Writing in Privacy to Mass Publics: The Pamphleteer as an Activist Writer

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Abstract

The relationship between authors and their readers can be understood in terms of a dialectic between privacy and publicity, in that written media are consumed privately but at the same time constitute the foundation of publics. In this relationship, the literary format of the pamphlet, understood as a short form that expresses protest, is unique in that its function and content in voicing protest remain remarkably stable over time. Due to this stability in content, the format is able to change and be present in different media landscapes. Because of these traits, the pamphlets and pamphleteers referenced in this essay will be used as probes to fathom the historical dialectic between publicity and privacy. By drawing on pamphlets written by reformer Martin Luther at the onset of print publics, literary figure Émile Zola in developed mass publics governed by newspapers as leading media, and German footballer Mesut Özil as a public figure in digital publics, this paper intends to illustrate the relationship between pamphleteers and publics across time both historically and theoretically. This will demonstrate how pamphlets can be perceived as a becoming public of the private intentions of its pamphleteers in a very direct way. At the same time, they help us to understand who turns to pamphleteering and under which circumstances. Conversely, an analysis of pamphlets and their respective pamphleteers shows their historical boundedness as historic figures and is thus indicative of changing publics. Furthermore, studying pamphlets and pamphleteering invites us to conduct further research into the formation of public opinion and the nature of the democratic demos as an entity that shows deep fractures over time.

Keywords

Martin Luther, Émile Zola, Mesut Özil, pamphlets, pamphleteering, pamphleteers, publics, publicity, privacy

Pamphleteers in 18th-century Paris literally looked down on the people for whom they were writing their texts. Whereas this description of their point of view could be mistaken as an expression of arrogance or snobbishness on the part of the pamphleteers, their raised position was factually the opposite, an outcome of pure economic necessity. Writing pamphlets against the established order was hardly the best way to make a good living and pamphleteers therefore found themselves obliged to seek accommodation in the cheapest flats the French capital had to offer, which, unlike today, were situated in the garrets.[1] Paradoxically, although pamphleteers were looming over the city, they were engaged in a form of activist writing from below. This spatial oddity is not introduced here for purely anecdotal reasons, but rather in an attempt to suggest the dialectic between privacy and publicity that is particularly interesting in the case of pamphleteering.

The production and consumption of literary texts must always touch on notions of privacy, since, arguably, both reading and writing are conducted in private, drawing on one's own cognitive capacities but simultaneously connecting people with each other via the content of the various texts they are reading. Hence in this essay the concept of publicity or publics – as opposed to the private sphere – is directly related to the historical and sociological concept of the *public sphere* that was brought into being by the advent of printing and the broader readership that ensued.[2]

However, pamphleteering presents us with a special case when it comes to the dialectic between privacy and publicity. Pamphleteers intend to address large audiences by writing pamphlets, which in themselves form a literary genre that possesses remarkably stable characteristics: in essence, pamphlets are short publications produced in large numbers in a bid to reach the masses; they are cheap to buy or even given away at no cost and, most importantly, they always express protest.[3] Pamphlets – and manifestos as one of their subgenres – promote political action and call for often revolutionary transformation on a large scale. Due to this formal stability in content, pamphlets can serve as a probe to fathom the dialectic between privacy and publicity from a historical perspec-

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2   See the classic accounts by Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989 [1962]); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso 2006 [1983]). Due to the focus on pamphlets in this essay, notions of the public that are based on encounters and not on the act of reading and writing are not touched upon here. For such concepts with regard to pre-revolutionary France, see e.g. Robert Darnton, *Poetry and the Police. Communication Networks in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap, 2010). Ideas of collective action in the early stages of the 'Chicago School' of sociology also relied heavily on concepts of the 'public' and the more impulsive 'crowd' and the collective behaviour attributed to it as being organized by the mass media. See Robert E. Park, *The Crowd and the Public* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982 [originally in German 1904]). Eric Hobsbawm has described the collective actions of the crowd in the "City Mob" in: Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels. Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959).

3   George Orwell, "Introduction," in *British Pamphleteers*, vol. 1, edited by George Orwell and Reginald Reynolds (London: Wingate, 1948), 7-8 and 15.

tive, identifying pamphleteers in a range of social and political settings and drawing on a variety of forms of textual media that are extending well into the realm of social media.[4]

This diagnosis of the historic stability of the pamphlet can be used as a starting point to productively analyse the relationship between private and public in pamphlets against different historical backgrounds. In doing so, with this paper I intend to contribute to an understanding of the relationship between public and private in the case of pamphlets and pamphleteers as it has evolved over time. To this end, I would like to put forward two hypotheses. First, observing social phenomena through pamphlets and pamphleteering allows us to recognize that the relationship between private and public can take very different forms, whereas the pamphlet remains a very stable format. Second, although pamphlets and their authors demonstrate some remarkably stable characteristics, the social status and position of pamphleteers and their publics can differ widely. I shall test these hypotheses by means of a longue durée view that introduces three historical cases by portraying reformer Martin Luther (1483–1546), public intellectual Émile Zola (1840–1902), and – maybe surprisingly – German football international Mesut Özil (*1988) in their respective capacities as pamphleteers.[5]

Examining the relationship between the concepts of private and public requires definitions. Although the distinction of the private and the public sphere(s) poses a strong terminological juxtaposition, the two concepts are not as clearly delineable from each other, both in their usage and their semantics, as is commonly assumed.[6] Using these tensions productively, Mette Birkedal Bruun has developed two models that can be used in order to exemplify the dimensions in which pamphlets and pamphleteering mediate between public and private.[7]

First, her model of somewhat overlapping *heuristic zones* offers a conceptual lens through which the dichotomy of private and public can be regarded as a functional element of pamphlets as sources for historical inquiry. As will be shown on the basis of the pamphleteers portrayed in this essay, pamphlets essentially connect the seemingly most private zone of the "soul/mind/self" of the pamphleteer in a very direct manner with that most

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4　See e.g. Robert Darnton, "Anekdotomanie Blogging, heute und vor zweihundertfünfzig Jahren," *Zeitschrift für Ideengeschichte* 8, no. 3 (2014): 57-78; ibid., "Paris: The Early Internet," *New York Review of Books,* June 29, 2000, accessed July 5, 2022, https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2000/06/29/paris-the-early-internet/?lp_txn_id=1037986. Similar observations that trace short polemical formats in the writing from Martin Luther to Twitter can be found in Raphael Gross, Melanie Lyon, and Harald Welzer, eds., *Von Luther zu Twitter. Medien und Politische Öffentlichkeit* (Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 2020).

5　The cases of Émile Zola and Mesut Özil as pamphleteers were identified by Pierre-Héli Monot and are intended to form the central pillars of more comprehensive research. ERC project "The Arts of Autonomy. Pamphleteering, Popular Philology, and the Public Sphere (1988-2018)", The Arts of Autonomy, 2021, https://www.artsautonomy.net/research.

6　Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York: Zone Books, 2002), 26-31; Peter von Moos, "Die Begriffe 'öffentlich' und 'privat' in der Geschichte und bei den Historikern," *Saeculum* 49 (1998): 161-62.

