

Rethinking Europe

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ReThinking Europe



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Combining soft power with the geopolitical approach – how hard is it for the EU to change its attitude?

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Abstract

This paper intends to analyze how the EU already changed its perspective in the international arena, from an exclusively economic approach to a combination between soft power and power politics. It intends to analyze the steps that were already taken in this direction and to describe what could be done in order to strengthen this new attitude - the only one that can help the EU to compete in a very challenging and aggressive international environment.

For several decades, the EU has ignored power politics and focused on economic integration. In the last decade, since authoritarian regimes come to power in many parts of the world and the US leadership slowed down, geopolitics come back. With its weak structures, EU foreign and security policy have to quickly adapt to this new landscape.

There are already signs that the EU leaders are already adapting themselves to the new situation. Ursula von der Leyen spoke about establishing a "geopolitical Commission", Josep Borell insisted that the EU must "learn to use the language of power" and Emmanuel Macron said that Europe would "disappear geopolitically" unless it starts to behave as a strategic power.

It is a strong need to adapt the EU to these new challenges but it is not very easy because European integration had as purpose to overcome the legacy of power politics that led to so many conflicts in Europe in the past. US guarantees of security, even if still available, are no longer enough in order to leave the geopolitics behind.

At some point after Crimea annexation it became clear that Russia do not intend to be a liberal democracy, as many EU leaders hoped for years, but rather wants to be an authoritarian regime. Turkey, seen in the recent past as a future Member State, is now totally opposed to the EU. As all the reports conclude, now there are more authoritarian regimes in the neighborhood of the EU than ever before. This grim picture is not complete without taking into account Brexit and the aggressive stance of Donald Trump towards the EU.

To respond to all these challenges, EU started to shift its approach and the first step was the 2016 Global Strategy that stress the need to develop EU defense policy and strategic autonomy. EU is far from the capacity of Russia and Turkey to send troops on the ground in a very short amount of time, it requires multiple layers of decision-making but at least it wants to change its policy. EU is lacking the coordination of national foreign policies. One solution advocated by Macron and Merkel is the establishment of an EU Security Council that could encourage collective action.

In order to have a more strategic approach, EU have to reevaluate its relations with China - until recently it welcomed Chinese investments but the 5G networks issue shows that this is not the case anymore. The EU was divided about the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, as Visegrad countries and Italy were enthusiastic, but in 2018 EU managed to formulate an alternative, Connectivity Strategy for Asia. In 2016 EU have signed an agreement with Turkey to contain refugee flow from this country - the first kind of geopolitical deals. The attitude of Erdogan in 2020, blackmailing EU countries with the end of the agreement, and subsequent developments has shown that the geopolitical approach has been the best solution for the time being. The deep division about migration at the level of EU Member States shows that building a strategy approach at the level of the EU is still a difficult approach.

The EU have to be aware of the risks of geopolitics. Probably it will never adapt to power politics - its traditional model focused on economy is not fit for such an approach, but geopolitics is a necessity and EU leaders will have to adapt in order to combine soft power approach with power politics.

From migration issue to COVID-19 crisis

Adrian Pogacian

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Updating

Intercultural relations in the Nordic and Baltic countries

Panel 1

Chair: Enikő Molnár Bodrogi

A fly in amber? Nordic-Balkan citizen cultural connections then and now

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&

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Abstract

Before 1989, cultural friendship associations in the Nordic countries and the Balkans kept up non-formal connections beside the official diplomatic relations. Individual contacts were scarce and relations were mainly channeled to these semi-official structures. Their activities contributed – in the view of the participants and the states – to reducing the cultural and thus also the political gap. Many of those who took part still see the period as a glorious example of cooperation, friendship and building bridges, and unique opportunities for cultural and personal exchange, which presently have disappeared.

Official diplomatic ties have changed, but where does the informal cultural exchange stand today? Today the associations' significance has been reduced in comparison with thirty years ago. The previous friendship model appears antiquated in the era of Internet, increasing individual tourism and the growing possibilities for cultural exchange within the European Union framework. A fresh approach is needed, both looking back into the past and the present: a critical review of the earlier relations has not yet been done and the present needs to be mapped out. What is the role of the associations now and will they survive in the growing competition?

How has the cultural exchange scene changed and what is the model we can observe today? Analysing the pre-1989 and present models of cultural contact between Serbia and Bulgaria with Sweden and Finland, we can see that there are many new actors in the ecosystem of cultural exchange – individuals with personal contacts, students and academics, honorary consuls, businessmen and others, who create activities with or without official support from embassies. The concepts of culture have broadened and a greater variety of cultural forms are being exchanged. Contemporary relations between citizens in Serbia, Bulgaria, Sweden and Finland reflect modern views and ways of connecting – or do they?

Spreading Romanian Language and Culture in Norway after Year 2000

Crina Leon

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Abstract

Although apparently far away from each other, Romania and Norway have developed cultural and diplomatic relations for more than one hundred years. The present paper focuses on how Romanian language and culture could be spread in Norway in the 21st century, up to the present year. The fields which are taken into consideration are teaching, music, literature, history, cinema, books written in Norwegian, with reference to Romania. Some of the names referred to are Arne Halvorsen, Roar Engelberg, Dragos Andrei Cantea, Steinar Lone, Sindre Andersen, Jardar Seim, Jan Erik Holst, Svanhild Naterstad, all promoters of Romanian language and culture in Northern Europe after year 2000.

