

Master Thesis

Representations of transition: How transitional governments establish their symbolic structure to allow democratic foundations.

*Thesis presented as a requirement to apply for the degree of Master of Arts in
Conflict, Memory and Peace.*

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Igor Eduardo de Carvalho Parma', written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

Abstract

This thesis investigates the roles of political symbolism as a central role in transitional governments. It takes therefore the theory of Eric Voegelin in his book *The New Science of Politics* and attempts to extend the presented theory into transitional periods. Anchoring itself on the main work of Voegelin, the thesis also seeks concepts in philosophy, anthropology, sociology and history. The thesis has a multidisciplinary approach as it tries to provide a general frame of the challenges transitional governments face. It shifts the concept of symbolism, adapting it into a historical process developed mainly in the West by the secularization of Christianity, dwelling into the Gnostic ideologies, mainly of Fascism and National Socialism, taken as case studies for this thesis. Focusing on the role of symbolism and symbolic inventory, it looks into how political articulation arises from them, imbuing the world with meaning and allowing the state to be embodied by certain central principles, identified with the theory of *idées directrices*, developed by the French jurist, Maurice Hauriou.

It then proceeds to analyze how the Gnostic ideologies were structured in such manner and how transitional governments went through a process of symbolic reconfiguration, replacing the ideologized *idées directrices*, by others compatible with a democratic government. The thesis analyzes mainly how this process can happen, in hopes of laying ground for future studies on the field of transitional symbolism.

Keywords: Symbolism, ideologies, transitional governments, Gnosticism, Conflict, Memory, Peace.

Resumen

Esta tesis investiga las funciones del simbolismo político como papel central en los gobiernos de transición. Para ello, toma la teoría de Eric Voegelin en su libro *La nueva ciencia de la política* e intenta extender la teoría presentada a los periodos de transición. Anclándose en la obra principal de Voegelin, la tesis busca también conceptos en la filosofía, la antropología, la sociología y la historia. La tesis tiene un enfoque multidisciplinar, ya que intenta proporcionar un marco general de los retos a los que se enfrentan los gobiernos de transición. Desplaza el concepto de simbolismo, adaptándolo a un proceso histórico desarrollado principalmente en Occidente por la secularización del cristianismo, deteniéndose en las ideologías gnósticas, principalmente del fascismo y del nacionalsocialismo, tomadas como casos de estudio para esta tesis. Centrándose en el papel del simbolismo y del inventario simbólico, examina cómo de ellos surge la articulación política, impregnando el mundo de sentido y permitiendo que el Estado se encarne en ciertos principios centrales, identificados con la teoría de las ideas directrices, desarrollada por el jurista francés Maurice Hauriou.

A continuación, procede a analizar cómo las ideologías gnósticas se estructuraron de tal manera y cómo los gobiernos de transición pasaron por un proceso de reconfiguración simbólica, sustituyendo las ideas directrices ideologizadas, por otras compatibles con un gobierno democrático. La tesis analiza principalmente cómo puede ocurrir este proceso, con la esperanza de sentar las bases para futuros estudios sobre el campo del simbolismo transicional.

Palabras clave: Simbolismo, ideologías, gobiernos de transición, gnosticismo, conflicto, memoria, paz.

Content

| | |
|--|----|
| Abstract | 3 |
| Resumen | 4 |
| Content | 5 |
| 1. Transitional Governments: A Challenge to Political Symbology | 7 |
| I. The Current Literature on Political Symbology..... | 9 |
| i. Key Concepts And Methodologies | 11 |
| 2. The Symbolical Orientation of Men: How Sense and Meaning Is Imbued in and Through Our Surroundings..... | 13 |
| I. Chapter's Abstract: | 13 |
| II. The Individual Need for Symbolism and the Personal Discovery of Transcendence | 14 |
| ii. Symbolism, the Individual Interpretation of The World, and Society..... | 14 |
| iii. The Historical Development of Societies and the Search for Ground of Meaning | 16 |
| iv. The Discovery of Transcendence and the Burden of Faith | 18 |
| v. Secularization, the Ground of Meaning and Incomplete Nihilism | 20 |
| vi. The Joachitic Symbols and the Western Immanentization of the Eschaton..... | 23 |
| III. Societies as Symbolic Cosmions and the Coming of States as Units of Power in History..... | 25 |
| vii. The Existentialist Dimension and Fortescue's Corpus Mysticum..... | 26 |
| viii. The Idée Directrice as Modeling of Institutions and Symbolic Nucleus | 28 |
| ix. The Political Uses of Symbols and its Origins in Communitas | 31 |
| IV. The Symbolic in Action: Political Symbology on Authoritarian and Transitional Governments | 35 |
| x. Authoritarian Government's Representation: The Case of Malaysia | 37 |
| xi. The Types of Symbolic Conflicts and Their Adaptation to Transitional Governments..... | 45 |
| V. Chapter's Conclusions | 51 |
| 3. Transitional Symbolism: The cases of Italy and Germany | 53 |
| VI. The Actualism Influence and the Fascist Symbology | 54 |
| xii. Actualism and the Immanence of History | 54 |
| xiii. The Fascist Ideology: Its God, Prophet and Messiah | 57 |
| VII. The Reichs Symbology: Nazi's Symbolic Structuring | 63 |
| xiv. The Aryan Ideal and the Foundational Myth of Nazism..... | 64 |
| xv. Nazism as the Reich's Foundational Myth: The Ideological Core of Nazism | 67 |

| | | |
|--------|---|-----|
| xvi. | The Implemented Nazi Idée Directrice: The Nazi Machinery..... | 71 |
| xvii. | The Dictator is Dead: Long Live the Empty Throne | 76 |
| 4. | The Aftermath: The Transitional Governments and the Symbolic Shaping of Democratic Italy and Germany | 80 |
| VIII. | The Italian Process and the Identity-split | 80 |
| xviii. | The Italian constitution: The compromise that shaped a nation | 85 |
| xix. | The Italian Practices of War and the Fascist Scapegoat | 89 |
| xx. | Italians: The ‘good’ Europeans..... | 95 |
| IX. | Germany and the coming to terms with the past..... | 96 |
| xxi. | Denazification: The four approaches | 97 |
| xxii. | The Holocaust, Germany’s Vergangenheitsbewältigung and the founding of a new identity. | 100 |
| xxiii. | The German Redemption: An Identity and Authority | 106 |
| 5. | CONCLUSION | 111 |
| 6. | BIBLIOGRAPHY..... | 116 |

1. Transitional Governments: A Challenge to Political Symbology

Political symbolism is a relatively recent field in political sciences. Even when states have used of symbols, banners, flags, and symbolic language, for as long as historic records can show, the study of such fields in political science and in International Relations is fairly recent. There was a spike on it with the advent of the politics of the masses, and the unifying effect their symbolism instigated societally. Political symbolism was mainly portrayed as accidental, secondary to the power plays politics occupied itself with. It was on anthropology that this theme was usually explored, as studies of rituals, or solely connected to religion. Symbolism made its way through anthropology, psychology and sociology before being studied by political sciences beyond aestheticism.

It was in the book of 1952 called '*The new Science of Politics: An Introduction*', by Eric Voegelin, where a structure of how symbolism could affect political sciences and be analyzed by it. Anchored on this work and its underlying methodology, the current thesis has as its theme the transformation of political symbols in a country's democratic transition. In this manner, it tries to apply the Voegelin's theory to answer the question as to how the symbolic foundations of the transitional governments of Italy and Germany transformed their political symbols towards a democratic representation on the period post-World War II. Such a question implies identifying the driver force of the transitional processes just as much as that of the preceding dictatorships. From which emerges a need to identify the core of both Fascism and Nazism, both philosophical and practical consequences and compare it with the transitional periods, noting how each government led the transition in a successful manner. Success is to be defined by a long-standing practice that becomes constitutive of the national character. To help achieve an answer to such question, Voegelin's rationale of the source of symbolic need will be followed and compared with other authors in order to identify driving forces of symbolic power. Then, it will be examined how political symbols become constituents of state identity beyond

the aesthetic point of view. Only then can the way in which political symbology affects transitional governments emerge in a sensible manner to elucidate our investigation.

When looking at the role of symbology in transitional governments in this light, the thesis will test the hypothesis that the way political symbology is structured in transitional governments allows an insight on how a transition to a democratic government will function. The central values and symbols, if the transition is successful, should have a major impact on the national politics in the following democratic government and on its society's political articulation, be it on its praxis, as well as in its principles. This is due to the fact that political symbols constitute the state identity not only in terms of official symbols – that is, aesthetically – but that it also affects the posing of laws, state institutions and individual political articulation – that is, constituting a state identity. The general population then enters in a co-defining process with the state's symbols, a process heightened on transitional periods. Such symbols can be used as statesmanship by understanding the symbolic interpretation that has more strength in a demography, trying to give traction to some, or annul others. Likewise, society's political articulation can then be shaped and directed towards democracy and preventing the return of the authoritarian regime. Political leaders can also enter symbolic conflicts and alter the symbolic repertoire's value hierarchy or insert, modify or exclude the existent symbols. In this thesis, the term symbolic repertoire is used as the symbols actively used within a society, whilst symbolic inventory is understood as the total amount of symbols present in a country, regardless of whether they are actively used, or when they were created. Political symbology can therefore influence a transition in ways that the transitional government can shape political articulation to foster the democratic forging of the state around certain central core values that would shape the new institutions and define a guideline for the country's political behavior.

I. The Current Literature on Political Symbology

The literature on political symbology presents a solid panorama on how political symbols are used by governments to achieve obedience from population or even to form solidarity within the very same individuals. Rebecca E. Klatch (1988) separated the field of political symbology in two fields, which she called the field of symbols as meanings, and as masters, pointing out to the two common uses of political symbology. While there are many papers who analyze the use of symbology to exert power and build-up or break down political articulation, there is still very little written on how political symbology can influence in a transition towards democracy, especially if the symbology is encompassed on terms of French jurist Maurice Hauriou's *idée directrice*, that says institutions are shaped according to central ideas that shape their identity and scope. The process of symbolic transformation of a country, as well as its implications to the following democratic government, is still not very explored in political sciences. There is much to investigate in political sciences on how can a government shape and therefore weigh in on a process of co-construction within its society.

For the thesis the case studies of Italy and Germany post-World War II were selected, as they allow not only for an exam on how countries with different cultures were affected by the same source of fascist ideologies, but also how both countries took different paths on their transitional governments, once Germany chose to break with its past, and Italy adopted greater continuity, according to Quine (2002), Müller (2000), and Ginsborg (2003).

The thesis will anchor itself firstly on a bibliographic review of political symbology and its different uses, both on authoritarian and democratic governments. The main points of symbology in respect to political articulation will be sought after, in a way to try and give an as-much-as-possible complete picture of the sources of political symbology, how it affects society and how it can be shaped and applied to different cases. On the case studies, the thesis will anchor itself firstly on already published historiographies of both countries, like on the aforementioned papers and will seek what the scholars identify

as the main symbols and core values of the authoritarian and transitional governments of the time. It will then follow a symbolic analysis, based on the works analyzed on the theoretical frame and seek complementarily speech analysis of the leaders, or a documental analysis of the official documents from Germany and Italy, both on their authoritarian era, as well as on the transitional governments, if it proves itself needed.

The thesis relies heavily on the work of Eric Voegelin '*The New science of Politics*' instead of other known scholars of transcendency and political symbolism. It does so for several methodological reasons. Firstly, Voegelin's work directly addresses political representation through symbols and institutions, seeing symbolism as central for political articulation. One of his central concepts, of political religions – also identified as Gnosticism – examines how modern political systems are dependent on a quasi-religious symbolic structure, which is especially suited for the understanding of the fascism aftermath in Italy and Germany. He also understands, and so affirms, that representation beyond the existentialist sense must be made true through a representation of "nothing but cosmic truth, today quite as much as in the time of Plato" (Voegelin, 1952, p. 61). This is symbolic value of a core set of values and affirmations, represented through their symbols and the core idées directrices – a concept elaborated by French jurist Maurice Hauriou. Both scholar and jurist complement themselves in a remarkable way, understanding governments as they embody founding ideas that guide and shape their development and institutions. This is an especially interesting conceptual framework as it allows for an insight into the symbolic and institutional transformation of transitional governments as politically intentional. It allows us to see in the foreground how the symbolic transformation, usually considered as secondary, can actually be a driving force in the democratic transition of governments emerging out of dictatorial regimes. Political symbolism becomes a constitutive practice of national identity, aiding in ensuring a successful transition.

i. Key Concepts And Methodologies

To achieve the goal and a possible answer to the research questions, the paper will first need to define the necessity for a political symbology. It will first need to look upon why symbols are needed, and if they can be separated of the individual. It will anchor itself on Freud's understanding of the symbolic, as understood by Lacan (1973/2004), on the works of Glenn Hughes (2003), Jordan B. Peterson (2020) and Eric Voegelin (1952). These scholars identify the need for symbolic interpretation as one part of the unconscious, along with the most primal structures, such as the ability to count, and see it fostered by the human need of knowing. Humans then start to attribute value and "discover" transcendence as being a dimension not exhausted by matter. This then goes through a differentiation process, in which transcendence gets dislocated further and further away from matter. Societies are built then around the idea that gods dwell among them, associating them with elements of nature and, in certain occasions – Voegelin points out the Confucian and Taoist China, Upanishadic and Buddhist India, Platonian and Aristotelian Greece and on the Jewish culture – the transcendent is dislocated completely from the physical, and can only be accessed by an internal ordering of the soul. The transcendent is latter immanentized, especially during Enlightenment. When this happens, history gets imputed an eschatological end into itself, and the ideologies as form of Gnosis show on the political spectrum. From this point, there is, methodologically so, a separation of different political symbology being ideological governments and non-ideological ones. The first will present a fixed, inert interpretation of the world, and will see fit to use all the pragmatic force at their disposal to enforce it. The symbolic methodology must then look at this transition. It is expected by the literature – especially the work of Jordan B. Peterson (2020) – to see a strengthening on the pragmatic side at the beginning of the democratic transition, but at some time the relying on pragmatic forces must diminish and, even when it hasn't, it is expected that the symbolic inventory must be collective, allowing for multiple influences – albeit some forces will be prohibited, namely, the nazi and fascist influences.

When looking at the methodology for symbolic interpretation, the thesis will focus on the lines marked by Voegelin (1952), Turner (2018), Cannadine (2014), Hobsbawm & Ranger (2014), and Harrison (1995). The methodological basis for the scholars is built up by historical and anthropological analysis. Following the path laid down, the symbols studied should be found beyond state aesthetic as the official appurtenances of state – such as flag, coat of arms, hymns, ceremonies – but rather on its underlying philosophy, which shows on manifestos, official speeches and formation of institutions. Usually, the *idées directrices* of institutions can be seen in its effects, the guiding principles for official institutions, common agreements of the political elite or principles expressively stated on documents. The symbolic inventory will also be a signal to the *idées directrices* and will actively be represented on official statements, ceremonies, foundational myths and on the historical connections political leaders emphasize on their government. To analyze the symbology, following the path of Voegelin (1952), the symbols must go through a critical clarification, to assess what is the actual use they have on their context and time. After such a process, they must be analyzed on the historical-anthropological context they are being used. Only then can their symbolic value be assessed accurately. The strength of such driving forces should be assessed both by time and general acceptance. That is, both by the symbols which endure time on institutions as well as by those who are generally accepted by the population and direct its political mobilization. Even though the perception of such symbols at first might be negative, if the state – in this case the transitional government – manages to persuade or successfully enforce said symbols, it will be considered a strong symbol, as it can be used to bring forth obedience.

2. The Symbolical Orientation of Men: How Sense and Meaning Is Imbued in and Through Our Surroundings

I. Chapter's Abstract:

When looking at political symbolism, one needs to start at the individual to first understand the need for symbolic tools of interpretation of reality. Such need is imbued in our very subconsciousness and influences both consciously and unconsciously how we see and interact with the world. This chapter tries to establish this initial point of symbolic interpretation on the individual, manifested by the desire or the need to know and interpret the world around us. Societies in general are formed then as a cosmion, based on its own universe of symbolical interpretations that each cultural element allows. Voegelin (1952) identifies symbolic evolution of societies, linked to their perception of the transcendental in respect to the degree of separation between the transcendental – represented by the symbolical – and the immanent. Each society generates, from this relationship, an image of the individual that is brought forth symbolically. We then go to show how this affects individuals in their relationship with government and power. Governments and leaders are bound to such a relationship if they want to successfully act and influence their context, in what Voegelin calls “distinguishable power units in history”. It is thus established that political action needs to be preceded by symbolic articulation by every government that wants to be backed up by the governed. The real challenge presented to transitional governments should then be how to reshape – or even reinvent – such societal cosmion. Such challenge is accentuated by a process through which ideological authoritarian governments establish what Voegelin calls an immanentization of the transcendent, process which ideally transitional governments would have to revert or substitute, if to avoid resurgence of the ideological movements. This essay will then investigate on further chapters how have the transitional governments of Italy and Germany embarked on such symbolical action and how they've

established the symbolical fundamentals to consolidate the democratic regimes that followed their dictatorial governments.

II. The Individual Need for Symbolism and the Personal Discovery of Transcendence

ii. Symbolism, the Individual Interpretation of The World, and Society

“The soldier who dies for his flag, dies for his country; but as a matter of fact, in his own consciousness, it is the flag that has the first place.” (Durkheim, 1915, p. 251).

To first understand how somebody can die for a flag, or feel represented by such an abstract body as is the “state”, one must first ask oneself: Are symbols necessary? And if so, where does this need for symbolism come from? To understand the forms of representation and how political societies articulate themselves to sustain it, it must first be affirmed that the symbolic perception is formulated in our very subconscious, as well as being part of our consciousness. It is where Freud identifies as the network of signifiers, which is one of the most basic structures, along with the ability to count, where we can find the structure for symbolic interpretation. (Lacan 1973/2004).

Lacan (1973/2004), talking about the concept of *Gewissenheit* (consciousness) in Freud indicates that “Freud places his certainty, his *Gewissenheit*, only in the constellation of the signifiers as they result from the recounting, the commentary, the association, (...) Everything provides signifying material, which is what he depends on to establish his own *Gewissenheit*” (p. 44). The constellation of signifiers – that is, elements provided by nature, what surrounds us – is understood as the result of the repetition, the iteration between the subject and the world around it. The *Gewissenheit* is involved in a strict relation towards the interaction between oneself and the signifiers. Voegelin (1952) and Hughes (2003) go in the same direction.

Analyzing the human need for symbolism and transcendental thought – understood as thought that transcends the material reality – Glenn Hughes (2003) ends up on the works of Eric Voegelin and Bernard Lonergan, on their reflections of the human

consciousness, identified by the scholars as the desire to understand. “Questioning – as wonder, as curiosity, as concern – is what prompts our engagement with experience and propels human development through all types of discovery, assimilation, affirmation, evaluation and decision” (Hughes, 2003 p.18). This understanding is resounding to the classic philosophy of Aristotle, when he affirms that all human beings, by nature, desire to know. It is on this desire to know that Hughes locates the beginning of human experience. It is established on cognitive and emotional aspects which lay moral fundamentals, as knowing begets the question of what to do, what might be wrong or right, it is also the beginning of transcendental thought. “We are concerned, in short, about the meaning of our existences, our parts in the human drama (...) through comprehending the ultimate truths pertaining to the whys and wherefores of human existence and history” (Hughes, 2003 p. 19). In this exploration of human existence, matter seems to not suffice, and human consciousness (as being driven by the desire to know) stumbles and anchors itself on transcendental grounds once it comes to the conclusion that “All finite reality is contingent, or dependent, reality, that is, its existence presupposes prior causes, and contingent reality in its entirety presupposes a nondependent – a necessary reality as the intelligible basis or ground of its existence” (Hughes, 2013 p.19).

This is where it must be clarified what is being referred to when we speak of transcendence and symbolism. By referring to the transcendent, it is not meant on this thesis exclusively an image of a god (or The God). By transcendence it is meant any perception or constructed value that transcends matter, that is, that is not exhausted in its meaning by what’s physical. As Hughes (2013) formulates it: “Transcendent meaning is not something outside of ourselves that we are trying to discover or figure out. It is the deepest identity of human existence, the “ground” of conscious existence” (Hughes, 2013, p.24). That being said, transcendence does not imply an escape of the physical reality, neither its dislocation in favor of a constructed “realm” with its own rules. Transcendence is, in such manner, reality itself, at a deeper level. It is not a made-up world, but the world itself manifested in its origins. The symbolic is its decoding language

in manners that allow for the foundations to reveal themselves in a perceptive way. It is what is meant by Hughes (2013) when he says that “Transcendent being is not (...) a thing but (as Lonergan puts it) a realm of meaning—the realm that constitutes the ultimate answers to our deepest questions about ourselves and reality” (p.24)

Further clarification is needed before moving on to the topic. Even though the transcendent points out towards the essence of the reality perceived by each human, it is not to say that each individual apprehension of said essence would exhaust or even limit the transcendent reality itself. That is to say that the emergence of a political ideology, based on a certain apprehension of the transcendent is not necessarily its limitations. Culture itself, as formed by such symbolic cosmion, or inventory, is not limited to the interpretations that arise from it. Symbolic interpretations should not be considered then a description of reality as a whole, even though they might present themselves in that manner. Transcendental reality, and thus symbolic sources, can never be exhausted or properly defined by a single ideology nor cosmivision. These are a result of the latter in contact with the social-historical reality, not a definition nor a limitation of the transcendent itself. As Hughes states it “...transcendence means *mystery*: that what is truly transcendent can never be substantively known by human consciousness.” (Hughes, 2013, p.36)

iii. The Historical Development of Societies and the Search for Ground of Meaning

The way the transcendent impacts and reflects on one’s worldview can be seen on the historical search for what Hughes (2013) reflecting on Voegelin’s work calls ground of meaning. That is, the transcendent source or foundation that gives purpose and ultimate significance to human existence and experience. This idea of transcendence, even though it will by definition never be complete nor exhaustive, reflects not only on the personal beliefs or on personal and individual orientation, but

also on societal organization. Looking at human history, with the focus on such seeking of the grounds of meaning, the scholar identifies some main nodal points of inflexion according to the transcendent belief. According to Hughes (2013),

Such an approach will help to make clear how the modern eclipse of transcendence (...) has, by misdirecting the search for the necessary and transcendent ground of meaning toward contingent being, given rise both to disastrously influential visions of historical determinism and to experiences of history as a monotonous sequence of strictly mundane and equally valueless moments, in each case exposing contemporaries to what Mircea Eliade calls “the terror of history.” (p.40).

The search for a ground of meaning is, according to the author, non-reliant on a cultural context, and can be found “East and West, early and late in human history” (Hughes, 2013, p.41). It can also be identified in different phases according to complexities on the degree of separation between immanent and transcendent. The first degree of complexity is found on what Voegelin identifies as “cosmological societies”. Such societies are characterized by their search of meaning through a notion of circular passage of time, whose rituals of contact with the transcendent are a way to install, in Mircea Eliade’s terms, the *annihilation of time*. Contact with the transcendent was for such societies a way of encountering what is truly real, unaffected by time deterioration and therefore an escape from the endless deteriorating cycle they suffered. Such encounter was seen as “especially acute where suffering is concerned, because suffering that is merely “historical” and unconnected with sacred being and purpose would be experienced as arbitrary and pointless” (Hughes, 2013, p.44). The transcendent exists then as a signifying mean to escape the angst caused by apparently meaningless suffering, once “it is possible for human beings (whether of cosmological or later cultures) to tolerate sufferings (...) so long as they have a meaning that raises them above the level of pure arbitrariness, as long as they are not absurd” (Hughes, 2013, p.44).

