

**A PORTRAIT OF A YOUNG MAN AS A SURVIVOR:
MIHÁLY CSEREI (1690-1697)
A CASE STUDY IN HISTORICAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis, as a case study in historical anthropology, provides a detailed microhistorical reconstruction of eight years, in order to construe the anthropological process of *rite de passage*, in the life of a 17th century young man. Mihály Cserei's youth from 1690 to 1697 coincides with a special period of quest and fight for survival. Therefore, the aim of my interpretation is to describe the mental, spiritual and ritual evolution of this young man, who from an uncertain condition and status has managed to become integrated, by marriage, in the community of married, respected men. This change of status is a *rite de passage*, in which two important events the betrothal and wedding (1697), as life-cycle offices, exemplify the transition from the status of unmarried, young man to adulthood, as husband and potential father (1698).

The sources used for this case study consist of eight calendars containing everyday notes from 1690 to 1698, a list of books read by Cserei up to 1697 and the original manuscript of Cserei's solely published work, *The history of Transylvania*. As for the published sources, I will rely on *The History of Transylvania*, because it also narrates the period of 1690-1697, which represents the range of my interest.

It is almost certain that due to this micro view not only his particular attitude toward transition from one status to another will be deciphered, but the development of his identity, its religious, cultural and social components as well. However, the most important undertaking of this thesis is to display a convincing example illustrating the historical and anthropological complexity of the relations between mentalities, literacy and survival.

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Introduction

The very first page of the original manuscript of the work entitled *Erdély Históriája* (*The History of Transylvania*, 1709), contains several records referring to the first 31 years of an early modern individual. Mihály Cserei, author of both the above mentioned historiographical work and the written notes, seemingly, might have felt the need to begin the new year of 1698 with a meditative retrospection upon his former life, from his birth to his wedding. After he had married Ilona Kun in the autumn of the previous year (October 22, 1697), he moved to Nagyajta to commence his family life. It must have been, no doubt, a new start for this recently married man, husband and future father.

In Nomine Sacro Sancti Trinitatis, Unius, Solites, veri, ac aeterni Dei. 2. Januar. A. 1698 in Nagi Ajta. I, Nagyajtai Miklosvárszéki Cserej Mihály, from the eternal decree of God, I was born to this world, according to my parents, at Felcsik, in Rákos die 21 octobr. A 1668. (...) I celebrated my wedding at the house of my patron, Count István Apor. I came home to Nagyajta, together with my wife, on 18 Xbris. A 1697 ¹

Mihály Cserei (1667–1756) is first and foremost, well-known as the author of the work entitled, *Erdély Históriája* (*The History of Transylvania*, 1709). His unusually long life covers an unhappy and tragic period in the history of Transylvania, which culminates in the loss of independence and the Habsburg occupation (1687). Similarly, his family life is full of tragic events and harsh experiences. All their problems started, when his father was sent to prison

¹ This is the original manuscript, which was also used for the editio princeps of the *History...* as well. The manuscript is available at the library of Hungarian Academy in Budapest (ms. K. 100). Due to the fact that Cserei's work was widely read, the first edition was already published in the 19th century: *Nagyajtai Cserei Mihály Históriája* ed. Gábor Kazinczy (Pest: Újabb Nemzeti Könyvtár 1852). The Hungarian original is written on the first page of the folio seize manuscript

"Én Nagyajtai Miklosvárszéki Cserej Mihály Istennek örök rendesiből születtem e világra, a mint Szüleim referalljak, Felcsikon Rákoson die 21 octobr. A 1667... Celebraltam a Lakodalmam Keczen ugian Gróf Uram ő Nga Házánál, die 22 octobr. A 1697. Jöttem haza nagi Ajtára, mind Feleségestől die 18 Xbris. A 1697." (*Nagyajtai Cserei Mihály Históriája*, 1709, A1).

(1678), which caused the economic decline of the family. He was, at a rather early age, forced to give up his studies (1685), and he had never had the chance to study abroad at a foreign university. However, it is worth noticing that Cserei was intellectually shaped and influenced by the Calvinist-Puritan culture of the late 17th century. Not only his books and readings, but his education acquired at the Protestant College of Udvarhely (1678-1685), was also of Calvinist origin, promoting a worldview based upon the doctrine of predestination and the importance of conscience.

After participating in the battle of Zernyest (1690), he undertook different services in the Habsburg military administration. During the rebellion against the Habsburgs led by Ferenc Rákóczi II he tried to survive by being faithful to the Habsburgs. The period between the battle of Zernyest (1690) and his first marriage (1697) is very well documented in 8 calendars (1690, '91, '92, '93, '94, '95, '97, '98) in which he noted down the events of his quotidian life-experiences on a regular basis.

The three most important events in human life are the so called lifecycle events, such as, birth, marriage and death. These are usually paralleled by corresponding rituals, meant to underscore the anthropological significance of these events, which sometimes basically influence the destiny of individuals in a micro community. While birth and death, stand first of all, for the start and end of the biological existence, marriage undertakes a more special and ritually loaded position in this anthropological process. It has the function and value of a special threshold, which refers to the existing passages in the lifecycle that is the ritual shift from one status, age and condition to another.

In Cserei's case this particular time parameters (1690-1697/98) had an outstanding importance. For it preceded the lifecycle event of marriage (1697) and the assimilation of a new social role, the status of married, settled man. According to the anthropological explanation of

social and cultural evolution of the individual, this period coincides with a process of inner change and spiritual development, in terms of becoming a responsible, mature individual of a (micro) society and community. This interpretation adapted to Cserei's case, relying on his original manuscripts, brings about a unique chance to explore this ritual process and the relations between lifecycle events, rituals and quotidian use of literacy, or the more basic connections between literacy, culture and survival.

It was not until recently, that this particular view of the rites, provided by cultural anthropology² as a result of research among indigenous peoples, was applied to history, especially social history and historical anthropology. Moreover, the spectacular emergence of microhistory and historical anthropology from the 1970s made possible a strong interaction between anthropology and history, culminating in some outstanding achievements³ related to the history of early modern Europe. On the other hand, social history also, while exploring early modern European society,⁴ family⁵ and individual, shared almost the same approach, that is the contextualization of early modern sources relying on anthropological and sociological concepts.

² The work of the Belgian Van Gennep about the rites was neglected for a long time, although its first edition was launched at the beginning of the XXth century. Victor Turner's research related to the rites, even though he approached the problem in a different way than Van Gennep, contributed to the rediscovery of this theory. During the renaissance of historical anthropology and microhistory it proved to be a classic source for many innovative approaches to the historical representations of rituals and lifecycles.

Arnold van Gennep, *Les Rites de Passage. Étude Systematique des Rites* 3rd ed., (Paris: J. Picard, 1991). Concerning the concept of *liminality*, I also rely on Turner's work: Victor Turner, *The ritual process: structure and anti-structure* (Ithaca, New York: 1991). *Ancient and Medieval Rites of Passages. A History of Youth People in the West*, eds. Giovanni Levi and Jean-Claude Schmitt, transl. Camille Nash, (Cambridge Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1997).

³ I am referring to the "classics" of microhistory such as: Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: the Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1980), Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 2002), or Alan Macfarlane, *The Family Life of Ralph Josselin: an Essay in Historical Anthropology* (Cambridge 1970).

⁴ David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death, Ritual, Religion, and the Life-cycle in Tudor England* (Oxford: University Press, 1995).

⁵ Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500–1800* (London: Penguin Books, 1990).

Hence, it was microhistory that redirected the historians' attention toward the individual. Alan MacFarlane's book about the family life of Ralph Josselin, issued as an essay in historical anthropology, or Carlo Ginzburg's spectacular attempt to reconstruct the mental world of a 16th century miller, illustrate the growing importance dedicated to early modern individuals and their life stories. Consequently, this attention, since it relied mostly on written sources, implied another important topic related to the early modern period, literacy and orality, the consequences and cultural uses of literacy. Due to the research related to literacy and written culture made by such outstanding scholars like Roger Chartier⁶ or Jack Goody⁷, we have a fairly detailed picture concerning the impact of literacy upon the life and mentalities of early modern Europe.

However, my thesis will provide innovative contribution in at least three major perspectives. Although in microhistory and historical anthropology it is an established custom to reconstruct individual lives, concrete periods or one central event, my approach works with an unusual small scale, it covers only eight years from Cserei's life. Yet, this choice is a reasonable one, because it reconstructs not only the chronological line of events, but describes the whole process of becoming a man, that is the ritual passage from youth to adulthood. Therefore, my approach is an anthropological interpretation from an historical perspective, not a simple microhistorical reconstruction of the happenings, which took place from 1690 to 1697.

In addition to this, a second contribution consists in the use and application of Van Gennep's concept of *rite de passage*. Although, David Cressy has described the ritual connections between birth, marriage and death in Tudor England,⁸ there has been no attempt to apply this particular concept to the interpretation of individual destinies from the early modern

⁶Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France* (New Jersey: Princeton, 1987).

⁷Jack Goody, *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral* (Cambridge: University Press, 1987).

⁸Cressy, 1995, 7-9.

period. My approach as a case study, goes beyond the set phrases of Geertz's "thick description" as a method,⁹ and will explain the significance of ritual for the mental world of an early modern individual. Furthermore, this contribution becomes more important, if we take into account the fact that it is related to Cserei's life.

Hungarian literary historians and cultural historians both agree upon one idea: Cserei's importance is solely related to the fact that he is the author of the *History of Transylvania*, one of the most widely read books of 18th century.¹⁰ As this book is the work of the adult, married and respected Cserei, they simply neglected everything prior to this intellectual achievement. Thus my thesis, focusing on a forgotten period of Cserei's life, will provide a fairly new picture of this early modern intellectual. Nonetheless, the new life story will also provide a reevaluation of those manuscripts written by Cserei, which have avoided the attention of contemporary literary and historical scholarship.

Finally, the conclusions of this research will provide a detailed view of the ritual uses of literacy, within the limits of a case study, regarding early modern Hungarian culture. However, Cserei's manuscripts, containing a large variety of writings, convincingly illustrate how events, experiences, feelings and their representations are converted into special types of texts. Despite the fact that literary history operates with a debatable concept of literature, or genre, ignoring

⁹ Due to the subversive criticism of postmodernism and post-colonialism/occidentalism, the interpretive anthropology of Geertz in general, and its particular impact upon history has been profusely debated. Moreover, the sound reevaluation of concepts like "thick description" or "local knowledge" seems to discredit the methodological validity of the interpretive anthropology for historical analyses. The lack of diachronic moments of Geertz's cultural analyses causing a dangerous disposition to present cultural and social phenomena in a homogenous perspective is a further remarkable consideration. William H. Sewell, "Geertz, *Cultural Systems, and History: From Synchrony to Transformation*" *Representations*, Special Issue, no. 59, (1997) 35-55; Renato Rosaldo, "A Note on Geertz as a Cultural Essayist" *Representations*, Special Issue, no. 59, (1997) 30-34; Paul Shankman, "The Thick and the Thin: On the Interpretive Theoretical Program of Clifford Geertz" *Current Anthropology*, vol. 25, no. 3, (1984), 261-280.

¹⁰ Katalin Kemény, "Erdélyi emlékirók," *Erdélyi Múzeum*, vol. 1–3, (1932), 180-276; Károly Máté, *A magyar önéletírás kezdetei (1585–1750)* (Kolozsvár: Minerva, 1926); Samu Benczik, *Nagyajtai és Miklósvárszéki Cserei Mihály* (Kolozsvár: Minerva, 1905); István Bitskey, *Eszmék, művek, hagyományok* (Debrecen: Egyetemi Kiadó 1996), 247-253.

everything which does not fit these frames, my thesis offers a more reliable approach. Instead of labeling, selecting and eliminating texts, which is not “(high) literature,” my interpretation starts from the supposition that texts are always expressions of individual self-representations. Therefore their value cannot be judged from exclusively aesthetical and poetical perspectives, because they very often perform other functions, like for instance, the ritual one.

My thesis, as a case study in historical anthropology, will give a detailed microhistorical reconstruction of eight years, in order to construe the anthropological process of *rite de passage*, in 17th century Hungarian culture. Mihály Cserei’s youth from 1690 to 1697 coincides with a special period of quest and fight for survival. Therefore, the aim of my interpretation is to describe the mental and spiritual evolution of this young man, who from an uncertain condition and status has managed to become integrated, by marriage, in the community of married, respected men. This change of status, as a *rite de passage*, in which two important events the betrothal and wedding (1697), as life-cycle offices,¹¹ exemplify the transition from the status of unmarried, young man to adulthood, as husband and potential father (1698).

Having a wife or later a family implied the right to and the need for a new household, which could be constructed partially on previous individual acquisitions and partially on the marriage portion. A further consequence of this transition is the achievement of higher social status, which was sometimes represented by gestures or, representations referring to incorporation. After having been incorporated, the individual had better chances for social or institutional promotion. It was, therefore, important for the individual to obtain such a social position with such kind of material benefits that could ensure safety and stability for the new family, within the new household. Due to the quotidian notes written by Cserei in this period, the historian can have access to those special mental components, which generated and

¹¹ Cressy, 1995, 6.

promoted the strategies of survival, the religious spirituality and the mental outfit of this individual.

Cserei as the actor of this inner passage toward a new social, cultural and spiritual status had probably undergone serious emotional pressure. His attempts and activity were not solely related to the gaining of social status, but they were associated with the emergence of his religious and confessional identity. Thus the passage from youth to adulthood culminating in the lifecycle event of marriage did not exclude the possibility of another spiritual and religious passage related to the problem of predestination. This might have well been a second ritual passage built upon the cultural pattern of Puritan piety and focused upon the lifecycle event of death. On the other hand, the doctrine of predestination with the Puritan-type piety¹² could have been a continuous source of motivation as well. This multifaceted complexity of the passages deciphers not only the unknown sides of his youth, but actually could produce a better understanding of his entire life.

The sources used for this case study consist of eight calendars containing everyday notes from 1690 to 1698, a list of books read by Cserei up to 1697, and the original manuscript of Cserei's solely published work, *The History of Transylvania*. As for the published sources, I will rely on *The History of Transylvania*, because it also narrates the period of 1690-1697, which represents the focus of my interest. The most important sources are these eight calendars, which contain notes in Hungarian and Latin, including all kinds of information. They also represent a large variety of texts, prayers, poems, recipes, and remedies.

¹² The dialectic of hope and despair it was a compulsory syndrome of Puritan piety in England and early modern Europe. For this issue see: Michael Macdonald, "The Fearefull Estate of Francis Spira: Narrative, Identity, and Emotion in Early Modern England," *Journal of British Studies*, no.31, (1992), 32-61; Margo Todd, "Puritan Self-fashioning: the Diary of Samuel Ward," *Journal of British Studies*, no.31, (1992), 236-264; Adam Seligman, "Inner-wordly Individualism and the Institutionalization of Puritanism in late Seventeenth-century New England," *The British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 41, no. 4, (1990), 537-557; Jerald C. Bauer, "Types of Puritan Piety," *Church History*, vol. 56, no. 1, (1987), 39-58.

These texts analyzed in the context of events and placed within the framework concept *rite de passage*, represented by the idea of *promotio* (promotion), that is the fight for survival, make possible at a small scale, a microhistorical reconstruction. Moreover, in a further step, this reconstruction, corroborated with Cserei's readings, will highlight the range of discourse he was exposed to, which may have influenced his decisions. They would therefore possible motivations and aims for his actions. After having learnt his motivations a reassessment of his behavior will provide us with a detailed picture of his mental world. Moreover, the functions and particular features of the mental world contextualized within the theoretical framework of the *rite de passage* will probably make possible the interpretation of self-representation as a process of self-fashioning.

It is almost certain that in this micro view not only his particular attitude toward transition from one status to another will be deciphered, but the evolution of his identity, and its religious, cultural and social components as well. Nonetheless, this thesis, due to some limitations, cannot undertake the responsibility to give a detailed picture of Cserei's economic and political activities in the above mentioned period. Even though, survival strategies would imply economic and political arguments as well, this time I confine the range of my approach to the analysis of their mental components. The most important undertaking of this thesis is to display a convincing example illustrating the historical and anthropological complexity of the relations between mentalities, literacy and survival.

Chapter 1. Theoretical Considerations

My interpretive strategy is built upon a multidisciplinary approach with special foci on two interrelated disciplines, anthropology and history. It is the task of this particular chapter to construct the theoretical foundations of my discourse, in order to promote the method and conceptual apparatus of my interpretation. I will consider only those theoretical antecedents which can contribute to a better understanding of my method exposed at the end of this chapter. Moreover, I will argue that the early modern period claims a special theoretical and methodological approach completed by a mandatory exhaustive knowledge of primary sources.

1. 1. Anthropology and History

Anthropology as the *archeology of social research*¹³ had a major impact upon the interpretation of the past. However, the interrelatedness of anthropology and history took another form after their emergence as scientific disciplines operating with a defined methodology. It was their disciplinary existence and function which paved the way for an interdisciplinary encounter.

The discovery of history by anthropologists goes back to the 1950s, when, for instance, E. E. Evans-Pritchard reformulated the relation between history and anthropology.

¹³ The term was proposed by Justin Stagl, who dedicated a whole book to the early history of social research. He claims that the corpus of travelogue written during the early modern period represents the very first attempts to grasp social reality and cultural otherness. He also asserts that the first travelers, following the strict regulations of the *ars apodemica* or *prudentia peregrinandi*, in fact performed the very first fieldwork researches based upon the method of participant observation. He concludes that the art of travel is the proximate precedent to anthropology or sociology. Justin Stagl, *A History of Curiosity: the Theory of Travel* (Chur: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995), 1-85.

He had first diagnosed the existence of an anti-historical trend in anthropology¹⁴ then, asserted the natural interrelatedness of the two disciplines. After he had pointed out in 9 arguments the importance of integrating history in the anthropological approach, that is the immediate search for diachronic laws, formerly abandoned for the sake of synchronic description, he concluded that history and anthropology were indissociable.¹⁵

All the same, this direction marked off by Evans Pritchard was continued by Alan Macfarlane, a remarkable scholar, equally well trained in history and anthropology, who managed to render into practice the theoretical precedents concerning the relation of history and anthropology. First, in 1974 in a lecture, then, in a written version in 1977, Macfarlane reflected the problem of historical anthropology.¹⁶ He argued that the totality of historical understanding derives from a so called total approach based upon the usage of anthropological methods for the interpretation of historical data. He also sustained that microsociology, consisting of researches centered upon kinship; religion/morality and economics, applied to local history could spectacularly enrich our knowledge from both historical and anthropological perspectives.¹⁷

The American anthropologist Clifford Geertz was and probably still is the most influential anthropologist for historians. Moreover, the vision of culture as language or society as text interpreted by “thick description,” the challenge to grasp the local knowledge,¹⁸ still are

¹⁴ E. E. Evans-Pritchard, "Anthropology and History" in *Social Anthropology and Other Essays* ed. E. E. Evans-Pritchard (New York: The Free Press, 1964), 173.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 191.

¹⁶ Alan Macfarlane, "Historical Anthropology," *Cambridge Anthropology*, vol. 3, no.3, (1977), 7-13.

¹⁷ This perspective actually has been demonstrated in Macfarlane's remarkable book, which relying on the trinity of social, mental and economic concepts delivered a convincing interpretation of an early modern individual's life story. Alan Macfarlane, *The Family Life of Ralph Josselin: an Essay in Historical Anthropology* (Cambridge 1970).

¹⁸ Geertz entitled the whole volume of essays *Local knowledge* and dedicated one to present his concept using three cases as illustrations from Java, Bali and Morocco. Clifford Geertz, "From the Native's Point of View" in *Local Knowledge. Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* ed. Clifford Geertz, (New York: Basic Books, 1983), 55-70.

the best known anthropological concepts despite their criticism, disclosed for a time, by historians as well.¹⁹

Notwithstanding the criticism formulated by anthropologists concerning Geertz's theoretical program,²⁰ historians have gladly embraced the main concepts of geertzian anthropology and hurried to apply them. Consequently, the "thick description"²¹ of a multicultural encounter, or the assessment of the Bali cockfight as "deep play,"²² completed by Geertz's predisposition to favor microscopic approach²³ in ethnographic description seemingly entered for good the vocabulary of practicing historians during the 1980s. The unconditioned trust of historians in the symbolic or interpretive anthropology is perfectly illustrated by the controversies of Robert Darnton's case.²⁴

A unique contribution to the discourse of criticism provided by anthropologists²⁵ is delivered by William H. Sewell Jr. He strove for a different aim. His endeavor was to grasp a

¹⁹ Aletta Biersback, "Local Knowledge, Local History" in *The New Cultural History*, ed. Lynn Hunt (Los Angeles, Berkeley, London: University of California Press, 1989), 72-96; Jacques Revel, "Microanalyses and the Construction of the Social" in *Histoires: French Construction of the Past*, eds. Jacques Revel and Lynn Hunt (New York: New York Press, 1995), 493-501.

²⁰ Paul Shankman, "The Thick and the Thin: On the Interpretive Theoretical Program of Clifford Geertz," *Current Anthropology*, vol. 25, no. 3, (1984), 261-280.

²¹ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, (Fontana Press: London 1993), 3-31.

²² *Ibid.*, 412-453.

²³ *Ibid.*, 23.