7　Mette Birkedal Bruun, "Towards an Approach to Early Modern Privacy: The Retirement of the Great Condé," in *Early Modern Privacy: Sources and Approaches*, ed. M. Green, L.C. Nørgaard, and M.B. Bruun (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 20-24; Bruun, "The Centre for Privacy Studies Work Method," Centre for Privacy Studies, July 2019, https://teol.ku.dk/privacy/research/work-method/, accessed July 21, 2022.

public zone of "state/society".[8] They may therefore be regarded as a particularly useful format for understanding how people's "private" inner motifs are introduced into the "public" realms of politics. *Second*, drawing on the mechanisms of this introduction of "private" sentiments, the pamphleteers nonetheless act in their capacities as social beings within society, in that they occupy public positions from which they interfere in public matters. In a *semantic mapping* of concepts that might be seen as being in tension with the private, all of the presented pamphleteers acted to some degree within the parameters of their "professional" role, which is connected as much to the private as it is to the public sphere.[9] The professions of *theologian and professor* Martin Luther, *novelist* Émile Zola, and *footballer* Mesut Özil served as intermediaries that enabled all three of them to gain public recognition with their privately drawn-up pamphlets. Throughout the text I will be outlining those decisive instances in which their professional roles promoted them in their capacities as pamphleteers. As will be shown in the discussion below, the pamphleteer becomes an author through the act of writing pamphlets. This is why this essay focuses on specific texts that initiated Luther, Zola, and Özil to pamphleteering, thereby conjoining the zone of "soul/mind/self" with the zone of "state/society", as well as acting in their "professional" roles, linking the "private" with the "public".

This approach offers an opportunity to map out matters that are, to use Warner's words, "related to the individual, especially to inwardness, subjective experience, and the incommunicable" in relation to the public, although these matters apparently have "no corresponding sense of public".[10] Contrarily to this assumption of a non-correspondence between individual matters and the public in some instances, the perspective of the pamphleteers provides an opportunity to demonstrate how privately held claims might extend and enrich the public debate and eventually widen our understanding of how public issues are formed.

This essay illustrates these claims by applying the lens of social theory, with groundwork on pamphlets and pamphleteers, and by a historical approach, with a depiction of selected pamphlets. The first two parts of this essay will focus on theoretical insights. First, I shall make some basic claims regarding pamphlets and the public sphere; second I shall outline the interwoven characteristics of pamphleteers and pamphlets. Third, I shall present the cases of Luther, Zola, and Özil as pamphleteers. While these cases may initially seem to have very little to do with each other, they have been chosen deliberately in order to portray pamphleteering in three different media and public settings. In fact, the portrayal of pamphleteers in early print capitalism (Luther), at the beginning of high modernity with its newspaper publics (Zola), and in our contemporary globalized societies with their digital communication networks (Özil) provides us with an opportunity to map out some general peculiarities of the privacy of pamphleteers and their respective publics.

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8   Bruun, "Towards an Approach," 23. The other zones in between these two are "body," "chamber/alcove/studio," "home/household," and "community."

9   Bruun, "The Centre for Privacy Studies Work Method," 5. The other spheres that overlap with the "private" are "together with others," "common,",and "evident."

10 Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 30.

Drawing on social theory as well as historical description, this essay is informed by my professional background as a contemporary historian and social scientist and attempts to cater to the technical requirements of both scholarly fields. This being said, these two fields can easily be at odds with one another. Although each strives for transpersonal insights and comparability, the means by which they attempt to achieve these ends differ widely. Whereas the social scientist strives for reproducibility by means of methodological coherence, historians aim to historicize individual cases by contextualizing them within broader frameworks. Whereas social scientists try to find representative cases, historians, based on a fundamental and deep knowledge of historical epochs, are drawn with delight to the outliers, which are able to topple an all too systematized way of thinking. Therefore, my disciplinary combined perspective is simple: due to their historical stability and ubiquitousness, I suggest using pamphlets as heuristic devices that can offer conceptual insights into the relations between private and public. The wager I am basing this article on is that they can then hopefully be useful for further inquiry in both history and social science and ultimately add to our understanding of how an engaged and polemical literature might influence the course of politics and society. This then, in turn, *is* history.

Activist Writing: The Pamphleteer and Pamphlets

If we were to affix a contemporary social character to the pamphleteer it would be that of the activist. The pamphlet would then have to be considered a form of activist writing, a sort of making public sentiments that are shared in smaller more private zones by the pamphleteer and his or her peers. Among others Eric Voegelin investigated the role of activists in politics from a strong conservative standpoint. For the political scientist, activists were "activist dreamers",[11] who were promoting escapist utopian fantasies that would invariably result in totalitarianism.[12] Despite his utterly deprecating view of activists, Voegelin offers an insightful perspective in that he was right to think that activists were unwilling to cool-headedly give in to the state of political affairs and accept *reality* in its current form.[13] And indeed counteracting reality is *exactly* what the pamphleteer as activist writer does. As Luc Boltanski has stated, pamphleteers are "rooting their words in a personal existential experience" that promotes a certain form of "lucidity" that leads to "an access to the world whence the *reality of reality* can be challenged."[14]

In order to understand the peculiar position of the pamphleteer as activist writer who is anchoring his or her worldview in personal experiences, we should turn to Walter Benjamin's theory of authorship. In his speech-turned-essay *The Author as Producer*, Benjamin focuses on the connection between authorship and political struggle – thereby bridging the gap between private production of texts and public involvement in politics.

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11   Eric Voegelin, "Wisdom and the Magic of the Extreme. A Meditation," *The Southern Review* 17, no. 2 (April 1981).

12   Eric Voegelin, *The New Science of Politics. An Introduction* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1952), 132.

13   Voegelin, "Wisdom and the Magic,",246.

14   Luc Boltanski, *On Critique. A Sociology of Emancipation* (Cambridge, MA and Malden: Polity, 2011), 101 (italic in original).

He upholds the notion of a self-conscious and autonomously deciding author, who is drawn to certain political ends and allegiances, which in his case meant exploring the conditions for a siding of authors with the proletariat. In order to do this, authors needed to become aware of their social position and had to turn into producers, who "in their writing" aimed at transforming the productive relationship of which they themselves were a part.[15] Benjamin's understanding of the author as attaining consciousness of his or her position in social struggles is relevant here because the insights and realizations of the authors invariably were happening in their minds but turned them into writers who had to engage in public matters. In fact, Benjamin criticized left-leaning authors who expressed their sympathy for the proletariat but did not draw the conclusion that they ought to change their literary production accordingly.[16]

Pamphlets are a natural means of expressing the contentious sentiments connected with political struggles. The short format both makes possible and demands poignant and polemical assertions. They are intended to evoke sentiments in a way that few other literary forms are. Pamphleteers proclaim their standpoints to be the truth and do not accept any middle ground.[17] The pamphleteer is therefore ideological and, just like manifestos, pamphlets can be regarded as incendiary formats in that they are written in a bid to escalate tensions, sometimes with calls to militancy.[18] A pamphlet essentially always expresses protest and conveys clear political implications in order to advocate for or against something.[19] This is not to say that pamphlets are not programmatic and are not able to put forward elaborate analyses. In fact, many of them do. But their initial impulse comes out of contention, which is transformed into a call that addresses the masses and tries to rouse people into backing the claims made in the pamphlets.

These definitions make it clear that it is a characteristic of pamphlets that their content cannot be separated from the intentions of the pamphleteers as authors, or their experiences and their attempts at expressing them in writing. The pamphleteer's recognition of social and political problems thus ultimately unleashes forces which demand that people act accordingly. Herein lies the key to perceiving the pamphleteer as an activist writer, who by putting his private thoughts on paper, turns into a pamphleteer who is addressing the public at large and tries to change public opinion.

