curiosities of long gone and strange people and eras. Instead, what archaeology as a discipline shows is that there is a dimension to history that is not rational, and that irrationality could be seen outside of the historical record in the material remains.

We live in a world in which history is told in an exclusive, biased, and often manipulated way to make sense of and justify all the violence and injustice derived from our economic and social institutions. History, understood solely as logical process, is vicious. It strengthens the grasp of the oppressor over the oppressed, declaring inevitable the institutions that guaranteed their dominance. Archaeologist then have to be up to the task of creating a new history, one that includes all the oppressed, subjected groups of history. Otherwise, as Benjamin said, “not even the dead will be safe from the enemy, if he is victorious. And this enemy has never ceased to be victorious” (391).

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# The Role of Nudging in Sustainable Energy Consumption

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Sustainable consumption and production, renewable energy, and sustainable development in general remain the top issues of global agendas. The idea of sustainable energy consumption encompasses both the use of renewable energy and the improvement of energy efficiency. On an international level, specialized agencies of the UN, international governmental and non-governmental organizations, international networks, and states set a range of different policies and targets to maximize sustainability of energy consumption. On a macroeconomics level, the majority of aforementioned actors demonstrate preparedness to support sustainable energy consumption. What about regular citizens, however? How can governments, energy companies, and other stakeholders support people at altering their consumption behavior towards more sustainable approaches? If traditional means of support are still not enough, should these actors apply more efficient, but at the same time controversial methods of assistance? All of these questions are addressed in the current research regarding the role of nudging in sustainable energy consumption.

During the last decades, the interest in nudging has grown significantly. The role of nudges in sustainable energy consumption was the primary topic in many debates for a long time. According to the definition, nudging aims to alter choices in particular ways by modifying individuals' decisions. What is characteristic for nudging is that the use of methods is different from rational persuasion. Energy companies, for instance, could enroll their consumers into renewable energy projects by default, instead of encouraging them to 'sign up' voluntarily, thereby increasing the popularity of these projects. Many decision-makers are unwilling to impose nudges due to potential ethical concerns. This research analyzes key allegations of nudging in the sustainable energy context. Aside from condemning arguments, the author provides counterarguments and proves that

nudging can eventually serve as a strong and very important tool to improve sustainable energy consumption.

To achieve the research goal of this article the author uses empirical literature, including major studies about both nudging and consumer behavior in the area of sustainable energy. The first section presents the idea of sustainable energy consumption and the role of nudging within this context. The second section presents three crucial points undermining the use of nudges in energy decision-making, mainly paternalism, reduction of autonomy, and its offensive character. The third part discusses the reasons to believe that nudging is ethically permissible. The third section also explains why we need nudges in the public sphere, especially when it comes to sustainable energy consumption by citizens. In the conclusive part, the author briefly summarizes the main statements presented in this research and closes the debate with the place of nudging in sustainable energy consumption.

## 1. Nudging and sustainable energy consumption

We can understand the phenomenon of nudging and the notion of sustainable energy consumption in many different ways. Basic assumptions of both definitions have already been presented shortly in the introductory part. In this section, the author highlights a mutual correlation as well as the role nudging plays in sustainable energy consumption.

By ‘sustainable energy consumption,’ the author refers to the, first of all, improvement of energy efficiency and reduction of final energy consumption, and secondly, to the transition from traditional fossil fuels (gas, oil, and coal) to renewable energy sources (e.g., wind and solar power). The main aim of nudging programs within sustainable energy contexts is to promote clean energy as well as to support the reduction of energy consumption to ensure that the actual energy infrastructure will meet the demands. Moreover, it is important to mention that energy production and consumption are ‘massively architected.’ This means that something (in this case energy production and consumption) is strongly influenced by external factors which are not directly controllable by ordinary citizens.

We can distinguish the two main types of nudges aimed at improving the sustainability of energy consumption. The first one, and the most common type of nudging, delivers specific information in a way that supports certain options over others. This type of nudging is referred to as ‘default option,’ which is defined as “the preset

selection of an option offered by a system, which will always be followed except when explicitly altered” (“Default option”). So-called ‘green defaults’ are often used to impact people’s choices of energy sources by altering the decision framework presented by energy companies (Momsen and Stork 380).

The second main type of nudging within energy consumption constitutes social norms that change behavior. Social norms can be targeted at different aspects of energy use; however, most are targeted at consumption patterns. Social norms and defaults present perfect case studies to prove the ethical permissibility of nudging. Both of these nudges are effective, easy to implement, and engage a broad range of actors including state governments, the private sector, and consumers (Kasperbauer 478). In the following sections, the author discusses multiple examples of the aforementioned types of nudging aimed at improving sustainable energy consumption.

## 2. Ethical concerns of nudging in the context of sustainable energy consumption

Given its closeness to the generally negatively connotated term of manipulation, it is no wonder that there are a lot of ethical concerns related to nudging. In this section, the author investigates three main allegations of nudging that have attracted the most attention from decision-makers. The following allegations to nudging in the context of sustainable energy consumption include: the paternalism of nudging, autonomy reduction, and offenses caused by nudges. Moreover, in this section, the author briefly provides the most common counterarguments to these allegations.

### 2.1. Paternalism of nudging

What does ‘paternalism’ mean? Cambridge Dictionary defines paternalism as “thinking or behaviour by people in authority that results in them making decisions for other people that, although they may be to those people’s advantage, prevent them from taking responsibility for their own lives” (“Paternalism”). Thaler and Sunstein emphasize that nudging “tries to influence choices in a way that will make choosers better off, as judged by them” (19).

Critics claim that nudging is dramatically paternalistic in its nature. For example, changing the default energy supplier from fossil fuels to renewables is making a decision for the consumers on what is better. Moreover, nudge theory assumes that there is a need

for some assistance for people to make the ‘right decision.’ In this case, consumers are treated subjectively, meaning this help is provided without their consent or permission. In fact, consumers are left without a space where they can express their disapproval. There is no need for overt coercion or enforcement to take some actions. To claim the existence of solid problems related to nudges is already pushing people to oppose the nudge, especially in people who are highly skeptical of official instances (Sunstein and Reisch 177-178).

The allegations of the paternalism of nudging suggests a high probability of deception involved in nudges. Paternalism becomes problematic when we are facing difficulties in detecting it. Hausman and Welch underline that manipulation alongside nudge theory is heavily different from the normal process of decision making according to rational choice theory. Nudging undermines an individual’s control over their own deliberations and their abilities to assess alternatives, thus, *prima facie*, threatens people’s freedom of choice. In addition, the researchers stress that there is a huge difference between nudging and the influence on the rational choices of the consumers (Hausman and Welch 130).

The main counterargument on the aforementioned accusations is that nudging and so-called ‘choice architecture’ are unavoidable. Sunstein and Reisch claim that nudging does not create architecture where it did not exist before. Instead, it aims at simply changing it. That means, for example, that the already existing standard option of fossil fuels already serves as a nudge against renewables. Nudging, here, does not introduce a new manipulation but simply questions the status quo. That is why Sunstein further argues that it is impossible to escape from nudging in public sectors. People cannot be absolutely rational and avoid the impact of external forces on their opinion (Sunstein *Human Agency*, 94). Experts like Kasperbauer further believes that energy consumption is *the* area where the influence of governments and policymakers are required (477).

## 2.2. Nudging and human autonomy

The allegation is that nudging reduces human autonomy. If people are continuously pushed towards certain activities, it could reduce people’s ability to live the lives they want. Hansen and Jespersen underline that nudging is a relatively new phenomenon in human history. Moreover, if nudges are intentionally directed by government entities, they might cause a range of ethical problems. The researchers call for a strict and clear

distinction between unintentional acts of influencing people's behavior and intentionally trying to alter someone's behavior (Hansen and Jespersen 5). Moreover, Sunstein and Reisch put great emphasis on the idea that whatever the goals are, no matter if legitimate or not, manipulation constitutes a significant problem for nudging (169).

Another point is that nudges are not a one-off event – as a rule, manipulation is a continuous process. What is important to point out is that multiple actors can use manipulation with different goals at the same time. Thus, competing nudges would not only reduce individuals' autonomy, but could also lead to a process called 'fragmented self,' which occurs when behavioral tendencies are altered without fundamentally impacting a person's preference structure (Bovens 217). Also, Baldwin was afraid that regimes might abuse those strategies to revoke people's self-governance (851). Even though individuals fail to make good decisions, systematic manipulation cannot be seen as a good solution.

The most common counterargument to these allegations is that governments already impose some kind of decision-making framework long before people begin to claim their autonomy. Nudging is simply a way to transform this framework. According to Sunstein, any government has a right to establish a set of prohibitions and permissions where the default settings of the legal system already nudge (*Ethics of Influence*, 36). Thus, from the beginning, all participants are already acting under the strong influence of external forces. Such frameworks allow neither the freedom from such influences nor a full autonomy.

Proponents of nudging believe that in some exceptions nudging even boosts autonomy and motivates individuals to take responsibility for their lives. Well-regulated frameworks can drastically reduce the actual level of undesirable influence on people's behavior. Furthermore, individuals are already influenced by bad-intentioned actors, such as companies designing energy defaults to increase their profits. There is no need to prohibit regulations from actors who work in favor of the public good, especially when the alternatives impose the same control with dubious intentions.

### 2.3. Nudging is offensive

The last allegation to nudging is that nudges are offensive. The offensive character of nudging seems to be derived from the already mentioned paternalisms and the autonomy deficit. According to Wilkinson, nudges treat individuals as incompetent decision-

makers, thus other people should decide for them (345). Even if people are not competent enough and need support in decision-making to meet their goals, doing so without their consent still impacts their human dignity. Manipulation will probably outrage people instead of making them satisfied, even if nudging, in fact, has helped them reach their goals.

The most common counterargument to these claims is that nudging aims to improve the public good. Cornell points out that people would not do what is best for the public good without government intervention. As is the case for many social problems, “there’s simply no way individuals can expect to make progress toward a solution on their own” (1320). Sustainable energy consumption is one such area. It should not be considered as offensive to receive help in problems that apply to everyone.

### 3. Why should we accept nudging?

In the author’s opinion, the paternalism, autonomy reduction, and offensiveness are not convincing in this context, because energy production and consumption are already massively architected by itself. In the following section, the author presents four arguments in support of the aforementioned statement. These arguments explain why the massive architecture of energy consumption justifies a certain level of nudging.

#### 3.1. Broad architecture of nudging

The so-called ‘broad architecture’ means the basic system of energy production and its consumption by individuals. Broad architecture of energy production and consumption is entirely independent from consumers’ behaviors. Since this broad architecture of energy systems is outside of the control of ordinary people, it is difficult to see how nudging could be blamed for the reduction of human autonomy if it is lacking to begin with.

Most national power grids were established in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. They were built to stay; thus, it is hard to modify them. For example, despite solid efforts to improve the US-American energy system, it is still only changing very slowly. In many cases, the energy system is almost entirely set up by governments and big corporations. The broad architecture of energy production and consumption was established long prior to individuals making their choices (Everett et al. 127-154).