Besides, cosmological societies hadn't still fixed the grounding of reality in a transcendent realm, as they had "no explicit conception of an immanent, worldly, *temporal* reality radically distinct from the sacred. Reality is still the unity of the cosmos: the space and time of the finite universe are still saturated with the timelessness of divine presence." (Hughes, 2013, p.47).

iv. *The Discovery of Transcendence and the Burden of Faith*

A substantial change can be found in different societies, on what Hughes calls differentiated cultures, being differentiated exactly by the revealing of the transcendence of the ground of being. This happened not only on the Jewish culture (and therefore the Christian and Muslim), but also on Plato's and Aristotle's Greece, Upanishadic and Buddhist India and Taoist and Confucian China. All those societies came to a revelation of such transcendency, in one or another fashion. (Hughes, 2013 p.48).

Such discoveries brought up severe consequences according to Hughes (2013). The first of them was that the ground of reality was moved to a place beyond matter, highlighting not only its unknowability, but also precisizing its relative inaccessibility. This led to an emptying of the former ways of accessing the sacred. The ancient rites that allowed the annihilation of time and access to a refuge of the terror of history are now emptied in meaning. The access to the transcendent now depends not on such externally identifiable acts, but rather on internal arrangements. That is why Hughes (2013) affirms that "objects and events of the physical world can no longer *be* archetypal in an immediacy of participatory identity; rather, they must be understood as only *related* to the timeless ground, in a permanent tension of relatedness" (p.49).

This is a double-handed change in the value of the symbols of the transcendent. Even though at first it seems like an absolute emptying of value, if not at least a severe downgrade on the physical symbols itself, the connection between individuals and symbols becomes, at the same rate, much more intimate. The more intimate character is due exactly to the fact that access to the transcendent is now dependent on an internal

process. "... the search for the ground was forced to turn inward, and to develop those subtle powers of self-reflective discernment that lead one to truth only by exposing one also to the many dangers of spiritual self-deception" (Hughes, 2013, p.50).

If we concentrate the analysis mainly on the West, that access to the transcendent would then happen through what on the Christian doctrine is identified as faith, more specifically to the bond of faith, as Voegelin (1952) explains,

"in the sense of Heb. 1:1, as the substance of things hoped for and the proof of things unseen. Ontologically, the substance of things hoped for is nowhere to be found but in faith itself; and, epistemologically, there is no proof for things unseen but again this very faith. The bond is tenuous, indeed, and may snap easily. The life of the soul in openness toward God, the waiting, the periods of aridity and dullness, guilt and despondency, (...) the silent stirrings of love and grace, trembling on the verge of a certainty which if gained is loss – the very lightness of this fabric may prove too heavy a burden for men who lust for massively possessive experience" (p.135)

The introduction of a transcendent ground of meaning, stemming from the revelation of transcendence entails the heavy burden mentioned by Voegelin. Hughes (2013) classifies the same burden in two consequences unfolded by such grounding as one being the revelation of a contingent quality of the immanent world, and the second as a preponderance of the individual's own accountability for one's own life. On this manner, the decision as to what to do with one's life can be measured "for either attuning personal life with the truths of transcendent meaning or dissipating it in a flourish of irrelevancies." (Hughes, 2013, p.53). There is then an emptying of the immanent, physical world at the same rate that the transcendent ground becomes accessible only by a frail internal ordering. Besides, there is no identifiable rite nor external force that becomes responsible for the success or failure of one's personal life. The pressure installed by such a perspective institutes a conscious exercise of purposeful historical contingent existence. That is an existence that does not count anymore with a notion of

annihilation of time but rather tries to inflict and mold timely existence and has to deal with the consequences of said action. This existence is without escapes, which has set many to seek circumventions “through, for example, attempted reintroductions of intracosmic notions of the sacred, or through adherence to a rigid belief in “fate” or “destiny,” or through hope for an imminent end to history, (...) all of them efforts to escape from history.” (Hughes, 2013 p.53).

v. *Secularization, the Ground of Meaning and Incomplete Nihilism*

What we saw on the societal historical search for meaning when it became secularized, according to Voegelin (1952), was not a break on religious thought led by a reactionary secularization with a highly religious society, but rather a continuation on the same train of thought. The secularization of the ground of meaning led by the Enlightenment, in what Voegelin (1952) later identifies as different manifestations of Gnosticism was not a break, but a long process of immanentization of said ground of meaning that was meant to strip away the uncertainty that the requirement of faith introduced into the access of the transcendent ground. Secularization did not come disembodied from its immediate historical context but arose as a consequence of a highly Christianized society with ever rising levels of literacy. As stated, “the likeness of a fall from faith will increase when civilizational progress of education, literacy, and intellectual debate will bring the full seriousness of Christianity to the understanding of ever more individuals.” (Voegelin, 1952, p. 135). This fall from faith, i.e., an alienation from a transcendental ground of meaning could only lead to a distorted view of the grounding already present, in the absence of a new revelation. As “a man cannot fall back on himself (...) because, if he tried, he would find very soon that he has fallen into the abyss of his despair and nothingness; he will have to fall back on a less differentiated culture...” (Voegelin, 1952, p.136). Such observation also explains the mistrust by some of the Enlightenment philosophers that they’ve never managed to break away from the

Christian roots of their societies. It is certainly what leads Nietzsche, according to Giovanni Reale (1995/2014) towards the classification of an incomplete Nihilism.

According to Nietzsche, following God's death, society should be emptied of its Christian values. Society should, according to him, act "as if they were a direct command from God but, once the petty origin of these values has become clear, the universe seems to us to have become devalued, "meaningless" ... but this is only an intermediate state. [wie als ob sie Comando's Gottes wären (...)] Jetzt, wo die mesquine Herkunft dieser Werthe klar wird, scheint uns das All damit entwerthet, „sinnlos“ geworden... aber das ist nur ein Zwischenzustand.] (Nietzsche, 1887, 11 [100]).

This intermediate state is where incomplete nihilism, in which secularism was brewed, came to be. Incomplete nihilism, for what Nietzsche could identify, assumes many forms, and follows on the same lines of what Voegelin (1952) says that a man cannot fall on himself. They are different manifestations of a same structure, what is classified as a signature, that is, "something that, in a sign or concept, marks and exceeds such a sign or concept referring it back to a determinate interpretation or field without for this reason leaving the semiotic to constitute a new meaning or a new concept" (Agamben, 2017 p.375). Incomplete nihilism therefore used of the structure and language of its preceding Christian society to structure different worldviews that were reflections of the same Christian schematics but seeking to eliminate the criteria of faith as source of said uncertainties and the relative inaccessibility of the transcendent. In order to eliminate that which cannot be seen and only hoped for, the ground of meaning was immanentized, brought to the physical world and anchored in many different factors, according to each ideology.

Incomplete Nihilism is considered by Nietzsche himself an intermediary state on the transvaluation of values. A stage on the process of abandoning absolute values in favor of achieving the "super-human state". On the stage of incomplete nihilism, there is an attempt of subtracting the consequences of nihilism itself, with subterfuges of the supreme values, ranging from scientific knowledge to social praxis, with a series of

nuances (Reale, 1995/2014). As formulated by Heidegger, “incomplete nihilism does substitute the preceding values with others, but puts them on the preceding’s places which conserve then the ideal position of the supra-sensory [il nichilismo incompiuto sostituisce, sì, i precedenti valori con altri, ma li pone al posto dei precedenti, posto che conserva così il rango di regione ideale del soprasensibile]” (Heidegger, 1950/1968 p.206).

Incomplete nihilism comes to being then as a fruit of a process that never saw its completion – not on Nietzsche’s times, neither currently. The process of abandoning all forms of values and transvaluating them all in favor of Nietzsche’s conception of the “Übermensch”, is something no society has managed to achieve. What we saw was the replacement of said values for another, albeit using the same structures. The completion of said process will more than likely never come to light, at least not without a structural change unlike anything that’s currently existent. The current incomplete nihilism is in itself one of the very perpetuating factors of the structure that contains it, as Nietzsche himself admitted:

Main proposition: As much as the complete nihilism is the necessary consequence of the current ideals:

- The incomplete nihilism in its forms: we live within it
- The attempt to avoid the nihilism by not revaluating every value brings up the opposite, it aggravates the problem

[Hauptsatz. In wiefern der vollkommene Nihilismus die nothwendige Folge der bisherigen Ideale ist.

— der unvollständige Nihilismus, seine Formen: wir leben mitten drin

— die Versuche, dem Nihilismus zu entgehn, ohne jene Werthe umzuwerthen: bringen das Gegentheil hervor, verschärfen das Problem.] (Nietzsche, 1887, 10 [42]).

Incomplete Nihilism then came up in many different forms by the transvaluation of Christian values, whilst making a signature out of their structures. On the political scheme, they took hold of a gnostic theological elaboration, made by Joachim de Flora.

vi. *The Joachitic Symbols and the Western Immanentization of the Eschaton.*

The Joachitic symbols, as analyzed by Voegelin (1952) emerged from the Augustinian theology of de Civitas Dei, especially its interpretation of the Danielic prophecies about the fourth realm, which would last until the end of times. What de Flora did with its theory was, in general lines, bring to the immanent conception of history, what was understood as a transcendent process of history, which inserted the religious redemption and longing of the Second Coming on Christian societies. This way, “in his speculation the history of mankind had three periods corresponding to the three persons of the Trinity. (...) it appeared that each age opened with a trinity of leading figures, followed by the leader of the age himself.” (Voegelin, 1952 p.124)

This transposition of an eschaton to the immanent history created four symbols that affected political-historical interpretation to this day on Christian societies – western and eastern alike. According to Voegelin (1952), the influence can be noted when history itself started being characterized into three ages along the different classifications with the third stage being pointed out as superior and without succession. Be it the classic periodization of ancient, medieval, and modern, even reflected towards the ideological tales of history, such as Marx’s stages of primitive communism, class society and final communism, or even Hitler’s figure of the third Reich, and Mussolini’s Third Rome.

The second and third Joachitic symbols are more easily identifiable, especially in populist and authoritarian governments; they are the symbols of the prophet and the leader which can be blended into each other in a one-person representation. Their roles on an immanent grounding are exactly to announce the “third realm” and to lead the select people through the eschaton of the gnostic ideology. The two symbols usually

identifiable with a specific person, or group of persons, will establish and mold the basis and criteria for validation in the new world and “the course of history as an intelligible, meaningful whole must be assumed accessible to human knowledge, either through a direct revelation, or through speculative gnosis. (...) the Gnostic intellectual becomes an appurtenance of modern civilization” (Voegelin, 1952 p.125).

The ideological government establishes therefore a fixed symbolic interpretation. This symbolic interpretation is an eschatological one, with narratives that are not only a rhetorical tool, but that actually reflect an eschaton, a narrative about moral absolutes and the ultimate redemption of those involved and verifiable heavens and hells. Such interpretations make of politics a means to an end, to achieve an absolute good and desirable state. To break away from such construction is much more strenuous than from a normal rhetorical concoction. The processes of de-Nazification and elimination of fascism should reflect in their context such challenges.

When analyzing the modern types of Gnosticism generated in such context, Voegelin (1952) points out that there are two main types: intellectual, or emotional, depending on whether they assume a “speculative penetration on the mystery of creation, or of an “activist redemption of man and society”, putting on the first category Hegel and Schelling, whilst Comte, Marx and Hitler step into the second. Either way, the “experiences, in the amplitude of their variety, are the core of the redivinization of society, for the men who fall into these experiences divinize themselves by substituting more massive modes of participation in divinity for faith in the Christian sense.” (Voegelin, 1952, p.137).

Societies embroiled in such an eschatological narrative should then enter into a behavior of societies of masses led by their eschatological Messias, such as Hitler to Germany and Mussolini to Italy and will justify any kind of actions in name of this greater good once, if the end goal is heaven, no action is unjustifiable, as brutal as it may be. “Gnostic speculation overcame the uncertainty of faith by receding from transcendence and endowing man and his intramundane range of action with the meaning of

eschatological fulfilment. (...) civilizational activity became a mystical work of self-salvation" (Voegelin, 1952, p.141). This overcoming is due to the forming role symbolic interpretation has not only the individual, but on the state itself, in a dynamic which governments use their society's symbolic repertoire to gain legitimacy and conduct action within their territory and legitimacy beyond its borders. Symbolism therefore becomes no secondary nor accidental element to political science. It can, instead, explain the driving force of articulation within a society, communicating from a government's standpoint to its population and obtaining certain behavior according to the structuring of such inventory.

III. Societies as Symbolic Cosmions and the Coming of States as Units of Power in History

"Articulation, thus, is the condition of representation" (Voegelin, 1952, p.57)

Voegelin (1952) argues that human society works through self-interpretation of the individual. Society presents itself and its externality then as a cosmion constituted by the encounter of said symbolic interpretations, in a constant process that creates and bears itself, according to the meaning given by societal symbolism. It must then be understood according to the symbols generated and followed by its people, not as a fixed, inert object, given to the theorist to examine and dissect as the natural sciences do. It is the symbols, and the meaning by those imbued, that generate the substance that qualifies a nation:

"...through such symbolization the members of a society experience it as more than an accident or a convenience; they experience it as of their human essence. And, inversely, the symbols express the experience that man is fully man by virtue of his participation in a whole which transcends his particular existence, by virtue of his participation in the *xynon*, the common, as Heraclitus called it. (...) As a consequence, every human society has an understanding of itself through a

variety of symbols, sometimes highly differentiated language symbols, independent of political science; and such self-understanding precedes historically by millenniums the emergence of political science, of the *episteme politike* in the Aristotelian sense” (Voegelin, 1952 p. 27-28)

It is on this notion that Voegelin (1952) sees anchored to societies the anthropological principle, derived from Plato’s maxim that a polis is man written large. This principle then, added to the one that societies are cosmions of symbolic interpretation, is what leads Voegelin to affirm that “A political society in existence will have to be an ordered cosmion, but not at the price of man; it should be not only a microcosmos but also a macroanthropos” (Voegelin, 1952 p.61). That is to say, the way a political society – or, in such case, its representant – understands and communicates certain worldview must reflect or be reflected, in one way or another, at the way its individuals also understand the world around them, or its representation-value can come into question.

vii. *The Existentialist Dimension and Fortescue’s Corpus Mysticum*

The first essential for a political society, however, is to have a functioning structure, that is, a structure that allows not only for the functioning of the state bureaucracy, but that, in doing so, allows and incentivize civil obedience. This structure is seen first to guarantee the existential needs of said society, such as defense and administration of justice, and that is the first end of political articulation. With such articulation, the figure of the political leader is the one that comes into light the strongest. They are those who are seen as the *de facto* representatives of the state, whose actions are seen as the state’s, not their own, but mainly whose rules regulating behavior “will be experienced by the members of the society as the declaration of a rule with obligatory force for themselves. When his acts are effectively imputed in this manner, a person is the representative of a society.” (Voegelin, 1952, p. 54). Voegelin (1952) then moves on pointing to an important distinction between the very representative and its agents, being

that the first is able to act in virtue of his position on the structure, without a specific set of rules, while the agent is empowered by the first and can only act on determined occasions with a much more limited power.

It is by such articulation capable of generating a leader that can impute –by its own action or that of his agents– laws, which are seen as rules with obligatory force, that a society will come as a power unit in history and will be able to act with a distinguishable cohesion. Existential needs, however, are not the only thing needed for a representative of a political society or, at the very least, are not at the level which detains articulation. By directing his focus to John Fortescue, Voegelin (1952) points out the scholar's analogy by transferring the Christian symbol of the *corpus mysticum* to the state. Such analogy was an attempt to find an image to the binding force of society and indicated that its representative would live beyond the elemental existentialist representation, reaching a spiritual dimension.

The *tertium comparationis* would be the sacramental bond of the community, but the sacramental bond would neither be the Logos of Christ that lives in the members of the Christian *corpus mysticum* nor a perverted Logos as it lives in modern totalitarian communities. Nevertheless, while he was not clear about the implications of his search for an immanent Logos of society, he found a name for it; he called it the *intencio populi*. This *intencio populi* is the center of the mystical body of the realm; again in an organic analogy he described it as the heart from which is transmitted into the head and members of the body as its nourishing blood stream the political provision for the well-being of the people. (Voegelin, 1952, p.43).

The analogy made by Fortescue allows us to think of popular will as the vital force in a political society. With the analogy locating it as the heart of the political body, transmitting the political provision for the well-being of the people puts it far from any kind of political or social class and leaves its importance to no doubt. This notion of *intencio populi* is a very solid first impulse that established therefore the substance of popular will

at the center of political life and away from any one person. At the same time, the *intencio populi* was not thought of as the consensus of a population, not on the same basis as envisioned by Rousseau nor by the Greeks in any sense. The *intencio populi* was rather something impalpable, a vital force that not only unites political societies, but gives them life.

For this reason, the answers to claims of legitimacy to representation, especially on transitional governments, cannot be made by sheer *tour de force*, as maintaining a political system by coercion is already extremely difficult, much more on such frail moments in society. As stated by Schmitt (1953), “no skill in manipulating the weapons of power will be enough to enable a political system to survive even a single generation.” (p.53). They will also not be found on the mere formal elements, that is, the existence of institutions considered democratic. These constitute, as Voegelin calls it, the elemental form of democracy, as “the concepts on this level are unproblematic in terms of the internal self-interpretation of a society,” (Voegelin, 1952, p.33).

viii. *The Idée Directrice as Modeling of Institutions and Symbolic Nucleus*

Those answers to claims of legitimacy to representation must be found before the institutions themselves, even when they are the guarantors of the functioning of the State. They must then also be found before the law itself, as, resounding with the propositions made by Maurice Hauriou and laid out by Voegelin:

- (1) The authority of a representative power precedes existentially the regulation of this power by positive law
- (2) Power itself [i]s a phenomenon of law by virtue of its basis on the institution; in so far as a power has representative authority, it can make positive law
- (3) The origin of law cannot be found in legal regulations but must be sought in the decision which replaces a litigious situation by ordered power. (Hauriou according to Voegelin, 1952, p. 48)

Studying the writings of the French jurist Maurice Hauriou on his book *Précis de droit constitutionnel*, Voegelin (1952) presents that, when a new source of representation arises to try and stabilize a country, what ensures its first task, the one of guaranteeing state's existence will be "the idea, the *idée directrice*, of realizing and expanding it and of increasing its power; and the specific function of a ruler is the conception of this idea and its realization in history" (p.65). The *idée directrice* is then this same impulse that will shape and direct institutions.

It is then the idea, the narrative that a government creates, or on which it relies, that should not only shape its institutions but also legitimize it before its population. Transitional governments will more likely than not use some kind of element of the recent struggle, as they are usually preceded by a period of conflict. This, however, should not be enough. The strongest narratives would be the ones that could tie a national history and identity going back in time. It should be the most compelling narrative backed by the state's structure that could ensure the capability to successfully represent and avoid the return of the old authoritarian leaders. Legal representation or one upheld by force alone are not enough to keep power and ensure the transition of regimes. The letter of law can't ensure power maintenance as it depends on the existence of an order before itself to be seen as valid. In the same manner, the monopoly of force needs a source of legitimation not to be seen as general oppression or as state terrorism.

Following Voegelin (1952), we can see that this symbolic interpretation of the world not only affects society but is affected by its historical developments. From there comes the necessity of understanding such dynamism as one of co-construction, in which the iteration once more plays a decisive role. Given its importance to strengthen narratives, historicity presents the first big challenge to a symbolic analysis. As the origin of some symbols may be rooted historically, tracking the initial formulation of some of them can be a real challenge as it may imply a completely different cultural context. This may limit the comprehension of cultural symbols, as symbolic archeology could present itself as too extensive and may limit the analysis to the effects of said symbols in a

contemporary context. It may also mean that such symbols, being located far away in a country's history, could be more subject to manipulation and resignification by the political elites. On some occasions, the distance between the application and theoretical understanding of the concept will be such that theoretical concepts may have different definitions than the actual political reality. Then, a process of critical clarification must take place, in order to try and see if an approximation of said symbols with reality is possible or not in such a context. Through this process "some of the symbols that occur in reality will be dropped because they cannot be put to any use in the economy of science, while new symbols will be developed in theory for the critically adequate description of symbols that are part of reality." (Voegelin, 1952 p. 28).

The political interpretation of symbols will then be heavily context dependent. Which would add up to the already ineluctable challenge transitional governments have by definition. They are faced with the task of creating, if not maintaining, a very fragile and recent order, in which a new kind of society may emerge. Representation must be sought and legitimized to stabilize the country and avoid the return of chaos and conflict. While transitional governments inherit a cosmion of their own from its precedent authoritarian governments, they must craft it, modifying it according to the recent events in their history while re-signifying or replacing the most authoritarian symbols with some others who allow the democratic orientation of its structures.

On this sense, transitional governments step into a symbolic conflict with the preceding order. Such conflicts will most likely have already started before such governments were installed or came to power. They would, however, take a different approach when on the implementation of transitional governments. Most likely starting earlier, at the time of open-conflict or at the crisis of the preceding regime, as "Competition for power, wealth, prestige, legitimacy or other political resources seems always to be accompanied by conflict over important symbols, by struggles to control or manipulate such symbols in some vital way." (Harrison, 1995 p.255). That is to say, on their very efforts to reach power and create a contestant force against the authoritarian

governments, transitional political forces should have already been in process of generating their own symbols or different interpretations of existent symbolic sources on their society's cosmion, if the theory is held to be true.

On regards to why political groups may feel the need to present themselves as a continuity of a former culture, Peterson's (2017) observation on culture might come in handy when he states that "It isn't just that your culture and cultural beliefs protect you from anxiety and say anxiety about death even, it's that they actually protect you from death! (...) it's the match between your map of the world and other peoples' actions that regulates your emotions" (12m20s-12m56s). This means that the "map of the world" each person carries also contribute to the cultural normalization in a society and that it contributes largely to the maintaining of the world order also in an existential way. This regulation, according to Peterson (2020) works best if deeply rooted in the foundational myths, or on a long historical narrative. The maps of meaning, according to the scholar, rely heavily on a historical sense of continuity. The more consolidated narratives have a better reception and appearance of legitimization. It is also noted that the longer a narrative is set in place, the harder it becomes to contest it. Therefore, the narrative presented by a government in its efforts to shape a nation's culture becomes a potential discharge for the anxiety of death as much as a shield against uncertainty by a set feeling of normality.

ix. The Political Uses of Symbols and its Origins in Communitas

We can see that clearly on the rise of authoritarian governments which usually take place in very disturbing epochs, revolving within deep economic and/or social crisis. Authoritarian leaders usually craft a certain type of statesmanship as a response to what Voegelin (1952) calls critical junctures, "when a society is about to come into existence, when it is about to disintegrate, or when it is in an epochal phase of its career" (p.58) that allows for the general population to have screens for liberating the anxiety generated by this uncertainty. As mentioned by Klatch (1988) "Extending Freud's views of symbols as

disguised representations for the latent thoughts and wishes of the unconscious, political symbols are seen as screens for the projection of unconscious psychological processes” (pp.143-144). The use of political symbols as screens for such psychological processes is very consolidated on the field by research papers such as Adorno (1964), Klapp (1964), Mazon (1984), Edelman (1977) and Laswell et al. (1952).

When looking at political symbols as screens for anxiety and other unconscious processes, it becomes clear that authoritarian governments, and more specifically authoritarian leaders, will have themselves as a key-figure for the psychological stabilization of their society. “Orrin Klapp argues that symbolic leaders of various kinds relieve psychic anxiety through their very image (...) in this way, political symbols allay individual fears and doubts by assuring the stability of the political system or by restoring confidence in leadership” (Klatch, 1998, p.144).

