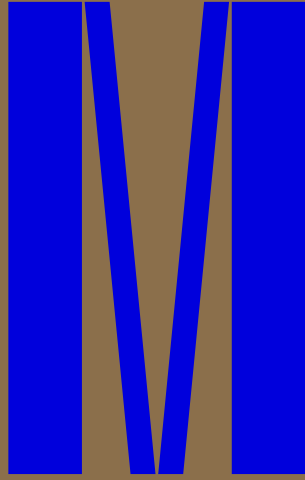


MASARYK
UNIVERSITY
DOCTOR
HONORIS
CAUSA



Herbert Leon Kessler
Jeffrey Charles Alexander

**MASARYK
UNIVERSITY
DOCTOR HONORIS
CAUSA AWARD
CEREMONY 2023**

**THURSDAY 26 OCTOBER 2023
FROM 10AM, DURATION OF THE CEREMONY
APPROX. 100 MIN.**

**KAREL ENGLIŠ GREAT HALL
FACULTY OF LAW
VEVEŘÍ 70**

PROGRAMME OF THE CEREMONY

To the accompaniment of a fanfare, the following academic dignitaries will take their places in the auditorium in order:

members of the scientific councils of MUNI

Vice-Deans of MUNI

Bursar and President of AS MUNI

Deans of MUNI and their representatives

Vice-rectors of MUNI

Rectors and other representatives of universities

moderating Vice-Rector Jiří Hanuš

promoter Irena Radová

promoter Stanislav Balík

Ivan Folletti for FF MUNI

Adéla Souralová for FSS MUNI

Herbert L. Kessler, doctor honoris causa in spe

Jeffrey C. Alexander, doctor honoris causa in spe

Rector Martin Bareš

The anthems of the Czech Republic, the European Union and the United States of America will be played.

Jiří Hanuš will take over the opening ceremony.

Ivan Foletti will introduce Herbert L. Kessler.

Adéla Souralová will present Jeffrey C. Alexander.

Jiří Hanuš will ask for approval for the Rector's graduation.

Rector Bareš speech and his approval of the graduation

Reading of the graduation vows

Graduation of Herbert L. Kessler

Speech of the new Honorary Doctor of MUNI

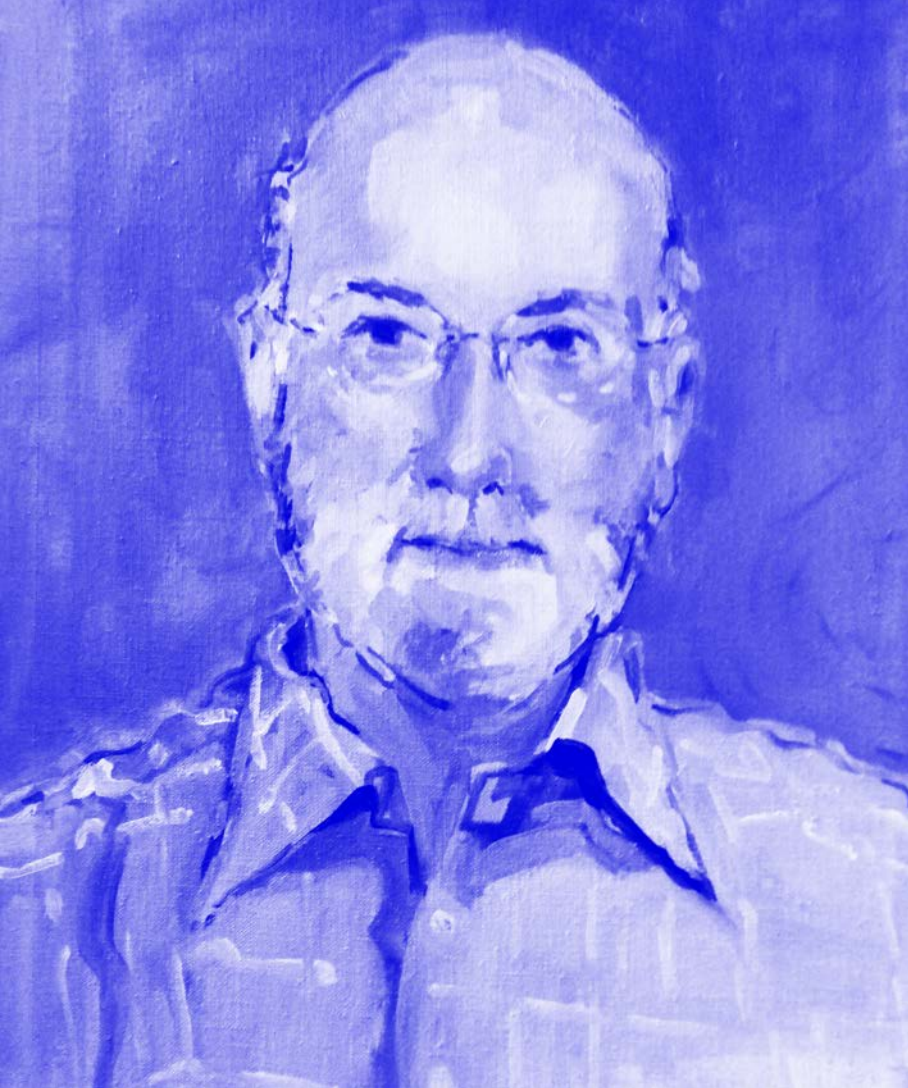
Graduation of Jeffrey C. Alexander

Speech of the new Honorary Doctor of MUNI

The musical performance will feature the arietta "Amor, fammi goder" by an unknown Italian composer from the second half of the 17th century, the period of the happy flowering of opera. Sung by Kateřina Naučová with piano accompaniment by Vladimír Richter.

