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"The good wanderer leaves neither footprints nor traces": On Georg Simmel´s "Individualismens Former" published during WWI

Abstract. *In January 1917, an article by Georg Simmel, "Individualismens Former", appeared in the Danish journal Spectator. Citing an editorial note herein, Simmel researchers have trusted that Simmel wrote the text in Danish and authorized the article (Rammstedt et al, 2015: 690; Christensen et al (eds.): 2019).*
On the contrary, we use archives, memoires and historical research to show that the editorial note in fact concealed the true provenance of Simmel´s text. The German propaganda machine during World War 1 secretly financed the journal Spectator. The editor therefore had a motivation to alter a crucial passage in the text.

An original text in Danish from Simmel´s hand?

"From the highly esteemed researcher Prof. Dr. Simmel in Strassburg we have received the following article, written in Danish, which is likely to be of great interest to our readers. Ed." This editorial note introduced an allegedly original article by Georg Simmel, "Individualismens Former" [The Forms of Individualism] in the Danish journal Spectator in January 1917 (Simmel, 1917).

The editorial passage is cited in the highly respected and admirable *Gesamtausgabe* (Rammstedt et al., 2015: 690) and in a well-edited anthology of Simmel´s work in Danish (Christensen et al (ed), 2019). Both of these sources also provide the full Danish text without discussion of the trustworthiness of the editorial remark. Instead, it is echoed that Simmel wrote the text in Danish himself, citing the editorial remark as evidence (Rammstedt et al., 2015: 689-90).

Furthermore, Rammstedt reiterates that "Individualismens Former" is presumably the only text in Danish from Simmel´s hand (Rammstedt, 2019: 8). In other words, the *tradition* in Simmel studies takes for granted that Simmel was in command of Danish and that the text in Spectator is *authorized* as Simmel´s own direct work (Rammstedt et al, 2015: 690), in contradistinction to some reconstructed versions of similar texts by Simmel in German.

This article questions these assumptions. We argue that Simmel did *not* have command of the Danish language and that the article is translated. Furthermore, the translation is problematic, if not manipulative in a crucial passage. We question the credibility of the editorial note as well as the status of the journal Spectator as a reliable source of evidence.

Our basis for doing so is a research strategy where we consult historical research, archives and memoires. We begin with research on Danish collaborators with the German occupational forces in Denmark during World War II (Düring Jørgensen, 1982-83, 2007, 2013). One of these collaborators was Louis von Kohl. The very same von Kohl was working for the German propaganda machine in Denmark during World War I as editor of Spectator. This work was secretly financed by Germany (Düring Jørgensen, 1982-83, 2007). This structural underpinning of the journal Spectator became known with certainty only many years later when German archives were opened for research after the collapse of the Nazi regime. Photocopies of these German archives available in the national archives in Copenhagen have been studied. We also consulted Louis von Kohl´s memoires (under restricted use in the Royal National Library in Copenhagen) as well as broader historical analyses of the Danish collaboration with Germany during WWI (Düring Jørgensen, 1982-83, 2007, 2013).

By mobilizing this stream of research (which is usually not connected with research on Simmel´s work), we offer a fresh

analysis of the provenience of Simmel´s Danish text on individualism. We interpret the exact version of Simmel´s text in the broader context of Germany´s propaganda apparatus in Denmark during World War I. Propaganda perhaps works most efficiently when it operates discretely and covers its traces. It is therefore unsurprising that some of the conditions of production of the exact text in "Individualismens Former" were swept under the carpet and remain only partly visible.

However, we claim with certainty that neither Spectator nor its editor had the independence and integrity that would be required for us to trust the editorial note as an authoritative source. The opposite is the case, since the editor and the journal deliberately tried to conceal their mode of operation.

That said, we shall be left with no small amount of ambiguity regarding Simmel´s responsibility for the final text. He was probably not aware of any problematic translation and probably did not authorize the final version of the text. Even if no final verdict can be issued on this point, this article supports an interpretation of "Individualismens former" which deviates from the tradition in Simmel studies.

While our study of Simmel´s text published in Danish in 1917 by definition goes into historical detail, the broader perspective speaks to the conditions under which sociological concepts, ideas and texts become translated and communicated under particular conditions of possibility in a situation of war. Although the object of analysis is a little more than hundred years old, the larger perspective is therefore frighteningly relevant today.

The article sets out to answer the following questions: Did Simmel have command of the Danish language? Is "Individualismens Former" an original text original? If translated, in which ways does the text differ from its counterpart in German? Who was the likely translator, and what is known about his motives and integrity? What is known about the journal Spectator? How did the text fit into the larger purposes of the translator and the German

propaganda machinery at the time? And finally, how did the editor get hold of Simmel´s text? Did he have contact with Simmel?