Cultural relations between the Nordic and the Baltic countries and the rest of Europe – The case of the La Fontaine Literary Society

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Abstract

In my paper I will focus on the activity of the La Fontaine Literary Society, founded in 1920 in Budapest. My choice of topic is mainly motivated by the fact that the history of this society and the description of its activities have not been addressed systematically so far.

The objectives of the society included the translation and introduction of the valuable works of world literature, as well as the presentation of these to the public at various literary evenings and matinees. If we look for lessons to be learned from studying the activities of the La Fontaine Society, it should be done in the context of the relationship between large and small literatures, and literature in general. By large literatures I mean the literatures with a central role in Europe. The Finnish, Estonian, Swedish, Romanian and Serbian literature can be categorized as small literatures. In my view, however, the weight and presence of a certain literature at the events were not determined by its position in the European literature, but rather by the network of regular members within the society. With the help of personal acquaintances, they were able to attract more creators, or even literatures. In order to do this, of course, there was a need for openness on the behalf of the public and of the administration of the society. After all, turning to the large literatures is practically coded into the life of a world literature society. However, the interest of small literatures for each other is a less obvious operational policy in terms of reciprocity.

Rethinking the Baltic Sea Region in Europe during the interwar period

Panel 2

Chair: Mihai Dragnea

Rethinking Romania in Finland, 1918-1944

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Abstract

Independence was a significant turning point in Finnish history; it also changed the attitude of Finns to the world around them. During the period between the two World Wars, and also generally speaking, one part of building a national identity was to compare one's own country and culture to those of other countries and nations. Moreover, identity is always defined through two opposing viewpoints: "who we are" and "who we are not". Identity and worldview also always include narrative(s). One's own group and other groups of people are seen as subjects who have a past, a present and a future. These elements make up a logical and coherent narrative, no matter how true that narrative is.

Based on earlier research, it is known that Finnish perceptions of Romania changed somewhat between the World Wars. Finnish textbooks, for instance, provided summarized basic information about Romania, which was neutral or in some respects negative. In my research, however, I will focus on those Finnish interpretations that challenged the above mainline view that was represented by school books and Finnish diplomatic reports. In the 1930s and later during the war, in particular, printed material was published in Finland, which re-evaluated Romania as a country and the Romanians as a people and saw them in a much brighter light. In the background of the re-evaluation were factors related to the general cultural orientation and the increased cooperation between Finland and Romania during World War II.

Rethinking Europe in a renewed Baltic Sea Region: the Finnish foreign policy and Baltic regionalization after World War I

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Abstract

When Europe finally extricated from World War I barely a border was left untouched in Baltic Sea Region (BSR). Five new states emerged from the ashes of war as a result of self-determination principles embodied in Wilson's 14 Points and in Leninist propaganda, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland. Further south, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Austria, enlarged Romania and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians reshaped the whole of East-Central Europe. The centuries old Romanov dynasty was abolished the Soviet Russia of Lenin and Stalin took hold of power. In these circumstances newly independent Finland had to make sense of this renewed Europe and contribute to the strengthening of the small and medium nations surrounding the Baltic Sea in its eastern half and entered into close regional cooperation especially with the Baltic States and Poland. This paper will follow this region-building process up to The Warsaw Accord of March 1922. I will analyze the vision of Finland on the BSR and how it related to the wider genesis process of East-Central Europe thus reconnecting post-war endeavors of

safeguarding the independence and stability in the whole region. What was Finland input in this region-building process? How significant was the role of Foreign Minister Rudolf Holsti in shaping Finnish policy in this regard? What was the role of Poland and the Polish-Romanian alliance of March 1921 in this frame? The paper will review the scientific literature (especially the writings of reputed historians such as Marko Lehti, Kalervo Hovi, Vesa Vares) and focus on the results of investigation of documents discovered in the Finnish Foreign Ministry and National Archives and Romanian Foreign Ministry Archives. Literature review, primary sources study, foreign policy analysis, international relations theory and discourse analysis will be employed in order to have a consistent understanding of the aims and stakes of the Finnish foreign policy in the first year of independence. The paradox of enthusiastically signing and then turning down the Warsaw Accord will be explained in the context of shifting perceptions of Finnish elites and public opinion with regard to BSR, East-Central Europe and Scandinavia in the post-war complicated contexts.

Romania, Poland and the difficult path towards a regional alliance in early 1920s

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Abstract

Updating.

Kaunas in the 20s and 30s of the 20th century: modern architecture as evidence of Europe oriented modern city

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Abstract

The aim of the report - to introduce the case of Kaunas - provisional capital of the Republic of Lithuania in 20-30-es of the 20th century emphasizing its modern architecture as significant evidence and feature of those times Kaunas identity as Europe oriented modern city. Lithuania regained its Independence in 1918 and from the very beginning it clearly declared its European orientation. In 1920, because of certain circumstances Kaunas became provisional capital of Lithuania and played this role until the very end of 1939. It is impressing that just within two decades Kaunas from an ordinary town with poor infrastructure, prevailing small wooden buildings turned into modern European city. Thus 20-30-es of the 20th century Kaunas city modern architecture became impressive sign of those times Kaunas identity and obvious evidence of Kaunas, as well as Lithuania, European orientation.