Jiří Hanuš will close the ceremony.

The robed academic dignitaries leave the auditorium to a fanfare.



Herbert Leon Kessler

**DOCTOR HONORIS CAUSA
IN MEDIEVAL ART HISTORY**

HERBERT LEON KESSLER

Born on July 20, 1941, Chicago Illinois, United States of America.

KEY RESEARCH INTERESTS

history of medieval art, Byzantine art, manuscript illumination, medieval Rome, theory and aesthetics of medieval art.

EDUCATION

1961–1965 Princeton University (MFA, Ph.D.)

1958–1961 University of Chicago (BA)

POSITION HELD (SELECTED)

Since 2014 Masaryk University, Brno, Invited Professor

2018-2019 Williams College, Williamstown MA, Croghan
Bicentennial Visiting Professor

2007 Emory University, Atlanta GA, Alonzo
McDonald Professor of Theology

2006–2007 Williams College, Williamstown MA, Croghan
Bicentennial Visiting Professor

2000 Harvard University, Cambridge MA, Department of the
History of Art and Architecture, Visiting Professor

AWARDS AND HONORS RECEIVED (SELECTED)

2021 Gold Medal, Fundación Santa María la
Real, Aguilar de Campoo, Spain

2013 Diploma honoris causa, Faculty of Philosophy,
Masaryk University, Brno Czech Republic

2010 Gastwissenschaftler, Kunsthistorisches
Institut in Florenz, Florence, Italy

SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES (SELECTED)

Since 2016 Ars mediaevalis conferences (Aguilar de Campoo)
(co-director with G. Boto and A. Aviles)

2018–2021 La Capraia Center, Naples, member of advisory board

2010–2011 Treasures of Heaven exhibition, Cleveland, Baltimore,
London, member of advisory committee

2008–2009 Giotto. Le vie nuove dell'arte italiana exhibition,
Rome, member of comitato scientifico

- 2007-2010 Medieval Academy of America, Vice President and President
 2000 École des Hautes Études en Sciences
 Sociales, Paris, Directeur d'Études invité
 1997-2000 Vatican and City of Rome, Volto Santo exhibition,
 co-organizer (with G. Morello and G. Wolf)

EDITORIAL BOARDS MEMBERSHIP (SELECTED)

- Eikón Imago (from 2018, scientific committee)
 Codex Aqvilarensis (since 2015, editorial committee)
 Convivium: Seminarium Kondakovianum series nova (from 2014, editor)
 Iconographica (since 2012, advisory committee)
 Arte medievale (since 2003, comitato scientifico)

ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS (SELECTED)

- H. L. Kessler, *Visible Truth*, University of Murcia, Murcia, 2023
 H. L. Kessler, S. Romano, *A Hub of Art In, Out, and Around Venice, 1177-1499*, Centre for Early Medieval Studies, Brno, 2020
 H. L. Kessler, *Experiencing Medieval Art*, University of Toronto Press, 2019. (Spanish translation: *La Experiencia del Arte Medieval*, Akal, Madrid, 2022; Italian translation: *L'esperienza medievale dell'arte*, Rome: Officina Libraria, 2023.
 H. L. Kessler, R. Newhauser, *Optics, Ethics, and Art in the Thirteenth and Looking into Peter of Limoges's Moral Treatise on the Eye*, Pontifical Institute for Mediaeval Studies, Toronto, 2018
 Roman Veronica in the Middle Ages, Centre for Early Medieval Studies, Brno, 2017
 A. Murphy, H. L. Kessler, M. Petoletti, E. Duffy, and G. Milanese, *The European Fortune of the F. Dell'Acqua*, A. Cutler, H. L. Kessler, A. Shalem, G. Wolf, *The Salerno Ivories. Objects, Histories, Contexts*, Gebr. Mann, Berlin, 2016
 I. Foletti, H. L. Kessler, *Many Romes. Studies in Honor of Hans Belting*, Centre for Early Medieval Studies, Brno, 2015
 H. L. Kessler, *Neither God nor Man. Texts, Pictures, and the Anxiety of Medieval Art*, Rombach, Freiburg im Breisgau, 2007 (Czech translation. *Words, Pictures and the Anxiety of Medieval Art*, Center for Early Medieval Studies, Masaryk University, Brno, 2016).
 H. L. Kessler, *Seeing Medieval Art*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2004. (French translation: *L'œil médiéval*, Éditions Klincksieck, Paris, 2015)
 H. L. Kessler, *Old St. Peter's and Church Decoration in Medieval Italy*, Centro italiano di Studi sull'alto medioevo, Spoleto, 2002

LAUDATIO

Herbert L. Kessler: visionary interpreter of medieval visual culture **Ivan Foletti**

Your Magnificence, Mr. Rector, honorabiles, spectabiles, distinguished members of the scientific councils, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to introduce Professor Herbert Leon Kessler, the world's leading expert in art history. Herbert Kessler was born in 1941 in Chicago and studied art history at the University of Chicago and Princeton University. Kessler defended his dissertation on the Karl Holý Bible in 1965, and its findings were published in 1971 in the prestigious scholarly journal *The Art Bulletin*. A few years later, in 1977, a monograph based on his dissertation was also published.

