Marija Bišćan
diplomski studij povijesti, istraživački smjer: (Moderna i suvremena povijest, 19. i 20. stoljeće)
diplomski studij lingvistike, smjer: Primijenjena lingvistika
Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu

Interview with Dr. Catherine Horel: On Multiculturalism and Central Europe

(Courtesy of Dr. Horel)

About Dr. Horel:

Catherine Horel, a Parisienne born in 1966, is a historian who specializes in the contemporary history of Central Europe. She is a program director at the French National Centre for Scientific Research. Her historiographical research has been widely recognized, and because of her specialization, she is a member of numerous international organizations. It is also important to point out her

position as president of the *Comité international des sciences historiques*. Her research focuses on urban history, history of the Jews and the investigation of sociopolitical structures of the Habsburg Empire. In one of her recently edited publications, she deals with the phenomena of migrations in the late Ottoman Empire. She is the author of many books about the Central and South European territories, some of them being *Admiral Horthy – The Regent of Hungary*, *Multicultural Cities of the Habsburg Empire, 1880–1914: Imagined Communities and Conflictual Encounters*, *Soldaten zwischen nationalen Fronten*, *History of Budapest* and *Cette Europe qu'on dit centrale. Des Habsbourg à l'intégration européenne (1815-2004)*. Thanks to her knowledge of many languages used in the former Habsburg Empire, Horel was able to research these topics using primary resources in the archives, thus making her work authentic and detailed. Her publications, due to her extensive knowledge and prestigious education, are part of a well-researched historiographical discourse on Central and Southern Europe of great quality.

During my research I couldn't help but notice the number of languages you write in and speak. As a linguist, it was very fascinating to me. Could you tell us something about how you came to learn so many languages? For instance, Hungarian, German and Croatian? And what are some of the language difficulties you had while conducting your research for your books and papers?

Well, I had a Hungarian grandmother, which means that I had the chance to learn Hungarian in the kitchen, but not with my grandmother because she died when I was a young girl. Being an immigrant in France, she wanted to integrate and she didn't want to speak the language, which means that I learned Hungarian later, when I was still in my teens. I heard Hungarian later at my family's house in Budapest in the kitchen, and then of course I changed my vocabulary and I went on to study the vocabulary of historiography in Hungarian. I had German at school as my first foreign language, and then I had the opportunity to work in Vienna quite many times for a long time. German is actually the language I speak the best because this is really the language I learned, while Hungarian I just learned in the kitchen with my family, so it's not very accurate. My German is very accurate, and then I started with Russian in the '80s, which was not very popular at that time, meaning also that we couldn't go to Russia, to the Soviet Union so easily. Then my doctorate father, professor Bernard Michel, was a specialist on Czech lands. Then he told me: "Oh, you know, it's not enough if you know German and Hungarian, you should pick up a Slavic language." And then, being a bohemist himself, as we say, I understood that he wanted me to learn Czech. So, I learned Czech. I didn't like it. I don't want to offend anyone by being a Czech person or learning Czech but I didn't. Well, it didn't match with me. On top of that, for Hungarian history, Czech lands and the Czech language were not as relevant as we would say for the Slovak language. Then I had the opportunity to be involved in a project in Croatia. Out of this project came the book we are going to talk a little bit later about the Habsburg soldiers. So, I said: "My God, yes, Croatia.