Former and Recent Baltic Capitals between the Central European and Nordic (Scandinavian) Trends: The Case of Kaunas as for the Urban Culture

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Abstract

While the self-determination of all the three Baltic countries stresses Nordic links, even in Lithuania, the landscape and historical past, also the recent spiritual surrounding, too, are different. However, all cities in the Baltic countries seek to become "European", which is reflected e.g. by the glass-sculptures in each of them; let's see the glass-monument of poet Kudirka and his poem the recent national anthem in Vilnius: very national but very postmodern in the same time, next to the edge of the historical downtown. – Latvia and Estonia belongs to the "Baltic" region in the narrow sense: former Hansa-towns with their typical architecture; the visitor faces a store under the roof of the old houses from the Middle Ages at every corner, especially in Riga – which is the largest and most postmodern capital city, too. – Riga has the most chances to be named "European" metropolis with some other phenomena in Latvian cities: the seaport town Liepāja was the first one in the region, in which a "public house" was established just at the very time of the collapse of the Soviet Union. – The neighbouring Estonia has its most ancient capital; Tallinn remained in a more Middle-Age-character; however, the large shopping-complex around the modern Hotel Viru at the downtown, or, at the very edge of the downtown, may symbolize the very postmodern character of the Estonians: the visual art and performance, also the movie in Estonia are leading members of the European postmodern art; and their capital combines the Middle ages with the very recent time, as well. – Vilnius is different with its baroque heritage and its couleur locale, too: the old and new quarters are built cyclically, as the onion, not to confuse nor combine each other. (Cf. Thomas Venclovas' views about it.) Thus function and the tradition are divided into different quarters in Vilnius, while in Riga and Tallinn the historical quarters are multifunctional. – Tartu and Kaunas are to be compared: the kissing couple of students as a sculpture in the very downtown (of Tartu) symbolises the main profile of the "university-town"; while the grand promenade in the downtown of Kaunas is an allegory of the former capital and recent university-city also the centre of a county. – Four determining factors are to be taken into account, if we try to describe and define, "What is Baltic?" and "What is Nordic?" and "Which countries of the Baltic region belong to the Nordic or Baltic or Central European cultural region?" and "Are the Baltic cities and cultures European and if so, to what extent?" The author wants to focus on Kaunas, due to its very special role: the former Tsarist military garrison-city became the capital of the independent Lithuania; then in the Soviet-occupied Lithuania Kaunas played the role of the "very, real" Lithuanian city; and recently in the re-independent Lithuania it plays a competitive role, parallel to Vilnius; which is very similar to the role of Tartu as a competitive scientific and cultural centre in parallel to Tallinn. (My paper is dedicated to my former mentor in the field, Endre Bojtár, passed away in 2018.)

Constructions of Christian Identity and the Idea of the Holy Land in the Northern Periphery: The Sawley World Map in Twelfth-Century England

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Abstract

In the last decade we have been seeing more and more interest in the connections between the formations of Christian identities and concepts of sacred places in Northern Europe. The study explores the complex relation between Christian constructions of identity and the idea of the Holy Land. It argues that the Holy Land is not a static location in the eastern Mediterranean, but rather a concept developed uniquely in a specific context, often intertwined with theology and mythology. The complex relation between the two, sometimes fueled by economic considerations, was crucial in the construction of Christian identity in the lands recently converted to Christianity, and influenced the authors of world maps from the eleventh century onward. The study investigates how the pagan past and Christian present were incorporated in some world maps like the twelfth-century Sawley map from England. Thus, it offers readers a coherent analysis of early history writing in Northern Europe in the first centuries after conversion.

Teaching and use of Nordic languages

Panel 3

Chair: Crina Leon

SKAM – The Language Terminator (Språkterminatoren)? Norwegian, English and Global Success

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Abstract

This article explores some dimensions related to the role of English in the Norwegian language in today's context influenced by globalization, use of media and increased technological advances. Because language facilitates social interaction and communication in diverse contexts, it undergoes constant changes in order to accommodate its discourse to the requirements of the society, both in online and offline settings. Language influences in Norwegian can occur at different levels (lexis, morphology, pronunciation, etc.) and some domains (research, mass media, academia, etc.) tend to accept English as a tool for increasing their popularity and for providing exposure. Therefore, English is not unanimously perceived as a threat to the Norwegian language. Due to the constant exposure to English, which cannot be avoided, the younger generations no longer consider it as a foreign language, but rather as an essential part of their daily lives, even of their identity. This paper intended to focus on the discursive speech encountered in the Norwegian teen drama web series "Skam", which has gained worldwide popularity. Different perspectives were analysed in order to better understand how English coexists with Norwegian. It is beneficial for the young to start early to speak a global language, and the solid language skills will undoubtedly help the young generation in their education and career, but it is necessary to discuss whether the influence of English is so strong that it affects the mother tongue. On the other hand, the use of teenage slang and English in "Skam" is iconic for today's teenagers, as it testifies for the dominance of the western culture in their daily lives, and explains, at least partly, the wide success of this drama series.

Paths to learning second languages in Finland

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Abstract

This article is concerned with comparative approaches to second language instruction and second language choices in Finland and describes the challenge of preserving Finland's language and culture while facing the globalization process. The article discusses the success of Finnish second language learning and aims to investigate how Finnish and English as second languages are taught and learnt in Finland compared to other countries as well. The goal of this study is to discuss issues related to teacher training and its role in second- or even third language acquisition.

We articulate the following research questions: How does the English-language teaching line serve the international families? How does Finland develop successful teaching practices and what problems of implementation does it face? What are the challenges of teaching the pupils' mother tongue and a second language (Finnish, Swedish, English, Russian etc.) at different levels of education? What are the differences between acquiring a Finnish or an international degree concerning adult education?