We can observe that the decisions of ordinary people do not play an important role in the broad architecture of energy distribution and consumption. In the creation of energy

use predictions, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) takes into account, above all other aspects, economic factors such as the price of oil and the expected economic growth. These factors are much more predictable than expected energy consumption or an increase in the popularity of renewable energy. In 2015, the EIA forecasted that by 2040 18% of US electricity will come from renewable energy sources. The main factors helping to identify the upcoming trends in renewable energy include non-expiring renewable portfolio standards (RPS) and federal tax credits. In fact, the impact of ordinary citizens on the adoption of renewables is very low.

Moreover, the EIA is reporting that electricity usage and sales have decreased from 9.8% in 1950 to about 5% in 2015 (EIA 4). The most important reasons for this decrease are the following: an improvement in energy efficiency, saturation within the electronic devices market, and the decrease of population growth. EIA also points out that energy consumption in transportation is going to decrease due to enhancements in energy efficient vehicles usage, including electrical vehicles. Human choices remain unpredictable (EIA 6). Similarly, the International Energy Agency (IEA) contributed data to the establishment of the targets of the 2016 Paris Agreement by focusing on a range of technological developments, including carbon capture technology and improvements in renewables production (IEA/IRENA 191). To sum this up, the main factors of these forecasts constitute technological, infrastructural, and economic drivers. It assumes that the largest positive changes in energy production and consumption are made by governments and big private companies – not ordinary citizens (Smith 193).

### 3.2. Narrow architecture of nudging

‘Narrow architecture’ is referring to the decisions related to individual energy consumption. In fact, the narrow architecture of nudging imposes no impact on people’s choices. Different from the broad architecture, narrow architecture offers decisions which are already rigid in ways that reduce citizens’ autonomy of choices on energy consumption.

For example, Kasperbauer noted that 33 US-American states do not offer individuals a choice on energy suppliers. In such states, a chosen supplier has an agreement with the state government to offer all energy services, with usually only one default option per chosen energy source. In the case of more options, they were typically limited, without citizens’ participation, and were made up of around 4 or 5 options, none

of them renewables. As a result, people lacked control over their choice of energy suppliers (Kasperbauer 475).

That is why some people blame the state for bad energy policies. Energy companies need to offer a broader set of options for consumers, including energy from renewable sources. It is quite paternalistic and manipulative to force citizens to use ‘dirty’ energy, instead of offering a broader selection. Human autonomy here becomes compromised because of the limited influence people have on their energy suppliers.

However, it is hard to understand how a broader range of choices would change the energy infrastructure remarkably. Even when energy companies provide a large range of options, they do this without the intention to preserve people’s autonomy. They instead try to gain a competitive advantage over their competitors. Renewable energy as a default option would be possible only if it is profitable. Nevertheless, what is profitable is determined by broader technological and economic variables, which are also outside of people’s control.

Around a third of all energy production satisfies the energy requirements of buildings and electronic devices. Unfortunately, due to a range of factors, it is not always easy to move to a new house or acquire new devices. Citizens are considerably resistant to any changes; thus, they do not generally willingly invest money into improving the energy efficiency of their possessions, unless there are some problems with the property and devices they already own (Weber). Additionally, consumers are not directly responsible for improvements in energy efficiency. First of all, technology must get more advanced, and the long-term benefits should outweigh R&D costs for technological innovations.

To conclude, both the broad and narrow architecture of energy production and consumption significantly reduces people’s autonomy. That means that the energy infrastructure already is massively architected. Therefore, there is no reason to think that pushing people towards sustainable energy consumption is more paternalistic or manipulative than the system already is.

### 3.3. Situational Factors

The next statement is drawn from the narrow architecture. It argues that consumption patterns are freely steered by apparently trivial, random factors. There is probably no existing energy company which could guarantee the preservation of people’s autonomy.



Presumably, human autonomy is absent when it comes to energy production and consumption.

A range of studies has showed that informing citizens on the average energy consumption in their neighborhood can remarkably change household energy consumption. In opposition, some studies show that some encouragements to conserve energy, such as appealing to people's environmental awareness, provision of financial incentives, and imposing penalties, have no effect (Croson and Treich 337).

Furthermore, this shift in behavior is significantly fragile. For example, some households can reduce energy consumption in the following week or two weeks after getting the report summarizing their energy use. Unfortunately, until the next report a constant backsliding takes place. The reports appear to be more effective in a long-term perspective, while a tendency towards previous consumption behavior has not changed (Allcott and Rogers 3006-3008).

The explanation of these patterns is that our consumption behavior is firmly affected by multiple external factors. For example, Abrahamse and Steg argue that sociodemographic factors, such as country and region, the number of members in a household, and average income, can, to a great extent, determine our consumption patterns. Psychological factors like people's attitude towards energy consumption play a less important role in this case (Abrahamse and Steg 35).

Multiple debates over 'situationism' stress the important role of consumer patterns in regard to environmental virtues. Environmental virtue theory claims that character traits have possibilities to produce virtuous behavior towards various situations and actors. Situationists believe that there is a lack of one core element defining an individual's character, thus people's behavior in human energy consumption is not connected to purely internal factors. Consumption patterns are most likely caused by a strong influence of external factors (Kasperbauer 480).

Several studies conducted in the United States regarding solar energy have showed that a single adoption of solar energy systems increases the probability of the following adoption in the neighborhood by 78% (Bollinger and Gillingham 40-42). Moreover, Graziano and Gillingham discovered that this 'neighbor effect' was especially remarkable within a half mile radius of the first installation. Citizens' choice of renewable energy was largely influenced by their neighbors. Massive adoption of solar energy system

increases visibility of renewables, and thus creates a local norm that individuals feel obliged to follow (Graziano and Gillingham 820-824).

### 3.4. People's preferences

The core idea for all three aforementioned objections is that individuals' preferences play a major role. Thus, going against individuals' preferences is considered highly paternalistic, autonomy reducing, and offensive. Nevertheless, some scholars argue that consumers strongly prefer sustainable energy. If this is true, this would justify nudges in sustainable energy consumption and recognize them as ethically permissible.

Numerous experiments on default energy preferences demonstrated strong support for sustainable energy. According to Pichert and Katsikopoulos, 50-90% of citizens living in the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union prefer to use sustainable energy instead of cheaper non-sustainable alternatives (714). What is important is that this tendency was kept even in the absence of default option, for example, citizens supported participation in the Smart Grid program even when it was not set as the default. Nevertheless, participation in sustainable energy initiatives is higher if it is the default. It appears that the default option helps individuals to act in accordance with their preferences.

Indeed, nudging would be more controversial if consumers did not support sustainable energy. Since people already support renewable energy and energy efficiency, we can assume that the current non-sustainable default in energy consumption is against citizens' preferences. Promotion of sustainable consumption generally seems to be a global trend in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In 2014, National Geographic and GlobeScan conducted a questionnaire of over 18,000 people from 18 countries. It found that 61% of the surveyed were 'very concerned' with environmental problems, in comparison to 56% in 2012. Unfortunately, this concern rarely translates to consumption patterns. For example, sustainable consumption patterns have been continuously declining due to citizens' low support of energy efficient electronic devices, light bulbs, and hot water usage (Shannon-Missal).

Nevertheless, 69% of the survey participants agreed that solar energy is the best solution for the environment, 53% claimed that coal is the worst for environment, and 50% believe that the ecological risks of coal significantly outweigh its benefits (National Geographic and GlobeScan 18-25). The aforementioned studies prove that, besides

growing environmental awareness, it is still difficult to act in accordance with pro-environmental preferences. To some extent, we could claim that nudges provide crucial and very desirable assistance to individuals.

## Conclusion

Taking into account the massively architected character of energy consumption, nudges should be considered *prima facie* ethically permissible. Generally speaking, in the case of sustainable energy consumption, the majority of allegations towards nudging are not sufficient. Current nudging strategies are not any more manipulative than the default options already applied. They even have two important advantages. Firstly, they are not just employed for the financial gain of individuals or companies but are performed by state actors in accordance with scientific research to pursue something that can be considered the greater good. Secondly, they might even improve people's autonomy by providing additional options, thereby allowing citizens to act in accordance with their preferences.

To sum up, the author wants to shortly address the following four issues. First of all, the justification of nudging in this article might, for obvious reasons, not be extended to all existing kinds of nudges. One of the main assumptions in this research is that sustainable energy undoubtedly is part of the public's best interest. However, in this situation, not only the goal is important, but also the methods of achieving it. Whether external agents actually support us in achieving our goals, it is also important if they are manipulating us or not. If instead of clean energy, 'dirty energy' was promoted, which is harmful for both people and environment, nudging appeared to be totally unacceptable.

The second point is that nudging for sustainability continues to be offensive. However, the author argues that nudging cannot be offensive if it does not include paternalism, manipulation, or reduction of autonomy. To some extent, nudging is crossing a line by assuming that individuals need help to act sustainably. This could be enough to recognize nudges as offensive. As a counterargument, the author uses the idea that sustainable energy consumption is a public issue that cannot be governed by citizens alone. This issue requires a common response and specific resources that only state agents are able to access. There is no doubt that people need support from others to act sustainably. This is actually the nature of solving common problems.

The third statement is related to the previous point. It should be stressed that nudging itself would not be enough. Nudges need to be designed to support other policies related to sustainable energy consumption (Stern et al. 308-309). Nudging works best in combination with broader policy frameworks. For example, nudging people towards clean energy would be mostly impossible if the broader energy policy is set in opposition to renewable energy or, what is worse, supports traditional fossil fuels. So, state regulations and policies need to be established in ways that allow sustainable energy nudges to work properly.

The last argument in this discussion is the rising decentralization tendency of energy systems. Sooner or later, people will move from the national centralized grid model towards local 'mini grids.' This might considerably support energy independence for a range of actors from states to private households. Every electronic device could be powered with its own photovoltaic system or other type of clean energy, omitting the need to be connected to any grid. Experts are making the case that such a model would not be massively architected, thus nudges would become ineffective and unnecessary. The author supports this position. Such a system would have no space for massive architecture. Moreover, citizens would gain remarkable energy autonomy. What is even more important, such an energy model would indeed be sustainable, and much more beneficial than an actual national grids. Under these circumstances, nudging would be ethically problematic since it would not serve a greater purpose anymore. However, would we still need nudging if we achieved sustainability in energy consumption? Probably not.

The arguments provided above explain why nudging is actually permissible and plays a crucial role in effective energy governance. The actual energy production and consumption are massively architected. In itself, massive architecture is not necessarily a bad thing. However, rather than seeing nudging as bad, paternalistic, and manipulative, it should be considered as helpful. Nudges could ensure both choice autonomy and sustainable consumption behavior.

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# Manipulation in the Polish Holocaust Narrative

## The Influence of Language in Dehumanization, and the importance of Piotr Macierzyński's *Antologia wierszy SS-mańskich* [*An Anthology of Poems of SS-men*]

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Piotr Macierzyński, in an interview published in *Czas Kultury*, highlighted the importance of fighting against an unrealistic and idealized image of the Holocaust (Sikorzanka and Macierzyński). He compares the reception of his collection of poems *Antologia wierszy SS-mańskich* [*An Anthology of Poems of SS-men*] in the Czech Republic and Poland, concluding that in Poland the impartial discourse about concentration camps is almost nonexistent. The poet believes that the Polish image of the Holocaust is susceptible to different kinds of manipulation.<sup>1</sup> As a consequence, victims are not seen as real human beings but rather as examples of properly behaving martyrs, which is often far from being true.

