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What a year this has been! A year marked sharply by the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic and felt harshly, personally and collectively. It effected the very core ideas of the Institute, in a distortion similar to what happened at other institutions and in other contexts, in Europe and worldwide. For what usually defines the fellowship at an IAS is the very sense of plenty of what otherwise is a rare resource, namely time. Time provided to concentrate on one's research and time to go astray in unrelated literature or neighboring fields. Having time to isolate from daily routines that mark our academic life today and to engage in undirected conversation with fellow Fellows. That is, in Abraham Flexner’s famous and much cited coinage, to experience the usefulness of useless knowledge.

If time defines one of the Institute's purposes and core idea, the other is providing a very special sense of hospitality. Hosting brilliant scholars and artists, junior and senior, is the enabling condition for that primary purpose, unstructured time. But during the pandemic, hospitality has been subject to limitation and restriction - or did not take place at all. Time took on a different meaning, and it did so dramatically. This affected not only opportunities for exchange and sociability, but it also kept the staff of the Institute from interacting with the fellows. It hindered casual talk in the corridor or over coffee, it limited the ability to plot likely and
not so likely ideas for workshops and discussion, it prevented introducing fellows to the scholarly communities at CEU, whether in Budapest or Vienna. The contributions in this booklet of the Fellows of the 2020/21 academic year provide vivid testimony to the varied experiences of this protracted period of emergency. So many expectations went unfulfilled, so many lunches and dinners were missed, and, last but not least, the city of Budapest itself could not be experienced fully! The lack of personal sharing, conversation, and response leaves a taste of regret.

And yet, this year’s contributions are a testimony to resilience, even to success and some sort of fulfillment as well. It is this dual character, and the tenor of divergent experiences portrayed, in different measures and with personal affinities, that renders this Yearbook a very special one. In retrospect, as these lines are written and as we are struggling still with the effects of the ongoing pandemic, what impresses most is the sense of resilience that transpires through much of the fellows’ reflections on their time spent at the Institute. Regardless of concrete situation and of a certain sensation of menace, enhanced by the unfamiliarity of the city, this period of uncertainty turned for most fellows into a period of productivity. It is impressive to see how much was accomplished, chapters written, books finished, outlines for new ideas and projects taking shape. The enforced isolation and social distancing, a term that has lost none of its cruelty, prompted individual responses of strength and creativity in the research at hand. And it succeeded in prompting imaginative new forms of sociability among Fellows as well. Imagination and productivity were not restricted to writing and research alone, but triggered, at least for some, a new and special sense of comradeship and emotional ties.

Social distancing and trigger warnings, closed reading rooms and libraries, concert halls and museums, all while waiting anxiously for the first jab of vaccine; these punctuated in many ways the time spent at IAS. “We all, it seems, have an erosion story to tell,” Gina Caison pertinently observed in her contribution. And yet, in unexpected ways this has been a good year as well, at least in scholarly terms. While reorienting the logic of legal materials, making sense of contests over prophecy, or creatively reading mural paintings, the sense of purpose and the drive for scientific and artistic work proved to be stronger than the mundane obstacles thrown up by the pandemic.

Finally, a few words are in order about what this year meant to our Institute. In many ways, the academic year 2020/21 has been an exceptional one for the Institute, both because of the pandemic and despite it. Administratively and organizationally, Corona affected the schedule of arrival of Fellows, shifting yearly rituals of initiation for the new cohort, altering and canceling the joint excursions in Budapest neighborhoods near and far, and limiting interactions with IAS alumni, CEU colleagues, and artist friends. While the main CEU campus moved to Vienna in summer 2020, the Institute established itself in its new quarters on the fourth floor of the beautiful new facilities at Nádor utca 13, sadly underutilized after the departure of most of the faculty. And while the Institute remains at present in Budapest, along with some other CEU institutes and units, the two-campus situation in Vienna and Budapest is having an impact on the Institute, including its management. This year witnessed in some way another kind of unsolicited social distancing, enhanced by the pandemic. But the Guesthouse and the Institute are in secure hands, as the administrative teams of both maneuvered through this year and provided a safe and open space for the continuation of a scholarly life, albeit with all the restrictions mentioned above.

This has been a special year, in every sense and for each of us. In retrospect and with temporal distance, we shape our narratives, cut our losses, and cherish our gains. I hope you will find inspiration as you leaf through these pages.

Nadia Al-Bagdadi
fellows
Judges and historians, in Carlo Ginzburg’s formulation, share the project of writing “to demonstrate, according to specific rules, that x did y, where x can designate the main actor, albeit unnamed, of a historical event or of a legal act, and y designates any sort of action.” Historians who treat legal decisions as a source of evidence about state violence, as I do, may read a case file and then offer a different interpretation of the series of events or a different conclusion than the one reached by the judges. An alternative vision of justice may emerge from a re-reading that lays bare the coverup of perpetrators in cases of state violence perpetrated against the people or the injustice perpetrated against the people either intentionally or by sleight of hand by the court itself.

But what if the historian stepped out of the scholarly narrative and wrote in the voice of a judge and in the format of a decision? The series of events making up the past or evidence in a decision might be ordered, or even constituted, differently. The evidence needed to hold state perpetrators to account could be foregrounded, rather than what must be elided for them to be exonerated. Rather than remaining at the level of critique, the alternative vision of justice – as well as the gap between the law as practiced and law as ideal – then becomes central to scholarship.

During the five months (February to June 2021) that I spent at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, United States, I worked on the book project, Dictatorship on Trial in Thailand.
Institute for Advanced Study at Central European University, I picked up the judge’s pen to write a condensed history of the five years of dictatorship under Thailand’s most recent coup regime, the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO). I arrived as the pandemic was at a height in Hungary, and so spent much of my initial time in solitude in a beautiful apartment at the Raoul Wallenberg Guesthouse. The combination of solitude, and then increasingly broken up by challenging conversations with fellow thinkers both through the weekly seminars and walks through the city were very generative and inspiring. Many trips to purchase the most delicious poppyseed strudel in the world at various pastry shops around Budapest were a bonus.

The NCPO launched a coup on 22 May 2014, Thailand’s 13th since the transformation from absolute to constitutional monarchy on 24 June 1932, and remained in power until 10 July 2019, when a new civilian cabinet was sworn in following elections. The NCPO’s most-favored tool of repression was the law, and hundreds of civilians were prosecuted in political cases for peaceful protest and simply daring to think differently than those who held power. Anti-coup protests were swiftly shut down. Dissidents were summoned for interrogation and re-education (soon given the euphemistic but no less Orwellian name of “attitude adjustment”). Activists who questioned the role of the monarchy in society and politics were sentenced to lengthy prison terms. Law, rather than the extrajudicial violence favored by previous dictatorships, gave the NCPO’s repression a veneer of legitimacy and made it possible for the junta to respond to criticism by stating that they were merely enforcing the law.

But who determines the meaning of the law? As Noura Erakat writes in the context of Palestine, “...the law is contingent and does not predetermine an outcome. It only promises the possibility of a contest over one.” Was the interpretation of the law that the Thai military and civilian courts offered under the NCPO the only possible one? Decisions under the NCPO overwhelmingly supported the junta and its project of eliminating opposition, primarily by casting dissent as criminal agitation rather than peaceful expression and privileging the state over the people at every turn. Neither of these perspectives are codified in law, but are instead how the court fashioned its role under the NCPO. What are other potential perspectives, and why might exploring them be significant, analytically and politically? If, instead, one begins by privileging the people and recognizing dissent as protected under both Thai domestic law and Thailand’s international human rights obligations, different narratives and divergent outcomes become possible.

In choosing to rewrite court judgments, I am inspired by feminist legal scholars who have rewritten decisions in Canada, US, UK and many Commonwealth countries. Focused on the persistence of gender injustice despite fulsome legal protections, they rewrite decisions in the service of assessing why it is so difficult for the courts to treat women as equal members of the polity. They compose new decisions using the evidence available and the law in force at the time of the original decision. In rewriting decisions issued during the regime of the NCPO I have taken these instructions on as well. The reasons are at once scholarly and political. The NCPO was not merely enforcing the law but using the law as a tool to dispossess citizens of their rights. As a historian, documenting how this took place illuminates unexpected continuities of legal support for coups and the persistence of citizen opposition to dictatorship in Thailand. As a person concerned with the eventual aftermath of dictatorship, understanding how interpretation of the law and the narratives of the benevolence of the state and danger of the people issued by courts constituted and legitimated departures that may have adhered to the law as written but departed from the rule of law is a key part of understanding the transformations that will be necessary to build a democratic polity, and the roles of the law and court in doing so.

Working with human rights colleagues in Thailand, I selected nine decisions to rewrite and brought them with me to Budapest. My selection of cases was guided by the goal to both highlight opposition to the regime and track the different ways law was deployed by the junta to thwart it. One way to understand the nine decisions, eight out of nine of which were decided in favor of the state, is as a part of the history of the NCPO’s repression. But they are also a record of how citizens held the line against dictatorship, despite the sacrifices this entailed. Ordered chronologically, the first case rewritten is one brought by citizens against the junta for launching the coup, and then other eight are cases in which citizens were prosecuted for noncompliance with the junta. These eight cases include citizens prosecuted for peaceful protest, not reporting when summoned for detention and re-education, and supporting a friend prosecuted for insulting the king. Across all of the cases, which were heard in courts and
around the country, the judges are less interested in showing that “x did y,” to return to Ginzburg, and instead emphasizing that the coup and all subsequent actions by the junta were legitimate and lawful.

As I translated these decisions into English as the first step to rewriting them during the first half of the fellowship, the absence of citizens was what was most noticeable. The names of the sixteen plaintiffs, let alone the significant damages they suffered as a result of the coup by those who brought the case against the junta, are left out. Defendants suffer no less invisibility. The reasons why people who protested opposed the coup are left out. The detention of a man’s children on a military base until the authorities apprehended him and took him for re-education is left out. The surveillance of activists by military intelligence so they could be prepared to arrest them before they even reached the demonstration site is left out.

The first step in rewriting the decisions to at once write a history of the NCPO period and imagine justice in its aftermath is therefore to center the people, not the state. This then leads to casting the judges as having a role other than legitimizing the junta. I spent the second half my the fellowship rewriting the judgments. Writing in the voice of a judge and the form of a decision has been full of simultaneous discomfort, uncertainty, and fun. Doing so makes the contingency of the law and the possibility of different outcomes palpable. The contest over law goes from being theoretical and hopeful to being real and present on the page underneath my pen. What I learned as I struggled, sentence by sentence, to rewrite the judges’ decisions was that the legal decision has ceased to be only a source of evidence for the outcomes palpable. The contest over law goes from being theoretical and hopeful to being real and present on the page underneath my pen. What I learned as I struggled, sentence by sentence, to rewrite the judges’ decisions was that the legal decision has ceased to be only a source of evidence for what I write, but the very site in which to imagine the future anew.

Postscript: The book of rewritten court decisions that I am completing is a single-authored English-language monograph intended primarily for an academic audience in legal history, feminist legal studies and Southeast Asian studies. In the upcoming year, I will work with colleagues to create a collaborative, Thai-language judgement rewriting project. Building on my work completed in Budapest, I will lead a series of workshops on rewriting court decisions for lawyers, activists, academics, journalists and artists. Then, participants will rewrite court decisions in Thai and we will disseminate them as an open-access free PDF book.

Frances Kneupper
University of Mississippi, United States

Beware of False Prophets: The Contest over Prophecy in the Late Middle Ages

During the 2020-21 academic year, while a Fellow, I worked on my book manuscript. I utilized my time to complete a rough draft of the entire manuscript and begin polishing the manuscript for publication. The following is a description of the book in its current form.

Beware of False Prophets: The Contest over Prophecy in the Late Middle Ages

Matthew 7:15: Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

Joel 2:18: And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions.

An outpouring of prophecy occurred in Europe as the Middle Ages drew to a close. The period spanning roughly 1380 – 1410 witnessed two significant turning points: there were more prophets than ever before, and new types of individuals claimed the gift of prophecy, including laypeople, especially laywomen. This marked a considerable shift, as before this time, those who claimed to know the future of Christendom were mostly clerical men.

During these decades, predictions of the future were wildly popular but highly controversial. Prophets, both male and female, claimed direct access to privileged knowledge, bypassing elite clerical authority. Their messages were employed to bolster papal claims, legitimize political reigns, and predict the outcomes of Church councils. But the power of future-telling and its independence from traditional authority elicited dissension. Hence, the surge in prophecy was accompanied by a new crop of literature dedicated to the topic. Numerous treatises emerged, some upholding and others dismissing, the validity of prophecy. At issue were definitions of prophecy, the role of clerical oversight, the potential for demonic influence, and the legitimacy of female prophets.

The years of intense prophetic activity coincided with what has been termed the “crisis of authority” in the fourteenth century. Claims to prophecy by non-elites acted as a significant challenge in a moment...
when conventional structures of authority were unstable. The Church was divided. Prelates, kings, and popes could not agree on the basic facts of what happened at the papal election of 1378. Women’s claims to spiritual authority, prophetic and otherwise, were fiercely asserted and forcefully contested. Laypeople’s access to scripture and the eucharist were stridently asserted and denied. The privileges and rights of clerics were challenged. Demands for reform of the religious orders and the curia were pervasive. All of these constituted threats the status quo during the tumultuous years of 1360-1410.

This book addresses the contest over prophecy that took place during Europe’s fraught exit from the fourteenth century. I name this a “contest,” because prophecy became a forum where some individuals asserted authority and privileged knowledge, while others doubted and denied these assertions. It must be noted that this was not a binary contest, but one which involved multiple viewpoints and assertions. Thus, this book takes the approach of an ethnography, observing the conversation about prophecy from multiple angles. Paris theologians, French cardinals, Italian hermits, radical Czech reformers, noble and non-elite laywomen, and members of royal houses all took part. Among these various contestants, three main positions can be discerned – those of prophets, their proponents, and their detractors. The chapters of this book observe prophecy from each of these vantages.

What could easily be viewed as a binary competition for spiritual authority – learned theologians versus “little women” – is complicated by a third viewpoint, the assertion by learned clerics that God now offered his voice to women. This was justified using Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians 1:27, “But God chose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to confound the strong.” Devotees of prophets suggested that the humble were more likely to receive God’s messages than the elite, and many of these humble would be women. With the addition of this third viewpoint, the conversation over prophecy became something more nuanced, which involved a rethinking of prophecy, prophets, and the reasons that God elected to speak to certain humans.

By embracing female prophecy in an explicit way, these individuals rewrote the rules of valid prophecy, and helped destabilize conventional justifications for male clerical authority. Where theologians emphasized intellect, theological training, and scripture, advocates of female prophecy suggested a new basis for spiritual authority – humility, and perhaps subalterity.

