

KriegsErklärungen

The Notions of 'Event', 'Narrative' and 'Memory' as Critical Tools for this Volume and Beyond

This introductory text examines existing definitions of 'event', 'narrative' and (cultural) 'memory' in philosophy, literary/cultural theory and historiography, capitalizing on Martin Heidegger, Alain Badiou, Slavoj Žižek, Mieke Bal, Jurij Lotman, Arno Borst and many other (secondary) sources: a cursory discussion of the general topic and central focus of this edited volume, which is meant to operationalize the terms in a pragmatic way with respect to the case studies to come.

“Das Ereignis er-eignet das Seinlose in das Sein.”

(Martin Heidegger¹)

As already laid out in our Preface, this volume is based on the assumption that there are three structural layers, as it were, that constitute the “(Long) Shots of Sarajevo”, i.e. the *Attentat* that caused the death of the heir to the Habsburg throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, and his wife, Sophie von Hohenberg, on the streets of Sarajevo on 28 June, 1914. Accordingly, three research tasks were assigned to the authors of the following case studies:

- 1) to describe and reconstruct the *event* itself – as far as this is possible and innovative; and/or
- 2) to analyze some of the numerous *narratives* the *Attentat* has produced so far in the media, literature, film, historiography and politics; and/or
- 3) to investigate the way how these narratives have been used and instrumentalized in the *cultural memory* formation, or memory politics, respectively, of groups, regions, states and nations, and eventually, in Europe as a whole.

Thus, in order to create some theoretical and methodological clarity for the book chapters to come, it might prove useful to define the central no-

¹ Martin Heidegger: *Das Ereignis* [1941/42]. (= Gesamtausgabe, Bd. 71, ed. Friedrich-Wilhelm v. Herrmann.) Frankfurt/Main: V. Klostermann 2009, p. 197.

tions involved in this undertaking first, namely Event, Narrative, and Cultural Memory. These three terms, which are so central to cultural studies and theory as a whole, have to be thought of as inter-related.

This means, for instance, that calling something an 'event', as it has probably occurred in an unpredictable, contingent, sometimes overwhelming and rather opaque manner for the onlookers and bystanders, only seems to be possible in hindsight: as soon as you have words and a narrative ready to make sense of it, which is then immediately subject to a collective debate of what representation and interpretation of the event is exactly going to be incorporated in cultural memory, particularly in agonistic cases. ("9/11" is a very striking example for this cultural process, but also the Shots of Sarajevo which share some traits with the American event of 2001 that triggered a not very successful 'War on Terror' as well.)

Along these lines, I chose the German title for my theoretical sketch that plays with the double meaning of the word *KriegsErklärungen*, which can be read as 'declarations', but also as 'explanations' of war. What narratives and cultural memory formations do to an event, can be both: surprisingly, they seem to exercise a performative function even *a posteriori*, i.e. they let the event 'happen' again, but in the first place, they make *sense* of it. You can ask yourself here sophisticatedly to what extent the event exists as such without the intervention of the narratives and memories that created it out of a mere occurrence.

For the heuristic sake of the following, however, the three terms in question will be treated and presented apart from each other, with a clear focus on the event which is the most recent and least theorized notion in cultural theory among them.

I. Event (Historicity)

Ein Ereignis schafft eine Realität nicht durch sich selbst; [...]. Es zeigt uns an, dass eine Möglichkeit existiert, von der man nichts wusste. Das Ereignis ist auf gewisse Art nur ein Vorschlag. [...] Alles hängt dann von der Art und Weise ab, wie diese Möglichkeit [...] in der Welt ergriffen, bearbeitet, inkorporiert und entfaltet wird.²

This definition by Alain Badiou, stemming from a dialogue about his oeuvre with Fabien Tarby, sums up a few important aspects for a definition of an 'event'. What is crucial for the French philosopher is the unique and novel

² Badiou, Alain / Tarby, Fabien: Die Philosophie und das Ereignis. Mit einer kurzen Einführung in die Philosophie Badiou's. Vienna, Berlin: Turia + Kant 2012, p. 17.

potentiality its occurrence introduces, which cannot be controlled even by the ruling powers;³ to put it in a Heideggerian way, it is “a figure of enablement”.⁴ Badiou clearly conceptualizes the event here with an eye on radical politics, social change and revolution, in an enthusiastic intellectual Adventism of sorts (and at this point already, it becomes evident why an *Attentat* like the one in Sarejevo would become the epitome of it⁵).