In my article, I would like to show how Macierzyński's conclusions fall into the pattern of various research focused on examining the ways Poles have coped with the awareness of being witnesses to the Holocaust. This intense debate has been going on since the Second World War. One side of the dispute aims at highlighting Polish heroism

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<sup>1</sup> As Macierzyński points out, "Zainteresowanie jest większe niż w Polsce. U nas temat 'zamiata się pod dywan'. Z rozmów wynioskowałem, że dla organizatorów spotkań bardzo ważne jest ustalenie intencji autora. Gdy słyszą, że były dobre, są skłonni przyznać mi prawo głosu, nawet uznać te utwory za udane, jednak wyczuwa się obawę przed ewentualnym skandalem. Jest to więc książka spod lady. Oficjalnie tylko jeden dom kultury zrobił wieczór z antologią (w Nowej Soli), kilka spotkań wydawca. Natomiast Czesi rozmawiają o Holokauście z powagą, ale niezdrowych emocji" (Sikorzanka and Macierzyński; "The interest in the book [in the Czech Republic] is higher than in Poland. In our country, it is 'swept under the rug.' Conversations with Poles organizing the meetings made me realize that what is really meaningful for them is to determine the true intention of the author. If they hear that my intention is virtuous, they are prone to grant me the right to speak up or even acknowledge my works as successful. But you can sense the fear of a possible scandal. Therefore, my book is under-the-counter. Officially, only one community center (in Nowa Sól) organized a social evening with my anthology. My publisher also enabled me to meet with the readers. Contrary to the low interest in Poland, Czech people discuss the matters regarding the Holocaust with solemnity but without excessive unhealthy emotions [transl. K.K.]").



and portrays Poles as the most righteous among all nations. The other, however, holds that the national image of the Holocaust is distorted.

This second group of researchers is, among others, represented by individuals like Jan Tomasz Gross, Jacek Leociak, Michael C. Steinlauf, and Joanna Tokarska-Bakir. They are examining the Polish attitude towards Jews since the Second World War. The researchers claim that the atmosphere between Poles and Jews has been very tense, especially since the Holocaust. This has led to further prejudices and discrimination, a subject that is thoroughly discussed in Steinlauf's book *Pamięć nieprzyswojona: Polska pamięć Zagłady* – the English title takes another direction and calls it *Bondage to the Dead: Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust* – which is in full measure devoted to the relationship between Poles and Jews.

Another aspect of Macierzyński's book is the question of the accuracy of the imagery. The poet aims at emphasizing how difficult it was for prisoners of concentration camps to survive. He draws a conclusion very similar to Tadeusz Borowski's, whose position on the matter had led to him being branded as a nihilist: actions taken in order to survive were not always ethical (Krupa 16). Macierzyński objects to passing over those morally ambiguous cases in silence and writes about them, for example, mentioning the fate of Maksymilian Kolbe (Macierzyński, *Antologia* 50).

*Antologia wierszy SS-mańskich* was published in 2011, with a second edition in 2016. One year later, in 2017, Macierzyński wrote *Książka kostnicy* [*The Book of the Morgue*], fully devoted to the topic of the Holocaust. Both books are based on documentary evidence on the concentration camps. Macierzyński makes use of various works written by Auschwitz survivors, for example the Hungarian Miklos Nyiszli's *Auschwitz: A Doctor's Eyewitness Account*.

The emotional aspect in choosing to write these works is worth taking into consideration as well. Macierzyński's uncle has survived Auschwitz and talked to him about its atrocities (Biedak). This fact is rarely brought up in papers focused on Macierzyński's poetic works. However, I have a firm conviction that the family's experience is worth pointing out. Macierzyński, who was born in 1971, after all depends on the accounts of witnesses and the representations and discourses in Polish culture for his knowledge on the Holocaust and the situation in the concentration camps.

The topic of the Holocaust is reoccurring in Macierzyński's poems. His works is part of the project of re-reading Polish history and showing that it is a lot more complicated than the average readers might think. The poet fights against overly idealized portrayals of the Holocaust. It is worth emphasizing that Macierzyński's perspective benefits from recent developments. In the last years, a huge amount of research has been published on Poles' attitude towards Jews, among it is Jan Tomasz Gross' *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne*, written in 2000. The book has caused outrage and still remains controversial because it poses the question of Polish moral responsibility for the massacre in Jedwabne on July 10, 1941. Andrzej Kaczyński wrote about the book's impact on Polish culture:

Najgłośniejsza książka ostatnich lat. O niezrównanej liczbie cytowań. Od jesieni 2000 roku do jesieni 2002 roku nie było dnia, w którym media nie omawiałyby poruszonych w niej spraw. Wywołała narodową debatę na temat relacji polsko-żydowskich w czasie wojny, a w konsekwencji duże zmiany w świadomości społecznej.

It is the most renowned book. With its number of quotes, it is incomparable to any other work recently written. From autumn of 2000 to autumn of 2002, not a single day passed without the media discussing the issues raised in the book. It sparked a national debate about Polish-Jewish relations during the war and, as a consequence, it led to major changes in the social consciousness [transl. K.K.].

This reception confirms that in Poland the subject of Polish-Jewish relations is an ever-present issue. This is the main thesis of Michel Steinlauf's book *Pamięć nieprzyswojona: Polska pamięć Zagłady*, in which he investigates the Polish attitude towards the Holocaust through its history.

Steinlauf states that even though the Polish were direct witnesses to the Holocaust, they did not understand it (54). Before and during the war, Poles were rather apprehensive towards Jews. Moreover, the disappearance of Jews was considered financially beneficial. As a result, many Poles benefited from the Holocaust and, as he concludes, this recognition provoked a guilty conscience and a general feeling of guilt that became omnipresent. Most of these Polish witnesses were bystanders who did not directly commit any crimes, but the fact that they saw these unspeakable atrocities combined with the awareness of the tense Polish-Jewish relations made them feel responsible for numerous deaths (Steinlauf 114).

The most common way of dealing with their feeling of guilt was to suppress it. National propaganda focused not on the deaths of millions of Jews but on the pain the Nazis had inflicted on Poles. The government in socialist Poland used Auschwitz as a place to commemorate Polish martyrology.

All the negative feelings and bad conscience erupted in March 1968, when the government called Jews the enemies of Poland and made thousands of them emigrate. Katarzyna Kuczyńska-Koschany calls this event, referring to Adam Michnik's words, "suchego pogrom" ["dry pogrome"] (2-3). This refers to the Polish idiom "ujść na sucho" (literally: not to get wet, remain dry), which means "to get away with something." Even though many Jews suffered and even committed suicides, no one on the Polish side was punished. People were not directly murdered, but the consequences of anti-Jewish attacks were still significant. Among the attacks were: calling names, physical violence, attempts to take over Jewish assets, etc. For many people, this led to a resurfacing of memories of the Second World War and the Holocaust.

One of the people who decided to emigrate is Janusz Marchwiński, who, in an interview conducted by Krystyna Naszkowska, said:

Antysemityzm jest chorobą psychiczną Polaków. Nigdy nie sterapeutyzowaną. Żadna z ekip, które objęły władzę po 1989 roku, nie próbowała w jakiś uporządkowany, usystematyzowany sposób zająć się tym tematem, a to jest moim zdaniem absolutnie niezbędne. Przerobienie brunatnej przeszłości było kluczowe dla Niemców, co widziałem i przeżyłem na własne oczy, żyjąc tam wśród nich. Widziałem drogę, jaką oni przeszli. Nie odbyło się to w sposób przypadkowy, na zasadzie: "Było, minęło, zapomnijmy" (Naszkowska and Marchwiński 131).

Antisemitism is Poles' mental illness. It has never been treated. None of the governments ruling since 1989 have taken any measures to deal with this issue in an organized, systematized way. I truly believe that this is inevitable. Working through their Nazi history was crucial for Germans, and I have personally witnessed that living among them. I have seen the efforts they were making. It wasn't done haphazardly, as if under the principle of: "The past is the past, let us forget about it." [transl. K.K.].

Macierzyński's poetic books fit into the pattern of publications like Steinlauf's or Gross'. He poses the question whether all Poles behaved morally right. He, for example, builds a case around the story of St. Maksymilian Kolbe, a Franciscan and Auschwitz inmate, who, in 1941, while detained in Auschwitz, voluntarily took the place of another Auschwitz prisoner, Franciszek Gajowniczek, who was sentenced to death by starvation in the infamous Block 11. Kolbe survived the horrors of Block 11 just to be executed via

a lethal injection on August 14, 1941. Gajowniczek, on the other hand, survived the concentration camp and, after the war, bore witness to Kolbe's act of charity. The Franciscan was beatified in 1971 and canonized in 1982 (Bar 31-41).

On the other end of Kolbe's story, however, before being sent to Auschwitz, he was the executive editor of the catholic newspaper *Rycerz Niepokalanej* where multiple controversial articles about Jews had been published (Bar 5). Because of that, the aforementioned researcher Jacek Leociak holds the outspoken opinion that Kolbe was an anti-Semite (52). Macierzyński makes direct use of this information showing the ambiguities of Kolbe's behavior in one of his poems:

**List do świętego Maksymiliana Kolbe bez znaków opłaty pisany nie z potrzeby serca lecz z chęci poszukiwania prawdy**

przyznaj stałeś ogłupiały z bólu lub strachu  
i nie wiedziałeś co robisz może ktoś cię wypchnął  
potknąłeś się albo sam już nie pamiętasz  
jak znalazłeś się naprzeciwko esesmana

są ludzie dla których ogólny brak higieny i dostępu do książek  
jest równie uciążliwy jak zrywanie paznokci

jeśli miałeś dość wszy i homoseksualistów  
albo nie chciałeś by twoja śmierć była przypadkowa  
w pełni cię rozumiem (Macierzyński, *Antologia* 50).

**A letter to St. Maximilian Kolbe without a stamp, written not from the bottom of one's heart but in the pursuit of truth**

admit it you were standing stupefied with pain or fright  
and you had no idea what you were doing maybe someone forced you out  
you stumbled or you don't remember  
how you happened to be standing in front of the SS-man

there are people to whom overall lack of hygiene and access to books  
is as burdensome as having their fingernails ripped off

if you were fed up with lice and homosexuals  
or you didn't want your death to be accidental  
I completely understand you [philological transl. K.K.]

In the poem, the question is posed why Kolbe sacrificed his life for his fellow prisoner. Instead of getting an idealized image of Kolbe's behavior, the reader has to face the truth: it is impossible to know Kolbe's intention, impossible to uncover what led him to save Gajowniczek's life while sacrificing his own. The real motivation behind Kolbe's sacrifice will forever remain unknown. Of course, there is a natural inclination to claim

that Kolbe's commitment stemmed from the fact that he was a virtuous man who believed in God and preferred to sacrifice his own life rather than idly stand by while a husband and father was sentenced to an unjust death. However, it is impossible to prove that there was no other motivation. Macierzyński aims at making the readers realize that they cannot exclude other, less idealized possibilities.