From the 1960s to the 1980s, Kessler worked closely with the Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies at Harvard University, where he established close and lasting relationships with the world's leading scholars of the time. In 1965, Kessler returned to Chicago, where he served first as an assistant professor in the Department of Art History, then was promoted to associate professor (1968-1975), and finally, in 1975, became - at the age of 34 - the youngest full professor ever at the university. The following year, however, he decided to move to one of America's most prestigious universities, Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, where he was a professor in the Department of Art History from 1976-2013.

During this time, Kessler gradually became one of the most important scholars of his generation in the field of medieval art history. He has studied monuments from late antiquity to the end of the Middle Ages. In parallel, however, Kessler is not afraid to cross disciplinary boundaries, as is evident, for example, in his collaboration with the philologist Paul Dutton. Moreover, his research has extended over the years across centuries and geographic units, from "Byzantium" to the global Mediterranean to Great Britain. Such a broad field of scholarship has also led him to collaborate with some of the world's finest institutions: in the last two decades, these have included the *École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales*, Harvard University, Williams College, the Medieval Academy of America, the Max-Planck-Institut in Florence and Rome, and Masaryk University.

Herbert Kessler's activities in the Czech Republic are mainly connected to his ten-year collaboration with MU. This began in 2013 with the lecture *Cotton Genesis in situ*, which "sold out" the lecture hall at the Museum of Decorative Arts in Brno. His role in the founding of the international journal *Convivium* was also crucial, and in the brief time of its existence, it has earned, undoubtedly thanks to Kessler, an exceptional position in the field.

To understand Herbert Kessler's contribution to world art history, however, one more aspect needs to be mentioned. It is the incredible generosity with which he has given, and continues to give, to young scholars across the planet. More than one budding scholar has been surprised to receive a letter in his inbox from one of the biggest stars in the field. These letters often begin with the

words: "I read your great article and would love to meet you." Through these contacts with younger generations of scholars, Kessler has thus managed to build a unique scholarly platform across America and Europe, from which all contemporary art historians around the world benefit in one way or another.

Herbert Kessler is therefore one of the most important living art historians of our time: this is evidenced not only by his innovative output and its global reception, but also by the institutions that associate their names with him. At the same time, Kessler is one of the truly generous experts in our field, and it is a great honour and pleasure that, starting today, his relationship with MU is becoming permanent.

SOLEMN OATH

Distinguished sir, before I confer upon you this title in appreciation of your extraordinary scientific merits and exceptional competences, we must observe the ancient custom which requires those about to be presented with this academic title to take a solemn oath.

Distinguished sir, because you have contributed to the development of our university and provided others with an example worthy of following, I hereby ask you to swear:

First of all, that you shall forever maintain your allegiance to this university, which bears the illustrious name of Masaryk, forever keep your friendship and continue to support it with all your strength.

Moreover, that you shall continue to cultivate the development of human knowledge so that its light shines ever brighter. And finally, that you shall remain in the future as you are now, unchanging.

Do you swear and promise to do so to the best of your knowledge and belief?

I SWEAR AND I PROMISE .

Now that I have gratefully received your solemn oath, I, the duly constituted promoter, by the authority bestowed upon me, proclaim you,

HERBERT LEON KESSLER ,
HONORARY DOCTOR
IN THE FIELD OF MEDIEVAL ART HISTORY .

I hereby publicly declare your appointment and grant you the rights and privileges associated with this title. As proof, I present you with this diploma, bearing the seal of Masaryk University, and confer upon you the Gold Medal of this university.

S P E E C H

Hebert Leon Kessler

Your magnificence Mr. Rector, respected notables, distinguished members of scientific councils, honoured guests:

Receiving an honorary doctorate from Masaryk University is not only a momentous tribute but also particularly affecting personally. I was born in a city that hosted the third largest Czech population in the world (at the time bigger than Brno's). Growing up in Chicago, I went to school with kids named Bartusek, Hruska, and Novak. As an undergraduate at the University of Chicago, I later walked to and from classes past a formidable bronze and granite monument memorializing Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk accomplishments constructed by the Moravian sculptor Albin Polášek. (Masaryk had lectured at the University just after the turn of the century; Polášek taught at the Art Institute of Chicago for three decades.) Both Masaryk and Polášek stood on the periphery of my biography. My mother, a painter, had trained at the Art Institute when Polášek taught there, and she followed Masaryk's daughter, Alice, to work at Jane Addams' Hull House.

An interest in the then-dominant Chicago architect Mies van der Rohe led to my awareness of Brno; his Villa Tugendhat initiated the modernism he came to develop in so many of the buildings that graced my hometown. After becoming a Byzantinist, I discovered further ties with this city and country. In conversation with the great Church historian Francis Dvornik at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington DC in the early 1960s, I learned about the importance of the Chicago businessman and diplomat Charles Crane (whose daughter married Jan Masaryk) in underwriting Byzantine studies and preserving many of the monuments I was studying.