Not only in Badiou, the definition of what makes an event in terms of philosophy, historiography and the humanities is very often – implicitly or outspoken – sought along the lines of Martin Heidegger, who in 1941/42 wrote *Das Ereignis*, probably the first influential philosophical sketch on the subject matter.⁶ Slavoj Žižek, for instance, defines the event in a recent book publication as

something shocking, out of joint that appears to happen all of a sudden and interrupts the usual flow of things; something that emerges seemingly out of nowhere, without discernible causes, an appearance without solid being as its foundation. [...] at first approach, an event is thus the effect that seems to exceed its causes.⁷

From a French Poststructuralist perspective, the event, through its “murky randomness” and Otherness (“seinen Schlamm der Zufälligkeit” und “Bodensatz des Andersseins”), brings uncertainty and contingency to prevailing structures.⁸ And, according to the German sociologist and philosopher Niklas Luhmann, the continuous disintegration through the occurrence causes permanent change to the constellation of the past, present and future.⁹ The event is thus basically the carrier, or even the

³ Ibid., pp. 20-21. “Auf ein Ereignis vorbereitet sein, heißt, in einer subjektiven Disposition zu sein, in der man die neue Möglichkeit erkennt. [...] Auf ein Ereignis vorbereitet zu sein heißt, in einem Geisteszustand zu sein, in dem die Ordnung der Welt, die herrschenden Mächte nicht die absolute Kontrolle über die Möglichkeiten haben.”

⁴ “eine Figur der Ermöglichung” (Naumann, Barbara: Zur Entstehung von Begriffen aus dem Ungeordneten des Gesprächs. In: Rathmann, Thomas (ed.): Ereignis. Konzeptionen eines Begriffs in Geschichte, Kunst und Literatur. Cologne, Weimar, Vienna: Böhlau 2003, pp. 103-118, cit. p. 109.)

⁵ Demandt, Alexander: Das Attentat als Ereignis. In: A.D. (ed.): Das Attentat in der Geschichte. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp 1999 (st 2936), pp. 535-552, esp. p. 549.

⁶ Cf. Heidegger 1941/2009. – It would be interesting to discuss in depth the circumstances that made Heidegger raise the question of ‘the event’ in philosophical terms during the Second World War.

⁷ Žižek, Slavoj: What is an Event? Harmondsworth: Penguin 2014, pp. 4-5.

⁸ From *Dialogues between Georges Duby and Guy Lardreau* (1980), qtd. after Biti, Vladimir: “Ereignis”. In: V.B.: Literatur- und Kulturtheorie. Ein Lexikon gegenwärtiger Begriffe. Reinbek: rororo 2001, pp. 193-197, here p. 195.

⁹ “Die durchgängige Desintegration des Ereignisses bedingt eine ständige Veränderung in der zeitlichen Konstellation von Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft.” (Biti 2001, p. 197, re-

invasion of temporality itself into social and historical life as well as into literary texts, as we will see.

At this point, also the question of human agency comes into play. Metaphorically speaking, every new hand of cards changes a play of Poker, but it is mostly out of the hands of the player. But then the event is also (according to Žižek, quoting Badiou again) “contingency which converts into necessity”¹⁰: “a radical turning point”¹¹ which also causes a structural change “of the very frame through which we perceive the world and engage in it”.¹² Thus, “the space of an event is that which opens up by the gap that separates effect from its causes”.¹³

Further descriptors can be listed as follows, capitalizing on the books by Suter & Hettling (2001), Thomas Rathmann (2003), Kulcsár-Szabó & Lőrincz (2014), and Rowner (2015);¹⁴ according to these publications, what constitutes an event in terms of a theory and philosophy of history is:

- the relation between the occurrence of an event and a period of *latency* prior to it – in a philosophical but maybe also in a psychoanalytical sense;¹⁵
- the event is thus the driver of an underlying principle of *becoming*;¹⁶
- however, the event is also always characterized by a moment of *surprise* (as mentioned before already), which challenges existing horizons of expectation,¹⁷ and creates a “*rupture*, a momentary excess or lack of sense”;¹⁸

ferring to Niklas Luhmann; also see *ibid.*, pp. 195f.) Also see Naumann 2003, p. 107: “Das Ereignis würde den Verlauf der Zeit (i.e., den ‘Lauf der Dinge’, CR) in ein Vorher und in ein Nachher zerlegen, und dabei eine Veränderung initiieren, deren Resultate im Ereignis selbst noch nicht ablesbar seien.”