Highlighting the complexity of the matters connected to concentration camps is one of Macierzyński's main goals. In his works, ambiguity plays a crucial role. Rather than presenting the infallibility of the facts, he focuses on portraying the dividing and controversial points that are difficult to interpret or evaluate. In the interview conducted by Joanna Sikorzanka, he says:

Inna sprawa, że nie potrafimy mówić o Holokauście, oficjalnie przybiera się minę powagi i recytuje odrealnione wiersze – szkolna akademія i sztuczność, fakty zastępowane patosem. W swoich tomach walczę z takim przekazywaniem pamięci. Pokazujemy udane ucieczki z obozów, robimy o tym filmy, gloryfikujemy awers, ale nie mówimy, co zawiera rewers. Chcę, by każdy, kto podziwia bohaterską ucieczkę, wiedział, że za jednego szczęśliwca dziesięciu ludzi szło na śmierć albo Niemcy sprowadzali do obozu rodziców uciekiniera. Bohaterami byli ci, którzy mogli uciec, ale tego nie zrobili, by nie skazywać najbliższych na męczeństwo. Ale im trudniej stawiać pomniki (Sikorzanka and Macierzyński).

Another case is our Polish inability to talk about the Holocaust. The official discourse is full of excessive solemnity and recitations of poems only loosely based on reality. Facts are usually replaced by a pompous style, school celebrations, and artificiality. In my poetry, I try to fight against such means of conveying memory. We have a tendency to produce films about successful escapees from concentration camps. By glorifying only the obverse, we usually ignore the other side of the story. I would like everyone admiring heroic escapes to know that for every person on the run ten people were killed or the Germans brought the fugitive's family to the concentration camp. The true heroes were those who could have escaped but did not. They remained there in order not to condemn their whole family to martyrdom. But it is a way greater effort to pay homage to those people [transl. K.K.].

In his poems, Macierzyński tries to fight this idealized image of concentration camps. To do this, his *Antologia wierszy SS-mańskich* contains pieces of works written from two perspectives: the torturers' and the victims'.

The torturers are presented as brutal and cruel. They also seem to not be tormented by remorse because they do not perceive themselves as responsible for the deaths of millions of people. They excuse their actions by saying that they are just following orders, and that they do not have any option but to do so. Therefore, Macierzyński asks whether

we ought to blame those people or not. Even though the answer seems to be rather obvious, the poet aims at giving the readers different perspectives and encourages them not to judge too quickly and easily.

Victims in Macierzyński's poems are not martyrs. They obviously still suffer, but not in the name of any worldview or faith. Their pain is inflicted on them by others. They were humiliated and had to do things way beneath human dignity in order to survive. Macierzyński, for example, mentions an episode described by Miklos Nyiszli in his book *Auschwitz: A Doctor's Eyewitness Account*: eating human meat from the cauldron in which it is being boiled by the *Sonderkommando* in order to separate the bones from the flesh (Nyiszli 129-130). The poet does not add any notes to the poem to make this connection to Nyiszli's account explicit. However, at the end of the book he mentions a few of the works which influenced him, and Nyiszli's book is among them.

Macierzyński shows a certain ambiguity of the victims by presenting the degradation of their morality. Even though the image of the human remains floating in a cauldron is utterly ominous, the poet does not judge the victims' behavior, and rather focuses on blunt and brutal descriptions:

**Rozrywki obozowe**

zrobiłem sondę wśród współwięźniów  
*czy wierzysz w nasze ocalenie*  
i z wyników mogli być zadowoleni  
jedynie wartownicy

pytałem też *czy istnieje Bóg*  
wśród tych co trwają w obozie od kilku miesięcy  
Bóg się nie uchował  
nowi wierzyli z dawnego rozpędu

zadałem pytanie *czy zabiłbyś za pajdę chleba*  
i uzyskałem taką zgodność  
jakiej oczekuje się na zebraniach  
gdy pada pytanie *czy wspomógłbyś kalekie dzieci*

oczywiści sfalszowałem dane  
ale i tak trudno było zasnąć (Macierzyński, *Antologia* 13).

**Entertainment in the camp**

I took a poll among my fellow prisoners  
*do you believe in our salvage*  
the only people pleased with the results  
could be the watchdogs

I also asked: *does God exist*  
among those who were in the camp for months  
God has not survived  
newcomers' faith is just a habit

I asked *would you kill for a slice of bread*  
and I saw the kind of agreement  
that one would expect from a meeting  
when the question *would you help crippled children* is posed

of course I tampered with the results  
but still it was hard to fall asleep [philological transl. K.K.]

Macierzyński shows that everything people had learned and thought they knew suddenly appeared useless and out of place because of the war and life in the camp. For compassionate humanists, this loss of meaning and basic human values was especially hard and for them it, thus, was more difficult to survive the concentration camps. The war forced people to change their behavior and values in order to stay alive:

**XXX**  
w szkole odpytywano nas z antyku łaciny  
i innych niepotrzebnych rzeczy  
nie uczono nas jak się zachowywać  
w obozie koncentracyjnym  
zamieniłbym piątkę z geografii  
na umiejętność kradzieży ziemniaków  
[...]  
na razie zdałem maturę z wywożenia trupów  
i robię wszystko  
żeby nie stać się przedmiotem  
egzaminu (Macierzyński, *Antologia* 9).

**XXX**  
at school we were tested on ancient Latin  
and other unnecessary subjects  
we were not taught how to behave  
in a concentration camp  
I would have traded an A in Geography  
for the ability to steal potatoes  
[...]  
at present I have received my High School diploma in corpse disposal  
and I am doing everything I can  
so that I won't become the subject  
of the exam [philological transl. K.K.]

Another poem presents the way old faith became inadequate:

**Dekalog trupa**

obserwuj umierających  
aby tuż po śmierci ukraść im ubranie  
skórkę chleba złote zęby  
chyba że masz siłę i odwagę uczynić to wcześniej

bądź donosicielem  
podłamuj morale współwięźniów

stosuj arytmetykę  
żadnych sentymentów  
nie trać czasu na chorych i bezużytecznych

zapomnij o moralności i wstydzie  
patrz na to z punkty widzenia wszy  
której w głowie nie poprzewracały książki oraz wiersze

nie przechodź obojętnie obok swojego nieszczęścia  
dziel się bólem jak chlebem  
ale chleb ukrywaj

udawaj przyjaźń  
ale się nie zaprzyjaźniaj  
i bądź tak potrzebny  
że niezastąpiony

nie wiem czy będziesz szczęśliwy  
ale najedzony  
w obozie nie ma większej przyjemności  
bezinteresowność uczciwość i dobroć  
strasznie skracają tu życie (Macierzyński, *Antologia* 15-16)

**The Decalogue of a corpse**

watch the dying  
so that you can steal their clothes right after their death  
their crust of bread and golden teeth  
unless you have the courage and strength to do it earlier

be a common informer  
undermine your fellow prisoners' morale

use arithmetic  
without any sentiment  
don't waste time focusing on the ill and useless

forget about morality and shame  
look at it from a louse's perspective  
who hasn't been confused by books and poems



don't suffer through your misery indifferently  
share it as if it was bread  
but hide the bread

fake the friendship  
but don't make any friends  
and be needed to such an extent  
that you are irreplaceable

I don't know if you'll be happy  
but at least you'll be full  
there is no greater pleasure in the concentration camp  
selflessness integrity and kindness  
terribly shorten one's life here [philological transl. K.K.]

Macierzyński has his literary predecessor in Tadeusz Borowski, a Polish writer and former Auschwitz prisoner, who was born in 1922. Bartłomiej Krupa reconstructed the controversy around Borowski's work showing that it started as early as the 1940s when the Catholic community accused Borowski of being a nihilist (16). One of the central issues of this controversy and his writing was the portrayal of Poles and Jews in Auschwitz. It is in this light that Borowski's harsh criticism of Zofia Kossak-Szczucka's book *Z otchłani* [*From the abyss*] in his renowned review "Alicja w krainie czarów" ["Alice in Wonderland"] has to be read. The writer stated that Kossak-Szczucka's account of the time spent in Auschwitz presents a strongly distorted image. He pointed out that the writer focused on the martyrdom of Poles, ignoring the fact that thousands of Jews were murdered. Moreover, he accuses her of idealizing the death of Catholic camp inmates by depicting them as martyrs who believed in God throughout their entire life – until they disappeared in the gas chambers. Borowski points out that the reality of Auschwitz was totally different and that people in their struggle for survival often committed excesses unacceptable in any other circumstances – something he calls "moralność oświęcimską" ["Auschwitz morality"] (Borowski, "Alicja" 122).

It is worth mentioning that *Z otchłani* was not Kossak-Szczucka's first publication about Auschwitz. In the June of 1942, the conspirative forces, the resistance movement in Poland during WWII, released *W piekle* [*In Hell*] written by Kossak-Szczucka (at that time Zofia Kossak, as she was still unmarried). It was the second brochure (after Halina Krahelska's *Oświęcim – pamiętnik więźnia* [*Auschwitz – A Prisoner's Diary*]) about concentration camps. This publication was based on oral accounts of former Auschwitz

prisoners who were released from the camp. Kossak-Szczucka had not been in Auschwitz before writing *W piekle*. Making use of the stories told by former prisoners, she put them into the apocalyptic frame that Auschwitz is the result of people allying with the forces of the devil (Bartoszewski 6):

Do niedawna miasteczko nie wyróżniało się niczym z mnóstwa innych [...]. Taka była przeszłość Oświęcimia. Należało o niej wspomnieć, gdyż jest to wspomnienie ostatnie. Dla nikogo już bowiem, zarówno w Polsce, jak na całym świecie, osada ta nie zwiąże się z niczym ludzkim, pogodnym, a bodaj zwyczajnie powszednim. Po wszystkie czasy OŚWIĘCIM oznaczać będzie dantejski krąg piekła, szatańskie uroczysko, o którym się szepce ze zgrozą. Ludzkość zapomni o fortach Verdun, o szwedzkich okopach, tatarskich kurhanach, ucieczce z Dunkierki, zimowaniu Niemców w Rosji. Zapomni krucjat, Grunwaldu, Napoleoniady. Nie zapomni Oświęcimia. To Oświęcim wykracza poza ludzką miarę. Oświęcim zostanie po wiek wieków dowodem tego, do czego zdolni są ludzie, gdy dobrowolnie pójda na służbę szatana (Kossak 151).

Until recently this town did not stand out from the others [...]. That was the history of Auschwitz. It was inevitable to mention it because this memory is the last one. From now on, to everyone in Poland and other parts of the world, this town is not associated with anything human, cheerful, or even simply ordinary anymore. For all eternity, Auschwitz will indicate Dantean circles of hell, a devilish middle of nowhere, about which people whisper with terror. Mankind will forget about Verdun, Swedish trenches, Tartar burial mounds, the escape from Dunkirk, Germans dying in Russia because of the winter. Mankind will forget the crusades, the battle of Grunwald, Napoleon's excursions. Never will it forget Auschwitz. Auschwitz is what goes beyond any human measures. For all eternity will Auschwitz be a testimony of what human are capable of when they voluntarily start serving the devil [transl. K.K.].