Thus, the contest over prophecy opened new avenues of spiritual authority to women and others outside the conventional power structure.

There was no “winner” of this contest. Rather, I emphasize that all three positions continued into the fifteenth century. This statement already disrupts a common narrative that female spiritual voices were repressed in the fifteenth century. Some theologians expressed increased skepticism towards female prophets and what they viewed as novel devotional or spiritual practices. In the following century, their arguments became enfolded into clerical anxieties about demonic activity. But female and lay prophecy were far from silenced, and the avenues opened at the end of the fourteenth century were never closed. Vincent Ferrer, Colette of Corbie, and Lucia Brocadelli were among the spiritual progeny of this prophetic movement. Moreover, the justification that the “weak were sent to confound the strong” and its potential to justify the authority of outsiders would become a strategy employed for centuries by those wishing to disrupt the status quo.

In conclusion, in the contest over prophecy a battle for privileged knowledge was taking place, one that has not yet been fully explored. The contest over prophecy produced enduring changes in the ideas of what humans can know of God’s will, who can know it, and how. The raising of these questions and their divergent answers permanently changed the landscape of spiritual authority in Europe.

It has been a good year; it has been a bad year. In assessing the past year, it is very difficult to give a definitive answer as to how the year has been for me as a scholar and a person. There were many challenges, not least of which was a global pandemic, that I worry we have not conquered yet. There were also some personal challenges that meant that even though I was technically able to cross the Atlantic to start the fellowship in Budapest, health concerns held me back for months. By December of 2020, I was starting to wonder whether I would ever be able to make it there at all. Thankfully, in February of 2021, I decided to take the plunge, and I am so glad I did.

Arriving in Budapest, a city that was in the middle of yet another devastating spike in COVID-19 cases and a health system that at times seemed to be completely overwhelmed, I found safety at the Raoul Wallenberg Guesthouse. It seems strange to say now, but back then, even though I was in a foreign country where I do not speak the language and where hardly anything was open and streets looked deserted, I found a peaceful shelter in the four walls of the studio apartment I was assigned there. It would have been impossible to do that without the help of the generous and patient staff, Agnes Forgó, Agnes Bendik, Krisztina, and Andrey. In the middle of the chaos of the pandemic, they kept everything on track and supported us in getting things done in incredibly exceptional circumstances.

After several months of weekly Zoom meetings with the director of CEU, Nadia Al-Bagdadi, and the other fellows, I thought I had a good handle on who each scholar was. I could not have been more mistaken. They were much more than just excellent scholars; they were kind, generous, and resilient, which only comes through in in-person interactions. We were all in the same boat of a very strange year. We shared with one another our worries, our homesickness, and even at times, our feelings of anxiety and depression. However, for me, knowing that my next-door neighbor was also there, working hard to stay on track with their work, despite the isolation and uncertainty, pushed me reflected going as well. Even though our goals were different, we all kept our eye on the prize. For me, it was to finish the first draft of a book that I have been researching for well over six years. The book was a book that I had been researching for well over six years. The book was

I am very grateful to Nadia, who was very encouraging and supportive when I told her that I was changing the topic of my research. The result is a book that provides an alternative history of empire that privileges the human scale over the institutional scale, individual experiences over collective extrapolations, street-level over bird’s eye view of historical events, intricate details over grand sweeping narratives, and finally, the temporal period of a human lifetime over a pre-set historical periodization. The book is tentatively titled Arab-Ottoman Imperialists and Their Vanishing Empire. This research project is the product of over a decade’s worth of research and writing that took me across archives and libraries from London to Damascus and led me across the world to conduct interviews with descendants of the family that lies at the center of this book—the Azmzades. I spent years re-membering the tiny fragments of the lives of two men and their family members who lived over a hundred years ago. These men embodied the trials and tribulations of an Ottoman state they identified with, whose strength and weaknesses they reflected, and whose demise meant the end of a generation who lived their lives in the shadow of a vanishing empire.

The Vanishing Empire is the first monograph to provide a “total history” of the world of Arab-Ottoman imperialists of Istanbul; a street-level experiential history of the significant events of the late Ottoman Empire; and a peek into the good, the bad, and the ugly of the social spaces of Ottoman elites of the metropole. Adopting a microhistory approach to be a diplomatic and political history of Ottoman imperialism in the Horn of Africa and Ottoman-Ethiopian relations at the turn of the 20th century. Years of preparation, including research in seven countries, had led me to that point where I was ready to start writing. However, in early August 2020, before I took up my fellowship and while I was visiting friends in Beirut, something terrible happened. The third-largest non-nuclear explosion ever took place at the Port of Beirut, two blocks away from where I was staying. I survived the blast without any physical injuries. My laptop and the apartment I was staying in did not fare as well. I immediately left Beirut and gave myself a few weeks to rethink many things, including the choice of a project I want to pursue at that moment in time. I decided to take the risk and follow a project that I have wanted to write for a long time. With everything happening, I decided that I did not want to wait any longer.

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to study this period through the lives of historical figures, I lay bare the hopes, anxieties, and prejudices of the time that would have been nearly impossible to uncover if my focus remained on the state, significant events, or the traditional historical paradigms of the field.

The Vanishing Empire is a book that uses biographical information to uncover the history of experiences that intersected with some known events and much less known social and cultural trends of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It highlights how those close to the sultan maintained their loyalties through a study of the moral economy of corruption, racism, ethno-racial differentiation, real and perceived. In its most straightforward distillation, it asks: What was it like to experience pivotal historical events as an Arab-Ottoman imperial loyalist who lived and worked very close to the eye of the storm during a quickly vanishing imperial world order?

Less than 24 hours ago, I sent the finished manuscript for review. The challenges of this year, the support of the institute—staff, director, and fellows—and the desire to make this year count helped me to finish a book that is a true representation of me as a scholar at this moment in time. I could not be more grateful. So yes, it might have been a bad year, but luckily, I was in the right place at the right time for it to turn out to be a good one, too.

I spent five months at the IAS at CEU, where my project was on the famous Greek Christian theologian, Origen, who was active in the first half of the third century in Alexandria and Palestinian Caesarea. The focus of the research was his Homilies on the Psalms that were discovered in 2012 by Marina Molin Pradel, an Italian paleographer of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich, who had been entrusted with the preparation of the new catalogue of the Greek manuscripts in the library. She found that there were some mistakes in the catalogue, yet some pieces of Homilies were familiar as they featured in earlier Latin translations. She had identified twenty-nine Greek homilies in Codex Monacensis Graecus 314, a 12th-century Byzantine manuscript, as works by Origen. By now, Origenian authorship is already taken for granted, and the critical edition of the text of these homilies has been published by Lorenzo Perrone and his colleagues in 2015. The recent discovery is perhaps the most momentous event for the early Greek Christian studies of the last few decades. These new texts deserve attention even more because they shed new light on various aspects of the Alexandrian master’s oeuvre.

The goal of my research project was to study the theology of Origen’s Homilies on the Psalms in its broader context and to write papers on this topic. Principal tasks are the registration of the similarities and differences of the thoughts in relation to the Homilies on the Psalms and the other Origenian works, especially the numerous fragments of Origen’s commentaries on the Psalms and the analysis of these ideas.

I tried to combine or mix the Origenian and modern terminologies also such terms for disciplines as theologia moralis and theologia hymnica, theologia revelata, terms never used in antiquity. At first sight, using the word “theology” when attempting to explain the Psalms seems to be unfitting because the Psalms themselves are poetic works providing no well-argued theological theses and complicated demonstrations. Its tenor is the religious sentiment and not theological reflection. Furthermore, while exploring Origen’s impact in the field of Psalm-interpretation one can safely build on the homilies, however its literary genre displays no features of precise argumentation and systematic analysis. We are accustomed to considering “theology” as systematic treatise working exclusively with academic methods. This approach does not reckon with the use of terms by Origen, and it is possible that an important theological idea may occur in the homilies due to the improvisation of the author or because we do not have a commentary text on a theologically relevant verse of the Psalm.

Origen uses the words “theologia”, “theologos”, “theologikos” and “theologein” in a wider and narrower sense. In a wider and more neutral meaning, all speeches about the God constitute theology, including the mythological figures described by Greek poets or Plato’s teaching on the gods. Due to his love for human beings God revealed himself, and thus the Bible itself is also “theology”, Origen says that the prophets delivered
substantial theological teaching on the relation between the Father and the Son. Here the narrower sense of the word "theology" comes to the surface, namely the doctrine of the Trinity, which is developed in the commentaries. In Contra Celsum "theology" is the doctrine on God and it is difficult to understand. In the 18th Homily on Jeremiah Origen introduces the distinction between "theologia" and "oikononomia" where the former is a doctrine of God as the divine being while the latter means the providential divine action, the incarnation of the Word, that is Jesus Christ's earthly life and teaching. In the biblical context "theology" is the explanation given by Jesus of the parables to the smaller group of the followers, but "theology" is also the most important discipline of true philosophy.

The second chapter deals with the figure of the Psalmist David, focusing on the different faces of him: as a prophet, a wise man and the king.

The third chapter treats the Theologia hymnica, principally the notion of the Psalm as music, with special emphasis on the relation between instrumental music and song. Here, there is a parallel between Origen and Plotinus. The longest chapter will be the fourth one that deals with the questions of philosophy moralis [s.a.]. This part aims at showing how ethics as a philosophical discipline emerges in Origen's interpretations of Psalms. While the Christian ethical teaching, which has been formed in the First and Second Centuries, existed mainly in the form of the series of prescriptions into a detailed and coherent but not systematic theory, which takes notice of anthropological and psychological preconditions of the moral conduct. Origen gives special Christian answers to the philosophical problems of the "good" and "goal" discussed by the Greek thinkers, he explains the notion of the "virtue", investigating the question of the different virtues, especially of the formation of them. Origen adopts and transforms several elements of the 'spiritual practice' — term of the French scholar, Pierre Hadot — cultivated in contemporary philosophical schools. The moral development is described by Origen as a long procession.

The topic of the fifth chapter is the relation between natural theology and Biblical theology in the Homilies. It seems that the key text is the First Homily on Psalm 77, where Origen emphasizes that faith in the Creator should be based on experience, because heaven and the earth manifest a divine order. In the process of becoming Christian, according to Origen, this theistic faith should be prior to the reading of the Scriptures, because sometimes the manuscripts of the Scripture suffer from corruption. One of the causes of corruption is the activity of Evil. In this way, the heretics influenced by Evil find their false doctrines in the Scriptures. This thought of Origen is absent in his other works, and I think that the idea of the priority of the cosmological argument helps to grasp the true relation between natural theology and scriptural theology in the Alexandrian master's thought. The final chapter will analyze the thought of Origen relating to the doctrine on the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit and creatures as gods. This last topic is the divinization of rational beings, the union with God.

My project, titled "Embodied Personal Autonomy and the Goals of Medicine", is a part of a larger research endeavor that aims to offer a reassessment of personal autonomy and its implications for a range of practices that depend upon it, including medicine, education, and criminal justice. Such practices, and indeed substantial parts of our social lives, assume that adult human beings are, for the most part, autonomous agents who govern their judgments and behaviors in accordance with values that they reflectively endorse. However, while some philosophers have early on expressed doubts that we possess the ability to govern ourselves in a way that personal autonomy demands, recent research in psychology and neuroscience indicates that it is often not our values and principles, but relatively minor and irrelevant influences that play a determining role in what we think and do. The veritable explosion of such findings seems to undermine the key assumption of personal autonomy, and this would have substantial implications for any practice that depends upon it.

I first began thinking about this issue when I was studying some of the classical 'situationist' studies in social psychology that highlight situational influences on moral behavior and challenge the idea of widely instantiated efficacious character traits that motivate trait-consistent behavior across a wide variety of situations. At first, these studies may seem to undermine the idea of personal autonomy, but on closer scrutiny, the findings can be explained in terms of conflicting dispositions. It seemed to me that the situational influences explored in these studies do not bypass the values and reasons of agents in a way that would threaten personal autonomy.
A more serious challenge to the idea of personal autonomy comes from a set of studies in social psychology and neuroscience published over the last fifteen years, offering evidence for even more profound situational influences via bodily experience. In a scoping review I articulated some concerns about methodological challenges in these studies, as well as problems with replicability. Nonetheless, I gradually came to accept a general conclusion that these studies seem to support, namely that bodily experiences of situational variables exert systematic and substantial bottom-up influences on morally relevant cognition and behavior. When starting to work out the consequences of accepting this conclusion, I found it increasingly hard to avoid the impression that it spells bad news for the idea of personal autonomy, because these situational influences bypass reflectively endorsed values and norms. We would not count them as proper reasons to motivate action if we had reflective access to them, and they are best described as association-based embodied attitudes that are not directly evidence-responsive. On such basis, I argue that the findings do not merely threaten the traditional notion of character, but also seem to undermine the very idea of personal autonomy, which hinges on the idea that we are, for the most part, able to reflectively endorse the motivations for our actions, undisturbed by momentary and situational impulses.

What conclusion should we draw? Should we accept that personal autonomy is a myth, or should we perhaps explore whether a less demanding account of personal autonomy might be rendered compatible these findings? Opting for the latter possibility, in a chapter that is crucial for the project, I contend that the studies offer valuable insights that can be used to rethink personal autonomy. But it also became increasingly apparent that traditional, hierarchical accounts of personal autonomy are not entirely suitable for this task. Instead, relational approaches that allow relationships beyond the reflective control of individuals to be constitutively relevant for autonomy seem much more promising. Indeed, relational accounts of personal autonomy have proved valuable for my efforts to provide an account of personal autonomy that is able to accommodate situational influences and to delineate the complex relationship between autonomy, agency, and health.

I was grateful for the opportunity to present my work at the weekly seminar. Even though the seminar took place online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I received some constructive feedback that helped address some of the challenges that haunted the structure of the project. Attending the seminars and listening to inspiring presentations by scholars from various humanities and social science disciplines was an intellectually enlightening experience, although most of the topics touched upon were not directly related to my research interests. We were also offered the opportunity to present short interventions on the impact of the pandemic, which not only led to stimulating discussions, but also helped get to know the fellows a bit better. Even if physically very far from each other, the interventions highlighted a number of similarities in the nature of the challenges that we faced.