That's the best place to be for a Hungarian." It's relevant to the topic of historiography, and access to the sea puts you a step above Czech lands. You have the sea, the wine and better cooking. And so I became completely enthusiastic about Croatia and actually I learned Croatian during this research I made on the soldiers. So, I practically learned here, on the spot. It means that if I stay here for a long time, everything comes back to me and I can really talk a little bit. I can manage little more than talking to the market lady or the taxi driver, however, I can read everything and I can understand nearly everything. Then the other languages came, well, all the Slavic languages came from this experience, which means that I can read Polish, Slovak, Czech, of course, but I cannot speak them really because if I started to speak, I would speak Croatian, Serbo-Croatian. So, it's not very correct either, but I can read. I have my limits. You asked me about the limits when I started to work on Lemberg/Lviv/Lwow, because first it was Polish, which is not my best languag,even in reading. And then I had to take a little bit of Ukrainian. At that time, at the turn of the century in 1900, Ukrainians, the Ruthenes, had three options to write their own language. One was to write in Cyrillic Russian. So, it's completely Russian Cyrillic letters, which I had difficulty learning just as well. Then they invented a new Ukrainian writing using Old Slavonic letters. And then sometimes the typograph making the newspapers didn't have quite the same letters. Then I thought: "Okay, now I know where my limit is." In the Slavic languages, I reached my limits with Ukrainian because it was very confusing. But it was also a sign of how confused Ukrainian identity was at the time because they really had to struggle to enforce a real language. So of course, nowadays everyone knows that Ukrainian is a codified written language, and so on. But you can imagine that in the 1900s that was not the case, and it was also a political option, because, of course, if you choose to write Ukrainian using Russian alphabet letters, it means something and at that time it meant the Russophile tendency of the Ukrainian national movement, so it was very confusing. And Romanian, well, you know Romanian. I know Italian quite well, which I didn't learn in school. I learned Italian by listening to opera. I read the libretti and then it was enough. But you know I'm French. I had nine years of Latin, so Italian is really not a problem. And then Romanian. I can manage to read because when you hear Romanian, it's very difficult to understand correctly. After all, Romanian is penetrated by so many Slavic, Latin and Hungarian words. But knowing these languages, when you read about a topic which you know, after a moment, you know the vocabulary, so it's not that difficult. So, this is how I came to learn all these languages.

That is very fascinating indeed. While doing research on the city of Lviv, I saw that they also had this vernacular that is a mixture of Polish, Ukrainian and German.

And Yiddish, don't forget Yiddish.

And Yiddish, of course. It's so amazing to see how all those cultures blended, even in the form of a language.

I actually learned Yiddish to be able to read the newspapers in Lemberg/Lviv/Lwów, which were written in Yiddish, not so much in Czernowitz. There the Jews tended to be more German and German speaking and so on. But for Lemberg, you had quite a lot of Yiddish newspapers. And so, I picked up Yiddish as well because I come from a Jewish background, but from a very assimilated Hungarian background and in my family, I don't know to which generation we would have to come back to to have people speaking Yiddish. My grandmother didn't speak, the great-great-grandparents neither. I was not familiar with this Yiddish language at first.

Speaking of language barriers in your book* Soldaten zwischen nationalen Fronten*, you mentioned only a small number of Croats went to the Military Academy in Budapest due to most of them not knowing the Hungarian language. Could you explain the reasons behind such preferences and tell us why some of them decided to build their military careers in Budapest?

If they wanted to have a higher education, they could go to Budapest, of course, but they would stand more to go to Vienna. For some of them, it could have had political meaning. But I think that probably the ones who thought on very pragmatic terms thought that they would have better opportunities by enforcing German and because in Austria, you had quite a lot of military academies, diverse types of academies like pioneers and things like that. So maybe they thought that if they went to Austria, they would have better career opportunities after this education than if they just went to the Ludovika Academy in Budapest. So, it was not necessarily distaste or hostility towards Hungary, because in the military, you know, they didn't have this kind of nationalistic mindset. I think that for some of them, it was just a career opportunity, which was better in Austria because of this diversity of military education they could have that they would not have in Hungary.

When thinking of these soldiers in the Royal Hungarian Home Guard, can we refer to them as forming a new hybrid identity different from a simply Hungarian, Croatian or Austrian one? And if that is the case, when would you say that the disintegration of that complex identity took place?

Yes, we can absolutely speak about hybrid identities on many levels. First, the *Ugarsko kraljevsko domobranstvo* was recruited mainly from the former Military Frontier. So, in the Military Frontier, you had, to put it very simply, Catholic Croats and Orthodox Serbs. Already, you had a mixture of people from diverse backgrounds, but in this complex of the former military border, you also had German officers who had settled there, for example, in Slavonia,nd who had become somehow Croats, but being from a German background, so it's another level of identity. And then, of course, this new military force was administratively ruled from Budapest, so you couldn't refrain from having direct ties with Budapest, but considering the fact that in Croatia proper the number of Hungarian-speaking people was not so enormous, the Hungarian language was not so frequent in Croatia. So inside of the two headquarters of

this military force, in Budapest and here in Zagreb, you had a special translation office. So, everything that went and came from and to Budapest was translated. The book came out in 2009 so I don't remember exactly the details but, if I remember well, you had three translators here in Zagreb who worked practically all day on sending the reports, everything that was produced here in Zagreb, translated into Hungarian and in Budapest you had the translation office sending everything back that was relevant for the administration here. In conclusion, yes, there was hybridity, but there was also a lot of separation. But each administration was aware of the fact that they had to translate because it was not so evident for a gendarme from Ogulin that he would know Hungarian. I mean, it's impossible thathe would be from a Hungarian family, which is also possible, having a Hungarian mother or grandmother. But more generally, if he were a former border guard, a former *graničar*, he wouldn't know Hungarian, so he had to have his orders in Croatian. There was absolutely no way to do without that.

