

Adrian MIOC

Health and Politics in Romanian Cinema: Cristian Mungiu's *Four Months, Three Weeks and Two Days* (2007) and *Beyond the Hills* (2012)

Abstract: This article examines two important cinematic works by Romanian director Cristian Mungiu. The analysis of *Four Months, Three Weeks and Two Days* (2007) and *Beyond The Hills* (2012) features a historical perspective that emphasizes how a political context is able to affect the health of the female protagonists. In an effort to find a suitable answer, the present exercise will reference different theoretical frameworks like Althusser's ideology, Foucault's biopolitics, Schmitt's and Agamben's theory of the state of exception or Benjamin's cultural thought. Close readings of key scenes from both movies will also constitute a significant element of this study. The conclusion will bespeak a rather innovative solution that underscores the director's artistic excellence.

Keywords: biopolitics, crisis, ideology, Cristian Mungiu, state and power.

When the jury at the 2007 Cannes Film Festival chose Cristian Mungiu's *Four Months, Three Weeks and Two Days* (2007)¹ over Coen brothers' *No Country for Old Men* (2007) many heads were turned. The Palme d'Or sent a strong message that goes beyond snubbing a market dominated by American movies though. It shunned a story of death and destruction, of greed and punishment and backed one about a female body's tribulations to preserve its health as it is violated by an oppressive political power.

The then fairly unknown Romanian director is part of a new generation who make up what is called the Romanian New Wave. His work extends

Adrian MIOC

University of Western Ontario
amioc2@uwo.ca

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beyond *Four Months, Three Weeks and Two Days* (hereafter 4 3 2) and *Beyond the Hills* (2012)², the two movies proposed for analysis. *Occident* (2002), the collaborative *Tales of the Golden Age* (2009) and *Graduation* (2016) testify of his multifaceted talent and craftsmanship. 4 3 2 is usually mentioned alongside his next movie, *Tales from the Golden Age* (2009) because both are placed historically in the pre-1989 revolution era ruled by the repressive regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu. This article attempts to distend a rather scrupulous historical perspective and rewire it to a more general vision of human nature. Mungiu's movies endorse such approach. *Graduation*, a story of corruption in the context of a college bribery scandal, is not restricted to a particular historical moment and can take place in any type of society.

The comparison to *Beyond the Hills* will not be oblivious to the historical context and its ramifications for the plot; the differences between political regimes cannot just be disregarded. Rather, the search for elements of continuity that puts pieces of history back together will frame the movies under a more comprehensive context that allows a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between politics and the body in view of its health. A variety of theoretical frameworks like Althusser's ideology, Foucault's biopolitics, Schmitt's and Agamben's theory of the state of exception or Benjamin's cultural theory will be called upon to provide different perspectives. Once the relationship between politics and body will have been established, the discussion will focus on close readings of specific scenes that highlight the struggle the female characters have to go through in order to preserve their health while affirming their femininity as well.

1) Health and Politics: Althusser and Ideology

The WHO definition of health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity”(100)³ highlights both the intertwining of the physical and mental and the importance of the social context. All these elements prove crucial in bringing the two movies together. Politics as is defined by the OED as “activities associated with the governance of a country, state or an area” (3693)⁴ helps in finding a common denominator as well. The activities associated with the governance of the communist state in 4 3 2 will be observed alongside the rules that govern the religious community of the monastery in *Beyond the Hills*.

The case for their togetherness is made as both movies examine the bond (love or friendship, respectively) between two women. One of the women is stronger and tries to protect the other: Alina from *Beyond the Hills* has defended Voichița since they were kids while Otilia takes charge as Găbița seems overwhelmed by what is happening to her. Structural similarities can be further expanded when considering the outside aggression. In

both contexts, a mediator (the priest and the abortionist) performs the act (i.e., abortion or exorcism) of extracting what has been deemed as unwanted. Neither mediator is a true representative of their institution though: Mr. Bebe is not a licensed doctor, but the priest is almost a ‘black sheep’ for his church as well. The latter must perform his duties in an unconsecrated monastery because he has fallen in disfavour having renounced his salary and chosen a rather individual path. He also carries out the exorcism on his own, without asking permission from any higher authority in the church. In the end, he even places the blame on himself feeling he may not have been “worthy” to accomplish such task. This rather undetermined status gives both the ability to perform ‘unorthodox’ tasks. As they turn out to be exceptions with respect to more general community rules, they also acquire a sovereign power to declare a state of emergency or exception in their respective circumstances. More on this later, though.

As far as differences are concerned, the most obvious one is of political regimes. The main issue of abortion presented in 4 3 2 is closely linked to the communist dictatorship. In 1967 the regime of Nicolae Ceaușescu issued the Decree 770 which restricted both abortion and contraception. This decree affected the well-being and health of many women and mortality figures range from 10,000 to 500,000, depending on the sources one chooses to cite. Adriana Cordali Gradea even argues that the decree rendered women second-class citizens with no right to be heard. (110)⁵ Like everything happening in those times, such laws had an ideological underpinning serving the party’s plan to build what was called “new human beings” needed for the advancement of socialism. At its meeting from August 2-nd 1966, the party endorsed the idea that abortions encourage libertinism and oppose traditional family values. Ceaușescu was even more radical saying that it promoted prostitution and a higher rate of divorces.

It is true that 4 3 2 depicts an era of a totalitarian regime but the happening is placed in the ’80 when the system was already established and did not need to exert the terror of the ’50 and ’60 anymore. People were no longer chased and sent to prison just because they were well-off and without a “healthy origin.” While the secret police were still active, the intensity of the repression has been eased. The movie realistically reflects this aspect in the scene of the party at the boyfriend’s family apartment, where people who knew each other well enough could speak, at least ironically, about the ‘accomplishments’ of the “All-Too-Enlightened One”. They could do that without feeling threatened that in the next moment the Securitate would knock on their door and arrest them. It should also be said that this is the only time in this movie that Ceaușescu is mentioned; in *Tales from the Golden Age* the cult of personality is almost omnipresent.