Pamphlets and the Public Sphere

According to Habermas' classical account, the idea of *one* public opinion is an "institutionalized fiction"[20] that is nonetheless integral to the inner workings of democracy,

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15 Benjamin derived the notion of the author as producer from Bertolt Brecht, who served as a role model in Benjamin's essay. Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," [1934] in *Understanding Brecht*, ed. Benjamin (London and New York: Verso, 1998), 98.
16 Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," 97.
17 Marc Angenot, "La parole pamphlétaire," *Étude littéraires* 11, no. 2 (1978): 264.
18 Julian Hanna, *The Manifesto Handbook. 95 Theses on an Incendiary Form* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2020, eBook).
19 Orwell, "Introduction," 7-8.
20 Habermas, *Structural Transformation*, 237.

because democratic societies treat public opinion (i.e. the polling of public opinion on certain issues) as a discernible quasi-general will upon which democracy rests. Public opinion is formed by the participation in public discourse of individuals in flesh and blood such as authors and readers. Such figures certainly influence individual opinions, which in aggregate conversely constitute and shape public opinion in reality.[21] By putting forward political claims, the pamphleteer is voicing standpoints that are able to shape politics, and this directly hints at the political dialectic between privacy and publicity.

The dialectic between reading and writing in privacy and the ensuing publicity in mass publics thus signifies being part of the fabric of society. Benedict Anderson has worked out this relationship in his seminal book *Imagined Communities* by referring to an aphorism written by Hegel on the act of reading a newspaper. Hegel states: "Reading the morning newspaper is the realist's morning prayer. One orients one's attitude toward the world either by God or by what the world is."[22] In Hegel's depiction, the private act of reading is transformed into a social action, which interweaves the reader tightly with the society he lives in. For Anderson, Hegel's depiction, "being performed in silent privacy, in the lair of the skull", became a way of describing the mechanisms of the "secular, historically clocked, imagined community".[23]

The concept of the imagined community is useful for our analysis of the pamphleteer caught in between privacy and publicity. Literary scholars and historians have adopted an open use of imagined communities that centers around the act of reading certain publications, leaving Anderson's focus on the emergence and development of nationalism behind.[24] This understanding still fits conceptually with Anderson's idea that imagined communities largely came into being through the invention of the printing press and the dawn of print capitalism. These new means of literary production made possible the mass distribution of novels and newspapers. Conversely, the act of reading these new printed goods synchronized the private imaginations of the readers and led to the formation of communities.[25]

However, research into pamphlets has cast doubt on the idea that it was the printing and reading of newspapers and novels that created such communities in the first place. Especially with regard to the emergence of democracy, there is evidence that it was in fact pamphlets and related genres such as petitions that made palpable a sense of community based on shared convictions. In Raymond's words, its "capacity *to speak to the unknown, to*

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21 David Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture. Printing, Petitions, and the Public Sphere in Early-Modern England* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 220.

22 G.W.F. Hegel, "Aphorisms from the Wastebook," *The Independent Journal of Philosophy* 3 (1979), 2; G.W.F. Hegel, "Jenaer Schriften 1801-1807," in *Werke*, vol. 2 (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp 1986), 547.

23 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 35.

24 Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists. Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850-1930* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 56; Sven Reichardt, *Authentizität und Gemeinschaft. Linksalternatives Leben in den siebziger und frühen achtziger Jahren* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2014), 277; in my own work: David Bebnowski, *Kämpfe mit Marx. Neue Linke und akademischer Marxismus in den Zeitschriften Das Argument und PROKLA, 1959-1976* (Göttingen Wallstein, 2021), 20.

25 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 37-46.

the crowd, the multitude […] empowered the pamphlet to imagine a public, and to speak to and fashion the public's opinions."[26]

In Great Britain, the pamphlet rose to prominence through theological controversy and become a propaganda item in political disputes.[27] This was also largely due to changes in printing technology. Whereas until the 17th century scribal formats had offered rulers a means of hierarchical communication, technological advances made the production of print cheaper and lead to a flourishing of pamphlets, in which opposing camps claimed that their interests converged with the will of a large and anonymous body of opinion.[28] The connection between protest and pamphlets was set in motion with the invention of the printing press and first became visible during the Reformation in Germany, which has been described as a "storm" (*Sturmzeit*)[29] of pamphlets. Pamphleteering became a salient feature also in the development of economic thought, especially in England. In their writing of pamphlets, from the 16th century on, a diverse group of people from different professions and some "cranks" contributed to the emerging discipline of economics that was barely defined until around 1750.[30] However, pamphlets had their biggest impact during the revolutions in North America, France, and Germany during the 18th and 19th centuries, in which they became one of the most important media for conveying protest, ridiculing monarchs, and forming alliances against the prevailing orders, thereby fostering ideas of enlightenment and democratic forms of government.[31]

Owing to the capacity of pamphlets to voice discontent, it becomes clear that the imagined communities of writers and readers closely resemble the notion of counterpublics, understood as publics of people that take a stand in opposition to dominant publics and feel addressed by certain pieces of writing.[32] In fact, pamphlets are at the core of political movements. In describing social ills and provoking the authorities, pamphlets often take the form of revolutionary manifestos.[33] They voice fundamental social criticism, thereby identifying political opponents and simultaneously contrasting the status quo with the political ideals of the pamphleteers and their political allies, as is the case with the *Communist Manifesto* (1848). Pamphlets may call for radical (and violent) political action, as *The*

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26 Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 97 (italic in original).
27 Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 7-12.
28 Zaret, *Origins of Democratic Culture*, 217.
29 Karl Schottenloher, *Flugblatt und Zeitung. Ein Wegweiser durch das gedruckte Tagesschrifttum*, vol. 1 (Munich: Klinkhardt & Biermann 1985 [1920]), 59.
30 Josef Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis* (London: Routledge, 1994), 156.
31 See for North America: Bernard Bailyn, *Pamphlets of the American Revolution, 1750-1776* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1965); ibid., *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1967), 2; Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 3. For France: Darnton, *The Intellectual Underground*, 14-40; ibid., *The Devil in the Holy Water or the Art of Slander from Louis XIV to Napoleon* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2010); ibid. and Daniel Roche, *Revolution in Print. The Press in France 1775-1800* (Berkeley et. al.: University of California Press, 1989); Antoine de Baecque, "Pamphlets: Libel and Mythology," in *Revolution in Print*, 165-77. For Germany: Sigrid Weigel, *Flugschriftenliteratur 1848 in Berlin. Geschichte und Öffentlichkeit einer volkstümlichen Gattung* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1979).
32 Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, 56 and 77.
33 Hanna, *The Manifesto Handbook*.

Coming Insurrection (2007)[34] does, or they may underline entire historical movements – as does the women's movement in its now centuries-long effort to promote gender equality.[35] In their striving for political, social, and cultural change, pamphlets often push for somewhat utopian ideas that breach the boundaries of everyday politics. Thus, placing pamphlets and their contentious character at the center of the formation of political debate, we attain a notion of publics that diverges from classical models and emphasizes liberal reasoning and the resulting pluralist balancing of standpoints in public debate.

