

Elective Affinity and Crisis:
Intellectual Entanglements and Political Divergences
in the Weber Circle, 1912–17

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Abstract

This thesis aims to reconstruct the dynamics of the Weber Circle during the high point of its activity in Heidelberg: 1912–17. During this period, a critical mass of intellectuals interacted with one another in close contact. These figures included, among others, Max and Marianne Weber, Edgar Jaffé and Else Jaffé-von Richtofen, Emil Lederer, Heinrich Rickert, Ernst Bloch, Georg von Lukács, Emil Lask, and Gustav Radbruch. Although this group came from numerous different intellectual contexts—e.g., neo-Kantian philosophy, antipositivistic sociology, romantic anti-capitalism—they each left their marks on one another, often publishing in the same journals, and most interacting with one another on the designated Sunday “journs” that the Webers’ held in their home on the Neckar. The house on Ziegelhäuser Landstraße 17 served as the physical center of this exchange—a central, scenic meeting place for salon-type activity.

The investigation draws upon a wealth of theoretical tools—Karl Mannheim’s “sociology of the intelligentsia,” Reinhart Koselleck’s distinction between “space of experience” and “horizon of expectation,” as well as Goethe’s rendering of “elective affinity”—in order to characterize the interactions of the Weber Circle. This thesis asks how it could be the case that intellectuals so tightly bound together on personal and intellectual terms could split apart so radically in the wake of the First World War. In order to dive into this distinction, I use Koselleck’s heuristic use of “crisis” to organize two reactions to the war: Emil Lask’s enlistment and Georg von Lukács’ resentment. What emerges is a composite picture of an intellectual circle that, when faced with a moment of world-historical crisis, fractured along pre-defined lines of stress. This thesis asserts that moments of historical crisis reconstitute previously “secure” elective affinities between intellectuals due to their status *as* intellectuals: thus, one must look at intellectual contexts, local situations, and macro-historical events in the same perspective.

Acknowledgments

This text is dedicated to numerous individuals. Knowingly or not—named or not—the following pages may be my own work, but they are merely a synthesis of information gathered from others. The list of names and organizations that follow is in no way exhaustive. Any mistakes or omissions are not the fault of a bad transfer of information, but rather my own failure to convey dutifully and completely the breadth and depth of what has been provided to me.

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Prelude: Notes on Historiography, Theory, and Sources

For at the end, that union of waters, as they gradually destroy firm land, results in the restoration of the mountain lake that used to be located in the region.

—Walter Benjamin,
“Goethe’s Elective Affinities,” 1924/5¹

On 3 July 1908, Irma Seidler—a painter and cousin of Budapest’s Polányi family—sent a letter to György (Georg) Lukács, then a young dramatic-literary critic living in Budapest. They were lovers. Or at the very least, she was the object of Lukács’ love, for the relationship had neither been entirely reciprocal from her position, nor materialized in any physical sense. Nevertheless, in their correspondence, they reflected deeply on the nature and character of their relations to one another. She wrote:

As Goethe put it so wonderfully somewhere, the union between two people is like a chemical process in which crises, shocks, and tensions precede the fusion. Those who adore the metaphor of the gentle ivy clinging to the strong oak probably have an easier time of it. But we both know that the strong oak can turn into a python whose deadly embrace is bound to annihilate the pliant soul. And it is my belief—shared by you, I trust—that *our individual lives will be enhanced by our [belonging] to each other and vice versa*; for this reason the road we travel will be longer, more painful and noble. We have at one occasion come to the conclusion that a great work, a great deed, all great things bring to our minds the sight of a flexed bow. Love is something like that.²

The characterization of these interpersonal relationships—Seidler makes clear reference to Goethe’s *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (The Elective Affinities, 1809)—had wider resonances, namely in the intellectual circle that would welcome Lukács between 1912 and 1917, the Weber Circle in Heidelberg.

In this particular letter, Seidler may have been speaking about the love between two people, but the entire cultural edifice of *fin-de-siècle* Austria-Hungary was filled with the same tension of a flexed bow. That structure had not descended into crisis *per se*, but perhaps

¹ Walter Benjamin, “Goethe’s Elective Affinities,” in *Selected Writings, Volume 1: 1913–1926*, Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, eds. (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press, 1996), 303.

² Irma Seidler, letter dated 3 July 1908, in *Georg Lukács: Selected Correspondence, 1902–1920*, edited by Judith Marcus and Zoltán Tar (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 42. Editors’ emphasis.

a prelude was heard. This “chemical” process—“in which crises, shocks, and tensions precede the fusion”—could thus characterize Habsburg Central European *bürgerlich* society in the decade and a half leading into the Great War.³ Thus, Seidler’s letter frames the broad research question of this study: What is the relationship between interpersonal elective affinity and historical crisis? Understandably, this question is large and cannot be succinctly answered. In order to give one of many possible answers to this question, the following thesis will analyze the case study of the intellectual circle around Max Weber between 1912 and 1917.

By historicizing the various political and intellectual entanglements among the Weber Circle, I show how a dynamic process of historical crisis—the Great War—reconstituted the relationships between these intellectuals. The dynamics of the relationships spun these individuals into different political directions, with the Great War acting as the most immediate catalyst. Given their intellectual starting positions and the years of close intellectual and personal contact, the Great War came as a great intervention into the lives of the members of the Weber Circle and forced them to choose political languages and actions that accommodated their outlooks. Through the war, resentment was met with enthusiasm, and the Circle’s character was irreparably altered. Lukács returned to Budapest, Bloch fled to Switzerland, and the Webers moved to Munich. Even if these intellectuals had spun out from the orbits they once shared, they still held onto common points of intellectual reference, seen through their publications and letters after they had gone separate ways.

The contribution of this text—its thesis—is that moments of historical and ideological crisis force intellectuals bound in elective affinities to reconstitute their ideological positions in order to respond to and accommodate new conditions of everyday life. In this particular

³ For this general trend in the twin capitals of Austria-Hungary, cf. Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979); and Péter Hanák, *The Garden and the Workshop: Essays on the Cultural History of Vienna and Budapest* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). For a wider idea of “crisis” in *fin-de-siècle* European thought and its political consequences, cf. Zeev Sternhell, “Crisis of Fin-de-Siècle Thought,” in *International Fascism: Theories, Causes and the New Consensus*, Roger Griffin, ed. (London: E. Arnold, 1998).

context, that general principle is concretely realized as a reconstitution of both individual horizons of expectation and the realization of the poverty of previous intellectual inclinations. This is unique, for the experience of the Great War provided the space for the intellectuals of the present study to adapt their *Weltanschauungen* in totality, demonstrating intellectual flexibility rather than rigidity.

The broadest context of this study is decidedly Central European in spatial terms, and temporally bound to the first two decades of the twentieth century. My hope is that the issues raised and conclusions drawn in the following pages will have general use, and therefore point both forward and backward in time, toward possible histories to be written. The contribution of this study can therefore be nested comfortably in the overlap between the fields of intellectual history, history of political thought, and the sociology of intellectuals.

1. Historiography

One of the best ways to trace the dynamics within the Weber Circle is to enter into the problem through the personality of György Lukács, in that context better known as Georg von Lukács. Although large portions of the secondary literature, primary sources, and archival materials will lean on the figure of Lukács, they are not exclusively focused upon him. In fact, many secondary works about figures in the circle are of a comparative or entangled persuasion, all of which attempt to go beyond the individual personality as the key to the story. As such, there will be healthy consideration for other individuals in the Weber Circle, among others Max and Marianne Weber, Emil Lederer, Mina Tobler, Emil Lask, and Ernst Bloch. The historical-sociological centerpiece of this study is therefore the relationship between interpersonal and intellectual elective affinity and moments of historical crisis.

Often, the biography of an individual and the sociological exploration of a *milieu* are two distinct types of studies, a division reinforced either by bias, intention, or merely by

method. Biography places the individual over their own interpersonal relationships and social circles, while the sociological study of a circle often has to grapple with multiple personalities, and therefore multiple types of relationships, sometimes even reducing individuals to the quality or character of their relations with one another. Since I am entering into the problem of interpersonal relations between those participating in the Weber Circle from the perspectives of intellectual history and the sociology of intellectuals, this study cannot focus on Lukács alone as some sort of monad through which the entire world is reflected. Yet, one of the ways to historicize the “Weber Circle” is to enter the issue through the angle of existing research on the “young Lukács” as a locus of documentation where this intellectual circle is most robustly analyzed.

There is a plethora of literature on the “young Lukács” to be dealt with: nearly a self-sustaining cottage industry since the 1970s—a “Renaissance” in itself, as Zoltán Tar once noted.⁴ There are numerous articles in various journals that appear when one starts a cursory search of the phrase “young Lukács.”⁵ Plenty of books and edited volumes, too.⁶ These studies emerged from Lukács’ later years when he began to autobiographically narrate his youth,⁷ and have led up until the present.⁸ The studies are typically concerned with the place of

⁴ Zoltán Tar, review of *The Young Lukács*, by Lee Congdon, *Slavic Review* 43 (1): 162–63.

⁵ To select a few: Helen Fehervary, “Regarding the Young Lukács or the Powers of Love: Anna Seghers and Thomas Mann,” *New German Critique* 95 (Spring–Summer 2005): 81–92; Ágnes Heller, “‘Von der Armut am Geiste’: A Dialogue by the Young Lukács,” *The Philosophical Quarterly* III (2–3): 360–370; Margit Köves, “Anthropology in the Aesthetics of the Young Lukács,” *Social Scientist* 29 (7–8): 68–81; Ferenc L. Lendvai, “György Lukács 1902–1918: His Way to Marx,” *Studies in East European Thought* 60 (1–2): 55–73. Also, for a collection of articles on Lukács from Hungarian academics in English translation, cf. László Illés et al., eds., *Hungarian Studies on György Lukács*, vols. 1–2 (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1993).

⁶ Cf., among others, Árpád Kadarkay, *Georg Lukács: Life, Thought, and Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1991); George Lichtheim, *George Lukács* (New York: Viking Press, 1970); Judith Marcus and Zoltán Tar, eds., *Georg Lukács: Theory, Culture, and Politics* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1989); G. H. R. Parkinson, ed., *Georg Lukács: The Man, His Work, His Ideas* (New York: Random House, 1970); Michael Thompson, ed., *Georg Lukács Reconsidered: Critical Essays in Politics, Philosophy, and Aesthetics* (New York: Continuum, 2011).

⁷ Cf. the 1962 introduction to Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1971). The secondary literature on this topic began, in a way, with Lucien Goldmann, “The Early Writings of Georg Lukács,” *Tri-Quarterly* 9 (1967): 165–81.

⁸ Notably in the case of two Lukács-focused events in Budapest, Hungary: the conference “The Legacy of Georg Lukács” at the Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) and the Central European University (CEU), 27–29 April 2017; and the “Lukács-vita” debate hosted by the National Association of Doctoral Students of Philosophy (DOSz) at the ELTE Faculty of Humanities.

Lukács' early, "youthful," "pre-Marxist" works in the larger scheme of his body of work. Two tendencies in this debate are striking and often reproduced: (1) the "inside-out" rendering, which tries to make sense of Lukács' conversion to Marxism through textual exegeses, and (2) a sociological or social-historical rendering that traces changes in Lukács' early work and attempts to tie these changes to the contexts in which they occurred. This study approaches the topic from the latter but cannot help but take certain points from the former.

There are two texts from 1979 that point to this bifurcation of the secondary literature. Andrew Arato and Paul Breines' *The Young Lukács and the Origins of Western Marxism* focuses on the transition between Lukács' pre-Marxist and Marxist periods, setting off a wave of scholarship that has attempted to negotiate this transition. They are historians but have little to do with sociology. Or any particular method in that case. As Judith Marcus remarked in her review of the book, they "follow the method of *Geistesgeschichte*—sort of."⁹ Yet how Lukács' youthful thought is related to "the times" is not assessed.

Arato and Breines leverage the weight of the study to find the kernels of this proto-Marxism in his early work (1902–1919), which then seamlessly culminates, in their view, with *History and Class Consciousness* (1919–1923) as the single "origin" of the amorphous intellectual tradition of "Western Marxism." All of this is loosely tied to an even larger and hardly defined *Zeitgeist*. The authors even admit that historicizing Lukács would be tantamount to a reduction of his thought—here, they opt for the rendering of Lukács as an intellectual monad. As a consequence, they insist that his works can only be understood from the "the inside out."¹⁰ The issue is precisely the lack of sociological or social historical perspective—or even just ground-level contextualization. For Arato and Breines, Lukács'

⁹ Judith Marcus, review of *The Young Lukács*, by Andrew Arato and Paul Breines, *Contemporary Sociology* 11 (6), 645–47. For contrast, see also Zoltán Tar, "The Young Lukács," *Slavic Review* 40 (1981): 304–7.

¹⁰ Andrew Arato and Paul Breines, *The Young Lukács and the Origins of Western Marxism* (London: Pluto Press, 1979), 7.

internal Marxist teleology is inherent throughout his entire *oeuvre*: as a result, Lukács sits divorced from the outside world. In more polemical renderings,¹¹ this supposed dissociation from the world results in an interpretation of Lukács' Marxist works from late 1918 onward as justifications for revolutionary violence and Stalinism. Clearly, these types of “inside out” studies read the problem backward: their question is not about a complex intellectual development fraught with negotiation and self-criticism, but rather a clean teleology from pre-Marxist to Marxist positions, with the inherent “Marxism” always present, if only in disguised form.

That is not the case with Michael Löwy's study, also published in 1979, entitled *Georg Lukács—From Romanticism to Bolshevism*.¹² This sociological study examines the turn from Lukács' self-proclaimed period of “romantic anticapitalism” to his Bolshevik conversion. In this work, Löwy rejects the idea that Lukács was the genealogical “origin” of some category of political thinking called “Western Marxism”—a Cold War distinction retrospectively applied to pre-Cold War conditions—and instead posits that certain historical circumstances rendered the Bolshevik option as one of a limited few from which to choose. This study in particular has inspired my own work. My criticism is therefore negligible, and I cite the text often.

Drawing on a similar tradition from Löwy—but decidedly more concerned with intellectual history rather than historically-inspired sociology—is Mary Gluck's classic 1985 text *Georg Lukács and His Generation, 1900–1918*.¹³ This is perhaps the first comprehensive text to go beyond the initial “young Lukács” works published in English in 1979 and as of 2018, the last. In the book, Gluck reconstructs the personal-intellectual inspirations among

¹¹ Cf. Victor Zitta, *Georg Lukács' Marxism: Alienation, Dialectics, Revolution: A Study in Utopia and Ideology* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964).

¹² Michael Löwy, *Georg Lukács—From Romanticism to Bolshevism* (London: New Left Press, 1979).

¹³ Mary Gluck, *Georg Lukács and His Generation: 1900–1918* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985).

Lukács and his intellectual circle in Budapest: the “Sunday Circle,” whose membership included the likes of Lajos Fülep, Anna Lesznai, Edit Hajos, Béla Balázs, Karl Mannheim, Emma Ritoók, among others. Gluck has a comprehensive grasp of the English and Hungarian literature on the topic, with some reference to the German-language materials. The text mostly focuses on the problem of generations (following Mannheim’s theorizations from the 1920s) and its particular place in the context of Budapest from the late nineteenth century to the end of the Great War. As a result, there is little mention of the German context: neither Berlin nor Heidelberg are given much more than passing contextualization in broad view of Budapest’s narrative supremacy. This is a large gap in my view since, as I will argue, the existence of the “Sunday Circle” was only possible by translating the form of the Sunday salons of the Weber Circle onto the Budapest intellectual context. Yet, as with Löwy, this text serves both as inspiration and source for this thesis.

A final important monograph on Lukács worth mentioning is Lee Congdon’s *The Young Lukács*.¹⁴ The title replicates Arato and Breines’ title in parallel with the form of Lukács’ later studies on *The Young Marx* and *The Young Hegel*. But Congdon’s 1983 study does not replicate the loose argumentation of the former, and by contrast succeeds in sifting through all of the archival materials that Arato and Breines and even Löwy do not readily use in their own work. Congdon’s book sits somewhere in the middle of these texts in terms of analytical strength and contribution. Yet it is strangely formatted and has an odd conclusion. Each section is read through Lukács’ relationships and marriages: Irma Seidler, mentioned above; his first wife, Lena Grabenko; and his second wife until death, Gertrud Bortstieber. Each relationship represents an expression of Lukács’ work in three periods of his “youth” (that is, his 30s and early 40s), which, for Congdon, holds great explanatory value. Even if we reject this strangely Freudian rendering of Lukács’ work, there is still no serious discussion

¹⁴ Lee Congdon, *The Young Lukács* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

of his wider social circles, of the crisis of the Great War (though admittedly mentioned, but not in a challenging or analytically profound way), or even of whether the *type* of study that Congdon provides can be generalized outside of Lukács' case. Though the details may be right, the methodological rigor otherwise expected is missing.

One aspect of this literature on the “young Lukács” is a recurring reference to the importance of the intellectual circle around Max Weber in the years immediately preceding the Great War. Yet, there are only a few essays on the issue of the Weber Circle as an intellectual circle with its own dynamics. Source-based records of the circle appear in just one collected volume of essays¹⁵ and as excerpts in memoirs without systematic treatment.¹⁶ Although there are numerous studies that attempt to reconstruct some of the intellectual similarities and actual links between prominent intellectuals within and beyond the Weber Circle,¹⁷ they hinge more on biography and light readings of works rather than situating these intellectuals rigorously in any sort of wider social, intellectual, or political context. Indeed, they only ever focus on one or two characters in an asymmetric intellectual comparison. The circle itself, as a separate unit of analysis, has not been undertaken as its own study.

Additionally, the Great War—the largest historical event overlapping the intellectual exchange within the Weber Circle—is hardly touched upon in these works (with small

¹⁵ Essays from Rüdiger Kramme, Éva Karádi, and Mihály Vajda in Hubert Treiber and Karol Sauerland, eds., *Heidelberg im Schnittpunkt intellektueller Kreise: Zur Topographie der “geistigen Geselligkeit” eines “Weltdorfes”: 1850–1950* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1995).

¹⁶ Cf. various anecdotal excerpts in Paul Honigsheim, *The Unknown Max Weber* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1946), and Marianne Weber, *Max Weber: A Biography* (New York: Wiley, 1995).

¹⁷ Dietrich Harth, “Gesellschaftsdämmerung in Heidelberg: Zur Kritik der Moderne in Lukács' und Blochs Frühschriften,” in Karin Buselmeier, ed., *Auch eine Geschichte der Universität Heidelberg* (Mannheim: Ed. Quadrat, 1985), 251–269; David Kettler, “Culture and Revolution: Lukács in the Hungarian Revolutions of 1918/19,” *Telos* 10 (1971): 35–92; Miklós Mesterházi and György Mezei, eds., *Ernst Bloch und Georg Lukács. Dokumente Zum 100. Geburtstag*. Archivumi Füzetek IV. (Budapest: MTA Filozófiai Intézet – Lukács Archivum, 1984); Lawrence A. Scaff, *Fleeing the Iron Cage: Culture, Politics, and Modernity in the Thought of Max Weber* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989); John E. Seery, “Marxism as Artwork: Weber and Lukács in Heidelberg, 1912–1914,” *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* 27 (1982): 129–165; Werner Jung, “The Early Aesthetic Theories of Bloch and Lukács,” *New German Critique* 45 (Autumn, 1988): 41–54. Also cf. Guy Oakes, “Weber and the Southwest German School: The Genesis of the Concept of the Historical Individual,” in Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *Max Weber and his Contemporaries* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1987), 434–446; Éva Karádi, “Ernst Bloch and Georg Lukács in Max Weber's Heidelberg,” in *ibid.*, 499–514.

exceptions¹⁸), nor can one find much discussion of the contributions of these thinkers even within larger histories of the social sciences.¹⁹ Although I stand by these criticisms, the literature is typically of high rank and quite useful for this study.

All of these historiographic considerations point toward a larger gap in the secondary literature on intellectual production in philosophy and the social sciences in the first decades of the twentieth century. To date, there has not been a study that attempts to tackle what David Kettler has called the “attractive but slippery terrain for productive interaction between history and social science,” that is, “the social history and analysis of cultural groupings, offered as a context for interpreting important cultural achievements,” and apply such an approach to the Weber Circle.²⁰ Kettler writes this approvingly in response to Gluck’s work which attempts the same, but on the terrain of the Hungarian intellectual and cultural environment around the “Sunday Circle” mentioned above. Again, what is lacking is a robust account of the German context around the Weber Circle and its situation within the broader Central European reaction against positivism in sociology, the development of neo-Kantianism in Germany, lingering mixtures of romanticism and anti-capitalism in the political outlooks of Lukács, Bloch, and other radicals, as well as the larger context of the Great War.

¹⁸ Ferenc Fehér, “The Last Phase of Romantic Anti-Capitalism: Lukács’ Response to the War,” *New German Critique* 10 (1977): 139–54.

¹⁹ Typically, Max Weber is one of few canonized figures who can be seen as the clear Central European (or, at least, German) representative of “classical” sociology, but who, for example, receives passing treatment in volume 7 of *The Cambridge History of Science*, entitled *The Modern Social Sciences*, edited by Theodore M. Porter and Dorothy Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Worse, the chapter entitled “Psychology in Russia and Central and Eastern Europe,” which has little to do with sociology, is relegated to the broad section on “The Internationalization of the Social Sciences,” reinforcing a strict center-periphery model of one-way, West-to-East transfers of knowledge. Yet, a more recent study from Balázs Trencsényi, Maciej Janowski, et al., entitled *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe* (Oxford: OUP, 2016), also covers developments in historiography and the social sciences in East Central Europe. The text argues that, alongside developments in local production of political thought, eminent developments in the “sociological gaze” were often the consequences of transfers that outlasted the dissolution of the formerly robust inter-imperial, regional frameworks of intellectual exchange in the aftermath of the Great War.

²⁰ David Kettler, review of *Georg Lukács and His Generation, 1900–1918*, by Mary Gluck, *Canadian Journal of Sociology* 11 (4), 443. Although Ellen Meiksins Wood in particular has attempted to give a theoretical background for possible future research along these lines, that research has not been fruitfully undertaken outside of her own work. Cf. Ellen Meiksins Wood, “The social history of political theory,” in *The Ellen Meiksins Wood Reader*, Larry Patriquin, ed. (Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2012).

The following sections on sources, theory and method, as well as the outline of the thesis, deal with this general problem.

2. Sources

The sources used in the following study fall into three categories: archival materials, published primary sources, and secondary literature that has previously dealt with portions of the first two corpuses of material.