All the same, the ideological element remains deeply embedded in the universe the movie portrays. While it was no longer purely repressive, the ideology of the regime was still to be followed, at least apparently, by every Romanian subject. Whether out of submissiveness,

fear, indifference, or cynicism people had to get so accustomed to it; by senseless repetition it came to even feel like a normal way of life. Althusser argues that “the state apparatuses are not reducible to the repressive apparatus alone.” (232–233)⁶ Rather, ideologies produce a class result, which is astonishing but quite “natural”: namely, the individuals in question ‘go’ (les individus concrets ‘marchent’), and it is ideology which makes them ‘go’ (fait marcher).” (233) An ideology is thus not an ideal or spiritual dimension but rather always already embed in institutions or apparatuses from where it acts and forms individuals into subjects. Relevant for this investigation is the fact that from an ideological point of view, a totalitarian and a capitalist state are no longer opposed and different in kind. The same mechanisms of power are employed albeit with varying degrees of intensity. The element of repression is used more in a totalitarian state, but the capitalist or democratic state is not completely free of it either.

Without minimizing this distinction — a difference of degrees is a real difference — one can still argue that while *4 3 2* depicts times ruled by a totalitarian, prison-like regime, in *Beyond the Hills*, which places its events in a post-communist Romania, people can take advantage of democratic freedoms like the possibility to travel and are allowed to enjoy material prosperity. However, religion condemns such freedoms as illusory or mere distractions on the spiritual path and prescribes its own rules. Following the precepts of the Eastern Orthodox Christianity, the priest says that West culture has lost its true faith and “in the name of freedom everything is allowed. Men marry men, women marry women.” (11:30). Children grow up without proper guidance, without being taken to church “to teach them good from evil” (12:18), “even the Church isn’t what it used to be” (11:03) He embraces a stricter, quite dogmatic, and, in this sense, ideological direction even when he says that “for a true believer even entering a non-orthodox church is a sin” (11:53). This speaks to his sovereign power in the monastery, and we will come back to it. That being said, religious impositions are not oppressive: Voichița’s choice to enter the monastery and lead an ascetic life is self-imposed. Her vows are voluntary, and truth be told, she and Alina can leave the monastery anytime they want.

While the secular state is the ultimate guarantor of democratic freedoms, in *Beyond the Hills* the state acts merely a general frame of reference. Its authority is felt only in the end, after the exorcism has already taken a life. Most events in this movie take place in the confines of the monastery where particular rules apply. These rules are the ones that actually govern and implicitly affect the characters immediately or on a personal level. Understood as “activities that are associated with governance”, the political is therefore constituted, for the most part, in the confines of the monastery. One is free to leave the monastery, but there is a big caveat attached: “The man who leaves is not the same when he returns” (9:00). One “cannot be His servant just from time to time” (8:53) and “there is a continuity in our spiritual life, you cannot stop for a break when you feel like it.” (8:58)

Moreover, if Voichița's self-imposed rules oppress and afflict pain on her own body, the difference between imposition and self-imposition shrinks even more. Monastic commandments become more *structurally* similar to laws of a totalitarian state, which makes the two movies share a common platform. In both contexts, political power is exerted in a way that can endanger one's health. The ideological framework can be extended to include *Beyond the Hills* even in more general terms. Althusser rightly regards religion as a form of ideology as well. The Voice of God in Christian religion instructs a person on what his place in the world is and what he must do to be reconciled with Christ. Voichița is free only when she subjects herself to the rules of this spiritual path. She cannot recognize herself outside of this overarching structure; or so it seems. Moreover, religious ideology defers the responsibility of one's acts to God, and this plays a crucial role for the outcome of the movie.

What is essential is that ideology, religious or not, dictates its rules on the body from above or in an abstract way. Even as it becomes a second nature, this set of ethical ideals, principles or doctrines still deals with larger groups of people, so that one rule is valid for all bodies. In theoretical terms, it reminds of Benjamin's critique of Kant's moral law (*Sittengesetzt*) that is merely "the norm of a conduct, but not its content (*Inhalt*)."⁷ (48) A categorical imperative gets inevitably disrupted as it cannot be presented in a way that would genuinely awaken in the individual a moral impulse to act. Ideology's abstract framework works in a similar manner: while providing the blueprint of a practical conduct, it cannot reach the empirical plane and have a concrete claim over the individual body. In view of the present context one will say that the ideology of the communist regime has certainly shaped the events of the movie, but the decree cannot single-handedly explain what happened to the two girls in the hotel room. Similarly, religious ideology alone is not enough to elucidate Alina's death.

2) Politics and Health: Foucault and Biopolitics

As Voichița internalizes religious commandments and chooses to follow them, her self-imposition could turn into a genuine desire to bring a positive change in her life. She might feel that it needs more structure and religion offers a cohesive set of guidelines. She tells Alina that "we're very organized here" (05:37); getting water for the community is her appointed task. This presumption is relevant because it opens the way for a biopolitical interpretation.

For all its naturalizing claims, ideology still needs to rely on institutions or external social apparatuses to constantly exert its power as a top down deployment. At that, Foucault proposes a more flexible and dynamic negotiation between state and self-governing "liberal" individuals. The legitimacy of governance takes place as an exchange between changing internalities and externalities and it leads to self-rationalization. Foucault's concept of power highlights interiority and inclusivity: "relations of power are not in a position of exteriority

with respect to other types of relationships (economic processes, knowledge relationships, sexual relations), but are immanent in the latter” (94)⁸. His notion of biopower envisages a force that is exerted on the life of the body without, necessarily, any means of repression or violence: it is restricted to acts of discipline and optimization by means of self-regulation. Where the ideological position uses, at least in part, oppression to impose certain life habits, the biopolitical perspective proposes a more integrative approach which is not managed by means of opposition and negation. In his critique of psychoanalysis, Foucault goes as far as canceling the imposition even by an inner instance like the superego.

The question whether religion has a truly positive effect on Voichița's life in the way biopolitics anticipates, is still a matter of point of view. Alina feels that her friend is alienated and does not speak in her own words but merely reproduces the priest: “It's as though Father were talking not you” (1:31:56) or “Can't you speak like a normal person anymore?” (1:32:11) Voichița's conduct would then remain at an ideological level that can only represent or reproduce empty ideas in a “discursive, talkative way” without being able to produce anything in terms of knowledge. At the same time, one has to tread carefully when involving knowledge in religious matters. The caption at the entrance of the monastery - “believe and don't question” — a quote from Celsus, erroneously attributed to the *Bible* — hints at willfully canceling imagination and ingenuity. These strict rules of the monastery, however, also speak to the rather exceptional circumstances that will be discussed in what follows. In this respect, one can add that *1 Thessalonians 5:21* says: “but test them all; hold on to what is good”. The practice of confession can be connected to Foucault's thought as well. Alina's confession did not have the expected positive effect, but we learn that even Voichița did not “give details” (14:09) in hers.