²⁴ Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Basic Books, 1984). His book generated a real controversy amongst historians debating the reliability of symbolic anthropology in historical research. Chartier, as the representative of French historiography provided a thorough criticism, in fact, questioned the reliability of the definition of culture provided by Geertz and applied by Darnton to the interpretation of the execution of cats. Chartier has also expressed his doubt concerning the accuracy of the concepts of the symbolic system and culture. Although Darnton answered to this criticism, the general impression remained, namely that the direct application of symbolic anthropology to history might be a risky undertaking. (Roger Chartier, "Text, Symbols and Frenchness" *Journal of Modern History*, nr. 57, (1985), 682-695; Robert Darnton, "The Symbolic Element in History", *Journal of Modern History*, nr. 58, (1986), 218-234).

²⁵ The generation of anthropologists grouped around James Clifford and George Marcus with their *Writing Culture* theory brought about the postmodern criticism of the whole discipline. (George Marcus and James Clifford, "The Making of Ethnographic Texts: A Preliminary Report", *Current Anthropology*, vol. 26, no. 2, (1985), 267-271; *Writing Culture: the Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford and George Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986). Geertz's work, too, was reassessed in the contexts of postmodernity. (Vincent Crapanzano, "Hermes' Dilemma: the Making of Subversion on Ethnographic Description," in *Writing Culture: the Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, ed. James Clifford and George Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 51-76). However, the fate of culture constituted such a major concern for the anthropology

very special stratum of the geertzian reception, namely the perception of Geertz's theory outside anthropology, such as, in history.²⁶

Sewell focused his attention upon those elements and methodological peculiarities promoted by Geertz, which were used by historians, more or less, successfully during the previous decade. He suggested that the dialectic between synchronic and diachronic was truncated in the thick description. He also argued that the symptom of "suspended time," contradicts the very nature of historical explanation. Accordingly, he reasserted E. E. Evans-Pritchard's standpoint, who wanted to give up the plain synchronisms of anthropology and add diachronic dimensions provided by history. Moreover, Sewell delivered an adept critique of geertzian cultural system and symbolism proper. Therefore, he suggested that the *model of/model for* conceptual matrix proved its limits, since it assumed a very debatable relation of mirroring, whereas the individual perception of reality was a more complex and contradictory process.²⁷ Though Sewell's criticism read Geertz and interpretive theory from a different angle, it had its novelty in repositioning not only the geertzian tradition, but cultural anthropology as well, within the reach of historians.

1. 2. The Discourse of Historiography

Hereafter, I will focus my attention to those relevant moments in historiography which brought about the approximation of history and anthropology, in terms of method and practice. However, because of the already mentioned English historiographic contexts of anthropology, I

of the 1990s that Geertz's criticism and (re)interpretation was still in the focus of the debates. (Renato Rosaldo, "A note on Geertz as Cultural Essayist," *Representations*, no. 59, (1997), 30-34).

²⁶ William H. Sewell Jr., "Geertz, Cultural Systems, and History: from Synchrony to Transformation," *Representations*, no. 59, (1997), 35-55.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 46-48.

will mainly underscore the importance of the French and then, especially, Italian tradition in order to grasp the linkage points between anthropological method and historical practice.

1. 2. 1. The French Tradition

The first relevant change in the postwar history of the *Annales* took place in 1946, when the famous reformulation occurred: the *Annales d'histoire économique et sociale* became *Annales: Économies, sociétés, civilisations*.²⁸ This development combined with Braudel's *longue durée*²⁹ made accessible in terms of method not only an overall summing up, according to Chaunu the *peseé global*, but it also allowed a passage toward the static history as Le Roy Ladurie proposed it.³⁰

The appearance of *Nouvelle Histoire*³¹ promoted a new perspective upon French historiography, a heterogenic one, including redefined or completely new trends such as *histoire antropologique*. It became clear that quantitative history built upon a certain homogenization, measurement and producing of endless lists of countable data was no longer the ultimate method in historiography. At this stage, it is possible to conclude that the *crisis* of the 1980s evoked by the retrospective narratives telling the history of the discipline consisted mostly in the main dichotomy between the stubborn sustainability of objectivism versus the subjectivist approach. The method, concept and practice generally associated with quantitative

²⁸ Lynn Hunt, introduction to *Histories: French Construction of the Past*, eds. Jacques Revel and Lynn Hunt (New York: New York Press, 1995), 20.

²⁹ Fernand Braudel, "History and the Social Sciences. The *Longue Durée*" in Fernand Braudel, *On History* trans. Sarah Matthews (Chicago: Chicago Press, 1980), 27.

³⁰ Hunt, *Introduction*, 22-24.

³¹ The representatives of the new generation Le Goff, Revel and Nora published 2 important volumes in order to give legitimacy of the regeneration within the French historiographical tradition: Pierre Nora and Jacques LeGoff, *Faire de l'histoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974); Jacques LeGoff, Roger Chartier, Jacques Revel, eds., *La Nouvelle Histoire* (Paris: Retz – C. E. P. L., 1978).

history did not manage to produce such an adequate representation of the past, as to counterbalance the attacks launched by the representatives of social sciences.

The notion of *mentalité* was also part of an almost sacred heritage, because two “giants” of the *Annales* March Bloch and Lucien Febvre had first promoted it in historiography. Despite the impressive scholarly value of the most well-known works written by Bloch³² or Febvre,³³ the overall change in practice, due to the new challenges of the late 1970s, made the transformation of the discipline unavoidable. The major reevaluations urged by the new generation of the 1970s, marked by the belief that social history should be interpreted in terms of cultural practices, brought about changes. Consequently, it was Roger Chartier, one of the representatives of the *Nouvelle Histoire*, who declared that the notion of *collective representation*³⁴ would be more useful than the concept of *mentalité*.

Thus, the French historiography, seemingly unfaithful to the Braudelian heritage of *total histoire*, had to handle not only the challenges of the structuralist anthropology, but the poststructuralist literary theory and philosophy as well. French historiography entered a period of changes, wherein the third generation of *Annales* disseminated the once uniformly conceived historiography. Consequently, a large variety of sub disciplines, from *histoire anthropologique* to *histoire culturelle*, emerged out of the remnants of the great *Annales* program. French historiography too, experienced the painful transitivity and liminality of post modernity.

³² Marc Bloch, *Les Rois Thaumaturges: Étude sur le caractère surnaturel attribué à la puissance royale particulièrement en France et en Angleterre*, 5th ed., (Paris: Gallimard, 1983).

³³ Lucien Febvre, *The problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century: the Religion of Rabelais*, 4th ed., (Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1982).

³⁴ Roger Chartier, "The World as Representation" in *Histories: French Construction of the Past*, eds. Jacques Revel and Lynn Hunt (New York: New York Press, 1995), 552.

1. 2. 2. The Italian *Microstoria*

When Fernand Braudel first³⁵ coined the term microhistory³⁶ he did not have any reason to think about the possible subversive consequences of a serious *macro vs. micro historical* opposition in terms of method, theory and practice. In spite of this, the French school of social history based on the concept of *longue durée*, during the late 1970s, underwent a serious crisis.³⁷ The exit from this situation was represented, among others, by the Italian school grouped around the journal *Quaderni storici*, whose declared intention was to “make Italian historical scholarship more independent from the dominating influence of the French *Annales* School.”³⁸ Consequently, in a 1977 *Quaderni storici* article Edoardo Grendi set forth the first agenda based on microanalysis. Moreover, in 1979 Carlo Ginzburg and Carlo Poni proposed a program for microhistory, which promoted a new concept, method and theory about historical writing and scholarship as well.³⁹ It was, no doubt, the beginning of a new era.

From a theoretical point of view, microhistory, first of all means the reduction of scale, that is the shift of focus when investigating the past. This spectacular change of levels, from *macro* to *micro* level constituted, according to Carlo Ginzburg and Carlo Poni, the necessary frame for microhistorical reconstruction.⁴⁰ In a first step, this new habit of focusing upon a village community, a family, or even on an individual person, had importance as opposed to the

³⁵ Although, Carlo Ginzburg detected two scholars, the American George Stewart and the Mexican Luis Gonzalez, who also used the term *microhistory* and respectively, *microhistoria* in 1959 and 1979, I do believe, Braudel’s remark comes closest to the theoretical stakes of a micro vs. macro dichotomy. For the non-Braudelian occurrences of the term see. Carlo Ginzburg, “*Microhistory: Two or Three things That I Know about It*” *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 20, nr. 1, (1993), 10-12.

³⁶ Braudel, *History and the Social Sciences*, 28.

³⁷ Revel, *Microanalyses and the Construction of the Social*, 494.

³⁸ Edward Muir introduction to *Microhistory and the Lost People of Europe*, ed. Edward Muir (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press 1991), 9.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9

⁴⁰ Carlo Ginzburg and Carlo Poni, *The Name and the Game: Unequal Exchange and the Historiographic Marketplace*, in Edward Muir ed., *Microhistory and the Lost People of Europe*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press 1991) 4.

schematic and uniform description of social history from a *macro* level. Later, it became fairly clear that it represented a new theoretical perspective with a great potential for historians, who were able to combine the interpretation of unusual primary sources with sociological and anthropological considerations. Moreover, Ginzburg and Poni in the 1970s predicted the creation of an *ethnographic history of everyday life*, which was followed by the appearance of two separate trends, social and cultural microhistory.⁴¹

It is worth remarking that this particular moment in the history of *microstoria* coincides with the golden age of both American and English interpretive anthropology. Macfarlane has just published (1970) his book about a Puritan priest with the suggestive subtitle of essay in historical anthropology. In the meantime, Geertz's decisively contributed to the growing influence of anthropology on history. The method consisting of the use and applications of *thick description* and interpretation of symbols was just beginning to dazzle nonconformist historians.

Yet, quite surprisingly, one can also sense a certain critique of this influence. It was microhistory, especially its leading characters, who signaled the existing differences between Geertz contextualization as "thick description" and the methods and aims of microhistory. Accordingly, historians rightly objected that Geertz's contextualization without any comparative aim, presupposed the existence of a homogenous, schematic culture, ignoring the fractional inconsistencies existing in the culture or in the symbolic repertoire representing it. The particularities of every human existence within a given culture, or society implies an immense variety of cultural representations. Giovanni Levi concluded:

⁴¹ Muir, *Introduction*, 11, 15.

Individuals constantly create their own identities, and groups define themselves according to conflicts and solidarities, which however cannot be assumed a priori but result from dynamics which are the objects of analysis.⁴²

As for the method of this analysis, Ginzburg and Poni proposed the so-called “micronominative research,” claiming that the name (*il nome*) could be a guiding thread⁴³ along the labyrinth of archive materials. They have also sustained that the name represents a referential point from which diverges lines, causes and perspectives which could constitute a network of social relationships embedding an individual or an institution. Thus a special and valuable context has emerged, which is embedding the name in social, anthropological and historical micro-milieus. Therefore the historian’s task will be to contextualize and (re)interpret on a small scale the importance and peculiarities of the person or institute represented by that given name.

One could easily object to this method by raising questions about selectivity and significance. Indeed, in most of the cases, small and unimportant persons, sometimes living at the margins of society, or representing deviant attitudes and conduct patterns seem to be promoted as valid standards for whole communities. Edoardo Grendi, according to Muir, gave a response to this discrediting with the concept of the *normal exception* (*eccezionalmente normale*).⁴⁴ For, in a society dominated by all kinds of extreme behaviors, where normality and deviance are arbitrarily developed to exercise a social control, not only the normal and the central, but sometimes the marginal, unusual or even criminal features are significant or determining standards.

⁴² Giovanni Levi, "On Microhistory" in *Historical Writing*, ed. Peter Burke (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991) 105.

⁴³ Ginzburg and Poni, *The name and the Game*, 6.

⁴⁴ Muir, *Introduction*, 14.

Carlo Ginzburg⁴⁵ provided convincing illustrations through case studies, such as the one about a witch trial, whose heroine accused of witchcraft, is *Chiara Signorini*, or the more famous Menocchio, a sixteenth century miller⁴⁶ and unorthodox interpreter of books. It is Ginzburg's merit that through the microhistorical reconstruction and interpretation of a unique case, he managed to suggest valid conclusions with exemplary value concerning the popular beliefs of the sixteenth century.⁴⁷

Microhistory, in spite of its Italian origin and beginnings, soon turned out to be an international discipline. An impressive number of historians felt the need to practice the method promoted by this tradition or to enrich with further theoretical considerations this scholarship. According to Matti Peltonen⁴⁸ a tripartite distinction should be made, while describing the history of, first, Italian and then, international, *microstoria*. He suggests that the 1970s represents the starting phase dominated by Ginzburg's practice and results. During the 1980s, he argues, a new wave of microhistorians made felt their presence, like Giovanni Levi,⁴⁹ Natalie Zemon Davies⁵⁰ etc. Finally, he concludes, the 1990s demonstrated a more pronounced preoccupation with theoretical issues, such as the ones provided by Ginzburg, Levi and Muir.⁵¹

Yet it is still difficult to properly identify the place of Italian *microstoria* within the discourse of the historiography, because the French *histoire anthropologique*, the English *social history* and German *alltagsgeschichte* very often disputes and claims similar method, results or

⁴⁵ Carlo Ginzburg, "Witchcraft and Popular Piety: Notes on a Modenese Trial" in *Myth, Emblem and Clues*, ed. Carlo Ginzburg (London: Hutchinson, Radius 1990), 1-16.

⁴⁶ Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms. The Cosmos of a Sixteenth Century Miller*, trans. John and Anne Tedeschi, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980).

⁴⁷ Ibid. 16.

⁴⁸ Matti Peltonen, "Clues, Margins, and Monads: The Micro-Macro Link in Historical Research" *History and Theory*, vol. 40, nr. 3, (2001), 347-359.

⁴⁹ Giovanni Levi, *Inheriting Power: the Story of an Exorcist*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane, (Chicago: University Press, 1988).

⁵⁰ Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983).

⁵¹ Ibid., 347-348.

even authors. The most suggestive example of this complex interdisciplinarity is the ambiguous relationship between historical anthropology and microhistory.

1. 2. 3. Historical Anthropology and/or Microhistory

Even though microhistory, or *microstoria* and historical anthropology were simultaneously present in the discourse and practice of historians, is equally difficult to differentiate or equate them. On the other hand, one should also admit that historical anthropology, as the expression of a mutual approximation between history and anthropology, has certainly preceded microhistory. Brian Keith Axel, for instance, suggests that while the theoretical grounds of microhistory has been shaped during the 1970s; historical anthropology by that time had already been nourished by the theoretical framework of interpretive anthropology worked out during the 1950s and 1960s.⁵² Moreover, while microhistory produced its most remarkable results related to the early modern European history, historical anthropology's range of interest, emphasizing its anthropological and holistic character, covered almost all existing varieties of temporal, historical and cultural phenomena.

A relevant criterion for differentiation could be how the relation between history and anthropology was mirrored in their overlapping, sometimes almost similar, methodologies.⁵³ During the late 1970s and 1980s mostly in America, but less in Europe, interpretive

⁵² Brian Keith Axel refers to forerunners such as the American Margaret Mead, whose most famous disciple was Clifford Geertz, and the British Evans-Pritchard, who paved the way for Macfarlane's scholarship. Brian Keith Axel, introduction to *From the Margins. Historical Anthropology and its Future*, ed. Brian Keith Axel (London: Duke University Press, 2002), 3-6.

⁵³ Don Handelmann. for instance, asserts that there is a special relation between anthropology and microhistory. He exemplifies this suggestion with the concept of scale reduction, which can also be found in Geertz's microscopic ethnography. Consequently, he claims, that the proper practice relying on both history and anthropology ought to be defined as microhistorical anthropology. See. Don Handelmann, "Microhistorical anthropology: atemporal, retrospective, prospective," *Focaal-European Journal of Anthropology*, vol 4, no. 4, 135-148.

anthropology has deeply influenced history as a discipline. While even authors like Natalie Zemon Davies, often identified as microhistorian, were praising the benefits of anthropology applied to small scale approaches,⁵⁴ their European colleagues, as we have seen, both representatives of microhistory (Ginzburg) and French historiography (Chartier) expressed moderate enthusiasm and doubts concerning this interdisciplinary approach. Yet, it would be still debatable to deny any anthropological affinity in the method and discourse of microhistory.

Another important question is whether microhistory can be successfully used to interpret modern or contemporary historical phenomena? One can say that taking into account the topics debated and later published in the last twenty years, there is a clear tendency to use early modern primary sources and debate upon fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth century issues. Indeed, we have to acknowledge that only few attempts have been made to apply microhistory to the exploration of contemporary⁵⁵ historical issues. Still, Robert Scribner provides a considerable refutation of this supposition, when he collectively taken all microhistorical and historical anthropological works about the history of early modern Europe, defines them as historical anthropology of Early Modern Europe.⁵⁶

Hence, the sources, or certain types of sources (records of visitation, trials, diaries, letters, and marginal notes on books etc.) can attract not only certain methods, but practices and theories as well, relevant, first of all, for explaining early modern historical and cultural phenomena. This is why, early modern sources, as referring to typically early modern

⁵⁴ Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Possibilities of the Past", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol. 12, no. 2, (1980), 269. Bernard Cohen, professor of anthropology and history at Chicago University, approached the problem twice, one in an original way, proposing a discussion about *Anthropology land* and *History land*, and then, in a more serious way. See. Bernard S. Cohen, "History and Anthropology. The State of the Play", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 22, no. 2, (1980), 198-221; Bernard S. Cohen, "Toward a Rapprochement" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol. 12, no. 2, 1981, 227-252.

⁵⁵ *The History of Everyday Life. Reconstructing Historical Experiences*, ed. Alf Lüdtke (Princeton: New Jersey 1995). For a comprehensive reflection upon microhistory and *Alltagsgeschichte* see. Brad Gregory, "Is Small Beautiful? Microhistory and the History of Everyday Life," *History and Theory*, vol. 38, no. 1, (1999), 100-110.

⁵⁶ Scribner, *Problems in the Historical Anthropology*, 10-34.

institutions, events, and beliefs, could constitute the hardcore of scholarship, which would keep in balance and equally emphasize a microhistorical practice completed by anthropological considerations.

It is possible to conclude that the small scale approach could refigure a social construction and a cultural practice making use of anthropology and history. All these limited to the early modern period, that is a pre-industrial and proto-literate society positioned within the system of beliefs of a confessionally divided culture and literacy, could set up, indeed, a durable framework for the practitioners of microhistory and historical anthropology as well. Consequently, I define *historical anthropology*, as an independent discipline based upon anthropologically oriented interpretation, complemented by historical and/or microhistorical practices dealing primarily with early modern sources, regarding the historical and anthropological phenomena of early modern culture, society and history.

1. 3. Sources and Method

Miles Fairburn was certainly making a valid point, when he referred to the difficulty of finding the *right (true) explanation*.⁵⁷ Postmodernity and postsocial history shows its best, when it comes about the social historian's attempt to set forth a reliable method concordant with his sources and extrapolating a convincing explanation. Hence, the difficulty arises from the transitory aspect of social history's interpretive discourse, which has been widely debated, during the late 1990s.⁵⁸ However, I define my research and interpretive endeavor as historical

⁵⁷ Miles Fairburn, *Social history. Problems, Strategies and Methods* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 236.

⁵⁸ Patrick Joyce, "The end of Social History," *Social History*, no. 20 (1995), 70-92; Geoffrey Eley and Keith Nield, "Starting Over: the Present, the Postmodern and the Moment of Social History" in *The Postmodern History*

anthropology, in the aforementioned sense, namely historical anthropology of early modern period. Consequently, my interpretation, organically related to history and anthropology, can also be defined as a sort of social history based upon a microhistorical reconstruction aiming at a historical anthropological interpretation.

The most successful interpretive attempts of historical anthropology were usually the results of the proper use and assessment of sources. Accordingly, the first methodological step is the *evaluation of the historical, textual/rhetorical and anthropological potential* of the sources involved in the explanation. I can best define my sources, both manuscripts and print, as *ego documents*. This corpus contains, 8 calendars,⁵⁹ 6 diaries,⁶⁰ and two manuscripts entitled *Compendium*⁶¹ and *Apologia*,⁶² complemented by the surviving items of Cserei's library containing his marginal notes. I will also use the original manuscript of Cserei's most important work, entitled, *Erdély Históriája (The History of Transylvania, 1709)*.⁶³ These sources, written at different moments of his life, contain a great variety of often contradictory information about his environment, but beyond that they also cover several dimensions of the life of an early modern individual. Hence, Cserei's unusually long life is mirrored by a complex and

Reader, ed. Keith Jenkins (London: Routledge, 1997), 366-379; Patrick Joyce, "The end of Social History?" in *The Postmodern History Reader*, ed. Keith Jenkins (London: Routledge, 1997), 380-383

⁵⁹ Although the notes written in these calendars were partially published, I rely on the originals, because the published version's transcription is not totally accurate. These calendars are available at the Library of the Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca. (BMV. 9286, BMV. 9285, BMV. 9086, BMV. 8963, BMV. 8607, BMV. 8472, BMV. 8345, BMV. 8185.)

⁶⁰I. *Diary* (1712-1724): The manuscript is available at the library of Hungarian Academy in Budapest (Ms. K. 105); II. *Cserej Mihály jedzőkönyve*, (1716-1728) the manuscript is available at the library of Hungarian Academy in Budapest (Ms. K. 104); III.-IV 2 *Diaries*, posteriorly united in one single manuscript with two main entries (1716, 1728). The manuscript is available at the library of Hungarian Academy in Budapest (Ms. K. 103); V. *The Biggest Diary* (1733-1748). The manuscript is available at the Országos Széchényi Library in Budapest (Ms. 2244. Quart. Hung.); VI. *Economic Diary*, (1696). The manuscript is available at Teleki Téka Library in Marosvásárhely, Romania (Tf 1075b, Ms 20).