The Jewish faith does not occupy a lot of space in this brochure. Even though Jews had already been transported to concentration camps at this time (the plan for the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question" was presented at the Wannsee Conference on January 20, 1942), their fate is barely mentioned:

I znów, jak wszędzie, księża katoliccy są przedmiotem specjalnej nienawiści władz. Dawniej dzielili ją z żydami. W ostatnim roku jednak żydów bądź wymordowano, bądź wywieziono do osobnych obozów. Księża spełniają najcięższe, najbardziej odrażające roboty. Niedziela przed południem przeznaczona jest na czyszczenie ustępów. Do księży należy roznoszenie zupy w kotłach ważących po 120 kilogramów (Kossak 176-177).

And again, as always, Catholic priests are the objects of the authorities' special hate. In former times, they shared this fate with Jews. However, in the last year, Jews have either been murdered or transported to separate camps. The priests have to deal with the most difficult and offensive plight. Sunday

morning, it is mandatory for them to clean the latrines. The priests are responsible for distributing soup which is stored in kettles weighting up to 120 kilograms [transl. K.K.].

Kossak-Szczucka was sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau in October 1943 and, as Władysław Bartoszewski in a foreword to *W piekle* states, liberated prior to the beginning of the Warsaw Uprising on August 1, 1944 (Kossak 176). Afterwards she wrote the book *W otchłani*, which was published in 1946. Borowski's review of the book shows that it contains obvious parallels to the narrative presented in the brochure she wrote before she had any experience in the camps.

Mentioning Borowski's works is inevitable when the case of truthfulness of witness' accounts is brought up. The writer strongly believed that one ought to present the true image of life in concentration camps rather than to idealize the actions one took to survive. In an essay which became an introduction to the English translation of Borowski's works, Jan Kott writes:

Borowski's Auschwitz stories are written in the first person. The narrator of three of the stories is a deputy Kapo, Vorarbeiter Tadeusz. The identification of the author with the narrator was the moral decision of a prisoner who had lived through Auschwitz – an acceptance of mutual responsibility, mutual participation, and mutual guilt for the concentration camp (21-22).

Kott quotes Borowski's review of Kossak-Szczucka's book. In Polish, the abridged passage from Borowski's review reads:

Uważam dalej, że nie wolno o Oświęcimiu pisać bezosobowo. Pierwszym obowiązkiem oświęcimiaków jest zdać sprawę z tego, co to obóz – [...] ale niech nie zapominają, że czytelnik [...] nie odmiennie zapyta: [...], a jak to się stało, że właśnie pan(i) przeżył(a)? [...] Nie ma co: opowiedzcie wreszcie, jak kupowaliście miejsca w szpitalu, na dobrych komandach, jak spychaliście do komina muzułmanów, jak kupowaliście kobiety i mężczyzn, co robiliście w Unterkunftach, Kanadach, Krankenbaumach, na obozie cygańskim, opowiedzcie to i jeszcze wiele drobnych rzeczy, opowiedzcie o dniu codziennym obozu, o organizacji, o hierarchii strachu, o samotności każdego człowieka. Ale piszcie, że właśnie wyście to robili! Że częśćka ponurej sławy Oświęcimia i wam się należy! (Borowski, "Alicja" 121-122).

In the English translation of the same passage reads:

It is impossible to write about Auschwitz impersonally. The first duty of Auschwitzers is to make clear just what a camp is ... But let them not forget that the reader will unfailingly ask: But how did it happen that *you* survived? ... Tell, then, how you bought places in the hospital, easy posts, how you shoved the 'Moslems' [prisoners who had lost the will to live] into the oven, how you bought women, men, what you did in the barracks, unloading the transports, at the gypsy camp; tell about the daily life of the camp, about the

hierarchy of fear, about the loneliness of every man. But write that you, you were the ones who did this. That a portion of the sad fame of Auschwitz belongs to you as well (qtd in Kott 22).

This way of thinking is also brought up by Piotr Macierzyński, who also portrays behavior in his poems that in any other circumstance would be heralded as immoral or indecent. In one poem in his anthology *Książka kostnicy*, called *Szczęście* [*Happiness*], he presents a monologue of a man who at first seems to be proud of not taking up any immoral actions. However, at the end of the poem, he states that the reason for remaining a decent man was very simple: he has not been subjected to circumstances forcing any ambiguous behavior. In line of Macierzyński's fight against the manipulated image of prisoners in concentration camps is the following poem about the relativity of morals:

### **Szczęście**

nie kopałem ciężarnych w brzuch  
nikomu nie kazałem w przysiadzie trzymać przed sobą taboretu  
nie rozdawałem mydła i ręczników  
żeby wprowadzić ludzi do komór gazowych  
nie przeprowadzałem selekcji na rampie  
by jednych wysłać do gazu  
drugich na długie męczarnie  
nie wrywałem złotych zębów  
nie katowałem  
bo nie byłem poddawany takiej próbie (Macierzyński, *Książka kostnicy* 58)

### **Happiness**

I did not kick the pregnant in their bellies  
none of the people were forced by me to hold a stool while squatting  
I did not give out soap and towels  
to get people into the gas chambers  
I did not make a selection at the loading ramp  
to condemn some of the people to the gas  
and the others to long agony  
I did not pull out golden teeth  
I did not torture anyone  
because I was not subjected to such a test [philological transl. K.K.]

Macierzyński's conclusion here is the following: those who have not been subjected to the atrocities of concentration camps ought not judge the actions of those who have. They lack the experience of this extreme and unimaginable situation. They don't know how they may have behaved if confronted with the horror of the camps. Moreover, over seventy years after the liberation of Auschwitz, it is an obligation to present the real image of the camps and Polish history which was – at least according to Macierzyński – not

always morally unequivocal. A fact we have to live with instead of trying to hide it in skewed, idealized, and manipulated representations of this time.

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# Suggestion of false memories under blind interviewing conditions

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Memories are believed to be an essential part of an individual's identity (Scoboria et al.). Memory research (Oeberst and Blank; Loftus et al.; Scoboria et al.) has shown that human memory functions reconstructively. That means that human memories are not stored like books or documents in an archive, waiting to be picked up and looked at without any loss of quality of the content. Rather, human memories are re-lived by a person and are slightly altered, depending on the context in which they are remembered and the schematic knowledge of the remembering person. Therefore, a memory is almost never an accurate representation of the original event or situation that is remembered. This means that memories are vulnerable to distortion. That in itself is not problematic. In fact, it has been shown that the reconstruction of memories can have very positive effects on the remembering person. When a person alters a memory in their favor, they might feel more self-confident or more harmonious with how they view themselves in the moment they remember. Another example of (potentially) positive effects of the reconstruction of memories is the collective memory of groups. When a family or a group of friends relive an event together repeatedly, they will create a common memory that might differ from the original individual memories and bond over it.

Unfortunately, the reconstruction of memories can also have severe negative consequences for individuals and the people who are close to them. This is especially true when people are being suggested false memories, i.e., memories about events that they have never experienced. Remembering something that has never happened, or at least not in the way it is suggested by a false memory, can harm an individual. It can be a cause for different problems, among them alienation, psychological strain like depression or traumatic disorders, and incorrect assumptions about oneself. For example, Loftus and Ketcham found that patients developed false memories of having been sexually harassed by people close to them when they were interviewed in a suggestive manner by their

psychotherapists. This led to increased psychological strain for the patients, and a rift between them and their family members.

Another example for negative effects of false memories are the Worms trials (“Wormser Prozesse”) that took place in Germany in the 1990s. In these trials, family members of young children were falsely accused and sentenced to imprisonment after the children had been interviewed by their kindergarten teachers, using suggestive techniques (Niehaus et al.). Years later, the convicted were proven to be innocent. By then, a lot of harm had been caused: Some of the children had been taken away from their families to live in foster families or foster homes, families had drifted apart, and many of the children and adults had developed psychological disorders, such as depression or PTSD.

It should be noted that the reconstruction of memories and the suggestion of false memories are usually processes that the individual is unaware of (Loftus and Pickrell). When false memories emerge, the remembering individuals are mostly unaware that their memories are not accurate representations of the past but rather a distorted or even made-up version of it. That is why the suggestion of false memories is potentially dangerous. If a process is triggered that an individual is unaware of, it is very difficult for them to question or resist it. Therefore, the aim of this contribution is to discuss the prevention of negative consequences of false memories. It focusses on negative autobiographical memories of young adults.

In order to discuss the prevention of false memories, firstly, the keywords of this contribution will be defined. Secondly, explanations for the origin of false memories will be discussed. Thirdly, an experiment about the suggestion of false childhood-memories to young adults will be presented and lastly, implications and limitations of that experiment will be discussed in the context of research on false memories.

## 1. Definition of keywords

### *Memories*

The foremost topic of this contribution are memories. Memories are defined as the mental recollection of past events and experiences (Loftus and Ketcham; Oeberst and Blank; Scoboria et al.; Shaw and Porter). In our case, the focus lies on the autobiographical memories of adults. These are memories from their own past – as opposed to knowledge about others or general knowledge – and they have a strong connection to the self and a person’s identity (Scoboria et al.).



A memory consists of two components: recollection and belief in occurrence (Scoboria et al.). *Recollection* describes to what extent a person “relives” a past event. There are several types of recollection. This contribution focusses on cognitive (i.e., what a person thinks), emotional (i.e., what a person feels), and perceptive (i.e., what a person sees or hears) recollections. *Belief in occurrence* describes in how far a person is convinced that the recollections that they experience are based on a true memory. Both components of a memory can occur independently from each other (Clark et al.; Scoboria et al.). For example, when reading a novel, one can imagine seeing the protagonists, the setting, or the action, and hearing the dialogue. That does not mean that one is convinced that these mental recollections are based on real-life experiences. On the other hand, an example for belief in occurrence without recollection is the fact that people believe that they were born even though they have no recollection of this event. Similar examples are stories from early childhood that were retold by adults. The lack of recollections does not hinder us to believe that they are true.

### *Suggestion*

Suggestion is a form of manipulation. Through successful suggestion, an individual experiences false recollection about an event and believes that said event has really happened (Hyman and Pentland; Loftus and Ketcham). If the suggestion is successful, a person does not only repeat the false or suggestive information given to them but reports additional information about this event (Scoboria et al.). In this contribution, the focus lies on the suggestion of false memories to others, using suggestive techniques in interviewing.

Many psychologists believe that the use of suggestive techniques is the most important reason for the emergence of false memories in interviewing (Garven et al.; Hyman and Pentland; Loftus and Pickrell; Shaw and Porter). Scoboria et al. give an overview on suggestive techniques. Prominent suggestive techniques include building rapport with the subject, encouragement, incontrovertible false evidence, tactics of presumed additional knowledge, social pressure, guided imagery, active listening, and asking additional questions.

### *False memories and false beliefs*

Scoboria et al. differentiate between false memories and false beliefs. *False memories* can differ in their quality, especially in their intensity. Scoboria et al. introduced a coding scheme that allows to rate false memories on a six-point-scale: 1 = *rejection of false memory*, 2 = *no memory*, 3 = *accepting false memory*, 4 = *partial false memory*, 5 = *full false memory*, 6 = *robust false memory*. A partial false memory is defined by two factors, by being at least moderately accepted and through the subject generating a detail that they consider remembered. A full false memory requires at least moderate acceptance and the generation of two to five additional “remembered” details. To be rated as a robust false memory, a memory requires a high level of acceptance with the generation of at least five details that are “remembered.”