All things considered, Voichița's rather contemplative demeanour seems to have brought peace in her life. She seems content in this environment and affirms that this is her true calling. She asks for a temporary departure only to help her friend: “I have (found my path). I was telling you what she wants” (08:38) Obviously, an inwardly oriented spiritual life cannot be properly shown; and it has not been tested yet. The camera also remains impartial and objective. Like a silent observer, it rarely lingers on an individual. There is no shot/reverse shot that would strengthen the idea of a dialogue and a more personalized approach; no closeups, just long shots without a specific pattern or idea. Only actions are depicted and when the flow is accelerated, the camera becomes mobile as well.

A similarly complex situation is also developed in *4 3 2*. One can safely say that the abortion law did not have any moral or religious grounds to be interpreted as a straightforward pro-life decision. Going back to the Decree 770, the regime's official reason for introducing it was that it aimed at the creation of a new and large Romanian population. Without a doubt, the decree had an ideological basis since the population was supposed to build the high goals of socialism and the state had enough levers to impose such restriction. However, it can also be

seen as a merely economical decision that envisioned a positive, biopolitical outcome. The decree was supposed to enlarge the population of Romania to over 30 million over fifteen years, and then, if possible, to surpass Poland's, which in the 1980s was close to 40 million.

It is not unusual even in neoliberalism for market economy reasons to be extended to non-economic domains of social and biological existence so that life processes such as family and reproduction to be thought in economic terms. A larger working population would implicitly translate into an accelerated rhythm of growth and an increased standard of living. Let's not forget that the birth rate was decreasing due to the low quality of life which affected the affordability of having children. Moreover, the effort to modernize Romanian economy brought a high participation of women into the work force; they were depicted driving tractors and working in factories "elbow against elbow" with men.

This decision could even be qualified as an attempt at correcting past mistakes; the communist revolution was a matter of continuity after all. If the intention to optimize the standard of living brings the matter in the biopolitical realm, the sweeping idea of oppression against women can be questioned as well. Without fully attributing the noble idea of gender equality to the communist propaganda, — the woman was no longer a childbearing housewife but was not free to choose her own destiny either — one cannot fully retrace a sudden demotion to a second-rate citizen of the female population after the decree either. Women with 4–5 children were declared "heroic mothers" and received subsidies from the state. Until 1967, Romania was one of the most progressive countries with respect to its abortion laws. After that, the underground industry of abortions flourished. Wealthier women were able to obtain contraceptives illegally, or bribed doctors to give diagnoses which made abortion possible. The movie mentions a doctor, who went to prison for it. As an aside, besides creating the problem regarding women and their health, the decree also caused an orphan problem. In this respect, *Beyond the Hills* carries on where *4 3 2* left off: both Voichița and Alina are such orphans. The movie also depicts other such children seeking shelter in the monastery.

The overall situation remains problematic because this law did not target specifically the health and well-being of women in the way subversive elements were chased in the early days of the regime. However, the woman's body did still turn into a target as a consequence of the law. Women became inevitable victims of the created circumstances. To relativize and extend the context even further, one can recall the Chinese one-child policy as the reverse scenario of a totalitarian regime toying with biopower. This time, an overabundant population is forced to downsize in order not to outpace economic development and to ease environmental and natural resource challenges and imbalances. The Chinese example shows not only how "proletarians of all countries" failed to unite but also how ideology can be rerouted to serve biopolitical purposes. In this case, an even more brutal regime ends up harming women less just because of a different socio-economic context.

The previous remarks are meant to emphasize a multifaceted situation that cannot be diagnosed with merely general statements. The regime's discrimination against women is not exonerated. Unquestionably, gender inequality existed in communist Romania, an issue that Otilia tackles in her conversation with her boyfriend after the party. She proves to be a strong and independent woman who refuses to cook for her husband-to-be his favorite soup like her 'in-laws' has accustomed him to. Additionally, she would rather 'solve' her pregnancy on her own rather than rely on her boyfriend or be forced into a marriage because of it. At the same time, however, the paternalistic worldview exposed in this scene is a general symptom of society and not necessarily a matter that pertains to the communist states only.

In many respects, biopolitics and ideology are not mutually exclusive. For instance, Foucault did not reject the idea of a commanding sovereign power altogether. The older sovereign power of the "right of take life or let live" is transformed into biopower, into the "right make live and let die". As the new "complements", "penetrates" or "permeates" the old, the sovereign power becomes the other pole that is still part of the same continuum. At this point, the Marxist perspective voices the concern that Foucault remains unable to formulate a clear political practice because it is missing "concrete relations of determination"; his notion of power being "effectively emptied of any real political content." (Resch 25)⁹ When a state counts on self-rationalization and self-regulation, clearly formulated "activities that are associated with governance" become rather imprecise or even obscure; fears of a 'deep state' surface. Another critique points to the fact that biopower ends up encompassing such an extensive almost metaphysical range that it misses distinguishing the individual human body as such. Foucault says:

What we are dealing with in this new technology of power is not exactly society (or at least not the social body, as defined by the jurists), nor is it the individual body. It is a new body, a multiple body, a body with so many heads that, while they might not be infinite in number, cannot necessarily be counted. Biopolitics deals with the population, with the population as a political problem, as a problem that is at once scientific and political, as a biological problem and as power's problem (241).¹⁰

Biopower does come closer to the life of the body and its health status but falls short of offering sustainable solutions at the level of the individual: it disperses the individual into a rather indeterminate, statistical multiplicity. The intertwining or correlation of science and politics does not impose a preconceived ideological model but ends up labeling subjects according to forms of political rationality, nonetheless. It is true that biopower remains helpful in identifying Alina's specific sexual orientation, or in diagnosing her mental condition as she is evaluated from a psychiatric point of view. However, it will still subject her to a larger structure of power without reaching the individual body. When referring to

4 3 2, Foucault's perspective is useful in flagging Găbița and Otilia as not law-abiding and in need to be disciplined as opposed to being chased as enemies and subversive elements of the state.