The methodology chosen for this article is a comparative study and it is used to showcase the differences between the Finnish and English second language instruction in Finland. In regard to the theoretical framework to second or foreign language acquisition, learning and teaching, I embrace linguistic, cognitive and sociocultural frameworks and approaches.

Overcoming challenges of teaching smaller languages. The case of teaching Norwegian as a foreign language

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Abstract

This paper intended to highlight some of the challenges that might be encountered by learners who study a smaller foreign language in the context of a formal academic environment. In addition to language competence, learners should acquire a socio-linguistic and a discourse competence so much needed when using the language in diverse communicative contexts. New technological advances provide additional support to foreign language learning and develop learners' digital literacy. This paper put an emphasis on the fact that learning a language is a life-long learning experience and an endeavor for overcoming challenges that reside in: linguistic difference, learning characteristics, intercultural communicative competence, motivation or purpose of learning the foreign language.

Directives given by the L2-doctor on multicultural primary care consultations

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Abstract

In my study I investigate the interaction on multicultural primary care consultations in which the doctor speaks Finnish as a second language. My research data consists of authentic video material of the project Multicultural encounters in primary care.

In my research I investigate the L2-doctor's directives during the consultation. To see how the patient reacts to the directives I confine my research to focus on the kind of directives which demand an immediate response.

My purpose is to find out what kind of grammatical constructions the directives of the L2-doctor contain and what kind of communicative functions they represent. I also investigate what features in the directives affect the matter that the patient's response is unexpected and which features support the understanding. Beside the verbal communication I am interested in finding out what kind of a role non-verbal communication plays in the interaction of primary care consultations.

Because my research data consists of authentic video recordings it is best to approach the investigation from a conversational analytic perspective. As the principal method of the study, conversational analysis offers the opportunity to consider the smallest details of the interaction.

The study showed that imperative-formed directives are the most common directive type in my data. This result correlates also with previous studies. The second common directive type in my data is the group of directives without a finite verb. This result does not correlate with previous studies, but even so the result is still expected according to the consultation as the interaction context. Most of the directives used by the L2-doctor concern movements or positions, when using constructions that do not include a finite verb, are common in Finnish language.

In general, the directives of the L2-doctor are understandable and minor grammatical mistakes do not harm the understanding. The vocabular mistakes harm the understanding only when the used word does not belong to the same semantic category with the right word.

My results can be applied to the language teaching, especially on courses given to foreign doctors coming to Finland. According to my research results it is possible to form some linguistic models that are common in health care context.

Encounters, fantasies and perceptions in shaping Europe

Panel 4

Chair: Sándor Földvári

Heading to the North and back – the influence of the Arctic expedition on the 19th-century travelers of Sibiu

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Abstract

The “Franz Binder” Museum of Universal Ethnography is the only museum in Romania that specializes in non-European ethnology. It was opened in 1993 in the Small Square from Sibiu and it was created around an initial group of artifacts collected by the members of the Transylvanian Association for Natural Sciences (German: Siebenburgische Verein für Naturwissenschaften) in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. It includes old and new heritage goods that entered its collections mostly by the donations from Romanian travelers.

Arthur Soterius von Sachsenheim was one of the thirty scientists from thirty countries, participated in the 1896 expedition of the steamer Erling Jarl sent to explore the region around Svalbard (Spitzbergen). He brought home to Sibiu/Hermannstadt a collection of both artificialia and naturalia that were later donated to the Transylvanian Society for Natural Studies. The collection, around 28 items, is related to day-to-day lives and the traditional folk costume of the Sami population. Most of them are beautifully decorated with reindeer motifs and traditional colors – red, blue, green, yellow.

Our paper attempted to emphasize the role of the explorers and adventurers of the 19th century in the Romanian ethnography and how they set a system of cultural reference in understanding the indigenous populations they encountered. The easiest way to raise awareness of the exotic population was to present their material culture. But is interesting to see how they selected the objects. How they collect them, in an age where the artifacts were part of the daily life and not easy to let go. Which objects aroused their interest, and how these objects influence the perception of the Romanian scientific community and the Romanian public. We will try to swing the viewpoint from the explorers engaged in the process of collecting to the items themselves. To identify the story behind the museum artifact and the way they change our perception of the “outside”.

As a paraphrase of the ideas of Hans Peter Duerr, we can argue that the traditional relationship between our culture, the “inside” and the culture we don’t know nothing about, the “outside” represents the most important process of sociogenesis in the West Society. We will better understand ourselves by understanding another culture and spirituality through the museum artifact. We believe that their role is to ask questions and to lead to the discovery of the answers. And, as the philosopher, Constantin Noica said, “when you ask a question (...) you shed light on things.” Therefore, things are brought to light, they acquire the capacity to open up horizons.