⁶¹ The original manuscript is available at the Library of Romanian Academy in Cluj. (Ms.U.1119). Mihály Cserei, *Compendium Theologicum et Politicum*, 1709.

⁶² This manuscript was published, but I use the original, which is available at the Library of the Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca. *Cserej Mihály Apológiája Anno 1747 10. Aug. Aetatis suae Anno 80*. (Ms.840).

⁶³ The manuscript is available at the library of Hungarian Academy in Budapest (Ms. K. 100). Due to the fact that Cserei's work was wildly read, the first edition was already published in the 19th century: *Nagyajtai Cserei Mihály Históriája* ed. Gábor Kazinczy (Pest: Újabb Nemzeti Könyvtár, 1852).

multifaceted set of textual and rhetorical representations. The various information, narratives, and events depicted in several of his manuscripts, often, due to overlapping aspects, bear the obvious influence of the literary and rhetorical training assimilated by their author. Yet, it can also be grasped, Cserei's special practice of writing and reading.

The most remarkable feature of this corpus is that it makes possible to figure Cserei's habit of relying on literacy, in terms of writing and reading. For, the corpus denotes not only, in a descriptive manner, the mere and quantifiable items of what was Cserei reading or writing, but it also depicts the particular functions attributed by Cserei to the acts of reading or writing. Beyond the thematic repertoire displayed, there is a special insight introducing the nucleus of Cserei existence as a literate. However, due to this particular perspective, one can evaluate how literacy was involved in the *modus vivendi* of an early modern individual. Furthermore, there is a real possibility to figure out the role of literacy in the survival strategies undertaken by this individual, or to explain why literacy functions as a device for practical, representational or ritual tasks.

In this context the most remarkable group of sources are the calendars containing the everyday notes of Cserei. They cover a period of 8 years, but do not function as the narratives of some diaries or memoirs. They are not organized according to poetical patterns or cultural master narratives, they just "simply" render into writing thoughts, moments, and experiences often in a fragmentary way. Still, they are representations shaped by linguistic and basic rhetorical skills, but since they were nearly simultaneously recorded with the events they refer to, their value as sources is much higher than the usual accounts of posteriorly composed diaries or memoirs.

This particular type of source not being framed and shaped into literary patterns, though its fictitious character hardly can be refuted, displays a closer reference about past social

experiences, than memoirs posteriorly written up, subordinated to a central truth, or artificially carved into coherent accounts. These calendars confronted or situated in the context of Cserei's other writings and readings could provide an innovative evaluation of these 8 years, which coincides with the concluding period of Cserei's youth. An extremely important passage of his life, which starts with the extreme experience of the battle of Zernyest and ends with the lifecycle event of marriage (1697) heading toward the new social role of father (1698). Furthermore, I believe, that the reinterpretation of the main group of primary sources (the calendars) within the context made up by the others sources, due to the overlapping references would add a certain refinement of the assertions found in the calendars. On the other hand, the ongoing or starting anthropological or social processes recorded in the calendars could be more precisely deciphered with the data or references available in the other sources.

All the same, I define these 8 calendars as the main primary sources of my research, but the proposed explanation will be carried out using the other sources too. The aim of my explanation is not to narrate or describe in details the events of this period, but to interpret them as a more or less coherent experience resembling the process of *rite de passage*.⁶⁴ It is this anthropological concept of the passage that assembles into a relatively coherent experience the disseminating fragments of actions, meanings and impressions noted down in the calendars, and confirmed by the other sources as well.

1. 3. 1. Methodological Considerations of the Explanation

Since I define my approach as historical anthropology consisting of a microhistorical reconstruction, the explanation I will provide coincides on several points with the one promoted

⁶⁴ I refer to Van Gennep's theory. See. Arnold van Gennep, *Les Rites de Passage. Étude Systematique des Rites*, 3d ed., (Paris: J. Picard, 1991); Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passages*, trans. Monika B. Vizedom (Chicago: University Press, 1992).

by the classics of microhistory. I rely on the *small scale approach* and I expect to have access in this way to a number of anthropological issues, such as the relations between survival strategies and belief system, or confessional identity and self-fashioning, in order to explain their function in this experience of passage. I am interested in Cserei's discourse⁶⁵, because his perception of social reality is heavily shaped by a social imaginary⁶⁶ and is rooted in a reality-discourse-consciousness, the main driving force for producing meanings⁶⁷. Cserei, especially in his retrospective writings, uses the Latin word *promotio* (promotion) referring to the continuous fight for survival, first for his, then, for the sake of his family. He perceived social reality through this main concept of *promotio* and he had also defined it as the main moral duty of man, or for any young man experiencing the passage of becoming a responsible adult, husband and father.

As for the interpretation of sources at this *small scale*, I naturally rely on a hermeneutic inquiry.⁶⁸ I do intend to avoid its shortcomings;⁶⁹ therefore, I have operated a few modifications to the model described by Fairburn. I tried to delineate the most debatable anthropological aspects linked to the tradition of symbolic and interpretive anthropology. I do not claim to have access to some sort of *local knowledge*; or that I could perfectly reconstruct or assimilate Cserei's interpretation of reality. I propose a *recontextualization* in the sense

⁶⁵ I use the term as it has been proposed by the representatives of post social history. In this particular case, my source is Miguel A. Cabrera, and I rely on his definition of discourse: "...the term discourse refers to the coherent body of categories, concepts, and principles by means of which individuals apprehend and conceptualize reality (and, in particular social reality) and through which they implement their practice in a given historical situation. A discourse is a conceptual grid of visibility, specification, and classification by means of which individuals endow social contexts with meaning and confer sense on their relations with them, through which they conceive themselves as subjects and agents, and by which, consequently, they regulate and guide their social practice." (Miguel A. Cabrera, "Beyond the Cultural Turn: Discourse and Postsocial History" in Miguel A. Cabrera, *Postsocial History. An Introduction*. Lexington Books, Lanham, 2004, 22-23.)

⁶⁶ Ibid., 24.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 27-30.

⁶⁸ The hermeneutic tradition consists of an impressive body of literature, but for the special application to historical research, I have opted for Miles Fairburn approach. Fairburn, *Social History*, 208-234.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 224-232.

proposed by the Italian *microstoria*, along the categories used by Cserei and their plausible backgrounds, in order to accomplish a *profound explanation*,⁷⁰ something different from thick description. As a type of genetic or contrastive explanation

Sometimes explains the elements of the first disposition which was triggered then, or for the trigger itself. In the case of contrastive explanations they may explain the causes of the condition which was responsible for one outcome occurring rather than a designed other.⁷¹

Applied to Cserei's case, the profound explanations could reveal those *dispositions* or *triggers* which made our hero act in a particular way. A number of actions were undertaken by Cserei, after he survived the battle of Zernyest, then the marriage, which was to take place in 1697 ended this ambiguous chain of actions, reactions and experiences. The main question, of course, is what made the actor (Cserei), in a given cultural and social set or micro milieu, behave in a certain way. My conviction is that in the cultural social framework of the small scale approach the profound explanation could provide a plausible interpretation.

The first step of this *recontextualization* would be to analyze the outcome of this process, in order to explore the anthropological aspects of Cserei conduct and actions. Hopefully, after the calendars will have been interpreted in the context of other sources, an anthropologically articulated answer will emerge. In fact, the hypothesis of *rite de passage* will be confirmed or refuted.

The second step focuses upon the profound explanation of this process that is the attempt to grasp the transformations inherent in this process. The stake is, of course, to avoid the sterile synchronism of a description consisting in the application of the script of *rite de*

⁷⁰ The expression belongs to C. Behan McCullagh, contributing to the issue of historical explanations. C. Behan McCullagh, "Historical Explanations," in C. Behan McCullagh, *The Logic of History. Putting Postmodernism in Perspective* (London: Routledge, 2004) 170-192.

⁷¹ Ibid., 177.

*passage*⁷² and try to use the dialectics of synchronism and diachronic perspectives.⁷³ However, a number of events, actions or gestures, though noted in these calendars, are not clearly intelligible, but in the context and diachronic perspective of later times and sources, they might become comprehensible. Moreover, the context can also consist of the institutions (Protestant College of Udvarhely), spiritual traditions (Calvinism and Puritanism) or mentalities and ideologies (a typical Transylvanian regionalism). As a result of this explanation, I do believe that not only this 8 years, but at to a certain extent Cserei's whole life will be reevaluated.

Accordingly, in judging the relevance or significance of my explanation, I consider that the *eccezzionalmente normale*, which is the concept of *normal exception*, fits Cserei's case as well. On the other hand, Cserei as a literate with an unusual habit and appetite for reading and writing would probably shed some light on the general image of Hungarian literacy in the late seventeenth century. Even at this particular stage, mostly prognosticating the possible outcomes of this thesis, it is possible to surmise that the recontextualization will probably enrich not only our knowledge about Mihály Cserei, but it will add notable contribution to the contexts as well.

⁷² The three phases of rite de passage are: separation (*séparation*), transition (*transition*) and incorporation (*agrégation*). (Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 11).

⁷³ William H. Sewell Jr. has produced a valuable criticism about the influence of interpretive anthropology upon history. His most important warning pertinently points out that the interpretation or description of transformation always has to avoid total synchronisms:

"I would argue that no account of a historical transformation can be cogent unless it performs a dialectical oscillation between synchronic and diachronic thinking." (Sewell, Geertz, *Cultural System and History*, 42).

Chapter 2. Contexts

This chapter will provide those relevant historical, social and cultural contexts which frame the microhistorical reconstruction of the period from 1690 to 1697. First I will outline the historical and cultural background of 17th century Transylvania, and then I will focus my attention upon Cserei's micro milieu, his family and his life proper, with a special emphasis on his youth from 1690 to 1697.

The principality of Transylvania underwent some major changes during the 17th century. While in the first half of the century the political stability, economic growth and cultural openness made contemporaries think of the principality as a *Fairy Land*, the second part of the century coincided with the loss of its independence. After the treaty of Balázsfalva (1687) and especially after the death of Mihály Apafi (1690), the last Prince of Transylvania, the little state transformed into the so called *Gubernium*, was, in fact, incorporated in the Habsburg Empire. Imre Thököly's attempt assisted by the Porte, to become the new prince, in spite of his victory at Zernyest (August 21, 1690) proved to be an unsuccessful venture. Furthermore, due to the political efforts of Count Miklós Bethlen, the Emperor issued the *Diploma Leopoldinum* in 1691, which settled the constitutional status of Transylvania as a Habsburg dominion unchanged until 1848.⁷⁴

Although the peace treaty of Karlóca (1699) made the Habsburgs the absolute winners of the war against the Ottomans,⁷⁵ they had to realize soon that the integration of the newly occupied territories with different cultural, historical and confessional traditions would be a difficult task. Thus, the rebellion led by Ferenc Rákóczi II (1703-1711) was the first major act

⁷⁴ László Kontler, *Millennium in Central Europe* (Budapest: Atlantis Publishing House, 1999), 183.

⁷⁵ Kontler, *Millennium in Central Europe*, 184.

of opposition that needed not only military intervention, but a more elaborated political program in the long run. The Habsburgs had to work out those strategies which could eventually convert their Hungarian subjects into faithful citizens of the empire willing to serve their king and emperor. This task was even more difficult taken into account the general mistrust generated by the long wars, which caused diseases, famine and hopelessness among the natives. In this particular historical context, one can rightly claim that the status of Transylvania was rather special. For a protestant state that used to be the military ally of the Ottomans would not easily obtain the confidence and trust of the Habsburg administration.

However, Transylvania at the end of the 17th century represented more than a strategically important region, or a military base to launch (counter) attacks against the shrinking Ottoman Empire. It was first of all an important protestant cultural center. Excepting the Netherlands, it was the only European state where English Puritanism was received and assimilated into the spirituality of Calvinist communities. Although the political agenda and radicalism of English Puritanism could not be totally applied to a feudal state like the Principality, yet the cultural impact in terms of devotional literature and theology was remarkable. The Hungarian Calvinist-Puritan religiosity, by the time Cserei had the chance to acquire it, had been the leading spiritual trend in Transylvania for some forty years.⁷⁶ Even though Puritanism has never become the official doctrine or policy of the Calvinist Church in

⁷⁶ Within the tradition of Hungarian literary history the reception of English Puritanism in the Hungarian Kingdom and the Principality of Transylvania has been soundly debated starting from the mid 20th century. Graeme Murdock is the representative of English historical scholarship interested in the history of Hungarian Calvinism. Pál Berg, *Angol hatások tizenhetedik századi irodalmunkban* (Budapest: 1946); László Makkai, *A magyar puritánusok harca a feudalizmus ellen* (Budapest: 1952); József Bodonhelyi, *Az angol puritanizmus lelki élete és magyar hatásai* (Debrecen: 1942); Attila Molnár, *A "protestáns etika" Magyarországon* (Debrecen: Ethnica, 1994); and Graeme Murdock, "Calvinist Catechizing and Reformed community identity", in Maria Craciun, Ovidiu Ghitta, Graeme Murdock eds., *Confessional Identity in East-Central Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002,) 81-98.

the Principality of Transylvania, Presbyterian ideas about church organization,⁷⁷ or patterns of Puritan practice of piety were fairly well promoted by the contemporary catechisms, sermon, prayers and devotional literature.

The first translation of Lewis Bayley's *Practice of Piety* in 1636,⁷⁸ was followed by a number of translations and compilations of English Puritan authors. The Latin works of William Perkins and William Ames were republished by Hungarian and Transylvanian publishers. Furthermore, peregrination made it possible not only to experience English Puritanism in its natural habitat, but often Hungarian students had the chance to take the courses of, for instance, William Ames at the University of Franeker.⁷⁹ Perkins and Ames became very soon the main sources⁸⁰ of Hungarian theological training. János Apáczai Csere in

⁷⁷ Pál Medgyesi, who was a moderate representative of Presbyterianism, dedicated a whole book of the issue. Pál Medgyesi, *Dialogus Politicus-ecclesiasticus*, (Bártfa: 1650).

⁷⁸ Bayley's book was translated by Pál Medgyesi, one of the leaders of Hungarian Puritanism. The translation proved to be a great success, during the 17th century had some 7 edition. Cserei also owned one item of this book from 1712. (Pál Medgyesi, *Praxis Pietatis Azaz: Kegyesség-gyakorlás* (Debrecen: 1636).

⁷⁹ János Tolnai Dali attended Ames's theological lectures. This influence soon turned into a personal relation, since Tolnai Dali was accepted in the Hartlib-circle. Not only Ames, but even the Check Comenius was a member of this prestigious society. (Klára Koltay, "Perkins és Ames recepciója Magyarországon 1660-ig," *Studia Litteraria*, (1991) vol. XXVIII, 99–114).

⁸⁰ At the end of the century the most important works of both Ames and Perkins were translated, reedited or compiled in the works of Hungarian theologians. Consequently, 2 works of Amesius were translated into Hungarian, two other Latin works were reedited and several compilations were made, which refer to him as a source. AMESIUS:

István Telki-Bányai, *Angliai Puritanismus, Avagy Kiváltképpen való Tudományok azoknak, kik Angliában a Puritanusok között (a mint közönségesen neveztetnek) legkeményebbeknek tartatnak. Melly ennek előtte Deák nyelven kibocsáttatott AMESIUS WILLYAM Szent írás magyarázó Doctor által: mostan pedig Magyar nyelvre fordíttatott TELKI BANYAI ISTVAN által* (Utrecht: 1654); István Szentgyörgyi, *Jo cselekedetek gyemant koeve. Az az: AMESIUS VILLYÁM Sz: Írás magyarázó Doctornak a' jó cselekedetekroel irt tractája, melly a' Reformáta Vallásnak igasságának abban a' valóságos jó cselekedeteknek mivoltának megmutatására Prédikációkban kibocsáttatott. Sz: GYOERGI P. ISTVAN által* (Kolozsvár: 1678); (Guilelmus)Amesius, *De Conscientia, Et Ejus Jure, vel Casibus. Libri Quinque. Editio Novissima. Job. 34. 29. Quum ipse tranquillat, quis inquietabit? & quum abscondit faciem, quis contemplantur eum? Debrecini. Per Stephanum Töltesi* (Debrecen: 1685); (Guilielmus) Amesius, *Medulla Theologica, Editio Novissima. Ab Avthore Ante obitum recognita & variis in locis aucta. Debrecini, Per Stephanum Töltesi* (Debrecen: 1685); György Martonfalvi, *Sz. I. M. D. és a' Debreczeni Collegium Professora Taneto és Czafolo Theologiaja: Mellyet Amesius és Vendelinus szerint irt azoknak kedvéért, a' kik az igaz Theologiat, és Vallást, hamar kívánnják meg-tanulni: és mellyet, ezen jó végért, a' Debreczeni Collegium, a' maga költségén nyomtatott-ki* (Debrecen: 1679). PERKINSIUS:

Ama Szent Írás fejtegetesben hatalmas és igen tudos doctornak, G. Perkinsusnak A lelki-ismeretnek akadekirol írott drága szép tanításának első könyvében az akarmi okbol meg-félemllet és rettegő lelki esmeretnek meg-vigasztalására és gyógyítására[!] le-tött istenes orvoslasi, transl. Mihály Tsepregi-Turkovitz (Amsterdam: 1648); János T. Iratosi, *Az ember eletének bodogul valo igazgatasának modgyáról. Wilhelmus Perkinsus, angliai*

his Encyclopedia,⁸¹ a manual used in the Protestant College of Kolozsvár, wrote the theology chapter solely based upon the theology of Ames. Count Miklós Bethlen, one of Apáczai's students, recalled this moment in his memories

As for theology, he [Apáczai] was teaching us Amesius.⁸²

Yet, it is important to underline one of the particular features of Hungarian and especially Transylvanian Puritanism, namely a certain regionalism amalgamated with a piety and confessionism heavily influenced by predestination. It is this regionalism, I believe, that provided the contemporary inhabitants of the Principality with a sense of distinct identity, which could emerge into a proto-nationalistic and patriotic discourse of representation at certain historical moment. It is almost certain that the term of *Transilvanism*, mostly associated nowadays with Transylvania between the two world wars, might have had important historical antecedents such as the protestant regionalism of the early modern period.

2. 1. The Csereis

Mihály's most important ancestor, Balas Cserei saved the life of the Hungarian King Sigismund in 1396, at Nicopolis. His bravery did not only consist in killing the Ottoman who

theologusnak irasából magyar nyelvre fordittatot Iratosi T. Janos thoronyai praedikátor által (Lőcse: 1637); János C. Kecskeméti, *Catholicvs reformatvs, az az egynehany vetelkődes ala vettetet hitnek agazatinak magyarázattya, mely meg mutattya az igaz kerezyen Annyszentegyháznak, menijben eggvezni kölyön az romai anyaszentegyházzal, menijben tüle különbözni... mely irattatot először angliai nyelven Guilielmus Perkinsus Anglus által, az után fordittatot hispaniai nyelvre Guilielmus Massanustul, harmadszor déákul egy fő, bölcs, tudos embertül. Mostan immár magyarra fordittatot Ketskemeti C. Ianos vngvari praedikátor által* (Kassa 1620).

⁸¹ János Apáczai Csere, *Magyar encyclopaedia, az az minden igaz es hasznos böltseségnek szep rendbe foglalása és magyar nyelven világra botsátása Apatzai Tsere Janos által...*(Utrecht: 1650).

⁸² "Publice a theológiában Amesiusnak a Medulláját... tanított(a)." (*Kemény János és Bethlen Miklós művei*, ed. Éva V. Windisch, (Budapest: Szépirodalmi Könyvkiadó, 1980), 552).

had attacked the King, but while they were retreating he fed Sigismund with grains. For his bravery he was worthily rewarded. Sigismund ennobled him, and also gave him several villages and lands in the region of *Erdővidék*, *Barót* and *Nagyajta*. Furthermore, the King gave Balas Cserei a coat of arms envisaging a soldier who holds in his right hand a sword with a head spit on its top, and in his left holds three ears of wheat. The story is almost symbolical, because it suggests that the members of the Cserei family accomplished social promotion due to their military virtues and faithfulness from a feudal point of view.

This was probably unchanged during the centuries, because all the generations before Mihály Cserei were born in a feudal society, and had to survive according to feudal mentalities. Furthermore, since they were all proud representatives of the privileged *natio siculica*⁸³, they were naturally inclined toward warfare and military service. None of them had tried any other career, because if they did not go to war, they would become so called “familiaris”⁸⁴ in the service of a high aristocrat. Cserei’s father, János provides a relevant example for this career pattern. First, he joined Prince Ákos Barcsai’s court as a valet, and then he offered his services to the new Prince Mihály Apafi. After he married he was appointed the Captain of fortress Fogaras. Then, unfortunately, he was put in prison because of his alleged participation in a conspiracy against Prince Apafi. Although his complicity was never proved, he spent almost eight years in prison.

⁸³ The székely/szekler communities, who were living along the borderland and organized into *sedes*, did not have to pay taxes, because they participated always in the military expedition of the principality. In fact, their social organization up to the 15th century, reflected military principles, since their society consisted of *primipili* and *pedites*, that is two types of weapon, cavalry and infantry. (István György Tóth, "Privileged Peoples in Transylvanian Society: Saxones and Szeklers" in *A Concise History of Hungary* ed. István György Tóth (Budapest: Corvina-Osiris, 2005), 266-267.)

⁸⁴ This is the typically Hungarian version of clientelism, which still functioned according to feudal principles. The young noblemen, especially those who had lost their lands and they held only the titles, were often engaged at richer aristocrats to undertake all kinds of military or even diplomatic duties. The longer period they had spent, the more intimate relation united them with their patron, who not just paid them, but helped them to obtain a good marriage or any other means for social promotion. (András Koltai, introduction to *Magyar udvari rendtartás. Utasítások és rendeletek*, ed. András Koltai, (Budapest: Osiris, 2001), 7-13.