Archival materials pertaining to Georg Lukács, but also the Weber Circle at large, were taken from the correspondence and manuscript collections contained—until mid-March 2018—in the Lukács Archívum és Könyvtár (Lukács Archive and Library, simply referred to as the “Lukács Archive” from here onward) in Budapest, Hungary. Emil Lask’s correspondence collection and Lukács’ *Habilitation* proceedings are currently kept in the digital and physical repositories of the Universitätsbibliothek und -archiv of the Universität Heidelberg in Heidelberg, Germany. Finally, some auxiliary materials relating to the publications of members of the Weber Circle (as well as some relevant journal circulation data) are kept within the Mohr-Siebeck-Archiv housed in the Handschriftenabteilung of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Haus Potsdamer Platz, Berlin, Germany.

For now, I will forego discussion and systematic reference to the relevant published primary sources and secondary literature for the simple reason that these will appear throughout this study. In this brief introductory section, I would only like to go into further detail about the archival materials found in the archives and libraries just mentioned.

There is a great corpus of correspondence from Lukács’ early period (formerly) contained in the archive, much of it fluctuating between German and Hungarian, with few letters in French, and even fewer in English. In order to overcome my current Hungarian language barrier, I used one compilation of selected correspondence in English translation

from Lukács' early period, edited and compiled by Judith Marcus and Zoltán Tar.²¹ This edited volume is a mere selection: the majority of correspondence is untranslated and kept in the Lukács Archive (and remains thoroughly under-researched, as I hope to demonstrate in this study).

The manuscript collection of the Lukács Archive only contains a few unpublished manuscripts from before 1919, so there are no large lacunae in this case. Most of Lukács' early work has been transcribed and is currently being prepared for publication in the German original or translation through the "Georg Lukács: Werke" project initiated by Aisthesis Verlag in Bielefeld. The most recent volume appeared in late 2016 and covers all of his early essays published in Hungarian and German, leading from his first published essay on dramatic criticism in 1902 to the collection entitled *Aesthetic Culture* from 1913.²²

Yet there remains a key manuscript that has only been published twice,²³ entitled "*Die deutsche Intelligenz und der Krieg* (The German *Intelligentsia* and the War)," dated sometime in 1915. It was written for the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft*,²⁴ but remained unpublished until 1973, two years after Lukács' death in 1971. Although sketchy, fragmented, and sometimes stuttering in cadence, the essay contains Lukács' most coherent formulation of his anti-war positioning, and is, in many respects, fairly under-researched, not properly historicized, and has not been put in comparative perspective with his other major work from exactly the same time, *The Theory of the Novel*.

There is a bridge in documentation between the Lukács Archive and the Universitätsbibliothek und -archiv in Heidelberg. The personal papers and preserved pieces

²¹ Cf. Judith Marcus and Zoltán Tar, eds., *Georg Lukács: Selected Correspondence, 1902–1920* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

²² Zsuzsa Bognár, Werner Jung, and Antonia Opitz, eds. *Georg Lukács: Werke Band 1 (1902–1918), Teilband 1 (1902–1913)* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2016).

²³ Georg Lukács, "*Die deutsche Intelligenz und der Krieg* (The German *Intelligentsia* and the War)," *Text+Kritik* 39/40 (1973), 65–69; Georg Lukács, "*Die deutsche Intelligenz und der Krieg*," *Zeitschrift für Germanistik* 11 (1990), 601–605.

²⁴ Georg Lukács to Paul Ernst, 2 August 1915, in *Georg Lukács: Selected Correspondence*, 252.

of correspondence of philosopher Emil Lask are held in Heidelberg, as well as Lukács' *Habilitation* proceedings at the Philosophical Seminar from 1918/19. Reconstructing these connections is one of the larger scholarly contributions of this thesis. The interpretation and contextualization of the Lask-Lukács correspondence, supplementary letters to others written in parallel, the unpublished "*Die deutsche Intelligenz*" manuscript, as well as the story around Lukács' failed *Habilitation* have yet to be treated together in a diachronic intellectual history.²⁵

Finally, the Mohr-Siebeck-Archiv at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin's Handschriftenabteilung (Manuscript Department) contains documentation covering roughly a century of publishing house J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck)'s business activities. Documents include letters, publishing contracts, and, interesting for this study, a collection of requests for various periodicals and publications from the German Army's Central Press Division during the Great War. These requests are also accompanied by formal requests for the publishing house to send statistics on circulation of printed materials, the amount of staff the publishing house employed, as well as the gendered makeup of that staff.

3. Theory and Method

This section on theory and method is preoccupied first and foremost by the question of possibility. By entering into the study of the Weber Circle through the Lukács-angle, so to speak, there are two historical-theoretical questions: (1) how was it possible that the relations between intellectuals within the Weber Circle altered so dramatically around the crisis of the

²⁵ Though, it ought to be noted that the *Habilitation* story has been explored in and of itself. Cf. Júlia Bendl, "Zwischen Heirat und Habilitation (Between Marriage and Habilitation)," *Lukács 1997: Jahrbuch der Internationalen Georg-Lukács-Gesellschaft*, Werner Jung and Frank Benseler, eds. (Bern: Peter Lang, 1998); Júlia Bendl, *Lukács György élete a századfordulótól 1918-ig* (Budapest: Scientia, 1994); Gerhard Sauder, "Von Formalitäten zur Politik: Georg Lukács' Heidelberger Habilitationsversuch (From Formalities to Politics: Georg Lukács' Habilitation Attempt at Heidelberg)," in *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 53/54 (1984), 79–106.

Great War, and (2) how was it possible that such divergent political radicalizations occurred in the wake of the War?

Questions of possibility have a distinctly Kantian legacy, as Ferenc Fehér has pointed out.²⁶ For example, in his first aesthetic work, György Lukács writes: “If this aesthetic ought to be conceived without illegitimate presuppositions, we must begin by asking: ‘Works of art exist—but how are they possible?’”²⁷ Lukács’ question is also explicitly referenced by Max Weber in “*Wissenschaft als Beruf*,” a lecture delivered in 1917 to the Freistudentischen Bund in Munich.²⁸ Thus, the question of possibility is a self-reflexive question informed by the objects of this study.

But the question of possibility is inherent in the practice of history as well. In an essay entitled “On the Need for Theory in the Discipline of History,” Reinhart Koselleck seeks to frame this issue. The notion of “historicity,” that is, that feature of objects of study as being historical, or *in* history, opens up discussion about the relationship between *Geschichte* (History in general) and *Historie* (a particular written history). That relationship is characterized partially by the transcendence of *Geschichte* to *Historie*: “‘History’ (*die Geschichte*) constantly passes both the historian and the writing of history (*die Historie*) by.”²⁹ This essentially means that historical statements are drawn from metahistorical categories. Put another way, general tendencies of change in *Geschichte* are realized as concrete changes with particular directions in *Historie*. Recognizing Koselleck’s theoretical contribution, the general issue at hand—the way in which intellectuals relate to one another, and how those relations change in moments of crisis—begins to take concrete form.

²⁶ Ferenc Fehér, “The Transformation of the Kantian Question in Lukács’ *Heidelberg Philosophy of Art*,” *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 16 (2), 331.

²⁷ In the French translation: “Si l’esthétique doit être fondée sans presupposes illégitimes, il faut qu’elle commence par demander : « il existe des œuvres d’art — comment sont-elles possibles ? ».” In Georg Lukács, “I. L’art comme « expression » et les formes de communication de la réalité vécue,” in *Philosophie de l’art (1912–1914): Premiers Écrits sur L’Esthétique*, trans. Rainer Rochlitz (Paris: Éditions Klincksieck, 1981), 3.

²⁸ Max Weber, “*Wissenschaft als Beruf* (Science as Vocation),” delivered at the Universität München, 1917.

²⁹ Reinhart Koselleck, “On the Need for Theory in the Discipline of History,” in *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Todd Presner (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

For this study, the period 1912–1917 has been chosen as the concrete, tangible, historical timeframe. It is clear that the processes, events, and objects of this study have historicity beyond that frame, but I have chosen this five-year span within which the processes, events, and objects of this study are most intimately intertwined and most radically broken apart. In order to trace these dynamics, I use the following tools:

3.1. *Metahistorical Tools*

The first tools are metahistorical, in the sense that Koselleck understands the term, relating to *Geschichte*, or the category of history in general. This draws from an anthropological approach, namely the use of “horizon of expectation” and “space of experience” for historical purposes.³⁰ “Expectation” and “experience” are, for Koselleck, and for this study, formal metahistorical categories. No *particular* history (*Historie*) can be deduced from them, e.g., in the way that “Seven Years’ War” can inspire multiple written histories. These notions organize all possible histories: there is “no history [that] could be constituted independently of the experiences and expectations of active human agents”—put more radically, “one could say that [these categories] indicate an anthropological condition without which history is neither possible nor conceivable.”³¹ As such, they cover all possible temporal categories: experience is “present past, whose events have been incorporated and can be remembered”; expectation is “at once person-specific and interpersonal ... it is the future made present; it directs itself to the not-yet, to the nonexperienced, to that which is to be revealed.”³²

These notions will guide this study from the most general perspective. Each of the actors in the Weber Circle had their own experiences and expectations, without which their

³⁰ Reinhart Koselleck, “‘Space of Experience’ and ‘Horizon of Expectation’: Two Historical Categories,” in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

³¹ *Ibid.*, 256–57.

³² *Ibid.*, 259.

reactions to the Great War and the resultant reconstitution of the circle could not have occurred. But what is the relationship between metahistorical categories and historical statements? I argue that this can only be mediated through the use of sociological tools.

3.2. *Sociological Tools*

Two particular sociological tools stand out for use in this study: the “sociology of the intelligentsia” and the “sociology of knowledge.” In this study, I follow Karl Mannheim’s renderings of these terms since they are, partially, informed by his own experiences in similar intellectual circles at the same time as this study.³³ Although the long, contentious debate about what constitutes the “sociology of the intelligentsia” or the “sociology of knowledge” ought to be noted,³⁴ Mannheim’s tools still provide the historian with a way to describe the tendencies of Central European intellectuals at the turn of the century. They are measuring sticks by which one can compare features of one particular historical manifestation with that of an ideal type.

Intellectuals, as Mannheim points out, are essentially classless: they are educated, highly literate people drawn from various classes and therefore hold divergent interests. They hold multiple historical roles and cannot be so easily categorized by means of their class origin: they often align themselves with a particular class, but are “equipped” to view a problem from multiple perspectives, leading to the circumstance that the intellectual “is less

³³ Cf. Harvey Goldman, “From Social Theory to Sociology of Knowledge and Back: Karl Mannheim and the Sociology of Intellectual Knowledge Production,” *Sociological Theory* 12.3 (1994), 266–278; and András Karácsony, “Soul–Life–Knowledge: The Young Mannheim’s Way to Sociology,” *Studies in East European Thought* 60.1–2 (2008), 97–111.

³⁴ Cf., for example, Pierre Bourdieu, “Are Intellectuals Out of Play?” and “How Can ‘Free-floating Intellectuals’ Be Set Free?” In *Sociology in Question*, Richard Nice, trans. (London: SAGE Publications, 1993); Idem., “The intellectual field: a world apart,” in *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*, Matthew Adamson, trans. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990); Christophe Charle, *Birth of the Intellectuals, 1880–1900*, David Fernbach and G. M. Goshgarian, trans. (London: Polity Press, 2015); Gil Eyal and Larissa Buchholz, “From the Sociology of Intellectuals to the Sociology of Interventions,” *The Annual Review of Sociology* 36 (2010), 117–37; David Kettler, “The Vocation of Radical Intellectuals,” *Politics & Society* 1.23 (1970), 24–49; Charles Kurzman and Lynn Owens, “The Sociology of Intellectuals,” in *The Annual Review of Sociology* 28 (2002), 63–90; Martin Malia, “What is the Intelligentsia?” *Daedalus* 89.3 (1960), 441–458.

rigidly committed to one side of the contest,” and is therefore “capable of experiencing concomitantly several conflicting approaches to the same thing.”³⁵ Relatedly, Mannheim’s sociology of knowledge posits that thinking and knowing “arise out of the collective purposes of a group which underlie the thought of the individual, and in the prescribed outlook of which he merely participates.”³⁶ In Mannheim’s rendering, intellectuals hold a tacit relationship to the class or group to which they have aligned, meaning that their own processes of “knowing” and “thinking” shift depending on that relationship. Of course, the fact that intellectuals often emerge from bourgeois backgrounds should not be overlooked, especially in the case of the Weber Circle.³⁷

All the same, if intellectuals align themselves with another group or obtain a different class-position than before, then their processes of knowing and thinking are likewise altered. This results in a shift in the focus or stress upon any one of several conflicting points of view or positions taken on a particular subject, framed by an individual’s “horizon of expectation” and “space of experience” as outlined in the section above. In being conditioned both by group and individual dynamics, there cannot be a monocausal explanation or mirror reflection in changes of thought and intellectual commitment among the intellectuals studied. Put simply, if the individual intellectuals within an intellectual group diverge, they do so in various different political and intellectual directions, constrained by their horizons of expectation and spaces of experience.

So, if these sociological tools mediate between metahistorical categories and historical statements, what are the historical statements? This is framed partially by *period* (1912–17),

³⁵ Karl Mannheim, “The Problem of the Intelligentsia: An Inquiry into its Past and Present Role,” in *Essays on the Sociology of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2003 [1956]), 105.

³⁶ Karl Mannheim, “The Sociology of Knowledge,” in *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1979 [1936]), 241.

³⁷ Cf. Michael Löwy, “Towards a Sociology of the Anti-Capitalist Intelligentsia,” in *Georg Lukács—From Romanticism to Bolshevism* (London: NLB, 1979), 15–90; Karl Mannheim, “The Problem of the Intelligentsia,” 122.

space (Central Europe, Austria-Hungary, the German *Kaiserreich*, and in particular the city of Heidelberg), and *objects of study* (interpersonal relationships in the Weber Circle, the crisis of the Great War, the intellectual trajectories of a few members of the circle). These historical frames organize the source material, along with the following heuristics.

3.3. Heuristic Tools

For this study, I use two heuristic tools: “elective affinity” (*Wahlverwandtschaft*) and “crisis” (*Krise*). “Elective affinity” is a characterization of the interpersonal dynamics of the Weber Circle. This is an analytical term that moves along different scales of research and can characterize interpersonal relationships (e.g. in Goethe’s text, or in Seidler’s description of her relation to Lukács) as well as the relationship between social and intellectual structures (as in Weber’s *Protestant Ethic*, or Lukács’ description of Novalis’ Romanticism in *The Theory of the Novel*). Originally, as Richard Herbert Howe has noted, the term “elective affinity” entered the German language in 1779 as a translation of chemist Torborn Bergman’s notion of *attractio electiva*, which described the character of association and dissociation between elements and particles.³⁸ From there, the phrase was adopted in certain intellectual circles and entered the lexicon of the German-language *Bildungsbürgertum* by way of Goethe’s novel of the same title, published in 1809. By the nineteenth century, “elective affinity” was no longer used as an analytic term in physics, but rather as a metaphor to describe the shifting nature of relations between people.

For this thesis, I take up Michael Löwy’s definition, which is in many ways a sociological distillation of Goethe’s literary use. In his text *Redemption and Utopia: Jewish Libertarian Thought in Central Europe*, Löwy defines elective affinity as “a very special kind of dialectical relationship ... one that cannot be reduced to direct causality or to ‘influences’

³⁸ Richard Herbert Howe, “Max Weber’s Elective Affinities: Sociology Within the Bounds of Pure Reason,” *American Journal of Sociology* 84 (2), 370.

in the traditional sense ... the relationship consists of a convergence, a mutual attraction, an active confluence, a combination that can go as far as a fusion.”³⁹ It is clear that an intimacy beyond mere friendship or collegiality is meant in this definition. Elective affinities reconstitute the way in which individuals think and act—when placed on an interpersonal scale, that is, the scale of the intellectual circle, Mannheim’s sociology of knowledge holds: intellectuals alter their modes of thought depending on the social group to which they attach themselves if one can demonstrate that an elective affinity is present.

The way in which these interpersonal relations alter is not only the consequence of individual individual “horizons of expectation” and “spaces of experience,” but also from external events and processes in everyday life: the problems upon which intellectuals reflect. The particular confines of this study use the heuristic notion “crisis” to characterize the external events around these intellectuals, though numerous other terms could describe other aspects of their experiences.⁴⁰ “Crisis” has its own conceptual history,⁴¹ and is perhaps overused (particularly in journalistic outlets⁴²) but will be used in this thesis as an analytical tool and heuristic device.

Koselleck’s study *Kritik und Krise* (Critique and Crisis) is particularly relevant for this discussion. As Koselleck argues, in its original Greek, “crisis” (κρίσις) denoted a process of “discrimination and dispute, but also decision, in the sense of final judgment or appraisal.” Through linguistic practice and translation, the meaning of the word “crisis” was modified into its Medieval medical sense as “designating the crucial stage of a disease [or event!] in which a decision had to be made but had not yet been reached.”⁴³ The subjective element of

³⁹ Michael Löwy, *Redemption and Utopia: Jewish Libertarian Thought in Central Europe* (London: The Athlone Press, 1992), 6.

⁴⁰ In Joachim Radkau, *Max Weber* (London: Polity, 2015), he opts for “erotic,” while Marianne Weber’s biographical study of her late husband, *Max Weber: A Biography* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1995), titles a chapter covering the years leading up to and through the Great War as “The Good Life.”

⁴¹ Reinhart Koselleck, “Crisis,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67 (2): 357–400.

⁴² Cf. Michael Freeden, “Crisis? How Is That a Crisis?! Reflections on an Overburdened Word,” *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 12.2 (2017), 12–28.

⁴³ Reinhart Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1988), 103–4, note 15.

crisis—decision and judgment—was only obscured rather than effaced as the word was brought into the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, where it was then combined with the contemporary notion of “critique.” Yet, if crisis is also flecked with an objective sense, i.e. “the crucial stage,” then Koselleck’s conclusion follows:

It is in the nature of crises that problems crying out for solution go unresolved. And it is also in the nature of crises that the solution, that which the future holds in store, is not predictable. The uncertainty of a critical situation contains one certainty only—its end. The only unknown quantity is when and how. The eventual solution is uncertain, but the end of the crisis, a change in the existing situation—threatening, feared and eagerly anticipated—is not. The question of the historical future is inherent in the crisis.⁴⁴

In moments of crisis, decisions must be made without the knowledge of their end. *An* end is certain, but its content is not. We are therefore presented with a double bind: in a moment of *objective* crisis, the “crucial stage” of an event will certainly end, but the course of events, and the end’s contents, are uncertain; in a moment of *subjective* crisis, that is, the moment of “discrimination and dispute, but also decision,” the content of one’s action is certain, but the end is relegated to uncertainty. Therefore, the intellectuals of the Weber Circle made decisions in a moment of crisis that diverged in character from those of their peers without knowing what the result would be. This resulted in the breakup of the circle, as well as their varied political and intellectual trajectories during and after the war.

4. Outline

The first chapter, “Toward Heidelberg: The Intellectual Background,” zooms out from the immediate issues given in this introduction and sketches some prevailing intellectual trends in Central Europe during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The first subchapter deals with the epistemic consequences of neo-Kantian philosophy as developed by the so-

⁴⁴ Ibid., 127.

called Southwestern School around Wilhelm Windelband (Freiburg/Heidelberg), Heinrich Rickert (Freiburg/Heidelberg), and their apprentice, Emil Lask (Heidelberg). The second subchapter reviews general trends in Central European sociology in the first years of the twentieth century in order to make sense of the positivist-antipositivist debates in the discipline, its belated institutional recognition in terms of departments and chairs in universities around Germany and Austria-Hungary, as well as the relation between the sociological outlook of Weber and his neo-Kantian colleagues. Finally, the third sub-chapter approaches the politics of “romantic anti-capitalism”—as used by Lukács and Bloch—in a historical-sociological sense, asking the question: What precisely are the politics and general intellectual stakes of such a label? What is “romantic,” what does “anti-capitalist” denote, and how can these phrases be made compatible? In that sense, I turn toward the conceptual framework provided in a relatively recent volume of the *Discourses of Collective Identity* project, using the notion of “anti-modernism” as a way to see how romantic anti-capitalism confronted the problem of “modernity,” which made up a central concern for the Weber Circle. These three subchapters are intertwined with one another to demonstrate the reciprocity of these trends, how they relate to one another (and often share the same figures), and therefore justify the focus on the Weber Circle.

The second chapter moves to Heidelberg and discusses the dynamics of the intellectual circle around Max and Marianne Weber. The chapter’s title, “On the Neckar: Developing Elective Affinity in the Intellectual Circle, 1912–17,” points in three directions. The first subchapter addresses the issue of defining an “intellectual circle” using Mannheim and related debates about the sociology of the *intelligentsia*. The second focuses on face-to-face interactions. It describes elective affinities between members of the circle through the way in which the “open house” of the Webers was conceived and conducted. This includes noting those who participated, their interpersonal relationships, as well as the interventions and

commentaries on each other's works. The third subchapter looks at another space of intellectual exchange for the sake of comparison: the two journals that published their philosophical and sociological thoughts, entitled *Logos* and the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, respectively, among other relevant publications that demonstrate the same trend in cross-referencing.

The third and final research chapter overlaps with the first two chapters, internally reflecting on the consequences of these intellectual entanglements and political divergences developed in the majority of this study. The title of the chapter, "In the War: Crisis, Reaction, and Political Divergences, 1914–15," reflects its content. As the title hints, the reactions to the war were not all in line with one another, and divergences in political and intellectual commitments take center stage in this narrative. This is what the sources bear out. The issue of intellectual "reconstitution" on a sociological scale—as opposed to a merely biographic one—also reappears here, but in the context of crisis, upheaval, and transformation. Temporally, the chapter begins with 1914, briefly reflecting on the initial conditions of the crisis, working then through two larger subchapters: Emil Lask's tragic and anti-heroic participation in the War and Georg von Lukács' deep resentment toward the War. Ultimately, this chapter reflects on the breakup of the Weber Circle read through the Janus-faced reactions of Lask and Lukács.