Window to a world beyond: A journey to the Black Sea in 1963

Sabira Ståhlberg

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Abstract

International traveller and acclaimed Swedish-language author Göran Schildt travelled to the Black Sea in the summer of 1963. His yacht "Daphne" was probably the first private vessel after World War II to tour Bulgaria and Romania. Previously Schildt, who was originally from Finland but lived in Sweden, had journeyed and written hugely popular books about the western part of Europe and the Mediterranean. This was his first visit to the Black Sea and the first journey of "Daphne" behind the Iron Curtain. Schildt, who had been wounded in World War II and visited the Soviet Union earlier, was suspicious of Communists, but surprised at his arrival in Bulgaria. Here was a freedom he had not expected; the situation in Romania answered more to his anticipations. In Bulgaria even the officials were relaxed and he could communicate with the locals without disturbances. In Romania and at the Danube Delta fear was more prevalent, but people would still talk to foreigners about their situation. On the sunny beaches of both countries, politics seemed far away, despite the fact that only a year earlier the world had been threatened by a nuclear war. The peaceful, happy holidays away from reality and the meetings between people from both sides of the visible and invisible walls were watched by agents in sunglasses and bathing suits, sipping drinks, yet they did not interfere. The situation should not have surprised a keen observer such as Göran Schildt. A small window had been opened by world politicians in the Iron Curtain at the end of the 1950s, despite a period of high tension, but this window was closed within a year after Schildt's journey. Through the eyes of a well-informed Scandinavian traveller this little aperture can be detected among the bricks in the walls dividing Europe.

Reality and fantasy of the Baltic Tunnel: In comparison with the British-French Channel Tunnel

Shan Huang

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Abstract

The British-French Channel Undersea Tunnel seems to be a microcosm of the relationship between Britain and the European Union for nearly half a century: it is better than nothing but has never really integrated Britain with Europe. What kind of cross-regional cooperation does the EU or the world need today? The idea of a tunnel under the Baltic Sea is being heatedly discussed. The tunnel that connects the Finnish and Estonia capitals is a product of pure inter-European integration. For the Baltic region, closer regional cooperation is a good way to deal with the globalization and the post-Brexit era, whose influence may come to this region, while it's also a future development trend. What lessons has it learned from the Channel Tunnel, and will it achieve the expected effects of promoting regional cooperation and economic development? The author uses the experience of the Chanel Tunnel to analyze the potential benefits and risks of the Baltic Tunnel by applying the new economic geography theory, developed by P. Krugman and M. Fujita. The centrifugal forces of economic development within these two core cities have gradually exceeded the centripetal forces of industrial agglomeration, and the proportion of their contributions to the overall national economy has declined. The Baltic Tunnel, which plans to shorten commuting time to 30 minutes, can integrate the two cities into a transnational economic cooperation zone, expanding the size of the city, and making further urban economic development possible. Compared with the Chanel Tunnel, the barriers of language, culture, and currency are smaller, but the construction cost and time of the tunnel, as well as the market competition pressure with the existing curses and flights, cannot be ignored. The interest of Chinese investment and construction companies in this project has also raised vigilance within the European Union, casting a shadow over the implementation of the project.

Rethinking Europe in Nordic and Baltic cultures

Panel 5

Chair: Roxana Dreve

Modernization and Language Loss

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Abstract

First of all, I am looking in my lecture for an answer to the question of how modernization affected the Meänkieli-speaking community in Northern Sweden during the 19th and the 20th century, as reflected in the works of the well known Meänkieli writer Bengt Pohjanen.

Meänkieli is one of the thirteen endangered Finnic minority languages spoken in the Baltic area. One of the most important factors which lead to the endangered status of Meänkieli was the systematic assimilation policy of the 19th and the 20th century Sweden. At the background of this policy laid the ideology of nationalism and social Darwinism which came into being in the 19th century. One of the main aims of the representatives of these ideologies was to lead language minorities to the path of modernization, offering them the acquisition of majority languages instead of their minority mother tongues, being in each case considered primitive and underdeveloped. Members of minority language communities were taught that their mother tongue is useless, and they were discriminated also from cultural and economical point of view. Language stigma has persisted in some respects even up to nowadays.

In my lecture, I analyse some works written by Bengt Pohjanen in Meänkieli, from the perspective of the insight it gives into the social, mental and historical context of the modernization process in the Meänkieli community. My research is thus based on the relational interpretation of history, culture, literature and language identity.

I will use the method of discourse analysis in my research, as I take into account the context of the conversation between the written text and the reader as well as what is being said. The context will encompass a social, historical and cultural framework.

Alberto Moravia in Swedish literary culture

Donato Gagliastro

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Abstract

The theme of literary influences in the North finds fervent theoretical developments in the relationship between the works of a great novelist of European fame, Alberto Moravia, and Swedish literary culture. As it is well known, his major novels have also been translated into Scandinavian languages and, for about a decade from 1949, have attracted widespread attention of the jury members of the Swedish Academy, who have repeatedly nominated him for the Nobel prize.

Among the many judgments of distinguished Swedish critics, the one elaborated by Ingemar Wizelius, literary critic of the Swedish newspaper "Dagens Nyheter", stands out. He had the task of evaluating the candidacy of Moravia proposed by Carlo Dionisotti, illustrious Italianist of the University of London. In 1955 Wizelius dedicated an article to Moravia, described as "a careful descriptor of environments and a tireless, acute and brilliant psychologist".

In his debut novel, Gli indifferenti (The time of indifference, Swedish: De likgiltiga, 1929), Moravia had illustrated, through the story of a family, the moral decadence of the bourgeois class under fascism. The

relationship between purity and corruption and the observation of social transformations predominate in the novels that most aroused the interest of the Swedish cultural elite: Agostino (1944), L'amore coniugale (Conjugal love, Sw: Äktenskaplig kärlek, 1949), Il conformista (The conformist, Sw: Anpassningen, 1951), Il disprezzo (Contempt, Sw: Föraktet, 1954), La ciociara (Two women, Sw: Två kvinnor, 1957), La noia (The empty canvas, Sw: Ledan, 1960).