¹⁰ Žižek 2014, p. 160.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 12.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁴ Cf. Suter, Andreas / Hettling, Manfred (eds.): *Struktur und Ereignis*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2001; Rathmann 2003; Kulcsár-Szabó, Zoltán / Lőrincz, Csongor (eds.): *Signaturen des Geschehens. Ereignisse zwischen Öffentlichkeit und Latenz*. Bielefeld: transcript 2014; Rowner, Ilai: *The Event. Literature and Theory*. Lincoln, London: University of Nebraska Press 2015 (kindle edition). Also see Ricoeur, Paul: *Time and Narrative I*. Transl. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press 1984, pp. 96-97.- The increasing number of publications indicates a certain boom of interest in the topic and its discussion in recent years.

¹⁵ Cf. Kulcsár-Szabó, Zoltán: *Einleitung*. In: Kulcsár-Szabó & Lőrincz 2014, pp. 9-20, here p. 9.

¹⁶ Cf. Rowner 2014, pos. 116, 635.

¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, pos. 1982, 1985.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pos. 208, cf. pos. 67; italics mine.

- there is also the factor of the collective, or *public/ity*, respectively, at work through which an occurrence gains the status of an recognized event¹⁹ – it is “a question of social production by mass communication”, as Pierre Nora puts it;²⁰
- and last, but not least, the interdependence of *historical structure* and event should be stated and investigated: the former brings about the latter, but is interrupted, changed or sometimes even destroyed by it as well – whereupon the event produces new structure again.²¹

In the history of Western historiography, the insistence on the event as a phenomenon of the *Lebenswelt*²² and, as a consequence, its “return” to the theory of the discipline are the reaction to two trends in the last decades of the 20th century: on the one hand, it was meant as a counter-movement to the general focus of historiography on writing the history of social and cultural *structures* rather than “Ereignisgeschichte” after Fernand Braudel and the French *École des Annales*; on the other hand, as opposition against the Postmodern concept of history as being purely a narrative *construction*.²³

However, as historian Arno Borst in Koselleck’s and Stempel’s trend-setting German volume *Geschichte – Ereignis und Erzählung* of 1973 concludes, in a way many of his successors have found noteworthy: “‘literarische Ereignisse’ gibt es, geschichtliche nicht.”²⁴ Something that occurs needs someone to write it down; otherwise it will be lost and become insignificant. Borst thus reinforces the mutual dependence of *Ereignis* and narrative; as Ilai Rowner resumes forty years later: “The literary event cannot be reduced either to an extralinguistic reality or to its existence inside

¹⁹ Cf. Kulcsár-Szabó 2014, p. 14. Another author writes: “Ereignisse sind Vorfälle, denen eine bestimmte Signifikanz zugeschrieben wird.” (Flaig, Egon: Ein semantisches Ereignis inszenieren, um ein politisches zu verhindern. In: Rathmann 2003, pp. 183-198, cit. p. 184).

²⁰ Quoted after Rowner 2015, pos. 269.

²¹ This relation is something Reinhart Koselleck and Paul Ricoeur have dealt with, cf. Rathmann 2003, pp. 8, 48. Also see Suter & Hettling 2001.

²² Rathmann, Thomas: Ereignisse Konstruierte Geschichten. In: Rathmann 2003, pp. 1-19, cit. p. 3.

²³ See Morin, Edgar: Le retour de l'événement. In: *Communications* 18 (1972), pp. 6-20; Nora, Pierre: The Return of the Event (1972). In: <http://de.scribd.com/doc/142676797/The-Return-of-the-Event-Pierre-Nora#scribd>; Koselleck, Reinhart / Stempel, Wolf-Dieter (eds.): *Geschichte – Ereignis und Erzählung*. Munich: Fink 1973.

²⁴ Borst, Arno: Das historische 'Ereignis'. In: Koselleck & Stempel 1973, pp. 536-540, cit. p. 540. Borst also deconstructs the opposition of structure and event by stating (in a re-assessment of Ranke's *Über die Epochen der neuen Geschichte* (1854): “sie galten ihm nicht als punktuelle Begebenheiten, sondern als Wirkungszusammenhänge” (ibid., p. 539); events can be thus also seen as brackets and conjunctions, not necessarily as interruption of historical structures. Cf. Cramer, Thomas: Vom Vorfall zum Ereignis. Wie Caritas Pirckheimer Geschichte zur Reason bringt. In: Rathmann 2003, pp. 223-242.

the linguistic realm.”²⁵ As a consequence, Rowner’s book itself “constructs the event as a dynamic in-between entity, a liminal movement”,²⁶ which makes sense in the light of what has been said so far. Thus, our focus, too, will have to shift towards cultural construction and representation.