The final part of the thesis is entitled "Coda: Existential Choice and Political Radicalization in Times of Crisis." It can be read as a closing outro through the repetition and renegotiation of previous themes in the text. It is a metaphor from musical composition, but also a way to reread the overlapping layers of analysis that the thesis offers: the place of intellectuals and their sociological groups within wider conditions of historical and ideological crisis. The focus shifts to Austria-Hungary toward the end of the war and traces the reverberations of the issues raised in the research chapters. The coda specifically reflects

upon how the Webers' Sunday "open houses" were grafted onto the Budapest intellectual context by György (Georg) Lukács in the form of the Sunday Circle (*Vasárnapi Kör*), thus facilitating a core for political radicalization in the latter part of the First World War.

I. Toward Heidelberg: The Intellectual Background

This chapter will provide an overview of the intellectual contexts within which the members of the Weber Circle positioned themselves. The first subchapter provides a brief, general history of some trends in neo-Kantian philosophy from the mid-1860s to the First World War. Then, it will proceed with biographical and contextual readings of Wilhelm Windelband, Heinrich Rickert, and Emil Lask, thus providing a reading of one of the core intellectual traditions carried by the Weber Circle.

The second subchapter traces some prevailing trends in sociological thought at the *fin-de-siècle* both in Central Europe and its “essential complement,” Germany.⁴⁵ It is necessary to make this large, albeit brief survey of a few trends in order to accomplish two tasks: (1) give perspective on the status of sociology as a discipline between Germany and Austria-Hungary as they relate to our case of the Weber Circle in Heidelberg, and (2) provide an explanatory framework through which we can describe the translation of the outlook of the Weber Circle into the Hungarian—specifically, Budapest—intellectual context from 1915 onward.

The final subchapter deals with the compound political thought called “romantic anti-capitalism.” The notion derives from Lukács’ autobiographical reflections in the 1962 version of *The Theory of the Novel* (1915/16) and is given more robust treatment as a means to interpret how the Hungarian and German *intelligentsia* were, in parallel, reacting to positivism with neo-Romantic tendencies drawn from intellectual references in the early nineteenth century. As a result, a common anti-capitalist sentiment emerged across these contexts.

⁴⁵ Dušan Janak, *The Institutionalisation of Sociology in Central Europe* (Opava: Silesian University in Opava, 2014), 25. Thanks due to Vojtech Pojar for the English translation of this obscure citation.

I.1. The Epistemic Consequences of Neo-Kantianism

Neo-Kantian philosophy was never a homogeneous movement. Frederick Beiser, in his study on its origins, proceeds from a basic definitional starting point: The core aim of neo-Kantianism is “to rehabilitate Kant’s philosophy,” leaving Kant’s legacy open to multiple interpretations and points of stress.⁴⁶ Similarly, though predating this assessment, Klaus Christian Köhnke has stated that:

The connection of the “Kantians” with one another was so loose, their interest in Kant too variously grounded, that the meaning of the concept “neo-Kantianism” might seem to be reducible to say that a “neo-Kantian” was a philosopher the focus of whose endeavors lay in a compounding with at least some parts of the philosophy of Kant.⁴⁷

What were these parts of Kant’s philosophy to be rehabilitated or renegotiated? Beiser points to some themes, including “transcendental idealism, a program for reforming epistemology through psychology, a mistrust of rationalism and speculative metaphysics, a deep belief in the reliability of the methods of the exact sciences, an ethics based on aesthetics, and an antipathy to the speculative idealism of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel.”⁴⁸ Although there is no room in this thesis to delve deeply into the meaning and consequences of each tendency, it is enough to say that two streams of philosophical idealism emerged in nineteenth-century Germany with countervailing epistemic tendencies. First, the rationalist-speculative idealism of Hegel and Schelling posited that human knowledge is *a priori*, that is, knowledge is constituted outside of experience. Second, the transcendental idealism of Kant argued that human knowledge is only reducible *a posteriori*, that is, knowledge is constituted only within human experience.

⁴⁶ Frederick C. Beiser, *The Genesis of Neo-Kantianism, 1796–1880* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 1.

⁴⁷ Klaus Christian Köhnke, *The Rise of Neo-Kantianism: German Academic Philosophy between Idealism and Positivism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 206.

⁴⁸ Beiser, *The Genesis of Neo-Kantianism*, 12.

Although this is a bit of a reduction, it is still enough for this study to point out these two epistemic strains. It was this tension between the possibility of *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge that constituted the central debate among neo-Kantians and their Hegelian sparring partners, a tension reproduced in microcosm within the Weber Circle.

First, it ought to be pointed out that these neo-Kantians were never without institutional support. These intellectuals were “free-floating” in the sense that their studies and academic appointments led them to various institutions and cities across German-speaking territories. Klaus Christian Köhnke has noted this fact statistically, and it demonstrates not only the proliferation of neo-Kantianism as a philosophical doctrine, but also its broad institutionalization. Köhnke points out that in the 1860s, the number of Kant lectures given in German-speaking universities in the German Confederation (including Austrian Cisleithania), as well as Switzerland, reached only three or four per semester.⁴⁹ By the 1880s, that number quadrupled to a range of twelve to twenty per semester, equaling the previous number of lectures given on Plato and Aristotle. In aggregate terms, this meant a change from 54 courses in the decade from 1862 to 1871, to 189 courses given in total between the years 1871 and 1881.

By the 1880s, then, neo-Kantian philosophy had gained a deep foothold in German academic and philosophical life (those two spheres completely overlapping more often than not): “Neo-Kantianism was thus represented by at least one prominent advocate [i.e., Ordinarius, or chaired professor] at nine German-speaking universities...”⁵⁰ This growth is remarkable, but only concerns our investigation into the intellectual lineage that spans Wilhelm Windelband (1848–1915), Heinrich Rickert (1863–1936), and Emil Lask (1875–1915).

⁴⁹ Köhnke, *The Rise of Neo-Kantianism*, 205.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

Wilhelm Windelband was educated under Hermann Lotze at Göttingen, completing his doctorate in 1870, exactly at the time when neo-Kantians were flooding German-speaking lecture halls. He was thus exposed to the two major intellectual trends of the day: historicism and neo-Kantianism. The former pulled him in the direction of the philosophy of history in the tradition of Hegel and Fichte. The latter was inspired by his studies under Lotze, which demonstrated a normative realm of thinking “that transcends its particular psychological or historical genesis.”⁵¹ This tension between transcendental knowledge and historically-conditioned knowledge would continue to plague Windelband and the Southwestern School around Rickert and Lask.

In 1875, Windelband was called to a philosophical chair at Zürich, around the same time that numerous neo-Kantians began to be appointed to philosophical chairs at German-speaking universities across Western and Central Europe. Windelband was part of this generation, and notably stuck in its problems, that is, the inconsistent conception of what neo-Kantian philosophy ought to be. As Frederick Beiser points out, that inconsistency rested on two ideals: “the demand that philosophy be autonomous, a discipline in its own right; and the requirement that philosophy imitate the model of the natural sciences.”⁵² This tension essentially meant that philosophy had a Manichean choice: autonomy or subservience. This was made more complicated by the tendency of neo-Kantianism to be intellectually allied with positivism at the end of the nineteenth century, acting as an intellectual foil for the alliance between Romanticism and Hegelianism. But, as a foil, the neo-Kantian–positivist alliance was never an affinity: tension only preceded further tension.

Windelband was caught in the middle of this tension, the debates of which were carried out mostly on the pages of the journal *Vierteljahrschrift für wissenschaftliche Philosophie*. Through the journal, a common agenda seemed to be a unifying principle among

⁵¹ Frederick Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 369.

⁵² Frederick Beiser, *The Genesis of Neo-Kantianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 457.

the neo-Kantians and positivists: “hostility to metaphysics, experience as the limits of knowledge, philosophy as the logic of science.”⁵³ But this was an older neo-Kantian program, and a decade after the initial institutionalization of the tradition, the positivists held positions diametrically opposed to those of the younger, historicist-inspired neo-Kantians. “The neo-Kantians were highly critical of the positivist’s extreme empiricism, their naïve faith in given facts, and their belief in the complete autonomy of the sciences, as if they had no metaphysical presuppositions at all,” writes Frederick Beiser.⁵⁴ These issues were never resolved with Windelband, who was torn between these competing streams of thought, never composing a systematic philosophy of his own. But, he did make a key contribution to the epistemology of the human and social sciences: the distinction between the existence and validity of knowledge. Thus, the generation of the 1870s pushed out of the positivist orbit precisely because they had conceived of a shift in the key Kantian question: instead of “What makes knowledge possible,” they went into the practical issue of “What makes judgments true and reasoning valid?”⁵⁵

Yet, Windelband never provided a systematic answer to the question he had posed. Instead, this issue was picked up by Heinrich Rickert, who completed his doctorate in 1888 under Windelband at Straßburg/Strasbourg. Rickert moved to Freiburg im Breisgau in 1889, and pursued his *Habilitation* under Alois Riehl, another neo-Kantian of the same generation as Windelband. Inspired primarily by Windelband, however, Rickert pursued a new answer to the problem of the truth of judgments and the validity of reasoning. Partially, the answer came from his rejection of the historicism of the generation of the 1870s. He saw Kant’s work as a critical doctrine of norms, otherwise commonly excluded by the doctrine of historically-conditioned knowledge held by the historicists. Rickert then entered into the questions of

⁵³ Ibid., 458.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 460.

values and validity. These questions would inspire debate within the social sciences originating precisely from the context of the Weber Circle, of which Rickert was a slightly older party, and a distant participant from Freiburg until he took a chair at Heidelberg in 1915.

But Rickert's main theoretical contribution to the amalgam of neo-Kantian philosophy lay in his theory of values. Classical neo-Kantian conceptions of reason placed it above the passions involved in politics, ethics, and aesthetics—all of which Kant had separated from philosophy *as* epistemology. Rickert made the key distinction, highly influential for those followers of Weber from the late 1890s until today, that reason can only determine the *means* of the cultural spheres: the *ends* are set by will and feeling, curiously setting him not so far from the positions held by Friedrich Nietzsche or Wilhelm Dilthey. Thus, historical knowledge—including knowledge of societies—was a product of reason and passion alike.

This vision of historical knowledge was the key point between Windelband, his *Doktorvater*, and later his own student, Emil Lask, in their common project to delimit history as a science. The stakes of this project were high. If they could not assert history as a science (that is, *Wissenschaft* in the broad sense of the German concept), then reason would be subordinated to “common sense” or “aesthetic insight”—historical truth as caprice.⁵⁶ This led to a general conclusion about the sciences as such. Boundaries between the sciences must rest on differences in material rather than subject; a difference in methodological foundation rather than objects of study. Thus, Rickert helped to lay the general epistemological foundations for the autonomy of philosophy, history, and sociology, indeed all of the human sciences. This derived precisely in the fact that reason could only accrue difference among disciplines in terms of *method* (that is, the *means*), and thus set reason on equal footing with passion and will.

⁵⁶ Fredrick Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition*, 399.

Rickert's contributions to the neo-Kantian tradition were highly influential, but his critique of normativity (such that it was quiet on the problem of objective truth and thus led to epistemic relativism) laid the groundwork for this tradition's undoing. This final blow was dealt by three individuals, two of whom were his students, and one of whom attempted to be: Emil Lask and Martin Heidegger, and the young Georg von Lukács, respectively. As the scope of this thesis entails a discussion of Lukács and Lask, Heidegger must be kept out of the frame for the sake of brevity.⁵⁷

Lask was born in Wadowitz/Wadowice, Austrian Galicia, to German-Austrian-Jewish parents on 25 September 1875. He completed his doctorate in philosophy under Rickert at Freiburg on the topic of Fichte's idealism,⁵⁸ and his *Habilitation* in 1905 under Windelband at Heidelberg on legal philosophy, after which he gave his inaugural lecture entitled "Hegel and the Enlightenment"⁵⁹—choices that would not have fit earlier curricula of a budding neo-Kantian. Given the strides that Windelband and Rickert had made for neo-Kantian epistemology in the preceding decades and given their critical interaction with German historicism in the tradition of Hegel and Fichte, Lask was inspired by a combined, dual tradition that had been radically separated in previous generations, as explained above. This engendered a deeper speculation on the problem of historical knowledge.

That problem first arose in Lask's doctoral dissertation, entitled *Fichtes Idealismus und die Geschichte* ("Fichte's Idealism and History"). The aim was to present the problem of historical knowledge. The problem, in Lask's rendering, goes like this: the aim of history is to grasp the individual; the individual is far too rich and complex to grasp by human cognition

⁵⁷ For an introduction Heidegger's place in the neo-Kantian tradition, cf. Tom Rockmore, ed., *Heidegger, German Idealism, and Neo-Kantianism* (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 2000).

⁵⁸ Published in Emil Lask, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 3 vols., ed. Eugen Herrigel (Tübingen, Verlag J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1923). Cf. "Fichtes Idealismus und die Geschichte," in *ibid.*, vol. 1.

⁵⁹ The manuscript of which is kept in the Emil-Lask-Nachlaß, Historisches Sammlungen, Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg (UBH). Cf. UBH Heid. Hs. 3820,1: Lask, Emil: "Hegel in seinem Verhältnis zur Weltanschauung der Aufklärung: Oeffentliche Antrittsvorlesung," Heidelberg, 1905 Januar 11.

and concepts; thus, the individual cannot be completely analyzed in history, and historical knowledge must acknowledge this irrationality—what Lask calls the “*hiatus irrationalis*,” a term taken from Fichte. For Lask, neither Kant nor Hegel provided solutions to the problem of irrationality vis-à-vis historical knowledge: Kant placed reason above passion and will; Hegel posited that knowledge precedes rationality or irrationality altogether. It was only Fichte who recognized a dialectical relationship between rationality and irrationality as the constituent features of historical knowledge.

This step had reverberating consequences for the Weber Circle. By asserting that historical knowledge must contend with the irrationality of the individual, then that irrationality can be extended to all autonomous sciences, since they only differ in method rather than object, as Rickert had asserted. If history, philosophy, sociology, and so on, all deal with the human at the center, then the inability for one autonomous science to contend with the gap between the limits of human cognition and the richness of human complexity spells disaster for the epistemology of each autonomous discipline. It means that cognitive categories cannot contend with human experience, and thus both the *possibility* and *validity* of knowledge is put into question—a question picked up from numerous different angles by the Weber Circle between 1912 and 1917.

The question remains: what about the other sciences? The Weber Circle involved itself with neo-Kantian epistemic foundations and its debates about the validity of those foundations. But these debates did not exist only in the realm of philosophical conjecture. On different footing, the debate raged about the methodological foundations of a new, growing discipline: sociology. The following subchapter will trace the parallel growth of sociology in Central Europe, its institutionalization and practice, as well as its convergence with neo-Kantian epistemic categories in the context of the Weber Circle in Heidelberg.

I.2. Prevailing Trends in *Fin-de-siècle* Sociology

In a unique work, Dušan Janak of the Silesian University in Opava has traced the institutionalization of sociology in Austria-Hungary, covering the Czech lands, Slovakia, and Hungary, as well as looking outside to Poland and nodding to Germany as well. Janak omits German-speaking Austria and the German Empire on methodological grounds: “we omit the German part of Central Europe which, in terms of language, we consider as part of a different type (i.e., western type) of sociological discourse.”⁶⁰ Yet, similarities do creep in. Janak admits that sociology which developed in the German parts of Central Europe play an essential constitutive role for Central European sociology in general—not least because many of the intellectuals who developed sociology in Central Europe obtained their education in German-speaking universities toward the end of the nineteenth century.⁶¹ This transfer of knowledge was, in large part, facilitated by the Central European Jews. Janak lists “Sigmund Freud, Edmund Husserl, Gustav Mahler, Franz Kafka, ... Ludwig Gumplowicz, Emil Lederer, Karl Mannheim, and Georg Lukács,” each of whom moved quite freely around the different German and non-German parts of Central Europe from the turn of the century through the Great War.

In comparison with the institutionalization of neo-Kantian philosophy described above, the institutionalization of sociology was delayed by nearly a half-century. Though compared with developments in France and Great Britain, developments in the German-speaking and non-German-speaking parts of Central Europe were quite evenly paced with the rest of Europe.⁶² In Great Britain, the first dedicated sociology department was founded in 1907; in France, 1913; in Germany, after the Great War, in 1919; in the rest of Central Europe (excluding Hungary), between 1918–1924.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 11.

⁶¹ Ibid., 21ff.

⁶² Ibid., 33.

Of course, institutionalization measured by departmental foundation should not be understood as coterminous with the *practice* of sociology. For example, Max Weber embarked on sociological investigations in the 1890s, beginning, in a way, with his *Antrittsvorlesung* at Freiburg in 1895 on the topic of Polish seasonal workers and the ethno-national composition of the eastern provinces of the German *Kaiserreich*.⁶³ Although Weber's first large-scale foray into sociological practice was marred by a rampant, albeit self-critical nationalism (he was, in fact, part of the Pan-German League at the time), it was one of many types of studies that aimed to explore the dynamics of society from numerous different angles, mostly within the national frame.

His methodological direction fit within the larger trend within Central Europe at the turn of the nineteenth century, which aimed to criticize Romantic nationalism with positivistic national histories and social-scientific investigations.⁶⁴ Weber's position would shift toward an antipositivistic approach after interacting with the neo-Kantians at Heidelberg, where he was appointed one year after Freiburg, in 1896. Although he accepted the chair in national economy once more, his interest and practice turned toward we would now call sociological investigations.

This distinction between the *practice* or even *interest* in sociology and its belated *institutionalization* is a key difference in this thesis. In order to develop and justify sociology as a distinct discipline, practitioners often utilized the arguments made by neo-Kantians like Windelband and Rickert on the epistemic justifications for the autonomies of the sciences, which fit into a broad antipositivist reaction. But this discussion was also relevant in Budapest, a city that produced numerous great sociological minds: Oszkár Jászi, Karl Polányi, György (Georg) Lukács, and Karl Mannheim, to name a few. An exploration of this context

⁶³ Cf. Max Weber, "Die Nationalstaat und die Volkswirtschaftspolitik (1895)," in *Max Weber: Politik und Gesellschaft*, 42–62 (Frankfurt: Zweitausendeins, 2006).

⁶⁴ Balázs Trencsényi, et al., *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe, Volume I: Negotiating Modernity in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 564.

is absolutely necessary in order to understand the intellectual trends that were brought with György Lukács—who then fashioned himself as the more Germanic Georg von Lukács—to Heidelberg.

Helpfully, Attila Pók has provided a survey of the status of sociology in Budapest at the *fin-de-siècle*.⁶⁵ Pók claims that the rise of sociology had much to do with the myriad problems facing Hungarian society at the turn of the century, and which cried out for solutions. Among them, “the country’s constitutional position within the Habsburg Empire ... the question of the national minorities, the problems arising from the preponderance of feudal latifunda, the miserable living conditions of large sections of the peasantry, and the emergence of industrial workers’ movements.”⁶⁶ These major ailments spurred local interest in other contemporary European intellectual trends that aimed to alleviate similar issues popping up around the continent.

One way to interact with these debates was to organize a sociological journal. In Budapest, this took the form of *Huszadik Szazad* (Twentieth Century), headed by Gusztáv Gratz and Oszkár Jászi, the first issue of which appeared in January 1900. Gratz and Jászi took their central inspiration from Herbert Spencer’s organicist view of society, asserting its usefulness in the analysis of social ills.⁶⁷ This view had its origins in the French and English Enlightenments, first explicitly distilled in the works of Comte, who viewed society as a whole that functioned “independently of all individual persons.”⁶⁸ Although this notion contained a “quasi-religious” tone, it set the foundation for organic conceptions of social development, of which the social whole was greater than the sum of its individual parts.⁶⁹ Spencer, by the 1840s onward, adopted this monolithic view of society, but rearranged its

⁶⁵ Attila Pók, “The Social Function of Sociology in *Fin-de-siècle* Budapest,” in *Hungary and European Civilization*, ed. György Ránki and Attila Pók (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1989).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 266.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 268.

⁶⁸ Harry M. Johnson, *A Short History of Sociology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), 10.

⁶⁹ Trencsényi et al., *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe*, 318.

stress and accentuated a more positivistic, analytical form. Within the social organism, institutions and functions were tightly interrelated, even interdependent on each layer of society: the family, the firm, and the government alike.⁷⁰ The holism of Comte was retained, but an “organic” distinction between its constituent parts introduced, leading to the possibility of much closer analysis of the layers and functions of society-at-large. This also meant a clear lineage was taken up locally by the Hungarians but adapted to their own circumstances and reworked for their own use.

One year after the foundation of *Huszadik Szazad*, a discussion group was created in Budapest, the so-called Sociological Society (*Társadalomtudományi Társaság*). These two institutions provided space for a new, common conception of day-to-day politics as symptoms of larger social processes—this contribution very much indebted to Spencer’s original organicist schema. For the contributors and editors of the journal, knowledge of larger social processes illuminated the background of daily politics, and thus the keys to social transformation.

The focus on Spencer’s organicism was not singular, however. The intellectual references of the editors of *Huszadik Szazad* varied greatly: inspired by the work of the anarcho-syndicalist and librarian Ervin Szabó, Jászi and others began to write on historical materialism; French sociological developments around Durkheim were republished and reinterpreted; the sociological grounds of aesthetics were probed by others. Irrespective of the topic, as Pók states, any and all studies appearing in *Huszadik Szazad* had to “trace back the phenomena to the objective rules of social development.”⁷¹ Although the journal took a critical stance toward academic institutions at the turn of the nineteenth century, it still sat comfortably within the limits of criticism acceptable to the liberal Budapest bourgeoisie.⁷²

⁷⁰ Johnson, *A Short History of Sociology*, 19.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 269.

⁷² Mary Gluck, *Georg Lukács and His Generation, 1900–1918* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 85ff.

Already, a tension arose between the neo-Kantians' insistence on antipositivism and epistemic autonomies for the human sciences—centered in Budapest around the philosopher and university professor Bernát Alexander—while *Huszadik Szazad* relied on more holistic, organicist notions of society combined with a positivistic outlook. But what is the precise link?