Were there any Hungarian soldiers coming to Croatia proper and mixing with those Catholic Croatians and Orthodox Serbs?

From Hungary proper? Practically, no. These people, these Hungarian-speaking people, would be from Slavonia. They would be from Osijek or they would be, you know, from this territory or from Međimurje. Somehow they would be already in contact with Slavic, South Slavic territory inside of Hungary at that time, but they would already be Slavic-speaking people.

In your latest book* Multicultural Cities of The Habsburg Empire from 1880 to 1914*, which you're presenting here today, you conduct a comparative analysis of 12 cities of the Habsburg Monarchy. What is something that you think historiography has neglected about these cities, while mostly researching the largest cities such as Vienna and Budapest?

First, you have entire libraries of books about Prague, Budapest, and Vienna. What surprised me when I started to work on urban history, which means now nearly 20 years ago, I found, of course, many books about the urban history of the Habsburg Monarchy, which included smaller cities. But all the time they were collective books. What about theater, for example? Then you would have 12 papers on each city and then at one moment, I said: "Why has not someone tried to bridge this gap and compare the cities all together, not having one author about one city? Go on, guys, have a real comparison." And of course, it's an enormous task we now have in front of us. If we were to have a map here of the Empire, of course you would say: "Well, it's impossible." It's impossible because it's huge and there is the problem of languages which we addressed before. So, I was completely ambitious in trying to do this and maybe mad because I said: "Well, I will do it, I will. Let's do it. I know most of these languages. So I shall try to bridge this gap." And I proposed to do a real comparison myself.. Not every person does something about one city. I wanted to take all these cities together. Coming back to the topic of smaller cities, they're not so small for the period we are discussing. They were quite big because, apart

from Bohemia, Austria-Hungary was not so urbanized at that time, so I tried to see where the limit of the relevance was for doing such research. Of course, you can work on even smaller cities. Doing research on villages is difficult, but not on very small cities. But then if you work on smaller cities, I mean even smaller than the ones I studied, you will not have all the parameters. I wanted to have a theater, a permanent one to see in which language the theater plays? Who goes to the theater? Is the theater at stake in the national conflict? So, I needed a permanent theater. I needed a gymnasium. More than one, if possible, to see if the gymnasium is also segregated between the nationalities, and I needed the daily press. So, it came out that under 50,000 inhabitants I would lack one of these elements. I would lack maybe the daily press or I would lack the theater or whatnot. Well, there is one city in which I don't have a permanent theater. That's Sarajevo. But I needed Sarajevo for other reasons. Well, it's a representative of this postcolonial discourse about the monarchy and so on, so I absolutely needed it. In Sarajevo, I did have my 50,000 inhabitants, no problem, but from the cultural point of view, I missed this permanent theater. But that was not the problem. Another criteria was that I had to have the two port cities. So, Trieste and Rijeka. Rijeka is a little bit under the 50,000 population mark; it had 49,000 inhabitants at the 1910 census, but back there I had everything. I had the theater, I had the gymnasium, I had the daily press, I had even a satirical press, which was also extremely important, and I love Rijeka so I was absolutely obliged to have Rijeka to compare with Trieste, you know, to try to find matters of comparison between cities.

Your book, as we had previously said, bears the name* Multicultural Cities of the Habsburg Empire. *Recently, historiographers have also started using the term pluriculturalism. What would be the differences between those two terms, and could you perhaps give us some examples of multiculturalism and pluriculturalism?

It's very difficult. One would say in one case people live next to each other and in the other case they live with each other. So that was one of the theoretical criteria for this thing. I would not say I chose my field of multiculturalism. Somewhere in the beginning of the book, there is quite a lot of theory about that, but also on urban matters. I think that the people who have a problem with these terms are not disoriented. They are sociologists, people who work with the present time, and of course you cannot compare Trieste in the 1900s with the city today, because the mixture of people and cultures is not the same. So, I think we should take care of not imposing the reality of the 19th-century terms on the 21st century, and this is what sometimes some historians do, including the ones who speak about this, all these postcolonial theories, and so on. Most of the time it is also, as I said, a discourse that doesn't come from historians.