In a nutshell, Foucault's biopower still remains distant because it fails to properly identify the cause of events. Biopolitical designations cannot fully explain what happened to Alina, for example. The fact that the priest is against her gender orientation is not enough to explain her death. Her lesbianism certainly played a role in her demise, but she did not die because she was a lesbian. Similarly, she did not die because of her mental problems. The doctor says that "these goddamn illnesses don't kill you, but they don't let you live (either)" (55:58) These are certainly 'pre-existing conditions' or premises that may enable but cannot guarantee an event actually taking place. Correspondingly, one cannot explain why the two not law-abiding girls were raped without putting up a fight.

Foucault did not eliminate the concept of sovereignty but rather stripped its power of a defined subject. In other words, the modern state is still based on authority but fails to secure a clearly determined subject behind its power. As individual freedoms gain in importance, the state recedes more and more into a mere power structure or a bureaucratic mechanism that is oftentimes slow in making decisions because it counts on self-regulation of citizens. The context of the two movies will also point to a diminished subject of authority. In 4 3 2, the physical presence of the dictator is so lessened that it can even be perceived as a mere "political body" (Kantorowicz); the authority of the police is more present in the plot. The influence of the Orthodox Church is reduced in the confines of the remote monastery as well. The priest does not even feel the need to ask for its blessing in performing the exorcism. This lack of agency behind political power enables various subjects or agents to make decisions that bring about new states of affairs.

3) Politics and Health: Sovereign Power and State of Exception, Schmitt and Agamben

The search for more "concrete relations of determination" of politics that can define at the same time the individual body prompts the examination of the theory of sovereignty. Known for establishing the concept, Carl Schmitt argues that the sovereign is he who declares the state of exception. Without being previously a sovereign, a person effectively becomes one in the context of the state of exception. The state of exception in discussion is not the "sovereign dictatorship" that institutes a new legal order, a new constitution, like the French revolutionaries. Rather, it is the "commissarial dictatorship" that would declare the state of exception in order to save the existing legal order. After 1933, Schmitt's controversially applies this form of dictatorship to Hitler who suspended the Constitution for four years

(and the renewed for another four) in order to “defend the law” (“*Der Führer schützt das Recht*”). (203)¹¹

In Mungiu's films, both the priest and Mr. Bebe declare the state of exception under such circumstances. The priest's choice of action is straightforward because Alina was becoming violent which is contrary to the peaceful conduit of the monastery. While his measures are clearly geared towards restoring and preserving the previous order, one can still debate Mr. Bebe's undertaking. He is an unlicensed practitioner who would lose his 'job' if the decree was canceled. He breaks the law without aiming to abolish it and ends up indirectly maintaining and saving it as well. A distinction between the letter and the existence of the law can also be made. As the law became even stricter in 1984, (Kligman 109)¹² the gap between its ideological 'letter' and its practical application widens. Abortion became a rather lucrative underground industry; Mr. Bebe was recommended by someone else and he was not the only choice. One can even detect a silent consent on the part of the authorities who turned a blind eye. The hotel clerk is almost too clueless as she sits beside a policeman. Without asking further questions, she gives back Mr. Bebe's ID to Otilia. In a 'let happen' scenario, Mr. Bebe could even be seen as an outlet that eases some tension in order to prevent a bigger, revolutionary damage. In this sense, the existence of the law can be preserved by allowing exceptions that are not contrary but actually prove the rule.

Historically speaking, the state of exception arises from a necessity (i.e., sovereign's death, invasions etc.). This emergency calls for a suspension of everyday politics., like civil business, including tribunals, the treasury or parliaments. In the example of the two movies, both states of exception or crisis prove necessary given the context: 4 3 2 is the countdown of an 'it's now or never' and Alina starts setting things on fire in the community of pious nuns. Her state seems to worsen and the failure of the medical system in dealing with such pathological cases adds yet another level of urgency as well. Washing his hands, the doctor recommends rest in the monastery and reading from the scriptures because “it helps” (56:04).

a) Agamben's Theory

Giorgio Agamben separates the personalized *auctoritas* of the sovereign power from the rather objective *potestas* of the social function of a state apparatus or institution. When referring to the legal status of the sovereign who declares this emergency, he finds it mirrored by that of the *homo sacer*: the latter is both a pariah outside the social order of laws while still being included in the legal system through his bare life as he can be killed. The recourse to bare life (*zoe*) as opposed a social life (*bios*) is relevant for the two movies because, under these circumstances anything can happen. Alina can be tied to a wooden board that looks like a cross because in this extraordinary situation a cross is no longer a cross or a socially established religious symbol. As the church was not consulted, these proceedings cannot count as a sanctified ritual and will rely solely on the “charisma”¹³ of the sovereign who declares the state of exception. According to Agamben, people in this position can be killed;

Alina's death can be explained in this way. Similarly, Găbița and Otilia are stripped of their civil rights and are exposed to an ordeal of rape and health-altering procedures.

Agamben's theory relies on binaries (inside vs. outside the law) that do not exclude each other but rather "blur one another" in a space of indifference. The liminal closeness of being outside the law turns out to be still inside because the *homo sacer* can be legally killed. In this view, the concept of the law relies on a paradoxical coincidence of opposites and acquires a rather "mystical foundation" (Derrida)¹⁴. Without a proper ground, the law is projected beyond the possibility of understanding and cannot be properly appraised: it loses its theoretical relevance and blends with praxis. For example, one can figure out that the law (of the state of exception) is the force that causes Alina's death, but one cannot prove it because the law is impenetrable. In other words, one feels the effects of an experience, but one cannot comprehend it in any way. The practical gesture that affects the body's health turns out to be so unique that it cannot be formulated as a general notion. The political is now concretely connected to the body but the event as such cannot be properly assessed and conceptualized.

b) Schmitt's Theory

Agamben draws his theory from Carl Schmitt but the latter's argument is carried out on different coordinates. The origins of law are not placed in an unknowable realm but are made dependent to a context. "All law is situational law" is his famous dictum. Schmitt agrees with Hobbes that authority and not truth is the main factor determining the law. Additionally, his concept of politics emerges from this context while having the support of the community (*Gemeinschaft*): the political community rallies its support when it perceives a threat. Even as the law of the state is suspended, the state of exception will still abide by legal obligations since it creates a law specifically adjusted for such circumstances. For Schmitt, this law is not mutually exclusive or even contradictory with respect to the established law of the state. His notion of enemy (i.e., Agamben's *homo sacer*) cannot be outside the law because his friend-enemy distinction is determined as a matter of degrees. To be precise, it is the "utmost degree of intensity ... of an association or dissociation." (Schmitt 38)¹⁵ The law inside the state of exception is a merely modification that swings the scale towards the pole of authority and sovereign power but is not outside the juridical domain (*Gesetzlichkeit*).