Such connections notwithstanding, I learned almost nothing about Czech art. My Ph.D. dissertation engaged the Velislav Bible (in the Czech National Library), but I knew the fascinating fourteenth-century manuscript only from photos because Americans were virtually barred from entering the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. When I took a position at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore in the 1970s, I did come to know firsthand one of the greatest works of medieval art from this land and could incorporate it into my teaching: the Walters Art Museum's spectacular fourteenth-century Crown of Thorns reliquary made for Bishop John Volek of Olomouc. This very masterpiece greeted the throngs of visitors to Prague: The Crown of Bohemia, the 2005 exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, opening my eyes (as myriad others') to the dazzling riches produced on Czech soil during the reigns of Charles IV and his sons Wenceslaus and Sigismund.

By 2013, I was well prepared psychologically to accept Professor Ivan Foletti's invitation to this amazing country. My first visit with my wife Johanna Zacharias a decade ago only confirmed my sense that I remained woefully ignorant of the Czech Republic's exceptionally rich medieval artistic heritage. Starting off with Klara Benešová's tour of St. Vitus cathedral in Prague, which included an agon between my compelling desire to see face-to-face the Peter

Parler sculptures in the clerestory and a nearly paralyzing acrophobia. (Torn between pleasure and pain, I identified with the blessed and the damned pictured in the transept mosaic.) On a return trip, I benefited from a privileged tour of Karlstejn with Professor Benešová and students from Masaryk University, an infinitely engaging monument that, had I another life, I would have made my life's work.

My destination on that first trip and later visits, however, was Brno, where Professor Foletti was inaugurating a Centre for Early Medieval Studies. With Johanna, I cut the ribbon (we celebrated its anniversary two days ago); both of us have been active participants in the Centre's work and its publications. It is about them that I would like to address my final remarks.

The Centre for Early Medieval Studies is now an established, transformative force driving research in medieval art throughout the world. With support from the Rector's office and, at the start, from Ondrej Jakubec, Professor Foletti assembled a staff, amassed resources, and built a facility and library that, in a few short years, has re-centred the entire field. Medieval art history, previously focused on the art of Byzantium and western Europe, now looks, from Brno, in all directions to include the Caucasus and Slavic lands, the Levant, and Africa. As important, the Centre has expanded the discipline's methods beyond traditional stylistic and iconographic research to encompass developments in anthropology and cognitive science, as well as recent technological innovations. Advancing current interest in historiography, moreover, its members also add the important but mostly inaccessible contributions of Slavic scholarship and history written during the Soviet period. When Brno students set aside their "devices" to emulate medieval pilgrims on treks the Centre organizes to Mont Saint Michel or Ani (in Turkish Armenia), they thus enact in their very persons current art-historical concerns with the experience of art, mental and sensory processes, and ecology and are made conscious of their own place on the lengthening branch of knowledge.

The Centre's publications, in turn, provide scientific outreach, most notably, *Convivium*. Transforming the *Seminarium Kondakovianum*, a journal of Byzantine art published in Prague between the world wars, the Centre's exceptionally beautiful publication has been advancing the same expansive and transformative view of medieval art history. I was present at *Convivium*'s creation; and I am exceptionally proud that an issue of Volume 8 was published in my honour.

Since I first visited Brno a decade ago, Masaryk University has become my European academic home. I have taught here and participated in seminars and conferences. Now, with a doctorate honoris causa, I truly become what my Midwest US school chums Joe Bartusek, Gale Hruska, and Jimmy Novak used to call a "Czechcogan."



Jeffrey Charles Alexander

DOCTOR HONORIS CAUSA
IN THE FIELD OF SOCIOLOGY

JEFFREY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Born on May 30, 1947, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, United States of America

KEY RESEARCH INTERESTS

sociology, cultural sociology

EDUCATION

1978 University of California (Ph.D.)
1969 Harvard College (B.A., cum laude)

POSITIONS HELD (SELECTED)

From 2016 Associate Researcher, Interdisciplinary Graduate School,
Heidelberg Center for American Studies, Heidelberg, Germany
Since 2004 Lillian Chavenson Saden Professor of Sociology,
Yale University, New Haven, USA
1981–2001 Professor, University of California, Los Angeles, USA

AWARDS AND HONORS RECEIVED (SELECTED)

2013 Honorary Doctorate, University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland
2012 The Pitt Professor of American History and Institutions,
Cambridge University, Cambridge, United Kingdom
2009 The Foundation Mattei Dogan Prize in Sociology,
International Sociological Association
2007 Honorary Doctorate, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia

SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES (SELECTED)

2005–2006 Academic Committee Member, Fudan Institute for
Advanced Study in Social Sciences, Chair, Culture
Section, American Sociological Association
1990–1994 Co-Chair, Research Committee on Sociological
Theory, International Sociological Association
1983–1986 Executive Council, Research Committee on the History
of Sociology, International Sociological Association
1983–1984 Chair, Theory Section, American Sociological Association
1979–1982 Council Member, Theory Section, American
Sociological Association

EDITORIAL BOARDS MEMBERSHIP (SELECTED)

Communication and the Public (College of Media and International Culture of Zhejiang University, China) (since 2016)

Irish Journal of Sociology (2014-2017, Associate Editor)

Chinese Journal of Sociology (Shanghai University, China) (since 2014)

The American Journal of Cultural Sociology (since 2012, Co-Editor)

Sociological Theory (2004-2009, Co-Editor)

Theory (2002-2006, Co-Editor)

ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS (SELECTED)

J. C. Alexander, *What Makes a Social Crisis? The Socialization of Social Problems*, Polity Press, 2019

J. C. Alexander, *The Socialization of Social Problems: Church Pedophilia, Phone Hacking, and the Financial Crisis*, *American Sociological Review*, 83 (6): 1049-1078, 2018

J. C. Alexander, *The Drama of Social Life*, Polity Press, 2017

J. C. Alexander, *Cultural trauma, morality and solidarity: the social construction of 'Holocaust' and other mass murders*, *Thesis Eleven*, 132 (1): 3-16, 2016

J. C. Alexander, B. Jaworsky, *Obama Power*, Polity, 2014

J. C. Alexander, *The Fate of the Dramatic in Modern Society: Social Theory and the Theatrical Avant-Garde*, *Theory, Culture & Society*, 31 (1): 3-24, 2014

J. C. Alexander, *The Dark Side of Modernity*, Polity Press, 2013

J. C. Alexander, *Trauma: A Social Theory*, Polity, 2012

J. C. Alexander, *Performative Revolution in Egypt: An Essay in Cultural Power*, Bloomsbury USA, 2011

J. C. Alexander, *Performance and Power*, Polity, 2011

J. C. Alexander, *The Performance of Politics: Obama's Victory and the Democratic Struggle for Power*, Oxford University Press, 2010

Your Magnificence, Mr. Rector, honorabiles, spectabiles, distinguished members of the scientific councils, distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen,

let me introduce Professor Jeffrey C. Alexander, the world's leading expert in the field of cultural sociology. An April 2019 article in *Sociological Quarterly*, "The Prestige Elite in Sociology," included him in a list of the most cited living sociologists. He is the author and senior leader of an influential strong program in cultural sociology, and a recognized innovator in the sociological study of iconicity and social performance. He serves as co-director of the Center for Cultural Sociology at Yale University. He is regularly invited for research fellowships and lectures at leading universities around the world and is one of the keynote speakers at international sociological congresses. His extensive publishing activity includes insightful theoretical analyses as well as popularization texts - both of which have been translated into dozens of languages. His work has significantly influenced the shape of sociology in the 21st century.

His professional life has been associated with two of the most prestigious universities in the world - the University of California, where he completed his doctoral studies and where he served in various academic positions for nearly thirty years; and Yale University, where he has been for the past twenty years.

The cooperation between Masaryk University, or rather the Department of Sociology of the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University, and Professor Alexander began in 2003. Jeffrey C. Alexander soon became not only a collaborator, but also a supporter and an ambassador of sorts for the Department of Sociology in Brno. He has visited it many times since then. In addition to individual lectures, in 2010 he led a several-day intensive proseminar on cultural sociology for master's and doctoral students. Although it was no longer part of his time in the department, he agreed to evaluate the students' final seminar papers. He would send them detailed comments, already from the United States, within a day, often within hours of receiving an email attachment. The interest and support of a world-renowned sociologist in their work was an important, inspiring, and motivating life experience for the students.

Also, thanks to Professor Alexander's recommendation, other top experts came to the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University to give lectures and conference papers: José Casanova, Bernd Giesen, Isaac Reed, Ron Eyerman, Phil Smith, Carlo Tognato, Giuseppe Sciortino and others. At the same time, the Center for Cultural Sociology at Yale University has provided facilities for long-term research fellowships for members of the department and gifted doctoral students over the past fifteen years. Others have been invited to participate in the Center's annual conference or to contribute to its research projects. A former student of Jeffrey Alexander and later co-author of one of his publications, Nadya Jaworsky, is now an established and publications-producing member of the Brno Department of Sociology.

Already in 2006, Jeffrey Alexander wrote a special preface to a scholarly publication produced at the Department of Sociology of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Masaryk University, which included translations of two other texts. Alexander's research interest in sociological research on citizenship is another important contribution to contemporary world sociology. The recent research project on the relationship between citizenship and political populism, which Alexander led, is the latest contribution to sociological understanding of our world. A member of the Department of Sociology in Brno also participated in this project.

Given his almost intimate professional and personal relationship with Masaryk University, and with the city of Brno itself, there is no need to mention the many other good reasons that justify Masaryk University honouring Professor Jeffrey C. Alexander with its highest academic award - an honorary doctorate. Professor, thank you for the enormous mark you have left on our University, Faculty and Department. Thank you for your example as a top social science researcher who inspires not only us, but sociologists around the world.

SOLEMN OATH

Distinguished sir, before I confer upon you this title in appreciation of your extraordinary scientific merits and exceptional competences, we must observe the ancient custom which requires those about to be presented with this academic title to take a solemn oath.

Distinguished sir, because you have contributed to the development of our university and provided others with an example worthy of following, I hereby ask you to swear:

First of all, that you shall forever maintain your allegiance to this university, which bears the illustrious name of Masaryk, forever keep your friendship and continue to support it with all your strength.

Moreover, that you shall continue to cultivate the development of human knowledge so that its light shines ever brighter. And finally, that you shall remain in the future as you are now, unchanging.

Do you swear and promise to do so to the best of your knowledge and belief?

I SWEAR AND I PROMISE .

Now that I have gratefully received your solemn oath, I, the duly constituted promoter, by the authority bestowed upon me, proclaim you,

JEFFREY CHARLES ALEXANDER ,
HONORARY DOCTOR
IN THE FIELD OF SOCIOLOGY .