Due to the outbreak of the pandemic, the academic year 2020-2021 has brought along some unexpected challenges, and it also meant that I was not able to make the kind of progress that I had initially anticipated. For reasons related to the pandemic, my stay in Budapest was brief and opportunities to establish the kind of close cooperation with CEU Faculty that I was hoping for were rare. Nonetheless, it was an enriching experience, and I am very grateful for the IAS team for their generous support. Nadia El-Badadi, Ágnes Bendik, Ágnes Forgó, Andrey Demidov, and Krisztina Domján have succeeded in creating a hospitable and intellectually invigorating environment in which fellows were able to develop their academic careers, expand their professional networks, and accomplish their scholarly objectives.
My project for the year, “Erosion: American Literature & the Anxiety of Disappearance,” took on a more prescient tone over the last nine months than perhaps even I anticipated. Indeed, when I began the project, I already understood it to reference a deep anxiety within narratives of the United States that signals a constant, tacit awareness of the country’s history of enslavement, genocide, and land theft. However, events of the past year have brought many of these anxieties to the fore, demonstrating the profound fragility of institutions of both democracy and demagoguery and how quickly these blur into one another. As I write this reflection of my year at the Institute, some parts of the globe are in a state of reappearance, emerging from what we hope to be the worst of the pandemic, while other places remain in the throes of rising case numbers amid low vaccine access. Such demographics of unevenness are not a revelation for anyone reading this, but it’s difficult not to pause at this moment and ask: do any of us truly know when we (and the structures on which we depend) are on the cusp of disappearance?

The book I wrote this year asks how authors have struggled with this question and how they have composed narratives that either confront or run from this most basic human question. Specifically, I examine this central question in the context of erosion. As a geological phenomenon, erosion is both mapped and lived — a geological process with a narrative footprint. It is limited neither to ocean-front towns (just ask U.S. Great Lakes residents) nor to shores at all (see the Dust Bowl). Importantly, it is not wholly a positive or negative process. Geologically speaking, some sites need to erode to yield sediment in others. While the Humanities have seen a recent investment with narratives of climate change and the grand scales of the Anthropocene, this project zooms in on the smallest of fragments: the individual particles of soil. Although there have been a handful of popular scientific texts that engage questions of erosion, these texts — written largely by geologists — tend to neglect the very real humanities questions of land attachment and narrative affect that undergird discussions of who claims the material earth and to what ends.

Although my project largely focuses on American literary and cultural contexts, spending this year abroad has enriched thinking about how the stories we tell others and ourselves about home depend upon certain fantasies of attachment. We may move around the earth, but for the most part, most of us imagine that the soil itself stays put. And yet, the earth itself is shifting soil. In the context of the U.S., settler colonialism and its attendant agricultural exploitation has caused damage across the continent, and even though the specifics may change from location to location, this larger refrain stays the same. It has been a bittersweet revelation to hear from many IAS colleagues about how these issues of land degradation and abuse resonate with stories they know from their own work, homes, and histories. We all, it seems, have an erosion story to tell.

I came to the Institute with the goal of finishing a first draft of the manuscript and identifying a press that would share my enthusiasm for a book about the unlikely duo of soil science and literature. I am happy to say that these goals were more or less accomplished. The majority of the book is drafted, and currently I am working with editors at my top-choice press toward a manuscript submission in January. I have a bit more work to do on the book’s final chapter about coastal erosion along the Atlantic seaboard, and I hope to finish the book’s introduction (the part I always write last) shortly after my return to the U.S. The imprint of IAS and CEU is everywhere on this project. The generous questions and suggestions from the other fellows weave through nearly every choice I have made in framing my central questions. Even when connections to my own work might not have seemed initially obvious, I found inspiration...
in each weekly seminar. The innumerable city (and countryside) walks I have shared with my colleagues have given me the opportunity to bore so many people with geological factoids and observations. Without these indulgences from my fellow Fellows, I double I could have maintained the momentum to accomplish my goals. Despite the fact that we have all lived lives on screen this past year, being in Budapest has allowed me to participate in the intellectual life of my European colleagues without the added complication of time-zones. I was able to give talks at virtual events hosted by Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg and Humboldt University in Berlin. I also appreciated the opportunity to invite colleagues from Aarhus University, Bard College Berlin, Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, Linköping University, Northumbria University, and Southern Denmark University to my seminar. This allowed me to reconnect with these scholars whom I am also lucky enough to consider friends, and they each have offered valuable feedback on the project. This year also gave me the time to apply for future opportunities to connect with colleagues around the globe, and (public health situation pending) I look forward to returning to the continent in October for the Anthropocene Campus Venice’s week-long seminar “Water Politics in the Age of the Anthropocene.”

Even though my focus this year has been the erosion project, I have also had the opportunity to complete a few other scholarly endeavors. I finalized the manuscript for my forthcoming co-edited collection with Stephanie Rountree and Lisa Hinrichsen, Remediating Region: New Media & the U.S. South (Routledge’s Companion to the Literature of the U.S. South, LSU Press), and I wrote a solicited contribution on “new media” for University of Northumbria University, and Southern Denmark University to University Halle-Wittenberg and Humboldt University in Berlin. I also work, I was honored to serve as a judge for American Literature Companion to the Literature of the U.S. South. In addition to this, Runtree and Lisa Hinrichsen, Remediating Region: New Media & the U.S. South. In addition to this work, I was honored to serve as a judge for American Literature’s 2020 Norman Foerster Prize. The time that the Institute affords has made an impact across my career, and I know it will continue to do so long after June 30th. As I reflect on my academic career, and I know it will continue to do so long after June 30th.

To close on a personal note, many people have asked me how, given the circumstances, this year has or has not been all that I hoped it would be. When posed from those at home, this question seems to carry a whiff of pity, the assumption being that surely a year of such unusual conditions could not match some imagined standard of what it should be. I usually respond by asserting that the tragedy of 2020-21 is certainly not my unmet expectations of museums and symphonies. But moreover, my research this year has reminded me time and again how much damage is caused by humans trying to make things do what they are not inclined to do and be what they are not meant to be: make this soil grow this grain; force this river to flow only this route at this rate; nail down this island under the weight of rebar and concrete. These efforts to curb the earth’s dynamism rarely yield satisfactory results. Thus, I’ve tried to apply this lesson to my life this year: let the experience be its singular, dynamic self. Relish the bakery smells that stop you in your tracks while in search of a vaccination appointment. Pause to photograph the unbothered snail inching up Gellért Hill. Ponder the tilt of the crow’s wing as it alights on its nest. Back in the light of the stained-glass window in a friend’s apartment. Absorb the afternoon mystery of the unseen violinist. Skip the next train home in favor of savoring a second pilsner outside on a chilly autumn night. Receive the greeting of csőkolom knowing it’s only accumulated laughs that revealed your age. Order the ice cream. Eat the börek. Observe the glist of sun on the Danube — first in Budapest, next in Belgrade. Marvel at how you came to end up in Belgrade. Board the ferry. Accept the pálinka. Climb the hill. Do not fret your disappearance when you find yourself off the trail. After all, the trail is where your feet are on this earth right now — each footprint its own kind of miracle where sole meets soil.

The list of publications that I have accomplished during my fellowship includes the manuscript of Erosion: American Literature & the Anxiety of Disappearance (currently under review with Duke University Press) and two articles: The Providence of Place & Margaret Mitchell’s Unlikely Soil Science and Lynn Rigg’s Out of Dust and the Performance of Colonialism.

During my stay at IAS, I began a new research project focused on the ways in which the appropriation of the discovered footage of Eastern European documentary films functions in relation to history, memory and identity. By dislocating the material from its original context and presenting it in reassembled forms – that might or might not maintain the representational value of the signified – filmmakers propose a new aesthetic paradigm, that focuses on the perception of images and sounds from a contemporary perspective. Reflecting the dynamic between the archive (as an institution) and the archival materials that are stored in it, these films both highlight, bring to attention, and obscure recollections for a specialized or general public and invite the spectator to participate in the
reconfiguration of the past. Eastern Europe – especially in the turbulent twentieth century – provides ample opportunity for retrospection. By looking with preponderance at films that use official/public archive footage, rather than home movies, my research engages with the discourse and ideology of nation states. While looking at specific case-studies within their own national contexts, it was imperative for my project to analyze the results from a transnational (regional) perspective.

During the first part of my fellowship, I focused on gathering materials, discovering new films that would be adequate case studies for my research. Constricted by the COVID-19 pandemic, this search was done primarily through online repositories – the Institute of Documentary Film's Database, but also primarily their East Silver Video Library; the Doc Alliance platform archive; the Multi Notebook and Lists; as well as through contacts at film festivals and in the European documentary industry. However, my research was most enhanced by the access to the Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives. While the Research room at OSA was closed throughout my stay in Budapest, due to the persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the staff at OSA was helpful in providing access to their digital records, as well as offering other titles on demand and even digitizing some of the films. Aside from providing a rich historical context, these films from the OSA archives have also slightly changed the objectives of my research. While primarily this research started with the premise of focusing on films that use exclusively archival or found footage, the examples from the OSA archives – a majority of which are what Bill Nichols calls expository documentaries – have underlined the value of expanding the scope of research to also include other forms of documentaries.

Simultaneously, and while the scale of case studies was growing, I was also trying to sharpen the theoretical approach by consolidating the analytical framework. While exploring a number of different directions, I have found an article by Patricia Pisters in which she compares filmmakers that work with audiovisual archives to metallurgists, ‘bending our memories and historical consciousness’ (2014), which led me to explore questions of history and memory and I have decided to focus on Walter Benjamin’s theory. Benjamin’s approach to history – in which history is continuously reconsidered from a contemporary perspective – is complementary to his concept of memory town halls provided as a medium that shapes this reconsideration of the past.

This research will be the foundation for a manuscript tentatively titled Film re(dis)covered: history, memory and identity in Eastern European found footage documentaries. During the months spent at the IAS, I have completed a chapter on the film Videograms of a Revolution that will be published as part of a bilingual (English and French) anthology co-edited by Dominique Nasta, Mircea Deaca and Alina Popescu for the Editions de l’Université libre de Bruxelles. Aside from this chapter that was completed, I am writing a chapter on autocrats, having identified several documentaries each about Joseph Stalin, Josip Broz Tito, Nicolae Ceausescu, Todor Zhivkov, Mikhail Gorbachev, Enver Hoxha. I also had the opportunity to give talks based on my research and expertise. Aside from presenting my research as part of the IAS seminars, I gave a lecture as part of the ‘Archive Film’ module at the Institute of Art Design + Technology (IADT), Ireland, as part of their Film and TV bachelor program, as well as a lecture/workshop on effective film project pitching for the Cinema bachelor program at Babes-Bolyai University, Romania.

While the pandemic has limited some of the activities that could be undertaken, and there were no possibilities to organize either film screenings or a workshop, the plan would be to organize a film program and possibly a symposium as part of the GoEast Film Festival (https://www.filmfestival-goeast.de/en/), an important festival of Central and Eastern European cinema, which takes place every year in April in Wiesbaden. Over the course of the fellowship I have had the opportunity to give talks based on my research and expertise. Aside from presenting my research as part of the IAS seminars, I gave a lecture as part of the ‘Archive Film’ module at the Institute of Art Design + Technology (IADT), Ireland, as part of their Film and TV bachelor program, as well as a lecture/workshop on effective film project pitching for the Cinema bachelor program at Babes-Bolyai University, Romania.

I have appreciated the efforts of the Institute to create a sense of community, despite the restrictions and the impossibility of meeting in-person for a large portion of the fellowship. The organized activities, tours of Budapest, the lunches and the online town halls provided an opportunity to relax and get to know the other fellows. To that end, I have
found the Life under COVID sessions to be particularly helpful in creating a sense of community, shared experiences and empathy, where I felt that we can go beyond and outside the confines of the Zoom meeting rooms.

This has been the most unusual year. Soon after I arrived in Budapest restrictions were imposed due to the waves of the pandemic and although I was given an office in the Nador 13 building, the apartment at the Guesthouse became a safe cocoon that functioned as both home and office. While I didn’t visit and discover as much of Budapest as I would have liked, this period also represented an opportunity to reconnect with old friends and colleagues and the in-person discussions on film, culture, theory, politics, the local conditions of the pandemic were transferred on Skype and shared over a cup of coffee, tea or even dinner. Also, having seen only a part of Budapest gives me the impulse to return at a later date.

The start of the IAS fellowship meant a return to research and academic work, after 5 years of working in organizing film events, a change that was very welcome but which left me with the uncertainty of my future. During my time at IAS I have also pursued several options and have written applications for positions as lecturer, but also applications for further research funding. Therefore, my Junior Fellowship as part of IAS has been productive not only in providing a useful environment in which to develop work on a new research project, but also in being a helpful motivation and a bridge to go back to academic work.

During my fellowship I finalized the book chapter for Romanian Cinema Anthology titled “The Revolution will be Televised. Prosthetic Memory, Power and Media Reality in Videograms of a Revolution”. Of this planned output, I have produced two article drafts that I am about to submit for publication.

Both before arriving in Budapest and upon my arrival, I was impressed by how everything was set up to help fellows settling in as quickly and as smoothly as possible, and to make them feel at home despite all the limitations and obstacles created by the COVID-19 pandemic: the great amount of bureaucracy needed for travelling during a pandemic was all handled by the IAS’ staff, and the guesthouse was so comfortable and organized that I did not need to think about anything but enjoying the new experience fully. We had some meetings and lunches, we were starting to know each other with the fellows, and I was greatly enjoying the city and the new situation and the many stimuli I was getting from it. Sadly, however, a new pandemic wave hit Hungary really badly, and everything had to be moved online. This deprived me of a good part of one of the most precious aspects of the life at IAS – the community life – but the staff handled the situation with the same remarkable organizational skills I had already appreciated and limited the damage as much as possible: our seminars continued to run smoothly and, although only online, we could nonetheless have also somewhat less formal discussion.

From the onset of the fellowship, I started working on my project: “Conceptualism or Non-conceptualism? Kant’s Understanding of the Relation of Intuition and Concept in Light of its Historical Roots”. The goal of my project was to approach the widely debated question of whether Kant is to be understood as a conceptualist or not from a new angle. Given the crucial importance that the interpretation of Kant’s terminology plays in answering this question – in particular, the concepts revolving around the notion of ‘representation’ – and how such a terminology originates from Kant’s interactions with the theories of representation of his contemporaries, I aimed to answer the question of whether Kant is a conceptualist or not by interpreting the key terms for settling it in light of their origin in the philosophical context of Kant’s times. Given the modular nature of the project, which is particularly apt to be developed as a series of articles, I had a quite clear work-schedule and output in mind: during my fellowship, I intended to write the first two articles of the series, the second of which was supposed to be divided in two parts in order to be of a size adequate for publication.