Could you explain the role intellectuals had in forging, what you termed, historical nostalgia? This of course doesn't need to limit itself to writers and scientists, but it can also be applied to architects, who, as we now know, had a great role in the semotization of certain places, especially regarding urban history.

That's a very vast topic. What I wanted to say is that normally when people speak of the Habsburg Empire, they would emphasize one side of the conflict saying: "Oh, it was terrible. People were oppressed, the Croats were oppressed by the nasty Hungarians." And you have this discourse in the national historiographies after the First World War and after the Second as well, if not more problematic. There is a picture of the permanent conflict between groups, nationalities. We prefer now to speak of groups. You can be in accord with Rogers Brubaker, but still, I mean, speaking of groups is a good option because you avoid this trap of speaking of nationalities for people who were not even conscious of being from a nationality. So, there is this one tendency which is the product of this national discourse after the First World War and the Second on insisting on the conflict. But on the other side, you have the other picture which emphasized multiculturalism saying: "Oh, it was wonderful, people were living together and we had such a nice culture and the city was so beautiful and people got along with each other. There was no hatred. It was a paradise." So, this picture has been created also after the First World War by writers, many of them Jewish, and this has also, of course, reached its climax after the Second World War, because of, of course, Shoah, ethnic cleansing by the Germans, the disappearance of the Jews and communism. Retrospectively, people started to see the monarchy not as a prison of the peoples (*Völkerkerker*) but, well, it was not so bad. And then they completely fell on the other side and forgot the conflict and created this nostalgia. So, I wanted to see how we, actually, have both. Yes, we have conflicts in some cities. It's really important. It agitates the town and it's a permanent play between the groups, but at other times you have also perfect quiet and vitality in this conflict. So, the conflict is not necessarily something that is bad. It's also something that shows that there is dynamism in the city. There is vitality and it creates something. It creates culture. If people feel that they are being, well, if not oppressed, but let's say segregated or not recognized by the majority of the town, they will force their own culture. In this way, the conflict can be very positive. But also, of course, the fact that they would live together is also very positive and on top of that you had all these mixed families, with one parent being, I don't know what, Czech, the other parent being German and people belonging to four different nationalities. I had a very dear Austrian colleague who died a few years ago, Professor Horst Haselsteiner. He was born in the occupied Belgrade in '42 during the war. His father was Austrian. His mother was Hungarian, the grandmother of the mother was Serbian and so on and so on. I think that the grandfather from the father's side was from the Czech lands. So, he was a perfect example, he was a product of the monarchy. So, people sometimes chose to refuse to decide upon their nationality. What would be the nationality if this person had been born in 1912 and not in 1942, what would he have chosen for

nationality? But would he? He would have had to choose in the censuses and going to school, you had to choose at one moment what kind of choice you make. But how do you do that in such a family?

You are also one of the editors of the book* Population Displacements and Multiple Mobilities in the Late Ottoman Empire. *In what way were normal people affected by the administrative changes followed by the annexation of Bosnia, and was it followed by a large number of migrations? How did that play into the transformation of their identity?

It's really good that you have this question about this book we edited last year with a German colleague. The book came out of an idea we had comparing first the transfers and displacement of population that the arrival of the Ottoman Empire caused in the 14th, 15th, 16th centuries. So, we had the first meeting on that topic, but we didn't publish these studies. And then we thought: "We looked at the one end of the story. We have to look at the other end of the story which is the end of the Ottoman Empire and how it affected people moving sometimes by millions." If we consider Bosnia, of course, it was an enormous change for people living in Bosnia when, as it is, put so nicely in the book of Ivo Andrić: "The Austrians came, the bureaucrats came." The Austrian civil servants came and they, of course, changed the form of everyday life for everyone. So, the fact is that it also caused a lot of population moving, not just displacement. If you look at the population figures of Sarajevo, you see how the face of the city changed enormously after the occupation. First, not so many people went, not so many Muslims went. The ones who went were the ones who, from the spiritual point, could not stand the fact that they would be ruled by a Catholic sovereign. Sometimes they didn't go as far as we would think. They went to other parts of the Ottoman Empire in Europe. They went to neighboring territories, but the large majority stayed because they had their land. And the Austrians were not interested in getting rid of these people. They needed the big agas and beys with the lands to rule over the population. So, these people had a difficult choice to make. Either they would go, but they would go with their prosperity and they would have to abandon their land. So that's a difficult choice. Only some of them did. The main migrants were not wealthy. There were some, maybe some small shopkeepers, workers, artisans and so on. But the big landlords, when the new administration came into power, remained the elite of the country. If we look back from the point of view of the other parts of the population, many people, many specialists of Bosnia, said that was a mistake made by the Austrians. They argue that the Austrians should have absolutely imposed a land reform. And then the mainly Serbian Orthodox people, they are called the *kmeti*, would have been able to buy land to receive some sort of compensation or even reward. And maybe that would have somehow eased their resentment against Austria. Then it would have taken away a tool from Serbia because the new Serbian principality was, of course, as you know, playing with the fact that Serbian people in Bosnia were oppressed by the Austrians. If these people had received land, then they wouldn't have been able to complain. It would have been also difficult for Serbia