These difficult times coincide with Mihály Cserei's childhood. After he was born in 1667 in Nagy Ajta the family moved to Fogaras. This is where he spent his early childhood and started his studies. While his father was in prison his Catholic mother Judit Cserei sent him to the Protestant College of Udvarhely. It is this College that led to the foundation of his extraordinary knowledge and transformed him into a professional reader and writer.⁸⁵ He studied from 1678 to April 9 1685 under the guidance of the Reformed professors István Letenyei and János Rozgóni. Though he wished to continue his studies abroad, his newly liberated and impoverished father had other plans for him in his mind.

Consequently, following the tradition of the family, Cserei was sent to be a valet at Mihály Teleki's court. After a year and a half, under the pretext of an illness, he left in 1687. He, again in the spirit of his ancestors, was oriented toward the army. Cserei's military experiences (1687-1691) ended up in a most memorable way. After he had survived the battle of Zernyest (August of 1690) he decided to join Thököly's army, but he would be soon disappointed by the famous *kuruc* army and their leader. Therefore, in January 1691 he surrendered to the Habsburgs. In 1692 he became the *secretarius* of the Catholic Count István Apor. After a period of six years he managed to consolidate his social status, consequently, he

⁸⁵ The remnants of his library, in which can be identified the items acquired while he used to study at the Protestant College, are suggestive. If one takes a look at the books originating from this period of 1678-1685, will surely realize that Cserei, very consciously, strove to gather a little library consisting of Latin and Hungarian books covering a large area from theology, logic, rhetoric to literature. The books also contain notes referring to the precise date of their acquisition. After each book I will add in brackets this note:

Pál Keresztúri, *Fel sördült Keresztyen ... az Isten beszédénec ama tiszta tején, a mennyei titkoknac tanulásában ditsiretessen nevedék ... hurré ad Kereszturi Pal* (Várad: 1641). (Est Michaelis Cserej comparantis Udvarhely Anno 1684 Flor. 1 Den. 38); Albert Molnár Szenczi, *Discursus de summo bono, az legfőbb iorol ... Mellyet ... Magyarrá fordított Sz. M. A* (Löcse: 1630). (Michael Cserey Anno 1681 Die 7 Novembris); Johannes Sambucus, *Emblemata et aliquot nummi antiqui operis Joan. Sambuci* (Antverpiae: 1569). (Est Michaelis Cserey Emptus in Anno 1680 die 9 Augusti.); Bartholomeus Keckermann, *Systema logicae tribus libris...* (Hanoviae: 1606). (Est Michaelis Cserey Emptus den 66 Anno 1682 die 3 februarii.); Philippus Melanchton, *Epigrammatum libri tres collecti ab Hilbrando Grathusio Uffleniensi* (Vitebergae: 1560). (Possidet hunc librum Michael Cserey ex donatione Dni Thomae Ugron Udvarhelyini Anno 1685.); Manutius Aldus, *Phrases Latinae, germanicae et gallicae* (1684). (Michaelis Cserey de Nagy Ajta 1684.); András Szilágyi Tarpai, *Libellus Repudii et divortii Christiani...* (Sárospatak: 1667). (Michaelis Cserey de Nagiajta Cui Deus Providebit Ao. 1685.); Mihály Buzinkai, *Compendii Logici Libri Duo...* (Sárospatak: 1668). (Michaelis Cserey de Nagi Ajta in Collegio Udvarhelyiano Anno 1684).

decided to marry Ilona Kun in 1697. This was, surely, a happy marriage, in spite of the great difficulties they had to endure, especially during the rebellion led by Rákóczi Ferenc II from 1703 to 1711. Cserei decided to remain faithful to the Habsburgs, thus all his values, estates and houses were plundered by the revengeful *kuruc* army.

His father died in 1712, but worse was to come. His beloved wife died in childbirth in September 1719. During this marriage they had eight children, but only three of them survived. In 1720 he decided to marry again. This time he did not find that home felicity, he used to share with his first wife. Susana Szeki was much younger than her husband, which might have been one of the main sources of conflict between them. However, they had two children together and many grandchildren. The calamities and disasters did not avoid him for the rest of his life. During the 1710s his worldly possessions were destroyed by fire on three separate occasions. After 1726 the ravages of the Black Death led to loss livestock and serfs. According to Cserei's account, there were villages, which were totally depopulated.⁸⁶ After he had ritually prepared himself for leaving this mortal world⁸⁷ he was to receive a last painful blow. Although he lived some ten years more, he had to spend eight out of them, in bed.⁸⁸

2. 1. 1. Mihály Cserei's Youth (1690-1697)

Although, Cserei referred to this period of his life several times in his different manuscripts, he usually repeated a stereotyped narrative consisting of three or four data. Yet, there are two sources, which could add some extra information to this superficial image of his

⁸⁶ Cserei, *The Biggest Diary*, 10v.

⁸⁷ I refer to his *Apology*, which was written when he was 80.

⁸⁸ This information comes to us from the diary of his son, György Cserei. He was the last Cserei, because this particular branch of the family died out. The manuscript is available at the Lucian Blaga Library of the Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca. *Diarium vitae aerumnose Georgii Cserei senioris de Nagy Ajta 1756*, (MS. 345.)

youth. Even though, these calendars from this period of 1690 and 1697 were not meant to be narratives, they set forth a very detailed survey of Cserei's everyday life. While these calendars were often filled up almost simultaneously with written remarks about the experienced events, Cserei's first printed work; the *Historia* alluded sparsely to his youth after almost twenty years, from the point of view of a 44 years old man. The calendars mostly and the *Historia* partially, completed by some other sources, could provide the most exhaustive *microhistorical reconstruction* of this period. I will bring forward the most relevant moments of the period from 1690 to 1697, available in the aforementioned sources, in order to have a basic context for the interpretation of Cserei's passage from youth to adulthood.

Since Cserei had joined the Transylvanian army under the command of General Boldizsár Macskási back in 1689, the following year he was still within its contingent. During the first half of the year 1690 the military operation ceased, therefore he could spend these months at home in Nagy Ajta. He lived the typical life of the petty nobility, traveling a lot but mostly in the neighborhoods, attending to business or just keeping social contacts with other nobles of his class. Accordingly, the Calendar from 1690 gives an impression of intense social activity and numerous small trips as Cserei attended several weddings and funerals. In the July⁸⁹ of 1690 he participated in the military expedition which covered the following six month.

It was certainly a crucial moment, when Imre Thököly defeated the mixed Habsburg and Transylvanian army at Zernyest, on august 21.st Cserei initially took part in the battle to fight against Thököly, but suddenly changed his mind and joined the *kuruc* army. Thus, we find

⁸⁹ Since the blank pages, containing Cserei's notes, inserted after every printed page were not numbered I had to elaborate a logical practice of quotation. First of all, I have given numbers to the blank pages, recto and verso. Consequently, when I refer to certain notes, I always mention the year, month and the number of the blank page. For instance a note referring to this event occurred in July 16, 1690, will have the following reference: 1690/Juli IIb.

him as a *kuruc* on Thököly's side only after 48 hours.⁹⁰ The glorious moments of early September, such as Thököly's ceremonial declaration as Prince of Transylvania, quickly passed. The Prince and his irregular army did not dare to confront the superiorly organized Habsburg forces, thus they gradually gave up the conquered territories and left Transylvania. Those must have been terrible moments for the young Cserei, since the army did not have any kinds of supplies or proper equipment for winter times. At the beginning of 1691, after a prolonged period of senseless wanderings and deprivations in Walachia, Cserei, together with some friends, decided to desert the *kuruc* army. After a successful attempt he finally arrived home on February the 7th, 1691.⁹¹

After having surrendered himself to the Habsburgs, he did not have any other choice but to try to obtain some employment within the military administration of the region. Consequently, he met on May 30 general Gabriani for this reason.⁹² He was co-opted in the administration with a minor responsibility. His task was to assist the transport and collection of supplies for the Habsburg army. The second part of the year passed without any extraordinary event, he restarted his former monotonous life. He might have been also dissatisfied with it, especially because he could not assure for himself financial independence; therefore he paid several visits⁹³ to the Catholic Count István Apor. He was one of the most influential and richest men in Transylvania, who due to his allegiance to the Catholic Church was favored by the Habsburgs too. Moreover, Cserei was a distant relative of Apor because his grandmother was the half-sister of the Count.

⁹⁰ The next reference after the battle, which makes clear that he became *kuruc* is written on August 24. "The Army of the Prince stopped at Nyír" ("A fejedelem hada szállt Nyírhez." 1690/August IXb).

⁹¹ Cserei added a short prayer to the date of escape in his Calendar.

"Blessed be the God and hallowed for ever in heaven and earth for his liberating grace." ("..as ő meg szabadító csodalatos kegyelmességert örökkön tiszteltessék és dicsértessék mennyben és az földön." 1691/Februarius IIb).

⁹² 1691/Junius VIa.

⁹³ First on February the 9th then on February the 19th. (1692/Februarius IIa-IIb.) Cserei was to be employed by Apor as his secretary later on in May, 1692.

Although the young Cserei was probably not thrilled by his new role as a *familiaris*, the Count was his only chance for social promotion and welfare. Not only the family ties, but especially Cserei's excellent skills in writing and reading both in Latin and Hungarian convinced the Count that the young man could be a helpful, intimate secretary organizing his correspondence and secret affairs. However, Cserei became very sick in June, and almost died, thus, for the rest of the year he stayed at his father's house postponing to move to his patron's residence. It was soon to happen.

Strangely enough, the most striking event of 1693, the first major conflict with his father, did not leave any obvious traces in the notes preserved in his Calendar. This time the *Historia* provides us not only with details concerning an additional episode from his youth, but points to some fine insights bearing special significance. There is a special episode that, recounted by Cserei after 15 years, was intended to be an anecdote, but in fact brought to the surface a father son conflict, which probably had some antecedents discreetly held back by both of them. Cserei while narrating this incident declared about himself that he used to be a ... A crude and unworthy young man⁹⁴

Cserei's father having learnt that his son had a love-affair with the daughter of one of their serfs intervened drastically by imprisoning the girl. Cserei was informed about the happenings on his way back from Brassó after he had consumed a remarkable quantity of alcohol. In his inebriated state, judging hastily the situation, attacked the guardians of his love and heroically liberated her. This course of action caused a huge scandal and only the influence of István Apor rescued Cserei from this delicate situation. But his father could not be swayed from his decision, he simply repudiated his son. Although, Cserei was not technically disinherited he had to move out from his father's household.

⁹⁴ Cserei, *Historia*, 228.

After this incident, Cserei came home very rarely, and he spent most of his time at the disposal of Count Apor, who gave him several missions. Thus, he started to travel to various destinations, such as, Thorda, Kolozsvár, Marosvásárhely, and Enyed. Although, the continuous travels must have been exhausting experiences, he was not complaining, because he could also construct for his own benefit a new social network. Moreover, being the intimate secretary of Apor, he had access to persons, places and information otherwise unreachable for a man of his condition.

The next two years, 1694 and 1695 were again mostly filled by travels and missions. As part of Apor's administrative personnel he participated in the weddings and funerals of the most important aristocrats of the time. For instance, he was present at the wedding of Mihály Apafi II,⁹⁵ who never had the chance to occupy the throne of his father, the former Prince. However, Apor trusted him more and more, so he had the support of a very influential man, therefore he could have hoped for a good marriage and social promotion. The *Historia* provides again an episode,⁹⁶ which was never mentioned in any other manuscripts by Cserei. Even though, this time the scandal is not related to a forbidden love-affair, the fact that Cserei did not mention it in his calendars suggests the existence of an internal censorship.

While Cserei and Apor were staying in Szeben for a week from May the 2nd to 10th 1695, one night at supper the Count started teasing the young men at the table. The Count argued that he as a young man used to be more restless and trouble-maker, whereas the youth of the present day were too lazy or just simply coward. Cserei and his fellows decided to prove by all means the opposite; therefore they went out and started a quarrel with almost anyone they met. Moreover, Cserei carried away by the events, decided to teach a lesson to the guardian

⁹⁵ 1695/JuniusVIa.

⁹⁶ Cserei, *Historia*, 244.

watching in front of the house of the mayor. The scandal, again, was unavoidable. Apor did his best to save his young valets and confidential men.

Concerning the events of the year 1696 we have as a main source only the *Historia*, since the Calendar of 1696 with its alleged written notes has been lost. Another source for this period can be the unpublished correspondence of Count István Apor.⁹⁷ Huge amounts of Hungarian and Latin letters, disposition or notification were sent by Apor in this year, but he probably just signed and sealed them. Both the original and the copy were written up by Cserei. These two volumes of copies actually point out the roles and tasks of the secretary. Cserei's faithfulness was doubled not only by outstanding skills, but he also had a beautiful handwrite, which really made easier to read the letters of...Apor. The references to locations and dates of the letters suggest that Cserei, just like in former years, spent his time mostly in Apor's company, or traveled with special missions. At the end of the year he was to receive his first important promotion. Count Apor was appointed by the diet the Treasurer of the state. The Count asked for a position of *Secretarius juratus*, in order to offer this position to Cserei, who was involved in all of Apor's businesses, so that he could have a regular salary paid by the Habsburg office of administration. Cserei was given this job, and promised a salary.

Cserei in 1697 was thirty. In less than five years, he had succeeded in securing for himself a permanent status and employment with, at least, the promise of a regular salary. His faithful and long service as a *familiaris* represented further arguments for an optimistic view of the future. He decided to make a decisive step. On May the 10th 1697 his betrothal to Ilona Kun took place. After five months, on October 22 their wedding was organized by Apor at his residence. Cserei was so impressed by the participating number of high aristocrats that he

⁹⁷ The manuscripts are available at the National Archive of Romania, Cluj-Napoca. This set of manuscripts are basically two folio seize books, in which all the letters sent by Apor were copied by his secretary Mihály Cserei in the period of 1696 -1700.(Fond Familial Korda, Fasc. 50, vol 1-2, 1r-457r).

proudly noted their names in his calendar.⁹⁸ After the wedding, the new couple paid a visit to Ilona's parents in Kál, and then at the end of the year they went to Nagy Ajta. Probably, after a very long time, this was the very first time that Cserei was happily expected home by both of his parents. Although, the restless young man even after the conflict occurred in 1693 went home from time to time, this time was different. The first born and just married son, a real grown-up *man*, was to come home.

⁹⁸ 1697/October Xb.

Chapter 3. Representations

This chapter, relying in the previously introduced contexts as backgrounds, will focus upon representations. In order to decipher the complex motivations and ongoing anthropological processes of self-representation, I will provide a *profound explanation* meant to explore the mental backgrounds of the represented actions and experiences. First, I will evaluate the selection and representation of events in my main sources, the calendars, then, I will engage into an analyses centered upon the components of Cserei's mental world. I will conclude with the promotion of a comprehensive explanation that assembles into a relatively coherent experience the disseminating fragments of actions, meanings and impressions noted in the calendars, and confirmed by the other sources as well.

The two most important sources for this period of 1690-1697 are the more or less coherent account of the calendars and the narrative provided by the *Historia*. These two narratives are two different approaches to the same reality. Their differences, in terms of social, anthropological or even poetical contexts have already been reflected. However, if one attempts to evaluate the process of historical representation in the calendars, will surely come to the conclusion that there are some inherent mechanisms of selecting, promoting and representing events, experiences or information. Cserei young man's discourse in the calendars confronted with the grown-up Cserei's discourse in the *Historia*, not only illustrates the different interpretation of social reality, but it suggestively points out how the patterns of intimacy and privacy influence the process of representation. For the calendars are not only the sources of Cserei's youth, they are artifacts, fictitious texts referring to a particular way of promoting an image about the self, that is shaping an identity.

3. 1. The Religious Young Man

The most striking feature of Cserei's discourse in the calendars is the permanent use of a set of stereotypes meant to refer to his religiosity. Cserei usually mentioned God as the Almighty, just, and sometimes forgiving Father, whereas he cast himself into the role of the sinner, not worthy of God's love, help and grace. This kind of self-fashioning⁹⁹ convincingly illustrates how devotional patterns are imbibed and applied to individual existence. Cserei's concern for divine surveillance, that is this particular *coram deo* state of the godly man, turned his life into a permanent fight against temptations or a desperate struggle to follow the right way. This attribute of his spirituality was not only expressed in a number of short prayers written generally at the beginning of each calendar¹⁰⁰, but also while narrating certain episodes of everyday experiences. On June 9th, 1692 he fell ill and he recovered only after a long period. Cserei's description heavily displayed the religious vocabulary of this self-fashioning process:

June the 9th I have fallen ill and I have stayed in bed for 5 weeks. Nobody believed that I would ever recover, yet the merciful God took pity on me. After having received helpful medicines, it was He who has cured me. I got up from bed first on July 13. Hallowed be His name, blessed be He together [...] with His Son and the Holy Spirit from here to Eternity, Amen.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ I am relying on Stephen Greenblatt's term, who grasps the process of self-fashioning in the following way: "... it describes the practice of parents and teachers; it is linked to manners or demeanor, particularly that of elite; it may suggest hypocrisy or deception, an adherence to mere outward ceremony; it suggests representation of one's nature or intention in speech or actions (...) it invariably crosses the boundaries between the creations of literary characters, the shaping of one's own identity." Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-fashioning from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago–London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 3. Greenblatt's concept was applied often to describe the process of shaping a religious identity in early modern Protestantism, especially in Puritanism. *Protestant Identities. Religion, Society, Self-Fashioning in Post-Reformation England*, eds. Muriel McClendon, Joseph Ward, and Michael MacDonald (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Margo Todd, "Puritan Self-Fashioning: The Diary of Samuel Ward," *Journal of British Studies*, July, (1992), 236–264.; John Martin, "Inventing Sincerity, Refashioning Prudence: The Discovery of the Individual in Renaissance Europe," *American Historical Review*, December, (1997) 1309–1342.

¹⁰⁰ There is a short, written prayer on the very first page of each calendar; all of them were strictly related to the idea of new beginning. Cserei, almost invariably, at the beginning of each year, basically, asked for the same favors, a dominant request is the one related to the forgiving of sins.

¹⁰¹ "9. Junij Dél után betegedtem megh, egész öt hétig feküdtem súlyos nyavlyában, ugj hogj senki sem reménlette meg gjogyulásomot, de az irgalmas isten Kinek szemej tellyesek könyörületességgel sok hasznos orvosságok után megjogított, kezdettem ...Járni 13 Julyi, kiért ő Felségének legyen dicsiret dicsőség, hálaadás birodalom és orszagh szent Fiával és Szent lelkivel együt mától fogva mindörökké ámen." (1692/JuniVIIb).

Sometimes, without any clear connection to certain events, he just felt the need to produce a few verses expressing his vision of the godly man. After having come back from a journey on June 20th 1693, he wrote a small poem

He who trusts in God is a happy man. / For no one has ever been disappointed by Him/ where human forces proves their limits/ Divine power breaks through.¹⁰²

In the same way, he emphasized the importance of obedience that is the invariable consent to all of God's decisions without any intention of questioning or revolt.¹⁰³ Despite this somehow, mechanical way of enumerating¹⁰⁴ and promoting these stereotypes, they have a major importance in the shaping of the individual religiosity and the construction of confessional identity. For, these stereotypes, in fact, are moral, religious and ethical standards and they compose and represent the prototypes of the ideal godly, in Cserei's vision of course, Protestant man. Moreover, these stereotypes are easily attainable basic components of a confessional tradition, thus they made possible the identification with an ideal, with a community or a confession. After having found and assimilated the individual and collective pattern for confessional identity, the early modern Christian found his/her religious and confessional identity. The next step was to delineate him/herself from *the others*, because the learning of otherness made possible a more thorough identification with the chosen pattern. This is Cserei's case as well.

¹⁰² "Boldog ember ki Istenben bizik Mert soha ő benne meg nem csatkozok/Emberi segitseg hol meg fogyatzokiz/Isteni hatalom ot mingiart kitetczik." (1693/JuniVIb.)

¹⁰³ In the summer of 1694 he expressed his idea about religious obedience with the help of a small Latin excerpt from the Pater Noster prayer sentence: *Fiat voluntas tua Domine, sicut in coelo et in terra.* (1694/JuniVIa). At the end of the year of 1693, he had probably made a retrospective consideration of all his deeds and he finally came to a very similar conclusion: *Quem Deus amat etiam flagellat. Sit nomen Domini propterea benedicendum.* (1693/DecemberXIb). The last notes from December in the calendar of 1695 expressed the same idea of obedience: *Justus es Domine et justa sunt judicia tua, o Domine!* (1695/DecemberXIIa).

¹⁰⁴ Cserei simply filled up a whole page of his Calendar from 1698, with the wisdoms of Seneca (*Aurea dicta Senecae*). (1698/MartiusIIIa).

Having participated in a Catholic mass on May the 21st 1693, Cserei pointed out the different character of Catholic preaching, declaring that the priest talked in a new and unknown way like lawyers did during a trial.¹⁰⁵ The comment clearly refers to that anthropological process which is often displayed in communities where people of different religion, race, and ethnicity must live together. The idea is simple: the better you grasp the cultural or confessional otherness, the more you assimilate your own confessional identity. Consequently, for a better identification or better understanding of the self, it is necessary to compare oneself to the other, to take account of otherness so that the resulting contrast would strengthen the initial identity. It is this anthropological mechanism that was functioning in Cserei's approach to Catholicism.