I applied for a Junior Core Fellowship at IAS CEU right after defending my PhD thesis. This seemed to be a golden opportunity for me to elevate and develop my career further: not only is the IAS CEU a prestigious institute, but this fellowship would have granted me the time and the financial and academic freedom to work on some ideas I had developed while working on my PhD thesis, to improve my publication record and prepare research proposal for obtaining further funding. In hindsight, I can say that, despite the pandemic, the IAS gave me all this, in a particularly stimulating context and a beautiful city: I am grateful for all of this.
of “thinking” in Kant’s *Transcendental Deduction*, and according to my research question, this was the first technical term I have focused on. Accordingly, the first article contains an analysis of the notion of “thinking” that was most widespread among Kant’s contemporaries, i.e. the Wolffian one. In it, I dispel a misunderstanding about Wolff’s notion of thinking (as conscious representing) that has hitherto affected the scholarship on the topic and has made it difficult to appreciate the significance of the Wolffian notion for the interpretation of Kant. Through an in-depth consideration of Wolff’s Latin writings, I show how, contrary to the received view, the conscious nature of “thinking” does not for Wolff simply amount to distinguishing the contents of thought (something which is instead only a condition of possibility of thinking); thinking is instead the result of the combination of various acts of representing (perception, apperception, etc.), of which I reconstruct the relation. In the second article, I make use of the results of the first in order to provide an interpretation of the famous “I think” sentence that constitutes the fundamental premise of Kant’s *Transcendental Deduction* in the second edition of the Critique of pure Reason. In order to do this, I combine the results of the first article with a consideration of how “accompaniment” was used as a technical term by Kant’s contemporaries. These drafts have been presented at the Leuven Kant Conference, and will also be presented at the University of Trier and at the XV e Congrès international de la Société d’Études Kantianes de Langue Française. Having benefited from the received feedback, I will submit these drafts for publication. Together with some other materials I have been working on during the year, part of the contents of these two articles have been presented during my IAS lecture, in which I have presented my broader view on the topic and have received some highly valuable feedback that is going to shape my work in the future.

In the meantime, I have also written an article titled “Transcendental Deduction of the principle of purposiveness of nature in Kant’s third Critique”. In the article, I argue against the idea that what is at stake in Kant’s *Critique* is the nomic necessity of the laws of nature. By comparing the “Transcendental Deduction” with the *Introduction* and the *Appendix* to the *Transcendental Dialectic* of the first Critique, I argue instead that the necessity of the laws of nature Kant refers to is their necessity as consequences of higher laws. I have submitted this article for publication, and I am waiting for a response from the editorial team. I have also finished modifying an article on Kant’s doctrine of self-positing in the *Opus Postumum* according to the suggestions of the referees. This going to be published in a Routledge edited volume on Kant’s last work: in this case, I have to thank the IAS for covering the costs of proofreading. Lastly, I have continued my work in the editorial team of the journal *Studi Kantiani*.

Working on my main project has turned out to be more fruitful than I expected. In November, I have given a talk at the Italo-Brasilian Workshop on Transcendental Philosophy of Curitiba (BR), where I was dealing with the question of whether Hegel’s *Science of Logic* can be taken to contain a form of transcendental logic. Having dealt with the notion of a ‘priori’ both for this talk and for my main project, I came to see how to consider Hegel’s *Philosophy of Nature* from a broader perspective – i.e. by taking into account also Kant’s predecessors theories and their aftermath in the natural sciences – provides one with a vantage point for answering a particularly problematic interpretative question: how can Hegel’s *Philosophy of Nature* be, at the same time, free from any presupposition and employ the result of the science of nature of its times? This has resulted in a collaboration with Dr. Kabeshkin from Potsdam University, with whom we are about to finish an article on the topic (there, I have also presented my research on the topic in the research colloquium of the chair of theoretical philosophy, Prof. Dr. Johannes Haag). Secondly, working on Kant’s contemporaries’ notion of intuitive knowledge has proven an invaluable tool for looking at Kant’s break with his predecessors from a new angle. This idea is at the core of my future research plans, and has given me the opportunity to continue some old collaborations (with Prof. Karin de Boer from KU Leuven) and to begin some new ones: with Dr. Sonia Schierbaum from Würzburg University, PI of the DFG funded Emmy Noether project “Praktische Gründe vor Kant (1720-1780)”; where I will spend three months as a visiting scholar with the EP Lab at IFILNOV in Lisbon (in particular Prof. Antonio Marques and Dr. Susana Cadilha), where I had the chance of discussing some of my ideas in April; and with Prof. Manuel Sánchez Rodríguez from Granada. Having turned these ideas into a research project, I have used them for applying for funding and finding a position, with a good degree of success: from October 2021, I will therefore start a post-doc at the University of Trier, in the team of Prof. Kristina Engelhard.
If I look back at this year, I have only one regret. In the last weeks, with the progress in the vaccination campaign and the marked decrease in the number of cases of COVID-19, I have had the occasion to spend again some time together in person with the fellows and the staff, and to establish a more personal relation with them. Although, sadly, this could not last long – the fellowship is over – this has been really rewarding at a personal level, and I wish that the whole year could have been like this. I am extremely grateful to all the staff and the fellows for this year.


In recent years, macro-murals have become an ambitious trend and one of the most visible forms of applied art through which various subjects try to improve the material environment of poor communities in cities in the global South. My goal was to compare several macro-murals in Colombia to establish a novel understanding of how they emerge and travel globally, how they are locally implemented, and what impact they have. Truth be told, given the circumstances, it was a rather difficult might seem about right. But it wouldn’t be fair to simply give it such a one-sided diagnosis. Despite many situations that weren’t always easy—and I have to admit to being highly privileged in the complex and unmerciful socio-economic, political, and health circumstances of the global pandemic—surprisingly, I had a very good time. And it was mainly thanks to all the marvelous people I met and interacted with at the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS).

I came to the IAS as a Junior Core Fellow with a project titled “The Politics of Designing Poverty in a Contemporary Globalized World: A Study of Macro-Murals in Colombia.” In recent years, macro-murals have become an ambitious trend and one of the most visible forms of applied art through which various subjects try to improve the material environment of poor communities in cities in the global South. My goal was to compare several macro-murals in Colombia to establish a novel understanding of how they emerge and travel globally, how they are locally implemented, and what impact they have. Truth be told, given the circumstances, it was a rather ambitious endeavor. Luckily, my talk was already scheduled for November. As a byproduct of my reading and thinking on squatter settlements in Latin America, informality, and politics, to which I devoted most of my time at the IAS, I finished the paper “From Squat to Cottage: Macro-Murals, Informal Ownership, and the Politics of Unspotted Homes” that, most likely, will be published in the journal Housing Studies. In the paper, I ask the following question: how is property negotiated and experienced by homeless people, and how does it influence their homemaking? Based on the intra-urban comparison of informal dwelling in two abandoned buildings—a former railway station tower and an unlisted former cottage—I argue that “unspotted home-making” arises from the assemblage of socio-materiality, meanings, and various dimensions of politics, where the politics of informal homeownership plays an important role.

The past academic year at the IAS was also highly important for me as a scholar in two other very specific ways. “Ten years of research, five years of writing, three continents and one pancreatitis.” These are a few numbers that most aptly characterize my book monograph titled: Glosárnce a bezdomovcetvi v českém městě (On the ship: Globalization and Homelessness in the Czech City) published in late June 2021, that ended one era of my life. In this monograph, I explore how homelessness in Czechia materializes at the intersection of political-economic factors, such as the democratization of society or integration into the global economy, and the specific accompanying logics arising from the encounters of street culture and certain conditions characteristic of Czech society.
study of Pilsen and comparing it with certain elements of homelessness in the United States and informal settlements in Latin America, I argue that homelessness is not an exclusion from society as generally perceived by the public as well as experts, but a systemic component of current cities. Besides the monograph, another highlight of the past year was being awarded a Marie Curie Global Fellowship. I feel excited and honored when I picture myself joining the Georg-Simmel Center for Metropolitan Studies at Humboldt University in Berlin and visiting the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University during the outgoing phase to work on the project "Surface for Urban Innovation: Politics of Designing Poverty in Colombia and Czechia." I am very glad that I will be able to continue my research on macro-murals that I worked on at IAS, and I can clearly imagine the significant role played by IAS in the decision to award me this fellowship.

To be honest, my stay in Budapest wasn't only about working on the project. I came here with another very specific intention: to enjoy it. I wanted to meet as many people as possible, try the weirdest items of local cuisine, and explore all those hidden yards full of wild bushes in hilly Buda. In the pandemic setting, it was rather challenging, but not impossible. When recalling all that I've done in the past nine months, I think "we" were pretty successful. And this "we" is crucial here. If I had used "I" in the sentence, I believe it would mean I haven't achieved it. But I am so happy to be able to mention a few of the things that we have undertaken: I will never forget the numerous hikes, dinners, and talks with Gina Caison and Tanja Šljivar. The famous Rám-szakadék in Dobogókő, the first beer in cold damp Zebegény, or the adventurous week in Belgrade—those are just a few examples of our communal activities. I still can't stop laughing when thinking about all the surreal situations and interactions we experienced that are incommunicable. One must live them. Who would think I was going to travel from Budapest to Belgrade to witness the purchase of a house in Atlanta, right? Similarly, it was always wonderful to visit István Pál Ádám, his wife Magda, and Carlito in their home in Nagymaros; I enjoyed all the chats switching between Italian soccer and the philosophy of Immanuel Kant with my neighbor Lorenzo Sala; and I am going to miss the weekend "stairs breakfasts" with Mostafa Minawi. And, to be honest once again, I could carry on listing more experiences if I had more space in this short reflection.

Nine months after my arrival at the IAS, I am leaving with several more friends, wonderful memories from several new places I visited, and the invaluable knowledge I gained about myself as well as about scientific craft. In my talk "The Pandemic and Changing Urban (In)Formality" in one of the roundtables about the Covid-19 pandemic organized by IAS, I strongly emphasized a "not natural" character of social order. I highlighted the everyday and repetitive human practice and its negotiated and contested potential. And this is something I have thought about repeatedly during this year. As a scholar who has spent his career studying the poorest and most marginalized people in cities, I learned that sometimes, despite the circumstances, one just must stubbornly push a rock uphill. That is what I kept reminding myself this year in moments when I couldn't leave the apartment, couldn't write anything, or when I struggled with post-Covid symptoms accompanied by "It is what it is" and "I'm just keep doin' what I do," to use some quotations from pop culture. It was the people around me who made this "pushing" actually kind of "easy." Namely, I am incredibly grateful to all the people from the IAS for their help and continued support: Nadia Al-Baghdadi, the Director; Ágnes Bendő, the Senior Administrative Officer; Kristína Domján, the Fellowship Coordinator; and Andrey Demidov, the Scientific Coordinator. For the always perfect and stimulating living environment, I thank Ágnes Forgó and her crew. And finally, thank you to my colleagues, my new friends!

During my fellowship I finalized and submitted two pieces: the article titled "From Squat to Cottage: Materiality, Informal Ownership, and the Politics of Unspotted Homes' (submitted to the *Housing Studies*) and the book chapter "What Makes a Mural a Macro-mural?" in Gabbay, Cynthia, Tom Penfold (Eds.). *Dust, Scratch and Paint: Street Art in the Global South*.
I am grateful to the Botstiber Foundation, and to the Institute for Advanced Study at CEU, for the opportunity given to me to be a 2020/2021 Botstiber Fellow. Moving to a new country during a pandemic to take up this opportunity, and then dealing with the uncertainties of Covid-19 and larger bureaucratic issues in a new environment had their challenges. Yet I am still grateful that I moved to Budapest because of the people that I met and the other Fellows. I would like to highlight some of the benefits, both personal and professional, that this fellowship provided.

My research focuses on three main questions:

1. How does war impact food security and health of civilians?
2. How do governments and civil society internationally assist in human recovery?
3. How can we think about new ways to measure effectiveness of international aid?

My current book project, which is supported by the Botstiber Foundation and the IAS at CEU, revolves around these three questions in relation to Vienna post WWI.

As the Austro-Hungarian Empire began to unravel during the First World War, the specter of civilian hunger grew in Vienna. Food insecurity increased in the city for a variety of interconnected reasons. In the midst of wide-spread food shortages, the University of Vienna's Children's Clinic and Hospital became inundated with new patients suffering from a variety of ailments associated with malnutrition. Unfortunately, hunger did not immediately cease with the succession of hostilities. One contemporary study suggested that in 1919, 90% all school children in the city were experiencing moderate to severe malnutrition. My book project explores the impact that reduced food supplies due the First World War and Franco-British blockade had on the health of civilians in Vienna. I consider both the spectre of nutritional disease in Vienna as well as the positive impact international food aid had on the city once the blockade was lifted.

Philanthropic donations played a huge role in alleviating children's suffering and reducing nutritional inequality and were hugely effective.

1. Planned Archives

I had arranged to do six months of extensive archival research immediately before the fellowship began (April 2020 – September 2020). This coincided exactly with the onset of the pandemic. Travel to these archives was unfortunately not possible because it was dangerous, and archives were closed. I chose to be cautious and safe, and tried to avoid enclosed indoor spaces as much as possible. I visited the National Archives in Budapest in the castle district, but was not able to search through their material. The next day the archives were closed, and remained closed for the remainder of my fellowship.

Because of my fellowship, I have learned that there are indeed archival materials in archives in Budapest related to the nutritional status of Viennese children during the War and the philanthropy aimed at helping them. I am carefully planning a return trip to gather material from these archives with the help of a new friend and native Hungarian speaker whom I met during my time in Budapest. My previous archival trips that I was sure would be completed before taking on the Botstiber Fellowship have also been rescheduled. While the time spent in Budapest would have perhaps been more useful if I had been able to conduct my much anticipated archival work, there was nonetheless progress made.

Fortunately I did have archival material that I collected earlier in the project. While it is difficult and, in my view, unfair to contact archives to ask them to do your research for you, archivists were eager to help where
they could. I contacted one to ask for a better copy of an image I had taken myself a couple of years ago, and they graciously reproduced it for me in a version that I can use for publication.

2. Memorial efforts.

In the aftermath of World War I, the world responded to the severe poverty and malnutrition of the people of Vienna by donating and sending aid. This took various forms, and was recognized by the residents of Vienna in various ways. Schwedenplatz, formally known as Kaiser Ferdinands Platz, received its name on November 6, 1919 in an act of gratitude to the country of Sweden for their generous philanthropic aid to support mothers with infants with baby supplies and food during the First World War. The country of Argentina was thanked for their philanthropic services with the naming of well-known Argentinierstraße in 1921. Holland was also thanked for their aid to Vienna following the First World War, largely through taking in children into homes in Holland with plenty of food where children received proper nutrition and regained their health before being sent back. Vienna renamed a street in Leopoldstadt to Hollandstraße to commemorate this act of charity.