I hereby publicly declare your appointment and grant you the rights and privileges associated with this title. As proof, I present you with this diploma, bearing the seal of Masaryk University, and confer upon you the Gold Medal of this university.

S P E E C H

On the intellectual origins of a strong programme in cultural sociology
(and its links to sociology at Masaryk University)

Jeffrey Charles Alexander

I am deeply honoured to be awarded this honorary doctorate from Masaryk University, not only generally, because of Masaryk's scientific reputation, but specifically -- because I have for many years closely collaborated with sociologists at this university. The focus of our working together has been the development of cultural sociology, a non-reductive approach to the study of collective meaning that is known as "the strong program." I would like to take this opportunity to trace the intellectual origins of this research program. I will conclude by indicating, all too briefly, how the strong program became a topic of collaboration with my colleagues here in Brno.

The strong program in cultural sociology emerged from the intertwining of two classical sources. One is the Geisteswissenschaft tradition originating with Wilhelm Dilthey, in Germany, in the late nineteenth century. Dilthey sharply put the distinction between the sciences of nature and the sciences of the spirit. He explained that the human sciences orient themselves toward the inner rather than outer, toward subjectivity, meaning, and experience. Their method has, therefore, to be interpretive, or hermeneutic. The hermeneutic method is shared between the interpretive social sciences and the humanities, where the focus is the written text. As Paul Ricoeur later would put it, if meaning is our first concern, then the social scientific analyst must find a way to 'convert' meaningful social action into an interpretable text. This text reveals the 'inside' of action. In cultural sociology, we call this textual inside a "culture structure." The first goal of any strong program effort must be to find the culture structure, or structures, that inform an individual, group, or institutional action, and to give this structure as much force and integrity as the other, more material (organizational, political, economic, demographic) kinds of structures that social scientists usually find.

It is Dilthey (as amended by Ricoeur) who provides the broad orientation to meaning and the defence of interpretive method that has allowed a cultural form of macro-sociology to emerge -- as compared with the micro-sociologies inspired by phenomenology and pragmatism, which are subjectively oriented but do not reveal "structures" whether of a cultural or material kind. To understand this philosophical foundation for a macro-cultural sociology, it is vital to read Max Weber considering Dilthey, for it was from this founder of the Geisteswissenschaften that Weber took so many of his cultural cues. Weber's most important work of cultural sociology is *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. He insists, following Dilthey, that there is an inner meaning to capitalism, its spirit, and with the help of Benjamin Franklin, and Weber's own family history, he reconstructs this economic cultural structure as a form of disciplined asceticism. Once this culture structure of economic action is revealed, a new problem of causal understanding appears. For, instead of asking simply, "what caused capitalism," we must ask, "what has caused

the capitalist spirit?" Once this new question is on the explanatory table, it allows Weber to look outside the laws of economic life – the kind of laws to which Marx attributes capitalism's origins in *The Communist Manifesto* and *Capital* – to religious life. He finds that the "Protestant ethic" contains quite a similar culture structure to that of modern capitalism, and he establishes that the centres of early British capitalism were also centres of Puritan activity.

In Weber's comparative studies of world religions, we find other impressive exercises in hermeneutic reconstruction, e.g., his comparison between the meaning structures of prophetic religion and modern social criticism in Ancient Judaism or the comparison of the Confucian gentleman and the Puritan saint in *Religion of China*. The great paradox of Weber's legacy, indeed its tragedy, is that, with some minor if significant exceptions, he does not extend this Dilthey-inspired interpretive approach to the political, organizational, and historical sociology he developed in *Economy and Society*. This tragedy is compounded by Weber's ideological conviction that modernity is so deracinated that the meaningful patterning of action has become impossible – "The Puritan wanted to work in a calling, we are forced to do so." According to Weber's cultural pessimism, the narrative telos of traditional societies had been displaced by the efficient causality of mechanism. We live in a rationalized world without meanings or gods. I established this interpretation of Weber in the third volume of *Theoretical Logic in Sociology* (1983) -- *The Classical Attempt at Synthesis: Max Weber*. This interpretation set forth the challenge: To find a way of continuing Weber's cultural sociology in a manner that went against the instrumental insights of the broad thrust of his comparative, historical, and macro-sociological work.

It is Emile Durkheim and the semiotic tradition he established that allows us to meet this challenge, providing the corrective that allows us to establish a meaning-centred sociology for the modern age. The early and middle writings of Durkheim had been interpreted in a structural and functional manner, and his writings on so-called primitive societies had been read as complementing the conviction, shared by Weber and Marx, that such phenomena as mechanical solidarity, collective conscience, ritual, and symbol were relevant primarily to simpler societies of premodern times. In the second volume of *Theoretical Logic* (1982), I challenged this interpretation, arguing that the later Durkheim, particularly that of *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, was not so much an effort to lay the groundwork for an anthropology of simple societies as an effort to construct the basic concepts for understanding the "religious," or meaning-centred nature of modern life. I continued to elaborate and develop this interpretation, for example in *Durkheimian Sociology: Cultural Studies* (1988) and, with Philip Smith, in *The Cambridge Companion to Durkheim* (2005).

