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Back to the Past: Notes towards a Conservative Revolution

There is a saying that has now circulated for many decades or even centuries, in various forms, attributed to various sources, let me here quote the variant Winston Churchill is credited with: “If you’re under 30 and not a liberal, you don’t have a heart, but if you are over 30 and not conservative, you don’t have a brain.” If Churchill was right, I am definitely a heartless person, having written a paper in an unmistakably conservative spirit at the age of 28. This was the paper “The Unhappy Life of Ludwig Wittgenstein”¹. Here I interpret Wittgenstein as being an old-fashioned conservative, a traditionalist,² and quote this passage from his early notebooks: “I cannot bend the happenings of the world to my will: I am completely powerless.”³ Next let me mention my talk “Musil und Wittgenstein”, given in 1975 in Graz (Austria).⁴ Musil had rather diversified views on conservatism, I will come back to them below, but first I want to stay with Wittgenstein. In my 1975 talk I focussed on his later work which, I suggested,

¹ “Das unglückliche Leben des Ludwig Wittgenstein”, *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, vol. 26, no. 4 (1972), reprinted in my volume [*Gefühl und Gefüge*](#) (1986).

² Wittgenstein believing, as I had put it, in a “Traditionen entsprechend gelebte[s] Leben”, having a “Widerwillen gegen jede Veränderung des Bestehenden” (*Gefühl und Gefüge*, p. 124). I quoted his formula “The sickness of a time is cured by an alteration in the form of life of human beings” (*Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, Appendix II, § 4), and claimed that Wittgenstein’s message here was: alterations having an ideological motivation, consciously/actively brought about, cannot in fact lead to a healthier society (cf. *Gefühl und Gefüge*, p. 131).

³ *Notebooks 1914–16*, 11. 6. 16.

⁴ The talk was published in the journal *Literatur und Kritik* 113 (Apr. 1977) and also in the *Conceptus* special issue *Österreichische Philosophen* (1977). Reprinted in my volume *Gefühl und Gefüge*.

ultimately implies that *freedom*, “if by that expression one understands something else than being bound to genuine traditions, is simply incompatible with any sort of rationality”.⁵ I referred to Wittgenstein’s Russian teacher Fania Pascal recalling her student’s political worldview in the mid-thirties: “At a time when intellectual Cambridge was turning Left he was still an old-time conservative of the late Austro-Hungarian Empire”⁶; then I cited the Nestroy-motto at the beginning of the *Philosophical Investigations*: “Überhaupt hat der Fortschritt das an sich, daß er viel größer aussieht, als er wirklich ist”, that is: “Progress at all is such that it looks much greater than it really is”⁷, and of course I quoted from the 1930 preface to the *Philosophical Remarks*: “This book is written for such men as are in sympathy with its spirit. This spirit is different from the one which informs the vast stream of European and American civilization in which all of us stand. That spirit expresses itself in an onwards movement, in building ever larger and more complicated structures...”. The phrase “onwards movement” stands for “Fortschritt” in the original German; the translators and the editor⁸ obviously recoiled from letting the reader know, even in this unmistakably social-political context, that Wittgenstein was an enemy of progress – that is, a con-

⁵ *Gefühl und Gefüge*, p. 144.

⁶ “Wittgenstein: A Personal Memoir”, *Encounter*, August 1973, reprinted in Rush Rhees (ed.), *Recollections of Wittgenstein*, Oxford University Press, 1984, the quoted passage on p. 17.

⁷ Incredibly, prior to the Hacker – Schulte version (2009), no English translation of the motto has been included in the *Philosophical Investigations* editions. Incredible, but at the same time easy to explain. As the literature shows, Wittgensteinians were eager to argue that the word “progress” here refers to the philosopher’s own progress as he saw it at the time, not to progress in some social-historical sense. The idea was to deny that Wittgenstein’s philosophy had any political relevance. This idea was of course untenable (and thus not put forward in the literature) when it came to the preface of the *Philosophical Remarks* (see the next passage in the main text above). Incidentally, the Hacker – Schulte rendering of the motto – “The trouble about progress is that it always looks much greater than it really is” – strikes me as a mistranslation, the word “trouble” is not there in the original German. I wonder what the editors were troubled by.