The pamphleteers want to address masses but never society as a whole. This is the case because pamphleteers always voice protest, discontent, and contention on the grounds of perceived injustices and discriminations. Drawing on these considerations, pamphleteers are bound to position themselves as authors who are expressing the sentiments of minorities or social groups who are oppressed, or feel that they were. Hence the format in itself is contentious; the pamphleteer and his or her pamphlets are always pointing toward conflict and potential antagonisms as structuring forces in society, thus effectively exposing a *fractured* demos, understood as the people who are forming the base of democratic decision-making, instead of a pluralist demos. The notion of a relationship between publics and the counterpublics that emerge in order to deal with exclusion from the broader or dominant public corresponds with these ideas.[36]

Summing up the argument thus far, *writers turn into pamphleteers when they engage in writing pamphlets*. It is precisely in this act that the connection between the different heuristic zones of privacy referred to above becomes a factor. Pamphlets that are drawn up in the private zone of the "soul/mind" become publicized and turn into a means of evoking a sense of community in their readers, thereby merging them into a contentious imagined community – or counterpublic – that may be interfering with politics on the level of the "state/society". Amplifying the historical importance of pamphlets and using the current digital equivalents of pamphlets such as tweets, memes, or posts, also the contemporary pamphleteer stands at the gateway of organizing contentious publics and challenging powers.

Martin Luther: An Early Pamphleteer and the Unfolding of the Public Sphere

According to Lyndal Roper, "[T]he Reformation truly was sparked by a single text."[37] The religious tract in question was also a pamphlet. In fact, it was to increasingly become a pamphlet as a result of the development of early print-capitalism, which profited from the

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34   The Invisible Committee, *The Coming Insurrection* (Los Angeles: Semiotexte, 2009).

35   See Penny Weiss, *Feminist Manifestos: A Global Documentary Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2018); Breanne Fahs, *Burn it Down! Feminist Manifestos for the Revolution* (London and New York: Verso, 2020).

36   Robert Asen, "Seeking the 'Counter' in Counterpublics," *Communication Theory* 10, no. 4 (November 2000): 438, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2000.tb00201.x; Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text* (1990): 67-68, https://doi.org/10.2307/466240.

37   Lyndal Roper, *Martin Luther. Renegade and Prophet* (London: Penguin 2016), Introduction, para. 6 (eBook: ePub).

reproduction of the text and gave it a pamphlet-like print format.[38] Martin Luther's "Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences" (German: "Disputation zur Klärung der Kraft der Ablässe", Latin: "Disputatio pro declaratione virtutis indulgentiarum"), better known under the title *Ninety-five Theses*, effectively took on the reigning powers of the Catholic Church. Although theological historiography doubts whether Luther really hammered his theses onto the door of the chapel of Wittenberg on 31st October 1517[39], the impact of this document on world history is indisputable. Condemning the practice of selling indulgences to 'sinners' in order that they escape purgatory, Luther opposed the authorities not only theologically but also materially, by attacking the "entire financial and social edifice"[40] of the church. In addition to adhering to these basic political characteristics of pamphlets, the theses displayed witty dialectics in that they effectively ended in a diagnosis of a separation of the Church from the will of the Pope. Moreover, Luther made use of almost satirical polemics, for example in his dry remark that, from the perspective of the Church, indulgences really had to be understood as "greatest graces," insofar as they were meant to increase the Church's wealth (thesis 67).[41]

Martin Luther's character as a pamphleteer was shaped by the times he lived in and first and foremost by his *profession*. Professions can be regarded as intermediaries between the spheres of public and private. This is because professions assign social roles to individuals who then, as individuals, act in these roles and adhere to public rules on a societal level. From this viewpoint, at least certain professions, which grant their respective professionals public recognition, can serve as channels helping to inject individual demands into the broader public sphere. In this way, Luther's proclamation was a deed expected of the theological professor that he was, and their title "disputation" indicated that he was acting in his capacity as a professor of theology disputing religious convictions.[42] Interestingly, not only as a professor of theology but also as an Augustinian monk, the life of the then 36-year-old author was shaped by intellectual contemplation first and foremost. Luther himself played with this self-image in styling his theological awakening as an act undertaken in solitude, with his being struck "like a thunderbolt" in his study, which was situated in the privy tower of the monastery he lived and worked in.[43]

Thus, as was shown above in our discussion of the author, it was by writing his theses and other pamphlets in subsequent years that Luther went from being a scholar to a pamphleteer because he left the realm of pure scholarly reasoning for an engagement in the political debate. Moreover, his sense of mission, embodied in his writing, can be seen as a turning outward of his inner *self*, an attempt to convince the *public* of exactly those ideas

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38 Andrew Pettegree, *Die Marke Luther* (Berlin: Insel 2016), 67-68. The edition of Basel printer Adam Petri became especially famous: Thomas Kaufmann, *Die Druckmacher. Wie die Generation Luther die erste Medienrevolution entfesselte* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2022), 103.

39 For a discussion, Patrizio Foresta, "Der Thesenanschlag. Geschichte eines Mythos," in *Martin Luther. Ein Christ zwischen Reformen und Moderne (1517-2017)*, ed. Alberto Melloni (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), 189-208.

40 Roper, *Martin Luther*, Introduction, para. 10.

41 Martin Luther, *Disputation of Doctor Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences* [October 31, 1517], accessed July 5, 2022, https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Works_of_Martin_Luther,_with_introductions_and_notes,_Volume_1/Disputation_on_Indulgences#Ninety-five_Theses.

42 Foresta, *Der Thesenanschlag*, 197.

43 Roper, *Martin Luther*, ch. 4, part 5, para. 3.

that had formed in *privacy*, since he was convinced he had "come to the truth"[44]. Also, this conviction that one is in possession of a truth that needs to be displayed is a common feature of the pamphleteer, as outlined above. As if to underline this change in personality and transformation into pamphleteer, it was in fact during this time of writing theses and pamphlets that he changed his birth name from Luder into Luther, in reference to the Greek *Elutherius*, signifying "the freed one",[45] and these semantics surrounding freedom became a cornerstone of his later pamphlets as well as in his defense against papal authorities.[46]

However, in terms of the public that Luther was directing his messages to, his case is a remarkable one, since it constitutes a sense of a twofold creation in terms of pamphleteer and public. Luther not only helped to bring a new strain of Christian faith to life; he was also one of the first authors to profit from the new means of print production and draw a mass audience with his writing. Effectively, this Augustinian monk, together with other reformers and luminaries such as Erasmus of Rotterdam, can be considered a *printing native*, a part of the first generation to be immersed in this media revolution.[47] Together with fellow printers, Luther generated a market. Two years later he had already become Europe's most published living author. In his most productive year, 1520, Luther reigned supreme as the most-printed living author and despite the fact that he was "in command of the discourse", he literally had to write for his life when he was tried by the Catholic Church.[48]

In the early 16th century, the main mode of social communication was oral, and print media still had to adapt to orality. Eventually though, this enabled a mode of communication with those who were not witness to a conversation.[49] The "reformation public sphere" (*reformatorische Öffentlichkeit*) was the first to be based on the printing press and able to integrate the "common man".[50] It is hard to overstate Luther's role as an individual in the process of forming this reading public. The Reformation was a boost for print capitalism that expanded through the vernaculars and was to become one of the central pillars for the imagined communities resulting from large reading publics.[51] And, especially in this regard, Luther was a foundational figure in that he influenced the development of printing to a revolutionary degree through his writing of short formats.[52]

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44 Roper, *Martin Luther*, ch. 4, part 5, para. 3, 5-7, quote on page 7.