Did Simmel have command of the Danish language?

There is only very scant evidence to support the assumption that Simmel knew Danish. The central source is a letter from Heinrich von Gleichen-Russwurms to the press attaché of the German envoy to Stockholm of September 23, 1917 where a potential series of talks by Simmel in Copenhagen, Lund, Uppsala and Stockholm is under consideration. The letter mentions briefly that "Simmel speaks Danish." (Rammstedt & Rammstedt, 2008: 837). However, no further substantiation of this assumption is provided, and there is no evidence that the author of the letter was in close contact with Simmel nor that he had exact knowledge about Simmel´s language skills.

Instead, Gleichen-Russwurms may have *heard* about Simmel´s Danish skills from one of his Scandinavian connections with whom he planned Simmel´s appearances. It is therefore quite possible that the two sources which mention Simmel´s Danish skills (the editorial remark in Spectator and Gleichen-Russwurms letter) should not be seen as independent sources as suggested by the term "also" (Rammstedt & Rammstedt, 2008: 837), but perhaps as coming from the same person. This person might well be the editor of Spectator. (We shall substantiate this statement further in the following.)

Perhaps the most reliable source of information about Simmel´s Danish skills is his own communication with a large number of philosophers, sociologists and cultural notabilities in several countries. A very small proportion of them were Danes. There is no indication that he spent any considerable amount of time in Denmark. There is also no particular trace in his writings of any interest in Danish history, culture or language.

It is also unlikely that he, after finally earning a professorate in Strasbourg at a late stage in his life, should suddenly become interested in learning a language that was spoken by relatively few people, and which stood far behind German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, and other languages in terms of significance in international debates. Add to this that he was always extremely busy with talks and publications, not the least his philosophy of life, which he completed in his final years. And last, but not least: His country was at war.

Furthermore, it would be strange if Simmel had indeed made the effort to learn the Danish language, and this immense investment would have left only one single text among his enormous Nachlass, which amounts to at least 15,000 pages, as testified by the *Georg Simmel Gesamtausgabe (GSG)*.

Even when Simmel described his potential trip to Scandinavia and the invitation to speak in Copenhagen (in a letter to Anna Jastrow dated September 30th, 1917), he did not say that he was looking forward to using his Danish. Instead, he referred to Scandinavian countries as "rather far away", a term which does not suggest familiarity with the language and culture of these countries (Rammstedt & Rammstedt, 2008: 834).

If Simmel had known even a few Danish phrases, how could he resist the temptation to throw one or two of them into a letter to his Danish colleague, philosopher Harald Høffding, with whom he communicated several times, including a letter of October 2nd, 1914? (Rammstedt & Rammstedt, 2008: 691). But the letter contained not a single Danish word. If Simmel understood Danish, why not let Høffding know about it? That would have saved Høffding from the humiliation of writing back to Simmel in "leicht gebrochenem Deutsch" (slightly broken German) (Rammstedt & Rammstedt, 2008: 692).

Our plausible conclusion is that Simmel neither had the motivation nor the time or occasion to learn Danish. Neither did he need command of the Danish language as a precondition for the

text in Spectator. All he needed was a translator, since the text already existed in *almost* similar form, albeit in German, as the following section shows.

Simmel´s work on individualism

Simmel was immensely productive. He did not use references as conventionally done today. He also frequently recycled and reinterpreted parts of his earlier works. As a consequence, it is difficult to establish exactly when a Simmel text is "original." In no way, however, does this term apply to the text in Spectator, as we shall see.

Simmel touched on the issue of individualism in 1901, where he wrote about its two manifestations (Rammstedt et al, 2015: 489). Quantitative individualism is where the individual is reduced to a mere human being, and everybody becomes equal. Qualitative individualism is where the individual achieves a sense of being unique, an individual like no one else. Simmel also places the two forms of individualism in time. The quantitative dimension characterizes the 18th century, while the qualitative one flows out of the 19th century. (Müller, 2018: 296).

Simmel also played with these forms of individualisms in his masterpiece "Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben" (Simmel, 1995 [1903]). The modern metropolis, the place where strangers meet, hosts both forms of individualism, but a tension among them remains.

In some texts, he also distinguishes between a "Roman" and a "Germanic" version of individualism (Müller, 2018), thereby superimposing forms of individualism on geographic or nationalistic categories. The "Germanic" form requires a particular form of self-consciousness (Müller, 2018: 302).