⁸ Translators: Raymond Hargreaves and Roger White. Editor: Rush Rhees.

servative. I concluded my talk by suggesting that Musil's work in a sense might provide a key for understanding what Wittgenstein's problem really was. "This problem", I wrote, "is that of an age in which the dissolution of naturally-grown human communities has reached such a degree that the illusions of liberal anthropology cannot anymore be upheld."⁹ Liberal anthropology believes that human beings can develop an autonomous inner self which can liberate them from the moral-cognitive bonds of society, i.e. they can become independent individuals. However, with those social bonds vanishing, there remains nothing against which the notion of being an individual makes sense. Wittgenstein here certainly drew the appropriate epistemological consequences, by introducing the conceptual framework of custom, of conformity, of rule-following, of training¹⁰ (as opposed to explanation), and the use-theory of meaning.¹¹ Wittgenstein's new

⁹ "Dieses Problem ist das einer Zeit, in welcher der Auflösungsprozeß der naturwüchsigen menschlichen Gemeinwesen bereits derart fortgeschritten ist, daß die Illusionen der liberalen Anthropologie nicht mehr aufrechtzuerhalten sind" (*Gefühl und Gefüge*, p. 147).

¹⁰ See e.g. *Philosophical Investigations*, §§ 5 f. Wittgenstein uses the word "Abrichtung", an expression with clearly authoritarian connotations. In the English editions the term is translated in a politically biased way. As I put it in my https://www.academia.edu/49537957/DOES_WITTGENSTEIN_SCHOLARSHIP_REST_ON_A_MISTRANSLATION?: »PU § 5 last lines and § 6 first lines run: "Solche ... Formen der Sprache verwendet das Kind, wenn es sprechen lernt. Das Lehren der Sprache ist hier kein Erklären, sondern ein Abrichten." The 1953 Anscombe translation has: "A child uses ... primitive forms of language when it learns to talk. Here the teaching of language is not explanation, but training." Now among the dictionary meanings of the word "Abrichten" you can certainly find "training", but the primary translation should be "drill". I am not surprised about Anscombe's translation – she was not at home in the German language, my mother tongue – but I would have expected the 2009 Hacker – Schulte translation to rectify this passage, the only modification however Hacker and Schulte made here was to change the pronoun "it" to "he", a change I find unexplainable but uninteresting. What is interesting is that the term "training" does not have the connotation "drill" has: *submitting to unthinking obedience*.«

¹¹ The use-theory of meaning has a conservative ring since it claims that the senses of the words we use are not based on the individual's inner mental world, but rather on established community usage. Let me here note that the anthropologist

epistemology implied that instead of giving up yet more traditions, we should re-create bonds and boundaries.

My paper “Wittgenstein’s New Traditionalism”¹² (1976) was composed in the same vein, but covered a broader scope of Wittgenstein’s oeuvre than the “Musil und Wittgenstein” talk did, with the references to Wittgenstein’s conservatism markedly more explicit. As I here wrote: “Wittgenstein’s so-called later philosophy is the embodiment of a conservative-traditionalist view of history, and ... this philosophy in fact provides a logical foundation for such a view.”¹³ It was in this paper I first mentioned the impact Oswald Spengler’s *The Decline of the West* obviously had on Wittgenstein.¹⁴ Also, I drew