The link comes in the form of young intellectuals like Lajos Fülep, György Lukács, Béla Balázs, and Karl Polányi, each of whom participated in many of the *fin-de-siècle* intellectual circles of Budapest. Between 1906 and 1913, Lukács published articles in the premier, modern reviews *Nyugat* (West),⁷³ and *Huszadik Szazad*, for the latter of which Lukács wrote roughly twenty articles or reviews alone.⁷⁴ Lukács wrote prolifically in that period, mostly dramatic reviews and short essays on aesthetics, which culminated in *Soul and Form*, a collection of essays published in 1910. Yet, Lukács was not readily welcomed within the *Huszadik Szazad* group, and in fact clashed with what he saw as their positivistic outlook—a common trait among sociological trends at the turn of the century.⁷⁵

This observation translated well into the context of the Weber Circle when Lukács moved to Heidelberg in early summer 1912. His criticism of positivism found clear allies among Rickert, Lask, Weber, Bloch, and others who felt that sociology and philosophy alike

⁷³ *Nyugat* (in English, *West*) was a periodical founded by Ignóty (the pen name of Hugó Veigelsberg), and edited primarily by Ernő Ósvat, with the aim to “‘catch up’ with Western ideas of freedom for the individual, of social equality and international brotherhood.” The periodical published essays from a heterogeneous mixture of essayists and literary critics, many of whom gained varying degrees of fame at home and abroad: Margit Kaffka, Oszkár Jászi, Endre Ady, György Lukács, and Anna Lesznai, to name a few. Cf. Joseph Held, “Young Hungary: The *Nyugat* Periodical, 1908–1914,” in *Intellectual and Social Developments in the Habsburg Empire from Maria Theresa to World War I: Essays Dedicated to Robert A. Kann*, Stanley B. Winters and Joseph Held, eds., East European Monographs, No. XI. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975); Mario D. Fenyo, “Writers in Politics: the role of *Nyugat* in Hungary, 1908–19,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 11 (1): 185–198; idem., “Literature and Political Change: Budapest, 1908–1918,” *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 77 (5): 1–156; and also addressed in some detail in Maxwell Staley, “The First *Nyugat* Generation and the Politics of Modern Literature: Budapest, 1900–1918” (MA Thesis, Central European University, 2009).

⁷⁴ Attila Pók, “György Lukács’ Workshops in *Fin-de-siècle* Budapest,” *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 34 (2–3), 261.

⁷⁵ Ibid. Originally cited in György Lukács, *Magyar irodalom – magyar kultúra* (Hungarian Literature – Hungarian Culture) (Budapest: Gondolat, 1969), 11. Cf. Johnson, *A Short History of Sociology*, 10ff.

could not be grounded on purely rational bases. They recognized an *irrational*, interpretive side to human cognition, conditioned by judgments that had their footing in passion and will. This position had much in common with the neo-Kantian positions explicated above, as well as the *Lebensphilosophie* of Wilhelm Dilthey.

The clearest reflection of this issue came through Weber's own methodological views on the practice of sociology, conditioned clearly by his interactions with his neo-Kantian colleagues. Although the character and direction of these interactions is the subject of the next chapter, it is enough to say here that Weber's own views were not isolated from the inspirations around him. As Wilhelm Hennis noted, Weber's work may differ from the sociological work of Comte, Durkheim, and Spencer, but he nevertheless fits into the general stream of "German human and social sciences" as they existed at the end of the nineteenth century.⁷⁶ His position thus denoted participation in the contentious debate about the epistemic foundations of the disciplines to which these intellectuals adhered.

In 1902, Weber completed his reading of Heinrich Rickert's *Die Grenzen der naturwissenschaftlichen Begriffsbildung* (The Limits of Natural-Scientific Concept Formation), a book which, in the words of Guy Oakes, provided "an attempt to employ the epistemological doctrines of neo-Kantianism in order to develop a philosophy of history by means of transcendental arguments that would refute both positivism and neo-Hegelian idealism."⁷⁷ This meant that in cultural spheres, there are no given facts, nor any concrete universals that order systems of cultural production. Instead, as Weber claims, humans are cultural beings, and as such ascribe value and significance to cultural works due to the cognitive position that humans have toward the world—a position of passion and reason alike.

⁷⁶ Wilhelm Hennis, "A Science of Man: Max Weber and the Political Economy of the German Historical School," in *Max Weber and His Contemporaries*, ed. Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel (London: Routledge, 2010 [1987]), 25–6.

⁷⁷ Guy Oakes, "Max Weber and the Southwest German School: Remarks on the Genesis of the Concept of the Historical Individual," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 1 (1), 115.

Although this was partially informed by Weber's participation in the German "historical school" of economics at the end of the nineteenth century, this recognition of the historicity of the individual follows directly from the neo-Kantian positions of Windelband, Rickert, and Lask given above. Through their work, "Weber found a theory of the cultural sciences which, in his view, established the conditions under which knowledge of the historical individual is possible."⁷⁸ This reaction against the sterility of positivism was felt in the realm of aesthetics as well, resonating with a neo-Romanticism that was emerging, intertwined with the antipositivistic stress on historical knowledge.

Back in Budapest, around 1910, Lukács sought to form his own journal along with Lajos Fülep, the art historian, and Sándor Hevesi, part of the Thalia Theater Company. The journal, *A Szellem* (in German, *Der Geist*), sought to be an outlet for "new metaphysics and anti-positivism," though only published two issues in 1911.⁷⁹ Although this attempt faltered, *A Szellem* was partly an attempt at reconciling sociological investigations with philosophical reflections in the realm of aesthetics, and partly a way to link the Hungarian antipositivism debate with a similar discourse around the German-language journal *Logos* based in Tübingen.

The neo-Kantian–positivist tension was reproduced in Hungary already from the last quarter of the nineteenth century, specifically in the universities of Budapest.⁸⁰ Although the reception of positivism was belated, its institutional hegemony clung to the halls of Hungarian academia with tenacity. In 1901, the Hungarian Philosophical Society was founded. Although attempting to break away from the status quo, it was quickly subsumed within it. By 1916, when Bernát Alexander—neo-Kantian professor of philosophy at the University of Budapest and initiator of the twenty-nine volume *Filozófiai Írók Tára* (Philosophical Writers'

⁷⁸ Ibid., 118.

⁷⁹ Pók, "György Lukács' Workshops in *Fin-de-siècle* Budapest," 262.

⁸⁰ Laszlo Percz, "The Background Scenery: 'Official' Hungarian Philosophy and the Lukács Circle at the Turn of the Century," *Studies in East European Thought* 60 (1–2), 33.

Library)—was elected president of the Hungarian Philosophical Society, a debate emerged that aimed at declaring the Society “positivist” once and for all.⁸¹ This was no surprise, for the positivist strain had a wide reception in the Hungarian context around the 1890s, well after its apogee in Germany. The Society thus organized the basis of its epistemological outlook on the aspiration to be completely “anti-metaphysical ... and taking the natural sciences as the epistemological ideal.”⁸² As shown in the previous subchapter, Windelband, Rickert, and Lask had rallied *against* this issue with equal tenacity. Eventually, the debate among the membership of the Hungarian Philosophical Society stalled and failed, much like its wider institutional hegemony by the end of the Great War.

These episodes capture the depth of the competing intellectual tendencies in the first decades of the twentieth century. One consequence was a return to a metaphysical stance, acknowledged by Windelband, Rickert, and Lask, and held up as ideal by Lukács and his intellectual compatriots in Budapest. Another consequence, set out in the final subchapter below, is a return to Romanticism, and a politicization of that aesthetic position against capitalism as a substitute for the otherwise positivistic sociologies proliferating around Central Europe at the *fin-de-siècle*.

I.3. Romantic Anti-Capitalism as an Anti-Modernism

By the 1890s, the liberal-nationalism of the *Vormärz* had declined steadily, and the urban bourgeoisie in Central Europe attempted to find new means of political expression in the latter half of the century. This was exacerbated quite rigorously in the German Empire, often turning into a generational conflict between lingering liberal elders and younger, more radical children. But Mary Gluck points out that this was not necessarily the case in the Kingdom of Hungary, where “the Hungarian cultural rebels continued to share the fate and aspirations of

⁸¹ Ibid., 34.

⁸² Ibid., 35.

the larger middle-class society from which they hailed and with which they never completely lost their ties of loyalty and solidarity.”⁸³ Although this may very well be nuanced and contested in lieu of its broad generalization, it holds well for the young Budapest *intelligentsia* similar to György Lukács. This lack of complete severance with their middle-class upbringing led them into different directions, often contradictory. Where political uncertainty arose, deep aesthetic reflections also took hold. By wavering in one area of life, these young, “postliberal” intellectuals took refuge in another.

Aesthetics was the central area to which Lukács and his group retreated, not unlike their Austrian counterparts at the *fin-de-siècle*.⁸⁴ They abhorred aestheticism, seen in its most wretched, self-serving form as Impressionism, the height of *l’art pour l’art*. In 1905, the art historian and *A Szellem* co-founder Lajos Fülep stated that Impressionist art had allowed the artist to “reach down into the depths of the self where one is alone with oneself.”⁸⁵ But this had led to a negative aesthetics—an aesthetics spiritually and materially separated from the world. This younger group tied the purely subjective reflections of Impressionist art to the failed liberal tradition onto which their elders had held. In contrast, the younger generation yearned for a deep aesthetic and spiritual renewal in the world, one that would operate outside of the trivialities of disconnected self-reflection.

In one case, this came in the form of postimpressionism, a movement more or less translated into Hungary by Lajos Tihanyi and Károly Kernstok and their wider group, *A Nyolcak* (The Eight). Part of The Eight had been educated abroad among French postimpressionists (i.e., Paul Cézanne and the French Fauves), and subsequently brought these painterly trends to the Transleithanian lands of Austria-Hungary, centered in part on the artistic colony of Nagybánya/Baia Mare, Transylvania. At Nagybánya, a *peinture en plein air*

⁸³ Marx Gluck, *Georg Lukács and His Generation*, 77.

⁸⁴ Cf. Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979).

⁸⁵ Lajos Fülep, “Még néhány művészről (Concerning a few other artists),” *Hazánk*, 7 June 1905. Cited and translated in Mary Gluck, *Georg Lukács and His Generation, 1900–1918*, 115.

outlook prevailed, and a corresponding naturalism took hold. Yet, this was still a modern, local translation of Impressionistic tendencies, and The Eight constituted a dissenting minority in that regard. Their works were geometric and organic at the same time, pointing toward an affinity between the resentment toward “negative aesthetics” held by Lukács and Fülep, and their indebtedness to the converging traditions of antipositivism and Romanticism.

The Eight held their first exhibition in Budapest at the Könyves Kálmán Szalon, under the collective title “New Pictures,” which ran for all of 1910. The gallery paintings sparked what György Lukács called “the parting of the ways” in an essay of the same title, written as a review for the first volume of Hungarian modernist periodical *Nyugat*. There, Lukács described that the painterly tendencies of the latter half of the nineteenth century consisted merely of subjective impressions, moods, and attitudes.⁸⁶ The paintings of postimpressionist Eight tried to capture “the essence of things,” and the expression of this sentiment in their paintings led to a cultural divergence. No longer did the moods of subjective life wash away objective form, order, and value. The solidification of values and the quest for essence through painting had returned not only in these painters’ pictorial forms, but also their urge to carve out a place in society for the artist. Art embedded in society, in collective life: this was the aim and ultimate goal.

Of course, in the Hungarian context, the decline of a positive (that is, content-filled) aesthetics allowed room for the revival of certain Romantic tropes from the early nineteenth century. This dovetailed nicely with the young radicals’ aspirations to overturn the academic positivism enshrined within university lecture halls and the sociological groups mentioned above. To those groups, to be modern was to be positivistic; to Lukács and his peers, modernity was crisis-laden and therefore had to be overcome by the spiritual means that escaped the methods of the positivist sociologists. A corollary with this trend was, of course,

⁸⁶ Georg Lukács, “The Ways Have Parted,” in *Between Worlds: A Sourcebook of Central European Avant-Gardes, 1910–1930*, Timothy O. Benson and Éva Forgács, eds. (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2002), 126.

a distinct anti-capitalistic trend, seen as one of the numerous causes underpinning this collective feeling of alienation from the social world.

In Michael Löwy's text *Georg Lukács—From Romanticism to Bolshevism*, this line between aesthetic resentment and anti-capitalism is clearly drawn. In Lukács' own rendering from the 1962 introduction to *The Theory of the Novel*, this position toward the world was captured as “romantic anti-capitalism,” a complicated spiritual/aesthetic/political position caught between a “‘left’ ethics and a ‘right’ epistemology.”⁸⁷ Although this self-description was filtered through decades of shifting political commitments, self-criticism, and revised self-narration on the part of the seventy-seven-year-old Georg Lukács, this conceptual category can help illuminate a strand of thinking widely shared among sections of the radical *intelligentsia* in Central Europe (including Germany) at the turn of the century.

Paul Honigsheim, at the time a young student in Heidelberg around the Weber Circle, recalled that a certain “neo-romantic” trend had reemerged in German intellectual life.⁸⁸ “Reemerged” due to the fact that the trend never really went away: it was a clear continuation of the romantic ideology of the early nineteenth century, mediated by the philosophies of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, which had wide, parallel receptions across Central Europe.⁸⁹ This neo-Romanticism pointed in at least two directions: one radical and Volkish; the other, left-wing and anti-modern. As George Mosse argued in *The Crisis of German Ideology*, Romantic tropes from the first decades of the nineteenth century were intellectually rehabilitated in the last decades of the same century.⁹⁰ This was a reaction to the economic logic of industrialized modernity and its resultant social alienation, as well as an intellectual resentment directed toward the failed promises of the (French) Enlightenment: “The fine

⁸⁷ Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, 19.

⁸⁸ Paul Honigsheim, *On Max Weber* (New York: Free Press, 1968), 79.

⁸⁹ Trencsényi et al., *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe*, 391.

⁹⁰ George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: Schocken Books, 1981 [1964]), 52ff.

distinctions and restrictions of the intellectual systems and rational ideologies of the eighteenth century had been inundated by what many men took to be inevitable social and historical forces.”⁹¹ A strong feeling of dissolution permeated cultural life toward the *fin-de-siècle*, with the interpenetrated decline of “rationalism and Positivism” and the rise of the “philosophy of Bergson, the idea of the subconscious launched by Freud, the popularity of Nietzsche, the influence of Le Bon’s mass psychology, and the elite theories of Mosca and Pareto.”⁹²

Lukács, as well as those in the Weber Circle, sought new forms of certainty in a dissolving world. They did not choose the more certain Volkish path, but rather a more ambiguous anti-modernist position, which complemented the anti-capitalist tendencies in the revival of Romanticism to which they had adhered. Anti-modernism is, in some ways, the Janus face of modernism. In the introduction to the fourth volume of the *Discourses of Collective Identity* project, the editors provide this definition for the term:

... Anti-modernism is (like modernism, but to various degrees and specific ways), a neo-palingenetic, revolutionary, transfigurative, future-oriented alternative spirituality that pervades and shapes every realm of the human experience, from belief systems to aesthetics, from ideology to politics, from individual and collective (speculative) anthropology to cosmology and metaphysics.⁹³

In many ways, this definition covers the concerns of the strand of romantic anti-capitalism envisioned by Lukács, Bloch, Weber, and numerous others in Heidelberg leading up to the First World War. They were searching for a new metaphysics and a new future that would confront the problem of “spiritual decline” in Germany and elsewhere in Central Europe.⁹⁴ Eschatological visions preceded a new union in a decaying world.

⁹¹ Ibid., 13.

⁹² Trencsényi et al., *A History of Modern Political Thought in East Central Europe*, 391.

⁹³ Introduction to *Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770–1945)*, Volume IV: *Anti-Modernism – Radical Revisions of Collective Identity*, Diana Mishkova, Marius Turda, and Balázs Trencsényi, eds. (Budapest: CEU Press, 2014), 3.

⁹⁴ Letter from Georg Lukács to Paul Ernst, September 1911, in *Georg Lukács: Selected Correspondence*, 169.

Lukács went to Heidelberg for the reasons of career and stimulation—and partially to escape the drama of Budapest, where he had failed to *Habilitate* and where his lover and closest friend had died less than a half-year apart in 1911. What he found was a receptive group of intellectuals, and within which he found a way to distill and negotiate his own intellectual ambiguities.

Given these intellectual contexts, the next chapter will pick up these threads and address their concrete realization in the discussions of the Weber Circle in Heidelberg. The focus shifts down a level of analysis, from broad intellectual horizons across regions to a local context and social environment around an intellectual circle. The chapter will address three issues: the conceptual problem of the intellectual circle, the functioning of the Weber Circle itself, and an additional layer of interaction beyond the circle captured in two publications that hosted the thoughts of these intellectuals in essay form: *Logos* and the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft*. At times, the timing and pace of the chapter leaps back and forth in order to draw various lines of inquiry together, ultimately resulting in a composite picture of the Weber Circle and its myriad intellectual horizons.

II. On the Neckar: Developing Elective Affinity in the Weber Circle, 1912–17

The central questions of the following two research chapters are: In what ways, and to what extent do interpersonal relationships and historical events mediate the dynamics of individual intellectual development? My general focus therefore tries to negotiate the boundary between social and intellectual history, but also between the narration of large-scale historical events and small-scale political thoughts. In order to negotiate this boundary, I focus on the sociological formation of the intellectual circle. In my work, I see this as a type of social group whose *raison d'être* is bound up both in the preservation and promotion of the social status of individual members, as well as the provision of concrete solutions to social, political, or cultural problems by intellectual means. Put another way, I focus on a social group composed of so-called intellectuals that gather to exchange their own (often critical) views of the world.

The concrete context of this study focuses on the intellectual circle around Max and Marianne Weber that gathered in their Heidelberg home on Sundays between the years 1912 and 1917. Although there are traces of salon-type activity around the Webers from before 1912 and after Max's death in 1920 (that is, carried on by Marianne in different form), its core activity and greatest extent existed between 1912 and 1917. The circle included members like Emil Lederer, Gustav and Lina Radbruch, Karl Jaspers, Emil Lask, Mina Tobler, Ernst Bloch, and, partially the focus of this thesis, the philosopher and literary critic Georg von Lukács. By looking at the names without much context, one can discern a few things: each had a remarkable career and some sort of later influence on their field of expertise; the members were predominantly male; the group was filled by a German-language core and collective academic acculturation. All of these aspects should not be treated as distinct or mutually exclusive. It is not by accident that the intellectual circle is filled with academics (or

those seeking academic positions, in the case of Lukács and Bloch), and that those academics only saw other intellectuals as their equals. This chapter aims to address these issues.

Given a clear century of distance between the present study and the “open houses” of the Webers in Heidelberg, the dynamics between these individuals, their later independent careers, and the large-scale historical events that surrounded them becomes a bit clearer (though not crystal clear). The onset of the Great War in August 1914 certainly garnered quite different reactions from each member of the “Weber Circle,” but their reactions to the event were also filtered through their interpersonal relations and past experiences.

II.1. What Is an Intellectual Circle?

It is clear that groupings of intellectuals have numerous different manifestations taken in a sociological, *longue durée* perspective. In the extended essay entitled “The Problem of the Intelligentsia,” Karl Mannheim makes the central claim that:

Between the compact, caste-like organization and the open and loose group, there are numerous intermediate types of aggregations in which intellectuals may range themselves. Their mutual contacts are often informal, but the small, intimate group forms the most frequent pattern. It has played an eminently catalytic role in the formation of common attitudes and thought currents.⁹⁵

Beginning with twelfth-century “Bauhütte” in southern Germany and France, Mannheim works through various manifestations of the organizations within which artists and intellectuals organized themselves. (This includes artisans, craftsmen, the clergy, as well as the members of the aristocratic courts in Mannheim’s rendering.) Through the Middle Ages, the clergy takes on dominance as a compact, *literati* organization, with the Church acting primarily as a patron. The result was a closed-type group, which sought “to develop a unified *esprit de corps* and to neutralize the effects of the diverse social orientations which its

⁹⁵ Karl Mannheim, “The Problem of the Intelligentsia,” 123–24.

members carry with them.”⁹⁶ Yet, these groups of clergy were not necessarily homogeneous—Mannheim points to a “secondary differentiation” of social origin brought into the abbey or monastery.

This notion of “secondary differentiation” plays a crucial role in the intellectual groupings of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Although intellectuals, in Mannheim’s view, become “free,” that is, unattached from any one class during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it is often the case that they keep traces of their former lives. Where Lask and Lukács retained the characteristics of assimilated Central European Jewry, Weber remained inspired in many ways by his national-liberal, wealthy, Protestant German upbringing. Yet, the dissolution of an intellectual’s place in their original social strata is a feature of the democratization of the intellectual grouping, which occurred with the devolution of the salon from the court.

Mannheim points out that the development of a literary public sphere in the eighteenth century—a republic of letters as it was—allowed for a critique of Baroque absolutism from *inside* the court, rather than outside.⁹⁷ The salon emerged as a means to gossip at the court without transgressing the etiquette or formalities of courtly proceedings. Mannheim points to the French court, and particularly the practice of the Marquise de Rambouillet, who subdivided her reception hall in order to create distinct spaces for small groups of gossiping members of the court. This initial impulse to talk “behind the scenes” developed into a more institutionalized practice once the court began to accept a “newly amalgamated *intelligentsia*” that acted as a mediator between the educated public and the court itself. This mediating role of the *intelligentsia* demystified the whole courtly practice without threatening the authority

⁹⁶ Ibid., 127–28.

⁹⁷ For two other classic, comprehensive interpretations of this issue, cf. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence, trans. (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1989 [1962]); Reinhart Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1988 [1954]).

of the court. The salon, in its early stages, became the crucial inflection point between the so-called feudal and democratic types of intellectual groups.⁹⁸

Although the salon still required certain formalities—e.g., participation by invitation, recognition of rank or *état*—it was removed from the formal structures of feudal intellectual associations. The salon was neither clerical, nor courtly. Middle-class urbanity, as Mannheim points out, became the norm within the salon, and thus a new set of characteristics emerged. Referencing the work of Chauncey B. Tinker’s 1915 study, *The Salon and English Literature*, Mannheim reconstructs a six-part typology of the salon, which follows and serves as the basis for the basic characteristics also found among the practices of the Weber Circle. Mannheim lists the following: (1) the *intimate locale*, i.e., the intimate space where intellectuals gather; (2) the *stimulating influence of the hostess*, “who encourages talent, regardless of birth, and sets a high standard for the party”; (3) literary, philosophical, or critical *conversation*; (4) *Platonic love*—“the erotically charged atmosphere is symptomatic [of the salon]”; (5) the *preeminent role of women*, which will be contested by the early twentieth century, particularly in the Weber Circle; and (6) the salon as “mediator between life and literature,” which, as we will see in the next chapter, is clearly the most relevant aspect.⁹⁹ Although we cannot draw a straight line between the form of the French and English salon during the late eighteenth century and the early twentieth-century German intellectual circle around Max Weber, the typology of the modern, democratic salon as intellectual group fits the following case closely. In the next subchapter, the given characteristics will be brought to bear on the case of the Weber Circle.