The political leaders will also engage in political symbolic action when they are in other forms of government, albeit in a different manner. Critical junctures, like when a transitional government is needed will only allow us to see such action more clearly, as they are an attempt to close a political crisis and develop in a period not “hedged around by taboos and thrust away from the centers of public life. (...) it takes up menacing stance in the forum itself and, as it were, dares the representatives of order to grapple with it. It cannot be ignored or wished away” (Turner, 2018 p.39).

Transitional governments act symbolically on a phase of conflict Turner (2018) calls redressive action. On such stance, societies will present different mechanisms to try and conciliate the population, in order to avoid going back to a conflictive scenario. Since the focus of this thesis is on the transitional governments following a war based on state identity, Germany and Italy on Post-World-War II offer a singular opportunity to look at political symbolic action, as the mechanisms for symbolic action depend on “depth and shared social significance of the breach, social inclusiveness of the crisis, nature of the social group within which the breach took place, and the degree of its autonomy with reference to wider or external systems of social relations.” (Turner, 2018 p.39).

Transitional governments, even when acting symbolically, will have to rely on punitive pragmatic action as well in order to enforce the new symbolic order. When speaking about the state in the redressive stage, Turner (2018) points out that one should ask.

...whether the redressive machinery is capable of handling crises so as to restore, more or less, the status quo ante, or at least to restore peace among the contending groups. Then ask, if so, how precisely? And if not, why not? It is in the redressive phase that both pragmatic techniques and symbolic action reach their fullest expression. For the society, group, community, association, or whatever may be the social unit, is here at its most "self-conscious" and may attain the clarity of someone fighting for his life (p.41).

However, transitional governments are not limited to the redressive phase of a social conflict but are also expected to lead social reintegration and conciliation of the country. This task of the transitional governments is a complex one, since there will be new actors and a completely new political framework. "More importantly, the nature and intensity of the relations between parts, and the structure of the total field, will have changed. Oppositions may be found to have become alliances, and vice versa. Asymmetric relations may have become egalitarian ones" (Turner, 2018 p.42). On this phase, the evolutionary process of conflict and conflict resolution should reach its climax, influencing and shaping the transitional political symbology. "For each phase has its specific properties, and each leaves its special stamp on the metaphors and models in the heads of men involved with one another in the unending flow of social existence. (...) the phases of social drama as cumulating to a climax." (Turner, 2018, p.43).

Of importance in the work of Turner (2018) to the current topic is also the concept of anti-structures which are bonds that unite people over any other formal social bonds, in what he calls *communitas*, which have the qualities of being undifferentiated, equalitarian, direct, and nonrational. They differ from social structures as, "Structure is all that holds people apart, defines their differences, and constrains their actions."

(Turner, 2018 p.47). It is clear to assume than – later confirmed by Turner himself – that *Communitas* would be most easily found on the margins of society, on the verge of formal institutions, or in liminal transition amidst structural change in society. It is more than reasonable to see such *communitas* as having a stronger symbolic bond (they are in fact and in many examples associated with actual religious experiences, or to be found in art or literature). *Communitas* emerge out of a result of symbolic integration and survive even out of the reach of formal structures and when they fall out. It is to be expected then that transitional governments will encompass different *communitas* in their territory, and many of the political actors that emerge as political leaders at critical junctures could find their capacity for representation as emanating from one or more of them. At this perspective, the role of political symbology on transitional government emerges separated by formal structures, many of which are reformed, abolished, or even created by the transitional governments themselves. Now, it is given that the *communitas* thought by Turner are part of what he identifies as anti-structures and could not themselves be positive structures for the transitional governments. But they are social evidence that symbology predates the formal institutions of society. That being said, *communitas* might not be the structures themselves, but might certainly contribute to shape institutions and influence the *idée directrices* of governments. This is in accordance with the statement that “it was not mere self-interest or the letter of the law that prevailed but its spirit, the spirit of *communitas*. Structure is certainly present, but its divisiveness is muted into a set of interdependencies” (Turner, 2018 p.50)

It is on such *communitas* that the symbolic construction finds its seeds. “The components of what I have called anti-structure, such as *communitas* and liminality, are the conditions for the production of root metaphors, conceptual archetypes, paradigms, models for, and the rest.” (Turner, 2018, p.50). As the symbolic flourishes firstly on the individual, and then on the *communitas*, subsequently shaping and influencing the *idée directrices* that will make up institutions, it then becomes clear how the symbolic can influence transitional governments and how, after the failing of formal structures and a

new, shaky political scenario, the symbolic sources would not be affected, as they are neither dependent on, nor originated at the formal social structures, and once their transfer and collective construction can happen independent on formal structures.

IV. The Symbolic in Action: Political Symbology on Authoritarian and Transitional Governments

Representation in transitional governments must then be made real and possibly presented as a continuation from the cosmion that originated in society, desirably, in a somewhat less destructive possibility than the one precedent. Transitional governments will have to try and reach a consensus within society if it is to stabilize it. They should work then with a very distinguishable *idée directrice* that would take into account the recent historical developments and would most likely be affected by the new political framework and the *communitas* that emerged out of war. Coming from a very unstable conjuncture, the first order of business of transitional governments must be to conserve this fragile stability and the administration of the state so that a new government can arise, but the real challenge is to do so in a different manner than that used by the authoritarian governments that preceded it and also ensuring that such authoritarian ideas which were the drivers to said regimes lose strength. They would also likely use of pragmatic force and rule of law to ensure such weakening, if not eradication of the former *idée directrice*. Nevertheless, It is an intuition of the theory utilized in this paper that ideas – specially the ideologically characterized by a strong Gnostic element – cannot be fully eradicated, it is easier to modify or weaken them, but Gnostic ideas have proved to resist time and governmental interference, the possibility of a complete elimination of an ideology beyond the formal limits of institutions requires further investigation.

When deciding on the different sources of legitimacy for the transitional governments, pragmatism and symbolism should have different complimentary roles. The different influences each of these factors will have should not be decisive and might also depend, along with the shaping of formal institutions, on the substance of its claim

for legitimacy that drives the *idée directrice* which will give shape to its government, institutions and pragmatic action. There may be as well, since the case studies are countries who lost a war, some external constraints on the use of force, and legal obligations that come with the signing of peace treaties. As the grounding for the state's legitimacy, the *idée directrice* should have its core preserved along the years – even if it presents itself on different forms as it interacts with the domestic and international political scenario. The explanation for such an effect can be found in Voegelin's conclusion that

“society is the representative of a transcendent truth (...) the representative of a society is its active leader in the representation of truth; and (...) a government by consent of the citizen-body presupposes the articulation of the individual citizens to the point where they can be made active participants in the representation of truth through Peitho, through persuasion” (Voegelin, 1952, pp 74-75)

The substance of representation, this transcendent truth which will align the *idée directrice*, will set therefore the core values of a transitional government, which should be transmitted to the following governments on the democratic order. Through this formation principle, political articulation will be legitimated, both in form and procedure and it will enter into a process of co-construction with the general social context found within the state.

The ability to order the social context within its borders allows what Voegelin (1952) names as power units in history, that is, the presentation of the state as a body that can effectively act in history. The order imposed within allows for the action and representation of the state with its counterparts. From the order arises articulation. It is from this state stability that the representants are named, and the bureaucratic body can flourish according to its functions without external interference or constraints.

x. *Authoritarian Government's Representation: The Case of Malaysia*

The study of authoritarian governments usually focuses on the power maintenance of the regime, or on their efforts to maintain the status quo. There is little consensus on whether authoritarian regimes might use of symbolism to maintain themselves in power, or if a realist reading of politics is exhaustive on such governments, that is, if they are maintained solely through power monopoly and repression. However, analyzing it through Voegelian lenses, it is possible to see that symbolic action also holds a powerful analytical power of interpretation of the political action in such regimes. The case of the so-called Leviathan state of Malaysia can prove itself a good example of this claim.

It is established that not all authoritarian governments are alike, and there has been some impressive intellectual works trying to differentiate between the ideal types of authoritarian governments. Between those are the revolutionary regimes, of which the work of Levitsky, S. & Way, L. (2013) is a reference. The scholars have pushed forward a concept elaborated by Huntington and Skocpol, which defines revolutionary regimes as “those which emerge out of sustained, ideological and violent struggle from below, and whose establishment is accompanied by mass mobilization and significant efforts to transform state structures and the existing social order.” (Levitsky & Way, 2013 p. 5). On the other hand, some historians such as Dan Slater focus on what he calls the “Leviathan states”, which alludes to the Hobbesian theory of the social contract. For Slater, power maintenance for such states can be found crucially relying on what he identifies as four sets of elites that “provide authoritarian regimes with the strategic resources they need to develop a preponderant advantage in coercive, remunerative and symbolic power over any political opposition” (Slater, 2012 p.146).

Slater (2012) and Levitsky & Way (2013) represent two good solid arguments on what determines an authoritarian government. Even though they seem opposite, with one arguing about the prevalence of ideological factors, while other focuses on power maintenance and resource control, there's a point on which both arguments meet, and

that's on the symbolic field. When highlighting the reasons for the remarkable durability of revolutionary regimes, Levitsky and Way (2013) identify four key legacies: The destruction of independent power centers; cohesive ruling parties; tight partisan control over security forces; and powerful coercive apparatuses. With a tight hard-power frame to their analysis, the essay's focus seems to lean more toward the military operations, but even then, the role of symbology appears. When analyzing the four pillars, all the first three have to do with it, whose shadow seems more preponderant than one would think.

On the first pillar of revolutionary regimes' endurance, independent power centers are identified as the formal structures, namely the institutions or social classes "...whose power, resources, or legitimacy can serve as a basis for mobilizing opposition to the regime... [and that] revolutions also weaken or destroy traditional ruling and religious institutions whose "symbolic power" could be used to mobilize opposition to the regime" (Levitsky & Way, 2013, p.7).

What makes those institutions a threat to the authoritarian state is the capacity to represent an ideal, to mobilize opposition to the regime. As it was demonstrated, mobilization is a fruit of political articulation, which emanates from the symbolic sources within a society. That is to say, they can represent a symbolic image (with the material means to support it) that can contend with the dominant ideology of the authoritarian State, its *idée directrice*. What defines these independent power centers is then this same capacity to represent, to bring forth an image, or to embody a value that mobilizes and calls the masses to political action. As stated by Carl Schmitt, "An intelligent man of political instincts who is at war with politicians immediately scents in any recourse to an ideal principle, a claim to representation and consequently to authority..." (Schmitt, 1931 p.70). Representation is identified then as the source of authority itself and therefore, a threat to a state that seeks complete domain over its subjects – seemingly to what Slater calls Leviathan states, whose distinction is going to be approached later.

The second pillar of authoritarian endurance for Levitsky and Way (2013) is a strong cohesive ruling party. The essay identifies the reason for it as being one of resource access and distribution, in which “by regulating access to the spoils of public office and providing future opportunities for career advancement, ruling parties create incentives for regime elites to remain loyal” (Levitsky & Way, p.8). However, it becomes clear that the very resource distribution does not act of its own volition, neither on parameters of efficiency but is rather determined by an ideological factor, what is called an institutionalized “military style discipline”, which makes strong ruling parties. It can be seen that this discipline to which they refer is not restraint to a notion of conditioned behavior by military training. It has instead a strong moral driver, as they rely on the concept of Adrienne Lebas, who states that conflict “sharpens ‘us-them’ distinctions, strengthening within-group ties and fostering a perception of a ‘linked fate’ within party cadres” (Adrienne Lebas according to Levitsky & Way, p.9). The theory of us-them distinctions is derived from Schmitt’s theory of the political, in which he states:

The specific political distinction, that to which all political actions and reasonings can be guided to is the friend-enemy distinction. (...) the purpose of the friend-enemy distinction is to mark the maximum degree of intensity of a union or separation, of an association or disassociation (Schmitt, 1991 pp.56-57)

It is an attribute of the political power to make such distinctions which is in accordance to Voegelin, when he affirms that “In so far as the order of society does not exist automatically, but must be founded, preserved and defended, those who are on the side of order represent the truth, while their enemies represent disorder and falsehood” (Voegelin, 1952, p.54). According to these scholars, political regimes, especially those who are based on a cosmological understanding of the world according to Voegelin (1952), represent themselves as holders and *de facto* representatives of the Truth and moral righteousness, while their enemy becomes nothing but the representation of the Lie and the morally condemnable. That violent conflict can radicalize the party’s ideology and “entrap” its members that can be explained by the theory of Dr. Jordan B. Peterson

(2020), in which life or death situations lead psychologically to a stricter symbolical interpretation, and leaves little to no flexibility on any contestant interpretations.

The third pillar of revolutionary regimes according to Levitsky & Way (2013) is identified on the fact that they almost never experience coups. On matters of power maintenance, it is easily understood how that can be a very desirable regime feature. On the reasons why such regimes don't have to worry about coups is that their military is usually inculcated not only by the leaders of revolution itself, but by the fact that they are "almost invariably commanded by cadres from the liberation struggle and imbued with a revolutionary ideology." (p.10). It is ideology which constitutes the glue that holds together a revolutionary regime. It is interesting and noteworthy that the authors found no distinction between ideological content. That is, independent of its political orientation or even geographical location, ideology has a lead role in power maintenance, even when it is not fully given the acknowledgement for it.

The fourth pillar of the durability of revolutionary regimes is due to a high coercive capacity which leads to the formation of garrison states. The formation of garrison states seems to be due to a more historical-deterministic factor. For Levitsky & Way, such garrison states emerge from

"Liberation struggles and postrevolutionary armed conflict (...) Years of military struggle give rise to a generation of elites and cadres with experience in sustained and risky violence. (...) in most successful revolutions, armed struggle engenders cohesive-ruling parties that, upon seizing power, reconstruct and thoroughly penetrate the coercive apparatus" (p.12)

It is also noteworthy to see that most of the attributes are not exclusive to a revolution *per se* but have more to do with a military-ideological ethos. This pragmatic action of authoritarian governments has as its goal power-maintenance. Curiously enough, they make it by preserving the monopoly of revolutionary ideological state on symbolic production. Their concern within those four pillars is to halt mobilization against the regime, acting preventively by shaping state institutions and forming others such as

the OVRA in Italy, Gestapo in Hitler's Germany, the Stasi in the DDR, the KGB in the Soviet Union and many others. The concerns with stopping mobilization made the revolutionary governments instinctively oppress the *communitas* and the formal structures capable of symbolic representation and its consequent articulation.

One last question regarding authoritarian states must be considered, before moving to the praxis of political symbology. There are some scholars who call authoritarian states "Leviathan States", as is the name of Slater's book. According to Schmitt, once a state becomes a Leviathan, political representation becomes impossible.

"The principle of representation, on the other hand, depends so entirely on the conception of personal authority, that both the representative and the party represented must possess and assert a personal dignity. (...) Representation invests the person of the representative with a peculiar dignity, since he who represents something of great worth cannot himself be worthless. Not only, however, must the representative and the represented possess personal value but so, too, must the third party to whom they address themselves. You cannot represent something or somebody to automatons and machines, neither can they in their turn be representative of anything nor be represented. As soon as the State becomes a Leviathan it vanishes from the sphere of representation." (Schmitt, 1931, pp.60-61).

On this short quote, Schmitt sets a limit for the principle of representation. That which represents needs to leave a certain dignity to the represented, once the value of representation can only be same in measure between the image and the real, the State and the Citizen. That "once the State becomes a Leviathan it vanishes from the sphere of representation" is a two-edged sword that needs to be looked carefully at. At first, Schmitt seems to resonate with the Hobbesian reasoning that allows the right to rebel to those who became persecuted by the state, becoming targets of the Leviathan-state.

This first impression is only made stronger by Schmitt's concept of the political. "The specific political distinction, that to which all political actions and reasonings can be

guided to is the friend-enemy distinction. (...) the purpose of the friend-enemy distinction is to mark the maximum degree of intensity of a union or separation, of an association or disassociation.” (Schmitt, 1932/1991, pp. 56-57) By defining the very concept of the political on such a distinction, it makes a very strong case, according to Schmitt’s theory, that the state can choose those which will not be represented and therefore branded as enemies.

What should be taken into consideration, however, when looking at Leviathan-States, is that it doesn’t mean they don’t have any sort of representation. Becoming a Leviathan State, in a Schmittian sense, seems to be more of a matter of persecution in on itself than of power concentration by the State. This is something that can be perceived on the study led by Dan Slater on the state of Malaysia. Even when the Malaysian State is literally classified as a Leviathan by Slater as a state that interferes, controls and molds religious expression of Islam within its borders, fact reinforced by Slater as he says that “government authorities tightened these practices of control and surveillance in response to outbreaks of contentious politics in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, and have strengthened their grip over political Islam throughout Malaysia’s authoritarian era” (Slater, 2010 p.149).

The fact that the state attributes to itself the role of shaping religion would put his representation level in a more-than-sacred level for Schmitt, statement which can be derived by the reasoning that “Whatever status may be assigned to religion, it manifests in every direction its power to absorb that to which it attaches itself and to invest it with an absolute value.” (Schmitt, 1931, p.73) Therefore, a state that is officially religious but can still determine the shape religion takes and must not respect its otherwise determinations must be considered, for that political reality, more powerful than that which is sacred. Or, on the other hand, the state becomes sacred itself, when given the attributes to define the borders even of that which is, by definition, transcendental.

While, for Schmitt, the moment a state becomes a Leviathan would mean the end of representation, in what Slater identifies as a Leviathan, representation keeps being a

factor, including for social mobilization. The Malaysian State reaches a level of power concentration in and out of itself that attributes to its coercive institutions the literal function of drawing the lines of the Sacred but still possesses legitimacy and representation that reverberates with its populations. That is why Slater (2010) affirms that “whereas state repression has tended to galvanize and unify university students against authoritarian regimes in the Philippines and Indonesia, it has fragmented campus communities and demoralized student oppositionists in Malaysia” (Slater, 2010, pp.149-150). Now, while it is given that such defragmentation can be attributed sometimes by a form of religious persecution, that does not seem to be the case in Malaysia. On the contrary, Slater identifies its main factor being the “widespread student acquiescence to the notion that the authoritarian Leviathan plays a necessary stabilizing role in an inherently unstable society (...) Malaysian students have played a low-key and supportive political role” (p.150).

This wouldn't, however, make the schmittian theory of representation void. When commenting on the permeation of religion with juridical elements, albeit from a catholic perspective, Schmitt does affirm that:

“Thanks to its formal pre-eminence, it is easy for the law to adopt, in its leadings with changing political forms, a standpoint similar to that of Catholicism by recognizing the most various forms of actual power, provided only a minimum of social form is guaranteed by “the establishment of order”. As soon as the new state of affairs produces an authority that can be recognized, it furnishes the basis for law, the solid foundation for a substantial form.” (Schmitt, 1931, p.75)

Here, it becomes clear that the basis for law, in Schmittian terms, is order, a minimum of stability, in which he resonates once more to the Hobbesian theory. It is this same order that will raise therefore conditions for legitimacy on Leviathan states. Order is the availing consequence for a leviathan-like *idée directrice* in some contexts.

That is to say, the definition of a Leviathan State on Schmittian terms does not refer to a dictatorship, nor does it to an autocratic government. Rather, a Leviathan State

would be based on sheer repression and violence, which gives ground to his declaration that “no skill in manipulating the weapons of power will enable a political system to survive even a single generation.” (Schmitt (1931), p.53) The grounds of representation for this so-called Leviathan state can also be found in an *idée directrice* according to the theory presented by Slater, and there are some multiple answers to what it may be. Slater seems to find it on the capacity to gather, monopolize and consolidate power. On Malaysia, the ruling party, UNMO, seems to fully exploit the Kuala Lumpur Race Riots of May 1969.

Taking advantage of the effects brought by such violent epoch, UNMO managed to willingly amass the mobilization of the Chinese elite in the country, both economically as well as politically through their representation by the Gerakan party. This way, UNMO managed, with the majority’s acquiescence, to approve important economic and political reforms, such as the NEP (New Economic Policy) and the EPF (Employees provident fund), which have allowed the state to seize businesses owned by the Chinese economical elite by at least 30%, as “Malays and Malay interests (...) were targeted to own at least 30 per cent of the share capital of the corporate sector by 1990, from a base of less than 2 per cent in 1970” (Slater, 2010, p.150)

“Shared Chinese fears of continued Malay violence were even more palpable than Malay fears of Chinese power-grabbing in the wake of May 1969 riots. As Jomo K.S. writes, ‘it was by no means a given’ that the Malay majority and Malay-dominated security forces would not seek ‘to systematically eliminate the non-Malays’. (Slater, 2010 p.155)

We can see by the Malaysian example that the so-called Leviathan States are not categorized by schmittian terms, but that rather refer to those states that are authoritarian, whilst also acting symbolically. Slater (2010) leaves no space to doubt that the Malay state managed to instrumentalize and make the riots of 1969 into a Malay symbol, and through it, posed itself as the sole guarantee of stability and return to chaos and the uncertainty of death. By instrumentalizing an existential threat, the Malaysian

government managed to define the economy, control the bureaucratization of religion, control the student body in a legitimized repression, strengthen its grip on the military, control the ethnical Chinese minority, take a hold of extrativistic institutions, possession and control of companies and draw the lines of opposition parties, with their own consent (pp.146-163). The authoritarian statesmanship developed in Malaysia would not be possible without the state putting itself as a bulwark against a return to barbarity. This apprehension of the extrativistic and coercive institutions by instrumentalizing the riots as a symbol allowed the Malay government to maintain power “Even if elites perceive a declining need for authoritarian controls over time – as memories of past outbreaks of contentious politics fade...” (Slater, 2010 p.147). Malaysia is a good example that proves that authoritarian states even when focused on taking over resource distribution and the monopoly of strength do so by resorting to symbolic action. In fact, the Schmittian maxim stands “no skill in manipulating the weapons of power will be enough to enable a political system to survive even a single generation.” (Schmitt, 1931, p.53). Authoritarian regimes, including Leviathan states, still need symbology to maintain power.

xi. The Types of Symbolic Conflicts and Their Adaptation to Transitional Governments

When leaving an authoritarian regime and entering a transition towards democracy, it is to be expected likewise that symbolic action will persist. It has been extensively shown that transitional governments will inherit a symbolic cosmion from the authoritarian epoch and that one task of the new governments will be to craft it, transitioning firstly symbolically to achieve a government transition. This means a change in the official state symbols, like the flag, hymn, coat of arms, institutions and so on, but also on the core values, the *idée directrice* that leads and shapes institutions. What is missing still is to demonstrate how precisely governments can craft such cosmions. What

were the real-world experiences that can indicate it, and how precisely they were applied on the cases of Germany and Italy post 1945.

The symbolic struggle will have already started at the redressive stage of conflict which, as pointed out by Turner (2018), is the point where symbolic action reaches its fullest expression. The point where the transitional ideas come into power is when they will have a stronger backing of the coercive forces, as well as constraints from the signing of the peace treaties. It will be, however, the window of opportunity, the momentum in which the new *idée directrice* can be consolidated. The configuration symbolic conflicts may take are laid out in four possibilities – albeit they are not exhaustive – by Simon Harrison (1995).

Harrison (1995) enlists symbolic conflict in four possibilities, to what concerns Bourdieu's definition of the struggle to gain or legitimize symbolic capital. The four types of symbolic conflict are: Valuation contests; Proprietary contests; Innovation contests; & Expansionary contests. The symbolic conflicts in itself involve, in one manner or another, possibilities of reinterpretation, exclusion and insertion of new symbols in a society.