The provocative objectivity of Moravia's realism made the author a detached observer who portrays the degeneration of a humanity incapable of idealistic impulses.

Based on this thematic core, characteristic of his most acclaimed novels in Scandinavia, he applied to the drama of betrayed purity the merciless diagnosis of a moral pathology every time different.

Swedish criticism has shown interest in the works in which the writer represented the transformation of society from conformism (Il conformista) to neo-capitalist alienation (La noia). Despite conflicting opinions - including the harsh criticism of Dag Hammarskjöld, secretary of the United Nations, - it is undeniable that Moravia's works contributed to the affirmation of literary existentialism in Europe, in the search of a way of being specific to man, characterized by the constitutive precariousness of his historical era. Moravia increases the effectiveness of portrayals when, instead of the individual condition, he focuses on the moral and cultural deprivation of an entire society, themes that have had a reflection in the Scandinavian cultural context.

Saami Poetic Criticism of Nordic and Global Antroposcene

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Abstract

The indigenous Saami living in four countries in North of Europe are struggling to protect their lands and livelihoods from the ongoing exploitation by the industrial societies. "But what is it that prevents the States from taking everything at once? What lies between the decision makers and the resources of the land that they so aspire?" asks the internationally renowned Saami author, performer Niillas Holmberg (b. 1990) in his latest poetrybook Juolgevuoddu (Sole, 2018). This book, which was already in 2019 among top 10 books in Finland is a poetic manifest which emphasizes the connection with land as the defining matter for those with concerns over tomorrow. This compilation celebrates traditional knowledge while questioning its adequacy with the modern world and mind.

The present lecture gives an insight into the development of Saami postmodern poetry and reflects on latest developments of Nordic neocolonialism and critical discourse of Anthropocene as reflected in the artistic works of Niillas Holmberg..

Reception of Nordic literature

Panel 6

Chair: Adrian Pogacian

Henrik Ibsen's "Ghosts" and the star-actor tradition on the Romanian stage (1894-1947)

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to discuss the establishment of Henrik Ibsen's play "Ghosts" in the Romanian theatre repertoire in the first half of the 20th century. The analysis is based on the main theatre traditions that shaped the Romanian practice of acting and accordingly influenced the interpretation of the leading roles in Ghosts. In this respect, it focuses on the two different approaches of highlighting either Oswald or Mrs. Alving as the main character. Finally, the paper examines the relationship between these two interpretations and the various theatre traditions enacted by the Romanian actors on the national stage as well as their audience reception and effect upon the local practice of acting.

Based on visual and statistical information provided by IbsenStage Performance Database, this theatre historiographical approach uses as starting point Digital Humanities tools such as maps, graphs, and frequency lists. The topic is further investigated through Romanian theatre history inquiries, biographies and memoirs, as well as information from theatre reviews and archival material.

These sources support the digital data and clarify the contexts in which Ghosts was performed on the Romanian stage until the middle of the 20th century. At the same time, they cast light upon the specificity of the Romanian stage practice of the time and upon the audience reception on the occasion of the performances of Ghosts. Finally, they reveal the contribution of Constantin Nottara, Aristide Demetriade, Ion Manolescu, Agatha Bârsescu and Mărioara Voiculescu as the most prominent interpreters of Oswald, respectively Mrs. Alving in the Romanian theatre of the first half of the 20th century.

The place of crime. The case of Scandinavian Noir

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Abstract

This paper attempts to undertake a geo-literary analysis of contemporary Scandinavian literature and especially of recent crime fiction, as this subgenre represents the Scandinavian peninsula's latest contribution to World Literature and a "temporary sub-centre" (Mads Rosendahl Thomsen) of provisional international interest. Transcending both the idyllic settings of the Golden Age of crime (Agatha Christie) and the urban decay of the hardboiled tradition (Raymond Chandler), Scandinavian Noir succeeds in re-establishing the rural as predilect locus of narrative unfolding. The paper argues that the rural mise-en-scene is symptomatic for the ideological background infused within the works, as crime fiction authors from Scandinavia, by placing the isolated crime plot within a seemingly perfect and crime-free welfare state and by appealing to a set of spatial cues borrowed from Nordic romanticism, direct criticism at the dismantling of social-democracy under the pressure of neoliberalism.

Halldór Laxness and the Romanians

Marian-Alin Dudoï

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Abstract

The working paper deals with Romanian efforts to invite Icelandic writer Halldór Laxness to visit the country. The author undertook the research at the Central National Historical Archives in Bucharest, the main branch of the Romanian National Archives, the Institutul Român pentru Relații Culturale cu Străinătatea Fund (the Romanian Institute for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries Fund). Seeking to disseminate propaganda in the West, Communist Romania launched a vast programme in the 50' aimed at inviting Communist or Social-Democratic people or representatives of the Trade Unions to visit the country. The Office in charge with this was called the Romanian Institute for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries. Halldór Laxness was subject to several attempts by the Institute meant to persuade him to come to Bucharest as he was recently the recipient of the Stalin Prize for Peace and of the Nobel Prize for Literature. Romanians' large degree of interest was mainly due to his novels which reflected the past of the Icelandic people, especially poverty and the hard lives of working people. The Institute invited him for the first time in 1955, and this also happened and in the following years but Laxness offered excuses for his refusals. The postponement of his visit still contributed to publishing of several of his novels – even Laxness expressed hopes in his letters to the Institute for publishing it – and a short description of Iceland appeared in Romanian newspapers. Finally, Laxness spent two weeks in Romania, between April 30th and May 12th, 1961. During the visit, he gave two interviews in which he spoke about his novels and his country. The Institute introduced to the Romanian audience facts about Iceland and several literary articles about his novels which marked the beginning of the Icelandic studies in Romania.