Bronislaw Malinowski provided, in an 1923 essay, an explanation of this issue far superior to that of Wittgenstein’s, see my [“Wittgenstein as a Philosopher of Post-Literacy”](#), and [“Wittgenstein as a Philosopher of Secondary Orality”](#). Now not only is Malinowski nowhere (do check the Nachlaß!) mentioned by Wittgenstein, but I do not know (I am sure I am just not sufficiently well-read) of works analyzing the two in a shared framework (would you believe that not even Gebauer’s *Wittgenstein’s Anthropological Philosophy* does refer to Malinowski?). The only exception I am aware of is Perry Anderson’s 1968 *New Left Review* paper “Components of the National Culture”, where the author discusses both Wittgenstein and Malinowski under the heading “white emigration”. Anderson’s paper is written from a shockingly extremist political (leftist) perspective, but is at the same time shockingly lucid and informative. May I here add that Anderson’s 1998 *The Origins of Postmodernity* is in my opinion by far the best (albeit politically biased) summary of its subject. I am adding this because I believe that whatever Anderson in this book writes about Wittgenstein, and whatever Wittgenstein was or was not, he was definitely a prototype of the postmodern philosopher (on my nutshell view on postmodernism, see below).

¹² *Acta Philosophica Fennica*, vol. 28, nos. 1–3, pp. 503–512. Reprinted in my volume [Tradition and Individuality](#) (Kluwer, 1992).

¹³ *Tradition and Individuality*, p. 1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 2 f. — Let me here add that Wittgenstein’s use both of the terms “Familienähnlichkeit” and “Lebensform” (originally non-technical expressions in everyday German) show Spengler’s impact. For the Spengler / Wittgenstein / family resemblances connection see esp. the latter’s *Philosophical Grammar*, transl. by Anthony Kenny, Oxford: Blackwell, 1974, p 299. “Lebensform” occurs conspicuously – already in the table of contents – in Spengler’s *Preussentum und Sozialismus* (1919), and is a recurring term in *The Decline of the West* (1919). On the *form of life* term’s history see also below, note 17.

attention to some specific remarks he wrote towards the end of his life, remarks in which Wittgenstein's traditionalism, and the close connection of this traditionalism to his later theories, becomes most apparent. One must, claimed Wittgenstein, "recognize certain authorities to make judgments at all"; authorities, for instance, like our *school*, or our inherited world-picture; *foundations*, against which any doubt is hollow. "My *life*", he wrote, "consists in my being content to accept many things."¹⁵

Then came the essay "Wittgensteins Spätwerk im Kontext des Konservatismus".¹⁶ Its introductory footnote states that I here "attempt to elaborate historically some theses which were put forward in my paper 'Wittgenstein's New Traditionalism'". The central move in that elaboration was to connect Wittgenstein's later philosophy to the Austrian and German neo-conservatism of the 1920s and 30s. Spengler was a dominant precursor of the trend, to which, among many others, Heidegger¹⁷ and C. G. Jung, too, belonged. Thomas Mann in

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6, cf. Wittgenstein, *On Certainty*, §§ 493, 47, 664, 94, 449, 312, 344.

¹⁶ Based on a talk held in Kirchberg/Wechsel in 1977, published in Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Schriften*, Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, Beiheft 3: *Wittgenstein's geistige Erscheinung*. English translation: "[Wittgenstein's Later Work in relation to Conservatism](#)", in *Wittgenstein and his Times*, ed. by Brian McGuinness, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982, pp. 44–68.

¹⁷ I have given a talk (first published in Hungarian in 1990) in which I made some very detailed comparisons between Heidegger's and Wittgenstein's ideas, as well as between the diverse philosophical backgrounds of their conservative world-views, cf. ch. 9 of my volume *Tradition and Individuality* (see note 12 above). Naturally I there referred to Wittgenstein's 1929 remark "To be sure, I can understand what Heidegger means by being and anxiety" (cf. *Wittgenstein and the Vienna Circle – Conversations Recorded by Friedrich Waismann*, transl. by Joachim Schulte and Brian McGuinness, ed. by Brian McGuinness, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979, p. 68; for the whole complicated history of this remark – and the suppression of the reference to Heidegger in the first publication of the remark – see Peter Keicher, "[Untersuchungen zu Wittgensteins 'Diktat für Schlick'](#) "). In the literature the question is sometimes raised whether Wittgenstein has actually read the book *Sein und Zeit*. I believe this is unlikely, but of course at that time Heidegger's ideas were absolutely in the air. And Wittgenstein might easily have encountered Heidegger's 1928 review of Cassirer's *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, Part II, *Mythical Thought* (1925), which appeared in the *Deutsche Litera-*