Another important experience which was probably shared by all his contemporaries is the sadness and fear triggered by awareness to the misery of human condition. The vulnerability and insecurity of the individual was promoted extensively by early modern Protestant neostoicism,¹⁰⁶ and as an antidote it was recommended the *constantia*, a kind of religious meditation combined with the ethical wisdoms of stoical tradition. But in Cserei's case it seems that beyond the "officially" pessimistic view of human existence, there was a powerful pressure caused by fears and sadness. These tormenting impressions are difficult to interpret because they were probably caused not solely by the crisis of Cserei's family life, they might have been the signs of his religious uneasiness.

¹⁰⁵ 1693/MajusVb.

¹⁰⁶ The most popular product of European neostoicism was the book written by Justus Lipsius, entitled *De Constantia Libri Duo*. After its first edition in Leiden (1584) it was translated into Hungarian by János Laskai. (János Laskai, *Iustus Lipsiusnak az alhatatosságról írt két könyve. Kikben főkeppen (Lipsiusnak és Lángiusnak) a közönséges nyomorságokban-valo beszélgetések foglaltatik. Mostan magyarra fordítottak Laskai János által* (Debrecen: 1641). This Hungarian translation coincided with a larger reception of neostoicism in Hungarian culture. The famous poet, Bálint Balassi's disciple, János Rímay was also one of the most important representative of this philosophy. The neostoic ideas promoted by the poems and prose of Rímay might have easily influenced Cserei as well, because he had in his library a volume of Rímay's poems. Moreover Cserei acquired a volume of Seneca's complete works in May 30, 1690, so this could have been another important source of his stoic predisposition. (Seneca, Lucius Annaeus, *Opera Omnia* (Amsterdam: 1628).

It is arguable that, when he referred to March 1697 as *dies infoelicis, tristes*¹⁰⁷, he expressed only his disquiet concerning his difficult relation with his father. He might have also alluded to a persistent emotion of religious anxiety. Cserei's unexplainable sadness was often paralleled by a certain type of fear. It is this fear, which had its source in both the (high) literary tradition of the Reformation¹⁰⁸ and the oral sources of popular beliefs, and which also had a major influence upon all early modern culture, by alluding to the end of the world. Cserei was a child of his age therefore; therefore, it is no wonder that in his *ouillage mental* the signs, the unusual happenings constituted the ultimate proofs of the ever approaching end. Jean Delumeau rightly pointed out that fear as one of the basic mentalities of human societies can be reified in this particular vision of the end. He also suggests that the financial, ecological, political or military crisis were always associated with the fearful oncoming end of the world.¹⁰⁹

Consequently, Cserei, just like all his contemporaries, paid special attention to all unusual events and phenomena. It was in November of 1697, when he noticed some strange signs in the sky and he was totally convinced that he saw a coded message sent by God.¹¹⁰ Cserei also took the time to put down those strange events or phenomena, which he did not see but were told to him by trustworthy men. Thus, we can learn from his calendars that in the Kingdom of Hungary in the year of 1692,¹¹¹ there had been all kinds of frightening miracles, fires and comets that were seen in the sky. These strange signs were considered by contemporary literate or illiterate people as signs foretelling the apocalypse. These clear signs

¹⁰⁷ 1697/Martius IIIa.

¹⁰⁸ The instant occurrence of apocalypse was one of the major concerns of Melanchton as well. He had not only taught history, but relied on Carion's German chronicle, published a book, which was to bring about the eschatological thinking in Protestantism for the following two centuries. *Chronicon Carionis latine expositum... a Philippo Melanphone*, Witebergae: MDLVIII.

¹⁰⁹ Jean, Delumeau, *Frica în Occident (secolele XIV–XVIII). O cetate asediată* (București: Editura Meridiane, 1986) vol. I., 34-38.

¹¹⁰ 1697/NovemberXIb. He also mentioned in his calendar from 1691 a terrible plague of locusts in the principality of Transylvania, which also proved the approaching of the Apocalypse.

¹¹¹ 1692/FebruariusIIIa.

of the Apocalypse to come were excellent promoters of the idea that repentance and the practice of piety were the sole activities which should be undertaken by believers in order to survive Doomsday. Nonetheless, the doctrine of double predestination and the obsessive return of the idea of the apocalyptic end of the world had been strongly linked to a terrifying view of the near future. Only those people could feel safe, who had already been convinced of their election (*certitudo salutis*) for eternal happiness.

It is possible to conclude that the period spent at the Protestant College of Udvarhely left a deep mark on Cserei's religious identity. It seems that while a schoolboy (1678-1685), he had probably assimilated the Calvinist and Puritan written tradition and spirituality of the epoch. This impact is vividly illustrated by his habit of representing his religiosity relying on the *loci communes* originating from the mandatory readings of his former studies. He also used these stereotypes to delineate his confessional belonging from other confessions. Consequently, the period from 1690 to 1697 as well, depicted in his calendars, promote a similar image of a religiosity built upon the Puritan tradition displaying a strongly expressed confessionalism. Yet, besides the assimilated frames of representation and the censored insights of his piety there must have been a discrepancy. Although his religious anxiety can be interpreted as a consequence of his agitated family life, yet he might have been preoccupied by some religious concerns related not only to his youth proper, but to his human existence. This particular problem will be revisited on the fourth chapter.

3. 2. The Other Cserei

When comparing the discourses of the Calendars and the *Historia* it seems clear that there was an inner censorship, relying on some particular considerations, which determined the

selection of events. We have already seen that the calendars have simply skipped two incidents recorded by the *Historia*, namely the conflict with his father (1693) and the scandal in Szeben (1695). One can argue that probably the criterion of *intimacy* was the main cause of this selection. A further event of 1698 recorded only in the *Historia*, was the death of his child,¹¹² which passed without any written reaction in the calendar of 1698. It is also worth mentioning that this censorship functioned at a different level as well. Sometimes the events were not totally eliminated, but a vague hint or allusion referred to the experience or consequences they might have caused.

The conflict between Cserei and his father it is not literally mentioned in his Calendar of 1693, but a strange poem is written at the time of the conflict. The poem, in the context of his repudiation from his father's house, does contain some suggestive lines:

There are moments when you cannot do anything, / but subject yourself and endure peacefully/ it has no use the extreme sorrow / because hope is the source of confidence /... Maybe one day all those who suffer, will be happy again.¹¹³

One can conclude that the criterion of intimacy and privacy may well be invoked, but there might have probably been a more complex explanation for this particular selection and representation of events. A micro level survey of the calendars surely provides a plausible explanation. A good illustration of this issue can be the interpretation at small scale of his habit of traveling.

For Cserei traveled quite a lot while he was in the service of Apor. He noted very carefully not only the routes he covered, but he often made references to the aim or the purpose of the travel. His written notes are so clearly put down and composed that at a careful reading

¹¹² Cserei, *Historia*, 273.

¹¹³ "Az miről nem tehet ember csak szenvedni, / Földre hajtván fejit békével kel tűrni, / Nem illik felettéb semmin is busulni, / Sőt jó reménységgel magát táplálni ...Talám még vigadnak, a kik most bánkódnak." (1693/Martius IIIb.)

one can easily realize which missions he undertook following Apor's orders, and which travels were related to his businesses or family life. Brassó was very often mentioned in his calendars, for he sometimes paid visits to Count Kálnoki or even Apor, both of them having a residence there. There were cases when Cserei just went to buy different things in this town, famous for its excellent manufacturers.¹¹⁴

Brassó, as an important trade center and the largest Saxon town of Transylvania, surely had a suburb populated by all kinds of cheap taverns and people. There must have been places where one could have played cards or dice and spent money in all possible ways. Cserei recorded in his calendars from 1691 to 1696 several trips to this city. If one delineates the strictly official journeys, there still remain several voyages without a precise purpose, and usually they coincide with a longer stay of 3-4 days or even a week.¹¹⁵ These repeated departures with a secret or at least ambiguous purpose must have been related to a pleasant pastime, since Cserei sometimes added the following remarks to his notes

I have spent some time in Brassó /Mulattam Brassóban.¹¹⁶

The verb *mulatni* (to spend) had a double meaning in Old Hungarian, it referred to both spending time, and waiting or participating, for instance, in a party, drinking and amusing oneself.

¹¹⁴ He mentioned in his calendar of 1694 that he gave a piece of gold to his mother, and she promised she would have a ring done from that in Brassó. (1694/ IXb).

¹¹⁵ He had two such trips to Brassó in 1691 staying each time 3 day, May 14-17 and November 1-3. The next year he mentioned two such travels March 5-10 and October 30-November 30. In 1693 he paid one single visit of this type, November 24-December 2. In 1694 seems that he was only once in Brassó, Augustus 16-18. In 1695 he had two travels to Brassó, between September 5-14 and November 14-19. We do not have data for 1696, because the calendar containing his note for that year has been lost.

¹¹⁶ 1691/November XIa. The following year he mentions the same period, October 30-November 1. (1692/November XIa). In 1693 spent a whole week in Brassó, and he added the well-known remark. "I have spent a whole week in Brassó." (1693/November XIa).

Furthermore, if one realizes that these mysterious trips to Brassó had ceased in the year of 1697 when he decided to marry Ilona Kun it might suggest something about the time Cserei spent there. In 1695, after having spent more than a week (!) in September from 5 to 14,¹¹⁷ upon his return he wrote a poem laden with a sense of guilt transposed into a stoic discourse:

All the pleasures were really short / all the sweetness mixed up with bitterness /...Up to now I have served this bad, mortal world / But what was my reward ?/ Sufferings, pains and sickness. /All my sorrow exhausted me. / But the only hope of my soul and body, / will be the graceful God of Heaven and Earth / for he keeps His promises / and it will be never forgotten. /...Dear Father, you'll be everything in my life.¹¹⁸

One can also recall the conflict from 1693. The main problem consisted in the fact that Cserei "being in love" with a peasant girl, that is having sexual contacts on a regular basis with that girl, could easily have illegitimate children disgracing the whole Cserei family and making it even more difficult to obtain an advantageous marriage. Therefore, we can conclude that probably these strange touring to Brassó coincided with his moments of relaxation. As Apor's secretary, he might certainly have the confidence and the financial means to allow himself a few moments of amusement, say, once or twice a year, in the company of his friends. The feeling of remorse transmitted by the poem can be explained by the fact that from religious point of view playing cards, drinking, dancing or just performing noisy, disturbing gestures, not to mention sexual contact were all very serious sins.

Cserei might have easily got into the habit of drinking while he was a *kuruc*, since Thököly and his army were famous for their drinking performances. Still, I believe, drinking was not the only sin Cserei must have committed during his days of leisure in Brassó.

¹¹⁷ 1695/September IXa.

¹¹⁸ "Igazan rovid volt minden gyönyörűség/Nagy keserűséggel teli az édesség/...Idéig ez rosz világ eleget szolgáltam / Neked ajándokon, de mi hasznát láttam? / Hanem kint, nyavalyát, bánatot kóstoltam,/ Szomorúságimban földig elbágyadtam / Az Mennynek és Földnek kegyelmes Istene / Testemnek, lelkemnek lessen már reménye / mert meg agya az ur, mit szollot igrve, /Semmi időben is nem lesz felejtve./...Te légy édes Atyám mindenem éltemben." (1695/September IXb).

The secret adventures in Brassó actually fit an image that Cserei might have wanted to keep private, since he decided to depict in the calendars mostly his experiences related to a continuous religious anxiety. The conscious construction of the self-representation by a careful selection of recorded events to be recorded, promoted the image of a young man preoccupied with his religious life and piety. Yet, at a micro level approach and due to the episodes recalled in the *Historia*, a precious insight becomes available for the microhistorian.

For the trips paid to Brassó, the conflict with his Father due to an obscure love affair, and the scandal in Szeben, were not incidental happenings. Furthermore, it might have been many other cases that were not recorded or even mentioned by Cserei in any of his manuscripts. The likely explanation is that all these incidents revolved around one major experience, the *liminality of the youth*.¹¹⁹ This period recorded in the calendars and partially in the *Historia* is a decisive anthropological passage from youth to the grown-up status, community and lifestyle. This period of passage consists often of an extreme duality in actions, gestures or self-expression. Hence it was possible for Cserei to be simultaneously dedicated to so different spiritual and bodily concerns.

According to Norbert Schindler in the early modern culture this ritual passage¹²⁰ was often experienced in group. He also claims that there were mechanisms of collective

¹¹⁹ Giovanni Levi, introduction to *Ancient and Medieval Rites of Passages. A History of Youth People in the West*, eds. Giovanni Levi and Jean-Claude Schmitt, transl. Camille Nash, (Cambridge Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1997), 2-3. Victor Turner dedicated a whole chapter to this particular problem. He envisaged this liminality as a dialectical process, which opposed the social *structure* to the *communitas*. For the concept of *communitas*, as opposed to the classic social structures such as class, clan, and family, refers to a special type of community visible only in the condition of liminality. (Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 107-144). Applied to Cserei's case, this argumentation explains the liminality experienced by Cserei. Moreover, it also provides a particular behavioral model, depicting Cserei as a liminal person, who in the *communitas* of his friends, caught in the same experience of liminality, tried to work out a solution to end this situation.

¹²⁰ Schindler argues that youth represented a *rite de passage* as Van Gennep proposed it.

"Historico-anthropological approaches that would like to be more than mere projections of current problems into the past should interpret the juvenile culture of early modern times as a kind of social moratorium, but as a phase of initiation and transition into adult status, analogous to ethnologist's rites of passage." (Norbert Schindler, "Guardians of Disorder: Rituals of Youthful Culture at the Dawn of the Modern Age" in *Ancient and Medieval*

apprenticeship deriving from the dialectic between observation of the rules and the controlled infraction of those rules.¹²¹ This is a valid remark fitting the case of the scandal in Szeben (1695), where Cserei's almost ritual bravado to attack the guardian in front of the Mayor's house, was a typical expression of disobedience performed by young men. Schindler provides us with further early modern examples when young men used violence just to demonstrate their bravery.¹²² The more familiar cases of charivary, especially the one described and interpreted by Robert Darnton¹²³ belong to the same cultural repertoire of self-representation.

It is, therefore, possible to conclude that privacy and intimacy, though they had a major role in suppressing events, experiences or thoughts, yet they were probably functioning within the limits of the inner self censorship created by Cserei, and his conscience. The main concern was not to keep secret certain events, but to hide or discretely mask an extremity of his identity that made even Cserei experience a sound sense of guilt. We should absolve him, since he was not a natural born wrongdoer, he just followed and performed some culturally and socially promoted actions and gestures. He was desperately looking for a breakthrough toward a new status, one which could have ended the liminality of his human condition as a young man.

3. 2. 1. The Components of Cserei's Mental World

In order to grasp the particular background that directly influenced the process of representation one should explore those sources which might have shaped Cserei's thoughts

Rites of Passages. A History of Youth People in the West, eds. Giovanni Levi and Jean-Claude Schmitt, transl. Camille Nash, (Cambridge Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1997), 242).

¹²¹ Schindler, *Guardians of Disorder*, 243.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 275.

¹²³ Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and Other Episodes in French Cultural History* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985).

and motivations. Two groups of sources are available for this analysis, the calendars and those books whose date of acquisition coincides with the analyzed period.

The calendars, as manuscripts contain a huge variety of written notes. Beyond the aforementioned stoic poems, prayers, and short ritual notes written at the end or beginning of the years, these calendars comprise all kinds of practical information. One could easily identify the rich influence of an early modern *oral* and *popular tradition* that pervaded the notes of the young Cserei. Thus, a fascinating world opens up, in which a Latin quotation of a most remarkable author is immediately followed by a utilitarian note reified in a recipe or a good therapy for horses or humans. Apparently, Cserei did not find any trouble in alternating elements of so-called high, aristocratic culture with elements clearly originated from the written or especially oral, popular culture. This fascinating mixture has a special significance, because it reveals something important about Cserei's use of literacy. For understanding the functions of these contrastive notes, we might have access to those mentally coordinated convictions which had motivated or oriented his acts, occasions and moments for reading and writing.

The presence of popular culture is mainly suggested by the various recipes Cserei noted down in his calendars. Due to the fact that much of the time he was traveling on horse-back, it is not surprising to see many recipes for horses, which have problems with their visions,¹²⁴ breathing¹²⁵ or just simply cannot urinate.¹²⁶ As for human diseases, as well, he had an impressive repertoire. For instance, he proposed original ways of treating flea-bite,¹²⁷ or a foot hurt by a new boot,¹²⁸ but he also had some solutions to liberate one's body from lice.¹²⁹ There is one very special type of recipe, which proves the extraordinary syncretism of the reality

¹²⁴ 1690/Martius Vb.

¹²⁵ 1690/ Aprilis VIa.

¹²⁶ 1695/ Aprilis Va.

¹²⁷ 1692/ Aprilis Vb.

¹²⁸ 1694/September IXa.

¹²⁹ 1692/Aprilis Va.

imagined and constructed by an early modern man. While analyzing Cserei's religiosity, I have already reflected upon the special expression of apocalyptic fears displayed in the calendars. It is this uncontrolled fear, which enables the microhistorian to explore and, at least, figure out that fantastic richness of the imagery¹³⁰ Cserei must have assimilated from his culture.

The Protestant Cserei was strongly convinced of a worldview haunted by the idea of predestination, often confronted with crises caused by remorse of conscience, proposes a recipe consisting of red wine and garlic for those

Whose skin was sucked by a witch.¹³¹

This example suggests that a fairly well educated young man, despite his sound theological training and predisposition to read, was still influenced by one of the most common characters of oral popular culture, namely the witch. On the other hand, it is not unusual at all, since everybody, without exception harbored this kind of thinking.¹³² Péter Pázmány, the most important leader of Hungarian Counter-Reformation was totally convinced that Luther was born after his mother had sexual contact with the devil himself.¹³³

However, according to this idea of *utilitarianism* Cserei wrote some practical advices related to his particular way of life, one dedicated to almost continuous traveling. Thus, the

¹³⁰ Robert Scribner collected and analyses the imagery of German reformation. The amazing varieties of creatures embodying the Antichrist were not only fictitious iconographic representations, but they surely belonged to the familiar figures of the typically folk imagination transmitted orally as well. Robert Scribner, *For the Sake of the Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 59-94.

¹³¹ "Ha megszínak a boszorkányok..." (1692/Februarius IIb).

¹³² J. Sears McGee came to an almost similar conclusion while he analyzed the mental world of a Late-Elizabethan English man. The duality or the extremity of popular and aristocratic tradition was also present in the discourse of this man as well. (J Sears McGee, "The mental World of Sir Richard Berkeley" in *Protestant Identities. Religion, Society, Self-Fashioning in Post-Reformation England*, eds. Muriel McClendon, Joseph Ward, and Michael MacDonald (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 94-95.

¹³³ "...azt olvasom Luther felől, hogy nem mindenestül természet folyása-szerént született, hanem Ördög bagzott Lídércz-módgára az Anyával. Ezt újomból nem szoptam: hanem Tíz vagy több Fő tudós embereket nevezhetek, kik-közzül némelyek, még élteben Luther-nek ezt szemére hánták." (Péter Pázmány, *Hodoegus, Igazságra vezető Kalauz...* (Pozsony: 1637), 200.)

advice how to take care of one's weapons, keep them dry or improve their accuracy while firing¹³⁴ represents further arguments that he not only recorded all kinds of information, but he surely used them. The large variety of written notes suggests an important criterion of selection. These recipes, therapies, poems, and prayers fulfill two functions, a *practical* or *utilitarian* one and one that is *representational*. The latter does not need any further argumentation, since we have already seen how Cserei's religiosity or piety was performed with the help of those texts, which he reread several times for certain. The *practical* or *utilitarian* function was the direct consequence of his *modus vivendi*.

Another source that could contribute to the evaluation to Cserei's mental world is represented by the surviving items of his books acquired before 1698. I have already referred to the importance of the books Cserei bought while he was a student in Udvarhely, this time I survey those items which he acquired from 1685 to 1697. Yet, we cannot really know the precise number of his books at this given period, but the assessment of the existing items is fairly suggestive. The books at a very first glance testify to the influence of Puritan Calvinism assimilated in the early 1680s. For Cserei preferred the ancient and the early modern protestant authors and completely ignored the representatives of the Middle Ages. Because of his excellent command of Latin, thus reading in both Hungarian and Latin, he could cover several topics.

Accordingly, his range of interest is quite wide. He felt attracted by ancient history and philosophy. The influence of the Seneca volume acquired in 1690 can be observed in his stoic poems available in the calendars. In 1693 he managed to procure Cellarius's book. Cellarius Balthasar, a Lutheran theologian, was interested in the philosophy of Aristotle and he produced

¹³⁴ 1693/Majus Va.

a book treating the philosophical and political concept of the Greek thinker.¹³⁵ The reading of Josephus Flavius and Eutropius, both of them¹³⁶ debating upon ancient history, was completed by his particular interest in geography. The Gölnitz volume¹³⁷ was one of the classics of the age and it represented the most reliable manual for English education at that time. Cserei, as a future historian, but first of all as a young man who had read a lot, traveled a lot and most importantly, due to Apor's influence had access to political events and circles as well which might have been surely fascinated by these readings. It was this interest in politics, which made him buy one of Puffendorf's books.¹³⁸ The first contact with philosophy might have been important for him, because it turned into a passion. At an older age he not only reread Puffendorf several times, but added to it his own political concepts and convictions. Moreover, those little patriotic poems he had written about the great Hungarian kings and Transylvanian princes¹³⁹ can be assessed as a direct influence of his readings.