⁹⁸ Mannheim, “The Problem of the Intelligentsia,” 137.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 136–37.

II.2. The Elective Affinities of the Weber Circle

The intellectual circle provides fertile ground to examine the sociological phenomenon of “elective affinity” (in German, *Wahlverwandtschaft*). I use elective affinity in the sense given by Michael Löwy in the first chapter of his book *Redemption and Utopia: Jewish Libertarian Thought in Central Europe*. In that text, he briefly defines elective affinity as “a very special kind of dialectical relationship that develops between two social or cultural configurations, one that cannot be reduced to direct causality or to ‘influences’ in the traditional sense ... the relationship consists of a convergence, a mutual attraction, an active confluence, a combination that can go as far as a fusion.”¹⁰⁰ In a significant way, elective affinity is a more precise way to state the tendency of intellectual groups to cohere around “common attitudes and thought currents” as Karl Mannheim has made clear.¹⁰¹

The phrase “elective affinity” has alchemical origins from the Middle Ages, though analogous ideas can be (tenuously) traced as far back as Hippocrates. Originally, the notion of elective affinity was used as a means to describe the forces between particles of certain elements or compounds, though mostly as a metaphor rather than a strict physical category as we now envision terms like “magnetism.” It is this conceptual flexibility that allowed the term to be used in literature and sociology alike, as shown by Goethe in his *Die Wahlverwandtschaften* (1809) and by Weber in central passages of *The Protestant Ethic* (1905). For Löwy, however, the term ought to have a more precise theoretical rendering. He states that the term, when used in studies in the social sciences and humanities, has four levels: (1) a static element, that is, “simple affinity: a spiritual relationship, a structural homology”; (2) dynamic motion, or “the *election*, reciprocal attraction, and active mutual choice [that] lead to certain forms of interaction, mutual stimulation, and convergence”; (3) the

¹⁰⁰ Michael Löwy, *Redemption and Utopia: Jewish Libertarian Thought in Central Europe* (London: The Athlone Press, 1992), 6.

¹⁰¹ Mannheim, “The Problem of the Intelligentsia,” 124.

consequence of the process of “elective affinity” is “the articulation, combination, or ‘alloying’ of partners ... what might be called ‘cultural symbiosis’”; (4) and, as such, “a *new figure* may be created through the fusion of component elements.”¹⁰² This brings up a central question: was the Weber Circle more than its constituent members? If elective affinity is produced by the mutual attraction between individuals, then this so-called new figure of the circle seems to be something greater than any one personality. It can therefore be an object of study for historical and sociological studies alike.

Although this definition is helpful in orienting the theoretical focus of this sub-chapter, it makes sense to examine the concrete reality of the intellectual circle first by tracing the links between its members. Only then would it make sense to confirm that the relations within the circle are characterized by elective affinity rather than, say, professional necessity or social competition. Another theoretical issue emerges here.

“Elective affinity” has no dynamism unless there is some anthropological content. To fill this gap, it is fruitful to reflect upon two important metahistorical categories theorized by Reinhart Koselleck, namely spaces of experience and horizons of expectation.¹⁰³ As described in the theoretical introduction to this thesis, these categories cover all possible temporal periods, and as such organize all possible written histories. Put simply, there can be no history without experience, and no future-oriented thoughts without expectation. The intellectuals in the Weber Circle are no different in this sense: spaces of experience and horizons of expectation intertwined in order to achieve elective affinity and overcome what Michael Löwy has called the “spiritual gap” and what Mannheim described as “secondary

¹⁰² Ibid., 11–12.

¹⁰³ Cf. Reinhart Koselleck, “‘Space of Experience’ and ‘Horizon of Expectation’: Two Historical Categories,” in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

differentiation” among members of an intellectual circle.¹⁰⁴ How did elective affinity, spaces of experience, and horizons of expectation function in concrete circumstances?

Marianne Weber, among others, has provided a fruitful source to examine the origins, development, and direction of the circle that grew around their home, but particularly around Max.¹⁰⁵ From 1910 onward, the Webers’ had a great influx of guests in their home at Ziegelhäuser Landstraße 17. The house, which still stands today, is situated between the foot of the Heiligenberg and the northern bank of the river Neckar, is made up of a ground floor with two above, one balcony on the first, and a front patio on the ground. The back edge of the house is met by a garden, while the front overlooks the Neckar and across to Heidelberg Castle, with the *Altstadt* and *Alte Brücke* in the foreground.¹⁰⁶ The house is large, and, combined with the prestige of its residents, was be the perfect “intimate locale” to receive guests.

The circle included, among numerous others, the poet Stefan George, the Goethe scholar Friedrich Gundolf, the newly-appointed *Privatdozent* at the university’s philosophical faculty Emil Lask, as well as Lina Radbruch (wife of Gustav Radbruch, the jurist-*cum*-philosopher) and the economist Eberhard Gothein.¹⁰⁷ Although these initial interactions were rich in intellectual content, they also began to cost the Webers’ much of their personal and working hours. For example, the sociologist Paul Honigsheim, in one instance, arrived at 6PM and did not leave until Berta, the Webers’ maid, kicked him out four hours later, stating, “Frau Professor [Marianne Weber] would really be angry.”¹⁰⁸ The ever-increasing (and ever-

¹⁰⁴ Löwy, *Redemption and Utopia*, 12; Mannheim, “The Problem of the Intelligentsia,” 127–28.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Marianne Weber, *Max Weber: A Biography*, Harry Zohn, ed., trans. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1995).

¹⁰⁶ As a side note, the house is now officially called the “Max-Weber-Haus,” within which international students can attend Universität Heidelberg-administered German-language courses.

¹⁰⁷ Marianne Weber, *Max Weber: A Biography*, Harry Zohn, ed., trans. (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1995), 454.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 455.

prolonged) visits by numerous people jockeying for Max's ear began to take a toll on the Webers.

Toward the end of 1912, a Sundays-only rule for visitors was instituted in the Weber household. Although this "open house" intended, as Paul Honigsheim remembers, to organize the visits made by a whole host of so-called intellectuals, the rule was violated often:

The guests were numerous, and they often had things to say that they wanted to say only to the master [Max Weber] and not to the company at large. So on Sundays they would make an appointment for the following week, and the result was that the Webers had single visitors in the house during the week, as in the beginning, or, instead of having just the Sunday open houses, as later in the middle Heidelberg period, they had both: on Sundays the house was full of guests and on work days one or another would be there for a private discussion.¹⁰⁹

On the first attempt of this Sunday open house, Marianne Weber recalled its difficulty. "The ice was not broken, and the company did not fuse."¹¹⁰ By the end, Max "angrily slammed the door to his room shut behind him: 'Never again—having to talk insufferably and immorally for the sake of talking!' However, the second Sunday was quite lovely and familylike ..."¹¹¹ Although difficulties appeared in the first instance of the Sunday open house, Marianne and Max were both able to act as stimulants for discussion, the second key aspect of Tinker's typology of the salon.

The development of intimate personal relations between intellectually heterogeneous individuals takes time, effort, persistence—and above all, conversation. In the case of the Weber Circle, conversation took place outside of the Sunday open houses as well. Later in 1912, Paul Honigsheim and Marianne Weber both remember an evening at a new Russian-language library opened in Heidelberg on the banks of the Neckar.¹¹² At the opening, speeches

¹⁰⁹ Paul Honigsheim, *The Unknown Max Weber* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 125.

¹¹⁰ Marianne Weber, *Max Weber*, 467.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Honigsheim, *The Unknown Max Weber*, 132; Marianne Weber, *Max Weber*, 466. Honigsheim places the date somewhere in 1913, while Marianne Weber distinctly places the event on 19 December 1912, referencing her own diary.

were delivered by Gustav Radbruch, Max Weber, and his brother Alfred Weber, the economist.¹¹³ After the event, marked by a seemingly “endless musical program” and a strange atmosphere, Max, Marianne, Paul Honigsheim, Georg von Lukács, and Ernst Bloch—who Marianne called “our philosophers”¹¹⁴—all retreated to a small café until three o’clock in the morning. By Honigsheim’s recollection, Weber, marked by the exhaustion of the evening, “wolfed down eight little cakes in just an hour.”¹¹⁵ Small events like these formed the integral backbone of mutual relations between these intellectuals, and had the consequence of coming together *outside* of their personal relationships to Weber himself.

In one example, it is interesting to trace the living arrangements of those in the Weber Circle, and how they were, quite literally, living on top of one another. Heidelberg is not a large city, but a city nonetheless. Using thorough research undertaken by local Heidelberg historian Michael Buselmeier, the following results emerge.¹¹⁶ In the house on Landfriedstraße 8, a succession of Weber Circle members lived one after the other: the national-economist Eberhard Gothein (1904), Emil Lask (1906–08), and the Austromarxist economist Emil Lederer (1924–31). From 1912 to 1924, Emil Lederer lived in Keplerstraße 28—along with Georg von Lukács (1915–18) and the social democrat Emil Henk. Between 1911 and 1917, the philosopher Ernst Bloch lived with his wife Else von Stritzsky at Ziegelhäuser Landstraße 65, down the river from the Webers’ home at number 17. Between 1905/06, Edgar Jaffé and his wife Else Jaffé-von Richtofen (to whom this subchapter returns) also lived at number 65. The house on Werrgasse 7 hosted another parallel intellectual circle, the “Eranos Circle,” whose focus centered on the sociology of religions, and whose

¹¹³ Honigsheim, *The Unknown Max Weber*, 132.

¹¹⁴ Marianne Weber, *Max Weber*, 467.

¹¹⁵ Honigsheim, *The Unknown Max Weber*, 132.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Michael Buselmeier, *Literarische Führungen durch Heidelberg: Eine Stadtgeschichte im Gehen* (Heidelberg: Verlag das Wunderhorn, 1996), 46; 52; 227–228; 231–34; 240–41. Many thanks are due to Prof. Carsten Wilke of the CEU History Department, who, in the final stages of my research, loaned this rare source to me.

membership included Max Weber, Wilhelm Windelband, Ernst Troeltsch, George Jellinek, and Eberhard Gothein. Similarly, the Café Häberlein, formerly located at what is now Friedrich Ebert-Anlage 35, acted as a public meeting place that hosted all of the names mentioned and more in true *fin-de-siècle* coffeehouse style.

Although another thesis could analyze all of the ways in which these intellectuals made their way to Heidelberg, I will stick to Lukács' way as a symptomatic, but perhaps unique example. In 1910, Lukács had studied with the noted sociologist Georg Simmel in Berlin, where he met Ernst Bloch and became closer friends with Béla Balázs. On 11 February 1911, Lukács sent a letter to his friend, the Hungarian art critic and translator, Leo Popper, writing:

I had somebody here who was very useful: Dr. Bloch, the German philosopher whom Simmel sent to me once, was the first inspiring intellectual after a long hiatus; he is a real philosopher in the Hegelian mold. Now he intends to move to a smaller German town—possibly to Bonn—and I would have nothing to do there. Of course, if it turns out that I need not or could not habilitate in [Buda]Pest within a reasonable time ... then I would consider the Freiburg “adventure” and Bloch may be able to join me there. But this is neither important nor timely.¹¹⁷

In one month, the jaunt to a small German academic town would become a necessary step for Lukács take. On 4 May 1911, Bernát Alexander, professor of the history of philosophy at the University of Budapest, bore bad news: Lukács' *Habilitation* vote was rejected by the philosophical faculty at the university.¹¹⁸ As a result, Lukács would have to pursue his aims abroad. Although his initial thought drove him toward Freiburg (ostensibly to work with Windelband), Lukács chose Heidelberg. He thus sought out Max Weber and his circle under the recommendation of his former tutor in Berlin, Georg Simmel.¹¹⁹ Although Weber advised

¹¹⁷ Georg Lukács to Leo Popper, 11 February 1911, in *Georg Lukács: Selected Correspondence, 1902–1920*, Judith Marcus and Zoltán Tar, eds. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 146.

¹¹⁸ Letter from Bernát Alexander to Georg Lukács, 4 May 1911, in *Ibid.*, 159.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Letter from Georg Simmel to Georg Lukács, 25 May 1912, in *Ibid.*, 200.

Lukács to *Habillitate* with Rickert,¹²⁰ Lukács had also nursed a non-systematic, essayistic side nourished by his romantic anticapitalist tendencies that matched the eschatological philosophy of Ernst Bloch.¹²¹

The move to Heidelberg in May 1912 made a great deal of sense for Lukács and Bloch alike, both of whom sought their *Habilitation*, and thus to embark on careers similar to their peers, among whom Emil Lask stood out. Although Bloch aimed to pursue his *Habilitation* at the University of Würzburg, where he had obtained his doctorate, Lukács chose to pursue his postdoctoral work in the liberal atmosphere and high prestige of Heidelberg. Shortly after Lukács had moved to Heidelberg, Ernst Bloch wrote on 10 June 1912:

Dear Djoury,¹²²

Hopefully all went well with Weber. Here [at Würzburg], [Max] Wertheimer still has a very good answer: in the worst case, I am still quite sure of the grounds of my *Habilitation* ... What is good enough for Wertheimer is good enough for me—and Vater [Oswald] Külpe knows all of this quite well. Perhaps leave your key with the concierge. I will arrive at night (Thursday or Friday). Be well!

Your brother, Ernst.¹²³

By this time, Bloch and Lukács had known each other quite well. Bloch had made it to Budapest the year previous to meet with their mutual friend Emma Ritóok.¹²⁴ Around this time, Bloch had decided that he and Lukács shared almost the same approach and same thoughts: both had a penchant for the mystical aspects of philosophy, both sought spiritual fulfillment in a sinful world, and both seemed to work in the same direction and reach the

¹²⁰ Cf., among others, Letter from Max Weber to Georg Lukács, 22 July 1912, in *Georg Lukács: Selected Correspondence*, 204; Letter from Max Weber to Georg Lukács, 28 January 1913, in *ibid.*, 211; Letter from Max Weber to Georg Lukács, 10 March 1913, in *ibid.*, 222.

¹²¹ Cf. Letter from Ernst Bloch to Georg Lukács, 29 February 1911, in *Ernst Bloch und Georg Lukács: Dokumente zum 100. Geburtstag*, 7.

¹²² Diminutive of “György,” Lukács’ Hungarian given name.

¹²³ Letter from Ernst Bloch to Georg Lukács, 10 June 1912, in Ernst Bloch und Georg Lukács, *Dokumente zum 100. Geburtstag*, Archívumi Füzetek IV., Miklós Mesterházi and György Mezei, eds. (Budapest: MTA Filozófiai Intézet – Lukács Archívum, 1984), 38.

¹²⁴ Ernst Bloch, Michael Löwy, and Vicki Williams Hill, „Interview with Ernst Bloch,” *New German Critique* 9 (1976), 36.

same philosophical conclusions. They established what Bloch later recalled as a *Naturschutzpark* for their disagreements—of which they had very little in the 1910s.¹²⁵

The next day, on 11 June 1912, Emil Lask wrote Lukács for the first time. Previously, Lukács had written a series of essays, published in German in 1910, entitled *Soul and Form*. He gave a copy to Lask to review. Lask was indisposed with health and professional issues and did not make enough time for a written review, and so wrote to Lukács to apologize, and asked if Lukács would join him at his home.¹²⁶ Lukács must have accepted, judging by the further invitations and budding friendship that followed. They went for walks (*spazieren gehen*),¹²⁷ often met in the afternoon, and became so familiar with one another that when an invitation was sent, Lask would merely assume that Lukács would arrive if no further correspondence came: “*Wenn Sie nichts schreiben, nehme ich Ihre Zustimmung an*”—“If you don’t respond, I take it as your acceptance.”¹²⁸

Similarly, on 15 February 1913, Emil Lask wrote to Georg von Lukács:

Honorable Mr. von Lukács!

Given the seductive weather, I wanted to ask you today whether you would perhaps want to go for an afternoon walk. Unfortunately, Monday does not suit me. If I can take the liberty of choosing the timing, I would suggest that we get together on Wednesday afternoon, and maybe walk only part of the time. Does the afternoon suit you as well, and could you meet me around 4.30 [PM]? Please write openly.

With warmest greetings,
Your completely devoted,
Emil Lask¹²⁹

Here, Lask prods Lukács for a meeting, supposedly out of interest. They lived near one another on the north bank of the Neckar, and supposedly shared numerous walks like these throughout their time in Heidelberg together (1912–14). Although Lask’s tone in the letter is

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ LAK LGyL24-1026/1, “Emil Lask an Georg Lukács, 11 June 1912.”

¹²⁷ LAK LGyL24-1026/6, “Emil Lask an Georg Lukács, 15 February 1913.”

¹²⁸ LAK LGyL24-1026/8, “Emil Lask an Georg Lukács, 8 March 1913.”

¹²⁹ MTA LAK Correspondence Collection: Dossier 1026: “Emil Lask levelei Lukács Györgyhöz, 1912–1915,” LGyL24-1026/6: Brief, Emil Lask an Georg von Lukács (Heidelberg, 15 Februar 1913).

a bit formal, this does not entirely differ from the style of writing he directs at his *Doktorvater*, Heinrich Rickert, Rickert's wife, Sophie, as well as Max and Marianne Weber.¹³⁰ By the time Lask had written the above letter, he already had an academic appointment at Heidelberg as *Privatdozent*.¹³¹ The formal tone of the letter may indicate some superiority on Lask's part, though it is more likely the case that this is merely Lask's style.

In moments like these, elective affinities grew, at least on an interpersonal level, mediated by common spaces of experience (the Webers' Sunday open houses, sharing personal academic and intellectual news) and convergent horizons of expectation (meeting for heady, discussion-laden walks, and looking toward the future for their careers in the case of Lukács' preparation for *Habilitation* in Heidelberg). All of this blossomed into robust relationships, both intellectual and friendly. Lask shared professional worries with Lukács—particularly around his possible appointment as *außerordentlicher* Professor at Heidelberg¹³²—as well as jokes about Lukács and Ernst Bloch's messianic philosophical tendencies to those in the Weber Circle: “Who are the four evangelists? Matthew, Mark, Lukács, and Bloch.”¹³³

But this kind of joke was only one side of the Platonic love that often developed in salons—as Tinker noted above, there is also an erotic side to the friendly relations. This erotic aspect developed in equally robust measure among the participants of the Weber Circle. Joachim Radkau, in his biography of Max Weber, treats this aspect on the first pages of his book:

¹³⁰ Cf. UBH Heid. Hs. 3820, Emil-Lask-Nachlaß.

¹³¹ Lowest post-*Habilitation* rank in German academia in the early twentieth century. Equivalent in some ways to British “Lecturer,” and below the ranks of *außerordentlicher* and *ordentlicher Professoren*, that is, professors without and with appointed chairs, respectively. Cf. Rüdiger vom Bruch, “*Professoren im deutschen Kaiserreich* (Professors in the German Empire),” in *Gelehrtenpolitik, Sozialwissenschaften und akademische Diskurse in Deutschland im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Björn Hofmeister and Hans-Christoph Lies, eds. (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2006).

¹³² LAK LGyL24-1026/7, “Emil Lask an Georg Lukács, 23 February 1913.”

¹³³ Joachim Radkau, *Max Weber* (London: Polity Press, 2015), 432; Karl Jaspers, “Heidelberger Erinnerungen,” *Heidelberger Jahrbücher* 1961, 5.

Max's first semi-fiancée, Emmy ('Emmerling') Baumgarten, was his cousin; Marianne [Schnitger, then Weber] was his second cousin. Indeed, when [Max] fell in love with Else Jaffé, she was already family in the wider sense, as Marianne's close friend for many years and Alfred Weber's companion in life—which did not exactly make the situation easier. And Mina Tobler had for a lone time been in and out of the house when she and Max became physically close: she figures in Marianne's letters as 'Tobelchen'.¹³⁴

Aside from Marianne Weber and Max's cousin Emmy, two women stand out: Else Jaffé and Mina Tobler. Who were these women, and what relation did they have to the Weber Circle? Radkau does give intellectual portraits of each of these women, but some condensed details ought to be given for this study.

Else Jaffé was born Else von Richtofen in 1874.¹³⁵ She completed her doctorate in economics in 1901 as a student of Max Weber. The Universität Heidelberg had only allowed female students to fully matriculate and graduate in 1900—by 1909, 139 women had graduated on the heels of Else von Richtofen.¹³⁶ In 1902, she married Edgar Jaffé. Edgar was an economist, a co-editor of the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft* with Max Weber and economist Werner Sombart from 1904 onward, and, later, Minister of Finance in Kurt Eisner's short-lived People's State of Bavaria (*Volksstaat Bayern*, 1918–19).¹³⁷ Yet, Else Jaffé—she took Edgar's last name—began to grow intellectually and romantically weary of Edgar by 1910/11. Although Edgar and Else stayed together from their move to Munich in 1911 until his death in 1921, she turned toward Max and Alfred Weber for companionship in Heidelberg and Munich, thus entering into the Weber Circle from the erotic side.

Mina Tobler, the other name mentioned in Radkau's picture, was a skilled pianist of Swiss origin.¹³⁸ She had entered into the Weber Circle through philosopher Emil Lask, whom

¹³⁴ Radkau, *Max Weber*, 8.

¹³⁵ Many thanks to my friend Luisa von Richtofen who confirmed some details about Else, as well as the fact that Else and Frieda von Richtofen are, indeed, relatives: "My favorite von Richtofens."

¹³⁶ Martin Burgess Green, *The von Richtofen Sisters* (New York: Basic Books, 1974), 17.

¹³⁷ Hans Jaeger, "Jaffé, Edgar," in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, Band 10 (1974), 290–291.

¹³⁸ Marianne Weber, *Max Weber*, 368.

she had been seeing around 1909. Lask and Tobler had exchanged quite intimate pieces of correspondence and were often with one another in Heidelberg—as Lask wrote of her: “a beautiful relationship without problems!”¹³⁹ Yet, Tobler and the Webers became close—Max and Mina closest of all. The nature of the intellectual circle had created a fluid shift in erotic and sexual relations between the members, creating numerous triangles of love.