45 Roper, *Martin Luther*, ch. 4, part 5, para. 1.

46 With reference to Luther's pamphlet *The Freedom of a Christian*, ibid., ch. 7; Kaufmann, *Die Druckmacher*, 132.

47 Kaufmann, *Die Druckmacher*, 101; Patrick Wyman, *The Verge. Reformation, Renaissance, and Thirty Years that Shook the World* (New York: Twelve Books, 2021), ch. 7, subch. 8, para. 2 (eBook: Adobe Digital Editions).

48 Kaufmann, *Die Druckmacher*, 111 and 125.

49 Rudolf Schlögl, "Kommunikation und Vergesellschaftung unter Anwesenden. Formen des Sozialen und ihre Transformation in der Frühen Neuzeit," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 34, no. 2 (2008): 155-224; ibid., *Anwesende und Abwesende. Grundriss für eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte der Frühen Neuzeit* (Paderborn: Konstanz University Press, 2014).

50 Alexander Kästner/Wiebke Voigt, "Jedermann? Überlegungen zur Potenzialität und Entgrenzung von Öffentlichkeiten in der Reformation," in *Digitale Transformationen der Öffentlichkeit*, ed. Jan-Philipp Kruse and Sabine Müller-Mall (Weilerswist: Velbrück Wissenschaft 2020), 138.

51 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 40.

52 Pettegree, *Die Marke Luther*, 119-24.

In this regard, Luther's *self* served him well. On the one hand, the friar had an insubordinate, almost untamable "prominent ego"[53] that did not stop short of a complete delegitimization of the Pope's authority.[54] On the other hand, he had the gift of adapting to his circumstances and his audiences. He was a brilliant orator, which became evident in his defiance of the emperor at the Diet of Worms, which made an unparalleled impression on the crowds.[55] Moreover, the appeal of the reformer rested in his awareness of the "need of simplification"[56] for non-intellectual audiences, which he turned into a trait of his writing by leaving behind the frames of academic speech and style in favour of addressing "all" or "everyone" in their everyday language and embellishing his prints with rich illustrations.[57] Combining these talents with a grasp of the possibilities of printing, Luther became a prolific author and the most popular pamphleteer of his time.

Much of this was due to the fact that the friar from the central German town of Mansfeld understood the details involved in the production of printed materials like few others and was able to deliver manuscripts accordingly.[58] His works showed all the traits of pamphlets: they were short, often printed on a single sheet of paper to be published in quarto format; they could be produced in only a few days; and they were printed in large quantities and sold at low prices. It was the perfect partnership of an unfolding print market that was establishing its public and a pamphleteer who in tandem with fellow printers was able to seize new opportunities, turning the remote city of Wittenberg into a productive printing hub.[59]

Drawing on these insights, we are able to discover the unique quality of the relationship between the pamphleteer Martin Luther and his public. This uniqueness lay in the fact that the German reformer created this public through his virtuoso command of the printing press. It was Luther's expressing of his self in his professional capacities that was to become the foundation for his pamphleteering – thereby connecting the private with the public. Thus, Luther's work as a pamphleteer brings us to the onset of the formation of publics in general. These very publics quickly helped to shape and foster identity and the outlines of national publics that are not only still visible today but were in their heyday when Émile Zola entered the stage.

Émile Zola: Conscientious Pamphleteering in Mass Publics

As with Protestantism, the history of the figure of the modern intellectual has a pamphlet as its foundational document.[60] The pamphlet *J'accuse (I accuse)*, written by the French

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53   Susan C. Karant-Nunn, *The Personal Luther. Essays on the Reformer from a Cultural Historical Perspective* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 7.

54   Luise Schorn-Schütte, "Luther und die Politik," in *Martin Luther*, ed. Melloni, 592.

55   Roper, *Martin Luther*, ch. 8, sect. 4, para. 1.

56   Karant-Nunn, *The Personal Luther*, 70.

57   Kaufmann, *Die Druckmacher*, 110; Roper, *Martin Luther*, ch. 7, sect. 5, para. 4; Wyman, *The Verge*, ch. 7, subch. 8, para. 13 (eBook); Pettegree, "Martin Luther", 69.

58   Pettegree, *Die Marke Luther*, 120.

59   Wyman, *The Verge*, ch. 7, subch. 8 (eBook); Pettegree, *Die Marke Luther*, 124-30.

60   Pierre-Héli Monot considers the pamphlet "J'accuse" an especially useful case that forms a practical and conceptual cornerstone for the ERC project "The Arts of Autonomy". For the debate surrounding Émile Zola as a

novelist Émile Zola and published in the newspaper *L'Aurore* on 13th January 1898, not only stirred up French debate for years after its publication but also had a lasting effect like few other short formats have had.[61] In comparison to Luther, Zola's case is an example for the changes in media and the public sphere, as well as for the manifold forms pamphlets can take. Zola's pamphlet could not only get published in a newspaper but was an open letter directed at the president of the French Republic, Félix Faure. In this letter Zola exposed the antisemitic undercurrents in French society that had led to the conviction of the captain of the French army, Alfred Dreyfus. This interference by a man of letters in public affairs and his siding with Dreyfus on the grounds of a wholehearted plea for universal values were at the inception of the notion of the intellectual.[62] The newspaper edition containing the pamphlet was in high demand, with more than 300,000 copies as well as reprints in 16-page pamphlet format being sold in the end.[63]

Zola's piece rallied against structural impediments in French society such as antisemitism on an ideological level and the shortcomings of the French judicial apparatus at the political level. At the same time, Zola did not shy away from pointing the finger at those who were acting within these anonymous structures: Zola held accountable those who were otherwise able to hide behind the impersonal institutions in whose name they spoke in that he "named names".[64] In this regard, the opening sentences alone demonstrated how far Zola was prepared to go, in that he initially politely addressed the president, only to go on to point out the fact that the affair was a "crime against society" that had unfolded under Faure's reign, which in turn made him responsible for it.[65]

Similarly to Luther in many ways, Zola went from being a literary figure to being a rampant pamphleteer, or in other words, from "deskman [Schreibtischmensch] to activist for justice"[66]. It was nothing other than his pamphlets and his acts of pamphleteering that accounted for this transformation. Therefore, we see similar mechanisms regarding the interplay of private and public. As did Luther, Zola acted on behalf of his *profession*. As

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pamphleteer, see the foundational groundwork by Pierre-Héli Monot, ed., "Émile Zola: 'J'accuse...!': A Commented Bilingual Edition, Including Contextual Sources and a Facsimile Copy of Émile Zola's Manuscript" (Version 1.0). In *The Arts of Autonomy: A Living Anthology of Polemical Literature*, edited by Pierre-Héli Monot. Munich: The Arts of Autonomy, 2022, https://artsautonomy.hypotheses.org. For the role of Zola as the prototype of the modern intellectual, see also Michel Winock, *Das Jahrhundert der Intellektuellen* (Konstanz: UVK, 2000), 26-38.

61 Monot ed., "J'accuse…!".

62 Gangolf Hübinger, *Gelehrte, Politik und Öffentlichkeit. Eine Intellektuellengeschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 93. Generally the Dreyfus Affair is considered to have laid the groundwork for French (public) intellectuals: David Drake, *French Intellectuals and Politics from the Dreyfus Affair to the Occupation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Tom Conner, *The Dreyfus Affair and the Rise of the French Public Intellectual* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2014); Dietz Bering, *Die Epoche der Intellektuellen 1898-2001. Geburt, Begriff, Grabmahl* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft 2010), 24-60.