Valuation contests, for example, are understood as those contests about "the ranking of symbols of the competing group's identities; their ranking, that is to say, according to some criterion of worth such as prestige, legitimacy or sacredness." (Harrison, 1995 p. 256). Such conflicts try to establish, in the societal cosmion, a rank that may favor certain groups instead of others in regard to their focal points of identity, be it collectively or individually. On such contest, Harrison (1995) identifies two tactics regarding those contests, one being positive, and the other negative, in which the objective is to increase or diminish the perceived value of certain identities. Such disputes, independent of their vector, are intended in a way that the ranking of inherent values to certain symbols can be either rearranged or solidified.

The second type identified by Harrison (1995) is called "Proprietary Contests". As the name suggests it, the contests on this kind of conflict are about the proprietary rights of symbols, that is, which groups can claim an important symbol for itself. These kind of

conflicts tend to happen to those symbols whose perceived societal importance is higher than the groups themselves, once “A precondition for a proprietary contest is a consensus among the rivals as to the prestige value of the symbolic property for which they are competing.” (Harrison, 1995, p.258) Such symbols will have mostly a connection to a stablished past, they will be the former heroes of said society, the glorious battles, or places, documents, and cultural work of undoubtable importance and worth.

It comes then as no surprise, for example, that many Latin American governments try to offer different interpretations of central historical figure Simon Bolivar. It is also a possible answer to why so many different political groups offer different interpretations of canon events within a country. Why, for example, the fascist government of Benito Mussolini tried to present itself as a continuation of the roman empire, or why Hitler’s nazi-government hinged on the figure of the Third Reich, alluding itself as a following to the former empires on German history. Usually, an event of big enough importance – or so culturally perceived – will more likely than not be appropriated by groups seeking political legitimacy, even when they have to distort the initial interpretation such events had. Here, “the winner in war installs himself in the symbolic appurtenances of the losers (...) The seizure of power can be made legitimate by turning oneself, as it were, into the person from whom one seized it.” (Harrison, 1995, p.260).

Between valuation and proprietary contests, there is an attempt of rearranging the values or ownership of some symbols, valuation contests are more commonly used on redressive stages of conflict, where one side tries to delegitimize the other and therefore stablish itself as the dominant part. Proprietary contests, in its turn, are used to legitimize or to create a notion of commonness and can be used on the reintegration phase, where the victor attempts to reconcile both winners and losers of the conflict, and bring social unity once more to the field. The other two kind of symbolic conflicts are more focused on altering the symbols itself, not their configuration on society’s cosmion.

The third type of symbolic conflicts which called innovation contests, however, are focused on the creation of symbolism. It was firstly pointed out by Eric Hobsbawm

observing about the period preceding the World-War I, when many nationalist symbols were created. The creation of the official state symbols, according to Cannadine (2014) and Hobsbawm & Ranger (2014) came up historically in a moment of rivalry between European countries, and the symbols we today take for granted when mentioning states were fabricated at the time as a contest amongst nations. According to Cannadine (2014), at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth there was a spurge of creation or revival of state, be it at the level of the head of state, reaching all the way to even a municipal level in which honor ceremonies, titles, coats and ritual symbols were created or revived, installed as official state symbols.

“During the third period, from 1914 to 1953, the context once again shifts profoundly, so that the ritual of the British monarchy ceased to be merely one aspect of widespread competitive inventiveness and became instead a unique expression of continuity in a period of unprecedented change.” (Cannadine, 2014, p.139).

This process of competitive inventiveness which affected not only England, but also “characterized English, European and American public life, not only at the level of the head of state, but in a more widespread manner as well” (Cannadine, 2014, p.138) is what leads Harrison (1995) to call innovation contests. According to the scholar, such process usually take one of two forms: the competitive elaboration of symbols, or the competitive creation of new categories of symbolic forms. One example of the first “is the rise in the scale and complexity of European coronation ceremonies during the late nineteenth century.” (Harrison, 1995, p.261). The new categories are e.g. “the creation of royal ‘jubilees’ or anniversary celebrations” (Harrison, 1995, p.261).

Cannadine (2014) exemplifies these at the competition between Reginald Brett, Viscount Esher, Edward VII and George V, which embarked on a competition within the British royalty on redecorating the royal palace, planning state pageants” (p.135), changing the royal clothing, innovating the official ceremonies – including the funeral of king Edward himself –, and composing hymns (p.136). Such increments in state

ceremonies and new traditions were made to show the British monarchy as a new force, in opposition to the other powers of the time. Soon, “the public image of the British monarchy was fundamentally transformed in the years before the First World War” (Cannadine, 2014, p.137). British political forces took full advantage of this transformation on the monarchy’s image to expand their power and influence, not only nationally, but internationally as well, boosting commerce, regional and international relations. Soon, the innovation contest started by England would reverberate in Europe and America.

The innovation contest is then defined as “a process of escalation in the quantity and complexity of the competing groups’ diacritical symbols. Innovation contests are essentially ‘schismogenic’ processes of competitive differentiation.” (Harrison, 1995, p.261). As schismogenic processes, the creation of such symbols must be in a context where it leads countries to asymmetrical, competitive interactions in a escalation process to be characterized as innovation contests. Innovation contests can also be directed within a society, causing a schism, in which a certain group manifest the wish to “establish a separate identity in this way, a seceding group must generate a distinct set of symbolic *representations* of that identity” (Harrison, 1995, p. 261). The innovation contests then become a way for this separated group to both affirm its separated identity, but is also a way of affirming equal dignity to the other group. In this manner, a group that creates a new symbol as to oppose it original group also states that their capacity to create similar symbols puts them in an equal condition as that of its opponents. “This recalls the fad among the European nations in the Middle Ages for tracing their origins back to the sacking of Troy, claiming to have been founded, like ancient Rome, by a Trojan hero.” (Harrison, 1995, p.262). For this reason, Harrison (1995) affirms that the Innovation contests also have an emulation characteristic and affirms that the level of innovation within the innovation contests is usually limited by it, putting groups in a process of mutual identification with each other. This is why fascist Italy never fully broke the Italian identity but rather tried to construct a cosmion in which they were the heirs of

ancient Rome. It is also the reason why Nazi Germany alluded to Bismarck's Germany, by referring to themselves as the Third Reich. It is why Harrison (1995) states at his reasoning that "The inherently relational quality of social identity, and particularly of cultural or ethnic identity, has often been noted: every such identity needs an other or others against which to counterpose itself." (p.262).

The last type of symbolic conflict Harrison lays out are the expansionary contests, which should have an important weight on the symbolic action of transitional governments. These contests are defined as when "a group tries to displace its competitors' symbols of identity with its own symbols. In other words, within some given field of social relations two or more group identities are competing for survival" (Harrison, 1995, p.263). On this type of contest, Harrison lays out the possibility of creation or destruction of symbols. The creative or destructive process depends on whether or not they are coupled to represent the groups' identities, not on their formal previous existence. As stated "It [the symbol] may have previously existed within the cultural repertoire, but not as part of any group's symbolic inventory (...)" (Harrison, 1995, p.263). Likewise, when talking about the symbolic destruction, the symbol may continue to exist, it's just not coupled anymore as a central symbol to the group's identity.

One important feature of such contests is that they act on a determined social universe, attempting not to alter the perceived hierarchy of symbols, but rather which symbols are employed as central representations of a group's identity. "The assumption underlying an expansionary contest is quite different: namely, that sociopolitical identity is singular, exclusive and absolute. No group or person can be affiliated to two symbolically-constituted identities at the same time." (Harrison, 1995, p.265).

The types of symbolic conflicts provide an insight into how governments can establish themselves and consolidate their representation when on a transition from an authoritarian epoch. The strategies of contests will most likely be used in combination, in order to suppress, re-signify, devalue and/or substitute the symbols that constitute a society's symbolic repertoire. It is the hypothesis of this thesis that such symbolic action

of transitional governments will focus on the new ideas directrices they will shape the new institutions with.

V. Chapter's Conclusions

The human need for symbolism originates out of an integral part of human unconsciousness and of human need for knowledge, it cannot be separated from human action, neither can it function without the constant iteration with one's surroundings, not at least without being the cause or symptom of a severe psychiatric malfunction. Political symbolism emanates from the encounter of individuals that each carry their personal symbolic inventory, each with its own possible interpretations.

This dynamic can happen on society itself, with the exchange of ideas and selection of symbols through *peitho*, persuasion, or they can be originated, reinforced or reaffirmed in the *communitas*, which are social groups united beyond the formal social structures. A society's symbolic inventory – understood as the general symbols, in use or not – is then the aggregation of these many symbols and out of it comes the symbolic repertoire, understood as the amalgam of symbols currently in use in society.

Political symbolic action is then the art of politics to use, reaffirm, reevaluate, appropriate or exclude certain symbols of its repertoire, in order to shape its institutions and therefore the political articulation within its borders. This symbolic action is used to represent society beyond the existential level, beyond the mere necessity of survival, right up to a spiritual dimension. The more symbolically aligned a government gets to its society, the higher its acceptance will be.

There is, however, one menace with symbolic alignment, and that is the use of gnostic ideologies, which are political worldviews corrupted by an immanentization of the eschaton that is, an eschatological narrative that fixes, physically and historically, heavens, hells, and a redemption narrative. Such ideologies come with their own prophets and messiahs, promising heaven-on-earth through numerous atrocities that become justifiable by such a narrative. These ideologies are nothing more than a form

of absolute control over society and embroil it on a fixed symbolical interpretation. How do transitional governments that need to get out of such systems manage to do it is the theme of research of this thesis and we believe it was done by a mix of pragmatic and symbolic action that implemented new *idées directrices* on its institutions, weighing in the process of co-constitution of state and society and shaped a new political identity for the countries in case.

The symbolic action of the transitional governments should be done in order to return to Fortescue's concept of the *corpus mysticum*, as explained by Voegelin. That is to say, that the Logos of society as being the *intencio populi* finds in its leaders a righteous representation. It is what Voegelin meant when he said that "A political society in existence will have to be an ordered cosmion, but not at the price of man; it should be not only a microcosmos but also a macroanthropos." (Voegelin, 1952, p.61)

3. Transitional Symbolism: The cases of Italy and Germany

The transitional governments of Italy and Germany faced a special challenge, that of overcoming two highly ideologized governments and laying the foundations for a functional democratic government. Even though both Mussolini and Hitler were politically alike, the symbolic inventory of each government was largely different from one another. Fogu (2003), when analyzing the relation of both regimes with arts, states that:

Everything, from the personal preferences of the two dictators, to their policy statements, to the political histories of the avant-gardes in Italy and Germany, conspired to create two parallel paths. Whereas the amateur painter Adolf Hitler used his power, speeches, and financial resources to first denounce all forms of 'degenerate' avant-garde arts and then identify Nazi art with a state-approved, vaguely defined 'Ger-manic style,' the ex-journalist and futurist sympathizer Mussolini sought actively to endorse the talent of avant-garde artists for the cause of fascism, and he never gave in to reactionary demands to sanction an official art form of the fascist state. (p.4)

This leads to different lenses when it comes to analyzing the different symbolic structures. While Nazism had an official state-sanctioned form of art and symbolic structure, Mussolini sought a more "fluid" relationship between symbols and artistic production, posing fascism and fascist government as an alternative aligned with modernism. This resounds with Mussolini's attempt of posing fascism as an alternative to the left-right political spectrum. "Translated into ritual- and image-politics, this claim meant that fascism pursued a unique balance between modernist aestheticization and popular-cultural sacralization of politics" (Fogu, 2003, p.5).

Mostly, the different connection established by Mussolini's fascist regime is due to the influence of Gentile's actualism – *attualismo* – and the shaping such philosophy gave to the whole fascist structure. According to Fogu (2003), one can notice the main consequences of the introduction of the actualism as the molding factor of fascist

symbolic imaginary in one of the most famous fascist mottoes “*il fascismo fa la storia, non la scrive*”.

VI. The Actualism Influence and the Fascist Symbology

xii. Actualism and the Immanence of History

There can be no question that the birth of modern Italy was the work of the few. And it could not be otherwise. It is always the few who represent the self-consciousness and the will of an epoch and determine what its history shall be; for it is they who see the forces at their disposal and through those forces actuate the one truly active and productive force — their own will (Gentile, 1928, p.291)

Gentile's elaboration of actualism came to answer a deep-seated crisis on the new Italian state. This crisis was triggered by the defeat at the battle of Caporetto. According to Fogu (2003), “On the Italian war front, intellectuals, political leaders, and a Catholic populace had experienced history as immanent rather than transcendental. For Gentile, the stage was set for the birth of a new political subject whose philosophical vision would be founded entirely on history belonging to the present” (p.42).

It was the sense of a near-loss experience of the newly founded Italian state propelling the birth of this new philosophy that would motivate the Italian war-effort and preserve the state. Gentile was amongst the group of intellectuals that developed the founding principle of this philosophy, that this battle was the fourth battle of independence of Italy, connecting therefore this incursion with the *Risorgimento*, the unification of Italy on the XIX century under a will of returning to the former Roman glory.

This bringing of a historical symbol to motivate and shape the war effort, led Gentile to understand it as an historical event transforming the present, as if it was happening in that moment. The symbolical strength of the *Risorgimento* was enough to maintain and save the fatherland. It was not, however, perceived as a symbolic strength mobilizing the political society in a war effort. Instead of interpreting the event as such, Gentile saw it as the past being re-enacted and re-iterated on the war front. Similar to

the myths of cosmological societies, the symbolic image introduced, for the Italian philosopher, an annihilation of time, and allowed the image of the newly-founded-state to come forth in its fullest extent.

Gentile's conception of actualism was then a way of immanentizing history, making of every historical aspect one that happens in the present. He managed to construe such a theoretical artifact by extrapolating one of the orientations of historical imagination.

But what is history? What do we differentiate it from nature? History oscillates between two opposite notions, and at times we take it by one side, at times by another. At times history belongs to the past, at times to the present; and most times we only see that that first history, which is presently set up in a historiography which presupposes entirely its own object; and only with great effort we can see the second history which does not presuppose anything, because it, in its turn, creates its own object. However much in the distinction, which pertains to the modern age, and unknown to ancient times, we do nothing but look exclusively to the former. [Ora la storia è del passato, e ora è del presente; e il più delle volte noi non vediamo che quella prima storia, la quale si configura attualmente in una storiografia, che presuppone interamente il proprio oggetto; e a gran fatica ci riesce di vedere la seconda storia, che non presuppone nulla, perché essa appunto crea il suo oggetto; quantunque nella distinzione, tutta propria dell'età moderna e ignota all'antichità, non facciamo che guardare verso di essa] (Gentile, 1918/2018, p.61)

Gentile took on his actualism philosophy the perspective of historic events – that is, the ones that make history and not only are registered as historical – to its fullest extent, and brought an entirely new *idée directrice* to Italian institutions which would affect, shape, and orient the fascist state as a whole. As stated by Fogu (2003), “the actualist philosophy of history rejected both Hegelian and Marxist notions of transcendental History, positing instead what I call a catastrophe of the

histori(ographi)cal, that is, the reciprocal immanence of the historical and the historiographical act". (p.13).

Actualism acts and structures itself around the predominance of the present. Not only seeing the historic facts in the present, but also immanentizing the past. It installs a time annihilation in which time can be mixed on past and future and interact concomitantly with one another on the present.

Gentile considered *the Contest of Faculties* to be an unfinished 'fourth critique' of history, which he aimed to correct and complete. For Gentile, in fact, by thinking of historical experience from the point of view of reading historical signs, rather than writing history, all distinctions between reality and representation, past and present, evaporated immediately. The progress of history revealed itself as immanent in the movement of thought during the act of reading. From the point of view of actualism, reading a history book, a historical document, or a historic event were all activities belonging to the transtemporal presence of experience. Because we can never transport ourselves to the past, we always make that past *attuale* (actual) by thinking its content within 'our present awareness of thinking ourselves thinking the object' (Fogu, 2003, p. 38).

Actualism forged itself into a creationist act, in which the mere act of thought could not only condition but rather create. Its concept of autotaxis is central on this creationist perspective, as "every action was an act of thought and every act of thought was pure because it was an act of spiritual self-consciousness" (Fogu, 2003, p.46). Through pure acts of self-consciousness, actualism gave supremacy to idealism and "proposed a syntactical synthesis of Catholic religion and idealist philosophy that may be summarized as 'switching the declination of God from the third to the first person'" (Fogu, 2003, p.46).

In this manner, the past can be made ever present by evoking or simply remembering it, and the present can be constructed through speech. The historical symbols can then be re-lived and re-enacted time and time again, as time itself is annihilated through actualism. This ritualistic dynamic was found on the nucleus of fascist

ideology, and was one of the strongest *idées directrices* that shaped the institutions and the communication of fascist Mussolinian regime.

It was upon this concept of actualism that the central roles of *Roman-ness* and the symbolic strength of the battle of Caporetto hinged, as from such battle, “there rose an ‘image of an endangered fatherland, dead or under deadly threat’ which spread rapidly throughout the home front and survived well after the victory, traversing the entire aftermath of the Great War” (Fogu, 2003, p.44). Besides, the claims that Fascist regime made to being a ‘Third Rome’, invoking the same symbols that lead the Risorgimento in the unification of Italy, “the fascist sense of time was characterized by an acute sense of discontinuity between past and future rather than a desire to forge a mythic identity between the Roman past and fascist present” (Fogu, 2003, p.23). Rather than seeing Fascism set on its proper historical chronological time, the regime set itself conveniently through the annihilation of time as a continuance of the Roman Empire, through which “Roman-ness provided a sea in which anyone could fish out anything for any occasion: a reminder, a justification, a title of whatsoever nobility,’ rather than a properly mythic horizon.” (Fogu, 2003, p.24)

xiii. The Fascist Ideology: Its God, Prophet and Messiah

But towards the end of the Nineteenth Century and in the first years of the Twentieth a vigorous spirit of reaction began to manifest itself in the young men of Italy against the preceding generation’s ideas in politics, literature, science and philosophy. It is as though they were weary of the prosaic bourgeois life which they had inherited from their fathers and were eager to return to the lofty moral enthusiasms of their grandfathers (Gentile, 1928, p.296)

The fascist ideology was presented within the range of Noe-Idealism, a movement of return to the old ideals in an abandonment of positivist and materialist views. The return of old figures from the Risorgimento and their respective ideals in the intellectual and socio-political Italian frame was ushered and celebrated as a return to

good ways, not anymore focusing on the individual needs in detriment of the State, but looking to find a balance within such entities. The concepts of Marxism and the views of bourgeoisie in a bad perspective were brought forth and reformulated, seeking to denounce “a hypocritical ‘collaborationism’ which betrayed both proletariat and nation” (Gentile, 1928 p.296).

Fascist ideology moved as a value-centered articulation, in an anti-parliamentarian moral spirit, allied with a syndicalism developed by George Sorel. It was a moral ideology, focused on the primacy of the State, which the individual had a moral duty to defend. Therefore, the state is seen on fascist ideology as a moral bastion, a decisive state, not shirking from war or its necessity and rapidly gained the support of Italian soldiers. “Anti-individualistic, the fascist conception is for the State and is for the individual in as much as it coincides with the State – [who is the] universal consciousness and will of man in his historical existence [Antiindividualistica, la concezione fascista è per lo Stato; ed è per l’individuo in quanto coscienza e volontà universale dell’uomo nella sua esistenza storica]. (Mussolini, 1933 p.3).

Fascism was, even more, a doctrine of praxis. Fascist ideals are those of practice, not of philosophy. “From the first, the Fascist Party was not one of believers but one of action. What it needed was not a platform of principles, but an idea which would indicate a goal and a road by which the goal could be reached.” (Gentile, 1928, p.298). From it derived some of the central conceptions of fascism, as the loath for speculative thinking. From it we can also derive the famous fascist motto derived from a speech of Mussolini: “Fascism makes history, doesn’t write it (Il fascismo fa la storia, non la scrive). On this motto it becomes clear both the focus on praxis from fascist ideology, as well as its actualist influence on historic events and the framing of the present, the actual, as the sole focus of action. Besides, Gentile (1928) makes it clear on his “The Philosophic basis of fascism” that fascism should neither be considered a philosophy, nor a religion, that Mussolini took pride on having a good timing and acting on the most pragmatic way. Gentile ends up admitting that fascist is anti-intellectual “if by intellectualism we mean

the divorce of thought from action, of knowledge from life, of brain from heart, of theory from practice. (...) Fascist anti-intellectualism holds in scorn a product peculiarly typical of the educated classes in Italy: the *letterato*" (Gentile, 1928, p.300).

Therein, fascist ideology is not foreigner to a system of beliefs, nor to philosophical influence – as seen by the influences of actualism and by the very name of Gentile's document, or by the fact that Mussolini himself wrote about the fascist doctrine. The intellectualism that fascist stands against is understood as abstract thinking, pure theoretical speculation. That is not to say that fascism acted without a guiding philosophy, as a blind ideology walking with no support, it does, however, refer to its beginnings when fascism was a political practice, trying to reach political legitimacy, which would come with the march on Rome in 1922. The supposed aversion for philosophy and abstract thinking is rather one more piece of evidence of the by-product of actualism and fascism. A practical doctrine as fascism could only have a philosophy of absolute immanentism such as actualism.

"Fascism is a religious conception, in which man is seen in his immanent relationship with a superior law, with an objective Will that transcends the individual in himself and elevates him to a conscious member of a spiritual society. [il fascismo è una concezione religiosa, in cui l'uomo è veduto nel suo immanente rapporto con una legge superiore, con una Volontà obiettiva che trascende l'individuo particolare e lo eleva a membro consapevole di una società spirituale]" (Mussolini, 1933, p.2). Mussolini, in his doctrine, talks about a spiritual society, of a conscious participation on a transcendent conception, facilitated by his doctrine. Could that be considered evidence of transcendental thought within fascism? The evidence shown through Mussolini's manifesto shows a substantial amount of proof against it. On the conception of man given by Mussolini, we can see him conscripted to history and the State. This happens many times through the text but especially when he affirms that

"Fascism is a historic conception, in which man is nothing if not in function of the spiritual process to which he contributes, on the familiar and social group, in

nation and history, to which all nations cooperate. Where the great tradition values memory, languages, traditions, and the norms of social life. Out of history, man is nothing. [Il fascismo è una concezione storica, nella quale l'uomo non è quello che è se non in funzione del processo spirituale a cui concorre, nel gruppo familiare e sociale, nella nazione e nella storia, a cui tutte le nazioni collaborano. Donde il gran valore della tradizione nelle memorie, nella lingua, nei costumi, nelle norme del vivere sociale. Fuori della storia l'uomo è nulla] (Mussolini, 1933, p.3)

We see that the spiritual concoction formulated by Mussolini has nothing to do with a transcendental concept, but is rather fully encapsulated on society and the State. The religious experience he refers to is the full immersion in one's culture, the immanent circle of Fascism finds here its completion. Even a religious experience has immanent characteristics, and man cannot find meaning if not outside of the immanent world. That is what leads Mussolini to conclude that "for the fascist, everything is within the State, and nothing of human or spiritual exists, much less has value, outside of the State. [per il fascista, tutto è nello Stato, e nulla di umano o spirituale esiste, e tanto meno ha valore, fuori dello Stato.]" (Mussolini, 1933, p.3). As a pure immanent ideology, fascism needed the praxis first, it needed to see itself firstly unfolding in history to then be able to conceptualize itself. That is why fascism emerges first as pure practical doctrine, to then become a categorized doctrine, it was unfolding a new immanent reality, never before seen or experimented. This is why Mussolini admits that "People argued, but - what is most sacred and important - people died. One knew how to die. The doctrine (...) could be lacking; but there was to replace it something more decisive: faith. [Si batteggiava nelle città e nei villaggi. Si discuteva, ma - quel ch'è più sacro e importante - si moriva. Si sapeva morire. La dottrina (...) poteva mancare; ma c'era a sostituirla qualche cosa di più decisivo: la fede.]" (Mussolini, 1933, p.7). This faith mentioned by Mussolini is the fascist faith, it is the State which invests everything with a value, it is for the State that the loyal fascist dies. The fascist State is the god of the fascist immanent ideology, the

borders of the Sacred are defined and marked by the fascist State, and Mussolini placed himself as his sole interpreter. Furthermore, he placed the fascist state as the representation of the individual himself, by placing nation as conditioned and set by the state, and nation itself as being every single individual, when he claims that "Instead, nation is created by the State, that gives to the people, conscious of its own moral unity, a will, and therefore an effective existence. [Anzi la nazione è creata dallo Stato, che dà al Popolo, consapevole della propria unità morale, una volontà, e quindi un'effettiva esistenza] (Mussolini, 1933, p.4).