Yet, these erotic aspects of the Weber Circle were only one side of the prevalence of women within its ranks. Marianne Weber controlled the functioning of the household, decided upon Max’s academic appointments, and even had time to form her own circle of feminist intellectuals as well as be active within the League of German Women’s Organizations (*Bund deutscher Frauenverein*, BDF).¹⁴⁰ Else Jaffé took to the inspection of factories in the Rhineland before the First World War.¹⁴¹ Mina Tobler, on the other hand, tread the line between fixture and participant. She shifted between the one to whom Max would read poems as well as the one to play piano during the Sunday open houses.¹⁴² Yet these women had definite opinions of the other participants, and were not passive in that respect. Marianne Weber saw Ernst Bloch as a strange, messianistic figure and as having altogether “uncivil manners.”¹⁴³ Mina Tobler complained about him as well. Yet they were both quite sympathetic toward Emil Lask, and the Webers treated Lukács with a great deal of care, even vacationing with him in Italy during the autumn of 1913.¹⁴⁴

It was not only infighting and love triangles at the Weber Circle. There was a clear aspect of the group that attempted to mediate between literature and life, as Tinker’s typology of the salon suggests. In August 1913, while on vacation in Italy with Béla Balázs and Edit

¹³⁹ The Lask-Tobler correspondence is held within the Emil-Lask-Nachlaß. UBH, Heid. Hs. 3820,459–474. This quotation—“schöne Beziehung ohne Probleme!”—comes from a letter from Emil Lask to an unknown recipient, 13 September 1909, UBH, Heid. Hs. 3820,415.

¹⁴⁰ Radkau, *Max Weber*, 51–52. Cf., among others, Günther Roth, “Marianne Weber and Her Circle,” in Marianne Weber, *Max Weber*, xvii.

¹⁴¹ Martin Burgess Green, *The von Richtofen Sisters*, 17.

¹⁴² Radkau, *Max Weber*, 207; Marianne Weber, *Max Weber*, 369.

¹⁴³ Radkau, *Max Weber*, 432.

¹⁴⁴ Letter from Weber to Lukács, 3 October 1913, in *Georg Lukács: Selected Correspondence*, 229.

Hajós—both of the same Hungarian bourgeois extraction as Lukács, and close friends from his time in Budapest—Georg von Lukács met Yelena Grabenko.¹⁴⁵ Grabenko—although she was the daughter of “Andrey Michailowitch Grabenko, *semtsvo*-secretary of Cherson,” according to Lukács’ *Habilitation vitae*—was a radical.¹⁴⁶ She was a Russian Social Revolutionary who had fled Russia in the wake of the collapse of the 1905 Revolution, and therefore the embodiment of everything that Lukács had seen as inspirational and mystical about Russia. He married her in May 1914, mere months before the outbreak of the Great War, and after much mediation between József von Lukács and Max Weber. Nevertheless, once Lukács had married Grabenko, the initial love faded. Lukács saw the marriage as a formality, something to spare her life, but also to gain access to his ideal of the Russian literary imagination—and to satisfy one of the unspoken qualities looked for in a *Habilitation* candidate.

This was, in many ways, conditioned by, and no different from that same affinity toward an idealized Russia held by Max Weber, Ernst Bloch, and even the young Karl Mannheim at the time.¹⁴⁷ The problematics of ethics and life given by the literature of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy (above all the problem of terrorism and its possible ethics) had captured the imagination of the pre-Great War German and Hungarian *intelligentsia*. The common point of Russian literature began to mediate the lives and intellectual choices of the participants of the Weber Circle.

The six aspects of Tinker’s typology of the salon—the intimate locale, influence of the hosts, critical conversation, Platonic love, the prominence of women, as well as the salon as mediator between life and literature—cohere clearly to give a sense of the intimacy

¹⁴⁵ Judit Marcus and Zoltán Tar, “Introduction,” in *Georg Lukács: Selected Correspondence*, 22.

¹⁴⁶ UAH, Collection H-IV-102/144 (*Habilitation* Proceedings of the Philosophical Seminar), Bd. 1, S. 223–53: *Habilitation* Records of Georg von Lukács.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.* On Mannheim, cf. Letter from Mannheim to Lukács, 5 January 1912, in *ibid.*, 184. Bloch’s wife, Else von Stritzky, was also of Russian extract; cf. Ernst Bloch, *Mémorial pour Else Bloch-von Stritzky*, ed. Lucien Pelletier (Paris: Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l’homme, 2014).

between the members of the Circle. Elective affinities among the circle were clearly formed at numerous levels: intellectual, personal, erotic, and so on. The following section deals with the publications that hosted the intellectual output of these intellectuals in the Weber Circle (among others) and attempts to link the first research chapter to the second. By examining the intimate personal relations between these intellectuals, their shared living spaces, and their common points of intellectual reference, the links between their texts become robust. Certainly, elective affinities emerge in their sharpest form through the intellectual production of these figures.

II.3. Publications in Parallel: The *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, *Logos*, and Other Texts

Two publications collected the vast majority of ideas conveyed in the Weber Circle: the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* and *Logos*. Originally, the *Archiv* was titled the *Archiv für Soziale Gesetzgebung und Statistik* (Archive for Social Legislation and Statistics, a kind of statistical demographics journal), founded by the German social democrat Heinrich Braun.¹⁴⁸ In 1904, Edgar Jaffé bought the journal and changed its title. Its co-editors between 1912–17 were all economists of one brand or another: Werner Sombart, Max Weber, Edgar Jaffé, and Robert Michels. Although the particular lineup of editors fluctuated in these years, the four listed figures served as the intellectual centerpieces of the periodical. Topics in the journal ranged from the sociologies of religion and culture to national economy and political theory, to name the main clusters.

Logos, on the other hand, had a much different focus. It was intended to be the premier periodical for the philosophy of culture in the German-speaking intellectual world. It had, as mentioned previously, served as the inspiration for the Hungarian equivalent, *A Szellem*, co-

¹⁴⁸ Heimpel, Elisabeth, “Braun, Heinrich,” in *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 2 (1955), 546.

founded by Lajos Fülep and Georg von Lukács. *Logos* was founded in 1910 and edited by Georg Mehlis, a philosopher in Freiburg with ties to a large cadre of Germany's preeminent, or at least high status, academics: Edmund Husserl, Friedrich Meinecke, Heinrich Rickert, Georg Simmel, Ernst Troeltsch, Max Weber, and Wilhelm Windelband were all on the supervisory board of *Logos*.¹⁴⁹ It published, among numerous other articles, essays by Georg von Lukács, Georg Simmel, Heinrich Rickert, Marianne Weber, Ernst Troeltsch, Ernst Cassirer, and Max Weber precisely in the height of the activity of the Weber Circle, between 1912 and 1917.

Logos and the *Archiv* were both published by Verlag J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) in Tübingen, an outlet for newer publications in sociology, economics, and philosophy, all of which had distinct neo-Kantian, sociological, neo-Romantic or anti-capitalist aspects. The circulation of these journals was fairly large, and thus included a readership wider than merely a small group of interested individuals. In fact, even authors themselves were given special copies of their essays by request, while full editions went out to subscribers, a large percentage of which were most likely libraries and institutions in Germany. Per a request by the German Army's Central Press Division in 1917, the Verlag Mohr Siebeck provided circulation numbers to the German authorities. In this source, the circulation of *Logos* and the *Archiv* were nearly identical at roughly 1000 copies of each journal circulated per year.¹⁵⁰ Interestingly, the circulation of the *Archiv* actually *increased* during the war years—up by an annual average of 400 copies.¹⁵¹ This is most likely due to the *Krieg*-Editions of the *Archiv*, which focused on economic and political issues related to the war effort in Germany.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ *Logos: Internationale Zeitschrift für Philosophie der Kultur*, Band 1 (1910/11).

¹⁵⁰ Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (SBB) Handschriftenabteilung: Mohr-Siebeck-Archiv, Box A0276, 1.31.1–166, 1917. Erl–Fieb, “11. Zeitschriften-Kartei. K. Pr. A. Id.,” *Logos*; Ibid., *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft*.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft*.

¹⁵² Cf., for example, Emil Lederer, “Zur Soziologie des Weltkriegs,” *Archiv* 39.2 (1915), 347–384.

The topics treated in *Logos* and the *Archiv* became testing grounds for the ideas of the intellectuals of the Weber Circle. During the war years, Edgar Jaffé proposed a typology to understand the “militarization” of economic life under circumstances of war and thus a means to understand changes in the structure of the national economy from the perspective of consumption rather than production.¹⁵³ Around the same time, Lukács contributed a piece on essential features and method of the sociology of culture, influenced heavily by the work of Max Weber’s brother, Alfred.¹⁵⁴ The intellectual kernels on the pages of these journals were either representative pieces of books already published, or those to be tested elsewhere. For example: The contours of Bloch’s interest in Medieval mysticism was distilled in his book review of Alfred von Martin’ *Mittelalterliche Welt- und Lebensanschauung* in the *Archiv*—a theme that would arise in his 1918 work *Geist der Utopie*¹⁵⁵; Marianne Weber published on the cultural question of feminism in *Logos*, a long-term civic project of hers¹⁵⁶; The German translation of an early Hungarian work by Lukács entitled *On the Sociology of Modern Drama* was published in the *Archiv* as well¹⁵⁷; Ernst Troeltsch used *Logos* as a space to continue publishing on his studies of theology and the sociology of religion.¹⁵⁸

The publications also drew in contributions from individuals outside of the Weber Circle itself. Ervin Szabó—librarian at Budapest’s Metropolitan Library and “father” of modern Hungarian Marxism—published an article on the Great War and its impact on economic policy across Europe in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft*.¹⁵⁹ Szabó was formally part of the Galileo Circle and the Sociological Society in Budapest, mentioned earlier. He was also personally acquainted with Lukács and Béla Balázs, also as a cousin of the the Polányi

¹⁵³ Edgar Jaffé, “Die ‘Militarisierung’ unserer Wirtschaftslebens,” *Archiv* 40.3 (1915), 511–547.

¹⁵⁴ Georg von Lukács, “Zum Wesen und zur Methode der Kultursoziologie,” *Archiv* 39.1 (1914), 216–222.

¹⁵⁵ Ernst Bloch, review of *Mittelalterliche Welt- und Lebensanschauung* by Alfred von Martin, München und Berlin: R. Oldenburg, *Archiv* 38/2 (1914), 553–54.

¹⁵⁶ Marianne Weber, “Die Frau und die objective Kultur,” *Logos* IV.3 (1913), 328–363.

¹⁵⁷ Georg von Lukács, “Zur Soziologie des modernen Dramas,” *Archiv* 38/2 (1914), 303–345; Idem., *Archiv* 38/3 (1914), 662–706.

¹⁵⁸ Ernst Troeltsch, „Logos und Mythos in Theologie und Religionsphilosophie,“ *Logos* IV.1 (1913), 8–35.

¹⁵⁹ Erwin Szabó, “Krieg und Wirtschaftsverfassung,” *Archiv* 39.3 (1915), 643–688.

family—indeed, related to or acquainted with most of the Budapest radical intelligentsia. Szabó also had his own contacts with the German-language academic sphere, and used German not only as an imperial *lingua franca*, but as a common tongue of academic acculturation. In Szabó’s article, a clear systemic and pan-European focus is employed, negating merely national or regional levels of analysis. He focuses on the structural issues of capitalism during the Great War and its unique form: “High Capitalism.” Szabó’s view seems to resonate with Lenin’s assessment that the Great War was first and foremost a capitalist-imperialist war. Rather, a closer reading suggests that Szabó is closer to one of the editors of the *Archiv* itself: Werner Sombart. The usage of “High Capitalism” (*Hochkapitalismus*) in Szabó’s article is taken directly from Sombart’s *Der moderne Kapitalismus*, the first edition of which appeared in 1902 and was developed and expanded with the war experience in 1919.¹⁶⁰

These close intellectual references were replete throughout texts within the *Archiv* and *Logos*, appearing in the later works of members in the Weber Circle. In 1917, Max Weber gave the first in a larger series of guest lectures collectively entitled “Mental Work as a Vocation” (*Geistige Arbeit als Beruf*), given to the Freistudentischen Bund at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München. The first lecture was entitled “Science as a Vocation” (*Wissenschaft als Beruf*) and covered the broad category of *Wissenschaftliche* work (that is, “scientific” in a wide sense), mostly conducted in academics. Weber points out that all “scientific” vocations must approach the same fundamental question posed by Kant:

‘There is scientific truth, and it is valid’—and [Kant] then asked: Under what preconditions of reasoning is that possible? Or, as the modern aestheticians (*expressly in the case of G. v. Lukács*—or otherwise) proceed from the assumption that ‘There are works of art,’ and now ask: How is this (meaningfully) possible?¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ Werner Sombart, *Der moderne Kapitalismus*, 3 vol. (Leipzig: Verlag von Duncker & Humblot, 1902).

¹⁶¹ Max Weber, “Wissenschaft als Beruf,” in *Geistige Arbeit als Beruf: Vier Vorträge vor dem Freistudentischen Bund* (Munich and Leipzig: Verlag von Duncker & Humblot, 1919), 34. My emphasis.

With these words, Weber expressly references the opening problematic of Lukács' first attempt at a *Habilitationschrift* in Heidelberg: a systematic aesthetic philosophy based on neo-Kantian epistemic categories developed by Windelband, Rickert, and Lask. But this remark came on the wake of the Circle, whose original character had disintegrated.

By 1917, the whole structure of the Weber Circle had changed. Max moved to Munich with Marianne, where he began to see Else Jaffé-von Richtofen again. He held a position at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, working on his final essays, helping to draft the Weimar constitution after the war, and serving as an advisor through 1920, when he died of a lung infection. By 1917, Ernst Bloch had moved to Switzerland, escaping the war for its duration. In May 1915, Emil Lask had died on the Galician Front after enlisting in November 1914, a story developed in the next chapter. Tangentially, Lukács returned to Budapest in 1915 to serve as a postal censor—a reduction in service made acceptable by his father's influence and a medical note from fellow Weber Circle member Karl Jaspers. He travelled back and forth from Budapest to Heidelberg—where he met Paul Ernst in April 1917¹⁶²—yet Lukács never again settled there.

Thus, the year 1917 marks the dissolution of a critical intellectual mass developed within the Weber Circle. These members of the circle, referenced throughout, collaborated with one another, sponsored weddings, shared lovers, shared ideas, and grew quite close on intellectual and personal terms. The Webers' Sunday open houses, the journals, and the publications served as a means by which to express the consequences of the exchange of ideas among this intellectual circle. Personal elective affinities turned into intellectual ones, providing foundations for later developments in the work of each respective member.

Yet, the commonalities began to grow tense by the beginning of the war in August 1914. As Ernst Bloch recalled in his later years, the opening of the war split the Weber Circle

¹⁶² Cf. Michael Löwy, *Georg Lukács—From Romanticism to Bolshevism*, 120.

into pro-war and anti-war factions. The pro-war camp was represented clearly by Max and Marianne Weber. Max, for example, dressed in his reserve blues on Sundays and greeted guests.¹⁶³ The anti-war camp included Bloch himself, Lukács, the philosopher Karl Jaspers, the lawyer Gustav Radbruch, and the economist Emil Lederer.¹⁶⁴ Interestingly, Bloch mentions that after he had left Heidelberg (1915), Russian revolutionary Eugen Leviné and playwright Ernst Toller arrived and joined the anti-war circle.¹⁶⁵ Thus, one can see that deep intellectual entanglements gave way to quite divergent political trajectories. Bloch and Lukács were clearly radicalized by the experience of the outbreak of war—Lukács remarked to Marianne Weber, when pressed about individual acts of heroism on the front: “The better the worse!” This sort of categorical rejection of the war fell in opposition to the stances of Lask and Weber, each of whom enlisted. Although Lask was sent to the front, Weber was forced to attend to the coordination of reserve hospitals in Heidelberg. In the final research chapter to follow, a comparative perspective will assess two representative cases of this fracture: Lask’s entry into the Imperial German armed forces—“without illusion,” as his sister later wrote¹⁶⁶—and Lukács’ unequivocal resentment and disdain for the war cause.

¹⁶³ Ernst Bloch, Michael Löwy, and Vicki Williams Hill, “Interview with Ernst Bloch,” *New German Critique* 9 (1976), 35.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. Leviné and Toller helped to create the Bavarian Soviet Republic in the wake of Kurt Eisner’s failed Bavarian People’s State in February 1919. In Eisner’s government, another former Weber Circle member and editor of the *Archiv*, Edgar Jaffé, served as the Minister of Finance. Jaffé died in a mental asylum in 1921 after resigning from the Eisner government in early 1919. Eisner was assassinated in February 1919, one month after Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, by Anton Graf von Arco auf Valley, an aristocratic German nationalist with ties to the *Freikorps*. Leviné died in prison in 1919, while Toller left prison in 1925 and committed suicide in 1939. Max Weber was also living in Bavaria at that time, holding a position at LMU München. Weber testified in favor of Leviné and Toller to reduce their sentences. Parenthetically, he was also involved romantically with Else Jaffé-von Richtofen up until the end of his life in 1920. Else was then the life-partner of Alfred Weber from the 1920s onward, reducing the love triangle at Heidelberg to two elements.

¹⁶⁶ UBH, Heid. Hs. 3820,266. Biographische Skizzen über Emil Lask von Berta Lask, Januar 1923, 5.

III. In the War: Crisis, Reaction, and Political Divergences, 1914–15

It is best to begin by noting that the elective affinities detailed in the previous chapters are not static structures. These were dynamic relationships that shifted not only in accordance with the changes in their constitutive interpersonal associations, but also the ways in which those relationships were shaped by the surrounding social and ideological environment. Consequently, the personal relationships within the Weber Circle became politicized and the interpersonal reactions to the war often had just as much influence on one's political commitments as reports on the war itself.

In the following sections, I will detail how this politicization developed through the personal commitments, actions, and writings of Emil Lask and Georg von Lukács. I begin with Emil Lask, neo-Kantian philosopher, and focus on his initial support for the war, his disillusionment, and treatment of the circumstances of his untimely death on the Galician Front. I then reflect on the anti-war positioning of Georg Lukács, both during the war as well as his reflections on the period later in life. Throughout, connections are made across the subchapters, typically through correspondence or memoir. The central contention of this chapter is that the Great War brought about the defining world-historical and ideological crisis that reconstituted the entire character of the Weber Circle and, by consequence, determined the postwar intellectual trajectories of its individual members.

To quote Reinhart Koselleck as at the opening of this thesis, “crisis” denotes an uncertain situation, in which all previous certainties have been dissolved and a decision must be made. Put more precisely:

The uncertainty of a critical situation contains one certainty only—its end. The only unknown quantity is when and how. The eventual solution is uncertain, but the end of the crisis, a change in the existing situation—threatening, feared and eagerly anticipated—is not. The question of the historical future is inherent in the crisis.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ Reinhart Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis*, 127.

In this case, and this is precisely my argument, ambivalence was not possible for these intellectuals when faced with such a crisis as the Great War. The historical and ideological weight of the moment was too much to bear. They had reactions to the war, reflections upon its course, and, in the end, there were unquestionable, often absolute consequences for their courses of action. Thus, the uncertain character of the historical future—as it coincided with the horizons of expectation of these intellectuals—was inherent in the events of the Great War that these intellectuals faced.

But it is not enough merely to state that a moment of crisis precipitated such divergent reactions to the war. Divergent commitments were bound up in personal intellectual trajectories—the “starting points” from which I have proceeded in the first chapter—as well as the political entanglements which had been brought together through the Weber Circle in Heidelberg. The following subchapters explore the individual expressions of these divergent commitments and political entanglements as expressed through the letters, manuscripts, and other documents left from this period by Emil Lask and Georg von Lukács, placed in a comparative perspective. These intellectuals made commitments in reaction to the very real historical, political, and ideological constraints that surrounded them. As intellectuals, they had a unique position to perceive, react, and criticize.

III.1. The Anti-Heroism of Emil Lask

Lask had felt at home in Heidelberg. As Éva Karádi has pointed out, “[it] is certain that Lask felt that he belonged to German *Kultur*, and that he had been accepted by its supportive social stratum [*Trägerschicht*], the *Bildungsbürgertum*. He was no longer an outsider—like Lukács

and others—and he was prepared to pay a high price for it ...”¹⁶⁸ Lask was not necessarily *enthused* by the war. He rather saw that both the German state and the German nation were concepts worth dying for, in a sacrificial, mythical, but ultimately abstract sense.¹⁶⁹ He enlisted shortly after the outbreak of war in August 1914.

This complemented his complicated relationship to neo-Kantianism, its historicist variation, and the neo-Romanticism engendered particularly by Lukács and Bloch within the Weber Circle. Politically, his sister categorized him as a socialist, but he felt his *duty* was with the German war cause, “without illusions,” as numerous other German socialists of the day had held without contradiction.¹⁷⁰ Yet when confronted with the actual, real, concrete mass death of the war after a long period of inaction during the last half of 1914 and the first of 1915, the realities began to sink in.

Lask’s commitment to enter active duty followed logically from his philosophical stance, summed up nicely through Otto Liebmann’s motto: “Back to Kant!”¹⁷¹ This not only included the return to a radical dualist metaphysical stance, but also back to an ethic based on the categorical imperative. The crisis of the Great War necessitated a response from Lask, whose own philosophical commitments became politicized. Just as the crisis of the Great War did not spontaneously appear, the decision made by Lask was not merely impulsive action. The historical crisis forcibly crystallized his otherwise amorphous, and often hesitant attitude, mediated in parallel by the ideological crisis that confronted him. Marianne Weber reflected on this fact, recalling that “[when] he needed to make a quick decision, he always became caught up in melancholy reflection and doubts. If good fortune came along, he always saw that it was transitory, and his clearheadedness [*sic*] always kept him from taking decisive

¹⁶⁸ Éva Karádi, “Emil Lask in Heidelberg oder Philosophie als Beruf,” in Hubert Treiber and Karol Sauerland, eds., *Heidelberg im Schnittpunkt intellektueller Kreise: Zur Topographie der „geistigen Geselligkeit“ eines „Weltdorfes“: 1850–1950* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1995), 395.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. UBH, Heid. Hs. 3820,266. Biographische Skizzen über Emil Lask von Berta Lask, Januar 1923.

¹⁷⁰ UBH, Heid. Hs. 3820,266. Biographische Skizzen über Emil Lask von Berta Lask, Januar 1923, 5.

¹⁷¹ Karádi, “Emil Lask in Heidelberg,” 389.

action ... However, he immediately made the decision to offer himself for his country.”¹⁷² This is precisely the issue at hand: it was not merely Lask’s philosophical reflections, or his personal disposition that led him to choose active duty at the front. It was precisely that, in a moment of crisis—at that crucial stage—Lask took a definite course of action without knowing the concrete ends of his aims. A world-historical event emerged and, irrespective of its origins, Emil Lask found himself amid a crisis, necessitating a choice on his part whether to willingly become involved, abstain altogether, or mitigate his involvement as much as possible.