II. Narrative (Textuality)

An *oeuvre* is an event, to be sure; there is no *oeuvre* without singular event, without textual event, if one can agree to enlarge this notion, beyond its verbal or discursive limits. But is the *oeuvre* the trace of an event, the name of the trace of the event that will have instituted it as an *oeuvre*? Or is it the institution of the event itself?²⁷

In his essay *Typewriter Ribbon*, Jacques Derrida answers this sophisticated hen-egg question with “both at once”,²⁸ pointing at the circularity of the relation between event and work, which, upon scrutiny, seem to *mutually* constitute each other; thus the *oeuvre* becomes the trace, but at the same time the “institution” of the event, and its “testament”,²⁹ as it were.

However, the event as a literary term also plays an important part in narrative theory. In her *Narratology*, Mieke Bal, for instance, defines it as a basic element of story-telling and plot-building (*fabula*):

A *fabula* is a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors. An event is the transition from one state in another state. Actors are agents that perform actions. They are not necessarily human. To act is defined here as to cause or to experience an event.³⁰

As Bal observes further, every event, whether it is an element in the plot of a literary text or a constituent part of history, entails a ‘triple C’, namely the factors of “Change, Choice and Confrontation”.³¹ Her definition follows

²⁵ Rowner 2015, pos. 64.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Derrida, Jacques: *Typewriter Ribbon: Limited Ink* (2). In: J.D.: *Without Alibi*. Ed., Transl. and Introd. by Peggy Kamuf. Stanford: Stanford University Press 2002, pp. 71–160, cit. p. 132–133. Also see Deleuze, Gilles, *Logic of Sense*. Transl. by Mark Lester and Charles Stivale, ed. by Constantine V. Bundes. New York: University of Columbia Press 1969; cf. Rowner 2015, pos. 220.

²⁸ Derrida 2002, p. 133.

²⁹ Lörincz, Csongor: *Einleitung*. In: Cs. L. (ed.): *Ereignis Literatur. Institutionelle Dispositive der Performativität von Texten*. Bielefeld: transcript 2011, pp. 7–30, cit. p. 11.

³⁰ Bal, Mieke: *Narratology. Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, p. 5.

³¹ Ibid., p. 13.

a prominent one by Jurij Lotman who conceives of an event as the movement of a character across the boundaries of a semantic field set up in the fictitious world of the text, for instance from life to death.³² Accordingly, an event causes a situation to change or, in other words, is the dynamic transition from one situation to another. An event, particularly a historical one, thus creates a liminal stage of sorts; it is a threshold, the crossing of a borderline in space and time – and the agents generally have no idea (yet) what is coming out of it.³³ This holds particularly true for spectacular, transgressive political acts, such as forms of protest, revolution, tyrannicide and acts of terrorism – and particularly an *Attentat* like the one in question has its own aesthetics and is meant to be spectacular and to trigger something of historic consequences,³⁴ although those involved don't know (yet) where it is going to lead them.

It takes hindsight to decide what a historic event is, and you need a narrative to make sense of its inherent complexity – be it in the media or in literature. So, although the *Attentat* seems like the epitome of an event and Gavrilo Princip like the role-model assassin,³⁵ it even took him a retrospective point of view to make his deed meaningful in his self-defense during police interrogation and at the trial. Furthermore, it took a writer like Ivo Andrić (1892-1975), the later Nobel prize laureate who in 1914 had sympathized with Princip and his group, and who, during an interview in the 1930s, spoke of the Sarajevo Assassination as “our Thing [...] which was terrible and glorious and great”, changing the summer of 1914: “jener hitzige und ruhige Sommer mit seinem Geschmack des Feuers und seinem kalten Atem der Tragödie, den man überall spürte: er ist unser wahres Schicksal.”³⁶

Repeating Mieke Bal's and Roland Barthes's claims, a narrative is the chain that ties events together in order to create a chronological order and, with it, causality and teleology, to turn contingency into something that makes sense. This happens through a process the US historian Hayden White calls “emplotment”: the way contingent events are turned into a meaningful storyline with characters and a plot structure following cultur-

³² Lotman, Jurij M.: *The Structure of the Artistic Text*. Transl. by Gail Lenhoff & Ronald Vroon. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1977, p. 238; cf. Rowner 2015, pos. 567.