his 1921 paper “Russische Anthologie” used the term “conservative revolution”, the term taken from Dostoevsky, a figure, as I see it, having a debilitating influence on Austro-German neo-conservatism, the latter soon to be spiritually and physically destroyed by Hitler. Wittgenstein, as we know, was absolutely devoted to Dostoevsky.

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In my 1977 essay I quoted a formula by Gerd-Klaus Kaltenbrunner, from his “Der schwierige Konservatismus”. The man of conservative character, Kaltenbrunner there writes, is “devoted to the familiar and mistrustful of all novelties; he ... affirms instinctively the durable, the constant, the traditional; ... and [he] would rather underestimate than overestimate his fellow men”.¹⁸ Now in recent years psychologists and political scientists have succeeded in providing a rather more articulated, empirical and experimental characterization of what might be termed a genetically determined conserv-

turzeitung, a widely read journal. Heidegger refers to *Sein und Zeit* in the review at the point where he introduces his crucial notion of “thrownness”. Incidentally, the concept of a “form of life” is conspicuously present in the Cassirer volume, and is repeatedly used in Heidegger’s review. The literature on Heidegger and the conservative revolution is substantial, let me here just mention Daniel Morat, *Von der Tat zur Gelassenheit: Konservatives Denken bei Martin Heidegger, Ernst Jünger und Friedrich Georg Jünger, 1920–1960*, Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007, and the recent book by Reinhard Mehring, *Martin Heidegger und die “konservative Revolution”*, 2nd ed., Freiburg: Karl Alber, 2018, which I find particularly informative on the role of Thomas Mann. I am obliged to Tobias Adler-Bartels for alerting me to the Mehring volume.

¹⁸ G.-K. Kaltenbrunner (ed.), *Rekonstruktion des Konservatismus*, Freiburg i.B.: Rombach, 1972, p. 35. See also my references to Kaltenbrunner in the chapter “Wittgenstein 1929–31: Conservatism and Jewishness”, in my volume [*Tradition and Individuality*](#), Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1992, pp. 15 and 117. The chapter is an abridged version of the study “Wittgenstein 1929–1931: Die Rückkehr”, *KODI-KAS/CODE – Ars Semeiotica* 4–5/2, 1982, pp. 115–136, English translation in Stuart Shanker (ed.), *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Critical Assessments*, vol. 4, London: Croom Helm, 1986, pp. 29–59.

ative personality, suggesting that in a broad sense not only conservatism, but also liberalism – the striving for ever more freedom, if you like – is a perennial attitude. My 1977 essay was written from the perspective of a one-sided, traditionalist – say old-fashioned – conservatism, but by 1981, when I published – alas, only in Hungarian – the paper “The Free Market in an Authoritarian Society: Anglo-Saxon Liberal-Conservative Theories”¹⁹, I was clearly on the way to become a liberal conservative myself. The 19th-century Hungarian conservative liberal József Eötvös was my main hero in a paper I published in Roger Scruton’s *Salisbury Review* in 1989.²⁰ And I still have been a liberal conservative in 2016, when my *The Monist* piece “Conservatism and Common-Sense Realism”²¹ appeared. This piece contains detailed references to the empirical-experimental studies I referred to above. Also, it attempts to sketch a typology of various kinds of conservatisms. I will come back to that typology in a minute, but first let me divulge that in my 1981 paper I was sharply critical of my good friend Roger’s book *The Meaning of Conservatism*. I quoted Ascherson’s observation that Scruton does not provide “an anthropology suggesting that authoritarianism is the natural condition of the human race”.²² Indeed, may I add today, such an anthropology cannot be provided at all if liberalism, as we have reason to believe, is a perennial attitude just as conservatism is.