New perspectives on Norwegian literature

Panel 7

Chair: Gianina Druță

Norwegian Emigration and the Emergence of Modernity in Norway. America Letters and the Case of Knut Hamsun and Sigbjørn Obstfelder

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Abstract

The Norwegian emigration to America in the 19th and 20th centuries was the second largest from Europe; only the Irish were more numerous if we consider the population of the two countries. Norway was going through important changes in the 19th century. It was a time of disruption, when the old rural society was transformed by the growing industrialisation, by the development of transportation and the expansion of free trade, when internal migration reached its peak as farmers struggled to survive using the old ways of living that had been passed on from generations and that no longer seemed to work in the modernized world. Of course, the 1800s and the first decade of the 20th century brought significant improvements in the life of the growing Norwegian people, but the progress was slow and the expectations high, so it was natural that old means of livelihood had to be abandoned, as young people did not want to continue in the trades of their parents. There was a spirit of change – a wish for change, and the necessity for it.

This paper argues that, although the need for change of the old habits was at the basis of the mass migration to the New World, the Norwegian emigrants who came back to the homeland became agents of change upon their return. The migration facilitated, hence, the emergence of modernity in Norway. America letters played an important role, as they both convinced the families and friends of the emigrants to embark for America, but they also helped increase the literacy rate in the homeland. Furthermore, the discussion will focus on the American experience of Knut Hamsun and Sigbjørn Obstfelder, which helped them gain recognition as forerunners of modernism in Norway.

The Sense of Space and Arctic Nature in Cora Sandel's *Kranes Konditori: Interior med figurer* (Krone's Café: An Interior with Figures)

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Abstract

*The paper combines the close reading technique of the novel *Kranes Konditori: Interior med figurer* (Krone's Café: An Interior with Figures) (1946) written by the classic Norwegian writer Cora Sandel (1880-1974) with an ecocritical approach which aims to present the past and the present of novel's main character, Katinka Stordal. The action takes place in a small town situated in Northern Norway, at Krane's Café. It is worth noting how topography, the seasons of the year, the Arctic climate and nature are gradually reflected in the novel. On the one hand, through the interdisciplinary study the novel is placed at the crossroads of the ecocritical perspective and the literary criticism, which has in its center Krane's Café, the place where almost all the characters are brought together and which is the most suggestive and representative interior space of the novel. On the other hand, the subtitle *An Interior with Figures* strengthens the idea of an interdisciplinary research, in the sense that it resembles the title of a work of art, namely a painting where all the characters are simply figures animated by the beauty of the Arctic scenery.*

Standing out vs. Standing still? Children, adults and Janteloven in Thorbjørn Egner's book People and Robbers of Cardamon Town (Folk og røvere i Kardemomme by)

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Abstract

Janteloven is a set of ten detailed laws formulated in Aksel Sandemose's book A fugitive crosses his tracks. First intended as a satire of the Scandinavian mentality and of how individuals should relate to the group, this set of laws is now a cultural phenomenon in Norway that influences not only adults, but also children. The aim of this article is to analyse Thorbjørn Egner's book People and Robbers of Cardamon Town (Folk og røvere i Kardemomme by) -1955, focusing on children's behaviour, on their uniqueness and their restless search for the truth as well as on the „Jantementality” that diminishes their creativity. We argue that the children's behaviour is influenced by the expectations the adults have regarding the socially accepted modesty and that the self-appreciation or self-depreciation of their inner „I” is only a matter of rigorous interpretation of the difference between standing out and standing still.

Rethinking Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea Region in Europe during the two world wars

Panel 8

Chair: Bogdan-Alexandru Schipor

The Idea of Europe in Women's Diaries from the Great War

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore the way in which women thought about the ongoing conflict and Europe in diaries that were written during the Great War. In The Great War and Modern Memory (1975), Paul Fussell advances the idea that the devastating conflagration of WW I has modified the aesthetic sensitivity of individuals. Those who witnessed the war were marked by its vainness and irrationality to such an extent that they lost any predisposition towards romanticism and idealisation and started perceiving the world in harsher terms. This was evident in the front-participants' diaries and in the letters they sent home, but also in the poems soldiers wrote and in their novels and essays. Following the First World War devastation, theorists and visionaries from a number of political backgrounds started circulating the concept of a economically united Europe once more.