The community of nuns, which includes Voichița, not only supports but even encourages the priest to perform the exorcism. This support brings the gesture into the political domain; and it does turn out to be a necessary political act. The fact that the law instituted in the state of exception (i.e., the procedures of the exorcism) is not excluded from the overall juridical system makes the community still accountable. A temporary suspension of the law is not an exclusion from the system of right. Alina is thus not a *homo sacer* who can be killed without consequences. The exorcism is not borderline outside the law (yet still inside) in such a blurred definition of the law. The law is known, and Alina is still a citizen of a state ruled by laws. To read the exorcism as a sacrifice (Megan Girdwood)¹⁶ would also be an overstatement. It is

hard to imagine that the priest would have had the intention to kill Alina in order for all the members to share their guilt and to yield up and consume the sacred substance in an effort to ensure “their identity with one another and with the deity.” (Freud 159)¹⁷ The priest knows very well that her death will involve the authorities’ intervention, and tries to justify his act by saying that “God knows that we didn’t mean anyone harm.” (2:25). At this time however, he is relying on an authority (not truth) that is not inscribed in the historical system of right. The monastery is still surrounded by a secular state that would have responded in the same way in 4 3 2. Alina is also not a scapegoat that died “to restore harmony to the community, to reinforce the social fabric.” (Girard 131)¹⁸ It would have been much easier to just expel her from the monastery and, additionally, the harmony was not restored as priest and nuns are dragged into the legal system.

To summarize, one will say that the cause of a bodily harm is now traceable to a specific situation created by the state of exception. In concrete terms, the immanent or efficient cause for Alina’s death is, most likely, her untreated lung infection and hypothermia. The situation as such is not *sui generis* but referable to a legal system that gives it enough generality to form a mental picture. It is the result of a decision that turns out to be political due to its support coming from a more or less homogeneous community while not overcoming the existing legal framework. According to this new definition, politics is not just an abstract set of activities that envisage the government of public state of affairs. This determination makes the political equally dependent on the particular situation of the governed and on established laws. It is thus an abstraction that adjusts itself dynamically to concrete circumstances without becoming concrete. It is a (juridical) form that is matched to a specific (bodily) content. In Benjamin’s parlance, the abstract norm is translated or converted (*umsetzen*) into a lived or empirical set of rules (*empirische legale Ordnung*) and is thus able to receive content.

What is important in view of the overall scope of this article is that a link between politics and the body has been established and can be defined as a simultaneous correlation between the two. The body’s health is affected by a specific law that was, in turn, created by the political community. This multitude of bodies differs from Foucault’s biopolitical perspective in the sense that it is conceived as a concrete bond or in a reciprocal relationship with a notion of politics that is not missing “concrete relations of determination” anymore. The effect is now traceable to a cause or legal ground that is no longer “mystical” but becomes in turn verifiable as well. This legal intertwining, even interlocking between the political and the body testifies to the efficiency and validity of the theoretical framework.

The ramifications of this point of view are even more intriguing for 4 3 2. The crisis escalates to the point where the two girls have to go through a sexual ordeal as well. Not having enough payment, they find themselves in a position to have to pay with their bodies. Let’s not forget that in order to become a political act, the state of exception relies equally on the sovereign who declares it and on the support provided by the community. The two

girls end up between a rock and a hard place having given their consent and not being able to rescind it due to the advanced stage of the pregnancy. Their bond of friendship is tested at this point. It is true that Mr. Bebe is obnoxious to ask for this particular type of transaction, but, from his point of view, he is not overstepping the contractual obligations and can rightly ask for the previously agreed upon payment.

Afterwards, when Otilia tries to make sense of the events, her rage is not directed only against Mr. Bebe. She calls him names but is also trying to figure out how they got into the situation, and, at what point, it could have been avoided. She is concerned with the chain of events that lead to this because the situation determines the law. Placing the events in an order contributes to the healing process as well. Otilia understands the circumstances correctly even when she steals the knife from Mr. Bebe's bag. Hurting the guy out of revenge would have made their situation worse; the state would have intervened just like in *Beyond the Hills*. Most likely, she steals the knife for self-protection in case the abortionist required more 'payment.' It does not come to that as the latter sticks to his end of the bargain and even offers to come back and make sure everything was alright.¹⁹

4) Politics and Health: Benjamin's Political Theology

The interlocking link between politics and the body also opens the possibility for the body to be hurt. This last part aims to take a closer look at the female characters in both movies in light of bypassing tribulations coming from the political. To anticipate, one will say that the bodies of these female characters will respond not as mere passive receptacles but rather as actively overcoming these afflictions. These women are no longer victims who try to merely cope with traumatic events but emerge as integral or healthy human beings who also affirm their femininity in both body and mind thus vanquishing their socio-political conditionings.

From his influence on Althusser's Marxism, to Foucault's biopolitics, to Schmitt's and Agamben's theory, Walter Benjamin's thought has been an unacknowledged yet constant presence throughout the argument. At first glance, Benjamin might not be the obvious choice to examine a subject matter that involves women and their femininity. His famous images of the whore and the lesbian as allegories of modernity do not help in bringing the movies together as well. The lesbian would be relevant for *Beyond the Hills* but introducing the whore in the context of 4 3 2 would derail the meaning. That said, recent scholarship does dedicate substantial research to his notion of femininity.²⁰ Moreover, Benjamin's perspective is suitable to unite the two movies because his thought is both theological (*Beyond the Hills*) and secular (4 3 2) without becoming contradictory. Even his later Marxist writings remain "related to theology as blotting pad is related to ink. It is saturated with it."²¹

To be able to escape the political implies circumventing the juridical framework it establishes. Benjamin locates both the beginnings of the legal context and the genealogy of gender²² at the Fall from paradise. The loss Edenic plenitude not only translates into a divided world, but into judging circumstances as well. The Fall of the sinful becomes both a cognitive judgement (*Urteil*) and a juridical verdict in a court of law (*Gericht*). This law is congeneric with the change of context that requires new conditions. The now tainted Word turns out to be the instrument in ensuring a stricter purity (*strengere Reinheit*). This desire to purify not only clarifies the confusion between the spiritual and the material but endorses the purity of spiritual. Even as this cognitive judgement/judging sentence (*richtende Urteil*) will hover (*schwebend*) in a so-called “over-worldly gender” (*überweltlichen Geschlecht*) it will be labelled male by default.