So let us now turn to a possible typology of conservatisms. I am building, partly, as indicated, on my 2016 *The Monist* piece, but my basic position has since changed. My present talk is blatantly out of step with the times, and is clearly opposed to contemporary main-

¹⁹ “Szabadpiac és tekintélyelvű társadalom. Angolszász liberális-konzervatív elméletek”, *Világosság* 1981/8–9, pp. 534–540.

²⁰ “Tradition and Freedom: Austrian Conservatism from Eötvös to Musil”, *Salisbury Review*, March 1989.

²¹ Vol. 99, no. 4 (October 2016), pp. 441–456. I am obliged to Martin Beckstein for editing my manuscript for *The Monist* “Conservatism” issue.

²² Neal Ascherson, “Conservatives”, *London Review of Books*, vol. 2, no. 21 (Nov. 1980).

stream thinking.²³ The reason: the experience of the pandemic has made me change my mind. With overpopulation, overglobalization, climate change, mass tourism, mass universities, and the by now suffocating effects of extreme genderism, mankind has clearly been led into a blind alley. The task is to go back to the juncture where the wrong turn was chosen. Philosophy now faces the conceptual challenge to create a new–old world-view, suggesting new–old forms of life, pointing to the merits of the attachment to one’s home and vicinity – propagating a new localism – calling attention to the advantages of self-sustaining communities, the rewards of delayed gratification, the need for coherent social roles especially in the world of learning, the indispensability of autonomous scholarship, the value of elite institutions of higher education. What is called for is a return, under advanced technological conditions, to earlier attitudes – once more a *conservative revolution*, a revolution however not repeating the failures of the one crashed by Hitler a hundred years ago.

In my 2016 paper I pointed to characteristic paradoxes inherent in different kinds of conservatism. There is, most fundamentally, the paradox of backward-looking conservatism. This type of conservatism suggests that we should give up our current patterns of life and return to those of some earlier age. Let me here come back to Musil. In his 1923 draft essay “Der deutsche Mensch als Symptom” he wrote:

Having freed himself from all the old bonds, man is recommended to subject himself to them anew: faith, pre-scientific thinking, austerity, humanity, altruism, sense of national community, a concept of civic duty, and abandonment of capitalistic individualism and all its attitudes. ... The belief is that a decay has to be cured. ... It is seldom recognized that these

²³ My first recent attempt to formulate a radical conservative approach is the essay “Back to the Roots – Conservatism Revindicated”, uploaded on Sept. 7, 2020, see https://www.academia.edu/44033627/Back_to_the_Roots_Conservatism_Revindicated. It centers on Wittgenstein, Heidegger, and C. G. Jung, and on what a “conservative revolution” these days, with the pandemic happening, should mean, and why it should happen. It ends with urging a return from the mass university to the research university.

features present a completely new problem for which no solution has as yet been found. I can think of hardly any account which conceives of our present condition as a problem, a new sort of problem, and not as a solution that has miscarried.²⁴

That is, Musil did certainly not recommend a return to the past. However, he did have an understanding, even if no arguments, for the position he disagreed with. No wonder he chose to write (and was ultimately incapable of completing) his famous novel *The Man Without Qualities*, in part essayistic, in part mystic, with the protagonist Ulrich's meditations conveying Musil's uncertainties. As Ulrich for instance speculates:

In earlier times, one had an easier conscience about being a person than one does today. People were like cornstalks in a field, probably more violently tossed back and forth by God, hail, fire, pestilence, and war than they are today, but as a whole, as a city, a region, a field, and as to what personal movement was left to the individual stalk – all this was clearly defined and could be answered for.²⁵