Theology represented, as for many of his contemporaries, the most important discipline. Consequently, it is not surprising that we find important Protestant authors amongst his books. Seemingly, he was more and more interested by the nonconformist theology, one that after the synod of Dordrecht (1618-1619) challenged orthodox Calvinism. One of the consequences of this clash between traditional Calvinism and nonconformist Protestantism led to the emergence of Puritanism and the English Civil War. Cserei read not only the work of Barclay¹⁴⁰, but Maccovius's book as well, who used to be the colleague of William Ames at the University of Franeker.

¹³⁵ Balthasar Cellarius, *Politicae Succintae ex Aristotele...* (Jenae: 1674).

¹³⁶ Josephus Flavius, *Opera Iosephi Viri inter Iudaeos Doctissimi ac Disertissimi...de Bello Iudaico* (Francoforti: 1580); V. C., Eutropius, *Historiae Romanae libri X.* (1584).

¹³⁷ Abraham Gölnitz, *Compendium Geographicum Succincta Methodo Adornatum...* (Amstelodami: 1649).

¹³⁸ Samuel Puffendorf, *Commentariorum de rebus Svecicis LLXXVI ab expeditione Gustavi Adolphi regis in Germaniam ad abdicationem usque Christianae.* (Ultrajecti: 1686).

¹³⁹ 1697/Augustus VIIIb.

¹⁴⁰ John Barclay, *Euphormionis Lusini...* (Lugdunium: 1674).

The practice of piety promoted by the Puritan devotional literature represented also a significant part in Cserei's interest as a reader. He preferred from the Hungarian authors, one of the most popular one, Imre Pápai Páriz, whose book¹⁴¹ he had acquired back in 1687 and was surely one of the books he used to read and reread regularly. For this book, as a typically Puritan conduct book, might have helped him to pass through the moral and religious crises he underwent not only as a young man, but as a grown-up too. Another discipline, which in Hungary and Transylvania was associated with the English Puritan influence, was the logic of the French philosopher Pierre Rameé. Cserei, who had studied at Udvarhely logic, rhetoric and dialectics from the book of János Szathmári Pap,¹⁴² owned the book of Keckerman as well, but he decided to procure the more up-to-date Ramus as well.¹⁴³

It is not a coincidence that the popular-aristocratic dichotomy inherent in his written notes was present in his readings as well. His Hungarian calendars, filled up with his quotidian notes as readings, were also typical representatives of the popular register. Moreover, he owned two Latin calendars¹⁴⁴, in which he diligently underlined all these useful advice which were related to agriculture, farming or popular medicine. However, this special features of his taste in both writing and reading is a further argument that popular and aristocratic registers within a given culture do not function in binary opposition, they complement each other. One could

¹⁴¹ Imre Pápai Páriz, *Keskeny út, melyet az embernek elméjébe ütköző tsuda gondolatoknak akadékiából ki irtot...P.Páriz Imre* (Gyulafehérvár: 1657).

¹⁴² Cserei actually copied the whole book while he was a student in Udvarhely. He tried to imitate the structure of the calendars, thus every copied page was followed by a blank page where he could have added remarks and comments. He wrote on the last page of this book

"*Scribebam in Udvarhely Anno 1684 Die 3 Decembris, Ego Michael Cserei de Nagi Ajta.*" The manuscript is available at the Library of Romanian Academy, Cluj Napoca (ms. U. 9). This manuscript is the copy of the book, whose *editio princeps* is unknown. (János Pap Szathmári, *Logica et Oratoria Contracta*. (?):).

¹⁴³ Petrus Ramus, *Petri Rami Veromandui regis professoris dialecticae Libri duo* (Spirae: 1595).

¹⁴⁴ *Calendarium Tyrnaviense ad Annum Christi MDCXCVI* (Tyrnaviae: 1696); *Calendarium Tyrnaviense ad Annum Christi MDCXCVIII* (Tyrnaviae: 1698).

rightly point out that the popular and the aristocratic are not two distinct traditions, they are probably two compensatory discourses of the same cultural heritage.

Cserei's mental world with its components originated from oral, popular and "aristocratic/academic" sources points to a conclusion, I have partially already mentioned. It is his particular use of literacy, his special habit of relying on the written culture, including acts of reading and writing, which were not incompatible with the oral culture of the age. The *representational* and *practical* functions this time not only denote his habits of writing, but they actually expose how he used the written and oral, aristocratic and popular dimensions of the culture he assimilated.

3. 3. Rite de passage: 1690-1697

Van Gennep argued that every social and cultural change within the life of an individual is intertwined with rituals. Thus, human life is continually built upon experiences and concepts which are fairly well ritualized. Not only the changing seasons with their typical feasts are the markers of the ritual passage in time, but life is conceived as a cycle. The three most important events in human life are the so called lifecycle events, such as, birth, marriage, and death. These are usually paralleled by corresponding rituals,¹⁴⁵ meant to underscore the anthropological significance of these events, which sometimes basically influence the destiny of individuals in a (micro) community. While birth and death, stand first of all, for the start and end of biological existence, marriage undertakes a more special and ritually loaded position in this anthropological process. It has the function and value of a special threshold, which refers to the

¹⁴⁵ David Cressy defined them as the lifecycle offices of baptism, wedding and funeral. (Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 6).

existing passages in the lifecycle that is the ritual shift from one status, age and condition to another.

In addition to this, it is worth noticing that Van Gennep claims that all the rituals are based upon the pattern of rites of passage (*rite de passage*).

A complete scheme of rites of passage theoretically includes preliminal rites (rites of separation), liminal rites (rites of transition) and postliminal rites (rites of incorporation).¹⁴⁶

The most important transitions in human life are situated between the major lifecycle events, such as childhood, youth between birth and marriage and then the old age positioned between marriage and death. This particular passage always supposes a shift from certain, sometime obscurely defined positions toward a new social and cultural status.¹⁴⁷ The transition represents the main test to be passed by individuals wishing to join a community previously inaccessible for them. This process resembles the ritual incorporation of strangers into the primitive tribes. In a preliminary stage the strangers are not allowed to enter, therefore they offer gifts for the chief of the tribe and receive gifts from him. It is this exchange of gifts that constitutes the starting point of the transition, followed by the concluding part, when a formal entrance or a common meal is organized in order to demonstrate the performance of the ritual incorporation.¹⁴⁸

Consequently, the whole period of youth ritually ended by the act of betrothal and marriage, is a period of transition, a passage from youth to the adulthood. In this case the *rite de passage* means a liminal experience gone through in order to pass the threshold of youth and

¹⁴⁶ Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 11.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 18.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 20.

articulate a new identity and social status.¹⁴⁹ Therefore, Cserei's youth narrated in his calendars and completed by the allusions of the *Historia*, further refined by the books acquired in this period are all sources referring to this process of *rite de passage* started sometimes around 1690 and ended by the betrothal and marriage in 1697.

Cserei was 23 years old in 1690, and he has finished his studies in 1685. He spent his life during these 5 years first at the court of Mihály Teleki and then in the army. None of the experiences have accomplished his education or granted him financial independency. The peregrination (*peregrinatio academica*), the travel and study at a Western university was lacking from his education. Even though, he was desperately longing for this experience, he lacked the financial means to make this dream come true. This peregrination would have improved not only his knowledge and education, but it had granted him social promotion, a good position and social status.¹⁵⁰ Instead, he spent his time mostly at home overwhelmed and caught in the routine of everyday life. His participation in the battle of Zernyest might have had some naive motivations typical for his age. He did not just execute orders, but he was presumably looking for glory or at least hoped that some acts of bravery during a battle could attract the attention of his superiors. This might be the reason why he decided to join Thököly's army and become a *kuruc*.

Yet, he still had the power to admit that the bitter disappointment caused by this experience was for his benefit. It strengthened him. He recorded a funny moment in his calendar of 1690. The whole *kuruc* army was in a camp near in Ploiești, in Walachia. They ran

¹⁴⁹ From a methodological point of view, all these anthropological considerations incorporated in the profound explanation at small scale point towards a comprehensive historico-anthropological interpretation of the microhistorical reconstruction. This is the most important aim of my thesis.

¹⁵⁰ Cserei was aware of this lost opportunity. His heavy-hearted remark after fifteen years written in the *Historia* confirms it

"(1685) It was this year when my father was released from prison and I gave up my studies. I wish my father did not allow me to do so. Who knows, I might have become a better man..." (Cserei, *Historia*, 155).

out of bread, but they had plenty of wine... Somehow ashamed by the incident, imagine the whole contingent of the glorious *kuruc* army, claiming that they fight to liberate the nation, but, in fact, getting actually drunk, so he wrote a grievous short prayer

Blessed be my God for ever, for He rightly afflicted me for all my sins and gave me the chance to know myself and this bad world.¹⁵¹

The extreme experience of the war, the humiliating moments and the terrible dangers he came to know made him more attentive to the meaning and value of life. Under the influence of Seneca, he was reading by that time, he produced long poems dealing with the issue of death and life. Invariably, all his poems noted in his calendars ended with the conclusion that after all these earthly, meaningless struggles peace is provided only by the grave.¹⁵² The following two years (1691, 1692) in spite of the fact that he became Apor's secretary and thus he managed to gain the financial, political and emotional support of an extremely influential man, his notes betray a religious anxiety organically linked to his insecurity. It is almost certain that all these are the expression of his *preliminal status*.

The conflict at the beginning of 1693 represents the real entrance into the *liminal* status of transition. This was surely one of the deepest crises he was to handle while an unmarried young man. The symbolic repudiation from his father house, that used to be his home, denotes a ritual isolation and it is a suggestive symbol of his outcast condition and liminal existence. It was certainly clear for him that the reintegration into his family, after the scandal he caused, would coincide with the successful pass of an exam proving his maturity. This period lasted until the betrothal (May 10, 1697) and then his wedding (October 22, 1697).

¹⁵¹ "Az én Istenemnek legyen örökké való dicsőség és áldás, hogy ő felsége bűneimért méltán ostromozván, időt engedett arra, hogy mind magamat, mind ez rossz világot megismerhettem". (1690/September IXb.)

¹⁵² Cserei deserted the *kuruc* army in January of 1691. During the following months he wrote a number of poems debating upon the theme of death and meaningless life. (1691/Martius IIIb; 1691/Aprilis IVb; 1691/MajusVa; 1691/Augustus VIIIb; 1691/November XIa.)

These four years, 1693-1697, must have been a period of quest and fight during which he not only read and wrote, but gained all kinds of experiences. In this special context, Cserei as a non-conformist youngster challenging authorities and finding difficulties in being obedient reifies the ambiguities and transitory period of his youth. Accordingly, his adventures in Brassó, or his violent attitudes testify first of all his attempts to discover himself, his limits and his true callings.

The post liminal stage of his evolution, again in a suggestive symbolical coincidence, was related to Nagyajta and his home. After having been ejected from home in 1693, he came back with his wife in December 18, 1697.

Blessed be the God I have come home to N.-Ajta.¹⁵³

This short note resembles a rite of incorporation, because the son is admitted again in his family, furthermore, the home, the space he had lost became his own again as well. On January 2nd, 1698 he wrote on the first page of an empty book which was to become the manuscript of the *Historia*

In Nomine Sacro Sancti Trinitatis, Unius, Solites, veri, ac aeterni Dei. 2. Januar. A. 1698 in Nagi Ajta. I, NagyAjtai Miklosvárszéki Cserej Mihály, from the eternal decree of God, I was born to this world, according to my parents, at Felcsik, in Rákos die 21 octobr. A 1667. (...) I celebrated my wedding at the house of my patron, Count István Apor. I came home to NagyAjta, together with my wife, on 18 Xbris. A 1697¹⁵⁴

The beginning of a new year (1698) coincided with a new beginning in his life. He became a married man, a grown-up with his own household, duties and responsibilities. The rite de passage came to an end.

¹⁵³ 1697/ December XIIb.

¹⁵⁴ "Én NagyAjtai Miklosvárszéki Cserej Mihály Istennek örök rendelésiből születtem e világra, a mint Szüleim referalljak, Felcsikon Rákoson die 21 octob. A 1667... Celebraltam a Lakodalmam Keczen ugian Gróf Uram ő Nga Házánál, die 22 octob. A 1697. Jöttem haza nagi Ajtára, mind Feleségestől die 18 Xbris. A 1697." (*Nagyajtai Cserei Mihály Históriaja*, 1709, A1).

Cserei became another man. As the secretary of Apor, but in the same time the secretary at the office of Treasury employed by the Habsburgs, he had a respectable position. It seems that from both social and economic point of view the passage from the uncertainties of the youth to his present status was a success. One may assert that he had found the optimal strategies of survival. Therefore, it is almost certain that the unstructured references or lack of references to events, feelings and experiences, in spite of their censored and incoherent character can be epitomized in one single anthropological phenomenon, the *rite de passage*. This process, as a historical explanation of some fragmented narratives not only organizes into one coherent body the incidentally noted references, signs, and impressions, but renders the hidden motivations of an individual into a plausible model of self-fashioning and survival.

Chapter 4. *Via Salutis*: the Liminality of Life

The previous chapter provided a comprehensive anthropological explanation, the process of *rite de passage*, in order to grasp in one single theoretical frame the complex significance of Cserei's youth. Accordingly, I have emphasized that the passage from youth to adulthood reached its climax in the act and ritual of marriage, as an expression of incorporation. This chapter will add the next step in the application of *rite de passage* to Cserei's life. First, I will evaluate the theoretical possibility of the multiple passage, then I will analyze in both synchronic and diachronic perspective the main religious transformations experienced by Cserei. I will conclude by arguing that understanding Cserei's youth through the perspective of this ritual passage, one can come to a better understanding of Cserei's whole life represented in his various manuscripts.

4. 1. The Perspective of Multiple Passages

Van Gennep's conclusion that human life consists of a succession of ceremonials and rituals from birth to death¹⁵⁵ does not exclude the idea that these rituals could be interrelated with each other. Furthermore, sometimes a prominent passage, say, from youth to adulthood, could consist of several smaller transitions related to experiences events, or actions having a particular significance. Hence, in Cserei's case, one can rightly claim that within the main process of transition from 1690 to 1697 can be delineated another passage strictly related to the lifecycle event of marriage. Thus the two ritual events, the betrothal (May 10, 1697) and the wedding (October 22, 1697) as lifecycle offices, referred to a passage existing in the lives of

¹⁵⁵ Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passages*, 189.

both Mihály Cserei and Ilona Kun. Their individual status and their relation to each other underwent a period of transition¹⁵⁶ that came to an end as soon as the wedding was performed. In Cserei's case, however, this passage was organically related to the main passage he experienced in his way of development from youth to adulthood.

Moreover, it is still quite debatable whether the social transition always coincides with the mental and spiritual passage from youth to adulthood. Although, the marriage undeniably produces spectacular changes within one's *modus vivendi*, it cannot necessarily mean that the acquisition of a social status or the assurance of survival produces immediately spiritual and mental maturity.¹⁵⁷ Even though we do not have any reason to think of Cserei as an immature and inexperienced young man, yet it seems pertinent to ask whether the 30 years old man has experienced a thorough change not only in his private life, but in his spirituality as well. For the question still remains, whether he has found the necessary peace to liberate himself from his disconcerting religious anxieties that dominated his youth. Was the end of the passage the start of a new balanced religious life overwhelmed by the feeling of election for eternal happiness?

Let us turn our attention in the following subchapter to the religious anxiety experienced by Cserei and reevaluate it as a passage from birth to death¹⁵⁸, which has contributed to the emergence of his religious identity. Since he assimilated, first of all, due to his studies the Puritan theology and piety; he must have approached the problem of predestination, afterlife or

¹⁵⁶ Van Gennep claims that

"The marriage establishes the girl and the boy in the category of socially adult women and men." (Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passages*, 144).

¹⁵⁷ Natalie Zemon Davies's famous book about the return of Martin Guerre provides a suggestive example. The young, immature and biologically still child Martin, under the pressure of his new social role, experienced a crisis. As soon as the small community learnt about his sexual problems, he was declared deviant and treated as such. The charivari produced by his fellows in order to warn him that he did not meet the expectations of the community forced him to leave his wife and his family. (Natalie Zemon Davies, *The Return of Martin Guerre* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1983).

¹⁵⁸ The pattern of rite de passage could be applied to the entire human existence and afterlife as well. In this way, death would become the threshold to be passed and the postliminal stage coincides with the afterlife. Thus the preliminary stage could theoretically cover a whole life. (Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passages*, 189).

redemption in the terms of Puritan theological and devotional tradition. Not only his studies, but his readings as well, prove his uninterrupted preoccupation with the Puritan practice of piety. Consequently, I will provide a theological context in order to construe more precisely the significance of religious anxiety in Cserei's life.

4. 2. The Puritan Theological Context of Religious Identity

Puritan practice of piety consisted of a very intense religious life, a continuous self examination focused upon conscience.¹⁵⁹ For conscience,¹⁶⁰ as *the deputy of God*,¹⁶¹ revealed all the sins even the smallest intention to do something against the law of God. Furthermore, a special type of sadness, *tristia de peccato*¹⁶² was often the expression of a bad conscience,¹⁶³ as

¹⁵⁹ Ames defines it in Latin as *casus conscientiae*, but the contemporary English version was cases of conscience. "Casus conscientiae est questio practica, de qua conscientia potest dubitare." (Amesius, *Medulla Theologica*, 46-47).

¹⁶⁰ The concept of conscience was central in Puritan theology. William Ames defined conscience pointing out that it is subordinated to God and cannot be corrupted by men.

"Conscientia humana (Angelicae enim explicatione non aggredimur) est iudicium hominis de semetipso, prout **subijcitur iudicio Dei**." (Ibid., 1).

Annesley gave this definition

"Conscience is mans Judgement of himself, i. e. of his Estate and Actions, as they are subjected unto the judgement of God... Conscience is placed in the middle, under God, and above man... I will close this with Brochmand's description of Conscience, to be a kind of silent reasoning of the Mind, whose definitive sentence is received by some affection of the Heart, whereby those things which are judged to be good and right, are approved of with delight, but those things which are evil and naught, are disapproved with grief and sorrow, God hath placed this in all men, partly to be a judgment and testimony of that integrity to which man was at first created, and of that corruption that followed sin, partly that God may have a Tribunal erected in the breasts of men to accuse delinquents, and to excuse those that do what is good and right." (William Annesley *The Morning-Exercise at Cripple-Gate or, several Cases of Conscience Practically Resolved, by Sundry Ministers* (London:1661), 3.

¹⁶¹ The expression belongs to Annesley, a widely read a Puritan divine

"It (conscience) is God's Deputy, and Viceroy, and so its Voice and Judgement, is the very Voice and Judgment of God himself, who can and will maintain it in its office, till he brings forth Judgment unto Victory." (Annesley, *The Morning-Exercise*, 349).

¹⁶² The expression was set forth by William Perkins and defined in the following way

"Tertia res, est dolor de peccato admissio, qui est cruciatus & compuncti cordis ex irae diuinae sensu & ex iustae condemnationis peccatum subsequentis agnitione proficiscens." (PERKINSI, Gvilielmi, *Operum Omnium Theologicorum quae extant* (Genevae: 1618), 647.

¹⁶³ Annesley described it as troublesome conscience

"All men have a Conscience, but we may say of most, Conscience hath them: they have a Conscience as they have a Fever, or a disease, **Conscience is troublesome and disquiets them**, they cannot sin so freely, as if they had no

a result of the remorse caused by the committed sins. Therefore, the most important task of a godly Puritan was, to examine his conscience on regular bases¹⁶⁴ and try to keep a good conscience.¹⁶⁵

The good conscience and the self-examination were directly related to God's grace. Puritanism rooted in the theology of Calvin, started from the presumption that human existence is subordinated to predestination, that is God's sovereign decision to offer redemption for some and damnation for others. This decision was a sole expression of the superior divine justice unquestionable by humans. As opposed to Catholicism, the good deeds, or gifts could not influence the divine decision that had been made long before the creation of this world.

Based upon these considerations the image of *via salutis* or *gratia gradus* was promoted as a process, resembling strikingly the *rite de passage*, during which the elected individual performed a ritual journey of his existence. Ames conceived this process as consisting of predestination, vocation, justification, adoption, sanctification and glorification.¹⁶⁶ This phenomenon during which the elect individual discovering its election could improve his person and character, in fact, it is a certain *rite de passage* because is focused upon the last lifecycle event, death, and afterlife. The famous Puritan, Richard Baxter gave a convincing description underpinned by the finest Puritan piety and religious enthusiasm

inward gripes, and therefore they had rather be rid of their Conscience, than be thus troubled with them." (Annesley, *The Morning-Exercise*, 2).

¹⁶⁴ Another influential Puritan divine, William Baxter, promoted the term of self-conference referring to the inner reflection upon deeds, feelings and experiences.

"As every good Master and Father of a Family, is a good Preacher to his own family, so every good Christian is a good Preacher to his Soul. Soliloquy is a preaching to ones self. Therefore the very same Method, which a Minister should use in his preaching to others, should a Christian use in speaking to himself." (Richard Baxter, *The Saints Everlasting Rest...* (London:1654), 201).

¹⁶⁵ According to Ames

"Conscientia bona dicitur vel quoad honestatem, & integritatem, vel quoad quietem, & pacem. 3. Conscientia honeste bona est, quae iudicium fert omni ex parte rectum, & efficax." (Amesius, *Medulla Theologica*, 28).

¹⁶⁶ Ames, 101-330. Perkins put a special emphasis on the mystical experience of the Lord's Supper and described a process consisting of three major steps: election, justification and sanctification. "Electi, quum sint in hunc modum Christo coniuncti, tria admirabilia ab eo beneficia percipiunt, Iustificationem, Adoptionem, & Sanctificationem." (PERKINSIUS, *Operum Omnium*, 655).