This tendency, however, is not even merely Christian. It can be detected in Plato's aesthetics that favours “spiritual children” or in Hegel's dialectics of *Aufhebung* oriented towards the spiritual. It can even be extended to any purification efforts that ostracize or mortify a body that turns out to be the female counterpart. The idea is that (male) cognition turned juridical has lost touch with the (female) experience of the body. Put differently, the male side which amounts to spontaneity or creativity (*Schaffen*) has lost its prelapsarian bond (*Binding*) to its female side which corresponds to receptivity (*empfangend*). Both aspects are equally important, and one side cannot function properly without the other.

Under this overarching theoretical framework, the two movies secure a common “cultural construct” (Butler). The challenge remains to show how the female characters manage to escape the grasp of this paternalistic law that has a linguistic nature. His early essay, *On a Critique of Violence*, points to the possibility of such undertaking. When used “mythically” as a means to an end, violence will both maintain and create new laws. While foreshadowing Schmitt's two forms of the “state of exception”²³, Benjamin adds a new category or a level of politics. The politics of “pure means” turns out to be a “divine”, yet “educative violence” (*erzieherische Gewalt*) which “in its perfected form stands *outside the law*.” (252)²⁴ (italics mine) For Benjamin, violence is a more general phenomenon that abides at the heart of signification: semiosis, for example, is a violent act. Producing a meaning destroys the object one is trying to understand and his famous image of the allegorist who turns out to be a sadist is pointing in the same direction. Along the same lines, the rigour of (male) cognition turns out to be *rigor mortis* that leaves behind a deserted, dead landscape of *facies hippocratica*.

a) Politics and Mental Health in *Beyond the Hills*

In a similar deployment, Luce Irigaray's psychoanalytical approach draws attention to desire and madness. “Each sex has a relation to madness. Every desire has a relation to madness. But it would seem that one desire has been taken as wisdom, moderation, truth, leaving to the other sex the weight of a madness that cannot be acknowledged or accommodated.” (242)²⁵ Remapping the strict binarism of both Lacan and Freud, Irigaray forefronts a space

of subjectivity that maintains a common underlying substance. Both men and women blame their desire to madness on the mother, the “dark continent” that remains in the shadow yet still at the basis of our culture and social order.²⁶ Alina’s erratic behaviour — she “hears voices” — is labeled pathological both by the medical system and the religious community; both paying tribute to the same paternalistic or juridical mindset. But this male mentality is equally driven by madness. The carnal Dionysus is known for his madness, but the spiritual Apollo channels a form of madness as well. The desire of purification and spiritualization is merely labeled as wisdom but is just as mad, albeit in a different manner. This difference shows up as opposition and can only be ‘cured’ by conversion. The exorcism would ‘heal’ Alina by converting her to the paternalistic paradigm. Unfortunately, her love for Voichița²⁷ proves incompatible and therefore the young Amazon will die.

A position of health (i.e., madness-free) implies a detached, impartial and equidistant perspective that still originates from the underlying unity. Without such an objective position, one merely “throws the stone” while being guilty of the same sin of madness. Sheer aloofness from this common origin/mother also cancels any ground and thus the possibility of comprehension and consistency. “Outside the law” stands for being above both the affirmation and the negation of the law. If Alina’s madness is directed against at the paternalistic system, it turns out to be merely an opposite reaction. It is destroying yet recreating it, just like the Dionysian will recall the Apollonian in Nietzsche’s *Birth of Tragedy*.²⁸ The dialectical interplay of contrasting impulses alternates its appearances but endures as such.

After her friend’s death, Voichița feels alienated in the monastery and starts wearing Alina’s clothes. She does not simply become her friend, though, and the last dialogue with the priest is particularly significant. The scene takes place in the police van, in a long, static yet comprehensive shot. Father is advising the nuns not to be afraid because: “God knows that we didn’t mean anyone harm.” (2:25) As he continues on the subject of fear, he addresses Voichița directly saying: “You seem frightened”. She should be because she doesn’t seem to be with God. However, she answers serenely looking directly at him: “I’m not frightened, Father”. This time, she calls him Father (părinte) instead of her usual, and more familiar Father/Papa (tati). He then continues: “If God is with you, there is nothing to be afraid of” (2:26). At this point, the dialogue breaks down and one is witnessing a discontinuity. The priest cannot hear her anymore because she is communicating on a different wavelength. She is obviously not with God (or God not with her), but she is still not afraid. She has overcome her “mythical fear” or her fated “guilt-context of the living” (*Schuldzusammenhang des Lebendigen*) (93–120).²⁹ The female protagonist has found comfort in a non-judgmental God that is “inexpressible” (*das Ausdruckslose* or *Unaussprechliche*) and beyond (the hills of) the monastery and of language.

Voichița is calm and recollected — which is a sign of inner strength — and does not react erratically or impulsively (like Alina) by affirming only her (female) body. She does not even

blame the priest because she has overcome the context of guilt and punishment altogether. The violence that was directed against her friend has had an educative effect on her. Now she has found her true calling which defines her identity as a woman; her femininity being an expression or a particular manifestation of the prelapsarian unity of body and spirit. This conveys a sense of integrity, of fullness which speaks to both her mental and physical sanity. It also translates into a redemptive jump into a “messianic time” where Voichița has found her faith in the true God without any mediation. This position alone can offer protection against the dominance of myth and law.

b) Politics and Physical Health in 4 3 2

Trauma caused by an event can affect the health of one's body, and Freud defines it in the following way:

We describe as ‘traumatic’ any excitations from outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield. It seems to me that the concept of trauma necessarily implies a connection of this kind with a breach in an otherwise efficacious barrier against stimuli. Such an event as an external trauma is bound to provoke a disturbance on a large scale in the functioning of the organism's energy and to set in motion every possible defensive measure (23).³⁰