Modern individualism in its several forms introduces a deeper cultural problem, ie. how to align the fragmented and/or unique modern individuals with a sense of a larger, collective, cultural purpose. Simmel later found that the war might create a unique historical moment where this cleavage in modern culture could be repaired and Germany reborn. Simmel´s writings on the war have been the object of analysis and controversy (Watier, 1991; Goodstein, 2017; Portioli, 2018). At the outbreak of the war, Simmel argued that the war constituted a great and unique occasion to revitalize German culture and identity (Simmel, 1914). He also claimed that the situation was almost overwhelmingly difficult to analyze and that it required all his "abstraction power" (Rammstedt & Rammstedt, 2008: 692). He was criticized for being too enthusiastic about the war, for failing to acknowledge Germany´s responsibility for the outbreak of the war, and for not seeing that Germany was only one nation among others. Perhaps no one articulated this critique better than Simmel´s American contact person, Albion Small, in his letter to Simmel dated October 29th, 2014 (Rammstedt & Rammstedt, 2008: 444-451). Perhaps this letter helped Simmel modify or revise his views (Fitzi, 2018). He bemoaned the "suicidal destruction" at the cost of "European values" (Fitzi and Rammstedt 1999: 54), which made authorities react, involving the rector of University of Strasbourg, where Simmel was a professor. Only some of his essays on the war could be published, due to official regulations (Fitzi, 2018: 138). Simmel´s position on the war is controversial, contested, complex and dynamic. It is difficult to disentangle his own views from the institutional and cultural pressures at the time (Goodstein, 2017).

We shall not go further into depth here, since the topic is covered competently and extensively in the sources already cited, and since the origins of "Individualismens Former" go back to the period *before* the war.

The content of Individualismens Former

A talk held by Simmel on March 1st, 1910 in Munich (Rammstedt et al., 2015: 690) with the title "Der Individualismus der modernen Zeit", is particularly interesting. The version of it given in GSG 20 (Simmel, 2004) is itself a "reconstruction" made by Otthein Rammstedt (Rammstedt et al., 2015: 690). The reconstruction was made on the basis of a another text by Simmel, "Das Individuum und die Freiheit" published posthumously by Landmann and Susman (Simmel: 1957). Characteristically, a part of this text was missing, presumably because it was "recycled" into another book (Landmann and Susman in Simmel, 1957: 273), but the two texts do not differ in any respect relevant for the following analysis. We use "Der Individualismus" as yardstick in comparison to "Individualismens former."

"Der Individualismus…" has striking similarities with the text published in Spectator. "Only a few changes can be found in the Danish version" (Rammstedt et al, 2015: 690). As these changes are not easily identified in the "Varianten" section of GSG 20 (Rammstedt et al, 2015: 747-748), it is difficult to believe that "Individualismens Former" is a new text originally written in Danish. In fact, Simmel clearly draws on "Der Indiviualismus" "*without re-working it*" (Rammstedt et al. 2015: 690).

In our analysis, "Individualismens Former" consists of 49 paragraphs. Among the 49 paragraphs, 45 paragraphs pass as fair translations of the exact same paragraphs in "Der Individualismus". The 45 paragraphs also appear in the exact same order in the two texts, which effectively undermines the idea that Simmel wrote the Spectator text in Danish. If someone writes the exact same words in the same 45 paragraphs, one after another, it is not a new text. It is a translation.

Two of the remaining sections (Simmel, 1917: 291) elaborate on the relation between freedom and equality in socialism. The third section is merely a brief textual transition away from this topic.

In the fourth and most crucial interesting section, Simmel draws on the two dimensions of individualism, the "quantitative", where individuals become numbers and the "qualitative", where an individual celebrates spiritual uniqueness. In the crucial passage on p. 295, the Spectator text says that "the individualism of the outright free and in principle equally conceived personalities determine the rationalist liberalism of France and England, whereas that kind of individualism, which rests on qualitative uniqueness and irreplaceability rather belongs to German and Scandinavian spirit." (In Danish: "Tysk og skandinavisk Aand".]

The following table unpacks the corresponding terminology in three languages.

In German:	In Danish:	In English:
Deutsch	Tysk	German
Germanish	Germansk	Germanic

This passage is interesting and absolutely crucial for two reasons. First, the text associates Simmel´s dimensions of individualism with different nationalities. The way it is done is remarkable in two ways. First, Simmel´s earlier distinction between "Roman" and "Germanic" individualism is now replaced with a distinction between the main powers of the Entente (France and England) on one side and Germany on the other. This change already occurred in "Der Individualismus". But "Individualismens Former" brings a second innovation. Now, "German" and "Scandinavian" are positioned side by side. This is different from "Der Individualismus…" which talks about "germanischen Geistes"

(GSG 24: 257). As the table shows, the direct translation of this term would be "germansk" in Danish (Germanic in English).