For an unknown reason, the proposal of renaming one of the streets in Vienna Herbert Hooverstraße, was not approved in the 1920s. This was despite Hoover’s role as head of the American Relief Administration (ARA) in providing approximately 70% of school-aged children in Vienna with a daily meal from the between 1919-1921. During the Fellowship I spent time looking at maps and viewing photographs of archival material I had gathered earlier. The main office of the American Relief Administration (ARA) in Vienna was located in the central first district of Vienna, at Elisabethstraße 9, and this address was published on their correspondence. However, Elisabethstraße 9 was not the first place that the ARA opened shop. The ARA spent their first six months in an old palace at Giselastraße 13. Giselastraße, named after the archduchess Gisel(l)a in 1862 no longer exists. It was renamed Bösendorferstraße on November 6, 1919. Bösendorfer pianos have had their main showroom there since 1914, and the Wiener Musikverein is also located on the street. It is a wonderful location. While Schwedenplatz, Hollandstraße, and Argentinierstraße were all renamed one hundred years ago, a proposal to rename Bösendorferstraße with its famous pianos to commemorate the dedication of Americans to save the lives of Viennese school children seems unwelcome. Elisabethstraße, where the ARA operated next, also seems an unlikely candidate for a name change as the street is named for the former Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary Elisabeth, a.k.a. the one and only beloved “Sisi”. So what to do, in a city that has largely moved on from one of the greatest philanthropy efforts to save and protect children in history? By closely examining maps, I noticed that Giselastraße 13 is located on a corner. This building has two entrances, and the other is located on Dumbastraße. Street names are always political, but I am currently working gently with a handful of others who through historical interest (or family connections to relatives who received this life-giving food), to commemorate this history with a memorial. We don’t know yet what form this will take, but are hopeful that we can work with those who own and live on Dumbastraße to come up with a renaming opportunity.

3. People

I have come to the conclusion that one of the best things about my time in Budapest was actually the people I met. Social interactions were curtailed because of the pandemic. Yet, perhaps because of this, the less common, carefully orchestrated, outdoor, socially distanced contact I did have was treasured and not taken for granted. Here too again, it was the Hungarians who made the greatest difference. The Institute for Advanced Study has a treasure in Ágnes Forgó at the Wallenberg Guesthouse. She is so helpful, so kind, so professional, so hardworking, and so generous. When I was getting beaten down by the Hungarian Bureaucracy and could not obtain health insurance or a TAJ-number to be recognized by the state (something terrifying to me as a foreign national during a pandemic), she sat down with me, masked of course, and helped me fill-out and translate the forms. This did not, unfortunately, lead to this recognition, but these generous actions of Ágnes led to huge comfort in a very difficult time. Later, after my fellowship had finished, she sent us information on how to get vaccinated in Hungary as foreigners. Because she is so well read and up-to-date on the news, she could then use her knowledge to help everyone at the guesthouse. I am so grateful to Ágnes Forgó!

I also appreciated academic conversations with other fellows. Ildi Zakariás, the other Botstiber fellow this year, was so insightful not only in discussing historical-sociological ideas, but the larger academic climate
in central Europe and Hungary in particular. I was also grateful to Zsuzsa Hetényi, in culture and literature studies and another great Hungarian for conversations about other ways about thinking about my research, and for the history and activism she shared with me about standing up for academic freedom. The Artir in Residence Oksana Maksymchuk was also so generous with her time and willing to talk. All of the fellows this year were interesting people. Perhaps because of our situation of being isolated together, there is a feeling of comradery unique to other years. I am so grateful for the chance I had to get to know them a little bit. On a personal level, my life has been improved by meeting everyone through the fellowships and others in Budapest such as Dr Orsolya Lazányi, Victoria Seifert, and Sara Pendleton.

My work during my stay at the IAS revolved three major focal points. First, my central project titled “Solidarities Reconfigured: Central Eastern European Migrants Working in Refugee Accommodation Institutions in Austria” has been launched. This research aims to unearth processes, narratives and practices of solidarity (or of indifference or rejection) between various migrant groups and migrant categories, as they unfold among migrants working in refugee services in Austria.

The research has been planned as primarily ethnographic, based on qualitative data: collection of interviews, participant and non-participant observation – such methodology had to be suspended due to the covid-19 pandemic. Despite the severe hindrance of ethnographic fieldwork, my stay at the IAS and my access to databases and literature through the generous support of the CEU Library gave a great opportunity to overview the contextual field of my study: to scrutinize and overview theoretical concepts, to understand the policy context in Austria; as well as to look at and analyse statistical data.

Although the covid lockdown did not allow for on-site research, still several on-line interviews were conducted during my time at IAS. According to these, the increasingly securitizing political discourses that emphasize control and exclusions of migrants, and in particular of asylum-seekers in Austria is paralleled by the downsizing of state budgets and subsidies offered for migrant and refugee services, and the increase of projectification and managerialism in the everyday operation of these institutions. These changes affect both asylum-seekers and refugees and workers assisting them: the worsening of perspectives of obtaining studying and working opportunities and residence permits for the former also put various types of emotional burdens on workers, who in the meantime also have to face the precariousness of their own jobs and living conditions. How such deterioration of prospects affects narratives and workers-students and worker-client (affective) relationships, and concepts of care and solidarity remains to be seen in future on-site fieldwork, hopefully to be enabled soon by the pandemic situation.

My stay at IAS also allowed for another type of desk-research: that is investigating statistical databases related to my research topic. Statistik Austria’s Statscube online database service allowed for assessing the presence (ratio and absolute numbers) of social workers with a migration background (having foreign citizenship) in specific fields of employment. The Register-based Labour Market Statistics showed that between 2011 and 2018 the ratio of workers with EU+EFTA citizenship increased from 7% to 9% in Austria in the entire social work sector.

Related to this topic, during my stay at IAS I finalised a book chapter (together with Margit Fölschmidt) on narratives of refugee deservingness and vulnerability of Hungarian migrants working or volunteering as social workers and teachers in the refugee services in Germany, to be published at Berghahn. As an IAS fellow in January 2021, I was also guest speaker at a course at CEU Nationalism Studies Program.

My second focus, during the months spent at IAS was on studying solidarities during pandemic times. We carried out an online survey representative of the Hungarian adult population in July 2020 in the framework of an NKFIH project lead by Domonkos Sik, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest. An attempt was made to explore those values, motivations and strategies, which ground the interpretations of deservingness and responsibility, while organizing the supportive interactions. The parallel analysis of the support provided and received, the structural positions and the relevant attitudes outlines the ‘field of solidarity’. My stay at IAS allowed me to develop papers on this topic (together with Domonkos Sik) appearing in journals Intersections. East European Journal of Society and Politics, and another paper in the journal Regio. Minorities, Culture, Politics and Society (in Hungarian).

My third focus during my stay at IAS was on finishing a manuscript
on transnational solidarities and care by civic initiatives and NGOs in Hungary, directed at ethnic Hungarian minorities of Romania and Ukraine. I am especially thankful for CEU IAS fellows whose comments and remarks during our walks in the city helped greatly to finalise the text, which is going to be published soon in the journal Voluntas - International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations.

I would like to express my immense gratitude towards the CEU IAS for hosting me, and especially for all the support and help I received from Nadia Al-Bagdadi, Ágnes Bendik, Krisztina Domján and Andrey Demidov during these difficult times. Although the pandemic constrained severely our possibilities for socialising, the few occasions at the beginning of the academic year still allowed to develop deep – and hopefully longer lasting - personal and collegial relationships.

When I applied for the IAS CEU fellowship, I had in mind to come to Budapest and consult the primary sources of the Hungarian archives. I had a research project on the ground level of the post-war denazification process in Budapest. I wanted to understand how ordinary Hungarians used or misused the retribution in the years of 1945-47. I arrived in Budapest relatively early, at the end of summer, 2020, and my séjour started well: I found an excellent documentation of the anti-Nazi investigation which had been carried out within the group of Budapest butchers. The academic year begun, I started to write an article from this archival material, and slowly but steadily life started also within the Institute for Advanced Study at the premises of Central European University. It is difficult to describe my feelings when I first entered this university in an official capacity since I had left it at the end of my MA studies in 2009. Eleven years later I was back again, and I have found myself in the middle of a circle of excellent scholars. It was great to take part actively in a research seminar of Mary Cox in the seminar room of the new CEU building, and it was nice to chat with the fellows before and after the Wednesday seminars. One can learn so much from friendly discussions about the different concepts of history and minority lives across the world, especially if one's direct colleagues include such characters like professors Mostafa Minawi or Gina Caison. But soon
the heyday of our fellowship life ended abruptly by the spread of the Corona virus, which made it impossible for us to take part in in-person meetings. From mid-November, not being able to see my colleagues in professional settings was unfortunate, however, thanks to this unexpected solitude most of us CEU IAS fellows had a productive writing period. I myself managed to finish my article on the denazification of the Budapest meat industry as quickly that one early version was accepted for publication by the English language periodicals of the Hungarian Academy of Science Institute of History. Of course, the paper needed further works, editing, correcting, responding to reviewers' comments, etc., which meant in practice a fruitful collaboration with members of Hungarian academia. At the end, this piece was published in the Hungarian Historical Review (volume 9, no. 3 (2020), pp. 491–511, DOI 10.38145/2020.3.491) under the title: “Budapest Butchers, the Jewish Question, and Holocaust Survivors”.

In a later phase of my fellowship, I published another scholarly paper about the memory culture of Hungary, and the memory of the Second World War. I based my observations on the historical monuments of Szabadság tér, and other localities neighbouring Central European University. This article entitled “Budapest’s Freedom Square and its Collection of Memory Narratives” appeared in the French periodical Mémoires en Jeu, no. 15 (Spring 2021), pp. 55-61. Beside these publications, I had some opportunities to get involved into CEU’s academic life as well. I took part in the “Anti-Jewish Quotas: Central Europe and Beyond” conference organized by the Nationalism Studies Program and Jewish Studies Program at Central European University and the Tom Lantos Institute. Later the organizers invited me to submit a revised version of my paper, which will be included in an edited volume called Quotas: The “Jewish Question” and Higher Education in Central Europe (Berghahn Books, 2022). https://events.ceu.edu/2020-11-23/anti-jewish-quotas-central-europe-online-conference.

On December 7, 2020, the Institute for Advanced Study invited us for a virtual “five o’clock tea” meeting with Frances Pinter, executive chair of CEU Press. Since then, I developed a good cooperation with Dr Pinter. As a result, in spring 2021 we both spoke at the event organized by the English CircleSq network about a Hungarian pianist, Agi Jambor and her husband, who had survived the Second World War in Budapest under challenging circumstances.

As part of my fellowship at IAS CEU, I got the chance to summarize my research in a Wednesday seminar in April 2021, where over 25 participants listened to the presentation of my research findings, and gave me much appreciated feedback. I am particularly glad for Constantin Iordachi’s critical reflections. In this talk I tried to explain how the denazification was implemented in Hungary on the level of occupational groups, a solution which allows the researcher to reveal the internal wartime and early post-war dynamism of a group of colleagues. Conducting the inquiry on the level of occupational groups allowed me to dig into the complexity of wartime discrimination. I found that there were certain professions and work associations where behind an anti-Semitic campaign one can identify a shared economic interest of the group, instead of individual agencies. Thus, in these groups, usually the unwanted competition was targeted by an anti-Jewish campaign, a tool which was widely used simply because the changing market circumstances did not allow all the competitors to maintain a profitable business. This was the case among the Budapest butchers, where the lack of fresh meat, and later the set prices and food rationing harshly limited business opportunities. My sources reveal that during the denazification each and every profession created its own narrative about the wrongdoers of the Second World War. This is why it is not easy to draw up a comprehensive picture of post-war retribution. In addition, many elements of the denazification were implemented spontaneously, and signs of improvising appeared not only at the beginning of the process, immediately after the war, but in later phases as well.

In March 2021, I got an invitation from director Nadia Al-Bagdadi to take part in the CEU IAS roundtable over the effect of Covid19 disease. Here I want to quote from the text entitled “The length of the train to Prague”, which I have prepared for this occasion, because it is a good reminder of those unusual times. I wrote this text in my family’s home, in Nagymaros, in the Danube bend. I have spent in this house a longer period of my fellowship, because the Rector of CEU advised all Hungarian staff, students, and others to return to their homes and work...
from there just to provide more safety against the epidemic. I chose to relocate here, and this is where I wrote the following words: “A year after its beginning, I am still searching for the tools to cope with the isolation and crisis brought by Covid19. One of the solutions which seems working for me is living a more structured life than earlier, with several regular daily activities, such as, for example, practicing playing music. Experiencing a pandemic isn’t a new phenomenon in the history of humanity, yet, we don’t really have adequate tools to handle and to measure the crisis. Governments handle Covid-19 with restrictions and they measure it with terrifying headcounts: they regularly publish the number of new infections, or the number of Covid related deaths, numbers which one can find somewhat inaccurate. This is because for example they don’t count those who committed suicide, or those, who died because of missing out on medical help, which is badly limited since all the doctors are working on Covid patients. These numbers are, of course, terrifying even in these inaccurate forms. They terrify the populations which plays an important part in convincing them to follow the restrictions, to limit social contacts and to wear a facemask. Yet, in the long term, I find these numbers counterproductive, because they alienate us from each other, they make us fear death, and evoke other unpleasant feelings. I figured that I needed new measurements, my very own ones.

From my study room in my family home in northern Hungary, if I look out of the window, I sometimes see the international train running between Budapest and Prague. Every other hour there is an express train like this going under my house. I look at this train and I wish I could travel again. When I last travelled with this train, some good three years ago, it included 7 passenger wagons, with a restaurant wagon added, where a slightly drunk Czech waiter served you fresh Pilsner Urquel beer for 2 euros. This year, as I spent a substantial part of the Covid lockdown in this house, I had the chance to observe how this poor train got shorter and shorter month by month. This is how the train to Prague became one of the most accurate indicators of the depth of the Covid crisis. This calendar year the Prague train started at 3 wagons for second class passengers, plus one 1st class wagon, and the restaurant one. Now, at the end of March, the locomotive carries just 2 second class and one first class wagon, it seems that no fresh beer is available anymore on this train, how unfortunate. I sometimes imagine the restaurant wagon parked in the outer part of Prague's main station in Zizkov, and I am afraid the waiter may need to find a new job.”

From a retrospective view, these words perhaps give back something from the melancholy of our times in spring 2021. By early summer, at the end of this difficult period, we all regained our strength, and the train to Prague regained its original eight-wagon-length. By May 2021, most of us got vaccinated against Covid19, and I could finally move back to the Raoul Wallenberg guesthouse, where Agnes Forgo and the entire staff did a great job in hosting us. The permanent members of the IAS team, Nadia, Agnes, Kriszta and Andrey remained super supportive all year long, and I am extremely grateful to them because they helped me to make the most of my fellowship. Thanks for this!