Now the idea of returning to the past is a revolutionary one, in need of reasoned argument, and thus opposed to the conservative spirit. Wittgenstein apparently did not believe in such a return.²⁶ Heidegger was quite explicit: he warned that “[t]he flight into tradition, out of a combination of humility and presumption, achieves, in itself, nothing, is merely a closing the eyes and blindness towards the historical moment”.²⁷ By contrast, Jung had an active yearning for long-

²⁴ “The German Personality as a Symptom”, transl. by David Hays, see J. C. Nyíri (ed.), *Austrian Philosophy: Studies and Texts*, München: Philosophia Verlag, 1981, p. 185.

²⁵ First volume, 1930, translation here quoted from the 1995 Alfred A. Knopf edition, p. 158.

²⁶ See note 2 above.

²⁷ Heidegger, “The Age of the World Picture” (1938), in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, edited and translated by William Lovitt, New York: Garland Publishing, 1977, p. 72.

bygone ages, and was intent on awakening the same in others. The psychology by which he explained that yearning was his theory of primordial images. I am in sympathy with that theory, even if I believe Jung did ultimately not succeed to elaborate it in a scientifically satisfactory direction.²⁸ Be that as it may, and with all the paradoxes a backward-looking conservatism implies, it is a revolutionary conservative position I have recently come to hold.

On the other hand conservatism might also be taken to mean that we should maintain whatever social conditions we happen to live under. But then we are once more faced with a paradoxical doctrine: one which would imply acquiescing to different values according to different times and places. And yet another cluster of paradoxes emerges when conservatism is equated, as it almost invariably is, with *traditionalism*. Twentieth-century scholarship has shown beyond any possible doubt that traditions in the rigorous sense of the term are instruments for preserving knowledge in pre-literal cultures.²⁹ Traditions belong to premodernity. Premodern conservatism strives to preserve the life of generations to come by seeking to ensure the survival of the mores and beliefs of former generations. Modern conservatism by contrast, that is conservatism in the age of the printed word, is forced to recognize that change is inevitable. It attempts to slow down change in order to reduce the destruction it causes.³⁰ But how should we construe post-typographic, post-mid-twentieth-century conservatism, conservatism in the age of online networks – that is, postmodern conservatism? At this point I propose an interpretation very different from that in my 2016 paper.

²⁸ See my paper [“Forever Jung”](#), 2020.

²⁹ I have provided a thorough and I believe philosophically penetrating summary of the issue in my “Introduction: Notes towards a Theory of Traditions”, in J. C. Nyiri (ed.), *Tradition*, Wien: IFK, 1995, pp. 7–32, accessible online: https://www.academia.edu/4365551/Notes_towards_a_Theory_of_Traditions. A topic I especially focus on in this summary is the myth of national traditions.

³⁰ Perhaps it is apt to refer here to the often voiced idea, here in the formulation of Armin Mohler: Conservatism “congeals into a theory only when a point is reached where it must defend itself against some opposing theory”. (*Die konservative Revolution in Deutschland 1918–1932*, Stuttgart: 1950, p. 163.)

The literature on the postmodern, or on postmodernism or postmodernity, is not just vast and ramified, but adds up to, or rather coalesces into, a fuzzy complex of contradictory approaches, a veritable morass of trends and theories. In this field to pronounce presupposes, and means, first of all to *stipulate*. I stipulate the postmodern to be an historical era: the era of post-typography. Post-typography means ageless digital documents, networked information, virtual communication, high mobility, with the ensuing forms of art, literature, and lifestyle. Thus conservatism in the postmodern age plausibly involves a turning back to the culture of the printed text, with a belief in the possibility of coherent knowledge, the unity of reason, well-defined social roles, and, not incidentally, less travelling, even if the portable book has been invented some five centuries ago.