In his later work, Durkheim explained that, at the heart of every group, whether small or wide, there exists a symbolic order of collective representations, which is sharply divided between the sacred and profane. In orienting themselves to this meaning pattern, social actors create solidarities, engage in rituals, and circulate powerful collectively structured "mana", or meaning-feelings. It was because Ferdinand Saussure attended Durkheim's lectures in Paris that he created what would later come to be called the structural un-

derstanding of linguistics, which Saussure defined as one part of a general “semiotics” that could be applied to investigate the “signs” that make meaning, not only in language, but in social institutions write large. Through the work of the master of the Prague School, Roman Jakobson, his mentee Claude Lévi-Strauss, and most critically Roland Barthes, these Saussurean insights were elaborated into a thriving interdisciplinary study of how sign systems work in traditional and contemporary life. Thinkers from Althusser and Baudrillard to Foucault took this legacy in diverse ways, but their debt to the late Durkheim remained. Most important for the strong program, however, were other late-Durkheimian manifestations -- the three key figures of 1960s and 1970s symbolic anthropology, Victor Turner, Mary Douglas, and Clifford Geertz.

Geertz is the key figure who not only adumbrated but directly inspired the strong program approach to cultural sociology. The reason is that he combined so seamlessly the hermeneutic Dilthey-Weber tradition with the semiotic-structuralist one. That Geertz was able to do so in such an elegant manner was due in no small part to the fact that he had been trained by the most sophisticated sociological theorist of the mid-century period, Talcott Parsons. Parsons’ work provided the bridge between the classics of Weber and Durkheim and the more culturally sensitive strong program approach of the present day, though in Parsons’ own hands this bridge became a dead-end.

When I began to be interested in sociology and culture in the late 1960s and early 1970’s, I was inspired by a Marxian variant of the classical traditions I have just described. I became an intellectual under the nourishing, if also often distorting, umbrella of “New Left” Marxism, cultural form of Marxism developed from a Hegelian reading of Marx. This Hegelian reading was inspired by Gramsci’s ideas about cultural hegemony, ideas that were themselves rooted in Croce, who had been deeply influenced by Dilthey and Weber. It was also nourished by Lukacs’s ideas about commodification as reification, which drew from Weberian theory, and by semiotically inspired theories of ideology such as those of Althusser and Baudrillard. The focus was on the relative autonomy of superstructural ideology and the role of symbols, not material experience, in shaping consciousness.

As my ideological commitments changed, Parsons provided a bridge back to the classical traditions from which cultural Marxism had itself emerged. Reinterpreting these classical texts, I “passed through” the great American structural-functional theorist to develop a more cultural social theory, inspired not only by symbolic anthropology and semiotics but by the linguistic turn in philosophy and the narrative turn in literary theory, which taken together inspired the “cultural turn” that swept through the human sciences in the second third of the 20th century. I moved away from the values- and institutions-based theories of Parsons and conceptualized how out a sociological way to take up, to “sociologize,” the revolutionary innovations that were transforming other, non-sociological disciplines.

There were, of course, other significant sociological responses to the cultural turn outside the strong program. In Europe, these were primarily neo-Marxist innovations, like the Birmingham school of cultural studies in the UK, Bourdieu’s practice theory in France, and Habermasian critical theory in Germany. In the U.S., while these European take-ups of the cultural turn

did wield considerable influence, there were home-grown, more pragmatist-inspired responses as well, most notably neo-institutional organizational sociology and its variant, the production-of-culture school. Each of these European and American efforts were “weak programs” in the study of culture. They took up the cultural turn, not to incorporate the relative autonomy of culture, but rather to overcome it. They were about the sociology of culture, not cultural sociology.

In my view, the “strong program in cultural sociology” is the only systematic theoretical effort to make meaning central to a macro-sociology of modernity. The strong program began as a critical reading not only of classical but of modern sociological theories, e.g., my *Twenty Lectures* (1987) and the book-length essay critiquing Bourdieu (1995). The strong program came to life, during the late 1980s and 1990s, as a broad set of theoretical postulates and dense empirical studies – conducted by myself, my collaborators, and my students -- of the manner in which codes, narratives, and ritual processes structure modern cultural life. Over the last two decades, the theoretical approach matured into a series of research programs about collective traumas, civil sphere, social movements, war and violence, race and gender, political campaigns and scandals, and material symbols, or icons. The general premises of the strong program have been reformulated in the model of cultural pragmatics, which emerged from speech act theory and performance studies and provides an analytical model for relating structure and agency, the ideal and material, power and meaning. Cultural pragmatics continues the decades-long effort to “modernize” the foundational ideas of Durkheim and Weber that have energized and propelled the strong program cultural sociology up to the present day.

Despite the special significance I attribute to the strong program, it is clear that contemporary sociology has produced other serious and productive efforts along the same lines. William Sewell, Jr., Viviana Zelizer, Robin Wagner-Pacific, and Michele Lamont are only the more prominent American sociologists who have also explored the relative autonomy of the deep meanings that sustain the inner life of so-called material social structures in modern times. These efforts draw upon the same sources as those that inspired the strong program – Dilthey, Weber, Durkheim, Saussure, Barthes, Turner, Douglas, Geertz, Douglas, and Parsons. It is no wonder there are so many significant homologies between our efforts, and such striking differences between our work and the weak programs that reduce meaning to social structure or agency.