What a year it has been – a year of extremes. As I was settling in Budapest and emerging from quarantine in October, I was determined to make the most out of the Fellowship despite the many Covid-19 restrictions. During the first days, I enjoyed peaceful research days, interspersed with castle walks, no teaching, no faculty administration, and many great weekly seminars at the IAS. In my mind, they worked surprisingly well on Zoom, we soon became an intellectual community, providing regular collective engagement and creative challenge (although post-talk lunch meetings might have rounded up our conversations even more). Yet then since December the other side: months of debilitating physical pain and strongest medicine. Because of Covid-19 I could not get the surgery I needed, being put on a long waiting list. The situation could be solved only several months later, and soon after I was happy to work again to the fullest and also appreciated increasing opportunities to meet with the fellows personally, as most of us got vaccinated and Covid regulations relaxed. The pendulum had swung back. Yet throughout the entire fellowship period, I was amazed and grateful about the superb infrastructure of the Institute and its excellent support throughout. The bulk of my fellowship time was spent on advancing my new book, The Making of Taste in a Global Cultural Market. Having returned from fieldwork and completed all interviews in Doha and Beijing, also online, the fellowship afforded me with the precious opportunity of uninterrupted periods of time to intensively engage the primary data and elaborate the

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Dynamics of Valuation in a Cultural World Economy

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crucial theoretical arc of the book. Reading more deeply through the interviews and the sociologies of consumption, taste, habitus and elites, I decided that my conceptual entry point would be how taste is formed at the meso level of the art market and its own endogenous dynamics, as a prism that reframes individual factors along with macro-level forces from class structures and macro cultures. Yet the important twist is to conceptualize art markets along a nested configuration of sub-national, national, regional, and global level influences. The book thus develops a nested field approach for understanding the shaping of collectors in rising world economies. And it shows, in a comparative framework, how the different articulation of these forces entails divergent taste patterns and underlying evaluative frameworks, beyond conventional individual or macro level accounts, but also beyond conventional national comparative methodologies.

With this crucial theoretical groundwork, I have everything in place to jump off to a first full conceptual book draft; one that I will share by the end of the summer with sociologists and area specialists alike, before I will go into second revisions for the fine grained details that matter so much to prevent Eurocentric accounts and grant each case its full empirical complexity. That should result in a substantive narrative that ultimately discards with teleological assumptions about the evolution of art tastes from pre-modern, modern and ultimately advanced contemporary states as they still inform Western narratives.

As part of my empirical research for the book, I also drafted a journal article on the Chinese art market case, completed a major quantitative dataset, and wrote a book chapter that will be published in an international volume. In particular, longitudinal data of the global top 200 art collectors for a period of thirty years (1990-2020) were retrieved from ARTnews ranking lists. The data allow to explore globalization trends in terms of changes in the diversity of collectors’ geographic-cultural backgrounds as well as the relative strength of countries in their share among globally recognized collectors. This unique empirical material inform the book’s introduction to situate my empirical case studies within the broader historical rise of “non-Western” collectors in the global art market. Moreover, these data also have become part of a co-authored book chapter that I completed during the fellowship, titled: “From the Love of Art to a Passion for Investment? Shifts and Classification Struggles around the Global Elite of Contemporary Art Collectors.” The publication will appear in the interdisciplinary volume this year, Judgment Practices in the Artistic Field, with contributions by internationally leading experts on the art market, and edited by the renowned art historian Beate Söntgen and colleagues.

Due to the pandemic, several talks to which I was invited during the fellowship period had to be postponed, such as a keynote for an international conference on Field theory and Globalization at Uppsala University or a talk at a German University. However, I was delighted to contribute with two talks on Zoom to the Institute’s weekly seminar series. The first, in December, presented my work on the Chinese case, as part of one of the book’s chapters and the journal article. I greatly appreciated the engaging questions from an interdisciplinary audience that helped me to think through my analysis more precisely. The second, in March, was a presentation about the effects of the Covid-19 crisis on the global art market, which also inspired me to look at how the ongoing transformations might affect collector behavior for my book’s epilogue. Overall, despite the restrictions of the pandemic and health related setbacks, I am eternally thankful for this fellowship. The stay in Budapest, the virtual and personal interactions with the magnificent fellows and IAS, were a precious time for tremendously advancing the book and for additionally writing a contribution for an international volume as well as a new journal article. I will be most thankfully acknowledging the Thyssen fellowship and the Institute's truly outstanding support in all publications.
When applying for the IAS CEU I imagined walking there daily on the Chain Bridge to Nádor street as I used to do often in my childhood with my now late father whose office was housed in the former Festetics Palace on the corner of Nádor and Zrínyi streets, the building that dates back to 1820s, that later became the first building of the CEU.

It was February 20, 2020 when I had to accept the Affiliated Fellowship without stipend instead of the Senior Core Fellowship I had applied for, not without the feeling that that marginality is a fatal fate of my topic, the Russian-Jewish literature. It was a very good decision, however, to apply for a prolongation of my stay at the IAS. Thanks to that I was given enough time to finish a much bigger project than was planned originally. During the whole year I was constantly grateful for this extra time given to me by the IAS Board.

One month later, Hungary was put under quarantine and the second lockdown from November 2020 determined our whole year at the IAS. I did not even meet in person some of the fellows, I had no news how they lived, where they were, at home or in Hungary. I was far from the Guesthouse, we met only during Zoom online seminars. Our gatherings were limited to October and June. In addition, I had to work and teach full-time at my university to gain my living—12 hours of courses per week plus the usual workload (exams, supervising, conferences, and meetings). Nevertheless, all my free time was given to my project, without weekends or holidays, with long nights’ workload. Libraries and archives were closed, so was the main CEU building most of the time. It was the first time in my life when I could have had an office of my own — and I was there less than 10 times during the whole year, and only for visiting, for looking around. To sum up: no stipend, no fellows’ community, no office, no library, no sleep, no free time, and as a final hit - no Chain Bridge. This was a challenging situation, or, as we say in Hungarian: that is the point from where it is fine to win.

And we won. IAS performed the Wednesday seminars with elan and gusto, raising lively debates, creating sudden thematic connections of interest, despite the fact that we missed the casual gatherings after and lunches. The lockdown made working without time limits possible and even allowed me to regain the time lost because of commuting to and from my job. I could not travel to remote archives in Moscow, Israel, Paris or Geneva, could not search for forgotten Soviet newspapers of the 1960s in the libraries, but as a compensation the extreme situation had made all archivists, librarians and museum workers worldwide understand that my research depended on them, and they were ready to provide me with materials and texts scanned or copied. And, finally, the closed Chain Bridge was replaced by a boat service.

The central project was the digitalization and publication of the legacy of Shimon Markish, founder of Russian-Jewish Studies. I spent the year collecting and tracing texts from different sources, compiling a full bibliography. It was followed by retyping, transcribing, scanning, OCR-ing, deciphering, proofreading and copyediting Russian typewriter-written or handwritten texts, also some printed texts from journals of 1960s–1990s (often with mistakes). Fortunately, CEU helped by hiring an assistant to help me with editing for 3 months (February-April). Special thanks for the IAS staff for administering this help, and for their year-long work and help—to Nadia Al-Bagdadi, Ágnes Bendik, Krisztina Domján, and Andrey Demidov. When preparing the planned volume, it became clear that I must
proceed with the publications chronologically, hence I cannot publish only the volume planned by the project. Interestingly, this chronology of the oeuvre overlaps with the historical one (antiquity, Erasmus, Russian-Jewish literature). By December 5, 2020 (anniversary of Markish's death) the first volume ('Antiquity') of Shimon Markish's collected works in Russian was published. The next two volumes 2 and 3 (‘Erasmus and his Age’ and ‘Russian-Jewish Literature of the 19th Century, longer articles’) were published by March 6, 2021 (90th anniversary of his birth), and by 13 April (my anniversary) the next two volumes (‘Russian-Jewish Literature of the 19th Century, essays’ and ‘Russian-Jewish Literature of the 20th Century, longer articles’) were out of print. So, finally, instead of the planned one volume I have managed to publish 5, all together 2164 pages of the text in Russian. I wrote 5 long forewords and a longer one about the history of the archive, added a biography, commentaries, footnotes, and thematic bibliographies for each volume.

The series will be completed in 2022 by the next 5 volumes, to become a series of, at least, 10 volumes. The collection is published in a Munich-based library and archive of Russian émigré literature which I found and connected during the Fall semester. 

https://vtoraya-literatura.com/razdel_1000113_str_1.html

By the end of my term Hungarian, Russian, and English Wikipedia pages were created about Markish, with the help of a second CEU-financed assistant (May–June) and CEU's wiki-expert Ádám Harangozó, found for me by Ágnes Bendik with a cosmic rapidity: https://www.wikiwand.com/hu/Markis_Simon
https://www.wikiwand.com/ru/Маркиш_Симон_Перецович

A version of the history of the archive and some pirate editions were published (18 February, 2021) in the biggest intellectual internet journal and got 11,256 readers (by June 22).


I had a lot of moments of serendipity, fortunate and unfortunate. I wrote to a museum in Moscow requesting letters in their holdings in copies. The archivist redirected me to another museum but attached an unknown photo—“this may interest you”. I immediately knew it was connected to the first text known of Shimon Markish (a speech given at the graduating ceremony of his high school, 1948). I asked about the provenance of the photo. It turned out that the archivist some 20 years ago walked by the former school of Markish under renovation where all the old documents were thrown on the pavement and she had recognized him and picked up the photos (Markish used to be a well-known personality in Moscow of the 1960s).

One bitter moment, however, was to discover that some of his texts were published illegally in Russia, and it took a lot of my time and correspondence to find out how it was possible and who was responsible, and to discover that I (the owner of the copyright) would not be able to sue the publisher in court in Russia as it seems highly unlikely any Russian judge would rule in my favour as a plaintiff as the author's rights are not sufficiently guaranteed in Russia.

At the IAS, the zoom consultation with the executive director of the CEU Press was highly instructive in several ways. Frances Pinter explained to us the different phases and categories of the Open Access format. This was how I could learn that the results of my project could not be published at CEU Press unless they would be translated to English—by me or at my expense. Here I understood that the e-book is the ideal form for Markish's oeuvre as this is the only way how his texts can easily and freely reach those Russian and Russian-speaking readers to whom these texts are addressed and even dedicated. Unfortunately, the archival part of the project (the history of the years 1970–1974 and the illegal not-returning of Markish from the West) was not possible to accomplish because of the pandemic. Not only was the ÁBTL (state security) closed but I could not access the archive with the certificate issued by the CEU. It proved to be insufficient for the archive. Still, I could contact some people and ask them to describe their memories about the Hungarian period of Markish (e.g. János Kias from the new Democracy Institute of the CEU). My Fellow Seminar "The Unfinished Past. The Legacy of Sh. Markish" took place on January 21, 2021. It was attended by András Kovács, ex-chair of the Jewish Studies Program at CEU when I used to teach a course. I was happy to hear the empathetic commentaries of the other fellows who asked me also about the excitingly ambivalent situation of the researcher and widow of Markish.
On Markish’s birthday, I organized with former colleagues at Geneva University and friends an online book presentation of the 5 volumes already achieved: “Shimon Markish et son oeuvre — de l’antiquité à Erasme de Rotterdam” (Université de Genève, 6 March 2021). The next day at the Russian Broadcast Free Europe an interview was out, also in written form.

A fortunate coincidence of the topics opened a collaboration with one of the fellows. István Pál Ádám’s research project deals with the documentation of immediate post-Second World War transitional justice procedures focusing on butchers. As one of my creative projects is an oral history (and personal history) work of Holocaust where a butcher saving Jews in 1944 in Budapest was a clue figure, so I could provide a first-hand testimony on his fate. This butcher became “The Righteous of the World” (only in 2017)! The last person who knew him and who submitted the request to Yad Vashem died in an accident in 2016… I wrote a 5-page essay for István who found documentation of denazification on him in the archives, and we plan to write a publication together.

I often played with the idea of finding the connections with the topics of the other fellows and I could! Of course, Gina Caison as a researcher of Literature was the closest connection especially because her geological metaphor of “Erosion” overlapped with my concept of “Slips”—this is the title of book in Russian on Vladimir Nabokov finished in September 2020 and being in preparation at the Academic Studies Press (Boston). It would be long to list the connecting or parallel lines with others.

My list of publications has grown by 37 titles in one year (with some journalism and earlier submitted texts them). The number of my references has increased by about 180 (also by searching for old ones). The number of my publications has exceeded 500 and the number of citations grew over 600. My Hirsch index has increased to 12.

During the period from January to June 2021 I held a CEU faculty Fellowship at the Institute for Advance Study. The fellowship granted me a teaching weaver, thus enabling me to concentrate my work on a research project entitled “The Making of Nation-State Citizenship in the Balkans: A Comparative-Historical Analysis, 1815-1945.” This ambitious, long-term project proposes a first theoretically minded and historically grounded comparative analysis of the emergence, evolution and main features of nation-state citizenship in the Balkans during the modern period (1815-1945). The analysis focuses on the emergence of new nation-states on the political and demographic background of the late Ottoman Empire, on techniques employed for ascribing state citizenship, and on practices of naturalization of aliens. Another major line of research is the legal status of ethnic, religious, and gender minorities and the emergence of an international regime of minority protection in the Balkans. The project employs a dual comparative perspective: internal, among the Balkan states; and external, among the making of citizenship in the region as a whole, as compared to other European regions. The analysis does not consist of a collection of disparate studies, but highlights the interdependence among them, by employing a relational and transnational approach. The project underscores institutional, legal, and intellectual transfers over temporal
and geographical borders, in an area characterized by multiple layers of historical legacies, most notably the Byzantine, the Ottoman, and various waves of Western- and Russian/Soviet-patterned modernization. The main aims of the project are: (1) to fill the gap between theoretical works on citizenship and their application to historical research on the Balkans; (2) to provide the first systematic treatment of the history of citizenship in the region; (3) to reconceptualize the study of citizenship, by connecting it with issues of social change, construction of new gender roles and group identities, and mechanisms of nation- and state-building; and, (4) on the basis of this case study, the project aims at building an integrative comparative framework for approaching the history of modern citizenship in Europe which does not take Western Europe as a normative measuring stick but accounts for a plurality of historical experiences which constitute our common European heritage.