63 Conner, *The Dreyfus Affair*, 138; Piers Paul Read, *The Dreyfus Affair. The Scandal that Tore France in Two* (New York et. al.: Bloomsbury, 2012, ePub), ch. 11, part 2, para. 14.

64 Pierre-Héli Monot, "Kill Lists. Ideas of Order in the Pamphlet," in: KWI-BLOG, https://blog.kulturwissenschaften.de/kill-lists/, April 20, 2022, accessed July 5, 2022. DOI: https://doi.org/10.37189/kwi-blog/20220420-0830, ibid. ed., "J'accuse…!".

65 Émile Zola, *I accuse… Open Letter to the President of the French Republic* [January 13, 1898], accessed July 5, 2022, https://jean-max-guieu.facultysite.georgetown.edu/other-interests/english-translation-of-emile-zolas-jaccuse.

66 Veronika Beci, *Émile Zola* (Düsseldorf and Zürich: Artemis & Winkler, 2002), 290 (my translation).

a renowned writer, Zola occupied a position that granted him access to the public by means of his writing. However, as was the case with Luther, we can make the argument that Zola's passage from writing to pamphleteering and thereby addressing the public at the level of the *state or society* had a lot to do with his *self* as the seemingly most private sphere.

We can gain these insights by relying on biographical accounts of Zola's personality and the circumstances under which he wrote his pamphlet. The dialectic between privacy and publicity in Zola's case initially appears to be an almost overstated example of scholarly reasoning in solitude. *J'accuse* was published only after Dreyfus had been convicted, since the trial against Dreyfus had begun already in 1894. Zola had been travelling in Italy and was therefore effectively unable to comprehend the impact of the *affaire Dreyfus*. Even on 10th November 1897, only two months before the pamphlet eventually appeared in *L'Aurore*, he told his wife that he did not feel capable of taking on the matter. However, only a week later he informed her of his first article in the newspaper *Le Figaro*, which was directed at the vice-president of the French senate, Auguste Scheurer-Kestner: "You don't know what I have done? With fire and flame I wrote an article on Scheurer-Kestner and the Dreyfus-Affair […] I found it to be cowardly to remain silent."[67]

Zola seems to have come to an understanding of the Dreyfus affair that left him compelled to act – thereby showing that the truth as he perceived it forced him to get involved in the case. Thus, we see mechanisms at work which resemble those of Luther's case and hereby witness the governing principles of pamphlets and pamphleteers. Furthermore, in the text of *J'accuse*, Zola explicitly identifies his *personal* motives as the driving force behind the pamphlet.

> As they have dared, so shall I dare. Dare to tell the truth, as I have pledged to tell it, in full, since the normal channels of justice have failed to do so. My duty is to speak out, not to become an accomplice in this travesty. My nights would otherwise be haunted by the specter of an innocent man, far away, suffering the most horrible of tortures for a crime he did not commit.[68]

Zola portrayed himself as a conscientious man whose values instilled a sense of duty to act, for anything else would simply make him complicit. With the last sentences of the paragraph, Zola doubled down on this inwardness with his mentioning of nightmares that would possibly haunt him if he did not act. Describing this *private* inner motivation was of course also a way for Zola to present himself in a favourable light. At the same time, however, there were numerous possible ways for him to do so. Thus, Zola's decision to portray his feelings can be perceived as an attempt to bridge the gap between private solitude and the mass public by appealing compassionately to sentiments shared by the many within a fully developed mass public. In other words: here we can see how the connection between the *self* and the *national* public was established.

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67   Beci, *Émile Zola*. (my translation).

68   Zola, *I accuse…* .

However, there remain notable differences between Luther and Zola in the media of these relations. Whereas the former was able to overpower his adversaries in the emerging print market by virtue of his productivity, the latter transmitted his views to a large reading public by means of the newspaper, informing the entire nation or even the whole francophone literary world. Although we might expect this ready-made mass public to have made the transmission of Zola's message easier, it in fact made things more difficult, in spite of his status as a renowned author. In a fully developed public sphere governed by newspapers as the prime medium, Zola had to compete for the reader's attention in a way that Luther simply did not. Initially, the public was not as easy to reach as the eventual status of *J'accuse* suggests. In fact, before the ultimately famous pamphlet was finally published and gained attention, Zola had already written several articles on the matter in the last months of 1897, but these had barely been noticed by the public.[69] In order to gain a bigger impact on the public, Zola appealed to the highest office in France when he published his open letter to Faure. Aside from the fact that he wanted to hold people responsible, this was a major reason for the success of the pamphlet.

> ʘJ'*Accuse…!*' explicitly points out – and this is the text's great innovation – that the symbolic economies of 'deliberation', of 'rational debate', or even those of 'polemic' and 'accusation' in their usual sense, always involve non-symbolic, non-discursive preconditions and consequences.[70]

All this shows that Zola, like Luther, had an astute sense of how to best reach the public. The potential to reach intended audiences with pamphlets some 120 years later in the digital sphere is of a completely different nature, as the case of Mesut Özil shows.

Mesut Özil: Antiracist Pamphleteering in Digital Publics

In the summer of 2018, German football and the public sphere were shaken by an announcement from one of the best midfielders in the history of the nation. In a statement that was subdivided into four pages and sent in the form of three tweets over the course of the afternoon of 22nd July 2018, Mesut Özil declared that he was resigning from the national team (@MesutOzil1088). His resignation would not have been a particularly hot topic if it had not been for the content of the tweets. Mesut Özil, who up until then had worn the number 10 shirt for Germany, revealed that he was resigning because of the racism he perceived within the German public and the unwillingness of the German football association (DFB) to protect him from racist abuse. Although born in the German town of Gelsenkirchen in 1988, Özil could be easily othered due to his family's ancestry: his grandparents had come to Germany during the 1960s as migrant workers. In fact, both of Özil's grandfathers had left the Turkish mining town of Zonguldak and come to work as miners in the West German coal region of the Ruhr, bringing their wives and

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69   Monot, ed., "J'accuse…!".
70   Monot, ed., "J'accuse…!", "Kill Lists".

children over to Germany in the following years.[71] Using the then president of the DFB, Reinhard Grindel, *pars pro toto* for parts of the public, Mesut Özil declared a sentiment that had already been voiced by other football players of dual heritage: "In the eyes of Grindel and his supporters, I am German when we win, but I am an immigrant when we lose."[72] Quoting other vile racist insults directed at him, Özil's tweets ended in a firm statement: "Racism should never, ever be accepted."[73]

To an even greater degree than in the cases of Luther and Zola, it was his pamphlet that turned Özil into a pamphleteer. In terms of standard markers of intellectuality such as formal education or the writing profession, the contrast between the 29-year-old footballer and the two *hommes de lettres* could hardly be starker. However, while Özil had received help in writing his pamphlet, it was not the case that he simply authorized a ready-made statement by his associates. Özil was involved in the process of writing the tweets and was responsible for their content.[74] And if the act of conceiving and writing pamphlets turns people into pamphleteers, then they are also a means of connecting *just* such diverging cases as Luther, Zola, and Özil, which in turn makes for an especially thought-provoking comparison.