Trauma is thus a two-pronged notion: a distressing, external event happening to the body that causes a damage to the mind as well leaving specific aftereffects to an individual's psychic reality. The experience of rape that the two girls go through certainly qualifies as traumatic. Otilia's behaviour does display signs of trauma when she vomits or has nose bleeds. The following argument, however, will try to show that these aftereffects are not damaging or in need to be repressed. The fact that she experiences what Benjamin calls a “profane illumination” (*profane Erleuchtung*) which is the equivalent of a redemptive jump in a secularized, material context, signals the ability to annihilate the effects of trauma. She is exposed to an utterly new category that obliterates this cause-effect relationship. The experience Benjamin is talking about will not cure her instantaneously or miraculously, but it does offer a momentary peak into a happiness (*Glück*) that consolidates the “principle of hope” (Bloch). Our “weak Messianic power” is still able to beckon an *end* (of suffering) that marks a completion or fulfillment; an end is different from a mere telos or goal that works like an open-ended regulative idea. (312)³¹

The scene that contains elements that could point in this direction takes place in the hotel room after Mr. Bebe has left. Cinematography is particularly important. Otilia walks to Găbița to give her last cigarette while the camera moves and holds a comprehensive shot for the rest of the scene. No musical score fills the long and heavy pauses between dialog lines. Otilia sees a painting that hangs on the wall, and comments succinctly: “This painting's really weird” (1:06:50) (*Ce aiurea e chestia asta cu natură moartă*). It is a painting of a still life

(i.e., “dead nature” in Romanian translation but in many other languages as well) depicting objects on a plate that suggest hospitality. The effect it produces is neither positive nor negative but rather “weird” (aiurea) or irrational. Both girls stop for a moment to look at the painting and then continue their conversation. At first sight, the scene is a *mise-en-abîme* that frames and reflects the situation: the two girls and the whole environment become similar to the still/lifeless objects in the painting. In other words, they are dead just like the objects in the painting.

However, it is *also* more than that. When they see the “dead objects”, they realize that they themselves are alive. They come alive in a unique way though. The ambiguity resides in the fact that this death is more than a mere negation of life or movement. It is an annihilation that empties its objects completely. Benjamin sees here a regress to a purely material or dead primordial landscape (*Urlandschaft*) before life even began. In this still life, the dialectical movement of alternating affirmation and negation arrives at a standstill. At the same time, however, it also nods to something wholly mysterious that is, by nature expressive, nonetheless. The important aspect is that this expression acts as an utterly new power like an effect that is not traceable to an identifiable or clearly defined cause. By arriving at this dead end, a sudden turn is activated, and one experiences a new power in the way emptiness becomes fullness or utter weakness turns into unmitigated or categorical strength, hopelessness into hope. The realization of being alive turns into a pure affirmation of life beyond the dialectics of life and death. Benjamin adopted the “nihilistic method” from Nietzsche who calls it an “eternal return”, a return that pertains to eternity rather than to homogeneous or sequential time. This is the lesson (*Lehre*) that Otilia learns from the weird painting on the wall.

For all its realism, this painting seems to have a surreal effect on Otilia. In addition, as fleeting as it may seem, this effect cannot be overlooked in the context of a modern world. Going back to the distinction between ontological and linguistic violence, Sigrid Weigel explains the consequences of such an event in at least two ways: the painting produces an experience and/or it generates interpretation. The first triggers an exchange between the image and the body of the subject in the sense that the image-space (*Bildraum*) becomes body-space (*Leibraum*) (16–17).³² This “image-body-space” collapses distance and absorbs or consumes the body of the subject. The moment of this “prophane illumination” is understood as a “materialist, anthropological inspiration”: the dialectics between “political materialism” and “physical nature” merge into an “anthropological materialism”. In the course of this exchange “a world of universal and integral actuality” (die Welt allseitiger und integraler Aktualität) is opened; and Benjamin uses the same phrase to describe the “messianic world.”(404)³³

The second way of looking at the painting is to *read* it as a “dialectical image”. The effect manifests itself in language and is expressed as an interpretation that involves the mind as well; language being the medium where a community is established (*Sprachgemeinschaft*).

The painting — she calls it a “thing” (chestia) — does not mean anything anymore. It does not even stand for a grotesque symbol of hospitality because signification or the “demonic” creation of meaning has been annihilated. As “allegory goes out empty-handed,” the painting becomes an allegory of an allegory. The destruction that destroys itself triggers a jump from a homogeneous or empty time into a Now-Time (*Jetztzeit*). This standstill will both face the inexpressible and generate an expression (i.e., the “weirdness”). The inner experience spills over and occasions the binding of receptivity and spontaneity. It turns into a *restitutio in integrum* that points to an originary condition in which body and mind enjoyed a healthy unity.

The previous remarks help understand how Otilia stays both physically and mentally balanced in the scenes following the rape. She conveys a deep sadness and melancholia but still manages to act coherently. She is remarkably composed and does not collapse into depression or does anything foolish or mad. Somehow, she finds the energy to organize rationally everything for her friend which means getting rid of the foetus and even going to the birthday party of her in-laws. There, she also remains mentally sharp as she argues her femininity with respect to a marrying into a paternalistic household. In the end, her advice to Găbița — not to speak about what happened — denotes a retreat into silence. This is a space that escapes the grip of a paternalistic law/cognition that has a linguistic nature. Silence is both the refusal of language, the refusal of judgmental signification and the experience of the inexpressible. The fleeting lesson of the painting turns now into a life-lesson. The world depicted here is dark and deeply melancholic. It “remains a mute world, from which music will never ring out. Yet to what is it dedicated if not redemption?” (355).³⁴

The motion towards silence is not a gesture of repression. The eternal return ‘cures’ any cyclical or temporal returns by blasting the relation between cause and effect. In other words, the traumatic event occurred and has been endured as such; outside stimuli have broken into causing damage to the protective shield. However, the experience does not need to be repressed as an illusion or as a dream one wants to forget; Freud derives trauma from germ. *Traum* (dream). In this instance, it would return to torment the subject as a posttraumatic stress disorder. When the event is registered as real instead, the force that affected the subject has also been transformed into a new power that revealed a position “outside”. Hence, the traumatic event has no disabling or paralyzing effect that would weaken or destroy the person experiencing it. Otilia’s confident gaze directly into the camera in the movie’s last moments implies a decision (*Entscheidung*) that transcends a mere choice (*Wahl*) between a good and a bad option. It marks the real possibility of disengagement from the given circumstances that victimize her. As Găbița gains her appetite, life — a plenary life, not just the survival drive inscribed in bare life — can move on. And it does just that in the end of *Beyond the Hills* as well.