to put this argument against Austria, but this is how it was, we cannot change history. If we look back, maybe this should have been done. But the authorities were thinking of that. I wouldn't say that it was not a possibility but it was a big stake to deprive the Muslim base because, who would know, they would have been revolting maybe, already the process of occupation had been difficult. The Austrian had thought: "Oh, we will do that in five days," and it lasted months with casualties, so they didn't dare to go so far in this strategy.

We were speaking of how Sarajevo didn't have a theater or some of these cultural places important for the formation of identity and the contestation of multiple identities. I was wondering if that is perhaps due to that lack of changes that could have brought some more modernity?

There was enormous modernity in Sarajevo, and it was used by the groups. It was very well recognized by each group and they made use of that immediately. They created newspapers immediately, they created associations and they made use of the civil laws which Austria had already imposed after it occupied Bosnia, so modernity was not a problem. It was absolutely accepted, but used to enhance each group so the people immediately recognized the potential of modernity to push their own group and their own arguments and architecture served a similar purpose. I didn't go back to your question about how architects defined this world of Habsburg cities. Of course, enormously. And in Sarajevo, that's a very good example too, because sometimes, you know, big catastrophes help very much. So, in Sarajevo in 1879, there was this big fire that destroyed everything that was made from wood and practically all of Baščaršija, and all these small shops that were out of wood, and quite a lot of buildings as well. So, it helped to create this Habsburg site variable with these nice streets and the *quai* and all that. And in Zagreb, you have this terrible earthquake in 1880 and this is how Donji Grad came to be. So, the plan was already there, but well, you know, it was slow and so on and so on. Boom, the earthquake arrives, and that's a very good occasion. And now we can really do it. And there were very, very few casualties actually in Zagreb. So, I wouldn't be laughing if there was a bigger number.

So, this is how the architects had the power, and there was actually money for all that. It was either money coming from Vienna or it was coming from the local authorities and so on. This is how all these cities started to resemble each other because if you look at this very important duo of architects Fellner&Helmer who practically built all the theaters in the Habsburg Empire, to begin with Zagreb. It's one of their works and one of their first works is also in Croatia. That's the theater in Varaždin. So, this is also why this nostalgia is also very important because people say: "Look, we have small Viennas everywhere," because practically everywhere you have something that looks like a ring. You have here *Zelena potkova*, Zrinjevac and so on and you will have the same theater and you will have the same kind of buildings, where one is the bank, the other one is the university, the other one is the casino of the nobility and so on, and they all look similar. And really, you can go there and you see the difference when you cross the border. You go to look at Zemun and

Belgrade. You are in Zemun, you are in Austria, everything looks like Austria. And then you go to Belgrade and say: "What is this mess? It's not a city, it's Belgrade." It's chaos. There is no urban planning. And I love Belgrade, by the way, but you see, you really see the difference between the two worlds of, on one side, this urban planning, which is typical of the Habsburg Empire and, on the other side, something else.

Nowadays the border of the European Union is in many ways consistent with the Austria-Hungary one. It is for this reason that some authors connect the concept of Europeanness to the Habsburg legacy many of these countries have in common. Do you think this is something that could have only happened because of many people's disappointment with the communist regimes in the previous decades, or are there some deeper reasons for this?