As opposed to false memories, *false beliefs* are the conviction that a made-up or suggested event has truly happened, even though there is no recollective material that would provide evidence for that conviction. According to Scoboria et al., a person who is accepting a false memory without being able to give any additional details about the memory has developed a false belief. Thus, false beliefs are a weaker form of false memories. Factors that enhance the probability of a false belief are plausibility of the memory as well as credibility of the communicator (Blank; Blank et al., “Social construction”). For instance, one would be more likely to believe a false memory suggested by a person one trusts, like a family member or friend, than by a stranger.

It is very important to differentiate between false memories and false beliefs because they are related but not the same. Wade et al. (“Rich False Memories”) criticized that, in many studies, these two terms were used interchangeably. That makes it harder to accurately compare the results of the respective studies and to estimate how powerful the suggestion of false memories really is.

### *Blind interviewing*

In this experiment, a blind interviewing approach was applied. That means, that the interviewer did not know if the participants’ memories were true or false. Blind interviewing, or blind testing, is a common method in psychological research. Its goal is to prevent experimenter-expectancy-effects from biasing the quality of the collected data (Rosenthal). The experimenter-expectancy-effect is a specific form of the self-fulfilling

prophecy (Merton). It occurs when researchers subconsciously communicate to their participants what behavior is expected of them to verify the researcher's hypotheses.

## 2. The development of false memories

In the past two decades, there has been a lot of research on false memories. A general finding from studies about false memories is that it is hard to differentiate false memories from true memories. This is due to their similar content and quality (Blandón-Gitlin et al.; Shaw and Porter; Wade "Rich False Memories"). There is vast variety of false memories that have been successfully suggested to individuals. Amongst them are false memories of being lost in a shopping mall (Loftus et al.; Loftus and Pickrell), having suffered a food intolerance (Bernstein et al.; Laney et al.), participating in a religious ritual (Pezdek et al.), taking a trip in a hot air balloon (Garry and Wade; Hessen-Kayfitz et al.; Wade et al., "A picture"), or spilling a drink at a wedding (Hyman and Billings; Hyman and Pentland). A question that remains unanswered is how exactly the false memories develop. According to the scientists, the suggestive techniques that they had used in their studies were responsible for the creation of false memories (Ceci et al., "Repeatedly Thinking"; Ceci et al., "Source misattributions"; Garven et al.; Hyman et al.). Although this seems very plausible, so far it has rarely been tested by using a control condition. Hyman and Pentland were the only ones who tested their hypotheses against a control condition, finding out that the use of the guided imagery technique leads to significantly more false memories. Since this is only one of the many suggestive techniques, one should not assume that these results can be generalized for all suggestive techniques. Especially, when considering the results of Porter et al. who found that participants did not develop false memories even though they had been confronted with several suggestive techniques. As research on the misinformation effect shows, using a control condition immensely increases the validity of the results (Blank et al., "Comparing the influence"; Oeberst and Blank). Therefore, in this experiment the hypotheses were tested against a control condition.

As to how exactly false memories are created, there are two popular theories in psychological research that explain this phenomenon. One is called the schematic integration approach; the other is source confusion. Hereinafter, both theories will be explained.

The *schematic integration approach* suggests that false memories develop when schematic knowledge is confounded with false information (Hyman et al.; Loftus and Pickrell; Shaw and Porter). It states that trying to remember the event (that cannot be remembered since it has never taken place) a person activates schematic knowledge, that is, recollections which fit the suggested event. This schematic knowledge, or these recollections, are placed in the context of the new – false – information. Over time, the individual will confound their schematic knowledge or recollections with the false information and remember them in the context of the false event. In that way, false memories are created by erroneously attributing recollections to a piece of false information.

In *source confusion theory*, the creation of false memories is explained by a different mistake. When confronted with misinformation about a false event, the individual imagines how the situation could have been. They create mental images, sounds, or other perceptions. Over time, and with repeated thinking about the false event, the memory attributes these self-created mental perceptions to the false event and starts misjudging them for recollections (Ceci et al., “Repeatedly Thinking”; Ceci et al., “Source misattributions”; Hyman and Pentland).

In summary, both theories explain the emergence of false memories by a misattribution of recollections to false information about a made-up event. According to the first theory – the schematic integration approach –, recollections, originating in another memory, are confounded with false information; according to the other – source confusion theory –, self-created “recollections” about how the event might have felt if it had happened are confounded with false information.

Both theories have been tested and confirmed in various experimental studies. However, there are some flaws in these studies, that this experiment seeks to address. Firstly, as mentioned above, the lack of a control condition in most studies limits the generalizability of their findings. Even though it seems plausible that suggestive techniques are responsible for triggering false memories, there could be other explanations for the development of false memories, such as repeated interviewing (Bluck Levine; Roediger III et al.). Secondly, in all the cited studies, the interviewers knew which of the memories were based on true events, and which were fake. Regarding the experimenter-expectancy-effect (Rosenthal), it might be possible that this has biased

the results of the existing studies. Keep in mind that the experimenter-expectancy-effect works without the experimenters being aware of their biasing the participants. This does not mean that experimenters manipulate their data in an unethical way. It simply cannot be ruled out that their expectancies might have been subconsciously communicated to the participants. This could also explain why the reported rates of successfully suggested false memories range from 0% to 65% (Scoboria et al.). To address both flaws, the presented experiment introduced a control condition in which participants were interviewed about a false event without the use of suggestive techniques. Furthermore, all interviews were conducted by a blind interviewer. Hereinafter, the experiment will be described in detail, starting with its hypotheses, then giving an overview about the procedure, methods, and results of the experiment. After that, limitations and implications will be discussed.

### 3. The experiment

To contribute to the prevention of false memories, an experiment was conducted in which false childhood-memories were suggested to the participants over the course of three interviews, each one week apart. The parents of the participants provided four negative childhood-memories, two real ones and two made-up ones. During the interviews, neither the participants nor the interviewer knew that two of the memories were false. The participants were told that they were taking part in a study about improving the recollection of childhood-memories. The interviewer – who is also the author of this contribution – was told that there would be one false memory for each participant, but he did neither know which memory was made-up nor that there were really two false memories.

As the motivation of this experiment was to investigate the negative consequences of false memories and compare the findings to a therapy or eyewitness setting, participants were only interviewed about negative memories.

#### 3.1. Hypotheses

As elaborated above, there are many studies that document that it is possible to suggest false memories to other people. Even though this has not been tested with a control condition before and even though the results are potentially biased by the experimenter-

expectancy-effect, it seems probable that the use of suggestive techniques in interviewing will indeed lead to the creation of false memories in individuals.

The reasoning behind this is that the suggestion of false memories either triggers recollections of true memories that are falsely confounded with false information (schematic integration approach), or that thoughts, emotions, and perceptions that are created in response to the suggestion are erroneously attributed to false information (source confusion theory). In both cases, the suggestive techniques would encourage the participant to make a wrong assumption about the true origin of a recollection. That means, the use of suggestive techniques should lead to more false memories, compared to a control condition in which no suggestive techniques are used.

H1: Using suggestive techniques when interviewing adults about made-up childhood-events will lead to significantly more false memories.

There are other studies in which participants developed false memories without having been exposed to suggestive techniques at all (Ost et al.; Strange et al.). This suggests that the suggestive techniques might not be solely responsible for the development of false memories. Another explanation for the creation of false memories comes from research about reminiscence (Bluck and Levine; Roediger III et al.). It has been shown that false memories can develop over time when the individual is interviewed repeatedly about the false event. This seems very likely, because one would want to remember a “lost” autobiographical memory and hence would spend time and effort to “recollect” it. Assuming that suggestive techniques are one factor for the suggestion of false memories and that false memories emerge in repeated interviewing even without the use of suggestive techniques, the combination of both should lead to an exponential increase of false memories.

H2: A combination of suggestive techniques and repeated interviewing about made-up childhood-events will lead to a significantly exponential increase in false memories.

### 3.2. Procedure and methods

This experiment was approved by the ethics committee of the psychology department of the Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz. It was part of a bigger project that investigated false memories. Data was collected by the author and another psychologist, Merle Wachendörfer, for two theses about the creation (the present experiment) and reversibility (Wachendörfer) of false memories. That is the reason why it was possible for the author

to interview the participants but still maintain his blindness towards the status of the memories.

Participants were recruited by flyers, e-mails, Facebook-posts, and personal contact in lectures or on the campus of the Johannes Gutenberg-University Mainz. As the participants could not be told the true purpose of the experiment, it was advertised as a study about remembering childhood-memories. 91 participants expressed their interest in taking part in the experiment. Questionnaires were sent to (at least one of) their parents in which the parents were asked to report two of their children's real negative childhood-memories from the age of four to fourteen. Additionally, they were asked to report two false negative childhood-experiences that they were sure their child had not experienced but could have plausibly experienced. Of these 91 questionnaires, 60 were sent back to the research team. After that, three 60-minute-long interviews were scheduled in which the participants were interviewed about all four childhood-events.

Two people could not participate due to difficulties in finding three dates for the interviews. One participant had to be excluded after the first interview because they guessed the true purpose of the experiment, leaving  $N = 57$  participants who completed all three interviews, each one week apart, and one 30-minute debriefing session that took place immediately after the last interview and was conducted by the other experimenter so that the author of this contribution could maintain his blindness towards the memories' conditions. In every interview, the participants were interviewed about all four memories. For two memories (one true, one false), no suggestive techniques were used. For the remaining two memories (one true, one false) suggestive techniques as described by Scoboria et al. were used. All interviews were recorded with a voice recording software on Microsoft 10.

After the interviews, five participants had to be excluded from analysis because it turned out in their debriefing that one of the respective false memories had in fact really happened or happened with only slight alterations. For example, one participant was excluded from analysis because they were interviewed about a tricycle accident in which they had presumably suffered a broken arm. In the debriefing, it turned out that that tricycle accident had really happened, but they had not broken their arm.