Latvians' Image of Europe During First World War: Change of Viewpoint from Russian Imperial Citizen to European National Subject

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Abstract

The First World War in August, 1914 came as a breaking event into the life of developing Latvian nation. European war has come into the every-day life and social opinion of Latvians since the first days of its outbreak. Latvians were persuaded by the imperial government and Latvian empire-loyal elite, as well, that the war will end soon and the best position was the loyalty to the Tsar's government. Russia's European allies, France and Great Britain, first, were supposed as also Latvian allies against the aggressor — the "age-old enemy" of Latvians — German Empire. As the war still lingered and the disaster increased, Latvian society started to ask, what will be the place of Latvians in the after-war Europe. Just after the Russian Revolution in March 1917 Latvians conceived that life will never be as earlier and Latvians will step to each-other with other European nations, having rights to self-government that will be realized through democratic elections and national autonomy. While Europeanization of whole former imperial, now new democratic Russia was the hope during the first months of Revolution, the further sinking into chaos, the success of German offensive towards Russia in 1917–1918, the outbreak of civil war in Russia lead to the necessity to strive for full independence from Russia and to found direct contacts with the Entente as early as the end of 1917 and beginning of 1918. European democratic states were considered the savours from German imperial aggression, firstly, and the Russian chaos, secondly. Entering the community of European democratic states was considered as the solution for contemporary problems (e.g., division of the territory of Latvia into two parts by the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, threats of annexation to German Empire of the part of Latvia) and the only guarantor for the political future of Latvia, as well. By the end of 1918 when World War I came to the end, hope to Latvia-friendly democratic Germany also arose. The paper is based on press, published works and archival documents of the time.

Romanian-Swedish trade relations during the Second World War, a way of rethinking the economic perspectives

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Abstract

The Second World War transformed countries' economy. Many states focused their economy on military production. Romania joined the Axis powers and had to give many economic advantages to the new allays. Thus, Germany won several economic facilities as having priority in importing Romanian oil and agricultural products. Giving the circumstances, Romania got under the German monopole and became afraid of economic isolation.

At the other end of Europe, Sweden decided to maintain its neutrality but encountered difficulties in selling technology and importing raw products, especially grains and oil. Until 1939, the trade between Romania and Sweden had no significant impact on the economies of these countries but the course of war made Sweden to reconsider the priorities, especially after German occupation of Denmark and Norway. Sweden was also afraid of isolation. The Baltic Sea was under Soviet and German control, Öresund was almost impracticable, and Sweden had no access to the South American oil, so necessary for the intern consumption. The reality made Sweden and Romania to rethink their trade strategy so both of them could avoid a total economic collapse. This perspective led to the development of the commercial transaction between these two countries.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the dynamics of economics bonds between Romania and Sweden during 1939-1945, to follow the evolution of the trades and to identify the obstacles that affected the economic relations between these two countries during the conflagration. The research is based on the documents of the Riksarkivet (The Swedish National Archives) and The Diplomatic Archives of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

April 1940: The German Invasion of Norway in Romanian Diplomatic Sources

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Abstract

Following to the outbreak of World War II., Scandinavian countries decided to keep their independence, a goal which seemed to be accurate judging by the experience of World War I. However, the economic importance of Swedish ore for the German war machinery and the geostrategic importance of Norwegian ports for its transportation – especially the city port of Narvik – made the region to gain a crucial importance in the German and British war plans. Also, this led to the ultimate invasion of Denmark and Norway by the forces of Germany, which established a regime of occupation.

For Romanian diplomacy, the events from the North of Europe were very important as a possible analogy for the fate of their own country. According to this, Romanian diplomatic reports concerning the occupation of Norway were very detailed. This presentation will be dealing with the image of the occupation of Norway through the perceptions of Romanian diplomats, based on the documents from the archive of the Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, from 1940.

Rewind and replay: mainstream parties and the pull of radicalization.

The Nordic experience

Luiza Filimon

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Abstract

In recent years, right-wing parties and figures of various radical inspirations have become a fixture in the political mainstream (Abou-Chadi 2016; Dawn and Han 2019; Miller-Idriss 2019; Ivănescu and Filimon 2020). The global proportions of the phenomenon signify that this is more than just a passing fad, its wide range and scope signaling the presence of an embedded electoral frustration with the political establishment. In the European Union (EU), though the advent of the radical right does not equally impact all the Member States, its practices and rhetoric are thriving to such a degree that we can identify a mainstream contamination (Akkerman, de Lange, and Rooduijn 2016): these parties have expanded their share of the electoral pie; they surpassed more established / traditional parties; they provide parliamentary support to the centrist parties and in some cases, they have even been part of ruling coalitions. Irrespective of the causes for the success of the radical right – be they the result of national particularities or regional trends – their presence affects the behavior of the other parties either directly or indirectly. Case-in-point: the Brexit referendum. While the reasons for the categoric denuement to the British participation in EU are well documented and multifaceted, there is no denying that the presence of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) shaped to a certain degree the electoral behavior (otherwise how would we explain that in 2014, UKIP won the elections for the European Parliament after gaining 27% of the

popular vote while in 2019, its successor, the Brexit Party replicated the same feat and secured over 30% of the vote shares). In the Scandinavian Peninsula, the radical right parties have been a fixture in the political landscape for several decades and while the Danish People's Party (DF) has been an outlier for multiple electoral cycles (its been in opposition only three times out of the seven elections it had participated in), the others (Finns Party, Swedish Democrats) have made similar inroads in the recent years. Outside the EU, the Norwegian Progress Party has been in member of the government after both the 2013 and the 2017 elections. This state affairs begs the following question: Why are mainstream parties collaborating with them especially when they are known to espouse controversial positions? Moreover, as part of such coalitions, parts of their radical right agenda end up being inevitably adopted. In light of these aspects, the present paper analyses the degree to which the political speech of mainstream parties has embraced radical right motifs (especially where immigration is concerned) and whether this radical contagion has carried over to the policy level. For this purpose, we will apply the theses of mainstreaming and radicalization in attempt to shape the radical profile of the centrist parties like Venstre or the Conservative People's Party in Denmark, Moderate Party in Sweden or the Centre Party in Finland.