The text in Spectator, however, does not say "germansk", but instead "German and Scandinavian." To reiterate, there is nothing in "Der Individualismus" about anything Scandinavian.

Nevertheless, the peculiarity of this choice is made very transparent, as Rammstedt et al (2015: 57-67) generously offer a back translation of "Individualismens former" into German. Quite loyal to the Danish version, the back translation says "dem deutschen und skandinavischen Geist" (not "germanischen"). If "germanischen" had seamlessly represented itself in the two terms "tysk" and "skandinavisk", then the back translation would have returned "germanischen." Evidently, it did not.

The rhetoric benefit of replacing "Germanic" could be to reposition the German spirit and the Scandinavian spirit side by side, as brother and sister. There could also have been a particular motive not to use the term "germansk" in the Spectator text. (We shall return to this point below).

Finally, the title is changed from "Der Individualismus der modernen Zeit" (The Individualism of The Modern Time) to "Individualismens Former" (The Forms of Individualism). Perhaps there was in interest in not appearing to offer a cultural critique of modern times in general, but instead to direct the reader´s attention to the forms of individualism and the way the text connects them to national entities.

If Simmel did *not* have command of the Danish language, he did *not* write the text in Danish. As long as we look at German texts only, "Der Individualismus" was probably used *"without re-working it"* as acknowledged by Rammstedt et al (2015: 690). It is therefore more likely that someone with command of both German and Danish modified "Der Individualismus" (or a text very closely similar to this reconstructed version of Simmel´s 1910 talk) on a

few, but critical points and presented the result as an "original" with the title "Individualismens Former". This person might well be the editor of Spectator, Louis von Kohl.

Louis von Kohl, editor

Louis von Kohl was born in Copenhagen in 1882. His family came originally from Germany, but his family members had served Danish authorities for several generations. His father was an officer in the Danish army (Düring Jørgensen, 2007: 455). Already at the age of eight, Louis von Kohl attended a school where he cultivated his interest in languages and developed strong skills, particularly in German (Düring Jørgensen, 2007: 456).

As a young adult, he was involved in art, cinema as well as teaching and translation jobs, but failed to gain a stable income. At the request of Harald Høffding, Danish philosopher, von Kohl translated Nietzsche´s "Also sprach Zarathustra" into Danish.

After a public controversy in newspapers about Nietzsche, von Kohl declared publicly that he was "German-friendly." In his memoirs, he declares that it is not "unpatriotic" from a Danish perspective to appreciate "Germany´s rich spiritual life and its political tragedy" (von Kohl, no date, 277). He also states that it has become "impossible to say something true without being accused of treason." He believes that patriotism "makes history rotten" (von Kohl, no date: 277), but no nation is a better than any other when it comes to the corrupting effects of patriotism (von Kohl, no date: 286). Von Kohl quotes the Danish national anthem according to which the Danish king made sure that the "helmet and brain of the "Gothic" enemy were smashed" (von Kohl, no date: p. 286).

During World War I, von Kohl was involved in several journals, including Spectator, which he edited, as well as other publishing activities. He translated a book about "Germany´s next war" written in 1912 by Friedrich Bernhardi, a German general and military theorist. The Danish version came out in 1915. Later, von Kohl justified this step by saying that the book allows enemies of

Germany to see what German militarism is like (von Kohl, no date: 273). He also played a leading role in a press agency, "Udenlandsk Pressebureau" ("Foreign Press Agency").

I 1917, he gained control over a publishing house, Nordiske Forfatteres Forlag (Nordic Authors´ Publishing). Under this aegis, von Kohl translated and published several books which were strongly critical of the Entente powers. Some of these books were more characterized by propaganda, agitation and caricature than by analysis. He also got engaged in commercial trade with paper for newspapers (Düring Jørgensen, 2007: 488). During WWI, von Kohl became wealthier than ever before (During Jørgensen, 2007: 457).

After the end of the war, he was accused of being a German agent. He found it difficult to remain in Denmark, and emigrated to Germany. He returned to Denmark in 1938, where he assumed work for the secret police (During Jørgensen, 2007: 472) and made several contacts with high-ranking Danish politicians. He continued to be paid for the provision of information to the Danish police until August 1944 (During Jørgensen, 2007: 476).