Although initially in the reserve, Lask was transferred to active duty in early 1915. Three letters were sent from Lask on 16 February 1915, marking the beginning of his time at the front. He was stationed with twenty-eight other men in, his words, “a tiny, remote Carpathian village” on the Galician Front, crowded into the small rooms of peasant huts and barns.¹⁷³ The air was crisp and fresh, and he declared that “[the Carpathians are] probably the healthiest theater of war there is today.”¹⁷⁴ He became an avid mountaineer at once, and basked in the camaraderie of his troupe. He wrote letters prolifically, and always took time to read his responses. “The whole thing is like a strange dream,” he wrote in a short message to Marianne Weber.¹⁷⁵ In an identical formulation also sent to Heinrich Rickert, Lask admits to living in fantasy: “One cannot come to their senses.”¹⁷⁶ It must have been an experience both beautiful and strange, for Lask was confronted daily with bracing natural elements and the constant existential threat of shrapnel and bullets in the air. He describes them “singing and whistling,” as a “sound ... immediately familiar to you, as if you had always heard it.”¹⁷⁷ The familiarity expressed a certain easygoingness about the whole operation. But this was only

¹⁷² Marianne Weber, *Max Weber: A Biography*, 529.

¹⁷³ UBH, Heid. Hs. 3820,495. Brief von Emil Lask an Heinrich Rickert, 16 Februar 1915.

¹⁷⁴ UBH, Heid. Hs. 3820,482. Brief von Emil Lask an seine Mutter, 16 Februar 1915.

¹⁷⁵ UBH, Heid. Hs. 3820,508. Brief von Emil Lask an Marianne Weber, 16 Februar 1915.

¹⁷⁶ UBH, Heid. Hs. 3820,508 and 3820,495. Both 16 Februar 1915.

¹⁷⁷ UBH, Heid. Hs. 3820,495. Brief von Emil Lask an Heinrich Rickert, 16 Februar 1915.

the beginning of his deployment, and there would be ample opportunity to come back to his senses.

The general violence on the Galician Front was ratcheting up by May as part of the Gorlice–Tarnów Offensive.¹⁷⁸ In a letter to his sister, Lask confided that the fighting had been bloody, that the army had sustained heavy losses.¹⁷⁹ On May 22nd, Lask again wrote three letters on the same day—his final pieces of correspondence. One, addressed to Sophie Rickert, wife of Heinrich, begins with thanks. She had sent him a tarp which he could string over the trench as it rained. This facilitated easier and extended sessions of letter writing, but small comforts only masked the horrifying experience of the trenches. Rhetorically, he asked: “When will these things come to an end?”¹⁸⁰ These things: the rain, the filth, the nighttime meals, the grenades, the death—the entire cataclysm. He and his soldiers lived “a mugger’s life,” something completely at odds with his *bürgerlich* sensibilities.¹⁸¹ Luckily, he had been stationed in the middle of the trench, and only the wings of the front were attacking Russian lines. Yet the shelling had been continuous. The language of “singing and whistling” had disappeared from his correspondence. His choice to join the armed forces—“without illusion,” as his sister put it—was met with the stark reality of “pressing up against the trench walls” while shells hurtled overhead.¹⁸² In a moment of crisis, Lask had been captivated by the initial prospect of newfound camaraderie and spiritual renewal in the *Volksgemeinschaft* of the front. But once in the trenches, like so many others, the horrors of the war gnawed at him, and ate him whole.

Four days later, on 25 May 1915, Lask died on the front in Galicia. The exact location is difficult to determine. Based upon correspondence from Lask’s time at the front, it appears

¹⁷⁸ Manfred Rauchensteiner, *The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy* (Wien: Böhlau, 2014), 311–315.

¹⁷⁹ UBH, Heid. Hs. 3820,492. Brief von Emil Lask an Bertha Lask, 22 Mai 1915.

¹⁸⁰ UBH, Heid. Hs. 3820,504. Brief von Emil Lask an Sophie Rickert, 22 Mai 1915.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

that he had travelled through the Kingdom of Hungary, specifically Debrecen by the end of January.¹⁸³ Then, he reached the foot of the Carpathians, presumably near Ungvar, given the location of railway lines leading to the front from Hungary.¹⁸⁴ There is no mention of his exact location or company, regiment, etc., in the correspondence—possibly a result of internal censorship. The only clue is located on an image of Lask in uniform with his mother and sisters, which serves as the cover of a postcard sent from Wittenberg on 27 November 1914 to his *Doktovater*, Heinrich Rickert.¹⁸⁵ In the image, the collars of Lask’s uniform bear the number “10,” though presumably this refers to his company or regiment. Without knowledge of which army he was located within—another issue altogether, since German and Austro-Hungarians were mixed in the Carpathians under equally mixed leadership¹⁸⁶—it is impossible to determine his precise location. Most biographic entries about Lask claim that he was killed somewhere near Turza-Mała in Galicia.¹⁸⁷ There are three separate villages in present-day Poland with that name, none of which are in the historical region of Galicia. Though, given the locations of armies along the front, and given Lask’s citizenship (he would have served in the German army, not the Austrian), he was most likely stationed somewhere near present-day Turka/Typka, Ukraine (in 1915, Austrian Galicia). Possibly, it could have been an error in transcription—a village bearing the name “Mala” appears nearby as well.

Irrespective of *where*, Lask was one of hundreds of thousands killed on the Galician Front. He was shot in the head during a charge¹⁸⁸; swallowed up by the “Moloch of militarism”

¹⁸³ MTA LAK Correspondence Collection: Dossier 1026: “Emil Lask levelei Lukács Györgyhöz, 1912–1915,” LGyL24-1026/8: Brief, Emil Lask an Georg von Lukács (Debreczen, 31 Januar 1915).

¹⁸⁴ See the map entitled “Northeastern Europe, 1914. Gorlice–Tarnow Breakthrough and Russian Withdrawal. Operations 1 May–30 September 1915,” prepared by cartographers of the Department of History, U.S. Military Academy (West Point), accessed 1 June 2018,

<[https://www.usma.edu/history/SiteAssets/SitePages/World War I/WWOne31.jpg](https://www.usma.edu/history/SiteAssets/SitePages/World%20War%20I/WWOne31.jpg)>

¹⁸⁵ UBH, Heid. Hs. 3820,34. Karte von Emil Lask an Heinrich Rickert, 27 November 1914.

¹⁸⁶ Rauchensteiner, *The First World War*, 300–313.

¹⁸⁷ Cf., for example, Susanne Blumesberger, Michael Doppelhofer, and Gabriele Mauthe, eds., *Handbuch österreichischer Autorinnen und Autoren jüdischer Herkunft 18. bis 20. Jahrhundert*, Band 1 (A–I) (München: K. G. Saur, 2002), 787; Friedbert Holz, “Lask, Emil,” in *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, Band 13 (1982), 648–49.

¹⁸⁸ UBH, Heid. Hs. 3820,243. Brief von M. Bierau an Helene oder Berta Lask, 1915 Juli 31;

UBH, Heid Hs. 3820, 244. Brief von M. Bierau an Helene oder Berta Lask, 1915 August 18;

UBH, Heid Hs. 3820, 245. Brief von Frau Hörschelmann an Helene oder Berta Lask, 1915 Juli 31.

as Georg Lukács put it.¹⁸⁹ In the crisis of the Great War, Lask plunged headfirst into the fray. It was always uncertain—necessarily uncertain—how the excursion would end. He could not have known that he would participate in the anonymous mass death of the front, though he could not have stood it if he had abstained altogether. “He did not want to preserve himself by tending the temple while the earth was becoming saturated with the blood of his brothers,” Marianne Weber recalled. Quoting a letter Max had written to Lask’s family after his death:

... It is *not* entirely senseless if a man validates what he has taught his students by the manner of his death. Inwardly without illusions as he was, he saw in his departure for the front *nothing* but his “*bounden*” duty ... If he had acted differently, he would always have been unsure of himself and never have admitted to himself that it would have been more appropriate for a man who was so courageous by nature but simply was *unwarlike* to devote himself to his profession. That, of course, is our view as well ... In his profound honesty with himself he knew this quite well, and that is why, after a brief period of indecision, he went.¹⁹⁰

The affinities between Weber and Lask are stark. Weber’s letter is full of reverence and self-proclaimed honor. Weber—through his own service in youth and measuring Lask against his inward (albeit naïve) envy of those at the front—could not help but sympathize with Lask’s sacrifice, as if he too would have preferred to sacrifice himself rather than organize the supply of hospitals in Heidelberg. But what Weber did not realize, and what he couldn’t have realized at the time, was that Lask had become disillusioned with the war completely. He was living in squalor, and by his own admission had only been lucky that he was not killed or seriously wounded by the time of his final letters. Of course, luck had nothing to do with mass death: to a certain extent, it was merely a matter of “when” rather than “if.”

This disillusionment was common to a few of Lask’s intellectual compatriots, although this was not the prevailing *Weltanschauung* in Heidelberg at the time.¹⁹¹ His choice was not merely a “*hiatus irrationalis*,” but rather a realization of his ethical principles of duty

¹⁸⁹ Letter from Georg Lukács to Paul Ernst, 2 August 1915, in *Georg Lukács: Selected Correspondence*, 252.

¹⁹⁰ Marianne Weber, *Max Weber: A Biography*, 529–30. Weber’s emphasis.

¹⁹¹ Éva Karádi, “Emil Lask in Heidelberg,” 395.

above all else, especially given the world-historical crisis in which he found himself.¹⁹² Thus, Lask's sacrifice could not be considered heroic, but precisely the opposite.

Though, this is not necessarily the picture painted by his sister, Berta Jacobsohn-Lask, after the Great War. Sometime in the early 1920s, Berta Jacobsohn-Lask compiled numerous pieces of Emil Lask's correspondence and, combined with her own recollections, attempted to reconstruct a biographical narrative of her brother's life through his death on the Galician Front. This was no ordinary biography, for it was filtered through the lenses of Jacobsohn-Lask's own political tendencies: she was a novelist and playwright who worked within the newly-organized Communist Party of Germany (KPD) from 1923 onward.¹⁹³ This meant Lask was portrayed as a socialist gone astray: he had joined the German war cause, was beloved by his comrades in the trenches, but was ultimately not a revolutionary.

Jacobsohn-Lask reaches this conclusion based upon her collection of Lask's correspondence, as well as personal inquiries she had made with members of Lask's company.¹⁹⁴ Of course, she does not include the depth of Lask's own work, and neglects to include his personal relations at Heidelberg. There is no mention of Heinrich Rickert's 1915 obituary of Lask,¹⁹⁵ nor Lukács' obituary and summation of Lask's work for *Kant-Studien* in 1918.¹⁹⁶ Of course, Jacobsohn-Lask does have the pieces of correspondence from Lask to his family, which enriches the view of Lask's family life otherwise obscured from his correspondence with Rickert, the Webers, or others.

Roughly the last half of the Emil-Lask-Nachlaß was compiled by Berta, while the first was accumulated partially from Lask's personal papers in Heidelberg, and partially by the matching correspondence of Heinrich Rickert. Thus, Rickert highlights his own relationship

¹⁹² Ibid., 394.

¹⁹³ Wolfgang Emmerich, "Lask, Berta," in *Neue Deutsche Biographie* 13 (1982), 647.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. UBH Heid. Hs. 3820,510–513.

¹⁹⁵ Cf. UBH Heid. Hs. 3820,260a: Heinrich Rickert, "Emil Lask. Ein Nachruf," *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 17 October 1915.

¹⁹⁶ Cf. Georg Lukács, "Emil Lask. Ein Nachruf," *Kant-Studien* 22 (1-2),

with Lask through the materials he had collected. In fact, over half of the preserved correspondence is between Rickert and Lask. Some bits from Weber, other pieces from Husserl or other philosophers of the era. No mention of Lukács or Bloch, even though Lask's letters to Lukács, for example, have been preserved in the Lukács Archive in Budapest.

Thus, one can see that each half of the collection has been heavily censored and edited. The partisanship around Lask's legacy muddies the waters even further, for each side strove to show that Lask was *not* an anti-heroic character. For Rickert, he was the best mind neo-Kantian philosophy had after the turn of the century. For Berta, Lask was her brother, who tragically died, and died a socialist (albeit one with improper convictions about the war). These competing narratives came to a head in a letter written by Heinrich Rickert to Verlag J. C. B. Mohr in 1926. Rickert did not consent to Berta Jacobsohn-Lask's submission of a biographical manuscript about Lask to the same publisher that had published his articles and held such a close relationship to those in his intellectual *milieu*.¹⁹⁷ Rickert, perhaps more disposed with his own anti-socialist or anti-communist views, was resentful toward Jacobsohn-Lask's portrayal. Verlag J. C. B. Mohr seems to have agreed. The manuscript was never published, and only its typescripted remnants remain in the Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg within a single box marked "Heid. Hs. 3820, Emil-Lask-Nachlaß." Lask's legacy remains fragmented as a result.

III.2. Georg von Lukács' Resentment

Georg Lukács never saw the war first-hand. He used his father's political connections as the director of the Budapest Credit Bank to reduce his duty to that of a mail censor in Budapest.¹⁹⁸ Then, in Heidelberg, he used Karl Jasper's medical authority to be declared unfit for service.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁷ UBH. Heid. Hs. 3820,514, Letter from Heinrich Rickert to Verlag J. C. B. Mohr, 12 March 1926.

¹⁹⁸ Georg Lukács and István Eörsi, *Georg Lukács: Record of a Life* (London: Verso, 1983), 45–46; Georg Lukács, "Gelebtes Denken," in *ibid.*, 155.

¹⁹⁹ Lukács, "Gelebtes Denken," in *ibid.*

This was due partially to his bourgeois class position, but also to his own moral outlook. Lukács' "own deeply personal attitude was one of vehement, global and, especially at the beginning, scarcely articulate rejection of the war and especially of enthusiasm for the war."²⁰⁰ But as time wore on, the crisis of the war became a subject to be comprehended and studied. He refused, as Georg Simmel had put it, "to comprehend the *greatness* of the war," or that it "could only be understood intuitively."²⁰¹ Instead, the war was a crisis for Lukács, and his general despair toward it was bound up precisely in the public's uncritical reaction to the possibility of dramatic change in the world. The war had caused a great deal of enthusiasm, "which, however, lacked all clear and positive content."²⁰² It was directionless, and in general an attitude captivated by the promise of change in itself, albeit of uncertain content, irrespective of the concrete, potential consequences.

That enthusiasm, although often the preserve of much more conservative militarists, had expressed itself most surprisingly among the social-democratic political forces in Europe, and particularly among the German *intelligentsia*.²⁰³ In a then-unpublished manuscript written sometime in 1915, Lukács examines this problem. Entitled "*Die deutsche Intelligenz und der Krieg* (The German *Intelligentsia* and the War)," Lukács' intention was to draft a study of the "German *intelligentsia*'s behavior toward the war in an intellectual-historical context of meaning, and to comprehend it in this context."²⁰⁴ That intellectual-historical context of meaning is twofold: the possibility of a radical renewal of the world through cataclysm, and a large-scale cultural renegotiation of the heroic leitmotif in history and literature. Only in this concrete context—and given the war as a stark moment of crisis—could the seemingly spontaneous behavior of the bulk of the German *intelligentsia* be comprehended.

²⁰⁰ Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1971), 11.

²⁰¹ Lukács and Eörsi, *Georg Lukács: Record of a Life*, 45. My emphasis.

²⁰² LAK, Manuscript Collection, fond II: "Tanulmányok, cikkek," box 29, dossier II/20, item 205, Georg Lukács, "Die deutsche Intelligenz und der Krieg," 1915/16.

²⁰³ Cf. Jörn Leonhard, *Geschichte des Ersten Weltkriegs* (München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2014), 109–115.

²⁰⁴ LAK, Lukács, "Die deutsche Intelligenz und der Krieg," 1915/16.

First, the possibility of a radically new world constituted through crisis appeared even in the early stages of the war. For the German *intelligentsia*, it seemed, this radically new world could have been *any* world, as long as it had upset some aspect of the old order—it was a collective “sigh of relief” after the “mood of resignation” to which Lukács was diametrically opposed on revolutionary rather than reactionary grounds.²⁰⁵ From the opening of the previously exclusive German *Kultur* to the feeling that this “New” [*dieses „Neuen”*] would constitute an abstract unity, “it is this change in the whole of reality that is so jubilantly welcomed... Everything that has happened now has ceased to hold; something not yet tangible, something absolutely new, must come.”²⁰⁶ The war was reprehensible precisely on these terms.

It was not so much the fact of change. Change occurred always, and Lukács himself welcomed radical spiritual renewal in the world. Rather, the war was “devoid of, and hostile to, ideas”—critical ideas—and therefore also toward critical reflection as such.²⁰⁷ Brazen, unreflective enthusiasm led to equally unreflective irrationality. Max Weber, as the scion of contemporary sociology in the early twentieth century, had traded in so-called rational thought and the systematization of the sciences for “reserve blues,” harkening back to his own youthful military days. Lask had similarly followed his philosophical system—a search for “unity, coherence, and consistency”²⁰⁸—to its logical, fatal end. Duty above all else and applied without illusion to the reality that he then faced: death on the front. How had systematic social science and neo-Kantian philosophy led to such seemingly incoherent and dangerous reactions to the war? In a moment of combined objective historical and subjective ideological crisis, the perceived nature of things had become so radically altered that the old modes of thinking ceased to operate. For Lukács, it was Fichte’s “age of absolute sinfulness,”

²⁰⁵ Michael Löwy, *Georg Lukács*, 30.

²⁰⁶ LAK, Lukács, “Die deutsche Intelligenz und der Krieg,” 1915/16.

²⁰⁷ Lukács, “Gelebtes Denken,” in *Record of a Life*, 154.

²⁰⁸ Georg Lukács, “Emil Lask. Ein Nachruf,” *Kant-Studien* 22 (1-2), 370.

and the only response was to violently criticize the crisis itself rather than accept and accommodate its changes as Lask and Weber had done.

This led clearly to the second main point that Lukács addresses in his essay. The German *intelligentsia* had inwardly accepted a radical gap in what he later called the “chasm between timeless value and historical realization of value.”²⁰⁹ Lask and Weber, in their own ways, had chosen to give primacy to the historical realization of value—pursuing one’s duty in this particular war—over pursuing the value of duty as something higher than participation in a war. This was symptomatic of the intellectual scheme of Rickert, whose theory of values was still indebted to a historicist epistemic problem. In one way, this shift had initiated a complete change in the essence of the heroic leitmotif in history and literature on Lukács’ view. “The hero of this war is nameless,” a consequence of the mass army, whose anonymity coalesces around the altered practices of the soldier in modern warfare. Gone are the days of chivalry and honorable, individual death: one concrete historical realization of the value of heroism in the face of mechanized warfare.²¹⁰ Even early cases of “knightly-athletic” rapprochements on the battlefield were banned by the officer corps, and fraternization with the enemy was recognized as a high crime.²¹¹ Although there had been an attempt by the soldiers themselves to create a modern convergence with a bygone chivalrous age, the notion of courage had been institutionalized and expected as a “prerequisite” by the army. The “psychic consequence of the mass army” was that “every soldier ... is a hero, and every man who is physically capable is a soldier.”²¹² The war churned out “heroism” and death in equal proportions at equally breakneck speed. This is why Lask’s death at the front could not be considered “heroic,” or fit into any sort of unified world.

²⁰⁹ Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, 16.

²¹⁰ LAK, Lukács, “*Die deutsche Intelligenz und der Krieg*.”

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid.

This came in stark contrast to the seemingly harmonious, balanced world of the Greek epic, analyzed by Lukács in *The Theory of the Novel*. That text was composed precisely at the same time when Lukács' mounting resentment toward the war required deep reflection on its causes. This was not a new intellectual practice for Lukács. As Michael Löwy has pointed out, Lukács' resentment for the war in particular had its roots in a much deeper resentment of *fin-de-siècle* Central European bourgeois society as such. "The conflict between authentic values and the inauthentic (capitalist) world was tragically insoluble, for Lukács could see no social force capable of changing the world and making those values a reality," as Michael Löwy has put it.²¹³

Roughly eight years before the publication of *The Theory of the Novel*, Lukács had published his *Sociology of Modern Drama*, republished, as mentioned previously, in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft*. Although the text reflected on the origins of then-contemporary drama, its conclusions are much deeper. Modern culture is identifiable with bourgeois culture, Lukács claimed, thus all modern drama is bourgeois drama. The structures of any dramatic piece are therefore determined *before* they are written. The conclusion Lukács drew in 1909 was restated with different stress in 1914:

The novel is the epic of a world that has been abandoned by God ... [this] defines the productive limits of the possibilities of the novel—limits which are drawn from within—and, at the same time, they define the historico-philosophical moment at which great novels become possible, at which they grow into a symbol of the essential thing that needs to be said.²¹⁴

Constrained by the identification of bourgeois culture with all modern culture, the inauthentic world in which the novel is produced limits the novel's possible meanings. This is essentially coterminous with the anti-war view that Lukács held from 1914 onward. Romantic anti-capitalism and anti-militarism—as well as a deep spiritual mysticism inspired by the sermons

²¹³ Michael Löwy, *Georg Lukács—From Romanticism to Bolshevism*, 109.

²¹⁴ Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel*, 88.

of Meister Eckhardt—came in deep conflict with the “progress” of bourgeois culture: the mechanization of daily life, the ossification of Central European empires, and their seemingly permanent, “metaphysical” character in the most strict sense of the term.

Just as the form of the novel was constrained by the limits of bourgeois culture, so the war was identified with bourgeois culture’s technocratic excesses in *Die deutsche Intelligenz*. *The Theory of the Novel* essentially shifts this same mental scheme onto literary aesthetics, drawing partially on Lukács’ reflections of the sociology of culture, produced for the *Archiv*, and partially on his deep sense of spiritual poverty, captured best by his pre-war dialogue *Von der Armut am Geiste* (On the Poverty of Spirit, the title of which is borrowed from Meister Eckhardt’s sermon *Beati pauperes spiritu*²¹⁵). This was, as in Ferenc Fehér’s discussion on the topic, Lukács’ last phase of romantic anti-capitalism. Such an intellectual position could no longer be sustained in the face of the depravity of the Great War.