Leslie Fiedler was on the right track when in his 1965 “The New Mutants” paper he saw a connection between postmodernism and the disavowment of “the very idea of the past”³¹, the withering away of “logical discourse”³², and the apparent need to determine “what significance, if any, ‘male’ and ‘female’ ... possess”³³. Also, in his famous 1969 *Playboy* essay he indicated that the rise of the postmodern is not independent of the emergence of mass media, and of “the printed book ... being radically altered”.³⁴

³¹ Leslie A. Fiedler, “The New Mutants”, *Partisan Review*, vol. 32, no. 4 (Fall 1965), pp. 508 f.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 512.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 518. A formulation by Fiedler two pages earlier: “To become new men, these children of the future” – meant are the participants in the Berkeley etc. student demonstrations – “seem to feel, they must not only become more Black than White but more female than male.” A prophesy, if you like, or perhaps an instance of the power of ideas becoming material force. Compare Roger Kimball’s essay “From Farce to Tragedy”, *Partisan Review*, vol. 60, no. 40 (Fall 1993), p. 565: “[A]nyone who has taken the trouble to observe what has happened in the academy knows that over the last couple of years political correctness has evolved from a sporadic expression of left-leaning self-righteousness into a dogma of orthodoxy that is widely accepted, and widely enforced, by America’s cultural elite.”

³⁴ Leslie A. Fiedler, “Cross the Border, Close the Gap”, *Playboy*, vol. 16, no. 12 (Dec. 1969), pp. 230, 253, and 230. Reprinted in Fiedler’s volume *Cross the Bor-*

What we today face is the West's false assessment of the prospects of liberalism and democracy – or, more broadly, of our post-modern loss of understanding the realities of nature and society. I have been asked why I apply the term “revolution”, and on what grounds I believe that the conservative revolution I envisage would not commit the failures, indeed the sins, of the one a hundred years ago. My answer is that the movement I argue for is a radical but non-coercive one. On the contrary, it is directed *against coercion*. To begin with examples from my own world, the world of research and higher education: I argue against the publish or perish imperative and the (author, year) reference style terror,³⁵ against the inexorable expectations of successful fundraising, against the intimidation of not being politically correct, risking your job if not using the appropriate

der – Close the Gap, New York: Stein and Day, 1972. The page numbers there: pp. 63, 69, and 66. For the volume Fiedler has very slightly rewritten the text, the *Playboy* version is the better read, though the nudes are of course distracting.

³⁵ First of course came the coercion to change footnotes to endnotes. As Gertrude Himmelfarb had put it: “with the banishment of notes to the back of the book, they have lost their honorable status as footnotes and assumed the demeaning position of endnotes. Publishers instigated this practice primarily as an economy measure to reduce the costs of typesetting. With the new mechanized and computerized processes, that is no longer a consideration. But the practice has been perpetuated for commercial reasons, to make scholarly books look more accessible and thus more marketable.” (“Where Have All the Footnotes Gone?”, *The New York Times Book Review*, June 16, 1991. A later version of this essay appeared in Himmelfarb's volume *On Looking Into the Abyss*, New York: Knopf, 1994, pp. 122–130.) Gertrude Himmelfarb, also known as BeaKristol, was a prominent American historian, wife of Irving Kristol, a pioneering and leading neoconservative. Himmelfarb was from her youth on deeply involved in conservative circles. I believe that the adherence to footnotes is indeed a conservative position, in contrast to the (author, year) worldview, which Connors justly connects to “populist scholarship” (Robert J. Connors, “The Rhetoric of Citation Systems”, Part II: “Competing Epistemic Values in Citation”, *Rhetoric Review*, vol. 17, no. 2, Spring 1999, p. 223.)

gender pronoun in English, or, when speaking German, not saying “Studentinnen und Studenten”, “Bürgerinnen und Bürger”, “Soldatinnen und Soldaten”, etc., etc., *ad nauseam*. Western political correctness ultimately turned out to aggravate the political conditions it had set out to correct. The movement I argue for might lessen the impotence of the West.