„If thou find thy self renewed and sanctified indeed, Oh get this warm and close to thy heart. Bethink thy self, what a blessed state the Lord hath brought thee into! To be his child! His friend! To be pardoned, justified, and sure to be saved! Why what needest thou fear, but sinning against him? Come war, or Plague, or sicknesse, or death, thou art sure they can but thrust thee into Heaven. Thus follow these meditations till they have left their impression on thy heart.¹⁶⁷

Although, the quoted passage underlined the inexpressible joy felt by those few, who were convinced and assured of their election and redemption. Yet it was not given for everyone to learn this unique experience. A great number of people did not find the divine signs referring to their election and identified themselves with the reprobate status. The pressure was so huge that many people went through such a deep despair that chose to commit suicide. No doubt, the stake was immeasurable. The entire human existence was gained or lost in the revealing moment of assurance (*certitudo salutis*) or despair (*desperatio*).

The primary spiritual and dogmatic context which shaped Cserei's religious self-representation can be proximately equated with this model of *via salutis*, functioning as a rite de passage focused upon the question of salvation. Since there are signs pointing to the fact that the primarily social and economic liminality ended by the marriage did not coincide with attainment of assurance (*certitudo salutis*) further analyses is needed.

4. 2. 1. Application

In order to display a consistent argumentation, concerning the possibility of multiple passages, it is necessary to change the focus of the analyses. For the interpretation of religious transformation is not enough to observe it at small scale, further dialectical move back and forth in the synchronic and diachronic dimensions of Cserei's narrative representations about his life

¹⁶⁷ Baxter, *The Saints Everlasting*, 187. Anthony Tuckney while delivering a sermon meant to honour the memory of Dr. Hill also relied on this concept of *via salutis*. He described the process as consisting of election, adoption, justification, sanctification, glorification. (Anthony Tuckney, *The Life and Death of Dr. Hill. A Sermon Preached at S. Marries in Cambridge, December 22 1653, at the Public Funerals of Dr. Hill* (London: 1654), 7–11.)

is needed. From a methodological point of view, the aim of this approach is to avoid the superficial grasp of a “thick description” linked to a single synchronic perspective, as Geertz proposed it. Instead, I will contextualize the period of 1690-1697 within the narratives of Cserei’s entire life, so that I could identify the antecedents, motivations and consequences of his actions and gestures, often held back by his inner censorship.

Judging only the written sources, seemingly, Cserei’s religious identity could be described as a continuous and progressive development, from the spiritual insecurity of youth to the strong creed of election. For in his swan song, written in 1747 at the age of 80, he expressed his strongest conviction about his redemption, because he interpreted his long life as a series of trials and exams which he had successfully passed. Thus, the 80 years old man, waited with confidence for his death, because he had reconciled with this mortal world and all his enemies. He asserted

It does not remain anything else to do for me, but to wait confidently for the exit from this mortal world as soon as possible or when the Holy God wants it, for his measureless mercy offers me eternal happiness in his holy country. Two kinds of Happiness nobody can have. In this mortal world or in the other one you can find it. This wicked world did not give me anything, so I wait for the happiness prepared by God for me. Amen.¹⁶⁸

Yet, Attila Molnár, analyzing the relation between Max Weber theory and the Hungarian Protestant ethic, claimed that Cserei’s religiosity, just like all his contemporary Hungarian Calvinists, did not consist of crises, and moments of spiritual decline and pressure. He also suggests that in the culture and spirituality of Hungarian Calvinism there were no signs of fears, despair associated with the doctrine of predestination. Consequently, he argued that Puritan books might have been read, but their reception never resulted into the severity and

¹⁶⁸”Nincs már egiéb hátra, varom igaz hitbol valo Tellyes bizodalommal Szegény bűnös Lelkemnek ez árnyékvilágból ez bujdosásnak siralmas völgiéből boldogul mentül hamareb mikor a Szent Istennek teczek kiköltözését s az én Istenem veghetetlen irgalmasagabol örök boldogsagomot az istennek Szent orszagaban. Mert Boldogságot kettőt senki it nem vehet. Ez világon avagj az másikon lelhet. Nekem e rosz világ részt abban ha nem tet, varom az Istentől melyet el készítet. Amen .”(Cserei, *Apology 1747*, 4r).

sometimes fearful ethic of English Puritanism. Thus, he concluded that the memoirs and diaries written in the 17th century cannot contain references to religious crises, because the cultural pattern for these kinds of experiences did not exist among Hungarian Puritans.¹⁶⁹

Even though, Molnár's argumentation contains some truth, it cannot be simply applied to Cserei's case. It would be far too simplistic. It is fairly debatable to pretend, relying on the account of written narratives that Cserei was a religious man, who had never faced crisis, or any kinds of crises. Nonetheless, these written sources, with the exception of the calendars, are all produced from a retrospective view, and refer to a defined, interpreted past period of a human existence. The written representations imply the idea of publicity; therefore they very often function as examples, or illustrations of a previously formulated truth or idea. Thus, the readers are not offered the problems, or crisis of a religious life, but only the examples of how these problems had been solved by godly persons. The written account, therefore, it creates only the illusion that readers are invited to explore the private life of the author, because, they could see only those aspect of the private life, which were presented with a certain purpose. These are, in fact, the stereotypes and commonplaces of Puritan piety originating from the devotional literary tradition or the orality of the epoch.

Yet, in Cserei's case there are some elements, which could allow a different interpretation and evaluation of his religiosity. While analyzing the calendars, strangely enough, there were some notes, verses which referred to fears, despair and hopelessness. These could not be solely interpreted in the context of the events which had previously taken place. Moreover, in the *Historia*, Cserei, while narrating the anecdotes of his early childhood, he mentioned the humorous (?) case of his conversion. He also wrote about Count Apor's failed attempt to convert him.

¹⁶⁹ Molnár, *A Protestáns etika Magyarországon*, 144-145.

The first so called conversion took place, when he was a schoolboy at Udvarhely, sometimes around 1678. In fact, it was not a conversion in a classical sense, because he did not change his confessional identity, it was rather a turbulent period, when he found consolation, as a naive and frightened boy, in the Catholic cult of Virgin Mary. His “Catholicism” consisted of his new habit to pray to Virgin Mary, or keep little images of the saints and pray the rosary. He was converted by the friars living at Csiksomlyó, who also ordered him to exercise his Catholicism in secret for a while. All this ended very soon, when at Udvarhely, in the same year, his protestant landlady caught him praying the *Ave Maria* and discovered his secret. The professors alerted by the landlady managed to convince the little Cserei to turn back to the real Christianity that is Calvinism.¹⁷⁰

The second case, mostly a temptation not an act of apostasy, took place around 1699. His patron, the Catholic Apor, made Cserei a very serious offer to convert to Catholicism. Apor also promised that he would offer Cserei not only money, but would assure him spectacular social promotion. This time Cserei refused the offer, without any hesitation, or at least this is how he recorded the episode in his *Historia*.¹⁷¹

The *Historia* contains another very important remark. Cserei narrates the story of his extremely serious sickness, which kept him in bed for more than 40 days. He also mentions that

The godly András Nánási spent a long time with me praying and encouraging me, because I got into **despair concerning my redemption**.¹⁷²

The reference to *despair* is actually a very serious confession. We have seen that the Puritan piety continually strives to identify the obvious signs of election, which emerge into the creed

¹⁷⁰ Cserei, *Historia*, 104-105.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 288-290.

¹⁷² "A nagy angyali életű szent ember Nánási András sokat forgolódott körülöm, imádkozott imádkoztatott érettem, mert szintén desperatióra jutottam vala idvességem felől is." (Cserei, *História*, 339).

of redemption. Cserei seemed to perceive the absolute negative extreme of this process. This is, undeniably, a major religious crisis. Moreover, this is not the only occasion, when Cserei seemed to be preoccupied by this problem of despair.

He wrote a poem in 1694, which referred back to the former period of his life. Thus, the obsessively recurrent perspective of the religious despair may be associated with a period before 1694.

My beloved God I have always trusted you, up to now / I have never doubted you / although I have passed through so many troubles and sorrow/ that I have almost fallen into despair¹⁷³

In the October of the same year, he wrote a little poem reflecting about predestination and the unquestionable divine decision.

He who is loved by God, is loved for ever/ The Father never gives up on him/ but there are others left in the mud of eternal damnation / Anyway, who dares to complain about it?¹⁷⁴

Cserei proved that he is not only familiar with the theory of double predestination, but these two poems suggest that he correctly understood its stake and impact upon his life. The calendars prove that Cserei might have been more and more concerned about his own salvation. After three months, at the very beginning of 1695 he wrote a poem, which applied the previously and generally debated issue of predestination, election and redemption to his own existence. The poem was preceded by a short but suggestive entry

Jan 1. This New Year started with a new sadness in my heart. Fiat voluntas Domini
What do you gain my Lord if I am lost? / How could you take delight in my eternal distress / Convert me my Lord /so that I could praise you in the bright heavens.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ "Édes jó Istenem eddig benned bíztam, / Soha penig eddig meg nem fogatkoztam, / Noha sok nyavalyát, kint s bánatot láttam, / Ugy annyira néha majd kétségre juttam." (1694/Majus Vb).

¹⁷⁴ "Az kit Isten szeret, örökké szereti / szine elől bizony soha el nem veti / Kárhozat sárjában örökké heverni, / Szabad, a kit ot hágy, ki mér hozzá szólni?" (1694/ October Xa).

¹⁷⁵ "Mi hasznod ur Isten az én elvesztemben/Hogy gyönyörködhetnél örök ínségemben / Téríts meg inkább tellyes életemben/Hogy dicsirhesselek s az fényes egekben." (1695/JanuariusIa.)

This sequence of poems was written during a period of 8 month starting from May 1694 to January 1695. It is worth underlining a few concluding idea. These poems display the syndromes of a serious religious crisis focused upon the teaching of predestination involving the somber perspective of eternal damnation. Moreover, it seems clear that these concerns are not organically related to his family problems, or his other conflicts persisting at that particular moment of his life. The issue of salvation came first and was surely the most important.

It is these poems that prove his sound knowledge of theology and illustrate that he perceived his human existence according to the aforementioned Puritan theological concept of *via salutis*. A further proof that this religious crisis expressed by the experience of despair was persisting in Cserei's life is related to a book acquired by him at a later stage of his life. Lewis Bayley's, *The Practice of Piety*, as I have mentioned it, was one the classics of 17th century English Puritanism. This conduct book had a spectacular reception not only among English Puritans, but in Hungary as well. Pál Medgyesi translated this book into Hungarian in 1636, which became shortly after one of the most important bestsellers of the age. Cserei also had this book in his library and, according to his handwriting,¹⁷⁶ came into his possession in March 22nd, 1715.

Although, this book does not contain marginal notes written by Cserei, there are some clear signs of Cserei's reading, because he underlined some relevant passage, and appended small "NB" (Nota Bene)-s. The book later passed into the possession of another person, but the new owner of the book did not write anything at all in this book, therefore one can be fairly certain that the underlinings can be traced to Cserei. Another argument in favor of this

¹⁷⁶ This particular item of *Praxis Pietatis*, which was in the possession of Mihály Cserei is available at the Library of Romanian Academy in Cluj. Pál Medgyesi, *Praxis Pietatis, az az: Kegyesség-gyakorlás ... Fordittatot Angliai nyelvből ...* (Lőcse: 1641). (BMV. U. 127).

supposition is that Cserei had this habit of underlining passages in his books; the existing items of his library confirm this. However, Bayley's translation contains not only advices, rules and patterns of prayers and meditations for all categories of people and for every situation or season, but it also contains small treatises about religious issues. A whole chapter is dedicated to the extremely important problem of **religious despair**.¹⁷⁷ Every sentence of the whole chapter was underlined by Cserei, sometimes after 1712.

Although Cserei mentioned religious despair literally only once, he might have been worried about his salvation not only before his disease in 1704, but even after during the 1710s. Moreover, the marriage which has changed his social status did not coincide with a spiritual rite de passage from the concern about salvation toward the certitude of salvation, since both the poems of the young man and the readings of the adult suggest the same fear, the terrifying perspective of damnation. In order to give a proper evaluation of the religious despair in Cserei's life it is necessary a short aside meant to reveal the cultural, theological and anthropological particularities of the phenomenon.

4. 2. 2. Digression: the Religious Despair in Early Modern Europe

Although, the emotion and experience of despair was known in the Middle Ages as well, because it denoted the special status of the damned man, during the Reformation became a dreadful element in the religious psychology of the epoch. The emergence of different confessions and confessional communities only to a certain number of individuals implied the question of religious choice. Strictly related to this decision was added the burden, which

¹⁷⁷ The title of this particular is: Meditations against Despair, or Doubting of God's Mercy. The Hungarian original is: "Kétségben eséskor való elmélkedések." (Medgyesi, Praxis Pietatis, 850-875).

resulted from the acceptance or refusal of the Reformed religion. Thus the conversion from one confession to another became a very difficult choice with unexpected consequences. Moreover, the various motivations, which could have determined one's decision to join the newly Reformed confession, or after conversion to turn back to the Catholic religion again, this phenomenon was very common in those times. Consequently, this phenomenon was labeled apostasy and it was defined as a mortal sin, directly responsible for men's eternal damnation.

The famous example of an Italian lawyer, called Francis Spira,¹⁷⁸ who after having found in Reformation the true Christianity he always longed for, was forced to convert again to Catholicism, might have had a certain influence on the religious mentality of Reformed communities. This apostasy caused the tragic end of the unfortunate lawyer. For, this individual was so deeply convinced that because of his conversion to Catholicism God would punish him with eternal damnation that he simply refused to live. Francis Spira fell into despair. He tried to commit suicide and refused not only food, but the Jesuits priests as well, who tried to make him change his mind. In spite of the fact that he was consoled by famous Catholic scholars like Vergerio or Gribaldi, he argued with them so successfully that after his death, these two scholars converted to Protestantism. Spira, after a torturing period of 8 weeks, simply starved to death. Nobody could change his conviction about the apostasy, which Spira had defined as the mortal sin against the Holy Spirit placing the individual beyond the Lord's mercy.¹⁷⁹ The story of Spira's tragic end remained a popular example, which accompanied the main stages of development of early modern European confessionalism.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁸ Michael Macdonald, "The Fearefull Estate of Francis Spira: Narrative, Identity, and Emotion in Early Modern England," *Journal of British Studies*, no.31, (1992), 32-61.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 39-43.

Even though, in the discourse of Catholic spirituality of the Middle Ages the reprobate man, as a person who had been possessed by the devil, was more or less a well-known example, it was the Reformation that attributed to this figure special significance. Since confessionism shaped out the determining dogmatic and spiritual differences of the age, despite of the common ethical, moral and religious features, the concept of “new Christian” imposed a set of rules for every believer in everyday life. The example of Geneva, which turned into reality the Calvinist ideas of Reformation up to an almost unimaginable extent, was very difficult to be similarly applied everywhere.¹⁸¹ In spite of this, Reformation or the social control exercised by the Reformed clergy, wanted to build up not only communities of true believers but morally reformed Christian societies as well.

It was this multiple and complex religious, moral, social and economic reformation which urged for cultural and moral patterns, meant to shape a new type of believer, the one, who is totally dedicated to his confession as his religious tradition and community as well. While the prototype of the sinner doomed for eternal damnation was very often contrasted with the “new Christian,” the Puritan or the martyr, the religious despair was similarly opposed to the idea of *certitudo salutis*. Consequently, during the 16th century religious despair was still strongly connected to the act of apostasy, which implied the early modern individual’s refusal to identify him/her with the true Christian belief. Nevertheless, the further radicalization of Reformation, the clash between Calvinist orthodoxy and religious non-conformism, opened a new chapter in the evolution of the concept of despair. Although, the spectacular English

¹⁸¹ William G. Naphy, "The Renovation of Ministry in Calvin's Geneva" in Pettegree ed., *The Reformation of the Parishes. The ministry and the Reformation in Town and Country* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 127.

reception of the Spira case was signaled by the impressive number of translation and adaptations to other genre, Puritanism imposed a different view upon the phenomenon.¹⁸²

The 17th century English and Hungarian Puritanism both laid specific emphasis upon the conscience and the continuous need for its evaluation and analysis. William Perkins, William Baxter and William Ames, the most important representatives of this theological tradition, connected the dogmatic concept of *via salutis* and *casus conscientiae*, in order to set about a continuous self-reflection subordinated to the only important issue: redemption. This was, of course, a long-term process with moments of despair and hopelessness. The fear of being reprobate could have led to tragic end. Yet, there were the others, the Puritan divines, who overcame the moments of despair and hopelessness, consequently their reward was the conviction that they were elected to eternal life.

It was Puritanism, therefore, that promoted this reevaluation of despair, which became, in contrast with its previous definition, somehow a positive and compulsory element of the Puritan practice of piety. Furthermore, the existence of despair it was actually, the very first sign of Puritan godliness, since it underpinned the existence of self-reflection concerned with salvation. One can easily understand the connection between the concept of martyrology, the prototype of the martyr or the godly man, who must have undertaken the spiritual torments of this tremendous experience in order to earn the right to face the divine justice, whether it was damnation or salvation. Those, certainly not many, who found the religious and emotional sources to successfully survive this exam, must have been happy and confident about their fate. They acquired the *certitudo salutis*, the conviction of salvation. As Michael Macdonald rightly pointed out, religious despair was essential to their salvation.¹⁸³

¹⁸² MacDonald, *The Feareful Estate*, 55.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 56.

4. 3. The Case of Mihály Cserei

According to the *Historia*, as we have seen it, Cserei, while struggling with a long-lasting disease in 1704, became so exhausted that fell into despair. This is the most direct reference to the experience of this special state of mind. We can also consider that the poems written in the period of May 1694-January 1695 and the underlined sentences of the *Praxis Pietatis* could be further proofs of this serious and probably lasting crisis. Even though Cserei did not make any other direct allusion to the presence of despair in his life, it had probably been a serious problem, which preoccupied him even in his declining years. It can hardly be imagined that, while approaching to the last lifecycle event, his death, this man, so eagerly concerned with theological issues, would not have thought about his salvation.

Still, it is an important challenge to decipher the possible motivations or causes of this despair. Despite of the fact that he was, at least, two times tempted to convert to Catholicism, first in 1678 and then in 1699, these cannot be considered as the sole causes of his despair. Furthermore, as we have seen, by the 17th century, conversion was no longer directly responsible for this extreme experience. Cserei was certainly not proud of his momentary error in 1678, but he considered this an unhappy incident, which could have occurred because of his naivety and childish vulnerability. In this context the narrative about Count Apor's failed attempt to attract him to Catholic side had certainly the function to demonstrate his loyalty, moral integrity and reliability as a Protestant believer. Thus, we can conclude that the experience of conversion might have caused Cserei's remorse of conscience, yet this cannot necessarily mean that it certainly caused him religious despair, too.

The devastating effect of religious despair¹⁸⁴ upon 17th century Protestant believers, according to John Stachniewski, was due to the so called persecutory imagination, which emerged out of the ruthless, severe and highly popularized Puritan piety. He asserts that Calvinism, in terms of double predestination having transposed into the Puritan theological discourse, reached a certain moral extremism illustrated by the haunting terror of the reprobate state. The frustrations and religious crises were quite often the result of a farfetched Puritan discipline, which implied obsessively continuous surveillance, control and most importantly punishments, from the very early age of childhood up to adulthood. Stachniewski suggests that the Puritan family and the contemporary pattern of childrearing implied the strongest conviction that the disciplining of children must be the first priority of education.¹⁸⁵ Though, Steven Ozment denies the almost legendary severity of early modern fathers, he seems to agree with the observation that obedience toward parents, teachers and educators or rulers was one of the major goals of the process of education.¹⁸⁶

It was probably the figure of the Father, as Stachniewski claimed, who represented the authority within the family toward which every family member should have turned with respect and obedience.¹⁸⁷ Thus, the father and husband very often became the family despot, lording over their wives and their children. Moreover, this latter relationship between father and children could have been sometimes truly problematic. In order to grasp its complex links with religious mentality and the particular question of *certitudo salutis*, it is extremely important to admit that it was more than the mere challenge of paternal authority by early modern teenagers.

¹⁸⁴ According to John Stachniewski, the number of suicide cases was so high that even a book was published to stop this strange social hysteria. John Sym published a book in 1637, entitled, *Life Preservative Against Self-Killing*, but the desperate acts did not immediately cease. John Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination, English Puritanism and the Literature of Religious Despair* (Oxford: 1991), 47.

¹⁸⁵ Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination*, 98.

¹⁸⁶ Steve Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled. Family Life in Reformation Europe* (London: Harvard University Press, 1983), 151.

¹⁸⁷ Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination*, 82.

Fathers, acting sometimes excessively rigidly in matters of education or the repeated use of beatings, could influence in a frustrating way the self-formation of children, especially teenagers. One's teens, a typical period of quest for identity, was burdened by an excessive discipline, which did not actually make any character more resistant or better, but simply frustrated these young people. Stachniewski reminds us that Puritan parents were advised, when beating children, to tell them that it was against God that they had sinned.¹⁸⁸

This particular disciplining method, the applied beating and the delivered explanations, did not make children godly and obedient persons, but influenced their self-reflection in a negative way. Children probably tended to identify themselves as sinners or even reprobates, whose relation to the *Father*, the strange resemblance it is not a mere coincidence, must be limited to the endurance of divine justice. Of course, eternal damnation as well, could have easily been regarded as the expression of an unquestionable divine justice. The experiences and emotions of alienation, cast off or desertions were probably related to this problematic relations between fathers and children. Stachniewski argued that the experience of divine rejection, which caused the acceptance of the reprobate status and implicitly led to despair, was often related to feelings about fathers or social hierarchy.¹⁸⁹ It is almost certain that the religious despair in 17th century Calvinist and Puritan culture was not caused by conversion, but it was closely related to the malfunctioning of family ties and lack of communication among parents and their children.