In Lukács’ reflections on the war years in the 1962 preface to *The Theory of the Novel*, he writes:

When I tried at this time to put my emotional attitude into conscious terms, I arrived at more or less the following formulation: the Central Powers would probably defeat Russia; this might lead to the downfall of Tsarism; I had no objection to that. There was also some probability that the West would defeat Germany; if this led to the downfall of the Hohenzollerns and the Hapsburgs, I was once again in favor. But then the question arose: who was to save us from Western civilization? (The prospect of final victory by the Germany of that time was to me nightmarish.)²¹⁶

Lukács’ critique of bourgeois culture in Central Europe morphed into a civilizational discourse, one that stretched the limits of his romantic anti-capitalism. Who would save Lukács and the other romantic anti-capitalists from Western civilization? In 1915, there was a complete “insufficiency of *any* national approach,” as Ferenc Fehér rightly points out (though parenthetically one could point to the insufficiency of the bureaucratic, military,

²¹⁵ Löwy, *Georg Lukács*, 104.

²¹⁶ Georg Lukács, Preface to *The Theory of the Novel*, 11.

imperial, etc., approaches to the war as well). Thus, the only option was the one Lukács had held onto from the beginning: a complete spiritual renewal of the world. But, if this renewal was a search for a “new metaphysics,” as the opening manifesto of *A Szellem* had put it, how was it to avoid relapsing in the ossification of bourgeois culture so vehemently condemned by Bloch and Lukács in contrast to the others at the Weber Circle?

Lukács had arrived in Budapest in 1915 to complete his military service as a postal censor. He had also come back under the influence of the intellectual scene in Budapest, which, as he was traveling between Budapest and Heidelberg, became politically radicalized as the war went on. Politics stood as a substitute for spirituality. Spiritual renewal was replaced by revolution. By holding onto his own long-term resentment for the bourgeois, capitalist world of the *fin-de-siècle*, Lukács translated his own class-position into a radical once. Taking the form of the Weber Circle, Lukács founded another group with Béla Balázs and others profoundly disappointed by the war: the *Vasárnapi Kör*—the Sunday Circle.

In the conclusion that follows, this open end of the analysis is reconstructed as a variation on the themes already presented. It is, above all, a renegotiation of the intellectual themes discussed earlier on the radicalized portion of the late-war Hungarian intellectual space. The Sunday Circle operated in tandem with other groups: the Free School of Humanistic Studies, the Galileo Circle, and the incipient elements of what would become the Hungarian Communist Party. As a result of these much more radical intellectual influences, the intellectual schema that Lukács had molded in the context of Heidelberg was recast in the light of possible revolution and its resultant spiritual renewal of the world. Thus, the

conclusion points forward in its research direction, giving vignettes that act as codas to the research and intellectual themes of this thesis.

Coda: Choice and Radicalization in Times of Crisis

On 25 May 1918, Georg von Lukács submitted the following letter to the Philosophical Faculty of the Universität Heidelberg²¹⁷:

To the Esteemed Faculty of Philosophy of the Grand Duchy of Baden's Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg.

The undersigned, Dr. Georg von Lukács (Kepplerstraße 28, Heidelberg), hereby requests the Esteemed Faculty of Philosophy to grant him the *venia legendi* in philosophy on the basis of the enclosed supporting material.²¹⁸

To this, Lukács attached a curriculum vitae, a list of courses he would potentially teach, and a list of published works. He waited from Budapest.

In a letter written on 12 July 1918, Alfred Weber, a member of the faculty, wrote a response to the committee from his residence in Berlin.²¹⁹ He stated that he supported Lukács' attempt at *Habilitation*, citing the fact that few have worked as fruitfully in the field of aesthetics as Lukács had in recent years. Alfred Weber gave his emphatic approval both on friendly and academic terms—not least because the faculty would need young academics after the war was over. “[Lukács] had not [to Weber's mind] taken a position on the war,” and so Lukács could not be considered specifically *disloyal* to the German state under which he hoped to profess.²²⁰ He may have been a Hungarian, and so did not share the same “national” view as the Germans, but Lukács was cultivated in the German-speaking *Kulturraum* between Budapest, Kolozsvár, Berlin, and Heidelberg. That made him acceptable in Weber's eyes.

²¹⁷ To note, the *Habilitation* committee only included active *ordinarius*, that is, chaired, professors: Fritz Schöll, Friedrich von Duhn, Wilhelm Braune, Fritz Neumann, Eberhard Gothein, Alfred von Domaszewski, Carl Bezold, Heinrich Rickert, Christian Bartholomae, Johannes Hoops, Karl Hampe, Franz Boll, Alfred Weber, Carl Neumann, Hermann Oncken, and Alfred Hettner. Max Weber was considered “inactive” by this time and thus did not count on the committee although he was still a member of the faculty as such. Cf. UBH Historisches Sammlung, *Personal-Verzeichnis der Ruprecht-Karls-Universität in Heidelberg – Sommer-Halbjahr 1918* (Heidelberg: Universitäts-Buchdruckerei J. Hörning, 1918), 11.

²¹⁸ UAH, H-IV-102/144, Bd. 1, S. 239. Cf. also Georg Lukács: *Selected Correspondence*, 285.

²¹⁹ UAH, H-IV-102/144, Bd. 1, S. 245.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

Shortly thereafter, Franz Boll, *ordinarius* Professor of the Philosophical Faculty, wrote to the committee.²²¹ He had his misgivings about Lukács' application, and revealed that he had consulted with Heinrich Rickert on the matter. Rickert suggested that they put off the formal proceedings for another semester, and Boll agreed. Possibly, this was an attempt to have Lukács withdraw his application before the faculty had to reject it. The reason is unclear, though Boll does point to further issues regarding a reference about Lukács he had requested from Budapest—it had not arrived in suitable time.

In true Central European fashion, the requested reference arrived a week-and-a-half later than hoped for, on 25 July 1918. József Szterényi, Minister of Trade (*Kereskedelemügyi miniszter*) of the Kingdom of Hungary, wrote that Lukács had previously worked under him. Lukács, on Szterényi's view, had a "Puritan" character, and pointed to the fact that his father's position in Budapest's Allgemeine Creditbank had placed the family at the forefront of respectable society. Minister Szterényi suggested that allowing Lukács a *Habilitation* in Germany could only promote further ties between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the German Empire—a suggestion made only a few months before the collapse of each empire.

Apparently, Szterényi's recommendation didn't mean much to the committee. After a few more months of inconsequential debate, the committee reached its decision—something probably pre-ordained by the majority of the faculty months before. On 7 December 1918, Acting Dean Alfred von Domaszewski sent a letter to Georg von Lukács, informing him of the bad news:

I am taking the liberty to inform you that under the present circumstances the Faculty of Philosophy is not in the position to admit a foreigner, especially a Hungarian citizen, to *Habilitation*. While fully recognizing the worth of your scholarly achievements, I nevertheless have to ask you in the name of the Faculty to withdraw your application for a *Habilitation*.²²²

²²¹ UAH, H-IV-102/144, Bd. 1, S. 246.

²²² UAH, H-IV-102/144, Bd. 1, S. 253.

It is questionable why it was such an issue to be a “foreigner”—perhaps due to Lukács’ assimilated Jewish character—but nonetheless Lukács responded shortly thereafter. It was no longer in his interest to complete the *Habilitation* at Heidelberg. Writing from Budapest on 16 December 1918, and thus after the bourgeois-democratic Aster Revolution led by Count Mihály Károlyi, Lukács declared that he was putting himself at the disposal of the new, revolutionary government.²²³ He thus rescinded his claim to *Habilitation* and asked the faculty to deposit his papers with Prof. Eberhard Gothein, another member of the Weber Circle. Lukács would not return to Heidelberg.²²⁴

By the end of December 1918, Lukács had joined the Hungarian Communist Party led by Béla Kun. “The conversion took place in the interval between two Sundays: from Saul came Paul,” Anna Lesznai recollected decades later.²²⁵ Yet, Lukács’ conversion was not an isolated case. It was partially due to the aesthetic and ethical problematics forged in Budapest around the Sunday Circle during the First World War that made this “conversion” so easy and common among Lukács’ group.

In 1915, Lukács had returned to Budapest in order to serve as a postal censor, as mentioned a chapter earlier. While in Budapest, he naturally reclaimed connections with the sections of the Budapest *intelligentsia* he had grown up with from 1902–1912. Now, in light of his experiences with the Weber Circle, Lukács, along with Béla Balázs, Anna Lesznai, and

²²³ Letter from Georg von Lukács to Alfred von Domaszewski, 16 December 1918, in *Georg Lukács: Selected Correspondence*, 289.

²²⁴ His papers, mentioned in this letter, were found in suitcase held within a Deutsche Bank deposit box in 1973—the infamous “Heidelberg suitcase.” Papers gathered from this suitcase make up much of the archival material used in this thesis.

²²⁵ David Kettler, “Culture and Revolution: Lukács in the Hungarian Revolution of 1918/19,” *Telos* 10 (1971), 68–9.

others, insisted on the formation of a discussion group that met regularly—on Sundays. The choice of day was of course partially out of convenience, and partially out of habit: the Weber Circle had met on Sundays as well. In effect, Lukács was translating *Sonntag* to *Vasárnap*, holding Sunday as the central day for the sermon-like reflections he and the group shared.²²⁶

Although Lukács travelled between Budapest and Heidelberg between 1915–17 (he had not yet officially submitted his *Habilitation*), he began to settle back in Budapest, surrounded by newfound notoriety and a group of stimulating discussions of the metaphysical type that was lacking in Heidelberg. Although the format was similar—the “master” was Lukács rather than Weber,²²⁷ and they met in Béla Balázs’ flat—the topics had shifted toward “religious thinkers like Kierkegaard or Meister Eckhardt and other medieval mystics, and words like *redemption*, *salvation*, and *transcendence* became key concepts in [the] ongoing debates,” as Anna Lesznai recounted.²²⁸

Although the Sunday Circle was grounded in mystical, religious, metaphysical, and ethical dilemmas, it could not keep political questions barred from the discussions, especially in light of the crisis of the Great War. In order to deal with these questions, many members were drawn into the orbit of Ervin Szabó, the radical who had also published in the *Archiv*. Szabó’s influence extended beyond these circles, however, and his personality—and clandestine organizational activity among the worker’s movement in Budapest—attracted the personality of Ilona Duczynska in the spring of 1917.²²⁹ Duczynska was born in Vienna to parents of traditional Habsburg gentry origin. This struck Duczynska as inauthentic, much

²²⁶ For an overview with collected documents, cf. Éva Karádi and Erzsébet Vezér, eds., *A Vasárnapi Kör* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1980), translated into German as idem., eds., *Georg Lukács, Karl Mannheim und der Sonntagskreis* (Frankfurt: Sandler Verlag, 1985).

²²⁷ As Béla Balázs reflected in 1917, “It is amazing how immensely Gyuri’s reputation has increased here over the years. He is starting to have a growing circle of admirers, though most of them hardly know why they praise him.” Cited in Mary Gluck, *Georg Lukács and His Generation*, 181. Originally cited in Béla Balázs, *Diaries*, (held in the archives of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest), 28 May 1917.

²²⁸ Mary Gluck, *Georg Lukács and His Generation*, 183.

²²⁹ Cf. Kenneth McRobie, “Ilona Duczynska meets Ervin Szabó: making of a revolutionary personality – from theory to terrorism, April–May 1917,” *Hungarian Studies Review* 33.1–2 (2006), 39–92.

like Lukács, Balázs, Ady, Polányi, and the other radical portions of the Hungarian intelligentsia.²³⁰ When she travelled to Zürich for her education, Duczynska was tutored by Henryk Lauer, a Polish social democrat, who introduced her to Marxism. This tempered her radical tendencies with theory—in practice, she felt a calling for agitation.

In April 1917, Duczynska took a train from Zürich to Vienna to Budapest. With her, in a slip of microfilm carried in the empty casing of a fountain pen, she carried a copy of the March 20th Manifesto of the International Socialist Committee, drafted from the proceedings of the antimilitarist Zimmerwald Conferences held over the past two years.²³¹ She took the microfilm to Oszkár Jászi's sister, Alice Madzsar, who translated it into Hungarian. Szabó had lived down the street from Duczynska's hosts, and visited daily, patiently listening to the young radical's exhortations about joining the budding worker's movement in Budapest. This translation would be one of numerous sparks that set off the revolutionary fervor that captured Budapest after the collapse of the Habsburg armies in October 1918. And it was, in many ways, stoked by a cultural environment radicalized by the confluence of perceived social decadence and its logical conclusion, the Great War itself.

These agitational tendencies found an audience not only among the organized working class, but among the *intelligentsia* as well. The Galileo Circle, headed by Karl Polányi—to be Duczynska's husband after their emigration to Vienna, in 1923—joined with the members of the Sunday Circle to form a collective public face: the Free School for Humanistic Studies (*Szellemi Tudományok Szabad Iskolája*).²³² Their lectures focused on numerous topics, including equally numerous contributors, and spanned the spring “semesters” of 1917 and 1918—aesthetics, drama, Marxism, tragedy, culture, and folk music were all elements included in talks given by the most publicly visible members of the radical Budapest

²³⁰ Ibid., 39.

²³¹ Ibid., 41.

²³² Mary Gluck, *Georg Lukács and His Generation*, 182; Michael Löwy, *Georg Lukács—From Romanticism to Bolshevism*, 85.

intelligentsia.²³³ Their points of reference were multifarious and radical. As Karl Mannheim pointed out, “the precursors of our road” included “Dostoevsky’s world-view and sense of life, Kierkegaard’s ethics, the German review *Logos* and the Hungarian review *A Szellem*, Lask, Zalai²³⁴ ... Paul Ernst and Riegl, new French poetry ... the Hungarians Bartók and Ady.”²³⁵ Meister Eckhardt, Rousseau, Kant, Schlegel, Schiller, Marx, and Simmel all made the list as well.²³⁶ Duczynska—along with Szabó, Mannheim, Lukács, Lesznai, and Balázs—was prone to the same cohort of intellectual references.

As these intellectuals were beginning to share the same intimate spaces, proceed from the same intellectual references, and were developing elective affinities of their own, another crisis hit: the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

In October 1918, the Habsburg Monarchy began to collapse under the pressure of continued military and diplomatic defeats, and so with it the entire bureaucratic edifice of the empire. Nationality councils began to act as provisional governments, and numerous swaths of the population found themselves caught in the administrative overlap between a crumbling empire and small, weak successor states. In Budapest, Mihály Karólyi proclaimed a democratic republic, but after failing to gain stability within his own government by the new

²³³ As Mary Gluck notes from Karádi and Vezér, eds., the 1917 lectures included: Béla Balázs, “Theory of Drama”; Béla Fogarasi, “Theory of Philosophical Thinking”; Lajos Fülep, “The Problem of National Character in Hungarian Art”; Arnold Hauser, “The Problems of post-Kantian Ethics”; Georg Lukács, “Ethics”; Karl Mannheim, “Epistemological and Logical Problems”; and Emma Ritoók, “The Problems of Aesthetic Influence.” The 1918 lectures included: Karl Mannheim, “Soul and Culture”; Béla Balázs, “Lyrical Sensibility”; Sándor Varjas, “Phenomenological Research”; Karl Mannheim, “Structural Analysis of Epistemological Systems”; Georg Lukács, “Aesthetics”; Béla Fogarasi, “Methods of Intellectual History”; Arnold Hauser, “Dilettantism in Art”; Antal Frigyes, “The Development of Composition and Content in Modern Art”; Ervin Szabó, “The Ultimate Implications of Marxism”; Zoltán Kodály, “The Hungarian Folk Song”; and Béla Bartók, “Folk Music and Modern Music.”

²³⁴ Béla Zalai, perhaps the least recognizable name on the list for non-Hungarians. A philosopher perhaps best placed in the phenomenological tradition, but whose thinking was highly original. After his death in a concentration camp in Serbia during the first phases of the Great War (1915), his papers were bequeathed to Georg Lukács. His best known work, *Allgemeine Theorie der Systeme*, was republished by the Lukács Archive in 1984. Cf. Béla Zalai, *Allgemeine Theorie der Systeme*, Béla Bacsó, ed. (Budapest: MTA Filozófiai Intézet – Lukács Archivum, 1982). The introduction, written by Bacsó, gives a biographic overview along with a truncated list of intellectual references and those with whom he worked and inspired.

²³⁵ Karl Mannheim, “Soul and Culture (1917).” I use a translation given to me by David Kettler, but otherwise can be found in a collected volume: Karl Mannheim, *Wissensoziologie. Auswahl aus dem Werk*, Kurt H. Wolff, ed. (Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1964).

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

year, 1919, he resigned to the social democrats, who had agreed to a governing coalition with the communists behind closed doors. Thus, in March 1919, the Hungarian Soviet Republic was declared under the authority of the Hungarian Communist Party, formed by Béla Kun and other experienced Hungarian Bolsheviks who had been POWs in Russia until the October Revolution of 1917. Trained under Bolshevik leadership, they had hoped to galvanize support in Hungary. They, too, failed in their efforts to achieve stability, but they were able to create wide inspiration among the radical Budapest *intelligentsia*.²³⁷

Lukács, and most of the Sunday Circle, joined the Communist ranks in late December 1918. Although they had deep roots in radicalism through earlier, side-by-side readings of the Jacobin poetry of Ady and the social analyses of Marx, the spiritual renewal that these intellectuals sought in a new metaphysics had been brought down to earth by Kun and his Hungarian Bolsheviks. It was, in a way, fulfillment akin to that experienced by medieval mystics that translated their experience into a paraphrased Anabaptist declaration: “The Kingdom of Heaven on Earth—Now.” The objects of debate for the Sunday Circle took on new life. Thought was transformed into action and new elective affinities were produced by new crisis. Just as Seidler had cited Goethe, crisis proceeded fusion.

This thesis attempted to portray a heuristic model of research to investigate the internal dynamics of intellectual circles and how they are affected by external moments of historical crisis. Between 1912 and 1917, activity in the Weber Circle reached a clear height both in terms of intellectual production and the cultivation of personal relationships. In order to

²³⁷ Cf. Rudolf L. Tökés, *Béla Kun and the Hungarian Soviet Republic* (New York: Praeger, 1967). For a recent update in the literature, cf. Bob Dent, *Painting the Town Red: Politics and the Arts During the 1919 Hungarian Soviet Republic* (London: Pluto Press, 2018).

understand the relation between these intellectual and personal aspects, I use the notion “elective affinity,” drawing its meaning from Goethe, through Weber’s usage, and finally distilled in Michael Löwy’s recent schematic definition. Elective affinity, I argue, can be used as a heuristic means to characterize the confluence between individual intellectual production and points of intellectual reference as well as the mediation of these references by personal relationships. This begins by drawing an intellectual context behind the core object of study: the intellectual circle. The intellectual circle, following Mannheim’s characterization, grows out of a specific form of bourgeois sociability that has its roots in courtly salons, the origin of which can be found in the gossiping corners of the French Baroque court. Translated onto the context of *fin-de-siècle* Central Europe—in Heidelberg, around Weber; in Budapest, around Lukács—the intellectual circle has surprising similarities with the salon typology constructed in 1915 by Chauncey Tinker, cited by Mannheim, and contemporaneous to the objects of this study.

Intellectual similarities are made congruent through a set of common intellectual references. For the Weber Circle, those references—developed in the first research chapter—include neo-Kantian philosophy (particularly the problem of the historical individual), antipositivistic sociology, and romantic anti-capitalism. From this array of intellectual references, the intellectuals in the Weber Circle were able to speak to one another and map their own intellectual projects onto one another’s. This was mediated by their similar modes of publication, namely in the journals *Logos* and the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft*, edited by German intellectuals not far out of the orbit of the Weber Circle itself.

Yet, as this thesis makes clear, the story is not marked by perfect coherence and unity. Points of stress do mark the creation of elective affinity, and that process was ultimately disrupted in the Weber Circle during the Great War. So, halfway through the height of the activity of the Circle, it was simultaneously torn into competing factions around the question

of support or disdain for the war. The third chapter assesses two symptomatic responses to this issue, following reactions to the war by Emil Lask, neo-Kantian philosopher, and Georg Lukács, the young aesthete seeking *Habilitation* in Heidelberg. Although Lask enlisted in order to join the *Volksgemeinschaft* of the trench, his anti-heroic death on the Galician Front confirmed Lukács' resentment. Lukács' antimilitarist position was reinforced by his romantic anticapitalist tendencies, as well as his intellectual realignment in Budapest, from where he was stationed in 1915 during his compulsory service as a military postal censor.

In parallel to these developments in Heidelberg, Lukács and his associated group of intellectuals, known as the Sunday Circle, began pursuing a much more radical ethical and spiritual line, consequently setting themselves on a path for equally radical political positions. The majority sided with the newly formed Hungarian Communist Party, a political force which they saw as a translation of their quest for a "new metaphysics" into reality. Many members of the Sunday Circle took part in its limited, 133-day period of governance before going into exile in interwar "Red Vienna." The exile, of course, was a way out of the reactionary murders staged by Admiral Miklós Horthy's forces in the wake of the Soviet Republic's collapse. This choice of political radicalization followed, as the older Lukács would recollect, "logically" from their previous positions.

This thesis therefore claims that moments of individual choice are mediated not only by interventions of large, world-historical events, but rather the intimate *milieu* in which one finds themselves. For research, this means an in-depth analysis of the common intellectual horizons and political discourses around which groups of intellectuals cohere. Although this thesis does not claim to provide in-depth analysis of each and every intellectual context from which a group like the Weber Circle collectively emerges, its fundamental aim is to stake out a new path of research that can negotiate between the approaches of intellectual history, history of political thought, and the sociology of the *intelligentsia*.

While using heuristic notions like “elective affinity” and “crisis” may be able to help as organizing principles for the source material, other “tools” may also be brought into the analysis. This thesis uses “metahistorical” (i.e., anthropological) and sociological toolkits as well, though one can imagine other possible toolkits depending on the problem. Using a variety of tools, the intellectual historian can therefore negotiate between different levels of analysis, from the individual text, the author, the author’s intellectual circle, regional intellectual discourses, to fields of transnational intellectual transfer.

This thesis therefore concludes on a note of openness. By giving this glimpse into the workings of the Weber Circle and its intellectual output, one can then argue about the consequences of this production. In Weber’s case, this resulted in a social-scientific methodology founded upon neo-Kantian epistemic principles. For Bloch, a rejection of rigid empirical systematization and a turn toward more eschatological and mystical themes. For Lukács, a rejection of positivism, but the inclusion of the problem of the historical individual (as put forward by Rickert and Lask) into a Fichtean and Hegelian interpretation of Marxism in the 1920s. Thus, this thesis points in numerous other directions of research with a theoretical and methodological model that can be flexibly applied to numerous other contexts.

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