My work at the IAS was built on previous research foundations. Fortunately, in the previous years I managed to accumulate a compressive collection of primary and secondary on the topic. My aim at IAS was to continue to process these sources and to synthesize my preliminary findings. Due to the vast subject matter, I decided to concentrate on the first part of this vast chronological period, namely the late Ottoman Empire and its successor states, 1815 to 1918. My work advanced at a fast pace; I have managed to write advanced drafts of four main chapters, while two are still in the making. IAS provided me with quasi-ideal writing conditions, including library assistance and adequate feedback. My presentation on the making of citizenship in the Balkans that took place in early March 2021 was a very good opportunity to test my research hypothesis and to gather feedback on my work. I was very pleased with the large audience, the useful questions raised and the lively discussion that followed.

Unfortunately, fellows’ socialization in Budapest was marred by the restrictions caused by the Covid-19 health crisis. Regular seminars as well as other events could only take place online for the entire academic year. This hampered, to a certain extent, academic exchanges and the launching of ad-hoc cooperation projects among fellows or among fellows and CEU faculty members. It should be said, however, that I did feel that we managed to form a virtual scholarly community. The Wednesday seminar was always an important event, which hosted a wealth of highly interesting presentations. In addition, the experience of being isolated at home created special emotional ties among the fellows. At the IAS initiative, we have participated in several debates over the impact of Covid 19 on society and the future of academia in a post-Covid 19 world. I found the debates very stimulating, indeed; they provided food for thought and stimulated me to further reflect on the role of universities and of academic knowledge in our changing world.

Overall, the period of research and writing that I spent at the IAS Budapest was most fruitful, both in academic terms and in building new and hopefully last lasting ties to other colleagues from around the world. I have much hope that the Institute, and the university, can resume its normal operation in the new academic year. I also hope to be able to soon publish the first results of my comparative research project on citizenship. I will duly acknowledge the help of the IAS in enabling my work.

Is Climate Change the Only Villain to Blame for Increasing Disaster Risks?

Increasing water security threats (floods/droughts) are often explained by progressing climate change. At the same time there are many influential, yet not widely analyzed, factors. Such neglected factors can be found in both environmental and social domains: changing land cover, impounded rivers, floodplain urbanization, evolving perception of disasters, among others. The importance of these factors varies depending on regional specifics and conditions. To be better prepared for upcoming threats, communities should not only follow the global narratives on climate change, but also recognize regional peculiarities and climate associated risks.

This topic has been a focus of my academic and professional activities for the last decade. In the current project I tried to combine new methods of scientific enquiry, e.g. cloud technologies of satellite imagery analysis, with historical data on socio-economic trends in river basins and associated changes in local communities' lifestyles. This idea originated in my previous work on recognizing a river basin as the territorial unit most appropriate for securing and monitoring sustainable development. The plan for the duration of the IAS fellowship was to undertake multidisciplinary study of complex interrelations between the evolving concept of water security and diverse factors contributing to it. The analysis of these interrelations is based on the geospatial analysis of various environmental and socio-economic parameters using the latest developments in information technologies (e.g. satellite imagery and

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Is Climate Change the Only Villain to Blame for Increasing Disaster Risks?
The multidisciplinary overview of the global cases of water insecurity aimed to result in identifying the best cases for the deeper analysis including evolution of land cover as well as socio-economic processes occurring in the corresponding river basins.

Unfortunately, the lockdown related complications, such as inability to access the computer labs and powerful office computers, essential for running the analysis due to high computational power and visualization capacities required, prevented the proper implementation of the plan. Through no publications were finalized during the period of the fellowship due to the unforeseen professional and personal complications caused by the lockdown and university transfer to Austria, some research ideas were completed, and several related research projects have been initiated. It is expected that these ideas should lead to several publications at some point soon.

In my own research, I continued to work in several directions. First, I continued to study the river-linked traditional lifestyle of the Cossacks communities and evolution in their perception of disaster (floods/droughts) risks (Don/Ural Rivers, Russia). Staying within the same geographical focal point I assessed the flood and urbanization patterns in the Don River basin and patterns of land use in the same region. Second, I continued work on studying the water security threats in the Tigris-Euphrates River basin in Turkey and Syria. In the former, I analyzed, using instruments of remote sensing, both water quantity and quality of water in the areas access to which is difficult due to the ongoing conflicts. In the latter, I went on exploring the links between water and food security. Third, I continued to analyze the changes in the hydrological regime of the Kura River that flows both through Turkey and Azerbaijan. Finally, I devoted time to further elaboration of river watershed approach to sustainable development at a global level.

The analysis of the climate change and surface water availability was executed using Google Earth Engine cloud service (GEE) that I have installed on my personal laptop. Google Earth Engine combines a multi-petabyte catalog of satellite imagery and geospatial datasets with planetary-scale analysis capabilities and makes it available for scientists, researchers, and developers to detect changes, map trends, and quantify differences on the Earth’s surface (https://earthengine.google.com/). In addition to that, some products of pre-conducted satellite imagery analysis were used for analysis such as Global Surface Water Explorer (https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/scientific-tool/global-surface-water-explorer) Global Surface Water Explorer is a water dataset and online tool developed in the Copernicus Programme and the European Commission Joint Research Center. The tool maps the location and temporal distribution of water surfaces at the global scale over the past 40 years and provides statistics on the extent and change of those water surfaces.

Based on this study, the ideas formulated during the IAS application were confirmed during the above-mentioned research efforts and demonstrated using the historical and ongoing process in the river basins worldwide. In particular, I demonstrated that in some cases increasing water security threats and corresponding reported socio-economic problems, including armed conflicts, are (un)intentional consequences of changes in specific water and land management patterns within the river basins rather than climate change drivers. For example, while there is some evidence of the ongoing climate change in the Middle East and its potential linkage to the droughts occurrences in Syria, the water shortages in the region can be partially caused by river’s impoundment in the upstream reaches. The changes in rivers’ hydrological regimes triggered water and food security crises, contributing to civil conflict and unrest.

Water security should be understood as the current and future availability of life supporting services and goods of aquatic ecosystems for both human needs and ecosystem processes. The largest irreversible damage to ecosystems has been inaugurated with the basin rivers’ impoundment aimed at securing economic growth. The multipurpose barrage cascades on rivers are being constructed with a view to economic goals and neglecting other needs. As a result, the unsustainable pattern of resource use causes regional environmental and economic crises, followed by increasing food security threats. The consequent unemployment and other negative effects contribute to socioeconomic and political instability as well as heightening international tensions. A good, but not the only, example is the successful and profitable irrigation campaigns in Central Asia using water diversion from the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers, that resulted in disappearance of the Aral Sea and consecutive environmental, social and economic disasters.

geographic information systems).
water security is closely linked to many other security dimensions such as international relations (e.g. Syrian War or water-related transboundary tensions in Central Asia) and infrastructure security. Apart from being a cause for the national and international conflicts such changes in river hydrological regimes lead to the changes in disaster perception by the local communities. For example, the local Cossacks communities in the Don River basin, the prevailing population group in the region before 1917, had exclusive rights over the natural resources in the region (including water and its bioresources) and considered regular extensive floods of the Don River as the essential and highly appreciated riverine ecosystem service. The regular submerging of the floodplains secured the biodiversity and aquatic resources richness, in particular sustained spawning sites of the harvested valuable fish stocks (e.g. sturgeons). However, following the political and social changes in the region after 1917 the communities were deprived of their rights over the resources, lost interest in preserving the river hydrological regime and changed their traditional agriculture/fishery-focused lifestyle. The river impoundment eliminated the regular submerging of the floodplains and led to conversion of these areas to urbanized areas (build up by residential houses and industry infrastructure). Nevertheless, the water availability varies year by year and eventual high-water availability (e.g. 10-year or 100-year floods) result in occasional flooding of these areas, causing infrastructure and property destruction and triggering climate change discussions.

To sum up, riverine ecosystems (including the rivers streams, tributaries and affiliated water bodies) strongly depend on the processes ongoing in river basins (catchment areas), what have undergone the tectonic changes over the last several decades (urbanization, conversion to arable lands, deforestation, amelioration activities, impoundment, etc.). These changes alone have drastically changed the hydrological regimes in water streams, causing cascade changes and disruptions in ecosystem services, what adjustment human settlements and societies historically depended on. Even without any impact of climate change, these societies are subject to increasing disaster risks and vulnerability due to the direct anthropogenic drivers. These local/regional drivers should be given due attention during the project assessing climate change impact and developing disaster management plans. The talk on this topic was given within the framework of the IAS weekly webinar series, triggering discussions and active feedback from the participants.

Oksana Maksymchuk
Independent scholar, poet, and translator, Ukraine/United States

The Bestiary

During my six-month tenure as a Writer in Residence at the Institute for Advanced Study, my main goal had been to work on a manuscript provisionally titled the Bestiary. To this end, I have developed an extensive database of reference materials and reviewed thousands of sources ranging from texts in poetry, philosophy, religion, biology, and psychology, to artworks, films, performance pieces and art installations. I have also completed drafts of more than fifty poems, twenty of which I have submitted for consideration to journals in May 2021. The manuscript itself is still a work in progress and will be completed over the coming years. This projected duration has to do not only with the complexity of the material, but also with the structure of the creative writing process. Whether I’m at work on a translation, a scholarly article, or a collection of poems, I find it crucial to build in opportunities, both temporal and cognitive, for gaining distance from the work. Thus, I usually let the project “sit” for at least six months in between drafts. This helps ensure that when I go back to the work, I can examine it from a renewed perspective, reflect on its limitations, and consider changes. The fellowship provided me with an invaluable opportunity to give undivided attention to the Bestiary manuscript for a few months, and then to turn my attention to other projects.
special destiny as a borderland defined by the ever-shifting contours of the great empires by developing a new dynamic post-national identity. While it is typical of avant-garde artists to harbor anxieties about the bourgeois etiology of their creative programmes, Ukrainian Futurists were distinct in that their anxieties were specifically aimed at the Ukrainian nation-building project. Whereas the European and Russian avant-garde turned to art forms with strongly expressed ethnic elements, such as traditional African masks and sculpture and folk and peasant art, corresponding to the dynamic of imperial expansion and external and internal colonialism, the Ukrainian Futurists viewed such attempts as nostalgic, reactionary, provincial, and aesthetically unsound. Rejecting ethnic arts and crafts, including visual and rhyming patterns, folklore and song, and the everyday register and tone of the Ukrainian “national” language, they focused on creating a new aesthetic reality, ultimately aiming at erasing any regional, ethnic, or linguistic distinctions and blending in with what they considered universal and ultimately shareable. The paper concludes by considering the contemporary legacy of Ukrainian futurists in such figures as Lyuba Yakimchuk and Serhiy Zhadan, who self-consciously adopt the post-national artistic identity advocated by Ukrainian Futurists in response to the current humanitarian and political crisis caused by the war in the Ukrainian east.

In collaboration with Max Rosochinsky, I prepared in-depth introductory essays to two self-standing books of poetry in translation. Lyuba Yakimchuk’s _Apricots of Donbas_ is forthcoming in the fall with Lost Horse Press/Washington University Press, which has recently initiated an impressive award-winning Ukrainian Poetry Series. The second book, Marianna Kiyanovska’s _The Voices of Babyn Yar_, is forthcoming with Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute/Harvard University Press in September, 2021. For the latter book, we have also prepared a scholarly apparatus helping situate the poems in the historical context of 1941-1943 German occupation of Kyiv and prodding further reflection of how to honor the memory of the fallen, especially in the context of the new plans for the immersive and interactive Babyn Yar Museum in the hands of Ilya Khrzhanovsky, known for his controversial and ethically problematic approach.

In addition to the volumes of books in translation, my co-translator and I have also prepared and placed seven individual translations of poems.

When I felt I had to put my work on the _Bestiary_ on hold and let it “cure,” I brought to completion two other major collaborative works in progress. They are a translation of Marianna Kiyano vska’s _The Voices of Babyn Yar_ and a translation of Lyuba Yakimchuk’s _Apricots of Donbas_.

While the drafts of both volumes had been submitted to publishers prior to my tenure as a fellow, during my fellowship I completed two rounds of manuscript revisions, addressing concerns raised by peer review reports, and comments and questions from the series editors. I also collaborated on preparing editorial introductions to both volumes (over 3,000 words each), and a scholarly apparatus to one of them.

Finally, also during the tenure as a fellow, I have conducted research and completed a rough draft for a book chapter on writing in the age of Anthropocene. I also co-wrote a scholarly article titled “Imagining the Future in Liminal Times: Ukrainian Futurists in Search of a Post-National Identity” for an edited volume titled _Crisis: The Avant-Garde and Modernism in Critical Modes_, edited by Sascha Bru, Kate Kangaslahti and Li Lin. De Gruyter: Berlin & New York, forthcoming in 2021.

I have polished and prepared for submission twenty poems reflective of the themes and moods salient to the book project. I also presented the work in the spoken word format, including giving a poetry reading at the Association for Slavic, East European, & Eurasian Studies Annual Convention in November 2020.

In collaboration with Max Rosochinsky, I completed a paper titled “Imagining the Future in Liminal Times: Ukrainian Futurists in Search of a Post-National Identity” which argues that the Ukrainian Futurists develop an original conception of artistic progress, shaped by their own anxieties about national identity and belonging. Protesting the unquestioned authority of established artistic canons and the Euro-centric tendency to museify art, the Ukrainian Futurists called for an emergence of a civically responsible approach to artistic activity, unconstrained by the paradigms of capitalist production and focused on a search for new forms of expression, ranging from language use to experiments in living aimed at reshaping the material conditions within which human activities become intelligible. Drawing on manifestos, poems, essays, and critical discussions featured in contemporary periodicals, pamphlets, posters, and books, the paper argues that the Ukrainian Avant-Garde of the 1910’s and 1920’s attempted to resolve the crisis of Ukraine’s neo-colonial belonging and
in an anthology of Ukrainian-Jewish poets, currently under review with an academic publisher, and sixteen translations of poetry in Ukrainian Literature, a journal affiliated with the University of Toronto Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. We have also placed seven poems in two respected literary journals in the United States, Washington Square Review and Willow Springs

Tanja Šljivar
Independent author, playwright, Serbia

National theater (the novel)

During my 3 months long stay in Budapest, as an awardee of the Writer in Residence fellowship at IAS CEU, I have managed, as primarily intended and outlined in my application, to work on my novel with the working title National theater (the novel). During the first month, I was busy preparing the lecture for a regular Wednesday Fellows’ seminar, and at the same time researching for the novel and structuring it in parallel to the lecture and its intersecting topics. The title of the lecture was Letters to the Imaginary Institutions and it was held online on November 4, 2020. I invited two artist friends: Zrinka Užbinec and Ida Daniel to join me in the reading, which was following the lecture, in order to stress and render visible strategies of collective authorship, I developed and applied while researching and writing the novel. The accompanying discussion and various e-mails I received afterwards were of immense importance for my further work, as well as for understanding better some of the key notions I introduced during the lecture in relation to the project such as: failure, concentration, meaning I was able to create a coherent textual unit by developing further all the ideas, inputs and motives I came across and gathered during the first two months of my research and stay.