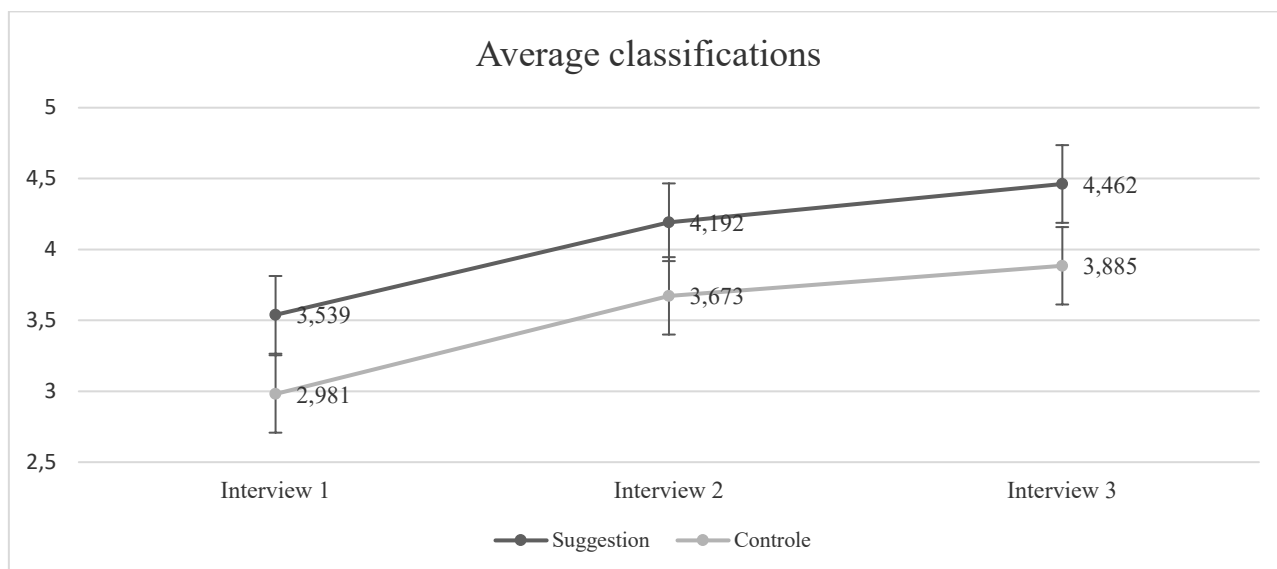
The data of the remaining  $N = 52$  participants was analyzed, using SPSS Statistics 23 V5 and MS Excel 2016.

### 3.3. Results

Since this contribution focused on the negative effects of the suggestion of false memories, only the false memories were analyzed. They were rated by two independent raters who were blind to the conditions. The raters rated the memories on a 6 point-scale, using the scale introduced by Scoboria et al. To test the hypotheses, a 2 (suggestive techniques, no suggestive techniques) x 3 (three interviews) repeated measures ANOVA with Greenhouse-Geisser correction were calculated in SPSS. The results are as follows:

A significant main effect for suggestive techniques  $F(1.00, 51.00) = 9.89, p = .003$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .16$ , and a significant main effect for repeated interviewing  $F(1.30, 66.10) = 59.91, p < .001$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .54$  were found. There was no significant interaction of suggestive techniques and repeated interviewing  $F(1.22, 62.36) = .07, p = .84$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .001$ . Pairwise comparison with Bonferroni correction across both conditions (suggestive techniques, no suggestive techniques) showed a significant increase of the classifications across all three interviews (Interview 1:  $M = 3.260, SD = 1.285$ ; Interview 2:  $M = 3.933, SD = 1.395$ ; Interview 3:  $M = 4.174, SD = 1.397$ ).

Illustration 1 shows the average classification of the respective conditions (suggestive techniques vs. no suggestive techniques) for each of the three interviews.



*Illustration 1:* Average classifications of the respective memory conditions for each interview ( $N = 52$ ).

Regarding the hypotheses, it means that hypothesis 1 was confirmed. When the participants were interviewed using suggestive techniques, they reported more false memories as compared to the control condition in which no suggestive techniques were applied. Hypothesis 2 was rejected. The combination of suggestive techniques and



repeated interviewing did not lead to an exponential increase in false memories. Instead, a main effect for repeated interviewing was found. That means that the participants developed false memories, even if no suggestive techniques were used in interviewing. These findings, as well as their limitations and implications will be discussed in the next chapter.

## 4. Discussion

This experiment has contributed to the research on false memory by introducing blind interviewing as well as a control condition in suggesting autobiographical false memories to an adult population. It was shown that the use of suggestive techniques led to more false memories. This finding replicates the many studies that have shown that the suggestion of false memories is possible (e.g., Garry and Wade; Hessen-Kayfitz and Scoboria; Hyman and Billings; Loftus and Pickrell; Pezdek et al.; Scoboria et al.; Shaw and Porter; Strange et al.; Wade et al., “A picture”).

Additionally, a significant increase of false memories over time was found in both conditions. That means that the participants developed false memories over time even when they were not interviewed in a suggestive manner. This finding is in line with research about reminiscence (Bluck and Levine; Roediger III et al.).

### 4.1. Limitations

One limitation of this experiment is that the interviewer was not completely blind. Even though he did not know which and how many memories were made-up (he was told that there would be three true and one false memory instead of two memories each), he knew that participants would be interviewed about false memories. Regarding the experimenter-expectancy-effect, this is not problematic because the experimenter was not able to identify the false memories. Since an experimenter who does not know if a memory is true or false cannot give the participants a cue about what is expected from them, it is very unlikely that the result in this experiment have been biased by the experimenter-expectancy-effect.

The fact that the interviewer was unable to identify the false memories makes the results of this experiment even more interesting as he should have had an advantage in identifying the false memories, compared to other interviewers like psychotherapists,

kindergarten teachers, or judges. This might indicate that the false memory effect is much more robust than expected.

One important limitation of this experiment is that some of the suggestive techniques might have had an impact on both conditions. Specifically, the techniques “building rapport with the subject,” “incontrovertible false evidence,” and “tactic of presumed knowledge” were applied in all conditions due to the facts that (1) the interviewer tried to build a trusting atmosphere from the start and maintain that atmosphere throughout all interviews, and (2) the participants were told that all memories were reported by their parents. This might have led to these suggestive techniques influencing the formation of false memories in the control condition. This might also explain why no interaction of suggestive techniques and repeated interviewing was found but two main effects for each component, respectively.

Another limitation is that only young adults, mostly university students, were interviewed. Since the memories were taken from questionnaires handed in by the participants’ parents, it is difficult to interview middle-aged or older adults because they often do not have parents who could send in a questionnaire. Still, this specific population might have lowered the external validity of the findings. One possible way to address this problem would be to rerun the experiment and have siblings or other family members hand in the questionnaires.

Lastly, the findings of this experiment are limited to cognitive, emotional, and perceptive aspects of negative childhood-memories since only these types of recollections have been investigated. It remains unclear whether other aspects of memories, such as body memory or positive memories, can be suggested equally successfully.

#### 4.2. Further research

As mentioned above, the presented experiment has some limitations. Future research could address them. For example, this experiment focused on negative childhood-memories. Future studies could test if false memories about positive memories can be as easily suggested.

This experiment has shown that it is possible to suggest false childhood-memories even under blind interviewing conditions. Based on that finding, additional questions can be posed. Most importantly, as the overall goal is to contribute to the prevention of false memories, one should investigate if there are risk factors that make the successful

suggestion of false memories more likely. For example, the relationship between interviewer and interviewee might be a success factor in the suggestion of false memories. Psychological research has shown that people are trying to please people they like (Smeets et al.; Zimbardo et al.). It might be possible that an interviewee gives an extra effort to “remember” false memories when they like the interviewer so as not to disappoint them.

Equally interesting, one might want to look for protective factors that enable an individual to resist a suggestion of false memories. Wachendörfer found that people can correctly identify false memories even after the successful suggestion, when they are encouraged to question their sources of memories. Possibly, the suggestion of false memory could be prevented in the first place, when people are reminded to question their sources during the interview.

Furthermore, in this study, a lot of different suggestive techniques have been applied to suggest a false memory. Further research might try to disentangle the influence of the respective techniques, as has been done by Hyman and Pentland for the guided imagery technique. This might give a better overview about which techniques should be used cautiously, or not at all, when interviewing someone about their memories.

#### 4.3. Implications

The findings of this experiments have important implications. Firstly, since the use of suggestive interviewing techniques such as social pressure or guided imagery leads to false memories, such suggestive techniques should not be used when interviewing someone about their memories. This is especially important when there is the possibility that the false memory might have negative effects for the interviewed individual (as elaborated in the introduction), and even more so if the goal of the interviewer is to support the interviewee, e.g., when a psychotherapist interviews their patient about their past. Rather than focusing on finding out “the truth” about memories, it seems to be more important to help the patient deal with the current symptoms and pain of memories or even the unknown.

When an eyewitness is interviewed, it is especially important not to suggest something to them that might blur their memories. Rather, they should be encouraged to think about what really originates in their own memory, and what aspects might have been added by external suggestions (Wachendörfer).

The findings of this experiment show that false memories emerge over repeated interviewing, even when no suggestive techniques are applied. Consequently, when in doubt, an individual should not be encouraged or even pressured to remember aspects of memories at all. Rather, the interviewer should give the interviewee the opportunity to talk about recollections that they are sure they remember. As was shown, the – mostly well-meant – intention of “helping” people “remember” more details most often causes the suggestion of false memories rather than really serving its intended purpose of making the interviewee correctly remember something in more detail.

Most importantly, this contribution shows that a person’s memories need to be treated cautiously. Whenever possible, people should refrain from letting their own hypotheses about what might have happened to another person influence the other’s process of remembering. This is asking a lot of discipline and awareness from interviewers. Hence, it might be helpful to integrate the following points into the training of professions who employ interviews, like psychotherapists, police officers, or kindergarten teachers: (1) deeper knowledge about the processes of remembering and (2) the dangers of suggesting false memories as well as (3) practical elements on how to interview without suggesting something.

## 5. Conclusion

This contribution has given an overview about how false negative childhood-memories can be suggested to young adults. It was shown that (1) using suggestive techniques in interviewing and (2) repeated interviewing about a false event led to false memories. Further, it has been argued why the potential suggestion of false memories should be prevented, especially when it cannot be estimated what consequences might follow a successful suggestion.

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# The Translator as a Mediator

## Potential Intentional or Unintentional Manipulation during the Translation Process

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When a text is translated from one language to another, the School of Manipulation (a movement within translation studies in the 1980s) used to argue that there is always a certain amount of manipulation involved – whether the translator intends it or not. In this article, I will discuss the potential intentional and unintentional manipulation of target texts, which responsibilities the translator has, and why the reader should be aware of potential manipulation. Considering how well the translator is hidden from the reader of the target text, it can be difficult for the reader to realize that the text they are reading is in fact a translation. My argument is therefore that it is important to acknowledge the presence of the translator in the target text. This is crucial for two reasons: (1) because of the need to acknowledge the work the translator puts into the translation, in order to ensure they are adequately compensated for their work, and (2) because the readership needs to be aware of the second voice in the text and the potential risk of intentional manipulation.

### Unintentional vs. Intentional

Chantal Wright defines a translation as “a blended or hybrid entity that is connected in a unique way to a preceding text; a text that has undergone a process of mutation or transformation” (85). This process is performed by a translator. The influence of the translator in the translation process ranges from completely unintentional to very intentional. Changes made to the text can be the result of the natural influence of the translator, to adapt the text to the source language or culture, or even a result of intentional manipulation in the form of propaganda. Usage of translation as a tool for manipulation has been well documented throughout time and “[t]here are numerous examples where transformations of historical accounts and literary texts have resulted in the omission or

distortion of information for ideological and political purposes” (McLaughlin and Muñoz-Basols 1). When this is the case, it is important to realize and acknowledge the presence of manipulation.

There are two extreme types of manipulation within translation where the intention is to completely deceive the readers. These are pseudo-translations and fake originals. The former is the term for original texts published as translations and the latter is the term for texts that are, in fact, translations, but they are presented as original texts. David Bellos explains that “[c]ountless writers have packaged originals as translations and translations as originals and got away with it for weeks, months, years, even centuries” (36). Including these categories, however, is beyond the scope of this article, and I will focus on authentic translations accurately published as translations.