No, that's very much the case. That's very much the case when in the 80s intellectuals of the communist countries started to really revive, you know, this mythology of Europe debate and so on. There was very much the argument again of nostalgia but for them it was not really nostalgic, but it was also an argument in the face of the Soviet Union. To say you are the others, you are barbaric, you are not from our world. We are better because we have this heritage. We were once something very brilliant. We had this civilization of Central Europe, which is OK. It was also a tactic to distance themselves from the Soviets and from the communist regime, but also mainly from the Russians. It was really an argument to say we were different, we were Central Europe, we are not Eastern Europe because you know, all the time people were speaking of Eastern Europe to push these societies farther east. In the barbarism of the Russians and they say no, we are somehow Western, we are in the center, of course, but we are somehow Western. You know this very famous paper written by Milan Kundera in 1983 which nobody reads, but everyone quotes. It's very interesting because he is a Czech, so for him being in Prague and not in Vienna, he thinks west. And geography counts. Somehow he terms this as kidnapping. Why does he say the West was kidnapped? We would say: "No, you're not in the West. You are in the center, you are in Central Europe." He says: "We are western." First, he said this because he's Czech, so he has this western orientation and, of course, he says that in political terms saying we did not belong to this communist world.

So, there is very much of this in and then after '89 in the strategy to go back to Europe because they feel they were cut off by the Iron Curtain from a world to which they belonged from the beginning. So, your question is absolutely relevant for that. And then in the years after '89, there were also quite a lot of articles and conferences to present the Habsburg Monarchy as having already been a small European Union, saying, look, you had the same currency. You had the same army you had, I wouldn't say the same language, but German was the *lingua franca*. At least if you wanted to make a career in Vienna, you had to know German and German was taught in practically every gymnasium of the Empire. So, it was somehow a kind of unity we don't have

now. You will find quite a lot of, even books saying, well actually the Habsburg Monarchy was already a small European Union and it also served this, not nostalgia, we were talking about in the beginning.

Some authors see in the shared Habsburg legacy a precondition of European solidarity, as we said, but in a way, this seems to limit itself only to nations of the European continent. I was wondering, what do you think is the legacy this continent and its people could adopt to show social solidarity and acceptance to refugees and workers coming here from all over the world?

Now we have the real bone of contention. Absolutely because as long as the people were mobile inside of the region, it was not a problem and people migrated a lot at the time of the Habsburg Empire and you had hostility. You had hostility against the Galician Jews coming with all their habits to Vienna, even to Budapest. They were considered a threat by the Jews themselves, by the already assimilated progressive Liberal Jews that would not show solidarity. But, well, if these people could then go away, that would be better. There is a very famous example in Trieste. At the turn of the century, a lot of Jews from Corfu arrived, and they were extremely poor, poor people and people were arriving in Trieste from Romania, from Russia, and most of them didn't want to stay there. They wanted to go to America. But still, they had to stay somewhere. Sometimes they had to gather the money to pay the ticket to the boat and the local Jewish community had to take care of them, and sometimes in the Jewish press, you would see that some people in the Community accuse the others from the Community of not being generous enough. Towards the coreligionists, they say: "They are Jews. We should help them." But some people say: "Well, let's help them to go. We don't want them here. These people are poor, and not educated. They speak some kind of strange language. I would rather buy them a boat ticket and let's get rid of them." Migration was not always this kind of you know, of course, people were mobile, enormously mobile, but there was also some migration crisis. The big crisis then came during the First World War because many cities had to accommodate people fleeing the Russian army from Galicia, from Bukovina. It again provoked a crisis, but then these factors were somehow forgotten and then, during the communist period, people also moved. In Hungary in '56, people came to Austria. They were welcomed and nowadays you see, well, the difference between, of course, people, mainly men, not Christian, not European, arriving in our countries and the Ukrainian refugees who were absolutely welcomed and being somehow considered as they were like us. So, this discourse is very much at present indeed.

Being human beings, we as historians are also bound to make mistakes. Of course, as everyone does. So what do you personally think is the best way to set straight the mistakes many of us make due to language barriers or the overwhelming number of information that we are bound to come across, especially researching the more recent periods, or simply giving the wrong interpretation?