Given this context, it is worth reexamining Cserei's account about his family, especially his relation with his father. Notwithstanding that he first mentioned his despair associated with a special physical and moral exhaustion, his sickness in 1704, it is his childhood, which could

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, 100.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 95.

explain the presence of those fears and sadness in the period of 1690 and 1698, recorded by his calendars. The *Historia* is the only written source, which recorded a few happenings, presented as anecdotic digressions of his childhood. Though, as we have previously seen it, this narrative may not be the most reliable one, due to the selective character of remembrance, yet it surely has a special significance, what was kept in the memory of the 42 year old man, about his childhood, and his relation to his father. Even though Cserei alluded only to a very few moments of his childhood, it cannot be questioned the major impact of these years upon his character and spirituality.

My father raised me in a terrible discipline, for up to the age of 14 I was not allowed to serve myself from the dishes brought to the common table. I was usually given a piece of meat and I had to be satisfied with it. Furthermore, a peasant servant of my father, named Jancsi, but called by my father Ficzkó, always stood behind me. When my father had cautioned him, he slapped me, no matter how many people assisted to this scene.¹⁹⁰

To these humiliating experiences were added further strange punishment of the exceedingly severe father, such as, the prohibition to sleep in bed, thus the little boy had to sleep together with his father's dogs. Moreover, because once he had accidentally laid flat one of his boots, his father ordered him to go to school on barefoot, in wintertime.¹⁹¹ Consequently, he remembered that

I was frightened by my father so much that I did not dare to look in his eyes, sit down in his presence or just say a single word. He, however, always swore at me, and used to call me a Saxon. He also ordered my teacher to punish me as often as it was necessary. Consequently I became frustrated and overwhelmed by fear to such an extent that, even as a young man, it took me some years to get rid of it.¹⁹²

¹⁹⁰ "Az atyám engemet oly kemény disciplinában tartott, melyhez hasonlót soha nem hallottam, mert tizenegy esztendő koromig, míg az atyám rabságra esett, soha asztalnál a tálban nem volt szabad nyúlnom, hanem egy darabocská húst vetettek a tányéromra s azon rágódtam. Mindenkor a hátam mellett egy bucsumi jobbágyból álló Jancsi nevű inas, kit Ficzkónak hittak, állott s annak mihelyt az atyám intett, mindjárt nyakon csapott, akármennyi vendége volt is az apámnak." (Cserei, *História*, 91).

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 92.

¹⁹² "Úgy féltem az atyámtól, a szememet fel nem mertem volna előtte emelni, nemhogy leülni vagy egyet szólani, különben is örökké szidott szásznak, catipilának, a mesteremnek is megparancsolta, mentől keményebben tartson, a mely miatt olyan nagy szemérem s félelem nevedkedett vala bennem, hogy azután felnevelkedvén is egynéhány esztendővel alig tudtam excutiálni erőszakkal is magamból." (Ibid., 92).

The memory of the childhood, visualized with the prominently dominant and extremely severe Father-figure, whose practices of education left deep marks on Cserei's self-confidence, confirms the possible relation between the frustration of childhood and the religious crisis of youth.

In addition to these confessions two important incidents should be added. First, after he had studied for 7 years, from 1678 to 1685, in the Protestant College of Udvarhely, he had to interrupt his studies. Normally, according to the practice and common custom of the epoch, those students who finished their studies, with the help of patrons, continued their education abroad. Although, it was a difficult experience, which required not only intellectual skills and considerable financial effort, but endurance, starvation and all kind of deprivation, it was worth undertaking. All those students, who had the privilege of becoming *academicus*, after they had returned, obtained easily an important status with a good salary. Their social promotion, due to the peregrination, was certainly easier. Thus, Cserei was deprived not only of the experience of *peregrinatio academica*, but also of the perspective of a better social promotion, when his father decided for him to become a valet at Mihály Teleki's court instead. Though, Cserei disagreed, he did not dare to contradict or challenge his father, at least, not yet.

It was in 1693, when the unavoidable conflict erupted. The scandalous love-affair with the peasant girl might have been a good pretext for both father and son, to confront each other. The result is known; Cserei had to leave his father's house. The rupture was a lasting one, only Mihály's marriage could reconcile the attitude of the two Cserei. These incidents, as the elements of a very complicated puzzle, sustain the idea that the religious despair experienced by Cserei, during his disease in 1704, did have precedents. It is, therefore, quite possible that the syndromes or references to sadness, fears and spiritual crises, beyond the contextual

explanations, allude to the existence of the religious despair, as a more or less constant presence in the religious life of this individual.

MacDonald justly defined the religious despair as the dialectic of hope and despair.¹⁹³ This definition fits the concept of *via salutis*, assimilated by Cserei as well, because it points out that this passage (*via*) from the recognition of election/predestination¹⁹⁴ to the glorification/sanctification,¹⁹⁵ which occurs only in the afterlife, is an uninterrupted line of extreme emotions such as fear and happiness, despair and assurance. It is indeed, a special rite de passage, probably the most important one within the beliefs system of Calvinism, where double predestination as the expression of divine sovereignty, was considered to be the main determining factor of human existence.

Cserei's Puritan religiosity realistically reflects this dialectic of hope and despair. At the age of 11 he sought for spiritual comfort in Catholicism, but then, under the influence of his Calvinist tutors, quickly came back to his initial confession. The theological knowledge acquired during his studies (1678-1685) made him aware of the doctrine of predestination, *via salutis* and despair as well. He was soon to experience it directly.

The liminal experience of his youth, especially the most difficult period of 1693-1697, was aggravated by a thorough crisis even panic, expressed by his poems written in the critical period of May 1694- January 1695. Worse was still to come. Exhausted by a 40 day long disease he admitted his defeat, he acknowledged that he missed the exam, despair overwhelmed him. It must have been difficult to recover, both physically and spiritually. In 1712 he was still preoccupied by the question of despair, since he diligently underlined those passages of the

¹⁹³ MacDonald, *The Fearefull Estate*, 58.

¹⁹⁴ According to Ames, election is the first stage of the *via salutis*, whereas Perkins claims that the very first step consists of predestination. However, both terms refer to a similar meaning. (Amesius, *Medulla Theologica*, 101-330; Perkinsius, *Operum Omnium*, 655).

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 101-330; Ibid., 659.

Praxis Pietatis, which promised remedy for those who had fallen into despair. He was 45 years old. In the context of early modern average mortality, this was a long life. The almost regular recurrence of the despair, or at least of the signs referring to it, might suggest that Cserei was continually alternating the moments of sadness, anxiety with his alleged periods of happiness. For, according to the Puritan pattern, all events, whether they were positive or negative happenings, were all connected with salvation; they were possible arguments of a hypothetical rejection or salvation. These were those excruciating experiences mandatory to live by, for godly Puritans.

The gap between the 1710s and the precise date of 1747 impede us to assess this period of 30 years from the perspective of the alternating experiences of hope and despair. Still, it seems fairly plausible, that the situation was probably the same. This ritual passage could not end in the meantime, since its threshold was the lifecycle event of death. Up to that moment, which happened in 1757, the religious liminality probably persisted. Moreover, despite Cserei's strongest conviction of his election expressed in his apology, this liminality did not end, because he lived some 10 more years. His son, György Cserei informed us in his diary that his father spent his last 8 years in bed. Would it be totally unrealistic to pretend that in his period too, he might have experienced despair? At the age of 37, after 40 days of sickness he fell into despair. For a very old man, well into his eighth decade, forced to spend helplessly his days in bed for eight years, how much time might have taken to reach the same state of mind?

Cserei's case renders into practice the *via salutis* process as a *rite de passage*. The preliminar stage consists mainly of his childhood, from his birth (1667) to his first "conversion" (1678). This period, in spite of the conversion it is mainly the expression of his wakening religiosity and confessional identity. At that particular moment or age he was neither aware of his Calvinism, nor mature enough to embrace the Puritan practice of piety. The liminal stage

basically covers all his life, starting with the experience of spiritual panic during the period May 1693-January 1694, to the moment he died (1747). Having assimilated both the dogmatic bases of Calvinism and the practice of piety provided by the conduct books he had read¹⁹⁶ he was ready to identify himself with a piety and confessional identity promoted by Puritan sources. It was a long and demanding process, basically it took all his life. But, this was in fact the idea of Puritan piety, to point out the *liminal character* of human condition.¹⁹⁷ Consequently, he spent his life torn between the extreme dispositions and feelings reflected in his writings. He surely experienced what possibly could have meant the dialectic of hope and despair.

The end of this religious liminality coincided with the end of his biological existence. The postliminal stage started in the moments of his funeral. The end of this passage starts with the end of his life, but it last incomparably longer. Cserei made a good decision when he chose eternity. As for the overlapping moment of these two passages, it is worth reevaluating the first within the context of the second. The *rite de passage* of 1690-1697, especially the period of 1693-1694 is incorporated into the spiritual passage covering, Cserei's whole life, 1667-1754. Although, the passage of 1690-1697 was, first of all successful from a social and economic point of view, it had a special contribution to the religious and confessional evolution of Cserei. It could not end the spiritual passage, since this process was not focused upon the lifecycle event of marriage, but upon the lifecycle event of death. Beyond this consideration, it was the starting point of religious liminality and produced probably the first experience of despair, recorded in the poems of the difficult period of May 1694-January 1695.

¹⁹⁶ *One book might have a very special influence upon him: Imre Pápai Páriz, Keskeny Út, melyet az Embernek Elméjébe Ütköző Tsuda Gondolatoknak Akadékiából ki Irtot...P.Páriz Imre* (Gyulafehérvár: 1657).

¹⁹⁷ Victor Turner pointed out that every individual during his or her life has to pass through the transitions since life in fact is a continuous and dialectical process consisting in the alteration of extreme experiences. (Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 110).

Thus, after this passage, Cserei not only became an adult, but had presumably understood for the very first time the liminality of life itself. The great gain and conclusion of his youth was a spiritual and religious “heritage” which might have transformed him from a learned and theologically trained young man, to a Puritan believer aware of the spiritual burden of piety. This passage, again, could not end the liminality of his religiosity, but prepared him to endure both the hope and despair in its most difficult, therefore, dialectically conceived alternatives.

The conclusion is that the theoretical perspective of the multiple passages was confirmed by the Puritan doctrine of *via salutis*. Moreover, the experience of religious despair, as the early modern Puritanism conceived it; was decisive in Cserei’s case as well, since he, too, experienced the dialectical extremity of hope and despair. It was this experience of despair, which during the liminal period of youth, in fact, initiated him for another passage focused upon the lifecycle event of death. The existing sources sustain the idea that Cserei experienced a double passage. The first was the one that transformed his social status and gave him economic independence through marriage, and another which brought about the invention of his religious identity and gave him the possibility of eternal life after his death.

Conclusion

This case study as a microhistorical reconstruction set forth a historico-anthropological explanation for a period of eight years (1690-1697) in Mihály Cserei's life. Consequently, my interpretation focused upon the mental, spiritual and ritual evolution of this young man, who from an uncertain condition and status managed to become integrated, by marriage, in the community of married, respected men. This transformation influencing Cserei's social, economic and spiritual life was, in fact, a culturally regulated ritual process, defined in anthropology as *rite de passage*.

However, this theory, in conjunction with the available sources, mostly original manuscripts written by Cserei, not only rendered into a coherent experience the disparate fragments of actions, meanings and impressions, but produced a better understanding of Cserei's entire life. For the period 1690-1697, or more precisely the time span from 1693 to 1697, covered the liminal stage of Cserei's youth, while at the same time, it was the starting point of another passage. While the passage of 1693-1697 led to the lifecycle event of marriage and brought about the emergence of Cserei's social identity, the other one starting its liminal stage in the period of 1693/1694-1695 contributed to the shaping of Cserei's religious and confessional identity. Moreover, the first passage was primarily successful from social and economic perspectives, since it helped Cserei to find the optimal survival strategies, while the second was beneficial at spiritual level. The second passage through its spiritual aims (election, *certitudo salutis*) motivated Cserei to accomplish his earthly mission of husband, father and true believer.

A particular significance has to be attributed in this model of multiple passages to literacy. Cserei's use of literacy, consisting of both acts of reading, writing or reproducing texts

orally, was the only permanent contact, a kind of liaison, between his experiences and their censored representations. This relation had led to the production of those “*ego-documents*” which allowed the microhistorical reconstruction and the profound explanation. Moreover, the *practical* and *representational functions* displayed in both his readings and written manuscripts revealed the particular way he understood and used literacy. This cultural practice of relying on written culture and on its products mirrored not only the character of Cserei as reader or writer, but exposed his techniques of self-representation or self-fashioning.

Greenblatt’s concept of self-fashioning has usually been applied to analyses of diaries, memoirs or dialogues where the narration is based upon alter-egos, or where the life-story enables the interpreter to delineate different narrative identities. Although the discourse of my main primary sources, the notes available in the calendars, cannot be catalogued as coherent narratives or life-stories, yet I relied on the concept of self-fashioning. Even though, in Cserei’s notes one cannot find differentiated alter-egos, roles or identities as in the posteriorly conceived narrative of a typical memoir, the process of self-fashioning could still be observed.

Even though, Cserei’s notes were sometimes almost simultaneously written with the events he experienced, a continuous inner censorship controlled the representation of events, experiences or feelings. The variety of bilingual notes, in terms of genre, shows an impressive repertoire and an exquisite knowledge of poetics and rhetoric,¹⁹⁸ reified in a display of various texts such as poems, prayers, wise sayings (*aurea dictum*) and anecdotes. Thus, the Hungarian and Latin prose and poetry as representations of the self were, in fact, signals referring to a

¹⁹⁸ The *rhetorical classis* taught in the early modern Hungarian secondary schools, such as the Protestant College of Udvarhely, was one the basic trainings acquired in these institutions. Cserei’s impressively fluent style and richness in expression was certainly the consequence of a sound training. He not only read the most important authors from 16-17th century, but he copied his rhetorical textbook before leaving the College of Udvarhely in 1685. (*Notationes in Logicam*, 1685, MS. U. 9).

sophisticated repertoire of achieved identities.¹⁹⁹ The different texts alluded not only to different experiences or contexts, but to different egos. The author of the poem in 1693 hinting at the quarrel between Cserei and his father implied an achieved identity, one which was very different from that displayed in other poem containing the syndromes of religious despair, written in the period of May 1694-January 1695.

It is this particular use of literacy that enables the interpreter to grasp the phenomenon of self-fashioning in Cserei's calendar notes. The different approach to the phenomenon is due to the special feature of the existing sources. Furthermore, the *rite de passage*, in both cases of liminality, essentially relies on an anthropological process of producing, altering and fashioning identities. Not only the young man during 1693-1697, but the adult Cserei in his entire intellectual existence (1694-1757) was trying to find and assimilate an identity to end the social, economic and then the spiritual liminality of his condition. Moreover, one can rightly claim that liminality as a ritual quest for identity is, in fact, a kind of self-fashioning. In Cserei's case, the use of literacy vividly illustrates this idea. The practical and representational functions of literacy, evolved into one *ritual* function, which not only testified to the process of *rite de passage*, but exhibited the spiritual transformations of the self. Experiencing the ritual passage cannot be dissociated from the fashioning of the self.

The importance of Cserei's case, from a methodological perspective, first of all is the special significance of the *eccezionalmente normale*, suggesting that the individual case must have its own relevance, not depending on quantitative considerations. Although Cserei was not necessarily a representative of a peripheral society and culture, there was something unusual in his *modus vivendi*. As the offspring of a typically military oriented family, he sought for survival strategies, as opposed to his ancestors, relying on intellectual skills and abilities. Cserei

¹⁹⁹ Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-fashioning*, 43.

as a literate young man, earning his living by writing letters, never gave up his natural commitment to literacy. As an adult, and then an old man he became known as a historian and an extremely learned individual. He was surely the very first Cserei who had the power and the determination to give up a traditional pattern of survival strategies for the sake of a new and non-conventional one.

In fact, Cserei's case, as the main conclusion of this thesis, displays a convincing example illustrating the historical and anthropological complexity of the relations between mentalities, literacy and survival. He was a rebel; especially while a youngster, but most importantly a natural born survivor. His life is the story of a survivor. We cannot be grateful enough to him that he took the time to write his experiences down. Yet, we have to admit, this is also a strategy of survival. Therefore, no one can doubt, he was, indeed, a natural born survivor.

Appendices

Appendix A

LIFECYCLE-EVENTS	EXPERIENCES	NARRATIVES
Birth (1667)		
Childhood –	1678 – Conversion to Catholicism	
Youth	1685 – Gives up his studies	
Marriage 1. (1697)	1690 – Battle of Zernyest 1693 – Conflict 1696 – Secretarius juratus	1690–1695 } 1697–1698 } Kalendáriumok (Calendars)
Adulthood	1704 – His sickness / Desperatio	
Marriage 2. (1720)	1712 – Praxis Pietatis	1709–1712 História (History) 1709– Compendium Politicum et Theologicum
Old-Age –		1712–1724 – Jegyzőkönyv (Diary) 1712–1728 – Jegyzőkönyv (Diary)
Very Old-Age		1733 – A legnagyobb Jegyzőkönyv (The Biggest Diary)
Death (1756)	1747 – Certitudo Salutis	1747 – Apológia (Apology)

Appendix B

The Books of Mihály Cserei

Books acquired while he studied in the Protestant College of Udvarhely (1678-1685):

1. Pál Keresztúri, *Fel Sördült Keresztyen ... az Isten Beszédénec ama Tiszta Tején, a Mennyei Titkoknac Tanulásában Ditsiretessen Nevedek ... Hirré ad Kereszturi Pal* (Várad: 1641).
2. Albert Molnár Szenczi, *Discursus de Summo Bono, az Legfőbb Iorol ... Mellyet ... Magyarrá Forditot Sz. M. A* (Lőcse: 1630).
3. Johannes Sambucus, *Emblemata et aliquot Nummi Antiqui Operis Joan. Sambuci* (Antverpiae: 1569).
4. Bartholomeus Keckermann, *Systema Logicae Tribus Libris...* (Hanoviae: 1606).
5. Philippus Melanchton, *Epigrammatum Libri Tres Collecti ab Hilbrando Grathusio Uffleniensi* (Vitebergae: 1560).
6. Manutius Aldus, *Phrases Latinae, Germanicae et Gallicae* (1684).
7. András Szilágyi Tarpai, *Libellus Repudii et Divortii Christiani...* (Sárospatak: 1667).
8. Mihály Buzinkai, *Compendii Logici Libri Duo...* (Sárospatak: 1668).

Books acquired during his youth (1685-1697):

1. Balthasar Cellarius, *Politicae Succintae ex Aristotele...*(Jenae: 1674).
2. Josephus Flavius, *Opera Iosephi Viri inter Iudaeos Doctissimi ac Disertissimi...de Bello Iudaico* (Francoforti: 1580); V. C., Eutropius, *Historiae Romanae libri X.* (1584).
3. Abraham Gölnitz, *Compendium Geographicum Succinta Methodo Adorinatum...* (Amstelodami: 1649).
4. Samuel, Puffendorf, *Commentariorum de Rebus Svecicis LLXXVI ab expeditione Gustavi Adolphi Regis in Germaniam ad Abdicationem usque Christianae.* (Ultrajecti: 1686).
5. John Barclay, *Euphormionis Lusini...* (Lugdunium: 1674).
6. Imre Pápai Páriz, *Keskeny Út, mellyet az Embernek Elméjébe Ütköző Tsuda Gondolatoknak Akadékiából ki Irtot...P.Páriz Imre* (Gyulafehérvár: 1657).
7. Petrus Ramus, *Petri Rami Veromandui Regis Professoris Dialecticae Libri Duo* (Spirae: 1595).
8. *Calendarium Tyrnaviense ad Annum Christi MDCXCVI* (Tyrnaviae: 1696).
9. *Calendarium Tyrnaviense ad Annum Christi MDCXCVIII* (Tyrnaviae: 1698).

Appendix C

THE STAGES OF THE RITE DE PASSAGE	EXPERIENCES	SOURCES
<p>1690</p> <p>Preliminal Stage</p>	<p>1690 – Battle of Zernyest</p>	<p>1690 Calendar, Historia</p> <p>Seneca</p> <p>1691 Calendar, Historia Iosephus Flavius</p> <p>1692 Calendar, Historia Gölnitz</p>
<p>1693</p> <p>Liminal Stage</p>	<p>1693 – Conflict/love affair 1693, 1694, 1695→ trips to Brassó 1695 Scandal in Szeben 1696 – Secretarius juratus</p>	<p>1693 Calendar, Historia Maccovius Eutropius, Cellarius 1694 Calendar, Historia</p> <p>1695 Calendar, Historia 1696 Historia, Count István Apor Correspondence Szilágyi Tönkö Otrokócsi Fóris Latin Calendar</p>
<p>1697</p> <p>Postliminal Stage</p>	<p>May 10, 1697–Betrothal October 22, 1697–Wedding</p>	<p>1697 Calendar, Historia Barclay Pápai Páriz</p>
<p>(1698)</p>	<p>January 2, 1698 the written note on the folio seized empty book</p>	<p>1698 Calendar, Historia Latin Calendar Lisznyai</p>

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