The fascist immanent ideology then fixes the State as an absolute god, capable of creating, signifying and assigning value. Mussolini established himself as the sole legitimate interpreter of said immanent god. The sacred symbology was made and fixated by the speeches Mussolini gave.

When citing the elaboration of the first historiographical fascist book, Fogu (2003) narrates how Gioacchino Volpe entered in direct contest with the Liberal Benedetto Croce, who had published his book shortly before. According to Fogu (2003), Volpe's book went against the common narrative that presented fascist Italy as a continuation of the old Roman Empire and, instead, "tied fascism to a century-long process of national formation in which the growth of nationalism from an intellectual to a full-blown political force was connected to the growth and organization of social energies..." (p.29). In this manner, Volpe, a renowned fascist historian, went against the official narrative of the regime, and presented fascism as a normal political movement, with a clear continuance line between the propagandistic war times and their time at the fascist regime. In one of Mussolini's interventions at the Italian Senate approaching the subject of the refusal of senator Croce's vote against conciliation pacts between the Vatican and the Italian state on grounds of the way the negotiations were led, he directed himself to Croce:

I don't believe [Senator Croce's vote] is about the treaty, as it is completed, improving in a great measure, those which were the projects for which men like Cavour, Ricasoli and Lanza yearned.

Everything reminds me of war times, when there were two ways of waging war: that of the generals and soldiers, who waged it seriously, and that of the shirkers, who in the safe back lines would always find that their ways would move armies and win battles.

No wonder, gentlemen, if side to side with the shirkers of war, there are the shirkers of history, who, having failed – for several reasons and maybe for their creative impotence – to produce the event, that is, to make history before writing it, take revenge by diminishing it often with no objectivity and many times unashamedly. [Non credo si tratti del trattato, perché il trattato realizza, migliorandoli di gran lunga, quelli che furono i progetti per i quali spasimarono uomini come il Cavour, il Ricasoli ed il Lanza.

Tutto ciò mi fa ricordare l'epoca della guerra quando c'erano due modi di fare la guerra: quello dei generali e dei soldati, che la facevano sul serio, e quello degli imboscati, i quali nelle sicure retrovie trovavano sempre che con il loro modo avrebbero spostato gli eserciti e stravinto le battaglie.

Nessuna meraviglia, o signori, se accanto agli imboscati della guerra esistono gli *imboscati della storia*, i quali, non potendo per ragioni diverse e forse anche per la loro impotenza creatrice, produrre l'evento, cioè fare la storia prima di scriverla, si vendicano dopo, diminuendola spesso senza obiettività e qualche colta senza pudore.] (Mussolini, 1929 p.5-6)

According to Fogu (2003), this critique of Mussolini was not only directed at Croce, but also at Volpe. That is because Volpe was, during the Great War, in the propaganda department of the fascist movement, which was constantly accused of evading the duties of war, hiding behind intellectual work to avoid the frontlines. This speech is the one that gave birth to the fascist motto of “fascism makes history, it does not write it”.

The event with senator Croce was not isolated, rather, it made part of a fascist tradition, of “construction of a fascist discursive regime founded on a ‘rhetorization of

violence' intimating that 'words should submit to the law of action and tend toward praxis.'" (Fogu, 2003, p.32). Mussolini, as the prophet and messiah of the fascist immanent ideology, would recurringly correct or adjust the fascist symbolic formation. On his speech-events, he would give directives and define Fascist symbology, once he connected speech to action. The immanentist capacity of fascism was so great that he was able to make all things immanent by speech. The influence of actualism that was able to bring the past into being in the present was somehow extrapolated by Mussolini's symbolic sharpening of the movement into his speech effectively shaping Italian's political reality. This was one of the consequences of the declination of God from third to the first person. In this way, "Mussolini's rhetoric consistently broke down the opposition between language and action in such a way that actions could be understood 'not as prediscursive but as part of the discursive formation itself.'" (Fogu, 2003, p.32). It is also the reason why Mussolini did not worry about an official state art. Mussolini held, by his own speech, the creative power of shaping, creating, eliminating and adjusting the very symbolic imaginary of his whole country. In many expressive manners, Mussolini would reiterately compete symbolically with the role of the Fascist state as the Gnostic god of the fascist State. That is why, concomitantly to Fascism, there was a second movement, *ducismo*, which centered around the figure of Mussolini, Italy's Duce. This leads Fogu (2003) to affirm, in agreement with Luisa Passerini, that "*mussolinismo-ducismo* was a largely autonomous and even competitive ideological compound in relation to *fascismo*, and that the 'Mussolinian imaginary' of Italians was the principal and most enduring factor in ensuring a measure of mass consensus, (...) for the regime at all times." (Fogu, 2003, p. 12).

VII. The Reichs Symbology: Nazi's Symbolic Structuring

"And if others speak of the World and Humanity we say the Fatherland – and only the Fatherland!" (Hitler according to Baynes, 1942, p.108)

Nazi ideology was heavily reliant on its symbolism to cohere. These symbols were geared to an emotional impact and the population's emotions were, to an

important extent, successfully manipulated through them. Therefore, the Nazis mobilized a significant proportion of the German people in favor of, or at least in passive acceptance of, Nazi aims, by the complex use of symbols. (Mackay-Rolfe, 1997, p.130)

On contrary to the fascist counterparts, there are several scholar-works that seek to actively investigate and dismantle the Nazi's symbolic structure that upheld Nazism and the Third Reich. Even though it carried the same connotation as the 'Third Rome', the 'Third Reich', also known as the thousand Year Reich bears a stronger ideological connotation with the Joachitic gnostic symbolism. Be it because Hitler never denied its ideological aspirations, or because of the acknowledgeable heaviest heritage ever left by a political regime – the Holocaust – Hitlerian Germany is easily-recognizable as a heavily ideological government. The Nazi government had a series of symbolic sources in its formulation, but also a centered, authoritarian symbolic origin on its core. Differently from Mussolini and the purely fascist conception, Nazism carried within itself, and as a main tool of symbolic articulation as it will be shown, a racist perverse idea that a blood purity should be encouraged, maintained and artificially reached within the German state, the ideal of the Aryan nation.

xiv. The Aryan Ideal and the Foundational Myth of Nazism

On ideological terms, the achievement of the Aryan nation is the end of the eschaton narrative for Nazism. In its name all kinds of atrocities were allowed and justified. On this manner, Nazism superseded Fascism as an ideology that had an end, an eschatological goal. Fascism was an ideology with a severely rigid praxis, shrouded by mythological figures and an almighty state and prophet Messiah in the figure of Mussolini. Nazism had the same elements but employed them to achieve a clearer immanentized heaven: the purification of the Aryan race, bringing 'heaven down to earth'. The first step in ensuring the symbolic repertoire to do so was intertwining Nazism with a existential twist.

The Aryan justification for Nazism is a mythological one. When reading Alfred Rosenberg's "The Myth of the 20th Century", or other propagandistic 'scientific' works by the Nazi intellectuals, there is a language that distorts and selects from different theories in an intentional way to 'fit' in the Nazi narrative. One of the key elements is that of the Aryan, also clouded on a mystical language but that, lastly, has to do with blood.

Although the race-doctrine was usually portrayed in scientific terms (...) much of it rested on the blood mystique. The blood was said to harbour mystical forces that would enable the German people to achieve all that had been promised them by National Socialism (...) To this extent, blood was also a symbol of the Nazi revolution against the (Nazi-defined) cold logic and inner decay of the era of bourgeois parliamentarianism and spirit-destroying liberal democracy. In Nazi ideology, blood symbolized vigour, intensity, fanaticism, the love of battle, health and success. Like the nation, Aryan blood was a positive symbol. Blood was, in some ways, a more fundamental symbol than even that of the nation, because the nation was said to rise or fall on the purity of its blood stock (Mackay-Rolfe, 1997, pp.128-129).

The use of myth, often in a dubious, clouded message, was one of the symbolic tools the Nazis, centred around the figure of Hitler, dominated and employ repeatedly. This was no accident, but it was made on a pedagogic intention, once a myth's "role is to propose, if not to impose, models or types (...), types in imitation of which an individual, or a city, or an entire people, can grasp themselves and identify themselves" (Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy, 1990, p.297).

The appeal and strength of the Nazi myth, however, is that it attended two urgent needs of the Germans of that time: it provided a heroic national myth to which Germans could relate and have a cohesive racial identity, and it provided a solution to the weak-perceived multi-party democracy of the Weimar republic after World War I. Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy (1990) connect the developments in German philosophy and its investigations on the myths – coincidentally, by the same authors that were distorted to

'fit' the Nazi propaganda – as a search propelled by the wanting of a national foundational myth. According to the scholars, the German were missing an identity as a nation, and the previous historical momenta were either not enough to create a culture with heavy artistic production and symbols or were recently seen with shame due to the first World War, like Wilhelm's Reich. Therein the newfound Republic of Weimar lacked a representation beyond the existentialist sense, which the Nazi myth of the Aryan sought to replace.

The Aryan narrative gave the Nazi regime a claim to a representation beyond the formal, existential ways of being. This claim was fundamentally racist and based upon a racist, totalitarian concept, justifiable through a language of its own, relying on a mysticism that took a disguise of scientific language. The Myth of the Aryan allowed Nazism to connect German's national identity to a history that traced back to a presumed – much more symbolic than historical – past. Germany was not alone in Europe on this context. What Voegelin identifies within the gnostic ideologies – leaving Europe post-Enlightenment to replace Christianity only in its aesthetic and exterior elements, not on its structure – Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy (1990) identified it as an imitation of the Ancients, such as Athens, Sparta and Rome. The scholars say, additionally, that as Germany was unable until then to come forth with a significant cultural production, it was forced to adopt the French imitation, which meant that the country “was not only missing an identity but also lacked the ownership of its means of identification. (...) And it would be perfectly accurate to describe the emergence of German nationalism as the *appropriation of the means of identification*”¹ (Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy, 1990, p.299).

The attempt of appropriating the means of identification to forge a new national identification suffered therefore a double-bind – roughly saying, a situation that presents two irreconcilable demands. Germans faced the dilemma of seeking an imitation, but not in the same manner as their European counterparts. The most immediate and obvious

¹ Emphasis maintained as in original text.

source were the Greek, but there were already long-settled traditions based on Greek philosophy, including the French, with whom Germany had a standing belligerent history. They were then faced with two ways: the speculative, as Hegelian philosophy of Dialectics being a strong German representative, or the aesthetic, which is the one chosen by National Socialism. (Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy, 1990)

In order to differentiate its national identity from other European countries, Germans sought “the archaic, savage Greece of group rituals, of bloody sacrifices and collective intoxications, of the cult of the dead and of the Earth Mother – in short, a mystical Greece, on which the other, not without difficulty, was raised.” (Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy, 1990, p.301). The interactions with the mythological side of Greece were not new to German history, there was an already established line of thought to the mythological, mainly for a linguistic connection that allows both languages to bring forth symbols and talk clearly even on a mythological field. Schelling, Nietzsche, Hölderlin are examples of the German tradition of the mythological, advocating sometimes for the need of new mythologies or fluently creating and shaping abstract, mythological components themselves. This mythological connection with a ‘buried Greece’ is extrapolated by ideology and there is an infiltration of the political through the aesthetic. In this context comes Wagner, whose goal with Bayreuth “will be deliberately political: it will be that of the unification of the German People. (...) one must understand the exigency of a ‘total work of art.’ This totalization is not only aesthetic: it beckons to the political” (Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy, 1990, p.303). Through its ideological gnostic thinking, Nazism exacerbated this infiltration into political as a work of art, with “the construction, the formation, and the production of the German people in, through and as a work of art.” (Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy, 1990, p.303).

xv. *Nazism as the Reich’s Foundational Myth: The Ideological Core of Nazism*

The greatest and most blessed thing in the German life is the mythical, sensitive, yet strong awakening. The fact is that we have again begun to dream our own

primal dreams – not with willed intent but far more spontaneously – in many places simultaneously – all in the same direction. It is again the old, yet new, dream of Meister Eckhart, of Frederick the Great and of Lagarde. (Rosenberg, 1930, p.318)

By analyzing the work of Rosenberg, together with *Mein Kampf*, written by Hitler, Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy (1990) come to analyze how Nazism is then presented as the very foundational myth, oversteering that of the Aryan man, which becomes but one aspect of it. First, they clarify that myth is no longer understood as mythological, but as “a power more than is a thing, an object, or a representation. (...) it designates this identity of something which is not given, neither as fact, nor as discourse, but which is dreamed” (p.305).

The Nazi myth, the central and nuclear ideology responsible for the formulation of *idées directrices* within the regime is a myth of blood. It is a myth that confers a national identity and provides all the elements of an immanent eschaton, with the possibility of redemption through historical action. It is first, encompassed in a circular logic. It needs the immanent faith to be present, “A total belief, an immediate, unreserved adhesion to the dreamed figure is necessary for the myth to be what it is, or, if this may be said, for the form to take form” (Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy, p.306).

The form the myth takes, its immanent manifestation, is manifested in a type, it being defined as the realization of the singular identity and being inseparable of the myth itself. Therefore, it is the model of the identity – what it ought to be - and its present, formed reality. (Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy, 1990)

“These racial dominants demand the creation of a type. Truly organic freedom is only possible within such a type. This limitation is racially conditioned. Race is the outward image of a definite soul” (Rosenberg, 1930, p.363). Race as being the outward image of a definite soul, fixates it as a the external manifestation of a type. The Nazi myth is in this sense deterministic. It is not completely rigid, but the type, being considered this outward image of the soul – the race - is that of heaviest influence. That is why

Rosenberg (1930) affirms that “A strong personality has an effect, style forming, but the type – regarded metaphysically – is already given before it” (p.363). The state then can only be strong if preserved racially, if there is no mix of types, once “A state is always characterized by the supreme value, art, culture and style of the dominant race” (p. 363). It is the soul then – understood by the Social Nationalists as that which is expressed by race which is the central point of the Myth. This soul has its quality affected by the quality of its blood. “A race is a soul, and in certain cases, a genial soul (...) As if races were themselves, above all, the *dreamed types* of a superior power. Rosenberg again quotes Lagarde: Nations are ideas of God” (Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy, 1990, pp.306-307).

On the Nazi myth, race is not defined by any social nor historical quality. It is linked by blood – and what is more, linked by blood quality. Blood is only associated with the state in the measure that the State represents “the soil from which that blood ultimately springs” (Lacoue-Labarthe, 1990, p.308). This conception is what led the politics of *Blut und Boden* (Blood and soil) in the National Socialist regime. This is how the Nazis manage to transform German national identity from centering in the German language into a material problem, a problem of ensuring the existence of the State to preserve the ‘noblest blood of the Aryans’. A turn from language needed to be made, as language belongs – or at least has great potentiality to belong – to the realm of the ‘universalisms’. That is, language is non-discriminatory, and can be put into the same category of “Universalism as a basic archetype of life [that] is thus just as barren as individualism. The result, in the event of victory of one or other of these two outlooks on the world, must necessarily be chaos” (Rosenberg, 1930, p.239). The turn then, from an element that can contribute to Universalism, led the Nazi myth to anchor itself on blood as a ‘will of nature’, that is “the will to difference, to distinction, to individuation. (It is therefore nature itself that engenders the process of identity formation through myth: it is nature that dreams and dreams itself in its types)” (Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy, 1990, p.309).

On the mythological formation of National Socialism, the Nazis decided then to anchor their identity on the Aryan blood, a civilization they place in the old Atlantis. They choose this particular people for their own symbolism. The Aryans are understood to be the bearers of the solar myth, and “the solar myth is the myth of the formative force itself,, of the original power of the type. The sun is the source of typical distinction. Or again, the sun is the *arche-type*” (Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy, 1990, p.309).

Aryan races — often absurdly small numerically — subject foreign peoples, and then, stimulated by the special living conditions of the new territory (fertility, climatic conditions, etc.) and assisted by the multitude of lower-type beings standing at their disposal as helpers, develop the intellectual and organizational capacities dormant within them. Often in a few millenniums or even centuries they create cultures which originally bear all the inner characteristics of their nature, adapted to the above-indicated special qualities of the soil and subjected beings. In the end, however, the conquerors transgress against the principle of blood purity, to which they had first adhered; they begin to mix with the subjugated inhabitants and thus end their own existence; for the fall of man in paradise has always been followed by his expulsion (Hitler, 1999, p. 292).

Aryans enter the Nazi mythology as the makers of culture, they are the ones superior to all others because of this formative power. The Aryans of the time – that is, the Nazi German people – have added to the mythology a formulation made by Eckehart, the formulation of the free soul, which – as Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy (1990) explain, it is a mystical formulation in which one soul can be free of all other formulations, including and especially of God himself. Therefore, “what matters is to form *oneself*, to *type oneself*, and to type oneself as absolute, free creator (...) [it] is finally nothing more than the absolute, Self-creating Subject” (p.310). This Subject then, transcending and being completely free, can only be influenced and determined by its soul, its race, defined by the quality of its blood.

To avoid the mix with the 'lower-type beings at their disposal', the State, which in Nazism is at service of the nation, inverting the logic in Fascism, has to ensure not only that the Aryans dominate and exploit the others, as that is seen as a natural process, but that all there is becomes Aryan. Therein lies the justification for 'lesser forms of life', whose blood is of poorer quality, and whose types, manifested by their race, is not worthy of the Aryans. Moreover, it fixates the elimination of Jews as an existential necessity, as "the Jew is not simply a bad race, a defective type: he is the antitype, the bastard par excellence. (...) The Jew has no *Seelengestalt*, therefore no *Rassengestalt*: his form is formless. He is the man of the universal abstract..." (Lacoue-Labarthe, 1990 p.307). As the prophet and Messiah of the immanent Gnostic religion, Hitler assigns a role to himself and to his followers, his disciples who have achieved the Self-creation force of the Aryan race. This role is to awaken the masses. The National Socialist state managed to assemble the whole state apparatus not only to ensure the preservation of Aryan's blood purity, but to mobilize and awaken the masses, to bring forth the immanent representation, the type of this myth.

xvi. The Implemented Nazi Idée Directrice: The Nazi Machinery

Through the regime, one of the most astonishing aspects of the Nazi government is how they have successfully appareled the state with a propaganda machine in a symbolical communication. The Nazi and communist government managed to master communication to the masses, which highly increased their effectiveness and gave them cohesion in their respective societies. The National Socialists managed to emplace such a symbolic inventory in such manner that "much of the ideology was only sustainable through the emotional impact of its symbols. These symbols imparted power to the ideology." (Mackay-Rolfe, 1997 pp.83-84).

Thus, the pervasive myth of Nazism was carried through institutions and communicated to the German society. What made Nazism so deadly as an ideology with a founding myth was a mix of the symbolic power entailed in its narrative and a deep

understanding of political communication and institutional shaping. Similarly to Mussolini, Hitler understood Nazism as a doctrine of praxis, albeit with a foundational myth, and showed certain misappreciation for theoretical speculation – that is, theoretical speculation framed as bourgeois, purely speculative thinking. Unlike Mussolini, this despeciation came not for spite against the German *leteratto*, but was rather seen as a connection with nature once, as seen before, the Nazi myth had this underlying conception of nature as that which selects, and had selected the Aryans as the superior race. Therefore, instinct, and not formal education had the primal role for political action. Beyond instinct, Nazism valued qualities such as “a close union with the spirit, with the emotions, with intuition, and a glorying in action and battle. Hitler himself regularly extolled the virtues of intuition” (Mackay-Rolfe, 1997, p.92). On his book, *Mein Kampf*, Hitler (1999) lets this concept show when he claims that “The impression made by such a success on the minds of the great masses of supporters as well as opponents can only be measured by those who know the soul of a people, not from books, but from life” (p.44). Such a value, of ‘knowing the soul of a people from life’, is what legitimated the notion of intuition and was passed along to the institutions and communicated to justify the concentration of power. “This was because the Nazi concept of intuition symbolized the arbitrary rights of the leader over the workings of any kind of due process. In other words, an intuitive leader would have no cause for elections or consultations” (Mackay-Rolfe, 1997, p.92)

A clarification here must be made. When the National Socialist regime communicated its values to the German people, they had a specific way of doing so. Usually, it focused each iteration on a single message in a very clear, easy-to-understand manner. “Despite the complicated structure of [Hitler’s] speeches, they were easy to follow, being designed primarily for emotional appeal. Thus, he could switch from subject to subject without losing his listeners because the bridge between topics was an appeal to some emotion” (Toland according to Mackay-Rolfe, 1997, p.94). In fact, Hitler saw clearly the importance of emotional speeches. “Particularly the broad masses of the

people can be moved only by the power of speech. And all great movements are popular movements, volcanic eruptions of human passions and emotional sentiments..." (Hitler, 1999, p.107). Not only communicating by stirring emotions, but Hitler's communication style also was based on repetition, and on uniting his enemies in a single category.

In general, the art of all truly great national leaders at all times consists among other things primarily in not dividing the attention of a people, but in concentrating it upon a single foe. The more unified the application of a people's will to fight, the greater will be the magnetic attraction of a movement and the mightier will be the impetus of the thrust. It belongs to the genius of a great leader to make even adversaries far removed from one another seem to belong to a single category, because in weak and uncertain characters the knowledge of having different enemies can only too readily lead to the beginning of doubt in their own right.

Once the wavering mass sees itself in a struggle against too many enemies, objectivity will put in an appearance, throwing open the question whether all others are really wrong and only their own people or their own movement are in the right. (Hitler, 1999, p.118)

Although Hitler's communication style was clear, and repetitive, ensuring that the masses would get the message, there was a care within the Nazi party with the ideological content and how it was communicated. As a mass movement, communication and contact with the German Volk were essential for the Nazis, but this contact was limited, as "it was neither essential nor even desirable that the masses should understand every nuance of Nazi ideology. It was enough that the leaders and men of intellect within the movement were aware" (Mackay-Rolfe, 1997, p.100). The symbolic orientation and creation of the Nazi party could not be found in a single person, like in Mussolini, but it had an elite group responsible for propagandizing it, shaping the Nazi symbols and using them to obtain mass obedience. In fact, the role propaganda played in gaining total control for the regime was such that, on the beginning of the studies about Nazism, "The corollary was that backing for the regime, apart from died-in-the-wool Nazi

fanatics, was chiefly a propaganda product. (...) The stress was laid upon a combination of repression and manipulation.” (Kershaw, 2009, p.33). However, the way political mass obedience was obtained superseded by an enormous amount any previous expectation, as it was able to get compliance from society as a whole, once future investigations showed that “The early generalization of a society repressed into submission had been replaced by a society of perpetrators willing to collaborate in the most inhumane policies ever known.” (Kershaw, 2009, p.35). It becomes clear that German society was completely controlled by a mix of the state propaganda and perverse *idée directrices* that expanded institutions into obtaining totalitarian social control. A single element of this dynamic could not explain the dynamism in Nazi Germany’s society. That the State was fully able to obtain civil obedience and place Nazi Germany as a power unit acting in History can only be explained by a mix of both, even on disputed narratives of whether society was in a consensus with the regime, or whether it was a victim of a totalitarian state’s propaganda machinery, there must be admitted traces of both elements to get an accurate frame of the Nazis political action.

that the regime was able until the middle of the war to unleash such dynamism and energy, invested in the pursuit of national ‘salvation’ is barely explicable without acknowledging the success in mobilizing society – or at least large sections of it – behind ‘visionary’ goals which entailed war and genocide. Consensus and coercion were inextricably entwined in the manufactured support for the regime’s ideological goals. (Kershaw, 2009, p.44).