Denmark was occupied by German forces on April 9th, 1940. In 1941, von Kohl published "Lænkerne Brydes" ("The Chains are being broken") where he offered an interpretation of WW1 and the Versailles treaty that was strongly favorable to the German point of view. On April 1st that year, he overtook the management of "Presse-Information", an apparently innocent name for the press service of the German occupational forces. He also had some editorial responsibilities at "Fædrelandet", ("The Fatherland"), which was the official newspaper of the Danish Nazis. He never appeared particularly enthusiastic about the Nazi ideology, but his active work for the German cause and his engagement in German propaganda was problematic in itself.

After the end of WWII, he was captured and charged. On March 24, 1949, he was sentenced to one year´s imprisonment because of

his propaganda activities, but after an appeal, he was found not guilty on September 8th, 1950. Although the court acknowledged that he had served pro-German interests, he had "limited" his activities, he had kept Danish authorities informed, and he was never accused of violent activities or espionage (During Jørgensen, 2007: 454). He had operated in a highly problematic and ambiguous territory, which made him publicly despicable in Denmark, but he just managed, by a narrow margin, to escape serious legal repercussions.

Quite evidently, von Kohl´s activities during WWII cannot be used to draw conclusions about his activities during WWI, when his editorship of Spectator took place. Nevertheless, the story of his entire life reveals a quite consistent set of pro-German sympathies and a constant willingness to engage in agitation and propaganda.

According to his own view, constructed retrospectively in his memoirs, he believes that no nation is better than any other nation, when it comes to patriotism and propaganda. He also sympathized with Germany and felt sadness for Germany´s fate after both of the wars. He pragmatically mixed strategic concerns and moral justifications. This might be the case when he suddenly expressed solidarity people in Ireland, Finland or India, or others who were oppressed under the Entente powers at the time. It is questionable, however, whether he would have brought these arguments up, were it not for the fact that everything that might delegitimize the Entente seemed to be useful in his argumentation.

In sum, his general view is non-ideological and pragmatic, bordering on the cynical. "The human being is not a truth-seeking animal" (von Kohl, no date: 312). When it came to issues related to the destiny of Germany, he claimed to use "more intense and passionate words" "out of love for his German teachers" (von Kohl, no date: 290).

At the same time, von Kohl believed that if someone wants propaganda, of course they have to pay for it. From a publisher´s viewpoint, it required good money to support whitebooks and

propaganda literature, because these things had to be nicely printed, and were still difficult to sell (von Kohl, no date: 320).

If these orientations characterized von Kohl´s subjective views, only the infrastructure provided by the German propaganda machinery in Denmark during WWI offered the necessary objective conditions for his work. These conditions included substantial streams of money.

The German propaganda machinery in Denmark during WWI

After Louis von Kohl declared in public to be "German-friendly" in the Spring of 1915, he was contacted by the German envoy to Denmark at the time, Ulrich Graf von Brockdorff-Rantzau. The two confided, and von Kohl assumed a role similar to a modern "spin doctor" (Düring Jørgensen, 2007: 457).

Together, they identified a number of publishing activities where von Kohl took on a leading role. An attempt was made to take over a Danish newspaper, "Vort Land". To do this, the German authorities set aside 100,000 DKK, an amount which testifies to the strong willingness of German authorities to exert influence in Denmark.

Even if the attempt failed at last minute, von Kohl received two months´ salary for his efforts. Although he declared that the money needed for the operation was under control of a Danish lawyer, von Kohl was in fact paid by German authorities to take part in this take-over (Düring Jørgensen, 2007: 492).

Although von Kohl euphemistically talked about "the people who had made the capital available for me" (von Kohl, no date: 294) and denied that the journal Spectator was also funded with German money, the German envoy to Denmark, Brockdorff-Rantzau, wrote to the German Reichskanzler that a sum of 10,000 DKK was

already transferred "als Subvention für die von ihm in Verein mit anderen Unternehmern gegründete Zeitschrift "Spectator"" ("as subsidy to his established journal Spectator along with other activities") (Düring Jørgensen, 1982: 142). This happened at a time where five issues of Spectator had already been published (Düring Jørgensen, 1982: 142). It can be verified in communication between Rantzau and the German Foreign Ministry December 24, 1915 (Rigsarkivet, box 187).

If a journalist under normal circumstances earned, say, 500 DKK per month, von Kohl received the equivalent of 20 months salary merely to cover basic start-up costs. In other words, Spectator was from the beginning made possible by substantial financial resources provided by the German representation in Denmark. In a letter Rantzau described to the German authorities how von Kohl, "without doubt a gifted publisher", could be useful if only "his temper could be kept under control" (Rigsarkivet, box 101).