If we exclude these obvious forms of textual manipulation, a wide scale of manipulation remains. Some of the most popular categories of texts that have been suspected of and scrutinized for potential manipulation are religious texts, news reports, and entertainment media. Translation of religious texts has often been a sensitive subject. Whereas the Bible has been translated on several occasions by several translators and various versions have been accepted by churches, the Quran has been considered sinful to translate and translations have been discouraged due to possible misinterpretations (Halimah 122). The fear is that the translator will consciously or subconsciously alter the content of the text and the words of god, despite the acknowledgement within the religions that the holy texts were transcribed by mere mortals in the first place. In this article, the main focus will be on unintentional manipulations of the text and how these occur.

### Manipulation of the Text

There are several factors that contribute to the potential presence of manipulation in translated texts. The act of manipulating the text can be performed to make the text read as native, or to make accidental or intended changes to the content of the text. Textual manipulation can be difficult to discover because of the assumed presence of the voice of the author, the lack of access to the source text, or language barriers. Perhaps most crucially, the reader does not suspect manipulation because they are encouraged not to look for it. As the translation is published under the name of the original author, the reader reasonably assumes the voice of the text they are reading belongs to the original author.

Under ideal circumstances, the voice present in the text will be the translator's honest interpretation and imitation of the original author's voice. However, "there is no simple equivalence between languages," which means that "the translation process will inevitably bring with it transformations, refractions, errors, distortions, implicit or explicit commentary, insight, gain and loss" (Wright 100). This is unavoidable.

Even if the translator is guided by the notion of being completely faithful to the source text (a term that can open a can of worms within translation studies), their obsession with remaining close to the source content would inevitably affect the form of the target texts. Schleiermacher explains that "the more precisely the translation adheres to the turns and figures of the original, the more foreign it will seem to its reader" (53), something he considered beneficial. In the same vein, author and translator Vladimir Nabokov argued in his article "Problems of Translation": "The clumsiest literal translation is a thousand times more useful than the prettiest paraphrase" (113). This style of translation will, however, result in a text poorly written in the target language which does not communicate the content or form of the source text well, even if the translator could defend their choices from an academic point of view. Thus, if the choice of translators and the general publication of translated literature is any indication, the average reader does not share Schleiermacher's or Nabokov's opinion.

The translation scholar Franca Cavagnoli argues that there is an element of unconscious manipulation in any translation. This is inevitable as the translator plays an active role in interpreting the source language text (2). However, manipulation in the translation process is not limited to the unconscious. The unwilling members of the School of Manipulation (unwilling, as they insisted they were not in fact a school) discussed how translators will consciously and purposefully manipulate the text. Since the publication of the conference proceedings that lead to the birth of the School of Manipulation, translation studies have started moving away from the discussion of unintentional manipulation – likely due to the negative connotation the word 'manipulation' carries (Schjoldager). Even if much of this research has been replaced by newer theories – both with the very scholars who constituted the school and others – their work sparked important discussions, discoveries, and subfields within translation studies. It is now becoming more widely acknowledged that the translator is a conscious participant in the translation process. 'Unintentional manipulation' is rather the inevitable influence the translator has on the source text based on the role as interpreter in relation to the source text and as

writer of the target language text. However, there is still a significant risk that a translator chooses to intentionally manipulate the text they are translating. This potential risk is enabled by the invisible role of the translator in our society.

Whereas the School of Manipulation argues that there is always an element of manipulation present in the translation process, Aiga Kramina, similar to Cavagnoli, does not see the issue as black and white. As a premise for her discussion, she assumes “that there are two types of manipulation – conscious and unconscious” (37). Kramina stresses that there is no agreed-upon definition of the term manipulation within translation studies, before she moves on to discuss and challenge specific claims made by scholars considered part of the school. After discussing the opinions of/ reasons for/ attitudes towards/ results of/ reactions to manipulation, Kramina concludes that ‘manipulation’ is an “evasive phenomenon” and a concept that is often confused for “other translation strategies” (40).

Certainly, it cannot be claimed that everything a translator does to a text is manipulation, but certain strategies under certain constraints and due to various factors lead to these results. These manipulations can happen subconsciously during the process, because translation does not happen in a vacuum. It is a complex process that entails “one entire culture to another with all that this entails” and it necessitates us being “conscious of the ideology that underlies a translation” (Álvarez and Vidal 5). Anything the translator opts to add to the target text or leave out “reveals his history and the socio-political milieu that surrounds him; in other words, his own culture” (5). How the translator interprets the source text and writes the target text, depends on the context in which he works and lives.

### The Context of Translation

The source text and the target text will be separated by time, space, or both. As Álvarez and Vidal explain, the text is “removed from one context and put into another” (2). There is a misconception that translation is an objective activity, “[b]ecause the translator, like the original author, is human, they cannot be entirely objective when creating their text” (2). The translator involved will reach their understanding of the text in light of their own experiences and understanding of society. Jorge Díaz Cintas points out that “translation is not carried out in a vacuum and cannot, therefore, be exempt from a certain degree of subjectivity and bias on the part of the translator and the rest of the agents involved in the translational process” (282).

These biases can subconsciously lead the translator to manipulate the text they are translating. It is a process that often happens during their interpretation of the text, rather than during the stage of what is more directly considered translation. As the texts “are created in two different contexts, they must necessarily have differences and they should ideally not be looked at without placing them in their proper context” (Álvarez and Vidal 3). Whereas many differences can be put down to small adaptations to a different culture, “[c]ertain shifts and renderings could be a manifestation of incompetence, oversight, personal interpretation, a particular translating ethics or deliberate manipulation” (Zabalbeascoa 98). In addition, changes to the text can be interpreted as errors or a result of “the translator’s inability to recognise a collocational pattern with a unique meaning different from or exceeding the sum of the meanings of its individual elements” (Baker 57). We should, therefore, be aware that “[a] certain amount of loss, addition or skewing of meaning is often unavoidable in translation” (60). So even if the changes are not necessarily deliberate, the manipulation of the text they cause should not automatically be assumed to be the intention of the original author.

Álvarez and Vidal suggest looking at the original and the translation as parallel rather than equivalent to each other. The translation functions as an image of the original, enabling different cultures to access a version of the original text, however much it has been adapted to its new context (4-5). They argue that “translation always implies an unstable balance between the power one culture can exert over another” (4). This is because the translation process gives the translator a good opportunity to affect and manipulate the text they are translating, if they wish so. In other words, the ability to manipulate leaves open a potential for the translator to abuse their power (5).

### The Influence of the Translator

The role of the translator is often seen in comparison to that of the author, where the task of the former is seen “as derivative and of secondary quality and importance” (Munday 225). Therein lies the danger of ignoring the influence of the translator on the target text. In a simplified view of the process of translation, it can be divided into three main parts: reading, interpreting, and writing. Before the translator can begin writing the text they have been tasked to translate in the target language, they will need to read the source text thoroughly. As they read the text and make (mental or physical) notes for the translation, they are interpreting what they read in light of their own knowledge of the source

language and culture. Once they have completed an interpretation of the text or of parts of it, they can begin rewriting it in the target language for the target audience.

Few readers will ever read a text as thoroughly as a translator will. When we read a text, we often do so with our brain subconsciously cruising through the words, making connections, and creating an understanding of the text in our personal context of the world. When the translator is reading a text, they need to be aware not only of their own reading of the text, but also, to the best of their ability, of how others may understand the text. Still, there is a limit to the capacity of the translator's mind, and their reading of the text will in the end represent only one reading and understanding of the text. As Wright puts it: "[t]ranslators are the only readers to weigh every single word in a text" (84). It is during this reading process that their interpretation of the text begins. During the writing process the translator will be influenced by what they have read themselves and the context of their own knowledge on the topic they are writing on. In effect, the movement between these three acts is constant and circular. Every step of the way, the translator will re-read, re-interpret, and re-write their text as they go along.

### The Translator's Responsibilities and Ethical Considerations

During the production of the translated text, the translator has a variety of responsibilities, to the source text author, source text, source culture, publisher, source language, target language, and the target culture. While interpreting and creating the target text, the translator must keep all these elements in the back of their minds. Whereas the source text author is only limited by their own imagination, the translator needs to restrict their writing to the frames created by all the aforementioned elements. The translator needs to present their interpretation of the source text in light of the source culture and language, with their best interpretation of the intentions of the source text author in mind, while creating a text that is readable in the target language and, often, adapted to the target language. Even when the translator does their utmost to meet these responsibilities and ethical considerations, they may in fact be unintentionally deceiving their reader, if they have misread or misunderstood the source text in any way. The interpretation stage is most often where the errors of a translation process occur.

Mistranslations may be "the translator's unconscious attitude towards the text" (Wright 94). Another cause of errors can be a translator's obsession with remaining too close to the source text (extreme foreignization) or changing the text too much when

trying to adapt it to the target culture (extreme domestication). This is why translators should not see domestication and foreignization as “binary opposites but part of a continuum, and they relate to ethical choices made by the translator in order to expand the receiving culture’s range” (Munday 227). One translation does not need to be fully domesticated or foreignized. The translator should rather continuously evaluate their approach on a case-to-case basis. Still, this is easier said than done and it is a time-consuming process. In the end, the translators need to make decisions and prioritizations. They need to try “to convey the meaning of key words which are focal to the understanding and development of a text, but [they] cannot and should not distract the reader by looking at every word in isolation and attempting to present him or her with a full linguistic account of its meaning” (Baker 23).

### The Importance of Acknowledging the Presence of the Translator

After looking at the many ways the translator does influence the target text, let us now summarize the dangers of ignoring this, something Lawrence Venuti calls the translator’s invisibility. This is an idea that has been widely discussed since 1995, and around which Venuti even conceptualized a history of the discipline. There are two main reasons for why we should fight to ensure we acknowledge the presence of the translator in the target text:

1. To ensure they are adequately compensated for their work.
2. To make sure the readership is aware of the second voice in the text and the potential risk of intentional manipulation.

The reader needs to be aware that “the words on the page are not the author’s words; they are the translator’s words” (Wright 98). This is not to say that the reader should be able to determine whether a translated text contains errors, has been manipulated, or is in fact an original work presented as a translation. It is rather an encouragement to readers to be critical and remain aware that the text presented to them is not written only by the original author of the source text. Perhaps it is useful to think of it in terms of a “dual authorship,” as suggested by Wright (84). It goes without saying that the translated text would not exist in its present form without the writing of the original author, but it would equally not exist in its exact form without the translator. In order to improve the working conditions of translators, their influence needs to be acknowledged by those who read and publish translations.

## Conclusion

Although it is getting increasingly harder for translators to intentionally manipulate texts to a great extent in our contemporary society, and although it is no longer common to speak of all influence by the translator as ‘manipulation,’ it is still essential to alert the readers of the translated texts to the presence of a second voice. The reader needs to read translations with a critical eye, even if they cannot access or read the original text. A target text is only one interpretation and view of the source text, and it can in some cases be disputed as a truthful representation of the original text. If the reader is made more aware of the translator’s presence and publishers begin advertising the name of the translator more prominently, the translator may also achieve an improved status and be better compensated for their work.

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