The symbolic production of Nazi Germany was not focused by a single individual, as Mussolini did. There was a group that understood the myth and forged the symbols that could better convey them. This group was reportedly commanded by Goebbels, Hitler’s propaganda minister. The formation of Nazi symbols was not brought to life by Hitler’s speeches, as was in Fascist Italy with Mussolini, it was rather done with mastery by Goebbels and the propaganda department. Centralizing the symbolic production by, i.e., having an official state art, and availing certain symbols directly via a department

deeply embedded in the state machinery, allowed such symbols to have a stronger social role.

Like Mussolini, Hitler became a central figure to Nazi symbology, his role as the Führer, the leader of the movement, became central in the symbolic inventory of Nazism. Hitler was the Joachitic prophet and Messiah of the gnostic ideology of Nazism but, on the contrary of his ideological counterpart, he did not claim for himself the creative power of the State god. On his speeches, he would constantly refer to the National Socialist state, and would always place himself as the representative, neither the embodiment nor the State himself. However, his symbolic role was central to the Nazi symbolic repertoire, much by the work played out by the propaganda department. “Hitler symbolized everything for which National Socialism stood. He became a ‘living symbol’ in that he was perceived, not merely as a political leader, but also as a symbol of truth, future well-being and national inspiration” (Mackay-Rolfe, 1997, pp.100-101). This made the Nazi symbolic repertoire revolve around Hitler and, aligned to the principle of intuition, made him an even more central-autonomous figure of power, leading to the *Führerprinzip* – a juridical term that installed blind obedience to the superiors, in a chain that led all the way to the Führer himself. According to Pauley (1979), and Boutlas (2023), it was a principle that took on juridical-philosophical foundations and that was present not only in Germany, but on all countries that suffered Fascist influence. This was the principle which, later on the Aftermath of the Second World War, would create the argument of ‘Just following orders’, as exposed by Boutlas, (2023).

The Third Reich, just as the Third Rome, alluded to the Holy Roman Empire as the first Reich – kingdom – and to the German Empire under Wilhelm, the immediate period before the Weimar Republik, which symbolically eliminated the Republic from Nazi history, as it was “a time of stagnation and decadence. In comparison, the more distant Germanic past, it was claimed, had been a time of supremacy, purity, vigour and ‘naturalness” (Mackay-Rolfe, 1997, p.87). It was, as already shown, a matter of identity over everything else. Hitler refused to connect himself with a period of multi-party

parliamentarism and wanted to present Germany as a continuation of Empires. In Italy, it was a matter of restoring Italy's identity, whilst in Germany, it was about eliminating the parliamentary identity and forging a new one.

xvii. *The Dictator is Dead: Long Live the Empty Throne*

Agamben (2017), on his book *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, analyzes the figure of the empty throne. According to the scholar, there can be found in many cultures engravements and representations of an empty throne as representing kingdom power itself. This was no mere representation, but a symbolic embodiment of the State, regardless of the ruler.

The empty throne is what Agamben (2017) finds at the center of the state machine, covered by Glory. It is what the states surround with rituals and visible manifestations of state power. Glory, drawing on the lexical archeology of the term, can be conceived as *kabhd*, which can mean one of many things, depending on the context. It can mean the force of God – represented by the State –, praise (whether objective, belonging to God, or subjectively, given to God by men), presence, the full revelation, or as a blinding light. Glory, on the New Testament, becomes associated with the word *doxa*, becoming associated with the figure of the Trinity (Agamben, 2017).

Drawing on the definition, Agamben (2017) ends up on the concept of inoperativity, which is the main factor of Christian eschatology, which he associates with *hetoimasia tou throunou*, the empty throne. What he finds at the center, covered by Glory on the State is essentially this representation, drawn from ancient iconographies that were reflected in different cultures, like the Upanishads, the Mycenaean Greeks, the Medicean Italy, the Macedonian empire of Alexander the Great, installed by Eumenes, and on caesarian Rome. The culmination of this representation is to be found in Christianity, in paleo-Christian and Byzantine basilicas, where

the fifth-century mosaic on the arch of Saint Sixtus III in Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome shows an empty throne encrusted with multicolored stones, on which rests

a cushion and a cross; next to it one can make out a lion, an eagle, a winged human figure, some fragments of wings and a crown. In the church of San Prisco in Capua, another mosaic represents the empty throne, between a winged bull and an eagle, resting on which is a scroll fastened with seven seals. In the Byzantine Basilica of Santa Maria Assunta in Torcello, the *hetoimasia* in the mosaic of the Last Judgment shows a throne with a cross, a crown, and a sealed book, accompanied above it by seraphims with six wings and, on either side, by two large figures of angels. In Mystras, in the church of Saint Demetrius, a fresco of the thirteenth century exhibits an empty throne suspended from the air, draped in purple, and surrounded by six acclaiming angels; just above it, in a crystalline transparent rhombus, there is a book, an amphora, a snow-white bird, and a black bull.

(Agamben, 2017, p.593)

The Glory of the State is its manifestation, the symbols, who allow it to convey an image to the 'outer world'. The empty throne is meant to represent, when drawing analogies, "[more] the office and the *dignitas* of the sovereign than his person" (Agamben, 2017, p.593). When further investigating the archeology of the term in Christian doctrine, the meaning *hetoimasia* acquires is even deeper.

Looking at the meaning it acquires, Agamben (2017) reaches the concept of the readiness of the throne. "The throne is empty not only because glory, though coinciding with the divine essence is not identified with it, but also because it is in its innermost self-inoperativity and sabbatism. The void is the sovereign figure of glory" (p.594).

This is what is ultimately confined in State symbols. Those which represent State itself should embody the central void of the State, becoming it themselves. That is the reason why the scholar states that

The *oikonomia* of power places firmly at its heart, in the form of festival and glory, what appears to its eyes as the inoperativity of man and God, which cannot be looked at (...) Man has dedicated himself to production and labor

[*lavoro*], because in his essence he is completely devoid of work [*opera*], because he is the Sabbatical animal par excellence. And just as the machine of the theological *oikonomia* can function only if it writes within its core a doxological threshold in which economic trinity and immanent trinity are ceaselessly and liturgically (that is, politically) in motion, each passing into the other, so the governmental apparatus functions because it has captured in its empty center the inoperativity of the human essence. This inoperativity is the political substance of the Occident, the glorious nutrient of all power. For this reason festival and idleness return ceaselessly in the dreams and political utopias of the Occident and are equally incessantly shipwrecked there. They are the enigmatic relics that the economic-theological machine abandons on the water's edge of civilization and that each time men question anew, nostalgically and in vain. Nostalgically because they appear to contain something that belongs to the human essence, but in vain because really they are nothing but the waste products of the immaterial and glorious fuel burnt by the motor of the machine as it turns, and that cannot be stopped (Agamben, 2017, pp.594-595).

Here, a crucial element to transitional governments can be found, as ideological Gnostic governments bring forth an immanentized eschaton. This eschatological narrative would lead to a never-ending kingdom, where the people would be saved and perfected after finally getting rid of the 'original sin', or of the presence of the Evil – for the Nazi, embodied on the Jews or on the 'lesser races', for the Italian Fascists, the weaklings, the democrats, socialists, liberalists, or any group that stands between Italy and its former glory. Once salvation is to be achieved, the throne is no longer empty. The cult of personalities and embodiment of the State in the figure of the leader – here, Mussolini and Hitler – are themselves transformed into the 'empty throne', they are themselves transformed into the State's main symbol, in a way that the State cannot be conceived without their Gnostic leaders.

Once the State finally crumbles in an unquestionable manner, as did the Fascist and Nazi state, the figure of the leader must symbolically die with it. This can lead to important theoretical discussions not yet approached in the field of political symbolism. What to do with a tyrant after the crumbling of his state is something that still casts a long shadow on the field of political science, and political symbolism can shed the light on why a dictator's existence after the fall of its state can be seen as a threat, or even why the dictator is 'invoked' after his passing. The binding of the dictator's image to the conception of the State always leads to a systemic change after his death, unless the regime has a narrative of transition imbedded on its ideology. However, it is a recurring fact that dictators die – if not only symbolic through a ritual, also physically – shortly after their government's fall. A possible answer to it may lie in the degree of merging between the image of the State and its leader, once the Gnostic Messiah gives the state an existential reason, in a way the opposite direction might also be true, in which the leader cannot exist in a political repertoire different than that of the old regime, establishing thus that one cannot live without the other. This could provide some clarity from the political symbology field as to why central, strong authority symbols quickly come into existential danger once the State fails. Why "Mussolini's death had been decided from the moment he was captured, as its importance for the country's political future was abundantly clear." (Musiedlak, 2018, p.237), or why news of Hitler's suicide was the last blow on Nazi's resistance on the siege of Berlin.

Nevertheless, the symbolic coupling between such images may present itself as a challenge to the following transitional governments, as was the case after the death of Mussolini, when "the absence of a coherent and credible account of the conditions of the execution, instead of consigning the trauma to the past, had the effect of reactivating the Mussolini myth" (Musiedlak, 2018, p. 237). That is perhaps one of the strongest indicators of the symbolic need of the Gnostic Messiah's presence for the Gnostic state to come to life.

This theory should be taken as a warning to all transitional governments. In order to establish a lasting government, the Throne must be emptied once more on the transitional build-up of a country. The coupling between the image of the state and its founding fathers should not happen as not to symbolize the State with a persona, but rather keep the throne empty. Some cults of personality may be present, especially with regards to the heroic fighter figures against Nazism and Fascism, but it must not turn into a 'symbolic usurper of the empty throne'.

4. The Aftermath: The Transitional Governments and the Symbolic Shaping of Democratic Italy and Germany

VIII. The Italian Process and the Identity-split

The Italian transition towards democracy was a process full with sudden changes, difficult negotiations and competing influences. The transitional period was led by what is known as the CLN (Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale), or Committee of National Liberation in English. It was founded in Rome in September 9th, 1943 and was initially comprised of six parties: Democrazia Cristiana (DC), Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI), Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria (PSI), Partito d'Azione (PA), Democrazia del Lavoro (DL) and Partito Liberale (PL).

The political framework was confusing and the parties themselves had many different agendas, as can be easily imagined by their names. One thing united the parties on the National Committee: all of them were persecuted by the Fascists and were standing against it now. Besides, Italy was still a kingdom, with a king tied to the Risorgimento epoch, albeit the chief of state was Mussolini and the Fascist party.

At this moment, the Partigiani, guerrilla fighters who embodied the resistance against Mussolini and his men, specially in the north of Italy, were one of the main political actors with the greatest symbolic weight on Italian society. They were the group which "managed to create grassroots revolutionary governments in key areas of the North of

Italy and finally succeeded in seizing and killing Mussolini during the closing days of the war” (Cartabia, 2020, pp.86-87).

After the end of the war, in 1946 a referendum was passed in Italy which rejected the Monarchy and called for an Constituent Assembly to draft a new Constitution. The following periods would be of change of governments, but always maintaining the Republican orientation. The Republic of Italy faced in the first decades of its constitution – ratified in 1947, coming into force in 1948 – a very defining problem. According to Orsina (2010), the accession of the Socialist Party (PSI) into the governing majority between 1960-1964 marked a shift in culture in which anti-fascism “became far more prominent as a legitimizing principle of the Republic, reconnecting it to the promise of the Resistance years and the constitution-making process” (p.78). In this period, Italy moved away from the cold war behavior that took hold of most of Europe, making countries focus on anti-communism. This ‘new’ Italian priority “implied a more far-reaching rejection of the Italian tradition and its long-term ‘structural’ characteristics, considered to be at the roots of Mussolini’s regime and the ever-present threat of a revived authoritarianism” (Orsina, 2010, p.78).

The government also pushed for the consolidation of the parties-centered system, which started with the founding of the CLN in 1943. This way, “the party system became the ‘structure’ and anti-fascism became the ‘culture’ of the Republic.” (Orsina, 2010, p.78). On the Italian political system then, there would be along the anti-fascist culture for a very long time some central figures present, such as the lead role played by the Christian Democrats (DC) and the denying of access to power to Communists – mainly for the influence of the Cold War – maintaining a balance between anti-fascism and anti-communism, “which can account for one of the main defining features of the Italian political system, namely the conflictual/collaborative relationship between government and opposition.” (Orsina, 2010, p.78).

However, the apparent balance the Italian government had was seen to not be as solid as imagined, once the Berlin Wall fell. Without the constraint of the Cold War

and the 'avail' it gave to the anti-communist parties to corrupt themselves – once there was no acceptable alternative, the system started to shake and, in 92-93, there was a sweeping anti-corruption offensive through which the Italian people could show its distrust towards most parties and through a movement that, in name of 'anti-fascism' had silenced the political voice of a considerable part of population. Once this mistrust settled on the parties who shared power, the PCI gained momentum and, in order to avoid the Communist coming to government, the Italians found in Silvio Berlusconi, future founder of the party Forza Italia (FI), a solution (Orsina, 2010).

That started a new time in Italian politics which showed several underlying problems that, due to conjectural constraints, could not have emerged until then. On this new phase of Italian politics, the electorate "could vote for a party that was not only center-right and anti-communist in the field of political practice, but that proudly asserted its being center-right and anti-communist in the area of political culture as well" (Orsina, 2010, pp.79-80). A stark shift came when Berlusconi allied himself with the Italian Social Movement (MSI) to create later the National Alliance (AN). The MSI were the remanent of the Italian Fascism, identified as post-fascists, and it was not clear yet their true intentions or if their ideology had in fact changed to be reincorporated in politics.

Berlusconi marked an era on Italian politics that showed the underlying problems unresolved from fascism but that, even more, showed a lack of consensus on the basis *idée directrice* the Italian government should have. It is given; the constitution of 1948 has a very strong anti-fascist underpinning. Nevertheless, the lack of consensus shows itself in the form in which anti-fascism and symbolic values should take on.

On Berlusconi side of the political specter, was "the conviction that the weaknesses of the anti-fascist Republic were inherent in its underlying philosophy (...) and [that] the period of *centrismo*, these weaknesses were exacerbated by the progressive political culture that came to predominate in the 1960s" (Orsina, 2010, p.80). This view of Italy's political times considered that the CLN had taken advantage of the anti-fascist orientation and concentrated power, in a term that Berlusconi coined as

partitocrazia, referring to an even dictatorial manner of governing, in which they would label the opposition as fascist as to silence it. Berlusconi Italy saw a danger on this political praxis of giving grounds of legitimation to the PCI once power would be concentrated and the government would want to put in to force social transformations and would weaken the 'Western Front', putting Italy under the influence of socialists and leading to a once more totalitarian control of the state and the economy. (Orsina, 2010)

On the progressive side of Italian politics, the understanding was inverted. The progressive politicians argued that the new Constitution could not be put into question and that "anti-fascism, the Resistance and the constitution allegedly gave the country a 'common grammar' and anyone who rejected them would be 'self-de-legitimized' and thus excluded from the national democratic scene" (Orsina, 2010, p.80). Moreover, the progressivists would reportedly say that the constitution had an underlying progressive, anti-fascist promise, and that the government's shortcomings were due to conjectural factors of the Cold War and "to the constant work that conservative forces, in continuity with fascism, had supposedly carried out with the aim of preventing that promise being fulfilled" (Orsina, 2010, p.80). This invoking of a 'promise of the Republic' that should be progressivist and anti-fascist, allowed the progressive left to present itself symbolically as the embodiment of such spirit. Berlusconi, however, opened the Pandora box of the Republic of Parties, in which it was recognized that "the Italian political system in 1943-1948 did not work well. At the same time, they are of the opinion that history presented no real alternatives in the face of 'what really happened', so that Italy's postwar phase was thus in many ways the best of all possible postwar scenarios" (Orsina, 2010, p.82).

Italy saw itself on a quest to answer a fundamental question of identity. What was at stake was not a simple political rhetoric, but a discussion of the State's identity. Mussolini had supported it on the Roman identity, connecting it to the Caesar's epoch, placing himself at and as the Italian 'throne'. With the dissolution of the Fascist state, and later on of Italy's monarchy, the new born Italian republic had lost not only a dictatorship, but its link to the Risorgimento, the Italian narrative of unification that had installed a

central monarchy and a centralized government. It is only obvious that the group who had fought against such a centralized authoritative state – the partigiani – would push the state to a shift against it but, at the same time, would need to keep the fascist symbol alive on its opponents, once their identity had a very stark negative orientation. That is, they defined themselves in great measure as the anti-fascists, which in a certain measure leads to the question, if the fascists are gone, what are they? Even then, they could not escape completely of the authoritarian scheme, as political reality and the identity of the Italian state was somewhat forged on centralized power. From it an explanation for the *conventio ad excludendum* – which marked the consociationalist practice of politics to exclude determined parties of any effective power, namely, those who were labeled as fascists and the communists – can emerge and not be seen as an authoritarian mechanism of exclusion, as its foundational justification presented it as a mechanism to avoid the return of authoritarian forces in to power, ironically putting a exclusionary mechanism at the base of a pluri-party system.

The entry of Berlusconi's claim on Italian politics stirred the political framework and raised genuine concerns about the representativity of Italian parties. However, this questioning – be it by the way it was carried through, or by the alliances generated by it – was seen “as an attempt to question the value of anti-fascism, and thus to legitimize or de-legitimize this or that political side” (Orsina, 2010, p.84). This effort led an unrest on Italian politics, as one of the central symbols of the new Republic was put under the spotlight, that is, the progressive view of the anti-fascist fight. According to Orsina (2010), the unrest was caused mainly by such a check, secondarily, by the affiliation Mussolini orchestrated with the MSI. However, the entry of Berlusconi marked a new epoch in Italian politics in such a way that the period after him is known as the second republic, even when there was no constitution change. The case of Italy shows that after World War II there wasn't yet a consensus, or even a majority movement that could forge a new symbolic identity for the Italian people, which has lead to a dissension nationally. Now, the immediate context after WWII did not allow for such a dissension to emerge

structurally. The Communist threat of the Cold War has let the differences and the deep divide on Italian society hidden, which is why only after the fall of the USSR, in 1991, the communist ghost disappeared and the Italian system could not hold back its dividing crisis.

This divide, or contradiction, is not inherent only to the political practice of the Italian political parties, but could also be seen at the Italian constitution which imbedded different conflicting *idées directrices* on the Italian system. It was also a pattern of behavior anteceding the constitutional Assembly that refused to face the reality of the post-war period.

xviii. *The Italian constitution: The compromise that shaped a nation*

The Italian Constitution was a 'compromise constitution'. In fact, one can hardly say that, in the Italian experience, the new Constitution was the result of the constitutionalization of a unique revolutionary ideology. Firmly rejecting fascist ideology, the Constitution set the bases for future, undetermined developments (Cartabia, 2020, p.102).

The Italian constitution of 1948 would be a warning signal for the attentive eye, when looked at under the idea of *idées directrices*, that the form of exclusion of certain political views, or even a solely progressive political conception would not work. Established, as already mentioned, by the coalition that fought against fascism, in which the Partigiani played a central symbolic role, "the Italian Constitution is undeniably a <<never again>> constitution: one that rejects the previous regime" (Cartabia, 2020, p.85). Despite being a 'never again' constitution, ensuring the impediment of returning to the fascist times, the Italian constitution did not represent a clean-cut break from the national past. Rather, Cartabia (2020) resounds the argument of Orsina (2010), by stating that it "was rather the result of the convergence between different and even opposed political ideas about the new society. It was not an abrupt and radical makeover

of the country, but an incremental reconstruction of the legal political, economic system” (p.85)

The new Republic was, symbolically speaking, on a identity crisis. The suspension of time Fascism used to induce society into balancing the death of the Fatherland and, at the same time, its saving, was taken away when the Fascist state crumbled due to its own belligerent nature and alignment with Nazism. The Monarchy, present on its foundational myth, was also taken away by the 1946 referendum, and the new political elite, led by the partigiani, had a progressive vision of anti-fascism largely incompatible with the conservatism of Italian society. If the Italian change – from a fascist society to a progressive constitution – seemed a bit too sudden, it cannot be explained by a war trauma, that led a whole society to choose progressivism, but rather to a false representation, that has been reflected on its constitutional text, leading Cartabia (2020) to affirm that “...the Italian Constitution is undeniably a <<never again>> constitution: one that rejects the previous regime. Nevertheless, as to the future of the polity, the features of the new republic were, in a way, <<undecided>>” (p.88).

As defended by the Italian president of the Constitutional Court, the formulation of the constitution in 1948 had an incremental approach, not revolutionary. That means that it maintained some aspects of the previous monarchical-fascist constitution and state structure. The Italian Constitution could not be revolutionary, as there was not only one group who beat the Fascists, neither was there a consensus on getting away from the monarchic system in Italy. (Cartabia, 2020)

The first change with the constitution was to put in place a rigid, normative text to counteract as the former *Statuto Albertino*, a statute that fixated terms of law in a mainly jurisprudential manner, with flexible principles and a large margin of interpretation. The Constitution, more than being rigid, had “principles [which] went far beyond the basic ideas of the liberal state, which had left too much leeway to the maneuvers of the fascist regime” (Cartabia, 2020, p.92).

Such principles can be seen at the recognition of fundamental human rights, who are thus on inalienable from the individual, as they no longer emanate from the state. Certain liberal principles are also instituted, such as the Article 21 on freedom of speech, article 18 and 2 on freedom of association and freedom of other intermediate bodies, in which the political parties and trade unions, articles 49 and 39, respectively. The principle of one-party was abolished and the multi-party system was constitutionally instituted. Articles 5 and 114 established the return practice of self-government in the Italian regions, in which “five Regions [were] endowed with autonomy at the legislative, administrative, and financial levels, and another fifteen with ordinary autonomy” (Cartabia, 2020, pp.92-93). In visage of ending a possible concentration of power, Article 70 returned Parliament to a central position on the legislative function, vesting chambers with such power in Article 72. It additionally regulated the normative power of the Government on Articles 76 and 77, centering power in a relation between Parliament and Government on Article 94, effectively putting in place a checks-and-balances system. (Cartabia, 2020)

However, the Constitution also had a good deal of continuity with the old regime as well. “Whereas the King was ousted, and a new Constitution replaced the old ‘Statute’, the underlying legal system was wholly transplanted from the fascist state into the Republic.” (Cartabia, 2020, p. 94). The Italian Republic kept the Criminal code of 1930 and the Civil Code of 1942, just as the procedural codes, administrative laws, military legislation, law on public order and the law on judiciary. In a way, “the sub-constitutional legal framework of the new republic was imbued with fascist culture. (...) The Republic was reconstructed within the legal framework of the fascist state.” (Cartabia, 2020, p.94). What the Constitutional Court and the legislative powers of the Italian Republic did was to change by incrementing, to adapt the existing code and keep some principles of the fascist state, with its underlying logic, whilst adapting them to fit a Constitutional Republic’s *idée directrice*. (Cartabia, 2020)

The very own judicial body was still the same as the Fascist state, and the attempt at purging them of the State – called epuration in Italy – was not successful when it came to the large majority of fascist bureaucrats, once “the epuration machinery produced a massive number of files, but resulted in very few convictions. Long after the entry into force of the new Constitution, the top-level agents of the public administration were still people trained and educated under fascism.” (Cartabia, 2020, pp.95-96).