This is also important in Croatia and in Hungary. You know you cannot do history of the first half of the 19th century in Croatia and in Hungary if you don't know Latin. So again, one language. Yes, we make mistakes. Of course, sometimes we simply look at one character in our research and we have the wrong person. Of course, we are making some bad interpretations because sometimes we lack some elements, and sometimes we just make hypotheses because not everything is in the archives. Not everything is written down or it's not written where we think it is. So sometimes we discover a piece of archive which shouldn't be there. So, it's discovery, and discoveries are very nice, but sometimes discoveries are risky. Sometimes you discover something and then you figure out that you were completely wrong the last ten years because you thought that you had found something. And actually, this piece of archive proves you the contrary, and then you have a crisis. Sometimes you don't find anything and you have an idea. You feel you have something, but you don't have proof and then you have to construct an idea, thinking on some material you don't have; you have only intuition. And sometimes you have bad intuition. It can happen. So what? You cannot be completely immune to that, but each time you have to, of course, you have to control everything. You have to verify everything and you have to be very disciplined to be as rigorous as you can, controlling, of course. As I said, for example, you find someone in a newspaper, people speak of someone and say things and this guy shows up. OK, so this guy must be identical to this guy I found in another newspaper. And then you have to cross-check. You have to cross-check and then you come to the result that it's not the same person. And then you have to identify both persons. Because then you have two persons instead of one, and one is apparently linked to the other and so this is the kind of thing you come across all the time. And there is no 100% guarantee that you will not make a mistake. Bad interpretation, it's something else. Because sometimes you have preconceptions, you have prejudices. You have, well, you want to prove something, and sometimes you're not so honest and you say: "Well, I cannot really prove that. But I will say it nevertheless." And then you come to a conference and a colleague raises his hand and says: "No, you're completely wrong. It's not that. This guy was not the guy you refer to." And you blush in front of everyone. It can happen. Fortunately, it never happened to me, but it can happen.

While we are on the topic of wrong interpretations, do you think such a classification of right and wrong, this dualism, threatens the integrity of the dialogic nature of our discipline?

Well, it depends. It depends on why your interpretation is wrong. If it's wrong because you tend to, you want to prove something that you know it's not. Well, the wrong interpretation can be your fault, consciously or unconsciously, as I said. It's, well, of course, harder when you go into the very present day. When you work on the 19th century, the end of the 19th century, well, it's less risky than working today on, I don't know, Russian history or on the post-communist era and this kind of thing. Of course, people have their backgrounds, they have their own history, and ego as well. If you ask them: "Why did you choose

this topic," and so on you will discover that these interpretations people make come from their own background, family or education. It's not only that they would be biased, but this is something we can explain. The risk is that your interpretation comes at the cost of your intellectual integrity.

And now on a lighter topic. The focus of your research studies has been and is Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe. How interesting and popular are such topics in the French public compared to the dominant fields of study in that part of Europe?

They are unpopular, I mean, not popular. I wouldn't say unpopular when you talk about that. People are interested, but it's too complicated for them. It's absolutely too complicated, too many languages, too many people, too many confessions too. Ah, it's so complicated. Vienna is wonderful. It's very nice. Everyone goes to Vienna and to Prague but they don't understand anything. It's just a tourist appeal. People rush to Croatia to the seaside and have no interest in what they would not do the 10 kilometers inside of the country so well. So, there is, I would say, a kind of interest which is not very deep, which is limited to this kind of, well, light cultural level.

And as soon as you go a little bit deeper, you absolutely see that. I remember once my mother had a neighbor, at that time my parents were retired and they had settled in my father's region in Normandy. In a small town, let's say. My mother was very depressed because she wanted to stay in Paris, she was the Parisian of the two. But well, that aside, she had a neighbor who was taking part in a kind of, you know, retired people group and this group made a trip to Austria. And then the lady comes back and: "How did you? How did you like it? Oh, yes. It was very nice. We ate very well." And do you imagine, she said to my mother: "In Austria, they speak German." And my mother was absolutely, you know, upset at such ignorance. So well, this kind of, you know, if you go to Paris, people go to the exhibitions, they go to movies or if you go to a town like in Normandy this is the kind of knowledge you would know for someone who had basically kind of just, well, secondary school level, right. And for the research, it is also a little bit, we are a little bit in despair because very few students nowadays know more than one or two languages. German is absolutely disappearing from the curricula of the secondary schools, which means that when we receive students who want to work on the program, and what about the German language? Oh wow. They don't see why they should know German. Well, you see. And then, of course, they will pick up Polish or they will make the effort. But again, it's not enough. And then everyone goes to work on the post-'45 period. Because how would you expect someone to go into the Vienna archives and read *Fraktur*? Very few, very few.

How would you compare historians from Central Europe or even Croatia to those in France today? And are there any differences you would like to point out?

Well, yes, of course. Yes, of course. Education is different. People in France have been completely nourished by all this, you know, *Annales* school and

all this, and tend to think of, you know, in a very sociological way concerning history. We have some passions as well. So, nowadays these post-colonial studies and so on. Sometimes they are very arrogant, the French historians. Because they suppose that everyone is inspired by the big theoretical work of the French historians of the past. Already in the past, I mean Marc Bloch and all these people. So, I would say that in the last, let's say, 20 years, the difference has been less big because the historians of the region here have left all these, you know, nationalistic discourse and this theological discourse about the nation and things like that behind. So, the difference is less acute now.