The German envoy to Denmark also helped secure subscriptions to the journal, but this subvention was confidential, so von Kohl was, according to his own memoirs, unable to talk about it at the time (von Kohl, no date: 296). In addition, von Kohl managed to sell subscriptions to important stakeholders in Denmark such as The National Bank, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and major Danish companies such as Store Nordiske Telegraf-kompagni og Østasiatisk Kompagni. In other words, von Kohl maneuvered discretely, trying to promote German interests, but in a subtle and discrete way under an apparently innocent official appearance. This style of work can be understood in the context of the complexity of the strategic communicative situation in which the German representation in Denmark found itself at the time.

Germany feared to be isolated. England had cut Germany´s transatlantic cables (During Jørgensen, 2013: 377). Denmark, which remained neutral, offered a great opportunity to circulate German-friendly views. However, at the same time, the strategic communicative situation in Denmark was sensitive for geopolitical

reasons: Denmark was a small, weak neighbour to Germany, at the time a massive political and military power. Furthermore, the imbalance between the two countries had been particularly exacerbated since the war in 1864, where Denmark lost a large portion of Southern Jutland. As a consequence, about 20,000 Danish-minded young men south of the border were mobilized as soldiers in WWI for a German cause for which they had no sympathy. About 5000 of them died in the trenches.

The Germans were, in von Kohls view, very poor propagandists. In contradistinction to the British, who can use humor and whose greatest heroes also have faults, Germans try to give the impression that their soldiers and bureaucrats are perfect (von Kohl, no date: 308). The Germans are, according to Kohl, "soul searchers, philosophers, poets and mystics", but they are not well acquainted with how human the human mind operates (von Kohl, no date: 309). In terms of propaganda, Germans made things worse for themselves, as von Kohl saw it.

For all these reasons, a large part of the German propaganda machine had to operate discretely. For example, separate addresses were used. The propaganda was also facilitated through particular channels with carefully chosen, apparently independent names. The name of the press agency was first "Udenrigsk Pressetjeneste" ("Foreign Press Service"), which resonated so much with "Udenrigsministeriet" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) that it later had to be changed to "Udenlandsk Pressetjeneste" ("Foreign Press Service"). The name of the journal "Spectator" reminds one about a famous English journal of the same name. The meaning is similar to that of "Tilskueren" ("the spectator"), which was already a respected journal for culture and debate at the time. The spelling of Spectator with a "c" reminds one of a Latin or English word, whereas "Spektator", which would have worked as well in Danish, would be reminiscent of a German spelling.

Von Kohl was no fan of "wild propaganda." He had no illusions about the effectiveness of the propaganda on the general attitude of the Danish people (von Kohl, no date: 321). He believed that one of the best strategies would be to provide negative facts about the enemies of Germany (von Kohl, no date: 319). Interestingly enough, von Kohl constantly referred to the official neutrality of Denmark when justifying his own position. In his view, neutrality would mean tilting the balance a little bit in favor of a more "balanced" view.

It was therefore beneficial to the German cause not to be identified with its most outrageous advocates. This view was presumably consistent with the view of Brockdorff-Rantzau, who was in dialogue with the Danish minister of foreign affairs, Erik Scavenius. By showing moderation on his side, Rantzau could ask Scavenius to do the same (During Jørgensen, 2013: 373).

Von Kohl later took pride in showing how little of the material in Spectator had anything to do with the war. His ideal for Spectator was an enlightened, interesting, and sophisticated journal that revealed a tendency in favor of Germany only in the most subtle and discrete ways, again under the flag of "balanced" "neutrality".

When he was later accused of working for Germany, von Kohl argued that very little of the content in Spectator actually was originating from Germany. This argument served him well in two ways. During WWI, the concealment of the German sources of information helped polish the image of objectivity and independence, which von Kohl wanted for his journal. Long after the war, he used the same argument to demonstrate that he was not working particularly for German interests.

These concerns perhaps explains why the editor claimed that Simmel had written the text in Danish. The less German, the better. The operations and strategies of the German propaganda machine in Denmark also helps us understand the small, but crucial textual differences between "Der Individualismus" and "Individualismens former."

As part of the German propaganda machinery in WWI, special attention was given to the sensitivity of the term *"Germanisch"* ("Germanic.") In a report by Anton Hollmann (special cultural advisor to the German envoi to Denmark), it was noted that Danish hatred towards the Germans was extensive at the time, and in particular that the term "Germanisch" triggered nausea among the Danish. Hollmann therefore concluded that any strategy which suggested a tribal community among all "Germanic" people, including the Danes, were bound to fail (Düring Jørgensen, 2013: 374).

Hollmann´s document was used as "a starting point for the German propaganda strategy in Denmark" (Düring Jørgensen, 2013: 373, footnote 652), and could not have been unknown to von Kohl. If he acted accordingly, he had a motivation to change Simmel´s term "Germanisch" into the much more innocent terms "German" and "Scandinavian."