Let me now return briefly to the links between strong cultural sociology and Masaryk. If one can find in the sociology department of Masaryk University some of Europe’s leading cultural sociologists – and that is most certainly the case – I would place the origins of this unique collaboration to a visit that Radim Marada made to Yale’s Center for Cultural Sociology (CCS) in 2005. In 2006, I wrote a special Forward to Radim’s edited collection *Ethnic Diversity and Civic Unity*, which contained translations of two of my texts on ethnic incorporation. Soon after, I made the first of several visits to Masaryk’s burgeoning department that Radim then headed, offering lectures and seminars, and, in 2010, an “intensive course” in cultural sociology to graduate students and doctoral candidates. In 2012, Radim spent 8 months at Yale CCS, and Csaba

Szalo, Radim's successor as Chair, participated in the annual CCS "Spring Conference." Under their joint leadership, Masaryk's sociology department launched a joint graduate training program in cultural sociology with Trento University (Italy), Graz (Austria), and Zadar (Croatia).

During these years, some of my closest colleagues -- like Bernhard Giesen, Ron Eyerman, Philip Smith, Giuseppe Sciortino, and Carlo Tognato -- and some of my most notable students -- like Jason Mast and Isaac Reed -- visited Brno. (Jason has returned for a visit only weeks ago.) These growing institutional links, along with special EU funding, led directly to Masaryk post-doctoral appointments for Nadya Jaworsky and Dominik Bartmanski, two recent Yale Ph.D.'s, and for Werner Binder, who had taken his degree with Bernd Giesen at Konstanz. Binder and Jaworski soon became members of the faculty -- which has just voted to make Nadya a professor. This impressive cultural sociology cluster, further enriched by Pavel Pospech, who has also visited Yale CCS, soon began to train outstanding doctoral students of their own. Some of these, like Vanda Cernohorska and Jan Vana, made long term visits to CCS as well.

In perceptive 2021 article, "The Recurrent Motif of Cultural Autonomy in the Development of Czech Sociology of Culture," Charles University sociologist Marek Skovajsa singled out Masaryk's department for "accumulate[ing] the essential institutional and, above all, intellectual resources" that have allowed it to become a visible participant in "the internationalized research programme of cultural sociology." Skovajsa argued that this sociological achievement built upon a broad interest in matters cultural that has long marked Czech intellectual life, from Masaryk's philosophical investigations of literature and Blaha's "federal functionalism" to Petrusek and Alan's post-Communist writings of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

But that is another story, which I certainly have neither the space nor the linguistic competence to take your time up with today. Let me conclude, then, by expressing, once again, my appreciation for the fact that you have honoured both myself and the strong program in cultural sociology with the bestowal of this honorary degree.



A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE AUDITORIUM MAXIMUM

Karel Engliš Great Hall

The ceremonies of Masaryk University are nowadays inseparably linked with the auditorium of the Faculty of Law, which serves as a university-wide auditorium.

In its early days, in the 1930s, it was the venue for most of the university's ceremonial moments, which included the inauguration of lecturers and the lavish graduations of honorary doctors. However, the space was considered a temporary makeshift for such ceremonies and was to serve as such only until the construction of the extensive university campus. For this reason, the auditorium was originally austere in character, almost devoid of artistic decoration. The only exception was the ceiling with stained glass windows by František Kysela.

The idea of building a large Academic Quarter with a monumental new hall was gradually abandoned and only the building of the Faculty of Law was realized from the original plan. It was therefore decided to create a more dignified framework for the festivities by decorating the original large blank wall in the front of the auditorium maxima.

The large-scale composition of Prometheus bringing fire to humankind, measuring 7.5 x 13 metres, is divided into three horizontal strips by Antonín Procházka. In the upper one is the god Helios announcing a new day to humankind, accompanied by the goddess of time Hora. In the middle strip are allegorical figures of all the sciences that were represented at the university - from left to right they are law, medicine, philosophy, art, pedagogy, and natural sciences. The centre of the painting is dominated by the figure of Prometheus with a burning torch. In the lower band, the work depicts humankind in its daily activities - building, seafaring, and agriculture. The figure of Prometheus is linked in meaning to a group of figures craving the fire of knowledge. The grand opening of Procházka's monumental work took place in the atmosphere of post-Monarchist Czechoslovakia on 16 December 1938. The composition had a turbulent fate during the war period. It was insensitively cut out of the frame by order of the Brno Gestapo, but thanks to the courage of Czech workers it was hidden in the cellar of the building. Three years after the war, the painter's companion completed the restoration of the work, Linka Procházková.

As part of the celebration of the 104th anniversary of the founding of the university in January this year, the auditorium was named after the first rector of the university and one of the greatest personalities of his time, Karel Engliš.

Karel Engliš was not only the co-author and co-sponsor of the bill on the establishment of the "second Czech university", but later also its first rector, who in cooperation with the then president T. G. Masaryk managed to procure the basis of the university insignia - the rector's chain.

"It is important to remember the past because without it there would be no present. We can be rightly proud of our past because it was shaped by extraordinary personalities whose legacy should be regularly recalled so that it never disappears from our memory," said Martin Bareš, Rector of Masaryk University, during the unveiling of the name of the Karel Engliš Great Hall.

Published by: Masaryk University, Rector's Office, Research Department
Graphic design by Milan Katovský
Printed by Ing. Vladislav Pokorný – LITERA BRNO
First edition, 2023
Print run: 100 pcs