³³ In the case of a *trauma*, the event can also be something that is rather concealed than exposed in a text, or gradually revealed, as something that is lacking in the narrative order first, but still setting it into motion. Cf. Rowner 2015, pos. 2321ff.

³⁴ Cf. Demandt 1999.

³⁵ Cf. Demandt 1999, esp. pp. 536-537. Also see Sösemann, Bernd: *Die Bereitschaft zum Krieg. Sarajevo 1914*. In: *ibid.*, pp. 350-381.

³⁶ Quoted after Preljević, Vahidin: “Unsere Sache von 1914”. Zur jugoslawischen Idee und zum Attentat von Sarajevo. In: *Konkret*, nr. 7/2014, p. 46.

al templates, not only in literature, but also in historiography.³⁷ That's how narrative changes the irreducible asymmetry of the event into an ordered sequence and overwrites Otherness (which entered our world through the event) with similarity.³⁸

Auf der einen Seite zeigt sich das punktuelle *Ereignis*, das Einzelne und Unerhörte, das zufällig Begegnende, das 'Abenteuer' im Wortverstande, dasjenige, was [...] unwillkürlich 'zustößt' und 'passiert'; demgegenüber findet sich der Kontext, die Sinnhaftigkeit der Welt, jenes Entworfenen einer 'Ganzheit' aus Anfang, Mitte und Ende (nach der Formulierung des Aristoteles), das – wiederum nach der klassischen Episteme – System-Charakter besitzt, die Ordnung der Dinge stiftet.³⁹

Narrative thus transcribes the unique incident into the familiar scripts of our knowledge, enabling us to process an event of any kind cognitively; at the same time we are tempted to reduce its complexity to what we already know. (Here, maybe a heuristic distinction should be made in terms of size and importance between the great (historic) *Events* and the small, mundane *events* (actions, occurrences) that e.g. change a situation in a story, such as 'leaving the house' changes my day; the latter are very often described as plot elements, narrative atoms, literary motifs etc.⁴⁰)

If we now look back to the "Shots of Sarajevo" in 1914, then this event can be easily turned into a narrative that reads like the epitome of a movie plot, almost perfectly suited for a Hollywood script, with a potential storyline that is so multi-faceted it can carry numerous interpretations. First, you have a gang of angry young men who are in Sarajevo to kill a high-ranking person whom they consider to be a symbol of colonialism and oppression. In the center of the image, you have the young assassin Gavrilo Princip and his target, the Habsburg crown prince Franz Ferdinand. Furthermore, we have a second victim, Franz Ferdinand's wife, about whom we barely speak, since there seems to be gender politics as well in narrative representation until recently.⁴¹ However, there are other interesting side-characters involved, depending on the actual version of the narrative:

³⁷ Cf. White, Hayden: *Metahistory. The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Baltimore: John Hopkins UP 1973.

³⁸ Biti 2001, pp. 196-197, summarizing Jean-François Lyotard.

³⁹ Neumann, Gerhard: *Begriff und Funktion des Rituals im Feld der Literaturwissenschaft*. In: G.N./ Weigel, Sigrid (eds.) *Die Lesbarkeit der Kultur. Literaturwissenschaften zwischen Kulturtechnik und Ethnographie*. Munich: Fink 2000, pp. 20-52, cit. p. 42.

⁴⁰ Cf. Rowner 2015, pos. 435ff.; Ruthner, Clemens: *Am Rande. Kanon, Kulturökonomie und die Intertextualität des Marginalen am Beispiel der (österreichischen) Phantastik im 20. Jh.* Tübingen: Francke 2004, chapter IV.

⁴¹ In most versions, the *Attentat* is related as a duel of sorts between two males, treating the killing of Sophie von Hohenberg as collateral damage, as it were.

General Oskar Potiorek, for instance, the Austro-Hungarian governor of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the investigating Austrian magistrate, Leo Pfeffer, or the Czech driver who misses his way, almost a literary motif for Jaroslav Hasek, Bogumil Hrabal and their likes.

Point of view and focus, to use two more technical terms from narratology with respect to the ways how the (hi)story of the *Attentat* is told, make a lot of difference when it comes to a potential interpretation. Here the toolsets stemming from literary analysis can prove extremely helpful to show that no narrative is innocent, but all of those stories are told for a reason, employing certain narrative and rhetorical strategies; which brings us to the ideologies behind narratives.