Conclusion

After ideology and biopolitics proved useful, but ultimately insufficient in linking the political with the body, the theory of the state of exception managed to achieve this goal. The consequences of this link, however, brought up hard-to-deal-with issues regarding the possibility of damaging the body and its health. The last part tried to suggest ways in which the body can evade the influence of a paternalistic judgmental culture which is also a culture of the concept.³⁵ The analyzed moments of interstice, of disruption and discontinuity are not only gaps that point to a silence “outside the law”. They are moments of sublimity that have an aesthetic nature as well. Indeed, every “true work of art” has these moments that feel like “a cool wind of a coming dawn.” (474).³⁶

Awards tell a certain story, but the two movies would not justify their artistic excellence if it was not for these instants. Finally, this aesthetics is not the Kantian or even the Nietzschean from *Birth of Tragedy*. Its effect preserves a historical and political coverage which makes the female protagonists even more authentically real.

End Notes

1. *Four Months, Three Weeks and Two Days*, (hereafter 4 3 2) director Cristian Mungiu (Romania: BAC Films, 2007), DVD.
2. *Beyond the Hills*, director Cristian Mungiu, (Romania: Midora Films, 2012), DVD.
3. *Preamble to the Constitution of WHO as adopted by the International Health Conference*, New York, 19 June–22 July 1946, (Official Records of WHO, no. 2).
4. *Oxford English Dictionary*, (Clarendon, Oxford: Oxford Univ Press, 2009).
5. Adriana Cordali Gradea, *Communist Authoritarian Discourses and Practices in Romanian New Wave Cinema*, in *Commanding Words: Essays on the Discursive Constructions, Manifestations, and Subversions of Authority*. (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016).
6. Louis Althusser, *On the Reproduction of Capitalism*. trans. G. M. Goshgarian. (London/New York: Verso, 2014), 232–233.
7. Walter Benjamin, „Der Moralunterricht“ in *Gesammelte Schriften*. II.1, (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1991).
8. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume 1: An Introduction*, (London: Allen Lane).
9. Robert Paul Resch, *Althusser and the Renewal of Marxist Social Theory*, (Los Angeles Oxford: Univ. of California, 1992).
10. Michel Foucault *Society Must be Defended*, (London: Alen Lane 2003).
11. *Deutsche Juristen-Zeitung*, (1934), 38. Also trans. as “The Führer Protects Justice” in Detlev Vagts, *Carl Schmitt’s Ultimate Emergency: The Night of the Long Knives* (2012) 87(2) (*The Germanic Review*).

12. Gail Kligman, *The Politics of Duplicity: Controlling Reproduction in Ceausescu's Romania*, (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1998), 109. Legal abortion age was raised from 40 to 45. Abortion was legal now after 5 children instead of 4.
13. Agamben borrows Weber's concept.
14. Jacques Derrida, *Force of Law: The "Mystical Foundation of Authority"* in *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, (London: Routledge, 1992).
15. Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*. Expanded Edition (1932), trans. G. Schwab, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).
16. Megan Girdwood, *Bearing Witness: The Sight of a Sacrifice in Cristina Mungiu's Beyond the Hills*, *Journal of Religion and Film*, vol. 20 Issue 3 Oct 2016,
17. Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, trans. James Strachey (London: Routledge, 1965).
18. Rene Girard, *The Scapegoat*, trans. Yvonne Freccero, (London: Athlone Press, 1986).
19. It may also be significant to add that the director casts the same actor, Vlad Ivanov, in other movies as well. In *Tales from the Golden Age*, he plays a man who sells eggs to a female restaurant owner in the hope of getting sexual favours as well. He goes to prison for selling eggs without achieving his sexual goals. In *Graduation*, he is a policeman willing to bend the law and help the protagonist accused of corruption because the latter has done it to protect his family.
20. The three volume *Walter Benjamin. Critical Evaluation in Cultural Theory*, ed. Peter Osborne, (London: Routledge, 2005), dedicates a chapter on feminism where contributions by prominent authors like Christine Buci-Glucksmann, Helga Geyer-Ryan, Sigrid Weigel, Angela McRobbie or Janet Wolff are gathered.
21. Walter Benjamin, *GS*, I (3), (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1978).
22. For further details about how gender distinction originates from his language essay see Eva Geulen 'Towards a Genealogy of Gender in Walter Benjamin's Writing', in *German Quarterly*, vol. 69, No. 2, (Spring 1996), 161–180.
23. Schmitt's theory from 1922 postdates Benjamin's essay from 1916. From this point of view, whether Hitler was defending the law or creating a new one pertains to the same paradigm.
24. Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, ed. Howard Eiland, Michael W. Jennings, (Harvard: Belknap, 2006).
25. Luce Irigaray, "There are two Sexes, Not One" in *French Feminist Reader*, ed. Kelly Oliver, (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000).
26. The idea of the mother preoccupied Benjamin as well after reading Bachofen.
27. She doesn't care for social norms, and we remember how she hugs Voichița in the beginning.
28. In *Origins of German Tragic Drama* Benjamin is critical of Nietzsche's early essay for restricting his approach to aesthetics, and therefore restricting the understanding of tragedy. Lacking a philosophy of history, Nietzsche's study was unable to situate the political and ethical significance of the metaphysical and mythical features it isolates (101). When Nietzsche himself looked back at *Birth of Tragedy*, he found it very "Hegelian."
29. My not so obvious jump from the terminology of the violence-essay to the Goethe-essay was already done by Alison Ross in *The Distinction between Mythic and Divine Violence: Walter Benjamin's*

- “*Critique of Violence*” from the Perspective of “Goethe’s Elective Affinities”, *New German Critique*, February 2014.
30. Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans., ed. J. Strachey, (W. W. Norton & Co, 1961).
31. Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, vol. 3. “Therefore, the Kingdom of God is not the *telos* of the historical dynamic; it cannot be set as its goal. From the standpoint of history, it is not the goal, but the end.”
32. Sigrid Weigel, *Body- and Image-Space: Re-Reading Walter Benjamin*, (London: Routledge 2003).
33. See *Selected Writings*, vol. 4.
34. Walter Benjamin, *Selective Writings*, vol 1.
35. The German for concept is *Begriff* and it derives from *greifen* = to grasp.
36. “In every true work of art there is a place where, for one who removes there, it blows like cool like the wind of a coming dawn (...) Progress has its seat not in the continuity of elapsing time but in its interferences – where the truly new makes itself felt for the first time, with the sobriety of dawn” *The Arcades Project*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, Howard Eiland, Kevin McLaughlin (Belknap: Harvard University Press, 2002). [N9a,7]

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