The decision for an incremental, or evolutionary, approach was made also for the lack of a revolution that ended fascism, or even for the association the word ‘revolution carried with the Fascist government of Mussolini. De Gasperi, founder of the DC party, managed to leave this principle clear in his intervention on March 18th 1948, which he remembered before the 1st national congress of the Christian Democrats in Rome, from April 24-28th 1946.

I don't fear the word revolution, but I am rather annoyed by it after twenty years that fascism, invoking the rights of revolution, has committed so many abuses of power and violated the rights of citizens. In any case, the real revolution is the Constituent Assembly. (...) The Christian Democrats are for the democratic solution, because they know that the people want freedom, that is, they want to be masters in their own homes, which can be guaranteed to them peacefully through the Constituent Assembly, where renewal must take place by the internal force of self-discipline and self-government.

This, O my friends, is to remind you that the word Constituent did not come later, but was born in the conflict of that time and was born above all as a democratic tendency against velleities of an insurrectional character that I do not know personally whose they were, but they presented themselves as socialist. [Non temo la parola rivoluzione, ma ne ho piuttosto fastidio dopo venti anni che il fascismo, richiamandosi ai diritti della rivoluzione, ha commesso tante soperchierie e violato i diritti dei cittadini. A ogni modo la vera rivoluzione è la Costituente. (...) I democratici cristiani sono per la soluzione democratica, perché

sanno che il popolo vuole la libertà cioè vuol essere padrone in casa sua, ciò che gli può venir garantito in via pacifica con la Costituente, ove il rinnovamento deve avvenire per la forza interna di autodisciplina e di autogoverno.

Questo, o amici miei, per ricordarvi che la parola Costituente non è venuta più tardi, ma è nata nel conflitto d'allora ed è nata soprattutto come tendenza democratica contro velleità di carattere insurrezionale che non so personalmente di chi fossero, ma si presentavano come socialiste] (De Gasperi, 1946a, pp.5-6).

xix. The Italian Practices of War and the Fascist Scapegoat

Compromise was not only a driving-force for the Constitution but can be seen in the general praxis of the Italian government after the second World War and the fall of the fascist regime. Already before the 1946 referendum, through which Italy decided to no longer be a monarchy, the historical context was not easy to navigate through: The Fascist state crumbled, victim to its own belligerent ideology, Mussolini got killed in an extrajudicial decision, with confusing reports that shrouded the event and himself with a mystery that fueled myths and the new transitional governments. The coalition of the Committee of National Liberation (CNL) comprised of Christian Democrats, Communists, Socialists, Action Party, Liberal Party, and Labor Democrats, went through varying formations through the transitional governments until the drafting of the new constitution which came into effect in 1948.

Even before the end of World War II, Italians had to face a horrifying reality, as the fascist states' loss became clearer by the day. On 28 January 1944, senator Croce gave a speech in which he "expressed his 'horror' that the soldiers 'of the land of Mazzini and Garibaldi' were being called on to 'imitate, against all custom and the Italian temperament, German practices in the lands of Yugoslavia'" (Focardi & Klinkhammer, 2004, pp.330-331). Senator Croce is the same mentioned earlier who was a liberal historian and clashed with the Fascist conception of history at the beginning of Mussolini's government. On his speech, as a veteran senator that has very good care of

his rhetoric, it is possible to see how compromise was set as a central value as to conserve Italy's identity, saving the nation and its symbols. Benedetto Croce chose to still reference the Italian soldiers as men of the land of Mazzini and Garibaldi, in a clear reference still to the Risorgimento but instituting a symbolic break.

There were too many questions that could not be left unanswered. On the verge of the end of war, Mussolini was destituted, his war-policies discredited, and Italy was confronted from that moment onwards with the consequences of such an historical moment. When deciding on the political fate of its still young country, the Italian political elite did all it could to not have a complete break in its country and used the horrors of the war to place Fascism as a scapegoat. In this way, Italy could survive by breaking off with Fascism, adding to the political momentum and preserving national symbols. It was through compromise, that with time came to be accepted through all the political elite, that Italy managed to overcome Fascism institutionally as if it were a simple political moment in the country's history, and tried to expiate symbolically all evil associated with it.

At the beginning of the coming to terms with Italian action of the Second World War, there were reports of the bestiality generally employed by Italians, fascists and royal army alike. Newspapers, mainly associated with Italian-left, denounced publicly "Italian oppression, marked by the pillaging and destruction of villages, the torture, shooting and hanging of hostages, and deportations of populations. A 'bestial policy' carried out not only by 'fascist murderers' but also by soldiers of the royal army" (Focardi & Klinkhammer, 2004, p.331).

Despite the initial revolt and association of Italians in general on regards to Human Rights violations and War Crimes, a general alignment did not take long, and Italy started to claim the right of judging war criminals, be they fascist, officers, or military personnel of any rank. Italy claimed this right even when it violated the terms of long armistice – agreement made in 1943 that marked the turn of Italy on WWII, entering the Allied forces – in which it stated that Italy should deliver war criminals, including

Mussolini, to be judged by the Allied forces. Despite the agreed on the armistice, all the anti-fascist forces soon united around this claim and government officials and high-level-bureaucrats soon started resonating the idea around international forums, that Italy should have the right to judge said criminals to the full extent of the law. (Focardi & Klinkhammer, 2004)

Indeed, there was a push for judging the Italian War Criminals, specially for their acting in former Yugoslavia. This push was driven mainly by the leftist parties, and their associated press, such as *L'Unita*, *Ricostruzione* and *Italia Libera*, which urged for the condemnation of Italian generals responsible for atrocities beyond Italian borders, preferably in cooperation with the affected countries. The resistance against a generalized judgement of fascists and royal army soldiers came mainly from the monarchists, represented by the paper *Italia Nuova*. Its communication strategy was to rely on the Fascist scapegoat, putting the blame on the Fascists, the Germans or simply by deflecting, as when General Mario Roatta, a fascist commander was arrested in Rome and the paper "came to defence of the general and the armed forces, underlining the great 'humanitarian sense' of Italian generals and claiming the right to protect national 'honour' towards foreign countries little disposed to distinguish between the Italian people and fascism" (Focardi & Klinkhammer, 2004, p.332).

The initial push of the left-wing parties was then fended off by the moderate anti-fascist parties, the monarchists and military. Reportedly, the British government was also lending support to the nationalist cause, at least at first, by association to the monarchist movement. The British indeed did not have much faith on the anti-fascists as a political movement. In 1942, before the turning of Italy and the Armistice, "a note from the Foreign Office to the State Department said that, at that moment, there was no leader in Italy able to oppose fascism, nor was there any person abroad who could take up that task" (Cartabia, 2020, p.98).

The resistance to meet Italian officials was then extended to all Italians, fascists or not, and the Italian Republic became dad-set on not allowing any external judgement.

When, in 1944, Yugoslavia was preparing lists to prosecute Italian soldiers, “secretary general Prunas emphasized the ‘necessity to promote the collection of lists and documentation on the tortures carried out by the Yugoslavs against civilian and military Italians” (Focardi & Klinkhammer, 2004, p. 333).

Facing the threat of external judgement, pushed by the Allies and third countries such Yugoslavia or Morocco, Italy formed a united front, with left and right-wing parties. This defense was done by constructing the symbol of ‘the good Italian’. It hinged upon a comparison with the brutal Nazi soldier, a right of national sovereignty, and a refusal of falling prey to a ‘victor’s justice’ on Draconian terms. “This united front was marked by internal oppositions, however: while the socialists, republicans and actionists intended to punish those responsible for war crimes, the conservative forces aimed to secure them complete impunity” (Focardi & Klinkhammer, 2004, p. 335).

However, when Yugoslavia occupies the region of Trieste and part of Venezia Giulia in 1945, the Italian position to a sovereign right of judging its own was reinforced once “The fragility of the international position of Italy and the impending dangers appeared evident to all. This the priority became the need to keep the country from being harshly punished by the victors” (Focardi & Klinkhammer, 2004, p.335).

The impending threat of suffering from a supposed victor’s justice led fiercely to this construction of a symbolic scapegoat, attributing blame to Germany and Mussolini, separating Fascism and the Axis alliance of Italian identity, treating both of them as political moments, already overcome by the Italians of that time – a couple of years later.

The image of the ‘bad German’, a fanatical warrior capable of every abomination, was contrasted to that of the ‘good Italian’, who was poorly equipped, catapulted against his will into a disastrous war, who, as a soldier, sympathized with the peoples of the invaded countries, helped them against hunger and misery by sharing with them the little he had and, above all, protected them from the abuses and violences of his German comrades in arms, thus saving many lives, as was

the case of the thousands of Jews pulled from the clutches of the German exterminators (Focardi & Klinkhammer, 2004, p.336).

The Italian government not only reinforced such reports, but has actively tried to erase the image of the Italian fascists committing war crimes, even by the partigiani, in regions such as Yugoslavia. On this matter, all parties united themselves and effectively began re-writing history, in a tale that the Italian soldiers became 'disgusted' by the behavior of German soldiers, even turning to fight against them, after the armistice. It portrayed Italian turn from the Axis as a centrally moral behavior, not led by necessity neither by military-political considerations. (Focardi & Klinkhammer, 2004)

On the post-war, this image was transmitted at full force also internationally, of what the speech of De Gasperi at the Paris Peace Conference can clearly be an example:

But in truth, more than the text of the treaty, we are concerned about the spirit(...) Now there is no doubt that the overthrow of the Fascist regime was possible only as a result of military events, but the upheaval would not have been so profound, had it not been preceded by the long conspiracy of patriots who at home and abroad acted at the cost of immense sacrifices, without the intervention of political strikes in northern industries, without the skillful clandestine action of the men of the anti-Fascist parliamentary opposition (and here is one of its most active representatives) who pushed for the coup. Recall that the Potsdam Communiqué of August 2, 1945 proclaimed, "Italy was the first of the Axis Powers to break with Germany, to whose defeat it made a substantial contribution and has now joined the Allies in the war against Japan."

"Italy has liberated itself from the fascist regime and is making good progress toward the reestablishment of a democratic government and institutions."

Such was the Potsdam recognition. What has happened so that in the preamble of the treaty the Italian people who were protagonists are now made to disappear from the historical scene? Perhaps that a government freely appointed by the

people, through the Constituent Assembly of the Republic, deserves less consideration on the democratic ground? [Ma in verità più che il testo del trattato, ci preoccupa lo spirito(...). Ora non v'ha dubbio che il rovesciamento del regime fascista non fu possibile che in seguito agli avvenimenti militari, ma il rivolgimento non sarebbe stato così profondo, se non fosse stato preceduto dalla lunga cospirazione dei patrioti che in Patria e fuori agirono a prezzo di immensi sacrifici, senza l'intervento degli scioperi politici nelle industrie del nord, senza l'abile azione clandestina degli uomini dell'opposizione parlamentare antifascista (ed è qui presente uno dei suoi più fattivi rappresentanti) che spinsero al colpo di stato. Rammentate che il comunicato di Potsdam del 2 agosto 1945 proclama: «l'Italia fu la prima delle Potenze dell'Asse a rompere con la Germania, alla cui sconfitta essa diede un sostanziale contributo ed ora si è aggiunta agli Alleati nella guerra contro il Giappone».

«L'Italia ha liberato se stessa dal regime fascista e sta facendo buoni progressi verso il ristabilimento di un Governo e istituzioni democratiche».

Tale era il riconoscimento di Potsdam. Che cosa è avvenuto perché nel preambolo del trattato si faccia ora sparire dalla scena storica il popolo italiano che fu protagonista? Forse che un governo designato liberamente dal popolo, attraverso l'Assemblea Costituente della Repubblica, merita meno considerazione sul terreno democratico? (De Gasperi, 1946b, p.1)

Besides re-telling the Italian war experience as a sort of moral epiphany, which allowed an entire nation to find itself again, Italians also focused on the crimes committed by the Allies as means of exculpate themselves, strengthening the perception that a victor's justice was the leading motivation for judging Italians, not their actual war crimes. Italy started employing thereon a strategy of accusing its accusers, singling out, as an example, the behavior of "English and French in the camps in North Africa and India (...). Derided, beaten, left to die of hunger and disease: this was the destiny of many soldiers

who were treated with malevolence and in violation of every international regulation” (Focardi & Klinkhammer, 2004, pp.340-341).

xx. *Italians: The ‘good’ Europeans*

The Italian transitional period and coming to the Italian Republic was a strong but decisive moment in History. Trying to save the national identity and conciliating the Republic’s most immediate past was a task that demanded high political capacity of the Italian elite.

Despite denying place to the fascist and communists in the Republic and putting in place constitutional Articles that would ensure it, Italy has never been through an ‘Italian Nurenberg’ as the Germans did. It never faced an international court of justice that made the country come to terms with its fascist past by the force of law. Instead, Italian politicians forged a symbolic image that broke off with its fascist identity, setting Mussolini and Nazi-Germany as exculpatory sacrifices, presenting themselves as a good, but misled nation, victim of a sanguinary deceptive ideology. There was no emphasis by the Allies for purging the formal institutions, as will be shortly demonstrated as a genuine and generalized preoccupation in post-war Germany. The Armistice of 1943 and the turning of Italy to the Allied forces allowed Italian politicians a momentum to protect the country against external prying.

The political forces, even when managing to expulse fascism-tainted monarchism, compromised on the build-up of the Republic’s Constitution once, as show by Orsina (2010) and Cartabia (2020), the referendum against monarchy won by a very slim margin, marking the political devise between north and south and, the anti-fascist *communitas* were not able to form a consensus on what anti-fascism meant. The *partigiani* were too concentrated on the north of Italy, and the other parties mistook the elections as an opposition to communism with unequivocal approval from the Italian people. The attempts of governing Italy away from such compromise, set as a principle, or *idée directrice* of the Constitution only lasted as long as the external pressure saw in

the Communist threat. Once the USSR dissolved, so did the practice of governing without the first compromise to Italian conservatism. Italy was founded on the political symbolism of continuity. It maintained the Italian tradition of the Risorgimento, its flags and its state structure. The change and break with fascism were made organically, through compromise that kept fascist structure and personnel, but installed a new *idée directrice*, guided by an anti-fascist constitution and, mostly, by a sense of preservation of the Italian identity and nation. The new Republic, the motherland, had to be preserved and maintained alive, even if that meant casting away the old, idolized leader, Mussolini, alongside with Italy's former ally, nazi-Germans, as scapegoats.

IX. Germany and the coming to terms with the past

Germany's case of transition was more complicated than Italy's, to say the least. Transitional Germany was a landmark in many respects, but it laid out the foundations to what was coined as '*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*', in English, 'coming to terms with the past'. The German case is specially complicated once, as explained before, Nazism was an ideology that installed a myth about blood and territory. This new myth unlocked a new law in world politics, implementing ethnic extermination as a state policy and engulfed the World in a violent war, in which technological progress was unsurmountable and was being used to kill.

After World-War-II, it is understandable that the German problem was a more than delicate problem. The international community, or more specifically, the Allies, wanted to avoid the possibility of a third World from ever occurring, and there was a lot of external meddling in German politics. The German restoration would start a process that significantly changes not only European history, creating the European Union, but also the entire World Politics. The first question was justice, the Nuremberg trials were set into place and the horrors of Nazism and its concentration camps were brought forth. Inside Germany, there were two urgent subjects: Denazification and the German fundament, that would allow for the coming of a new symbolism and political orientation.

xxi. Denazification: The four approaches

The first topic approached by all four occupying allies – British, French, Americans and Soviets – was to try and ensure that Nazism would cease to affect Germany's public institutions. To this end, processes called Denazification were implemented in order to, as the word indicates, get rid of Nazism. "Denazification was a purge of the German government, economy, and society conducted by the occupation powers. The need for such a purge seemed self-evident at the time, (...) for reconstruction and insurance that Germany would never again threaten the peace" (Vogt, 2000, p.2).

The occupying powers had different approaches, mostly depending on how they understood Nazism itself and how their own political conformity affected their political practices. Nevertheless, each of them tried a different version of Denazification with varying results. What they had in common, besides the end goal was that in every territory, "Denazification, broadly defined as a program designed to purge Germany of Nazi influences, proved impossible to achieve" (Vogt, 2000, p.2)

"The Allies eventually settled on an approach that contained both negative and positive features. The negative aspect, in the sense in which the term is used here, was a purge. On the positive side, there was a hope that denazification could transform German hearts and minds in order to ensure that Nazism would never reappear. Thus, the solution to the 'German problem' was seen as both punishing those deemed responsible for the war and the crimes of the Third Reich and eradicating what were seen as the wellsprings of this criminal behavior: the influence of antidemocratic elites, xenophobia, aggressive nationalism, militarism, and the peculiar German attribute of slavish obedience to authority." (Vogt, 2020, pp.4-5)

The Allied grasp on Nazism behind the formulation of such policies was one in which it was mainly seen as one more political ideology as a cosmivision, just another way of understanding the word, however destructive it was. Even though the program

envisaged attacking Nazism both on the pragmatic as well as on 'hearts and minds', the understanding given to what was precisely affecting German 'hearts and minds' was at the very best shallow. It was seen almost as a pedagogic method. Thenceforth, the Allies employed similar methods all around. There were denazification commissions subordinated to the Allies and staffed by German citizens, extensive questionnaires were filled out by the attendees of such commissions, decisions were based on the extent of the involvement with the Nazi party, and punishments were seen as fiduciary. (Vogt, 2020)

The general method employed was one and the same. However, the intentions behind each of them were different, based on the interaction of each national understanding of the 'German problem'. Even when "in general terms, all were agreed that there were deep-rooted elements in the German national character which led to the virulent form of National Socialism that appeared in Germany." (Vogt, 2020, p.6)

The French, for one, had a more apprehensive reasoning behind it, wanting to ensure the crippling of Germany's "future war-making potential. (...) denazification would serve this goal by combining a purge of individuals with a 'reeducation' program designed to wean the Germans from Nazism and simultaneously instill in them a sympathy for France and French culture" (Vogt, 2020, p.6). Being one of the most affected countries on Europe's contemporary history since the war of 1870, the French saw Prussianism as the main problem that led Germans belligerent character and tried to present Germans with a 'other Germany', which was democratic and pacific, whose underlying values would be "what they saw as the Germans' remarkable capacity for hard work and their shared conception of duty." (Vogt, 2000, p.6).

The British had no ambitious far-reaching plan of purging but focused more on 'the hearts and minds'. As they agreed with French, Prussianism was seen as the root of Nazism. In this way, "British reeducation has been summed up as a 'combination of high idealism, arrogant colonialism, and pragmatic improvisation', which failed to 'lead to a coherent and carefully coordinated program of implementation and fizzled out as it

deserved to". (Vogt, 2000, p.7). The lack of committing to approach the Nazi problem with a purge of Nazi officials meant, additionally, that on British-occupied zones such individuals were able to go without judgement.

The Americans, however, decided on a very ambitious plan of a thorough purge and substantial reeducation that envisaged eliminating the roots of Nazism. However, such an ambitious plan led to troubles on its implementation, in a way that "U.S. denazification was roundly criticized (...) as an overly complex and unwieldy bureaucratic quagmire in which millions of individuals were forced to complete denazification questionnaires while in the end only a relative few were ever brought to justice" (Vogt, 2020, p.8)

The Soviets, having the most differentiated structure of all occupying powers, also understood the problem completely differently as the others. Their goal never was reeducation, but neither symbolic transformation. The Soviets sought to awaken the class consciousness of Germany's working class as a means to awaken the socialist revolution. The concept held of democracy in this scenario was completely different, as a socialist democracy.

The result was an ideological quandary that crippled the foundation of a clear-cut denazification program. On the one hand, historical materialism showed that there were deeply rooted systemic features in Germany that had developed over generations, and that were not amenable to short term solutions. On the other hand, Leninist tactics called for swift action (...) The Soviet denazification program was ultimately abandoned for the same reasons as the western programs. The primary causes were an inability to turn ideological assumptions into workable program, and increasing reliance on German-staffed denazification commissions whose decisions cannot be controlled by the policymakers, a ballooning bureaucratic operation that quickly reached unmanageable proportions, and the intractable contradiction between the purge and reconstruction (Vogt, 2000, p.9).

In general, Denazification programs fell terribly short of their goals of getting rid of the former Nazi-officials and of changing the 'hearts and minds' of Germans. There was some degree of success that can be attributed to the French and American processes, in the extent that West Germany post-occupation developed certain sympathies toward France and the USA, but there are many historical factors that could explain such sympathies also, ranging from geopolitical consideration to material necessity.

The historiographical literature for a long time considered the purges and denazification processes to be utterly flawed, as they did not manage to identify and punish the majority of those involved in National Socialist's party to control and implement the Holocaust. However, that changed when the historian Lutz Niethammer changed the focus of analysis. His argument was that the purges, especially by the western Allies, were not intended the way orthodox literature claimed, but rather to make "the purge of personnel a surrogate for antifascist reform in the service of a political and economic restructuring of West Germany." (Vogt, 2000, p.13). The idea then was to prepare Germany for structural changes that "would lead to the ideological incorporation of the Germans into the Cold War" (Vogt, 2000, p.13).

xxii. The Holocaust, Germany's Vergangenheitsbewältigung and the founding of a new identity.

Germany presents a very specific and tenuous challenge to a political symbolism analysis precisely because of Holocaust's significance. The terrors unfolded by the mythical gnostic ideology of National Socialism were unprecedented. There was no point before in history where politics and propaganda were instrumentalized in such a manner that – although it will forever be impossible to say that the vast majority of the population was completely in line with Hitler's policy, as shown by Kershaw (2009) – undoubtedly allowed a party to act politically as an unit to exterminate millions of people based on a myth on blood purity.

The Holocaust presented such a challenge in every direction, that new terms had to come into being, new analysis and new forms of representation. Germany was utterly defeated in 1945, not only militarily, but also morally, there was no denying the fact, no getting out of the situation unharmed. The path to nation-building and to the amassing of a political symbolic repertoire was a strenuous, arduous one that needed to generate symbols to act as a power unity in history, but had no authority, be it internally or internationally, to do so. This was called the *Stunde null* – hour zero.

“The term ‘Stunde Null’ evokes the need for a new beginning, a moral and political break with disastrous and ultimately criminal national traditions.” (Herf, 1993, p.21). While the Italian path to getting rid of fascism went through a continuity of sorts – heavily because they had National Socialism as a ‘scapegoat’ – the German path could never be one of continuity but had forcibly so to represent a clean break. As denazification policies were not very successful in removing from institutions those involved with the Nazi party, no political figure from the post-war period was unscathed of being affected by it. The first movements, specially on the first transitional periods, were of what Herf (1993) coined “*multiple restorations*”. In their search for political symbols, and authority sources, Germany’s political elite sought exactly in the period Hitler tried to eliminate from history, the Weimar Republic and long-standing German traditions. Albeit Germany was fractured and divided into four parts between the occupying Allies – USSR, USA, France and Great Britain – “From the very beginning, there were German histories that rested on the return of intact and surviving German political traditions (...) of other continuities and lost causes of German history to the center stage of postwar political culture” (p.23).