In that respect, the crucial point for all Sarajevo Assassination narratives seems to be to identify who actually the perpetrator was and who the victim. Ethically speaking, what happened will always remain murder. However, in the narratives the *Attentat* has produced in history so far, Archduke Franz Ferdinand is either seen as a Habsburg martyr who might have made a change for the better within the empire, had he become *Kaiser*, or an oppressor and passionate animal-killer who was to be murdered in an act of Slavic self-sacrifice. Gavrilo Princip, the assassin, saw himself as a freedom fighter, whose great deed was supposed to lead all Yugoslav people(s) on the road to liberation – or only the Serbs among them?⁴² There are some who see him as a victim as well, if not a martyr, since he was not handed out a death sentence by the Austro-Hungarian tribunal due to his minor age during the assassination, but left to rot alive in Theresienstadt where he died from tuberculosis only months before the end of the First World War.

From a bird's-eye perspective, one can say that the high amount of ambiguity and ambivalence stored in the event of the assassination itself has created a virtual narrative *matrix* of sorts not only for two, but for dozens of narratives which emerge therefrom. This is particularly important when it comes to the ideologically biased incorporation of the *Attentat* narratives into the cultural memory formations of groups and societies that proclaim themselves nations.

What is striking though is the unequal share of narrative focus and empathy, as it were: most available literary accounts of the *Attentat* focus rather on the assassin Princip than on his victims. This in a way reduplicates the contemporary attitude even in Austria-Hungary towards Franz Ferdinand who was seen as “unsympathisch”,⁴³ on the other hand, the perpetrator's

⁴² According to Dedijer, Princip said at his trial: “I am a Yugoslav nationalist, aiming for the unification of all Yugoslavs, and I do not care what form of state, but it must be free from Austria.” (Dedijer, Vladimir: *The Road to Sarajevo*. New York: Simon & Schuster 1966, p. 341)

⁴³ Cf. e.g. the contribution of Vedad Smailagić in this volume.

mind, in its opaqueness and ambiguity, seems to be much more appealing for narrative than the Habsburg hunter and bureaucrat, particularly through the mentioned tragic circumstances of Princip's early death.

Very often, the authors of narratives thematizing the *Attentat* or the assassin's perdition resort to the aesthetic device of the Sublime (*das Erhabene*) as a mode of representation (if you recall e.g. Andrić's words, for instance). This happens seemingly in a similar vein to William B. Yeats's contemporary verses about the Irish Easter Rising in 1916: "[...] and a terrible beauty / was born." This is also the case in Dževad Karahasan's *Princip Gavrilo* [*The Principle Gabriel*, 2007], a tale that tries to catch the last words of the assassin in prison.⁴⁴ The lines which Karahasan makes one of his protagonists utter here, however, might be paradigmatic for the enterprise of narrativizing an event like the Shots of Sarajevo, 1914, namely "daß die Kunst den Stoff durch die Form überwinde, notfalls sogar negiere; Kunst überführe den Stoff in eine Form, in der er über sich hinauswächst und ihm überhaupt erst Sinn zufällt."⁴⁵

III. Cultural Memory (Politics)

Our ghosts will walk through Vienna
And roam through the Palace
Frightening the Lords.⁴⁶

The metaphor of ghosts and their hauntings which Gavrilo Princip 'planned' in his last written statement, scratched with a spoon on the wall of his prison cell before his death, surprisingly corresponds with the answer the Austrian writer Robert Musil gave in the 1920s to the question "what are you working on":

Die reale Erklärung des realen Geschehens interessiert mich nicht. Mein Gedächtnis ist schlecht. Die Tatsachen sind überdies immer vertauschbar. Mich interessiert das geistig Typische, ich möchte geradezu sagen: das Gespenstische des Geschehens.⁴⁷

The ghastly simulacrum the Event is turned into by its narratives is also due to collective / cultural memory formation which, if we follow Maurice

⁴⁴ Cf. Das Prinzip Gabriel. In: Karahasan, Dževad: Berichte aus der dunklen Welt. Prosa. Transl. by Brigitte Döbert. Frankfurt/Main, Leipzig: Insel 2007, pp. 127-159, esp. pp. 151-157. Also see the contributions of Naser Šećerović and Almir Bašović to this book.

⁴⁵ Karahasan 2007, p. 133.

⁴⁶ Gavrilo Princip in 1918; qtd. after Dedijer 1966, p. 365.

⁴⁷ Musil, Robert: Was arbeiten Sie? In: R.M.: Prosa und Stücke. Reinbek: Rowohlt 2000, pp. 939-942, cit. p. 939.