In almost all other respects, Simmel´s text, "Der Individualismus…" fitted perfectly into von Kohl´s plans and strategies. It was not bluntly propagandistic (it was in fact written before the war). Based on apparently advanced cultural analysis (which also passes in undigested form as an academic contribution many years later (!) (Christensen et al, 2019)), it nevertheless presents the Germanic form of individualism as more sophisticated than the French and British. The tone, voice, and message was therefore perfect for Spectator—except for the term "Germanisch." This term was uncomfortable under the circumstances and had to be deliberately lost in translation. Instead, the innovative translation of "Germanisch" into "Tysk og Skandinavisk" left the Germans and the Scandinavians respectfully side by side, not suggesting any tribal subordination of the Danes to the superpower south of the border.

By falsely declaring that the "new text" was originally written in Danish, von Kohl could kill two birds with one stone. He would

mask the original German origin of the contribution to Spectator and make his manipulation of the text less blunt. Only a reader who did not suspect that the editor might be bluffing would get the idea that perhaps an original German text existed. Furthermore, only a very suspicious reader would identify the original version and compare it diligently to the version appearing in Spectator. It took about 105 years for anyone to do that. So von Kohl´s trick served him well for a long time.

No trusting relationship

We cannot determine exactly how much Simmel knew about the exact formulations in Danish in "Individualismens Former." But we exclude that a proper academic practice took place, namely that Simmel would sit down with a trusted person competent in Danish to review the Danish text in Spectator in the ready-to-print version and that Simmel would receive a copy of the printed version. Such a process would have made it clear to Simmel that the Danish editor of Spectator provided false information to his readers and could not be trusted. It is unlikely that Simmel would have accepted a lie about the origins of his own text and about his own language skills. Simmel was known for speculative thinking, and for a problematic standpoint towards the war, but not for lying.

It is not impossible that Simmel would have accepted the replacement of "Germanisch" with "German and Scandinavian" in the Danish version, but it is unlikely. He did not usually analyze anything Scandinavian. If he used that strategy in Denmark, would he say to for example his Dutch colleagues, that "Germanisch" really meant "German and Dutch"? Such rhetorical strategy could lead to great confusion.

If von Kohl intended to lie about the provience of the text anyway, why would he bother to consult Simmel during the production of the text? It would, of course, be impossible to explain his editorial remark to Simmel. Add to this that Simmel was always extremely busy with talks and publications, not the least his

Lebensanschuung (Philosophy of life), which he managed to complete before his death 1918, the year after "Individualismens Former" appeared. And last, but not least: His country was at war. It is not likely that Simmel spent much time and energy on any verification of a text appearing in Danish in a country "far away."

Given von Kohl´s style of work, and given the fact that he must have been fairly busy with Spectator as a *weekly* publication, as well as with several other publications from 1917 onwards (Düring Jørgensen 1982-83), he probably decided in favor of a quickly written, manipulative editorial remark. He did not devote much time to consider any potential consequences. In its own beautiful way, the falsity of von Kohls statement that Simmel wrote the original text in Danish provided a first line of defense against accusations of manipulation, exactly because Simmel and most other Germans did not understand Danish.

If von Kohl had already lied in the editorial remark, a manipulative change of the word "Germanisch" in his own (concealed) translation of the text would pass as one of the minor tricks that he played in his professional life in propaganda. The editor would be vulnerable if the truth about Simmel´s lack of skills in Danish were exposed one day. He would probably not want to meet Simmel in person. But this was presumable the least of von Kohl´s problems. He worked for a foreign power, he constantly lacked money, and a war was going on.

In the research leading up to this article, no evidence was found of contact between Louis von Kohl and Georg Simmel. It is unlikely that the two of them interacted in a long-standing relationship based on trust, because von Kohl would probably not share his lie about Simmel´s language skills with Simmel himself, as already mentioned.

We can only speculate about how von Kohl got his hand on Simmel´s text, "Der Individualismus…". It could have reached him in at least three different ways.

Since von Kohl travelled to Berlin at least three times in between from 1915 to 1917 (von Kohl, no year), he could have met Simmel or heard him speak. In Germany, Kohl might also have heard about the text and picked it up from someone who happened to be in possession hereof.

Simmel could also have sent his text to Høffding, with whom he communicated, and Høffding could have sent it to von Kohl, whom he regarded as a competent translator. But Høffding did not share Simmel´s views on the war, which he clearly revealed in direct communication with Simmel (Rammstedt & Rammstedt, 2008: 692). If von Kohl then further promoted Simmel´s views, and lied about the provenience of the text, it would have left Høffding in an awkward position. He would have connected two persons, one of whom lied about the other. Høffding spoke Danish and knew German well, so he would be one of the few persons best positioned to see that von Kohl lied and bluffed.