During the first month of my stay, before the hard lock-down was introduced by the Hungarian state, I have met in person (via mediation of my Serbian colleague Astera Pejović who is a PhD candidate at the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at CEU) several professors and PhD students from the same department at CEU, some of my text’s translations into Hungarian. Apart from that, I was able to write four chapters of the novel to be, committed and with full concentration, meaning I was able to create a coherent textual unit by developing further all the ideas, inputs and motives I came across and gathered during the first two months of my research and stay.

On the evening of my lecture on Fellows’ Seminar, I went to a small beautiful art-house cinema Circo-Gejzir to watch a film by a Hungarian director Lili Horváth: Preparations to be Together for an Unknown Period of Time. It’s an unusual, a bit psychotic, love story, but its main trait is impressive promise of what the city has to offer, and an escapist look into the night. The next day, I visited the city and onscreen I saw what I saw in daily life, or more precisely what I would have been to see had it not been for the pandemic. It was an impressive promise of what the city has to offer, and an escapist look into Wednesday Seminars, also in this frame of OLive-WP, which took place online as a zoom webinar on November 28, 2020. Stimulating learning environment and curiosity of attendees also inspired me to keep working on my topic in the frame of both research and creative writing, since I got once again inspired by comments and questions which confirmed that the topic of large cultural institutions and their broader role in the society resonates across many different contexts.

In the second month of my stay, I organized an online reading group on the topic of art institutions, where on a weekly basis I invited fellow artists — writers, choreographers, and visual artist to read together with me various texts dealing with the topics of art institutions and institutional critique. Together with artists Tamara Antonijević, Sinša Ilic, Zuzana, Žabkova, Ida Daniel, Bojan Dördev, Nik Timkova and Zrinka Užbinec, we set on to read the texts by authors such as Bojana Kunst, Hito Steyerl, Paolo Virno, Jerry Monaco and Snježana Banović and exchange notes, impressions and input with each other. As a result, we all created artistic: textual or visual or choreographic responses to the topic, which I would want to collage and assemble as part of the novel to be. Besides that, in this period of my stay, I also managed to apply to a few other international writing residencies, to be able to continue working on this project.

In the third month of my stay, I entered an intense phone exchange with Hungarian theater publisher, editor and agent Mária Mayer-Szlágyi for searching possibilities for my theater work to be more visible in Hungary. She is committed to find more ways to finance some of my text’s translations into Hungarian. Apart from that, I was able to write four chapters of the novel to be, committed and with full concentration, meaning I was able to create a coherent textual unit by developing further all the ideas, inputs and motives I came across and gathered during the first two months of my research and stay.

On the evening of my lecture on Fellows’ Seminar, I went to a small beautiful art-house cinema Circo-Gejzir to watch a film by a Hungarian director Lili Horváth: Preparations to be Together for an Unknown Period of Time. It’s an unusual, a bit psychotic, love story, but its main trait is being a specific kind of postcard for Budapest. I have just arrived in the city and onscreen I saw what I saw in daily life, or more precisely what I would have been to see had it not been for the pandemic. It was an impressive promise of what the city has to offer, and an escapist look into...
a possible reality of this stay, if only the circumstances were very, very
different. In the weird way our experience of pandemic was mirroring
the narrative of the movie: neurosurgeon comes back to Budapest for
reasons of heart, but the love of her life claims they have never met. So,
it is Budapest I never met: the one with bars, cafes, museums, theaters,
cinemas, club, conference and concert halls, the one in which I had
readings and presentation and contact with potential audiences, but still
Budapest that keeps doubling in my eyesight: on and off screen in all
the walks and urban hikes and shopping for groceries I nevertheless did
during my stay. Love story in the film does end up somehow well. Ours
did too. With me in cinema were Dániel Mayer, the son of publisher
Mária Mayer-Szilágyi, who himself is a producer and manager of the
Budapest-based independent theater company STEREO AKT, as well
as co-fellow Petr Vašat. I still did manage to build a network in Budapest,
against all the odds. My exchange with two other fellows of IAS CEU:
Ildikó Zakariás and Gina Caison, as well as talks with Prof. Nadia Al-
Bagdad helped me better shape my interest in broadening the research on
art institutions in the frame of possible future PhD studies, and not only
in the frame of artistic project the novel — large share of which I was able
to complete during my stay.
Events
Örigenész, Zsoltárhomíliák (Kairosz Kiadó, Budapest, 2020),
by Róbert Somos

In 2012 Marina Molin Pradel, an Italian archivist of Bayerische
Staatsbibliothek in Munich, identified twenty-nine Greek homilies on
Psalms in Codex Monacensis Graecus 314 as works by Origen. By now,
Origenian authorship is already taken for granted, and the critical edition
of the text of these homilies has been published by Lorenzo Perrone
and his colleagues in 2015. The recent discovery is perhaps the most
momentous event for the early Greek Christian studies of the last few
decades. These homilies are the last work of the Christian master and the
earliest non-fragmentary Christian explanations of Psalms.

The Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes: a Conceptual Framework
(CEU Press, 2020)
by Bálint Magyar and Bálint Madlovics

Offering a single, coherent framework of the political, economic, and
social phenomena that characterize post-communist regimes, The
Anatomy of Post-Communist Regimes is the most comprehensive work on post-communist regimes to date. Focusing on Central Europe, the post-Soviet countries and China, the study provides the concepts and theories to analyze the actors, institutions, and dynamics of post-communist democracies, autocracies, and dictatorships. The authors try to systemically renew the vocabulary of the analysis of post-communist regimes. Beyond a cataloguing of phenomena—actors, institutions, and dynamics of post-communist democracies, autocracies, and dictatorships—Magyar and Madlovics also conceptualize everything as building blocks to a larger, coherent structure: a new language for post-communist regimes. This involves categories as well as a whole new grammar for the region’s political, economic, and social phenomena.

While being the most definitive book on the topic, the book is nevertheless written in an accessible style suitable for both beginners who wish to understand the logic of post-communism and scholars who are interested in original contributions to comparative regime theory. The book is equipped with QR codes that link to www.postcommunistregimes.com, which contains interactive, 3D supplementary material for teaching.

Discussants: Masha Gessen (journalist and author of The Future is History), Henry E. Hale (Professor of Political Science and International Affairs, George Washington University); Iván Szelényi (Professor Emeritus of Sociology, Yale University)

Moderator: Inna Melnykovska (Assistant Professor in Comparative Political Economy at the Political Science Department at Central European University)

In 2020, when the world was shocked by the global pandemic of COVID-19, the Network of European Institutes for Advanced Study opened its doors to all interested in the research conducted at our Institutes and interested in timely discussions by launching the European NetIAS Lectures Series. Besides responding to the current situation and to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, the Network wanted to showcase the quality and diversity of the research conducted in its member institutes. To achieve both goals the Network launched a series of by-weekly open access on-line lectures under the topic of ‘Border’ featuring renowned scholars from a variety of disciplines, approaches, and thematic interests.

In the Fall of 2021, IAS CEU coordinated the lecture series.

Niko Besnier
Professor of Cultural Anthropology, University of Amsterdam, Former Fellow, Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies

Borders, Youth, Neoliberalism: How Global Sport Undermines and Strengthens National Borders

13 February 2020
A series of round table discussions: COVID – 19: reflections one year after. As the world entered another year and yet another wave of the pandemic, the Institute for Advanced Study at Central European University (IAS CEU) invited its fellows of the current year 2020/21 to share their reflections on the effects and lessons of the pandemic. In their interventions, IAS fellows explored a variety of themes related to our shared experience of grappling with the pandemic: the fate of politics in the COVID era, trends in art markets and industries, digitalization and its (dis)connective effects, changing urban landscapes, individual experiences of lockdowns and disrupted movement, academic work, vulnerability and responses of smaller communities across a variety of contexts and geographical areas. Besides offering their reflections on the immediate effects of the unexpected and dramatic alteration of lifestyles brought about by the pandemic, IAS fellows shared their views on what kind of new world is emerging as humanity is muddling through the pandemic. They engaged in a challenging yet undoubtably intellectually stimulating exercise of looking ahead and answering, as much as it is possible, the question ‘what is next?’.
Roundtable discussion I: One year after: Perspectives from different fields and places – taking stock
Mary Cox (Junior Botstiber Fellow), Mostafa Minawi (Senior Core Fellow), Tyrell Haberkorn (Senior Core Fellow), Oksana Makysmchuk (Writer in Residence)

Roundtable discussion II: Beyond Corona: How the world will change – outlook
Speakers: Constantin Iordachi (Faculty fellow), Gina Caison (Junior Core Fellow), Somogy Varga (Senior Core Fellow), Victor Lagutov (Faculty Fellow), Larissa Buchholz (Junior Thyssen fellow)

Roundtable discussion III: What next?: new themes, contexts and format – or returning to the same
Speakers: Frances Kneupper (Senior Core Fellow), Lorenzo Sala (Junior Core Fellow), István Ádám Pál (Junior Thyssen Fellow), Zsuzsa Hetyényi (Affiliated Senior Fellow), Raluca Iacob (Junior Core Fellow)

Off Limits. A Roundtable Discussion on Memory Culture and its Challenges
As a result of transnational developments, the last decade or so has seen the resurgence of fascist (or, “populist-nationalist”) tendencies in memory cultures across Europe and beyond. Cosmopolitan modes of memory as they had developed since the nineteen seventies have been unable to effectively respond to these unsettling tendencies. This roundtable discussion invited memory scholars to reflect on the limitations and shortcomings of our contemporary memory regime and the underlying humanitarian model. Furthermore, they presented diverse research initiatives that seek to reformulate our conceptual-discursive framework for thinking about memory in its relation to our contemporary world and its social and political conflicts.
Speakers: Gruia Badescu (Alexander von Humboldt Fellow at the University of Konstanz, Germany); Raluca Grosescu (Faculty Member, The National School of Political and Administrative Studies Bucharest; Romania); Hans Lauge Hansen (professor, School of Communication and Culture, Aarhus university, Denmark); Zoltán Kékesi (researcher, Alexander von Humboldt senior research fellow at the Center for Research on Antisemitism, TU, Berlin, Germany); Máté Zombory (professor, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary)
Professor Roberts discussed his forthcoming book, which explores Stalin’s intellectual life and biography through the prism of his personal library. By the time Stalin died the library contained some 25,000 books, periodicals and pamphlets. It was dispersed after his death but important remnants and traces survived in the communist party’s archives. Stalin wrote no memoirs and kept no diary, but he left a well-marked literary trail, not just in the books he read but in those he wrote and edited. Through an examination of these books it is possible to build a composite, nuanced picture of the 20th century’s most self-consciously intellectual dictator.

What are the limits of laughter? How do we define the boundaries of what we can joke about, on a societal and legal level? These issues are particularly topical in the digital age, with potentially offensive cartoons or memes easily gaining viral circulation via social media. During this symposium, the members of the ‘Cartoons in Court’ team discussed the complex relation between humor and the limits of free speech, together with two special guests – Professor Laura E. Little (Temple Law School, author of Guilty Pleasures: Comedy and Law in America, 2019) and world-renowned cartoonist Bob Mankoff (former cartoon editor of The New Yorker). In the first part of the event, the team members and Prof. Little ed present their ongoing research on humor and the law; the second part, instead, consisted of a conversation with Bob Mankoff on humor and (self-)censorship, followed by an open Q&A.

‘Cartoons in Court’ is a NETIAS Constructive Advanced Thinking (CAT) project, coordinated and hosted by the IAS CEU Budapest (2020-2023). The project focuses on visual humor controversies from an interdisciplinary perspective, with special but not exclusive regard to cartoons.
Fellows’ Seminars

21 October 2020
Somogy Varga, Senior Core Fellow
Aarhus University, Denmark
Rethinking Personal Autonomy

28 October 2020
Mary Cox, Botschier Fellow
University of Oxford, UK
Childhood Inequality in the Aftermath of the First World War & the Effects of Foreign Intervention: Vienna 1919-1922

4 November 2020
Tanja Sljivar, Writer-in-Residence
Letters to the Imaginary Institutions

11 November 2020
Róbert Somos, Senior Core Fellow
University of Pécs, Hungary
Biblical Theology and Natural Theology in Origen’s Homilies on the Psalms

18 November 2020
Petra Vašat, Junior Core Fellow
Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic
Re-envisioning Macro-Murals: Reflections on Fieldwork in Colombia

25 November 2020
Mostafa Minawi, Senior Core Fellow
Cornell University, USA
When It All Falls Apart: Arab-Ottoman Imperialists of Istanbul at the End of Empire

9 December 2020
Larissa Buchholz, Junior Thyssen Fellow
Northwestern University, USA
Dynamics of Valuation in a Cultural World Economy

20 January 2021
Zsuzsa Hetényi, Affiliated Fellow
Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary
"The Un(f)vanished Past," Shimon Markish, founder of the research field ‘Russian-Jewish Literature’

27 January 2021
Oksana Maksymchuk, Writer-in-Residence
Independent Scholar, Poet and Translator
Possibilities of Living: What Bestiaries Are For

3 February 2021
Lorenzo Sala, Junior Core Fellow
University of Pisa, Italy
Kant’s vocabulary and the question of non-conceptual content

10 February 2021
Raluca Iacob, Junior Core Fellow
Astra National Museum Complex, Astra Film, Romania
Records (re)told: Parallax Filmmaking in Found Footage Documentaries

Petr Vašat, Junior Core Fellow
Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic
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17 February 2021  Frances Kneupper, Senior Core Fellow
University of Mississippi, USA
Beware of False Prophets
The Contest over Prophecy in the Late Middle Ages

24 February 2021  Gina Caison, Junior Core Fellow
Georgia State University, USA
Erosion: American Literature & the Anxiety of Disappearance

3 March 2021  Constantin Iordachi, Faculty Fellow
Central European University, Hungary/Austria
Liberalism, Nativism, and the International Law: The ‘Securitization’
of the Jewish Question in Romania and Serbia, 1835-1919

28 April 2021  István Pál Ádám, Junior Thyssen Fellow
Selma Stern Zentrum für Jüdische Studien,
Berlin-Brandenburg, Germany
Coming to Terms with the Past:
Immediate Post-war Retribution Procedures in Budapest

5 May 2021  Tyrell Haberkorn, Senior Core Fellow
University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA
Dictatorship on Trial in Thailand

26 May, 2021  Viktor Lagutov, Faculty Fellow
Central European University, Hungary/Austria
Water Security Threats: Climate Change vs Human Factors
Governance & Management
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