The presentation of your latest book* Multicultural Cities of the Habsburg Empire *is taking place later today. Is there anything else that you're currently working on?

Of course, of course we are. We never stop. We never stop working. We stop when we are actually dead. Now I'm working on Banat. Yes, because of languages, German, Hungarian, Serbian, Romanian, no problem. What interests me is the history of Banat from the Hungarian compromise until the First World War. Because we know very much, we know the 18th century very well, what the Austrians did in Banat, this laboratory of colonial policies of Austria and so on. We know less about this Hungarian period when actually Banat disappeared as an administrative entity and so I want to explore it. I want to ask the question if there was a Banat identity, would someone say: "Ich bin ein Banater." Certainly, the Germans would say: "Ich bin ein Banater Schwabe." But they would first emphasize they're German/*Deutscher* and then say: "We live in Banat." The Romanians and the Serbians fought at the end of the First World War to have all the province and they couldn't make it. So, one part is in Serbia, then Yugoslavia. One part is in Romania with mixed villages until today. So, what was life like in these villages? Where one half of the village was Romanian, the other half Serbian or Hungarian. The perception of life in Banat at that time lacks very much. We don't know so much. We know quite well all these ethnographical works of that time. The first ethnographers went there and took pictures, noted about the dress of the people and the songs and so on and so on. All this was to prove something, to prove that it's diverse, it's multicultural and at one point the Hungarian authorities said, already the, let's say, Ethnographical Society of Hungary at one point said: "Well, actually, it's not so interesting. They should be all Hungarian." And so, the people who were working on these specificities of Banat were completely put aside by the establishment because they were trying to prove that Banat is not only Hungarian. It's something else. It's mixed. There are Hungarians, of course, but now all the others as well. So, I want to explore this more, let's say more deeply.

Dr. Horel, thank You for this interview!

Pro Tempore

ČASOPIS STUDENATA POVIJESTI BROJ 19 2024.

Pro Tempore

Časopis studenata povijesti, godina XIX, broj 19, 2024.

Glavna i odgovorna urednica
Tijana Vokal

Zamjenica glavne urednice
Ivana Đordić

Uredništvo
Filip Bačurin
Marija Bišćan
Ivan Ćorić
Ivana Đordić
Adrian Filčić
Ivan Mrnarević
Marko Perišić
Ruben Prstec
Matija Pudić
Tijana Vokal

Urednici pripravnici
Klara Miholić
Ivan Moškatelo
Patrik Smolak

Redakcija
Filip Bačurin
Marija Bišćan
Ivan Ćorić
Ivana Đordić
Adrian Filčić
Klara Miholić
Ivan Moškatelo
Ivan Mrnarević
Marko Perišić
Patrik Smolak
Ruben Prstec
Matija Pudić
Tijana Vokal

Tajnik Uredništva
Adrian Filčić

Recenzenti
dr. sc. Damir Agičić
dr. sc. Zrinka Blažević
dr. sc. Inga Vilogorac Brčić
dr. sc. Aleksandra Golubović
dr. sc. Branimir Janković
dr. sc. Filip Šimetin Šegvić
dr. sc. Ivica Šute
dr. sc. Nikola Tomašegović

Lektura za hrvatski jezik
Lorenia Jantolek
Martina Prosen
Lucija Rak
Josipa Skenderović
Gabrijela Soldan
Jakov Zidarić

Lektura za engleski jezik
Anamarija Brusić

Oblikovanje
Boris Bui, FF press

Izdavač
Odsjek za povijest Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu

Tisak
Studio Moderna d.o.o., Zagreb

Naklada
Tiskano u 100 primjeraka.

ISSN: 1334-8302

Izdavanje ovog časopisa financirano je novcem dobivenim na natječaju za studentske projekte Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu te sredstvima koja je ustupio Odsjek za povijest Filozofskog fakulteta Sveučilišta u Zagrebu.

Redakcija časopisa Pro tempore iskreno zahvaljuje Odsjeku na financijskoj podršci.

Časopis se ne naplaćuje.

Adresa uredništva
Odsjek za povijest
(za: Uredništvo Pro tempore)
Filozofski fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu
Ivana Lučića 3, 10 000 Zagreb

Kontakt
casopis.protempore@gmail.com

Web-stranica
https://protempore.ffzg.unizg.hr/