However different these cases might seem, the common denominator of all three was to be found in the fact that it was their respective *professions* that enabled them to reach audiences. In his capacity as a footballer, Özil was able to access the public to an extent unparalleled by Luther and Zola. In fact, as will be shown below, Özil was a public figure and can be regarded not only as a footballer but as a media professional. Özil's pamphleteering came about in the context of the German national team's unsuccessful campaign in the 2018 World Cup, which resulted in early elimination in the group stages. Over the course of the tournament, the attacking midfielder had been the focal point of debates over the performance of the team in which his loyalty to Germany was questioned.[75] Özil himself had exacerbated these sentiments by meeting Turkish president Erdogan along with fellow midfielder Ilkay Gündogan during Erdogan's election campaign for the Turkish presidency and posing with him for pictures a month before the World Cup started.[76] Although the background of the incident is largely unknown to the public, rumors abound that foreign players of Turkish descent and their families are pressured into such photo sessions by the Turkish state. It is, however, more likely that Özil and Gündogan were ushered into the meeting because an agent of theirs had set it up without think-

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71 Mesut Özil (with Kai Psotta), *Die Magie des Spiels. Und was du brauchst, um deine Träume zu verwirklichen* (Cologne: Bastei Lübbe 2017), 33-35.

72 Mesut Özil (@MesutOzil1088), "III/III" (page 1 of 2), tweet containing two JPEG files, July 22, 2018, 8.04 pm, https://twitter.com/MesutOzil1088/status/1021093637411700741. Similar remarks were made by German national player Jérôme Boateng. Dietrich Schulze-Marmeling, *Der Fall Özil. Über ein Foto, Rassismus und das deutsche WM-Aus* (Göttingen: Verlag Die Werkstatt, 2018), 7. The French-Algerian striker Karim Benzema is commonly referred to as the first to express such sentiments.

73 Mesut Özil (@MesutOzil1088), "III/III" (page 2 of 2).

74 Information from Mesut Özil's agent Erkut Sögüt, email to David Bebnowski, June 9, 2022.

75 For a contextualization of the affair, see: Schulze-Marmeling, *Der Fall Özil*.

76 For a chronology of the affair, see: Anon., "Chronologie der Özil-Erdogan-Affäre", *Spiegel-Online*, July 23, 2018, accessed July 5, 2022, https://www.spiegel.de/sport/fussball/mesut-oezil-vom-foto-mit-recep-tayyip-er-dogan-zum-ruecktritt-die-chronologie-a-1219642.html.

ing about the consequences.[77] Regardless of this incident, Özil's self-identification as a German had already been frequently brought into question by the public, since he did not sing the German national anthem at the start of matches and his technically delicate style of playing did not reflect the traditional physicality of German footballers.[78] All this happened in spite of the fact that Özil had never lived or played in Turkey, was born in Gelsenkirchen, and even had to consciously revoke his Turkish citizenship in order to obtain German nationality and be able to play for Germany.[79] It would hardly be an over-statement to say that, even before the World Cup had started, no other German player had already been the target of as much racism as Özil had.[80] Thus the playmaker tweeting his thoughts might well be understood as a pressure valve finally bursting.

As pamphleteer, Özil gained a voice in a way that was strikingly similar to what Luther and Zola had done before him. He also began his pamphlet by laying out his motives and turning his inner feelings outward – thereby using his *self* as a relay between private and public. After concluding that enough time had passed since the World Cup, the mid-fielder wanted to share his "thoughts and feelings about what [had] happened".[81] From his point of view, the meeting with Erdogan had had no political implications but was rather a gesture of respect for the president of his family's country. Also, this notion of respect as an essentially social trait was given a fundamentally private touch when Özil explained that it had been his mother who had instilled this sense of respect in him.[82]

Aside from these parallels, Özil's case becomes different from those of Luther and Zola when we turn our attention from him as a pamphleteer to the public he was addressing. Although hardly an intellectual, Özil at the time of his statement was undoubtedly a top celebrity and as such had attained a much higher public status than his counterparts por-trayed in the other two cases. Moreover, the football star was a media professional. But herein lies a striking parallel to Zola and perhaps even more to Luther. For whereas the reformer can be cast as a *printing native*, Özil, born in 1988, can no doubt be considered a *digital native*, as Marc Prensky coined university students back in 2001.[83] Özil's means of communicating were never based on traditional printing techniques but on the digital sphere and its respective publics.

The status of the Gelsenkirchen-born football player as a media figure in a digitalized environment can best be demonstrated by his social media profiles. In July 2018 Özil had 23 million followers on Twitter and in 2022 that number has increased to 26 million. He had then and has now (July 2022) a larger following than *any* other Twitter account held

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77 Schulze-Marmeling, *Der Fall Özil*, 55-56.

78 For an overview of quotes from former German football notables, see ibid., 83-91.

79 Özil, *Die Magie des Spiels*, 68-82.

80 Schulze-Marmeling, *Der Fall Özil*, 11.

81 Mesut Özil (@MesutOzil1088), "I/III", tweet containing one JPEG file, July 22, 2018, 12.52 pm, https://twitter.com/MesutOzil1088/status/1020984884431638528.

82 Özil (@MesutOzil1088), "I/III".

83 The *digital natives* are the inspiration for the *printing natives* in: Kaufmann, *Die Druckmacher*, 7. For the concept of the digital natives, who are turning older generations into "digital immigrants," Marc Prensky, "Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants," *On the Horizon* 9, no. 5 (October 2000), https://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky - Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants - Part1.pdf, accessed July 5, 2022.

by any other German person.[84] The publication of his message in three partial statements over the course of one afternoon was suspenseful and generated massive attention. As of July 2022, the number of Twitter users who had liked Özil's tweets ranged from around 116,000 to 255,000; between 38,300 and 109,000 users had shared them, and each of the tweets had generated comments ranging in number from 2,500 to 13,000.[85] Due to the short attention span of social media, the bulk of these interactions happened within hours of the tweets being posted.

This reciprocity and instantaneous interaction between the pamphleteer and his surrounding digital public is fundamentally different from the much slower and much less visible interaction that came with early print and traditional mass media publics. Moreover, it was Özil's status as a public figure in a literal sense that governed the pamphlet. In fact, on closer inspection, it was precisely this interplay between Özil and the public that became the real touchstone for his pamphlet. The main focus of Özil's critique was directed at the media, which the footballer saw as being largely responsible for the uproar he was faced with. Moreover, by indicting the media, Özil implicitly touched on the scholarly debate about whether the public sphere is fractured not only because of ideological standpoints but also as a result of medial circuits, a question that has given rise to discussion of structural transformations of the public sphere time and again.[86]

Throughout his pamphlet, Özil accused the German mass media of being the driving force behind the campaign and accused "[c]ertain German newspapers" of using his meeting with the Turkish president "as right-wing propaganda to further their political cause" while simultaneously choosing to keep quiet about his support for charity projects.[87] In laying out these incoherencies in the coverage of his actions, Özil was trying to launch a counterattack on German high-circulation tabloid journalism, and especially on the influential newspaper BILD, which had instigated the campaign against him. Although Özil stated that he would be able to endure criticism of his sporting performance, he could not accept "German media outlets blaming my dual heritage and a simple picture for a bad World Cup on behalf of an entire squad".[88] In fact, this crossing of a line was, in Özil's view, an attempt to *turn the nation against him* and single him out as a scapegoat. Almost rhetorically, he asked if his Turkish heritage made him a worthy target.[89]

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84 Ruth Ciesinger, "Ohne Umwege zu 71 Millionen sprechen," *Tagesspiegel*, July 23, 2018, accessed July 5, 2022, https://www.tagesspiegel.de/sport/mesut-oezil-und-social-media-ohne-umwege-zu-71-millionen-sprechen/22833022.html. Numbers according to the Twitter profile of Mesut Özil (@MesutOzil1088), accessed July 5, 2022, https://twitter.com/MesutOzil1088. Comparison based on statistical data. L. Rabe, "Ranking der beliebtesten Twitter-Profile aus Deutschland nach der Anzahl der Follower weltweit im Mai 2021," accessed 5 July, 2022, https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/70597/umfrage/twitter-accounts-nach-anzahl-follower/.