The opposition the Nazis could not eliminate was eager to reintroduce to the German framework the traditions that were almost suppressed, “the leaders of Weimar’s non- and anti-Nazi parties were alive and vigorous in 1945. (...) They experienced Nazism, World War II and the Holocaust in their mature, not their young and formative years” (Herf, 1993, p.26). The main political figures of German transition were essential

part to this opposition, such as Adenauer, Schumacher, Heuss, Ulbricht, Grotewohl and Pieck. The political elite of both Eastern and Western Germanies came from such an opposition. These very own leaders started attacking Nazism and its consequences, whilst admitting the complicity of the German people to its actions.

The first impulse in such direction can be seen in a letter wrote by Kurt Schumacher to the Hanover Social Democratic party. Being arrested and persecuted by the Nazi party himself, Schumacher stood against its ideology and consequences, identifying the Nazis and their supporters as brutal, cruel, imperialist and intellectually limited (Herf, 1993). Speaking as a self-nominated socialist, Schumacher assigned the blame specially to German imperialism and the productive classes, which he so fondly called servants of entrepreneurs – *Unternehmensknechte*. On his view, however, there was no possibility to assign guilt to all Germans, collectively. “In the chorus of voices speaking of ‘the guilt of the German people’, he discerned earlier advocates of force and militarism.” (Herf, 1993, p.31). Schumacher used the us-them distinction placing those politically-persecuted by the Nazis at one side, and the ‘rest’ of German society on the other, which, according to him, were complicit, or hidden advocates. “His major preoccupations concerned the collapse of Weimar democracy, and the avoidance of another German dictatorship. While appalled by the murder of the Jews, the Holocaust was not at the center of his initial indictment” (Herf, 1993, p.32). Schumacher was a traditionalist and a conservator, he pushed for a democratic socialist agenda on West Germany but had no symbol that united Germans as a whole.

The second restoration signaled by Herf (1993) was on Eastern-Germany, with Walter Ulbricht. As communists, and with obvious ties to the Soviet Union, eastern Germany’s political elite shared the Soviets view of Nazis, as motivated by the central lenses of Marxism, class struggle. Ulbricht defended that Nazism was implemented by imperialists, leaders of big banks, and the economic elites. Nevertheless, there was a strong moral component in Ulbricht and in the *Demokratische Deutsche Republik* – Democratic German Republic, or DDR. The narrative pushed by this elite was that the

belligerent character of Prussianism was pushed to its limits by economic interests and, within Hitler's crimes, the betrayal on the USSR was one of the biggest. The Soviets would've always had German's workers' interest at heart. The language Ulbricht used was also very dividing language but, unlike Schumacher, he did insist "the German people bore an 'important part of the shared guilt [Mitschuld] and shared responsibility [Mitverantwortung] for the war and its consequences. It is not only Hitler who is guilty for the crimes committed against humanity!" (Herf, 1993, p.34). Despite admitting a bigger share of guilt than Schumacher, the symbols employed by his party (the Sozialistische Einheitspartei, or Socialist Unity Party) were still very divisive, and painted German society with very macabre colors in a way that, if not active supporters and advocates of Hitler's regime, they would be at least complicit, cowardly watching from the shadows of their personal safety. Ulbricht still painted the Soviets as the returning heroes, once persecuted by Hitler for advocating the truth about Hitler's and Nazism's true character. Despite admitting a certain share of guilt to the Communists, the *mea culpa* presented by Ulbricht was half-hearted at best, presenting their fault as that they could not present a united front against Nazism. He would not single out Holocaust as a singular event, neither would mention the Jews as a singular group, more persecuted than others. The myth of blood and soil – Blut und Boden – was never present in his accusations against Nazism if not in the background. His party was the one of socialist unity, and for that his re-telling of history focused on political persecution, not based on blood. "He presented the Soviet Union, not the Jews, as the primary victim of Hitler-fascism, and as the primary source of deliverance from the Nazi yoke as well" (Herf, 1933, p.38)

With Adenauer, Cologne's mayor at the end of the War, German conservative would emerge. He would become the first prime minister after the approval of Germany's Basic Law – Grundgesetz – which became effectively the current German constitution. Adenauer made significant changes to Germany's political framework, changes that reverberate to the current days.

Adenauer believed the Nazi era to have been a pagan and atheistic celebration of secular idols to which the antidote was to be a return to Christianity and the West. For Adenauer, Christianity and the 'West' were unambiguously positive traditions. In numerous speeches in the postwar years, Adenauer insisted that only a renewal of Christianity in Germany could overcome the moral disaster left by National Socialism. In stressing with renewed vigor long-held religious convictions, he wanted to break with an era he viewed as dominated by Marxist – and in the early speeches also capitalist – materialism. (Herf, 1993, p.43)

In Adenauer, post-war Germany found a uniting figure. He advocated on religious terms, that Germany could only fight off the materialistic anti-religious attacks of Socialists and Social Democrats with a Christian Democratic Union. The party that carries this name, when united with another, the Christian Social Union, are the main conservative political force up to this day and managed to forge one of the strongest ruling coalitions of German democratic regime.

Adenauer saw clearer, and communicated so, that the Nazi problem was one of race, of blood. It was given, his framing of the problem was on religious terms, and he would not question antisemitic traces on his ideology, neither on Weimar Republic, but he offered the German people a narrative that acknowledged the horrible immediate past, but also a perspective of future. "He looked toward a decentralized, Western and Europe-oriented Germany, reconciled with France, that placed its militarist, authoritarian, de-Christianizing traditions behind it" (Herf, 1993, p.46).

Adenauer started as the most fore-fronted contender of Germany's political dispute on the grounds of legitimacy for the post-war period. Germany's Left and Right were in a dispute not yet centered on the memory of the Holocaust, neither on whether the past must be suppressed or not, but on which traditions pre-1933 should be restored and employed for the post-war in Germany. Adenauer's contribution brought forth great contributions for Germany's foreign policy. A West-aligned Germany would allow the

advantages and favorable circumstances for the economic miracle that would later help to structure German identity.

One last political figure was responsible for the last key element that would help forge the new German identity in a long, strenuous process. This figure is the one of Theodor Heuss, who would become the first president of the Federal Republic of Germany. Journalist, arduous liberalist and professor of politics during the Weimar Republic, Heuss was a member of the DDP – German Democratic Party – and was a proponent scholar at the time Nazism was rising. One deed that would mark his political life up until the post-war period, he was part of the DDP's delegation that voted in favor of the Enabling Act, properly and effectively helping to install Hitler as Führer and fully powered Kanzler. (Herf, 1993)

Maybe for the guilt he carried of contributing to such a decision, or because of his own core values, Heuss was a strong advocate for the suffering the National Socialist movement inferred. His speeches were centered on remembrance, preserving the memory of what happened and announcing it to the external world, who still could not see as clear as the own German people. Heuss saw as a German duty to not forget the horrors of National Socialism.

Moreover, Heuss saw on the resistance of the victims of concentration camps the German spirit and the 'other Germany' the Allies tried so hard and so wrongly to present as an alternative. It was on the remembrance of the victims that Germany could find once more a noble identity.

Heuss remembered several of his friends who had been murdered. Yet, he continued, it was not these individuals but the 'nameless' victims who impelled the postwar Germans to the duty 'to make good and make up for the suffering. insofar as it is possible for that to be done, of a people so deeply hurt'. (...) Contrary to their intentions, the National Socialists brought those they persecuted together in the camps where Communists and religious prisoners, pacifists and military officers, freethinkers and Catholics, Social Democrats and ennobled

landowners learned to respect one another as human beings, despite their differences. The Nazis killed many of them. 'With their deaths they may have accomplished a political purpose that extended beyond Germany, by making visible the other Germany (*das andere Deutschland*) with the evidence of their own blood.' Heuss concluded with the starkest and most moving appeal to the powers of memory of the first months of the postwar era" (Herf, 1993, pp.49-50).

Heuss kickstarted a discourse that was centered not on a future, but that confronted with no hesitation, no rush, and with all the sympathy, the victims of the indescribable. As the first president of Germany, Heuss' posture would help shape German institutions and would guide Germany in its finding of a new source of authority.

xxiii. The German Redemption: An Identity and Authority

Germany counted with important references of restoration that brought back German traditions unencumbered by Nazism. These traditions mainly pointed toward a future by putting forth different foundations, anchored in socialism, communism, liberalism, or religious conservatism. On Eastern Germany, Socialism and Communism would rule until the fall of the USSR and the fall of the Berlin Wall. On western Germany, CDU und CSU dominated politics until 2021, with brief periods of interruptions by the Red-Green coalition, of the Social Democratic Party with the Green party and with the FDP – Free Democratic Party, on separate times.

For Hannah Arendt, on the historical paths for founding authority to act as a political unity – act which could be translated in this present thesis as the core idea to establish and order a symbolic inventory – there are two paths showed on the modern era: The American and the French path.

"The American path took as its absolute the historical act of foundation itself in which, in turn, the authority of the constitution could be anchored." (Hoye & Nienass, 2014, p.416). It established itself in a positive manner, by creating a foundation on the very act, which would anchor the Constitution and allow for the political community to

develop with its own symbolic inventory. The American political symbolism would first revolve around this symbolic core, of the positive creation.

“By contrast, the French revolutionaries took as their absolute referent the abstract figure of the nation – a figure which presupposed a homogenous political voice and its sovereign status, and which loomed ever-presently over the political sphere” (Hoya & Nienass, 2014, p. 416). The French revolution then used of an abstract founding of the State, but still in a positive, creational manner. The sources of authority, for Arendt, had to be positive in order to have a creative tendency. The challenge in explaining the new German identity then, would be to identify an even which is the absolute negative event in human history, the complete opposite of a political event on arendtian terms, as it was a pure expression of violence.

Authority, for Arendt, “only exists where both parties share an understanding of the hierarchy itself. (...) [it] is defined by its prepolitical nature insofar as it functions outside the realm of discursive contestation, persuasive speech, and political action.” (Hoye & Nienass 2014, p.418). Arendt seems to resonate with Schmitt’s argument that what represents invests with dignity the represented. At the same time that, for Schmitt, the Leviathan state would vanish from the sphere of representation by using solely its strength and capacity for violence, so would the State no longer act based on authority if it would act merely violently for Arendt.

Politics then, instead of functioning solely anchored on the monopoly of strength, would function in an ever-returning cycle to its source of authority. The clarity and positive strength of this source is of vital importance, once “new authority, it was discovered, could not be constructed ex nihilo, authority required a reference to an absolute in order to break the spells of relativism and positivism inherent to new foundations” (Hoye, Nienass, 2014, p.420)

There were some efforts to try and find this absolute for the new German beginning. The regional and subnational identities, the economic miracle and the political structures that arose from the context were all good supporters for the German Identity

but could not provide an absolute founding of authority. The strongest absolute Germany had was a highly negative one, with no apparent creative power. The foundational authority for this new identity would only be found on German memory politics' development. When looking at this field, there are four moments that can be identified. The first of them is the process of multiple restorations, with the prominent figures of Adenauer, Ulbricht, Schumacher and Heuss. In this return to German past, the policies generated in memory politics were meant to express Germany's disposal to accept accountability. "It was also implied that the new reliable Germany had little to do with its predecessor regime and that the memory of war crimes and crimes against humanity could be safely left behind" (Hoye & Nienass, 2014, p.426). Here, the measures were structural – with constitutional provisions – and material, with reparations paid.

A generational shift in the 1960s, accompanied by the further exploration of the Holocaust, led to the introduction of the second phase of memory politics, in which the new generation questioned their parents' participation in Nazi crimes. When the systematized knowledge of the Jewish extermination became more extensive, and it became clear that it was not one crime amongst many, it forced Germany to revisit and open the Pandora box, once closed by the ending of the Nürnberg trials. From this moment "emerged a new pattern of legitimation, one that Olick has referred to as the 'moral nation', characterized primarily by a willingness "to confront and draw more radical lessons from the past" (Hoye & Nienass, 2014, p.427). This acknowledgement of the Holocaust and its importance installed cycle in which it became more and more reinforced, with an even more central role to Germany's memory. Out of this central role, of the Holocaust with German memory, arose a movement of post-nationalism in Germany, revealing the extensive negative character of the Holocaust. This movement was called by Moses (2007) as "The Non-German German", as to refer to a nationally shared feeling of not seeing oneself as part of an identity capable of such destruction. Curiously enough, many Germans started to associate themselves with other national identities and cultures, in a shared German practice of not identifying oneself as such.

As consequence to a distancing of this national sentiment caused by the negative aspect of the Holocaust at the center of German memory politics, a third phase began. On this phase, Germany's political elite, represented by chancellor Kohl, insisted on a relativization of the Holocaust, albeit not negation. The idea is that a narrative of violence is common in every nation's foundational act, and Germany was not different from such nations in having to face its crimes. Kohl's "sidelining of the Holocaust was particularly aggressive, "embodied in an ideological program for cultural change, which included pride in German history, the celebration of heroes . . . and a distancing of past misdeeds. (Hoya & Nienass, 2014, p.428). After serious backlash, once there is no honest way of comparing a the Holocaust with any other political event, a fourth phase begun, also understood as a continuity from the preceding second phase, in which Germany was seen as the 'moral country' for its ability and disposal to face its past.

The fourth phase of Germany's memory politics has a metadiscursive element to it, that is, a discussion of the discussion itself. The way in which Germany historically remembered its past became, in and on itself, object of remembrance. Memorials and museums no longer refrained to present themselves "as a reminder of the murder of the European Jews, but also as a reminder of Germany's willingness to fully acknowledge its past" (Hoye & Nienass, 2014, p.430).

It is in its telling of remembrance that Germany found a way to placate the absolute negative aspect of the Holocaust:

Conceptually, in distinction to "negative nationalism," Germany's current discourse is probably best described as a national postnationalism: Germany can claim to be-somewhat paradoxically-particularly postnational. Here we enter the possibility of a new authority, a memory of a common shared experience, one that can be returned to, and in being returned to, regrounds the authority of the state itself: Germany now remembers its past struggles for a postheroic attitude. This being so, Gudehus asserts that the 'narrative of learning from a 'negative past' of not constructing a heroic, potentially nationalistic version of the past . . .

delivers a model for a positive, even heroic narrative on how well Germans have dealt with their problematic history' (Hoye & Nienass, 2014, pp. 430-431).

In the telling of remembrance Germany managed to find its new symbolic core that allowed for a symbolic re-structuration and entering of the German state as a power unit in history. It also managed to find a foundational myth of authority, in which the politics made for remembrance augment the foundation of the new beginning and reinforces German identity as the nation who could face a dredged past. Germany's new-found authority and central symbolism was anchored then not on new values, but on how they could avoid and ensure the no-return of the absolute negative in its history.

It was by assuming this new identity that was able to cancel the negative character of the holocaust that Germany managed to project itself internationally as a role-model country. From this identity, a new Germany emerged, backed by the economic miracle of its strong recovery at the Cold War context since "realizing that the Ruhr was the industrial heartland of Europe, the United States pushed hard for German industrial recovery as a prerequisite for European economic recovery." (Dinan, 2010, p.16). Germany became a key-actor on the European integration and later formation to the Union not only for its economic importance, but also for its capacity to prove that it was dedicated to facing its past and dealing with the aftermath of arguably the worst historical moment in any country's history.

Germany's capacity of 'facing the music' and trying to atone for the irreparable, has shaped its identity to be a central player to European integration as well as its current politics. "We have suggested that the Holocaust works as a temporally transcendent event which grounds the enactment of political judgements (...) this negative absolute is itself not subject to political dispute but has the status of a prepolitical measure" (Hoye & Nienass, 2014, p.437).

5. CONCLUSION

Directing a democratic transition in a country is a strenuous, multi-factorial task. For a successful transition, there need be a ready, politically sharp elite who can conduct the nation through such period. The approach needed is comprehensive and looks after the country not only economically or structurally, but also symbolically. The theory used points to the fact that political action cannot be successful if society does not count with a closely-knit symbolic repertoire political action can be supported by. Following moments of political dispute, transitional governments have the task not of putting an end to its conflict, but of ensuring that the threat of returning to it does not consolidate.

The bibliography on political symbology can also be applied to transitional governments in ways of re-structuring of the symbolic inventory. Times of conflict, especially so in the cases studied, bring forth the need for a new way of understanding the world around us. The previous symbols might have been delegitimized, and a new national identity might be needed. It must be seen then under what influences the political elite driving the new constitution process was under, just as much as their underlying ideals and historical sources of legitimacy.

The historical and bibliographic analysis have shown that, in both cases, Germany and Italy came from very strongly ideological dictatorships – in the sense of Voegelin's concept of ideology, that is, a gnostic rationale anchored by an immanentization of the eschaton that generates a Joachitic structure. The Fascist and Nazi ideology were highly eschatological and very little flexible. Both ideologies had very clear heavens and hells, easily identifiable enemies, a prophet and messiah of their own, who inserted the country on the path of redemption.

The supporting philosophies of Fascism and Nazism were, albeit from the same fascist origin of facing politics as Praxis and as a means to itself, supported by different sets of values and symbols. Whilst Mussolini's Fascism was a doctrine of praxis supported by Giovanni Gentili's philosophical doctrine of actualism and its annihilation of time, Hitler's National Socialism was underscored by a myth of Blood and Land, by racial

superiority and domination logics. Fascist ideology was structured *post-facto* and sought the re-installing of the old Roman Empire's glory, enacting itself as the Third Rome, which should have lasted forever and represented a continuity to ancient times. Nazism had its theory of *Blut und Boden* from its beginning, and sought to install the empire of the Aryans, superior by blood and fated to maintain their purity.

However substantially different, both regimes generated a centralized structure, with a god-like leader – on one side, Mussolini with its creative speech power, on the other, Hitler being the embodiment of Nazism. Both regimes were anchored on the idea of the Third Realm, with the Third Reich and the Third Rome. The symbolic repertoire used by both Nazis and Fascists were deeply Gnostic and created fixed interpretations of the world that engulfed their respective population in rigid paths of destruction. The *idée directrices* employed by both dictatorships were militarist, belligerent and fundamentally destructive.

The paths of Italy and Germany started to divide shortly after the end of WWII. After the complete failure of Mussolini's war plan, he was stripped from power, hunted and killed while Germany was still desperately trying to avoid defeat. As firstly a doctrine of praxis, Fascism could be more easily disregarded as not being constitutive of Italian identity. Dependent on the creative power of its prophet and Messiah, Fascism became a barren land when her god was killed. With the neighboring country being the embodiment of European-opposition, Italy could choose the path of least resistance and use Germany as a scapegoat not to face juridical consequences for its war crimes. Italian statesmen chose to preserve the national character of the Risorgimento to save their recent born country. They seemed to intuit that facing Fascism as a constitutional part of Italian Identity would taint not only monarchy but also the country's foundational myth. Instead, they chose not to interpret it as such, but rather as a disastrous political moment. For this reason, the new emerging republic was able to adopt an incremental approach to its constitution, adding to the old *idées directrices* an essentially anti-fascist characteristic. And the state could 'move on' from this dark moment in history. The

Cesar of the Third Rome was dead, and the Senate could take over, just like in the original myth.

The Constitution was forged then on this delicate balance. It tried to get rid of referencing the old regime when establishing a democratic republic. On Italian praxis, however, the first decades of the Republic were marked by a political action that tried to anchor itself on an authority that was substantially different from the concept upon which Italian constitution was forged. Deriving its authority from the partigiani movement as a *communitas*, and taking advantage of the Cold War context, the CLN could implement the *conventio ad excludendum*, through which Italian conservative perspectives could be excluded regarded as fascist. When Italy got rid of the external constraints that had her tied, the people could then freely express its will and rescue the founding compromise of the Republic, urging for more conservative voices. The compromise that symbolically tied together Italian national image was stronger as a founding value that ordered the political context, as stated by the theory, and this practice of exclusion eventually crumbled out giving way to Italian conservatism and governing through compromise.

It was the decision of preserving the symbols of Risorgimento that drove Italian international behavior as a power unit in History. There is a continuity in Italian behavior in this sense, in which Italian identity and the care for its foundational myth were preserved all through the country's history.

The challenge Germans faced was considerably more difficult, being offered no escape from its recent past. Hitler and National Socialism took Germany through a dark path, unfolding horrors in such a scale never seen before in world politics. The way that Nazi symbolism acting as one with its pragmatic action could shape and direct a country to systematically eliminate millions of people based on a blood-myth has eternally scarred world-history. There was no possible way of presenting a continuity that would be accepted by the international community from such events. Nazi symbolism was a myth of identity, not of praxis, and Germany had to break with its immediate past. Its statesmen tried to walk on a similar path of when Hitler tried to eliminate Weimar

Republic, and tied the country to the previous epoch, presenting a break with the Third Reich logic. German political elite recovered Weimar traditions and the still-existing lines of political thought of the movements that historically offered National Socialism resistance.

In trying to find a new basis of authority, or a new fundament from which new political symbology could flourish, symbolic conflicts started between Adenauer, Schumacher, Ulbricht and Heuss. As Adenauer and Heuss could get more traction, their views were the ones that shaped the new Basic Law, they were the *idées directrices* that shaped German institutions and memory politics. Heuss insistence of facing the Jewish factor of the Holocaust, aligned with Adenauer's Christian view of politics and German recovery started a process so significant that would allow Germany to anchor its new identity on it. The way this new German identity was so significant that, backed by its secondary economical attributes, it could be said that Germany "has advanced from the status of eager pupil to that of schoolmaster of Europe". And yet, for the schoolmaster, "the word power is still a dirty word, one that they like to replace with the word responsibility" (Beck according to Hoyer & Nienass, 2014, p.437). This new German identity, centered on the remembrance of the Holocaust, made Germans hesitant to incorporate power language in their political speech, it led to a solidary, communal building of Europe.

The theory and Hypothesis showed themselves to be true along the investigation. The way political symbology is structured in transitional governments allows an insight on how a transition to a democratic government will function. It was also seen to be true in the cases studied that political practices incompatible with this structure and its driving factors will be unsustainable. Additionally, the concept of Agamben's empty throne was also seen to be an important factor, as the new democratic constitutions and their respective leaders took extra care in banning totalitarian ideologies, leaving the central machine of government as the empty throne, ensuring power transition, and avoiding the authoritarian take-over of the state machine.

The symbolic sources for transitional governments also showed themselves to be history-contingent, with different opportunities presented according to the immediate historical context and the international context's configuration. The different *communitas*, both in Germany and Italy had different narrative-building power, depending on the gravity of the break with the past and of the previous influence such *communitas* had whilst the dictatorial government was still in-place. In Italy, for example, the *partigiani* could not get much political momentum because their acting zone was concentrated on the north of the country, whilst the monarchy held more influence on the south. The *communitas* from which Ulbrich came in Germany had little influence on West Germany, factor which affected his dispute.

The field still shows much to be clarified using the theories here presented. The positive role of different *communitas* and how or why each of them can have different strengths on the formative stage of transitional governments can be one of them. What influence the international and regional context plays out in shaping the transitional stage needs also to be more clearly established. With the added limitation imposed by Voegelin when drafting his theory, it needs to be explored if and how symbolic structures unfold in political action on eastern countries not shaped by Christianity. All in all, the theory proved to hold analytical power for the cases selected, an expansion of such into other countries might also prove itself to be useful to the field of political symbology, transitional studies and the overall political sciences, once it demonstrated itself capable of clarifying matters on democratic transitions and of overcoming limitations found by other theories, as specified by Hoye & Nienass (2014) when they stated that "the same set of [Arendtian] concepts provides an incomplete guide to fully understanding the mode in which this problem would be politicized" (p.432). The field of political symbology on transitional governments then, albeit little explores, holds a fairly expressive amount of analytical power, also to shed light into contemporary problems.

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