Finally, the German foreign ministry ("Auswärtiges Amt") facilitated contact between German intellectuals, cultural personalities etc. and the German representations abroad. The line of communication between Simmel and von Kohl might have gone through Auswärtiges Amt or some middlemen. Rantzau, the German envoi to Denmark, in fact asked the authorities in Berlin to establish contacts with respectable German intellectuals and artists who could help promote an understanding of the German cause in a subtle, unpolitical way (Düring Jørgensen, 1982-83: 144).

In a letter of August 31, 1917, the authorities in Berlin suggested that von Kohl contacted Heinrich von Gleichen-Russwurms, who was the leader of "Geschäftsstelle des Bundes deutscher Gelehrter und Kunstler" (an association of Germen intellectuals and artists) (Rigsarkivet, box 101). The purpose of this organization was to facilitate a positive impression of German culture outside of Germany.

Gleichen-Russwurms wrote to the press attaché of the German envoy to Stockholm of September 23, 1917 to discuss a potential

series of talks by Simmel in Copenhagen, Lund, Uppsala and Stockholm. Simmel mentioned these plans in a letter to Anna Jastrow dated September 30th, 1917 (Rammstedt & Rammstedt, 2008: 834). Simmel knew that the purpose of this trip was "unpolitical", as his talk would only serve indirectly as "propaganda for Germany" due to the "quality of the performance" (Rammstedt & Rammstedt, 2008: 834). This understanding was in line with von Kohl´s view of how propaganda worked best.

In his letter of September 23, Gleichen-Russwurms mentioned a peculiar thing about Simmel´s language skills: That Simmel speaks Danish. He could have gotten this "information" from Louis von Kohl and/or Spectator if contact between them were established as a result of the recommendation from German authorities a few weeks earlier. If that is the case, there remains no independent sources claiming that Simmel knew Danish. It all boils down to one source and a problematic one, indeed.

However, if von Kohl were to arrange an event in Copenhagen, where Simmel were expected to speak in Danish, it would have exposed von Kohl´s lie. Simmel´s trip to Scandinavia never materialized for reasons that he explained only euphemistically in a letter of November 8th, 1917 (Rammstedt et al, 2008: 864).

We cannot establish with certainty how von Kohl got hold of Simmel´s text. He might well have gotten it through the authorities or other connections in Berlin. When Gleichen-Russwurms then suggested to send a "Danish-speaking" Simmel on a tour to Scandinavia, von Kohl must have frowned. He could have invented a phony reason to cancel Simmel´s appearance in Copenhagen.

If our interpretation of the history of "Individualismens Former" is correct, it would have been highly inconvenient for the editor of Spectator to meet the author of this text in person.

Conclusion

It is time to sum up. There is no substantial support to the assertions that Simmel knew Danish, and that he wrote "Individualismens Former" in Danish. An analysis shows that 45 of its 49 sections are direct translations of the prototype found in "Der Individualismus". In one of the reaining passages, the crucial change of the term "The Germanic spirit" into the "German and the Scandinavian spirit" was probably made by Louis von Kohl, translator and editor of Spectator. This change was consistent with explicit strategies on the non-use of the term "Germanisch" by German authorities in Denmark during WWI as well as with von Kohl´s subtle practice as German propagandist and editor of Spectator secretly funded by German authorities.

He covered his dubious translation under a lie in the introductory editorial remark, thus supplying the Danish text with an air of Simmel´s authority as an original author.

The fact that that von Kohl´s small but important manipulation of Simmel´s text was not discovered for many years testifies to the shrewdness of his style of work. As he stated in his memoirs: *"The good wanderer leaves neither footprints nor traces*" (von Kohl, no date: 441). However, he probably went a step too far with his editorial remark. His ambiguous balancing act in fact did leave traces, although it took 105 years and a combination of several streams of research to identify them.

Our study is a reminder of how financial support to apparently innocent journals influence the editorial line and the editing of texts in subtle and less subtle ways. Our study also underlines the importance of paying close attention to issues of *translation* of texts in social science. A translation is a result of an interplay of political, strategic, communicative and personal factors. The precarious nature of this interplay is particular intense in times of war. Therefore, the contemporary relevance of our case study is striking and sinister. In times of war, we must be on our toes when we interpret texts, whether they are "originally written" or "translated",

and whether or not editors and translators, not to mention manipulators, leave more or less visible footprints and traces.

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