85 All numbers are rounded up or down, the cases for the comparison are tweets II/III (lower numbers) and III/III (higher numbers).

86 For these debates touching on Habermas' work, see the classic Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992) and the latest repeat with regard to social media in Germany, Martin Seeliger and Sebastian Sevignani, eds., *Ein neuer Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit?*, *Leviathan*, special issue 37 (2001).

87 Mesut Özil (@MesutOzil1088), "II/III", tweet containing one JPEG file, July 22, 2018, 3.03 pm, https://twitter.com/MesutOzil1088/status/1021017944745226242.

88 Özil (@MesutOzil1088), "I/III".

89 Özil (@MesutOzil1088), "I/III".

Özil's statement made clear a certain unwariness concerning his contact with Erdogan and it also lacked reflection on, let alone justified criticism of Erdogan's politics. A critique of these shortcomings is granted, but, in the words of political scientist Mahir Tokatli, "thanks to the medial depiction, Özil did not have to address these touchy subjects at all. Bitter. Especially because in the end one feels in agreement with some parts of the statement."[90] Even this critical summation of Özil's attitudes shows that the pamphlet was a reflection of indicative shifts in public opinion to the political right, and thereby exemplifies the inner workings of a public sphere that is antagonizing people and social groups. In other words: What the case of Mesut Özil presents us with is the interplay between large scale publics and their effects on the seemingly private individual. As pamphleteers do, Özil exposed his privately held truth, which in turn resonated with parts of a potentially global public due to the communicative circuits of social media. Ultimately, it is the historical stability of the pamphlet that makes visible such interactions between private and public and invites for further comparison.

Conclusion

By viewing pamphlets and pamphleteers from a *longue durée* perspective both historically and within the framework of social theory, this essay has focused on the dialectic between privacy and publicity. This dialectic structures the concept of publics and is directly connected with writing and reading on a mass scale. Due to its formal stability as a short literary genre that expresses protest, the pamphlet was used as a probe to fathom the dialectic between privacy and publicity in different publics and media settings.

Pamphlets were presented as linking different heuristic zones ("soul/mind/self" and "state/society") and semantic concepts ("profession" linking "private" and "public") in the relationship between private and public. The pamphlet was thereby portrayed as connecting the seemingly most private zone of the *self/mind/body* with the apparently most public one of *state-wide political and social* publics. With regard to the pamphleteers, it was their respective *professional* positions that enabled them to act as pamphleteers who could reach mass audiences and connect the private with the public. Regarding pamphleteering, this framework exemplifies that the spheres of private and public are overlapping and affecting each other to a great degree. Relying on this groundwork, this paper tested two hypotheses: first, that if we look at social conflicts through the lens of pamphlets, it becomes clear that in pamphleteering the relationship between private and public can take different forms, while the pamphlet remains a stable format. Second, that in contrast to the formal stability of the pamphlet, the social status and position of pamphleteers and their publics can differ remarkably.

Both hypotheses could be affirmed by depicting the pamphleteering work of Martin Luther at the onset of print capitalism, of Émile Zola in developed modern publics dependent on newspapers, and of Mesut Özil by means of social media in a digitalized public. Furthermore, the paper brought to light several similarities with regard to the pamphleteers and outlined key differences pertaining to the audiences they were gearing their pamphleteering toward.

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90 Quote from Schulze-Marmeling, *Der Fall Özil*, 151 (my translation).

All three cases showed that their protagonists who were occupying different social roles before essentially turned into pamphleteers, and as such into activist writers, as a consequence of writing pamphlets, thereby confirming a central theoretical claim of this paper. Moreover, the pamphleteers presented their inner motives as driving forces in the sense that they felt duty-bound to write their pamphlets. In making their private feelings public, they positioned themselves directly within the dialectic between privacy in the sense of the *self* and publicity in the sense of an issue that pertains to a *national or society-wide* public. Such presentations unearthed another crucial similarity in that all three pamphleteers possessed the skills to reach their publics due to their media prowess, which was a result of their *professional* roles.

Conversely, however, with regard to the publics the pamphleteers intended to address, differences were visible. In contrast to the stability of pamphlets as a genre, the positions of their respective pamphleteers were fundamentally shaped by historical circumstances. Essentially, all three pamphleteers were historic figures in the double sense that they created memorable media moments and reacted to specific historical situations. Additionally, all of them had to maneuver within publics that were structured by different leading media. In this respect, their positions within the media were special in each case: whereas we can position Luther at the cradle of mass publics, Zola already had to compete for attention in a fully developed public sphere that had newspapers as its primary media. Özil, in turn, was able to rely on social media as an alternative to the mass media apparatus that he criticized in his pamphlet. Moreover, while the recognition of the earlier two pamphleteers as historic figures was directly related to their pamphlets, the footballer was already a top celebrity and, as such, a public figure.

Thus the cases portrayed presented persons who acted in the name of their professional positions and inner convictions. But this is not the only way it might be. Pamphlets can obviously be written on behalf of different sorts of collectives. However, while Luther, Zola, and Özil were all clearly part of society and public debate and intent on addressing pressing issues in different publics, they do present strong cases for the connection of the most private with the most public zones.

One important insight that can be obtained from comparison of the three cases relates to questions of democracy and our understanding of publics, or more directly, the interplay between private feelings of individuals or individual groups and public opinion. The pamphlets of Luther and Zola, especially, can be considered foundational documents for democracy in that they took a firm position against the prevailing order and helped bring either social movements (Luther: Protestantism) or important democratic social characters (Zola: intellectuals) to life. While the status of Mesut Özil's pamphlet may not have set as much in motion, his pamphleteering activity nonetheless appealed to general humanist and democratic values and could be related to contemporary activism and debate.

Further research might ask if these general democratic appeals are a precondition for pamphleteering. Pertaining to these considerations and with regard to the theoretical discussion and assumptions outlined in this essay, pamphleteering then poses a question of fundamental importance for democracy. Pamphlets were foundational documents for

the early public sphere. Drawing on this and back to the starting claim of this paper – the diagnosis of the stability of the pamphlet as a format throughout history – we might conclude that their contentious character does reveal a deeper truth about *all* publics. Pamphlets and pamphleteers would then be the natural result of an essentially fractured demos. This in turn would explain their historic stability and ubiquity. The public, then, essentially resembles the notion of an assemblage of counterpublics or smaller imagined communities instead of a pluralist public sphere. These questions concerning the interplay between privacy and publicity invite further research on pamphlets and the private motives of their respective pamphleteers, be they individuals or groups, and call for clear-sighted historicization.

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